

## Chupacabra in Clark Park

When I first moved to Ye Olde UC Village, the neighborhood was infested with chupacabra, kappas, and Yowies. At that time the Bowl in Clark Park had not yet been drained, and children were warned by their parents that if they misbehaved they would be thrown into the Bowl at midnight and devoured by bunyips.

At that time I was hoping to make a living by raising sheep and goats in my extensive, lightly forested and weed-grown backyard. After weeks of clearing away the brush, and carting to the dump tons of used condoms, crack cocaine containers, and soggy volumes of H.P. Lovecraft which the previous tenants had deposited, I imported my first herd of horned Merino sheep from Australia. My real estate agent, who was also running illegal immigrants from the Hebrides to populate the new "University City Village", advised me that these sheep were quite tough, and that the price of their wool would triple, quadruple, or go through the roof by the time I was ready to retire. I also obtained some hardy goats from the Shetland Islands to round out my herd, the goats to be slaughtered for meat which could be sold for ritual sacrifices to the Lutherans in Clark Park.

You might say that I was naive. If you even said that I was hoodwinked, you would not be far off the mark. One midnight several weeks after importing my herds, I was awoken by bloodcurdling howls in the back yard. I lit a gas lantern and went out with my trusty Bulgarian Shipka to investigate. What I found was too horrible even to report in the pages of the UC Review. Several of my prize goats had been killed, disemboweled, and totally drained of blood.

When I spoke to neighbors about this, most of them withdrew in horror and slammed their doors in my face. But one hardy grizzled old drunk by the name of Cassidy merely shook his head wisely and said, "Yup. It done were them chucapbracas." He kindly invited me in for some tequila, and played a home movie on his widescreen TV. It was titled "The Jersey Devil" and had been, he informed me, shot on location in the Pine Barrens. He was hoping to sell it to Hollywood and make a fortune. He also warned me to stay clear of the Lutherans.

Immediately I invested in several Rottweilers, trained from childhood in the art of protecting sheep. I deployed them amidst the herds, and several months passed without incident. Then late one night I again heard those bloodcurdling howls. Stepping out gingerly into the backyard, armed with my Bulgarian Shipka and several light mortars, I discovered to my horror the footprints of a gigantic hound -- but a hound with huge claws and footprints brimming with blood.

This time I deployed acres of barbed wire and ground mines around the perimeter. Going into Caspars on my weekly foray into the village for my provisions, I heard a group of grizzled old men muttering darkly about "them chuckarachas." I listened in, and learned that these bizarre creatures lurked in the swamps and hollows of Clark

Park, venturing out at midnight to prey on the sheep, goats and cattle in neighborhood farms.

"Only one way to put down one o' them durned chubarackas", one wizened old man said. "An' that's with a silver cross through the heart."

I inquired quietly where one of these silver crosses could be obtained. He looked at me darkly, than put a foetid moss-covered arm about my shoulders and rasped "Reckon you could get one offa the Lutheran padre -- if you'se prepared to sell your soul, that is."

**--Ross Bender**