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# Tall Tales from the Editor

## Size does matter or Ride the chute

Over the years I've laid my head in many places I've called home. Some of my favorite homes were in Moab, Utah.

Doo Doo the wonder dog and I had christened my 1959 army green Oldsmobile 88 as home. Doo Doo claimed the large back window ledge that was bigger than a Toyota Yaris as his bed. I got the back seat, which was almost big enough for me to stretch out all 6'4" and 150 lbs. of my body in those days. I couldn't do that in a Toyota Prius.

Speaking about size, you could sit four testosterone-ravaged, little-brain driven, teenage boys in the front seat of the 88 and still have enough room to plant an ice-filled cooler stocked with our favorite highway refreshments between us. That was living! Everything I owned, including my Gibson Les Paul guitar, Marshall full stack amplifier and kitchen facilities fit nicely into the 88's huge trunk. Yes, the trunk was larger than a Toyota Camry.

They don't make cars like my old Oldsmobile 88 any more, and that's a shame, because size does matter. You'd have to have one of those motor-mansions on wheels that the snowbirds travel in to experience Oldsmobile 88 living these days.

Another home Doo Doo and I shared was an 8' wide by 16' long singlewide in Moab's famous Walnut Lane Trailer Park. What was life like at Walnut Lane? According to Utah outlaw Chris "Madman" Allen, you'd have to watch the Canadian T.V. series called "Trailer Park Boys" to know what life was like at Walnut Lane Trailer Park. Punk rocker Ricky Lee "Lizard Slayer" Costanza says the "Trailer Park Boys" is "The Waltons" come to Utah.

Also Doo Doo and I spent some time dwelling in a 1963 navy-grey Dodge panel truck that sat on blocks. The truck had suffered a blown engine and blocks replaced the tires that might have been pawned. The tumbleweeds that collected around the truck served as insulation or "Utah camouflage." This particular home sat across the Sandflats Road from the old Moab Cemetery (years later I'd have a job there working as a gravedigger), next door to the Grand County equipment yard at a Volkswagen repair shop called "Tom Tom's." The county yard was a place that reluctantly accepted my Oklahoma credit card, to feed the vast amounts of fuel required to run around the countryside in my Oldsmobile '88. This credit card could only be used after midnight.

We had lived there for several weeks and had settled in quite nicely to our new digs. On a typical morning, Doo Do and I were answering nature's call – Doo Doo preferred one of the front blocks holding up our sand-sinking, tumbleweed-covered, scorpion-infested, unlevelled home. And me? I chose the anthill just out from our back door. From there I could gaze to the southeast as the sun rose up over a green island known as the La Sal Mountains. These mountains jetted above a sea of red rock canyons, quite picturesque! On this particular morning, I was thinking about hiking up to the old power dam for a much needed shower under the falls. While I was lost in thought, a Porsche pulled into "Tom Tom's" parking lot. Holy Ex-Lax, it was Tom Arnold Sr. He never showed up that early. Bummer. He owned "Tom Tom's",

so my morning started with an eviction. It didn't matter that Tom Arnold Jr., his son and my buddy, said it was all right to live there – of course Tom Jr. told me "just don't get caught."

One of my favorite great adventures in how to live on five dollars or less a day and have a home, which of course was not in Beverly Hills, California, but was in Moab, Utah. Doo Doo and I moved into the coal bin at the Holiday Theater with Ken Hoffman. We lived in the heart of downtown Moab on Main Street. I know you're thinking, how in the heck could a coal bin be one of my favorite homes! For starters, there was no coal. Ken and I had the place as clean as – well, let's just say very livable, OK? No rattlesnakes, black widows, cockroaches, fleas, rats, cowboys, roughnecks, miners, politicians, or ticks. Aren't politicians and ticks of the same species, or is that lawyers? Anyway, the "bin" was really clean.

There was a 40-watt light bulb hanging from the ceiling in the center of the bin, our 18' x 18' living quarters. We had two queen-size mattresses that had been borrowed after hours from a local motel. The "bin" sported two doctor's office waiting room chairs circa 1940 that we had liberated from the dump. There wasn't a hole to be found in the fake dark brown leather material that covered our "early dump" Chippendale chairs. The table that sat between the classic chairs was a mid-size cable spool from behind Midland Telephone Company. In one corner we put up a small closet made of 2x4s and burlap.

The best part of our home was the secret entrance from back in the alley. You'd just open the lid to the old coal chute, hop onto the metal chute which we had polished up, lie back and ride the chute down to the "bin," landing on one of our queen-sized mattresses, if someone hadn't moved the mattress for a good joke. If they had, you'd hit the concrete floor and utter unprintable verbiage. I was always amazed at how Doo Doo loved to ride the chute, but then he loved to ride anything! The theater had rear exit doors that the civilized folks would come and go by.

The coal-bin chute came in real handy if you needed to disappear rather quickly if, for example, local law enforcement was chasing you for some minor disruptive prank or you were running from your date's upset boyfriend. There could be many angry tourists giving chase once they found out you really weren't a tour operator. That's right; Ken and JD's "Red Rock Belly Crawl Tours guided by Doo Doo, the Wonder Dog" didn't really exist. Then there were the Navajos from the city park who always wanted more than a swallow from your Spanada wine, or you just may have needed to escape from the hallucinogenic moonflower plants that lurked in the shadows of night in that part of the world. Yes, the coal bin chute saved us many a time!

The "bin" was cool during the mind-melting heat of summer and toasty warm when the snow blew in winter. That's because the giant swamp cooler and the gas furnace were located next to the "bin". Plus, I was close to work. I was a highly trained movie projectionist at the Holiday