

ESCAPE TO THE WHITE MOUNTAINS

ARIZONA

HIGHWAYS

ESCAPE · EXPLORE · EXPERIENCE

MAY 2012

DESERT ISLANDS
BY CRAIG CHILDS
& DAVID MUENCH

50 OF OUR FAVORITE THINGS TO DO IN THE WHITE MOUNTAINS THIS SUMMER

Big Lake, August 2011

PLUS: TINY COWS · ST. DAVID · MONUMENT VALLEY · THE GRANDVIEW TRAIL · LEON KING · KING SNAKES · ANTELOPE SQUIRRELS · THE BURNETT FAMILY BAND

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5 THE JOURNAL

People, places and things from around the state, including a Flagstaff family that puts out some of the hottest bluegrass music in Arizona; an incredible photo of a king snake devouring a rattler; the best spur maker we know; and St. David, our hometown of the month.

18 SUMMER'S HERE

Summer doesn't officially begin until June 21, but the timing of things is a little different in Arizona, especially for desert dwellers who start thinking about summer trips to the mountains about the time Spring Training comes to an end. Either way, here's your itinerary. Hit the road, and please drive carefully.

BY KATHY MONTGOMERY

26 A LOOK TO THE EAST

The White Mountains of Eastern Arizona are an anomaly — too much green, too much water, too many pastoral scenes to be in a state that's stereotyped as being nothing but desert. But there they are. Arizona's version of Eden. Indeed, the White Mountains are among the most beautiful places in the state, and despite the Wallow Fire of 2011, that paradise wasn't lost.

A PORTFOLIO EDITED BY JEFF KIDA

40 MINI MOOS

When Robyn and John Hutchison moved to their ranch near Prescott, they were looking for something different: quiet nights, a cooler climate, a chance to live off the grid ... they even wanted a different kind of cattle. Unlike most ranches, where beefier is better, the Hutchisons opted for mini-Jerseys that stand only waist-high to a human.

BY BARBARA YOST
PHOTOGRAPHS BY SUZANNE STARR

44 DESERT ISLANDS

Mention the words "desert island" to most people and they'll think of a tropical paradise. But Arizona has desert islands, too. Better known as sky islands, these lone mountain ranges form an ecological bridge between the Rockies and the Sierra Madre. They're great for recreationists, but more importantly, they serve as steppingstones for migrant birds and mammals.

BY CRAIG CHILDS
PHOTOGRAPHS BY DAVID MUENCH

52 SCENIC DRIVE

Monument Valley Drive: Monument Valley has been the subject of millions of photographs and paintings, as well as several Hollywood Westerns. A cruise along this scenic route makes it easy to see why.

54 HIKE OF THE MONTH

Grandview Trail: The name says it all, but in addition to the panoramic views of the Grand Canyon, this trail offers a bit of history and a respite from the crowds on Bright Angel and the Kaibabs.



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Check out our blog for daily 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.

www.facebook.com/azhighways

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.

One of Leon King's custom spurs reveals the handiwork of the Winslow craftsman. (See *Odd Jobs*, page 8.) | DAWN KISH

FRONT AND BACK COVERS High clouds show a promise of late-afternoon rain over Big Lake in the Apache-Sitgreaves National Forests. This photograph was made in August 2011, a few weeks after the Wallow Fire. | RANDY PRENTICE

Escape to the White Mountains

May 29, 2011. It's not a date that resonates around the world like December 7, 1941, or September 11, 2001, but it's a day Taani Harper will never forget. Neither will Pauline Merrill, Dominique De La Paz or anybody else who lives in the White Mountains. That's the day, now almost a year ago, when two foolish kids from Tucson made the biggest mistake of their lives. After cooking breakfast over a campfire in the Bear Wallow Wilderness, they took off on a hike. According to the federal criminal complaint in their case, they thought the fire was out. It wasn't. Not even close. The Wallow Fire, as it became known, would eventually burn 538,049 acres and become the largest wildfire in Arizona history.

Fire is devastating. And in the case of the White Mountains, there are places that'll take hundreds of years to recover. If they ever recover. But the White Mountains comprise a massive area, most of which wasn't touched by the fire. And that's the point of this month's cover story. To let you know that in spite of the images that dominated the news a year ago, the White Mountains are open for business, and there's plenty to do in that bucolic neck of the woods.

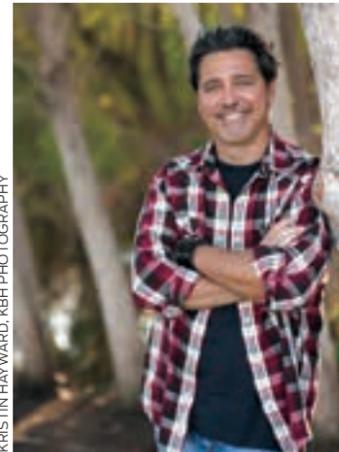
In our piece, we feature 50 of our favorites. Number 1 on the list, which is presented in no particular order, is a trip to Bear Wallow Café. That's where Taani Harper, also known as "the pie lady," bakes about 70 pies a week, all from scratch. To say that Taani's pies take the cake would be an understatement. The apple pie alone is worth the drive to Alpine. Pauline Merrill's meatloaf, the house specialty at Rendezvous Diner in Greer, falls into the same category. So does just about everything on the menu at Los Dos Molinos in Springerville, where Dominique De La Paz runs her family's original restaurant. There's some good food in the White Mountains, but that's only part of our story. We'll also tell you about a hiking trail that follows an old railroad line and features an 80-foot trestle

bridge, one of the state's oldest jails and a quiet campground that'll make you wish you'd learned about it sooner.

Los Burros Campground, which is the site of a former ranger station, sits on the edge of a meadow and offers a sleepy alternative to the more popular campgrounds that line the lakes in the area. "The middle of nowhere" is how you'd describe it if you were writing a postcard. Even the old red barn, the only sign of mankind, is alluring. Or maybe mystical is a better word. The first time I saw it I half-expected Django Reinhardt to step out and offer me a slug of Chateau Margaux. It's a wonderful campground, and so are those around Big Lake.

If you've never been to Big Lake, flip back to our cover. That shot epitomizes the landscape of the White Mountains. And you might be surprised to know that it was made in August 2011, a few weeks after the Wallow Fire went through. Clearly, there's nothing apocalyptic about that scene. The same is true of the photos in our May portfolio, which offers a post-fire perspective of the area. The images are impressive, but the views are even better in person. All you have to do is get in your car and hit the road. Of course, you will see signs of Wallow, as well, but that's the nature of the West in this era of megafires. The signs are everywhere, including the Chiricahuas, one of the state's many sky islands.

Of all the geography in Arizona, the sky islands might be the most important. They're defined as solitary mountain ranges that rise above the surrounding terrain — their physical isolation separating them from other similar biomes nearby. They're great for hikers, bikers and backpackers, but



KRISTIN HAYWARD, KEH PHOTOGRAPHY

the reason they're so important is because they form an ecological bridge between the Rockies and the Sierra Madre, and serve as steppingstones for migrating species of birds and mammals. It's a fascinating example of Mother Nature at work, and we paired two of our most accomplished contributors — Craig Childs and David

Muench — to tell the story.

If you're a frequent reader of *Arizona Highways*, you know how talented that combo is. In the history of this magazine, there haven't been many words or photographs that rival theirs. Enjoy their handiwork, be inspired to visit one of the sky islands, and then point your car in the direction of Eastern Arizona. May 29 is almost here, and as that date approaches, the good people in the White Mountains — people like Taani, Pauline and Dominique — would love to see you. In fact, their livelihoods depend on it.



ROBERT STIEVE

GIVE US A SHOT

In our ongoing attempt to keep up with the rapid evolution of social media, we're now on Instagram. Join us at arizonahighways, and let's share some photos.

ROBERT STIEVE, editor

Follow me on Twitter: @azhighways

ARIZONA HIGHWAYS

MAY 2012 VOL. 88, NO. 5

800-543-5432 www.arizonahighways.com

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Arizona Highways® (ISSN 0004-1521) is published monthly by the Arizona Department of Transportation. Subscription price: \$24 a year in the U.S., \$44 outside the U.S. Single copy: \$3.99 U.S. Call 800-543-5432. Subscription correspondence and change of address information: *Arizona Highways*, P.O. Box 433124, Palm Coast, FL 32143-3124. Periodical postage paid at Phoenix, AZ, and at additional mailing office. CANADA POST INTERNATIONAL PUBLICATIONS MAIL PRODUCT (CANADIAN DISTRIBUTION) SALES AGREEMENT NO. 41220511. SEND RETURNS TO QUAD/GRAPHICS, P.O. BOX 875, WINDSOR, ON N9A 6P2. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to *Arizona Highways*, P.O. Box 433124, Palm Coast, FL 32143-3124. Copyright © 2012 by the Arizona Department of Transportation. Reproduction in whole or in part without permission is prohibited. The magazine does not accept and is not responsible for unsolicited materials.

PRODUCED IN THE USA

ARIZONA HIGHWAYS TELEVISION



ELLEN BARNES

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RANDY PRENTICE

Photographer Randy Prentice makes it a habit to visit the White Mountains at least once a year for some rest and relaxation. His last trip — shortly after the Wallow Fire — led to this month's cover photo. The wraparound image brings him full circle since his first cover for *Arizona Highways*: a shot of Big Lake in autumn, taken in the late 1980s. Capturing this photograph took some patience, he says. "You might find a great shot and set up your camera just in time for the sun to duck behind a cloud. So you wait — sometimes for quite awhile — for the sun to reappear and warm your scene." Prentice is a regular contributor to *Arizona Highways*. His images have also appeared in *Sunset*, as well as Rand McNally and Western National Parks Association publications.

ERIC HANSON

Eric Hanson admits that it's a stretch to say he's been illustrating since childhood, but he did begin designing and selling Christmas cards at age 13. For this month's cover story, Hanson hearkened back to his years driving through the mountainous West to visualize the White Mountains map on page 19. "I also really love the colorful 1940s and '50s highway maps, so that pattern appeals to me in an abstract way," he says. "It works nicely as a backdrop for figures doing fun things." This is Hanson's first illustration for *Arizona Highways*. His work has also appeared in *Rolling Stone*, *Vanity Fair* and *Gourmet*.



SUZANNE STARR

Photographer Suzanne Starr loves an excuse to photograph people and animals in rural areas, which is why she jumped at the chance to work on our feature *Mini Moos* (page 40). As she puts it, "How often do you get to experience and photograph gentle minicows on a historic ranch site surrounded by the wilds of the Prescott National Forest?" For this assignment, Starr says natural light was the key to making great images. This is Starr's first assignment for *Arizona Highways*. She previously worked for *The Arizona Republic*.

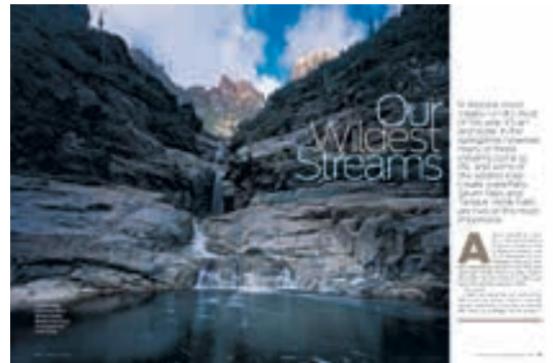
— MOLLY J. SMITH



LET THIS BE A LESSON

In the article *Our Wildest Streams* by Lawrence Cheek [March 2012], the writer mentions the potential dangers of hiking Seven Falls and Tanque Verde Falls during the monsoon season. I hiked Seven Falls on August 3, 2007, after heavy monsoon rains, and was barely able to cross the creek to get to the Bear Canyon Trail. There were several other hikers that day, and I mentioned to one of them that I hoped there wasn't going to be a flash flood. When I got to Seven Falls I took pictures and then headed back. The next day there was a flash flood, and two people were swept down the canyon from the falls. They didn't survive. I now have a much greater respect for "our wildest streams," especially during the monsoon season.

Dennis Elley, Prescott, Arizona



March 2012

A REAL GEM

I love your Centennial issue [February 2012]. Living in Arizona for over 50 years brings back memories. It was amazing to see Chuckawalla Slim on the cover. I met him in Indio, California, and as an amateur mineral collector, he piqued my interest in starting my own rock shop. With his help, I bought a small shop in Palm Springs and ran it with my wife, Melba. We soon outgrew it and purchased an existing shop in Globe — we celebrated 42 years in March. Ed actually died in the early to mid-1970s. I visited him around 1974 in Southern California. I hope he can see the *Arizona Highways* cover from wherever he is. He'd be so proud.

John Mediz, Globe, Arizona

I was browsing through the Centennial issue today and saw the photo stating that the Arizona Biltmore was the only Frank Lloyd Wright-influenced hotel in the world. I'm sure that many others have written to you by now, but I will add my name to the list. Two years ago I had the pleasure of staying at the Imperial Hotel in Tokyo. It was the third incarnation of that enterprise, having been built in the latter half of the 20th century.

Suzanne Hobson, Anthony, New Mexico

I want to compliment the *Arizona Highways* gang of talented people on one of the greatest issues ever — your February 2012 issue. It's filled with beauty and love. Thank you, and

please keep up your great work.

Paul Gatto, Archibald, Pennsylvania

I just received the 100-page Centennial issue of *Arizona Highways*. What a masterpiece! This issue is the best of the best ... the greatest of the great! My touring days are over, unfortunately, but I'm very glad that over the years I was able to see more of the U.S.A. than most people. I have so many wonderful memories of touring while on vacations. My room here at the friary is a "photo gallery." My memories are covering the walls. Those days are over now, but I can still get "lost," even on Guam.

