

# Goat Bulletin



Volume 11 - Big Bend People & Goats, Inc. - April 2007 - Issue Number 1

## Big Bend People & Goats in International Study

Big Bend People & Goats has cooperated in a research project that studies the resistance to industrial development through three historic periods: (1) high industrialization from the late 1880s to 1920, (2) industrial corporations negotiating with labor while government has a key role in codifying legal rights -- 1920 to 1940 --, and (3) a globalization period, which begins after 1940 and continues into the present. The industrial corporations are now withdrawing from the negotiation, labor is losing its former power and the government role is diminishing, no longer able to impact on issues arising between labor and the corporate establishment. During the first period resistance was often violent -- a time

when Marxism was applied to the relationship between workers and the corporate side of this conflict. During the second stage the resistance became more moderate as labor became part of the establishment -- participants within a pact of elitists, including those from government. During the globalization period labor lost its place in the pact and government no longer did much about the resistance issues. Those in industry insist that they cannot afford the expense of what was negotiated during the second period. If threatened by a strike, they can move the industry out of the country. The hog industry in Texas is sited to illustrate this process. What all of this seems to suggest is that elitists generally will need to participate

on public issues not in elitist roles but in grassroots positions. For public participation increasingly they will find themselves restricted to their grassroots roles. (They will have to participate as members of the Sierra Club do - as citizens - but all will need to connect with the grassroots!)

The study also traces these historic developments and resistances in a Mexican agricultural region. Both Mexican and Texas scholars did the project.

Big Bend People & Goats is of interest to the researchers because of resistance the goat raisers have toward bureaucratic controls of industry that replace government.

A report on the project was made

*Continued on Page 3*

## What do you see?

In experimental breeding, for example for a given region, the quality of the animal rather than the breed is likely to become the major concern. (Although in Big Bend People & Goats some producers still speak mainly of crossing established goat breeds, Alfonso Ramos crosses Spanish and Boer looking for special contributions Spanish goats might make in meat goat breeding programs and Reverend Wolf crosses Alpine dairy and Boer in recent breeding.) [BBPG started its breeding program including goats from several established breeds but did not include the Spanish goat.] A collective effort in BBPG guided by quality rather than breeds has been going on for several years. Being able to identify characteristics of quality becomes very important. Some traits can be associated with previous bucks or does used in breeding. For example, can one see any of Peachie, one of the earlier bucks in the program? Something that does not show up in appearance but is of fundamental importance is the genetic strength of the animals. This must be learned from past performance of the animals.

The goat shown below is picked at random and will be identified by herd at the end of this issue of the Bulletin.



# How Many Goats Do You Have?

One of the most frequently asked questions must be, "How many goats do you have?" And people who ask it undoubtedly have no idea what mental processes this seemingly innocent and simple question stirs in the mind of an informed goat raiser.

What is the questioner asking and should the response be friendly or defensive? What is the questioner really asking? Is it: no one should have a goat, how many do you have? Or is it: If you have more than five, will you give me one? Or is it that the questioner knows that goats are social animals and wants to know if you have two or more? Or is it that the questioner is a trader and is about to ask the next question: How much do you want for these goats? Or the questioner may value the higher numbers for status or money reasons: Do you have enough goats for a higher rank for a family or in an agricultural area? Or is it a question about starting a goat herd? Where can one buy fifty goats to

start a goat herd? (They will not want to be informed that is not the way to start a goat herd.)

Worst of all possibilities might be a question raised in the interest of placing chips on all livestock. The bets would be placed to seize even more control of the industry for large corporations and perhaps launch a gigantic fundraising program paid for by producers to reward industry professionals.

If you lose your patience you may be tempted to give an unfriendly answer: I know my goats so I do not have to count them! But remember to count those precious animals if you put them in the barn at night to protect them from predators. One may want to count them occasionally even with very good guard animals on watch.

Now some advice: Every time one hears the question (How many goats do you have?) look for potential goat raisers for some may be found. This question can be a first step toward becoming a

goat raiser, leading to questions about building shelters and setting up facilities, and learning where the best quality in livestock is available. The big steps forward come from relationships people have with the animals and with each other. In a band of goat raisers, as in many other groups, people can find what Jim Corbett in his book *Goatwalking* calls communion on the planet and have their social lives fulfilled. For these people say, "I am glad you asked that question!"

A "roadside note" on editing for a band of goat raisers who attempt to bring the elite and the grassroots together (as Big Bend People & Goats): Do not select an over-professional content or you get little that promotes camaraderie. Most if not all reports would be designed to establish superior statuses and to present favorable "news" as if that is the total reality for the group.

## Whose idea was it to have goats?

Wanting to have goats may be a passionate desire of one or more members of a family. Sometimes it is a commitment of the entire family. Everyone has the idea. And the relationship with the animals



stands out. Included are symbiotic relationships in which the animals and people need each other and beyond that to a sanctuary that eliminates alienation on the planet.

Chickens and ducks given nutritious feed produce eggs for human food. And if there is a rooster there will be more chickens. Both ducks and chickens find roosts for safe haven when nighttime darkness comes. Other things to look for under such circumstances: look for a garden, construction of facilities by the people, guard animals, and activity centers. Above all look for credibility (much in life is working) and authenticity (daily realities that bring unity need not be concealed).

