

Retro AZ

22 OF ARIZONA'S
BEST DRIVE-INS,
DINERS, MOTELS & MORE

ARIZONA

HIGHWAYS

ESCAPE · EXPLORE · EXPERIENCE

NOVEMBER 2011



**RESURRECTING NEON:
LET THERE BE LIGHTS
TURNING BACK THE PAGES
OF ARIZONA HIGHWAYS**

Apache Drive-In, Globe

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People, places and things from around the state, including a nonconformist named Sjors who counts condors and lives at Phantom Ranch; a Mexican restaurant in Phoenix where you're encouraged to eat with your hands; and a Q&A with Miss Arizona, who shares her thoughts on hiking, chicken sandwiches and Steven Seagal.

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Some pieces of the past — DDT, the Edsel, *Tip-Toe Thru' the Tulips* — are better left behind, but some things are worth reliving. Things like ice-cream sodas, Airstreams and drive-in movie theaters. Because of Historic Route 66, Arizona has more than its share of retro, but the chrome and neon aren't limited to the Mother Road. There are flashbacks all over the state.

BY KELLY KRAMER & KATHY RITCHIE
PHOTOGRAPHS BY PAUL MARKOW

34 GLIMMER OF HOPE

Looking back, it's hard to believe that the vibrant neon signs of the '40s, '50s and '60s were replaced by mass-produced, backlit plastic eyesores. But they were, to the point of near extinction. Fortunately, the losses have fueled attempts to save what's left, and the flickering radiance of neon is making a comeback. It's early, but there are signs of life.

BY KATHY MONTGOMERY
PHOTOGRAPHS BY TERENCE MOORE

42 GET A ROOM

Although "living in the past" is often said derogatorily, there's nothing wrong with spending a night or two in the good old days, especially if you can get a room at the Valley Ho in Scottsdale or the Wigwam in Holbrook.

BY MARK SPIVAK
PHOTOGRAPHS BY KERRICK JAMES & CRAIG SMITH

46 TURNING BACK THE PAGES

As we were putting together this issue, and thinking about the heyday of Historic Route 66, we started wondering what kinds of things *Arizona Highways* was doing back in the '40s, '50s and '60s. Turns out, there wasn't anything too gaudy.

BY KATHY RITCHIE & KEITH WHITNEY

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Kentucky Camp: The route to this old mine winds along the high-desert grasslands of scenic State Route 83, passing a winery and historic ranch along the way.

54 HIKE OF THE MONTH

Mescal Ridge: Although it's located in the Hellsgate Wilderness, there's nothing devilish about this hike. Other than the first half-mile.

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www.arizonahighways.wordpress.com

Check out our blog for regular posts on just about anything having to do with travel in Arizona, including Q&As with writers and photographers, special events, bonus photos, sneak peeks at upcoming issues and more.



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Join our Facebook community to share your photographs, chat with other fans, enter trivia contests and receive up-to-the-minute information about what's going on behind the scenes at *Arizona Highways*.

Photographic Prints Available

Prints of some photographs in this issue are available for purchase. To view options, visit www.arizonahighwaysprints.com. For more information, call 866-962-1191.

Western Motel on East Benson Highway in Tucson. | TERENCE MOORE

FRONT COVER Vintage cars reflect the sunset at the Apache Drive-In in Globe, as Elvis appears in a movie still from *Blue Hawaii*. Movie scene by Michael Ochs/Gettyimages. | PAUL MARKOW

BACK COVER Knickknacks from the Hackberry General Store located along Historic Route 66 in Hackberry, Arizona. | RICHARD MAACK



PAUL MARKOW

The Saguaro Theatre in Wickenburg (1948), the Hill Top Motel in Kingman (1954), the Galaxy Diner in Flagstaff (1958) and the Sugar Bowl in Scottsdale (1958) are some of the other flashbacks you'll read about in *For Old Times' Sake*. It's an old-time collection, and as you'll see, Jennifer (yes, *that* Jennifer) even managed to get Bil Keane of *Family Circus* fame to sit for our photo shoot at the Sugar Bowl. He's 89, but as he told me between bites of his sundae, "You're never too old for ice cream." I didn't ask, but I'm guessing he has a similar affection for some of the other stuff in this issue, including the neon signs.

Or maybe he doesn't, but we certainly do. That's why we put together what started out to be a portfolio of classic neon signs around the state. The more we got into it, though, the more we realized there was a story there, not just a photographic obituary. Turns out, neon isn't dead, but it is on life support.

"The reasons are as old as commerce," Kathy Montgomery writes in *Glimmer of Hope*. "Owners change, businesses evolve, new technologies replace old. [However], the losses have fueled attempts to save what remains, with neon lovers storing signs in backyards hoping for a brighter future. Now neon is seeing new light."

It's an encouraging story, one that had us flipping through back issues of *Arizona Highways* in search of neon. Frankly, we didn't find a lot, but we did come across some interesting content from the '40s, '50s and '60s. In *Turning Back the Pages*, we share a few of our favorite clips. The magazine was very different then, but one thing is exactly the same: The words and photographs passed through a lot of hands before ending up on those pages. Josef Muench may have gotten the byline for the cover photo in November 1969, but you can be sure he had some help along the way.

ROBERT STIEVE, *editor*

Follow me on Twitter: www.twitter.com/azhighways.



Cartoonist Bil Keane (center) with (left to right) Kelly Kramer, Jeff Kida and Robert Stieve

PAUL MARKOW

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PRODUCED IN THE USA



TERRENCE MOORE

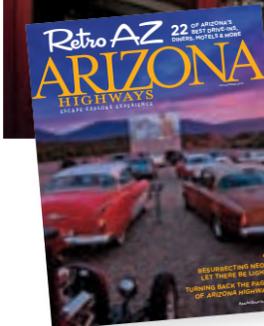
For photographer Terry Moore, neon signs represent the "old" Arizona. "They were common before corporate businesses and plastic signs snuffed out the majority of neon," Moore says. "I've always loved the signs. In fact, I remember photographing Marie's Truck Stop in Benson in 1973, before I even moved to Arizona." Moore got another dose of neon when he hit the road to shoot *Glimmer of Hope* (page 34), and before long, the Minnesota native's memories of neon came flooding back. Moore's work has also appeared in *The New York Times*.

MARK SPIVAK

As a fan of food, wine and culinary travel, writer Mark Spivak considered his retro hotels assignment a dream come true (see *Get a Room*, page 42). "For me, these were places that represented a lost America, but not an America of *that* long ago," he says. Although he lives in Florida, Spivak frequents Arizona. His work has also appeared in *Men's Journal* and *National Geographic Traveler*.



PAUL MARKOW



GOLD-'N'-OLDIES CAR CLUB

Globe's Gold-'N'-Oldies car club revved up its engines for this month's cover shoot, which took place at Globe's Apache Drive-In (see page 31). "The photo shoot was very interesting and a lot of fun," says Dorina Espinoza, the club's vice president. "We had 19 cars — from a 1993 Corvette to a 1928 Model-A truck." In addition to modeling for magazine covers, the nonprofit club hosts an annual car show, which raises funds for food banks, the Salvation Army, youth groups, St. Vincent de Paul and more. For information about upcoming events, visit <http://myweb.cableone.net/goldnoldies>.

Behind the Bylines

Writers get bylines. And so do photographers. It's the equivalent of Picasso scribbling his name at the bottom of a painting. The difference, at least in this analogy, is that words and photographs pass through a lot of hands before ending up in a magazine. Picasso may have done all of the work on *Guernica*, but what you see on the pages of *Arizona Highways* takes more collaboration than that. This month's cover photo is a good example.

The byline goes to Paul Markow, who is one of the most talented photographers out there, but working the camera was only part of the shot. Somebody had to line up those vintage cars. Somebody had to coordinate with the drive-in. And somebody had to pray for an incredible sunset with a smattering of monsoon clouds and not a drop of rain. Jennifer Irwin is that somebody. Think of her as Paul's Miss Money Penny. Or, better yet, the Gwyneth Paltrow character in *Iron Man*. Jennifer is incredible, and without her, we wouldn't have a cover — if there were a place for a byline, it would read: Behind-the-Scenes Brilliance by Jennifer Irwin.

We wouldn't have a cover without Jeff Kida, either. Jeff is our photo editor, and for years he's been talking about doing a photo shoot at the Apache Drive-In. Jeff was with Paul on the day the cover was shot, directing traffic, watching the weather, being a photo editor. He also played the role of Grand Poobah during the preshoot powwow at Paul's studio, where Associate Editor Kathy Ritchie kept Jeff and Paul on task — those two have a tendency to veer off down memory lane. Like Jeff and Jennifer, Kat didn't get a byline for the cover photo, but she did get a byline for the cover story, which she co-wrote with Managing Editor Kelly Kramer.

It's the anchor piece in our *Retro AZ* issue, and it spotlights 15 of our favorite places to find ice-cream sodas, Airstreams, classic motels and more. Our objective was to dig up places that give readers a chance to step back in time — places that haven't really changed since the '40s, '50s and '60s. MacAlpine's Soda Fountain in Phoenix fits the bill. As Kat writes, "During the 1950s and 1960s, MacAlpine's was ground zero for greasers and pink ladies who would hang out and drink ice-cream sodas, egg creams and malts."

ARIZONA HIGHWAYS TELEVISION



ARIZONA HIGHWAYS TV

If you like what you see in this magazine every month, check out *Arizona Highways Television*, an Emmy Award-winning program hosted by former news anchor Robin Sewell. For broadcast times, visit our website, www.arizonahighways.com, and click the *Arizona Highways Television* link on our home page.



May 2011

A VOTE FOR STATE PARKS

I applaud the various entities that ensure access to our state parks, but I firmly believe that the role of government is to take care of the things that shouldn't need to turn a profit. The May 2011 article titled *The State of Our State Parks* neglected the most important action readers should take to save our parks system: Contact your state representatives and vote.

ADAM BACK, TUCSON

GOING THROUGH FIRE

I was so moved by your September 2011 editor's letter that I must thank you. You finally put into words much of what I've been feeling as I followed the course of the Horseshoe Two Fire. I arrived in Portal for three glorious days of hiking in the Chiricahuas on the day the fire started, only to be evacuated before midnight the same night. I hiked and looked for birds in other favorite places in Southern Arizona for 10 days, but concern over the devastation taking place in the Chiricahua Mountains was constantly in my thoughts. With disbelief, I followed the fire online after returning to Colorado as it continued to devour those forests. I mourned the inevitable loss to the wildlife and habitat, the losses for Portal citizens who depend on tourism, and the losses to the ranching community of the region. I rejoiced that the American Museum of Natural History Research Station was spared. Friends and family tried but simply couldn't comprehend why this was hitting me so hard. Then subsequent fires began to ravage the Huachuclas and began to burn into Sycamore Canyon and my anxiety

increased. So, again, thank you for letting me know that my feelings of loss are understood and shared.

ANN ADNET, MONUMENT, COLORADO

FOR LAND SAKES

What the Magoffins are doing in regard to protecting endangered plants and animals on their ranch is commendable [*Ranchers With a Reputation*, August 2011]; however, I take exception to the opening salvo that "ranchers and environmentalists are rarely on the same page and they're even less likely to be one and the same." This type of broad statement is unhelpful and only perpetuates a stereotype. The ranchers I know in both Arizona and Kansas are conservationists. Painting all ranchers with a broad brush of irresponsible land management discourages a reasonable dialogue on national issues of environmental importance.

MARGARET HALL, SHAWNEE MISSION, KANSAS



September 2011

FROM THE TOP

I've just opened my advance copy of the September 2011 issue. To say that I was over the top with excitement would be an understatement! The layout itself and the comments on *Sunset of the Century* were breathtaking. This honor has filled my entire being with a new sense of confidence and striving to become an even better photographer. Thousands of entries? Wow. I feel quite humbled.

BEVERLY COPEN, SEDONA, ARIZONA

EDITOR'S NOTE: Beverly Copen was the winner of our 2010 online photo contest. To enter this year's contest, visit www.arizonahighways.com.

LET HIKING DOGS HIKE

I have to admit, I was a little taken aback by the letter in the August 2011 issue from David Vick in Scottsdale



June 2011

regarding the *Summer Hiking Guide* [June 2011]. As an avid *Arizona Highways* reader and amateur hiker, I covet the hiking issues because I'm always looking for new places to hike and explore. My little family includes my husband and our three dogs, and we all enjoy hiking together. The first thing I check under the trail guide is the "dogs allowed" section to make sure my whole family can make the trip. We always head up to the White Mountains for our trips, and rarely come across other hikers. So how this gentleman can be "irritated" by the four-legged presence blows my mind, because I never see any other dogs.

ZAENE TRAYLOR, GILBERT, ARIZONA

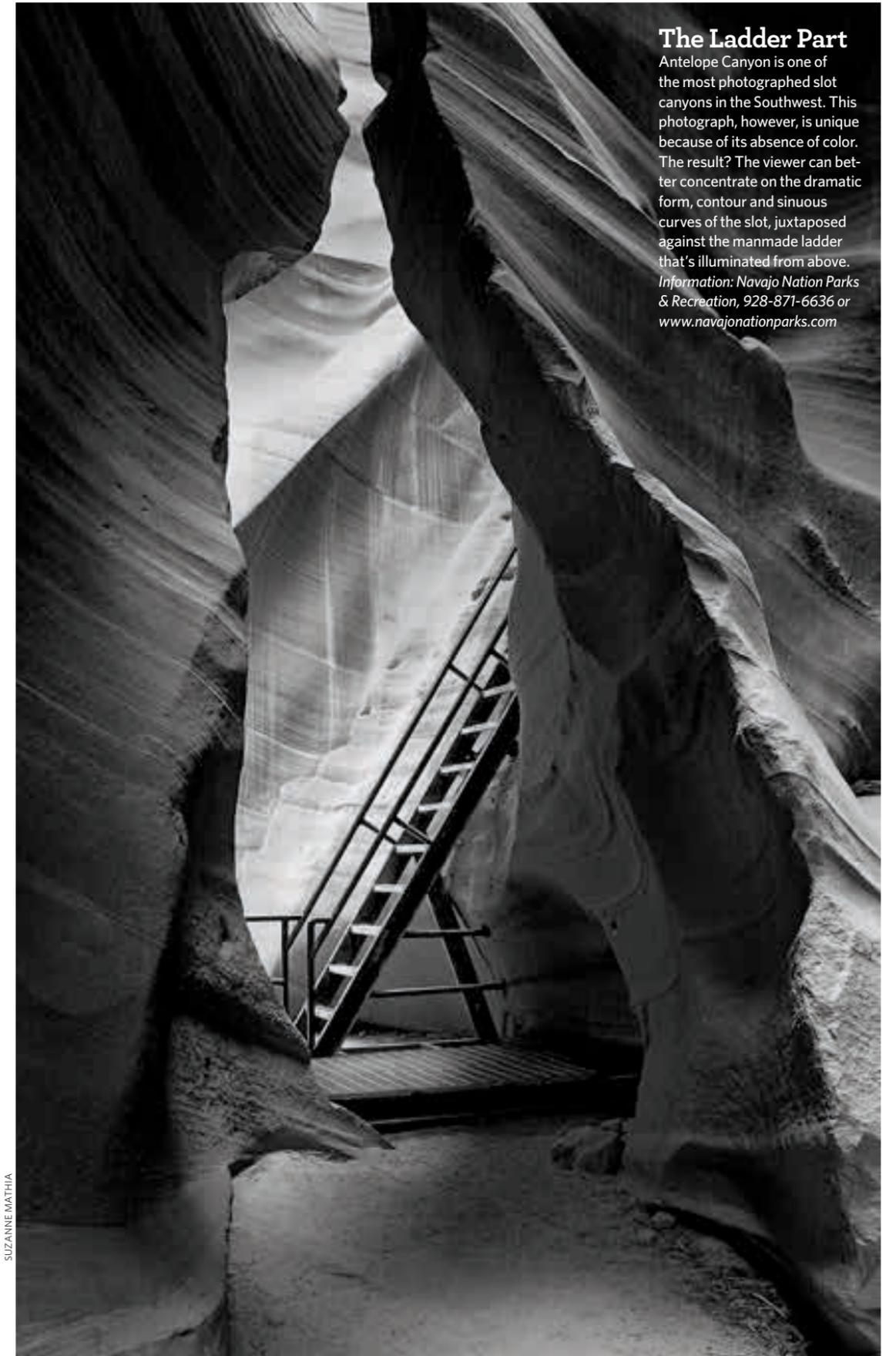


September 2011

MISSION ACCOMPLISHED

Thank you for including the photograph of the girl walking through the antique wooden door at the mission [*Winners*, September 2011]. That might have been myself in August of 1945, when we were on our way to live in Nogales. Many aspects of that picture speak to me.