Fr. George Maddock, Agana Heights, Guam

THRILLED TO BE THERE

Now 82, my father introduced us to the wonders captured by Josef Muench in the earliest years, and our home showcased framed images of his masterworks. The "50 Greatest Photos" [December 2011]? One hundred percent yes. Fortunately, your photo editor's descriptive legends are as tantalizing as the subject images. By the way, during summers in the 1950s I worked at Camp Curry [in Yosemite], and on free days Ansel Adams allowed me to carry his camera and equipment to high places. Quite a thrill.

Stan Jones, Point Loma, California

THE RIGHT TYPE

It looks like other people had the same idea as I did, but they got to you before me. I was about to cancel my subscrip-

tion after you started using a font that was so danged small I had to strain to read it. The smaller font in white on a black background was particularly problematic. Thank you so very much for "seeing the light" and using a slightly larger font with a darker appearance in your March 2012 issue. I know that for cost efficiency you want to get as many words on a page as possible, but have pity on your older readers who have been loyal to you these many years. I devour your magazine, and have copies back to the 1960s.

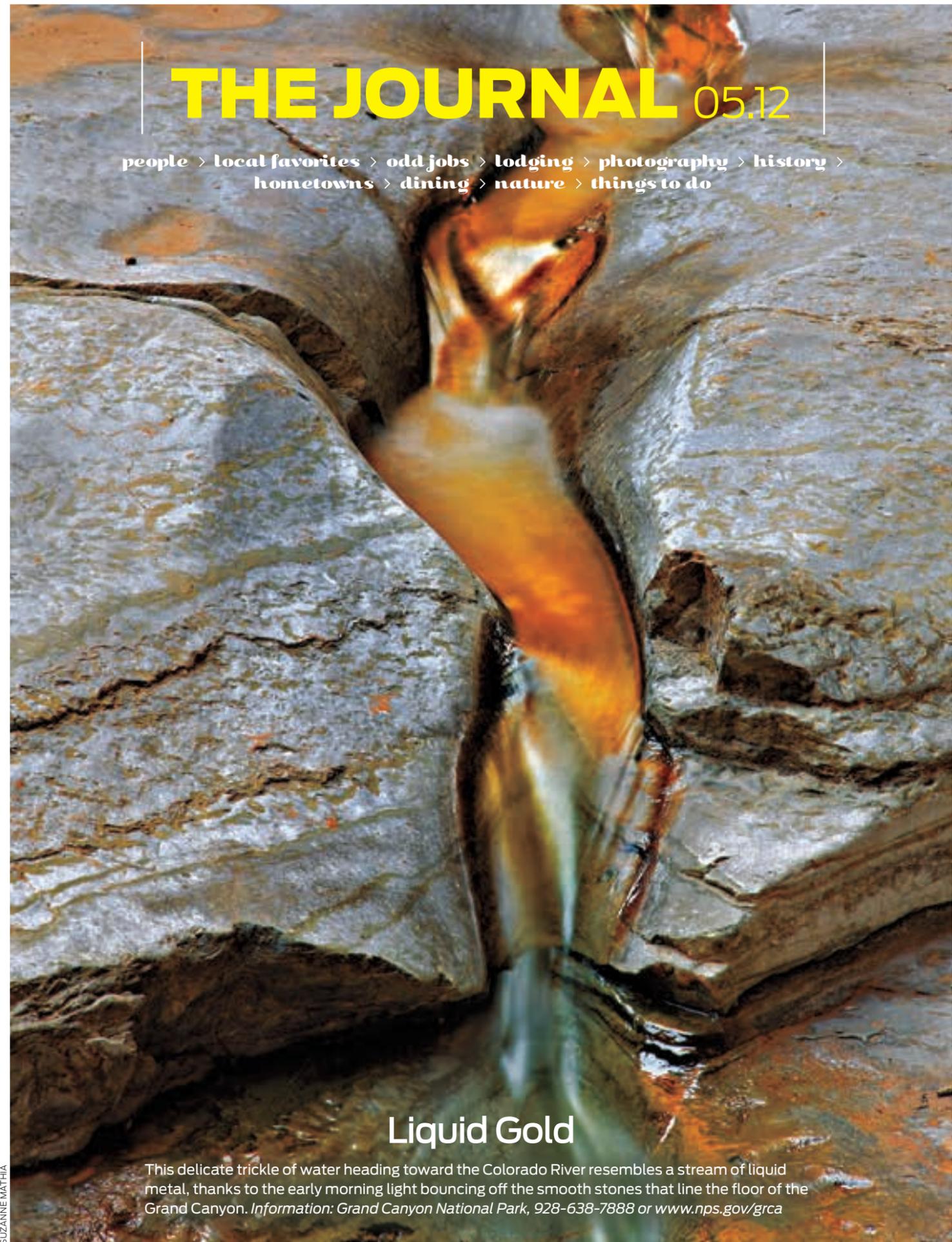
Beverly Bruce, Sun City, Arizona

OREGON PIPES IN

I'm a proud, native Oregonian, but last year my family in Gilbert, Arizona, sent me a subscription to your magazine. I read every issue and enjoy the photographs, but with the last few issues ("50 Greatest Photos" and the "Centennial Issue") I've found myself hooked. I've even ordered a back issue ("Taliesin Turns 70"). I'm planning a trip to your beautiful state in the fall of 2013, and am looking forward to exploring and visiting as many places as possible. Thank you for a great and beautiful magazine and to my family for giving it to me.

Joy Burnett, Gold Beach, Oregon **AH**

contact us If you have thoughts or comments about anything in *Arizona Highways*, we'd love to hear from you. We can be reached at editor@arizonahighways.com, or by mail at 2039 W. Lewis Avenue, Phoenix, AZ 85009. For more information, visit www.arizonahighways.com.



THE JOURNAL 05.12

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Liquid Gold

This delicate trickle of water heading toward the Colorado River resembles a stream of liquid metal, thanks to the early morning light bouncing off the smooth stones that line the floor of the Grand Canyon. Information: *Grand Canyon National Park*, 928-638-7888 or www.nps.gov/grca

SUZANNE MATHIA

THE FAMILY THAT PLAYS TOGETHER

Unlike the Partridge Family, a fictional clan of musicians who were made for TV in the early '70s, the Burnett family is real. Very real. They live together in Flagstaff, they practice together for hours on end, and they perform together all over the state. If you don't like bluegrass music, you haven't heard the Burnetts' virtuosic combination of banjos, guitars and high-pitched, close-harmony vocals.

They say the family that plays together stays together. But do they actually like one another? It's something you can't help but wonder about Burnett Family Bluegrass, the homegrown band that's making a name for itself with its robust bluegrass tunes. As it turns out, this family — dad Brian, mom Connie, and their brood of 20-something-aged kids: Rachel, Jessie and Ryan — genuinely likes each other. And that's a good thing, because this family not only plays together, they all live under the same roof.

A roof built for music. Located east of Flagstaff, the Burnett family home sits on a 4-acre parcel that also features a greenhouse, an old barn-cum-classroom where the Burnett kids were home-schooled, chickens, a 1960s Mercedes and a 1936 Dodge pickup. Behind the house loom the San Francisco Peaks. This is the kind of place where games of hide-and-seek or make-believe could last for hours. As the scenery reveals itself, you can't help but imagine a mischievous Ryan chasing after his squealing sisters, while Brian tinkers with one of the old cars and Connie fixes dinner. The made-up vignette has no basis in reality, but it's a lovely swirl of the imagination inspired by this place.

Brian opens the gate to the family's property. He holds out his hand — it's worn, and, not surprisingly, he has a strong grip. Connie walks down a half-dozen stairs from the house to the front yard, followed by the rest of her family. She and the girls are all dressed in black, while Brian and Ryan add a pop of color to the quintet with their pressed blue button-ups. This



LEFT TO RIGHT: Jessie, Rachel, Connie, Brian and Ryan Burnett.

PAUL MARKOV

“The whole idea was to play music with the kids ... but there never was this grand vision that we were going to be onstage.”

is clearly a performance, but that's show-biz for you. The family's matriarch smiles and introduces herself. There's a kindness about her — her voice is soothing, and she exudes a genuine warmth that makes you feel right at home.

Burnett Family Bluegrass has its roots in this land, and you can hear it in its down-home stylings. Brian, the owner of a truck-

ing company, built the house himself more than 20 years ago, modifying the home's original plans so the family would have the space to play music with its naturally rich acoustics.

“The whole idea was to play music with the kids,” he says. “But there never was this grand vision that we were going to be onstage — that wasn't there. These

guys got serious on their own.”

And getting serious for the Burnett kids meant forgoing hours of make-believe for hours of practicing. Music was their obsession. It still is. “I would practice the banjo eight hours or more a day,” Ryan laughs. “He was intense,” Connie adds.

That devotion to the music has certainly paid off, and not just in terms of the number of gigs booked or CDs produced (four, to date). Rachel provides much of the band's vocals and plays the five-string fiddle. Jessie can easily strum away at the mandolin, mandola, fiddle and banjo, and

Ryan plays ... well, you name it. “If you put it in Ryan's hands, he can play it,” Rachel says. “It's amazing to see them put one instrument down and pick up another,” Connie adds.

In a world where technology can earn even the most mediocre performer a record deal, the children's knack for instruments is proof of their natural talent.

It would be unfair to say that the kids are the stars of Burnett Family Bluegrass. Brian and Connie are equally talented, and without mom and dad, there wouldn't be a band. The parents have imparted a profound love of bluegrass to their children, and the best way to see that love is when they play alongside their brood.

Connie, who picked up the upright bass when the band started playing bluegrass in 1993, inhales and exhales the music. Eyes closed, her body sways as she slaps away at the heavy strings. Brian sits slightly hunched over his guitar — a thin smile crosses his face as his fingers slide up and down the neck. A wonderful joy fills the Burnetts' living room when they play. A beaming Ryan is rapidly picking away at his banjo. Jessie is equally as feisty with her mandolin, coming to life along with the music. And then there's Rachel and her voice, which adds another ambrosial layer to the kaleidoscope of sounds whirling around. The Burnetts don't play with sheet music, and while that may not seem particularly extraordinary at face value, the fact that the family knows about 200 songs by heart is. “Once it's in you, it's like a mathematical equation,” Brian says. “You just know it.”

You might say Burnett Family Bluegrass is a confluence of past and present. They're two different generations living under a single roof, and together they've created a sound that blends traditional bluegrass with contemporary influences to produce something uniquely Burnett.

Burnett Family Bluegrass is on the verge of something big. Who knows if it'll happen, but Connie is wise enough to know that fame is fleeting, and she worries about her children's future.

“I'm mostly concerned with what comes after this,” she says. “They haven't gone to college. This has been their college, and I would like to enable them to make a living doing what they love.”

There may be an end-of-the-road for Burnett Family Bluegrass someday. And if that day comes, there will always be a roof under which this family can create its music.

But for now, an end seems a long way off.

— KATHY RITCHIE

For more information about Burnett Family Bluegrass, call 928-526-3522 or visit www.burnettbluegrass.com.

Local favorites

POP-CYCLE Tucson

Located along Tucson's historic Fourth Avenue, Pop-Cycle specializes in sustainable, organic and “up-cycled” materials. Here, artist-owner Jennifer Radler explains up-cycling and how her store is defining Tucson's indie-shopping scene.

Your tagline is “pop-art up-cycling and a refreshing treat.” What's your definition of up-cycling?

If you recycle something, you're breaking it down and using it again, but up-cycling is using it in its original form and using it for a different purpose.

Explain the evolution of Pop-Cycle.

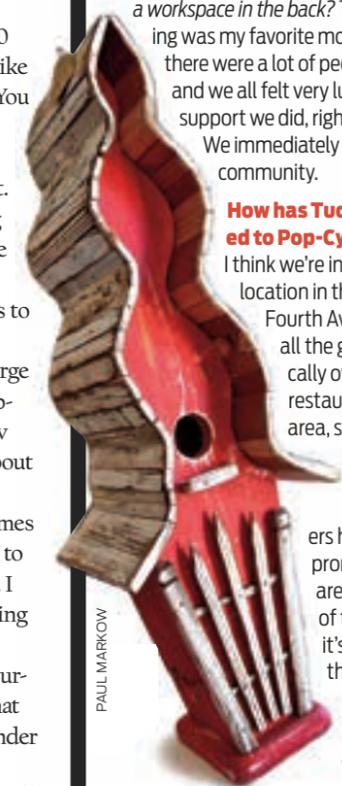
We opened the store on September 20, 2008. It actually came pretty easily to us, surprisingly. It was a collection of my sister's and sister-in-law's designs. We thought, *Why not create a recycled-art store in the front and a workspace in the back?* The grand opening was my favorite moment because there were a lot of people present, and we all felt very lucky to have the support we did, right from the start. We immediately felt a sense of community.

How has Tucson responded to Pop-Cycle?

I think we're in the best location in the city, because Fourth Avenue is where all the greatest locally owned shops and restaurants are in this area, so there are a lot of walking-traffic visitors.

Our customers have really promoted us and are so supportive of the store. I think it's the loyalty of the customers that has really allowed us to grow as we have.

— MAGGIE PINGOLT



PAUL MARKOV

Pop-Cycle is located at 422 N. Fourth Avenue in Tucson. For more information, call 520-622-3297 or visit www.popcycleshop.com.



