



PEAK MOMENTS: Climb 15 County High Points

JULY 2006

ARIZONA HIGHWAYS

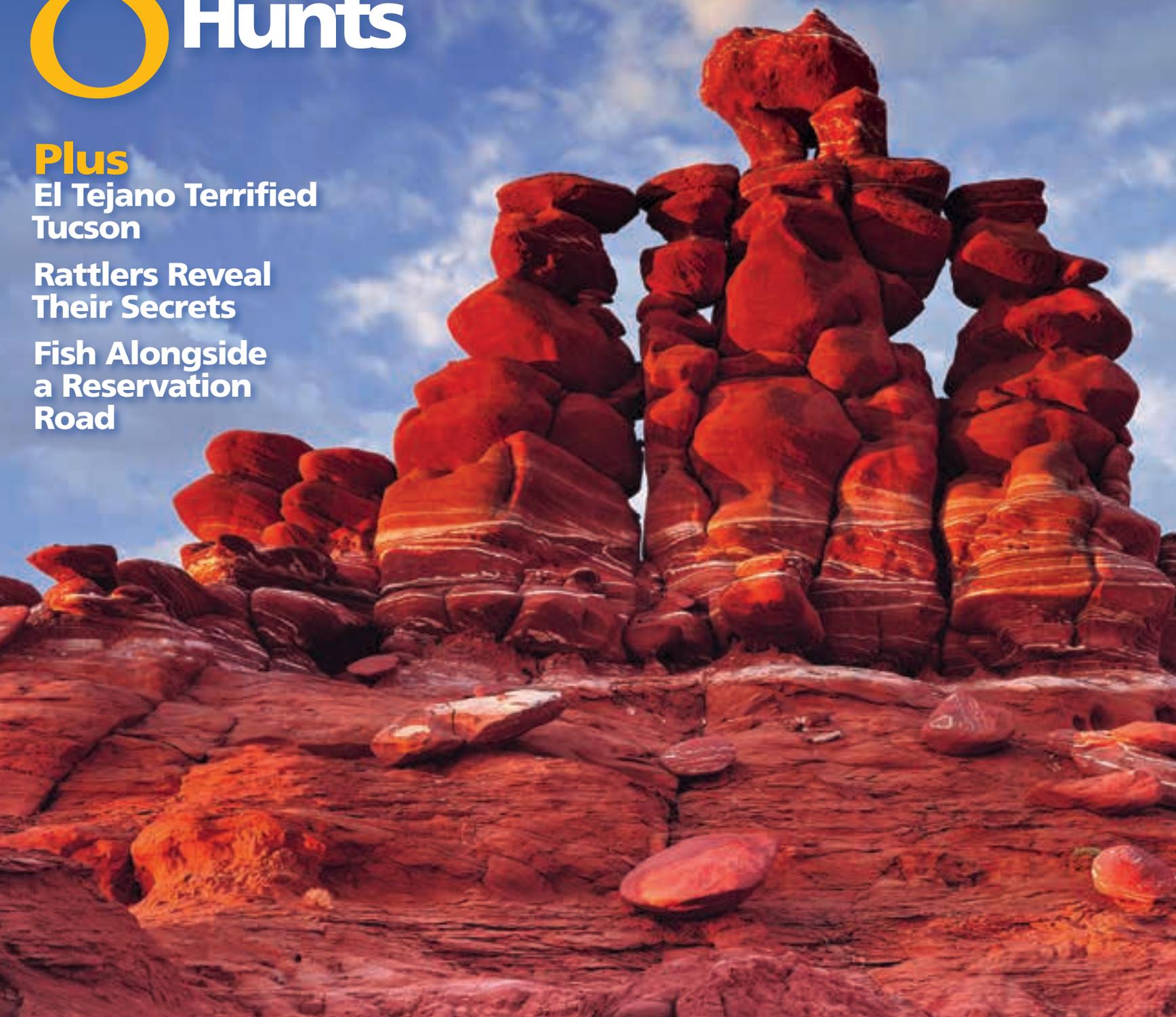
8 Great Hoodoo Hunts

Plus

**El Tejano Terrified
Tucson**

**Rattlers Reveal
Their Secrets**

**Fish Alongside
a Reservation
Road**



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online arizonahighways.com

The best way to beat the heat this month is to head for the high country. Even if you can't leave the desert, you can still hit the high points with our trip planner. To get the lowdown on Arizona summertime adventures, go to arizonahighways.com and click on the "July Trip Planner" for:

