

Nervous Nellie on the Edge: A Mother Teeters on the North Rim

ARIZONA HIGHWAYS

JUNE 2006

Navajoland Mystery Tour

Explore
the Landscape
of Tony Hillerman's
Detective Stories

Plus:
A Biologist
Braves Bear Dens

Cacti Burst
Into Bloom

A Hiker Seeks
a Peak Moment

Navajoland Mystery Tour

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Online this month, discover the mystery and majesty of Arizona. From the monoliths of Monument Valley, to the peaceful pine country of the North Rim, to the beauty of botanical gardens, go to arizonahighways.com and click on the "June Trip Planner" for:

- Thrilling Hillerman country trips
 - North Rim recreation
 - The buzz on botanical gardens
- HUMOR** Our author imagines cavalry life at Fort Huachuca.
- ONLINE EXTRA** Find the silver lining along Arizona's "Million Dollar Highway."

WEEKEND GETAWAY Walk on the wild side at Out of Africa Wildlife Park.

HISTORY Meet Jessie Frémont, Territorial Arizona's enchanting First Lady.

EXPERIENCE ARIZONA Plan a trip using our statewide calendar of events.

FRONT COVER Sunlight streams through the swirling sandstone forms of Lower Antelope Canyon on the Navajo Indian Reservation near Page. No wider than 18 inches at its start, the depths of the canyon reveal a phantasmagorical world of color and form throughout its quarter-mile length. PAUL GILL ■ To order a print, call (866) 962-1191 or visit arizonahighways.com.

BACK COVER Showy flowers cover a diminutive fishhook pincushion cactus. Generally less than 6 inches tall, the tiny *Mammillaria grahamii* bursts into bloom after the first rains of the summer monsoon season. See portfolio, page 22. JOHN P. SCHAEFER

ICONIC IMAGE Carved from the red sandstone of the Colorado Plateau through the action of countless centuries of wind and water, the striking buttes and pinnacles of Monument Valley remain the final testament to the ancient seas and sand dunes that once covered the area. See story page 8. LEROY DEJOLIE ■ To order a print, call (866) 962-1191 or visit arizonahighways.com.



Puckered Lips or Just Poppies?

After my first glance at the March cover, I thought I was looking at the facial profile of a Native American woman smelling some of our state's wonderful Mexican goldpoppies. Then I realized they were all flowers and not a face at all. In reading the caption, I was dumbfounded to find out that the picture was taken along the Apache Trail. The "connections" did not stop there, however. The issue also mentioned the story of Mexican native Juan Diego, the Aztec earth goddess Tonantzin, and the Virgin of Guadalupe, whose legend deals with the image of a woman produced by flowers.

Sam Mendivil, Tucson

I went back and looked. Unnerving. Of course, poppies often have that effect on me. And if there's one thing I've learned in life, it's that everything is connected. —Peter Aleshire, Editor

Howling Females With Pitchforks

I'm a linguistic anthropologist, and I really do understand. About the myopic patriarchal roots of our language and our culture, about how nobody really intended to exclude women from virtually everything for all those years, about how unreasonable the feminists were. Everyone's tired of the argument, right? But I'm looking at the cover headline "My Heroes Have Always Been Cowboys" (February '06), and it's underneath a picture of a woman on a horse, and it's just so . . . absurd. My heroes have always been cowgirls. I bet you knew something like this was coming and are barricaded in your office at this very moment, awaiting the crowds of howling females, armed with pitchforks, who are working their way up the mountain, torches flickering in the moonlight.

Christina Maris, Albuquerque, NM

You're right. I savored the irony. But now I'm worried about the pitchforks. —Ed.

Blurry Eyed Editor's Lapses

I would like to comment on some of your March 2006 photographs. 1) Page 13, out of focus acacia bushes in the foreground. 2) Page 36, both the arch in the foreground and the background are out of focus. 3) Pages 40 and 41, middle ground is blurry. 4) Page 57, excessive contrast. The good photographs in the issue are superb, as usual: the "Crescendo of Color" (pages 18-19), "The Great Flower Chase" (pages 24-25) and the wonderful back cover. Why the lapses above?

Michael Emptage

Good eye. In some of those cases, we were using 35 mm images to capture more action and people. Unfortunately, 35 mm cameras don't allow

adjustment of the film plane the way a view camera does, so there's a tradeoff. But we're trying to mix more people and action photography with our landscapes these days. —Ed.

Don't Feed the Danged Wildlife

I must question the judgment in publishing the article "Playful Prairie Dogs Put on an Entertaining Spring Show" (March '06, "Along the Way"). I also live in Tucson, and problems with feeding wildlife have been in the news, including the controversy over Arizona Game and Fish Department's having to kill mountain lions in Sabino Canyon and earlier problems with feeding bears on Mount Lemmon. There have been many requests to citizens of the area to not feed wildlife, and small animals can lead to larger predators frequenting the area.

James E. Carnahan, Tucson

Excellent point—feeding wildlife creates problems. But it gets worse. We later figured out that although the picture showed a prairie dog, the writer was probably actually feeding round-tailed ground squirrels—since the only prairie dogs in Arizona are way up north. —Ed.

Big Boulder Boo Boo

The article "Phoenix Urban Hiking" (March '06) interested me. In a caption I was shocked to read that schist is a type of granite. Being a geologist, I was astounded to find that granite, which is an igneous rock, is now being referred to as a schist, which is a metamorphic rock. Somebody goofed! Perhaps the rock you referred to was originally a granite that has undergone metamorphism to form a gneiss rather than a schist.

Karl Koenig, Texas

You're absolutely right. Gneiss catch. —Ed.

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highways on tv

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HANDS OF THE GODS

The Navajos say that the Mittens, 'Ná Tosh, are formed from the giant hands of the gods left behind as a promise that they will one day return. PETER ALESHIRE

distance to drive this loop and marvel. I have learned the stories of my own clan, tales going back 250 million years to the end of the Permian period when massive sand dunes covered this great region and the whole dry surface of the Earth was gathered together into a single supercontinent dubbed Pangaea.

Then the Earth shifted and nearly all living things died mysteriously in one of the most terrible mass extinctions ever recorded—just

as the Navajos say that the exasperated Creator wiped out the Third World, which came just before this one.

Pangaea broke up and its pieces went wandering, rootless as a band of white guys. Those great sand dunes were soon buried, heated, pressurized and turned to the thick layers of swirled rock we have dubbed DeChelly Sandstone.

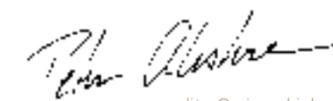
Then the Earth shifted again, thrusting these newly made rocks back up into the light, where the rain, thunder, ice and wind conspired to render them into the form of gods.

So I come now with empty hands, seeking a place to stand here among the stone gods and the mass extinctions and the misnamed buttes. I have read my geology and my history and also the Blessingway, hoping that these things may fit me to this place. For I have lived my life in many places, thinking always of other times, but in my heart I am jealous of the medicine men who know where they belong.

I turn off the engine and get out of the Jeep in the fading light. The engine block crackles as it cools, accentuating the wind-caressed silence. I walk a little way from the road, the Blessingway humming in my ears.

And then it happens suddenly. I fit. The Mittens glow in the long light. The gods have returned or perhaps they never left. The wind ripples in the red sand echo the fossilized 250 million-year-old sand dune buttes, reincarnated now as holy people making their ancient prayers to the clouds. The continents and the sand dunes and the sandstone and Merrick and Mitchell and the Yei Bichei and I have all wandered the world to come finally to this place at this moment, as though our single purpose all along had been to watch the light deepen into dark. In the words of the Navajo Nightway chant:

*Feeling light within, I walk.
With lively feelings, I walk.
It is finished in beauty.
It is finished in beauty.*



editor@arizonahighways.com

Native Son

Shares His Legacy

LEROY DEJOLIE CAUSED HIS MOTHER A LOT OF GRIEF when he entered this world in the early morning hours of a spring day in 1960. He's dedicated considerable time since then to making the world a better place for those around him.

DeJolie was born to the Rock Gap People, Tsé deeshgizhni, his mother's clan. Respect for his Navajo roots shows in his fervor to give back to the culture that raised him. He devotes his time and skills as a father, photographer, author, mentor and conservator. And he does it all while working full-time as a steel fabricator for the past 28 years at the Navajo Generating Station in Page.

Realizing his tribe's cultural values are slowly disappearing, DeJolie's efforts to preserve them are twofold: document traditions before they fade away, and pass the torch to the next generation.

"I like to think that I can utilize my cameras both honestly and objectively," he says. "I feel I can help in some way to protect, to preserve and to support the forces of conservancy. I'm compelled to capture as much as I can for my family, for my people and for generations to come."

This sandstone land of heroic buttes and sculpted canyons represents much more than a photographer's paradise for DeJolie. His allegorical landscapes pay homage to Dinétah, the Navajo homeland. "Navajo culture influences my passion for putting the spirit of Navajoland into photographic images," he says. "I feel very much a part of my homeland, and my homeland is very much a part of me."

Reverence for his birthplace grew from tending his family's sheep as a kid on ancestral land of the Kaibito Plateau. That experience taught him of the land's importance in the Navajos' agrarian ways. Growing up, he heard the Navajo Genesis stories recounting how all life emanates from Earth itself.

"Since there are no texts or written documentation of our history, our culture and traditions have been compiled and preserved only by our oral traditions and the perpetuation of rituals," DeJolie says. His images of this timeless landscape contribute to the recorded history of Navajo culture in the 21st century.

Lavishly illustrating our story "Land of Mysteries," beginning on page 8, is DeJolie's Dinétah through the keen eyes and passionate heart of the native son. This theatrical setting featured in Tony Hillerman's best-selling novels is where fictional Navajo policemen Jim Chee and Joe Leaphorn ply their detective skills solving mysteries on the reservation. Woven into Hillerman's storylines are truthful portrayals of the beliefs, values and ceremonies of traditional Navajo culture.

Hillerman and DeJolie are kindred spirits from divergent backgrounds. Each helps shape the world's view of the Navajo

Nation. DeJolie applauds Hillerman's ability to commune in the modern world and the traditional Navajo world. Similarly, DeJolie moves with equal savvy and grace in both worlds. He attributes that to his early education in government-subsidized boarding schools, and later learning metallurgy as a teenager at a trade school in Los Angeles. He's comfortable in both cultures.

"Yes, I wear a watch and show up when I'm expected in one world," DeJolie says. "However, in my Navajo world, my concerns are more about culture, tradition, relationships and spirit. In this context, time is not a strict numerical concept as much as it is an indicator of when people should plant or harvest, or when sheep will breed and give birth."

Preserving these traditional values for the next generation inspired DeJolie to found his "My World" project. Through his



Shiprock Peak forms a craggy landmark in the northwestern region of the Navajo Reservation. LEROY DEJOLIE

photography workshops, underprivileged kids on the reservation explore their own lives and the world around them with cameras.

"Each child is given a camera, tripod and film, and personal instruction. At the end of each workshop, the film is developed and each is able to keep his interpretation of the world," DeJolie says. "These workshops are so popular that several children have repeated them." Learning photography opens their eyes to a new form of self-expression, and expands their view of the world.

He knows firsthand the power photography holds to inspire a young mind. A book of old photographs from 1902 by Earle Robert Forrest titled *With a Camera in Old Navajoland* influenced young LeRoy to begin photographing his beloved homeland 28 years ago.