SPUR MAKER

Leon King, Winslow

Leon King is matter-of-fact when it comes to talking about his handcrafted, custom spurs. He says that his pieces are increasing in value — but he’s “gotta die first” before they really become collectors items. King made his first set of spurs after ordering a pair out of a catalog. “I didn’t like them,” he says. “I had a real good shop class in Tucumcari [New Mexico], so I thought, *I’ll try and make a pair*, and they turned out fairly decent.” Fifty years later, the self-taught spur maker keeps busy by outfitting rodeo champions, professional cowboys and local ranchers. Each pair has been commissioned, as works of art often are — you won’t find his spurs on the Web or in stores. King spends 12 to 20 hours manipulating pieces of stainless steel until he’s shaped them into his spiky masterpieces, which are numbered and cataloged because, well ... “it makes them a little more valuable.”

— KATHY RITCHIE

Information: King Spurs, 928-386-2013 or 928-289-9460



DAWN KISH

DAWN KISH

Peace and Quiet

Although it's only 10 minutes from Whiskey Row, Whispering Pines B&B is in the business of silent nights. Talk about quiet, their address doesn't even show up on a Google Maps search.

Q uiet. It's not always easy to find, but when Whispering Pines Bed & Breakfast owners Tim and Gayle Graham opened their log-cabin refuge in the trees, they had just that in mind. "It's not for everybody," Tim says.

prescott "You come just to chill," Gayle adds. Despite the silent hum, the place isn't exactly off the beaten path.

"We're so close to heaven and not too far from downtown Prescott," Tim says. Indeed, Whispering Pines nestles against Prescott National Forest, and although it's less than a 10-minute drive to the heart of town, the address doesn't even appear on a Google Maps search.

As you head up the steep drive and make your way onto the 5-acre property, you'll immediately be struck by the view. It's a spectacular sight and completely

unexpected — the photographs on the couple's website hardly do it justice. Gayle and Tim, who've been in the hospitality industry for decades, eagerly greet guests with their tiny pup, Cameo, in tow. Once ushered into the 3,000-square-foot house, it's not the size of the home that'll take your breath away, it's the 30-foot windows that offer more of those stunning views.

Four bedrooms feature different themes and varying price points. The British Room is filled with Blighty-inspired memorabilia, thanks to England-born Tim. The cozy Southwest Room boasts a Western theme (the cowboy pastel in the room is courtesy of Gayle's brother — "the place inspired him," Tim says). The Asian Room, with its two twin beds, is decorated with treasures from the couple's travels around the globe. Last, there's the Prescott Room, which feels more like a suite. The rest of the house is open to guests. Of course, if you're looking for just the right spot to unwind with a glass of wine, head up to the loft, where you can plop down on a comfy sofa, watch the sun set or get lost in a puzzle.

Like most B&Bs, breakfast is included, and the Grahams go above and beyond as far as hospitality is concerned. Forget bagels and coffee. Gayle loves to give her guests options, one of which is her savory breakfast pizza. If sunny skies are in the forecast, enjoy breakfast on the wraparound deck, then take a stroll on the trails that are — literally — the fruits of Gayle's labor. She trimmed trees and shrubbery to create three footpaths around the property.

"I want to exceed people's expectations," Gayle says. "We want people to say, 'Wow, this was a great experience.'" And a quiet one, too, no doubt.

— KATHY RITCHIE

Whispering Pines Bed & Breakfast is located at 3061 W. Tree Tops Trail (off Copper Basin Road). For more information, call 928-443-1429 or visit www.whisperingpinesbb-az.com.



PAUL MARKOW



DAVID MUECH

Seeing Double

The son of world-renowned landscape photographer Josef Muench, David Muench was destined to follow in his father's footsteps — but with a different perspective. For much of his career, David's goal has been to photograph landscapes in ways that have not been done before. He also loves juxtaposition, and you'll often hear him use phrases like "vast and intimate" and "near-far." This photo of saguaro cactuses against the silhouette of Baboquivari Peak is a double exposure made on a single sheet of 4x5 film. David wanted to visually connect the lower Sonoran Desert with the spectacular peak that springs abruptly from the desert floor. He created the image without a computer or any editing software, only incredible vision and perfect execution. For more of David's photographs, see *Desert Islands*, page 44. — JEFF KIDA, PHOTO EDITOR

PHOTO TIP

Halo Effect

Backlighting can often be problematic for photographers, but in some cases, it can make for a beautiful image.

When the light hits your subject just right, it can create a halo that seems to add dimension and make your subject glow. The halo effect can be achieved

with artificial light by placing the light source behind your subject, but you'll also find it in nature, particularly when the sun is low in the sky.

Enter our monthly caption contest by scanning this QR code or visiting <http://bit.ly/ahmcaptioncontest>.



ADDITIONAL READING

Look for our book *Arizona Highways Photography Guide*, available at bookstores and www.arizonahighways.com/books.



Scouts Honored

Thin Mints, Samoas, Trefoils ... cookies get most of the attention when it comes to Girl Scouts, but the state's 40,000 members do more than schlep boxed goods. They're young leaders in our communities, and this year, they're celebrating the organization's 100th anniversary.

There's one more reason to indulge in Girl Scout Cookies this year: In 2012, the Girl Scouts of the USA celebrates its 100th birthday. Juliette Gordon Low formed the Girl Guides in 1912, modeling the organization on England's Girl Guides and Boy Scouts. Low changed the name to Girl Scouts in 1914, after she was informed that scouts were sent out first and guides second — she believed her girls would be “second to none.”

Arizona's first troop was formed in Prescott in 1916, though a troop in Ajo was the first to be officially chartered, in 1918. Today, there are more than 40,000 Girl Scouts and 14,000 adult volunteers in the state, and councils in Phoenix and Tucson.

The Southern Arizona Council spans eight counties and owns the only Americans With Disabilities Act compliant cabin in the area. Located in the Santa Catalina Mountains, it was donated to the Scouts by the Angel Charity for Children.

The Phoenix-based Cactus-Pine Council has its own Girl Scout Historical Society to document the organization's rich history. Six volunteers, all of whom are lifelong members of the Scouts, are responsible for organizing and cataloging everything from Girl Scout handbooks



Tempe Girl Scouts parade, circa 1940s

COURTESY OF THE TEMPE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

that date to the 1930s to all the uniforms worn in the past century. They've collected more than 500 original uniforms, including two replicas of the first uniform worn by Gordon Low in the early 20th century.

The society will display some of its artifacts in museums around the state — in Apache Junction, Tempe and Wickenburg, as well as the Girl Scout Museum in Phoenix — as part of the 100th anniversary celebration.

And though the organization has evolved over the past 100 years, its fundamentals haven't changed much.

“There's an old saying that's just as honest today as it was back then, and it's that we encourage girls to be thermostats and not thermometers,” says Historical Society volunteer Joyce Maienshein. At 85, she's been with the Girl Scouts for 66 years. “Thermostats set the temperature, and thermometers just record it.”

— MOLLY J. SMITH

this month in history

■ Apache leader Geronimo escapes from the San Carlos Reservation for the second time in two years on May 17, 1885.
■ Randy Johnson, 40, becomes the oldest pitcher in Major League Baseball history to pitch a perfect game, leading the Diamond-

backs to a 2-0 victory over the Atlanta Braves on May 18, 2004.
Estevan, guide to Spanish explorer Fray Marcos de Niza and the first non-Native American to visit the Southwest, is killed by Pueblo Indians while in search of rumored

cities of gold in the north on May 21, 1539.
■ Amateur bandit Pearl Hart (left) and her boyfriend hold up an Arizona stage-coach on May 30, 1899. After taking \$421 from the passengers, Hart returns \$1 to each person.



ARIZONA HIGHWAYS 50 Years Ago



Mohave County was the topic in *Arizona Highways* in May 1962. That month, we looked at the second largest county in Arizona — at the time one of the least populated in the country — and featured a story about the “thousand miles of shoreline” surrounding Lake Havasu, Lake Mohave and Lake Mead.

MARK LIPCZYNSKI



ST. DAVID

AS THE MORMON BATTALION passed through the San Pedro River Valley during the Mexican-American War, one of its members, Philemon Merrill, made note. Decades later, he returned to found St. David, naming the town for Mormon apostle David Patten.

Early settlers logged the Huachuca Mountains, providing much of the timber used in the construction of neighboring Fort Huachuca and, eventually, Tombstone. Though the settlement was primarily Mormon, a Civilian Conservation Corps camp — established in St. David in the mid-1930s — drew new settlers to the area.

Today, St. David retains a strong religious identity, most notably in the form of Holy Trinity, its Benedictine monastery. Located on a 132-acre parcel along the banks of the San Pedro River, the monastery is known for its gardens and its commitment to environmental preservation — in 1993, the monastery received the “Conservation Co-Operator of the Year” award from the San Pedro National Resource Conservation District. — KELLY KRAMER

FOUNDED	AREA	ELEVATION	COUNTY
1877	5.3 square miles	3,700 feet	Cochise

INFORMATION: Benson/San Pedro Valley Chamber of Commerce, www.bensonchamberaz.org; Holy Trinity Monastery, 520-720-4642 or www.holytrinitymonastery.org

Mean Eggs & Ham

The Ranch House isn't fancy, as evidenced by the worn linoleum lunch counter and the vinyl swivel stools, but nobody cares. Customers show up for the food, which is house-made, abundant and delicious.

The Ranch House is crowded, and my husband and I have finished breakfast, but we can't tear ourselves away. At the table next to us sits an unsuspecting family of four. The daughter looks about 10. She just ordered the ham and eggs.

My husband and I look at each other. Should we say something? No. It would be more fun to watch her reaction when the food arrives. The sign on the wall, which warns, "Too much pork for just one fork," doesn't begin to describe it.

We learned long ago to split things here. All of the food is house-made, abundant and delicious, and nothing on the menu is more than \$10.95. That explains why the Ranch House is packed for breakfast and lunch six days a week. Recession or no. Diets be damned.

Nothing about the place is fancy. It opened at the top of Yarnell Hill in the 1940s, and the building shows its age. The linoleum lunch counter is as worn as the vinyl swivel stools, and everything about the place feels old school, down to the green paper checks the waitresses total by hand. Cash only.

Tables are set with checkered oilcloth, plastic flowers poking from rice-filled Coke bottles. The walls and shelves are cluttered with all manner of things — an old-fashioned telephone, tobacco tins, wind chimes fashioned from tableware — but mostly chickens. There are chicken-themed potholders, plates, coffee mugs and salt-and-pepper shakers. There are chicken curtains and chicken magnets. Cloth chickens. Knitted chickens. Ceramic, wood and plasma-cut chickens. Chicken-themed signs read: "No fowl moods," "Have some huevos," and my favorite, "Kitchen closed. This chick's fed up."

"This chick" is Shelley Bergeson, who has owned the place with her husband, Steve, since 1994. He does most of the cooking, and has his own sign. It reads, "Steve's



PAUL MARKOW

Roadkill Café: You kill it, we grill it."

The waitresses carry straws in their back pockets and holler to each other across the floor. No matter how busy it gets, they never seem to drop the ball or lose their composure.

In short order, the family's food arrives, ham steak nearly spilling from the edges of the plate. Conversation stops. Eyes grow

wide as pancakes. My husband and I laugh. "We learned the hard way, too," we say to the rookies.

They laugh with us, and say they'll know better when they come back.

— KATHY MONTGOMERY

The Ranch House is located at 23225 S. State Route 89 in Yarnell. For more information, call 928-427-6522.



Though kingsnakes are constrictors, they've been known to vibrate their tails as a type of "bluff."

A kingsnake's bands act as camouflage against hawks, coyotes and other kingsnakes.

From May to August, female kingsnakes lay two to 24 eggs. Hatchlings emerge two to three months later.

JOHN CANCALOSI

Kingsnakes Can Be a Royal Pain

What's in a name? The common kingsnake possesses an uncommon trait: immunity to rattlesnake venom. In fact, the kingsnake will even eat rattlesnakes, which it detects by scent. A constrictor, the kingsnake surprises rodents, birds and frogs with a bite before coiling around the meal-to-be.

Its scientific name, *Lampropeltis getula*, alludes to its scale pattern of alternating black and cream

bands: the Latin "getula" refers to the Getulians, an ancient people of northwestern Africa whose artwork featured similar ringed designs. The bands framing the snake's 2- to 4-foot length help hide it from predators.

Of the nine subspecies of *getula*, Arizona is home to three. Color variations of desert kingsnakes in Southeastern Arizona include yellow bands, while all black is the defining look for western black king-

snakes at the state's southern edge.

Kingsnakes thrive in a variety of environments, from low-elevation deserts to grasslands and forests. At dawn and dusk, when kingsnakes are most active, you're likely to find this non-venomous species slithering near rocks or water. Sightings are more common in warmer months, as kingsnakes hibernate throughout fall and winter.

— LEAH DURAN

nature factoid

A LITTLE SQUIRRELLY

White-tailed antelope squirrels are aptly named — their tails feature a conspicuous white stripe. Also, their bodies are mostly brown, but they have white stripes, which make the squirrels resemble a white flash as they're running past. The squirrels are common in desert washes, as well as grasslands.