GWENDOLYN GOWING, SALEM, OREGON



The Ladder Part

Antelope Canyon is one of the most photographed slot canyons in the Southwest. This photograph, however, is unique because of its absence of color. The result? The viewer can better concentrate on the dramatic form, contour and sinuous curves of the slot, juxtaposed against the manmade ladder that's illuminated from above. Information: Navajo Nation Parks & Recreation, 928-871-6636 or www.navajonationparks.com

SUZANNE MATHIA

Counting His Blessings

Sjors (no last name) spent a good chunk of his life exploring the planet — Indonesia, Australia, Africa. Then he got a job counting whales. It was good work, but then he got a job counting condors in the Grand Canyon. For the 55-year-old vagabond, it doesn't get any better than that.

By KATHY MONTGOMERY

SJORS STANDS ON a point high above the Colorado River, sweeping something that looks like a TV antenna from side to side. A connected radio hisses static.

On this spring day, Sjors wears a

National Park Service shirt, Guess jeans and regulation fleece. A wiry ponytail pokes from the back of his ball cap.

At 55, Sjors' olive skin shows the effects of years spent outdoors. Creases at the corners of his eyes deepen as he squints at

the radio, his fingers twirling through frequencies as if scanning for a favorite radio station.

"I got one," he says, finally. "Real faint. Two ninety-seven, a female. I'm checking other frequencies to see if anyone else is around."

Beeping noises, steady as a heartbeat, emerge from the static.

"Four twenty-three," Sjors says, raising a large pair of binoculars. "I've never had this bird before."

The beeping grows louder, then fades. "They're flying," Sjors says. "Probably together."

After what feels like a long time, he says: "I've got something. See them?"

The condors look tiny, two specks circling in the sky, barely identifiable by their flat wingspan and fingered wingtips.

It's a familiar sight for Sjors, who knows as much about the Grand Canyon's California condors as anyone. He keeps track of them using radio telemetry and records their activities for the Park Service. He speaks of them like friends, recalling which had babies, fledged or died. What he knows he learned from watching, which is also how he knows about whales and redbud trees and, for that matter, people who hike to the bottom of the Grand Canyon.

For 23 years, Sjors has volunteered at Phantom Ranch Ranger Station, where he's become an institution. People he doesn't recognize call him by name. Not just at Phantom, but while whale-watching in the San Juan Islands or hiking in Costa Rica. People stop him and say, "Hey! You're Sjors!"

Born in the Netherlands, Sjors immigrated to the United States when he was 4, and grew up in the tough Los Angeles suburb of Inglewood.

For most of his life, people called him by his last name because they didn't know how to pronounce Sjors. So he stopped using the surname. When people ask, he tells them his name is "Sjors, like ocean shores," slightly modifying the pronunciation.

Growing up, Sjors' parents took him camping every weekend and on longer trips in summer, visiting all the national parks in the Western U.S. and Canada. He

Walking around the Canyon, Sjors feels a deep connection to the place he has called home for the past 23 years.



SUZANNE MATHIA

laughs as he recalls his first glimpse of the Grand Canyon.

"I remember exactly what I thought," he says. "It was summertime, it was hot and I looked down and thought, 'Only an idiot would go down there.'"

In those days, Sjors didn't think much about what work he'd do. He dreamed of where he'd go. He wanted to visit a jungle and a desert. He wanted to see Africa.

After graduation, Sjors repaired TVs in people's homes. "I'm not quite sure how that happened, because I have absolutely no interest in it," he says. "It's like I was on an assembly line, only I was the one moving."

Then he started traveling. Sjors backpacked in Tahiti, then took a year off to drive around the U.S. and Canada, returning to work when funds got low. He took another year to travel around the Pacific, visiting Indonesia, where his mother was born, and Thailand, Singapore and Nepal. He toured Australia, New Zealand and Europe. He made it to Africa.

"I made money, but I didn't spend much," he says. "I lived in the back of somebody's house and paid very little. When I traveled, I never ate at restaurants. I never stayed at hotels. I camped in national forests."

Then he went to Hawaii. Sjors saw a volcano erupt and his world stopped.

"It was spectacular," he recalls. "And it slapped me in the face. *You need to get off this track.*"

Sjors realized he'd been moving too fast. He wanted to slow down, get to know a single place. Life was too short to fix people's TVs, he thought. So he returned to California and watched whales.

"It was just an interest," he explains. "I used to go to Palos Verdes and watch whales. While I was watching the whales, I decided to count the whales. This woman came by. She goes, 'What are you doing?'"

"I said, 'I'm counting whales.'"

"She goes, 'How many whales have you counted?'"

"I said, 'Thirty so far today.'"

"It turns out she was part of a census and they had counted 30 whales that day. So she talked me into joining."

Sjors quit his job to count whales, sleeping in his truck at night. Then he

heard about a study on the Colorado River. Seeing it as a way to raft the river for free, Sjors signed on, and spent 18 days at Hance Rapids.

"What I didn't realize was I would fall in love with [the Canyon]."

The next spring, Sjors volunteered as North Rim campground host, then continued on, doing maintenance. He helped out at Roaring Springs, then landed at Phantom Ranch, where he could stay year-round.

At Phantom, he became an extra hand for the rangers and got involved with a revegetation project that started in 1981.

By his own count, between November 1988 and October 1994, Sjors planted more than 200 trees, including mesquites, ashes and Goodding's willows. He stopped counting, but guesses he's planted at least 100 more. He's proudest of the redbuds.

"I had to experiment," he says. "I boiled the seeds for one minute exactly, then put the seeds under water for 12 hours. Then I put them under a wet towel for four days. I got egg cartons and put dirt in there, and put it in the sun for so many hours and kept it wet. That's where these guys are from. So they're my babies."

Then the condors arrived.

"I remember the first condor," Sjors says. "It was flying along the rim, a little speck. It must have been somewhere around '96. And I thought, *OK, there's no whales here, I'll watch condors.*"

But more than trees or condors, Sjors got to know people.

A few stand out: the circus performer from Sweden who hiked down on stilts, the cross-country cyclists who carried the wheels of their bikes, a pair of overweight women who had never hiked in their lives and arrived with their legs rubbed raw.

"They laughed at themselves for getting into this predicament," Sjors recalls. "They wanted to continue to the North Rim, and I assumed they're not coming back. They'd take the shuttle. No. They came right back. They said they couldn't believe the shuttle was 65 bucks. 'We're not paying 65 bucks!' So they went back across the Canyon."

All these experiences have rooted Sjors to this place, where he's content to sit and watch the world go by.

"I can't imagine leaving," he says. "It's part of me."

P R A T T ' S

Q & A



Jennifer Sedler
Miss Arizona

What's your favorite place in Arizona?
The desert washes in Tucson, because the desert has a lot of personal history for me. My great-great-grandfather was sheriff of Pima County when Arizona became a state, and my relatives were cattle ranchers, so when I was younger, my family would take me on walks through the wash and tell me stories about what life was like on the ranch.

How would you describe Arizona to Miss Vermont?

A lot of people from other states have this image in their heads of Arizona being one huge, hot, dry strip of desert that's infested with rattlesnakes. I love telling them about Lake Havasu, the snowy forests in Northern Arizona, Sedona's red rocks ...

What do you like to do when you get some quiet time?

During the school year at the University of Arizona, I loved getting off campus and going hiking with my friends on a Saturday morning.

Where does a beauty queen go for authentic Arizona food?

Flancer's in Gilbert has a prickly-pear-marinated chicken sandwich.

If you could have an Arizona celebrity as your neighbor, who would it be?

I'd definitely choose Steven Seagal. He's a great guy — very kind and down to earth, despite his sizeable stature.

Three words to describe Arizona to the judges.
Magnificent. Sunny. Home.

— Dave Pratt is the host of *Dave Pratt Live* on 103.9 FM in Phoenix



CRAIG SMITH

At Your Service

High thread counts, manicured putting greens and gourmet food are prerequisites for any great resort. What sets the Wigwam apart is its commitment to five-star customer service — at this historic retreat, everyone is treated like Joe DiMaggio.

By MARYAL MILLER

WHEN TIMES ARE TOUGH and rents are high, the hospitality industry can be a little inhospitable. Weary travelers must sometimes endure the contempt of underpaid and overworked hotel staff, fees for everything from toilet paper to tap water, and a D.I.Y. vacation style that takes the word “vacation” right out of your vacation. For travelers in metro Phoenix, the team at the Wigwam Resort is committed to reversing that trend and sticking to the fundamental principles of hospitality.

LITCHFIELD PARK
In 2010, Jerry Colangelo (the NBA Hall of Famer and legendary architect of the Phoenix Suns and Arizona Diamondbacks) and his partners poured \$7 million into the restoration of Colangelo’s favorite West Valley retreat. A year later, the spectacular 440-acre Wigwam Resort is once again turning heads.

Built in 1918 amid the cotton fields of Goodyear, the Wigwam was originally known as the Organization House, a small gathering place for visiting executives of the Goodyear Tire & Rubber Co. In 1929, the owners expanded the property, renamed it the Wigwam, and opened it to the public as a full-service dude ranch. Years later, it was transformed once again into a sprawling resort that boasted a whopping 54 holes of golf and a trendsetting clientele.

Around that same time, the owners also hired allegorist Les Sossaman, who, after 44 years of service, still stands in the Wigwam’s entrance, eagerly greeting guests with a “Hi folks!” and all the enthusiasm of a kid on Christmas morning. Sossaman, who was brought on as a bellman in 1968, is the archetype of the Wigwam’s excessively hospitable and undyingly loyal staff, and he can tell you all there is to know about the resort’s intriguing history. Among other things, he’ll tell you about the time he manned the Wigwam’s 1973 Elektra Records bash with Carly

Simon and Bread; how he chauffeured sports legends like Yogi Berra, Mickey Mantle, Joe DiMaggio and Jackie Robinson; and how he watched gaggles of famous ladies like Mary Tyler Moore and the Judds breeze through the lobby.

He’ll also tell you that after a heartbreaking decade of watching the Wigwam battle the perils of multiple ownerships and economic downturns, Sossaman is thrilled to see that his beloved resort is back among Arizona’s elite. And that its iconic wood-beamed archway is back in its rightful place at the entrance, its reimagined and rejuvenated Main Lodge is at once opulent and inviting, and all of its 331 casita-style rooms honor their Old West inspiration with style.

Combine those things with Colangelo’s dedication to preserve the vintage charm and old-fashioned spirit of service that made so many fall in love with the resort in its younger years, and the Wigwam glimmers like a mirage at the end of a dark desert highway. It’s magnificent, and if you squint hard enough, you can almost see a young Don Henley emerging from the mist and serving up wine. It’s exactly what a vacation should be.

The Wigwam Resort is located at 300 E. Wigwam Boulevard in Litchfield Park. For more information, call 623-935-3811 or visit www.wigwamresort.com.

Dawn Kish Rocks

We see hundreds of impressive portfolios, and we have the privilege of working with some of the best photographers in the Southwest. Dawn Kish of Flagstaff is on that list. This is one of her first shots for us, and there’s more to come — you’ll be seeing a lot of Dawn Kish in 2012.

By JEFF KIDA, photo editor

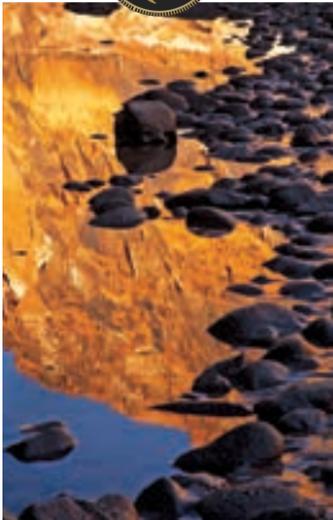


A climber stands beneath a boulder near Lees Ferry. | DAWN KISH

DAWN KISH SHOOTS what she loves — people and nature. And when those passions combine, as they did in this photograph, she gets especially excited. Kish made this photograph while rock-climbing with friends near Lees Ferry. Before settling on her vantage point in the shadows, Kish worked the entire perimeter of the location. She chose this angle because of the unusual silhouette that was created by the balanced boulder against the distant red hills. If you’re looking for a cliché in a Dawn Kish photograph, you won’t find one. She subscribes to a “careful observation of self” philosophy, both in the field and in the editing of her work. She’s always thinking: *How could this be better? Is there another angle or approach for next time?*



Enter our monthly caption contest by scanning this QR code with your smart phone or visiting <http://wp.me/pGZlw-JD>.



SUZANNE MATHIA

IN THE RAW

While most photographers shoot in JPEG format, more shades and colors are available by shooting in RAW. JPEG captures about 17 million tones. In RAW, that number hits 4.3 trillion, which is particularly helpful when it comes to maintaining details within shadows. RAW preserves about 500 shadow tones per channel; JPEG is about 20.



ADDITIONAL READING: Look for our book *Arizona Highways Photography Guide*, available at bookstores and www.arizona-highways.com/books.