- High-pointing highlights
- A hoodoo handbook
- A rattlesnake review

HUMOR Our writer decides to quench his thirst with heat.

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WEEKEND GETAWAY Visit Grand Canyon West Ranch.

HISTORY Meet unlucky Joe Goldwater.

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FRONT COVER Sculpted by solitude, weather and time, banded sandstone on the Navajo Indian Reservation becomes a visual phenomenon known as a hoodoo. See portfolio, page 22. **JACK DYKINGA**

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

FRONT COVER INSET The higher the toil the sweeter the view. Hikers explore Arizona's county high points. See story, page 8. **TOM BEAN**

BACK COVER Nearly 11,000 feet tall, Mount Graham is the highest point in Graham County and so a prime target for county high-pointers (see story, page 8). However, the top of the mountain is closed off by a University of Arizona telescope complex. **STEVE BRUNO**



ARRESTING CREATURE

A greater roadrunner puts on the brakes in Saguaro National Park East. Known for striking a variety of comical poses, these fast-footed birds are some of the only animals known to strike at rattlesnakes. Often working in pairs, they distract, attack and kill their equally striking victims. **PAUL & JOYCE BERQUIST**

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Perched on the Edge

Your May 2006 cover was terrific, but seeing the hiker perched on an overlook made me shudder. I know that the Grand Canyon park rangers wake up every day hoping they won't have to rescue or evacuate (or worse) someone foolish enough to venture to this spot. You don't have to read *Death in the Canyon* to get that point! Please remind your readers that this person has taken a BIG chance.

Rick Rockwell, Owings Mills, MD

Good point. Risky perch. Very sensible. Better-grounded editors here said the photograph might frighten otherwise friendly readers. This underscores the need for sensible editing. So please everyone: Go, look, quiver, but don't fall off.—Peter Aleshire, Editor

Writing About Heroes

Thank you for writing about the Leukemia & Lymphoma Society Hike for Discovery at the Grand Canyon (May '06). This hike has special meaning for me since I was diagnosed with chronic myelogenous leukemia eight months ago. Since that time, I have met many true heroes, such as the Vargases and others mentioned in the story. Fund raising is especially important now as government funding for cancer research has decreased.

Mary Lou Ludicky, Crystal Lake, IL

Where's the Locator Map?

Love Arizona and the magazine. We use it to plan our winter and fall trips. However, I very much miss the little map on the table of contents page that highlights the locations of stories.

Arlene and Joseph Stuhl, New York

We did drop the story locator map on the contents page, because it didn't look as good on a full-bleed, two-page picture there, but added locator maps for many stories — Ed.

Power of Love

Just want to say thanks for "My Goofball Dog and Me" ("All Who Wander," May '06). It's part of what makes *Arizona Highways* a magazine everyone can relate to! Your one story came across with as much power and love as could be found in an entire book. It made my day!

Valerie Lundy, New Jersey

I thank you. Lobo thanks you. At least he will as soon as he finishes eating my CD collection — Ed.

Keep 'em on a Leash

You might want to find out about the leash laws in Arizona ("All Who Wander," May '06). On a recent hiking adventure up the Cochise Trail in the Stronghold area of the Dragoon Mountains, we were confronted with three hikers, each with

a dog, one not on a leash. As we all tried to pass, one dog came between us and I fell down. This makes for what was a very nice hike into a painful downhill finish. I am not against dogs, but it just seems best that dogs be kept on a leash so that everyone can be "free" and enjoy.

