

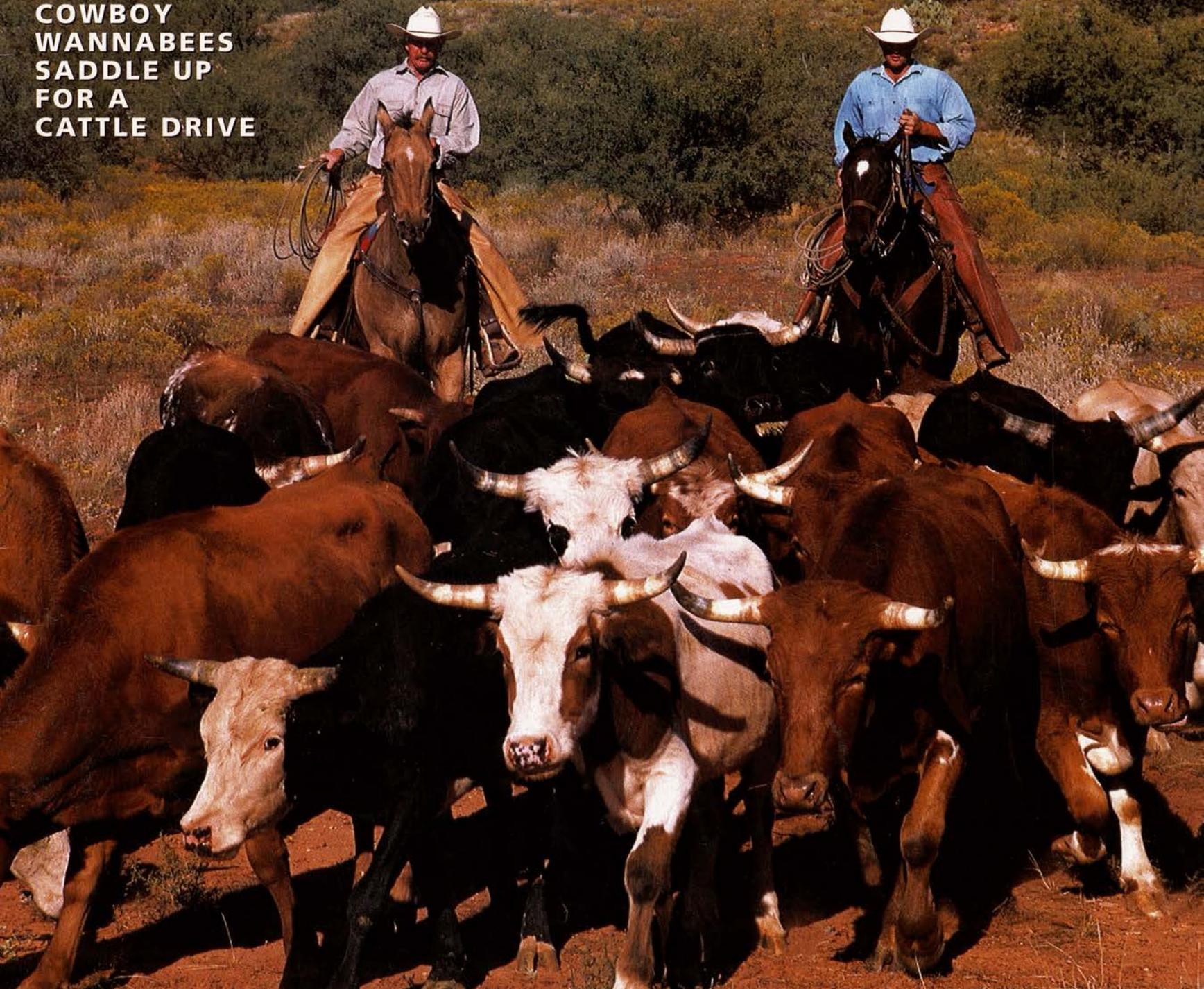
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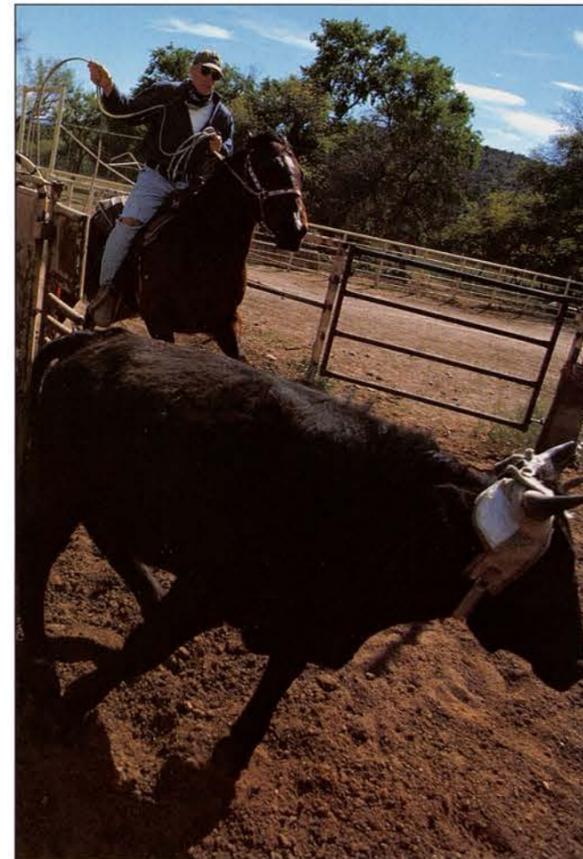
ARIZONA HIGHWAYS

MARCH ■ 1996 ■ \$2.50

HEAD 'EM OUT!

COWBOY
WANNABEES
SADDLE UP
FOR A
CATTLE DRIVE





COVER STORY PAGE 4

The City Slickers Ride Again

Bruised but proud, these cowboy wannabees emerge at last from this school of hard knocks virtually unscathed. But they all take a little of the frontier West home with them.

(LEFT) While chasing wildflowers in the Puerto Blanco Mountains, our photographer came upon a patch of owl clover dotted with clumps of brittlebush. See portfolio on page 20. This photograph is available for sale through the Arizona Highways Gallery of Fine Prints; see page 55.
RANDY A. PRENTICE
(FRONT COVER) Our eager dudes hope to become real cowboys. See story on page 4.
JEFF KIDA
(BACK COVER) A purple prickly pear cactus colors the desert in the Tucson Mountains.
RANDY A. PRENTICE

HISTORY

The Tragedy-haunted Major of Casa Grande

Major Pauline Cushman, a federal spy during the Civil War, lived a charmed life on the stage and as a secret agent behind Confederate lines, until Fate stepped in. PAGE 32

TRAVEL

Discover Nature's Diversity at the Sonoita Creek Sanctuary

In the golden splendor of giant cottonwoods along Sonoita Creek, you'll encounter examples of life's interlocking diversity, but you may first have to get down and lift a few rocks. PAGE 38

ARCHAEOLOGY

Rock Art: A Link to the Distant Past

At the relatively new Deer Valley Rock Art Center, an oasis among subdivisions in northwest Phoenix, archaeologists strive to solve the mystery of the Hohokams' thousand-year-old petroglyphs. But its lush Nature trail provides an equal incentive to visit. PAGE 12



PORTFOLIO

Spring Wildflowers

When an ancient alliance takes place in the desert in spring, it produces a heart-stopping profusion of blooms, assuring survival for another year. PAGE 20

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A Driving Passion

Men and women from backgrounds as diverse as medicine and agriculture come together once a year to compete in carriage-driving events that thrill audiences and prove their skill and ability. PAGE 14

FOCUS ON NATURE

The Noble Monarch of the Mountains

A bighorn ram in the Black Mountains shows our author some special water-gathering tricks. PAGE 36

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ALONG THE WAY

TEXT BY CHIPS MUEHL
ILLUSTRATION BY JEFF MEYER

For Kids in Territorial Days Life Was Lived on the Wild Side

Life in 19th-century Arizona was hard, but children, as always, had a way of coping. For pranksters like Jack O'Connor and his best friend, Gordon Goodwin of Tempe, the great skunk caper epitomized how idle minds sometimes get into trouble.

Jack and Gordon used to earn money by trapping skunks and selling their pelts. On one occasion, they decided to save the contents of a full scent bag by pouring it into a bottle.

"Then one of us got a brilliant idea: here was the skunk scent; there was the school. The prank seemed ordained by a higher being. We opened a window, sneaked in, and put a drop or two of essence on every eraser in the building."

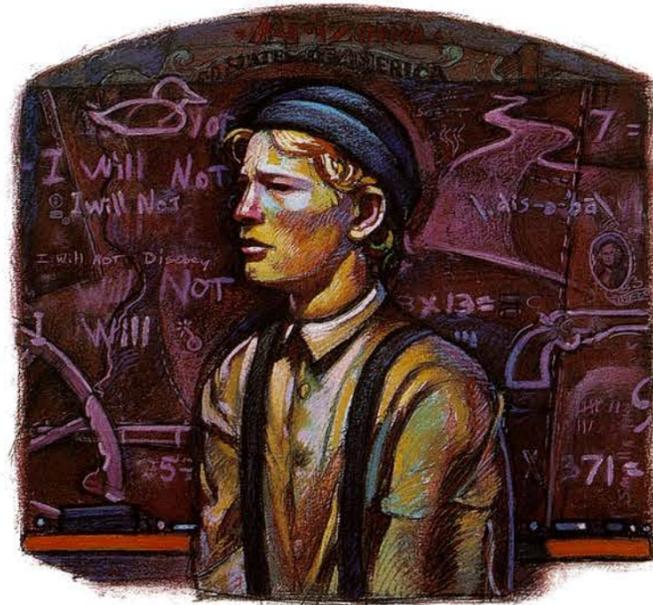
Soon identified as the culprits, Jack and Gordon were ordered to perform a massive scrubbing effort. The smell remained. The school was ventilated and finally fumigated, but the smell persisted — for years. "Heroes" to the younger children, who were given a week's vacation, the boys were the enemy of the principal and school board.

"I never told the harried principal that he could solve his problem by getting rid of the erasers," the unregenerate Jack remembered.

No doubt about it, life could be on the wild side for youngsters growing up in territorial days, especially in the earlier years. This is not surprising considering the primitive state of the schools, the rudimentary

justice system, and the hit-or-miss law enforcement in some communities.

Many boys in Tombstone during that era thought of themselves as men before they had reached their teens, according to historian John Myers. Especially those living on ranches "did a man's work and went around armed like men; and they were outraged when teachers objected to this practice in classrooms."



The use of firearms by youngsters was one ingredient that made life wilder for those boys and girls in the early days.

When Edith Stratton was a 10 year old, her grandfather gave her a 10 gauge single barrel shotgun. At that moment, hunting was added to horseback riding as a major interest for Edith. Her rough frontier background comes through in her account of the time she shot at three teal ducks swimming in a row:

"I wounded them all, and after thinking that I had successfully wrung their necks, I

packed them home behind me. When Mother asked me what I was holding behind me, I proudly threw them down in front. One lay still, one ran under the house, and the third started to flutter off, but the dog caught it. Mother stuffed all three with onions, and we had roast duck for supper."

Some escapades seemed like great fun to the youngsters but generated acute anxiety in their parents. One

incident took place at the turn of the century on the Salt River in central Arizona and involved a number of the 10 sons of Daniel and Mary Ellen Jones.

On a day when the river was tumultuous from a heavy rain, the Joneses discovered that their boys were missing. The worried father first found their "bare-footed tracks" and then their clothes hidden in some bushes. At last he heard their voices and "found a lot of naked little boys just getting out of the water. Each was dragging a two-inch plank." It turned out

the boys had walked several miles to the head of the Utah canal and then, getting hold of planks, had ridden them over the waves all the way downstream. "It was a trip many men in their right senses would hesitate to do," according to a newspaper account of the time.

Holidays like the Fourth of July provided more opportunities for dangerous antics. Kids could buy all kinds of fireworks, including the awesome foot-long giant cannon cracker. Once, a small boy, having lit one of these giants, "accidentally" sent it through the door of a crowded saloon where it exploded. Seconds later the patrons came "boiling out" like a "swarm of yellowjackets."

By the end of the 19th century, activities that would scarcely have been noticed 20 years earlier began to constitute criminal behavior. "Any minor," read one 1893 ordinance, "... who shall visit, hang around, or loiter in or about any ... billiard or drinking saloon, bar or other place where intoxicating liquors are kept or sold or who shall loiter about any street corner or private building without permission of the owners ... shall be guilty of a misdemeanor."

Delinquent youngsters could no longer hope for the charitable attitude accorded one young offender in Tombstone in 1887.

The landlady of a "beardless youth" who had stolen money from her made the following statement to the grand jury: "Gentlemen, don't be hard on the poor little fellow. He robbed me but I forgive him. He is young and inexperienced, and besides that, Gentlemen, he could not help it, Gentlemen, for he comes from Texas." ❧



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

ARIZONA HIGHWAYS

MARCH 1996 VOL. 72, NO. 3

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Good Laugh

I laughed till the tears ran down my face at October's "Wit Stop." What a very graphic account [of a dude wearing cowboy clothes].

Mary Lawton
Cheshire, England

Drawing Disappointment

I am not at all excited about the pictures in *Arizona Highways*. The October '95 cover is a sketch of Tombstone. Inside they are all sketches of Tombstone.

Is your photographer on vacation?

Helen Otten
Lakeside, CA

Remember Rona?

I started my subscription after a most memorable vacation in your state.

Sometimes the magazines accumulate for months before I have the chance to enjoy them, but I always do and have saved nearly all issues (except the ones I've given to friends).

I recently passed on the September '92 issue about a Madison Avenue executive who moved to the Grand Canyon for a simpler, more fulfilling life.

Susan Urban
Sterling Heights, MI

The former executive is Rona Levein. We heard from her just the other day, and she still lives in the Canyon area, doing well.

Rex Allen

At last! Your article on the very talented Rex Allen (October '95) was so welcome and long overdue. I grew up in Willcox many years ago, and I have such fond memories of the parades, the stage shows and the exciting rodeos.

But my fondest memories are

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We'll take you on virtual visits to famous Arizona landmarks, then give you tour information and an up-to-date calendar of events. You can shop from our catalog, find links to other Arizona and Southwest Web Sites, and a whole lot more. You can find us at <http://www.arizhwys.com/>

of Rex himself. He was always so approachable, so friendly, so willing to stop and talk to a fan and sign an autograph, even for a star-struck country kid.

Eileen Polk Cordova
San Leandro, CA

The article on Western movie star Rex Allen elicited numerous personal childhood memories.

I recall his version of "Streets of Laredo" was once featured by disk jockey Martin Block as the outstanding popular record release of the week on the "Make Believe Ballroom" radio program aired in New York City.

Michael Kawczak
West Chester, PA

In 1946 I got Rex Allen's autograph at the Illinois State Fair. Then in 1987, Rex Allen Jr. was at our Heart of Illinois Fair in Peoria.

So I took my same autograph book and showed him his dad's autograph, and he also signed his name.

Marjorie Glover
East Peoria, IL

Rex Allen has delivered many happy times for a lot of people, judging by the mail we received on that story.

Betatakin and Hopis

Today I was rereading the August article about Betatakin ("Back Road Adventure"). I went there in August on your suggestion, and I liked it even better than author Sam Negri did.

I did object to Negri's terse dismissal of the Hopis: "Three Hopi Indians I spoke to had never heard of Betatakin."

I live on the Hopi reservation

and have yet to talk to a Hopi adult who does not know of Betatakin.

Ease up, Sam, and the Hopis will talk to you.

Fritzi Redgrave
Keams Canyon

If Sam, who has been covering the Arizona outback for more than a generation, eases up any more he will be sleepwalking. They don't come much more laid back.

Geronimo

The October issue on Willcox mentioned that the Chiricahua Apache leader Geronimo once stopped at the Willcox Commercial Company to buy sugar. But there is more to the story.

Mariano Soto, my great-grandfather, and his brother, Pablo, owned Soto Brothers. They sold general goods to cattlemen, miners, and Indians.

Geronimo at the time was an on-again off-again renegade so he usually avoided contact with the white man. From time to time, however, a young Indian would come into the store to buy sugar. A purchase may have been for five pounds, but the Indian would request that the sugar be placed in one-pound bags.

Back at the Indian camp, the old warrior would take the one-pound bags and bounce them in his hand, for he could judge the weight of one pound but not three or five pounds.

Geronimo did not trust the white man, not even the Soto brothers, but he relished their sugar.

Joseph E. Cook
La Quinta, CA

CITY SLICKERS COWBOY ADVENTURE

RIDING, WORKING CATTLE,
SLEEPING UNDER THE STARS,
A GROUP OF URBANITES
GETS A TASTE OF A LIFE
SLOWLY FADING AWAY

TEXT BY MARILYN TAYLOR  PHOTOGRAPHS BY JEFF KIDA

“Get him over, Ida. Come on! You guys against the fence, we need help; get on over here and turn him. Watch them hooves. Heave him over.”

Three of us — all women — rushed to the Corriente steer in the middle of a small round cattle-working pen. The red dust was so thick we could barely breathe, so at

a dead run toward the steer, I pulled my kerchief up over my nose to keep from choking.

He was laid out ahead of us on his side and held by ropes, one each around his front and back legs. The ropes had been expertly looped and placed by two cowboys



whose horses now stood at command, keeping the ropes held taut.

We tried to hoist over the steer so the other side of his torso was exposed, and he started kicking. His hooves were like granite sledgehammers, and one of them smashed into my left thumb. The pain was sharp, and I saw that most of my thumbnail was gone. Determined not to lose any more of myself, I gave the steer one last hefty heave-ho, and he was over.

"Keep a hold of him," commanded one of the cowboys, Donny Bryson.

Ida Bryson rushed away from us to a

mesquite wood fire in the pen and ran back wielding a branding iron, topped with a red-hot "B+."

It was cattle branding time during our final morning as city slickers on the Dancing Apache Ranch, one of the largest privately owned ranching properties in Arizona's Verde Valley.

Six of us greenhorns had spent three spring days on the Dancing Apache as part of the C&S Cattle Company's City Slicker Cattle Drive. In 72 hours, we rode our horses through the meadows, craggy hills, and mountains. We herded cattle,

led them to water, and scoured the rocky hillsides for strays.

The sun beat down on us, burnt our noses red, and browned the backs of our hands. We rubbed blisters into our fingers and palms perfecting the techniques of cattle roping, and we learned the hows and whys of branding.