MARK A. CHAPPELL

may



SADIE JO'S PHOTOGRAPHY

Wyatt Earp Days

May 26-28, Tombstone

Everyone's favorite lawman, Wyatt Earp, comes to life at this annual event in Tombstone. In addition to gunfights and a gunfight skit competition starring groups from all over the Southwest, visitors can stroll along famous Allen Street, visit the O.K. Corral, listen to music, take in some excellent people-watching — period attire is encouraged, and there are usually multiple Wyatts on hand — enjoy a chili cook-off and more. *Information: 520-266-5266 or www.wyattearpdays.com*



HEARD MUSEUM COLLECTION; PHOTOGRAPH BY CRAIG SMITH

Zuni Festival of Arts & Culture

May 26-27, Flagstaff

Artists, performers and educators travel from Zuni, New Mexico, to share their art and culture at this annual extravaganza. Enjoy the Nawetsa Family Dancers and listen to music from the Zuni Pueblo Band. In conjunction with the festival, the Museum of Northern Arizona's newest exhibit, *A:shiwi A:wan Ulohnanne — The Zuni World*, will be open to visitors. Zuni artisans will also be on hand, selling their artwork. *Information: 928-774-5213 or www.musnaz.org*

Verde Valley Fair

May 2-6, Cottonwood

This big fair in a small town has it all. Some 40,000 visitors descend on Cottonwood for this annual event, which features livestock competitions, arts and crafts, live entertainment, food, a rodeo and plenty of family friendly entertainment. *Information: 928-634-3290 or www.verdevalleyfair.com*

Fine Art & Wine Fest

May 12-13, Prescott

Now in its 26th year, this festival features more than 140 juried fine-art exhibitors. After perusing the many booths, pop into the wine garden and sample a variety of Arizona wines. Live music and food round out the festival. *Information: 928-445-2510 or www.prescottartfestivals.com*

Arts and Crafts Festival

May 26-27, Pine-Strawberry

Come with high expectations to this festival — you won't be disappointed. The array of arts and crafts is so wide you won't know where to begin. Think stained glass, greeting cards, jewelry and more. Arrive early for a pancake breakfast. *Information: www.pinestrawhs.org/events*

27th Annual Tucson Folk Festival

May 5-6, Tucson

This two-day music fest features the musical stylings of Kevin Pakulis and Amy Langley, Sabra Faulk and many more. Take the family and jam out. *Information: www.tkma.org*

RAW Photography Workshop

June 16-17, Phoenix

Adobe consultant and Photoshop guru Rick Burrell leads this workshop, which focuses on the fundamentals of shooting and editing in Camera RAW format. The two-day workshop features the latest information and hands-on learning that will transform your digital post-processing and workflow. Rick is famous for turning the "necessary-but-complex" into "the joyfully simple." *Information: 888-790-7042 or www.friendsofhighways.com* [AH](#)

Mind If We Tag Along?

The state of Arizona gave us our own license plate, and we'd like you to take us for a ride.



To order an official *Arizona Highways* license plate, visit www.arizonahighways.com and click the license-plate icon on our home page. Proceeds help support our mission of promoting tourism in Arizona.

ARIZONA

HIGHWAYS



SERVICEARIZONA

SUMMER'S HERE →

Summer doesn't officially begin until June 21, but the timing of things is a little different in Arizona, especially for desert dwellers who start thinking about summer trips to the mountains about the time Spring Training comes to an end.

Either way, here's your itinerary.

Hit the road, and please drive carefully.

BY KATHY MONTGOMERY
ILLUSTRATIONS BY ERIC HANSON

Editor's Note: About this time last year, Arizonans (and concerned citizens around the world) were transfixed by news of the Wallow Fire as it spread through the White Mountains to become the largest fire in the state's recorded history. For a while, it seemed as if all would be lost. But in the end, much more was spared, including the communities of Pinetop-Lakeside, Show Low, Snowflake, Greer, Alpine, Eagar, Springerville and much of the Fort Apache Reservation. In affected areas, the fire hopscotched through the forest, skipping over many of the area's treasures. A year later, nature's resilience is on display, with new growth greening up even the burned areas. The point is: Plan a trip to the White Mountains this summer. There's still plenty of beauty and plenty of things to do. What follows are 50 of our favorites.





1

Order a slice of pie at Bear Wallow Café

Alpine

All of the food gets rave reviews at this friendly restaurant, which is run by four generations of Vada Davis' family. But the pies alone are worth the drive. Co-owner "Taani" Harper, also known as "the pie lady," bakes about 70 pies a week, all from scratch. With a dozen varieties, choosing just one is almost too much to bear. *Information:* 42650 U.S. Route 180, 928-339-4310 or www.bearwallowcafe.com

2

Hike the White Mountains Trail System

Vernon to Clay Springs

These nationally recognized, volunteer-built trails include a series of 25 interconnecting loops and connectors that incorporate urban paths, as well as surrounding forest. Pick up a WMTS booklet for \$2 at the Lakeside Ranger Station. Soon, you'll be happily walking around in circles. *Information:* www.tracks-pinetop-lakeside.org; Lakeside Ranger Station, 2022 W. White Mountain Boulevard, 928-368-2100

3

Look for pronghorns at Sipe White Mountain Wildlife Area

Near Eagar

Fortunately for wildlife lovers, much of this former ranch in the shadow of Escudilla Mountain was spared by the Wallow Fire. Its varied habitats, including grasslands, woods, irrigated fields and wetlands, make it attractive to a wide variety of wildlife, including elk and pronghorns, as well as birds as diverse as osprey, eagles, peregrine falcons and hummingbirds. *Information:* Arizona Game and Fish Department, 928-367-4281 or www.azgfd.gov

4

Plan a picnic in a wildflower meadow

Various locations

Mountain meadows blossom in an abundance of summer wildflowers that look as lovely as their names suggest: Indian paintbrush, wild iris, showy goldeneye, deer's ears. So bypass the cut flowers at the supermarket. Fill your basket with breads and cheeses, and set your "table" among them. *Information:* Alpine Ranger District, 928-339-5000 or www.fs.usda.gov/asnf



EDWARD MCCAIN

A lone harebell graces Hannagan Meadow south of Alpine.

5

Eat the meatloaf at Rendezvous Diner

Greer

Mom's meatloaf may have been good, but Pauline Merrill's is better. Merrill, the chef-owner of Greer's Rendezvous Diner, makes it from scratch each day. Whether you eat it as a sandwich or pair it with biscuits and chase it with a slice of berry cobbler, you won't regret the indulgence. *Information:* 117 N. Main Street, 928-735-7483

6

Tour the Butterfly Lodge Museum

Greer

What sounds like a lepidopterist's dream is really the historic hunting lodge of author James Willard Schultz and his son, artist Lone Wolf. Married to a Blackfoot Indian, Schultz called the place "butterfly lodge," perhaps for the butterflies in the surrounding meadows. The beautifully restored cabin makes it easy to see how his imagination took flight. *Information:* 928-735-7514

7

See the mountains from the back of a horse

Sunrise Park Resort

Beginning in June and stretching into fall, Snowy Mountain Stables offers horseback-riding at the base of the sprawling Sunrise Park Resort where elk, deer and turkeys often cross paths. Choose from half-hour to full-day rides and finish up with traditional Apache songs and storytelling by special arrangement. *Information:* 928-735-7454 or www.sunriseskiparkaz.com/summer/horseback-rides

8

Explore Pole Knoll Recreation Area

Apache-Sitgreaves National Forests, near Greer

Pole Knoll's name reflects the area's origins as a cross-country ski area. In summer, its Nordic ski symbols (ranging from a green circle for the easiest trails to black diamond) work equally well to guide the mix of hikers, bikers, horseback-riders and drivers over its diverse, moderate trails. *Information:* Springerville Ranger District, 928-333-6200 or www.fs.usda.gov/asnf



9

Go casting for trout at Hawley Lake

Fort Apache Reservation

Hawley Lake is one of the prettiest on the reservation, and that's saying a lot. Thick stands of pines, aspens and spruce surround nearly 10 miles of accessible shoreline. For anglers, brook, brown and rainbow trout are the lure. But beware, it's easy to get hooked. *Information:* White Mountain Apache Tribe Game and Fish, 928-338-4385

10

Pitch a tent at Los Burros Campground

Apache-Sitgreaves National Forests, near McNary

This small campground on a meadow's edge makes a peaceful alternative to the popular lakeside campgrounds. Originally home to a fire spotter, Los Burros retains the former ranger station's historic barn and corral. A nearby trail leads along a cool, shaded route to the fire tower at Lake Mountain Lookout. *Information:* Lakeside Ranger District, 928-368-2100 or www.fs.usda.gov/asnf

11

Have a slice of pizza at Red Devil Pizza

Pinetop

Co-owner Mike Digeno says the secret to his sinfully good pizza is the dough, prepared the way his father made it when he opened the family's metro-Phoenix chain 50 years ago. The three-day process allows the yeast to ferment like wine. Order two and say the Devil made you do it. *Information:* 1774 E. White Mountain Boulevard, 928-367-5570

12

Hike the Railroad Grade Trail (No. 601)

Apache-Sitgreaves National Forests

The Railroad Grade Trail extends along a historic railroad route from State Route 260 to Big Lake. If your engine loses steam at the idea of hiking the entire 19 miles, jump in at one of three other trailheads down the line. Just don't miss the 80-foot trestle bridge north of Sheep's Crossing. *Information:* Springerville Ranger District, 928-333-6200 or www.fs.usda.gov/asnf

13

Frolic in a cienega

Apache-Sitgreaves National Forests, near Hannagan Meadow

Cienega is Spanish for meadow, and the White Mountains are full of them. You'll find one of the loveliest at the K.P. Cienega Campground near the Blue Range Primitive Area. Incredibly, the fire skirted this remote, high-mountain spot. And with only five single-unit sites and no hookups, you'll likely have this lovely little playground almost all to yourself. *Information:* Alpine Ranger District, 928-339-5000 or www.fs.usda.gov/asnf

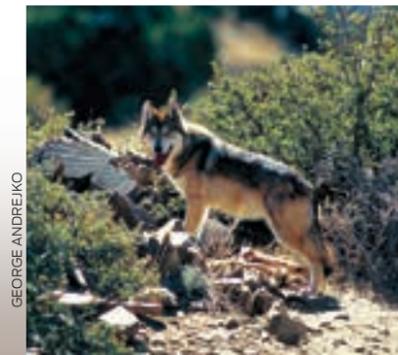
14

Listen for wolves in Bear Wallow

Bear Wallow Wilderness, Apache-Sitgreaves National Forests

Now famous as the place the Wallow Fire originated, Bear Wallow Wilderness is still home to a breeding pair of Mexican gray wolves. New aspen growth attracts deer and

Mexican gray wolves can be found in Eastern Arizona's Apache-Sitgreaves National Forests.



GEORGE ANDREIKO

elk, and, by extension, wolves. The wolves should begin quietly denning in late spring or early summer, but will grow more vocal as summer turns to fall. *Information:* Arizona Game and Fish Department, 928-367-4281 or www.azgfd.gov

15

Catch a flick at the El Rio

Springerville

When this tiny adobe theater opened around 1915, it showed silent films made by flicking cards before a camera. Since then, it's survived fire, recession and the advent of the multiplex. True, there's just one movie — shown at 7 p.m. Friday, Saturday and Sunday — but it's the reel deal. *Information:* 14 W. Main Street, 928-333-4590

16

Take to the highways

State Route 260 and U.S. Route 191

Heading to the White Mountains, half the pleasure is the journey. State Route 260 and U.S. Route 191, the major east-west and north-south routes, both carry scenic byway designations, and each is its own reward. State 260 offers panoramic views along the Mogollon Rim. U.S. 191 takes in everything from desert to alpine forest. Why choose? Head eastbound and down, and take the long way home. *Information:* Alpine Ranger District, 928-339-5000 or www.fs.usda.gov/asnf

17

Eat prime rib at Charlie Clark's Steakhouse

Pinetop

The origins of Charlie Clark's date back to Prohibition, when folks came in search of a certain illegal corn-based product. These days, they come for a different corn-fed commodity: beef. Roast prime rib is the specialty: mesquite spiced, slow roasted and so good it ought to be against the law. *Information:* 1701 E. White Mountain Boulevard, 888-333-0259 or www.charlieclarks.com





18

Singe your taste buds at the original Los Dos Molinos

Springerville

Worshippers of the fiery New Mexico-style chile served at this longtime Phoenix institution should make the pilgrimage to the Springerville location. It's the original, where the two chile grinders (molinos) that gave the restaurant its name are on display. Red or green, the chile here can bring you to your knees. *Information: 900 E. Main Street, 928-333-4846*

19

Watch the sun rise over Hannagan Meadow

Hannagan Meadow

The flames from the Wallow Fire spared this idyllic spot, which emerges from the damage along U.S. Route 191 like a fairy-tale oasis. The feeling of enchantment is, perhaps, strongest in the early morning as the sun rises over the tree line. Deer, elk, even a bobcat might materialize in the clearing to hold you spellbound. *Information: 928-339-4370 or www.hannaganmeadow.com*



LARRY LINDAHL

Hannagan Meadow is one of the White Mountains' most popular places.



