

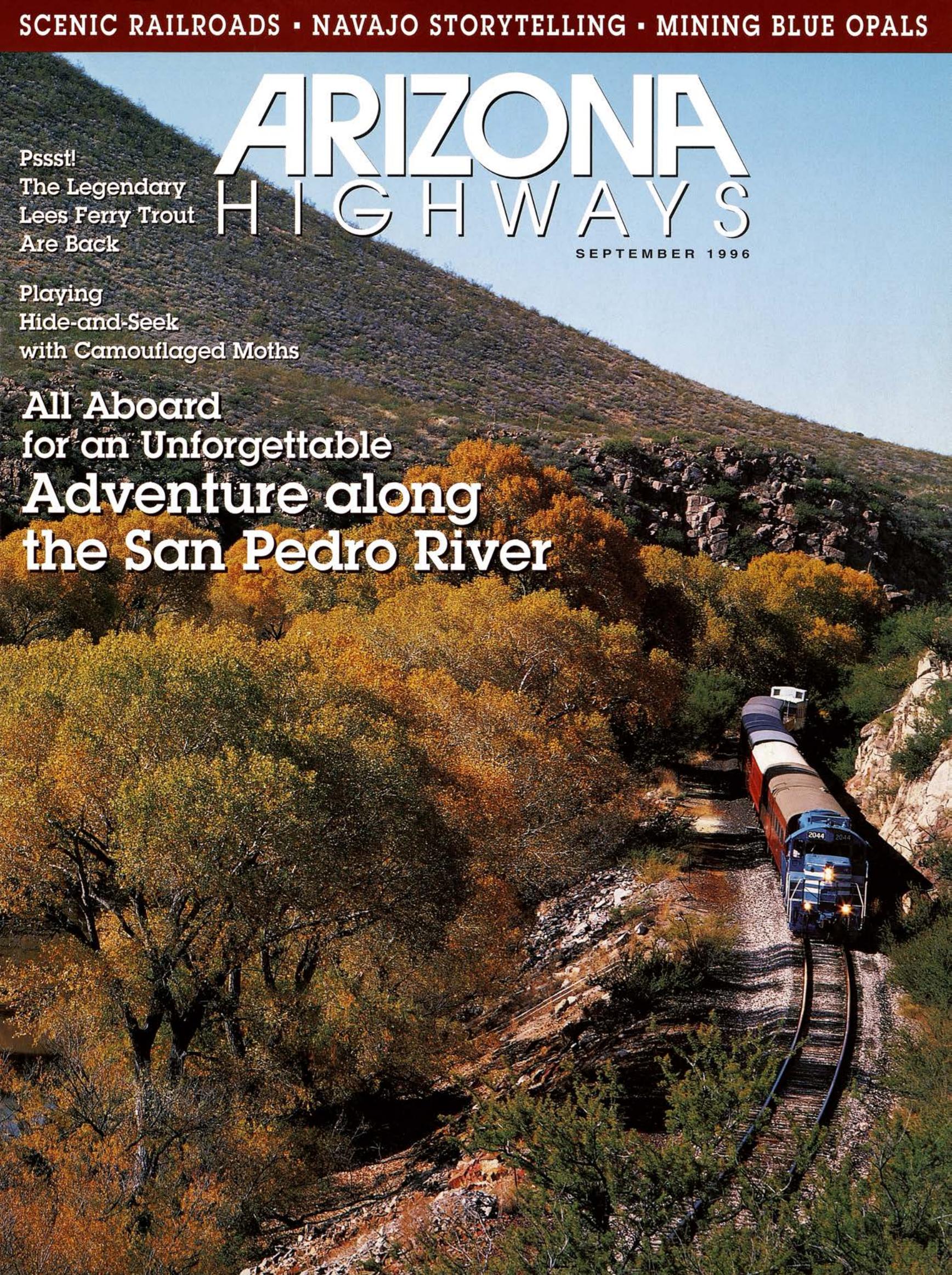
# ARIZONA HIGHWAYS

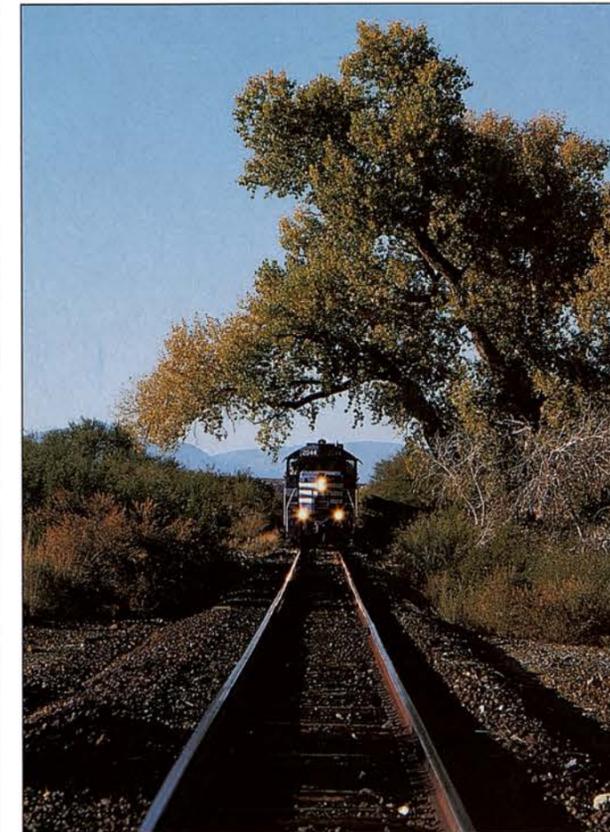
SEPTEMBER 1996

**Pssst!**  
The Legendary  
Lees Ferry Trout  
Are Back

Playing  
Hide-and-Seek  
with Camouflaged Moths

All Aboard  
for an Unforgettable  
Adventure along  
the San Pedro River





**COVER STORY** PAGE 38

**Tales of the Past Lure Rail Travelers**

John Rose is the engaging raconteur aboard the San Pedro and Southwestern Railroad, spell-binding passengers with legends of the Old Southwest and the characters who spawned them. Come take the scenic train ride through the country Tombstone and Wyatt Earp made famous.

(LEFT) *The camouflaged moth in this photograph illustrates why few of them are seen in the daytime, says our expert. See portfolio on page 22.*

MARTY CORDANO

(FRONT COVER) *Spectacular scenery and history highlight the train excursion from Benson to onetime wild and woolly Charleston. See story on page 38.*

ERROL ZIMMERMAN

(BACK COVER) *Cottonwood trees line the banks of the stream flowing through Canyon de Chelly, where a Jeep caravan explores geologic wonders and Indian ruins. See story on page 12.*

GEORGE H. H. HUEY

**INDIANS**

**Navajo Storytelling**

Invited to a Navajo family storytelling session, our author gathers tales from the Holy People, ancient stories of the natural world and man's place within it. **PAGE 32**



**TRAVEL**

**Jeep Touring in Canyon Country**

Dodging quicksand and fording floorboard-high streams fail to deter our backcountry travelers from exploring the rich and colorful past of canyons de Chelly and mysterious del Muerto in Navajo Country. **PAGE 12**

**PORTFOLIO**

**The Moth and the Flame**

Set a spell with our "moth person" in the Huachuca Mountains and catch the flame of one man's everlasting passion for moths. And find out why you don't see many moths in daytime. **PAGE 22**

**MINING**

**Arizona Gems Find Worldwide Markets**

What Cheri Saunders found was a pale blue vein that turned out to be harder and more delicately colored than any gemstone she'd seen. But what was it? **PAGE 10**

**HISTORY**

**Tales of Tombstone's Bird Cage Theatre**

"The theater became the Southwest's most famous vaudeville playhouse, and even today," says our author, "almost 120 years later, it is still being written about and visited by tourists, who can only try to imagine what went on there during its heyday." **PAGE 18**

**RECREATION**

**Lees Ferry, a Haven for Humongous Trout**

"There are trout in this river that can still make my knees quiver," says fishing guide Terry Gunn as he and our author fish the Colorado. **PAGE 4**

**HISTORY**

**The Turkey Legend of Henry C. Hooker**

Henry knew he had a money-making idea as soon as he thought of the turkeys. But no one had ever herded gobblers before. **PAGE 36**

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**POINTS OF INTEREST FEATURED IN THIS ISSUE**





# ALONG THE WAY

TEXT BY LARRY TRITTEN  
ILLUSTRATION BY ROB WIEDEMAN

## A Thick Slice of Prime Rib Excites Those Primal Urges

Let me make it clear at the outset that I am not the person who shot Bambi's mother. It may have been my dad or my brother, who between them probably killed about as many deer as there are commas in this piece. For some reason, even though I grew up in the wilds of north Idaho and my dad and brother were dedicated hunters, I never developed an interest in hunting. I tried, but it just wasn't in me.

It wasn't that I had some moralistic attitude about shooting animals for food, although I did enjoy the movie *Bambi* as a boy, and I remember crying when his mother was shot by a hunter. But understand, I grew up routinely seeing deer and bear hanging by their back legs in our garage, watching them being skinned, smelling the puddled blood, then eating them with my family.

When I left Idaho and came to live in San Francisco (which is, incidentally, named for Saint Francis, the patron saint of animals), it was inevitable that I encounter my share of the garden variety vegetarians who regard meat-eaters as wicked and/or misguided people. A while back, while on my way to a prime rib dinner as part of a celebrity function I was covering as a journalist, I discovered the following hors d'oeuvre for thought on a poster affixed to a telephone pole: MEAT IS MURDER. There also



was an ancillary sermon explaining why.

Vegetarians tend to be a pious bunch who don't emphasize a vegetable diet because they love vegetables but because they believe that killing animals is wrong. Personally I can respect the feeling that motivates that point of view while remaining an unrepentant carnivore.

Many things in life seem unfair when you put them on an idealistic graph. One of the facts of Nature is that there are two kinds of animals: those that eat grass and those that eat the ones that eat the grass. (Vegetarians should note that in a sense all flesh is grass.) If you happen to be one of the grass-eaters, it's a bad deal. It means that you've got to spend your whole life looking over your shoulder, like an accountant who made off with some Mafia money.

And you're never going to get much sleep or be able to sleep very deeply. The only animals that sleep soundly are the predators. The average antelope on the veldt will catch a minute or

two of sleep at a time, with luck, and some plains animals that are always being hunted actually sleep with their eyes open.

Cats, the most serious predators of all, have earned the right to sleep much of the time strictly because they have a biological heritage of not living in fear of being eaten like the animals they prey on. They're fortunate enough to be the eaters instead of the eatees. Cats need meat in order to live — they live by eating life. So if you're a vegetarian who moralizes about killing animals for food and you like cats, then you're hardly being logical about your ideals. I like cats and am not disturbed by the fact that they are in essence vampires incarnate.

As a boy I had a .22 rifle, but tin cans and bottles were my prey. I just couldn't get into going after animals, including the countless birds my dad and brother constantly stalked. But I did do some fishing, possibly because it didn't require as much dramatic commitment as hunting game, was a much

more leisurely activity, and usually yielded quicker results. I suspect that the kind of lake fishing I used to enjoy is to hunting game roughly what playing slot machines is to playing poker. Well I don't hunt, but I just can't imagine a buffet where salads are the sole bill of fare. If Noah really did get all of those animals to coexist on his ark like the amicable menagerie in Rousseau's painting *The Peaceable Kingdom*, I suspect it was just until they could resume their natural roles of predators and prey when they returned to the land.

And I'm bored by the argument that meat is murder, especially coming from those who have any leather in their wardrobe, on their books, and so on. As a mammal, I'm stuck with a racial heritage that includes hunting, herding, and farming. I'm not personally hooked on the challenge of the hunt (surely not as long as there are waiters), yet a good prime cut stirs something primal in my appetite. That's why when I go back to Idaho to visit, I look forward to eating some elk or bear meat if I can get it — exotic meat not available to most people.

I enjoy seeing animals anthropomorphized, too, as in *Bambi*. I'm a carnivore with a sense of humor. It's interesting to note that Disney's most successful film, *The Lion King*, gives equal time to predators, which have upstaged the deer at the box office.

As for Bambi, I'm more curious about why all of those parents named their daughters after a male deer than I am about who shot his mother. ❏

# LETTERS TO THE EDITOR



## ARIZONA HIGHWAYS

SEPTEMBER 1996 VOL. 72, NO. 9

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Toll-free nationwide number for customer inquiries and orders:  
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In the Phoenix area or outside the U.S., call (602) 258-1000  
Fax: (602) 254-4505

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<http://www.arizhwys.com>/  
Internet "Letters to the Editor":  
[editor@arizhwys.com](mailto:editor@arizhwys.com)

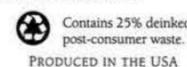
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Best Regional & State Magazine  
1995, 1993, 1992, 1991  
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Best Monthly Travel Magazine  
1995 Silver Award, 1994 Silver Award, 1993 Bronze Award,  
Society of American  
Travel Writers Foundation

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### Unhappy with Complaints

The April issue contained more than the usual amount of rancorous letters complaining about your magazine. There were comments from the centipede and javelina haters, horse lovers, and even the ecofascists.

What can I say. You can't please everybody.

My wife and I look forward to your magazine each month. As far as I can tell, you are apolitical. The photographs are beautiful. Tom Dollar may or may not be weird, but at least he is not trying to tell me where to drive my Jeep.

Folks who don't like centipedes should step on them. Don't like javelinas? Buy a hunting license.

Steve Ruff  
Vienna, VA

### Down on Cows

I am disappointed in recent articles about cow-related activities, such as cattle drives and rodeo schools.

In the history of the western United States nothing has been more detrimental to the land than cow grazing.

Furthermore, terrorizing animals by roping, throwing, jerking, and riding them is inhumane.

To glamorize these kinds of activities is to participate in them.

Tim Lengerich  
Sierra Vista

### Wide Open Spaces

I'm here to tell Charles Sellers of Knoxville, TN ("Letters," April, '96) that God gave us Arizona. Man gave us cities, and we are choking to death in them.

Until you have seen the dust roll across the desert, seen the colors change every hour, listened to the coyotes howl, chased a few mustangs, killed a

few jackrabbits, packed mules with grub to set camp in the high country for summer cattle grazing, shot the heads off a few rattlesnakes, swallowed a mouthful of gnats while doing it, cooked for a crew of real cowboys who helped settle this state, you have yet to understand what Arizona is all about.

Most folks are moving out of cities as fast as their money will take them.

Dorothy Gray  
Gold Beach, OR

### The Typo's in the Mail

As a magazine editor, I live in dread of typographical errors, which nearly always manifest themselves when the latest issue is already in the mail.

But I was delighted with one in Jim Boyer's entertaining article "Climbing I'toi's Sacred Mountain," April '96.

The author describes in skin-crawling detail his travails in climbing Baboquivari. One particularly apt phrase describes an ascent:

"We eeked our way up cracks, wiggled up a long chimney in the rock, and clambered onto a long horizontal shelf."

Kathryn Smiley  
Tucson

Kathryn describes herself as someone who eeks at the very thought of spending a night suspended on a cliff face. In that regard I guess all editors are alike.

### Travel Book

I've just returned from a vacation in Arizona and want to compliment you on your excellent book *Travel Arizona*. It is well-designed, clear, and easy to use. I traveled many of your recommended routes (1,500 miles total) and found your directions easy to follow and your descriptions of points of interest accurate.

Your book added quite a bit to making my trip an enjoyable one.

H. Clay Minor  
Norwalk, CT

### History Section

I subscribed to *Arizona Highways* because of the beautiful pictures of a beautiful country. I don't like the special history section (April '96) with the ugly drawings. If this continues, I will have to cancel my subscription.

William H. Avery  
Truckee, CA

*The April issue has added pages to accommodate the history section without sacrificing our normal run of stories and pictures. We intend to do that every April to build up to our 75th anniversary in April, 2000.*

### Second Time Around

Your publication has been a constant source of entertainment and pleasure for me since the mid-1940s. This past winter, I began to reread every issue.

Each one is beautiful, informative, and has the ability to lower my blood pressure several points.

May your magazine never reach its final issue.

James A. Jahnke  
Seattle, WA

### Happy Visitor

I began coming to Arizona as a result of your magazine, specifically the November '73 issue. I visited Kitt Peak then and have been returning ever since.

I enjoy your humor section. I also read the "Letters to the Editor" and find as much humor in them, especially the ones with complaints.

John G. Lawton  
Oklahoma City, OK

Icy Water, Dangerous Currents, and Giant Trout

# The River at Lees Ferry



**I** SEE THAT MY GUIDE, TERRY GUNN, IS WORRIED. We are in Glen Canyon, halfway between Lees Ferry and Lake Powell, motoring through the swift and dangerous currents of the Colorado River. "Anything wrong?" I ask as I poke around for my life jacket.

Terry's grim look suggests the greatest crisis since the Black Death. "We should have midges plastered all over our teeth by now," he tells me.

For most people, bug-free teeth would be something of a blessing, but not for Terry. We are out here, he reminds me, to catch some legendary Lees Ferry trout, fish that somehow — secretly it seemed — grew to monstrous proportions from 1963 to 1976, the period between the completion of Glen Canyon Dam and the moment of their discovery by fishermen. For a few years, rainbows in the 15- to 20-pound category were almost common here.

Then the biggest trout disappeared, their decline caused by too many anglers. New and stricter fishing regulations seemed to resolve the problem, but a series of water studies in 1990 accidentally wiped out the aquatic food supply, leaving the surviving trout with enormous heads attached to skinny bodies.

We are here today, however, because the big trout are fat again, and this time they are defended by regulations that both restrict kills and guarantee ample water flows.

But back to the midges. These tiny winged insects seem to stoke the appetites of big Lees Ferry trout like honey would for a bear. So no midges early in the morning could mean tough fishing the rest of the day.

Nevertheless, we decide to stop and test our luck a half mile from the 8 Mile Bar, a gravel deposit named for its distance from the launch site at Lees Ferry. While we stalk the 48° F river in insulated waders, Terry explains some of the special techniques I will need to catch Lees Ferry trout.

"This is big water," he tells me, "and the fish are scattered, so you have to spot them first and then make a fairly long cast. That's why people travel here from far away. Lees Ferry is one of the few places in the world where you can routinely sight cast to large rainbow trout."

The river's strong current initially defeats my casting technique. Terry, for his part, nearly goes hoarse from cries of, "Mend! Mend!" by which he means that, after each cast, I should pull gobs of extra line from my reel, shake it down the rod, and then throw it upstream as fast as I can. The reason for the mend is simple. Without it, the fly line will float ahead of the fly, tending to drag it downstream in a most unflylike manner. This alerts the trout to shut their mouths.



HOT GUSTS  
SWEEP MY FACE  
WHILE THE RIVER  
FROTHS LIKE  
ICED CHAMPAGNE  
AROUND  
MY KNEES.

TEXT BY  
**RICK HEFFERNON**  
PHOTOGRAPHS BY  
**RICHARD MAACK**

After some practice, I start to get the knack, but our fish tally remains solidly at zero. Terry grumbles the guide's lament: "Two days ago, we'd have landed a dozen trout already."

But two days ago was before the barometer started hopping like a frog on a pogo stick. First a freak snowstorm raced across northern Arizona, then a brisk cold front blew out the clouds. Now a sizzling clarity has descended on the canyon, making the landscape pop out in all three dimensions.

