

DECEMBER 1, 1977

Lights dimmed on the stage of the college theater. Hidden from view, the orchestra played "The Impossible Dream" from Cervante's Con Quixote. Dressed in the barest essentials of stage armor, the knight and his faithful attendant started the play of dreams and dreamer.

A hundred people, I was told, waited outside for a chance at reservation cancellations. I was not told why 100 people would wait in the chill of a winter evening. Were they hoping that 100 seats would be vacated by a fast striking fever or a swift moving chill that would send us on litters to the emergency rooms? Perhaps people hate lines because they distrust the rewards. I am not a line expert. Look in the paper back display at the drugstore. Some doctor has probably written a book on the subject.

"I am Don Quixote de La Mancha" he sang. That's nothing. I am Monte Noelke for Mertzon, the member of a whole industry of dreamers from a land much larger than the dry plains of Spain. I belong to a group that not only fights windmills but owns windmills. A class that labors and slaves to pump water for beasts that made the last big profit when the trail drives to Kansas closed and the State of Texas no longer harbored wild unbranded cattle.

You posturing, mythical knight of a talented Spaniard's pen are a mere brush outside of reality. So you see innocence in a bawn so commonplace that the runs in her stockings go crosswise to those of silk! By demanding the membership card from the cattleman's association, I can produce throngs of men driven by visions that defy the fantasy of stage or film. You thought an inn was a castle. Great Scott, man, we think that next year will relieve the agonies and disappointments of five decades.

Ah, the distraction of a good play. Close to the game of our lives, yet several centuries old. To live the impossible dream is our right. For us, Don Quixote can't be far away.