Lynette Rice, Cochise

With Lobo, I do wait until we get to the usually unpopulated ridge, but you raise a good point. Heck, half the time I don't think they ought to let me off the leash —Ed.

The Ink Stinks

I am very disappointed that you changed the format of the magazine. You also changed the ink. When I open your magazine, I can't breathe. Why do you guys always have to change things?

Thank you.

Karl Zemann, Las Vegas, NV

We haven't changed the ink, but please write again and tell me what element of the redesign bothers you. — Ed.

Film vs. Digital Revisited

I've just stumbled across Peter Ensenberger's article on film vs. digital (July '05). What a model of un-muddled thinking. Having invested heavily in digital imaging equipment, I'd like to believe that the images are every bit as good as film—even 35 mm—but the evidence is there before my eyes. I'm about to head off to Myanmar, and I'd like nothing better than to trek with just my Nikon D200, but my clunky, heavyweight, medium-format camera will be coming along for the ride for one simple reason—the end result.

Michael Gebicki, Annandale NSW, Australia

Pete Ensenberger is indeed the master of un-muddled thinking, but I love my digital since I can delete the ugly shots. That's less of a selling point for Pete; his stuff always comes out disgustingly good —Ed.

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Letters to the Editor editor@arizonahighways.com
 2039 W. Lewis Ave., Phoenix, AZ 85009

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highways on tv

Arizona Highways magazine has inspired an independent weekly television series, hosted by Phoenix TV news anchor Robin Sewell. For channels and show times, log on to arizonahighways.com; click on "DISCOVER ARIZONA"; then click on the "Arizona Highways goes to television!" link on the right-hand side.

Fools and Thunder

Stone goblins and reckless writers dance in the lightning flash

YOU GOT YOUR FOOLS.

You got your darn fools.
 Then you got your writers.

Arms akimbo astraddle a Chiricahua rock outcrop, I squint at the approaching monsoon thunderstorm.

Never hike among the lightning bolts, said my sainted mother. But I be a writer. Surely it will not rain on me. Besides, I long for the storm.

So off I go, setting myself up. I have but this one day to play hooky from my life. I can go down or turn around, so down I go for an afternoon on Witch Mountain, among the stone goblins waiting in the thunder gloom—acolytes of the apocalypse.

But the goblins know deep secrets, so I'm listening, listening, listening—understanding nothing, wanting everything. I have read all the books, studied all the pictures. I am a-shiver with catastrophe.

Here's what they would have us believe:

Once upon a time, the Earth went crazy. They say it was 27 million years ago, but this number means nothing to me. They say that two crustal plates get into a ruckus: The Pacific Plate goes down under the North American Plate. Maybe it is mad. Maybe it is weary. Why does a plate descend? Down, down, down it goes, into the radium and the mantle and the magma.

Rock melts. Mountains rise. Basins drop. You got your Rocky Mountains. You got your Colorado Plateau. You got your Chiricahua Mountains.

Way, way, way down, the magma rises up, desperate to escape. It rises relentlessly along fractures, oozing up, up, up until it meets the water coming down, until it finds the layers of ancient seafloor mud pregnant with carbon dioxide.

Then in a demented delirium of steam and chemistry, the pressurized magma expands 50-fold. Superheated clouds of ash and pumice explode through the last thin layer of crust, blasting out a gigantic crater and a 100-mph slurry of ash. The crater spews 100 cubic miles of debris. An absurd number: Enough to bury Phoenix and Tucson and everything in between under a mile of rock. A mushroom cloud of ash rises, spreads and darkens the whole planet, exterminating untold species. The bigger bits fall to Earth and blanket 1,200 square miles. The crater empties and collapses, leaving a 12-mile-wide, 5,000-foot-deep hole.

Once the Earth has fallen silent, abashed and jagged, the endlessly patient wind and rain and ice rise like woodwinds after the cymbal clash. Weathering and chemical deterioration sculpt the stone spires of the Chiricahua National Monument where I now wander.

The trail descends, my amazement grows, the clouds lower. Miles later, I come to the Heart of Rocks, the magical center of the carnage.

