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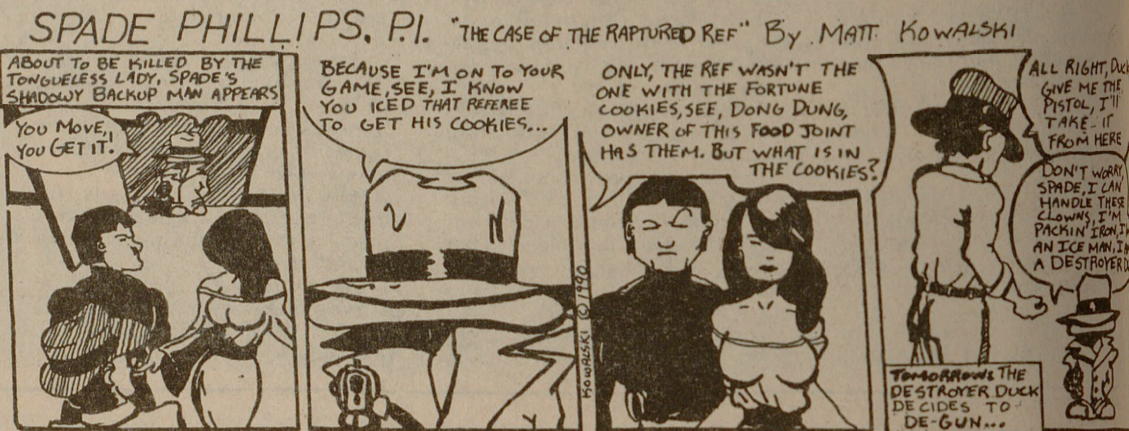
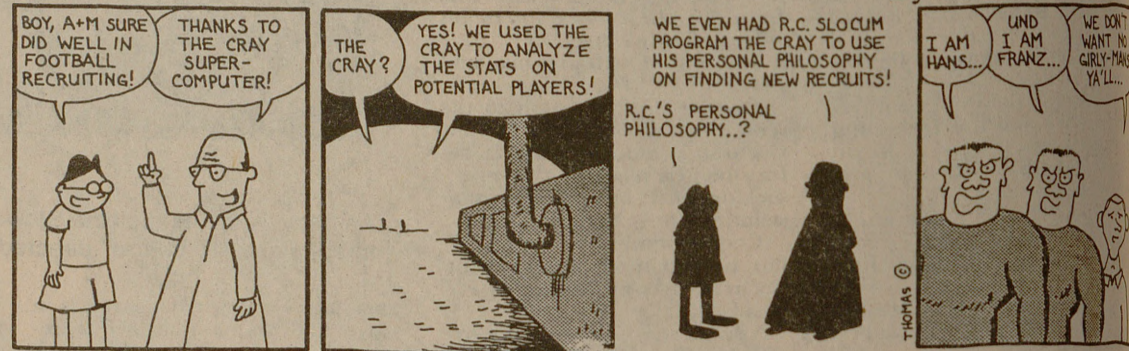
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WARD



WALDO



Cowboy poetry begins to gain acceptance in literary circles

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Cowboy poets who once practiced their art mainly in bunkhouses, bars and at family gatherings have extended their stage across America in recent years, appearing on national television and the banquet circuit. Cowboy poetry has existed as long as there have been cowboys. Several old songs began as cowboy verse and books of cowboy poems were published as early as the 19th century. But it didn't really attract a wide audience until January 1985 when Hal Cannon, former state folklorist for the state of Utah, organized with several others the Cowboy Poets Gathering in Elko, Nev., now an annual event held every January. "Cowboy poetry was a part of American folklore but it had almost no exposure," says Cannon, who has become the director of the Western Folk Life Center in Salt Lake City. "America didn't know about the poetic cowboy.

quiet circuit for years with stopovers in such places as Muleshoe, Texas, says acceptance from the general public began with that first poetry gathering in Elko. Before the poets went public, Cannon says, "the only place you really heard them in bars or cow camps. They were pretty private sessions." Cowboys and ranchers first published their poetic works as early as

replied: "He'd do to ride the river with. "I'd have you say of me. "And if I lived to fit the words. "I'd be all I should be." Waddy Mitchell, a ranch foreman near Elko who also has found national prominence as a cowboy poet, estimates participation since the gathering has increased 2,000 percent. Mitchell has appeared on several

