The neighborhood is very quiet
There is only one light in sight
A lonely man is dressing
To leave in the middle of the night

He tip toes out of the house
To keep from awakening his wife
To face a long day ahead of him
Because it is a lonely life

His neighbors don't understand
What this man is trying to do
He is carrying hope to the farmworkers
Just like me and you

He climbed into a contraption
Some people call a bus (La Tortuga)
You couldn’t read the writing on the sides
Because of the dents and rust

As he started the engine
The neighbors would curse and weep
Because of the noise this bus made
Would awaken them from their sleep

He drove this bus down the road
To fields far away
Looking for the poor farmworkers
That he could help this day

The sun has just come up
To shine on the dry hot field
This man was parked and waiting
To give these people a meal

He would talk with the farmworkers
He would tell them that he cares
He would tell them about his program
Then offered them a prayer

Everyone seemed to know this man
Because he was never late
He was their only hope
Because this man was great

He received no thanks for his work
When he was spreading good will
They knew that money was available
To help them pay their bills

The farmworkers toil all day
For life was very hard
But this person brought them peace
Was a man of God

Most ministers work in big buildings
When they talk about God
But this great man holds his service
In some farmer’s yard

He tells them about his program
Which is called Project PEP
He tells them about the services
And where they can get help

The morning is still young
The sun is in the sky
All the farmworkers are waiting
To see the bus pass by

All of us would like to see
A program that is well done
To help make his dream come true
To get the farmworkers out of the sun

The day has been long
The sun is going down
It has been fifteen hours
Since this man left town

The President took office that day
He said he would make a change
He wanted to cut all the Social Services
And he called our program a game

The people cried out in anger
They wore black buttons to show
How they felt about the cuts
And they wanted the president to know

The man called a meeting
And every one heard him say
We will not give up the fight
For this will be our day

Stand by this man dear Lord
As he gives these people help
Let him train all of us
To represent Project PEP

Now that this bus is no longer here
To carry people to help
But I wish that all of us
Could be like John of Project PEP

Fifteen years have passed
Since this man started down that road
Driving that old school bus
Carrying a heavy load

All of us had faith in John
When he called us that day
To tell us we were out of funds
And we would have to work without any pay

He worked very hard every day
Making it seem like fun
Waiting for DOL to say
Project PEP is the one

By Sam McCoy
Tolleson, Arizona 1983
A Testimonial To John David Arnold
25 Years of Service to Arizona Farmworkers 1958-1983
The Man