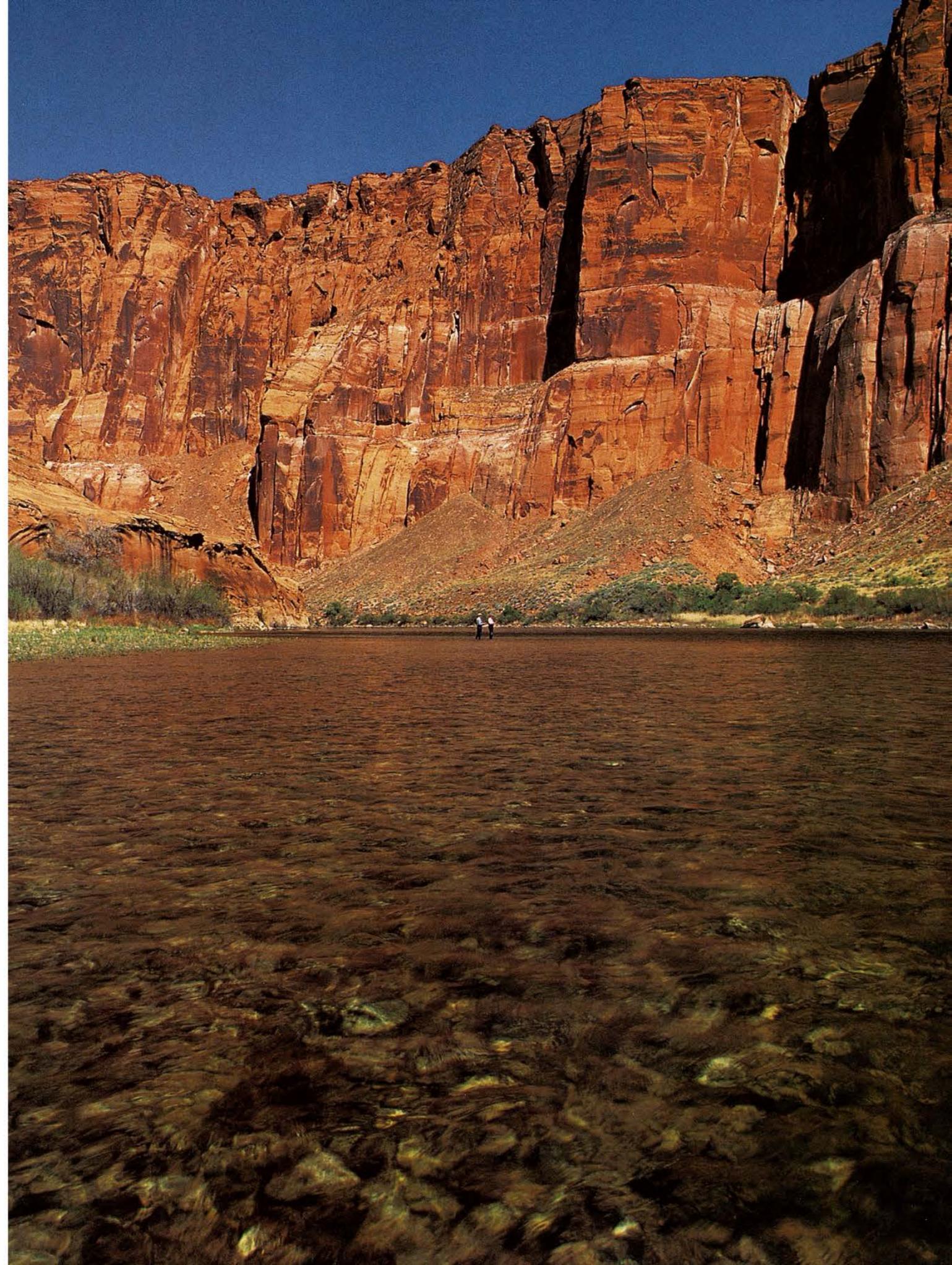
This stunning backdrop tests my concentration. Beside me, polished sandstone walls play host to flowering redbud trees. In back, a stupendous bighorn sheep stands etched into the cliff by ancient hands. And right in front of me, a swallow darts between my hands as I tie on a fly. How can I keep my eyes on the water? I feel the whole canyon reverberate in stark contrasts: impenetrable shadows and diamond-sharp reflections, frigid water and burning sand, immutable rock and fleeting pink blossoms. Even my body responds. Hot gusts sweep my face while the river froths like iced champagne around my knees.

In the midst of all this, a large shadow navigates through the bubbly past my legs. Trout. A brawny fellow. He fins over to join his colleagues who are lined up like trucks waiting to be loaded. Wondering if they might want to fill up on some imitation midges, I offer them a dry fly called an "Adams." But the trout ignore it completely, preferring to stare off at the scenery instead.

"Let's go," Terry orders. We clamber back aboard his 20-foot riverboat and drive farther north. At a spot called Russell's Place, we jump out onto another sunken gravel bar, and this time Terry rigs our leaders with "scuds": orange flies that imitate freshwater shrimp. Then we spread out, Terry taking the difficult hard-running currents at the head of the bar.

On his first cast, he strikes a trout. The fish jumps boldly and streaks for the middle of the river, but Terry quickly brings it around. Soon he is releasing a 17-inch rainbow brightly splashed with rouge-colored gill plates and crimson-blotched sides. "A spawning male," Terry tells me as he watches the fish swim off unharmed. "Isn't he beautiful?" I notice the grimness has gone.

(PRECEDING PANEL, PAGES 4 AND 5) Guide Terry Gunn casts for trout in the Colorado River at Lees Ferry. (ABOVE) Author Rick Heffernon wades in 48° F water, where the canyon walls come down to the river. (RIGHT) Gunn and Heffernon work upstream, fishing the crystal-clear waters below Glen Canyon Dam.



Terry quickly hooks another fish, and another, each one similar in size and color to the first. Then it is my turn. At the head of a sluggish eddy, I spot a four-pack of trout rocking like sunken boats against the bottom. I strip out 40 feet of my floating line and cast above them, letting the current carry my scud to the fish. When the fly has floated within a foot or so of the pack, a pan-size fellow swishes out of nowhere, snatches the scud, and cruises forward a yard or two. Instinctively I shoot my rod up in the air and haul back to set the hook, but the fish keeps going, taking fly, leader, and my rising hope along with him.

"What happened?" I ask Terry. "How did that little guy break my line?"

"That 'little guy' was two and one-half pounds," Terry says softly. "I think, maybe, you set the hook a bit hard."

I ponder this mistake and decide my problem is simply one of scale. Nowhere else would I confuse

T  
THERE ARE  
TROUT IN  
THIS RIVER  
THAT CAN STILL  
MAKE MY  
KNEES QUIVER.



(RIGHT) Heffernon frees a trout according to catch-and-release regulations at Lees Ferry.  
(BELOW) Gunn observes Heffernon's fly-casting technique and offers helpful tips.  
(OPPOSITE PAGE) Late light breaks through to illuminate the Vermilion Cliffs on a stormy evening.

a two-and-one-half-pound lunger with a pan-size trout. But I will discover I'm not the only one here troubled by a poor sense of scale.

We are working another gravel bar, where the algae-covered rocks roll like bowling balls underfoot. A nice trout rises to eat my scud, and I promptly set the hook, gently this time. To my surprise, the fish barely moves. Instantly Terry is at my side delivering a high-speed flurry of instructions: "Ready now. Loosen some line. He's gonna run, so be prepared. There! Give him line. Let him go. Good . . . now get ready. He's slowing . . . turn him around. Okay, strip in line . . . quick . . . haul it in faster. Now, rod tip over to the right. Lift his head up. Out of the water . . . lift. Do it!"

But I don't lift fast enough, and the trout swirls angrily, shaking from tip to tail before he plows off to the depths. I feed out line furiously in an attempt to keep up with him. Am I still attached? I think so. But then my line goes slack.

Terry pokes me. "Strip in line," he commands. "Hurry!" So I haul in armloads of line, letting it coil at my knees before it drifts downstream in the current. Finally I feel a tug — the fish — and then I feel his weight dragging against each yard of recovered line.

"Lift that rod," Terry urges next. "Be aggressive. Get his head up." I force the butt end of my nine-foot



fly rod toward the sky, and the tip doubles over on itself, tracing a delicate arc that culminates in a silver and red torpedo. Terry glides over to gently support the fish by its belly.

"Twenty-two inches long," he says. "Three pounds-plus. A beauty." He unhitches the barbless hook from the trout's lip, and we pose for pictures until our guest departs in a ripple of cool power. Afterward I ask Terry to explain a small red gash I noticed on the trout's back.

"Oh," he says, "that was probably where

a great blue heron poked him with his bill." "You're kidding," I say. "Why would it try such a thing? No heron could ever handle a three-pound fish."

Terry shrugs. "Who knows?" he says. "Heron's seem to have no sense of scale."

Ah, I nod. That's my problem here, too. Later, on the return ride, I question Terry about his own sense of scale. As a professional guide, he must catch and release big trout on a daily basis. Is there any thrill left for him at Lees Ferry?

"Rick," Terry says, "I have seen more

three-pound fish than you'd care to think about, but, believe me, there are trout in this river that can still make my knees quiver." He pauses while I visualize a trout the size of a Nautilus submarine with gills and a rainbow stripe down its side. Then Terry adds, "And there will be more when we learn to protect them." ❏

*Pine-based Rick Heffernon previously contributed an article about attending a fly-fishing school. He considers his Lees Ferry experience "the final exam."  
Phoenix-based Richard Maack says he used to fish for fish but now angles only for photographs.*

## WHEN YOU GO

**Best time to go:** Fishing in Glen Canyon is good in any season because the river temperature stays constant at about 48° F. The most pleasant air temperatures occur in spring and fall.

**Getting there:** Lees Ferry is located in Glen Canyon National Recreation Area, approximately 275 miles north of Phoenix. Take Interstate 17 north 146 miles to Flagstaff, then U.S. Route 89 north another 111 miles, then U.S. Route 89A for 14 miles to Marble Canyon where signs indicate the five-mile access road to Lees Ferry. A developed campground and boat launch area are available.

**Where to fish:** The best trout fishing is in the 15 miles of river between the boat launch site at Lees Ferry and Glen Canyon Dam. Some shore fishing is possible in the first mile and a half from Lees Ferry, otherwise power boats are necessary. Because of dangerous river currents, a guide is recommended.

**Guides:** Lees Ferry Anglers books fishing trips with Terry Gunn and several other guides. Rates average between \$200 and \$300 per day depending on the number in the party. Boat rentals

also are available. For more information, call toll-free (800) 962-9755. Names of other local guides may be obtained by calling businesses in the area, such as Marble Canyon Lodge at (520) 355-2225.

**Fishing tips:** A new state law directs that "fish shall be taken only by artificial lures and flies with barbless hooks" on that portion of the Colorado River from Glen Canyon Dam to Marble Canyon Bridge (Lees Ferry) in Coconino County. If you do not have barbless hooks, use pliers to close the barbs on your hooks. Bring the fish in as swiftly as possible. Keep the fish in the water and do not squeeze it. If you anticipate difficulty dislodging the hook, cut the leader. Allow a tired fish to completely recover before releasing by holding the tail with one hand and supporting the fish under the belly with the other hand. Point the head upstream and gently move the fish back and forth so the gills begin pumping oxygen. The fish will swim off when ready.





**A  
ROCKS  
TO  
Riches  
SAGA**

TEXT BY SAM NEGRI

PHOTOGRAPHS BY JEFFREY A. SCOVIL

**T**he truck lurched to a stop at the edge of a rocky creek bed in the Atascosa Mountains a few miles north of the Mexican border. Mike Anderson reached for the lever to his right.

"Time for four-wheel drive," he said, pulling the gearshift into low.

We inched our way up a nearly vertical hill, following a road that was well on its way toward returning to Nature. Occasionally rocks the size of footballs spun away from the rear wheels, tumbling into ravines and disappearing into thickets of gnarled oaks and juniper trees.

"Believe it or not, when I started prospecting this area this road was even worse," said Cheri Saunders as the tires hit a hole and jolted her into Mike's shoulder.

"A year or two ago, a TV reporter from Tucson wanted to come out here to do a story on our opal mine. We'd barely got started down these hills when she had to get out of the truck. She couldn't handle it. She thought we were going to turn over and roll down the side of a mountain. This is very rugged country around here. Most people don't realize how rough it is."

It took a full hour to cover the four miles between Ruby Road and the Jay-R Mine, where Saunders found the first of her rare blue opals and launched a rocks-to-riches saga some 27 years

ago. The find was the sort of thing that rock hounds and prospectors dream about: a pleasant day wandering in the Arizona outback that leads to a decent income and a satisfying vocation.

"I prospected all these hills looking for goodies," Saunders said, pointing to the rises that flank Ruby Road between Arivaca and Pena Blanca Lake about 60 miles south of Tucson.

"A prospector doesn't look for just one thing, you know. A prospector is an adventurer. I wanted to find a new pocket somewhere that nobody had ever found, and I did."

What Saunders discovered in that winter of 1969

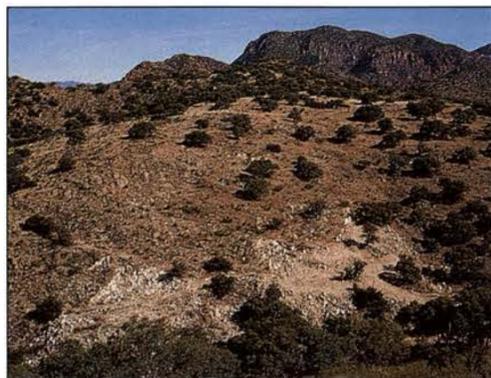
was a pale blue vein harder than turquoise or malachite and more delicately colored than any gemstones she had previously seen. But the truth is, at the time, Saunders didn't know what she had found.

Saunders interrupted her narrative on

(ABOVE) Cheri Saunders uses a pick to dig out some rock at her opal-rich Jay-R Mine.

(BELOW, LEFT) The mine sits in rough country in Santa Cruz County. Vehicular travel here is slow-going.

(BELOW, RIGHT) Gemstones found at Saunders' mine are natural blue opals.



the past as Anderson stopped in front of a wall of gray rock about seven feet high. She pointed to a vertical white stripe about as wide as a butter knife.

"When you see that, you're probably going to find opal," she said with authority. "This is mostly quartz and chalcedony here, but it's an indication that there may be opal underneath. There is a slight difference in the opal-bearing rock that we can detect. Well, maybe it's the other way around. We certainly know what rock not to find it in. There's a lot of that."

In 1969 neither Saunders nor her husband, James, realized they had stumbled upon a rare deposit of blue opals. Prospectors who originally came west in the 1950s to search for uranium, they had contemplated Arizona's geologic conundrums long enough to realize that what they had found in the Atascosas was very unusual, even if they didn't know precisely what it was.

Years later the Gem Trade Laboratory of the Gemological Institute of America analyzed samples from the Jay-R Mine and confirmed them to be natural opals, in this case blue ones.

Unfortunately James Saunders did not live long enough to realize the extent of the bonanza his wife had struck. The couple had staked six claims on the property, which is a part of the Coronado National Forest, in 1970, but James died of cancer in 1973. The Jay-R Mine became his memorial.

Before his death, James had taught his wife some basic mining skills. She knew a little about drills and jackhammers and how to set a dynamite charge. The couple also had bought a lapidary kit from Sears. For a while after James' death, Saunders worked the opal mine alone, bringing the

(ABOVE) These opals were cut and polished. The largest one, center, measures nine millimeters in width.

(BELOW, LEFT AND RIGHT) Saunders sells jewelry, created with opals from the Jay-R Mine, at her art gallery. The opal and gold brooch is 4.6 centimeters wide. An exquisite piece of opal was set in silver for a stunning pendant.



raw minerals back to her home and cutting and polishing the stones.

At the same time, she took courses in jewelry-making. Eventually she met Mike Anderson, an avid outdoorsman, and they became partners in quarrying the opals. For several years, they painstakingly extracted the opals using a primitive drill, dynamite, and then long crowbars to pry through the fractured rock in search of the best deposits. In the process, they moved tons of rock in small wheelbarrow loads.

Eventually Saunders and Anderson moved 15 miles north of Sierra Vista to Whetstone, where they had the convenience of a gallery and workshop. At the time, Saunders was making pendants and bracelets and earrings, using settings she had designed and opals she had mined, and selling them at craft fairs at Fort Huachuca. That's where representatives of the Tucson Gem and Mineral Show, one of the world's largest markets for gemstones, found her.

"These people looked at our opals and told us it was pretty nice stuff, and they suggested we write a letter to the board of the gem show and that maybe we'd eventually be accepted as participants," Saunders recalled.

A few years later, she and Anderson were accepted as exhibitors at the show, and their blue opals began to attract the attention of geologists and museum curators from around the world. Specimens from the Jay-R Mine are now displayed in natural history museums in Vienna, Austria, and Ottawa, Canada, among other places.

Saunders and Anderson spend a month a year working from a makeshift camp on



their one remaining mining claim. The rest of the year they cut and polish stones and make silver and gold settings for them. They sold or swapped the rest of their claims. In one case, they sold a half interest in a claim to a man who agreed to grade a passable road to their worksite.

Once they reach this remote spot, the backbreaking work may be very profitable, or it may be simply backbreaking.

"Our experience has been that we move tons and tons of rock for a little bit of opals," said Saunders "When we hit the high grade, it's wonderful because we've got good quality precious material that sells for as much as \$200 a karat. But if we don't hit high grade, we've got a lot of lower-grade material that sells for between \$4 and \$12 a karat.

"The difference between high grade and low grade is determined by the play of color in the opal," Saunders noted. "It's the sparkle within the actual opal. The background color is blue, but in the high grade, you'll see flashes of color; it's like a star sapphire. You'll see this star playing across the top of the stone. It's like a rainbow."

All of the labor has evidently paid off. Saunders now sells blue opal jewelry all over the world.

"I guess we're doing okay now," she said. "At least I was finally able to retire our old yellow wheelbarrow and buy that small dozer. That's something!"

**Author's Note:** Opals from Cheri Saunders' mine are available at the Jay-R Mine Opal Art Gallery, P.O. Box 4951, Huachuca City, AZ 85616. Call for directions, (520) 456-9202.

