

Trivia and humor mix in 'Actual Facts'



Courtesy of Main Street Press

By Trevor McArthur
Staff Reporter

"Moses May Have Been an Apache and Other Actual Facts," Cully Abrell and John Thompson (Main Street Press)

After the age of 30, the human brain begins to shrink, according to the Reader's Digest "Book of Facts." It is because of this or some other lame excuse that Cully Abrell

and John Thompson have compiled and written their new book "Moses May Have Been an Apache — and Other Actual Facts."

The book's purpose is to give the reader necessary information to speak with other truly educated people as a pseudo-intellectual, even if you are barely literate, to gain an edge in trivia games or to fill up the brain with things it can afford to lose. Because of this, you can keep important bits like "pants first, then shoes" well into your 80s.

The book's purpose is to give the reader necessary information to speak with other truly educated people as a pseudo-intellectual, even if you are barely literate.

James "Cully" Abrell has compiled an interesting and diverse list of jobs he had until his retirement to his farm in Peck, Kan., to which he holds an open invitation to Ronald Reagan when he loses his latest job. Included in Abrell's list of former employment are radio announcer, actor, telephone solicitor, work as a Burns Detective and as a carnival worker, as well as 19 years as the

head of the drama department of the Friends University of Wichita (Kansas). Today he still does radio and television commercials, though he mostly "wallows in the joys of retirement."

John Thompson of Scottsbluff received his bachelor's degree in art from Friends University in Wichita, where he first met faculty member Abrell. He at one time worked at Chadron radio station KCSR, where he worked his way up from announcer to news director. But he claims to have not been steadily employed since college, which he says has been a source of fun and recreation in itself. He also extends an invitation to the Reagans, but only if they don't bring their un-White-House-trained dog. He currently resides on Abrell's farm in Peck and does free-lance art (he drew all the book's illustrations) and mechanical tinkering.

"Actual Facts," the book they compiled at their suburban Peck think-tank, is an invaluable addition to our modern, empty lives and the great store of trivial information that society in general is based upon.

Well, maybe they made it all up, but it's a great spoof of Ripley's "Believe It Or Not" and other books of the kind, such as the new one by Reader's Digest.

Many of the shards of "truth" are just great one-liners, often of an obvious nature. For example:

"Most (U.S.) states fit together so closely that almost no space is

wasted."

Or against all logic:
"There have been four partially successful attempts to relocate Yellowstone National Park."

Some go into a darker humor like that explored by Gary Larson's "The Far Side":

"So-called 'lap dogs' were bred to be eaten."

As well as Larson's bend towards reinventing history or making in-jokes for the various sciences:

'The Rosetta Stone was found in 1412 1581 and 1617, but they kept throwing it back.'

—Moses May Have Been an Apache and Other Actual Facts

"Notorious gadabout William Techumseh Sherman was, in addition to everything else, extremely careless with campfires."

"The Rosetta Stone was found in 1412, 1581, 1586 and 1617, but they kept throwing it back."

The temptation to list every line from the book is strong, but that would ruin your reading it.

Also like Larson's "Far Side," there are several recurring themes, such as cheese, especially cottage; Grosvenor, Utah, sister city of Grosvenor, Utah, and father city of suburb Bad Boot; Field Marshal Hernando Civet (shoe size 7B); and U.S. presidents, including probably the least-appreciated one, Leland Piatt (one of the hardest people to research since only the fact that he served as president, and nothing else, was ever written about him). Unfortunately, they took out the section on the facts of porpoise life at the request of Prince Philip, but otherwise the book touches on every subject you wanted to know about.

In a phone interview, Abrell said the book took about 10 or 12 years to write. They are writing more, as Thompson says he has just discovered a correlation between the unified forces theory of the universe and 3-and-1 oil, but they say they probably couldn't come up with enough good bits for daily newspaper syndication. However, weekly printing, such as in some student newspapers, is under consideration.

The book costs just under \$7 (or just under \$9 for our readers at UNL's Canadian campus), which incidentally is just a little less than a third of what was originally paid for Manhattan Island. However, "Actual Facts" is a little easier to carry to parties and store on a bookshelf, thus making it a much better value.

CORN XVIII WOODSTOCK

E.T.C.



the SONS

WOODS

FRIDAY, APRIL 22, at 12:30 East Campus Mall Fields

No Glass Bottles Please

Win A Free AT&T Phone (plus other prizes to be given away)



AT&T

The right choice.

Dances & Cornstock

Concerts & Coffeehouse

House of Lettering

TOGOS

KFRX

WHY go to those small hole-in-the-wall bars?

Thursdays the BIG PARTY is at

MINGLES 9TH & P

TROPICAL THURSDAY & ROCK NIGHT

50¢ Draws 75¢ Mixed Drinks

NO COVER ALL NIGHT

Hawaiian Dress (shorts, etc.)

Beer Relay at 11 p.m.

POOL TABLES * VIDEO GAMES * DANCING * MUSIC
VIDEOS * SPORTS BAR UPSTAIRS * ALL ROCK MUSIC



EVER CRAVE A COPY AT 3 AM?

Hungry for a copy shop that caters to your odd hours? Kinko's is the place. With a full range of services and a courteous, helpful staff, we're there when you need us.

kinko's® Open 24 hours.

48th & Vine 1229 "R" St.