

## BUYER'S REMORSE IN COWBOY AND INDIAN COUNTRY

by Fred Hobbs

Almost all of us have made a bad decision or two in our lives. Some people, though, have chalked up an amazing total of unfortunate or even stupid moves. They have wound up in troubling, life altering situations such as spending hard time in the slammer, confronting hopelessly deep debt, or becoming trapped in an unhappy marriage. Safe to say, those poor souls have all experienced profound regrets.

More common and far less dramatic poor choices are made every day by hapless participants in the arena of commerce and the world of work. As a result, they are inevitably stricken by various degrees of "buyer's remorse." Maybe by purchase of a used car touted by the salesman as a "peach" which turned out to be more of a citrus variety, a real "lemon." Or making an investment in a group searching for a lost gold mine in New Mexico. (Actually, I was offered such an opportunity and wisely turned it down. No gold located there, so far!)

Not so wise, however, was my decision regarding the deal proposed to me by an old college buddy: leave my job in Boulder and go to work at a small radio station in an even smaller town, Thermopolis, Wyoming. "You'll be able to buy into a growing company that will soon own a string of small market radio stations all over the country," he promised. "We're negotiating now for a station in California and you could be in on the ground floor there." The idea sounded plausible to me as this young unattached single guy looking for the next move up. "You don't need to invest any money now," my friend promised. "Just come up and work on the air at the Wyoming station until we get things rolling." That was a little more reassuring, so I figured "what I have got to lose" and bought into the idea.

The "buyer's remorse" began almost instantly. First of all, I discovered I was a "city boy" or at least a "metro-area boy." Though it boasted two great swimming pools fed from the natural hot springs in the area, tiny Thermopolis was not beautiful Boulder. The nearest "big" towns were Casper, 135 miles away or Billings, Montana, a little larger, but some 200 miles distant. Right away, I missed Denver's city attractions. In Thermopolis, in addition to a local movie house and the VFW Club, some "entertainment" was available at a local watering hole where "bar-stool cowboys" often argued and sometimes scuffled with real Indians from the nearby Wind River Shoshone Reservation.

A much more promising attraction for me was "Jetta." Jetta, the receptionist for the office of the only two doctors in Thermopolis, was a beautiful girl with dark eyes and a nice figure. She was also a listener to my radio show and a frequent caller to the station, often requesting Sinatra songs. We met and started dating. We shared our dislike for small town life. (She had lived in San Francisco and Seattle.) But, little by little, it became apparent that for those mysterious reasons that swirl around romantic entanglements, we just weren't meant for each other. By the time we both realized that fact we had foolishly become engaged, but mercifully never got married. Jetta returned the ring. We parted friends, but both expressed a kind of "ex-lovers remorse."

At the radio station, all was going down hill. I never was offered a raise and no mention of a California deal was being made. And, then, one Friday afternoon, the station owner handed me my weekly paycheck saying: "I'd appreciate it if you waited until Monday afternoon to cash it."

That was it! The station going broke, a busted romance, living in a place that just wasn't a good fit.

Back to the Denver scene, suffering from a big dose of "buyer's remorse."