On the softer side, we slept in tents under warm cover and a vast black sky crowded with stars; we shared our personal histories and experiences over roaring campfires, and we listened to the cowboys' tall tales. We feasted on three big meals a day, home-cooked, simple fare that never tasted so good.

C&S City Slickers is owned by husband and wife Donny and Ida Bryson in association with their ranching partner, Jack Groves of Iowa and Arizona. The ranch, with 400 head of cattle, is on 550 acres in the Verde Valley, one of Arizona's most beautiful and fertile desert grassland valleys. It is isolated by the Mogollon Rim and the Black Hills. Oak Creek bounds portions of the ranch, and the famous red buttes of Sedona are not far away.

The Brysons, native Arizonans, founded C&S City Slickers in 1992 as a direct result of the blockbuster comedy film *City Slickers*, starring Billy Crystal and Jack Palance. Recognizing the popularity of the legendary Great American Cowboy throughout the U.S. and the world, the Brysons decided to fold City Slickers into their routine ranch operations.

It's a perfect blend, said Ida, a former elementary schoolteacher who met her husband at a rodeo when she was 15. Greenhorns want to learn how to be cowboys, and the Brysons are noted throughout the West for running the quintessential cowboy ranch, raising rodeo and beef cattle. Lean, tall Donny Bryson, 52, has earned a reputation throughout the West for his cattle-roping skills and his ability to train roping horses.

Three years after its founding, City Slickers has welcomed and schooled more than 100 cowboy wannabees from throughout the U.S. and other countries, including Switzerland, Germany, and Japan.

"They come here and they love it," Ida said. "I think they want to experience something they believe is fading away: the life of riding, working cattle, sleeping under the stars. They see it in the movies; they read about in books, and they want to take a piece of it home with them for all time.

"It doesn't matter where they're from or how old they are," Ida added. "Whether they are four years old or 70, whether they're from New York or Munich, they

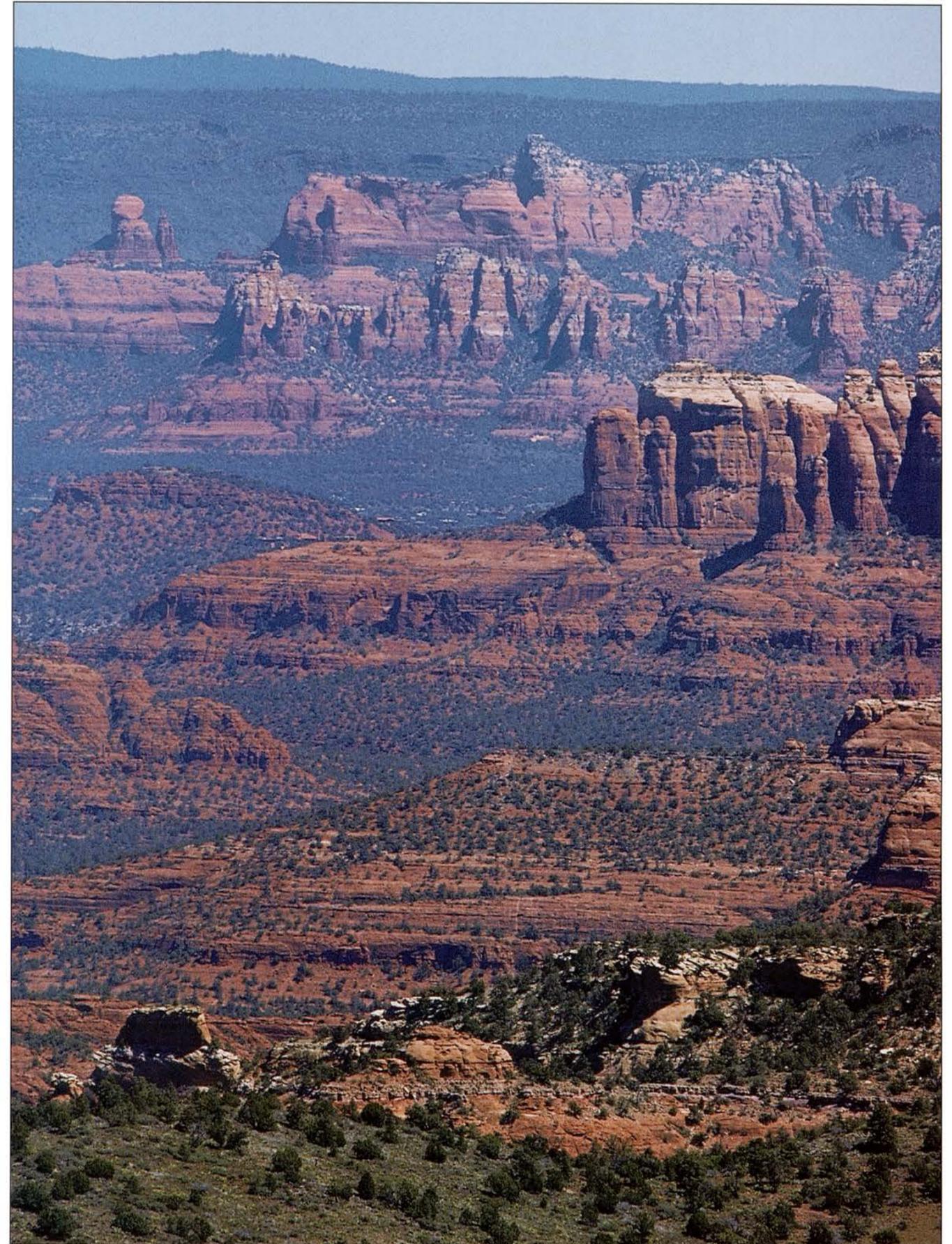
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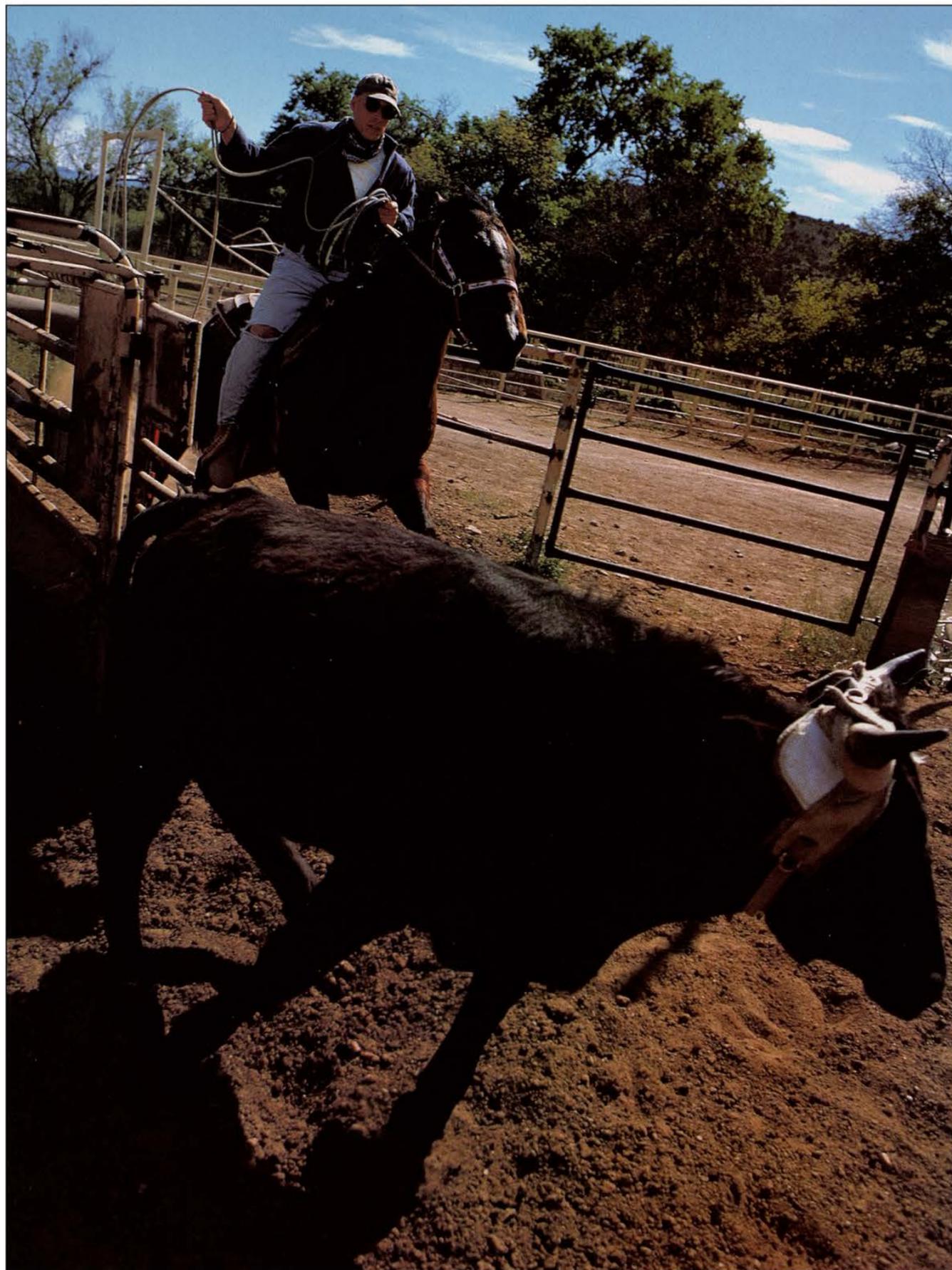


(PRECEDING PANEL, PAGES 4 AND 5) Cowboys Cecil Billingsley, left, and Donny Bryson, a champion roper, show dudes how to bring in a steer for branding.

(ABOVE) Dude Kelly Callahan practices her lasso toss from a dummy horse.

(OPPOSITE PAGE) Breathtaking red rock country dazzles visitors to the Dancing Apache Ranch, the base camp for the C&S Cattle Company's City Slicker Cattle Drive.





have the same fantasy about being a cowboy. It really seems to be universal.”

C&S offers several City Slicker packages depending on riding skills and experience levels of participants. Packages range from two and three days for the greenest of green-horns to seven, 10, and 14 days for heartier riders. During the two- and three-day treks, city slickers use the Dancing Apache as a base camp and ride out from it each day to check on and herd cattle. During the longer treks, home really is “on the range” for participants, and their stays are concluded with full-blown rodeos that feature bull riding, calf roping, saddle-bronc riding, and team roping. Costs for the various levels range from \$470 a person to \$5,000.

Our group included Donna Goldsmith and Kelly Callahan, two friends from Care-free who were on a horse-riding lark away from the demands of their families; David Diamand, 26, a stockbroker from Los Angeles; his companion, 19-year-old college student Lauren Walker; and Jeff Kida, a noted outdoor photographer.

Goldsmith and Callahan were skilled riders; Diamand and Walker had marginal skills; and Kida and I — well, we fit into the category of “dorks on horseback.”

Our adventure began the morning of our first day as we were each ceremoniously given our own pair of leather chaps, and we stood in front of a riding arena watching several ranch hands and the Brysons’ 25-year-old son, Tanner, select horses to match our individual skills.

Believing my utter lack of riding skill would spare me any challenges and obtain for me a horse that was slow and small — like me — my eyes nearly popped out of my cowboy-hatted head when I saw the four-legged white-and-brown paint that would be my steed for the next three days. It was the *biggest* horse of all.

“Gee, don’t you think she’s a little big for me?” I asked Tanner.

“Nah. This is Cody and it’s a he. Let me help you up.”

“But how much does he weigh?” I persisted as I slipped my booted foot into Tanner’s cupped hands and pulled up about two miles into the saddle.

“Oh, ’bout 1,200 pounds.”

“That’s about 10 times more than me,” I muttered as Tanner adjusted my stirrups.

Yet it turned out that Cody and I got along well. He was the type of beast that didn’t want to take risks or the lead on the trail. As we were heading out on our many rides each day, Cody would step aside until all the other horses were out in front on the trail. Then he’d move into his favorite position: the end. The only time he ever got

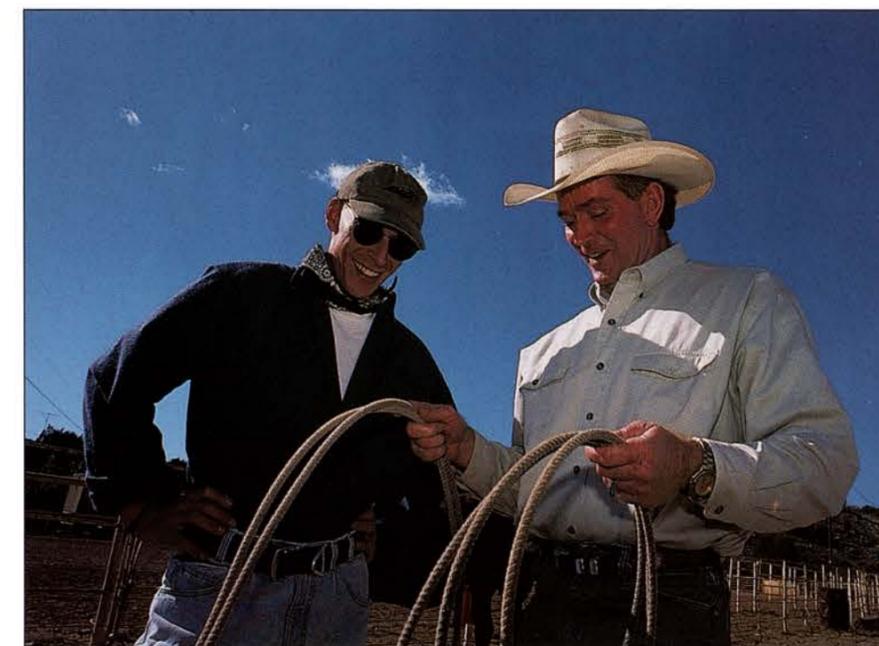
excited (sort of) was when he’d fallen too far behind the pack and lost sight of the horse in front of him. I think he didn’t want to be stuck alone with me. He’d break into a lazy trot until the next to last horse’s rear was in view, and then he’d resume his slowpoke walk.

Cody took me to places that seemed like cowboy heaven: one was a shadowy, cool meadow along Oak Creek with dark-green, thick grass, bounded by tall wind-whispering cottonwood trees. The warm, breezy air was filled with thousands of white, gauzy seedlings from the cottonwoods, and they fell gently around us like snowflakes.

And Cody guided me through some tough spots.

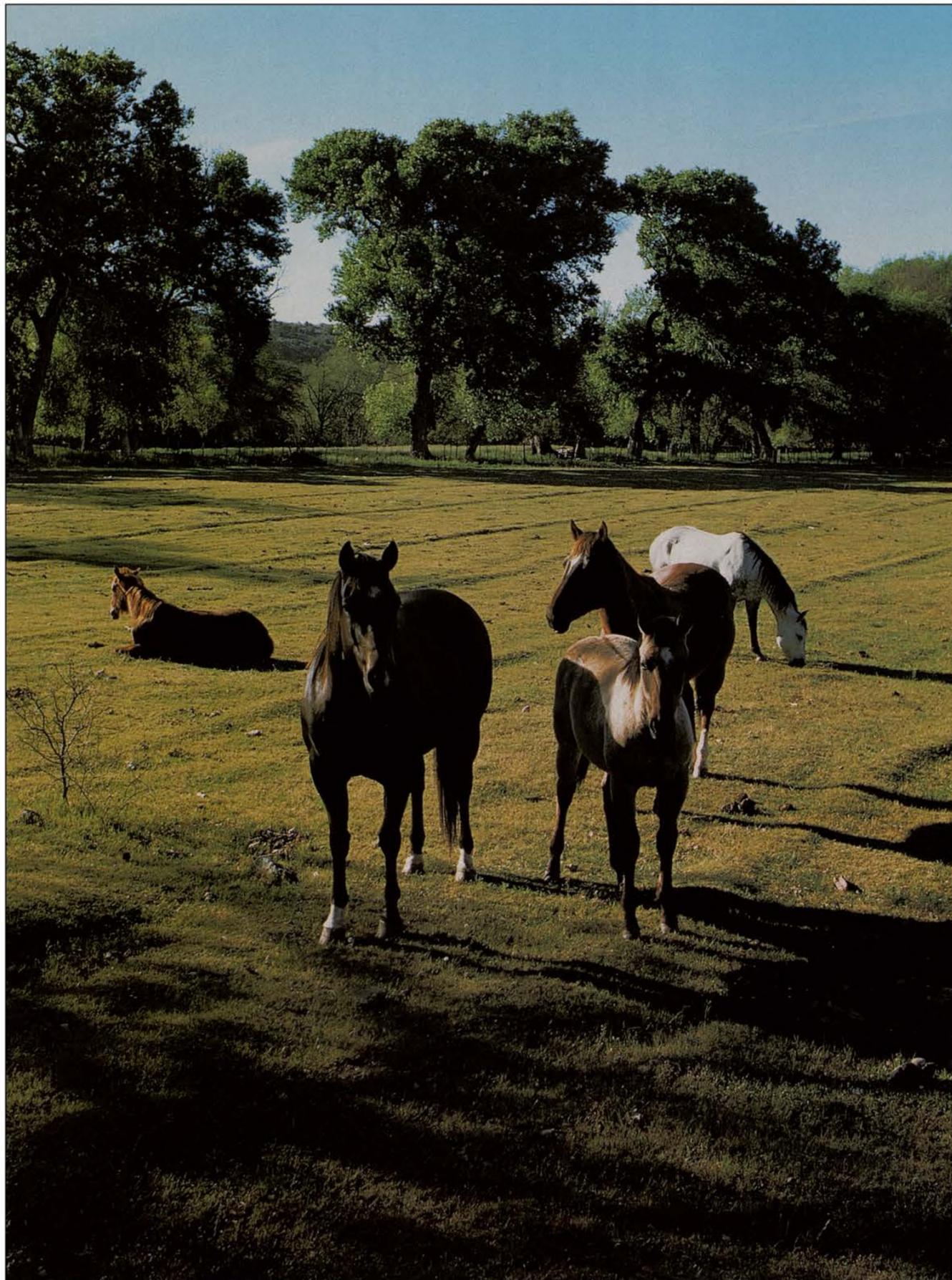
On the final day, Donny and Ida led us to one of their favorite locations, the top of House Mountain. In a span of less than two hours, our horses took us through lava rock fields and dense prickly pear patches on a vertical climb of more than 2,000 feet to House’s altitude of 5,127. Reaching the summit and enjoying thick sandwiches and fresh fruit, we eyed a 360-degree vista that included the stunning red rocks of Sedona, the snow-covered San Francisco Peaks at Flagstaff, small towns like Cornville and Cottonwood,

A SPECIAL PART OF THE STAY WAS WHEN
 WE WERE GIVEN ROPES AND ROPING LESSONS.
 THE LESSONS WERE FOLLOWED BY DEMONSTRATIONS
 BY DONNY BRYSON, THE WINNER OF MANY ROPING
 EVENTS IN RODEOS THROUGHOUT THE WEST.