ONLINE

For more photography tips, visit www.arizona-highways.com/photography.asp.

Arizona: 1992-2001

In Arizona's ninth decade, women take center stage in state politics, two spelunkers unveil an underground cathedral near Benson, and the Arizona Diamondbacks beat the New York Yankees in what many consider to be one of the best World Series ever.

By JANA BOMMERSBACH

EDITOR'S NOTE: In February 2012, Arizona will celebrate 100 years of statehood, and *Arizona Highways* will publish a special Centennial issue. Leading up to that milestone, we're presenting a 10-part history of the state. This is Part 9.

ARIZONA BEGAN ITS ninth decade by healing an old wound.

In 1992, voters approved a paid state holiday to honor Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Although Arizona was the first state to use the public vote to calendar MLK Day, citizens had previously turned down a holiday at the ballot box. They'd also seen a governor rescind the holiday and watched the legislature repeatedly refuse to act, making the Grand Canyon State the last state to publicly honor the civil rights hero.

While Arizona was behind the times in honoring King, it was ahead of the curve when it came to installing women as public officials. In 1998, Arizona elected women to its top five public offices: Republican Governor Jane Dee Hull; Republican Secretary of State Betsey Bayless; Democratic Attorney General Janet Napolitano; Republican Treasurer Carol Springer; and Republican Superintendent of Public Instruction Lisa Graham Keegan. Justice Sandra Day O'Connor, the first woman to serve on the U.S. Supreme Court, swore them into office in January 1999 (pictured below).

Sadly, Arizona also grieved around the same time, when two of its political giants — Barry Goldwater and Morris Udall — died in 1998.

Apart from the state's political landscape, its natural landscape was making news, as well, particularly at Kartchner Caverns State Park, which opened in 1999. Gary Tenen and Randy Tufts discovered the 2.5-mile cave system in 1974 and quietly explored it for four years before telling landowners James and Lois Kartchner. Decades later, the state purchased the land and developed the "living" caves for public enjoyment.

The caverns were a welcome addition to the state's portfolio, and so was the arrival of NHL hockey. In 1996, the Phoenix Coyotes, a professional ice hockey team from Winnipeg, took the ice in Phoenix. That same year, Arizona hosted its first Super Bowl.

College championships came to Arizona, as well, thanks to the University of Arizona's 1997 victory in the NCAA men's basketball tournament. In 1998, Arizona welcomed its first professional baseball team, and just a year later, in their second season, the Arizona Diamondbacks won the National League Western Division Championship. In 2001, the Diamondbacks made history by becoming the youngest expansion team to ever win the World Series. They defeated the New York Yankees in seven games, capping what many consider to be one of the best World Series ever.

Another first, but not the kind to brag about, occurred on September 5, 1997. That's when citizens saw their second governor in nine years removed from office in disgrace. Republican Governor Fife Symington resigned after being convicted of federal bank fraud. His conviction was overturned in 1999, but before the government could retry him, President Bill Clinton pardoned Symington. By then, the former governor had gone to cooking school.

Through all of the ups and downs, Arizona's growth was consistently up. Mid-decade, the state boasted 4 million residents, and by 2000, it was 5 million.

Former state legislator Polly Rosenbaum and U.S. Supreme Court Justice Sandra Day O'Connor (fourth and fifth from left) attended the swearing-in of Arizona's "Fab Five" in January 1999. From left: Lisa Graham Keegan, Janet Napolitano, Jane D. Hull, Rosenbaum, O'Connor, Carol Springer and Betsey Bayless. | ARIZONA STATE ARCHIVES

DID YOU KNOW?

- A first-class postage stamp cost 29 cents in 1992.
- *Billboard's* No. 1 song in 1996 was *Macarena* by Los del Rio.
- Manufacturing jobs accounted for 10.5 percent of state employment in 1998.
- Until 1999, the state had only two area codes: 602 and 520.



THE ARIZONA REPUBLIC



CRAIG SMITH

ARIZONA: THEN & NOW

FOR 32 YEARS, the Ciné Capri stood at the corner of 24th Street and Camelback Road in Phoenix. It opened with a showing of *The Agony and the Ecstasy* and, despite preservationists' best efforts, it closed with an ironic showing of *Titanic* on January 5, 1998. Six weeks later, the beloved theater was demolished. Today, an office building stands where the theater once did, and Harkins has resurrected the Ciné Capri at two locations in metro Phoenix.

IN THE NEWS

Headlines from
1992 - 2001

February 14, 1992:
"Symington Seeks Tax Cut:
Program Decried as 'Shell Game'"
— *The Arizona Republic*

September 17, 1993:
"DeConcini Bitterly Drops
Re-Election Plans"
— *Arizona Daily Star*

January 25, 1994:
"Taps for Bugel: Cards Coach
Fired After 4 Seasons"
— *Mesa Tribune*

August 25, 1994:
"More Trouble for McCain?
Ex-Worker: Cindy Demanded
Perjury in Adoption"
— *Phoenix Gazette*

April 16, 1995:
"An Acre An Hour; The Price
of Sprawl — A Delicate Balance:
Can Growing Valley Still
Preserve Desert?"
— *The Arizona Republic*

May 7, 1996:
"If a Wilderness Could Weep:
Four Peaks' Lush Ponderosa
Pine Forest Now an Apocalyptic
Landscape of Ash, Memories"
— *The Arizona Republic*

June 9, 1997:
"Kyl Betting Against Online
Gambling: Senator Says Law
Needs to Catch Up With
Internet Casinos"
— *The Arizona Republic*

August 8, 1999:
"Free Ticket to Speed: Time,
Officer Shortages Lead
to Fast Freeways"
— *Mesa Tribune*





KODAK 320 TXP

THE PERKINS RANCH, EST. 1900

Perkinsville, Arizona

BY KELLY KRAMER | PHOTOGRAPH BY SCOTT BAXTER

Silkie Perkins likes to paint, but don't ask her if she considers herself an artist. She doesn't. She's a rancher through and through. Five generations have worked the Perkins Ranch — a rolling swath of land near the Verde River, north of Clarkdale — since it was established at the turn of the 20th century. And, just as art has evolved, so has the art of cattle-ranching. "There's always been a lot of fluctuation in the market, as well as in the weather," Perkins says. "We've seen a lot of droughts and seen everything come back. Everything is cyclical." Though the rains and the price of beef may change, Perkins' love of ranching doesn't. "This is a way of life," she says. "I'm free. I'm at no man's beck and call. It's a whole life, a heritage." Scott Baxter photographed Perkins at Baker's Pass Tank on May 21, 2011, at 6 p.m.

EDITOR'S NOTE: "100 Years, 100 Ranchers" has been designated an official Centennial Legacy Project. Every month, we'll be featuring one of the ranchers. It's part of our own Centennial coverage, which will continue through February 2012. For more information about "100 Years, 100 Ranchers," visit www.100years100ranchers.com.



CRAIG SMITH

Street Food

Although it's located on an avenue in uptown Phoenix, Gallo Blanco is creating a buzz with its traditional Mexican street food. But don't let the hipster chic digs fool you. The food is down-home and delicious.

By KATHY RITCHIE

GALLO BLANCO CAFÉ & Bar doesn't look like the kind of restaurant that would serve up traditional Mexican street food. Located inside the refurbished Clarendon Hotel in uptown Phoenix, the place is decidedly more hipster chic — with its stained concrete floors, brightly colored walls, recycled furnishings and exposed ducts — than it is food cart. Even the crowd, a mix of business professionals, young families, older couples and skinny-jean types, add to Gallo Blanco's eclectic vibe.

This isn't your typical Mexican-food joint.

But once you taste the food that comes out of chef/owner Doug Robson's kitchen, you'll understand why people keep coming back — often for seconds and thirds. Growing up in Mexico City, Robson lived off street food, so it makes sense that he'd model his own menu after the food he loved.

PHOENIX

But it's not just Robson's cook-what-you-love philosophy that has made Gallo Blanco a hit. It's the fact that his food is made with the freshest ingredients possible and sourced from local vendors and farms. Nothing is frozen. Everything is made to order — like the guacamole, for instance. As soon as an order is placed, the avocados are cracked open and mixed with Roma tomatoes, navel orange segments, fresh jalapeños, onions and cilantro. The whole thing is topped off with cotija cheese.

After noshing on the guacamole, be sure to try Robson's street tacos. They fit perfectly in one hand, but sustain diners with a sampling of all four food groups. In fact, the tacos are so good, they've secured Gallo Blanco's place as a destination for street taco connoisseurs — for better or for worse.

"Gallo Blanco wasn't intended to be a taco shop," says Susan Burgos, Gallo Blanco's general manager. "We wanted to offer fine dining — quality food — at street vendor prices."

With five different kinds of tacos to choose from — pork, carne asada, fish, shrimp and veggie — each ranging in price from \$2 to \$3.50, it's easy to suffer from eyes-bigger-than-stomach syndrome. That's OK. It's worth sampling all five tacos.

The savory carne asada features a marinated slab of mesquite-grilled ribeye, topped with a fire-roasted tomato salsa. The *cochinita*, or pork, taco has a salty-sweetness to it,

probably because it's slow-braised in a curious concoction made from beer, Coca-Cola, chiles, onions and pineapple for four hours, all while wrapped in a banana leaf. The veggie tacos are stuffed with seasonal vegetables, pico de gallo and a dash of guacamole. The fish selection varies, but just like the shrimp taco, there's no skimping on quality or quantity here.

Gallo Blanco also dishes out some other very good eats, including *tortas* (sandwiches) and *clote callejero* (grilled corn on the cob), as well as house specialty items like their half *pollo asado* and *posole*. You can also order breakfast all day.

As for beverages, expect some popular Mexican brands, including Coke "Hecho in Mexico." And, yes, margaritas. The fresh-squeezed juices probably have something to do with their deliciousness. "Pretty much all we do is prep," says Burgos. "I have a bartender who preps for like three or four hours just to make the mixes for the entire day — we make everything."

Since opening its doors in 2009, Gallo Blanco (which is Mexican slang for "white guy" and happens to refer to Robson) is doing rather well, especially among people living in the area. But, then again, that was the point. "We want to be a neighborhood place that happens to serve really good Mexican food," Burgos says. "We want to be approachable and we want the food to be simple."

Mission accomplished.

Gallo Blanco is located at 401 W. Clarendon Avenue in Phoenix. For more information, call 602-237-0880 or visit www.galloblanco.cafe.com.

Nothing to Be Afraid of Cross paths with a glossy snake and you might mistake it for a rattler. But don't be fooled. Although glossies resemble their more ferocious counterparts, their bark is worse than their bite. By KATHY RITCHIE

"aid back" isn't the first thing that comes to mind when people think about snakes, but the *Arizona elegans*, or glossy snake, is pretty much that. In fact, you might say that glossy snakes are a bit too mellow. "There's nothing really spectacular about them," says Paula Swanson, manager of reptiles, amphibians and invertebrates at the Phoenix Zoo.

Despite being the low men on the reptilian totem pole, glossies do have one distinctive characteristic that sets them apart from other Arizona snakes: They have incredibly smooth, glossy skin, which distinguishes them from similar-looking gopher snakes. And that glossy skin comes in a variety of patterns and colors, including shades of gray, tan, brown and even pink.

Unlike their more nefarious relatives, glossy snakes are nonvenomous. But when confronted with a human, they might try to mimic rattlesnakes by vibrating their tails.

Unfortunately, these snakes, which average 3 feet in length, aren't masters of disguise. What's more, when handled by humans, they seldom bite — despite having a set of curved, needle-like teeth. And even if a glossy did try to sink its not-so-ferocious teeth into you, it probably wouldn't leave much of a mark. "A smaller glossy could barely puncture your skin," Swanson says. "I'd much rather get bit by a glossy snake than a dog or cat."

It seems the only animals these constrictors frighten are their prey, which includes small mammals and lizards.

With that kind of reputation — or lack thereof — glossies simply try to avoid humans and other predators ("They're a good bite-sized snack for roadrunners," Swanson notes) by being nocturnal. During the day, they're likely hiding underground — their narrow, pointed heads make them efficient burrowers.

There are three subspecies of *Arizona*

elegans: The desert glossy snake, which can be found in Western and Southwestern Arizona; the Arizona glossy snake, which inhabits the south-central part of the state; and the Painted Desert glossy snake, which can be found in Northeastern Arizona and the southeastern part of the state.

Despite their mild-mannered reputation, glossies do become active in the springtime, when it's time to court. Not much is known about their breeding habits, but according to Randy Babb, a biologist for the Arizona Game and Fish Department, glossies are probably no different than other snakes when it comes to mating. After the female releases a scent trail, which the male then follows, the snakes intertwine their tails and lie next to each other. The female will lay a clutch of about a half-dozen eggs, and, come July or August, the eggs will hatch.

If you do happen upon a glossy snake, remember, they're actually quite gentle. And should you feel the urge to pick it up, don't. There's a reason glossy snakes come out only at night, spending their days below the surface, far, far away from you.

nature factoid



BRUCE D. TAUBERT

BEEP! BEEP!

Although roadrunners are best known for their land speed — they can hit speeds up to 18 mph — they're also savvy predators, fueling their sprints with snakes, lizards, insects and even baby quails. When roadrunners sense danger and when they're running downhill, they'll briefly take flight, but their short wings don't allow them to remain airborne for long. The birds, which are common across the desert Southwest, nest in bushes, cactuses and small trees.