I am fascinated and foolish in my shirtsleeves, like a



marveling sunbather watching the water withdraw to join the oncoming tsunami.

The lightning flashes, startling me.
 The thunder rumbles, rattling me.
 The fat drops fall, spattering me.

I am miles from the Jeep and alone with the goblins. The lightning flashes in the same instant as the thunderclap, which deafens me. My heart flashes like a moth landing on a spotlight. I can smell the ozone.

The storm comes after me. The goblins dance crazily in the lightning strobe, furious and terrible. I cower and tremble. Be careful what you wish for, even if you are a writer and foolish.

The rain comes in a deluge. Soaked to the skin, I wait for the storm to drop the electric heater into my bathtub.

Abruptly, the storm loses interest in me. Maybe it never noticed me. Maybe it just stretched in its sleep—like the Pacific Plate bumping against the North American Plate.

To my amazement, the clouds shred and scatter. Sunlight lances through, a different school of magic.

All around me, waterfalls spring from the rocks, teasing the goblins. The water glitters and sings. Still the goblins dance, now in sounding joy.

I see everything, understand nothing.

The war with the Apaches took place here among the goblins. Sometimes a white man foolish enough to come here alone could escape by acting crazy, for the Apaches considered insane people potentially holy.

Maybe storms do, too.

And so take pity on fools and writers.

DO AS I SAY
 Don't be like Peter.
 Don't hike in
 thunderstorms. Be
 sensible. DAVE BLY

editor@arizonahighways.com

Pithy Pearls

Great photographers distill a lifetime into concise philosophies

"A GOOD PHOTOGRAPH IS KNOWING WHERE TO STAND."

The statement seems disarmingly simple, especially when we discover it comes from Ansel Adams, arguably the greatest landscape photographer of the 20th century. Rudimentary on its surface but burgeoning with truth, it offers a glimpse into the mind of a photographic genius.

Photography's brief history has provided ample time for extraordinary people to advance the craft and elevate the art form. Many of these early masters expressed themselves with equal eloquence, both visually and verbally. Books, essays and interviews articulating their thoughts on photography aid those of us seeking deeper interpretation of the medium.

These writings—sometimes earnest, sometimes humorous, but always perceptive—reveal the muses of photography's top practitioners and bring perspective to their larger-than-life personas. From these writings, philosophical nuggets emerge as stand-alone quotations that pack a lot of weight in their brevity.

Sage photographer Henri Cartier-Bresson, whose work embodies the "decisive moment," died in 2004 just three weeks shy of his 96th birthday. His photographic observations of the human landscape reinvented photojournalism in a style with the gravity of art. And he expressed incisive views on photography with fluency. Cartier-Bresson, whose photographs often captured the softened blur of his subjects in motion, penned one of my favorite quotes: "Sharpness is a bourgeois concept."

Photography quotes abound. Googling the term turns up dozens of Web sites devoted to the equivalent of the TV sound bite from photography's most illustrious personalities. In an economy of words, these vignettes illuminate photography.

Following are a few discerning quotes, evidence there's a lot more going on in photographers' heads than just f-stops and shutter speeds.

"The camera is an instrument that teaches people how to see without a camera." —DOROTHEA LANGE

"Your first 10,000 photographs are your worst." —HENRI CARTIER-BRESSON

"Which of my photographs is my favorite? The one I'm going to take tomorrow." —IMOGEN CUNNINGHAM

"There is a vast difference between taking a picture and making a photograph." —ROBERT HEINECKEN

"Now, to consult the rules of composition before making a picture is a little like consulting the law of gravity before going for a walk." —EDWARD WESTON

"Film is cheaper than opportunity." —STEVE SILBERMAN



"I find the single most valuable tool in the darkroom is my trash can." —JOHN SEXTON

"I see something special and show it to the camera. A picture is produced. The moment is held until someone sees it. Then it is theirs." —SAM ABELL

"Landscape photography is the supreme test of the photographer—and often the supreme disappointment." —ANSEL ADAMS