One day a Navajo boy or girl may see DeJolie's photographs from 2006, sparking a fire within to explore the possibilities of photography to document Navajo traditions. And the torch will be passed. **AH**

taking the off-ramp

Cowboy Coup

by Richard Maack, Arizona Highways photography editor

After working through the night to light the huge interior of the Gadsden Hotel in Douglas for an *Arizona Highways* story, my assistant and I settled into a booth in the hotel's coffee shop, dead-tired and near-ravenous. While we sipped our coffee and worked through massive plates of bacon and eggs, the morning sun began to stream across the chrome stools

along the counter opposite our table.

The repeating pattern of the stools appealed to me, and although my tripod was packed away, I did have my camera. I positioned the Nikon with its motor-drive and 20 mm wide-angle lens directly on the tabletop to expose a few frames.

And then . . .

A lone cowboy walked into the coffee shop

and picked a stool directly in the light of the window. Clad in a red shirt and a white hat, he sat down with his newspaper, creating a perfectly balanced composition that couldn't have been scripted any better. I managed to squeeze off the few remaining frames on my roll of film. By the time I reloaded the camera, more diners had sat down at the counter and the moment was gone.



RICHARD MAACK

25 Years of a Secret High Life in Flagstaff

TWO HUNDRED ACRES. Two thousand five hundred species of plants. Three miles of trails. Why is this place still a secret? The Arboretum at Flagstaff hides away down a dirt road in a lush ponderosa forest just west of Flagstaff. It stands at a higher elevation than any other arboretum in the country.

Growing plants in the high dry climate with only a 75-day growing season challenged California transplant Frances McAllister. The philanthropist dedicated her land and home to help other gardeners and help preserve native plants. This year, the Arboretum at Flagstaff, at 4001 S. Woody Mountain Road, celebrates its 25th anniversary. The secret is out. To join the celebration, take State Route 66 west through town and turn south on Woody Mountain Road. Wander the trails to see the Flagstaff Fabulous Plants or rare treasures like the Sunset Crater penstemon, which grows only on the extinct volcano and on the grounds of the arboretum.

Docents lead tours daily at 11 A.M. and 1 P.M., April 1 through October 31. Information: (928) 774-1442; www.thearb.org. —Vera Marie Badertscher



time, providing them with cameras and the skills to use them while wandering through Arizona's natural wonders. Participants keep trip journals and interact with professional photographers, environmental educators, naturalists and park rangers, all the while taking aim at everything from landscapes and wildlife to each other.

Following the trip, students learn to create Web pages featuring their photos and journal excerpts. This month, 12 future shutterbugs will zoom in on Oak Creek Canyon, Slide Rock State Park, Tuzigoot National Monument and the Grand Canyon. To see the results, log onto www.udall.gov/parks/. (Or wait a few years and check back with us). —JoBeth Jamison

Shooting Gallery

TUCSON KIDS ARE TAKING SHOOTING lessons in Arizona parks and wilderness areas—pointing and shooting lessons that is. In 1999, the Morris K. Udall Foundation teamed up with the Tucson Boys and Girls Clubs to form Parks in Focus, a program that creates environmental awareness by giving select youths a chance to see the state's natural wonders through the viewfinder of a camera. Since its inception, Parks in Focus has conducted yearly photography workshops and trips for up to a dozen middle-school students at a

Student photographs document Parks in Focus.



Susan Ruble of High Country Raptors holds a red-tailed hawk for two young visitors at the Arboretum at Flagstaff. Raptor demonstrations are held every weekend from April 1 through October 31 at noon and 2 P.M.



Junk Bikes and Fine Art

SURROUNDED BY THE ARTISTS who work and perform in the old warehouses on either side of Stone Avenue just north of Tucson's downtown, BICAS, which stands for Bicycle Inter-Community Action & Salvage, encourages new ways of relating to your bicycle, including wearing part of it as jewelry. At 15 years old, one of the oldest community bicycle shops in the country, BICAS goes beyond repairing bikes to use gears, chains, saddle seats and reflectors to create art and adornment. In 2001, the governor recognized its ingenious recycling, presenting BICAS with the prestigious Governor's Award for Community Art.

In the cool, dim basement workshop, bikes hang from the ceiling and huddle in clumps on the floor. The location at 44 W. Sixth St. once served the nearby railroads as a warehouse. Inside, tools arranged neatly on pegboard await customers needing to fix a broken bicycle. They also find new uses for old bike parts, says administrator Ignacio Rivera de Rosales, and aim to make sure that people understand their bikes. That means classes in repairs and construction and encouraging everyone from high school volunteers to the homeless to provide sweat equity to keep the wheels turning.

BICAS welcomes visitors to the art gallery Tuesday to Friday from noon to 7 P.M. and Saturday, noon to 6 P.M. Check for the schedule of classes for bikes and art.

Information: (520) 628-7950; www.bicas.org. —Vera Marie Badertscher



Saving Treasures

IN 1895, curator Herbert Brown recorded the acquisition of the Arizona State Museum's first piece of pottery—an ancient Maricopa bowl. Since that first pot, the museum's ceramic collection located at the University of Arizona has

grown to more than 20,000 vessels spanning 2,000 years of Southwestern history.

Designated as an official project of the Save America's Treasures program, the collection—the largest of its kind—will be preserved under glass in the Pottery Project's viewable vault. This year, the ceramics will

move from five storage areas in two buildings to their permanent home in a viewable glass-walled storage vault, where the vessels will be on display, preserving the past for the future generations to come.

Information: (520) 621-6314.

—Carrie M. Miner

Mistaken Identity—It's a Croc

"BY CRIKEY" it's a crocodile—despite previous thinking that isolated teeth found in Petrified Forest National Park matched those of a plant-eating dinosaur named *Revueltosaurus callenderi*, which roamed the swampy marshes of the prehistoric Southwest approximately 210 million years ago. But in March

2004, park paleontologist William Parker discovered a complete fossilized skeleton to go with the teeth and threw a monkey wrench into scientific theory.

Instead of a being a dinosaur, *R. callenderi* was actually a very early

ancestor of today's crocodiles. The creature, 3 to 4 feet long, with a stubbier, flatter skull, had a less sprawling leg posture than today's crocodiles. Another unusual feature was that armor didn't cover the entire body, but was limited to two lines down its back.

Revueltosaurus (named for Revuelto Creek, New Mexico, where the original teeth were found) proves that some ancient

crocodilians had teeth that looked just like teeth from ornithischians, the branch of dinosaurs that includes Triceratops. Not only was this mistaken identify, but it means that paleontologists will need to rethink the order of dinosaur evolution. *Revueltosaurus* will eventually be displayed at the park's Rainbow Forest Visitors Center.

Information: (928) 524-6228. —Janet Webb Farnsworth



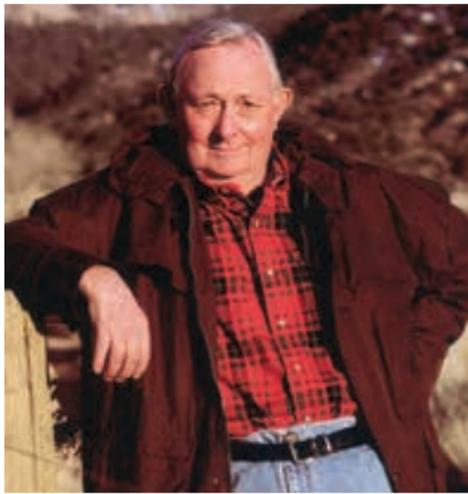


A war, a healing
and a string of
best-selling detective
novels connect
Tony Hillerman
to Navajoland

LAND OF MYSTERIES

By Rachel Dickinson
Photographs by LeRoy DeJolie

Tenacious Toehold Sprouted from a pine nut possibly a century ago, a once-hardy, drought-resistant piñon pine tree maintains a rocky toehold on Hunts Mesa overlooking the iconic rock formations of Monument Valley—one of Tony Hillerman's favorite haunts—in northeastern Arizona.
To order a print, call (866) 962-1191 or visit arizonahighways.com.



Tony Hillerman

KELLY CAMPBELL

TONY HILLERMAN TAKES UP A LOT OF SPACE, whether it's in the front of a packed room of admirers all crowded around clutching dog-eared paperbacks and brand-new books for him to sign, or sitting at a table in the local diner eating a chicken-fried steak dinner. Physically, he's a big guy, bearlike as he lumbers across the room, his gait the result of stepping on a mine during World War II.

But it's more than that. He's got a long face and big ears and thinning hair, and his sonorous voice carries in a crowd. His best-selling detective novels made the nation more aware of the Navajo Indian Reservation, and spawned an entire travel industry centered on "Hillerman Country." And although he brought a Navajo worldview to jaded American readers, he was embarrassed by all the fuss.

Since he first stumbled upon an Enemy Way ceremony in 1945, Hillerman has been studying the Navajo culture. He was sent to El Paso, Texas, after stepping on the land mine in France, and while convalescing, he took a job driving a truck loaded with oil-field equipment out to the Navajo Reservation. "I just happened to drive into—literally—an Enemy Way ceremony for two Marines who were just back from the Pacific war," said Hillerman. "And of course, if you know about Enemy Way ceremonies, their primary goal is to get you back into the culture and let you forget all the bad things you learned and get rid of all the anger—forgive and forget. That's really deeply

Sculpted Sandstone Appearing from aboveground as a mere crack in the earth (opposite page), Antelope Canyon's play of light and shadows on wind-and-water-sculpted sandstone may be visited only by arrangement with Antelope Canyon Navajo Tribal Park. ■ To order a print, call (866) 962-1191 or visit arizonahighways.com.

ingrained in the Navajo culture. I thought about all the people I knew who fought the Japanese and just hated them. What a difference this was from the way I was greeted coming home. More than any single thing, this chance encounter caused me to be attracted to the Navajo way."

Growing up during the Great Depression in Sacred Heart, Oklahoma, Hillerman was no stranger to Indian culture. He attended a Pottawatomie Indian boarding school run by the Roman Catholic Church as a day student. He went there partly because the religious education was important to his family, but also because his father wouldn't allow him to attend the public school where the teacher was a bigoted political extremist.

Hillerman grew up with Indian friends, both Pottawatomies and Seminoles. "We were all friends and grew up together and didn't get into any of these racial differences," said Hillerman. "We had one thing in common that held us together—everybody was dirt poor."

Hillerman's father ran the general store in town. When Hillerman was a teenager, the family moved a couple of miles out of town onto a 40-acre ranch bought with money his mother made by selling a homesteading lot she owned in the Oklahoma panhandle. Not long after the move, his father died, leaving his mother responsible for three teenaged children. Hillerman's sister attended nursing school, and Tony's mother was determined that one of the boys would go to college. Barney, the older brother, offered to stay home and work the farm. Soon World War II intervened, and both boys found themselves overseas. After the war, the GI Bill allowed Tony to finish the education he started half a dozen years earlier.

Hillerman grew up surrounded by books. His father, in particular, was a voracious reader and passed the love of reading on to his son who eagerly read everything he could get his hands on. His mother passed on a sense of adventure and a deep love for the land. As a teenager, she left Nebraska with her brother, two teams of horses, a wagon and a buggy and staked a homestead claim in the prairie of the Oklahoma panhandle. She built her own sod house and lived in it long enough to get title to the land. This remarkable accomplishment by such a young woman wasn't lost on her son, who has shown a similar sense of adventure and passion for the land throughout his life.

After working as a newspaper reporter and editor for 15 years, and teaching journalism courses at University of New Mexico from 1966 to 1987, Hillerman tried his hand at fiction. A couple dozen books later, he thinks he's gotten it mostly right. With millions of

Guide to Hillerman Country Tracking Jim Chee Through Navajoland

By Pauly Heller
Illustrations by Peter Thorpe

Travelers can now follow the tracks of author Tony Hillerman-created Navajo Tribal Police detectives Lt. Joe Leaphorn and Officer Jim Chee through Diné Bike'yah, NavajoLand. Visit www.detoursaz.com or call (866) 438-6877.



