

Kerrville makes a good stopover between Mertzon and the Coast. The short drive trims off a hundred and sixty miles from the close to four hundred miles to the Gulf.

Also, the city attracts lots of retired folks. The clerks naturally talk loud to anyone showing the slightest wrinkled countenance. Around town, my hearing aids only need to be turned up to the setting where I can hear whether the car starts.

At a book store this morning, for instance, the owner's voice echoed in spite of the muffled effect of rows of paper goods absorbing the sound. She is a plenty savvy ol' sister, the owner. She deals with so many of the Great Depression generation, she knows to keep the free penny box back close to the cash register, or one of my crowd will be trying to make up a dime in coppers.

Combinations of reasons favor the old inn of choice for a place to stay. Small things like the free postcards on the desk that a Swiss innkeeper ordered from Germany anon ago. Big things like a virtual oak garden around a big oval swimming pool.

I don't swim or garden, but I can stock up on postcards. When the Swiss lady ran the place, she allowed

one card per visit. You may remember her; she's the one who refused to serve rare beef because of the mad cow epidemic. Evidence showed she sure wasn't infected by the mad cow disease after she nabbed the Sheep and Goat Herders' convention every July with a few specials on lamb chops. (Wonder what happened to the doctor who predicted mad cow disease was going to wipe out the British Isles? Do know his ranting took a deep toll on Canadian herders' pocketbooks.)

After she sold, a different feel accompanied every new owner. Breakfast was served at the same table under a Swiss cuckoo from the other inn, yet the breakfast bar became a wilted bar and the room joined in an aura of emptiness.

On the last stay, the ripe bananas and the overdone oatmeal showed the same consistency. A very troubled gentleman in a dark suit kept darting through the breakfast room to a back office. I had already bribed the waitress with a two dollar bill, so her attention level was extra high underneath the cuckoo clock.

The evening before, at check in, the clerk offered the manager's special of 79 bucks plus tax. If this was the same guy in the dark suit, I traded too easy.

Hard times stuck out all over.

In my room, a sign stated that the rack rate at "\$179 double occupancy," is bound to have gone way back. No telling how far a hundred seventy nine dollars cash would go on a down payment for the whole joint now.

The Swiss lady launched, or re-launched, the place. Rumors claimed she not only moved her Swiss clocks from the Interstate location, but brought along the nails and wire to re-hang them. It escapes memory who owned the inn before her.

The reason the clocks keep coming up is that striking clocks, especially cuckoo clocks, are mighty important to writers. If a scribe eats breakfast underneath a cuckoo clock's warbles and still can't write poetry or music, he or she better stay in their normal genre.

Please take a look at the possibility of the setting. First, vaguely comes to mind a title for a movie or book named "Breakfast at Tiffany's." Would you read ...? I can answer that, I think. No, you wouldn't read a poem or play (except in a doctor's waiting room) titled "Breakfast Under a Cuckoo Clock."

One way to be sure to be read is to write an article like this with unfavorable remarks. Breakfast lasted through two cups of coffee and the front page of the San

Antonio paper without catching the eye of the distraught manager.

But say this is printed, and a subscriber in Kerr County knows the manager. He is going to beat it over to the inn to blurt: "Goshamighty, you need to read this article about your hotel. You are in it! Hah, har, hah, hah."

Writers have no defense. We can't say outlandish things like we only write the truth. The truth is what hurts in this report.

I thought about describing the banana's black, mushy peel, saved to show the manager in case he did stop by my table, but that didn't seem fair. Kerrville might have been out of fresh fruit that week. All those retirement homes around town take a lot of banana stalks to fill the cupboards.

Also, bananas are grown a long ways from Central Texas. By the time this goes to press, however, I will be out of reach, too.