"I think all art is about control—the encounter between control and the uncontrollable." —RICHARD AVEDON

"Maybe the judgment of whether something is art or not should come from the viewer and not the doer." —ALAN BABBITT

"Hardening of the categories causes art disease." —W. EUGENE SMITH

"If I could tell the story in words, I wouldn't need to lug around a camera." —LEWIS HINE

"Light glorifies everything. It transforms and ennobles the most commonplace and ordinary subjects. The object is nothing; light is everything." —LEONARD MISONNE

"The sheer ease with which we can produce a superficial image often leads to creative disaster." —ANSEL ADAMS

"If you are out there shooting, things will happen for you. If you're not out there, you'll only hear about it." —JAY MAISEL

And finally, there's Garry Winogrand, who, when asked how he felt about missing photographs while he reloaded film in his camera, replied, "There are no photographs while I'm reloading." I wish I'd said that. ■■■

taking the off-ramp

Showing Some Leg

Phoenix Photographer Kevin Dyer wanted to impress Yoko, visiting from Japan, so he took her to Jerome's House of Joy, a brothel-turned-restaurant. Built in 1890 and operated as a house of ill repute from 1912 to 1946, it morphed into a restaurant. Good food, red light décor, a kitschy gift shop and the odd allure of a bordello gone upscale ensure a month's long waiting list in the season. Reportedly, the owners once turned away President Richard Nixon. Kevin and Yoko didn't get a table, but got a kick out of the visit anyhow.



PLACE DE L'EUROPE, 1932
French photographer Henri Cartier-Bresson pioneered the art of the "decisive moment." He also had a gift for expressing his vision with words. MAGNUM PHOTOS

Jewelry for Squirrels?

THE SENTINELS OF forest-fire reduction strategy may come in small, furry, bushy-tailed packages, according to a group of Arizona Game and Fish Department researchers.

Researchers fitted about 45 tree squirrels around the Flagstaff area with transmitter collars to learn whether forest officials can protect nearby communities by clearing out debris, trees and other potential forest fire fuels without discouraging wildlife from living in those areas. If the squirrels venture out of their dense forest nests and into areas thinned by fire or cutting, it will be an indication that forest thinning is a viable strategy—for both humans and wildlife.

The squirrels used for the study are Aberts, or tassel-eared squirrels. The project is one of the region's first electronic squirrel-tracking projects. The squirrels will be captured, weighed, fitted with collars, released and monitored over a two-year period. The collars will be unobtrusive—like wearing a necklace. —*Kimberly Hosey*



Top 10 Rodeo Superstitions

WHEN IT COMES TO their game or skill, most athletes have a superstition or two. Some baseball players never step on a foul line, while some hockey players always lace up the left skate before they lace up the right. Some athletes refuse to wash their jerseys during a winning streak, and others eat the same meal before every game. And chances are, you'll never see a rodeo cowboy wearing yellow.



Perhaps some of the strangest competition superstitions come from rodeo cowboys and their solid traditions, which have kept these 10 superstitions alive in Arizona's rodeo arenas.

- Never eat peanuts or popcorn in the arena.
- Don't compete with change in your pocket because that's all you might win.
- Never kick a paper cup thrown down at a rodeo.
- A saddle bronc rider always puts the right foot in the stirrup first.
- Never set your cowboy hat on a bed.
- Never wear yellow in the arena.
- Barrel racers often wear different colored socks on each foot, for luck.
- Eating a hotdog before the competition brings good luck.
- Never read your horoscope on competition day.
- Always shave before the competition. — *Sally Benford*

Taylor Celebrates the Fourth by Having a Big Blast

FAMILIES STAND IN A CIRCLE, passing out earplugs while men of the Thornhill family place an anvil in the middle of the street with another anvil on top. Sandwiched between them is a cylinder filled with black powder. A man holding a flaming cloth at the end of a pole ignites the paper fuse. Children cover their ears.