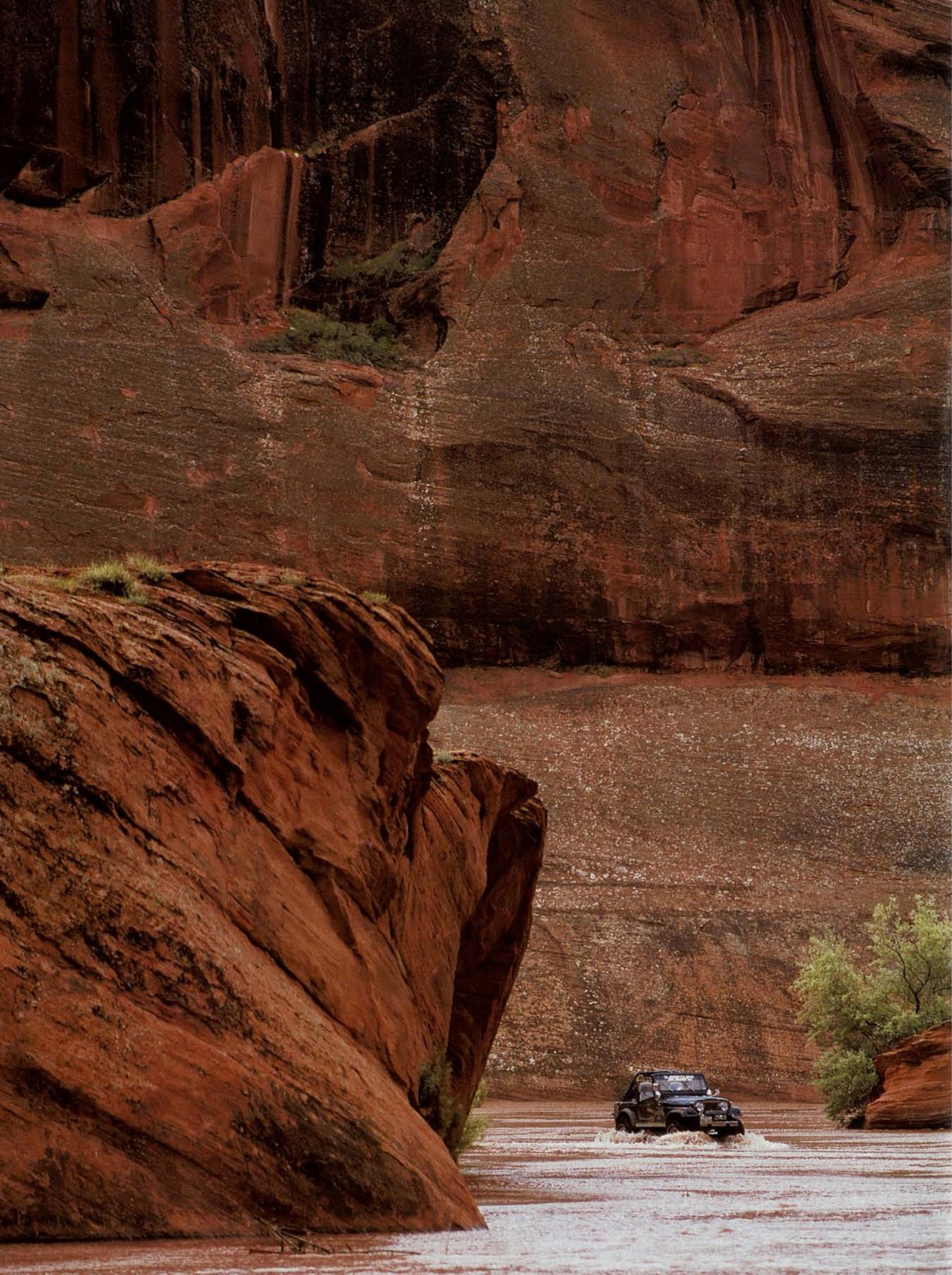
Tucson-based Sam Negri has found plenty of adventure in southern Arizona but no gemstones. He also wrote about the San Pedro and Southwestern Railroad excursion in this issue.

Phoenix-based Jeffrey A. Scovil is a longtime mineral collector. He says the beautiful scenery helped him forget the bumpy road leading to the Jay-R Mine.



FOUR-  
WHEELING  
HISTORIC  
CANYON  
DE CHELLY

TEXT BY ANN L. PATTERSON  
PHOTOGRAPHS BY MONTY ROESSEL



The speedometer needle pointed to eight miles per hour, sometimes dipping to five. It was Saturday, and we were four-wheeling the watery arroyos and rutted roadways of the beautiful and wild terrain near Chinle on the Navajo Indian Reservation in the far northeastern part of the state.

But at a crawl.

Our caravan consisted of 55 Jeeps from nine states divided into groups of five, each one with a guide. Destination: Canyon de Chelly (pronounced “shay”).

The organizer of our weekend adventure, Georgetown, California-based Jeep Jamboree USA, ranks its Canyon de Chelly trip a two to four in difficulty; one meaning highway-smooth and 10 so rugged the terrain is virtually impassable, even for a Jeep. We were warned, however, that the rating could jump to eight if it rained hard, causing the stream running through the canyon to flow dangerously high and fast.

It stormed the Thursday before we arrived. A deluge came down again Friday, and it was still drizzling that evening when we checked into our motel in Chinle. Saturday dawned clear and sunny, but because of the heavy rainfall, we found ourselves fording streams with water up to the floorboards.

Oh, and did I mention quicksand?

Quicksand lurks in the canyon streambeds, and nobody seemed to know exactly where. Scary.

(PRECEDING PANEL, PAGES 12 AND 13)

*Our author joins a Jeep caravan and Navajo guides to explore the beauty, mystery, and perils of Canyon de Chelly.*

(LEFT) *One of the Jeeps fords a watery arroyo, taking care to avoid the quicksand.*

(ABOVE) *The caravan heads into the mouth of the canyon.*

(RIGHT) *John and Krista Edwards lurch out of the streambed near White House Ruin.*

Leon Skyhorse Thomas, our half-Navajo and half-Sioux guide, told of cars disappearing into the quagmire without warning. He said a friend, honored as Guide of the Year in an elaborate ceremony, watched the very next day as a car under his guidance sank beneath the sand. “It’s safe to say there are 15 vehicles that have gone down in these canyons,” Thomas said.

As if on cue, a Jeep up ahead stalled and started to settle. Alert drivers nearby stopped, tossed over snatch straps, and managed to pull the trapped car free. Our guide was unimpressed: “Don’t ever stop your vehicle in the water,” he scolded.

Drivers joining a Jeep Jamboree usually arrive prepared for trouble. They equip their four-wheel-drive vehicles with tow hooks, tow straps, extra gas tanks, and winches. Ready, they hope, to handle anything and get on with having a good time.

On our trip into Canyon de Chelly, Thomas rode ahead in a vintage World War II “flat fender.” Using a walkie-talkie, he explained to us about the cliff dwellings and the cliff writings high above us.

“The Anasazi built their homes on the north side of the wall — up high — but they planted down below,” he said. “That

way they were away from the flash floods, and they were safe from any enemies.” The Anasazi, who occupied these canyons from about A.D. 348 to 1300, grew corn, beans, squash, and cotton, while bartering with other tribes for feathers, shells, and turquoise. Archaeologists believe the Anasazi were the ancestors of today’s Zuni, Hopi, and Acoma Indians, he added.

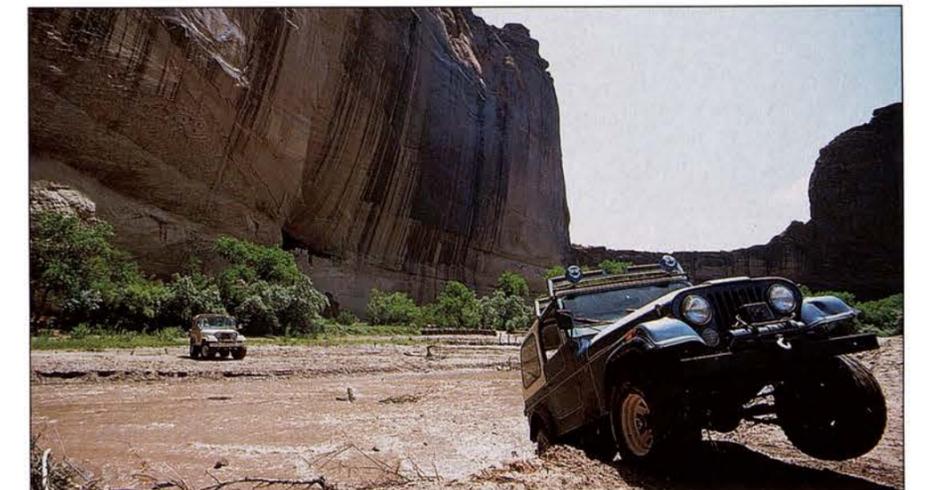
Thomas belongs to the Tsegi Guide Association, which means he knows the rocks, ruins, and relics of Canyon de Chelly intimately. “I grew up playing in these ruins. Of course that was before I knew any better,” he said, acknowledging that over the years he had learned to appreciate the need to protect the ruins.

Canyon de Chelly National Monument is shaped roughly like the letter V, with Canyon del Muerto (Canyon of the Dead) on the north and Canyon de Chelly on the south. Cliffs towering as high as a thousand feet border the two canyons, about 18 and 27 miles long, respectively.

Thomas observed that the Anasazi villages could be reached only by lashed-together ladders and torturous climbing using footholds. This fact seemed to amuse him. “Can you imagine the wife telling the husband, ‘Go down and get me a cup of water?’” he inquired.

Thomas helped us understand what the rock writers wrote. Under his tutelage we saw deer, snakes, lizards, birds, turkeys, star clusters, and handprints, as well as shapes like a reverse swastika, circles, zigzags, and what are best described as squiggles. Thomas admitted, though, “A lot of these petroglyphs I don’t even try to interpret.”

At one ruin, while watching red-tailed hawks soar beneath the azure skies, we asked Thomas about the people who live in the canyons today. He said some 50 Navajo





## CANYON DE CHELLE

families reside there in hogans, half hidden by stately willow and cottonwood trees, cultivating corn and beans, harvesting peaches, and herding sheep. Most stay in the canyons only during summer and leave as winter approaches. A Navajo woman selling jewelry at the base of Antelope House in Canyon del Muerto, where we lunched, later told me, "Oh, I couldn't live down here all the time: no TV, no electricity."

The Navajos value their privacy and do

(LEFT) Navajos living in the canyon herd sheep and cultivate vegetables and fruit.

(BELOW) David Bailey, one of the caravan's Navajo guides, talks about some of the many petroglyphs found in the canyon.

(BOTTOM) Katie Melloy came with her parents from Farmington, New Mexico, to explore Canyon de Chelly.

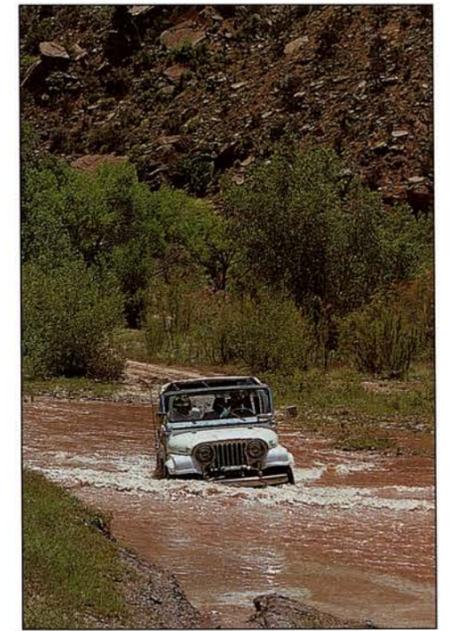
(RIGHT) The Walden family, also from Farmington, fords some deep water.

not like being photographed without their permission. "Some of these people are bitter that strangers come into their homes all the time," Thomas said.

Each year some 760,000-plus people visit Canyon de Chelly National Monument. Many of them explore the canyons hiking the trails on foot; others buy tickets to tour in what the locals call "shake and bake" trucks, so named because the huge panel-side vehicles give passengers a good jostling on the rough roads and do not provide shade from the hot summer sun.

Individuals are not permitted to drive through the canyons on their own. So taking our four-wheel-drive vehicles on a guided tour was a real treat. We were able to penetrate both canyons and with the help of our knowledgeable guides to interact with people who share our reverence for Nature, history, and the Navajo way of life.

Unfortunately the time allotted for exploring the canyons ran out all too soon. As



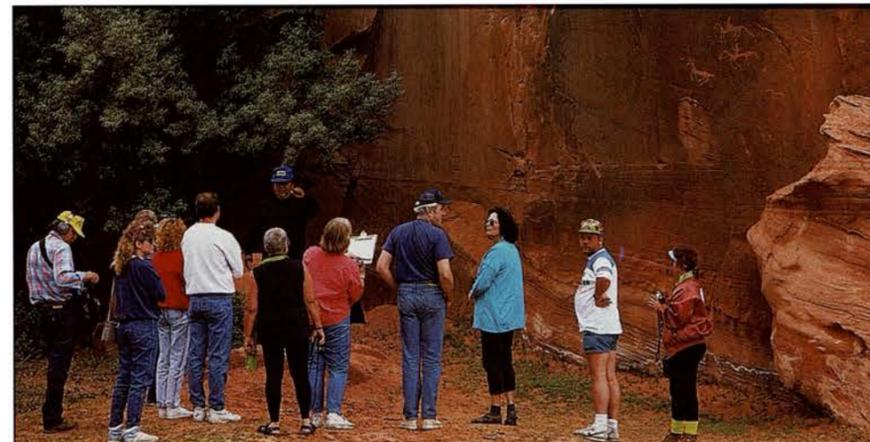
**Author's Note:** Jeep Jamboree USA operates 20 trips annually to various locations, with the organizers stressing safety and respect for the environment. Arizona's only Jeep Jamboree is held in June. For information, call toll-free (800) 925-JEEP.

For more information on Canyon de Chelly National Monument, write or call P.O. Box 588, Chinle, AZ 86503; (520) 674-5500. The park is open every day of the year, except Christmas, May to September, 8 A.M. to 6 P.M., and October to April, 8 A.M. to 5 P.M. The Navajo Indian Reservation observes daylight-saving time from April to October, so it is an hour later there. Admission is free, but tours of the canyons must be arranged and accompanied by park rangers (advance reservations are recommended) or private, licensed guides.

**Photo Workshop:** Join photographer Jerry Sieve and the Friends of Arizona Highways, the magazine's support auxiliary, on a Photo Workshop trek into Canyon de Chelly, October 2 to 5. The trip, led by a Navajo guide, offers the opportunity to explore the magnificent canyon in a way that few experience it. Added to that is the chance to pick up photography tips from an expert. Jerry Sieve's images appear regularly in the magazine. For more information, call the Friends' Travel Office, (602) 271-5904.

*Tempe-based Ann L. Patterson, a veteran of Jeep Jamboree trips in Colorado and New Mexico, was thrilled to go on one of the outings in her own state.*

*Monty Roessel lives in Kayenta on the Navajo Indian Reservation. As a youngster, he would ditch school and float on an inner tube through the Canyon de Chelly spring run-off. He also contributed the photos for the article in this issue about Navajo storytelling.*



the afternoon shadows lengthened, we retraced the bumpy, winding roads back toward the entrance.

That's when we ran into a surprise.

Following the stream as it twisted and turned between the narrow canyon walls, we suddenly saw our view open up ahead. We came upon a group of children frolicking in the stream, young Navajo mothers wading the shallow waters, and teenage boys galloping bareback across an exposed spit, their ponies splashing all who ventured close.

At the sight, the caravan slowed. Our drivers worried they were intruding upon a private festivity and felt unsure how to proceed.

Then the young people smiled. Waved. Soon we, too, were waving and laughing and joining in the fun. What a joyous conclusion to our first Jeep Jamboree in Canyon de Chelly National Monument. ❧



B I L L Y H U T C H I N S O N ' S R I B A L D



## B I R D C A G E T H E A T R E

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I L L U S T R A T I O N S B Y

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IT STARTED IN JULY, 1880, WHEN AN OPERA HOUSE  
MANAGER PAID \$600 FOR A PLOT OF LAND AT THE  
SOUTHEAST END OF TOMBSTONE'S ALLEN STREET. BILLY  
HUTCHINSON'S DREAM WAS TO BUILD A THEATER IN  
WHICH RESPECTABLE CITIZENS MIGHT FEEL AT HOME.

What he got was a cramped boxlike adobe structure, which, from its December 23, 1881, opening, and continuing nightly for the next two years, was packed to the doors with dusty cowboys, day-wage miners, and assorted drifters, droolers, and reprobates, each perfectly willing to collapse into a guzzle-and-holler frenzy at the sight of the winking chorus girls parading before them.

The Bird Cage Theatre went on to become the Southwest's most famous vaudeville playhouse, and even today, more than a century later, it is still being written about, portrayed on film, and visited by tourists, who can only imagine what went on there in the roaring days.

The truth of the place is often hidden behind its legend, and over time the two have become interwoven. But it's unlikely Hutchinson could've imagined tales as colorful as those told about the Bird Cage.

Several were compiled by author Pat Ryan for the publication of the Tucson Corral of the Westerners in 1966. There's the one about Methodist preacher J.E. McCann,

SPECTATORS  
COULDN'T  
BELIEVE  
THEIR EYES  
WHEN THE  
HECKLER'S  
BODY CAME  
SAILING OUT  
OF THE BOX  
AND ONTO  
THE STAGE.

who insisted on climbing onto the theater stage one fine Sunday morning to bellow his sermon. He found his audience attentive to the point when the men assembled before him suggested the reverend perform a little dance. He refused.

After a second request produced the same response, a cowboy drew his pistol and shot off McCann's boot heel. At that he danced like a black-coated fool, and shortly thereafter caught the first buggy headed east.

Another story comes from old-time magician Charley Andress, who recounted a performance of *Uncle Tom's Cabin* that he witnessed.

"Just as Eliza was crossing the icy river in that play," reported *The Arizona Daily Star* in May of 1930, "a drunken cowboy in the audience became excited and shot the bloodhound that was pursuing her.

"After something of a fight the cowboy was lodged in jail and the show continued minus one good hound . . . The cowboy was somewhat the worse for his beating when he sobered up, but was penitent and shed tears over the dead dog, offering money and his pony in recompense."

From its first days, the Bird Cage was a sensation. The January 4, 1882, *Tombstone Epitaph* commented that it was "fast becoming one of the most popular resorts of the city," thanks to its modern conveniences, such as the gas-fired jets that bathed the stage in light.

Hutchinson's only misstep was "ladies night." It lasted one evening because not a single female showed up. That failure reinforced the notion that respectability meant bankruptcy, so Billy kept on giving his audiences what they wanted.

And as an old handbill from the 1880s makes clear, it wasn't Shakespeare: "Grotesque Dancing, Leg Mania and Contortion Feats in which they [the Healey Brothers] stand positively alone."

Then there was Mrs. De Granville, "the woman with the iron jaw." Her gift was picking up heavy objects in her teeth. And jig dancer Pearl Ardine, who could "pick up money thrown her and place the same in her stocking without losing a step."

But the most popular by far were the variety acts and rowdy leg shows that kept the crowd stomping, spitting, and spending. In his book *Tombstone: An Iliad of the Southwest*, Walter Noble Burns captured the scene in this passage:

"Seated on wooden benches, the audience guzzled whiskey and beer and peered through a fog of tobacco smoke at vaudeville performers cutting their capers

in the glare of kerosene-lamp footlights. Beautiful painted ladies in scanty costumes sang touching ballads of home and mother on the stage and then hurried to the boxes where, by their voluptuous charms and soft graces, they swelled the receipts of the downstairs bar and received a rake-off on every bottle of beer they induced their admirers to buy.

"When the performance ended, the benches were moved against the walls to clear the floor, and the crowd reeled in the drunken dances until the sun peeped over the Dragoons."

The gullibles lined up early to have their pockets turned inside out. Admission was 50 cents. Day-wagers from the Lucky Cuss and other mines took seats on the benches, while the bosses and their big hats repaired to the balcony boxes.

The shows got under way about 9 P.M. William Hattich, former editor of *The Tombstone Prospector*, said patrons often showered the stage with coins when "a vivacious actress scored a popular wave of approval."

In correspondence with author Pat Ryan some 80 years after the theater's heyday, Hattich also said that shootings and mayhem presented only occasional problems for management. A far bigger headache was replacing the show girls who quit to marry lonesome pioneers.

But it was "honeymooning" not marriage that was on the minds of those cavorting in the curtain-shrouded cribs. Each box sat six men, and some suggested the cramping resembled that of a bird cage, hence the name.

Another version, published in *The Arizona Star* on August 18, 1882, has it that the name came about because the boxes had so many "doves" in them.

