

The Politically Incorrect Issue



WEEDS IN WINNEBAGOS

by Darrel Spens

It was fall and we were roping Winnebagos just outside Yuma, AZ — Dave Barry, Ken Copeland, and I. The trail was hard, but our cutting horses were spectacular. It was great sport.

Dust, saddle leather, greasy lariats, and horse sweat; the smells swirled and boiled up around us. Copeland's head, though perfect in size for television, was far too big for real life, a Word-Faith boulder jumping and jouncing on his slight shoulders as he blazed along the freeway median through the desert, rope flailing against the aluminum siding of thundering Winnebagos. Kids jeered from windows.

As Dave often said, "As I often say in my witty, funny, yet still inoffensive manner, it's high time we made public the feasibility study results re: Copeland's alleged anointing vs. depletion of natural resources: 1. Not feasible — head large; ego boundless; inadequate worldwide supply of olive oil."

We camped behind a huge boulder, split down the middle, on the west side of Sheep Mountain. The stars blazed. The campfire crackled like onion-skin pages being crumpled and ripped out of a Bible. Something out of, say, the Gospels.

Crumple here,
rip there,

piece together yonder — and lo! No Trinity!

And so, I suppose there were also wolves howling into the night. Coyotes. Whatever.

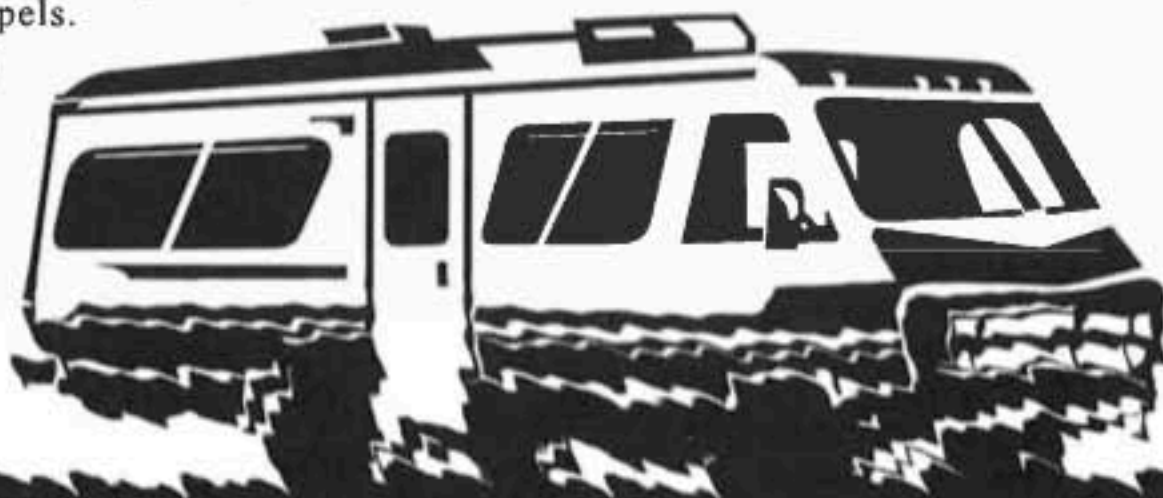
The lights of Yuma twinkled in the distance, visible through the gap in the rock. The low, shapeless hum of radial tires verified the continuing mainstream of motorhomes rolling down the interstate. Yes, the Winnebagos were running.

Dave, the man who single-handedly transformed the word "booger" into a literary device, hunkered down, wrapped in a hair shirt woven from his wife Beth's underarm hair. The calloused finger of his rope hand performed exploratory nasal surgery. His face cracked into a wide Alfred E. Newman-esque grin. The hand was thrust out. The booger was crusty, dry.

"Whoa!" exclaimed Dave. "Guys — another specimen for the Smithsonian Institute Of Things That Come From Dave's Nose."

Of course we laughed. Dave is the funniest writer in America.

Copeland, though — he looked over at me.



"That ol' boy's plumb gone loco, amen?" he said, jerking a thumb at Dave. "Why I remember remembering a time gone by when boogers weren't even somewhat talked of out in public — amen?"

"What are you saying?" I asked.

Cope's eyebrows knit together.

"I don't know," he said. "Ol' 'Dad' Hagin, he never had no sermon on boogers for me to somewhat internalize."

"You mean memorize."