BRUCE D. TAUBERT



Veterans Day Parade

NOVEMBER 11 PHOENIX

Celebrate Veterans Day by honoring the men and women in uniform at this year's VA Veterans Day Parade in downtown Phoenix. With floats, bands, military vehicles, a military flyover and the 108th Army National Guard Band on hand to pay tribute to these heroes, the event highlights the contributions of the more than 300,000 veterans in Maricopa County who have defended our freedom. *Information: www.phoenix.va.gov*



Gem Fair

NOVEMBER 26-27 WICKENBURG

Prepare to be dazzled at this 11th annual gem show. More than 40 dealers will be on hand to show off their semiprecious stones, fossils, gems and minerals. Besides perusing the rocks, visitors can sit in on demonstrations and even learn how to make jewelry. *Information: 928-684-0380*

Pecan Festival

NOVEMBER 12 SAHUARITA

With thousands of attendees expected at this year's "nut" fest, the folks behind this official Centennial event have decided to mix things up. Visitors can expect extended hours and farm displays, as well as educational activities and live entertainment. But the best part might be the local foods, products and crafts from the Santa Cruz River Valley. *Information: 520-820-3299 or www.sahuaritapecanfestival.com*

Make Money With Your Camera

NOVEMBER 5 PHOENIX

Former Arizona Highways photo editor J. Peter Mortimer has been selling photographs for more than 25 years. He's shot everything from weddings and portraits to news assignments for *Time*, *The New York Times* and the *Los Angeles Times*. Using his experience as a guide, he'll give you tips on how you can put your creative ideas to work. *Information: 888-790-7042 or www.friends-of-highways.com*



Balloon Festival

NOVEMBER 18-20 YUMA

Visitors can expect a colorful three days as the Colorado River Crossing Balloon Festival takes off and celebrates its 21st year. Every morning, balloons will be inflated and sent floating above the Sonoran Desert. The family friendly event culminates with the annual AEA Federal Credit Union Glow, where the balloons, tethered to the ground, burn at full blast, lighting up the night sky. *Information: 928-783-007 or www.visituma.com*

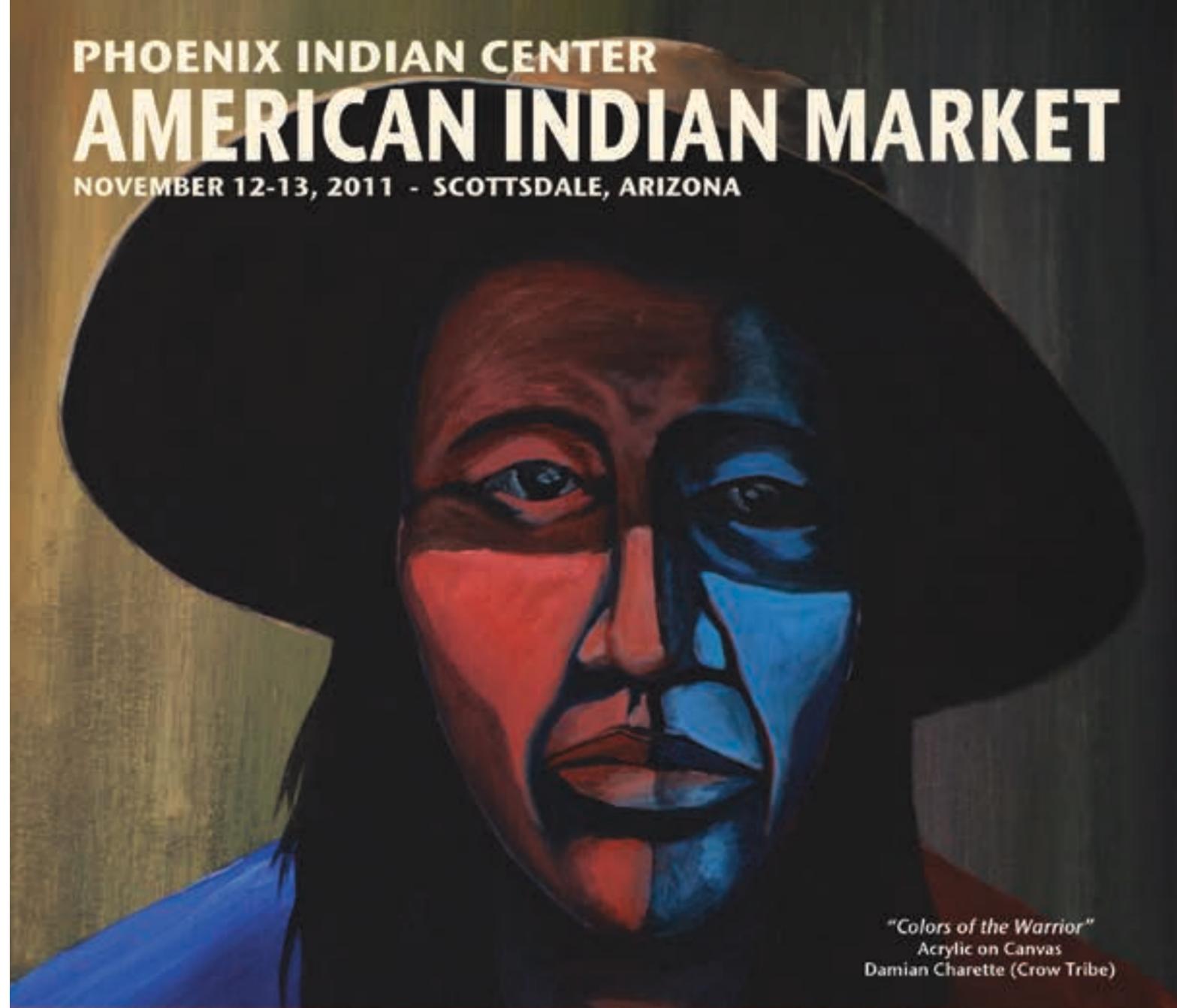


The Polar Express

NOVEMBER 11 - JANUARY 7 WILLIAMS

Get into the holiday spirit by riding on the Grand Canyon Railway's *Polar Express*. Trains depart from Williams for an exciting journey to the "North Pole." Once on-board, guests can sit back, relax and enjoy a cup of hot cocoa and a cookie, all while listening to the classic holiday story. *Information: 800-843-8724 or www.thetrain.com*

— Compiled by Dan Jacka & Kathy Ritchie



"Colors of the Warrior"
Acrylic on Canvas
Damian Charette (Crow Tribe)

POTTERY ◊ CARVINGS ◊ JEWELRY ◊ RUGS ◊ BASKETS ◊ PAINTINGS ◊ SCULPTURES ◊ TEXTILES ◊ OTHER FINE ART



PHOENIX INDIAN CENTER

AMERICAN INDIAN MARKET

CELEBRATING OUR CULTURE THROUGH ARTISTIC EXPRESSION

JOIN US November 12-13, 2011 in beautiful Scottsdale, Arizona, and experience American Indian art at its finest. The American Indian Market features one-of-a-kind fine art, American Indian cuisine, and more. Admission and parking is free.

For more event details, visit www.picindianmarket.com or call (602) 264-6768, ext. 2900.

For Old Times' Sake

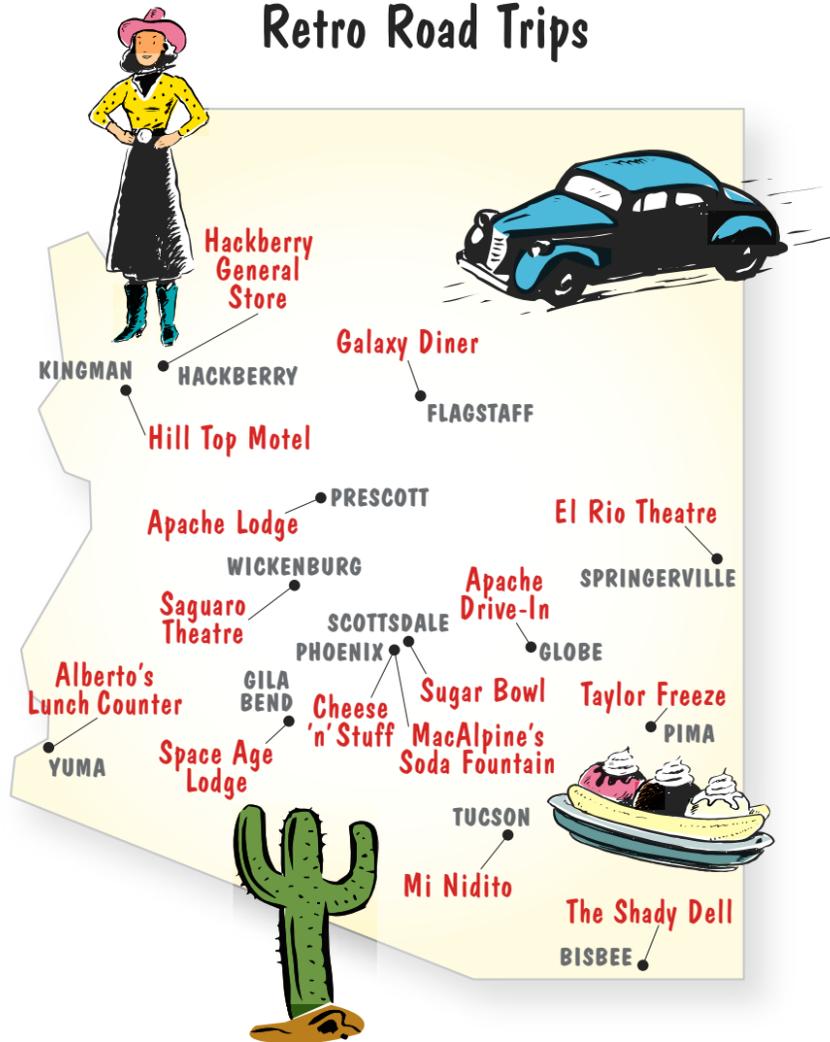
Some pieces of the past — DDT, the Edsel, *Tip-Toe Thru' the Tulips* — are better left behind, but some things are worth reliving. Things like ice-cream sodas, Airstreams and drive-in movie theaters. Because of Historic Route 66, Arizona has more than its share of retro, but the chrome and neon aren't limited to the Mother Road. There are flashbacks all over the state.

BY KELLY KRAMER & KATHY RITCHIE
PHOTOGRAPHS BY PAUL MARKOW

Talk about the hostess with the mostest! Wearing her poodle skirt for that 1950s feel, this hostess helps treat guests at the Galaxy Diner in Flagstaff to a truly retro experience.



Retro Road Trips



GALAXY DINER FLAGSTAFF

Vinyl booths, jukeboxes, a checkerboard floor and a handful of neon signs give Flagstaff's Galaxy Diner the feel of an authentic 1950s diner. Well, those details, and the fact that Galaxy is, in fact, an authentic 1950s diner — it opened along Historic Route 66 in 1958, but wasn't renamed the Galaxy Diner until 1995. Talk to people who've been there, and they'll say things like, "They've got the neon, the jukebox, the black-and-white photos of stars like Marilyn Monroe and James Dean on the walls, and just the kind of food you'd expect for breakfast — coffee in thick, white mugs; excellent crispy, spicy home fries; and eggs any way you'd like." In a nutshell, the diner's a flashback, but the food is fresh — and it's out of this world. Information: 931 W. Route 66, Flagstaff, 928-774-2466



Nothing sets the tone in a '50s diner better than a jukebox that plays the musical stylings of Elvis Presley, Bobby Darin and Patsy Cline.





Taylor Freeze offers guests a slice of nostalgia with a modern twist. The Taylor Tacos are owner Sheryl Goodman's mom's own recipe and a huge hit with customers.

TAYLOR FREEZE

PIMA

If you have a hankering for a 44-ounce milkshake, you'll want to visit Pima. That's a big drink for such a tiny town, but for the past 48 years, those shakes have been flying out the doors of Taylor Freeze, along with Taylor Tacos, nationally famous Tastee-Freez ice cream, and sodas served over flaked ice. "People love our sodas because of that ice," says owner Sheryl Goodman. And she should know — the restaurant has been in her family for four generations. "Thirteen of 21 grandchildren have worked here, and two of the oldest great-grandchildren have worked here, too. My parents were very community-oriented, and that's what's helped preserve us." So, too, has Joyce Johnson. She's worked at Taylor Freeze for 44 years. "People come in just to see her," Goodman says. "She's an icon." *Information: 225 W. Center Street, Pima, 928-485-2661*

During the 1950s and 1960s, MacAlpine's was ground zero for geeks, greasers and pink ladies who would hang out and drink ice-cream sodas, egg creams and malts.

EL RIO THEATRE **SPRINGERVILLE**

Consider El Rio the grande dame of Springerville's Main Street. At 88, she's aged gracefully, and even retains a popcorn machine that theater owners installed in 1950. Although a burned-out cable has sidelined the machine, it can be used "in a bind," says theater owner Anne Madariaga. "The building hails from the early 1900s, and my husband remembers watching silent movies in it. Practically all of the fixtures are original to the building, but we've made a few upgrades over the years." The Madariagas have owned the 247-seat El Rio for 44 years, but don't ask Anne about her favorite movie. "That's a loaded question," she says. Maybe, but you can expect to find Hollywood's most recent blockbusters at El Rio — the single-screen theater offers one show per evening on the weekends. *Information: 14 W. Main Street, Springerville, 928-333-4590*

HILL TOP MOTEL **KINGMAN**

For more than 50 years, the Hill Top Motel has promised visitors "the best view in Kingman." And, thanks to the 29-room property's gorgeous views of the Hualapai Mountains, it delivers. Owner Dennis Schroeder has worked hard to maintain the authenticity of the motel, which opened in 1954. "We've tried to make minimally invasive upgrades to the property, like adding wireless Internet connections," Schroeder says. Sure, the trees are taller, the air-conditioning units are more efficient and the former owners added a swimming pool, but, for the most part, the Hill Top is a throwback to the '50s, when, as Schroeder says, "you didn't have to worry about tomorrow until tomorrow arrived." *Information: 1901 E. Andy Devine Avenue, Kingman, 928-753-2198 or www.hilltopmotelaz.com*

HACKBERRY GENERAL STORE **HACKBERRY**

You won't be able to fill 'er up, but you'll certainly get your fill of Route 66 memorabilia. Hackberry

General Store is, itself, a relic of a bygone era, but thanks to owners John and Kerry Pritchard, the store is enjoying a sort of renaissance. Walk into the store and you'll step back in time. Music from a jukebox plays Del Shannon, Ricky Nelson and Elvis Presley, and heaps of memorabilia — circa the mid-20th century — cover every wall, nook and cranny. Although you can't buy gas (the tanks were removed in 1978), you can enjoy an 8-ounce bottle of Coke as you get your picture taken next to the couple's most popular Route 66 acquisition: a 1957 red Corvette, a tribute to *Route 66*, the popular 1960s TV show. "We bought this store on a whim so we would have something to do, and people fell in love with the stuff," John explains. "This store is a survivor." *Information: 11255 E. Route 66, Hackberry, 928-769-2605 or www.hackberrygeneralstore.com*

MACALPINE'S SODA FOUNTAIN **PHOENIX**

Since 1929, MacAlpine's has been known for its soda fountain. That's because it used to be a pharmacy, and pharmacies often had soda fountains, which gave pharmacists a place to create their medicinal concoctions. In 1938, pharmacist Fred MacAlpine purchased the place and changed its name from Birch's 7th Street Pharmacy to MacAlpine's. He sold it 10 years later, but the name stuck around. During the 1950s and 1960s, MacAlpine's was ground zero for geeks, greasers and pink ladies who would hang out and drink ice-cream sodas, egg creams and malts. And many of those kids left their mark. "The underside of the fountain is covered in bubblegum," says owner Monica Heizenrader, who took over in 2001. "We left the gum since it's part of the history." *Kids back then!* Besides the gum, there's plenty of other history still intact, like the counter and malt machine. Even some of the waitresses get in on the act, wearing their hair in victory rolls. Visitors who pop by can order old-school sodas or choose a bite to eat from MacAlpine's full menu. *Information: 2303 N. Seventh Street, Phoenix, 602-262-5545 or www.macalpines1928.com*



Customers feel like they've entered another era when they visit MacAlpine's Soda Fountain, where visitors can literally get a taste of the 1950s and 1960s — MacAlpine's still serves up classics, like sarsaparilla soda.