(OPPOSITE PAGE) Aspiring cowboy David Diamand concentrates on his aim during his first attempt to rope a steer.

(ABOVE) Rick Cozens, right, shows Diamand the finer points of handling a lasso. Like most cowboys, Cozens also is a top hand when it comes to telling tales, such as the one about his 72-year-old cowboy crony, Billingsley.



Apache Maid Peak, and Lake Montezuma.

But the descent whitened my knuckles, particularly when the trail turned into vertical sheet rock, and the horses slowly slipped down, trying their best to balance their passenger loads. Cody did well, no thanks to me.

A special part of the stay was when we were given ropes and roping lessons. The lessons were followed by rollicking demonstrations by Donny Bryson, a former state roping champion and winner of many roping events in rodeos throughout the West. He was joined each afternoon by cowboy

cronies including partner Jack Groves, Rick Cozens, and Cecil Billingsley.

"You ought to hear the story about ole Cecil," Cozens told Kida and me as we watched the 72-year-old Billingsley and Bryson pound full-speed into the roping arena, chasing a frantic calf. Bryson was the header, meaning his job was to rope the cow's front legs; Billingsley was the heeler, riding at the rear, targeting his rope at the back legs.

Cozens' story was interrupted by a laughing yell from Bryson after he'd missed his mark: "That was a FAM!"

THREE DAYS DOES NOT A COWBOY MAKE,
BUT THE SAFETY-CONSCIOUS BRYSONS, THEIR FRIENDS,
AND THEIR CAJOLING RANCH HANDS DID THEIR BEST
TO GIVE US A SENSE OF THE COWBOY'S LIFE.



(ABOVE) The dudes ride out into Dancing Apache country in search of cattle to round up and whatever new adventure awaits along the trail. (OPPOSITE PAGE) After providing transportation for the city slickers all day, the ranch's well-cared-for mounts are turned out to pasture.

"What's a 'FAM?'" Kida called out.

"It means I flat-a--ed missed," Bryson answered.

That's unusual for Bryson, Cozens tells us, breaking into another story. During one span of rodeo competition that lasted several years, Cozens said, Bryson never missed his roping target. He had a mustache then, and he vowed he'd shave it off when he *did* miss. It took four years but, finally, he missed, and the mustache immediately came off.

Another calf burst out of the chute and Bryson and Billingsley sped out behind it, their torsos forward and their arms raised, circling their ropes above their heads.

"Anyway, back to Cecil," Cozens said. "He rode so much that his legs were bowed worse than any cowboy you ever did know. Then, a couple of years back, he got an operation to straighten out his knees. You know what? That ole Cecil, he grew three inches taller just like that. It was just about overnight."

A tale or a true story? You never know when you're talking to a cowboy because a cowboy seems to take such pleasure in pulling the legs of a city slicker. Everyone but Billingsley himself swore to the story. Billingsley, a handsome, straight-legged man who wore crisply ironed jeans, would only smile at the question and shake his head like we were *all* daft.

Three days does not a cowboy make, but the safety-conscious Brysons, their friends, and their cajoling ranch hands did their best to give us a sense of the cowboy's life — both the hard, gritty work it takes and the great play after it's done. Thanks to them, I know how to twirl a rope above my head; I'm better at horseback riding; and I'm a couple of pounds heavier than when they met me.

They took my mind away with this cowboy fantasy vacation, and I wouldn't have changed anything but this: they shoulda let me keep my chaps. There are times when my urban spirit could use the kick they give you when you put 'em on. ❏

Author's Note: To inquire about the C&S Cattle Company, write 351 S. El Rancho Bonito, Cornville, AZ 86325, or telephone (520) 634-1898.

For more information on cowboy outfitters around Arizona, contact the local chamber of commerce and inquire about area ranches that offer city slicker roundups.

This was Phoenix-based Marilyn Taylor's second major "horse encounter" for Arizona Highways. Previously she took a five-day trail ride through Monument Valley with Don Donnelly Stables.

Jeff Kida has shared other adventure assignments with Taylor, but not always as a participant.



THE FIRST THING YOU NOTICE as you drive up to the Deer Valley Rock Art Center is the solitude. Here on the north-west side of Phoenix, not far from subdivision after subdivision, you become immersed in quiet, surrounded by lush desert foliage.

And steeped in mysteries from the last millennium. The center opened in 1994 to preserve and study more

than 1,500 petroglyphs pecked into rocks in the area by the prehistoric Hohokam Indians and other ancient cultures probably between 3000 B.C. and A.D. 1450. The mysteries involve trying to decipher what all these carvings mean, and why they proliferate in this area.

But on this day in March, the mysteries can wait awhile. Now I'm drawn to the paved path that takes visitors on a

quarter-mile trek through the luxuriant desert flora mingled among the rocks that bear the ancient carvings.

Dark green creosote bushes and flowering honey mesquite trees beckon visitors along the pathway as if to say, "Come on. Enjoy yourselves. We'll see to it that you're comfortable as you go."

Nothing is quite so soothing as rich green plants growing

thickly in an otherwise arid and barren land. And when you find such a place in the city it becomes more remarkable.

So I stroll among the trees, feeling refreshed and in touch with Nature. Rock art is everywhere, chipped out on large brown boulders. The orange and pink blossoms of globe-mallow, yellow brittlebush, red penstemon, and orange desert

poppies accent the rocks and embellish the ambience.

Rock squirrels flit through the underbrush, and rabbit warrens dot the landscape, but at midmorning the jackrabbits have already retreated underground. Small lizards substitute for the rabbits, however, and lucky strollers might get a glimpse of a chuckwalla, a coyote, a Gila monster, or even a turkey vulture. All have been spotted in the area.

In the early morning, center officials say, visitors have seen a pair of great horned owls, red-tailed hawks, and some road-runners. You also may come across cactus wrens, canyon wrens, and Gambel's quail.

But the most prolific winged creatures around are the flitty, flighty hummingbirds. They even get into the museum building.

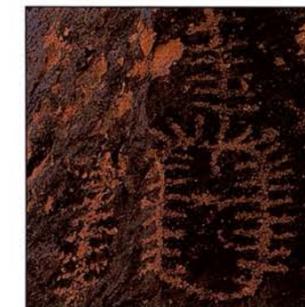
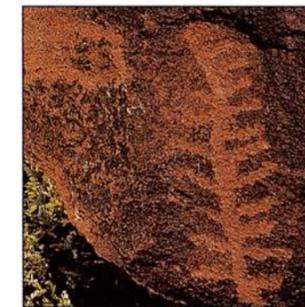
Amid the solitude, the color, and the sweet smell of the desert you can escape in time, back to the days of the Hohokam. They enjoyed this spot as I do today. They spent a lot of time here. The writing on the rocks attests to that. But what were they writing? What were they communicating?

"There is this sense of connection that you develop having been in a place like this," says the center's director, Peter Welsh. "I've struggled for a long time to characterize what this place is. It really boils down to 'people were here,' and this was an important place for a very long time in a way I don't have any immediate understanding of."

The Hohokam hunted, fished, and farmed with the assistance of their network of irrigation canals that covered hundreds of miles of open desert and hills.

The center, a black, rectangular building set at the foot of the Hedgpeth Hills, is operated by Arizona State University. In it researchers attempt to understand the meaning of the carvings, some of which appear to be common items like snakes, spirals, even two deer nuzzling.

The center is the only such



(LEFT, BELOW) Visitors can spot most of the 1,500 petroglyphs at the Deer Valley Rock Art Center from the trail.

(OPPOSITE PAGE, ABOVE) A variety of wildlife also can be seen, but coming across a Gila monster would be a rare occurrence.

T.A. WIEWANDT

(ABOVE, CLOCKWISE FROM TOP, LEFT) The ladder glyph appears on many boulders at the center.

Several variations of the ladder theme decorate this rock.

Complexity of design and clarity distinguish this glyph.

Human figures with outstretched arms abound. The one in the foreground is nearly three feet tall.

facility in the country dedicated to the study of rock art. It resulted from work that dates to the early 1980s when the petroglyphs were identified and cataloged in advance of flooding from a network of flood-control dams. The 7,000-square-foot facility sits at the base of Adobe Dam, an earthen hill that controls Skunk Creek.

Inside the building, interpretive exhibits examine what is known of petroglyphs.

The exhibits isolate and enlarge individual images — making them easier to see — provide possible meanings of different

symbols, and offer maps of the area where these and other archaeological artifacts have been found. The final exhibit provides examples of the ways in which these and other cultural images have been incorporated into commercial products like T-shirts and dinnerware.

But the trail stands out as the center's main attraction. On that trail, you're in touch with the ancients and with Nature, oblivious to the hubbub of urban life right around the corner. ❑

Phoenix-based Les Manevitz has been photographing archaeological sites for 15 years.

WHEN YOU GO

In Phoenix take the Black Canyon Freeway, Interstate 17, north to the Deer Valley Road West exit. Continue west on Deer Valley Road until it dead-ends at the center, which is located at 3711 W. Deer Valley Road. The museum is open weekdays except Monday from 9 A.M. to 2 P.M.; Saturday, 9 A.M. to 5 P.M.; Sunday, noon to 5 P.M. Admission is \$3, adults; \$2, students and seniors; \$1, children six through 12; free, under six. The facility is wheelchair-accessible, and there is a gift shop. For more information, telephone (602) 582-8007.

A TRAIL TO THE PAST

PHOTOGRAPHS BY LES MANEVITZ



Carriage Driving Action

R E C A L L S T H E D A Y S O F Y E S T E R Y E A R



Iron hooves

CLATTER

as a custom-made

marathon

racing carriage

TEETERS

recklessly on the edge

of disaster. Pulled

by a spirited

black stallion,

the wheeled conveyance

WHIPS

at high speed across



EACH HAZARD
CONSISTS OF SEVERAL
MANDATORY OPENINGS
THROUGH WHICH THE
TURNOUT MUST DRIVE.
ONE HAZARD FEATURES
A SMALL POND
THROUGH WHICH
TURNOUTS MUST
SPLASH THREE TIMES.

a narrow bridge and plunges down a set of narrow stairs.

The groom, who has a tight grip on the seat next to the driver, stares at the hazard and leans sharply to the left in a bold effort to keep the carriage from tipping over.

In seconds it is all over.

What we've witnessed isn't an outtake from John Wayne's classic *Stagecoach*. It's the Arizona Combined Driving Event that happens every March in Coolidge. It's a spectacle that for more than a decade has

drawn the best carriage drivers from across the United States for three days of challenging trials.

Carriage drivers, men and women, come from backgrounds as diverse as medicine and agriculture and the fine arts. They do it mostly for love of the sport, not to mention a deep respect and love of the horses.

I'm here on Friday morning when the competition day begins with drivers putting final touches on polished brass, braided manes, and glossy hides.

Correctness of "turnout" is crucial. Each turnout — the combined appearance of horse, carriage, driver, and groom — is judged for presentation.

I stand next to Judd Wright, presentation judge, as he explains to one driver how a too-tight bolt on his carriage affects his horse's "way of going."

That's what today's trial is all about; it's called "driven dressage."

Drivers take their horses through a prescribed pattern in a large rectangular arena.

Each movement is scored, I explain to a couple sitting next to me. The judge looks for a horse that's calm and relaxed, listening and responding willingly to its driver while carrying itself correctly through the movement.

At its best, it is poetry in motion.

Nowhere will you see so many different breeds competing against each other: huge, black, high-stepping Friesians; Morgans and quarter horses; elegant Arabians and matched Hanoverians; even exotic breeds

like sturdy Fjord ponies with black dorsal stripes running through their dust-colored manes, flaxen-maned Austrian Haflingers, and tall, lean Russian Orlovs. You'll also find just about every kind of turnout, as well: single horses and ponies pulling a wide variety of carts and wagons, immaculately turned-out pairs driven by drivers in top hats, dramatic four-in-hands, even a tandem: two horses hitched one in front of the other.

Saturday is Marathon Day, a spectator

(PRECEDING PANEL, PAGES 14 AND 15) *In Coolidge's Combined Driving Event, Hardy Zanke and his wife, Uta, of Torrance, California, cut a tight turn driving a pair of Hanoverians.*

(ABOVE) *Marybeth Goree and her husband, Bob, enter a water hazard in the marathon, riding in a stable and maneuverable modern carriage designed for the event. Drivers use the whip only to lightly signal the horses.*

THE MARATHON

IS NOT A RACE BUT A TEST
OF DRIVER SKILL AND ABILITY.

EACH TURNOUT
IS GIVEN AN IDEAL TIME
TO COMPLETE THE COURSE,
BASED ON THE HORSE'S
LEVEL OF TRAINING.
DRIVERS ARE PENALIZED
IF THEY COME IN EARLY,
OR OVER BY MORE
THAN TWO MINUTES.



(ABOVE) Roel Hofstee of Ontario, California, holds the reins during the spit-and-polish "driven dressage" trial. Each entry is judged on the appearance of the horses, the carriage, the driver, and the groom.

favorite. The spectators cluster around seven obstacles, known as "hazards," waiting for each entrant to come through as it makes its way around the 16-kilometer course. Each hazard consists of several mandatory openings through which the turnout must drive.

The hazards are challenging. One consists of a series of concentric fences circling a mesquite tree. The turns are so tight most drivers slow to a walk. Then Hardy Zanke, one of the best pair drivers in the country,

flies through, taking the turns so rapidly his four-wheeled marathon wagon fishtails in the grass. Farther off, turnouts wind past a herd of cattle, through a stand of tall pines, and around an adobe hut. Another hazard features a small pond through which turnouts must splash three times.

The marathon is not a race but a test of driver skill and ability. Each turnout is given an ideal time to complete the course, based on the horse's level of training. Drivers are penalized if they come in

early, or over by more than two minutes.

Sunday's competition is both elegant and thrilling. Pairs of traffic cones set slightly wider than the carriage's wheelbase form a complex, winding pattern. Drivers and horses, in their best, must negotiate the pattern against a clock. To make it more difficult, there's a tennis ball on top of each cone. Even a slight touch means penalties. Here the competition is fast and tense, as horses gallop to the finish line.

When the event is over, competitors and volunteers take a moment to relive the best of the event, and officials hand out a first-place prize and runner-up ribbons. Photographers snap a few last photos — and I decide I'll be back again next year. ❏

Vicky English, who lives near Phoenix, took top honors in her division in the 1994 Arizona Combined Driving Event.

Ronni Nienstedt specializes in equine photography, covering prestigious competitions in the United States and Europe.

WHEN YOU GO

This year's Arizona Combined Driving Event will take place March 8 through 10 at Goree Farms in Coolidge. From State Route 89 in Coolidge, take Coolidge Avenue east approximately one mile across the railroad tracks to Christensen Road. Turn right onto Christensen and follow the signs one-quarter mile to the site. Admission is free. For more information, call (602) 386-1029.

She sat on a boulder in a sea of color at the bottom of the Superstition Mountains, balanced painfully on the turning point of her life.

The brittlebush staged a riot in yellow all around her, lapping like waves at her boulder and stretching without a break to the base of the gnarled volcanic mountains, where bighorn sheep stand watch and ghosts of lost treasures chase one another like bats at twilight. Bees hummed incessantly among the Van Goghish extravagance of cadmium yellow, frantically pollinating bushes each of which can produce 800 flowers and 50,000 seeds.

The brittlebush, a hardy relative of the sunflower, had produced record blooms all across Arizona in response to one of the wettest years in a century.

She hadn't known about the flowers when she set out in confusion from Los Angeles, a young woman seeking some trace of herself amidst the punched time clocks, quarreling parents, a floundering marriage, blunted expectations, and unanswered questions. She fled the city with no real plan, just a half-filled suitcase and an Australian shepherd. But sitting on her igneous island, the puzzle boxes of her life seemed for the moment

of less consequence than the hypnotic humming of the bees.

Wildflowers can do that.

I spent the spring chasing rumors of wildflowers, hoping to define their essence, sketch their ecology, and explain their allure here on this printed page. I encountered her halfway through that aimless journey, protruding just above the sunny expanse as though waiting for the filming of *The Wizard of Oz* to resume. We sat and talked as the setting sun experimented drunkenly with color. The brittlebush glowed as we watched the red-orange globemallow close for the night.

Make no mistake, flowers have conquered the world. Flowers evolved over a hundred million years ago as an ingenious way for plants to con insects into becoming their reproductive allies. Scents ranging from perfumed excess to imitation carrion, energy-rich nectar that sometimes harbors vitamins essential to preferred pollinators, and the shape and color of the flowers themselves all became blandishments for bees, birds, bats, and beetles.

Color remains the most noticeable come-on, designed not for human eyes but for the specialized vision of certain pollinators, ranging into the ultraviolet glow visible

only to the multifaceted orbs of many insects. The flowers preferred by the workhorse bees mostly blossom yellow. Flowers that set their lures for hummingbirds prefer a lascivious red, a signal that they hold enough concentrated nectar to make a stop worth the energy the hummer must expend by hovering.

Often those flowers are shaped to deny access to bees and other insects, to make sure that only hummingbirds pick up that crucial dusting of pollen that they'll bear directly to another red blossom of the same species, their inexorable appetites driving them to perhaps 10,000 blossoms daily.

These innovations worked beautifully. Pollinators helped spread plants across the continents. All the rest of us followed happily along in their wake.

This ancient alliance between flowers and the rest of us takes place in the desert with a special passion, where this burst of spring and late summer growth determines survival in a harsh land.

Each spring a heart-stopping array of flowers bursts into bloom on desert slopes too harsh for even weeds most of the year. Luminous poppies, luscious lupine, laden chuparosa, riotous brittlebush, leafy globe-mallow, sand-loving verbena, swaying

desert marigolds, startling Indian paintbrush, and demure owl clover remain merely the gaudy headliners in a wildflower cast of thousands.