One of the worst patterns might be for only one of the principal actors in the family to "get the idea" and after assembling the goats then leave the scene and the goats behind to be cared for by those who don't like goats. Maybe they only want to make money from the livestock. Both people and the animals are losers. Symbiotic and sanctuary relations are thwarted. Even this might change, however, if the people discover how wonderful those animals are.

## Goat Bulletin



A publication of Big Bend People & Goats, Inc.

Contact the Editor: George K. Floro, P.O. Box 1495, Alpine, TX 79831; phone/fax (432) 837-2930; e-mail [gkfloro@sulross.edu/](mailto:gkfloro@sulross.edu/).

Contact President of BBPG: Larry Sheffield, HCR 74, Box 36, Fort Davis, TX 78734; telephone (432) 426-3403.

# Introducing: Richard Quinney, Jeff Schmidt, and Monte Bute

Richard Quinney, a criminologist with a lifelong background in rural Wisconsin, has sent a copy of his most recent book entitled Tales from the Middle Border. He does not strip out the stories from his best writing. In his sociological books he has been remarkable for his concept of suffering in defining crime and of witnessing what is affirmable in collective life. However, much of his life work has been in a critical mode. Now retired from work as a professor he and his brother have converted the Quinney dairy farm in southeastern Wisconsin into an experiment in sustainable agriculture.

If goat raisers want to connect with a courageous person in professional circles they might meet (or get to know)

Jeff Schmidt. Schmidt collects much information from students and has an impressive foundation for social analysis in the following book:

Schmidt, Jeff 2000 Disciplined Minds: A Critical Look at Salaried Professionals and the Soul-Battering System that Shapes their Lives. Lanham, Boulder, New York, Oxford: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc.

Jeff Schmidt is a physicist who for nineteen years was a staff editor for the professional journal for physicists. He was fired after he published the book on Disciplined Minds exposing the conditioning of physicists in higher education programs to adopt the ideological commitments of future employers and benefactors.

Recent reports indicate that his defense supported from many parts of the world has had a victory in the legal case usually described in terms of freedom of expression. And a counter suit against him for a half million dollars has been dropped.

Now meet a hell raiser among the elite: Monte Bute, a sociologist from Minnesota who knows what it means for elitists to connect with the people. Attached is a selection from a presentation he gave before the Minnesota legislature. He knows about us and he is likely to tell others! (The selection comes from a feature published by the Pioneer Press newspaper and posted Feb. 27, 2007.)

## A beneficiary of Minnesota's commitment to higher ed argues for renewing it

*By Monte Bute*

I've given hundreds of talks over the past 35 years but none as personally satisfying as the commencement address I gave recently at the Minnesota Correctional Facility in Red Wing.

As I stood before that assembly, I turned to the 10 members of the graduating class and shared my secret: Nearly 44 years ago, I had received my high school diploma there, behind what Bob Dylan once called the "Walls of Red Wing."

If anyone in 1963 had predicted that I would one day be testifying before a Minnesota House committee as a professor at a state university, my former teachers, classmates and fellow citizens of Jackson, Minn., would have suggested that he was a few cards short of a deck.

So how did this improbable chain of events come to pass? Put simply, I had access to high quality and reasonably priced public education.

In the 1960s, I attended two different state junior colleges and a land grant university. My tuition ranged from the semester equivalent of \$7.50 to \$10.25 per credit hour. Those low rates, coupled with a series of part-time jobs, allowed

me to finish my undergraduate education with debt of less than \$1,000.

I share this personal story to put before you both a human face and a sense of history. The \$7.50 per credit hour I paid in 1963 at Austin Junior College and again in 1965 at Metropolitan State Junior College have now spiraled to more than \$130 and \$141. The \$10.25 I paid in 1967 at the University of Minnesota has now soared to \$275.

Inflation has played a role in this mind-boggling rise in tuition. However, inflation is little more than an accessory to this crime. The crime scene is the state Capitol. The victims include not only college students but the state's quality of life.

In the early 1980s, the state's share of public higher education was 80 percent, with students picking up the other 20 percent. For the next two decades, the state share was roughly two-thirds of the cost. Since 2002, public college students and their families have been swamped by a tuition tsunami: the state's commitment to sharing college costs has shrunk to 50 percent.

Students at the state universities

are far more likely to be from moderate or low-income families who struggle to make ends meet. These students are as intelligent and capable as their counterparts at private colleges or the University of Minnesota. However, our students routinely confront difficult life circumstances.

They work far too many hours, usually at low wages, face conflicting family obligations, take more credits than they can handle and, given the state's tuition policy, end up with debt that seems as insurmountable as that of the Ford Motor Co.

In Minnesota, quality education should not be limited to the well-to-do.

Given the competing demands of high tuition, work, family and school, our students are probably doing as well as could be expected. Nevertheless, these choices may well be limiting their future opportunities. If they choose to short-change their studies, will they achieve the level of proficiency that savvy employers require?

Peter D. Hart Research Associates recently conducted a nationwide study of more than 300 employers, companies where 25 percent or more of their new