Many of the ladies who work at MacAlpine's dress the part. Victory rolls, like those worn by these servers, were a popular hairstyle in the 1940s.



SPACE AGE LODGE GILA BEND

NASA's Space Shuttle program may have come to an end, but thanks to the otherworldly design of the Best Western Space Age Lodge, visitors to Gila Bend are still able to get a feel for the extraterrestrial. Built in 1965, in the midst of the Space Race, the lodge retains its UFO-inspired kitsch, from the flying saucer on the roof to the space-themed art that adorns its walls. There's also a restaurant on site, which is famous for its breakfast and its space-sleek design. As one visitor put it, "The restaurant is less Elroy Jetson and more James T. Kirk." Trekkies rejoice. When a faulty neon sign ignited the building in 1998, the owners were quick to rebuild. They even hung a banner during construction to reassure its loyal followers that nothing would change. "Attacked by Aliens!" it read. *Information: 401 E. Pima Street, Gila Bend, 866-683-7722*

APACHE LODGE PRESCOTT

Not much has changed at the Apache Lodge since it opened as a motor court in 1946. Well, the pool is gone, and the rooms have received some TLC, but for the most part, you'll find the lodge to be a throwback to the days of *American Bandstand*, Andy Williams and *Captain Kangaroo*. "The colors have varied over the years," says manager John Dickey. "Other than that, the rooms are pretty much the same. We still have those small showers — the ones where if you bend over to wash your feet, you hit your head and your butt at the same time." Tiny showers aside, the Apache has long been a favorite among Prescott travelers. *Information: 1130 E. Gurley Street, Prescott, 928-445-1422 or www.apachelodge.com*

SAGUARO THEATRE WICKENBURG

When Dwight "Red" Harkins, the patriarch of the Harkins Theatres chain, wanted to open a theater in Wickenburg, he decided to design it himself. The result was the Saguaro Theatre, a single-screen cinema that opened in 1948. Owner Brian Deveny, who purchased the theater in 1995, says that many of its fixtures are original. "We've really only upgraded by doing a few facelifts, like painting the auditorium floor, adding air conditioning and updating the carpet." Among the original details are the theater's signature saguaro, which tops the marquee; the box office; and the snack bar. "People laugh when they come in because not a lot has changed," Deveny says. "At the same time, they say, 'Please don't change a thing.'" *Information: 176 E. Wickenburg Way, Wickenburg, 928-684-7189*



SUGAR BOWL SCOTTSDALE

Legendary illustrator Bil Keane knows a thing or two about the Sugar Bowl. As a longtime resident of Paradise Valley, Keane's been visiting the Scottsdale institution — and partaking of its famous ice cream — for decades. In fact, the Sugar Bowl plays a starring role in scores of Keane's *Family Circus* cartoons. While Keane prefers his ice cream a little bit melted, most of the parlor's other patrons prefer sundaes straight from the carton. "The menu's the same as it was in 1958," says owner Carroll Huntress. "Sure, the prices are a little different — an ice cream cone used to cost 20 cents — but everything else is the same, including the clientele. People who ate here when they were kids return years later." It's no wonder. From its pink façade to its vintage counter, the Sugar Bowl is a scoop of classic Arizona. *Information: 4005 N. Scottsdale Road, Scottsdale, 480-946-0051*

The menu hasn't changed at the Sugar Bowl in Scottsdale, and neither has the wall art, some of which was drawn by Bil Keane (above), the man behind those wonderfully popular *Family Circus* cartoons.





TRUE GRITS

Mention Mel's Diner to anyone who watched television in the 1970s, and there's a good chance they'll blurt out, "Kiss my grits!", the classic line from the sitcom *Alice*. The show was fictional, but there is a Mel's Diner, and the sign out front is the real deal.

When you walk into Mel's Diner on 17th and Grand avenues in Phoenix, you won't feel like you're walking onto the set of *Alice*, the iconic 1970s sitcom. No grouchy Mel serving up greasy eats or shouting at his waitresses. No sassy, man-hungry Flo yelling, "Kiss my grits!" No frazzled Vera spilling a box of straws everywhere. And certainly no *Alice*. The only thing about Mel's Diner (the one on 17th Avenue) that has anything to do with Mel's Diner (the one on TV) is the sign — that classic coffee-cup sign with the arrow pouring out of it, luring the hungry and caffeine-starved masses inside.

In fact, there never was a Mel's Diner until

a producer for the show spotted the sign and asked the owner if she'd consider changing Chris' Diner to Mel's. Even then, the diner didn't become Mel's Diner until 2007, when a husband-and-wife couple from Greece took over the joint.

"I didn't know about the show," Paraskevi "Pari" Stamatouli says. "People would come in asking if Mel is still working here. I'd tell them, 'He's off today.'" Pari and her husband, Emmanouil Stivaktakis, came from a country where *Alice* never aired on the small screen. And so, they were a bit taken aback by the number of strangers who would pull into the parking lot to take a picture of the sign or

walk into the diner asking for Alice.

"Customers were telling us that this is where they filmed the show," Pari says. It wasn't long before Emmanouil, a businessman at heart, did his homework. He watched DVDs of the show and decided to *Alice*-up the place. He purchased memorabilia from eBay, including autographed photos of the cast and old *TV Guide* covers. The waitresses even wear updated versions of the classic pink uniforms worn by the cast.

"People love the uniforms," Pari says with a laugh. "Especially the guys." And here we thought they were coming back for the good old-fashioned diner food, plus a few Greek items. Gyro sandwich, anyone?

Like Mel's Diner, Mel's Diner has plenty of regulars who come in not to step into the TV past, but for the people who are there now. "We make them feel at home," Pari says. "We have their coffee ready, and we know what they're going to eat. They feel comfortable."

— Kathy Ritchie

Information: 1747 NW Grand Avenue, Phoenix, 602-252-8283 or www.melsdinerphoenix.com

CHEESE 'N' STUFF PHOENIX

Nothing says "deli" like Boar's Head meats. And that's exactly what owner Stan Zawatski serves up and attributes much of his success to. Well, Boar's Head and a very "happy staff." Cheese 'n' Stuff is a family run joint, and behind the counter, you'll find Stan, his sister Susan and daughter Crystal. But it's not just the family atmosphere that keeps folks coming back for more. Zawatski dishes out some pretty tasty eats, like his popular Doughboy sandwich, which is made with turkey, bacon, Swiss cheese, avocado and mayo on sourdough. The deli first opened in 1949, and in 1972, Zawatski's father entered the scene. Two years later, Stan started working at the deli. Today, not much has changed (except for the Boar's Head). "We still have the same two meat slicers that were here when the deli first opened," Zawatski says. "We've changed the blades and the motors, but they're still the same." Zawatski has also kept one of the original beverage cases, which he says dates back to the mid-1950s, giving his place that walk-back-in-time vibe. Add that to the Boar's Head, and it's plain to see why Cheese 'n' Stuff is still going strong. Information: 5042 N. Central Avenue, Phoenix, 602-266-3636 or www.cheesenstuffdeli.com

MI NIDITO TUCSON

The Lopez family has been serving its signature chiles rellenos to hordes of Tucson's Mexican-food aficionados since 1952. And although Mi Nidito is small — the name translates as "my little nest" — its list of celebrity clientele is big. Linda Ronstadt, Kurt Russell, Willie Nelson and former President Bill Clinton have all visited the Tucson institution. The owners even commemorated Clinton's visit via "The President's Plate," a combo platter that features a bean tostada, birria taco, chile relleno, chicken enchilada and beef tamale. "You never know who you'll run into at Mi Nidito, and that's part of the fun," says one frequent guest. "The birria flautas are the best in Tucson, and the tacos are always fantastic." Information: 1813 S. Fourth Avenue, Tucson, 520-622-5081 or www.minidito.net



APACHE DRIVE-IN GLOBE

Technology often trumps a really good thing — like drive-ins. Thanks to digital projectors and 3D, moviegoers are forgoing the simple things like setting up lawn chairs in the back of their pickup trucks for a pair of 3D glasses. In the 1950s and 1960s, drive-ins were a hit with families (who could take their young children out) and young couples (who were looking for the perfect make-out spot). The Apache Drive-In was no exception. Built in 1974, the drive-in sits on 8 acres of land and offers folks something unique to do on a Friday night. Nothing much has changed. Yes, the projector and screen have been updated, but some drivers still park their rides by the few existing pole speakers. "People just love those poles," says owner Robert Hollis. "They just get very nostalgic." The rest simply tune in to Apache's FM station to hear the movie. With only four remaining drive-ins in the state, Hollis isn't sure he'll be able to keep the past alive for much longer. "I have no doubt my drive-in will be gone in five years," he says matter-of-factly. "Times are changing and the upkeep on drive-ins is very high. Eventually, it'll become cost prohibitive." Let that be a warning: Best make your way to Globe before technology catches up to the Apache Drive-In. Information: 1785 N. Broad Street, Globe, 928-425-4511 or www.apache.holliscinemas.com

Time may soon catch up with the Apache Drive-In, but for now, the place is enjoyed by those looking for one of life's simple pleasures.



Plastic pink flamingos can be found throughout the Shady Dell in Bisbee, where what used to be an embarrassing piece of lawn décor is now a piece of good old-fashioned Americana.

THE SHADY DELL BISBEE

Seventy years ago, a man named Wally Byam had a vision. He wanted to create a fleet of travel trailers that provided luxury accommodations and could easily be towed by the family car. And so the Airstream was born. Seventeen years ago, Ed Smith and Rita Personet had an idea, too: to recreate a slice of classic, midcentury Americana by collecting vintage trailers and renting them out to visitors. Enter the Shady Dell — simply put, the



place is kitsch on wheels. In 2007, the Shady Dell became the property of Jennifer and Justin Luria. Today, it boasts nine restored vintage trailers, including a 1949 Airstream, and the place gives “getting away from it all” a whole new meaning. Time has a way of slowing down at the Shady Dell, and in many ways, it still feels like Ike is president and *Singin’ in the Rain* is a new release. Perhaps it has something to do with those pink flamingos. “We feel it’s not only important, but fun to preserve these trailers so that all generations can use them,” Jennifer says. “We also think it’s important to offer a place to stay that has history, charm and décor purchased from vintage stores, rather than a hotel catalog or the mall.” *Information: 1 Douglas Road, Bisbee, 520-432-3567 or www.theshadydell.com*

ALBERTO'S LUNCH COUNTER YUMA

Long before Albert H. Alvarez took over the lunch counter inside Sant Drug Co., the soda fountain inside was being used primarily for medicinal purposes. Today, that soda fountain is still in use, although most folks who order a soda aren't looking to be cured of whatever ails them. In fact, if something does ail them, it's likely hunger, and that's where Alvarez and his tamales come in. Tamales? Yes, tamales. For the past 10 years, Alberto's Lunch Counter, also known as Alberto's Other Place, has been dishing out mouthwatering, homemade tamales. Some of his tamale offerings include green chile, corn and red beef. Alvarez, however, isn't one to be pigeonholed. He does offer a few other items on his menu. “We have Mexican food and a very good hamburger and fries,” he says. Alvarez's counter is small, but not too small. There are 19 stools and a table that seats five, but if you arrive during the midday rush, you may be out of luck. The place fills up fast. Whoever said tamales and soda fountains don't go together has clearly never been to Alberto's. *Information: 419 W. Eighth Street, Yuma, 928-329-0153* ■

Glimmer of Hope

Looking back, it's hard to believe that the vibrant neon signs of the '40s, '50s and '60s were replaced by mass-produced, backlit plastic eyesores. But they were, to the point of near extinction. Fortunately, the losses have fueled attempts to save what's left, and the flickering radiance of neon is making a comeback. It's early, but there *are* signs of life.

BY KATHY MONTGOMERY
PHOTOGRAPHS BY TERENCE MOORE



Although it has a retro feel, the neon cowboy at Tucson's El Corral is a new addition to the Western-themed steakhouse.

For 50 years she dove from nearly 80 feet high, making a shallow blue splash at the bottom. In her turquoise bathing suit, her hair as perfect as her form, the diving lady repeated her performance 360 times per hour, 365 days a year. That is, until she plunged to the pavement in a pounding rain. It seemed unlikely she would survive.

Mesa Police surrounded the diving lady with yellow tape. Her loss felt like a crime.

The Starlite Motel's animated neon sign survived the opening of Interstate 10, the advent of LED, even the paving of the pool the diving lady once advertised. But as the years rolled by and the weather took its toll, it was only a matter of time. She eventually succumbed to a storm on October 5, 2010.

A welding point from a previous repair failed against the wind. The impact shattered the diving lady's neon tubes and dented her corroded head and hands. It looked like the end of an era. Then a couple of historic preservationists intervened.

Reporters covered every update on the diving lady's condition. The Society for Commercial Archaeology placed her at the top of its endangered roadside places list, dedicating \$250 toward her restoration. Fans sent money along with grief-stricken notes. Businesses offered labor and materials. The diving lady made more than 250 friends on Facebook.

Mesa's outpouring of support followed earlier events in Texas and Missouri, where neon fans in those states rallied to save other storm-topped signs. Yet even as the diving lady was being repaired, another landmark sign just down the street was quietly taken down and hauled away.

Admired for their artistry, their exuberance and, sometimes, even their downright gaudiness, vintage neon signs have been disappearing. The reasons are as old as commerce. Owners change, businesses evolve, new technologies replace old. Restrictive sign codes passed in many cities prevent their repair and restoration, forcing owners to tear signs down or let them rust until they fall.

The losses have fueled attempts to save what remains, with neon lovers storing signs in backyards hoping for a brighter future. Now neon is seeing new light. Once viewed only as part of a property, signs, themselves, can now be designated historic. Neon tours and museums draw crowds in Los Angeles and Las Vegas, and neon auctions bring big bucks.



Larry Graham (right), the owner of Graham's Neon Electric Sign Specialists in Mesa, and Scott Houston worked to restore the diving lady to its former glory.

For 50 years she dove from nearly 80 feet high, making a shallow blue splash at the bottom. In her turquoise bathing suit, her hair as perfect as her form, the diving lady repeated her performance 360 times per hour, 365 days a year.

The 80-foot diving lady, which long served as a beacon for the Starlite Motel in Mesa, came crashing down last fall during a windstorm. This photo captured the first time the diving lady was lit up following her painstaking restoration.



Still, saving neon is not easy. Repairs are expensive and a dwindling number of artisans have the know-how. But neon signs can rally communities. Recognizing this, cities from St. Louis to West Hollywood have restored neon signs along Historic Route 66 with support and funding from the National Park Service. In Arizona, neon is breathing new life into neighborhoods in decline.