In Hillerman's novel *The Blessing Way*, a murder takes Leaphorn to Ganado, home of Hubbell Trading Post, the oldest continuously operating trading post in the United States. Established by John Lorenzo Hubbell in 1878, the nonprofit Western National Park Association now operates the post. The site maintains its original 160-acre homestead, family home and visitors center, enhanced by Navajo artisans still trading there.

Open daily, May through September, 8 A.M. to 6 P.M., and October through April, 8 A.M. to 5 P.M. Closed Thanksgiving, Christmas and New Year's Day. User fee \$2.

From Flagstaff, take Interstate 40 east to Exit 333, then drive north on U.S. Route 191, 38 miles to Ganado, then west on State Route 264.

Information: (928) 755-3475 or www.nps.gov/hutrl/index.htm.

Note: The Navajo Indian Reservation observes daylight-saving time, while Arizona does not.



Hillerman Country



About 6 miles west of the place in the Chuska Mountains where Lieutenant Leaphorn is shot in *Skinwalkers*, stands Diné College, the first Indian-controlled community college in the United States. With hogan-inspired architecture, the seven-story Ned Hatathli Cultural Center forms the college's core, offering a museum and gallery with cultural exhibits and sales of Navajo arts and various crafts. The Diné College Bookstore carries volumes on Navajo religion, language and culture.

Open Monday through Friday, 8 A.M. to 4:30 P.M.
Information: (928) 724-6600 or www.dinecollege.edu.



Blind *Listening Woman* gives Lieutenant Leaphorn insight into solving a murder in Monument Valley.

To see the valley's iconic rock formations—such as the Mittens and the Three Sisters—take U.S. Route 89 north from Flagstaff to U.S. Route 160 east to U.S. Route 163 north. Drive 4 miles to Indian Route 42 east into Monument Valley Navajo Tribal Park. The Navajos consider the area sacred, so visitors must stay on this road unless accompanied by a licensed Navajo guide.

Open daily, 7 A.M. to 7 P.M. April through September, 8 A.M. to 5 P.M. October through March. Closed Thanksgiving and Christmas.
Admission: \$5, age 10 and older.

Information: (435) 727-5870 or www.navajonationparks.org/index.htm.



Windswept Patterns The rising sun beyond Monument Valley's Totem Poles emphasizes the textured patterns of windswept fine sand at Sand Springs. ■ To order a print, call (866) 962-1191 or visit arizonahighways.com.

readers eagerly waiting for the next installment of the mystery series featuring Tribal Policeman Jim Chee or Lieutenant Leaphorn, Hillerman has managed to crank out a new mystery almost every year. Characters from the Navajo, Hopi, Zuni and Apache tribes appear in his mystery novels, but he always comes back to the Navajos and tribal policemen, Chee and Leaphorn. His readers have learned about Navajo ceremonies, beliefs, history, cultural clashes and a colorful Western landscape

of canyons and mesas and hogans and ancient cliff dwellings.

Listening to Hillerman talk is like reading one of his books. He lends a strong narrative voice to his written work and is a consummate storyteller in person. Descriptions of weather, rain, sun, approaching storms, gusts of wind—and the landscape—are seamlessly woven into his stories until they become like characters. In fact, Hillerman's people are always pausing to look at

and comment on clouds, rock formations, erosion patterns, colors, shadows and the vastness of the land. The author says that Navajos will stop their cars to look at cloud shadows on cliffs or cloud formations in the sky. "I know of one great expanse of erosion—it's all colors—that's called Desolation Flats on a Bureau of Land Management map," he says. "I asked Austin Sam [a Navajo friend who was riding with Hillerman that day], 'What do you guys call this valley here?' He said,

'Our name for it is Beautiful Valley.' You see the different attitude? To the white guys, if it doesn't look like money, it's desolation. But the Navajos see all those beautiful colors and the shapes and the forms and that erosion and see the beauty in it."

After the publication of his eighth tribal police book, the Navajo Tribal Council declared Tony Hillerman a "Special Friend" of the Diné. Recently, Navajo President Joe Shirley Jr. praised Hillerman's books in a speech at the Pueblo Indians Cultural



Nature's Cathedral Church Rock's shadowy spires extend heavenward against the violet hues of a post-sunset sky near Kayenta.

Center in Albuquerque, New Mexico, because they got so many Indian children interested in reading. Hillerman feels honored by these accolades from the Navajo community. He notes that his Navajo nickname is "Afraid of His Horse," which goes back to a festival in Window Rock where he declined to ride a horse in a parade—he thought the horse was a little too spirited—and opted instead to ride in the Chevrolet convertible with the Navajo beauty queen. The people parked their pickup trucks along the highway to watch the parade. Hillerman said, laughing, "These people were all cheering the queen and they were looking at me and they were yelling, 'Who the hell are you?' I'll never forget that.

"What I see especially among the Navajos and the Zunis and the Hopis is a culture of people who have been smart enough to learn a lesson that we're awfully slow to get," notes Hillerman. "They know that being rich doesn't have a damn thing to do with how much money you've got. It's got to do with are you happy and are you content. Most of

the Navajos I know, and the Hopis and the Zunis and the San Juan Indians and the Taos Indians, like the life they live," he says. This doesn't mean they don't have problems. As Hillerman points out, the "imported good old West Coast problems like cocaine" plague the reservations. However he says the Navajos "pretty much hold onto the old ways—the traditional ways—certainly better than we do.

"One way Navajos aren't very similar to the average American is that they don't have what they don't need," says Hillerman. "They're not greedy."

Hillerman often writes about the Navajo belief in witches. He says that if a Navajo believes a witch is causing a string of bad luck, he'll look for the greedy guy—the one "who's got more than he needs and is not sharing it with the people."

James Peshlakai, a Navajo friend and shaman who shows up as a character in several Hillerman books (Hillerman often uses his friends, or at least their names, as characters), thinks Hillerman has influenced the Navajo culture. "When Mr.

'I WANT READERS TO COME AWAY WITH, FIRST AND FOREMOST, A RESPECT FOR THE NAVAJO CULTURE . . .' —TONY HILLERMAN

Hillerman's books became popular, the Navajos were among the first readers of his novels," says Peshlakai. "Then the young people wanted to know, 'Are these legends accurate?' and the elders had to answer their questions. We were on the verge of losing our cultural ways and Mr. Hillerman got the young people's interest back in their culture and history."

Acclaimed Navajo photographer LeRoy DeJolie agrees. "Tony Hillerman is a very thorough researcher, and he uniquely combines the two worlds together—the modern-day world we all live in and the cultural exchanges of the traditional Navajo world. Hillerman exquisitely intertwines these into one knot."

Not everyone can go into a culture and get an understanding of its worldview. But because Hillerman grew up among Indians in the West, he gained access to details about Navajos that might elude others. Fortunately, he's spent the last 35 years introducing this culture to the wider world through his mysteries.

"I get pretty much 100 percent cooperation from the Navajos when researching a book," says Hillerman. "I say, 'Do you guys still do this? Does this tradition still hold?' and they'll say, 'Yeah, my clan does,' or 'No, I haven't heard of that for years.' You know, once they know you're honestly interested in them and are respectful and have a legitimate, honest interest in something, then they respect that. I grew up a country boy, as they did, and they know I respect them.

"I want readers to come away with, first and foremost, a respect for the Navajo culture, and for the other tribes I write about. I want them to get some inkling of the religion of the tribes and of their devotion to it. The Navajos aren't secretive about their religion. With the Pueblos, you have to be very careful because if unauthorized people know some things, it diminishes powers. I'm careful not to reveal . . . well, if it's secret I don't know it anyway."

Peshlakai says Hillerman generally gets the details right when he writes about Navajo history or ceremonial characters. Peshlakai describes Navajo belief as "metaphysical—more science than religion." He worries that Navajo oral history is being diluted because outside religions are being adopted or mixed in with Navajo beliefs. He hopes Hillerman's books will actually help younger people learn about their culture.

At 80, Tony Hillerman is slowing down a little.

Bursts of Yellow Sandpaper mules ears—a reference to the plants' leaves' rough texture—adds bright starbursts of color to the arid landscape below Red Mesa on the Navajo Indian Reservation.

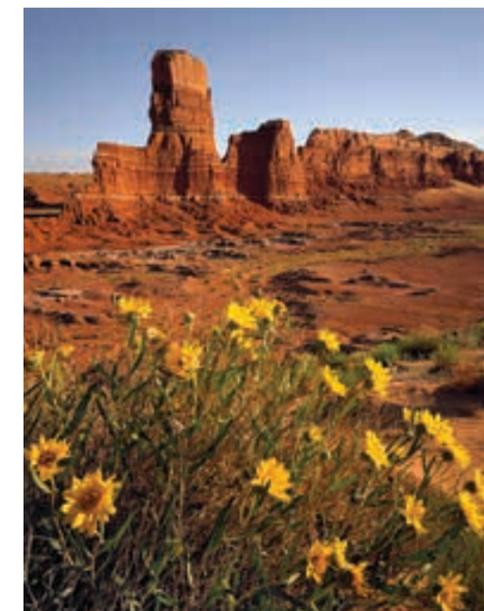
One day he decided to try and get all his legal paperwork in order, but while going through his filing cabinet, he began pulling out folder after folder of story ideas and piling them on the edge of his desk. He still hasn't located the legal papers, but the folders have got him thinking about a non-fiction book he's been wanting to write.

As he sits at his desk, Hillerman can see the trees outside his window turning yellow, and behind them is a bright blue cloudless sky. On the wall hangs a LeRoy DeJolie photograph that draws the viewer through an eroded arch and into a great expanse of the landscape of Navajo clouds, cloud shadows, the rising cliffs and the palette of Western colors. Hillerman country. A landscape Hillerman's spent a lifetime painting in words—trying to get just right—for a grateful audience. He doesn't do it for them, though, he does it for himself. For his need to capture elusive, ephemeral, ever-changing elements on paper. ■■

ADDITIONAL READING: In *Navajoland: A Native Son Shares His Legacy*, LeRoy DeJolie describes and pictures his homeland as a ruggedly beautiful part of his heritage and culture. The softcover book, with a foreword by Tony Hillerman, can be ordered by calling toll-free (800) 543-5432 or online at arizonahighways.com. \$12.95 plus shipping and handling.

Rachel Dickinson, who loves Arizona and Hillerman country, writes about science and nature from Upstate New York.

Navajo LeRoy DeJolie's photographs are best understood within the cultural context in which they have been created—for the preservation and regeneration of the Navajo ways of life. He lives near the people he loves most on the Navajo Indian Reservation near Page.



Hillerman Country



About 4 miles southeast of the sacred springs at Fort Defiance involved in Leaphorn and Chee's investigations in **Talking God**, Hillerman readers can investigate the Navajo Nation Administrative centers at Window Rock. Within the circular walls of the Navajo Nation Council Chambers, visitors can watch the 88-member council conduct meetings in English for federal business and in Navajo for tribal business.

Afterward visit the Veterans Memorial commemorating Navajo members of the U.S. military forces, open daily, 8 A.M. to 5 P.M.

Just over a mile from Window Rock, a natural rock formation used in Navajo ceremonies stands over the complex that includes the Navajo Museum Library & Visitors Center, open Tuesday through Friday, 8 A.M. to 8 P.M., and Monday and Saturday, 8 A.M. to 5 P.M.

From Interstate 40 east of Flagstaff, take U.S. Route 264 east, then north on Indian Route 12 beyond Window Rock to Fort Defiance.

Information: Navajo Nation Council Chambers, (928) 871-6417; Navajo Museum Library & Visitors Center, (928) 871-6675; Veterans Memorial, (928) 871-6413.

