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REPUBLIC COLUMNIST WRITES ANOTHER PRETTY FUNNY BOOK "THE VALLEY 101 GREAT BIG BOOK OF LIFE" AUTHOR CLAY THOMPSON TO SIGN BOOKS DECEMBER 1 AND 3 IN CENTRAL PHOENIX.

Phoenix (October 15, 2004) - *Arizona Republic* columnist Clay Thompson has made a living out of answering the strangest questions in the newsroom and making fun of the people who ask them. Once again he has put these columns together in the perfect book for any one who believes there are no dumb questions! *The Valley 101 Great Big Book of Life* will be available November 26, 2004

(www.claythompsonbooks.com) and in Valley bookstores.

Just like his column "Valley 101", *The Great Big Book of Life* shows off Clay's talent and finesse in answering very obscure questions about weather, desert science, our bodies and other stinky stuff. *The Great Big Book of Life* shows off Clay's fine research ability when he explains what to do with Bermuda grass in the winter and whether or not there is quick sand in Arizona and why some folks put Styrofoam cups on their cactus (or is it cacti?).

The 192 page book contains some 125 columns, the best of the best or real close to it! This book retails for \$14.95 in area stores or get it on line at www.amazon.com.

"There is no other column like Clay's in American newspapers. He can educate and amuse all at once." Sue Clark Johnson, Publisher, *The Arizona Republic*.

"Who needs Google when you have Clay Thompson's *Great Big Book of Life*?"

Beth and Bill

99.9 KEZ

Thompson will speak and sign books at 7 p.m. on Wednesday, December 1, 2004 in the Nina Mason Pulliam Auditorium at the Burton Barr Library, 1221 N. Central.

Thompson will sign books from 7-8 p.m. Friday, December 3, 2004 at the downtown Phoenix "First Friday" art walk at the Fair Trade Cafe, 1020 N. 1st Avenue, near Trinity Cathedral, (Central and Roosevelt).

A native of Iowa, Thompson grew up on a farm, he prefers to think of it as his agribusiness background.

Vinton, Iowa was small but the town did have a Carnegie Library, where young Thompson checked out books by Mark Twain, C.S. Forrester and James Thurber. Those early influences, and the fact that his parents read two daily newspapers, played a big role in his choice of career.

While a senior at Coe College in Cedar Rapids, Thompson decided to enter journalism. After briefly attending graduate school at Iowa State, he began work at a small town newspaper, "where you covered everything from fires to fairs to tornadoes to big tomatoes." Shortly after that, he became a reporter for the *Quad City Times* in Davenport, Iowa, remaining there seven years.

In 1979, he and his family moved to Arizona and he began work at *The Phoenix Gazette* and later *The Arizona Republic*. "Valley 101" is the thinking man's guide to survival in what we call the Valley (short for the Valley of the Sun); hence Rodin's "The Thinker" on the column and the book.

Thompson does not have any idea why people like his column. He thinks it may have something to do with their lack of taste and we agree. There is no accounting for taste, so chances are good you will like the book, too.

Some real fine people have endorsed this book. Marshall Trimble wrote the foreword, the Publisher of *The Arizona Republic* called the book "enjoyable" and Beth and Bill from 99.9 KEZ say reading Thompson is "like landing on a stool at the Cheers bar next to Cliff Clavin only without the mailman stories..."

This is Thompson's second book with Primer Publishers.

"Working with Clay continues to be fun and exciting," says Bill Fessler, Manager at Primer Publishers. "We are thrilled to be able to publish more of his work. We laugh out loud reading his column and now we won't have to get our hands so dirty with all that newspaper ink passing the column back and forth. Our other books are great for identifying plants, animals, ghost towns and national monuments of Arizona; now we have two of Clay's books for many of the other wacky questions we can't answer like, what is the controlling force that directs the turn of a flock of pigeons? It is just so darn fun to have useless information to toss around at all those important cocktail parties we go to."

Bill Fessler is the third generation to run Primer Publishers, founded in the late 1960's by Bill's grandfather George Fessler. The company publishes books related to nature, travel and tourism in the Southwest and the Rocky Mountains.

Primer Publishers has more than 100 titles including two successful lines of books, the Easy Field Guide Series and the American Traveler Series.

Thompson is available to speak to groups and sign his book but he makes it clear that he rarely does repeat visits to the same group. "I just have the one speech," he explains.