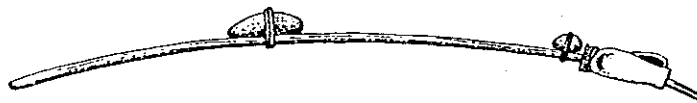


# The ATLATL

JANUARY 1993

VOL. 6, NO. 1

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE WORLD ATLATL ASSOCIATION, INC.  
1390 SOUTH PARIS COURT, AURORA, COLORADO 80012, USA



"Too long have I hunted Mammoths alone!"  
Rich McWhorter

## WILD BOAR HUNT WITH ATLATLS

Readers will remember last March's highly successful wild boar hunt in Vidalia, Georgia written up on these pages by Lou Becker. Lou and his buddy, Ron Rapport drove all the way from Michigan to participate, taking home enough pork for the winter. That exciting event is being repeated this year. Steve Coleman, organizer of the hunt, sent us the following information concerning this years events:

"I would like to announce my second atlatl hunt and contest to be held March 13 and 14, 1993, at Buck Horn Creek Ranch, Vidalia, GA."

"The hunt will be held Saturday morning, the 13th, and continue Sunday the 14th. A fee of \$100.00 will be charged participants. Hunters must obey hunting rules as dictated by circumstances in the interest of safety and fairness. The game will be Boar. Any meat killed on Saturday morning will be shared at a Cookout that evening."

"The contest will be held at short range hunting distances from 5 to 40 meters, and begins at noon on Saturday, March 13th. There will be an entry fee of \$25.00. First place winner will take home \$600.00 cash. Second place winner gets \$300.00."

"I have space for campers, and there are plenty of Motels in town. Call or write me for additional details."



Steve Coleman  
Rt. 2, Box 312K  
Vidalia, GA 30474  
Phone - (912) 583-2737



## 1993 ATLATL EVENTS

Everyone is getting excited about the 1993 atlatl contests, and there are quite a few from which to choose. First on the agenda is The Valley of Fire State Park--WAA event near Overton, Nevada. This is the third Annual atlatl contest to be held at Atlatl Rock, site of many Indian petroglyphs, a number of which, depict atlatls.

Members should set aside April 2, 3, and 4, 1993 for some enjoyable camping among the huge red monoliths, or if you prefer, stay at one of the many Las Vegas motels (50 miles away) or in Overton (15 miles distant).

The contest will be held on Saturday, April 3rd, at 10:00 am. Awards will be given in three categories: men, Women, and Youth (16 and under). Additionally, the World Atlatl Association will present a Grand Championship Award for best overall. We can expect to see Guinness record holder, Wayne Brian once again try for a new world record distance throw.

Come early, or extend your stay to explore beautiful Valley of Fire State Park. See the "Lost City" Museum, visit Lake Mead National Recreation Area, or take in the excitement of Las Vegas.

Additional information can be obtained from:

## ATLATL CONTEST:

Leni Clubb  
World Atlatl Assn.  
P. O. Box 56  
Ocotillo, CA 92259  
(616) 358-7835

## PARK FACILITIES;

Jim Hammons, Ranger  
Valley of Fire S. P.  
P. O. Box 515  
Overton, NV 89040  
(702) 397-2088

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## GREETINGS FROM PHOENIX ARIZONA IN "THE VALLEY OF THE SUN."

Pueblo Grande Museum, part of the Phoenix Parks and Recreation Dept. will hold an atlatl demonstration on April 24th from 1:00 pm to 4:00 pm. All atlatl enthusiasts are invited to participate. There will be an attempt to set a new long distance world record presently held by Wayne Brian. Additionally, Tod Bostwick, Pueblo Grande's resident archaeologist will hold a flint knapping workshop.

According to Wayne Brian the organizers will seriously discuss a future WAA sanctioned contest to be held at Pueblo Grande. For further information, contact Tom Hulen, Arizona Archaeology Society Activities Director at Pueblo Grande Museum, 4619 E. Washington St., Phoenix, AZ 85034, phone (602) 495-0901.

