

Nataqua News

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John Hunt, Comstock Artist

-by John William Hunt

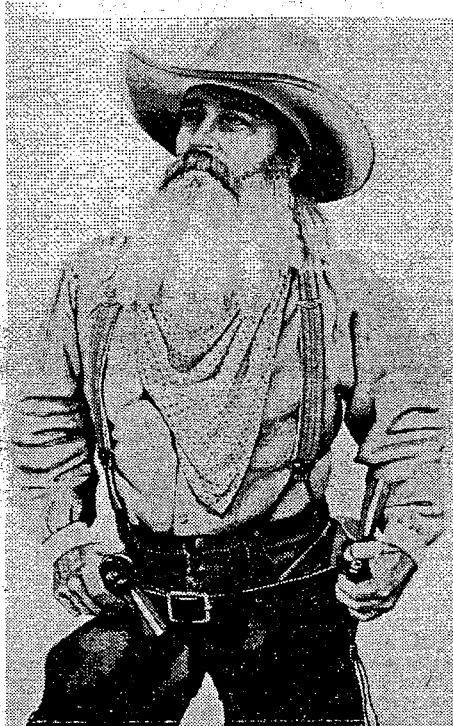
I was born October 12, 1947. Until I was 13 my family lived in Sun Valley, Nevada. We were the last place on the power line at that time. We never had a bathroom until we moved to Sparks in 1961, where I attended Sparks High. In 1964 I moved in with my aunt in Carson City and graduated high school there in 1965. As you can see my roots are Nevada. I have always loved this High Desert Country, I guess one could say I'm the true "Desert Rat."

December 1991 I moved to Silver City where I met my wife, Hazel Wald. Hazel is a paleontologist and Director of the Nevada Paleontological Association. During the warm months she and I travel the state digging up fossils. Very interesting and fun. In May 1993 we moved to B Street here in V.C. and love it. The view from my studio is spectacular. I look down on the center of town, the churches, hospital, Sugarloaf and the 100 mile view. Kings and Queens don't have such a view.

The character and characters of Virginia City are a constant source of inspiration for me. Just like the changing seasons so is this town. I love the first snows of winter. The town takes on the look of the ultimate Christmas card (which someday I will paint.) Down on C St. it's only us "locals." Very homey and a feeling of isolation, almost like a Robert Service poem.

And then comes the hustle and bustle of

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Happy
Father's
Day!



This portrait of Fly, owner of the Silver Dollar Saloon, is just one example of the many paintings of John Hunt's wonderful western characters that are on display in selected establishments throughout Virginia City.

Dudkowski's Blacksmith Rendezvous

"Did you know that only a Blacksmith can display horseshoes upside down?" Why? "Because," according to Tom Dudkowski of Janesville, CA, it is "so all the luck runs into his shop."

This is just one of the great bits of wisdom that was imparted by the group of artisans who traveled to Janesville recently for a weekend gathering of friends.

Tom Dudkowski knows how to throw a party, and quite a talented group of blacksmiths from all over managed to show up despite the rainy weather. Besides a few locals who strayed in and out over the weekend, there was a group who camped out on Tom's property, pitching tents, a tepee, and a few brave souls slept on the ground in sleeping bags, and awakened to a thin layer of frost and snow.

The invitation list included blacksmiths from all over the country. To name just a few, there was Bob Gott, who drove out from Colorado; and Frank Trousil, who is originally from Czechoslovakia, though, he now lives in San Francisco, as does Rod Plew. Kay Minto, a well known talented sculptor, who resided in Susanville before moving to Surprise Valley near Alturas, came down from Eagleville, CA; and Ron and Nick McBride drove all the way from Susanville! (About 14 miles!) There was Jon White, from Junction City, CA, Carl Adams from Ft. Jones, (near the Klamath River west of Yreka) CA; and others who came and went before my arrival on Sunday morning.

All told, there were about 35 people who came to partake in this gathering of friends, who also happened to be blacksmiths. Tom explained that once you are familiar with a blacksmith shop, no matter where you are from, Czechoslovakia, wherever, they're all the same all over the world.

"All we did was eat" said Ron McBride. "There were pancakes for breakfast, turkey, spaghetti, cookies brownies, everything! You name it. We ate the whole time. The food and the company was great! What a party!"

It was generally cold and windy, but by Sunday morning the sun was threatening to show itself, and it was a comfortable time around the campfire tended by Nick McBride. Most everyone was in the blacksmith shop, as the finishing touches were being added to "Midnight Madness" which is what a group of seven guys picked for the name of the masterpiece they began creating together the night before.

After deciding to join forces they began work at about 11 p.m. Saturday night and continued into the wee hours of the morning (around 2 a.m.), with each person contributing a different section of the face. Jon did one ear and the hair; Nick did the chin; Ron did the nose; Tom

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Confessions of a Volleyball Dad

-by Frank Goddard

YAWN!!! It's four in the morning. Yep, that's 4 A.M.; time to get up and try to get the girls moving. And I know they will have about as much enthusiasm as any typical teenager has when they have to wake up before their teenage biological clock tells them it's time to get up, which just about coincides with the lunch rush at Monk's Diner.