Those doves — soiled though they might have been — were one way Hutchinson kept his customers interested. He also wasn't above pulling a few stunts.

One night, in response to a drunk who was heckling the performers from his box, Hutchinson marched onto the stage and pleaded for quiet. But that threw the heckler into an even louder fury.

With reluctance, Hutchinson made a show of ordering his bouncers to eject the man. The audience stared saucer-eyed as bouncers surrounded his box. Then came shouting, the sound of a tremendous fight, and finally the crack of a pistol.

Spectators couldn't believe their eyes when the heckler's body came sailing out of the box and onto the stage. But the body

landed softly — it was a dummy stuffed with straw.

The Bird Cage's wild reputation probably helped with its bookings. Whenever the stage rolled into town carrying new performers, Tombstone gathered to inspect the talent.

Famed comedian Eddie Foy played a two-week hitch there in 1882. He later described the theater as a coffin, because of its shape, but he paid the place a compliment by saying he wasn't shot at or hit with cabbage there.

Pat Ryan wrote that comedienne Nola Forrest graced the place in 1883, but it was her off-stage act that keeps her in memory. It seems that the beautiful — but married — Nola took up with a bookkeeper named J.P. Wells and so turned his head that he began embezzling cash from his employer to keep his love in jewels. Alas, this did not keep her at his side, and Wells did not profit from the lesson.

After Nola reconciled with her husband, Wells took up with "another well-known woman of this burg, who completed the financial wreck begun by Nola." Ryan wrote that Wells eventually left town a broken man, and in June of 1886 was reported drowned in the Gila River.

Performer Lizzie Mitchell is remembered because of her unfortunate decision, while suffering from what *The Prospector* called violent pains, to swallow a dose of morphine.

"Not being an expert in pharmacy," the paper reported, "Lizzie got an overdose, and but for friends who compelled her to walk until five o'clock this morning, she would now be an angel."

Professor Ricardo, known as a wonder of wonders in feats of legerdemain, "Hindoo" juggling, light and heavy balancing, and sword swallowing, met a bad fate, too.

Two weeks after doing his act, it was discovered that the good professor was actually Edmund Don Lober, a deserter from Troop D, 4th Cavalry, at Fort Huachuca. He was given a bed at the town jail.

But even poor Edmund was better off than the girl standing on the Bird Cage stage waiting for a sharpshooter to blast an apple off her dome. In the wings stood Pat Holland, Tombstone's newly elected coroner, who thought the shooter was taking far too much time squinting down the

barrel, so he grabbed the weapon and blazed away.

Holland assumed the weapon was loaded only with wadded-up paper, according to a report in *The Territorial Enterprise* of Virginia City, Nevada. But he soon learned that someone had charged the gun with buckshot.

"Pat not only knocked the apple all to pieces," said *The Enterprise*, "but a bunch of hair, half as big as a man's fist, was carried across the stage and struck the opposite wall."

Hutchinson's ownership of the Bird Cage ended in 1883. The theater languished for three years until Joe Bignon, known as "the irrepressible showman," took over and used his considerable skills to resurrect it.



"It was a poor day if we didn't take in more than \$2,500," boasted Bignon, who had been a circus and minstrel performer and was best known for a dance he did while wearing a monkey outfit.

In the finale, he hooked his monkey tail over a wire and swung above his audience. One time his tail broke, depositing him on the lap of a spectator. Refusing to let the incident force him out of character, he jumped up and scratched his head like a monkey and bounded up behind the curtain out of sight.

After buying the Bird Cage in January, 1886, Bignon renamed it the Elite and went to work doing whatever it took to keep the acts coming and the customers paying.

He even hired two men to conduct a

six-hour walking match on a specially constructed track. It was a big deal, and bets were taken. "The money is up, in the hands of one of our responsible citizens," one paper reported, "and the parties mean business."

So did Joe Bignon's beloved wife, Minnie Branscombe, a pianist, singer, ballet dancer, and sometime hooker. When Minnie and Joe performed together, he billed her as "Big Minnie, six-feet-tall and 230 pounds of loveliness in pink tights."

But drunks who caused a row in her husband's business quickly learned that Minnie was no mere dainty. She would wrap her arm around a troublemaker's neck and toss him into the street.

The decline of the mines meant the same for the theater. Even Bignon's torchlight publicity parades down Allen Street couldn't arouse enough interest to keep the show going. About 1892 he sold the building and left Tombstone for the nearby gold town of Pearce, where he died in 1925.

Other owners made revival efforts, but they failed as well, and the great theater stayed silent for almost 30 years. Its doors opened again for the first Hell-dorado celebration in 1929. Five years later, it reopened as the Bird Cage Coffee Shoppe, then it became a souvenir stand. Today it's a popular tourist attraction.

But none of its reincarnations could erase what the old stage had been, or silence the "birds in gilded cages" who sang there over so many nights, and still do, if only in legend. ■

**Additional Reading:** To find out more about Tombstone and the surrounding area, we recommend *Tucson to Tombstone*, a guidebook by Tom Dollar. The full-color 96-page softcover book is jam-packed with stories and legends of the region and takes you over its trails from the desert floor to riparian canyons and alpine forests atop majestic mountains. Also included are maps and travel tips. The book 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.

*Leo W. Banks always visits the Bird Cage Theatre when he is in Tombstone. He lives in Tucson.*

*As a youngster, Jacksonville Beach, Florida-based Russ Wilson traveled to the West Coast in summer via Tombstone in a '69 Pontiac with no refrigeration. Still, he says, Tombstone was "really cool."*



IN HIS YOUTH, MOTH FANCIER NOEL MCFARLAND OFTEN PROWLED AFTER DARK OUTSIDE SALOONS IN SANTA MONICA, CALIFORNIA, HIS HOMETOWN. HAVING THOROUGHLY RECONNOITERED THE NEIGHBORHOOD, HE AND HIS MOTH-COLLECTING

buddies knew exactly where all the best neon tavern signs were — the ones fatally attractive to moths on the wing.

“Pabst Blue Ribbon signs were the best,” McFarland says. “Remember that sign? The bluish one? That’s at the blue-purple end of the spectrum, and it really gets ‘em. All the moth people knew where the Pabst Blue Ribbon signs were, and at night they’d lurk around them catching moths.”

Now, almost 50 years later, McFarland sits at a desk in his study-bunkhouse-hideout in a canyon in the Huachuca Mountain foothills. To say he’s still a

“moth person” understates his zeal. Moths are his everlasting passion. He’s here because southeastern Arizona’s cool, wet canyons rank with the world’s best places to find moths — or birds, or reptiles, or butterflies, or even wild orchids.

A borderline moth ignoramus myself, I sought out McFarland for answers to some idle questions I had pondered at one time or another. What’s the difference between a moth and a butterfly? Why do moths fly into flames and hot light bulbs, a practice that usually ends in slow incineration? Where do they go in daytime?

## SPHINX MOTHS AND FATAL ATTRACTIONS

A PORTFOLIO BY MARTY CORDANO  
TEXT BY TOM DOLLAR



E U M O R P H A T Y P H O N

(LEFT) Some of the moths that appear in daylight, such as this *Eumorpha typhon*, camouflage themselves expertly as leaf litter, lichens, bark, and even flower petals.

SPHINX MOTHS AND FATAL ATTRACTIONS

McFarland hands me a well-thumbed copy of *Arizona Highways*. The logo is old-fashioned, the paper pulpy. On the cover, a grainy color photo is identified as Hampton's painted tiger-moth. April, 1951, is the date; price, 35 cents.

"Lloyd Martin, who wrote that cover story, was my mentor," McFarland explains. "He was curator of entomology at the Los Angeles Museum of Natural History, and he gave up his Saturdays to work with kid collectors. I was one of those kids."

Though we tend to think of moths as drab nighttime cousins of butterflies, the relationship is really the other way around. The order *Lepidoptera*, which includes both, is composed mostly of moths. Thus for every species of butterfly found in southeastern Arizona, there may be up to 15 species of moths.

The differences? By and large, if it looks like a butterfly, and it's flying in full daylight, it is a butterfly; after dark, it's a moth. There are exceptions. Some sphinx moths, for example, often flit from blossom to blossom in full daylight or at dusk; larger ones are sometimes mistaken for hummingbirds, so rapid are their wing beats.

Other differences: butterflies' antennae are clubbed at the end; moths' antennae are either thread-like or feathery. Most butterflies are quite colorful, moths drab; but some moths, tiger moths notably, are as brightly colored as any butterfly. Butterflies, generally, are slender, moths thick-bodied; but here again, certain moths are quite streamlined. Geometrid moths, named for the looping "land measuring" motion of their inch-worm larvae, are skinny fast fliers.



M A N D U C A F L O R E S T A N

(RIGHT) *The Manduca florestan, or sphinx moth, is fond of daylight. But a predator would have difficulty spotting this one, which has taken on the appearance of the granite rock on which it rests.*





S P H I N X M O T H S A N D F A T A L A T T R A C T I O N S

The best way to observe moths is to install a black light (a long-wave ultraviolet light) against a light-colored backdrop. On dark nights, moths will home in on the light almost immediately. "Home in" is misleading; actually moths are trapped by light.

We've long known that moths are powerfully drawn to light, especially the ultraviolet band. One widely accepted theory holds that moths navigate by fixing upon dim sources of natural light and are disoriented by bright artificial light. Spiraling ever closer to its source, they become hopelessly lost. Turn out the light, and you set them free.

Collecting moths by black-lighting is a cinch, but to learn something about their life histories — where they lay eggs, what they eat as larvae, how long they live as pupae — a good moth collector

must find them by day, no easy task. Moths, you see, survive in daylight by pretending to be something else: a leaf, sand, ground litter, or even charred wood.

Without this ability to conceal themselves, most moths would be quickly seen and snapped up by birds. If a foraging bird encounters a white spatter that resembles its own fecal droppings, however, its bird brain simply doesn't register that the spatter could be fake. Of course if the droppings should move, the bird spots the deception and quickly gobbles up the moth.

Other moths camouflage themselves as lichens, bark, dead leaves, or flower petals. Lichen-mimicking moths need not necessarily come to rest on lichen-encrusted rocks. Any surface on which lichens are apt to grow is good

*Text continued on page 30*



M I R A C A V I R A B R I L L I A N S

(LEFT) *Employing its expertise in disguise, a Miracavira brillians is almost indistinguishable from the lichen on a rock. To fool predators, the moth needn't find a patch of lichen, only a surface on which it might be found.*



SPHINX MOTHS AND FATAL ATTRACTIONS



MELIPOTIS SP

*A piece of petrified wood provides a safe haven for a Melipotis SP. This is one of many species of Melipotis found in the Southwest. They are closely related to the more colorful underwing moths.*

SPHINX MOTHS AND FATAL ATTRACTIONS

*Continued from page 27*

enough to trick most predators.

Not all moths use cryptic coloring to fake out predators. Tiger moths, for example, though often brilliantly colored, are avoided by birds. The reason? They either taste bad or are poisonous.

Some of the larger silk moths have eyespots on their wings that scare off smaller birds. Big birds aren't much fooled, though. Jays and thrashers will wolf down moths of any size, owl eyes and all.

Finally there are moths with beautifully colored underwings. At rest on a tree trunk, one of these moths folds and covers its underwings, becoming one with the bark. But if frightened by the snap of a twig or a bird landing nearby, it flashes those underwings and flies off, flaunting its colors. As it alights on a nearby tree trunk it folds its sparkling

wings, becoming instantly invisible. By the time the astonished bird recovers, it's too late. The moth has become bark again.

As I prepare to leave, McFarland turns again to the cover photo of that tattered 1951 issue of *Arizona Highways*. "See that mouse-gray and rosy-pink triangle?" he says, pointing to the tiger moth photo. "It resembles a pattern woven into a lot of older Navajo rugs that my father used to collect. That moth occurs throughout the Four Corners area; it's one that every Navajo would have seen."

He looks up. I return his smile. We like it, the idea of a Navajo weaver copying a moth design. Art imitating Nature. ■

*Marty Cordano lives in Bisbee and is a former wildlife biologist for the Bureau of Land Management.*

*Inspired by his visit with Noel McFarland, Tucson-based Tom Dollar recently bought a 15-watt black light.*



SPHINX ISTAR

(RIGHT) The common sphinx moth is readily seen in southeastern Arizona. It flies mid-June to mid-September, peaking during the July-August monsoons.





N A V A J O C U L T U R E

# STORIES GRANDMOTHER TOLD

Several times out in Navajo country, people had told me fragments of traditional tales, the sort you read in books, about Coyote, Monster Slayer, and Changing Woman. But I'd never attended a family storytelling session, that quiet time when a Navajo grandmother sits in her hogan and passes on cultural lore to her grandchildren.

Then one morning the telephone rang. It was a Navajo acquaintance inviting me to a storytelling session with his aunt, a medicine woman in her 70s.

"I'd love to come," I said. "What kind of stories do you think she'll tell?"

He hesitated. It was the sort of pause that, I've learned, means I'm seeing something one way, and the Navajo I'm talking to is seeing it another.

"My aunt said it's okay for you to be there," he answered. "But I just want you to know, I'm really glad it's not wintertime anymore."

It was early February, but by the Navajo calendar, spring had already arrived. That happened when thunder awakened from its winter sleep and rolled across the sky.

"Winter stories are too sacred," he continued. "People write about Coyote, Monster Slayer, and all the others. But it's not good. It takes something from the Navajos."

I assured him I didn't want to do that, and he said he'd call when his aunt was ready.

A week went by. Then two. Then three. I called him.

"Not yet," he said. "Soon."

Finally one morning in April, I headed north on U.S. 191 through the heart of Navajo country. The highway rose and fell with the juniper-covered hills. It dropped into a broad plain, passed rust-colored clay erosions and hidden canyons, then wound north through red sandstone. A stark black mesa appeared in the west, disappeared behind hills, reappeared.

South of Round Rock, an unmarked road made a steep turn down from the highway. I crept along the hardpan until the track twisted upward and arrived at a cluster of buildings. An eight-sided plywood hogan, an outhouse, a ramada, and a pen for sheep and goats surrounded a small frame house which had no electricity or running water.

The animals bleated. Invisible behind the pen's high wooden walls, they marked the wind with a thick odor.

A girl who looked about 14 but turned out to be 11 was showing her sister, three, how to use a plastic slingshot. Other children played catch and climbed a horse trailer as if it were a jungle gym.

"Time for storytelling," their father, and the man who had invited me there, called out. They disappeared into the hogan.

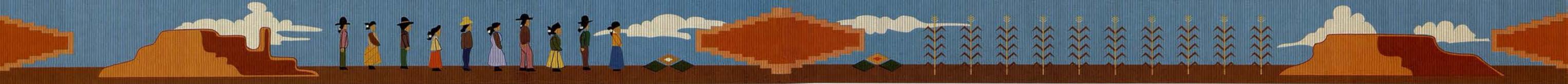
He pointed westward toward the mesa I'd glimpsed from the highway. Columns of falling snow



TEXT BY SUSAN HAZEN-HAMMOND  
PHOTOGRAPHS BY MONTY ROESSEL

ILLUSTRATIONS BY JIM McDONALD





connected the Earth to the sky. “That’s the sacred Black Mesa. It’s a female mountain. And that” — a red and black mountain to the east — “is the sacred Lukachukai. It’s male. On the other side, they call it the Chuskas.”

“What makes them male and female?” I asked.

He hesitated. “They’re alive, just like us.”

His aunt was busy, he said. His mother would tell the stories.

Inside the hogan, the only light came from a translucent window in the door and the smoke hole, an open space about two feet square at the center of the ceiling. Near the walls, sheepskins lay across the sand floor, leaving an inner circle of sand. A row of 10 corn cobs strung together with string like a miniature ladder hung near a bag of loose cobs on the unplanned boards by the door. Sheets covered other walls, slowing the migration of sand. The children sat quietly near the door with their mother.

The storyteller, a woman with graying hair and dark, solemn eyes, looked up but did not rise. A medicine woman herself, she had spent the past week presiding over a healing ceremony in this hogan.

Since my last visit to the reservation, I had learned more about Navajo etiquette. An outsider, coming in, owes a gift, something practical, not fancy. I’d selected a smoked ham that didn’t need refrigeration. I handed it to her.

She patted the ham in acknowledgment, then turned to her son. “Go see your mother. She’s shearing sheep.”

“Isn’t this your mother?” I whispered, confused.

“That’s how we talk in Navajo. My mother’s sisters are my mothers, too.” He said something in Navajo, and his mother laughed.

When he returned, his mother, now in the role of the storyteller, moved to the hogan’s place of honor, the wall opposite the door. The children came forward and sprawled on sheepskins in front of her. I settled a little way back, on the bare floor beside the stove.

The storyteller’s son lifted the corn ladder and the sack of cobs from the wall and took them to her.

“Navajo stories don’t have a beginning, a middle, and an end,” he whispered to me. “They’re a circle, like a hogan, like the Earth, with a lot of different things inside.”

The storyteller adjusted her dark cotton

skirt around her. Another skirt, worn for warmth, peeked out beneath it.

She motioned toward the sheepskins, and her turquoise and silver bracelets glowed against her purple velveteen blouse. “That’s where we slept last night, my sister and me,” she told the children. She spoke in a musical voice that turned English into a tonal language like Navajo. Her glottal stops added a staccato beat. “It used to be, when I was growing up, we lived in hogans

‘Respect the corn.  
You can’t just  
pick the  
perfect one.  
You have to pick  
every piece.  
You have to  
pick even the  
smallest piece.  
Even the ugliest.’

all the time. Just one room, like this, with a dirt floor. No water. No electricity. Everybody sleeping in the same room. Everybody talking Navajo.”

One child still held a baseball mitt, another a baseball, a third a soft drink, but their faces had turned earnest with attention and expectation.

“This morning a Navajo woman from Scottsdale came to me in this hogan. She is from Black Mesa, the most traditional place of all, but her mother, her grandmother, they didn’t teach her right. She said, ‘I’m having trouble with my job. I want you to pray for me. But I don’t know anything about Navajo ways.’”

The storyteller looked each child in the eye. “That’s why you have to know your culture. You have to say, ‘Ná’li [Grandmother], tell me the story about corn. Ná’li, tell me the story about mountains. Ná’li, tell me the story about rocks.’ These are powerful things. These are to protect you.”

The wind rattled the top of the stovepipe against the guy wires that held it in place in the center of the smoke hole.

The storyteller continued, “It’s springtime. So today we’re going to have a story about the corn, like the stories my mother told when I was a little girl. Okay?”

The children looked at her.

“Say Aoo’,” their father prodded.

“Aoo’. Aoo’. Aoo’. Aoo’. Aoo’.” Five soft voices said “yes” in Navajo.

“What does April mean in Navajo?” their grandmother asked.

“Spring,” said one of the youngsters.

“Daan-ch’il,” she replied. She held her hands up, palms together, then opened them, palms outward. “When something opens like this, we call it *Daan-ch’il*. That’s what spring is, the time when the plants open.”

The children repeated the Navajo word. Then she said, “There are plants outside. *Haza’aleeh*, like parsley. And there are other plants called wild onions. You take the coat off. There’s another coat inside. You take that coat off, there’s another coat inside. Navajos tease each other. They say, ‘Don’t be like onions, wearing too many coats.’”

The storyteller led the children outside. Near the blue water barrel beside the hogan, she stooped and pulled a flat, lacy plant from the sand. Her skirts grazed the Earth. “*Haza’aleeh*,” she said. “Who plants it? We don’t. Mother Nature does. The first plants you see in the springtime, you bless yourself with them. How many Navajos do that today?”