\*\*\*\*\*

WE SPEND THE FIRST SIX YEARS TEACHING OUR CHILDREN TO WALK AND TALK, THE NEXT 15 YEARS TO SHUT UP AND SIT DOWN.

FREMONT INDIAN  
STATE PARK, UTAH

Hold June 4, 5 and 6th open for the first WAA-Fremont Indian State Park atlatl demonstration and contest. The contest will be held in conjunction with a primitive tools workshop which should be interesting to atlatlists. This is Utah's newest state park established in 1985 to preserve Clear Creek area archaeological sites and local rock art. Archaeologists at the visitors center will take groups on tours and make presentations at the center. The contest is scheduled for 10 AM, Saturday June 5th. The setting is great for an atlatl event, and they have camping facilities set aside. If you prefer, motels are available in Richfield, a few miles east on I-70.

\*\*\*\*\*

THE GRAND DADDY OF  
THEM ALL, THE  
ATLATL WORLD OPEN

is to be held June 12th and 13th this year. This annual event held originally in Saratoga, WY 1981, has found a new home at Fort Caspar, Casper Wyoming for the past several years. The details of this event will be published in the next issue of "The Atlatl."

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COLORADO  
ARCHAEOLOGICAL  
SOCIETY ENCAMPMENT  
AND ATLATL CONTEST  
Details of this eighth annual event have not been received, but traditionally it is held July 4th at one of the mountain campgrounds. Watch for further information in a

future issue of this newsletter. This too, is the time of the World Atlatl Association annual business meeting. Don't boycott Colorado. We will be having important business to conduct at this single annual meeting. Please plan to vacation in Colorado in early July.

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DOES ANYBODY KNOW ABOUT THE EASTERN SEABOARD ATLATL CONTEST? This annual event was being held in Pennsylvania but nobody has reported on it recently. We really need to hear from you easterners. I sincerely hope it hasn't gone by the wayside.

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From Troy Helmick:  
The following was extracted from an article by Susan M. Stahl and appeared in the "Clarksburg Telegram" in West Virginia this past October:

"SPEAR-THROWING FOREST  
FESTIVAL FEATURE"

"ELKINS - A spear-throwing competition will be held on the lower campus of Davis & Elkins College as the 56th annual Mountain State Forest Festival continues in its fourth day."

"Five participants will each compete for a steak dinner by throwing an ATLATL (a primitive weapon developed around 4000 B.C.) at a target. The spear thrower who accumulates the most points after 10 throws wins explained Dr. William Good, chairman of the event."

"Dr. Good explained that ATL-ATL is an Aztec word

meaning spear thrower. He said it is believed that the ATL-ATL preceded the bow and arrow and is the first compound tool developed by mankind. The ATL-ATL was used for hunting as well as fighting, he said."

"All ATL-ATLS used in the competition must be made of materials that were available to primitive man. The ATL-ATL consists of two sticks--a spear thrower and a spear. The spear thrower is approximately 18 inches long and has a banner stone tied to it near the middle to control the spear."

"The contest will be judged by Randolph County Circuit Judge John Henning."

Troy continues by explaining that the Mountain State Forest Festival is an annual event in Elkins, WV, but this was the first time the atlatl contest has been included. He further stated, "My sources in West Virginia reported that Dr. Good was the winner of the steak dinner." Neither Troy Helmick, nor this editor take any blame for the errors in the weapons's history, description, spelling or function as reported in this article. We are both pleased, however, to see any mention at all of the atlatl in the press.

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We received a letter from Lou Becker--Bowsport Archery, earlier this month with a plea to the World Atlatl Association for assistance in setting up an atlatl contest in Michigan. I think this is a great idea and it is just

the thing to further promote the sport of atlatling. We have to keep the sport in the public eye. Lou is doing his part as shown in the following photographic report:

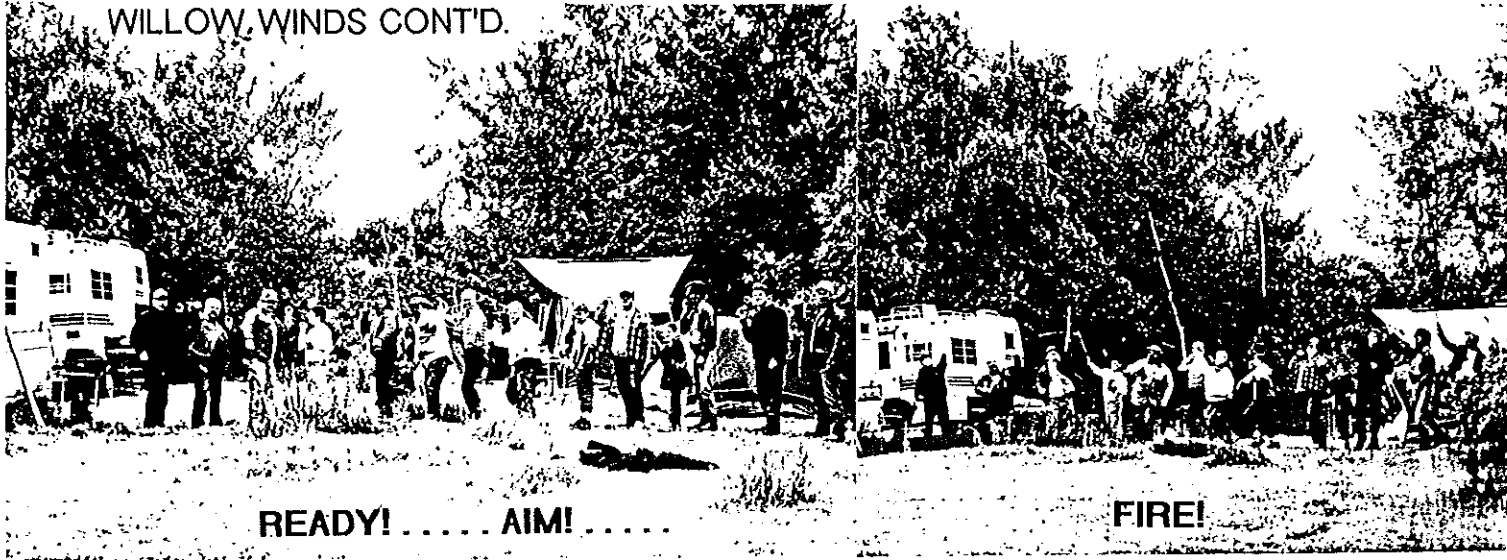
Lou Becker and his friend Jim Miller have been doing atlatl classes and primitive bow making classes for a new club called "Willow Winds." This group formed to experience first hand their keen interest in primitive skills and Indian history.



Right, Lou Becker teaching a hands-on atlatl class.



13 year old Adam Becker in action.



READY! . . . . AIM! . . . . . FIRE!

ATLATL WEIGHTS

Howard Hall of Mill City, OR sent us the following letter concerning his experience with atlatl weights:

Dear Bill,  
I have a theory on the purpose of the atlatl weight. I found it difficult for me to throw the longer darts with a twelve inch atlatl, so while keeping the dimensions of the handle, notch and neck base the same as your \* "Spear Chucker," I made an atlatl 29 inches long. By itself, it had no accuracy or power. After the addition of an eight hundred fifty grain (55.08 gram or 1.94 oz.) weight to the neck, accuracy and control returned. Accuracy becomes excellent when the weight is in one spot, much like a rifle sight, I guess.