Botanists and desert rats have lavished lifetimes on understanding the vagaries of these desert wildflowers, which have evolved oversize seeds that can lie in the soil for decades awaiting that perfect combination of rain and sun. Many experts say steady rains starting in October and November and continuing without any prolonged dry spells or hard freezes produce the best outpouring.

But despite all the studies and rain gauges, wildflowers remain irredeemably capricious. A hillside covered with poppies one year may remain barren the next. One slope may sing with brittlebush, while a similarly facing incline nearby remains forlorn.

That unpredictability plays havoc with the creatures whose life cycles remain linked to this annual floral extravagance. Tiny hummingbirds undertake continent-spanning migrations to remain on the edge of spring as it shifts from the tropics to the pine-scented northern forests. Bees stay in place but convert nectar and pollen into honey to carry

themselves through the winter. Moths and butterflies synchronize their metamorphosis to these seasonal displays, responding to good years with population explosions.

Seed eaters like the thirstless kangaroo rat even out this floral boom-bust by hoarding seeds gathered in the good years in underground burrows they and their kin may occupy for generations. In the process, they shape vegetation in the area, sometimes spelling the difference between grassland and desert scrub.

The other plant eaters also respond to the vagaries of the spring blooms. Elk, deer, and javelina all have preferred floral delicacies, drawing enough extra energy from certain plants during certain years to increase their reproduction. Quail orchestrate the number of eggs they lay each year by the Vitamin A content of the tender green springtime annuals.

The effects of the flowers ripple outward all across the ecological pool, finally touching everyone from the whirring hummingbirds to the lurking mountain lions whose reproduction and survival remain linked to the populations of the flower eaters.

But I didn't bother passing along such details to the woman as she sat on the

boulder, soaking in some inexpressible truth about wildflowers. I didn't have much helpful advice to offer about the interlocked dilemmas of her life. Sometimes I think I know even less about people than I do about flowers. Just as well. I think she had already given up on pat answers, one of the insights born of the confrontation with limits we call maturity.

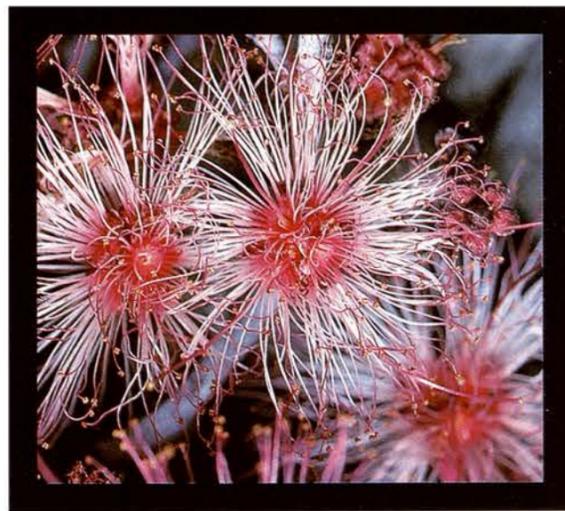
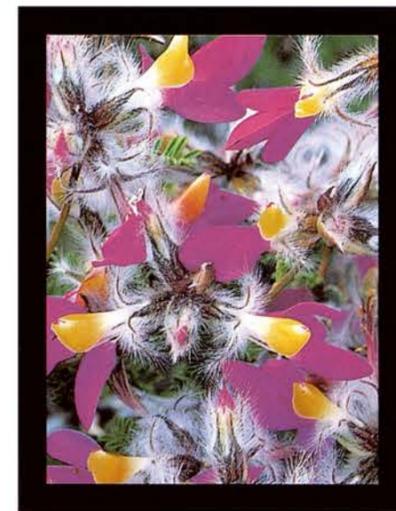
Instead we just sat and watched the flowers swaying in the breeze while the horizon to the west flamed out in a glow the exact color of globemallow. Then we picked our way through the bushes to the trail, a barely clear path through the mass of yellow.

I wished her luck. She said she figured things would work out, one way or another. She looked almost happy. Life's like that, unpredictable and as full of promise as a slope seeded with wildflowers.

I headed for home, catching the tail end of rush hour along the Superstition Freeway. Preparing for a shower, I looked down at my jeans. They were smudged with yellow pollen as though I'd brushed against the palette in a mad painter's studio. So I stood for a while in my bedroom in the glow of artificial light, holding my pollen-stained jeans, recalling the sound of bees.

W I L D F L O W E R S : A P O R T F O L I O

T E X T B Y P E T E R A L E S H I R E



From left, desert thistle, beautiful dalea, and Southwestern vervain. ALL BY LARRY ULRICH
Prickly poppy and fairy duster. BOTH BY ROBERT CAMPBELL

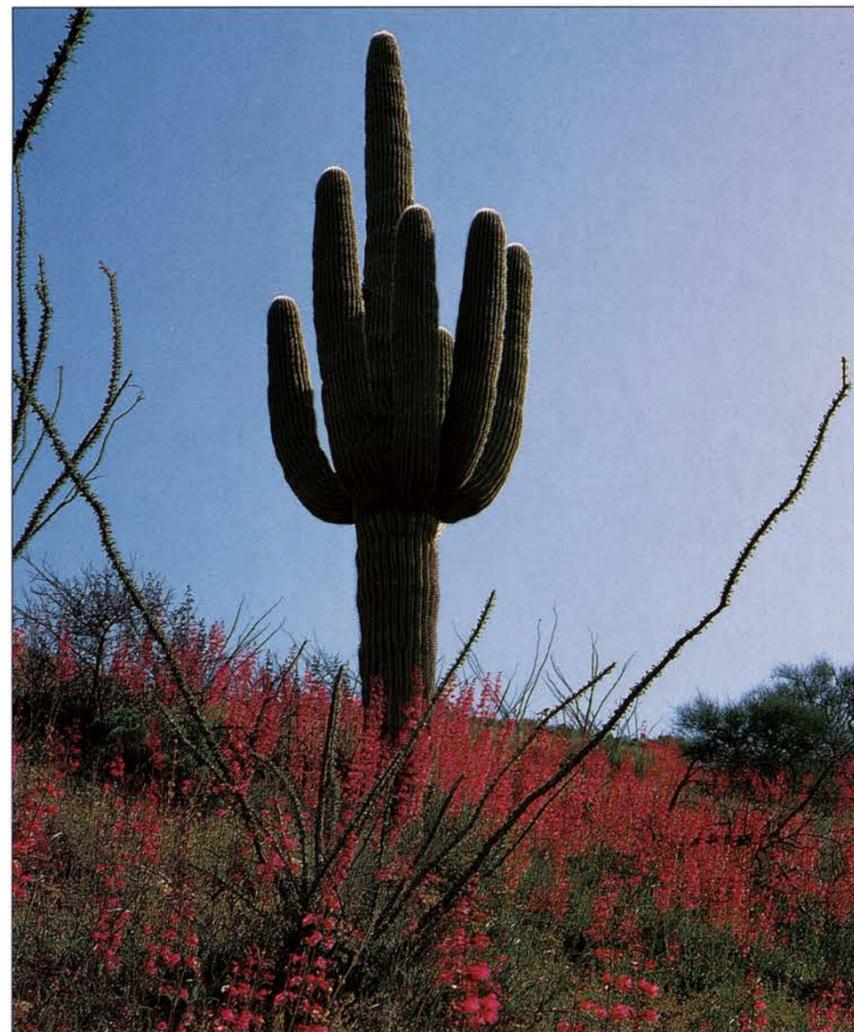


P E N S T E M O N A N D F I D D L E N E C K

(ABOVE) *Parry's primrose and cobblestone fiddleneck*
color a wash in the Ajo Mountains. LARRY ULRICH

(BELOW) *A stately saguaro reigns over a crowd of penstemon*
in the Santa Catalina Mountains. EDWARD McCAIN

(RIGHT) *A saguaro skeleton offers a rough backdrop for delicate penstemon*
in Saguaro National Park. MARK S. THALER





W I L D F L O W E R S
P O R T F O L I O



B R I T T L E B U S H A N D O W L C L O V E R

(LEFT) Brittlebush clings to a slope at the Grand Canyon, high above the Colorado River. EDGAR CALLAERT

(ABOVE) Sunny brittlebush flourishes throughout the Sonoran Desert. ROBERT CAMPBELL

(BELOW) Chain cholla and other cacti provide a prickly counterpoint to a display of yellow brittlebush and purple owl clover. JACK DYKINGA



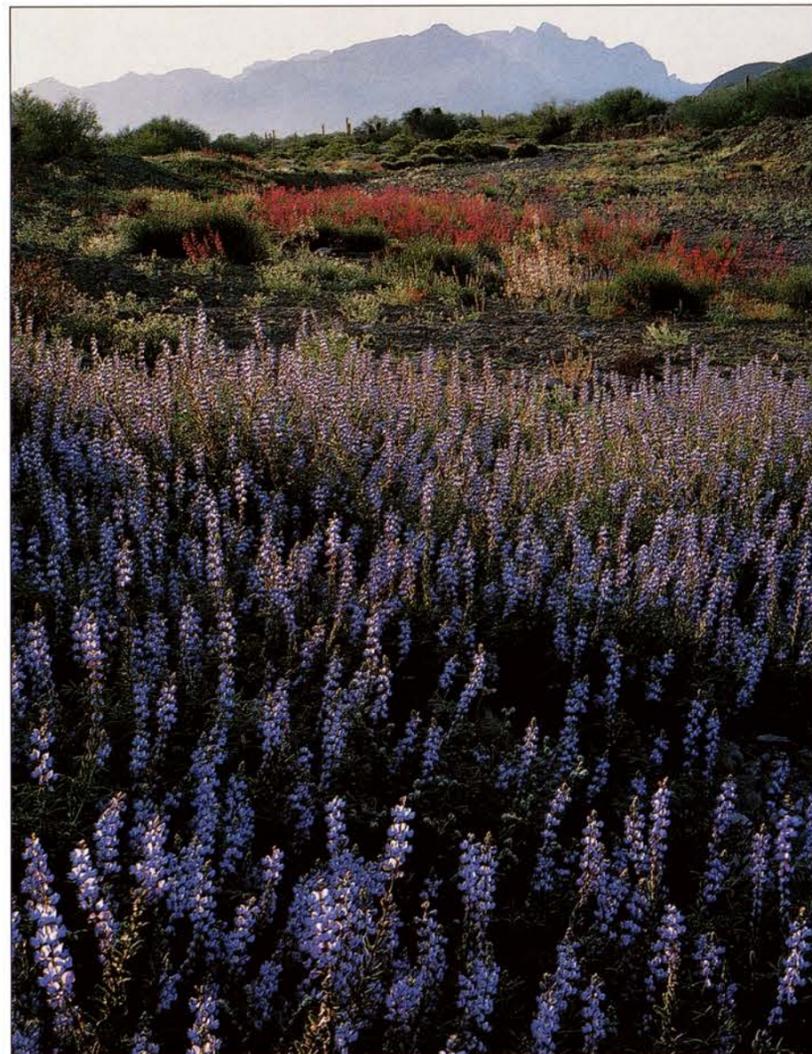


LUPINE, OWL CLOVER, AND PENSTEMON

(ABOVE) *Fragrant lupine blossoms peak in March and April.* JAMES TALLON

(BELOW) *Lupine and Parry's penstemon bedeck Alamo Wash in
Organ Pipe Cactus National Monument.* JACK DYKINGA

(RIGHT) *A sprig of lupine invades a field of owl clover in the
Tonto National Forest.* JERRY SIEVE







GOLDEN POPPIES, LUPINE, AND OWL CLOVER

(PRECEDING PANEL, PAGES 28 AND 29) *Brittlebush and lupine contrast with the cacti near Diablo Canyon in Organ Pipe Cactus National Monument.* EDWARD McCAIN
(LEFT) *Multicolored poppies close when the sun hides behind a cloud.* JERRY SIEVE
(ABOVE) *Golden poppies may be the most photographed wildflower in the Sonoran Desert.* DEBS METZONG
(BELOW) *Poppies, desert lupine, and owl clover decorate a field near Kitt Peak.* MARK S. THALER



T H E
L A D Y
I S A
S P Y

A FAMOUS
ACTRESS
BY CHANCE
BECOMES
A UNION
SECRET AGENT,
AND SO
BEGINS
THE SAGA
OF MAJOR
PAULINE
CUSHMAN



PAULINE CUSHMAN WAS AN ACTRESS BY CALLING, whose true deeds dwarfed those she portrayed on stage. Her life was her finest role, a medley of despair and triumph that in many ways mirrored the American experience in the 19th century.

BY LEO W. BANKS She was a federal spy, commissioned a major by President Lincoln for her daring Civil War service. She toured Western theaters after the war as a Union heroine, and rowdy audiences responded by firing their pistols at the ceiling instead of applauding.

Cushman was famous. Her eyes were Spanish-black, and she had raven ringlets falling almost to her waist, and a dashing manner. She also was known to pack a pistol and a hard punch, and she often used both during her time as a boardinghouse operator in frontier Arizona.

But in the tradition of great tragedy, Cushman's life ended in a cheap San Francisco boardinghouse. As one obituary put it, she died "childless and gray-haired," full of morphine to dull the pain of her last days.

ARIZONA HISTORICAL SOCIETY, TUCSON



Cushman was born in New Orleans on June 10, 1833. Following a business failure, her father, a Spaniard from Madrid, moved the family to Grand Rapids, Michigan, where he operated a trading post frequented by Chippewa Indians.

There Pauline lived her first adventures. An early biography presents her as the darling of the Chippewa tribe, soldiers, and others who came to the store to trade. Her admirers taught her to ride bareback, shoot and skin game; and it was said that she had the pluck to navigate a canoe over the fiercest rapids.

At 18 she made her way to New York and signed with a theatrical troupe called the New Orleans Varieties. She was a fast success, landing a plum costarring role in *The Seven Sisters*, playing opposite John McDonogh, described in early accounts as the matinee idol of his day.

In 1863 Cushman's troupe traveled to Louisville, Kentucky, a city roiled by wartime passions and dark intrigue. The venue was perfect for a woman who craved standing under the bright lights at the center of the nation's greatest crisis.

As part of her role in *The Seven Sisters*, Cushman was required to toast the Union. But Southern sympathizers offered her a \$300 bribe to hail Confederate President Jefferson Davis instead.

She reported the offer to the federal commandant at Louisville. Together they plotted to go ahead with the suggested toast and use the uproar it would surely cause as a cover for her new job as an operative for the Secret Service.

In her obituary in its edition of December 6, 1893, the *Arizona Daily Citizen* reported that Cushman mounted the stage at Wood's Theater the following night, and "while the eyes of a large audience were fixed upon her in a supper scene, she proposed this toast: 'Here's to Jeff Davis and the Southern Confederacy. May the South always maintain her honor and her rights.'"

The theater, packed with paroled Confederate officers and patriotic Unionists, exploded with rebel yells, jeers, and a few fistfights. The outraged theater manager promptly fired Cushman from the cast.

With the ruse accomplished, Cushman pulled on her cloak and went to work, infiltrating Louisville's most active Confederate sectors. But her most dangerous assignment came in Nashville, headquarters of the North's Army of the Cumberland and its chief of Army police, William Truesdail.

He and Gen. William Rosencrans needed someone to go behind rebel lines and gather information on the strength of Gen. Braxton Bragg's forces around Shelbyville.

They summoned Cushman, and she headed off under the guise of searching for her missing brother, who was, in fact, a rebel major on Bragg's staff.

Cushman's boldness nearly caused her death. In violation of Truesdail's orders, she made crude sketches of Confederate positions and managed to swipe documents from the desk of a Southern officer. With the valuable information stuffed into her shoe, she began to make her way back to Union lines.

But she was captured, escaped, and captured again. She was sent to rebel Gen. Nathan Bedford Forrest, who reportedly said: "Miss Cushman, I'm glad to see you. You're pretty sharp at turning a card, but I think we have you on this last shuffle."

At Shelbyville she was sentenced to the gallows, but her life was spared when General Rosencrans attacked the city, and she was left behind in the rebels' frantic retreat.

Back in Nashville, Cushman became deathly ill from her exertions, and she was attended by a warmhearted Yankee general named James Garfield. This future president so admired Cushman that he wrote to Abraham Lincoln, detailing the bravery of the woman Union troops had dubbed "The Major."

"Let her keep the title," Lincoln wrote to Garfield. "She has done more to earn the title than many a male who wore the shoulder straps of a major during the war."

When her health improved, Cushman

IN 1890 SHE
ATTEMPTED TO REVIVE HER
POST-CIVIL WAR RECITALS.
BUT THE WAR
WAS LONG OVER,
AND CUSHMAN HAD
BECOME A HAGGARD
57-YEAR-OLD HAS-BEEN,
A STAR WITHOUT
A GALAXY.



toured the nation's theaters in her major's uniform, reciting her war adventures to enthralled audiences and drawing six-gun salutes in response.

But in Cushman's life, success and sadness seemed to go hand in hand. Her first husband, Charles Dickinson, died of dysentery in 1862. Her two children by that marriage both died in childhood, and her second husband, August Fichtner, died shortly after their marriage in 1872.

Soon she was in love again, this time with Dr. Samuel Orr, an Army surgeon. But it was another ill-starred romance. In 1875 Orr was called for duty at Arizona's Camp Bowie, where he fell ill and died.

These painful episodes didn't eliminate Cushman's penchant for adventure or quell her fiery temper. She kept making news.

She was managing a resort south of San Francisco called La Honda when she taught its owner, Bill Sears, a brutal lesson in manners. Sears' affections for Cushman were not returned, and he sought revenge by speaking lies about her to anyone who would listen.

Cushman resigned her position, and on the morning of her departure a crowd gathered to see her off. When Sears appeared to see about the commotion, Cushman approached the stage driver and took his six-horse whip. Dressed in a red velvet gown and a plumed hat, the famous actress lashed into Sears, striking him over and over.

According to one account, dust rose from Sears' clothing after each crack of the whip. When she was done, Cushman returned the instrument to the driver and said, "Thank you, sir. It's a good whip."

The driver lifted his hat. "Thank ye, ma'am. All aboard."

But to Jeremiah Fryer, a handsome man of Cherokee blood, who was many years her junior, Cushman displayed considerably warmer sentiments. She married him on January 29, 1879, and together they bought a hotel and livery stable in Casa Grande, Arizona.