For the most up-to-date information on Navajoland, call the Navajo Nation Tourism Department, (928) 871-6436, or go online at www.discovernavajo.com.



PEAKMOMENT

The Tucson Mountains inspire a compulsion in a front-porch-sitter
by Bill Broyles
photographs by Jack Dykinga

Summit Fever Driven by a mysterious urge, author Bill Broyles (above) begins his hike to the crest of Wasson Peak as sunrise shadows guide his path along Tucson's Rillito River Parkway. Morning light sculpts a spiky sonata along the pleated edges of saguaro cacti (right) on the Sweetwater Trail to Wasson Peak.

WASSON PEAK, THE SUMMIT of the Tucson Mountains west of town, dresses daily in the gold of sunrise or red of sunset. In season, it wears spring green, the brown of early summer or, infrequently, winter white, but for those of us who live in the valley below, the peak always catches a smile, like a familiar photo framed on the wall. The other evening as my wife and I ate dinner on the porch with Wasson watching us, an urge startled me and without thinking it through, I blurted out, “I should walk to the peak.”

The route, about 30 miles round-trip, would curve along the Rillito River and then ascend the foothills before entering Tucson Mountain Park. Granted, I never was a world-class adventurer like Marco Polo, Lewis and Clark, or even the lesser-known hero Göran Kropp, who bicycled 7,000 miles from his home in Sweden, climbed Mount Everest alone, without supplemental oxygen, and then bicycled back home. But I don't have to be in the major leagues to enjoy playing the game, so I decided to see if I could at least run—or walk—the bases.

Before sunrise I tromped through my back door, down the hill and into the sandy arroyo behind our house. Several times a year, the wash actually carries water to the Rillito—the “little river” in Spanish and Rillito River in English, as if repeating the meaning could gush water in a dry bed. A few kitchen lights burned, but the only car I heard was the paper carrier making morning rounds.

At the Rillito I turned west, downstream, and by the time the first beams of sun colored Wasson, I was several miles closer. At my pace I felt like a grain of sand being slowly tumbled from the hills to the distant sea. Good trails line both sides of the riverbed, so we can jog, bicycle, roller-blade or ride horseback for 11 miles without pausing for a stoplight. Eventually Tucson will be ringed with trails, shade trees, drinking fountains, picnic tables, rest rooms and exercise stations.

As I journeyed, two mothers jogged past and waved cheerily. A bicyclist zipped by, dressed for the office. I chatted with a Vietnam veteran who walks at least 2 miles daily on doctor's orders. In an enjoyable relay, he has covered the entire trail many times over. “This walking has saved my life,” he said proudly.

From the riverbed, a coyote stared at me and I stared back. Redwing blackbirds loitered on the banktop railing, and occasional trees reminded me of the magnificent mesquites, cottonwoods and willows that once lined both banks. A hawk perched atop a pole, and nervous squads of sparrows and finches pecked the ground under saltbushes.

By midmorning I reached the confluence of the Rillito and the Santa Cruz River, a dry intersection near the railroad and interstate. Had I been here 3,000 years ago, I would have waved to farmers tending cornfields irrigated by canals. Today the river runs for a brief stretch through an artificial wetland, and at the crossing I took off my shoes and waded barefoot across soft sand in water that soothed my already tired feet. I half expected to hear a beaver slap the surface or see a heron lift off.

From the riverbank, my route would climb through foothills to the summit. As I left the city, the homes grew farther apart and some had barns with horses, chickens and goats. The hill-

sides are studded with cacti—saguaro, barrel and cholla, plus paloverde trees and ocotillos. In spring, the colors are enough to make my eyes spin.

At the park's trailhead, I joined a friend, photographer Jack Dykinga, with whom I once climbed snow-covered Pico de Orizaba, the highest peak in Mexico and third-highest in North America. Although both were formed by volcanoes, Wasson stands only one-fourth as tall—4,687 feet, but on that day we were relieved it wasn't any higher.

The trail to Wasson grates over rock and gravel and through patches of cacti, jojoba and acacia, gaining almost 2,000 feet

A Hiker's Reward Late-afternoon on Wasson Peak (below) yields a panorama that includes Saguaro National Park West, and the sprawling Avra Valley beyond. A vast floodplain, Avra Valley gathers seasonal rainfall from surrounding mountain ranges and funnels the runoff toward the north, where the floodwaters ultimately reach the Gila River.



Endless Vista An otherworldly sunset rewards Broyles' climb to the top of Wasson Peak with a view to the horizon featuring the silhouetted outlines of Baboquivari and Kitt peaks, more than 40 miles away.

elevation in 4.6 miles. We talked and walked, joked and chuckled, especially over a bumper sticker Jack had seen: “The older I get, the better I was.” It seemed appropriate for two older guys out proving they still had whatever it takes. Deer tracks crossed the trail and rabbits hid when they saw us, though they only had reason to fear the red-tailed hawk high overhead.

Soon we crossed an imaginary line and entered the Saguaro Wilderness Area. In a few hours I had gone straight from a warm bed to a pristine wilderness, thanks to Cornelius “C.B.” Brown, who foresaw that Tucsonans would need rough-and-tumble natural areas close to home. He was the county agricultural agent, and in 1929, persuaded local politicians, Arizona Sen. Carl Hayden and Congress to create Tucson Mountain Park.

Over the years, more land was added, and part of it became the western unit of renowned Saguaro National Park, proving the adage that no one ever regrets creating national parks, but they do lament not making them sooner and bigger.

From the trail we could see the summit, but eyes aren't legs and we weren't on top yet. We paced ourselves to make steady if slow progress toward the peak named for John Wasson (1833-1909), who founded the *Tucson Citizen* newspaper in 1870. He had drifted into Arizona, and eventually became the state surveyor-general. Another Wasson Peak, in Arizona's rugged Bradshaw Mountains, was also named for him.

At the saddle where our Sweetwater Trail met the King Canyon Trail, we rested and prepared for the 1.2-mile push to the summit. The slopes on both sides of the trail are loose and threatening. The peak just west of Wasson is named Amole, for the numerous shin-dagger agaves that bedevil anyone who dares step off the narrow path.

AS SOON AS we reached the summit and dropped our packs, I first looked for my porch, but I would have needed strong binoculars to pick it out on the grid of landmarks. I could easily see entire mountains, so I recited the names of the ranges rimming Tucson, some of them 60 miles away. Enjoying the time-out from hiking, we lingered for the last glow of sunset.

The coy sun teased us by peeking through the clouds before it finally sank below the gray veil, suddenly and vividly lighting the clouds from below as if a paint factory exploded. We were giddy with color. I stood stammering while Jack hopped from rock to rock taking photos, hardly knowing where to focus next. The flaming reds and oranges and yellows erupted like the volcano itself when it spewed molten lava and hot ash 15 to 70 million years ago. We weren't seeing a sunset—we were inside the sunset, drenched in color. We had gone to heaven and “died.”

Finally the colors drained, and after the first stars appeared we reluctantly started our two-hour descent. Pale flashlights illuminated the trail 10 feet in front of us. A mere sliver of new moon hung briefly in the sky. We were quieter, subdued and remarkably satisfied, though I had to



Lush Landscape The highest point in Tucson Mountain Park's 20,000 acres of pristine Sonoran Desert, Wasson Peak commands a natural oasis of protected desert plants and wildlife.

Shine on Brightly Venus pierces the evening sky with luminous intensity above a sliver of crescent moon in an iconic saguaro sunset photograph with a celestial twist.

laugh at one thought: Geologists predict that in another 7 million years erosion will level Wasson Peak, so it's good we seized our moment.

The air cooled, and city lights reminded us that nearly a million people live within sight of this wilderness. No one was at the trailhead when we arrived. Jack offered me a ride home, but I declined, switched off my flashlight and headed down the winding road toward the glow of the city. The shadowland along Camino del Cerro—"street of the mountain"—filled with familiar shapes and simmering fragrances. To my right I heard something crash through the underbrush, likely a javelina or a mule deer.

For a few miles the road was mine, but then cars grew more frequent, forcing me to shield my eyes from their headlights. My weary legs twitched uncontrollably whenever I paused for rest, so I pushed forward. I lost all track of time and walked in one glorious moment. The land flattened, as a rough sea calms, and abruptly I was out of the foothills and back in town.

I turned and caught the river path. Someone moved quietly toward me walking a dog, and it didn't bark. A mother called out to her son playing in the back yard. I was amazed how much I could see in the dark: bricks of buildings, makes of parked cars, leaves on trees, cats walking along fence-tops, rabbits nibbling fallen mesquite leaves. I heard horses whicker in a neighborhood where I'd never suspect them. On the far bank of the river, two forms walked hand in hand, occasionally silhouetted by a porch light. We each were alone on the land, as close to the stars as to Earth.

With every step the scenery glided by, like ceaseless water past my bow. I avoided well-lit intersections, not once tempted by the lure of convenience stores with their doughnuts, sodas and candy. The darkness along the river was more comfortable, rewarding and secure. I had felt my town's pulse as it awakened, as it worked and as it returned to sleep. Its vigor energized me. Its wilderness reassured me.

By midnight my feet throbbed and my legs sagged, but I plodded on. I left the river trail and slowly headed up my arroyo, still not using or needing the flashlight as I climbed the hill to my porch. Almost wishing the walk to last forever, I paused at the top step to look back at Wasson. Its shape was barely discernable, but I knew it was there, every rock and thorn and glow of it.

Many towns and cities have a Wasson, a hill, peak or knoll that is close, familiar and tempting. Phoenix has Camelback and South Mountain; Flagstaff has Elden and Humphreys. Traced in our minds and etched by our feet, these are part of who we can—and have—become.

At odd moments I can't take my eyes off Wasson. I see the foothills and trace the road to the trailhead. I remember where the path runs behind conical hills and then cuts up the side of the ridge. I remember the saddle where I sat and ate an apple before tramping up the switchbacks. I see the top of the ridge where the trail curls for the final climb, reaching for the sky. I feel the rock underfoot, reliable and sturdy, at once comforting and instructive. And now I view the peak much as a child sees a book after learning to read. ■■



Tucson resident Bill Broyles and photographer Michael Berman recently teamed up on Sunshot: Peril and Wonder in the Gran Desierto (University of Arizona Press).

Wasson Peak was for many years Jack Dykinga's back yard. He has run it, hiked it and photographed its rocky slopes, but this trip provided his first exquisite view of a blazing sunset from the summit. His latest book is Jack Dykinga's Arizona (Westcliffe Publishers).

when you go



Location: Tucson.
Getting There: To reach Tucson Mountain Park and Saguaro National Park West from Interstate 10, drive west on Speedway Boulevard to Gates Pass and follow the signs.

Weather: During the summer months, temperatures can be extremely hot.

Travel Advisory: Always wear a hat and sunscreen and drink plenty of water.

Additional Information: Saguaro National Park West, (520) 733-5158; www.nps.gov/saguopphtml/contact.html; Tucson Mountain Park, (520) 877-6000; www.pima.gov/nrpl/places/parkpags/tuc_mtpk/index.htm; Rillito River Park, (520) 877-6000; www.pima.gov/pksrec/metropk/rivpks/rivpks.html.

FLOWERS & THORNS

text and photographs by John P. Schaefer

Cacti show their softer side as the season changes in the desert



Nipple beehive cactus

Watch out for the thorns—but drink in the color of cactus blossoms. Stout plants bristling with vicious spines produce blossoms of extraordinary color ranging from crimson, salmon-pink and magenta to fiery orange and sulfur yellow. Some bloom at 115 degrees, some only after rain, some after nightfall. Here, *Coryphantha macromeris* spreads its pink blossoms. It's certainly no shrinking violet, extending tapered blushing petals to form 3-inch flowers in the mid- to late summer or early fall. The hardy plant can endure everything from Phoenix's searing July heat to frost.