20

Watch the sun go down from Blue Vista Lookout

Milepost 225, U.S. Route 191

This panoramic overlook at the edge of the Mogollon Rim marks the halfway point on the Coronado Trail Scenic Byway. The view is expansive, taking in Southeastern Arizona and western New Mexico. It's dramatic at sunset, when the Pinaleno and Gila mountains become layered cutouts against a rose and lavender sky. *Information: Alpine Ranger District, 928-339-5000 or www.fs.usda.gov/asnf*

21

Catch and release an Apache trout

Christmas Tree Lake, Fort Apache Reservation

Outdoorsman Lee Wulff famously said, "Game fish are too valuable to be caught only once." Certainly, that's true of Arizona's state fish. The White Mountain Apaches were 20 years ahead of the government in preserving this rare species, and Christmas Tree Lake is the premier fishing spot. The tribe permits only 20 fishermen each day on the catch-and-release lake. *Information: Hon-Dah Ski & Outdoor Sports, 928-369-7669*

22

Feed your inner child at Celebrations of Generations

Snowflake

A tea party is cause for celebration at any age. Here, kids can enjoy strawberry milk "tea" and pb&j finger sandwiches while moms play dress-up with Celebrations' hats, gloves and feather boas, sip grownup teas and indulge in specialty scones with flavors like piña colada. It's seriously enjoyable. *Information: 123 N. Main Street, 928-457-0198 or www.celebrationsofgenerations.com*



23

Grab breakfast at Darbi's Café

Pinetop

Darbi's serves old-fashioned comfort food at breakfast, lunch and dinner. But breakfast alone can carry you through the day, with lumberjack-sized portions of homemade biscuits and gravy, steak and eggs, and fluffy omelets or waffles loaded with fruit toppings. *Information: 237 E. White Mountain Boulevard, 928-367-6556*

24

Row, row, row your boat at Big Lake

Apache-Sitgreaves National Forests, near Springerville

This stunning lake and five surrounding campgrounds were dramatically spared from the Wallow Fire by what could only be divine intervention, says Rick Law, a third-generation owner of Big Lake Tackle and Supply. Rent a rowboat at his store and spend the day on the graceful waters. You, too, will be singing hallelujah. *Information: 928-521-1387 or www.biglakeaz.com*

25

Get a jump on Christmas at High Country Art Gallery & Gift Shop

Pinetop

Get a jump on your holiday shopping at this volunteer, nonprofit gallery and gift shop operated by the Northeastern Arizona Fine Arts Association. Gifts of handcrafted jewelry and one-of-a-kind works by local artists will earn you a reputation for the art of giving well. *Information: 592 W. White Mountain Boulevard, 928-367-3916 or www.highcountryartgallery.com*

26

Visit the Taylor Museum

Taylor

In the absence of a cannon to fire on Independence Day, Taylor's settlers shot an anvil into the air. The ritual is commemorated each July 4, along with the beating of the Jennings drum — two symbols so enduring they make up the town logo. Both are on display at this museum, which chronicles the development of a community that marches to the beat of a different drummer. *Information: 2 N. Main Street, 928-536-6649*

27

See an Old Master in the Renee Cushman Art Museum

Springerville

Renee Cushman lived all over the world before settling on an Arizona ranch and donating her European art, tapestries, furniture and china to Springerville's LDS church. Formerly seen only by appointment, the collection is now on display in a remodeled space inside Springerville's historic schoolhouse. There's even an engraving by Rembrandt, that master of the old school. *Information: 418 E. Main Street, 928-333-2123*

28

Sleep under the stars at Benny Creek Campground

Apache-Sitgreaves National Forests, near Greer

This pine-shaded campground overlooking Benny Creek is one of two in the Greer Lakes Recreation Area. The hosted campground is popular with anglers who come to fish for rainbow and brown trout stocked in nearby Bunch Reservoir. And its spacious dirt sites won't leave you feeling like the princess and the pea. *Information: Springerville Ranger District, 928-333-6200 or www.fs.usda.gov/asnf*

29

Explore Casa Malpais Archaeological Park

Springerville

The name Casa Malpais, "House of the Badlands," refers to the broken basaltic terrain on which the Mogollon people built this 13th century fissure pueblo. Accessible only by guided tour, the National Historic Landmark includes an ancient observatory where artists etched petroglyphs to create a solar calendar, leaving their mark for all time. *Information: 928-333-5375*



The Great Kiva is a major attraction at Casa Malpais, near Springerville.

30

Visit the Lavender Festival at Red Rock Ranch & Farms

Concho

Lavender fields are the last things you'd expect in the high desert. Yet in late June and early July, there they are — 35,000 plants in full bloom. That's when Mike and Christine Teeple open their gates for Red Rock's two weekend lavender festivals, with tours, demonstrations and foods like honey-lavender ice cream, another unexpected delight. *Information: 928-337-2289 or www.redrockfarms.com*

31

Kid around at Black Mesa Ranch

Near Snowflake

This "accidental dairy" produces artisan goat cheeses prized by some of Arizona's top chefs. On May 19 and October 20, David and Kathryn Heining open their milking parlor and cheese kitchen for open houses. Expect baby goats in May, seasonal candies in October. Of course, there also will be plenty of delicious cheese. It's the best. No kidding. *Information: 928-536-7759 or www.blackmesaranch.com*

32

Savor the German pancakes at Heritage Inn

Snowflake

There are many reasons to stay at the Heritage Inn, including a cheerful, Rockwellesque vibe, lush gardens and engaging innkeepers. But the best reason may be breakfast. The house specialty is the "German baby," a pillowy baked pancake served with butter, powdered sugar and lemon. Enjoy it in the garden. It'll start your day sunny side up. *Information: 161 N. Main Street, 866-486-5947 or www.heritage-inn.net*

33

Jam out at Music From Greer

Greer

Originally a weeklong chamber-music festival, Music From Greer has evolved into weekend concerts that run from mid-June through early August. Its 11th season begins June 16. Performers include the Quartet Greer, a string and piano quartet, and visiting musicians who travel to this high-mountain retreat to make "music with altitude." *Information: Ragel Family Greer Community Center, 74 Main Street, 928-735-9949 or www.musicfromgreer.com*





34

Visit the White Mountain Apache Cultural Center

Fort Apache Historic Park

Located in a structure reminiscent of a traditional Apache holy home, Nohwike' Bágowa (House of Our Footprints) serves as an interpretive center for Fort Apache Historic Park, with exhibits that explore Apache culture and history. Basketry, beadwork, books and music are sold in the gift shop, and admission includes access to the Kinishba Ruins 5 miles west of the fort. *Information:* 127 Scout Road, Fort Apache, 928-338-4625 or www.wmat.nsn.us/fortapachepark.htm

35

Mail a letter from the Blue Post Office

Blue

Collectors send self-addressed, stamped envelopes to this tiny post office, prized as one of the last to hand-cancel every letter. Postal workers still do so upon request. But this transformed camp trailer — with its wire-mesh customer-service window — deserves a visit in person. Just don't wait too long. It's targeted for possible closure. *Information:* 928-339-4945

36

Ride off into the sunset with Porter Mountain Stables

Lakeside

The Peterson family, which owns and operates the stables, homesteaded the property at Flag Hollow Ranch, Porter Mountain's new home. The two-hour sunset tour takes riders across Porter Creek, popping out of the tree line behind Scott Reservoir just as the sun dips behind the lake. If that doesn't knock your socks off, the equestrian center's Friday-night bull-riding probably will. *Information:* 9031 Jacks Road, 928-368-5306 or www.flaghollowranch.com



37

Eat the enchiladas at Booga Red's

Springerville

The name of this restaurant sounds a little like Booger Ed's. But don't let that deter you. Booga Red was the nickname of its former owner, a big redheaded guy, and the restaurant is still in the family. Try Booga Red's specialty: a sausage and cheese enchilada, covered with red or green sauce, topped with two eggs and served with hash browns. A dish by any other name would taste as sweet. *Information:* 521 E. Main Street, 928-333-2640

38

Drive the scenic road to Greens Peak

Apache-Sitgreaves National Forests

Forest Road 117 winds north from State Route 260 past wildflower-dotted meadows and forests of pine, spruce and aspen for 6 miles to Greens Peak, a cinder cone that rises from the surrounding grasslands like a great, overturned bowl. A steep road leads to communications towers at the top, where sweeping views take in distant Sunrise Lake. *Information:* Springerville Ranger District, 928-333-6200 or www.fs.usda.gov/asnf

39

Tour the Springerville Volcanic Field

Beginning in Springerville

The sheer size alone of the Springerville volcanic field is enough to blow your mind, with 400 vents covering an area larger than Rhode Island. A Springerville-Eagar Cham-



ber of Commerce pamphlet covers the high points, with a self-guided driving tour from Springerville to Greens Peak. *Information:* Springerville-Eagar Chamber of Commerce, 418 E. Main Street, 928-333-2123

40

Attend the inaugural High Pines Bluegrass Festival

Hon-Dah Resort

The Grammy-nominated group The Grascals headlines this new music festival, which replaces the White Mountains Bluegrass Festival. The two-day event, August 18 and 19, offers camping, food and "Fiddlemania" for the kids, plus a chance to end the summer on a high note. *Information:* 928-369-7576 or www.hon-dah.com

41

Do time at one of the state's oldest jails

Pinetop-Lakeside

The WPA built the historic jail on the corner of Burke Lane and White Mountain Boulevard in 1935. Originally located on Clare Lane in Pinetop, it was moved in 1988 to make way for First Interstate Bank, now Wells Fargo. You can't actually get locked up here, but it just might capture your imagination. *Information:* 800-573-4031 or www.pinetoplakesidechamber.com

42

Get cultural at Pow Wow in the Pines

Hon-Dah Resort

Drums vibrating, bells tinkling, costumed dancers swirling ... Pow Wow in the Pines is a moving, multisensory experience. Held the first week in June, the gathering of about 25 tribes from all over the United States and Canada features competitions, shopping and foods like roast mutton and steamed-corn stew. *Information:* 928-369-7576 or www.hon-dah.com



JACK DYKINGA

Waterfall at Cibecue Creek

43

Surrender to the canyon at Cibecue Creek

Salt River Canyon

Cibecue means "surrounded by red cliffs," which is what you'll be on this dramatic trek along a tributary of the Salt River. Alternately hiking, boulder-hopping and splashing through a narrowing canyon to a 50-foot waterfall, you'll gladly give in to the adventure. But get a permit from the White Mountain Apaches first. Hiking beyond Lower Falls requires a guide. At press time, the tribe did not employ one. *Information:* 928-338-4385 or www.wmat.nsn.us

44

Ride the slopes at Sunrise

Sunrise Park Resort, Fort Apache Reservation

Who says you can't ride the slopes just because it's summer? Weekend scenic lift rides from Memorial Day to Labor Day feature specially equipped chairs to carry your bike to the top, too. Slaloming down is as much fun as you can have on two wheels. *Information:* 928-735-7669 or www.sunriseskipark.com

45

Play Frisbee golf in Show Low

Show Low

The 18-hole wooded course at Show Low City Park offers technical challenges for seasoned players, but is short enough to be enjoyable for beginners, too. Forgot a Frisbee? No problem. The aquatic center sells discs. There are no greens fees and you don't need a cart, so there's no reason not to give it a whirl. *Information:* Corner of U.S. Route 60 and State Route 260, 888-746-9569 or www.showlowchamberofcommerce.com

46

Search for the stump of the 2009 U.S. Capitol Christmas tree

Apache-Sitgreaves National Forests

One hundred years after conservationist Aldo Leopold reported for work on the Apache National Forest, the superintendent of the U.S. Capitol Grounds selected an 85-foot spruce as the nation's Christmas tree. The Aldo Leopold Centennial Tree was the first for Arizona. The Wallow Fire passed through the site on Forest Road 88B, about a quarter-mile north of Forest Road 249. Though slightly charred, the stump still stands as a testament to nature's resilience.

47

Relive your childhood at Hidden Meadow Ranch

Near Greer

If you never got to experience summer camp, head to Hidden Meadow for daily planned activities like archery and canoeing. If you did, do it again. Lucky for you, the cabins and dining hall bear no resemblance to the camps of your youth. Here, they contain custom furnishings and stone fireplaces, and serve dishes like elk tenderloin. Better yet, it's open year-round for an endless summer. *Information:* 928-333-1000 or www.hiddenmeadow.com

48

Step back in time at Fort Apache

Fort Apache Historic Park

The 27 buildings in this 288-acre National Register Historic District may be the best surviving example of an Apache Wars-era military post. Interpretive signs along the self-guided walking tour explain the structures, which date from the 1870s through the 1940s. *Information:* 127 Scout Road, Fort Apache, 928-338-4625 or www.wmat.nsn.us/fortapachepark

49

Go bird-watching along the Blue

Blue River

Peregrine falcons, white-throated swifts, common nighthawks and Townsend's solitaires are among the winged creatures you'll find nesting near the Blue River. The river is also a major draw for sparrows, jays, titmouses, tanagers and turkeys. One of the best places to spot them is along Blue River Drive, a 48-mile loop suitable for high-clearance vehicles. *Information:* *Alpine Ranger District*, 928-339-5000 or www.fs.usda.gov/asnf



50

Sleep in a yurt

Lyman Lake State Park

Lyman Lake State Park is scheduled to reopen this summer, meaning that you'll have the opportunity to sleep in a yurt. The park is home to several of the domed structures — traditionally used by Turkic nomads — each of which features a canvas shell, two futons, electricity and a skylight. The yurts rent for \$35 a night and sleep up to four people, but they hold up to six — plenty of space for your band of nomads. *Information:* 928-337-4441 or www.azstateparks.com **AH**



For more summer travel ideas, scan this QR code or visit www.arizonahighways.com/travel.asp.





A PORTFOLIO
EDITED BY
JEFF KIDA

A LOOK TO THE EAST

The White Mountains of Eastern Arizona are an anomaly — too much green, too much water, too many pastoral scenes to be in a state that's stereotyped as being nothing but desert. But there they are. Arizona's version of Eden. Indeed, the White Mountains are among the most beautiful places in the state, and despite the Wallow Fire of 2011, that paradise wasn't lost. As you'll see in the following pages, the hills are alive and well. And so are the mountains, meadows and streams.

