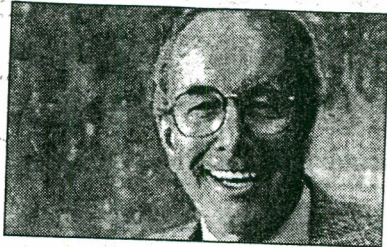


**LARRY
CALLOWAY***Of the Journal*

Calif. Cruise Gas-Powered

SAGUARO WAR: It's a tough, lonely job fighting for environmentally correct clip art. Go back where ya come from, giant saguaro cactus!

Your ever-vigilant columnist carries on the saguaro war against growing odds. I am sad to report that the well-armed Arizona intruder is now computerized!

Yes, the two latest graphic sightings of the giant Sonoran Desert cactuses within our non-Sonoran boundaries were transplanted from computer programs.

The City of Rio Rancho, which has been cited here once already for using saguaros on Christmas street decorations, put a saguaro on its invitation to three legislative events in late August. The two restaurant lunches, Aug. 28 and 29, and the country club reception and dinner, Aug. 28, were for the Legislature's traveling Economic Development, Science and Technology Committee. (The New Mexico Legislature is living proof that there is indeed such a thing as a free lunch ... and dinner!)

An almost identical piece of art decorates a certificate being dispersed in our saguaro-free environment by the University of New Mexico. Shame! The picture is on the UNM General Library certificate for those who complete various library instruction sessions — involving computers, of course.

The source of this non-native deco-transplant was revealed by Kjersten Paschall, a special projects assistant with the city of Rio Rancho. Kjersten confessed that she was the one who composed the legislative invitations, on her computer.

"What's wrong?" she asked with sweet innocence when I confronted her with her indictment on one count of third-degree misapplication of saguaros. "I don't know a thing about gardening. Everything I plant dies."

I let her off with a warning, considering that three state senators (Roman Maes, Pauline Eisenstadt and Joseph Carraro) and Mayor Thomas Swisstack all allowed themselves to be promoted with their names around the cactus art on the Rio Rancho invitation. Further, I thought, who can be expected to tell New Mexico from Arizona if UNM can't?

"Ma'am," I said to Kjersten, "The saguaro does not grow in New Mexico."

"Oh!" she said, sounding shocked and repentant. "It was the only Southwest icon I had in my Word Perfect."