'STAY AWAY' TURNS INTO 'COME HITHER'

••• SPRING TRANSFORMS the black-and-white of a Sonoran winter into a Technicolor extravaganza. Dormant trees flower and burst into a rainbow of color. Prickly cacti whose spiny thorns warn “stay away,” abruptly erupt with flowers that cry “come hither,” to both pollinators and photographers.

Spring heralds the desert's great change of the seasons as normally inconspicuous cacti flower in colors of breathtaking intensity. The purple flowers of the hedgehog family lead the way, with yellow, orange and magenta opuntias (the prickly pear and cholla families) close behind. In May the stately saguaro surrounds its top with a crown of waxy white blossoms, followed by belts of small pink and lavender blooms sprouting from the tiny *mammillaria* sheltered in the shade of native plants and trees. With the arrival of late summer and fall, barrel cacti blossoms provide a colorful end to the annual cycle.



Claret cup hedgehog

One of many hedgehog species, *Echinocereus coccineus* grows only about 14 inches tall, but is often found clustered with several companions. A few or as many as 500 stems may join to form a barbed bouquet, springing from the ground in a mound a foot high and up to 4 feet across. It is the only hedgehog in the United States to bear red flowers.



Night blooming cereus

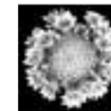
The *Peniocereus greggii* looks more like a dry bush than a queen of the night. Its drab, ribbed branches usually sport only downward-pointing spines. But for one night each summer, its flower opens as night falls, emits a sweet perfume and closes with the first morning light. Native to the Sonoran and Chihuahuan deserts of southern Arizona, the plant is fed by a turniplike tuber root that can weigh up to 100 pounds.





Jumping cholla

The daunting, spiny joints of the so-called “jumping cholla,” or *Cylindropuntia fulgida*, hide small but exquisite pink blossoms in the summer. It reproduces largely asexually, growing from dropped stem joints and fruit rinds. Its method for dispersing detached segments across the desert floor—latching onto animals or unsuspecting hikers—has earned it more nicknames than most plants. Other monikers include boxing-glove cholla and chain-fruit cholla.



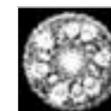
Fishhook pincushion

The *Mammillaria microcarpa*, also known as the Arizona fishhook, seems inconspicuous until you start looking for it—then you’ll spot areas where it seems every desert shrub shelters a fishhook. Its crown of pink blossoms blooms in June or July and lasts several days.



Fishhook barrel

Sporting strong, hooked spines, the *Ferocactus wislizenii* is found in gravelly soil throughout southern and central Arizona. It usually grows 2 to 4 feet high, but occasionally tops 10 feet, and is a slow grower—the 4-foot plant may be 25 to 100 years old. The flowers, bright oranges, reds or yellows, appear in late summer to early fall.



Cream cactus

The *Mammillaria heyderi*, covered with dense, pale spines, grows a crown of yellow and white flowers in late spring. The solitary cactus grows round, like a flattened sphere, lying low on the desert floor.





Coville barrel cactus

Ferocactus covillei, common in Arizona's lower deserts along gravelly, sandy or rocky hillsides, alluvial fans or washes, has the heavy, hooked central spines of its cousins but lacks radial spines, giving it a "cleaner" appearance and making it popular with landscapers and collectors. The white-kissed, deep-red blossoms might hint of cactus poinsettias, but they appear in August.

PHOTOGRAPHING FLOWERS IN THE FIELD

Most of the photographs in this essay were taken in the field on Fujichrome Velvia film with a Pentax 645 camera fitted with a 120 mm macro lens. To moderate the harsh desert light, I shaded the plants with a translucent white umbrella. To eliminate the background distraction of dirt, rocks and stray weeds, I surrounded the plants with black construction paper prior to making the photograph. The transparencies were scanned to create digital files and subsequently printed. I hope that the enjoyment that I feel in making these photographs will encourage you to look more closely—and down and around—at the remarkable plants of the desert. ■■

John P. Schaefer served as president of the University of Arizona from 1971 to 1982. In 1975 he worked with Ansel Adams to found the Center for Creative Photography, now home to the world's largest archive of 20th-century photography. As a member of the Ansel Adams Publishing Rights Trust, Dr. Schaefer authored the best-selling Basic Techniques of Photography: An Ansel Adams Guide, a comprehensive introduction to photography using the methods taught and practiced by Adams. Schaefer's own work has been featured in several one-man museum shows, and he enjoys lecturing, teaching and practicing photography whenever opportunities arise. He lives in Tucson.



Graham fishhook

Like many small desert plants, *Mammillaria grahamii* seeks shade. It is abundant among debris under cholla and can often be found hidden beneath and among desert shrubbery. The first round of striped, bubblegum-pink blossoms bursts forth several days after the first rain of the summer and last about a week.



Hell of a State

Names With a Whiff of Brimstone Got
Stuck on Some Heavenly Scenery

by Gregory McNamee



Hell-o, Cacti The devil himself might have loved the prickly thorns on chollas and ocotillos along Devil's Highway (left) but in Arizona, we just call them beautiful. The remains of Canyon Diablo Trading Post (opposite page) sit in a forlorn spot north of Two Guns off Interstate 40 east of Flagstaff.

that tip their hat to the infernal regions and their fork-tailed landlord. There is, for instance, Devil Tank, a waterhole to the east of the rugged Galiuro Mountains in southeastern Arizona, a place that must have caused many a cowpoke to question his career choice. Then there are the Devil Hills, out in the sun-bleached

desert in Arizona's far southwestern corner, within shouting distance of the axle-breaking road the Spanish called Camino del Diablo, or Devil's Highway.

There's the Devils Hump, out in the Aquarius Mountains of Mohave County, which must have tried many a prospector's climbing skills in the day. Not far from there as the crow flies runs Hellzapoppin Creek, a remote spot on the remote Baca Float watched over, happily enough, by a little rise called Mount Hope.

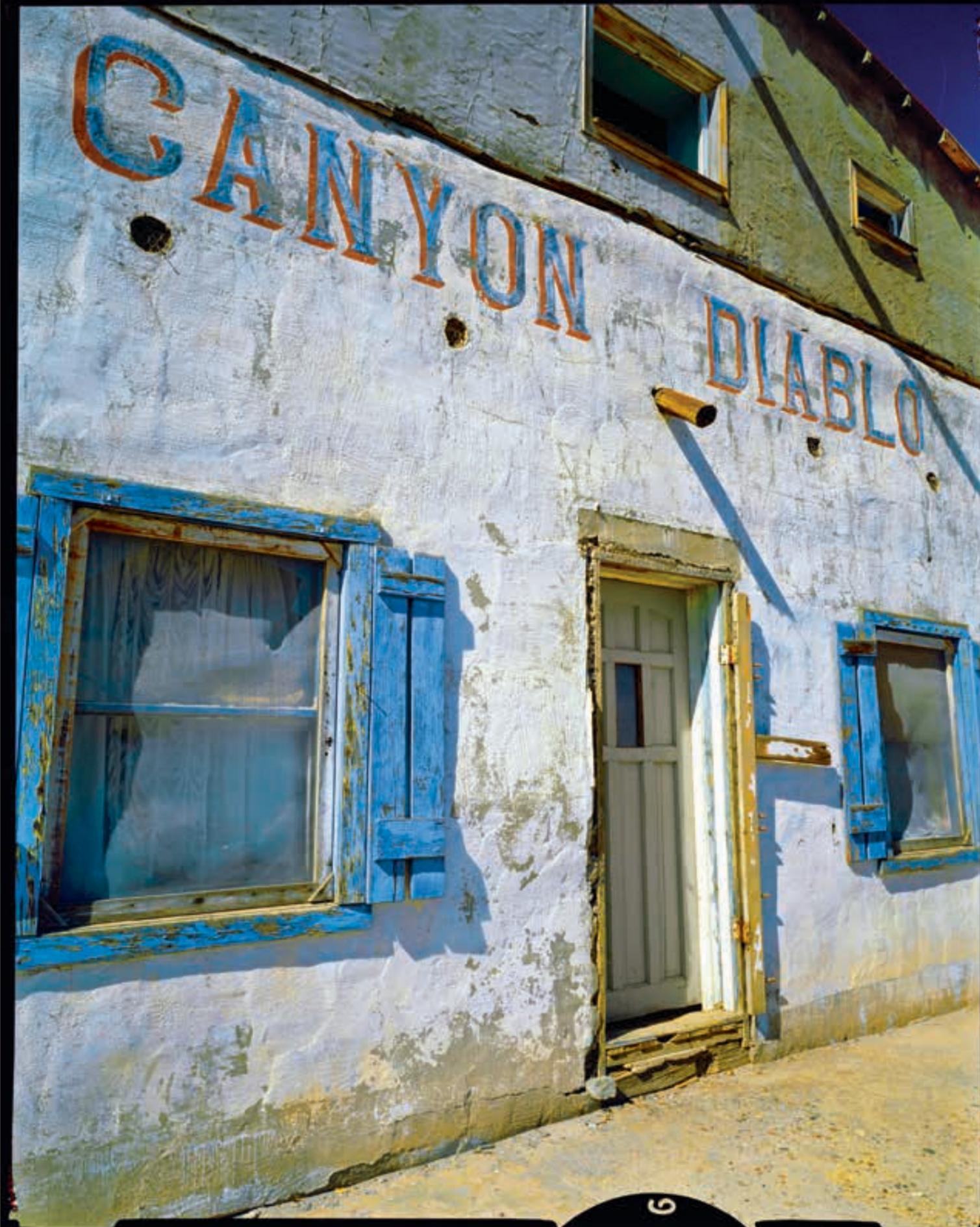
And, fittingly enough, the next chasm our stagecoach driver once had to negotiate on the trek north to Ash Fork is the steep-walled Devil Dog Canyon. Whether it was named for the Cerberus of legend or some rancher's snarling hound is anyone's guess. Just so, the rough-and-tumble countryside at the northwestern end of the Grand Canyon seems an appropriate home for 5,881-foot Hades Knoll, though it's nice to think that someone inserted that name in a spirit of fair play to counterbalance the Canyon's Angels Gate, just as Bright Angel Creek has its opposite upstream in Utah's Dirty Devil River.

Some of our infernally named spots deserve their monikers even today, equipped though we are with vehicles to stymie the devil's best efforts. The Hellsgate Wilderness, about 20 miles east of Payson below the imposing Mogollon Rim, embraces a series of spectacularly rugged canyons that, guidebooks warn, are best left to experienced hikers only. Hellgate Mountain, east of Wickenburg, is easier to negotiate, but the temperatures there can bake a hiking boot in no time flat.

Hellhole Bend, a stretch of the Little Colorado River not far from Desert View, on the eastern end of Grand Canyon National Park, defies efforts to reach it, whether by boat or on foot. And the tortuous corner of Skeleton Canyon called Devils Kitchen, down in Arizona's far southeastern corner, doubtless made an impression on would-be homesteaders, at least those who heard about the mysterious old German who built a hut there back in the 1890s. According to Will Barnes, he dug up and down the canyon looking for buried treasure until "one day he was gone, vanished into thin air."

Should the angels among us feel picked on by the devil's apparent fondness for Arizona? Perhaps so. But we can all take cheer in the fact that next-door California has nearly three times as many spots on its map that pay homage to the bad guy in red. That's one contest we shouldn't mind losing. ■■

Gregory McNamee is the author of Grand Canyon Place Names and other books about Arizona. He lives in Tucson.



