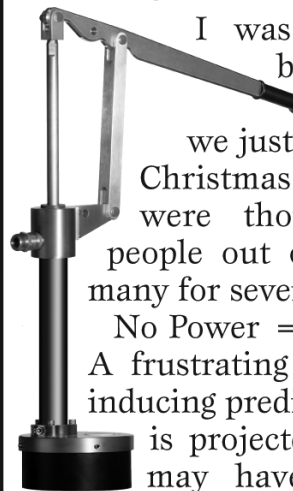


Hand Pump

with Bob Quinn, the Water Doctor



I was reflecting back to the storm we just had before Christmas. There were thousands of people out of power - many for several days. No Power = No Water. A frustrating and panic inducing predicament. It is projected that we may have a harsh winter and many of us could be faced with power outages again.

Don't be left without water. A hand operated pump can be installed on your well. Most people picture a hand pump being such that you have to be a weight lifter to get the water to come up and then you have to break your back carrying buckets of water.

The "Simple Pump" can be installed so that you easily lift the handle and you have water in your house! A small child can operate the Simple Pump. No buckets required and no weight lifting!

Quinn's is your exclusive "Simple Pump" dealer in Southern Oregon. Give us a call for more information and a Free Estimate.

Water is a geological cocktail so DRINK MORE WATER!



Did You Know...

Quinn's guarantees that if you have an out-of-water emergency, they will respond within 8 hours, or your labor is FREE!

Bob Quinn is the owner of Quinn's Well, Pump and Water Filtration located at 6811 Williams Hwy. We install, maintain and repair complete water pumping systems, and we offer a complete line of water filtration equipment. Contact our professional staff by phone, e-mail, or visit our office. quinnswell.com CCB #192047

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TALL TALES FROM THE EDITOR

The Rim mine

or

Climbing toward the light



It's a strange sensation, an urge that overcomes me every once in awhile. I am swallowed up in a dark, dreary, menacing ocean of desire. Why? I can't say. Years ago I had no appetite for the blackened hole of hell that I cry out for today.

So why now do I find myself wanting to climb into a cage, ride down a dark shaft that's dripping wet all the way to the bottom of a deep black hole—one that opens into a chamber of slow death, also known as a uranium mine.

The one uranium mine image that fills what's left of my now depleted brain cells was called The Rim. It was located out in the rattlesnake, scorpion, no-see-um infested cedar and piñon pine forest of southeast Utah. The forest on the plateau in this area was interspersed with pinto bean and winter wheat fields depending on the time of year.

The Rim wasn't the deepest hole I'd ever been in, being only 650 feet down or so. The deepest was Rio Algom, which was around 1,600 feet deep.

I was the flunky in the geology department of a future financially and environmentally bankrupt Fortune 500 company called Atlas Corporation. It had maybe a dozen mines in this part of a rapidly vanishing paradise.

I owed this job to J. Michael Pearce, formerly of the J. Michael Pearce band. He had the uncanny insight to get a degree in geology just in case the world of a delusional, self-gratifying, despicable, short-lived life of a rock star eluded him. This is unlike his buddy (that would be me) who has always been delusional and with no back-up plan.

Usually I was J. Michael's flunky.

"Hey J.D., why don't you carry our lunch pails over to that beautiful overlook so we can gaze down on the red rocks of Canyonlands National Park. We can kill the afternoon here. Want a brownie?"

Or "Why don't you drive us over to the Frontier bar in Dove Creek, Colorado. I need a nap before we party."

If we had the whole day to kill, usually Wednesday through Friday, we'd go to the Saloon bar in Telluride, then referred to as "To-hell-you-ride," Colorado.

J. Michael never worked me beyond my job-skill level. On this particular day, I was carrying the lunch pail for Jack Morton, one of the other geologists. I'd worked with Jack many times, and we were heading out to my favorite mine, The Rim, to spend the morning probing longholes.

One of my few official job descriptions was "longhole prober." Probing longholes is accomplished when you push your probe 50 to 150 feet into a hole that's about the

size of the diameter of a silver dollar. As you slowly pull your probe out, you take a reading on an instrument much like a Geiger counter and record on paper your findings every foot. These earlier drilled holes were usually in mined-out stopes at various degrees, above and below eye level. For example, I would spray paint on the wall in red "+24°," "+16°," "+8°," "0°," "-8°," "-16°," etc. Later I would draw a graph from the probe information to see what the ore body, if any, might look like.