The explosion blows the anvil 10 feet high and gets the cows running. The blast is loud enough to wake up the pioneers in the cemetery. It was their idea to begin with, so they can't complain. Folks in the Silver Creek Valley in 1880 devised a way to imitate a cannon on the Fourth. The Firing of the Anvil has been a tradition ever since.

The day comes complete with a patriotic program, barbecue, night rodeo and fireworks display. Generations of small-town Americans celebrate Independence Day in their own unique ways, but no town has a bigger blast than Taylor. —*Jo Baeza*



Historic Custer Art on View in Tucson

TWO PAINTINGS OF George Armstrong Custer, one of the West's greatest celebrities, stand in the dusty basement of the Arizona Historical Society's Tucson headquarters.

Cassily Adams painted the oils, part of a three-section triptych, in about 1885 for St. Louis beer magnate Adolphus Busch. He eventually donated the panels to Custer's 7th Cavalry, which moved to Fort Grant, Arizona, in 1896.

The two end panels came with it, but not the centerpiece, which later was destroyed by fire in 1946. Long before that, Busch had hired artist Otto Becker to repaint that centerpiece, and eventually distributed more than a million copies of Becker's bloody print. *Custer's Last Fight* hung in saloons everywhere, becoming a famous American painting.

After Fort Grant closed, the end panels went to a ranch near Willcox owned by the fort's caretaker, where they stayed until his son donated them to the Historical Society in 1944.

One shows Custer as a boy carrying a toy sword



and playing soldier. The other shows his body riddled with arrows at the Little Big Horn, the sun setting behind him.

The public can view the cracked and darkened panels by appointment.

Information: (520) 617-1175. —*Leo W. Banks*



Traveling Lite

TRAVEL IS GOOD for broadening one's horizons, but it can often broaden parts of us that we'd rather keep narrow. Between foreign cities, fast food, fatigue and limited workout facilities, hitting the highways and skyways can sabotage even the best health and fitness routines. *The Athletic-Minded Traveler: Where to Work Out and Stay When Fitness is a Priority* by Jim Kaese and Paul Huddle and *Healthy Highways: The Travelers' Guide to Healthy Eating* are guidebooks for those who seek to stay fit without staying home.

The *Athletic-Minded Traveler* lists 78 hotels with onsite or nearby fitness centers, as well as the types of equipment available, while *Healthy Highways* maps out more than 1,900 health-oriented food stores and eateries across the country. Whether you're on vacation or on business, these informative sidekicks can help trim the fat of travel planning and keep you on track with your healthy habits.

Information: www.socalpress.com and www.healthyhighways.com. —*JoBeth Jamison*

living the high life

A hardy, obsessive subculture of hikers bags our counties' highest points by Brendan Leonard



- MARICOPA COUNTY
 - **BROWNS PEAK** 7,657 feet
 - LOCATION: About 25 miles east of Fountain Hills
 - MAP: USGS Four Peaks Quad
- The Maricopa County-Gila County line actually runs over the top of Browns Peak. The 4.8-mile round-trip hike requires a short scramble up a scree chute to the summit. Watch where you put your hands when scrambling; the cacti are plentiful.

THREE-SIXTY AT FOUR PEAKS It may be Browns Peak, Maricopa County's highest point, but for summit-goer Jeff Snyder, it's nothing but blue sky. NICK BEREZENKO



I CAN SEE FOR MILES Hiker Susan Lamb (left) looks out from Coconino County's high point atop Humphreys Peak, the remains of a volcano. TOM BEAN

Humphreys and her slightly shorter sisters are more commonly referred to as the San Francisco Peaks (right). LAURENCE PARENT
 To order a print, call (866) 962-1191 or visit arizonahighways.com.



There were many things I thought I might say when I finally pushed my passion for high-pointing to the top of Humphreys Peak, the tallest mountain in Arizona, “Right now, I am the tallest man in Arizona,” was one memorable line. “Well, it’s all downhill from here,” was another.

But on the October afternoon my friend Brian and I actually made it to the 12,633-foot summit, I said instead, “Okay, snap a quick photo. I’ve got to go back down before I throw up.”