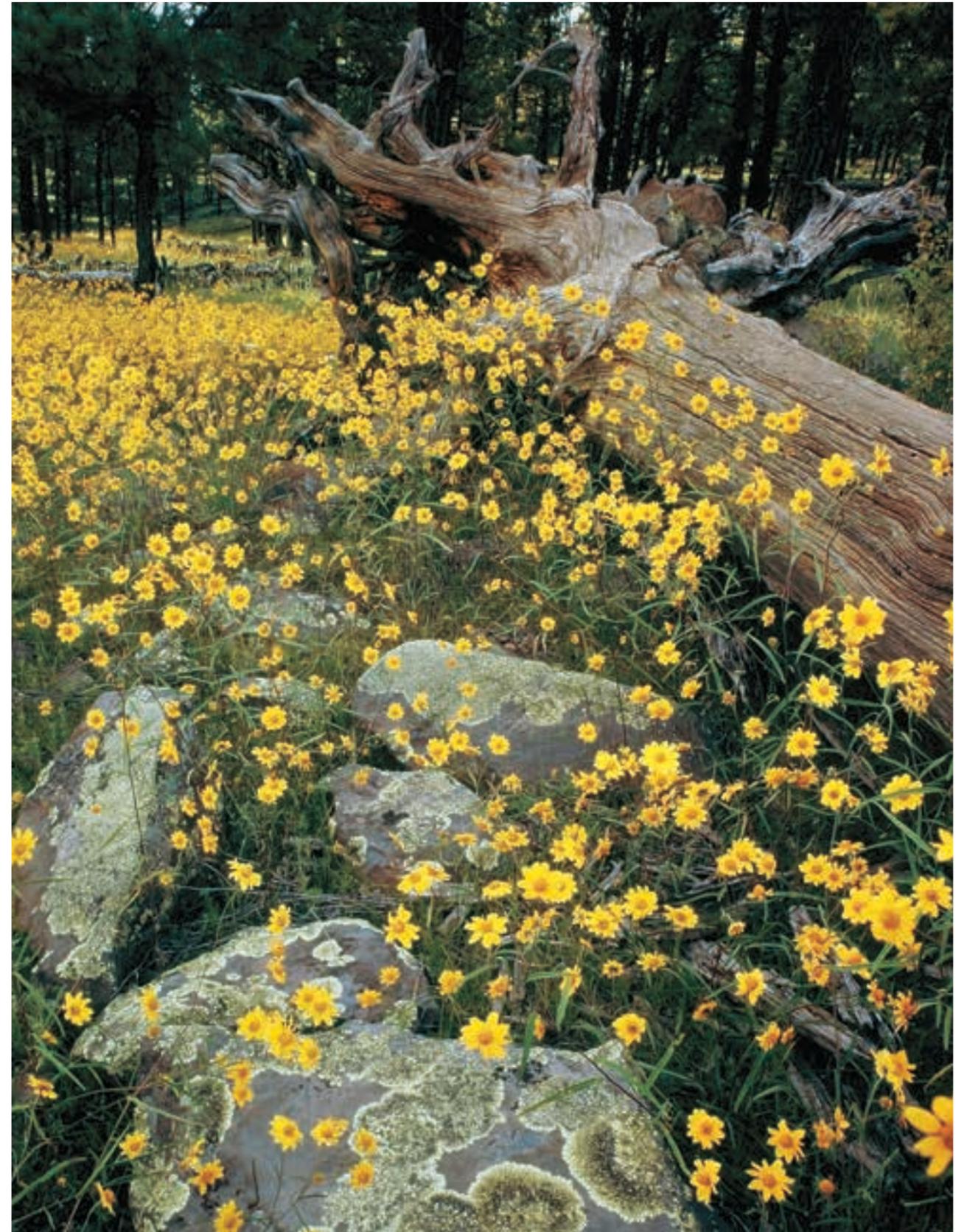


05.12 PORTFOLIO

PRECEDING PANEL: At sunrise, a light mist lifts from the still surface of Hawley Lake, a popular fishing and camping destination southeast of Pinetop-Lakeside. | DAVID MUENCH

ABOVE: Ponderosa pines and aspen trees form a dense thicket near the Escudilla Wilderness. | JACK DYKINGA

RIGHT: Sunflowers bloom profusely in the White Mountains when conditions are right. | DAVID MUENCH



“Nature always wears the colors of the spirit.”

— RALPH WALDO EMERSON

05.12 PORTFOLIO

Storm clouds conspire with the setting sun to create a brilliant display over Big Lake in the Apache-Sitgreaves National Forests. | PAUL GILL

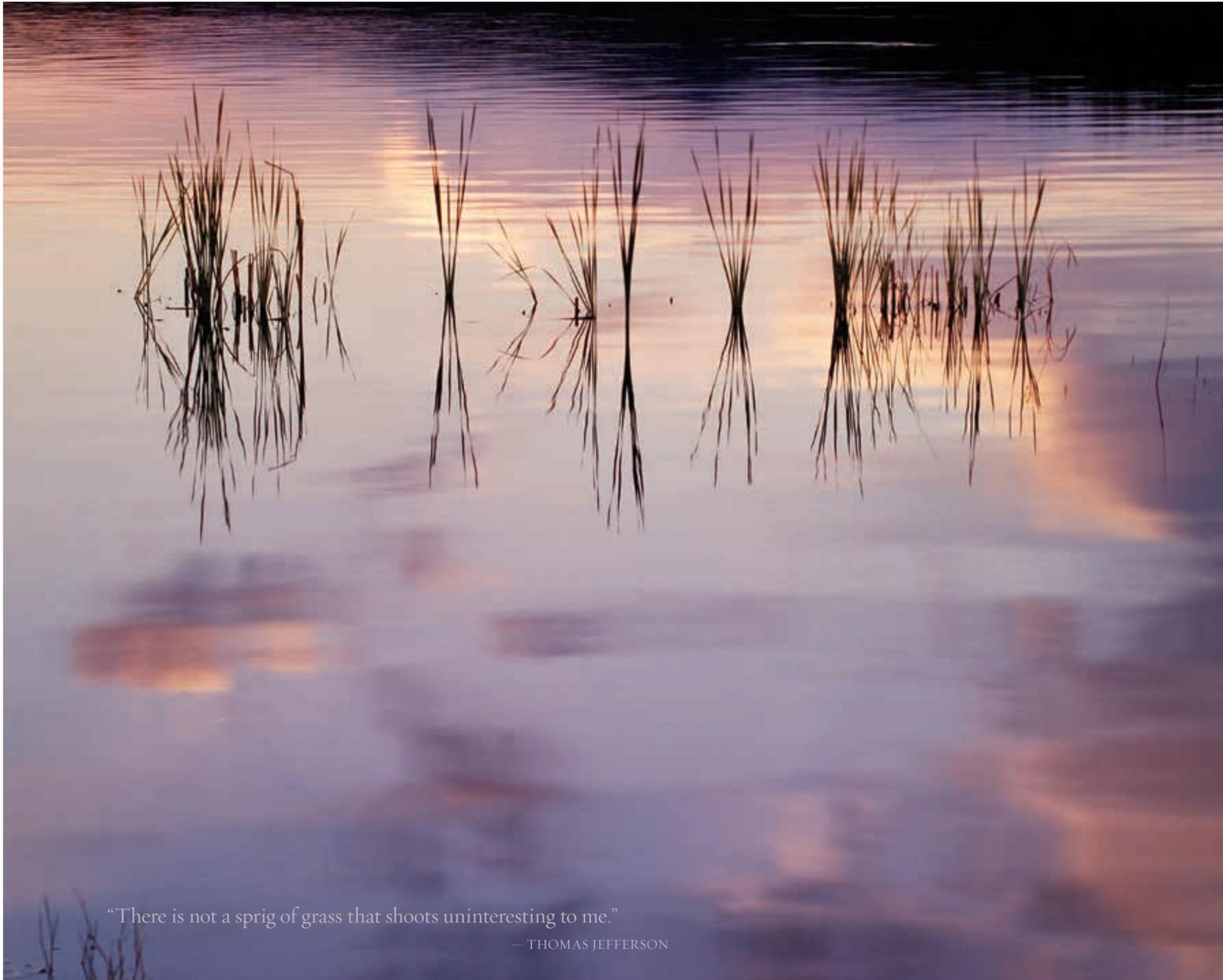


05.12 PORTFOLIO

ABOVE: Golden asters and red-orange lichens dot a rocky slope near Crescent Lake, a favored spot for Arizona's trout fishermen. | RANDY PRENTICE

RIGHT: The Black River offers countless idyllic getaway spots. | DAVID MUENCH





05.12 PORTFOLIO

Reflections of clouds and cattails
are juxtaposed on Hawley Lake.
| DAVID MUENCH

“There is not a sprig of grass that shoots uninteresting to me.”

— THOMAS JEFFERSON



05.12 PORTFOLIO

Musk mallow grows over the West Fork of Black River, south of Big Lake. | PAUL GILL



“Look deep into
nature, and then you
will understand
everything better.”

— ALBERT EINSTEIN

05.12 PORTFOLIO

A rainbow slices through a monsoon cloud over Jacques
Marsh, between Show Low and Lakeside. | PAUL GILL





MINI MOOS

When Robyn and John Hutchison moved to their ranch near Prescott, they were looking for something different: quiet nights, a cooler climate, a chance to live off the grid ... they even wanted a different kind of cattle. Unlike most ranches, where beefier is better, the Hutchisons opted for mini-Jerseys and other small cows that grow to a scant 400 pounds and stand only waist-high to a human. Don't expect any of those little dogies to be jumping over the moon.

BY BARBARA YOST
PHOTOGRAPHS BY SUZANNE STARR

Robyn Hutchison tends the miniature Jersey cows that she and her husband, John, raise on their Rocking Robin Ranch near the Prescott National Forest.



Getting to the Rocking Robin Ranch is no easy task. Stretching beyond the Prescott National Forest, the last miles are rugged even for a four-wheel-drive. Passage along that narrow dirt road is challenged by ruts and bumps as it twists through pines and oaks across high desert. The terrain is a mix of lush and arid, a kind of transition between Southern and Northern Arizona.

No wonder that normally intrepid Home Depot balked the first time Robyn and John Hutchison requested a delivery as they were building a home on their new 62-acre property. It was only a moment's hesitation. Since moving to the ranch in 2003, the Hutchisons have built two 3,200-square-foot houses with materials bought from the home-improvement store. Home Depot trucks have forged a well-worn path.

Robyn smiles. "They have done quite well with us." The Hutchisons once planned to carve out a piece of paradise in Queen Creek, 35 miles southeast of downtown Phoenix. Much of the town is a bucolic landscape of farm and ranch land. When the family moved into their home on 5 acres in 1999, they were promised that surrounding lots would be at least 1 acre. Over the years, developers squeezed in smaller and smaller lots. The Hutchisons felt pinched.

Around 2000, Robyn bought a miniature Jersey cow with hopes of providing her family with fresh milk products, such as cheese, yogurt, butter and ice cream. Though she'd grown up in the city as what she calls a "concrete baby," she once visited a farm in Kentucky that her father owned. She fell in love with rural life. That one little cow would be her entrée, literally and figuratively, into a world without traffic noise and intrusive neighbors, favoring a diet sourced from the land, not the factory.

"It started with a desire to give my family the best," Robyn says. "I believe nature got it right. No fake food."

While John worked in construction as a framer, Robyn began gleaning ranching magazines for techniques on how to become self-sustaining. She acquired six more minicows. The little bovines are a breed of their own, not dwarf animals, but heritage cattle the size cattle used to be before giant commercial concerns began breeding larger animals to increase milk yields after World War II. These are the cows our ancestors knew.

In 2003, the Hutchisons were craving more space and cooler climes. So John and Robyn printed out sheets of information about properties for sale north of the Valley. Then fate intervened. As Robyn tells the story, the windows of their car were cracked just a little that summer morning, but somehow a gust of wind whipped through and blew the notes away as the couple was driving to Prescott.

"I wanted to turn around and pick them up," John recalls. Robyn said no, so he conceded. "Well, maybe we weren't supposed to see them."

In town, they bought a Prescott newspaper and spotted an intriguing real-estate ad, an ad that would run just one time. It said, "remote 62 acres." The property was the old Eckel homestead, which dated to the 1860s and featured a sizable apple orchard.

Remote indeed. But, John says, "Once we came up over the hill and saw that orchard, we said, 'Ahhh.'"

A bill of sale for \$450,000 got them 62 acres and an abundance of apples, but little else — no power, pipes or plumbing. Living out of a small rented two-bedroom home with four children, they started building. By Christmas, a frame was up.



“It was like camping,” Robyn says.

Meanwhile, their seven cows were living in luxury with all the grass they could munch and room to roam. By trial and error, Robyn learned how to create the Eden she'd dreamed of for her family. The Hutchisons have six children: Delanie, 14; John, 16; Jacob, 20; and Josh, 22. John has two grown children, Ashley and Anthony.

John was a reluctant rancher at first. Though he grew up in Colorado, and his grandparents had a farm, he preferred the city. Robyn finds contentment in solitude. Her friends have dubbed her a recluse.

But John has come around. A ruggedly built man, he's established a successful framing business that survived the economic downturn when others failed. At the time he was constructing his own house, he broke his arm on a job. Doctors warned he'd never wield a hammer again and recommended a \$20,000 operation. With no insurance, John took a chance and wore a cast as long as he could. The arm healed.

Now he loves the ranch as much as his wife does. While he works construction, she runs the Rocking Robin, an ever-expanding ark.

ABOVE: Robyn pours off fresh cream right after the morning milking. **OPPOSITE PAGE:** The Hutchisons and their children have surrounded themselves with cows, pigs, chickens, turkeys, goats, rabbits, doves and dogs, including a dachshund named Cookie and the white Great Pyrenees at right, a breed used for hundreds of years as a livestock guardian.

At last tally, Robyn counted 10 mini-Jerseys, seven kunekune pigs, flocks of chickens and Bourbon Red turkeys, eight Nubian goats, 10 rabbits and an aviary of doves. A Great Pyrenees named Page and two gentle llamas, Kayla and Cadbury, guard the stock.

The family also has three cats, four other dogs of varying sizes (Robyn breeds Olde English Bulldogges) and a horse named Star-



light. The black mare belongs to Delanie. Raised on the Navajo Indian Reservation, Starlight is the only animal that costs more to keep than it produces. All others must earn their keep.