TOP LEFT: TOM DANIELSEN; RIGHT: DALE SCHICKELTZ

About a dozen miles south of the town of Ash Fork, out on a lightly traveled stretch of State Route 89 that affords a fine view of Sedona and the red rocks to the east, stands a bridge, a normal sort of steel and concrete affair. Under it, 50 or so feet down, flows a little creek, ambling through black rock studded with piñon and juniper trees and tufts of tall grass. It's a perfectly pleasant place for a stretch of the legs, a picnic, a photograph.

And the name of this tranquil spot? Why, it's Hell Canyon.

To modern eyes, there's nothing especially infernal about the little chasm. But then again, we're whizzing over it on a well-made highway, not trying to coax a herd of cattle or a wagon up and over its steep walls and along its boulder-strewn bottom. The stagecoach drivers who sweated and swore their way along the canyon on the way between Prescott and Ash Fork had good reason to think unkind thoughts of the place, and the name they gave the canyon, Territorial historian Will Barnes reasoned, "was easily applied to it."

Plenty of other spots on the Arizona landscape have had infernal names attached to them over the years, lending credence to 19th-century Tucson saloonkeeper Charles O. Brown's notion that the devil himself harbored a soft spot for our arid corner of the country. As Brown wrote in his wonderful poem "Arizona, How It Was Made and Who Made It," Old Nick took his time picking out the place as his own, and then, when he "saw there were some improvements to make," he studded the landscape with such challenges as tarantulas, prickly pear and skunks, then filled the rivers with sand, and then turned the heat up, "That all who might come to this country to dwell / Would be sure to think it was almost Hell."

The atlas bears Brown out. Arizona sports some 50 place-names

Nervous Nellie On the Edge

A struggling mother discovers courage and coolness perched on the North Rim

BY ROBIN N. CLAYTON

PHOTOGRAPHS BY GARY LADD

Do You Fear What I Fear?

The spectacular heights and sights of the Grand Canyon's North Rim can conjure spectacular fright for those who suffer from vertigo or high anxiety—problems that these hikers, perched on the narrow tip of Bright Angel Point apparently don't have.

■ To order a print, call (866) 962-1191 or visit arizonahighways.com.



Into Thin Air

Monsoon clouds and morning mist retreat into the depths of the Canyon, revealing the North Rim's historic Grand Canyon Lodge.

“Move back from the edge, son!”

I snapped as I reached for Joseph's arm to jerk him back before we both tumbled into the Grand Canyon.

“Gosh, Mom, do you have to be such a Nervous Nellie?” complained my 8-year-old son, with a roll of his eyes as his sister, Sara, 11, snickered. On the first hike in a three-day North Rim stay, my paranoia had already irritated him and amused her.

Anyone who says that the view looks the same from both sides of the Canyon has never been to the North Rim, nor walked the trails while clinging to the belt loop of a fearless, rambunctious young boy.

The trail to Bright Angel Point circling the Grand Canyon Lodge passes through aspen and blue spruce trees, and past Canyon overlooks that demonstrate what it means to be small. Standing at one of the several overlooks on the North Rim, which rises 1,000 feet higher than the South Rim, we saw the jagged heights of the San Francisco Peaks a little more than 100 miles south, then gazed downward toward Roaring Springs 3,000 feet below.

My daughter, cautious like me, held every hand-rail while my son climbed atop the highest rock and flapped his arms like a bird's wings, determined to send me to an early grave. When I felt it working, I decided it was time to unpack back at the cabin, resigned to my Nervous Nellieness.

The Grand Canyon Lodge offers the only accommodations on the North Rim, with 165 cabins and 40 motel rooms. After it was destroyed by fire, the lodge was rebuilt in 1937 with limestone walls and timbered ceilings, a dining room overlooking the Canyon plus a sunroom, cafe, saloon and gift shop.

Our cabin had two beds, a desk and chair, a phone and a bathroom—perfect for our three-day adventure on the Kaibab Plateau, a Paiute Indian phrase meaning “mountain lying down.”

Unpacked and relaxing on the cabin steps, we listened to a squabble of Steller's jays in the treetops. The kids scampered about shouting, “Check this out” or “Mom, hurry, look!” A chattering of ground squirrels showed up to beg tidbits. The baby squirrels eyed us dubiously, but the adults wandered in through the open cabin door to check out the luggage, much to the delight of my children.

After dark, we prepared for bed, anxious to start early the next day. Suddenly, Joseph screamed, “MOM!”

I hurried out, expecting a large, hairy spider or a rabid squirrel—something hideous enough to match the urgency in his voice.

He was standing wide-eyed and still, staring at a deer that seemed paralyzed by the scream. The deer stared at us for a moment, and then fled into the dark. Joseph climbed into the bed with a smile, convinced no one could top his animal sighting.

Early the next morning we headed into the crisp air, set out for Angel's Window, carved through the base of an overlook. The paved Angel's Window road leads to Point Imperial and Roosevelt Point, winding east across the Kaibab and Walhalla plateaus. One pullout sported a sign pointing to a path to Greenland Lake, a sinkhole in limestone. So we got out and wandered through the trees to an open field carpeted with waist-high grasses. A wooden sign declared Salt Cabin to be 200 yards ahead, and we followed a narrow path

Home on the Edge

Ponderosa and piñon pines grow old and tall atop layers of Redwall limestone, inches from the harrowing precipice above Kwagunt Canyon.

■ To order a print, call (866) 962-1191 or visit arizonahighways.com.



through the trees surrounding the sinkhole.

Two large, noisy ravens ranted at our intrusion. They moved from tree to tree and disputed our choice of paths. I cawed back, prompting my children to roll their eyes to express how glad they were that no one had witnessed their humiliation.

But the ravens liked it. I don't know what I said in raven speak, but they spilled the whole sordid story. Suddenly I was cool—really cool—and my children were cawing their hearts out.

An eerily lonely wooden cabin waited at the end of the trail, emitting an aura that prompted us to stop and peer at the spiderwebs covering the walls as we wondered who before us had stood on the inside, gazing out at the tall trees and marshy grasses. Abruptly, the crunching of leaves in the surrounding woods sent both of the children scurrying behind me in a flash. I turned to see a black furry body with a fluffy white tail scurrying up a tree trunk some 50 feet away. I had the impression that something larger watched us from beyond the trees, but I couldn't make it out in the shadows.

Sara was taking no chances and turned and headed for the car at a run, leaving behind the bear or the Yeti—or the deer. Suddenly, a place called Angel's Window sounded like a better place to hang out.

The lower-elevation Angel's Window represents a return to the upper Sonoran Desert landscape, with Arizona cliffrose, piñon pine, Utah juniper and sagebrush to frame one of the most photographed places in the Grand Canyon. It's among the few North Rim overlooks from which you can see the muddy rushing waters of the Colorado River far below.

The kids trudged along the paved trail behind me, complaining about the heat and yearning for the cabin, despite my exciting and insightful geology lessons. They remained resolutely unimpressed when I explained that the Canyon had separated the Kaibab squirrel from its South Rim brothers for so long that it evolved into a separate species, known as the Abert's squirrel. They were slightly more interested in the bright-green grasshoppers and thick black tiger beetles that jumped along the ground, red- and bark-colored lizards, clinging to the trees and the American crow honking at passersby.

Later back at the cabin, we saw a wild turkey wandering the meadow, her three babies close behind. Oddly enough, this made me hungry. So we headed for dinner at the lodge as we watched the sunset shadows swallow up the Canyon.

The next morning, ominous storm clouds gathered over the plateau, and I packed the car, determined to chase down the rain. Just past the park entrance, an

Higher Power

In Hinduism, Vaishnavas look to the sacred Saligrama stone as a means of worshipping Lord Vishnu, an incarnation of God, known as the Protector. From Walhalla Overlook, seen here, believers and nonbelievers alike can look to the distant, multiple stone layers of Vishnu Temple, but the power of the Protector (and the 5,000-foot drop to the river below) will compel you to watch your step.

■ To order a print, call (866) 962-1191 or visit arizonahighways.com.





Night Falls

As twilight approaches, storm cloud shadows spill into Canyon crevasses while the colorful arm of a rainbow reaches over Shiva, Confucius and Mencius temples, holding daylight by a thread.

■ To order a print, call (866) 962-1191 or visit arizonahighways.com.

unmarked road headed off into the dark forest.

“Where does this road go?” Sara asked.

“To the rain,” I said.

“What if we get lost?”

“Now who’s the Nervous Nellie?” I replied.

It got very quiet in the back seat, as their inner Nervous Nellies stirred and stretched.

I had no clue what I was getting into, but the storm clouds seemed to simmer now in my veins, so I ignored their exchanged glances, seized by the need to either catch the storm or hit a place my low-rider Ford could not pass.

Yesterday, I’d been clinging to shirttails, but today I had unaccountably gained courage.

The road led west 17 miles to Point Sublime. Soon we caught the rain, which muddied the jarring road and filled the air with fresh pine coolness. We drove along for a few miles as the rain pattered on the roof, and I started to worry that I’d get stuck in the mud.

Suddenly, Sara cried, “No, Mom. Please stop.”

“Sara, it’s a little rough, I know,” I said, glancing at her

in the mirror, “but I won’t go anywhere I don’t think the car can’t. . . .” I stopped short as I followed her gaze to the left.

Orange-red flames flickered and popped across the pine-needle covering of the thick spruce-fir forest floor, licking at the thick trunks of the aspens and blue spruce. Here we were, in the middle of the Kaibab Plateau—us, the fire and a sharp stab of fear. As I turned the next curve and the fire drew closer, I noticed people moving up in the trees. Firefighters. What a relief—a controlled burn.

I rolled down the window as a ranger approached. “Sorry, ma’am. We’ll have the road cleared for you in about 20 minutes,” said his soot-blackened face buried beneath a hooded yellow slicker.

“Controlled burn?” I asked.

“No, ma’am. Lightning strike. Get several a day during this season.” He wandered back into the trees. The very wonder of nature we had been chasing had unleashed this fury, a fire that would burn in the rain.

We watched the firefighters work for a long while,

before I turned back, thinking it would be a relief to my daughter. We headed back, stopping now and then to get out and wander among the trees singed by previous lightning strikes.

“Mom?” Sara said.

“Yes?”

“You really didn’t know where you were going?” she asked.

“No, Sara, I really didn’t.”

Long pause.

“That was cool,” she declared.

Vindicated.

We spent our last night playing cards on the porch, casually greeting the squirrels and deer. We slept with the windows open, the pine-scented breezes wafting about us.

On the last morning, we took one more walk out to Bright Angel Trail. As we passed a corner with 6 feet of path between a rock wall and a cliff, I fought the urge to grab hold of my son. We met a woman coming the other way with her two teenaged boys, and we veered



when you go

Grand Canyon North Rim

Location: Approximately 42 miles south of Jacob Lake on the Kaibab Plateau.

Getting There: From Flagstaff, travel north approximately 103 miles on U.S. Route 89 to U.S. Route 89A at Bitter Springs. Take U.S. 89A west approximately 55 miles to Jacob Lake, then drive south 42 miles to the lodge.

Hours: The Grand Canyon’s North Rim facilities are open May through October and closed for the winter months. Call for exact dates.

Fees: Use of the national forest is free, but there is a \$25 fee per car to enter the national park.

Lodging: Other than campsites, the lodge offers the only accommodations at the North Rim. Reservations are required and the lodge fills quickly, so advance notice is suggested. Cabin and motel room reservations may be made online at www.grandcanyonnorthrim.com or by calling toll-free (888) 297-2757.

Travel Advisory: Thunderstorms and lightning strikes are common at the North Rim during late summer, and can create unsafe and muddy conditions along unpaved roads surrounding the Canyon. Use caution, and turn back if the rains get too heavy.