The children followed her back into the hogan. “This is our own Navajo food, native food,” she said, holding the *haza’aleeh* out for them to see. “My sister and I were gathering some the other day. We put it in the ashes. Then we dry it. Then we go like this.” Her fingers made a crumbling motion.

“Then we roast the corn and grind it with a grinding stone, and then we cook the cornmeal with *haza’aleeh* in it. Then we serve it to kids.”

The children watched their grandmother as intently as if she were an adventure movie. Only the three year old looked around.

The storyteller picked up the ladder of

corn. “What makes a Navajo woman to be proud and happy is to see her corn growing,” she said. “My sister can’t live without her cornfield. Today nobody talks about this kind of stuff to young kids like you. You got to understand these things. These plants. Why we have cornfield. Why plants grow. What Mother Nature has for you.”

She stopped for a moment, then said forcefully, “You are plants. You are *nanise*, meaning something grow. You grow. You’re just like those plants.”

Robin, the three year old, picked up handfuls of sand and tossed them into the air. The others ignored her.

“This is what your great-great *cheii* [grandfather] and your great-great ná’li do,” the storyteller continued. “They fix the field. Your great-great *cheii* planted the corn, four seeds at a time, and your great-great ná’li walked behind him and patted the corn in place with her feet.”

She closed her eyes. “It takes all day. You get thirsty. Keep on. Keep on going. Keep on going. Can’t stop to eat or drink until the field is all planted.”

She looked at the children. “I think that’s what my mom used to say. I don’t remember.”

She formed her hands into a square. “The Navajo people plant two kinds of cornfields. One is square kind. That’s male. One is round kind. That’s female. You are male and female. White corn, that’s boys and men. Yellow corn, that’s female.”

Holding up the cobs, she taught the children the Navajo words for white corn, yellow corn, blue corn, and red corn.

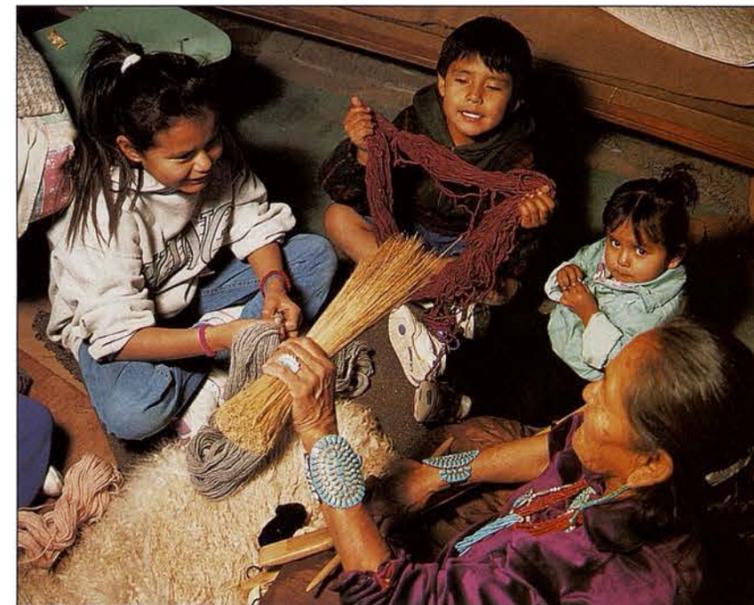
“This red corn, this *naada’álchíí*, is very important. You always have to plant four kernels of *naada’álchíí* in each field. It brings the rain to the cornfield. That’s the way I was taught.”

The storyteller ran her hand gently along a colored cob of corn. “Corn is the Holy People. That’s why you don’t laugh at corn. That’s why you don’t throw corn

away. Corns have feelings just like you.”

The storyteller paused. Her son knelt beside the homemade barrel stove and shoved in another stick of wood. The fragrance of burning cedar filled the hogan.

Softly the storyteller began, “Once upon a time, this man picked a perfect ear of corn. The others in the field weren’t so perfect. He said, ‘This one is no good. That one is no good.’ So he left all the others. But as he left, he heard someone crying.”



(PRECEDING PANEL, PAGE 33) *Gathered for a time of traditional storytelling, Marie Jim soothes her granddaughter, Harrisatta Sandoval, who has tangled with a sharp yucca.*  
(ABOVE) *Siblings Tiffany, Heath, and Harrisatta listen to one of their grandmother’s stories.*

I leaned forward. This was the sort of ancient tale I’d been hoping for.

“The man returned to the field and found that the cobs were sitting there crying. ‘No one wants us. We’re ugly,’ they said.

“So the man picked one. Then another. He talked to them. He picked them all, every one.

“That’s how the Holy People said to the Navajo, ‘Respect the corn.’ You can’t just pick the perfect one. You have to pick every piece. You have to pick even the smallest piece. Even the ugliest. It was the Holy People who told them to pick all the corn.”

The storyteller smiled at her oldest grandchild, Jaclyn, 11, who had just celebrated

her *Kinaaldá*, a ceremony honoring her transition to womanhood.

“The plants talk to you, but you don’t know it,” she said. “The plants won’t say ‘Jaclyn.’ They won’t say ‘Robin.’ They use your spirit name, your real name. Will say, ‘There’s so and so walking.’ When you grow up and think you’re alone, you’re not alone. The plants say, ‘There goes my grandson. There goes my kids.’”

“That’s why your ná’li always has corn around. That’s why you don’t ever pass corn. You pick it. You eat it. You put it on yourself. You take it home and plant it. The corn is Holy People.”

She folded her hands. “Okay, you understand?”

Five soft voices said, “Aoo’.”

“Whatever little I told you right here gets into your spirit, gets into your thoughts. You are all plants. You are all growing.”

She stopped talking, and the children left.

For the first time, the storyteller looked my way. “Everybody says, ‘Oh, that’s just mythology,’” she said. “But it is not mythology. These stories come from the Holy People. They’re sacred.”

I nodded. “Is it all right to write the names of the Holy People?”

She shook her head. “No.”

“So the story came from the Holy People, but the corn is the Holy People, too?”

She nodded. “All the plants are Holy People.”

The storyteller’s son hung the ladder of corn on the wall. The storyteller dozed on the sheepskins. A few grains of reddish sand rained in through the smoke hole. The children played outside the hogan’s door.

The storyteller stood up. It was time for me to go. ■

*Santa Fe, New Mexico-based Susan Hazen-Hammond is the author of four books and numerous articles about the Southwest.*

*Monty Roessel also contributed the photographs for the story in this issue about Jeep touring at Canyon de Chelly.*

THIS ROUNDUP  
WAS REALLY  
FOR THE BIRDS —  
OR HOW CATTLEMAN  
HENRY C. HOOKER  
LEARNED

# turkeys can fly

**I**N THE WILD WEST OF THE 1860S, TURKEYS WERE COMMONLY SHOT, STUFFED, AND roasted around holiday time. But it took an Arizona legend like Henry C. Hooker to herd them like cattle and march them over a mountain range.

It all started in the California goldfields in 1866, before Hooker started his widely known Sierra Bonita Ranch in Arizona. At 34 years of age, Hooker felt pleased with his life. He'd been prospecting for almost 13 years and had gotten over his strike-it-rich dream. He'd married, fathered three children, and was slowly making his fortune the smart way: selling mining equipment to gold-struck fools. He would have settled permanently in the goldfields of Hangtown except a fire destroyed his house, his store, and his entire stock of goods.

In one day his fortune was gone.

Lesser men would have picked up a gold pan and gone back to dreaming. But not Hooker. He knew another fortune could be made.

TEXT BY JANET TRONSTAD

ILLUSTRATION BY  
HOWARD POST



That was when he thought of turkeys.

Hooker knew miners would pay an exorbitant amount of money for anything edible, and although prices were high in California, they were even higher in the new mining town of Carson City, Nevada. Surely the miners in Carson City would welcome the smell of roasting turkeys.

Once Hooker made up his mind, he got busy. He borrowed some money and, at \$1.50 per bird, bought 500 plump turkeys from nearby ranchers. He then bought several sheepdogs to help herd the turkeys.

When word of Hooker's scheme got around Hangtown, the miners laughed. They said the fire had driven Hooker plumb crazy. What kind of fool would try to drive a herd of turkeys over the high Sierras?

Only a fool like Hooker.

When he started out, Hooker didn't know much about turkeys. By the time he'd reached the base of the Sierras, he was beginning to learn.

As he would have told you, turkeys aren't known for their brains. Even Benjamin Franklin, who championed the birds, had to admit they "were a little vain and silly." Others were less kind, pointing out that turkeys had been known to stand in a pouring rain, looking up at the sky with their mouths open — apparently fascinated — for such a long time that they drowned. And that other turkeys, if they came upon the dead body of a fellow bird, might fluster themselves into such a panic they would die of fright right then and there.

Needless to say, turkeys weren't the best traveling companions. They spooked easily and had little survival sense. Still, Hooker pressed on. His turkeys learned to wake with the dawn and grab an insect or two on the march.

By the time Hooker reached the far side of the Sierras, he felt satisfied with himself. Complacent, even. Perhaps that's why he didn't scout ahead and see that the dogs

were herding the turkeys straight toward a steep cliff. Sheep, with a little dog encouragement, would have had no problem climbing down the cliff. But not turkeys. Hooker frantically called his dogs back. It was too late. The dogs worried the turkeys right off the cliff.

There go my turkeys, Hooker thought, knowing a fall from the cliff would surely kill the silly birds.

But looking over the cliff edge, he saw his flock alive and well at the bottom. The ruffled turkeys weren't hurt, but they were certainly surprised — almost as surprised as he was. It was probably the only time these farm-fat birds had ever spread their wings. They hadn't even known they *could* fly until they were forced off that cliff.

It was a proud Hooker who drove his herd of turkeys into Carson City. The miners were overjoyed to see such an abundance of Thanksgiving meat and happily paid \$5 apiece for the birds.

Hooker cleared more than \$1,500, enough money to give him and his family a new start. Instead of rebuilding in California, he moved his family to Arizona.

Hooker never forgot his experiences with the turkeys, but he never again drove a flock of them over a mountain range like he did in 1866. Instead he turned his attention to purebred horses and prize herds of Hereford, Durham, and shorthorn cattle. Hooker's Arizona ranch, the Sierra Bonita, was a popular stopover for guests of all descriptions. Of course, when his company sat down at the table, it was usually beef, not turkey, that was on their plates. ❧

*During her childhood, Pasadena, California-based Janet Tronstad got acquainted with turkeys on her grandmother's farm, so she had a lot of sympathy for Henry Hooker.*

*Howard Post lives in Mesa, but he grew up on a ranch outside Tucson, where they raised horses and cattle but not turkeys.*

THE WILD FRONTIER COMES ALIVE ABOARD THE

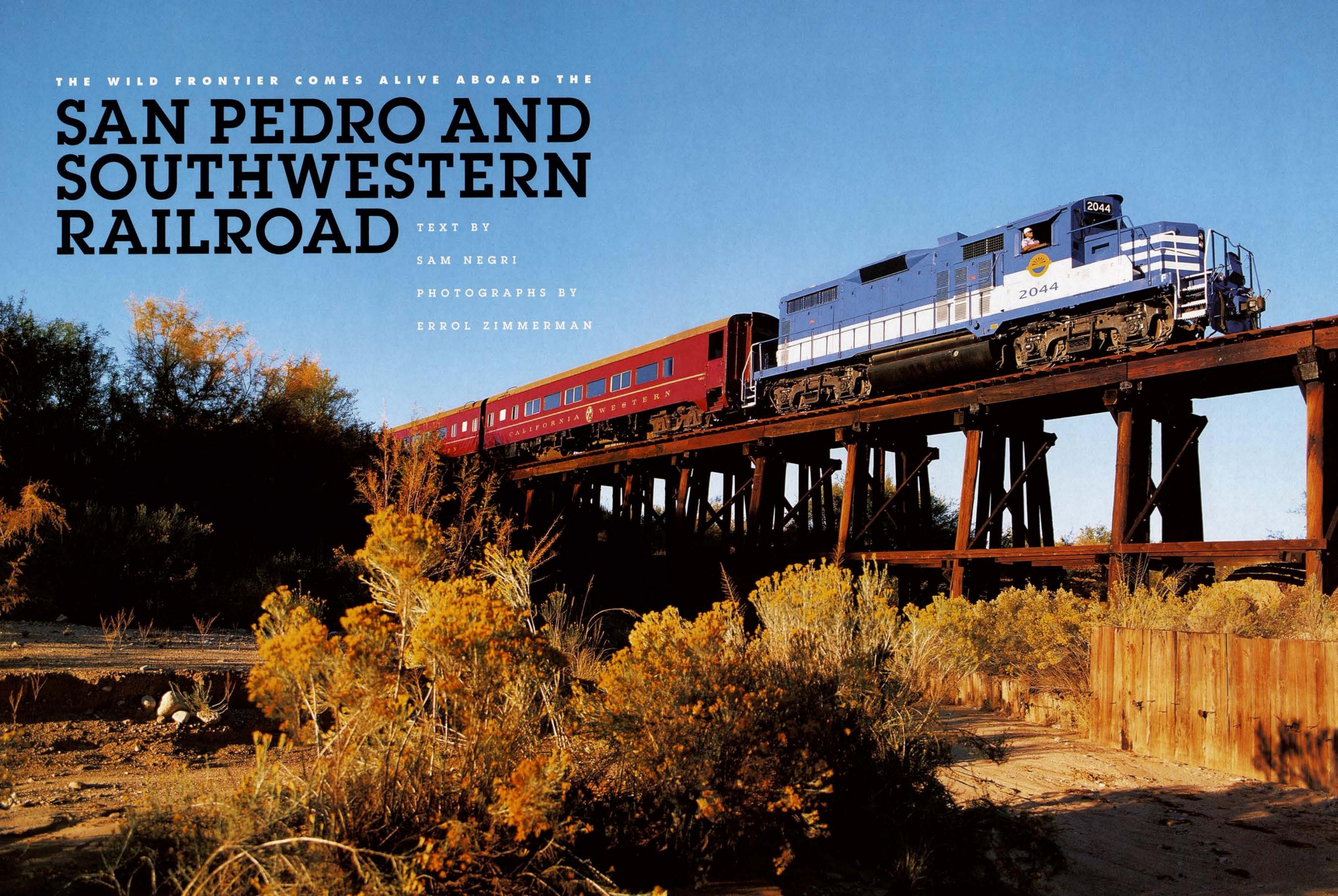
# SAN PEDRO AND SOUTHWESTERN RAILROAD

TEXT BY

SAM NEGRI

PHOTOGRAPHS BY

ERROL ZIMMERMAN



**J**ohn Rose and I stood in the bar car of the San Pedro and Southwestern Railroad's excursion train as it rolled through the high desert between the Whetstone and Dragoon mountains. Weekdays Rose is a real estate developer in Sierra Vista; weekends he puts on a striped railroader's cap and becomes the train's "talk boy," a raconteur who brings the landscape to life with an animated narrative on the history and lore of southeastern Arizona.

For Rose the 27-mile journey from Benson to Charleston, an unpopulated spot near Tombstone, unfolds like a movie reel. As the nine-car train rolls through the landscape, he sees not only mesquite bushes and cottonwoods and adobe ruins but also a cast of characters who walked through the San Pedro Valley and into the pages of legend and history.

"To understand the American identity," Rose said with enthusiasm, "you have to come to the West; and to understand the West, you have to come to this valley." As we passed the west side of the Dragoon Mountains, a natural stronghold where warring Apaches once took refuge, he added:

"If you were to go anywhere on Earth and the people knew the name of only one Native American, it would be Geronimo; and if they knew the name of one Old West lawman, it would be Wyatt Earp. If they knew one gunfight, it would be the 30-second O.K. Corral shoot-out. If they knew of only one Old West gambler, it would be Doc Holliday, the dentist turned killer. If they knew the name of one Old West town, it would be Tombstone."

The excursion train, which started up in the spring of 1994, makes a smooth four-hour jaunt through the countryside that for several years was the stomping ground of many of the West's most famous good and bad guys, and Rose talks about them as though they were all personal acquaintances. Minutes after leaving the railroad's small depot and gift shop at Benson, Rose pointed out the Whetstone Mountains to the west, and suddenly the reel was rolling again.

In those mountains, he told some 200 passengers over the public address system, Wyatt Earp killed the notorious bandit Curly Bill Brocius. The execution of Brocius, he said, was Earp's way of avenging the assassination of his brother Morgan Earp, who had been shot in the back while playing pool at Robert Hatch's saloon and billiard parlor in Tombstone. That wasn't what Wyatt contended, however. He said Curly



Bill was a stagecoach robber, and he had a warrant for his arrest. And when he found him, the outlaw and his companions opened fire. There are at least four versions of what happened in that gunfight somewhere between the Whetstone and Mustang mountains, and, 100 years after the fact, Rose's version is as good as anyone else's.

Some 20 miles south of the place where the gunfight reportedly occurred, we approached Charleston, once a town far more dangerous than Tombstone, and Rose brought his Earp-Brocius story full circle. After Curly Bill was killed, he said, his body was taken to Charleston and buried in a secret grave, which has never been found.

No one knows for sure where Curly Bill ended up, but if it was at Charleston, at least his final resting place is scenic. In fall the giant cottonwood trees at that bend in the river blaze yellow and orange. The spot is so special that in 1986 it was set aside

as part of a National Riparian Conservation Area, a giant Nature preserve that extends along the river from the vicinity of St. David to the Mexican border.

A couple of years ago, The Nature Conservancy, a private conservation organization, designated the San Pedro River area as one of the "Last Great Places" in the Western Hemisphere. (See *Arizona Highways*, May '96.) It's an area rich in wildlife, and throughout our afternoon journey Rose advised passengers to watch for mule and white-tailed deer and javelinas in the brush along the tracks. The javelina "looks like a pig on steroids," Rose said in one of his thumbnail summaries.

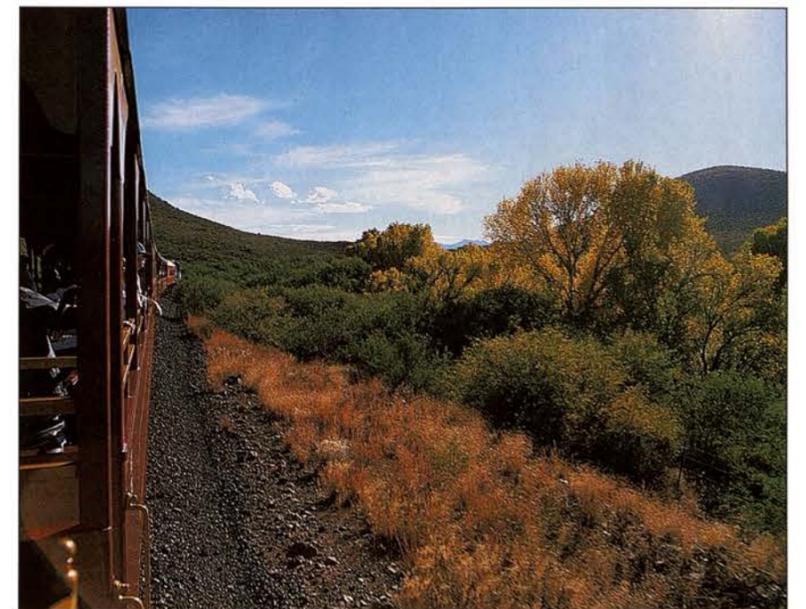
The San Pedro and Southwestern runs parallel to the river the full distance from Benson to Charleston, though the stream sometimes hides behind hills and dense vegetation.