The business thrived, thanks to the couple's hard work and the arrival, in 1880, of the Southern Pacific Railroad. This pushed Casa Grande's population well above the handful it had been when the Fryers arrived.

But it also gave Cushman, now known as Major Fryer, more targets for her temper. Area newspapers carried occasional accounts of her indiscretions, such as this one-sentence blurb: "Major Fryer doused Mrs. Cunningham in the water trough for slander."

In a story published in the *Arizona Republican* in 1925, Charles Eastman described meeting Cushman when he arrived in Casa Grande in 1884. She was "good-hearted and

an excellent nurse in taking care of anyone injured by bullet wounds."

That almost included Eastman himself. One night he was wobbling down the street, drunk, when The Major asked if he'd seen her "long-legged husband."

Eastman replied that he did not keep track of women's husbands. Cushman drew a .45, stuck it into Eastman's belly, and demanded an answer "due a lady."

Now unexpectedly sober, Eastman replied that he had not seen Mr. Fryer. "That's the way to answer a lady," she remarked.

Eastman wrote that a mollified Cushman "to my great relief took the .45 away from my grub sack."

Eastman also witnessed a street duel in Casa Grande in which Cushman played referee. A man named Price Johnson was killed by a second combatant, identified only as Robinson.

"During the shooting," Eastman remembered, "Major Fryer stood there on the

corner, the bullets whistling within 15 or 20 feet of where she was standing. At no time did she flinch."

Cushman displayed her bravery again in 1889 in Florence, Arizona, where the couple moved after Jeremiah Fryer became sheriff of Pinal County. The sheriff was out of town when a band of vigilantes threatened to drag some prisoners from their cells and lynch them.

With a Winchester on her lap, Cushman plopped down in her husband's chair in the jailhouse and calmly turned back the hotheads.

But by this time, Cushman's life was unraveling. The freshness of her youth had diminished, and she spent more and more of her time tracking down her missing husband, whose rumored infidelities made her half-crazy.

Mike Rice, a hotel bellboy who befriended her in California in 1871, wrote that her extreme jealousy, coupled with an "inordinate infatuation" with her husband, forced

her to "extraordinary methods to retain his waning affections."

Hearing of a woman from a nearby town who was about to become the mother of an unwanted baby, she conspired to acquire the infant and pass it off to Fryer as her own. She informed her husband she was pregnant and convinced him that she should give birth at a hospital in San Francisco. The pregnant woman, already in that city, gave birth to a girl who became Emma Pauline Fryer.

For a time the plan worked. The marriage stabilized with little Emma at its center. But she was afflicted from birth with an incurable nervous disorder and suffered from violent spasms. At age six she died. Shortly thereafter, Fryer learned of Cushman's desperate ruse, and the marriage was over.

In 1890 she returned to San Francisco, dusted off her major's uniform, and attempted to revive her post-Civil War recitals. She frittered away the last of her money living at the posh Baldwin Hotel, hoping that someone would notice that she was back in town.

But no one did. The war was long over, and Cushman had become a haggard 57-year-old has-been, a star without a galaxy.

Her last years were spent at a boardinghouse on San Francisco's Market Street, working as a scrubwoman and battling arthritis and rheumatism. A doctor gave her morphine tablets for pain, and early in December, 1893, the medicine killed her.

The official coroner's report stated that she died of a morphine overdose "taken without suicidal intent and to relieve pain."

Major Cushman's final hurrah befitted a woman who flourished and suffered along with her country, through the Civil War, the coming of the railroad, and the settling of the frontier.

In the days after her death, newspapers reported that The Major, who died in abject poverty, would be buried in Potter's Field. An uproar ensued, led by the Grand Army of the Republic, an organization of war veterans.

Donations poured in to remedy the injustice. Her body was laid to rest in a "handsome cloth-covered casket" draped with an American flag, and she was given a military honor guard and a rifle salute.

The Major would've beamed at the attention, and at the simple remembrance printed on her grave marker: "Pauline Cushman, Federal Spy and Scout of the Cumberland." ❧

Tucson-based Leo W. Banks is a student of Arizona's Civil War characters.



NATIONAL PORTRAIT GALLERY

ROSE PHOTOGRAPH BY DANIEL VERMILLION



FOCUS ON NATURE

TEXT AND PHOTOGRAPHS
BY WILLIAM BARCUS

The Bighorns of Black Mountain

In the stillness of a crisp December dawn in the remote and arid Black Mountains of northwestern Arizona, I stop to examine my path, a primitive game trail across a rocky precipice. Three hundred feet below, wintry shadows of towering pinnacles sprawl onto the desert floor backlit by the rising sun.

The trail, cut deep into the barren rock from centuries of beating hooves, charts the feeding routes of desert bighorn sheep.

On the ridge of a talus slope above me, a sentinel stands guard against the backdrop of a clear royal-blue sky. At home in its native range, the bighorn ram watches over a flock of ewes and lambs feeding on clumps of brittlebush, catclaw, and Mormon tea.

The ram, head cocked, appears to be appraising my trespassing into its territory. Then, apparently judging that I'm harmless, the ram picks its way across the talus, stopping near a plump reddish-colored barrel cactus. As I watch, I realize the ram is up to something. But what I can't imagine. Camera ready, I scrutinize the animal's every movement, and hold my breath.

Suddenly, the ram, lowering its head, crashes into the cactus. Nonplused at first, I finally realize what's happening. It is a survival technique few have witnessed and fewer still have photographed: the mountain sheep's ages-old remedy for obtaining precious water in dry, arid wastes.

Another dull thudding report shatters the morning silence as



(TOP AND ABOVE) As a female desert bighorn sheep looks on, a male butts its head into a barrel cactus to expose the plant's succulent inside. After the male quenches its thirst, he stands guard while the female takes a turn.

(OPPOSITE PAGE) Observant and fortunate visitors may catch a glimpse of a nimble bighorn perched on a rocky precipice.

the ram lowers its head then rebounds with the force of another assault. The sharp, elongated barbs of the barrel cactus collapse under the crushing thrusts.

It is a time-consuming task, but finally the ram is able to quench its thirst. As it devours the greenish pulp, a ewe sidles up to share the moist and tender meat. The ram's three-quarter-curl horns then expose the plant's remaining pulp.

Desert sheep may be able to survive as long as six months without drinking, deriving metabolic water from food. But when water is available, bighorns are prodigious drinkers, consuming up to 4½ gallons, or 23 percent of body weight, at a rate in excess of 2½ gallons per minute. With their enlarged water retention organs, however, the animals can withstand extreme dehydration, with body temperatures reaching 107° F.

An hour passes. Bellies now full, the pair of sheep abandon the hollowed-out core of the barrel cactus and retreat to the top of the ridge where they paw beds. Choosing an easy route to the canyon floor, I clamber down the mountainside.

When once on the desert floor, I stop and turn back to the mountains and catch sight of a memorable spectacle: the wild sheep standing silhouetted against the morning sky. A truly noble monarch of the desert. ■

William Barcus lives in Pine, a hamlet just below the edge of the Mogollon Rim, and works for the Forest Service.





WHEN THE BUTTERFLIES DANCE

A P A R A B L E O F D I V E R S I T Y

WE CHECKED OUR GEAR AT THE ENTRANCE TO THE PATAGONIA-SONOITA CREEK PRESERVE, ALREADY WORRIED THAT WE'D MISSED OUR CHANCE TO PHOTOGRAPH THE GREAT VARIETY OF BIRDLIFE WE'D SET OUT TO FIND. THE NATURE CONSERVANCY'S PRESERVE, A

350-acre cottonwood forest strung out along 1.75 miles of creek, protects one of the most diverse wildlife habitats in the state. Its 275 bird species draw avid bird-watchers from across the country.

The unique blend of trees, grasses, and bushes also harbors an extensive butterfly population.

But we'd missed the spring-summer biological rush hour when birds complete thousand-mile journeys to flock in the 100-foot-tall Fremont cottonwoods and their waving fringe of willow, ash, Arizona wal-

TEXT BY PETER ALESHIRE nut, netleaf hackberry, and velvet mesquite.

"I hope we didn't wait too long," I muttered to photographer Gary Johnson.

Johnson shrugged and settled a 30-pound bag of camera gear into place over his shoulder.

"Relax," he advised with irritating calm. "We'll get what we get."

"Right," I mumbled. "Anyway, what am I worrying about? You're the photographer."

"And that's as it should be," he concluded.

We turned then and wandered down the trail into the oldest more-or-less intact cottonwood forest in Arizona, dominated by awesome trees we couldn't encircle by linking hands and stretching to our straining fingertips. Before us lay Sonoita Creek, which flows year-round thanks to underground rock formations that force water to the surface even during dry years.

Nestled in a rich floodplain between Patagonia and the foothills of the Santa

Rita Mountains, the preserve sits just north of the U.S. and Mexico border. That means it's a biological intersection, luring many Sonoran Desert species to their southern limits and offering shelter to an amazing array of tropical species. Birders here seek rare treasures such as the blue mockingbird and green kingfisher.

A number of trails guided us through the dense growth of brush and trees. One track paralleled the creek and led to an old railroad bridge abutment, where you can sit and watch animals foraging along the banks.

We fell under the spell of the forest as soon as we passed under the canopy of the first gigantic Fremont cottonwood, which looked like some sort of outlandish tree-world for elves. We wandered on along the leaf-strewn trail and sauntered down an elevated berm flanked by Arizona walnut and velvet mesquite trees.

Squirrels scurried and rolled through the leaf litter, dashed up the tree trunks, played a demented game of tag across the interlocking branches, knocked loose leaves, and chattered inventive little squirrel oaths at our oafish passage.

Rounding a corner, we looked down on Sonoita Creek glittering through a leafy arch of shimmering cottonwoods. In the middle of the stream, two deer walked with such graceful delicacy they left no ripples. Framed by cottonwood branches, the deer dipped their heads to drink from the gleaming stream.

PHOTOGRAPHS BY GARY JOHNSON

"This is so amazing," I whispered.

"I think I can get pictures here," deadpanned Gary.

The chatter of the squirrels and the greeting of the deer proved but a prelude to a remarkable day among the trees that offered a lesson in the value of diversity in a complex ecosystem. Study after study demonstrates that biological diversity holds the key to a healthy, resilient, productive natural world. That's why an intact cottonwood-willow streamside system provides one of the most fecund habitats in North America, so bountiful that birds journey thousands of miles to reach it.

We encountered fresh examples of life's interlocking diversity around each bend in the creek. We glimpsed the dark form of a gray hawk, a raptor unusual to Arizona because it is at the northern end of its range. The hawk makes its living largely by weaving adroitly through the forest and plucking lizards off tree trunks.

But what makes Sonoita Creek a Mecca for this chirping, warbling, and fluttering feathered assemblage?

Answering that question requires getting down on your hands and knees and lifting rocks and leaves to peer at the base of the food chain: the amazing diversity of plants and insects that crowd one another in such a world.

Let's start with a purplish little creature dubbed the pleasing fungus beetle. We noted a pod of these garishly colored bugs clustered on a mushroom growing on a gash in the trunk of a cottonwood. These beetles spend all their time feeding on fungus, rooting through decaying stumps.

They're a perfect example of life's interdependence, both exploiting and benefiting the fungus — and thus playing a key role in the larger ecosystem. The beetles extract from the fungus certain chemicals that make them so repulsive in taste that no bird will sample a pleasing fungus beetle more than once. That may be why the beetles adopt such brilliant colors, a sort of swaggering defiance by



a creature confident of its chemical defenses.

The tactic exacts a toll because the physiological cost of converting the mushroom toxins into defensive chemicals leaves the beetle and its larvae unable to eat almost anything else. However, the beetles pay for their supper, spreading the fungal

spores as they move from trunk to trunk. That, in turn, contributes to the greater good because the trunk-growing fungus dramatically accelerates decomposition, which returns nutrients to the soil and fuels the growth of other plants.

"The fungi is absolutely critical in decomposition," noted Dave Pearson, a zoology professor at the University of Arizona. "Otherwise, we'd be up to our eyeballs in dead tree trunks."

This same scheme of plants and ecological niches accounts for the startling profusion of butterflies in the preserve. This tiny patch of ground boasts more types of butterflies per acre than anyplace in North America, according to Jeffery Cooper, The Nature Conservancy's on-site manager. Butterflies remain among the more specialized of insects, thanks largely to the dietary demands of their caterpillar incarnation.

Most caterpillars must eat only certain kinds of plants, causing them to be toxic to predators but forcing them to live among only those select plants.

That's why the caterpillar of the lordly monarch butterfly can feed on only one or two varieties of the milkweed. And that's why a caterpillar adapted to shade can't survive in sunny meadows. These physiological trade-offs link each species of butterfly to certain plants and habitats.

Therefore the plethora of butterflies fluttering across the landscape stands as frail evidence of Sonoita Creek's diversity — a happy state of affairs that the preserve's managers hope to increase.

They have undertaken an unusual project intended to increase the diversity of grasses and forbs on which butterflies depend.

Decades ago farmers

(PRECEDING PANEL, PAGES 38 AND 39)
The Patagonia-Sonoita Creek Preserve boasts more species of butterflies than any other place in North America.
 (ABOVE) *Deer can be spotted along the preserve's trails, undisturbed by visitors.*
 INGE MARTIN
 (RIGHT) *The overlapping habitats of the preserve lure an amazing diversity of wildlife.*





cleared off several large meadows and left behind a tenacious forage crop called Johnson grass. This Asian grass grows in thick monocultures, sprouting from root runners that grow so thickly in any open sunny place that they virtually choke out all other plants. The preserve's managers brought in George Ruyle, associate research scientist in the School of Renewable Natural Resources at the University of Arizona, to set up controlled but intensive cattle grazing to thin the Johnson grass.

The cows have already taken such a toll on the Johnson grass that once-excluded native plants now account for 40 percent of the biomass in the experimental meadow. Next the researchers hope to plant plugs of the native Sacaton grass, which grows in clumps and allows a wide variety of other grasses and forbs to flourish.

A waving forest of sunflowers has already invaded the meadow. Johnson and I came upon this spot near sunset, like Dorothy plunked among the Munchkins. We wandered among the undulating six-foot-tall forest of sunflowers, stalking butterflies and goldfinches with 200-millimeter lenses. Black, yellow, white, and gold butterflies lured us deeper and deeper into the meadow.

In the midst of the meadow, we found ourselves surrounded by a fluttering band of goldfinches, endearing wisps of brilliant yellow birds capped in black. The tiny creatures spurted from flower to flower, hanging upside down, extracting seeds from the swaying stalks like show-off acrobats.

I tracked them for an hour, lost in reverie. It was a memorable time.

I can shut my eyes right now and summon the image of a goldfinch bobbing on a sunflower; a butterfly fanning its shimmering wings; the swaying of a whole field of yellow blooms in a cool wind; the smell of fall wafting out of the trees; and the feeling of picking my way so carefully through those sunflowers, like a deer stepping into a glittering stream without stirring a ripple. ■



Additional Reading: The attractions of southern Arizona are the focus of *Arizona Highways'* newest guidebook, *Tucson to Tombstone*, written by Tucson-based Tom Dollar with photographs by regular contributors to the magazine. The region Dollar covers is imprinted with the mystique and legacy

of three cultures — Indian, Hispanic, and Old West settlers — not to mention modern-day visionaries. And its sights-to-see range from 18th-century missions to a futuristic enclosure in which people, plants, and animals can live without outside help. The lively text takes readers over the area's unique desert, into its riparian canyons laden with wildlife, and to the peaks of its sky islands. The 96-page softcover book features more than 128 color photographs, plus maps and travel tips. It costs \$12.95 plus shipping and handling. To order, telephone toll-free (800) 543-5432; in the Phoenix area or outside the U.S., call (602) 258-1000.

Visiting the Patagonia-Sonoita Creek Preserve helped convert Phoenix-based Peter Aleshire into an enthusiastic birder. He also wrote the text for the wildflower "Portfolio" in this issue.

Gary Johnson, also of Phoenix, says that while shooting photographs at the preserve he was lamenting that the "perfect" shot of a giant cottonwood needed something to show the immense size of the tree. Just then an unknown birder quietly and fortuitously walked into the frame.

WHEN YOU GO

The Patagonia-Sonoita Creek Preserve is about 60 miles southeast of Tucson near the little community of Patagonia. From Phoenix, take Interstate 10 east to State Route 82, then head south to Patagonia. In town turn west onto Fourth Avenue, then south onto Pennsylvania, go across the creek and then three-fourths of a mile to the entrance. Look for the new visitors center scheduled for completion about this time. For more information, contact Patagonia-Sonoita Creek Preserve, P.O. Box 815, Patagonia, AZ 85624; (520) 394-2400.

(LEFT) The preserve's Fremont cottonwoods, some of the largest on the continent, are touched by autumn gold.

(ABOVE) Birders scan the preserve hoping to add to their life lists of sighted species. Here a Harris' hawk perches in a snag.
MARTY CORDANO



WIT STOP

TEXT BY GENE PERRET
ILLUSTRATION BY RICHARD WEHRMAN

Closing the Sunroof Won't Help When the Sky Is Falling

A few years ago, I taught a summer course at Northern Arizona University in Flagstaff. On my first free day, my family wanted to do some sight-seeing, so we drove to Meteor Crater about 35 miles east on Interstate 40.

Frankly, I didn't want to go. My idea of a perfect day off is the same as my idea of a perfect day at work: do as little as possible in as few places as possible. I'd rather stay home and relax. Besides, a crater is just a hole in the ground.

I imagined it would be an interestingly shaped little cavity that might be cemented over and used by skateboarding enthusiasts. It's not. It's a big hole in the ground, 600 feet deep and 4,100 feet across.

The tour guide told us that the crater was formed about 49,500 years ago when a meteor approximately 100 feet in diameter and weighing about 50,000 tons slammed into the Arizona landscape traveling at 43,000 miles per hour. The explosive force of the impact equalled that of more than 20 million tons of TNT and probably extinguished all life within 50 miles of the crash site.

My family toured the crater

and the Astronaut Hall of Fame on the grounds, watched the video demonstration, bought a few mementos at the gift shop, and had hot dogs and soft drinks at the cafe. I didn't eat anything. My stomach was feeling a little queasy.

When we got back into the car after our visit, my wife said, "Where should we go now?"

I said, "We're going back to the motel."

She said, "Why are we going back to the motel?"

I said, "Because it has a roof on it."

The kids said, "What are we going to do at the motel?"

I said, "We're going to have our room changed from the second floor to the first floor."