Additional Information: Grand Canyon Lodge, May to October, (928) 638-2611; Kaibab National Forest, North Kaibab Ranger District, (928) 643-7395.

Pane-ful to Look At

While the views atop Angel’s Window (below) are breathtaking, the safer and more scenic views of the window happen along the walkways of Cape Royal.



On the Safe Side

They may be “wild” turkeys, but these creatures of the Kaibab Plateau tend to flock in the flat, grassy areas north of the Rim and are more apt to fall victim to hunters than to the Canyon.

to the wall to let them pass on the cliff side. The fretful woman instinctively reached out, as though the mere motion would stop her kids from tumbling into the Canyon. As soon as we passed her, she snapped at her boys to get back up against the wall.

Vindicated again.
“See,” I said to my son, “I’m not the ONLY Nervous Nellie in the park.” ■■■

Robin N. Clayton, who lives in Glendale, loves to take her kids on adventures in the Arizona wilds, and is determined to return to the North Rim and complete the 17-mile journey to Point Sublime, this time in a four-wheel-drive vehicle equipped with a fire extinguisher.



John Doe?

The biggest danger for tourists on the North Rim is catching one of these in their headlights. Mule deer feast and frolic near the highway, making them a common cause of accidents.



In Over His Head
Wildlife researcher Stan Cunningham spent years crawling into bear dens like this one trying to figure out how a wildfire in the Four Peaks Wilderness Area near Phoenix affected the black bear population.



Cute Claws
Born in the den during a fitful hibernation, black bear cubs may weigh just half a pound at birth but weigh up to 165 pounds by their first fall, depending on the food supply. Arizona Game and Fish researchers radio-collared about two dozen black bears to track their movement and weigh their cubs (right) in an effort to determine how the bears coped with a brushfire that caused habitat changes.



BearLY SANE

Armed with courage and pepper spray, a biologist crawls into bear dens

By Stan Cunningham

I love my job, but not that moment I found myself in a bear den with nothing but air between me and a 250-pound mother bear with two cubs. She was snapping her teeth, which in bear language means *Get the h#&% out of here!* In 20 years as an Arizona Game and Fish Department research biologist, the four years I spent crawling into a total of 30 Arizona black-bear dens provided some of my most entertaining moments.

The project focused on the effects of the 1996 Lone Fire on black bears on Four Peaks in the Mazatzal Mountains east of Phoenix, an area with one of the Southwest's highest black-bear densities. The study compared reproduction and cub

survival among bears living in the burned area to those living in undisturbed areas.

I'm a confirmed coward when it comes to big animals with teeth, but to count and weigh the cubs I had to crawl into the den and drug the mother. Warren Ballard, now a Texas Tech University professor, trained me on the technique, noting "you just crawl in with the jab stick [essentially a syringe with a 4-foot plunger] in front of you. She won't be asleep and may charge, but don't worry, no one has ever died in a den check."

In the spring of 1997, my crew and I trapped and radio-collared eight females, which meant at least eight dens to visit that first winter. I imagined crawling in

and drugging sleeping bears, but . . .

The following February, on a frigid morning, crew members Laribeth Kirkendall, Raul Vega and I scrambled up and down rocky slopes covered in Carhartt-ripping brush as we searched what seemed like 100 holes tucked in under boulders. Unfortunately, signals from radio collars do not work that well when the animal wearing the collar is underground.

Ever stuck your head in a hole to see if a bear was in there? Picture our position, one hole a time.

But I knew instantly I'd hit the right hole when the still unseen cubs started squalling and the mother started teeth popping as I glanced in. The good news: We found her. The bad news: She's ticked.

I mixed the drug concoction while my stomach churned. I put on a headlamp, stuffed a pistol along my back, and with a flashlight in one hand and the jab stick in the other, headed into the tunnel under a living room-sized boulder. I counted on my crew. Raul is as strong as an Army mule, so I figured he might actually win a tug of war for my body with the bear. Lari, although smaller, is meaner than most bears and could probably drive off an emerging bear.

I had to crawl 10 feet before I was close

enough to jab the bear with the syringe. As I advanced, I kept chanting Ballard's encouragement—"No one has ever died in a den check." Then realizing my stick was in the wrong hand, I struggled to shift the stick and flashlight. Momma Bear didn't like my technique, so she charged within 4 feet of me, while snapping her teeth. It happened fast and I did exactly what the term "jab stick" insinuates, and jabbed her right in the chest as I bellowed for Raul to yank me out.

For 20 minutes I kept my "No one ever died . . ." silent chant going while waiting for the drug to take effect. I re-entered the den and pulled out the small cubs as Mom snoozed. Looking like big puppies, the cubs loudly squalled—their half-human cries oddly endearing. They're easily handled and object only to this rude interruption in feeding. When we weighed Mom by measuring her chest circumference and then referring to a table formula, we found she had gained 100 pounds since

PHOTOGRAPHS BY PETER ALESHIRE AND ARIZONA GAME AND FISH DEPARTMENT

I'd trapped her in May. Black bears go on a serious binge in late summer, scarfing down acorns, manzanita berries and juniper berries to build up fat reserves. Acorns are super high in carbs, and bears knew about carbs and fat long before Atkins.

After that first den, I realized that in the tight space of the den I could never have reached the gun that was supposed to be my protection of last resort. So in the next den I switched to pepper spray—not one of those puny little purse cans, but a large aerosol can made in grizzly country. This den was not as deep, so there was room for a photographer to peer over my shoulder.

I crawled.

The photographer hovered.

Momma Bear snapped her incisors.

So I jabbed her with my stick. She growled and lurched forward. The pepper spray can was in the same hand as the jab stick, and though I had no intention of spraying, my finger jumped as she did.

Should you find yourself in this position, remember to always first check the nozzle direction. I had the can held so that the stream hit the rock above us and rebounded into our eyes. Fortunately, the bear was just bluffing, but we ended up lying face down in the snow trying to



Furry Handful

Black bear cubs often come in pairs and make the most endearing noises.

Wandering male bears pose the main threat to baby black bears, despite the best efforts of the mothers. Although grizzly bears have killed many people while protecting their cubs, black bear mothers usually limit themselves to bluff charges and teeth clacking even in defense of their young.

bear generally does not drink or eat, and lives entirely off stored fat. Bears also recycle the waste products of fat metabolism, whereas other mammals must rise to eat and eliminate waste periodically. Bears save energy by reducing their heart rate from about 45 to just 9 beats per minute, while lowering their metabolic rate by 50 percent. Unlike other mammalian hibernators, black-bear body temperatures remain constant, which allows them to

richest milk produced by any mammal. (Marine mammals' milk has the highest fat content.)

Studies of the physiology of hibernating bears have already provided insight into things like the function of kidneys and liver and how to reduce bone and muscle loss during long periods of bed rest—as in nursing homes or even in spaceflight.

Luckily, the “pepper spray” bear was the last to charge. As I settled down and became calmer, so did the bears. I'm no “bear whisperer,” but staying calm, avoiding eye contact and letting the bear smell the needle before gently pushing it into her worked much better than a quick jab.

After measuring the cubs, I would take them back in to a sleeping mom, and watch to make sure Mom was going to be all right. As I lingered I would sometimes ponder our findings that a catastrophic fire significantly reduced bear cub survival, which is strongly correlated with dense cover. I hoped our results will help forest managers manage our fire-prone forests more effectively.

But mostly, I would just lie there and listen to the cubs, keenly aware I was eavesdropping in a place I didn't belong, but blessed to savor the sights, smells and sounds. When the cub's screams turned to suckling, and mom's head bobbed slowly out of a deep sleep I knew it was time to return my world. ■■

Stan Cunningham, who lives in Waddell, is a research biologist with the Arizona Game and Fish Department and has studied numerous species since beginning his job in 1982. He is currently studying mountain lions around the Payson area, and black bears near Greer and Nutrioso, which means he is back to crawling into dens. He also wrote the Hike of the Month in this issue.

For 20 minutes I kept my “No one ever died...” silent chant going while waiting for the drug to take effect.

stop the burn in our eyes. If the bear had emerged and converted us into an added layer of winter fat, it would have been a relief.

This was shaping up to be a long and challenging spring.

Still, I found myself helplessly fascinated by bears.

Al LeCount, Jim Wegge and Bill Carrel documented a great variety of bear dens in the 15 years they studied Arizona bears. Some have a long entrance, which opens onto a larger sleeping area; others resemble a hole under rocks. Some are completely dug by the bears, others are natural caves. Bears rarely reuse dens, and may use two or three within the same year. Moms will only change dens if they feel threatened or moisture starts to seep into their bedding material. And you would be amazed at the spaces into which a 300-pound bear can fit.

For up to seven months, a hibernating

arouse quickly if disturbed. Hence, my dream of drugging sleeping bears never came true.

Most folks probably picture a bear's den as a smelly cave strewn with the all kinds of bones, even mastodons. But adult bears typically don't eat, defecate or urinate while hibernating and what mess is made by cubs is usually cleaned up by the mothers, so the dens smell quite nice, due to a soft “nest” of dried vegetation. The bears often deftly tuck themselves in using shredded yucca or agave.

Females give birth in dens and nurse their young during hibernation. They mate in early summer, but the 300-cell, fertilized embryo lingers for months in the fallopian tubes, awaiting some mysterious signal that the female is ready to hibernate. Born in January or February, the 8-ounce cubs are smaller than a school lunch milk carton. But they grow fast on milk that's 30 percent fat, some of the



Driven wild

by wildlife photography

I HAD TO GO NO FARTHER than to my own front yard to take up wildlife photography. Our little one-third-acre plot in south Phoenix has a bit of a desert feel and animals seem to take to it.

Hummingbirds quarrel over the feeder. Quail march around and bump into each other like Keystone Cops. Cottontails make sure to stop in front of the living-room window, so the dogs can see them and bark at ear-splitting decibels. Chipmunks pop their heads out of the ground in search of food, like any flowers I might have planted recently.

For a long time I watched the critters come and go, and thought: *I should get some film.*

And finally I did, setting out to document the wide world of nature just outside my own front door. I took a sip of fresh coffee to fine-tune my senses. I fitted the long lens on my camera and stepped into the mixture of paloverde and creosote I call a yard.

I looked around. *Okay, where'd all the animals go?*

Apparently they all had previous engagements, except for the pigeons on the roof across the street. They had nothing better to do, but I wasn't that desperate. I wanted real wildlife, not panhandlers with wings. Anyway, the quail hadn't gone far. I could hear them in nearby undergrowth, chattering excitedly. It sounded like a distress call—something akin to: *We're all going to die!*

I concluded they were scared and might refuse to come out and have their picture taken.

There was more to this wildlife photography than simply showing up with a camera. I had the mistaken idea that animals would stop whatever it was they were doing and look right into the lens—the way the lion does on a TV nature show. You can almost sense the lion thinking: *Nice camera.*

I shouted to the quail: “I have a good camera, too!”

They weren't buying it.

Okay, forget the quail, I told myself. A male hummingbird had come back to the feeder. Here I had to wrestle a bit with my conscience. Is it cheating to get the hummingbird at a feeder? The real nature photos show hummingbirds hovering before a brilliant red flower, as their own feathers glow purple in the sunlight. But as I didn't have any flowers handy—the chipmunk saw to that—I'd have to go with the wildlife equivalent of an office worker hanging around the water cooler. Slowly and quietly, I worked my way toward the little bird sipping sugar water.

Can I get close enough? I wondered.

Will he overlook the 5-foot-11-inch figure with a camera for a face creeping up on him? Well, no, he wouldn't.