Jack and I had planned to spend the afternoon drinking Scotch with Felix Medesco, a very large man of Basque heritage. He could lift double the weight I could. Wait, that's not a fair comparison because I tried not to lift anything heavier than a guitar pick. Anyway, Felix was quite strong with a hearty laugh. He ran The Rim mine as a lease operation from Atlas. If Felix wasn't topside in his ratty 1960 single-wide trailer that served as his office, we'd go arrowhead hunting instead. There was no shortage of things to do while still on the time clock.

We'd gotten into the cage, an iron box that could hold eight men or so. Jack pushed the button to let the hoist man know we were ready to go topside. We'd gone 150, maybe 200 feet, when the cage came to an abrupt stop with enough force to move one's Rocky Mountain oysters to your eyeballs. "What the?" we yelled in unison.

Jack went to use the emergency phone that's in the cage to call the hoist man and find out what's up. "This is just perfect," Jack said. He may have used stronger language when the phone didn't work. It was all corroded and rusted, like 1959 was the last year it had been used."

After about 45 minutes or so, Jack said, "We'll have to climb out."

"You bet," I said with a smirk. "It's at least 500 feet to the surface and what if the cage starts moving again when we're half in and half out of it?"

Jack laughed and said, "You won't be so tall then."

It took a few minutes to pry open the rusted safety escape door on the side of the cage. Looking out the escape door, I wasn't feeling very comfortable with the thought of climbing 500 feet or so up a wooden ladder that was installed in the early Stone Age days of uranium mining

when The Rim mine shaft was sunk. The fit was so tight I wasn't sure I'd be able to squeeze myself out of the cage onto a wooden beam (wood is what the mine shaft was cribbed in).

There was a downpour of pebbles and water outside the cage. The wooden beams and wooden ladder were as slippery as ice. I looked up and couldn't believe how small the hole of light looked up at the top. I felt like I was thousands of feet below the surface. While looking up, my hard hat fell off, but my mine lamp stayed attached to it (which was attached to the lamp battery on my mine belt), so I didn't lose the hard hat.

Recovering my balance and putting my hard hat back on left my head exposed for just enough time for a speeding pebble to hit its target. If I hadn't had so much hair, it could have caused more brain damage. Something a little larger might even have knocked me off the ladder. Keep focused, I told myself. Climb toward the light. Surely it would grow bigger and brighter as I experienced my own episode of *The Twilight Zone*.

"J.D., here's a section with a couple of ladder runs missing. The one you need to grab hold of to pull yourself up is loose, so be careful."

Right. It was all I could do not to stay wrapped around the timber next to me, but I kept climbing toward the light. Climb, rest, climb. So it went for what felt like days.

When we finally pulled our soaked-to-the-bone bodies up and over the ledge at the top of the mine shaft, we'd been climbing ever so slowly for more than two hours. My arms and legs were as limp as a drowned rag doll. Man, did that warm sun feel good; the Utah blue sky never looked bluer.

The hoist man, Freddy Skidmore, was there to greet us. (Freddy was a rail of a man who wore his ball cap cocked to the right, one pant leg inside his scuffed brown work boots and the other outside. I believe this look may be a genetic trait that runs throughout southeast Utah. Quite trendy.) "Power's out," he told us.

"No kidding," Jack said sarcastically.

"Yes, sir. No telling when it will be back on. Them Navajos [miners] might be stuck down there all night. You know I ain't never seen no one climb up out of that shaft before."

Years later, I took my bride Sioux to see The Rim mine early on in our adventures together in life. Unfortunately, most everything was gone. A chain-link fence now enclosed my favorite radioactive hole. While Doo Doo the Wonder Dog ran around marking all the "Danger, No Trespassing" signs, I regaled Sioux with other Rim mine tales. This is one of my favorites.

I've never quit climbing toward the light, which represents my dreams in life. I have been sidetracked, laid up, down dead-end roads, but I am still climbing. Whatever your dreams are—love, health, happiness, fame, money—keep climbing. You lose only when you quit the journey toward the light.

Years ago I had no appetite for the blackened hole of hell that I cry out for today.



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