My wife said, "That's silly. Why do we want to move to the first floor?"

I said, "Because the first floor is farther away from the sky."

My wife noticed I was pretty jittery as I drove and figured it out. "You're afraid of meteors."

I told my wife, "I am not afraid of meteors." Then I asked my son, "Joey, is your Little League batting hat in the trunk?"

Joey said, "I don't know. Why?"

"Daddy just might want to wear it for a while if it is."

My wife wouldn't give up. "You are. You're afraid of meteors."

"Well," I said, "this is a meteor-prone neighborhood. It's dangerous."

"There's only one crater," she said.

I said, "It doesn't take many." "But it happened over 49,000 years ago."

"That's just it," I said. "If it happened yesterday, I wouldn't be worried. But 49,000 years ago — we're due."

We drove along for a while in a silent truce. Then my wife said, "Boy it's hot," and she reached toward the roof.

"Don't open the sunroof," I said.

"It's like an oven in here. Why not?"

"Don't open the sunroof," I said.

My wife said, "Oh no. Don't tell me you're afraid a meteor is going to come in through the sunroof."

"It could happen," I said.

"Do you know the mathematical odds of that happening?"

I said, "I'm not good at math; I'm good at paranoia."

She said, "Closing the sunroof is not going to keep a meteor away."

I said, "Maybe not, but I'd rather be safe than vaporized."

She said, "There's no way a meteor could come through the sunroof."

I said, "Yeah, but what if one does?"

She said, "We'd be destroyed in a flash."

I said, "That's right. And 49,000

years from now I don't want tourists driving out Interstate 40 to see the 'Meteor Toyota.'"

Just then I had to swerve back into my lane to avoid an oncoming truck.

My wife said, "You're driving like a maniac."

I said, "I am not." I swerved out of the way of another truck.

She said, "You're looking up at the sky instead of keeping your eyes on the road."

I said, "Trucks have drivers. They can look out for me. Meteors don't have drivers, so I have to keep my eyes on the sky, too . . . to make sure none of them are coming."

My wife said, "Pull over. I'm driving."

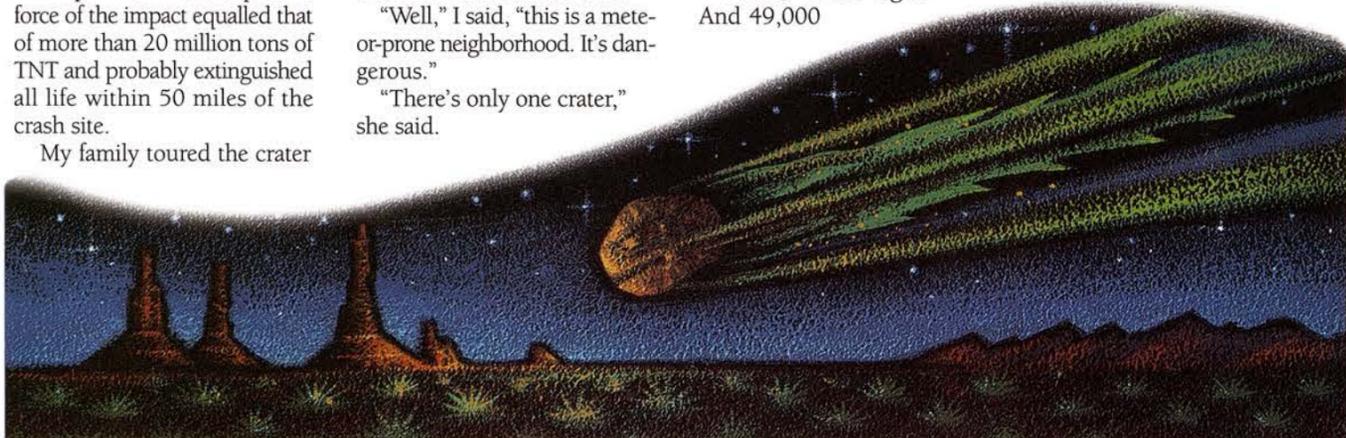
I pulled over.

My wife took the wheel and cautiously guided us back into traffic on Interstate 40.

She said, "I don't know why you're making such a big deal of this. The man at the crater told us that nowadays it's almost impossible for a meteor to penetrate Earth's dense atmosphere."

I said, "What does he know? He works at a hole in the ground."

And that's the last thing I remember about the trip. Just then a bug splattered against the windshield, and I passed out. ❧



FRIENDS TRAVEL ADVENTURES

Capturing Real Cowboys Close Up at Prescott's Famed Frontier Days Rodeo

Out in the arena in a swirl of choking dust — his body twisted in every direction, one hand gripping tightly, the other held high in the air — the cowboy fights to stay aboard a jackknifing bronco with other ideas.

If he doesn't get thrown and wins enough points, there'll be cash money in his jeans and a tale to tell about surviving another year in Prescott's Frontier Days Rodeo. Said to be the oldest such cowboy competition in the world, the rodeo is the focus of one of the Friends of Arizona Highways' most popular Photo Workshops. Set for July 3 through 7, the

workshop will be led by internationally noted photographer Ken Akers.

Workshop participants will have special access to areas where they will be able to photograph the action up close, says Akers, the recipient of national awards for his rodeo pictures.

Highlights of the workshop include a cowboy cookout, a cowboy portraiture session, a sunrise shoot on a working ranch, horseback riding, and a lively look at Prescott, the picturesque mile-high community known as "Everybody's Hometown."

A perennial favorite of participants is a stroll along Whiskey Row, which in the old days supported so many saloons it was "for all practical purposes, just one long bar." And it's a great spot to relax after all the rodeo excitement.

Following are other trips in upcoming months.

Photo Workshops
Ghost Towns and Missions; March 6-9; J. Peter Mortimer.
Sonoran Desert Secrets; March 27-30; Randy A. Prentice.
Monument Valley; April 10-13; John Drew.

Arizona Photo Sampler Tours
All trips visit the Grand Canyon,

Monument Valley, Canyon de Chelly, and Lake Powell; April 24-28, June 5-9, October 9-13.

Backpacking with the Friends
Paria Canyon; April 27-May 1.
Keet Seel and Betatakin; May 30-June 2.

WHEN YOU GO

The Friends of Arizona Highways offers a variety of ways to explore the wonders of Arizona. **Photo Workshops** led by our master contributing photographers provide picture takers of all skill levels with in-depth hands-on instruction to help them take photos like those in the magazine. New **Arizona Photo Sampler Tours** visit more scenic spots than Photo Workshops, and they offer plenty of tips from the accompanying photographer. **Friends Backpacking Tours** focus on Arizona's most popular destinations. **Scenic Tours with Ray Manley** are designed primarily for mature adults.

Assistance is provided by Nikon, Hasselblad, Fuji, and Image Craft.

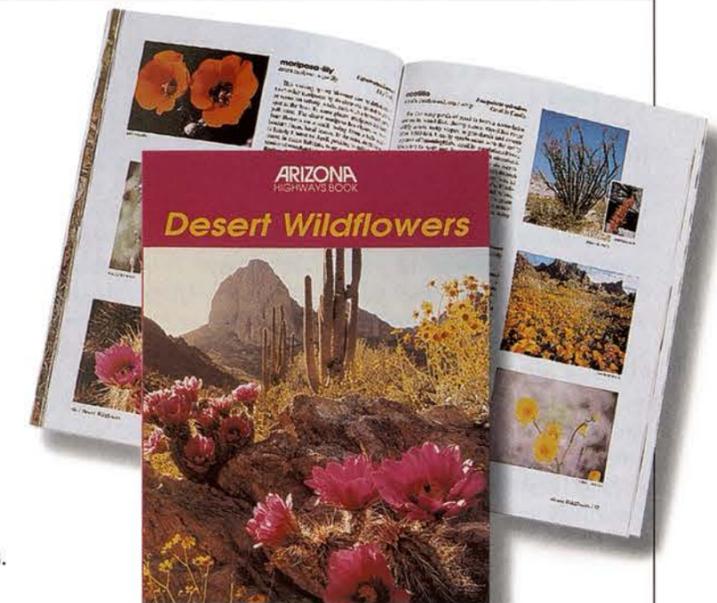
For more information, call the Friends' Travel Office, (602) 271-5904.

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LEGENDS OF THE LOST

TEXT BY SAM NEGRI
ILLUSTRATIONS BY KATERI WEISS

Did Some Mexican Bandits Stash Saddlebags Filled with Loot at Mexican Pocket? Some Think Not

He just wasn't buying it. We were at the edge of a snow-covered forest 12 miles south of Flagstaff, and Jack Smith was pointing at a piece of the landscape called Mexican Pocket. "This isn't any 'pocket,'" he said. "This is just a hill, and these trees, most of them weren't here before 1918. Before that this would have been an open meadow. Some hideaway! It just doesn't make sense!"

Smith, a historian by training, spends some of his time trying to verify stories that are presented as truth but which usually get riddled with folklore when passed from one generation to another. One of the most persistent of these stories deals with lost loot.

In this case, it was the lost loot allegedly buried by a gang of thieves in 1888 at the place called Mexican Pocket.

Many years ago, the story goes, two saddlebags were dug up at Mexican Pocket; one contained \$5,000, the other \$8,000. The saddlebags supposedly belonged to two of 12 Mexican bandits who camped at the spot, and the mystery has persisted ever since: did each of the 12 bandits bury a saddlebag containing his share of the loot, and is the rest of it still out there someplace?

Most of the so-called facts surrounding the buried cash at Mexican Pocket were gathered by the late Gladwell Richardson,

a Navajo trader who also was a prolific writer of Western novels and magazine articles. His story on Mexican Pocket was published in 1973. It is the only known article on this topic.

Bonnie Greer, who has indexed Richardson's articles for the Arizona Historical Society, Northern Division (Northern Arizona University's Cline Library Special Collections and Archives), has tried verifying bits of various stories that Richardson wrote. She concluded, "It seems like he would take one or two facts, and then, you know, he would just write a whole article, and a lot of it has to be taken with a grain of salt."

According to Richardson's account of this missing loot, in 1887-88 a gang from Old Mexico was stealing horses in New Mexico and Apache County in eastern Arizona. After a series of robberies, the bandits moved in with friends and relatives in Concho for about a month and then moved on to Phoenix via the Tonto Basin. With some 15 of their stolen horses, they headed southwest, stealing a few more mounts along the way. This was an error that could be made only by people unaware of the skill and temperament of Commodore Perry Owens, the Apache County sheriff.

Owens' speed and accuracy with a carbine has been well-documented in cases in which he killed several men. In the late 1880s, the lawman reportedly was under considerable pressure from ranchers furious over the theft of their horses. At his base in St. Johns, Owens also was besieged with complaints from irate citizens demanding action.

He started pursuing the bandits with a posse but eventually ended up alone when his helpers decided the



terrain was too rough for their horses.

"Deep canyons forced the outlaws to turn northwest, passing Chevelon Butte," Richardson wrote. "On the high plateau, the gang drove on past a series of small lakes, then into grass-filled, watered mountain parks referred to as 'pockets.' Believing they had evaded possible pursuit, the outlaws holed up to rest on one small creek."

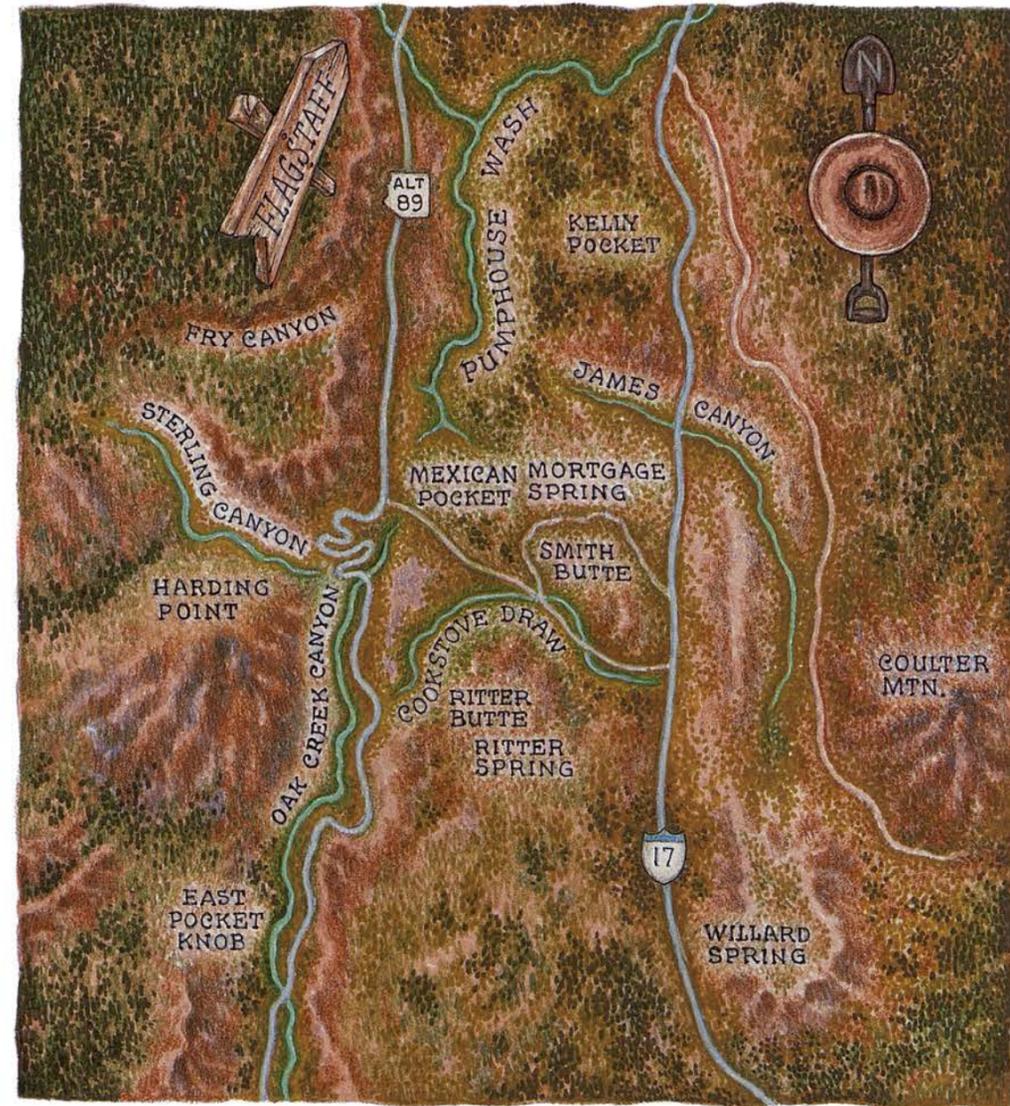
The pocket where the bandits camped in 1888 may be east of today's State Route 89A, and while Jack Smith contends it would have been a wide-open and ridiculous place to hide, Richardson offered a different account. Richardson says Sheriff Owens made his way through "dense" stands of pine trees the morning after the bandits had spent their first night in camp. Once he knew where they were, he went to Flagstaff and recruited two helpers, Pete Brogdon and John Jacobs.

When they returned to the pocket, Owens ordered Brogdon and Jacobs to spread out, adding that if the Mexicans didn't surrender, they should shoot to kill.

Later Owens swore he had called to the men in Spanish, pausing long enough to allow them to surrender, and then opened fire. Brogdon and Jacobs insisted that Owens said not a word and simply came out shooting with his recently purchased Winchester carbine.

When the gunfire ended, seven of the 12 bandits lay dead. The other five had sprung to their horses and escaped into the sheltering trees.

Owens gave Brogdon and Jacobs the bandits' horses and saddles as payment for their assistance and told them to bury the dead. Then they watched



him leave with the stolen horses he was herding to their owners. Brogdon and Jacobs returned to Flagstaff to get help to dig the graves and went back to the carnage the following day.

While picking through the gear the bandits had left behind, they found a short shovel encrusted with dirt. Brogdon thought the bandits might have buried something, but neither he nor Jacobs pursued that possibility until several years later when a treasure hunter came around asking questions about the shoot-out. His curiosity finally ignited, Brogdon returned and, after an extensive search, dug up a pair of goatskin saddlebags containing \$5,000 in gold and silver coins.

For several years after that find, Brogdon and Jacobs returned to Mexican Pocket on weekends to continue their search. In 1893, Richardson says, they found another pair of saddlebags containing a little more than \$8,000.

The five bandits who had escaped the shoot-out eventually made their way to Phoenix. Two of them died soon afterward of wounds suffered in the gunfight. The three who were still in one piece turned up at the Capital Saloon where they encountered Phoenix Town Marshal Henry Garfias. Suspicious of the new arrivals, Garfias questioned them. The men gave vague answers about where they were from and walked out

of the saloon. Dissatisfied with the responses, Garfias followed them outside and ordered them to halt. As they did, they turned and reached for their guns, and that, says Richardson, was a very bad idea since Garfias was a quick-draw expert. Seconds later, three more bandits lay dead in the street.

Richardson assumed that each of the bandits probably carried a more or less equal amount of the loot in his saddlebags, therefore more cash was to be found at Mexican Pocket. That assumption is only one of the questionable elements in this tale of lost loot. Another is the role Garfias supposedly played. At the time that he allegedly shot three



bandits, "Marshal" Garfias had been out of office for two years. His last term expired in 1886.

Also, according to Phoenix journalist Earl Zarbin, who has researched Garfias' life thoroughly, there is only one documented account of Garfias being in a shoot-out, and it wasn't the incident referred to by Richardson.

The story is further complicated by Richardson's final comment — offered almost as an afterthought — that the Mexican Pocket where this incident occurred is not the Mexican Pocket shown on the maps as directly east of State Route 89A. He says the original Mexican Pocket was west of the highway and doesn't appear on any topographical maps.

Historian Smith, who says no one has ever found the graves of the bandits supposedly buried in Mexican Pocket, speculated that the place Richardson was really talking about is Mortgage Spring, east of Pumphouse Wash. Mortgage Spring is an actual pocket, a real hideaway, Smith says, and there are some unmarked graves there.

Smith isn't certain about Mortgage Spring. He is certain, however, that nothing ever happened at the place called Mexican Pocket. ■



ARIZONA HUMOR

Universal Recognition

On my first day of teaching conversational English at a university in China, I told my students I came from Arizona. I mentioned the Grand Canyon, but they didn't seem to know anything about it or the state in general.