So what fun and exciting adventure awaits these less than eager young ladies. Well, whatever it is, it doesn't really matter *what* it is, because there aren't many enthusiastic teenagers at that time of day (or night, as they would quickly point out!). Even if the destination was their most absolutely favorite place to be, it just isn't so at an hour that even "Dan the Bee-man" (our local newspaper distribution specialist who keeps *really* early hours!) hasn't been by yet.

The basic problem is one of simple physics. Specifically, the physics of time travel. Lets say for the sake of argument, *which we have plenty of, trying to get a daughter's heart rate something above that of a hibernating bear and moving in the general direction of, say the bathroom, the clothes pile, (make that clothes MOUNTAIN. Tell me again the purpose of dressers and closets with hangers... the kitchen table, ANYWHERE out from those warm and cozy covers. Where was I... oh yeah, let's say that by noon your teen knows that they will be someplace totally cool (or whatever positive adjectives are "hip" this week) and that they will be with their best friends; but getting there means, yes, up at four, (the dark variety) and that concept is based on the Law of Physics, which I believe was the only law actually ratified by Congress and signed by the President this legislative year, that states in non-politician (normal people terms) to get from here to there by some specific time requires two things: Dad's car, and Mom's credit cards...No. No. No...what I really mean is a). The time to get there and b). The distance to travel. That's just common sense. Yes, I know we are talking about teenagers.*

But, I swear, every trip, it's "let me check...no the Law of Physics has NOT been repealed" even by Bill Gates (though he could probably buy the entire country, including our Congress, and have them rewrite the Law). So yes, since we have to get to somewhere else and unfortunately, just about everywhere is somewhere else) that means that we have to TRAVEL!

Now, if it were just the teens, then at least it could be one of those infamous ROAD TRIPS, but no.. As soon as you add mom and/or dad to drive, it's more like a BAD TRIP.

For those of you with kids below the age of "All Knowledge of Everything" - also known as the "teenage years" - if you think the "*Daddy, are we there yet?*" when you haven't even bottomed-out in that large pothole at the end of the driveway, goes away in the teen species of family members, then you'll be enthralled to hear that just doesn't happen. They wait until just past the city limits to start brightening your trip by reminding all those who happen to be awake or asleep just how boring the drive is. To us it is some of the most beautiful scenery in the world, to them it's just mile after mile after mile of trees and pavement. How uncomfortable they are (though you are the one with the bad back); how sore their "bottom" is (no argument there); how bad your taste in music is (I can't even write the names of

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Confessions... Continued from page 14...

their favorite bands in this family publication, let alone the lyrics!), and who is adding the less than fragrant atmosphere that is more commonly noticed in the vicinity of feed lots. (Yes, sometimes it IS me). And then there is this uncanny ability to have them wake up just after passing a rest stop or service station, with the next rest stop some 50 miles down the road, with an announcement that if they don't get to a "pit stop" within five minutes they will just "bust!" and of course, on these trans-Sierra treks, that you're behind schedule on already, (see above under "getting them out of bed") there is No Turning Back! So, it's either hold it, or use that third bush on the right. Of course, somehow it gets forgotten that at least the passengers get to snooze, sometimes for hours (which mercifully means less of the above under "the Joys of Getting There").

So, until we are able to employ the travel methods more common on Star Trek, these are the joys of "getting there". These are also the joys of the chauffeur duties which are listed in the "Official Parent Guide of a Teenage Athlete."

But wait... there's more! Driving responsibilities are far from all your duties. I can't think of any teen sport that doesn't require tons of specialized clothing (especially those shoes that cost more than your first car!) and equipment which is often made from titanium or some other exotic material. But it's probably the uniforms that generate the most consternation when just before bedtime the night before your early departure, its usually then that the teen athlete will have a moment of clarity and remember, "hey, mom, did you wash my uniform for tomorrow?"

For many sports it's the parent that has to remember to bring the food and drinks for the day of competition. And you can take solace that **WHATEVER** you pack will be **WRONG!** And not only do you get to purchase the healthy nutritious food and drink items (along with an ample supply of the "other" kind of food that they will actually eat) but you also have to pack it, haul it, and be

there at the player's "beck & call" to give them what they want and when they want it, which is usually **RIGHT NOW!**

Then there's all the miscellaneous 'stuff' such as folding chairs, blankets, etc. And of course a camera, with which you get to practice the fine art of taking lots of pictures your child will love to look at later, and will of course want copies for their friends, but expect you to be invisible while in the act of taking them.

Needless to say, there is this expected parent ability to appear not to be around your teenager and their friends while actually being there to meet their every whim and desire (which often includes "donating" large sums of cash to various absolutely necessary purchases, such as yet another sweatshirt that's just the "Coolest" color).

But the best thing about your participation in your kids extra-curricular activities is the time you get to spend with, or at least around, them. You won't always feel the most welcome, but you will find out more about them than hours spent in front of the TV, because, here finally is the confession of a volleyball dad: If you can manage to be real quiet on those hours and hours traveling to and from those distant venues, when you are hauling not only your teenage athlete, but a bunch of their team mates (because, guess what? Most of their parents *aren't!*) You just might hear more about what's going on in your wonderful daughter's (or son's) life than a hundred "What's going on with your life?" conversations around the dinner table, with the resultant "Nothing" 's, could ever elicit.

Frank Goddard is a proud parent of two student athletes who happen to be daughters and who happen to play volleyball, both high school and club, in Susanville and beyond.