Today, we associate neon with mid-20th century America, but a French chemist displayed the first neon tubes at the Paris Expo in 1910, and the first commercial neon sign advertised a barbershop on the Champs-Élysées.

In this country, neon was fueled by a growing car culture, so it's fitting that a Los Angeles auto dealer installed the country's first neon signs in 1923. The two blue-and-orange Packard signs reportedly stopped traffic on Wilshire Boulevard. By the end of the decade, neon lit up Times Square and Las Vegas.

Meanwhile, cars were changing the country. As the town square gave way to growth along the highways, sign makers molded neon into an infinite variety of shapes and letters, and put them in motion.

In Arizona, motels with names like The Frontier, La Siesta and the Hacienda sprouted up along Historic Route 66 in the north, and on U.S. routes 80, 89 and 60 through Tucson, Mesa and Phoenix. Sporting neon images of teepees, dancing Indians and bucking horses, neon signs promised the mythical experience of the golden age of the Western.

"The best neon was in the late '40s and '50s," says Phoenix Historic Preservation Officer Barbara Stocklin. "It's part of the story of what was happening on Grand Avenue and Van Buren [in Phoenix], where the city was spreading out. So when you're on Van Buren and there are 15 hotels, how do you get attention? You have the bigger, flashier sign."

Despite a brief resurgence of interest, by the 1970s, neon was in decline. Flashing arrows gave way to an understated aesthetic. Mass-produced backlit plastic signs became cheaper to install and maintain. In the '80s and '90s, towns and cities across the country passed sign ordinances that made many neon signs nonconforming. Though grandfathered in, they couldn't be taken down for repairs and reinstalled without being brought into code.

The Starlite Motel's diving lady perfectly illustrates the phenomenon. In Mesa, animated neon has been illegal since the mid-1990s. At 78 feet tall, she rises 66 feet over the maximum height allowed.

When preservation architect Ron Peters visited the Starlite in the wake of the storm, the owners were getting quotes to haul the sign away. Repair estimates were \$60,000 to \$65,000, 10 times the original cost of the sign and far beyond the reach of a small motel.

Peters offered to put together a group to take on the project. He and Victor Linoff had been discussing plans to form the Mesa Preservation Foundation. Their original intent was to save the Buckhorn Baths after the death of its owner, but the diving lady's plunge jolted the group into action.

"We came together and said, 'You know, this has really got to be a priority because they're going to haul it away,'" Peters says.

Recognizing the sign's importance, city officials supported a code variance, and the area's councilman raised the funds to pay for it. By April, the foundation raised half the cost of restoration through a combination of in-kind contributions and cash, including the Starlite's \$10,000 insurance settlement. Their plan was to list the sign on the



CLOCKWISE FROM ABOVE RIGHT: Just one of many retro motels in Tucson, the Tucson Inn continues to light up the night with its colorful neon sign. Located next door to the Tucson Inn, the Frontier Motel is another relic from a bygone era. The Motel Downtowner in Flagstaff once lured tired drivers off Historic Route 66 with its \$5-a-night room rates.



National Register of Historic Places, place it under a conservation easement and reinstall it by the first anniversary of the storm.

In April, the first of three restored diving lady panels stretched across the display window of a former salon space at Fiesta Mall in Mesa to encourage donations. Peters and Linoff arranged interpretive panels on easels and imagined bigger possibilities.

They talked about some sort of designation for Mesa's Main Street and its remaining neon. A driving guide could include neon signs in Tempe and Phoenix. A museum exhibit could place historic postcards of neon signs on a map.

"That would be really neat, and that's something the foundation could do," Peters says. "But it takes time and money to put it together. We've got so many things on the burner we'll never get to all of them."

No place says neon like Historic Route 66, so it's not surprising that, nationally, neon restoration has been concentrated along that storied road. Associations in Missouri, Oklahoma and the city of West Hollywood in California have made restoring neon signs a priority. Many did so with matching grants from the National Park Service's Route 66 Corridor Preservation Office.

In Arizona, a few Route 66 businesses have restored their neon

signs, but mostly without National Park Service funding. Though the Route 66 Association in Arizona has applied for grants every year through the program, only two have been for neon. The first was in 2002, for the Frontier Motel in Truxton. Recently, it applied for a grant for the Route 66 Motel sign in Kingman.

Sharlene Fouser, a grant-funded employee, says the association has been more concerned with saving buildings.

"For a while, we were losing a property a month," she says. "If we don't have the building, the neon is a moot point."

Yet in some communities, neon has sparked enthusiasm for preservation and redevelopment.

"The focus of our office is not really neon, but we really like when neon projects come up," says John Murphey, a cultural resources specialist for the National Park Service. "They have a lot of return for their money. People will get off the Interstate to look at a neon sign, spend more time in town and maybe spend some money as well."

Murphey worked for the New Mexico State Historic Preservation Office in 2002 when the New Mexico Route 66 Association facilitated Park Service grants to restore nine neon signs in Albuquerque, and saw a big impact.

"I think to put it in the context of economic development is really important," says Johnnie Meier, who headed the effort. "The owners were inspired to make further investment in their property. The city had renewed pride in their heritage. Other businesses looked at all the attention and they wanted neon."

Tucson is banking on that kind of excitement to revitalize one of its historic highways. Drachman, Oracle Road and present-day Miracle Mile once constituted the main route through Tucson on U.S. routes 80 and 89, collectively known as the "Miracle Mile Strip." But the area fell into decline after Interstate 10 redirected the route's traffic.

City planner Rebecca Roupp says a grassroots revitalization effort began in the area about four years ago.

"The mid-20th century Miracle Mile was all there, and wonderful motor courts, many of them operating as motels," she says. "We didn't need to reinvent the area. We could build on what it had."

Part of what it had was some of the city's best neon.

Independently, as part of a one percent for arts program, artist Dirk Arnold built a large neon saguaro on Oracle at Drachman. He chose neon as a nod to the road's heritage, adding the words "Miracle Mile" on one side and "Tucson" on the other.

"That got people incredibly excited," Roupp says. "It shows how important small things are that you can see very quickly."

A comprehensive plan to preserve the city's historic neon spun off from the revitalization effort. The city began work to nominate the district for the National Register of Historic Places and revise Tucson's sign code.

"I was hearing from all sides that [neon] was becoming a real preservation issue," says Historic Preservation Officer Jonathan Mabry. "Our community was losing these signs at a rapid rate because the owners were tearing them down. People were coming in from out of town, buying these signs and taking them out of the community."

At press time, a proposed ordinance was headed for the Tucson mayor and council. It allows for the restoration of designated historic signs, which would not count against a business' sign allowance.

That should help, for example, the owners of the Pueblo Hotel, now a law office. "Out front is a beautiful sign from the hotel days of 'the diving girl,'" Mabry says. "It still says 'Pueblo Hotel, swimming pool, refrigerated air,' that sort of thing. All the neon is broken off, but it's a community landmark that everyone wants restored.

"Under this sign code, the owners could come in with a plan for restoring it, get the designation and, for the first time ever, be able to put the name of their law firm on the business."

The proposed sign code also allows for relocation of historic neon signs in areas where there is an existing density. By allowing reuse,

Mabry hopes to stem the loss to out-of-state buyers.

It will also allow the Tucson Historic Preservation Foundation to proceed with plans for a neon art walk. Four restored neon signs were expected to be installed along the historic Miracle Mile last summer. Publication of a driving guide of the city's best neon, paid for by an Arizona Humanities Council grant, was planned in conjunction with the opening.

Mabry admits that the process took time and thought. "There's a lot of sensitivity to tweaking the sign code," he says. But he believes the carefully crafted definition of qualifying signs will prevent abuse.

"It's a feel-good initiative," he says. "Once people understand it, they say, 'Oh yeah, I love those signs. We ought to find a way to save them.'" ■



"Neon was becoming a real preservation issue. ... Our community was losing these signs at a rapid rate because the owners were tearing them down."

CLOCKWISE FROM ABOVE:
Sunland Motel in East Mesa on U.S. Route 60.
The New Windsor Hotel in downtown Phoenix.
The 30-foot Miracle Mile sign was erected in 2010 as an homage to Tucson's past. The Ghost Ranch Lodge & Restaurant in Tucson is now housing for seniors.



Get a Room

Although “living in the past” is often said derogatorily, there’s nothing wrong with spending a night or two in the good old days, especially if you can get a room at the Valley Ho in Scottsdale or the Wigwam in Holbrook. Those two are retro classics. For something even older, head to Flagstaff.

BY MARK SPIVAK

“Parents used to pack their kids into the car and set off on a road trip,” recalls Elinor Lewis, daughter of the original owner of the Wigwam Motel in Holbrook. “The children would see the wigwams [technically teepees] and go crazy, begging their parents to stay. Sleeping in a wigwam is every child’s dream. Most of our business now is during the summer, when we get tourists trying to re-create the Route 66 era. It’s not unusual for those kids to come back, all grown up, with their own children.”

We’re sitting in the lobby of the Wigwam, looking out at the collection of restored 1950s cars. The property consists of 15 concrete teepees, modernized with bathrooms and color TVs. There are no phones, hair dryers, Wi-Fi connections or pay-per-view movies — just a heavy dose of nostalgia and a glimpse into a bygone age. Lewis gets animated when she talks about it.

“Families were more close-knit back then. People were nicer, and they were more trusting — the road was filled with hitchhikers, and everyone stopped to pick them up. If your car broke down, three or four people would pull over to rescue you. It was a different time. [For us], it’s never been a money-making proposition. I guess we were the suckers,” she says with a chuckle.

At one point, there were seven Wigwam Villages across the U.S. Two of the three surviving Wigwam Villages, including the Holbrook property, are located on Route 66.
| KERRICK JAMES



They called it the Main Street of America. At its height, Historic Route 66 stretched nearly 2,500 miles from California to Illinois, encompassing eight states. Slightly more than 400 miles of road were located in Arizona. Its period of greatest popularity coincided with the post-World War II economic boom, when Americans were once again buying cars and enjoying their new freedom.

The construction of the interstate highway system was the death of Route 66. In Arizona, I-40 was completed in 1984, and traffic along the Route 66 corridor dried up abruptly. The tourists disappeared, businesses closed and populations declined.

“When the interstate came in, it was like turning off a spigot,” said a longtime resident of Winslow. “One day there were wall-to-wall people, and the next day no one was here.”

Nevertheless, the appeal of Route 66 has only increased as the years have passed. There are hundreds of websites dedicated to it, and every year thousands of travelers take to the road to relive the experience. For many people, it has become a symbol of a lost America.

On the trail of the original Route 66, there are some people who believe that the Golden Age glitters more brilliantly in memory than it ever did in real life.

“When I came to Flagstaff in 1980, downtown was deserted,” says Pamela Green, owner of the Weatherford Hotel. “Drunks loitered on the corner across the street, and there were hardly any businesses to speak of.”

Green’s husband, a psychiatrist named Henry Taylor who worked for the state, purchased the hotel in 1975 and originally used it to house

them for everything you can. Now the town is a destination in itself. People come here to stay, and maybe they’ll take a side trip to the Grand Canyon.”

In a real sense, the new downtown area of Flagstaff grew up around the hotel. Filled with restaurants, boutiques and cultural attractions linked to the presence of Northern Arizona University, the town is a far cry from the 1950s, when cars filled with tourists stopped to buy cheap souvenirs. Vintage motels such as the Downtowner and the Du Beau have been turned into hostels, and there’s a sushi bar across from the railroad station on what used to be America’s Main Street.

“It’s not so much our hotel anymore as a resource that belongs to the community,” Green says.

There’s a similar story down the street at the Hotel Monte Vista. At the Rendezvous Bar & Lounge off the lobby, university students work on their computers and the friendly young bartenders know everyone by name. The Rendezvous would not seem out of place in San Francisco or Manhattan. It’s a place where you can get a single-origin coffee, a draft Guinness, a glass of Eden Valley Riesling from Australia or a platter of artisanal cheeses.

“Remember that the train went through Flagstaff long before Route 66 was developed,” says Sean McMahan, who manages the property for the current owners. “The Monte Vista started off providing box lunches and ice to passengers. We were selling 1,000 sandwiches a day during the Depression.”

Built in 1927 with proceeds from a local fund-raising drive, the Monte Vista opened as a hotel held in community trust. Like the

The Valley Ho opened on December 20, 1956, just in time to host the wedding of Robert Wagner and Natalie Wood. It was the first hotel in Scottsdale to have central air conditioning.

mental patients. After Pamela (known as “Sam”) arrived on the scene, the couple began the long and slow process of restoration.

“The hotel does well for us now,” she says, “but it was a struggle. People talk about the recession, but we’ve seen worse. During the restoration, we came to a point where we either had to sell the hotel or our home. So we sold the house and lived here for over eight years while the renovation continued.”

The result is a comfortable lobby with period furniture, several bars, a cozy restaurant with a working fireplace and exposed brick walls, and an overall sense of faithfulness to history. Originally built in 1897 by John Weatherford, the hotel is an attractive corner building faced with hand-carved sandstone. Zane Grey wrote *The Call of the Canyon* here. Sam Green is a decorator who grew up restoring houses, and she brought her talents to the makeover of the hotel rooms.

What did she and Taylor see that no one else saw?

“Potential,” she laughs. “Back then, Flagstaff had the reputation of being a rip-off town. It was that old Route 66 mentality — the tourists are just passing through on their way to the Grand Canyon, so get

Weatherford, restoration is ongoing, and most of the money here has been put into infrastructure such as plumbing and electrical work. As with other restored landmarks like the Hotel Congress in Tucson, the Monte Vista places a premium on entertainment to keep a younger clientele flocking to the hotel. It’s the opposite approach from the Hotel San Carlos in downtown Phoenix, a restored 1928 structure that uses its connection to Hollywood’s Golden Age to attract a clientele of older tourists and convention goers.

Other than live music, what intrigues the younger generation about a place like the Monte Vista?

“Even in the 20-to-30 age group, history has a unique appeal,” says McMahan. “History means reliability. It’s equated with a sense of heritage. Kids want to go where others have been, where they’ve left their mark.”

Of all the old railroad hotels, none is more beautiful than La Posada in Winslow. Originally built by the Santa Fe line in 1929, it opened at the beginning of the Depression and never got off the



Built just five years after Scottsdale was incorporated as a city, the Valley Ho was the sister property to the famous Westward Ho located in downtown Phoenix. | CRAIG SMITH

of traditional dishes, modern ideas and treasures from the cookery of the Indian tribes, paired with a carefully chosen wine list.

“I’m all about big flavors, which has worked well for me in this location,” Sharpe says. “I try to straddle that fine line between creativity and satisfying the clientele. One of the most rewarding parts of being here is watching people who have no idea of what they expect to find.”

Back in Scottsdale, the past and present fuse together seamlessly at the Hotel Valley Ho, located on the edge of Old Town. There are a number of well-preserved 1950s hotels left in the state, but the Valley Ho is truly the Retro Palace.