Then I mentioned Phoenix, and all of a sudden their hands shot into the air and they began shouting, "Charles Barkley! Charles Barkley!"

Mark Alan Cooledge
Scottsdale

All in a Name

On our first driving trip through Arizona, we arrived rather late in Winslow without a motel reservation. We tried several motels without success, so we decided to call some of the places listed in our travel guide. Finally I found one with a vacancy, and the operator asked for my name.

"Steere," I replied.

There was a long pause. Then the voice asked, "And your first name?"

"Russell," I said.

Another pause, then, "Yeah, right!" And a loud click as the operator hung up the phone.

Russell N. Steere
Harmony, RI

An Oatman Visit

I recently visited the old mining town of Oatman with my grandson. As we parked the car, four burros approached, and I rolled my window down so my grandson could pet them.

To our surprise, one burro stuck his brown and white head right into the car, opened his mouth, and — with big brown-stained teeth showing — brayed loudly: *Hee haw! Hee haw!* We nearly panicked.

Then my grandson quipped,

"Look, Grandpa. He needs to floss his teeth like we do."

Kenneth R. Wideman
Bridgeton, MO

Not Quite Full

Two men were sitting in the blood donor center in Flagstaff. One was an eastern tourist, the other a Navajo. The easterner could not restrain his curiosity and asked the Navajo, "Are you really a full-blooded Indian?"

"Well, no," the Navajo responded thoughtfully, "right now I'm one pint short."

Charles R. Ehrhardt
Sun City West

His and Hers

While on a walk through Black Butte Ranch with our 3½-year-old granddaughter, I explained that the red cattle with the white faces were Herefords. Later that day, she told her grandma that on the walk she had seen some Hereford cows, but she didn't see any Hisfords.

Bill Blakley
Scottsdale

Take a Bow

A well-known coach was vacationing with his family at a resort near a small Arizona

town. One evening when he took his family to the tiny theater, he was surprised to receive a hearty round of applause upon entering. Graciously, he acknowledged the crowd, and then he sat down.

The next day, much to his embarrassment, he learned the applause occurred because the four members of his family increased the size of the audience to the required 10, and the movie could begin.

M.W. Cohn
Phoenix

Bases Covered

My wife, Red Marie, became exasperated one night by all the phone calls I get regarding Tombstone's history.

"I've heard you historians argue about that gunfight at the O.K. Corral for over 20 years. When I get to heaven, I'm going to walk right up to Wyatt Earp and ask him what happened."

Thinking I'd show her, I replied, "What if Earp's not in heaven?"

"Then you can ask him for me."

Ben T. Traywick
Tombstone

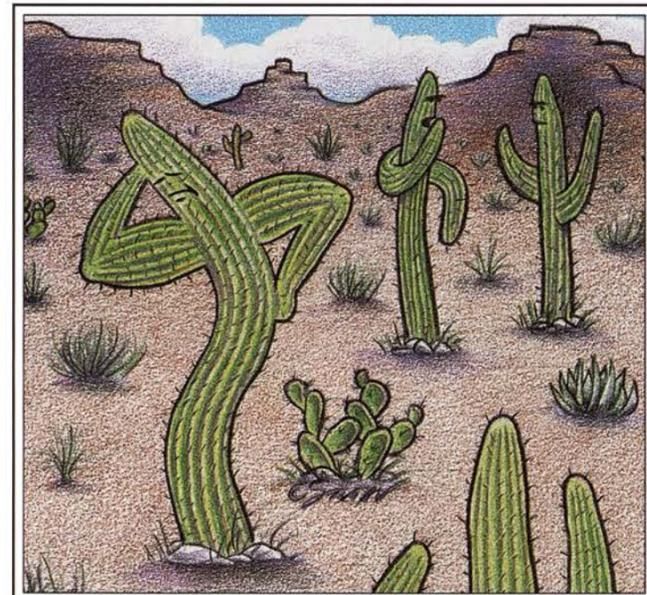
Weather Wonder

We stopped in a small town on our way to Quartzsite, desperate for something cold and full of ice. Though it was the end of September, the thermometer swelled past the 100° F mark, and our "weather wonder" got the best of us.

"Doesn't the heat moderate here as the summer ends?" I asked the waitress who brought our drinks.

"Well, sure," she replied enthusiastically. "It can be downright pleasant here this time of year. It just never has been."

Greg Faris
Bend, OR



"If you ask me, I'd say someone is a little STUCK on himself!"

VICKY SNOW

TO SUBMIT HUMOR

Send us a short note about your humorous experiences in Arizona, and we'll pay \$75 for each one we publish.

We're looking for short stories, no more than 200 words, that deal with Arizona topics and have a humorous punch line.

Send them to Humor, *Arizona Highways*, 2039 W. Lewis Ave., Phoenix, AZ 85009. Please enclose your name, address, and telephone number with each submission.

We'll notify those whose stories we intend to publish, but we cannot acknowledge or return unused submissions.



ROADSIDE REST

TEXT BY DON DEDERA
ILLUSTRATION BY JOHN MEGAHAN

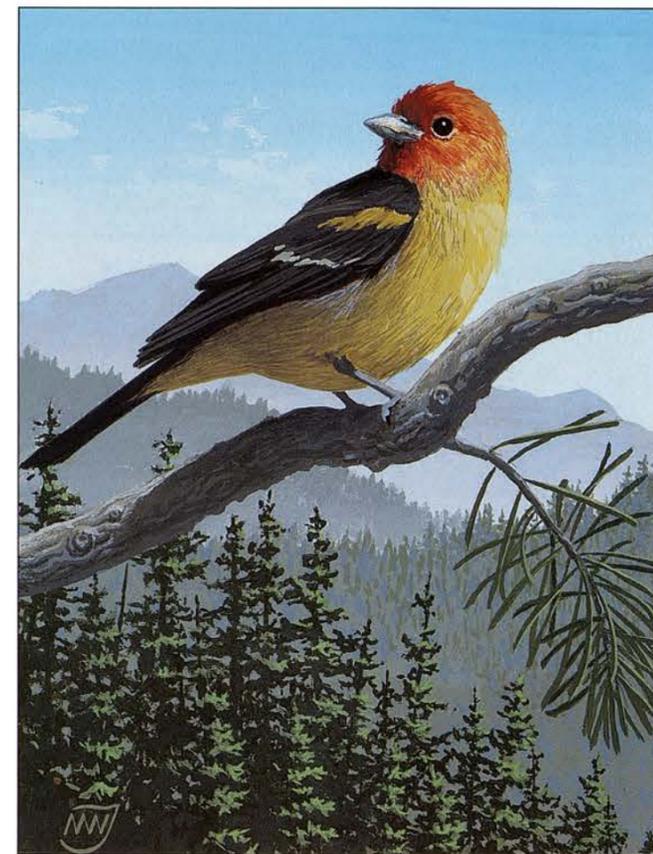
Declining Numbers of Tanagers Spark National Concern

At about the geographical center of Arizona and 6,000 feet above sea level, four citizens in their mid-60s — an English teacher, a librarian, a corporate executive, and a writer-naturalist — are pursuing one element of a deadly serious National Science Experiment. In a month or so, this team will go again to established stations to gather its fourth summer of data on three species of tanagers: western, summer, and hepatic (liver-colored). As before, findings from thousands of such sites located in nearly all the Lower 48 states will be fed via computer-readable data sheets to the Cornell University Laboratory of Ornithology at Ithaca, New York. Results will be combined and analyzed.

The Cornell-sponsored experiment seeks answers to a deceptively simple hypothesis: "Tanagers are more likely to breed successfully in large patches of forest than in small ones."

True or false? Involved in the study are the fates of many of North America's most beloved and admired songbirds, some 250 species of grassland- and woods-dwelling intercontinental travelers classified as neotropical migrants. Many species are believed to be rapidly declining in numbers, causing alarm among some of America's more distinguished bird experts.

For advanced bird-watchers and casual Nature lovers alike, the question is fairly posed: is a day coming when



our winged and feathered singers no longer will fill our fields and forests with sweet music and sharp calls?

It has long been taken for granted that on a single autumn night as many as 10 million warblers, vireos, tanagers, grosbeaks, flycatchers, and other wee flyers would launch southeastward from staging areas along Atlantic shores to wintering grounds thousands of miles away.

In some of their longest flights, migrants as tiny as warblers (fuel fat comprising half their body weight) remain aloft over water 80 hours at a stretch. At altitudes of one to four miles, the doughty flocks ride an advancing cold front from the north to the vicinity of

Bermuda, where westerling trade winds sweep them back to South America — 2,000 miles nonstop. Yet other bands of migrants embark on southward odysseys of more than 3,000 miles over woodlands, mountains, and oceans. They fling themselves across the Gulf of Mexico or wing across lands connecting the continents of North and South America. In the Western United States, migrants may flee the cold one day or week at a time, but they head ever southward, toward the warm.

However diverse their routes, the subtropicals tarry for the winter on Caribbean islands, within Central American jungles, along Mexican savannas, amid South American rain

forests. There knowledgeable citizens worry about onrushing destruction of habitat to accommodate human housing, frontier farms, and coastal development. But thus far, although perhaps in diminished numbers, every spring the mass migrations reverse. Magically, perfectly timed for the opening of buds and the hatching of insects, the states and provinces of North America welcome the colorful, melodious flocks for the annual rituals of reproduction.

That certain neotropical species have suffered population declines seems beyond doubt. Dr. John Terborgh, professor of biology at Duke University, wrote *Where Have All the Birds Gone?*, a book that compares his boyhood sightings of 150 kinds of migrants — whippoorwills, peewees, vireos, cuckoos, warblers, and tanagers — with conditions in his old Virginia neighborhood 40 years later. Plenty of forest remains today, if only in patches. Birds still abound. But they are mainly residents and limited-range migrants: robins, sparrows, catbirds, chickadees, woodpeckers, wrens, and titmice.

Terborgh's concern has been echoed by a host of colleagues. A line of logic has evolved, postulating that forest fragmentation (by roads, power-line clearing, commercial and residential accesses) has reduced the chances for subtropical migrants to reproduce. By instinct they seek breeding sites deep within large forests. When little is left but forest patches, neotropicals are vulnerable.

In time, science may craft a plan to ensure that future choruses of neotropical migrants will flourish in the forests and fields of North America. ■



BACK ROAD ADVENTURE

TEXT BY SAM NEGRI
PHOTOGRAPHS BY ROBERT G. MCDONALD

The Trip to Wild Cow Springs Just May Be the Most Civilized Backcountry Excursion You Can Hope to Take

Every desert community deserves an oasis. Fortunately many towns in Arizona have them. Tucson residents, for example, can escape hundred degree days by driving an hour to the cool pines on Mount Lemmon; Safford residents have Mount Graham; Globe-Miami residents have the Pinal and Sierra Ancha mountains; and people in the southeastern corner have the Chiricahuas. In all of these communities, you can drive from desert heat to the equivalent of a Canadian summer (minus the mosquitoes) in roughly an hour.

Of these various summer retreats, there's one that is simple to get to but virtually unknown outside of Mohave County. The county occupies roughly 8.5 million acres of high desert in northwestern Arizona, a terrain of sand-castle bluffs and dramatic mesas towering over the western borders of the Grand Canyon. Approximately 100,000 people live in Mohave County, most of them in Lake Havasu City, Bullhead City, and the county seat, Kingman.

Rising like a wall along the southeastern edge of Kingman

are the Hualapai Mountains, named for the Indians who once inhabited them. Hualapai, in the language of the natives, means "people of the tall pines," and the scenic drive from Kingman to a Bureau of Land Management campground called Wild Cow Springs, at the top of the Hualapai Mountains, will confirm the accuracy of the name.

The trip to Wild Cow is one of the most civilized backcountry excursions you can take in a state where mountain roads often are unpaved and dangerous. With the exception of a short bumpy stretch, this route into the Hualapais is a breeze. From Kingman, the entire one-way route to Wild Cow is 16 miles, and 12 of those miles are

paved. Furthermore, the paved road goes right through the heart of Mohave County's 2,262-acre Hualapai Mountain Park, where you can purchase a meal, rent a cabin or a room in a lodge, camp, picnic, and hike any one of a dozen trails. (See *Arizona Highways*, August '95.)

Begin this trip at the intersection of State Route 66 (Andy Devine Avenue) and Hualapai Mountain Road in Kingman. You can get to this point by leaving Interstate 40 at Exit 51 south and following Stockton Hill Road, which becomes Hualapai Mountain Road.

This road quickly climbs Sawmill Canyon to the park entrance. One minute you're in tumbleweed country at the edge of a new subdivision, and

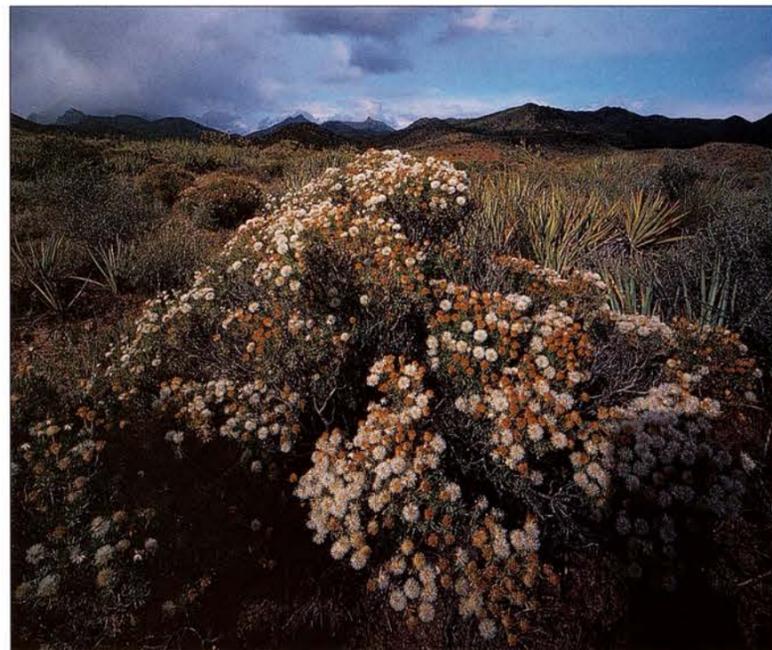
the next you're rolling through hills covered with piñon pines (once a major food source for the Hualapai Indians) and junipers. Within minutes the road passes from high desert to hills covered with ponderosa pines, spruce and aspens, and dramatic outcroppings of lichen-speckled granite. In less than an hour, the habitat of the Gila monster and desert tortoise gives way to a landscape thick with mountain lion, elk, deer, the tufted-eared Abert's squirrel, and the more elusive Hualapai vole, a mouselike creature threatened with extinction.

The road up the mountain begins at an altitude of about 3,300 feet and reaches 8,200 feet at Hualapai Mountain Park. Sawmill Canyon, which the road bisects, was named for a sawmill that operated near the mountaintop around the turn of the century. In addition to the sawmill, gold and silver mines pocked the Hualapais. In the 1870s, a horde of prospectors poured into the range from California and Nevada.

From the intersection of State 66 and Hualapai Mountain Road, it is 11 miles to the park headquarters, where you can get more information about the facilities and hiking trails in the area. Within the park, the county parks department maintains a bunkhouse which sleeps 10 and 15 cabins, four of which are rustic stone structures. If

you want to make a reservation (a good idea in summer and on weekends), call the parks department at (520) 757-0915.

Take a break at Hualapai Mountain Park, or end your



(ABOVE) Golden bush and yucca adorn the high desert outside of Kingman on the way to Wild Cow Springs. The Hualapai Mountains can be seen on the horizon. (OPPOSITE PAGE) Hualapai Mountain Road ascends Sawmill Canyon, heading toward an elevation of 8,200 feet at Hualapai Mountain Park.

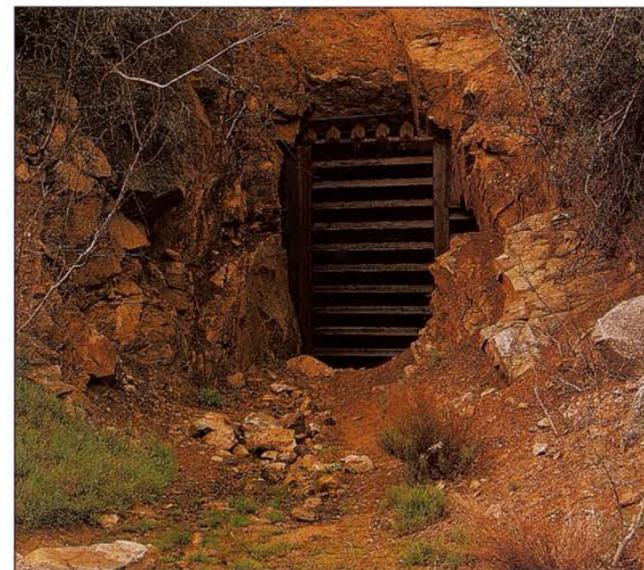




trip there if you don't want to drive the bumpy primitive dirt road that begins at the park and leads to Wild Cow Springs.

If you continue beyond the park, take the left fork after passing the ranger headquarters and drive through a picnic area. You will soon come to the intersection of Flag Mountain Road and Hualapai Mountain Road; take a right and continue through an area of private homes called Pine Lake. About .9 of a mile in, on the right where the pavement ends, you'll see the first sign pointing to Wild Cow Springs. The sign is exactly 12 miles from the beginning of the road at the bottom of the mountain, and it says you are four miles from Wild Cow. Turn right at the sign. The unpaved road gets rough enough to make a high-clearance vehicle necessary — but not a four-wheel-drive.