The center of Robyn's farm life is the barn behind the house, a short ride on her Kawasaki Mule. Cookie, a longhaired dachshund, chases after on stubby legs until she's given a lift the rest of the way.

Milking time for the sweet-faced cows comes twice a day after calving. Robyn and Jacob pull Joy from her stall and lead her to a basket of grass and oat hay. With cows that measure just 42 inches at the hipbone (microminis measure 36 inches), a milking stool is impractical. Robyn, wearing denim overalls and a white T-shirt, brushes her long blond hair out of her way and plops down on

a cushion on the dirt floor. She cleans Joy's udder with a hydrogen peroxide solution and rubs it with coconut oil to condition the teats and smooth the milking process. Jacob mirrors her actions on the other side.

Robyn uses no milking machines. "They make too much noise," she says. "Milking is peaceful for me."

All of her cows have been historic breeds: mini-Jersey, Zebu, Dexter, Kerry and Hereford. They grow to a scant 400 pounds, about a third of a standard cow, and stand waist-high to a human. Each peaks at about 3 gallons of milk a day, which makes 3 pounds of butter. Steers are butchered at age 4, twice the age of commercially bred cattle. Age improves the flavor of the beef.

Robyn is also breeding her kunekunes, a smaller pig once almost extinct. They produce leaner meat and are distinctive for their wattles, or tassels — short columns of flesh hanging from their chins. Just as Robyn sells cows as pets and for dairy, and offers frozen semen and embryos, she hopes to produce kunekunes for "seed and feed."

After almost a decade on the ranch, the Hutchisons have achieved near self-sufficiency. Power comes from solar panels, their water from a well. They produce their own dairy, eggs, beef, pork and poultry, and keep a small garden for produce. Monthly trips to Costco are for staples: cereal, flour and sugar. Once Robyn establishes a bee colony, she'll sweeten her foods with honey.

Delanie, who travels an hour into Prescott with her brother John to attend high school, says she lacks for nothing other teenagers enjoy. She has the Internet, a cell phone, television. When friends come to visit, they envy her ranch and the chance to ride a horse.

"We have more than they do," she says simply.

Jacob likes the ranch for its peace and quiet. Instead of the racket of the city, the sounds here are the grunts and squeals of pigs, the whining of a goat that missed its cookie, the gobble of Ira the tom turkey (he's been awarded a permanent pardon from the Thanksgiving table), the clicks of the llamas.

The elder John has almost finished building his second ranch house, a handsome structure gracious enough to be a lodge. It should be finished later this year. He and Robyn will move in, leaving the original house to the kids.

Between the two houses, down a dry wash, granite rock formations sport petroglyphs from the Hualapai people who inhabited this area before being driven out by the U.S. Cavalry, Robyn says. Covering the rocks are human and animal figures. She's found exquisitely painted potsherds left by the Indians, as well as stone manos and metates once used for grinding corn. Arrowheads fill a drawer in her kitchen.

The first time Robyn walked her property, it felt right. "Being here made me feel such a connection to our ancestors," she says. "It was amazing. I was supposed to be here. I knew it. It was my home."

Among her customers are Mormons from Utah, who buy her animals to sustain large families. No one proselytizes, Robyn says. Instead, they respect her as they do Native Americans, connected to the land. She embraces that notion. The Earth is her guidepost.

"I'm very spiritual," says this woman who harvests nature's bounty to nurture her family. "I celebrate and cherish life. This is one big beautiful church. Anything that brings you to community and the greater good is a good thing." **AH**

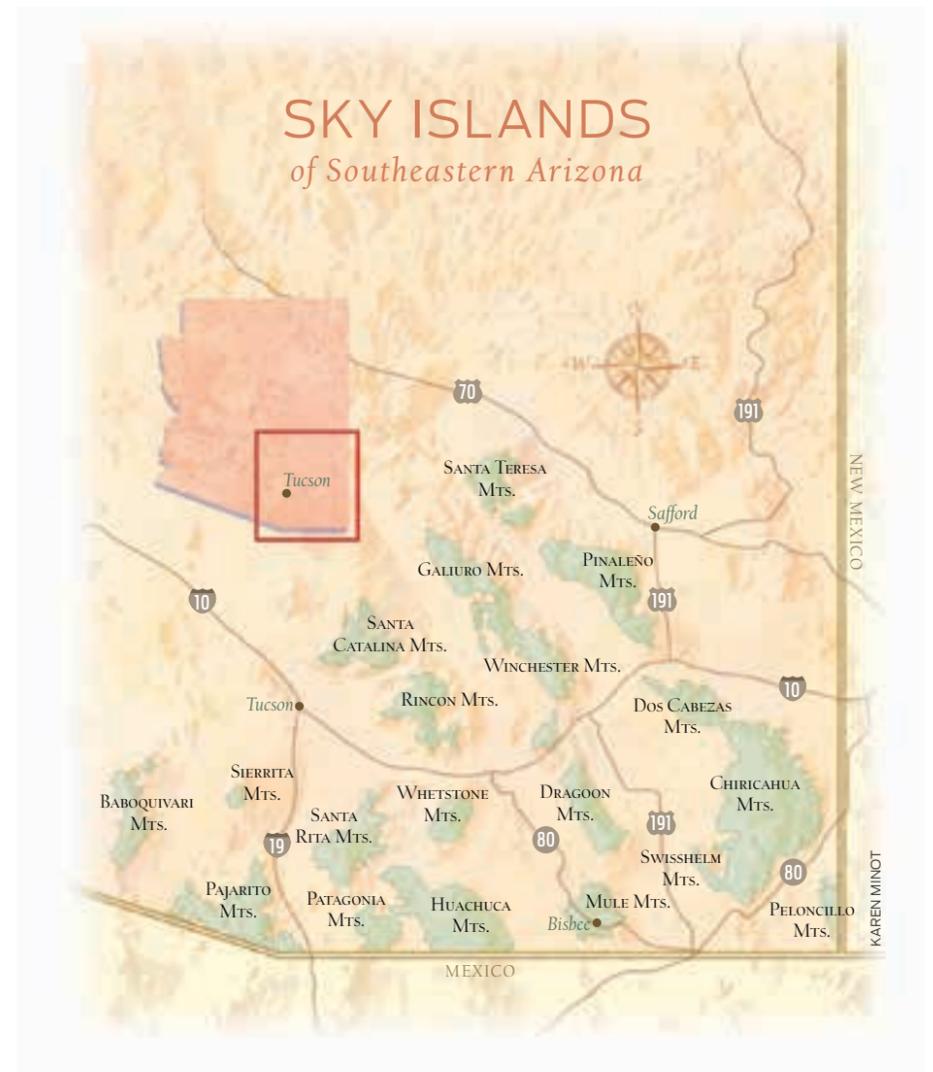
DESERT ISLANDS

Mention the words “desert island” to most people and they’ll think of a tropical paradise. But Arizona has desert islands, too. Better known as sky islands, these lone mountain ranges form an ecological bridge between the Rockies and the Sierra Madre. They’re great for recreationists, but more importantly, they serve as steppingstones for migrant species of plants, animals and insects that can only survive by striding high above the Sonoran Desert.

BY CRAIG CHILDS PHOTOGRAPHS BY DAVID MUENCH



PRECEDING PANEL: Unobstructed views stretch to the horizon from Monte Vista Peak in Southeastern Arizona's Chiricahua Wilderness, where the highest point is 9,759 feet atop Chiricahua Peak.
LEFT: A storm envelops the Santa Rita Mountains south of Tucson, where Mount Wrightson rises to 9,453 feet.



Some places have water. Whole parts of the country leak from every pore and crack in the ground. Think of New Hampshire or the Pacific Northwest, where each little town has a glimmering river or stream. In Arizona, water takes on a different aspect. It is not everywhere. In the places it appears, it is a miracle.

In my head, I map the land by its kinds of water — tinajas, seeps, springs, waterpockets, creeks, lakes and rivers. Each part of this state has its type, blood-red flash floods of the sedimentary northeast, and the hidden, underground streams of the dry, hot Southwest. Wherever there are mountains

tall enough to wear pines and manzanitas, you find springs and courses of freshets and streams nearby. The phenomenon is most pronounced in the sky islands of the southeast quadrant of the state. Here, lone peaks and ranges stand out of the desert, the highest reaching almost up to 11,000 feet in ele-

vation. Water pours from their bedrock innards. Gathered from storms and snowfall that collects around these solitary, weather-vane summits, this water reaches far down into the desert in the form of creeks spreading from the apron of the high-headed Pinalenos or the soft-spoken rises of the Whetsone Mountains. These are the miracles I speak of.

The solitary ranges in the lower right-hand corner of the state are called sky islands because they belong to a particular geographic class. They are pieces of high elevation standing well above surrounding terrain, their physical isolation separating them from any other similar biomes nearby. There are other

sky islands in the world: Venezuelan “tepuis,” the Ethiopian Highlands and the lone Altai Mountains of east-central Asia, to name a few. The ones here are known as Madrean Sky Islands because they stem north out of the Sierra Madre in Mexico, forming stepping-stones for migrant species of plants, animals and insects that can only survive by striding high above the desert. To the eye, these places are a powerful relief from the parched lowlands that close in around them like a sea of drought.

Another thing you don’t get much of in Arizona are fireflies. They are not entirely absent from the state — just rare. I know places, though, where the desert lights up

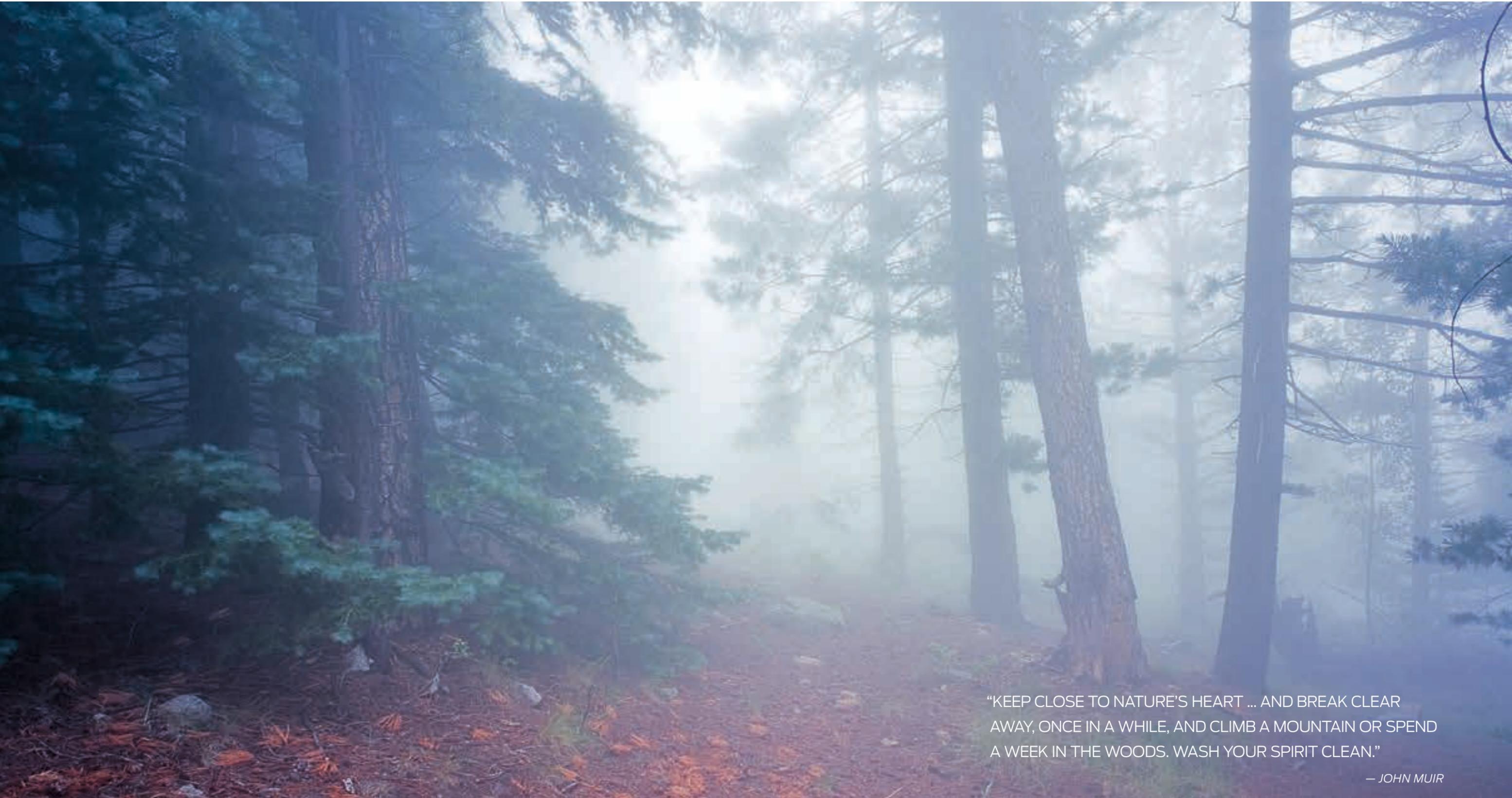
like a celebration. If you go to the base of these sky islands at exactly the right time of year, usually in July when monsoon moisture begins to stir the air and days are brutally hot, you may see them. Follow the water. When you find these sky-island fireflies, it feels as if they’re pouring down from above, rivers of eerie, flickering light moving into dry country below.