Designed by architect Ed Varney, the Valley Ho opened on December 20, 1956, just in time to host the wedding of Robert Wagner and Natalie Wood. It was the first hotel in Scottsdale to have central air conditioning, and the first to be open year-round. After a stint as a Ramada Inn, the hotel was purchased by MSR properties in 2002, and underwent an \$80 million renovation.

The Valley Ho refers to the style that emerged as “mid-century modern” — sleek and evocative, the equivalent of going back in time with every possible sparkle and convenience. The three low-slung motel buildings surround the tropical foliage of the pool; the tower (part of the original design, but not built at first) was completed in 2008. Suites feature Philippe Starck tubs and wraparound terraces.

Café Zuzu, the Valley Ho’s signature restaurant, features the same ‘60s and ‘70s vibe that permeates the rest of the property. Orange and blue

ground. The railroad gutted it and converted it to offices, and by the mid-1990s the National Register of Historic Places had the building on its endangered list.

Allan Affeldt and Tina Mion drove out from L.A. one day to look at the property. Affeldt was an academic, his wife was a painter, and they had no intention of getting involved — they only wanted a glimpse of the last Fred Harvey hotel before it disappeared. Like Sam Green, they saw potential they couldn’t put into words. Affeldt spent three years raising money and negotiating. He and Mion moved in on April 1, 1997, and began a slow process of renovation that continues to this day.

The result is a world-class hotel in the middle of a high, barren plateau, with dramatic architecture and intricate woodwork resembling a Spanish *parador*. The walls are decorated with Hopi and Navajo artifacts, interspersed with sculptures and Mion’s haunting canvases. About three years into the venture, John Sharpe arrived on the scene. Sharpe had been working as a corporate chef in Los Angeles. “I was fed up with the rat race,” he says. “I woke up one morning and decided I wanted to be a chef again.”

He was reborn in the Turquoise Room, La Posada’s unique restaurant. Sharpe is a strong believer in the locavore movement, and has developed an intricate network of local suppliers. His menu is a blend

Jetsons-esque chairs surround circular tables, and blue banquettes are built into stone walls. As for the menu, Zuzu celebrates classic American comfort food with a bit of a modern twist — think grilled salmon with roasted corn grits, watercress, fennel and lemon butter sauce; burgers with Virginia bacon and Maytag blue cheese; truffled grilled-cheese sandwiches; and pure, old-fashioned macaroni and cheese. It’s a menu that appeals to patrons of the original Valley Ho, as well as those who are flocking there to experience its renaissance.

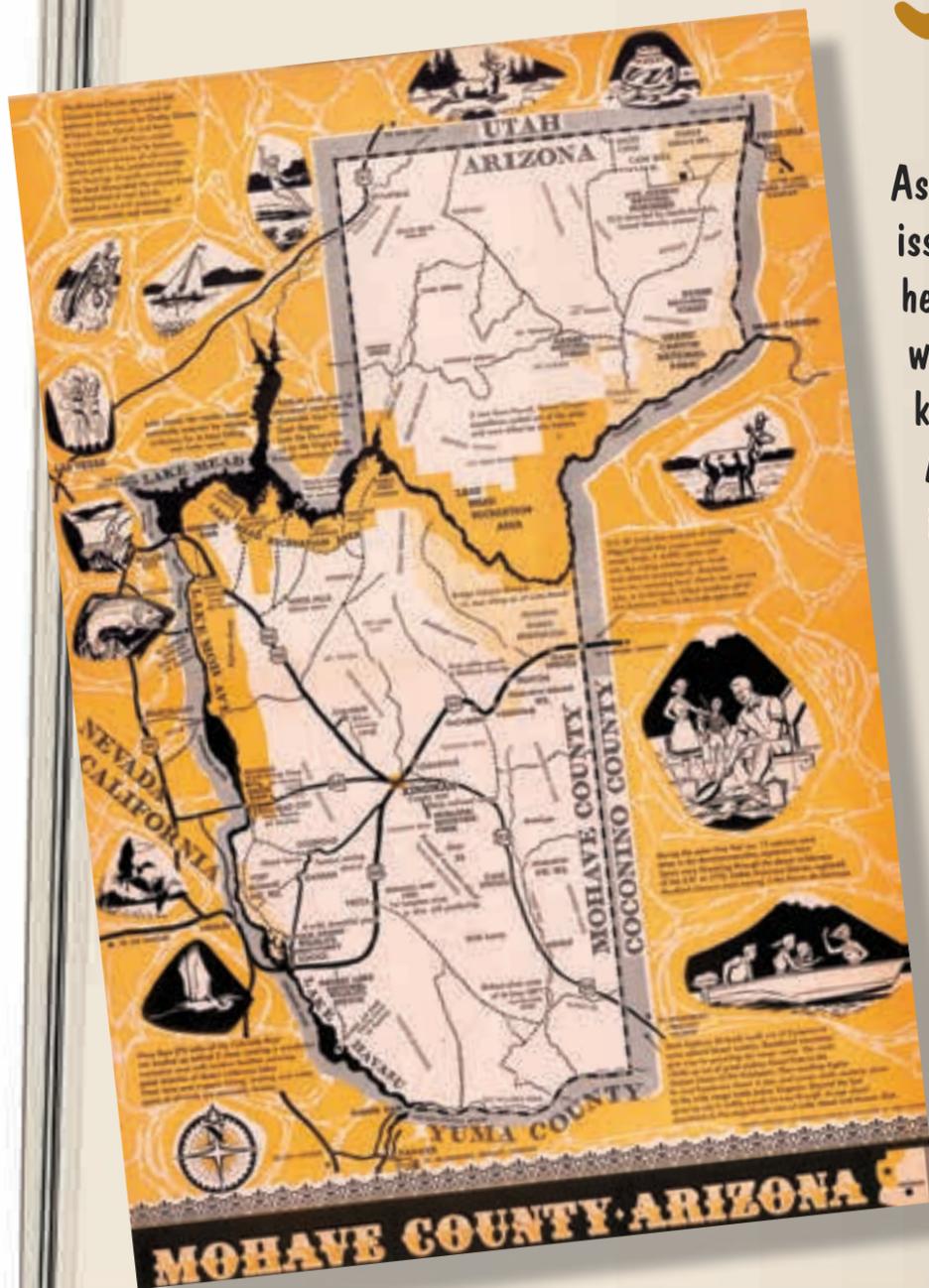
The Valley Ho has become a rendezvous point for local young professionals, who pack the lobby’s long, circular bar in the evenings. It’s unlikely that any of them would recognize Robert Wagner if he walked in, but they seem mesmerized by the place.

“The younger set is definitely fascinated with the hotel,” says a waitress one morning at breakfast. “It does have a hip factor, and people are attracted to that. Maybe it reminds them of something out of their parents’ era, or maybe it’s just so different to them.” ■



Scan this QR code with your smart phone or visit www.arizonahighways.com/travel/lodging.asp to discover more lodging options throughout Arizona.

Turning Back the Pages



As we were putting together this issue, and thinking about the heyday of Historic Route 66, we started wondering what kinds of things *Arizona Highways* was doing back in the '40s, '50s and '60s. Turns out, there wasn't anything *too gaudy*.

EDITED BY KATHY RITCHIE
& KEITH WHITNEY

May 1962



September 1948



January 1964

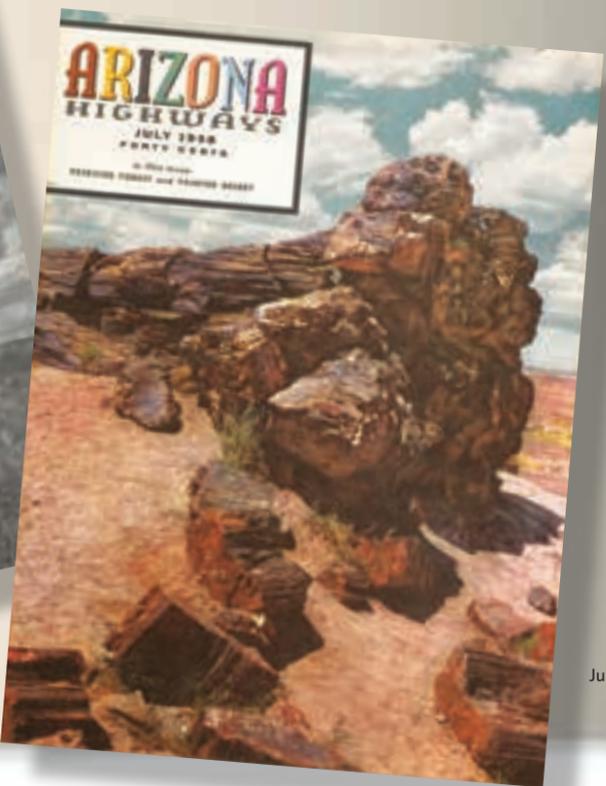


August 1959

"When we recall the past, we usually find that it is the simplest things — not the great occasions — that in retrospect give off the greatest glow of happiness."
— Bob Hope



April 1943



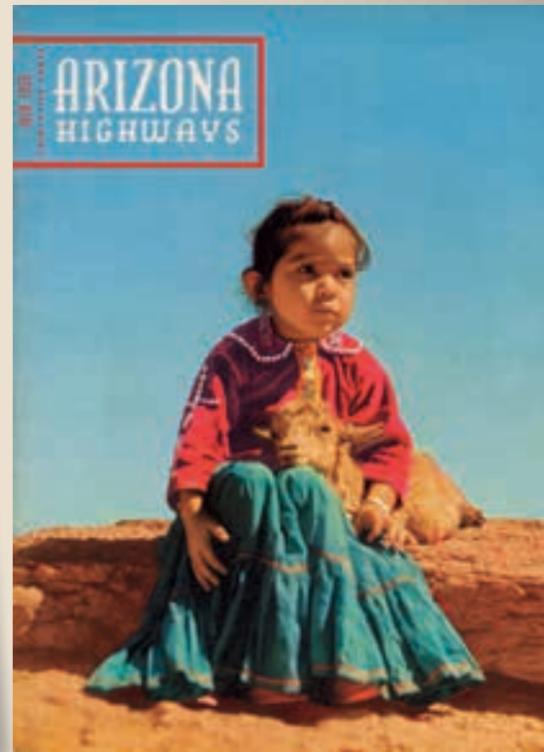
July 1958



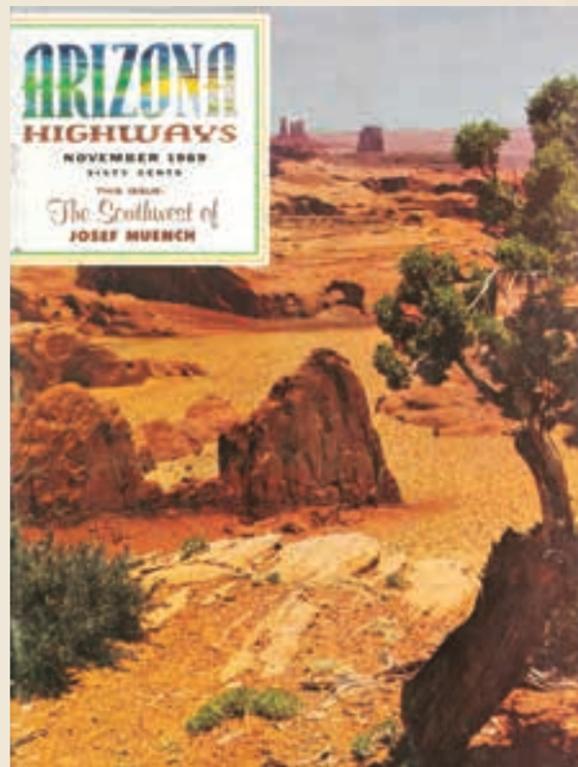
April 1957



November 1953



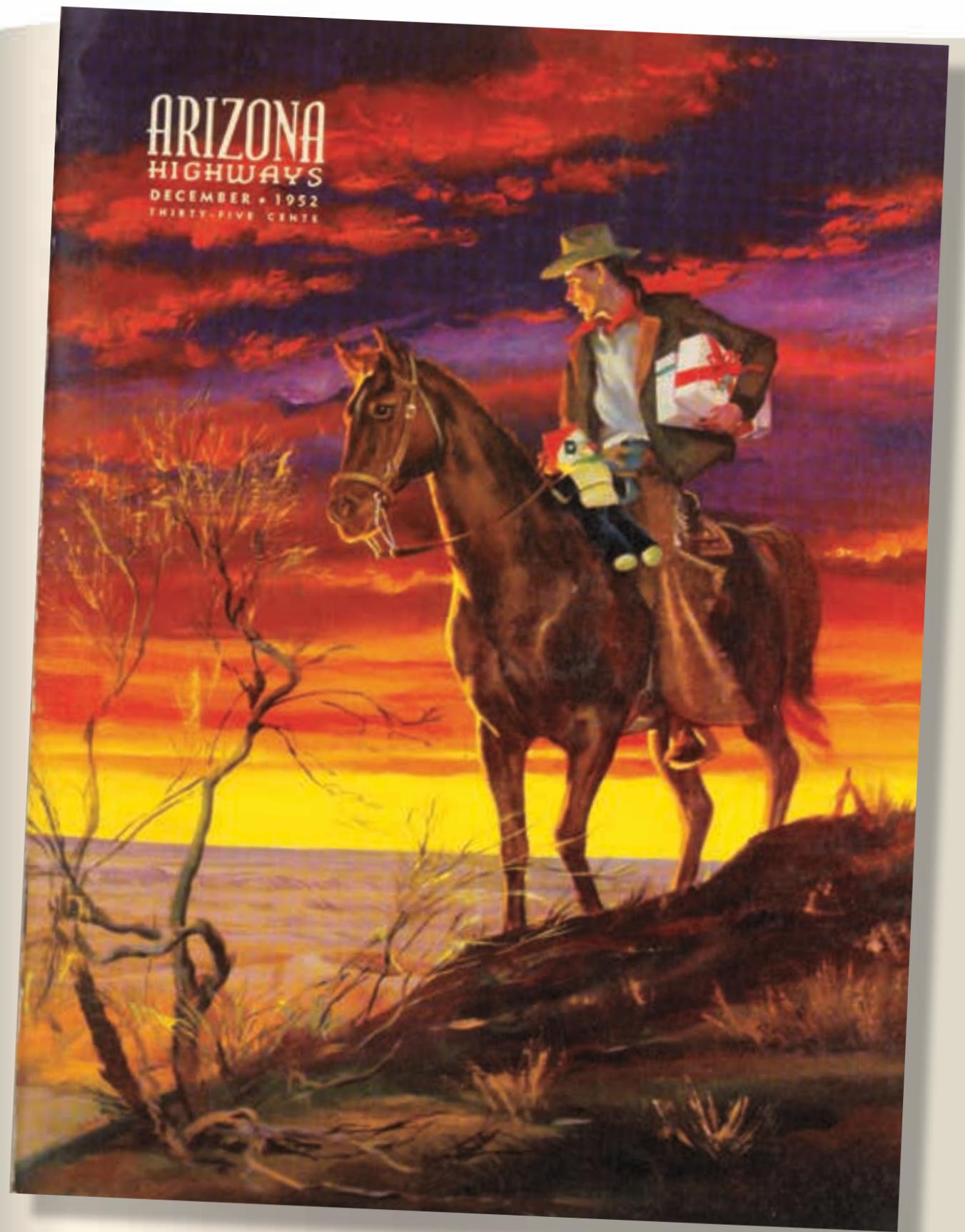
July 1955



November 1969



July 1959



December 1952



KENTUCKY CAMP

The route to this old mine winds along the high-desert grasslands of scenic State Route 83, passing a winery and historic ranch along the way.