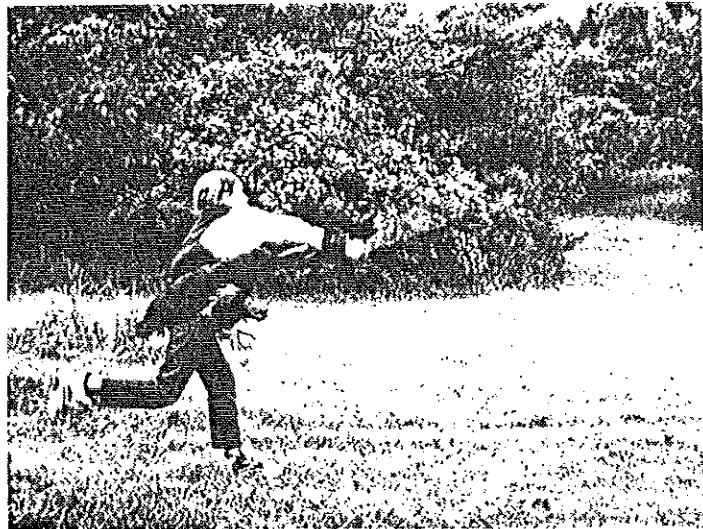
My theory is that the weights were used to "tune" the atlatl to the darts used to achieve accuracy. The force comes from the greater length of the atlatl. I encourage others to test this theory and report their findings.

Howard Hall

\*Tate Enterprises standard atlatl approximately 26 inches in length.



Willow Winds fearless leader: Jim Miller.



Eric Miller at 8 years old. shows them how.

ATLATLS IN ROCK  
ART  
BILL TATE

We see Indian rock art throughout the West which suggests atlatl use. Many of the drawings show not only the image of an atlatl, but frequently of the hunters and the hunted as well.

Marcia and I visited such a rock art site near White Sands in New Mexico last fall. Although the cold breeze didn't lend itself to close examination of the 20,000 pictures pecked into the rock outcroppings at Three Rivers National Petroglyph Site, we did manage to get a pretty good "feel" of the local variety of rock art. Below is an example of some of the spectacular figures covering nearly every available rock surface. Are these atlatls? The site is located just east of U. S. Highway 54, 27 miles north of Alamogordo, NM. Very easy access--Well worth visiting.



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BITS AND PIECES FROM WAA  
SECRETARY, CHARLEY LILLY

ATLATL CAVE FRAGMENT:

Atlatl Cave in Chaco Canyon got its name from a fragment of an atlatl excavated by John Schelberg. The fragment could possibly be examined by contacting Phil Lopiccolo of the National Park Service, c/o Department of Anthropology, University of New Mexico, Albuquerque, NM 87131, phone (505) 766-3780.

There should also be 1975 field notes and photos available from Mike Elliot, on file at the same office.

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From the book *A history of Technology*, Oxford Univ. Press, edited by Charles Singer, E. J. Holmyard and A. R. Hall, 1954, in an article titled "Foraging, Hunting, and Fishing" by Daryll Forde.

"Piercers, both thrusting and missile, have been more generally effective in hunting. They have been elaborately developed from early Palaeolithic times against fast moving animals. The very large yield of food, skins, sinews, bone, and horn from such creatures stimulated specialization. From the simple staff, which could be used indifferently for digging, thrusting, or throwing, whole families of piercing weapons were developed."

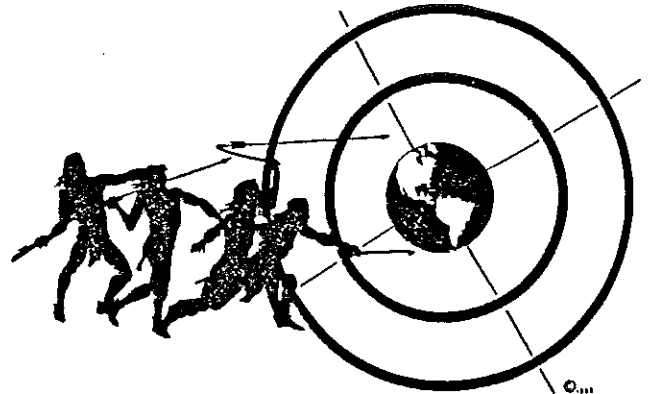
"The spear, at first a mere stiff sapling with point sharpened by stone-trimming or burning, was early specialized and barbed into a heavy lance for thrusting, and into a missile or javelin. Even in Palaeolithic times spears were

probably universal. With technical advances in working wood, stone, and bone, and metal, and fitted with heads of great variety for many purposes. Spearheads were shaped to penetrate deeply, and the points multiplied to increase the chance of striking elusive targets, such as birds and fish. Barbs were already a device of Palaeolithic man, and detachable heads were developed to retain the spearhead in the wound. Finally, spears have been incorporated in pit, trip-line, and spring-traps."