Once, at dusk, I hiked to a creek along the edge of the Galiuro Mountains, two ranges east of Tucson. Most of the land was desert decorated with ocotillos, saguaros and fat thumbs of barrel cactuses standing absolutely still in the lingering heat of the day. The creek ran inside a forest. At 7:45

p.m., lightning-green lamps began to illuminate all along the watercourse. They filtered through tall bank grass, tiny lanterns lighting up leaf litter and pools of water. It felt more like New Orleans than desert. The creek formed a biological causeway, a place where small, sucker-mouthed fish live in the same country as javelinas, Gila monsters and sidewinders.

I walked up the winding hallway where cottonwood trees and alders formed an arched canopy, the air below swampy with plant sweat. As fireflies grew in number, I stepped out of the wooded stream to cut a bend by crossing open, rolling desert. Out here, there

(Continued on page 51)



“KEEP CLOSE TO NATURE’S HEART ... AND BREAK CLEAR AWAY, ONCE IN A WHILE, AND CLIMB A MOUNTAIN OR SPEND A WEEK IN THE WOODS. WASH YOUR SPIRIT CLEAN.”

— JOHN MUIR

Fog surrounds the Riggs Lake area in the Pinaleno Mountains near Safford. Mount Graham is the highest point in the range at 10,720 feet.

The Bear Canyon area of the Santa Catalina Mountains near Tucson is one of the range's normally wetter areas. Mount Lemmon tops the range at 9,157 feet.



“WHAT MAKES THE DESERT BEAUTIFUL IS THAT SOMEWHERE IT HIDES A WELL.”

— ANTOINE DE SAINT-EXUPERY

(Continued from page 47)

were no fireflies at all, and none of the heavy-drinking trees known as *phreatophytes*, with roots in constant touch with moisture. The air was as dry as a furnace. Ducking back into this breathy lair of dizzying lights, the difference was shocking. It seemed impossible, two different worlds that could never touch, the desert encasing this lush and languid creek fingering down from the mountains. My hands swept through spider webs freshly woven between pliant coyote willow switches. Fireflies became more numerous, and by 8 p.m., the path of the creek was wholly dazzled, their individual trajectories springing upward in meteoric strokes. I felt as if I were walking through shooting stars.

Walt Anderson, a professor at Prescott College and one of the state's premier naturalists, has spent much of his adult life investigating these cloistered sky-island ranges. On a number of occasions, we have walked out here together, stopping at streams, listening for the chilling call of spotted owls. Anderson sees these islands as being a crucial part of American biology. He told me, “People often say that the Madrean Sky Islands archipelago is a unique bioregion, but I see it as a ‘biointersection,’ a meeting place consisting of dozens of mountain ranges that unify the spirits of the Rockies and the Sierra Madre, the Sonoran and Chihuahuan deserts.”

These mountains are an ecological connection between dark forests of the north and tropical habitats of the south. The toe of the Rocky Mountains nearly touches the top of the Sierra Madre, but not quite. The ecological bridge between these two continental regions are the sky islands, 27 of

them in Arizona and New Mexico, and 15 in northern Mexico, where disconnected mountains are alpine at the top, and dry grasslands, desert scrub or oak woodlands at the bottom. I camped with Anderson one winter below the snowbound summit of Mount Graham, the highest point on one of the largest mountain masses among all the Madrean Sky Islands. It rises just outside of the town of Safford. At lower elevations, we'd walked along creeks crowded with alder, chokecherry, sycamore and dark Arizona walnut trees. There were raspberries and scouring rushes, plants that wouldn't exist here without the elevation to support them. Higher in elevation grew Mexican blue oaks and wind-hushed ponderosa pines, and finally we slept on crusts of snow in a dense conifer wood.

Anderson told me that topographic diversity in the form of these high islands creates eddies and pools in waves of species dispersal. Their mere existence creates dramatically increased biodiversity, producing a wide range of habitats in a place that would otherwise be flat and dry. He said that as climates shift, species can weather changes on these mountains. Anderson sees time here in hundreds of thousands and millions of years where climates wash back and forth, and the sky islands act as both a refuge and an incubator for genetic futures. He told me that he knows a scientist whose research involved a 5-acre parcel high in Southeastern Arizona. On that piece of land, looking at only a type of moth from the *macrolepidoptera* branch, he found 950 species. These mountains are ridiculously rich — 5 acres of sky islands make up one of the richest biological patches of ground in the Southwest.

In the morning, I crawled out of my bag near the top of Mount Graham, pulling on layers of coats and pants in the frigid air.

Striding slowly beneath the birdcalls and the drumroll of woodpeckers, I walked through the dense pines. Snow broke and crunched beneath my steps. Stout trunks stood from the snow, jigsaw pine bark and Douglas firs with gnarled, woody humps, burls and wind-flagged branches. I came to a clearing, a gulping space opening as the Earth fell away. It felt as if I were held up in the sky by magic. Beyond here stood other island ranges separated by lowlands of mesquites, prickly pears, chollas and soaptree yuccas. These other mountains rose like green thrones: the Dragoons, Swisshelm, Dos Cabezas, the Winchesters, the Chiricahuas, the Galiuros. Corridors of greenery flowed down each, dark tendrils moving into the desert, finally fading across the arid expanses below.

As the sun rose, tree shadows turned across each other. Anderson was up, and we walked through the woods, he naming off birds as he heard their calls. Chipmunks chased each other, scurrying up pine bark, and Anderson watched them with binoculars.

“Chipmunks really illustrate the adaptive radiation of the West,” he said. “We've got 15 or 16 species of chipmunks in the West, and they've got one in the East. It shows that the West is topographically, climatically and vegetatively more island-like than the East.”

On Mount Graham, we were on the king of the islands. As the day warmed, snow began melting. Puddles ran into each other, sparking little streams, turning morning-frozen meadows to mush. This water would flow into the heart of the mountain and many years from now would appear in the desert below, perhaps giving birth to a flourish of fireflies. This is how miracles happen. **AH**

Monument Valley Drive

Monument Valley has been the subject of millions of photographs and paintings, as well as several Hollywood Westerns. A cruise along this scenic route makes it easy to see why.

BY KATHY RITCHIE | PHOTOGRAPHS BY SUZANNE MATHIA

There's a reason John Wayne once described Monument Valley as "the place where God put the West." The landscape unfolds and extends until it touches the horizon, then massive monoliths erupt from the red clay. There's nothing like it — sky and Earth come together to create this sacred place — and there's no better way to see it than along Valley Drive.

The route doesn't really begin until after you enter Monument Valley Navajo Tribal Park, off U.S. Route 163.

Once you're in the park, continue until you reach the parking lot of The View Hotel and veer left. Valley Drive kicks off where the pavement turns to dirt.

If you're not already in a four-wheel-drive vehicle, you'll wish you were as you descend a very steep and bumpy hill. That said, postpone the drive if inclement weather is a possibility. The road bottoms out before you climb another hill, where you'll enjoy a nice payoff. Right before mile 1, pull over and take in the panoramic view of East and

West Mitten buttes and Merrick Butte.

As you roll along, you'll notice (perhaps suddenly) that you're right at the base of Merrick Butte. It's both stunning and humbling to be so close to the massive land formation. After passing Elephant Butte (look hard and you might see its trunk), the road ascends,

BELOW: The tall and slender spires of Monument Valley's Totem Pole (left) and the Yei Bichei formation (center) make distinctive silhouettes at sunrise. OPPOSITE PAGE: The hand-shaped West Mitten glows warmly in evening light.

curving around more of Mother Nature's handiwork. On your right will be the famous Three Sisters — three pillars that resemble a nun facing her students. At mile 3.4, the road comes to a signed intersection. Turn right and continue on to John Ford Point — a worthwhile and historic stop. Should you decide to continue on Valley Drive, the road turns to washboard and gets bumpy.

There are several restricted areas around Monument Valley that are only accessible to authorized guides and residents. The area is home to several Navajo families, and trespassers are not always well received, so respect posted signs. As the road curves, you'll be sandwiched between Rain God and Thunderbird mesas. One can only

imagine the sheer awe the Navajo people felt when they first came to this place.

At this point, the road goes from mostly navigable to rough again, and an impressive view of Totem Pole awaits on your right. A signed detour offers even more dramatic views of this lone sentinel. After passing through a craggy forest of piñon pines around mile 6.9, you'll come to another junction. Turn right to explore Artist's Point, a less-traveled overlook that offers even more painterly views. Stay the course and you'll end up at The Thumb, one of the last stops along Valley Drive. There, you can get out of your car and marvel before returning to the John Ford Point intersection, where you'll turn right to return to the hotel.



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.



tour guide

Note: Mileages are approximate.

LENGTH: 11.6 miles round-trip (from the hotel)

DIRECTIONS: From Flagstaff, drive north on U.S. Route 89 for approximately 62 miles to U.S. Route 160. Turn right onto U.S. 160 and continue for approximately 82 miles to U.S. Route 163. Turn left onto U.S. 163 and drive approximately 20 miles. Turn right onto Indian Route 42 and continue for approximately 4.5 miles to The View Hotel, from which the drive begins.

TRAVEL ADVISORY: A \$5 fee is required to enter Monument Valley Navajo Tribal Park.

WARNING: Back-road travel can be hazardous, so be aware of weather and road conditions. Carry plenty of water. Don't travel alone, and let someone know where you are going and when you plan to return.

VEHICLE REQUIREMENTS: A high-clearance vehicle is recommended, but a sedan, in good weather, can be used.

INFORMATION: Monument Valley Navajo Tribal Park, 435-727-5870 or www.navajonationparks.org

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

Grandview Trail

The name says it all, but in addition to the panoramic views of the Grand Canyon, this trail offers a bit of history and a respite from the crowds on Bright Angel and the Kaibabs.

BY ROBERT STIEVE | PHOTOGRAPHS BY NICK BEREZENKO

You could spend a lifetime hiking the Grand Canyon and never see it all. Most people don't have that kind of time, so they tackle the Bright Angel Trail or one of the Kaibabs. Another great option is the Grandview Trail, which connects with the Tonto Trail and eventually drops all the way down to the Colorado River. Most hik-

ers, however, go only as far as Horseshoe Mesa, which is the halfway point between the rim and the river, and that's where this hike ends up.

The trail begins at Grandview Point, which, at 7,400 feet, is the highest point on the South Rim. Although the National Park Service doesn't maintain the trail on a regular basis, it's in good

shape — especially since the upper switchbacks were repaired in 2005 after a massive rockslide destroyed several sections of the trail. Bottom line: You won't have to worry about the trail, just your conditioning. In the short 3.1 miles to Horseshoe Mesa, the trail drops nearly 2,500 vertical feet, and the abrupt descent begins the instant you set foot on the trail.

Heading down, you'll be exposed to the sun, except in a few pockets shaded by a handful of Douglas firs — they're remnants of a forest that covered the area during the last Ice Age. After about 30 minutes, you'll come to the Coconino Saddle, which rises up from the side canyons created by Hance and Cottonwood creeks. The saddle is shaded and makes a great place to sit and gaze. It's also an ideal turnaround point for people not equipped to make the full run to the mesa.

Leaving the saddle, the trail takes a break from the descent, levels off for a few hundred yards, and cuts through a stand of trees. This is one of the best parts of the trail, but the level ground doesn't last for long. Five minutes later, the steep descent begins again, and what you'll notice is that going downhill can be very fatiguing. It almost makes you look forward to going up. Until you're going up.

With the exception of some minor boulder-scrambling about an hour into the hike, the terrain remains the same. Then, after 31 switchbacks and the incineration of up to a thousand calories, you'll arrive on the mesa. You'll know you're there when the views open up to your left and right — it's a 270-degree panorama. Once you're on the mesa, you'll quickly come to an old tree

LEFT: At the end of the Grandview Trail, hikers may catch this view of Wotan's Throne and Vishnu Temple across the Inner Gorge, as seen here over a yucca. OPPOSITE PAGE: The panoramic view of Horseshoe Mesa opens up about an hour into the hike, giving hikers a majestic payoff.



wrapped with rusted barbed wire. It's the first remnant you'll see from the Last Chance Mine, which was developed in 1890 by Pete Berry and Ralph and Niles Cameron. You'll also see old tin cans, fragments of copper ore (green malachite and blue azurite) and the red-rock ruins of an old cookhouse. There are

several short spur trails, too. If your legs are willing, they're worth exploring. However, keep in mind that the trip up is exponentially more difficult than the trip down. Like the Bright Angel Trail and the Kaibabs, the hike out will wipe you out. It's worth it, though. That's the nature of the Grand Canyon.

ADDITIONAL READING:

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



trail guide

LENGTH: 6.2 miles round-trip (to Horseshoe Mesa)
DIFFICULTY: Strenuous
ELEVATION: 7,406 to 4,932 feet
DIRECTIONS: From Grand Canyon Village on the South Rim, drive 12 miles east on East Rim Drive to Grandview Point. The trailhead is well marked.
VEHICLE REQUIREMENTS: None
DOGS ALLOWED: No
HORSES ALLOWED: No
USGS MAP: Grandview Point
INFORMATION: Backcountry Office, Grand Canyon National Park, 928-638-7888 or www.nps.gov/grca

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. **NH**

where is this?

It's a Gold Mine

Twelve miles south of a town named for the Austrian prospector who discovered it sits a slice of mining history. Once the site of one of the richest gold lodes in Arizona, the mine has been left abandoned — but for scavenging birds and adventurous tourists — since 1942. Legend has it the ghosts of prospectors and townsfolk haunt this place.

— MOLLY J. SMITH



KERRICK JAMES

March 2012 Answer & Winner

Route 66 Meteor Observatory.
Congratulations to our winner, John Ellis of Thornaby, Stockton-on-Tees, England.



LARRY LINDAHL

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IT *only* TAKES A SPARK.



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