Approximately 1.7 miles from the sign, the road comes to another sign identifying the historic Flag Mine, one of the big producers in the area a hundred years ago. Iron bars now seal the tunnel, but in its day the Flag Mine was one of the



(OPPOSITE PAGE) Hualapai Peak, center, can be seen from a tumble of granite rocks in its foothills.
 (ABOVE) A massive iron door seals the entrance to the Flag Mine, once a major source of silver ore.
 (BELOW) Gambel oak and pine trees flank a footbridge at Wild Cow Campground after a light snow.

major sources of high-grade silver in Mohave County. Its ore was carried by mules from the mine to a point that was once called Devil's Dip, where it was loaded onto ore wagons and

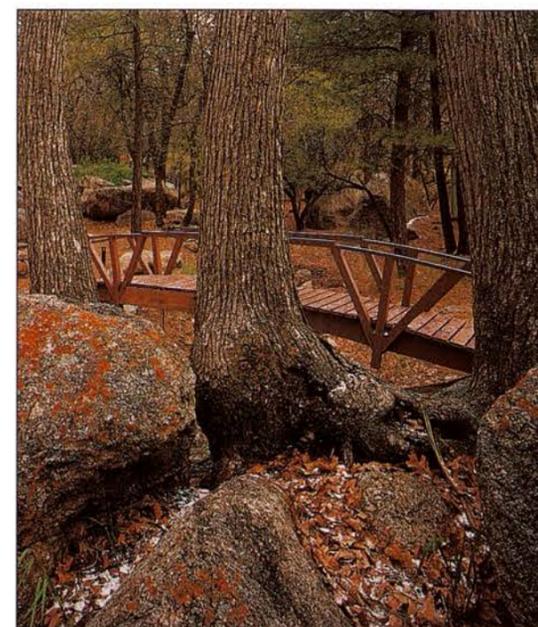
taken to Hardyville, a onetime port community on the Colorado River near the site of present-day Bullhead City. From Hardyville it was taken south by boat to Yuma, loaded onto

a windjammer, and shipped to a smelter in Wales.

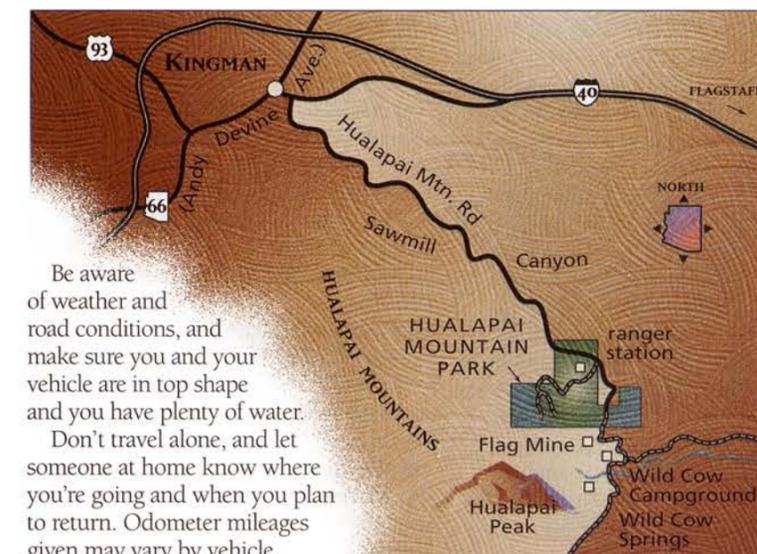
Eddie Covington, an engineer with the City of Kingman who has been in the area all his life, remarked, "You can imagine how long it took for these miners to get paid. But when they did get paid, it was a pile of money, and they'd go to San Francisco and blow it all."

When your odometer shows that you've gone 3.5 miles from the Flag Mine Road intersection, you will be at a junction and another sign. Bear left and it is .4 of a mile to Wild Cow. If you turn right, you'll end up in the small community of Yucca, 35 miles down the mountain. However, do not attempt the road to Yucca unless you have a four-wheel-drive vehicle and are familiar with off-road travel. This road is not as accommodating as the route you just traveled.

There are rest rooms, drinking water, and picnic tables at Wild Cow Campground. Most visitors to the area stop at Hualapai Mountain Park, so the campground is not heavily used, and often it's a good spot to find peace and quiet. And, that well-deserved oasis. ■



TIPS FOR TRAVELERS



Be aware of weather and road conditions, and make sure you and your vehicle are in top shape and you have plenty of water.

Don't travel alone, and let someone at home know where you're going and when you plan to return. Odometer mileages given may vary by vehicle.

KEVIN J. KIBSEY



MILEPOSTS

EDITED BY REBECCA MONG
ILLUSTRATIONS BY RUSS WALL

What'll You Have?

The sign out front says Truckers Welcome, but inside Cunningham's Ranch House Restaurant in Sonoita, you're just as likely to meet up with a cowboy in dusty jeans, a shirt buttoned to the neck, and boots with spurs that jangle as he bellies up to the bar — the salad bar, that is. The restaurant, owned and operated by Bob and Sarah Cunningham, offers a surprisingly varied menu and the kind of friendly service that makes small towns a balm for urbanitis. "It's home cooking — that's what I do," says chef Bob, who recommends the barbecued selections — if you can pass up the roast beef, chicken-fried steak, and stuffed bell peppers. The restaurant is at 3250 Highway 82. ♡



Arizona Highways Spring Sale

Scenic prints, T-shirts, books, back issues of the magazine, and Christmas cards are just a few of the items that will be sold at reduced prices — some at or below cost — at the Eighth Annual Arizona Highways Spring Sale. The big outdoor sale, which also will feature door prizes for lucky shoppers, will take place from 9 A.M. to 2 P.M., Saturday, March 23, at the magazine, 2039 W. Lewis Ave., Phoenix. For more information, telephone toll-free (800) 543-5432; in the Phoenix area, call 258-6641.



In the Pits? Take a Mine Tour

From the observation point above the huge Morenci Open Pit Mine, the 240-ton trucks and giant shovels hundreds of feet below look like toys. For a close-up look at what goes on in the copper mine, you can take a free van tour down into the pit, covering three-plus hours and 81 square miles, visiting the crushers, concentrators, and solvent extraction-electrowinning plants. About 9,000 people a year take the tours, which are guided by Phelps Dodge Corporation retirees. Times are weekdays, 8:30 A.M. and 1:15 P.M., departing from the Morenci Motel. Reservations are recommended. For information, call (520) 865-4521, ext. 435. ♡

All Aboard! a "RR" Hotel

Passengers on Grand Canyon Railway's trips from Williams to the South Rim of the state's most popular attraction can spend the night at the railroad's "new" (it opened last summer) Fray Marcos Hotel. The 89-room hotel is located in the historic Williams Depot complex just steps from where passengers board the railroad's restored 1923 Harriman coaches. A 19th-century bar highlights Spenser's, a restaurant off the lobby, which serves breakfast, lunch, and dinner daily. To inquire, call Grand Canyon Railway toll-free at (800) 843-8724. ♡

A Mission Renewed

We visited Mission San Xavier del Bac and were impressed with the dramatic results of the continuing project to spruce up the 212-year-old church's baroque interior. Thanks to the project — which involves only cleaning, not restoration — once faded colors are again the unbelievably vibrant blues, reds, greens, and yellows created by the padres and craftsmen who pushed Spain's empire in Mexico north into what is now Arizona.

Bernard Fontana, a retired University of Arizona anthropologist who has devoted 40 years to studying San Xavier (still an active parish of the Diocese of Tucson), says the cleaning is about two-thirds done and calls it "quite a transformation." From what we saw, the change already is nothing short of a miracle. To inquire about the mission, located just south of Tucson and visible from Interstate 19, call (520) 294-2624. ♡

Hotel Check-In Made Easier

In the amount of time it takes to "screw in a lightbulb or uncork a bottle of wine," guests can check into one of the more than 220 U.S. Hilton hotels and resorts, including eight in metropolitan Phoenix and Tucson, and be on their way to their rooms.

Guests with guaranteed reservations who are identified as members of the Hilton HHonors guest reward program are automatically registered using the "Zip-In Check-In" procedure. Upon a guest's arrival, a hotel rep verifies the name and credit card and hands over a waiting room-key packet. Hilton says this takes only 20

to 30 seconds, compared with the "standard" check-in time of more than three minutes. ♡

Understanding Tuzigoot

Information about Tuzigoot National Monument in German or French as well as in Braille or large-size print is available at the ruin's visitors center. Tuzigoot was built by the Sinagua between A.D. 1000 and 1450. Located 110 miles north of Phoenix between Clarkdale and Cottonwood, the monument is open daily, 8 A.M. to 7 P.M. in summer, closing at 5 P.M. in winter. Admission is \$2 for adults; free for youngsters under 17. Call (520) 634-5564. ♡



Gently Down the Stream

Drifting along a tranquil river, enjoying the sights and sounds of a lush riparian setting, doesn't have to mean a long trek into the outback. Less than two hours north of Phoenix, you can ply the Verde River in a canoe rented from the River Otter Canoe Company. The outfitters, located in Camp Verde, are open daily and offer two-person canoe rentals for \$30 a day. Guided trips are available for an extra fee along with shuttle service to and from the river. For more information, call (520) 567-4116. — Stuart Rosebrook

Tell-All Book Hits Stands

A new biography about one of Arizona's biggest celebrities was written by an insider, so

readers can expect to get the lowdown on a controversial artist whose career has been featured in both the prestigious *Smithsonian Magazine* and the cheeky *National Enquirer*, whose paintings sell for up to \$2,500, and who — it is revealed — snacks on monkey chow. At 8 feet five inches and weighing in at 8,500 pounds, Ruby, the Phoenix Zoo's artistic Asian elephant, is the subject of an official bio by zoo photographer Dick George.

According to George, *Ruby: The Painting Pachyderm of the Phoenix Zoo* goes behind the glitz with the facts about Ruby's arrival from Thailand in 1974, how she got started as an artist, why the zoo almost kept her talent under wraps, and how the portly painter bonded with a shy dyslexic animal keeper. The book costs \$14.95 and is available at the zoo's gift shop. Call (602) 273-1341. ♡

Ocotillo Extravaganza

If you find yourself traveling along State Route 83 between Patagonia and Vail, watch for a lush forest of ocotillos between Mileposts 48 and 58. State-wide, ocotillos produce their scarlet blooms between March and late May, but we saw spots of color here in mid-July. The multiarmed ocotillos are so hardy, they're sometimes planted as "living fences," and birds — especially hummingbirds — love their nectar. ♡



EVENTS

Lost Dutchman Days

March 1-3; Apache Junction

Missing gold, lost lives, and forgotten dreams are recalled at this annual salute to the fabled Lost Dutchman Mine. Activities will include a senior pro rodeo, parade, gold panning, a dance, carnival rides, arts and crafts, stage entertainment, and food booths. There'll be an admission charged for some events; all will be held outside at the new Apache Junction Event Center in the shadow of the Superstition Mountains. Information: (602) 982-3141.



Discover the Night

Friday/Saturday, March 1-30; Flagstaff

Show up at Lowell Observatory on these nights at 7 and 7:45 P.M., and chances are you'll meet up with the likes of Galileo and Copernicus and other lights of the world of astronomy. Armed with both information and humor, the costumed "presenters" will explain the objects you can see through the magnificent telescopes. Admission is \$2.50, adults; \$1, kids. Information: (520) 774-2096.

Indian Fair and Market

March 2-3; Phoenix

The prestigious Heard Museum hosts the 38th annual museum guild fair and market, featuring award-winning art,

Gallery of Fine Prints: Desert Flowers at Organ Pipe

Lush wildflowers carpeting Organ Pipe Cactus National Monument in southern Arizona provide the subject for the color print offered for sale this month by the *Arizona Highways* Gallery of Fine Prints.



Handcrafted color prints of Randy A. Prentice's photograph of the wildflowers that appear on the inside front cover are produced by EverColor Dye-Print's custom lab which uses the latest in digital technology.

To order the print, call toll-free nationwide at (800) 543-5432. In the Phoenix area, call (602) 258-1000.

The sizes and prices of the wildflower print are:

#A99OP16: Approximately 14" by 17" \$175

#A99OP26: Approximately 16" by 20" \$225

#A99OP36: Approximately 20" by 24" \$275

arts and crafts, live entertainment, a mini-trading post, and traditional Indian foods. Admission will be \$5, adults; \$3, children. Information: (602) 252-8840. ♡

admission charged. Information: (520) 723-5242.

Ben Johnson Rodeo

March 30-31; Scottsdale

Real-life cowboy movie actor Ben Johnson hosts his namesake Pro & Celebrity Ropin' for Kids rodeo at Rawhide. A world champion rodeo contender himself, Johnson will likely take a special interest in events like roping. There'll also be an autograph session; call to ask about the dinner, a dance, and admission prices. Information: (602) 396-3496. ♡



Civil War Reenactments

March 9-10; Picacho Peak

Professional reenactors from around the country will assemble at Picacho Peak State Park, about 40 miles north of Tucson, to bring to life Civil War battles fought in Arizona and New Mexico. Spectators can tour the "military camps," which will include demonstrations such as frontier laundering, candle-making, sewing, and cooking. Admission is \$3 per vehicle. Information: (520) 466-3183.

Pinal County Fair

March 27-31; Casa Grande

It's county fair time again in Casa Grande, and organizers promise five days filled with such down-home fun as livestock exhibits, a carnival, car races, arts and crafts, and live entertainment. There will be an

Information is subject to change; telephone to confirm before planning to attend events.

For a free Arizona travel kit and a calendar of events, telephone the Arizona Office of Tourism toll-free at (800) 842-8257.



HIKE OF THE MONTH

TEXT BY LAWRENCE W. CHEEK
PHOTOGRAPHS BY RANDY A. PRENTICE

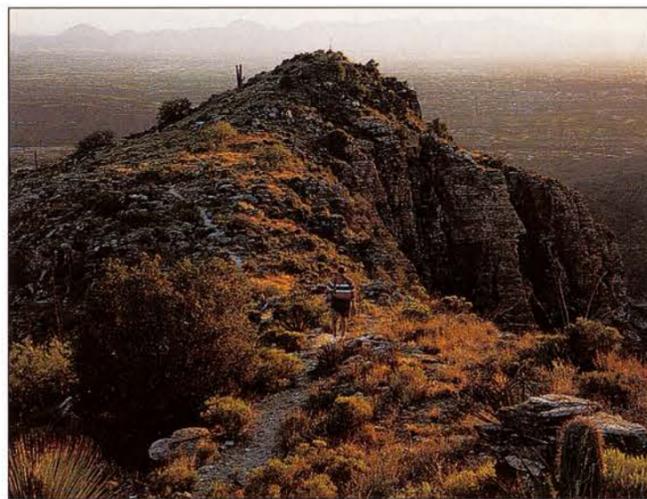
Blackett's Ridge Gets Top Marks for Humbling Hikers with Mind-boggling Scenery

I'm crawling on a windy spur of rock shaped like a lumpy anvil and not a lot larger. At my left elbow is a 1,500-foot plunge into Sabino Canyon. At my right elbow is a 1,500-foot plunge into Bear Canyon. Straight ahead is — well, another plunge, and I'm not going out to the prow of the anvil to report its precise character. According to the topo map, it is only 160 feet.

I have more than a touch of acrophobia, and the terminal aerie of this hike has triggered it. No, a phobia is an irrational fear, and there's nothing goofy about this high-elevation agitation. Even Betty Leavengood's definitive *Tucson Hiking Guide* is less than intrepid here. "Extreme caution must be exercised in this area," she wrote. "A misstep could be tragic."

This is Blakett's Ridge, and among the scores of spectacular hikes in the mountains around Tucson, it is tops at making the hiker feel both awed and humbled by the surrounding scenery. There's no cause to be scared except for the final 30 feet — but these last few steps lead to the overlook that makes it most worthwhile.

The trail climbs 1,500 feet from Tucson to the narrow saddle separating Sabino and Bear canyons in the Santa Catalina Mountains, traversing a desert forest of saguaro, ocotillo, and agave. It's a short hike, 3.1 miles one way, but the climb is relentless, and it mounts several



(ABOVE) Jay James of Tucson hikes on Blakett's Ridge above Tucson. The trail ascends through changing terrain and affords stunning views. (OPPOSITE PAGE) Sabino Creek and its bridge are barely visible, center foreground, from this vantage at the end of Blakett's Ridge Trail.

pseudo summits, each one raising false hopes.

Students of wildlife can observe hawks cruising at eye level, scanning the mountainside for breakfast. Students of urban sprawl can watch Tucson expanding literally by the

minute, as ant-size bulldozers make new subdivisions at the mountain's foot.

In winter Blakett's Ridge is sometimes shrouded in drooping clouds, and a hike into them is a foray into a wet, gray-white nebula where the desert plants

fade in and out like silent ghosts stranded in a bizarre alien world.

But the overlook from the lumpy anvil is the *raison d'être* of this trail. You stare across the gap of Sabino Canyon at the main body of the Santa Catalinas, eye to eye with the mountain, and you see its immensity and power in a new way. From here the mountain is not a geologic incident but a force of Nature. Not a stage set designed for a city but something that was here 15 million years before Tucson, and which will survive our ruins by millions more.

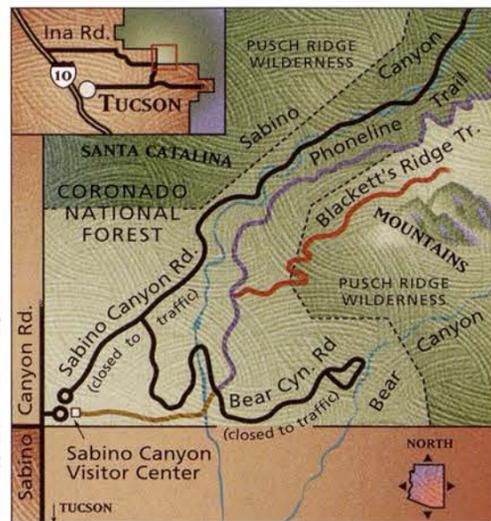
We've done some damage to this mountain: mined it, carved roads into it, extinguished the native grizzly on it. But from here I feel renewed confidence that it will abide; outlive our carelessness.

The converse, though, is another story. Which is why acrophobia is actually an advantage for an Arizona hiker. It enhances the drama of places like this and keeps one from pushing too far. The mountain, too, can be careless. ❏

WHEN YOU GO

Blakett's Ridge Trail in Sabino Canyon is marked and is easy to find. To reach Sabino Canyon, take Interstate 10 East to Tucson, go east at the exit for Ina Road, which becomes Sunrise Drive and dead-ends at Sabino Canyon Visitor Center. Park and walk the wide dirt trail to paved Bear Canyon Road. Immediately after crossing the creek, take the signed Phoneline Trail to the left. In .6 of a mile, Blakett's Ridge Trail will curve off to the right.

Check trail conditions by contacting the Coronado National Forest's Santa Catalina Ranger District, 5700 N. Sabino Canyon Road, Tucson, AZ 85715; (520) 749-8700. The hike is strenuous so take plenty of water and plan on spending at least half a day. Springtime is the best time for this hike since the wildflowers are usually spectacular along the trail. Beware of thunderstorms; the ridge is a magnet for lightning.



KEVIN J. KIBSEY