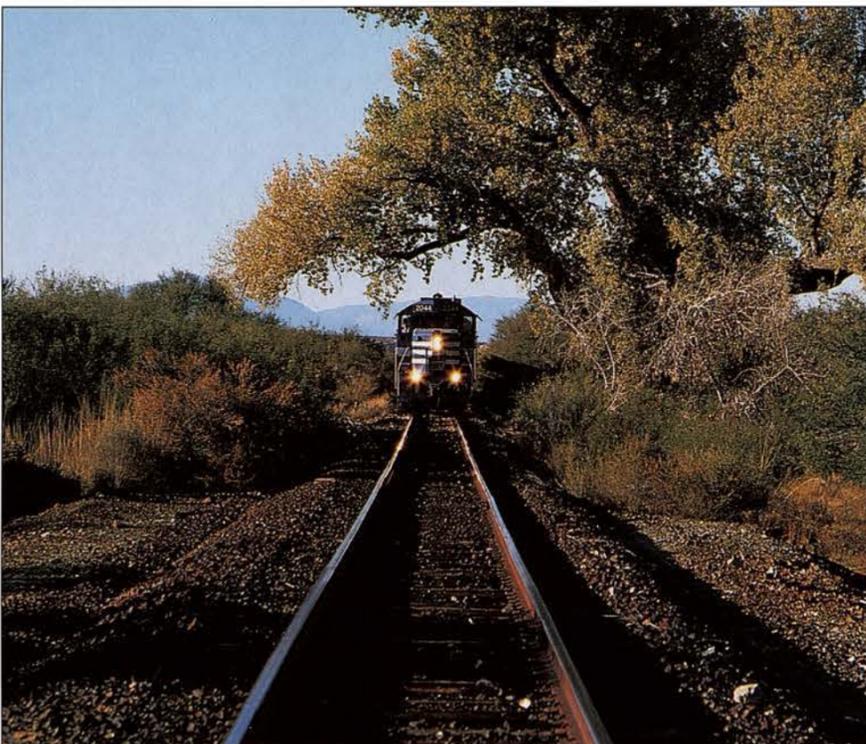
Like the Santa Cruz River that passes



(PRECEDING PANEL, PAGES 38 AND 39) Scenery and frontier history lure passengers aboard the train for the 54-mile round-trip excursion along the San Pedro River between Benson and Charleston.

(TOP) Towering cottonwoods turned golden in early autumn make "The Narrows" a visual highlight of the day. (ABOVE) Real estate development occupies John Rose weekdays, but on weekends, he's the trip's lively narrator. (RIGHT) Just before The Narrows, the train approaches a river crossing obscured by vegetation.





(TOP) Passengers like to visit one of the train's covered cars with open sides for a closer look at the countryside.  
 (LEFT) It's said that quick justice at the end of a rope dangling from this 100-year-old cottonwood between Benson and Fairbank, its limbs arching over the tracks, ended the careers of some frontier desperados.  
 (ABOVE) An old building at the ghost town of Fairbank was once a store owned by Joe Goldwater, the great-uncle of former U.S. Sen. Barry Goldwater.

through Tucson, the San Pedro enters Arizona from Mexico and flows from south to north. In a way, it is an upside-down river because it drops about 2,500 feet from the point in the south where it enters Arizona to the point in the north, near Winkelman, where it joins the Gila River. Long ago the river developed a reputation that sets it apart, based on the belief that even when it is reduced to a mere trickle, just prior to the summer rainy season, the San Pedro still manages to sustain one of the richest wildlife populations in the United States.

This rare river in the desert supports between 250 and 275 species of birds, 80 species of mammals, and 30 to 40 species of herptiles (reptiles and amphibians). Among the birds are great horned owls, Harris' hawks, vermilion flycatchers, blue grosbeaks, summer tanagers, warblers, thrashers — and gray hawks, which is why the railroad named its diesel locomotive Gray Hawk.

The terrain through which the train passes also holds a treasure trove of fossils from the end of the last Ice Age, some 40,000 years ago. Archaeologists working in the San Pedro Basin have uncovered numerous bones of long-extinct mammoths, giant elephants that prehistoric men hunted with spears. One of the most famous mammoth kill sites in North America is located at Hereford. (See *Arizona Highways*, Nov. '92.), roughly 20 miles southeast of Charleston.

We rolled through this countryside at a comfortable speed until we reached the turnaround point at Charleston, some 10 miles southwest of Tombstone. There the engine was uncoupled and reconnected at the rear end for the return journey.

As we waited for the engine to rejoin the train, I looked toward the old bridge that spans the river west of the tracks and wondered what it would be like there after sundown. Total darkness, I decided, as there are few inhabitants hereabouts. In fact, the only permanent "inhabitant" was one I'd heard about nearly 20 years ago.

I was in Sierra Vista and knew I'd be headed to Tombstone that night along the Charleston Road, a lonely rural route that forms a diagonal line connecting the two towns. I mentioned this to a friend who lives in Sierra Vista.

"I'd be careful of that road," he said.

"Yes, it's kind of twisty here and there," I agreed. I'd driven it many times.

"That's true," he said, "but that's not what you have to be careful of. You gotta watch out for the three-headed horse."

I checked his eyes and decided he was sober. "The three-headed horse?" I repeated. He offered the following:

"Many years ago, three men on horses crossed the Charleston Road near the narrow bridge over the San Pedro River. A truck came barreling along and hit them, killing all three.

"Now whenever there is a full moon, a horse with three heads appears on the bridge. The horse, which has one red eye, one blue eye, and one yellow eye, shines a light into your car to see if you are the truck driver who killed the three horsemen."

I didn't believe the story, of course, but I nearly jumped out of my skin when a blast from the train's whistle brought me out of my reverie. We were continuing our journey, heading north back to Benson.

However, about eight miles above Charleston we stopped again, this time for an entertaining 45 minutes at Fairbank, a ghost town that was an important junction when the line connected Benson with Mexico. A branch line extended from Fairbank to the mines at Tombstone, where N.K. Fairbank, owner of the Grand Central Mining Co., resided. In a mesquite grove surrounded by the ramshackle remains of Fairbank, we enjoyed a cowboy lunch (it cost \$7) prepared by the nearby Ironhorse guest ranch.

We also had a chance to see "Bullwhip Smith" in action. Bullwhip is actually Jerome Smith, an actor who worked Renaissance fairs for many years before he and his wife, Terry, became regular performers living and working at the Ironhorse.

In the melodrama they put on during my trip, Terry played the part of Bullwhip's sister, a young lady who was very pregnant, and another thespian, Bobby Stevens, played the role of the sheriff. Bullwhip was determined to find the miscreant who had put his sister in a family way and then vanished. Sister eventually sniffed the lowlife out — an unsuspecting passenger, whose wife did not seem particularly surprised by the allegation.

## WHEN YOU GO

The four-hour 27-mile ride operates Thursday-Sunday, departing Benson at 11 A.M. Enclosed cars are heated and air-conditioned. If you're going to sit in an outside car in cooler months, bring a blanket. Passengers also can bring lunch if they prefer not to buy the barbecue meal at Fairbank. Snacks and beverages can be purchased on board. Benson is three hours southeast of Phoenix via Interstate 10, or 50 minutes east of Tucson. Rates and reservations: (520) 586-2266, or write the railroad, P.O. Box 1420, Benson, AZ 85602.

### Other Train Excursions:

Grand Canyon Railway offers day trips from Williams to the Canyon. Packages that include guided ground tours and overnight lodging at the Canyon also are available. Information: toll-free (800) THE TRAIN.

Verde Canyon Railroad offers four-hour, 40-mile excursions through the Verde Valley. Overnight in Sedona packages are available. Information: toll-free (800) 293-7245.

Before and after the skit, the Ironhorse Westernaires serenaded us with old-time cowboy songs.

Following this relaxing interlude, the train started again for Benson, slowly passing the remains of the Presidio of Santa Cruz de Terrenate, one of the most remarkable historic sites in southern Arizona. The presidio reminds us the Spanish were the first Europeans to settle the land along this train route. Later, in 1821, it became part of Mexico after the country gained its independence from Spain. When the Spaniards controlled southern Arizona, known then as Pimeria Alta, they established three presidios, or forts, including the one at Terrenate. Its ruins, more than 200 years old, lie exposed on a hillside adjacent to the railroad tracks.

Gradually the train meandered to the northern border of the San Pedro Riparian National Conservation Area. A few miles before we returned to the tiny depot at Benson, Rose concluded his monologue on history, the vegetation, the reasons for washes, and the absorption rates of desert soils, and started singing over the P.A. system.

This ride through the high desert makes a relaxing diversion, and Rose is clearly one of the more popular ingredients. Toward the end of the journey, passengers received a questionnaire asking what they liked or didn't like about the experience. "I've been astounded at the positive response," said Rose, whose popularity with the passengers ranks just a notch below that of Wyatt Earp. ❧

*Sam Negri, also wrote the story in this issue about opal mining.*

*Phoenix-based Errol Zimmerman had photographed many train excursions in Europe and Japan, but this story provided his first opportunity to take pictures on an Arizona tourist train excursion.*





## WIT STOP

TEXT BY GENE PERRET  
ILLUSTRATION BY ROBERTA HANCOCK

### A Riverboat Gambler? In Your Dreams

A Mississippi-style paddle wheeler called the *Colorado King I* runs excursions along the Colorado River from September through May. The trip begins at Fisher's Landing on Martinez Lake and goes to Imperial Dam and back. And, of course, somewhere on the boat there's a gift shop.

My wife said, "Let's go to the gift shop."

I said, "No, you go on. I'll just relax here on the deck chair and watch the river go by."

I fell asleep on that chair and dreamed of the days when riverboat gamblers rode paddle wheelers and played high stakes poker.

In my dream, I spotted a table with an empty chair and knew immediately that three poker players occupied the other chairs because they looked like poker players; they acted like poker players; they smelled like poker players. The poker game they were playing helped a bit, too.

One was a bowler-hatted dude. One was a filthy mess with scraggly hair on his head, his chin, and under his nose. His face looked like it needed a gardener. One looked like Clark Gable in *Gone With the Wind*. When I said, "Do you mind if I sit in?" I expected him to say, "Frankly, my dear, I don't give a damn."

Instead he asked, "Do you play poker, stranger?"

I laughed. None of them did. "Do I play poker?" I laughed again. None of them did again. I sat down.

"Do I play poker?" I repeated.



"My wife and I play poker three Saturdays a month with two other couples. On the fourth Saturday, we play Pictionary, which I actually play better than I do poker. I don't suppose any of you would be interested in playing Pictionary?"

None of them answered. Pigpen just spat a stream of tobacco juice toward the cuspidor on the floor by his feet and, unfortunately, by my feet also. Ten percent of it went into the cuspidor, 90 percent of it went over the toes of my previously white Nike walking shoes. He either had bad aim or very good aim.

Clark Gable shoved stacks of poker chips my way and started dealing.

I said, "My cards are sticky." Pigpen said, "Baloney."

The "Ba" in "Baloney" sprayed a tobacco juice pattern all over my pink Izod shirt. I understood why the cards were sticky.

I lost with a pair of eights and a pair of twos to Bowler Hat who had three fours. I said, "We generally make twos wild, so I would have beaten your three of a kind with my four of a kind."

He pushed back his coat and

began rubbing the sidearm which I just noticed he wore. In our friendly game with the other couples we don't permit any weapons, except of course for the knife to spread the cheese dip on the crackers that we always serve during the game. These gentlemen didn't serve crackers and cheese.

The next hand, I had an eight-high straight. Not bad, but the other guys seemed to be happy with their hands, too. When the bet came around to me, I said, "Forfulflushstray."

Clark Gable said, "Excuse me?"

I said, "Oh, I was just talking to myself. In order to know what beats what I say 'forfulflushstray.' That reminds me that four of a kind beats a full house which beats a flush which beats a straight. Then there's three of a kind, two pair, and . . ."

Bowler Hat slammed his gun on the table. Pigpen shouted, "Baloney!"

It didn't bother me. It was an old shirt. I was about to get rid of it anyway.

I lost to a flush.

Now it was my deal. I said,

"I know a fun game. Let's play Peekie Peekie Boo Boo."

They all shouted "What?" like a trio of well-rehearsed back-up singers.

I said, "It's easy. You'll learn it very fast. Now red threes, fives, and nines are wild. Black fours and face cards are wild, too. If the first card you get is a seven, then it reverses all the wild cards. You see, red fours and face cards are wild . . ."

Pigpen grabbed me by the throat and Bowler Hat stuck his weapon up against my nose. Clark Gable scraped all my chips into his plantation hat. Apparently I was out of the game and gone bust.

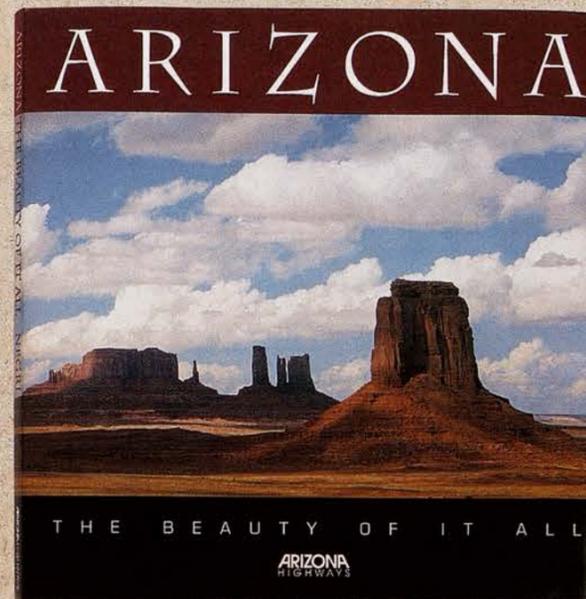
Pigpen kept shaking me and shaking me . . . until I woke up. It wasn't Pigpen at all who was shaking me; it was my wife.

"Wake up, honey. Wake up." What a relief. I was in the present day, riding the *Colorado King I* toward Imperial Dam. It had all been a fantasy. I hadn't lost a fortune at all.

My wife said, "Let me show you all the things I got in the gift shop."

She showed me. I had lost a fortune. ❏

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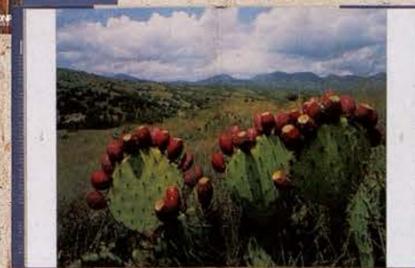
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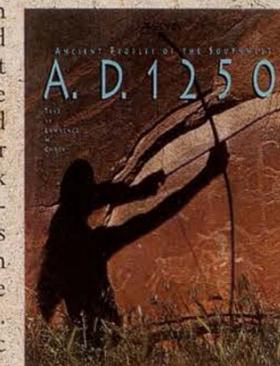
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# LEGENDS OF THE LOST

TEXT BY JIM BOYER  
ILLUSTRATIONS BY KATERI WEISS

## William B. Rood and the Treasure of Rancho de Los Yumas

You won't find La Paz, Arizona, on road maps, but for a brief period in the 1860s, it boasted the largest population of any town in the state. The reason for its short but glorious existence, not surprisingly, was gold. Prospectors recovered more than 100,000

ounces from placer deposits there, including nuggets weighing upward of four pounds.

Gold may or may not have been the reason that a man named William B. Rood sold his ranch south of Tucson in 1862 and then established a large cattle operation just south of La Paz along the eastern bank of the Colorado River.

When Rood drowned in the Colorado's flooding waters eight years later, however, a number of people believed he'd left considerable quantities of nuggets and coins buried in cans around his ranch. Some of those people also believed that

the drowning was not accidental, as had been reported, but that Rood had been knocked from his small skiff by his ranch foreman, who knew where the gold was hidden.

If Rood had amassed a fortune in gold since coming west in 1849, it hadn't come quickly or easily. Not that this had bothered him too much. Rood prided himself on his ability to survive and thrive among the many hazards of the frontier West. On his foray into California, he got lost in Death Valley with several dozen other Forty-niners. In the month it took them to find their way out of the Mojave Desert, most of the emigrants became too exhausted even to carry their guns. One man buried \$6,000 in gold because he could no longer bear the weight. Rood not only held onto his rifle, but in two canyons along the way he took the time to carve his name and the year, 1849, on boulders (these carvings later helped historians trace the path of the Death Valley Forty-niners).

After some ill-fated attempts at mining and other business prospects in California, Rood came to Tucson around 1855. Within a few years, he owned fruit tree orchards and a ranch 40 miles south of town.

In 1859 he wrote a letter to the editor of the *Weekly Arizonian*: "Some persons insist that it never rains in this country, and that this is all a desert; but that I can assure you is false, for I have over two hundred head of cattle in the middle of one of those wonderful places that people die for want of water and food, and my cattle are fat and doing as well as in any other part of the country."

Rood also became briefly famous for skirmishing with a band of Apaches that began



chasing him while he was riding near his ranch. The story has since been recounted in print numerous times. This version, written by a cavalry officer, appeared in *The Tucson Citizen*:

"Just as the pursuing Indians were upon him, he flung himself into a willow thicket and there made his fight. A circle was formed around him by the yelling devils, who numbered at least thirty; but he was too cool a man to be intimidated by their infernal demonstrations. For three hours he kept them at bay with his revolver, although they poured into the thicket an almost continuous volley of rifle shots and arrows. A ball struck him in the left arm, near the elbow, and nearly

disabled him from loss of blood. He buried the wounded part in the sand and continued the fight until the Indians, exasperated at his stubborn resistance, rushed up in a body, determined to put an end to him at once. He had but two shots left. With one of these he killed the first Indian that appeared, when the rest whirled about and stood off . . ."

Rood moved to Yuma County in 1862, shortly after famed mountain man Paulino Weaver discovered (or was shown by Indians) a rich goldfield north of present-day Yuma. It's likely that Rood was involved in prospecting to some extent, but most of his energy seems to have been focused on more secure forms of income. Along with his Rancho de Los Yumas, which by one estimate had 4,000 head of cattle, he ran a meat market in La Paz. He also supplied beef to the soldiers at Fort Yuma and firewood to the steamers that came up from the Sea of Cortes.

On April 29, 1870, Rood set across the Colorado River to pay his Indian workers. He was in a small rowboat with his foreman, Alex Poindexter. The next time Rood touched shore was several months later when his body washed up on a beach miles downstream. Poindexter claimed the boat flipped when it caught on a snag. He said he had survived by clinging to the boat, but that Rood had been swept away.

Was Rood murdered? His daughter certainly believed so. Years later she told her son that as an old man Poindexter was overcome with guilt and confessed to knocking her father overboard by hitting him in the head with an oar. There is no record of what his motive might have been, but hidden gold is one plausible answer. At the time of his death, the only money Rood was known to have was a few hundred

dollars on deposit with local merchants — not a lot of savings for a successful rancher and businessman.

A lot of digging went on around Rood's ranch in later years — and Poindexter was among those who showed up with a shovel. If he found anything, he never mentioned it. In 1896, however, a laborer named Alfredo Pina allegedly discovered \$1,000 in gold coins in a can hidden in an adobe wall of the ranch house.