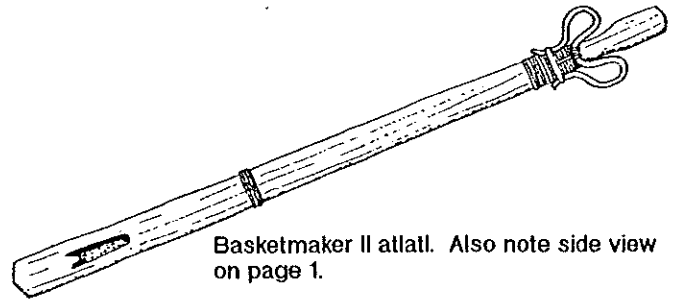
"Propulsive force and range were increased by spear-thrower and bow, both familiar to some palaeolithic peoples. The line-held detachable head or harpoon-point was adapted for both lance and javelin, including the bow-shot arrow. That the spear-thrower was devised earlier than the bow is suggested both by its wide distribution and by archaeological evidence. It was in use by the reindeer-hunting Magdalenians of the park-tundra in Late Glacial Europe, and in the historic time among the Australian aborigines ignorant of the bow, as well as among the eskimo of the circumpolar belt and the natives of New Guinea. In the new world it is known from the Arctic to the equator."

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Leni Clubb has been researching procurement of shoulder patches with our WAA logo. Happily, she reports that they are now on order from Indian Arts and Crafts Co. in Seattle, Washington. Members should receive their free patch with the next issue of "The Atlatl."



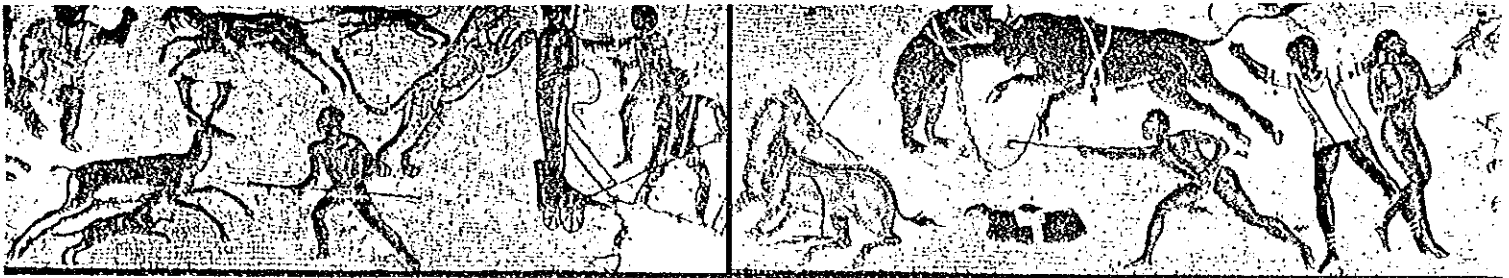
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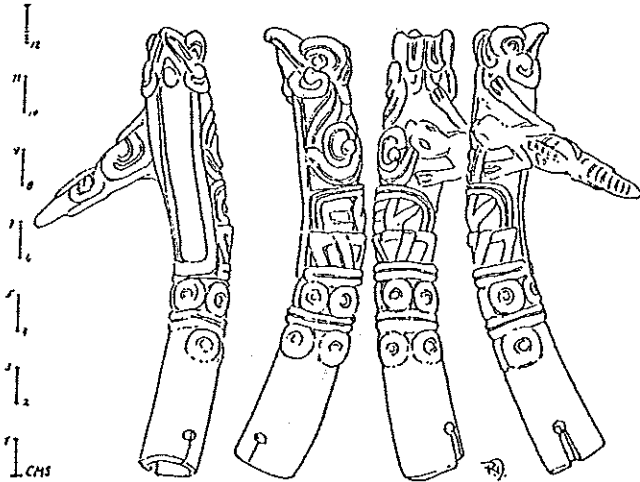
Basketmaker II atlatl. Also note side view on page 1.

