

DATE: June 1, 1989

FROM: The Garbage Czar, with love (and apologies to the “real” Uncle Willy)

TO: Grasshopper crews, present and future

The garbage generated by the Grasshopper field schools prompted endless debate. Here was the opportunity for archaeologists—the high priests and priestesses of behavioral offal—to demonstrate our command of refuse, to classify and dispose of it with utmost efficiency and elegance. We failed: until 1985 everything was burned (well, by god, we tried) in a huge pit. In that fateful year, due as much to problems with stench, bears, and other hazards as to concerns with long-term environmental impacts, Jeff Reid led the staff in formalizing a new system for the sequestration and disposition of all waste not deposited in the outhouses. All garbage was to be separated into one of four categories and treated accordingly: *Burnables*, *Recycleables* (aluminum cans), *Explosives* (batteries and pressurized cans), and the enigmatic catch-all, *Slop* that our pre-Ptolemaic technology made it impossible for us to reduce or handle effectively. Like so many Modernist schemes, this new system, straightforward on its face, created substantial chaos and frustration, requiring the creation of a new, nearly full-time position in the field school organizational chart, Garbage Czar. John Welch filled this role until his retirement in 1989, leaving the following missive to guide and console succeeding generations of Grasshopper refuse wrestlers.

THE UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA
ARCHAEOLOGICAL FIELD SCHOOL



• GRASSHOPPER, FORT APACHE INDIAN RESERVATION
CIBECUE, ARIZONA 85901

From the Garbage Czar, With Love (and apologies to the "real" Uncle Willy)

*Let me not to the burning of true refuse admit impediments.
Slop is not slop which burns when it fire finds,
Or explodes as a deadly elastic when put to the torch.
Oh no! Slop is an increasingly volatile goo that laughs in the face of incineration.
Slop's an ever-changing insidious brew
providing infinite chances for spontaneous generation.
It's smelly eggplants, Thursday's oatmeal,
and the creamy wheat of yore.
It's bottles, tin cans, scuzzy cantaloupes,
and the meaty organs and gore.
Slop's fraught with oozy gruel.
Tho' papers, plastics, and woods
within its moldering Hefty bags pool.
Slop moves easily between chemical states,
slipping among solid, liquid and gas at astounding rates.
Transmutating wildly with brief hours and weeks,
being assisted by maggots munching the peelings of
onions, garlic eek leeks.
Yes, Slop is the matter I can't store or burn.
It gets dumped in Cibecue, giving the horsies a turn.
So please remember, and keep to a minimum,
the inclusion with Slop of Burnables, Explodables, and Aluminium.
Save those zillion brew cans for smushing with your hangover in full bloom.
Shake out all the juices and butts;
Put them in the bin at the corner of the Grasshopper Saloon.
In conclusion I beg of you all to well hear
that a stray battery or aerosol can in the Burnables may blow off my ear.
Thus I urge you to tuck these away from my precious head, in the fifty-five gallon
drums behind the gas shed.
If any should have queries regarding this refuse confusion, bring them to me, for there
is no illusion.
To your questions, complaints, and notions I may listen, but it's more likely I'll dis-
patch you on a Slop-burning mission.
I know full-well this is rude, quite impolite, totally crude, but I'm the one to say it,
Your Way Heinous Garbage Dude!*