"Amen? Somewhat?" Cope was suddenly at a loss. He couldn't deny the truth.

There was a dead silence for awhile. Dave horked, then exploded into laughter. A cow bellowed out of the sky like a falling star, thumping flat onto the baked ground inches from his feet. It exploded. Methane buildup. We cleaned up and turned in for the night.

"This," said Dave, "is exactly the kind of thing I write columns about. I love America."

We awoke to a blistering sun and the sight of a seriously renegade Winnebago thundering away from the mainstream, scorching the desert with its heresy. Others followed. Many ground to a halt in the deep sand, axles busted, tires flat, overheated. The motorhomes on the freeway were fine, but as the renegade Winnebago motored on, still more left solid ground to find excitement in the barren wilderness.

"I'll tell you about my high school prom later!" yelled Dave as we saddled up. Adrenalin flowed. We vaulted onto our horses and slapped leather, streaming down Sheep Mountain, bent hell for leather for the maverick.

Dust boiled out from underneath the speeding Winnebago, but we gained on it, inch by inch; foot by foot — or, for those readers in Canada, centimeter by centimeter; meter by meter. Dave and I did a flanker, one to a side. We could see the thing clearly now. Strangely, Copeland hung back, a disembodied head looming in the dust. And coughing. He tried to yell something. It may have been in tongues — I don't know. He faded from view.

The 'home gleamed whitely under the sun. Satellite dishes bristled from the roof. The initials TBN marched along the flank.

"The white whale!" yelled Dave, doing his best Captain Ahab. "Whoa — the white whale!"

His rope snaked through the air, settling neatly around the forward satellite antenna base. With a practiced flip of a switch, he activated the winch mounted on his saddle horn. Dave

Barry's All-American Super-Duper Horse-Mouthed RV Winch (Made in Japan). The Winnebago bucked.

I closed in from the left. Looking through the windshield, I could see Jan Crouch at the wheel, frosted hair bristling as she simultaneously giggled and howled



threats at us. Paul Crouch was braced in the passenger's seat. He gripped a mirror. He combed his hair.

Two feet past Crouch's hook nose, face plastered to the window like a toilet plunger, Dave was doing that thing kids do at fast-food joints — blowing against the glass so their cheeks puff out and the inside of their mouths become voluminous caverns. He was still on the horse, winched up against the 'home, six feet off the ground. Paul Crouch noticed nothing. He was oblivious.

Jan had the accelerator rammed to the floor. The engine howled. The Winnebago threw dirt at the sky. Jan's whole being radiated joy and triumph. But I smiled knowingly — Coyote Wash lay up ahead.

A quick underhand cast and my lasso looped around the tranny. The mighty machine shrieked. It lost ground. Dave swung forward, the winch came loose, and America's funniest humor columnist became airborne.

"Whooooaaaa—aiyeeeeee!" Dave ballyhooed.

"Ballyhoo!" I halloped. "Whoop-de-do!" It was a real hullabaloo.

But I had the TBN Winnebago to rights — I had it! My gloved hands hauled on the rope. The horse braced ... and then, would you believe it, a rope — a rope settled around my shoulders! In a trice, I was out of the saddle, face down, eating dust. I looked up.

"Cope!" I yelled as he sat there grinning on his mustang. "What are you — in cahoots?"

"Somewhat," he said. "Somewhat."

My poor horse, still tethered to the Winnebago, was running for its life as the 'home veered from the Wash and put on a burst of speed. Dave banked in the air. His horse glided down and Dave slashed the rope with a Bowie knife. He galloped up to us.

"Copeland," he said, "what?!"

Copeland shrugged.

Dave looked at me. "Well, buckaroo — after the white whale?"

I wiped the dust and sweat from my eyes and looked about me. I could see many an RV wreckage dotting the landscape. All the occupants had suffered great loss in following the Crouchmobile. But there they were, on foot, making their way back to the freeway and vehicular orthodoxy, perhaps stronger and wiser for the experience. I turned to Dave.

"No," I said. "No — let it go. Let the weeds grow with the wheat. One day soon the Great Mechanic will round up all the well-behaved Winnebagoes, moral motorhomes, and righteous RVs. He'll take them to the Sacred

Service Station in the sky. The rest He'll junk."

"Junk 'em," nodded Dave. "I understand — my dad was a pastor."

"I know."

"OK then." ■

