"After this, refolding the maps in my car's glove compartment should be a snap!"

Letters to the editor

Tuesday, December 26, 2006 Edition "Sun Advocate"

Nothing to do with Lila Canyon

Editor:

While Mr. Bob Murray, president and chief executive officer of Murray Energy Corporation, would like to portray the Utah Division of Oil, Gas and Mining as the "bad guy" in recent layoffs of personnel at the Tower, West Ridge and Crandall Canyon mines, his recent statement to the *Sun Advocate* (Dec. 19, 2006) could not be further from the truth.

UtahAmerican Energy Inc.'s (UEI) press release blames the layoffs on increasing levels of methane gas at the Tower Mine. Yet, Murray claims, "We would not have to lay these people off if we could have gotten our permits from the Department (sic) of Oil, Gas and Mining for the Lila Canyon." Murray is referring to a permit request currently with the Division of Oil, Gas and Mining to open new facilities at that location.

The operating conditions at Tower Mine and the decision by UEI to layoff employees are independent of this division's processing of a coal mining application for Lila Canyon. Until the recent purchase of Andalex holdings by Mr. Murray, there was no previous business-related tie between the Tower Mine and the Lila Canyon coal mine application.

It is the mission of the division to facilitate development of Utah's natural resources in an environmentally responsible manner. The fact of the matter is UtahAmerican Energy has been slow to provide this division with information related to the Lila Canyon permit application, and only recently (Dec. 1) submitted documents in an attempt to address all of the technical deficiencies raised by the division in its review of that application.

To add insult to injury, at the request of UEI, staff members at the division did set aside work earlier this fall on the Lila Canyon permit to rush approval for projects to help alleviate the methane gas problem at the Tower Mine, and those approvals were issued several weeks ago.

We regret the recently announced layoffs, and we have great sympathy for the welfare of the laid off miners and their families, but sole responsibility for this business decision lies squarely at the feet of UEI.

John Baza
Director
DOGM

Withdrawal proposal

Editor:

Here is an open letter to the President of the United States.

If you are looking for an exit in Iraq, this one in your words would work.

Offer to withdraw your troops if the terrorists would promise there would be no religious connotations connected to it and that there would be no executions connected to it.

George Wheeler
Price

(Continued on page 5A)

Letters to the editor should focus on public issues rather than private personalities or entities. All submissions must be verified prior to publication. The paper reserves the right to edit letters not only to satisfy space constraints, but potential liability concerns. All letters must have a phone number attached for verification and must be signed by the author of the letter. All letters are published in the printed edition and the online edition, being part of the public domain.

By TOM MCCOURT
Contributing writer

Once upon a time, in a forest far, far away, lived an ugly little Christmas tree. He was so ugly the cows used him for a scratching post. He was so ugly the mean little squirrels spit nutshells at him. He was so ugly the pigeons used him for target practice.

Then one day a dumb little kid came into the forest with a dull little saw to get a Christmas tree for Christmas. The dumb little kid stumbled from tree to tree searching for just the right one. All of the pretty trees held their breath and waited to see which one of them the dumb little kid would pick. How surprised they were when the dumb little kid picked the ugly little Christmas tree.

Back at the ranch, the dumb little kid's mother couldn't believe that he had picked that ugly tree. She tried to get him to put the ugly little tree in the chicken coop so the chickens could have Christmas too, but the dumb little kid kicked and screamed until his mother let him bring it in the house.

The dumb little kid decorated the ugly little Christmas tree with old ribbons, sticky popcorn balls, and used tin foil. When he had finished his decorating, the ugly little tree looked like a sticky, tin foil covered broom handle with a couple of scraggy limbs.

The dumb little kid's father had already decorated a beautiful tree in the parlor, and so the dumb little kid's mother let him put the ugly little tree in the broom closet behind the kitchen door. From a crack behind the door, the ugly little tree could see the beautiful tree in the parlor surrounded by tons of lovely gifts. The ugly little tree stood sad and all alone in the darkness of the closet with only a mop bucket and a rusty mousetrap at his feet.

And then it was Christmas Eve and the dumb little kid's mother fed him chicken noodle soup and put him to bed. The dumb little kid's parents watched the late night news with eggnog and fruitcake, and then they too went to bed. It grew very dark in the dumb little kid's house, and very quiet.

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