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A Time-Life book advertisement we received had the following copies of mosaics decorating the top edges of the page. How about that figure in the center of the right hand picture. Does anybody know where these come from?



Charley Lilly sent us a xerox copy of this multiple view drawing of an atlatl hook from the Valley of Mexico. This highly decorated atlatl part is made of deer antler.



Remember, it is **Y O U R** newsletter. Let us hear from you with material you wish to share with other members.

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**ADVERTISEMENT**

BOWSPORT ARCHERY, 5940 URBAN DR., EAST CHINA, MI 48039, (313) 765-4717. LONG TIME ARROWSMITH, LOU BECKER MAKES FINE DARTS AND ATLATLS.

BOB BEANE, OF BOWWOODS FIVE, 1821 REDWING ST., SAN MARCOS, CA 92069, (619) 744-9797, MAKES REPLICA ATLATLS, INCLUDING THE SAND DUNE CAVE ATLATL SET.

BILL TATE OF TATE ENTERPRISES, PO BOX 440003, AURORA, CO 80044-0003, (303) 755-5591, MAKES THE ORIGINAL "SPEARCHUCKER" ATLATL KIT AS WELL AS SELLS BOOKS ON ATLATLS AND PRIMITIVE SKILLS.

BEN RUHE, 1882 COLUMBIA ROAD N.W., WASHINGTON, D C 20009, (202) 234-9208, HAS ACCESS TO SOME PITJANTJATJARA WOOMERAS (ATLATLS) PREVIOUSLY COLLECTED BY AN AUSTRALIAN ANTHROPOLOGIST.

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FORGIVE YOUR ENEMIES. BUT NEVER FORGET THEIR NAMES!  
JFK

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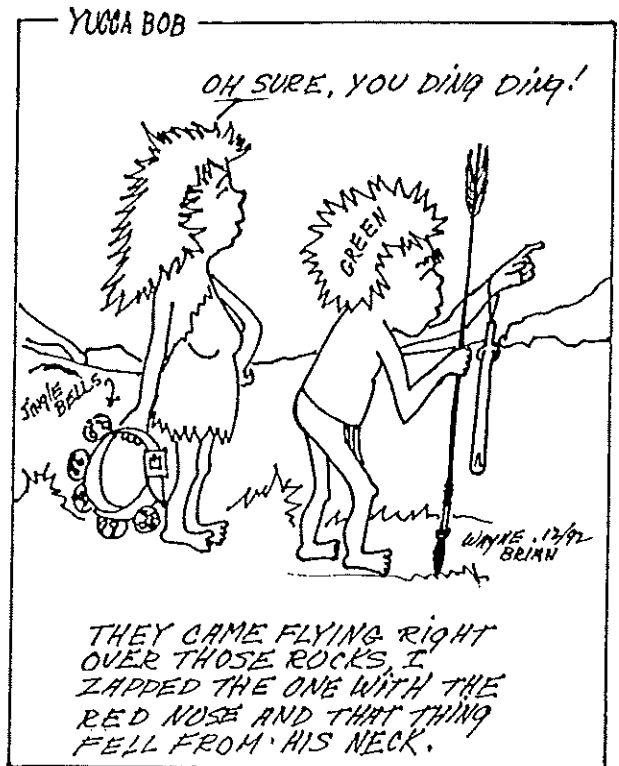
**WAA T-SHIRTS ARE STILL AVAILABLE**  
Black with white ink, these shirts boldly display the WAA logo. Sizes S, M, L, and XL available for \$9.00 plus \$2.00 shipping. Contact Bill Tate, 1390 S. Paris Ct., Aurora, CO 80012.

**BACK ISSUES OF THE ATLATL**

There are 15 previous issues available for \$4.00 each. These date back to the Summer of 1988. Contact Bill Tate, address above.

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Our thanks to all who submitted material for inclusion in this newsletter.



**SEND ATLATL INFORMATION FOR THESE PAGES TO:**  
"THE ATLATL," ATTN: BILL TATE  
1390 S. PARIS CT., AURORA CO 80012