It was a substantial find, but some said it was only a fraction of what Rood had stashed. Rood had a ranch hand named Leonardo Romo, and according to a story later written by his nephew, Romo found a can of gold on the premises while his employer was still alive. Thinking the can had been poorly hidden to test his honesty, he

took it to Rood, who said there were more cans like it around, but that the "big cache" would not easily be found.

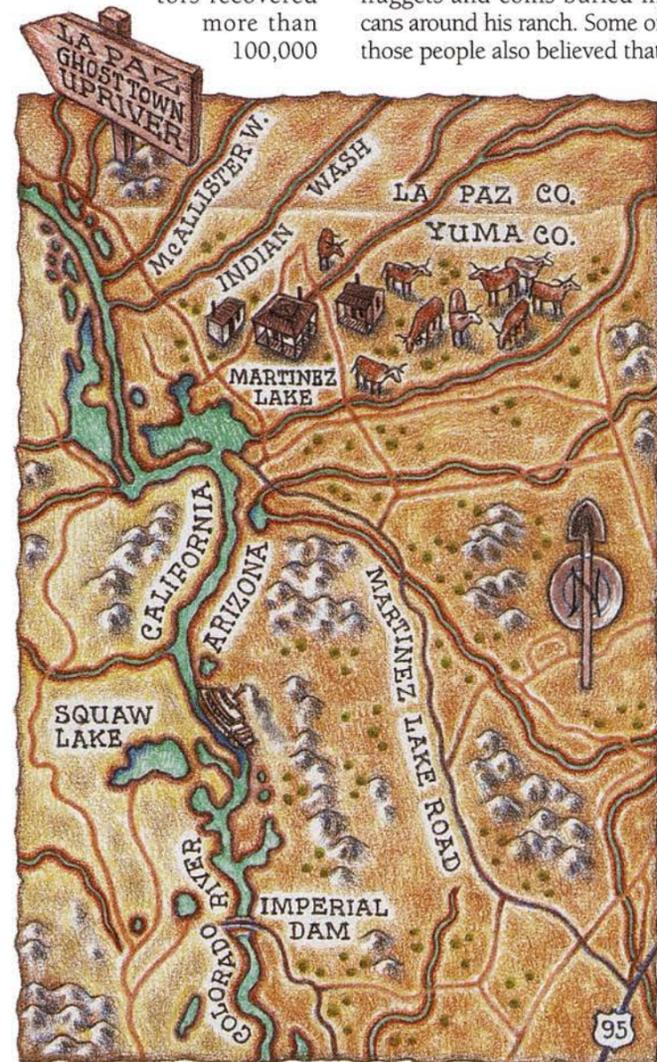
It's also possible, however, that Rood himself spent the money before he died. Though he was generally known as a responsible citizen — he was elected a Yuma County supervisor in 1868 — he also was known to go on periodic binges. A Forty-niner named William McCoy said he once saw Rood walking the streets of Hermosillo, Mexico, hung over, unshaven, and wearing peasant clothes. Rood told McCoy he'd blown \$3,000 on a good-time spree, and now he was broke. Rood also intimated in letters to his friend John Colton that he was capable of such antics.

The final twist to the story of Rood's treasure is this: after

he died, several normally sane people claimed to have encountered his ghost patrolling his ranch on horseback. They believed "Don Guillermo," as he was known along the Colorado, was protecting his gold. Whether Rood's ghost kept people from finding his treasure is not known, but the phantom rider certainly kept some people away.

Mail carrier Felipe Gonzales frequently spent nights in Rood's abandoned ranch house — until he too got spooked.

"This night I wake and hear a galloping horse and the jingle of harness," Gonzales later recalled. "It stops outside the rancho gate, and there is silence. 'Hola!' I cry out, 'who is there?' No answer. I open the door. The moon is bright, but no living thing is in sight. I don't stop there anymore." ■





# ARIZONA HUMOUR

## Fine Point of the Law

The following report was published in a recent edition of *The Tombstone Epitaph* under the heading "Marshal's Log":

"A Tombstone man reported he loaned his vehicle to a business associate who failed to return it. The county attorney advised the vehicle could not be reported stolen because the intent to permanently deprive could not be shown.

"The vehicle was located in Tampa, Florida."

Edward H. Hunngate  
Phoenix

## No Sale

I had made what I thought was a fine sales pitch to an elderly ranch owner, so I was quite surprised when he turned down my offer. I pressed him for the reason he didn't buy, and he said, "Well, if you must know, it's because I've got my brown shoes on today."

"Why," I stammered, "that's no reason at all . . ."

"Son," he said, smiling at me, "if I don't want to do something, one reason is just as good as any other."

M.W. Cohn  
Phoenix

## Interesting Question

For several years, I led Nature walks and gave slide programs and geology talks when I worked as a park ranger at the Grand Canyon's busy South Rim. I liked to encourage people to ask questions, advising, "There's no such thing as a stupid question. If you're thinking of it, chances are someone else would like the answer, too."

Once, though, I fielded a question that left me speechless. We were discussing the hundreds of prehistoric Anasazi ruin sites found within

Grand Canyon National Park, when a woman raised her hand and asked, "I understand these people lived here, but why did they build ruins?"

Stephan Block  
Cottonwood

## Vacation Highlights

When school resumed last fall, my seven-year-old grandson was asked to write about his summer vacation. Aaron decided to write about the Grand Canyon because he had recently visited it. However, we were all a little surprised at what he wrote:

"This summer I visited the

Grand Canyon. It is a place in Arizona with lots of gift shops and a very steep ditch."

Wanda Sandoz  
Mt. Pass, CA

## Arizona Pride

Several years ago, my parents retired and moved to southern Arizona. My father's regard for his new home state was evident in his praise of the mild weather, the panoramic vistas, and intriguing historical spots.

But his passion for his new home was never more evident than on a recent trip to California. While on a family picnic, we were admiring the

brilliant blue sky complete with fluffy, billowing white clouds on the horizon.

"Yeah, they're pretty," my father said, obviously unimpressed. "But in Arizona, we'd paint those clouds orange."

Tanya Stowe  
Lancaster, CA

## No Bones

A woman from the East visited our RV gift shop this summer. She referred to a ceramic buffalo skull I'd made as though it were a real one, so I hastily informed her it was not. "Oh, I knew that," she replied. "It doesn't look at all like the real horse skull next to it."

"Ma'am," I said, patiently, "that's not a horse skull. Horses don't have horns."

"Well," she said indignantly, "you just can't tell anymore with all this crossbreeding going on, like jackalopes."

Harvey Mickelson  
Flagstaff

## Modern Solution

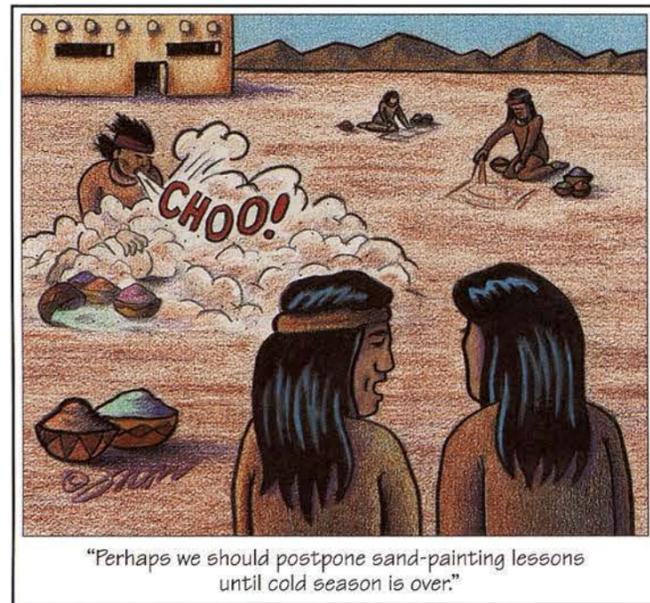
A local rancher spoke to a group of kids at the library about the use of chuck wagons on the range. As a finale to his presentation, he began to cook Dutch oven biscuits.

The children gathered around a bed of coals in the parking lot while the rancher mixed the biscuit dough in a big pan, using the tailgate of his pickup as a make-believe chuck wagon.

"Look at what the cook is doing now!" exclaimed the librarian to one wiggly youngster. "See, he is putting in the flour. Plop, there goes the lard. Is this the way your mom makes biscuits at home?"

One little boy turned to his friend in total bewilderment and whispered, "My mom just gets them out of a can."

Delane Blondeau  
Portal



VICKY SNOW

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# ROADSIDE REST

TEXT BY DON DEDERA  
ILLUSTRATION BY B. SCOTT HANNA

## Captivating Yavapai County Reluctantly Spawns a Population Boom

It's dawned on us recently that many close friends and working acquaintances from all the compass points have somehow arranged to pass their best and maybe final years in and around Prescott.

There is the consummate Texas editor whose wife now breathes the clear, pine-scented air of mile-high Prescott, far removed from humidity and pollution. And the long ago Virginia school chum, become the renowned physician. And the no-longer-sailing couple retired from Ohio to a glassy eagle's nest overlooking the Verde Valley. And a former California shopkeeper now dwelling as a hermit in a simple cabin in a remote canyon.

Not to mention the native-born and in-state refugees who get away from the hustle and stress of Phoenix and other Arizona urban centers. New and old Prescottonians prefer the open spaces and genteel lifestyle of our state's first territorial capital. Alas, in so doing, each contributes to the booming population, and quickening economy, of one of Arizona's fastest-growing communities.

"Don't you ever, ever, ever dare to write a complimentary article again about Prescott, do you hear?" a fifth-generation daughter of Prescott pioneers fairly shrieked at me in conversation some months ago. "We should have thrown a chain across the highway when we had the chance."

Should have, maybe. But didn't.

With its classic Yavapai County Courthouse and plaza, public forests, historic Whiskey Row, romantic Victorian neighborhoods, enterprising Indian landowners, artistic expositions, and athletic events — including the world's oldest rodeo — Prescott would inevitably attract the visitors and settlers whose sheer numbers would spur the town to a faster pace.

reporter for the *Courier* in Evansville, Indiana, and it was newsworthy when a deputy sheriff from Prescott came to my town to pick up a prisoner accused of an Arizona crime.

"I went over to the hotel to interview the deputy. He had on a big cowboy hat and ranch clothes, boots and all. We hit it off just fine. I asked him about the West and cases he had worked on and the country

he could get the hotel to fix dinner in a hurry, and we would have some more conversation.

"I told him he was kind, but wouldn't he please understand that, if I didn't run on home, my folks would begin to worry about me. Thanks very much, but no thanks.

"Right then, so quick that he took me by surprise, the deputy drew his handcuffs and snapped one cuff on my wrist.

"He dragged me over to the foot of the bed and snapped the other cuff to the bedstead. And this is what he said:

"Friend, I'm from Yavapai County. And where I come from, when a man is invited to dinner, he stays."

"When the dinner was eaten, the deputy fished up his key and unlocked the handcuffs and let me go.

"I've long since forgotten his name.

"But I guess I'll remember Yavapai County as long as I live."

Ned saw the Prescott of about 16,000 residents, all shopping within walking distance of home. The Sharlot Hall Museum complex was expanding around the original log Governor's Mansion, and more than a few inspired cultural leaders were parlaying a splendid public school tradition into a flowering of statuary, symphony, and opera.

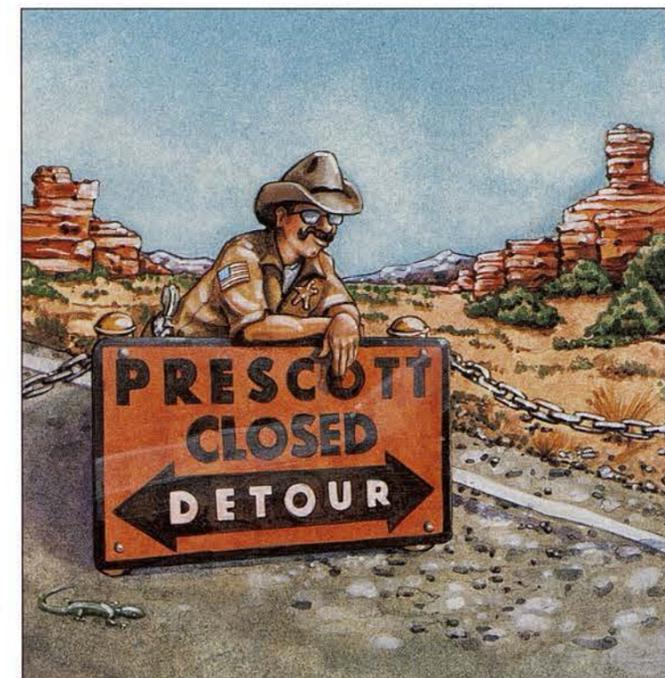
Today, depending on where the line is drawn, greater Prescott counts some 30,000 souls. Efforts have been made to control and plan for the growth of Yavapai County, little of which mollifies my first-family Prescottonian who failed to hang the chain across the highway. Hers is the unwanted inheritance of a people and a place that is unforgettably captivating. ■

where he lived. It was more of a friendly talk than an interview, but, as it was growing late in the afternoon, I finally got up to go.

"The deputy asked me to dinner. He said he would be honored if I'd stay and go on talking to him, exchanging facts about our two states.

"I'm sorry," I said, "but my family will be expecting me. My wife will have dinner waiting. Much obliged. Thanks all the same."

"The deputy insisted. He said



Also working against the wishes of my keep-Prescott-small lady friend was the personal charm of the early generations of Yavapai County people themselves. By illustration, when I was younger and writing a daily newspaper column, a gentleman from Terre Haute, Indiana, appeared one day to explain why he was satisfying a years-long ambition to see Yavapai County firsthand. Ned Bush by name, the Hoosier testified:

"During the 1930s, I was a



# BACK ROAD ADVENTURE

TEXT BY PHILIP VARNEY  
PHOTOGRAPHS BY PETER NOEBELS

## Trekking Buenos Aires Wildlife Refuge by Mountain Bike

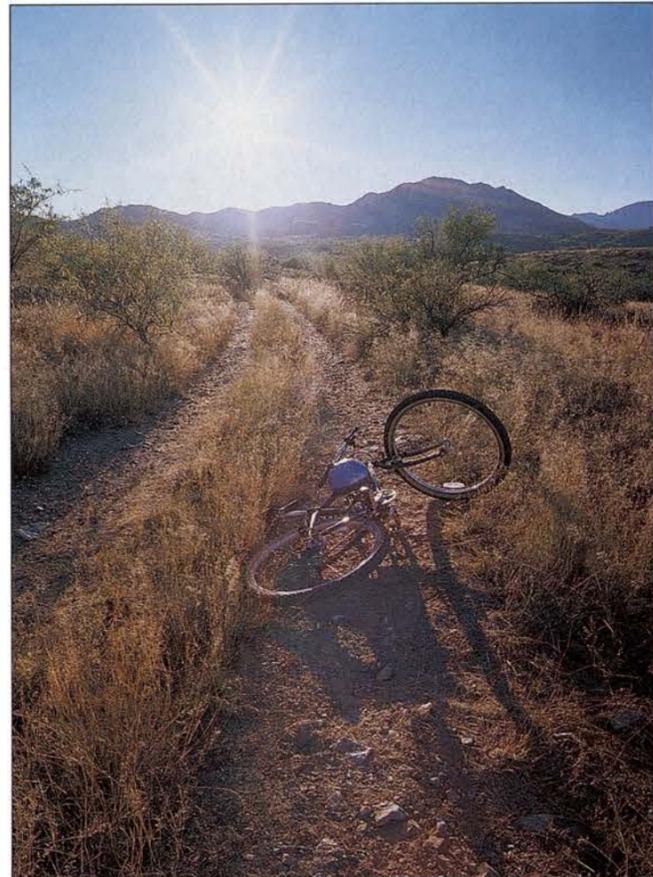
**B**uenos Aires means much more than “good air” in southern Arizona. It also means fields of waving waist-high grass, herds of pronghorn, vistas of Arizona and Mexico, and a place of rejuvenation for the masked bobwhite quail.

Buenos Aires Ranch was a cattle spread dating from the 1880s. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service purchased the 116,000-acre property in 1985, creating the Buenos Aires National Wildlife Refuge. The land was vastly different from its preranching state because of drought and overgrazing. Imported grasses and mesquite eventually so altered the ecosystem that native flora was choked out, and many indigenous animals could no longer flourish there.

Thea Ulen, outdoor recreation planner at the refuge, explains that the ranch was purchased to return Buenos Aires to the Sonoran savanna grassland habitat it once was, while, in the process, improving the conditions for the survival of the masked bobwhite quail, once believed extinct and now an endangered species.

Also reintroduced was a herd of about 87 Chihuahuan pronghorn, one of North America’s fastest animals, able to cruise at 40 miles per hour and top out at 60. Because of their resemblance to African antelope, pronghorn are often called antelope, although actually they are not closely related.

Most of the 200 miles of back roads in the refuge are



(ABOVE) When photographer Peter Noebels stopped along a trail in the Buenos Aires Wildlife Refuge, he left his bike to go exploring. (OPPOSITE PAGE) Baboquivari Peak, sacred to the Tohono O’odham as the home of their god I’itoi, looms in the distance.

open to the public, and we’re here with mountain bikes to ride one of the best loops in the state. On a clear fall morning, about 20 of us take off from refuge headquarters and turn south onto Antelope Drive, a two-lane dirt road for passenger cars and the principal route for visitors who wish to explore the area. Some of the first riders immediately spot several pronghorn loping across a plain.

Mesquite and prickly pear dot the prairie, and wheat-colored grass grows everywhere.

Much of it is a South African import, Lehman’s lovegrass, nutritionally far inferior to native grama grasses. Refuge researchers are systematically doing controlled burns to eliminate lovegrass so that native species can again dominate as they did before the 1970s when the foreign grass was introduced to the region.

Looming behind us is Baboquivari Peak, at 7,730 feet the most dramatic feature of Altar Valley (see *Arizona Highways*, Jan. ’92). This magnificent crag,

sacred to the Tohono O’odham as the home of their god I’itoi, will appear to us many times on the loop as we top a ridge or climb out of a ravine.

More than 100 ponds are scattered throughout the refuge, so we are on the lookout for some of the 300 species of birds that live here or migrate through in the fall. The first large pond, Lopez Tank, is 4.7 miles into our ride, but it’s dry — and birdless.

At 7.8 miles, we reach our first junction, a T in the road less than two miles north of the Mexican border. A right turn would take us to Sasabe, a tiny border village three miles away. We go left, leaving Antelope Drive and heading east toward the San Luis Mountains.

We reach our second junction at 11.4 miles, a place where three roads converge. The right fork leaves Buenos Aires toward Mexico; the middle goes to the headquarters of the old Garcia Ranch (no trespassing), now part of the refuge. We take the left fork, heading north on the most primitive of the three roads. For a truck, this is four-wheel-drive territory.

In 0.3 of a mile, we arrive at the Garcia Cemetery, still maintained by the Garcia family. Less than a mile beyond the cemetery, we climb into an area that features lovely quartz outcroppings and barrel cactus, ocotillo, yucca, and desert broom.