The hummingbird zoomed up to a nearby telephone wire like he'd been shot from a cannon. Then he zoomed back for a quick sip out of the feeder. Then he zoomed after an intruder, a second hummingbird, and they both zoomed up and down and all around until they zoomed out of sight.

Sure, I had a zoom lens, but it didn't help.

I needed something else, something you won't find in the photography catalogs or even on the Internet at a great price—an intangible quality known to professionals as patience. But I didn't have time for that right now. My coffee was getting cold.

I went back inside for a sip and to think about what I had to do to capture nature on film. I stood in front of the window, watching all the animals return from hiding. *That's it! I'll get them through the window.* I put the coffee down, raised the camera and they all disappeared.

This could get old fast, I thought.

Just then the cat jumped up on the windowsill, and stared into the lens—like the lion on the nature show. My cat's not exactly wild, but it is a bit crazy.

Close enough, I figured, and got the shot. ■■

Nothing But View

A bumpy drive to Camp Wood skirts history and plunges into solitude

THE 27-MILE-LONG BACK road to Camp Wood mingles spectacular scenery and lots of wildlife. It starts near the copper mining town of Bagdad in central Arizona, traverses a steep basalt bluff for 15 miles and gains 1,700 feet through high desert, juniper flats and ponderosa forest before finally winding up in Prescott.

Fortified by extra spare tires, food, water and a good map, we started out in two four-wheel-drive vehicles from the Miner's Diner in Bagdad one early June morning, revved up on strong coffee—photographer Chuck Lawsen, Mary Casagrande and me. We left pavement

just outside Bagdad and didn't return to it until 43 miles later, after a trip through enormous vistas, creeks, lush pastures, pinewood hiking trails, remote campsites and wandering wildlife on a road that didn't require four-wheel drive but did demand a full day of bumping along.

Camp Wood Road, or Behm Mesa Road, officially designated on the map as Forest Service Road 21, crosses over the broad piney hump of the Santa Maria Mountain range and stays mostly on federal and state public land, despite two gates that permit passage across private ranchlands.

We started from the

Bagdad end near the Phelps Dodge open pit copper mine. From there, FR 21 climbs 700 feet in the first 6 miles before descending suddenly into Wild Horse Basin at Boulder Creek. It climbs back out just as suddenly up the side of the basalt bluff. For the next 15 miles the road narrows to one-way traffic and gains another 1,000 feet while traversing the bluff midway between the Boulder Creek bottom and the bluff's ragged lava rim.

Vantage points along the way look southward for great distances across mountain ridges and down upon desert plains toward Phoenix, about 95 miles south. The polelike yellow flowered stalks of

century plant agaves marched up the side of the bluff and down into a wet creek bottom. We caught a glimpse of reflected light long before we spotted the rusted A-frame lift and wooden work shack of the old Black Pearl Mine up at the end of a pounding,

travel tips

Vehicle Requirements: High-clearance, two-wheel-drive vehicles.

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

Additional Information: Prescott National Forest, (928) 443-8000; www.fs.fed.us/r3/prescott/.



BLOOMING STICKS Their name means "green stick," but these palo verde trees (left) west of Bagdad are vibrant with their annual spring show of yellow blossoms.

four-wheel-drive road.

We hit one rough, short stretch of loose rock just before topping out in a juniper flat. From that point the going becomes smooth for the rest of the trip. A mile farther along we passed through a gate at Stratjost Flat, taking care to close it behind us. Two miles later, we reached the border of the Prescott National Forest as grasslands gave way to ponderosa pines.

Two mule deer does bounded across the road around midday and stared back at us from a ponderosa thicket. Their gray coats blended almost magically with the forest shadows. Casagrande, new to back-road travel, was amazed by their natural camouflage.

"Even knowing where they are," she said, "I still have a

hard time seeing them."

Herds of elk move through the higher elevations of the Santa Marias. In the range's northeast quadrant, where the land tips downward into juniper, antelope graze on open flats.

At about 22 miles from Bagdad, the woods gave way to a fenced, wet pasture at the Yolo Ranch headquarters, with a second public livestock gate. We paused to look around, but quickly retreated when a cloud of biting gnats descended on us.

Camp Wood, site of a former Forest Service station just 6.5 miles farther, was bug-free.

We stopped for lunch and strung backpack hammocks under tall pines for a noontime snooze. It's a popular camping spot for hikers who take Forest Service Road 95 north to Forest Service Road 95C west to the trailhead of the 2-mile-long Hyde Mountain Trail 6 to the fire lookout on top of

FLAMING STALKS Plump, leafy and tipped with flamelike crimson blooms following ample winter rains, an ocotillo occupies the foreground of this northward look toward the Santa Maria Mountains from Forest Service Road 21.

7,109-foot Hyde Mountain.

Camp Wood consists of the cement foundations of some 1950s buildings built to harvest ponderosa logs in the Santa Marias.

FR 21 passes several other signed trailheads, mostly old ranch pack trails leading to livestock tanks.

East from Camp Wood, 21 gets more traffic but offers

fewer good views. From a viewpoint about 1.4 miles past Camp Wood, we could make out the snow-capped San Francisco Peaks 50 miles away, at Flagstaff. Then the road began a rapid 15-mile descent from pinewoods into chaparral desert, finally returning to the pavement on Williamson Valley Road, 25 miles from downtown Prescott.

Historically, not much happened in the Santa Marias, according to the Forest Service. Fortunately for people who love solitude on a slow drive with long views, that's still true. **AKH**



route finder

Note: Mileages and GPS coordinates are approximate.

- > **From Wickenburg, drive 46 miles** northwest on U.S. Route 93 to the Bagdad turnoff, State Route 97. Turn right (east) onto State 97 and drive 14 miles to Bagdad.
- > **In Bagdad, begin at Lindahl Street** on the outskirts of town. (34°35.46'N; 113°09.69'W)
- > **Turn right** (north) onto Lindahl Street. Go 1.6 miles.
- > **Bear right** (confusing sign makes it look like Lindahl goes both ways. If you go left, you'll hit the mine entrance.) Go 1.6 miles. (34°36.45'N; 113°9.76'W)
- > **Bear left** on Behm Mesa Road (also labeled on various maps as Forest Service Road 21 and County Road 68). (34°36.17'N; 113°8.58'W)
- > **Climb 6 miles**, gaining 700 feet elevation.
- > **Descend into Wild Horse Basin** and Boulder Creek.
- > **Climb 1,000 feet** elevation out of Boulder Creek on one-lane road.
- > **Pass Black Pearl Mine turnoff.** (34°42.08'N; 113°02.62'W)
- > **Continuing on FR 21/County 68**, pass Prescott National Forest boundary. (34°45.50'N; 113°0.93'W)
- > **Pass Yolo Ranch** headquarters (22 miles from Bagdad). (34°47.29'N; 112°58.35'W)
- > **Go 6.5 miles** to Camp Wood. (34°48.05'N; 112°52.79'W)
- > **Continuing on FR 21/County 68**, go 15 miles to pavement at Williamson Valley Road.
- > **Turn right (south)**, and go 25 miles on pavement to Prescott.



WHERE THE WILD THINGS ARE
A downstream view at Three Forks shows off indigenous spruce trees and rolling open meadow. The pool-laden arena is a fisherman's fantasy and humble home to many four-legged friends, like elk and wolves.



ACHOO, MY FLOWER Between Diamond Rock and Three Forks, docile cutleaf coneflowers mingle with Western sneezeweed flowers, which are life-threatening to grazing sheep.

Forks in the Trail

Fish-loving, camera-snapping, sheep-watching hikers face tough choices on the East Fork of the Black River

ON A BEAUTIFUL JUNE DAY, five of us set out on a 3.5-mile hike up the aspen-lined canyon of the East Fork of the Black River between Diamond Rock Campground and Three Forks. We each had our own agenda. Ron and his son, Kyle, wanted to limber up their bamboo fly rods. My wife, Lori, and daughter, Addie, came armed with cameras. I wanted it all—fishing for Apache trout, scanning for wolf tracks, watching for Rocky Mountain bighorn sheep and photographing Chiracahua

leopard frogs, Three Forks spring snails or maybe some nice California floater clams.

We left one truck as a pickup vehicle near Three Forks along Forest Service Road 249, then traveled to the Diamond Rock Campground to begin our journey. Unfortunately, we didn't glimpse so much as a rump-flash of the bighorn sheep that often loiter just above Diamond Rock. No problem, since chronic "flyfishinitis" stopped me at every pool. Within three stops, I had a nice 11-inch

amber Apache trout, a native Arizona trout nearly exterminated by habitat destruction, competition and hybridization with introduced browns and rainbows. One goal down, many more to go.

The hike itself was an easy stroll on an unmaintained trail for the first mile or so, before it veered into the streambed in midcanyon, forcing a lot of boulder- and downed log-hopping, with a face-slap of willow pushing sprinkled in.

I was so intent on fishing,

online Before you go on this hike, visit arizonahighways.com for other things to do and places to see in this area. You'll also find more hikes in our archive.



MYSTIFYING A stand of silent spruce trees meditates in the thickening fog near Three Forks in the Apache-Sitgreaves National Forests.

when you go

Length: 3.5 miles.
Elevation Gain: 229 feet.
Difficulty: Easy to moderate.
Payoff: Opportunities for fishing and wildlife viewing, especially birds and small game.
Getting There: From Phoenix, take State Route 87 northeast to Payson to State Route 260 east through Pinetop-Lakeside. Continue on State 260 through Springerville to its end at U.S. routes 180/191. Turn right (south) and continue toward Alpine approximately 25 miles to Forest Service Road 249 (2 miles north of Alpine). Turn right (west) onto FR 249 toward Big Lake, approximately 5 miles to a Y junction with Forest Service Road 276. Bear left (south) and follow FR 276 for 6 miles to Diamond Rock Campground. The road is well signed.
Travel Advisory: Take a good pair of hiking shoes you don't mind getting wet, and bring sunscreen and bug spray. Carry a lunch and fresh water. Watch out for heavy rains and runoff in the late summer monsoon season.
Additional Information: Apache-Sitgreaves National Forests, Alpine Ranger District, (928) 339-4384.

looking up for bighorns and down for wolf tracks that I missed an American dipper feeding chicks in its nest until Ron pointed it out to me. A nondescript gray (*dip, dip, dip*) bird that can fly through the air (*dip, dip, dip*) or flap under water thanks to special feather oils (*dip, dip, dip*) and eye coverings, the frenetic water bobber (*dip, dip, dip*) seemed like a demented comic, taking its obsessive bows up to 10 times a minute, (*dip, dip, dip*).

Still hoping to spot bighorns, I climbed the steep travertine gray walls but found only old sheep beds. Rocky Mountain bighorns disappeared from eastern Arizona at the turn of the 20th century, but migrated back into our state from New Mexico, and the Arizona Game and Fish Department augmented their populations through transplants.

From the sheep beds, I could see the meandering stream, again home to Apache trout. Although they remain listed as endangered,

hatchery reintroductions and stream protection have now spawned such large populations that you can legally fish for them. The Apache trout could become the first native fish in the United States to come off the endangered species list.

Near Three Forks, Ron said he found wolf tracks and even drew a circle around the tracks and made a large W so I would see it. I missed it. But I had a full schedule, with trout, sheep and dippers. The last known Mexican wolf in

Arizona was killed in 1975, but thanks to state and federal reintroduction efforts, two wolf packs now use the canyon.

We reached the truck, delighted that the area actually boasts more wildlife than it would have 25 years ago; I'm more than satisfied with that.

As to overly full agendas, I'll keep working on it. **AW**

DECK THE WALLS Orange lichens scale the canyon walls along the East Fork of the Black River as the vibrant green creekside vegetation hurries to catch up.