BELOW: Framed by an old adobe ruin that was once a barn, the building in the background was used as an office for the Santa Rita Water & Mining Co. until 1906.

RIGHT: Mesquite trees punctuate the sprawling grassland near Kentucky Camp. Settling into the background are the Empire Mountains.

BY KATHY MONTGOMERY
PHOTOGRAPHS BY
RANDY PRENTICE

A former mining camp on the eastern flanks of the Santa Rita Mountains, Kentucky Camp makes a pleasant destination for an afternoon drive from Tucson. Most of the drive to the heritage site in the Coronado National Forest winds along the high-desert grasslands of scenic State

Route 83, passing a winery and a historic ranch before turning off for the last 6 miles onto a gravel road.

The handful of adobe buildings that make up Kentucky Camp served as headquarters for the Santa Rita Water and Mining Co. from 1902 to 1906. The firm was the brainchild of California mining engineer James Stetson. Mining the area's rich placer deposits required water to separate the gold from sand and gravel, but the surrounding arroyos were dry. Stetson's company intended to channel seasonal runoff into a reservoir large enough to support operations.

But Stetson tumbled from a Tucson hotel window in 1905 and died, and his partners couldn't keep the operation going for long. The area was used for cattle ranching until the 1960s, and was then sold to another mining company.

The Forest Service acquired Kentucky Camp in 1989 through a land exchange, and it's restoring the camp's buildings as an interpretive mining camp with the help of volunteers.

The headquarters building can be reserved for day use for up to 50 people. A smaller cabin can be rented overnight. With no heat or indoor plumbing, the overnight cabin offers four twin bunks in a single bedroom, an outdoor sink and vault toilet in an outbuilding. Although minimal, these amenities are welcome enough for hikers passing through on the Arizona Trail.

But the real pleasure of a day trip to Kentucky Camp is, as they say, in the journey. From Tucson, take Interstate 10 to State Route 83, a designated scenic highway that's flanked by straw-colored grasses dotted with yuccas, prickly pears and mesquites.

Charron Vineyards lies about 7 miles south of I-10, a half-mile past Milepost 53. The tasting room, open Friday through Sunday, sits inside a sunny, screened-in porch with views of the vineyard, rolling hills and the distant Santa Ritas. Five dollars buys a sampling of four wines, a souvenir glass and \$2 off tastings at Sonoita-area wineries.

Just past Milepost 40, Empire Ranch is worth a visit. The 160-acre homestead and cattle ranch was the setting for a number of Westerns, including *Red River* and *Last Train From Gun Hill*. The Bureau of Land Management acquired the headquarters and surrounding 42,000 acres through a series of land swaps. It's now Las Cienegas National Conservation Area, a black-tailed prairie dog reintroduction site. Built along cottonwood-lined Empire Gulch, Empire Ranch headquarters forms a green oasis about 3 miles from the highway, with the adobe ranch house and barn open to the public.

The turnoff to Kentucky Camp lies just 3 miles past Empire Ranch. The gravel road winds nearly 6 miles through waist-high grasses shaded by tall, graceful oaks. A small parking area lies outside the gates to Kentucky Camp, which is an easy, quarter-mile walk. The headquarters building serves as the visitors center. Perch yourself on the pleasant, shaded porch and the prospects for a pleasant afternoon feel rich, indeed.



ADDITIONAL READING: For more scenic drives, pick up a copy of our book *The Back Roads*. Now in its fifth edition, the book (\$19.95) features 40 of the state's most scenic drives. To order a copy, visit www.arizonahighways.com/books.



KEVIN KIBSEY

tour guide

Note: Mileages are approximate.

LENGTH: 49 miles one way

DIRECTIONS: From Tucson, drive east on Interstate 10 for approximately 22 miles to State Route 83, turn right (south) and continue for approximately 21 miles to Gardner Canyon Road. Turn right (west) onto Gardner Canyon Road and drive 0.75 miles to Forest Road 163. Take FR 163 approximately 5 miles to the Kentucky Camp gate. Park in the designated area, and walk approximately 0.25 miles to Kentucky Camp.

VEHICLE REQUIREMENTS: This route is accessible by passenger vehicles, but the last 5 miles may be muddy in wet weather.

INFORMATION: Nogales Ranger District, 520-281-2296 or www.fs.fed.us/r3/coronado. To reserve Kentucky Camp, call 877-444-6777 or visit www.recreation.gov.

511 Travelers in Arizona can visit www.az511.gov or dial 511 to get information on road closures, construction, delays, weather and more. ■



ADDITIONAL READING: For more hikes, pick up a copy of our newest book, *Arizona Highways Hiking Guide*, which features 52 of the state's best trails — one for each weekend of the year, sorted by seasons. To order a copy, visit www.arizonahighways.com/books.

OPPOSITE PAGE: Hikers make their way along the Mescal Ridge Trail, which offers great views of the rugged Hellsgate Wilderness.

MESCAL RIDGE Although it's located in the Hellsgate Wilderness, there's nothing devilish about this hike. Other than the first half-mile.

BY ROBERT STIEVE

Don't let the devilish name of this wilderness area scare you. The Mescal Ridge Trail is easy, enjoyable and it doesn't go anywhere near the netherworld. The thing is, you can't get to the trail without first trekking for a half-mile on the Bear Flat Trail. It, too, is easy, except for that first half-mile, which climbs uphill at an incline of what feels like 45 degrees. It doesn't look that steep as you're huffing and puffing toward some breathing space up top, but on the way back down you'll get a much better perspective.

The name of the wilderness area, which was given by early settlers and was originally spelled "Hells Gate," comes from the turbulent water at the junction of Haigler and Tonto creeks. Although you won't get wet on the Mescal Ridge Trail, it does offer a bird's-eye introduction to Hellsgate. Getting started, however, can be a little confusing.

From the Bear Flat Trailhead, the first thing you'll need to do is cross Tonto Creek by following the concrete road that leads to a home on private property. You'll see a large white sign with red letters that warns of "No Trespassing." Just before the sign, veer right and follow the creekside edge of the log fence. At the corner, you'll see a trail sign. This junction can be especially confusing. What you'll want to do is make a 90-degree turn to the left and follow the fence uphill toward an old jeep road. The wide road then climbs the hellish half-mile through a forest of mixed conifers to the wilderness boundary, and eventually leads

to Bear Flat's intersection with the Mescal Ridge Trail, which veers right. That's where you're headed.

The route continues south and climbs gradually, but nothing like what's behind you. The trail itself is a mix of rock and red dirt that winds through peaceful stands of scrub oak, alligator junipers, piñon pines and manzanitas. It's best to appreciate the flora along this trail, because the fauna is less conspicuous. That said, the wilderness area around the trail is home to beavers, black bears, ringtails, mountain lions, skunks and deer. If you see something, feel free to brag about it. If you don't, you might not even notice because the panoramic views to the southeast are impressive. They're essentially the same views the Salado people had when they gazed in the same direction during the 12th and 13th centuries. Ditto for the Apaches, who later occupied this area for several centuries before being forced out by white settlers.

Back on the trail, which doesn't vary a great deal as you move along, you'll eventually come to a high point that suggests you're at the end of the hike. But you're not. Although the trail is a little hard to find at this point, look closely and you'll see that it continues downhill. A little farther on, you'll pass some old cattle fencing, and then, 15 minutes after that, you'll arrive at the Mescal Ridge Tank. The trail veers left past the tank and quickly peters out, officially marking the end of the route.

Because this is a relatively short trail, and you won't have burned up a lot of clock, you might not be in a hurry to head back down. If that's the case, Mescal Ridge is a great place to hang out, eat some lunch, take a nap or take in the views. To the southeast you can see Horse Mountain and the endless open space of Tonto National Forest, the fifth-largest national forest in the United States. Whatever you do, don't lose sight of the trail. Although the surroundings are heavenly, remember, this is Hellsgate, and the last thing you want to do is get lost in a place with a name like that. ■

trail guide

LENGTH: 6 miles round-trip

DIFFICULTY: Moderate

ELEVATION: 4,891 to 5,603 feet

DIRECTIONS: From Payson, drive east on State Route 260 for 14 miles to Forest Road 405. Turn right onto FR 405 and drive 4.5 miles to the Bear Flat Trailhead at Tonto Crossing.

VEHICLE REQUIREMENTS: A high-clearance vehicle is recommended following rain or snow.

DOGS ALLOWED: Yes (on a leash)

HORSES ALLOWED: Yes

USGS MAP: Promontory Butte

INFORMATION: Payson Ranger District, 928-474-7900 or www.fs.fed.us/r3/tonto

LEAVE-NO-TRACE PRINCIPLES:

- Plan ahead and be prepared.
- Travel and camp on durable surfaces.
- Dispose of waste properly and pack out all of your trash.
- Leave what you find.
- Respect wildlife and minimize impact.
- Be considerate of others.



KEVIN KIBSEY

NICK BEREZENIKO



where
is this?

Prehistoric Landmark

BY KATHY RITCHIE
PHOTOGRAPH BY
RICHARD MAACK

You won't find this place on a lot of bucket lists, but it's a popular pit stop for motorists headed to one of Arizona's more popular destinations. Kids love it, too. That's because they can slide down the tail of a brontosaurus while imagining themselves in an episode of *The Flintstones*. Considered one of the state's more quirky roadside attractions, this old standby is worth a visit, especially if you like the idea of a Stone-Age-inspired diner. Bronto burger, anyone?



September 2011
Answer: Morenci.
Congratulations to
our winner, Rick
Narushoff of
Monroeville,
Pennsylvania.

Win a collection of our most popular books! To enter, correctly identify the location featured above and email your answer to editor@arizonahighways.com — type "Where Is This?" in the subject line. Entries can also be sent to 2039 W. Lewis Avenue, Phoenix, AZ 85009 (write "Where Is This?" on the envelope). Please include your name, address and phone number. One winner will be chosen in a random drawing of qualified entries. Entries must be postmarked by November 15, 2011. Only the winner will be notified. The correct answer will be posted in our January issue and online at www.arizonahighways.com beginning December 15.

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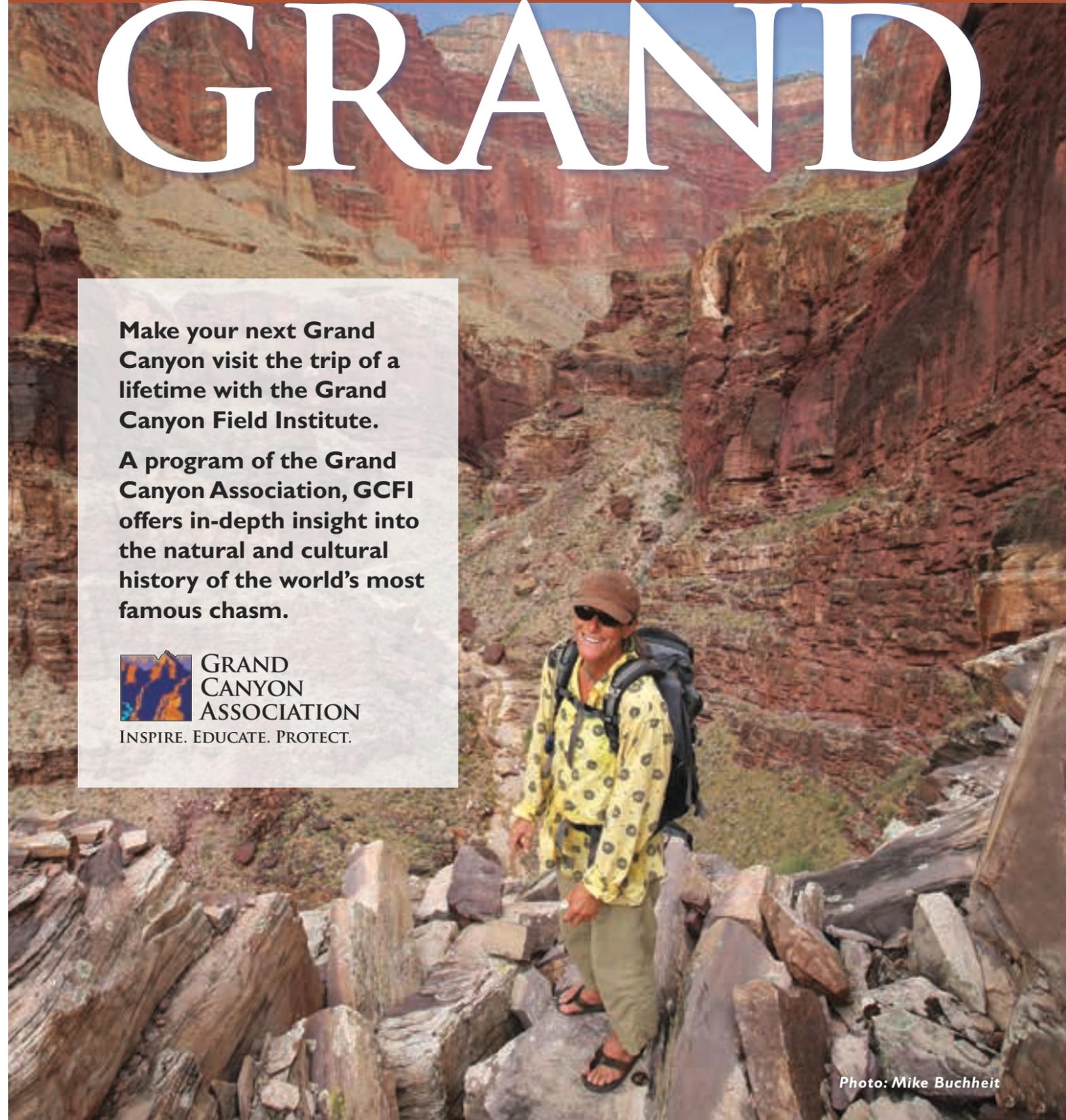


Photo: Mike Buchheit

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