Naturally everyone hopes to see some masked bobwhite quail, but that’s unlikely: currently only an estimated 300 to 500 live in the wild on the refuge (more awaiting release reside in an aviary closed to the public). So far I’ve seen some Gambel’s quail, a distant hawk, and about a dozen Chihuahuan ravens, which are





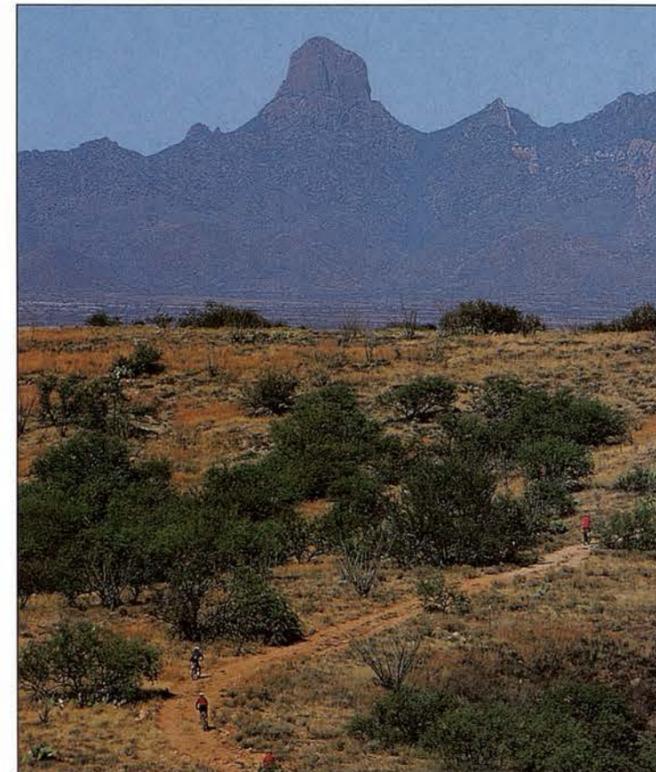
slightly smaller than the common raven.

Our third junction comes after 12.9 miles. A large mesquite with a huge barrel cactus almost six feet high to its right and three red barberry bushes to its left marks the spot. Our route will be to the left, crossing Canoa Wash. But we take the right anyway for 0.2 of a mile to Rock Tank to see a picturesque windmill creaking away. Then we retrace our route back to that third junction, now taking a right.

We reach our fourth junction at 13.7 miles. Going straight ahead would take us back to Antelope Drive, but we take a right and head down a steep slope, carefully keeping our bikes under control, into a wash. The slow climb up the other side is a test of heart, lungs, and legs.

At 14.5 miles, we climb a ridge and, almost at the crest, take a right fork. We missed this turn the first time we rode the loop, but our mistake simply took us to Antelope Drive. This time, taking the right fork, we head down into a beautiful valley and through another field of quartz.

Our now rather meager road



ends at 16.1 miles at a T with a much more substantial route. At this point, we've been out for just about two hours and have climbed 1,100 feet.

I comment to the group of riders that I have never been in a place where I felt better

about the use of my tax money. Others nod in agreement, one even intoning an "amen."

We turn left and get ready for the day's final treat. There's nothing like ending a ride on a downhill, and this easy, gradual descent lasts for 4.7 miles. I

(OPPOSITE PAGE) Prickly pear flourishes along the trail followed by our cyclists from the Southern Arizona Mountain Bike Association. (LEFT) The bikers follow the road through Altar Valley toward 7,730-foot Baboquivari Peak.

stop to watch others passing by and see one common denominator: everyone is grinning.

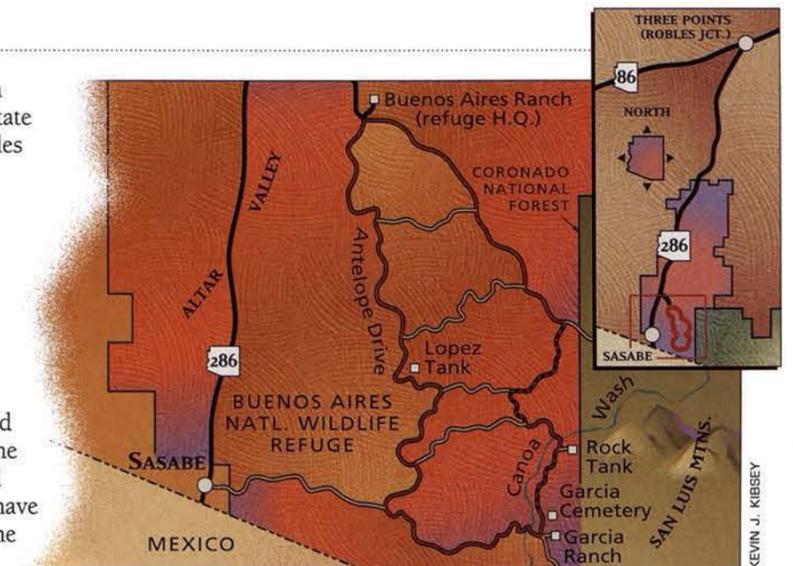
We rejoin Antelope Drive at 20.8 miles, just south of the refuge headquarters, now a half mile away. We retrace our route to our starting point.

Few riders glimpsed any pronghorn; no one viewed a masked bobwhite quail; but after this splendid 21-mile loop, no one is disappointed. Alexis Noebels is euphoric about our ride, the longest mountain bike excursion she has ever taken. When her husband, Peter, arrives, having photographed the riders using my four-wheel-drive truck, she exclaims that on the toughest uphill climbs, when she was gasping, she could tell how clean and pure the air is here. Peter smiles warmly at her and says, "Well, this is Buenos Aires!"

### TIPS FOR TRAVELERS

To reach the Buenos Aires National Wildlife Refuge from Tucson, take State Route 86 (Ajo Way) west from Interstate 19. At Three Points, also known as Robles Junction, 22 miles from Tucson, turn south onto State Route 286. The refuge entrance is 38 miles south, just beyond Milepost 8. The refuge is open to visitors every day, and admission is free. The headquarters is open 7:30 A.M. to 4 P.M., weekdays, except holidays. Even when the refuge office is closed, the reception area is open, offering brochures and maps. For more information, including times of tours and slide shows, write the refuge at P.O. Box 109, Sasabe, AZ 85633 or call (520) 823-4251.

Back road travel can be hazardous if you are not prepared for the unexpected. Whether traveling in the desert or in the high country, 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.



# MILEPOSTS

EDITED BY REBECCA MONG  
ILLUSTRATIONS BY KEVIN J. KIBSEY

## Outback Boutique

Driving the dirt road into Cochise Stronghold, immersed in the tumultuous days when the famous chief and his Chiricahua Apaches roamed this land and tangled with the bluecoats, I was jolted back to the present by a sign giving directions to the Fashion Products Gift Shop. A "boutique" way out here in the Dragoon Mountains? I'm no shopper, but this I had to see.

I followed the directions and was soon chatting with Ursula Pitz, who was glad to show me her handiwork: sweatshirts and Western-style shirts decorated with colorful Southwestern designs which she sells out of a room in the house she shares with her husband, Fred. Out in the Dragoons, 80 miles south-east of Tucson, Ursula isn't overwhelmed with customers — but then she has absolutely no competition, either.

If you're visiting the stronghold and want to stop by the shop, watch for the sign. Otherwise, drive west on Ironwood Road from Sunsites 4.5 miles to Cochise Stronghold Road, then turn north for a half mile. — Sam Negri

## Finding Fall Color

When the autumn weather cooperates, Arizona's higher elevations put on a spectacular display of color, peaking, usually, from late-September to mid-October. To go out in search of fall color on your own, try some of these prime locations: near Payson or Sedona, Madera Canyon, the White Mountains, the Chiricahuas, and Hart Prairie Road

near Flagstaff. Check with local chambers of commerce for color updates.

Another way to find fall color is to take advantage of activities and events happening at the right time and in the right

places, including: llama hikes in the Pinetop-Lakeside area, weekends, September 28-October 19; (520) 368-6700. A fall festival, also in the Pinetop-Lakeside area, September 28 and 29; (520) 367-4290. Payson's Museum of the Forest trip to Oak Creek Canyon and the San Francisco Peaks, October 5; (520) 472-6967. Boyce Thompson Southwestern Arboretum tours and fall plant sale, October 18 through 27; (520) 689-2811.

## A Grave Discovery

When you visit Quitobaquito Springs at Organ Pipe Cactus National Park, walk northward from the pond the equivalent of a block or so, and you will come upon a solitary concrete gravestone on a small hill. The lonely grave holds all that remains of one Jose Lorenzo Sestier, a Frenchman who died in 1900. Historians believe Sestier was one of the horde of travelers who came to this vast desert on their way to the goldfields of California. If Sestier had dreams of striking it rich, he must have given them up because he settled at the springs, working as a clerk in a general

store owned by Mikul Levy. It was Levy who erected the gravestone for his faithful employee. For information about Organ Pipe, call the park visitors center, (520) 387-6849. — Sam Negri

## Travel with the Zoo

A backpacking trip into the Superstition Mountains, October 18 to 20, is the last chance this year to travel with The Phoenix Zoo's Explorer's Club. (The 1997 schedule begins in January.)

The club offers Nature and eco-travel trips around Arizona (as well as South Africa and Kenya) geared toward individuals, families, seniors, and active adults looking for a challenge. A Phoenix Zoo expert accompanies each outing. The cost for Arizona trips, which range in length from one to several days, starts at \$65 and includes such destinations as Weavers Needle, the supposed Lost Dutchman's Mine, Havasu Canyon, Patagonia, and Sycamore Canyon. Club membership is free. For more information, including next year's schedule, call (602) 273-1341, ext. 7511.

## Trogon Tracking

Scientists estimate there are only about 100 to 200 elegant trogons in the United States, which puts them relatively high up on the threatened and endangered list. So popular an attraction are these colorful birds that each year up to 50,000 birders from throughout the world find their way

into the trogons' southeastern Arizona homeland, particularly the Chiricahua Mountains.

For the past two decades, Richard Taylor has tracked the distribution and habits of the trogons, and he has cataloged his findings in a book titled *Trogons of the Arizona Borderlands*. Taylor spent considerable time trekking the Chiricahuas (we profiled him in our April '94 issue) in search of the mysterious birds.

His discoveries you'll find in his book under the headings of: physical powers, sensory powers, ego, intelligence, habitat preferences, population, and distribution.

This is a book for any birders who plan to go afield and see a trogon for themselves. Check your favorite bookstore or contact Treasure Chest Publications, 1802 W. Grant Road, Suite 101, P.O. Box 5250, Tucson, AZ 85703-0250. — Richard G. Stahl

## Recipes of the Old West

Picture yourself as a wagon train cook, clumping across the West at two miles an hour behind a team of oxen. Not exactly ideal conditions for turning out culinary delights.

Take bread, for example. To whip out a loaf of sourdough, cooks first needed yeast to make the bread rise. Today yeast comes in packets from the store, but in the Old West the only way to amass living yeast was by creating a "starter." One type of starter was made of potatoes, sugar, flour, and water. But the fermenting mash had to be kept warm, no small problem for wagon train cooks.

One method a range cook used during cool nights was "to wrap the [starter] barrel in a blanket and tuck it into his bed,

sharing his body heat with the precious batter."

So says Lon Walters in *The Old West Baking Book* (\$14.95, Northland Publishing, P.O. Box 1389, Flagstaff, AZ 86002). The book is filled with cooking anecdotes wrapped around scores of recipes for biscuits, breads, cakes, pies, cobblers, and other old-time trail foods.

To pick up a copy, check your bookstore or contact the publisher toll-free at (800) 346-3257.

## EVENTS

### Apache Fair and Rodeo

August 28-September 2; Whiteriver

An all-Indian rodeo, a parade, concerts, Southwestern Native American ceremonial dances, and an intertribal powwow highlight the 71st annual White Mountain Apache Tribal Fair and Rodeo. Other attractions include native foods, exhibits, and intertribal arts and crafts. Overnight accommodations are available. Be sure to allow time to check out local trading posts and nearby Fort Apache, where buildings from the 1870s, including officers' row, still stand. Fair information: (520) 338-4346, ext. 316 or 323.



### Navajo Nation Fair

August 31-September 8; Window Rock

This is the 50th year for what's billed as the largest Indian fair in the country. The excitement includes a mix of traditional and contemporary activities: a big rodeo with bull-riding, Native American music,



## Learn to Take Scenic Photographs Like the Best of the Pros

If you're a camera bug, you can learn to take landscape photos

like those that appear in *Arizona Highways*. In fact, you can learn from the same photographers who shoot for the magazine. More than 1,000 already have.

*Arizona Highways* photographers, through a series of on-location Photo Workshops, teach their special techniques.

For four or five days, these famous photographers will work with you at such places as the Grand Canyon while rafting the Colorado River, Monument Valley, Canyon de Chelly, Sedona's red rock country, at

Indian ruins, and in color-splashed slot canyons.

The workshops, sponsored since 1988 by the Friends of *Arizona Highways*, are conducted throughout the year so there's a time convenient for everyone. For a brochure describing the 1997 workshops and other photo activities, contact the Friends at P.O. Box 6106, Phoenix, AZ 85005-6106; or, better still, call them at (602) 271-5904.

Also ask about the Photo Sampler Workshop program. These are five-day trips through either northern or southern Arizona intended to give the amateur photographer a sampling of the photography workshops at a variety of locations.

a comedy festival, a barbecue, fry bread contest, and — new this year — a chili cook-off. There will be an admission charged. Be sure to see the stone arch hereabouts that gave the capital of the Navajo Nation its name. Information: (520) 871-6478.



### 51st Annual Dick Wick Hall Day

September 7; Salome

The town named not for the Biblical dancer but a local one, supposedly — Mrs. Grace Salome Pratt — honors noted humorist Dick Wick Hall with a day of fun that promises a parade, pit barbecue, and outdoor dance. There will be an admission charged for the barbecue and dance. Information: (520) 859-3846.

### Zuni Marketplace

September 7-8; Flagstaff

The always interesting Museum of Northern Arizona hosts this indoor Indian market featuring tribal dances, Native American artists selling their

crafts, demonstrations, lectures, and kids' activities. Museum admission is \$2 to \$5. Information: (520) 774-5213.

### Oktoberfest '96

September 19-22; Tucson

That's right. Get a jump on Tall your friends by attending an October festival in September. *Willkommen!* to Hi Corbett Field in Reid Park, the site of this celebration featuring continuous live entertainment with a German theme, German food and beverages, arts and crafts, dance groups, choral singing, a petting zoo, magicians, and clowns. Admission is \$2. Information: (520) 298-6207.



### Festival of Science

September 27-October 6; Flagstaff

Dr. Mark Plotkin, ethnobotanist, will be the keynote speaker at this annual festival which is so big it's spread out

over numerous sites, including Lowell Observatory, the Museum of Northern Arizona, Coconino National Forest, and Northern Arizona University. And there are even more activities to choose from: hands-on exhibits, open houses, lectures, scientific displays, tours, and field trips to name a few. Admission is free. Call for a detailed schedule. Information: toll-free (800) 842-7293.

### Verde River Days

September 28-29; Cottonwood

You can pick up fishing tips from the experts and partake of old-fashioned fun at this annual event held at Cottonwood's Dead Horse Ranch State Park. There also will be horse-shoe games, a rubber duck race, canoe rides, Nature walks, environmental games, live entertainment, and food booths. Admission is free. Information: (520) 634-7593.



Information, including dates, fees, and activities, 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.



# H I K E O F T H E M O N T H

TEXT BY TOM KUHN  
PHOTOGRAPHS BY JOHN DREW

## The Sierra Estrellas' Gadsden Trail Gets You into Big Country

The jagged peaks of the Sierra Estrellas rise like a rusty saw blade against the sky, tauntingly close to the Gadsden Trail. But I know from the map the trail will follow a line of least resistance, avoiding the wild rocks.

At places along the seven-mile-long trail, I can see the tree line marking the Gila River. Before 1854, when the United States acquired a huge chunk of Mexico through the Gadsden Purchase, the Gila marked the Mexican border. The trail name commemorates the bargain.

But I haven't come for a history lesson or even a wilderness challenge — not today, anyway. Just looking, really. And along this trail, that's best done with binoculars because there's a lot of big country to take in, more than you would want to walk through on just a day hike.

Urban dwellers use the trail in Estrella Mountain Regional Park, about 20 miles southwest of Phoenix, for walking and jogging or trail-riding on bicycles and horses. In places the trail is worn to a deep groove from all the traffic. But you can make the Gadsden Trail a sight-seeing opportunity. Look to the mountains for your reward.

On this particular weekday, I encounter no one else, and the easy nature of the trail suits me just fine. An autumn sun has infected me with indolence, and I would be content to snooze in the thin shade of a paloverde tree. A desert wind speeds by, rearranging hair and clothing and dusting off the



(ABOVE AND OPPOSITE PAGE) Estrella Mountain Regional Park, located just a few miles outside Phoenix, offers city folks solitude as well as trails for hiking, biking, and horseback riding.

land after a long, hot summer. The only water handy is in my canteens.

The Estrella mountains, all perpendicular granite rising up to 4,337 feet at Montezuma Peak, provide a spectacular backdrop for my fall-fever daydreaming. There's nothing

stopping me, except lack of ambition, from striking southwestward away from the trail and Indian reserves farther east, across Bureau of Land Management public lands, to the Sierra Estrella Wilderness Area just a few miles away.

But I yield to overwhelming

laziness and continue down the trail. A few "little gray birds" and straggler mourning doves that have not yet migrated from the Gila River bottom are the only wildlife I see. The scarcity of critters only confirms how unrelentingly inhospitable the Estrellas are.

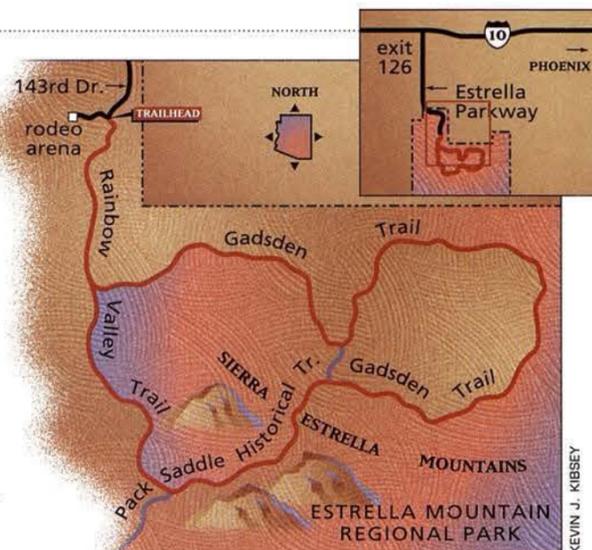
The trail first takes me across creosote bush flats all white light and hard on the eyes even in fall, through some small passes, then across rolling hills of hardpan before returning to the starting point at a rental stable parking lot in the park.

Before the land received park protection, a long stretch of the Gadsden Trail was a jeep road. Although the trail is rated for year-round use, I couldn't recommend it in summer. With little shade available, the Sonoran Desert through which the trail passes would be frying-pan hot. Late September through the desert flower blooms of February and March is the best time to hike the Gadsden, or to venture beyond into the Sierra Estrella Wilderness, itself. ❧

### WHEN YOU GO

To reach the Gadsden Trail from Interstate 10, about 20 miles southwest of Phoenix, take the Estrella Parkway turnoff, Exit 126. A freeway sign points the way to Estrella Mountain Regional Park, seven miles ahead. After you cross the Gila River bridge, turn left and follow the park perimeter road about a half mile, then take the road to the stables. The trailhead is located at the parking lot with a self-pay \$2 fee station by the covered picnic ramada. Always carry water, at least a gallon per person in hot weather.

For more information about the trail, contact Estrella Mountain Regional Park, 15099 W. Casey Abbott Road, North Goodyear, AZ 85338; (602) 932-3811.



KEVIN J. KIBSEY