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— Baxter Black, cowboy poet

"So we all started thinking about it. We started looking around and found that almost everyone who interprets the cowboy is an outsider. Movie makers, TV producers, journalists, artists, folklorists. "The cowboy hadn't really had a chance to tell his own story. He really didn't have a public forum." Baxter Black of Henderson, Colo., considered to be the only such poet who derives his entire income from rhyme, says audiences find Western poetry enchanting because of the cowboy's independent image. "He has a physical job," Black says. "He's outdoors. He's placing himself against the elements with the mythical Code of the West to guide him. When the chips are down, this is the person you want to stand beside you." Black, who has traveled the ban-

1880, he says, but, "It just never got out to the public." The public exposure has brought out "several hundred" other cowboy poets, some better than others. "The quality ranges from bad to great," Cannon says. Buck Ramsey of Amarillo, Texas, one of the newcomers to the cowboy poet circle, is considered by Cannon to be one of the best. "When I hear Buck Ramsey recite his poetry, I'm much more moved than when I see someone throw his hat all around the stage," Cannon says. Performance, which includes gestures, facial expressions and tone of voice, sometimes overshadows the content at cowboy poetry readings. Ramsey's verse is straightforward with no histrionics. Asked for a couplet about a cowboy poet, Ramsey

television specials and toured recently with country singer Mike Martin Murphy, to places like Martha's Vineyard, Mass., and Miami. Black, who acts as his own business manager and limits his appearances of the banquet circuit to once a year, has been a guest on Johnny Carson show twice. Other poets have begun to fill as headliners at dinners, banquets and conventions throughout the West. Cannon is preparing an anthology of cowboy poetry that will include some of Ramsey's work. Ramsey, injured in a bronchitis accident on a Texas Panhandle ranch in 1963, has written poetry for Southwestern publications for years. He believes that cowboy poets are far better-educated literate than most people realize

Revelers fancy strange music

OLIVE HILL, Ky. (AP) — This year's winner of the 10th annual Strange Music Festival was a hosaphone. Runner-up honors went to a harp that came from from the broad side of a barn. Third place went to the humongaphonium. The festival began in 1980 at Carter Caves State Resort Park and was intended to celebrate the jaw harp. "But we decided that was too limited, so the thing just started getting a whole lot bigger," said festival co-founder Dick Albin, a Nashville, Tenn., humorist. Albin said the festival has attracted musicians from Japan, Israel, Canada and West Virginia. "This brings out latent musical abilities," said John P. Tierney, park naturalist and the other co-founder. More than 100 people squeezed into the meeting room at the park lodge to watch six musicians demonstrate their creations. Prizes went to the instruments that were the most unusual and the best able to play a recognizable tune. Dick Mansfield, a folk musician from Mansfield, Ohio, won with what he called a hosaphone. He took the mouthpiece from a trumpet and stuck it into a hose from his mother's washing machine. Twirling one end

of the hose, he played "Taps." "I came up with this 30 years ago but never had a place to play it," Mansfield said. Robert Toothman of South Point, Ohio, came in second with his board harp, a 5-foot-4 piece of lumber from the side of an old barn that he fitted with frets and banjo strings. Third-place went to J.C. Ramsey of Olive Hill, a former elementary school principal who said he spent a year developing his entry, which he called a gigantic, compressed-air, PVC humongaphonium. It was a long piece of plastic pipe with a slide in one end and an air compressor on the other. With the help of two assistants, he played "The Ol' Gray Mare." Tierney recalled some previous entries: "This couple had a baby, and they figured out that if they patted him, he'd gurgle, so they played that." Another contestant tied a stick to a dog's wagging tail so the animal could play the drums. "Visually it was strange," Tierney said, "but musically, it was lacking something."

Magic

(Continued from page 5) owner Antonio Heleno takes pride in ordinary looking red ceramic bowls of water. Their special properties lie protected in blessed water, he explains, and during a week-long special they're \$3 per rock. In the shop next door, animals sold for sacrificial rituals, a controversial but widely tolerated practice. "It's absolutely barbaric," Maureen Roth, a member of World Society for the Protection of Animals in Rio. "But who complains? Sacrifice is accepted everywhere here, from the president of the country on down." Last July, Rio councilman Wladimir Leite Passos called for a law prohibiting animal sacrifice. Some 280 leaders gathered on the steps of the hall and threatened to cast a vote over each councilman. The bill was withdrawn. Professional magicians and magical powers don't come packaged. "You can't just buy magical powers," says Coelho, who advises a number of congressmen on the properties of magic. "It must be earned through ritual."