But that’s what happens when you enter into the society of high-pointers, who spend money, energy and much of their free time collecting peaks—like the highest point in every one of Arizona’s 15 counties.

I set out determined to bag the highest point of all, the volcanic mountain that dominates Coconino County. The previous day, we had heard that Humphreys had gotten some snow, but we expected only a light dusting. The kids sledding at the base of the Snowbowl ski area should have served as a warning that two guys in summer hiking gear weren’t very well prepared.

The snow on the lower parts of the trail was already melting in the midmorning sun, so with every step I took uphill through the wet snow, I slid a half-step backward. I slogged through the slush behind Brian, struggling to keep up, while also struggling to act like I wasn’t struggling. As we gained altitude, the snow became crunchier under our boots and my head began to throb with altitude sickness. Every tree was flocked with ice and snow.

At the saddle between Humphreys and Agassiz Peak, a vicious wind whipped over the north-south ridge that constituted our path to the summit. Two-foot icicles shot sideways off a wooden trail sign at a 90-degree angle. My socks were soaked with melted snow, as were the bottom 8 inches of my pant legs. My head pounded. We pressed on. We took on the last three-quarters of a mile to the summit, a trail of footprints

in the frozen snow cut just below the ridge. Brian plodded up the ridge, getting farther ahead with every step. I had to count my steps and stop every 10 paces to draw in three breaths. My pant legs froze to my boots. The throb in my head felt powerful enough to implode my skull and the wind burned my face. Just six hours earlier, I had been breathing comfortably in Phoenix, elevation 1,117 feet, temperature 72 degrees.

After what seemed like an hour of stumbling up the ridge, I finally ran out of mountain. There was no more up, just Brian squatting in a snow-filled rock shelter. The wind ripped at our clothes, and the sun provided blinding light but no heat. I had made it to the top, and it was terrible.

Humphreys Peak is the highest place to stand in Arizona, and also the worst.

I stood now on the trail of people like the software engineer with 3,142 mountains and molehills on his list, or the 69-year-old Flagstaff math professor who has notched 1,400 peaks—and still counting. The 15 county high points of Arizona vary widely in terrain, foliage and scenery, taking even hard core high-pointers a year or two to conquer and enabling one to say strange things like, “I have stood atop La Paz County” at a cocktail party.

— COCONINO COUNTY

— HUMPFREYS PEAK 12,633 feet

— LOCATION: About 10 miles north of Flagstaff

— MAP: USGS Humphreys Peak Quad

— This hike starts out at the Snowbowl ski area parking lot and goes over three false summits before getting to the highest point in Arizona. On a clear day, hikers can see the Grand Canyon from the summit.





RISE UP Hiker Lori Shewey (left) adds a few more feet to Gila County's high point along the Mogollon Rim, a massive escarpment that, millions of years ago, broke off from the surrounding lowlands and surged upward to its present height. NICK BEREZENKO
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The remote and rugged cap of Hualapai Peak (right) is named for the "people of the tall pines" who inhabited the granite-, gneiss- and schist-laden mountain range. The top rewards the end of a tough 60-mile hike. ROBERT G. McDONALD

Finding and climbing them all will take anyone from one end of Arizona's geographic spectrum to the other.

Of the 15 county high points, four are actual mountain summits that require a good day's hike. Mount Baldy, Humphreys Peak, Chiricahua Peak and Mount Wrightson sport great trails to their summits, although the trails up Mount Wrightson are closed due to the Florida Fire in the Santa Rita Mountains last year.

With a sturdy vehicle, it's possible to drive almost to the top of Mount Lemmon in Pima County, Mount Union in Yavapai County and the unnamed 9,441-foot high point of Greenlee County, a short walk off U.S. Route 191. You'll need a four-wheel-drive vehicle for Harquahala Mountain in La Paz County. Technically, the high point in Graham County is Mount Graham at 10,720 feet, but the summit of Mount Graham is closed to the public because it serves as a refuge for the endangered red squirrel. The next highest point in Graham County is Hawk Peak at 10,627 feet.

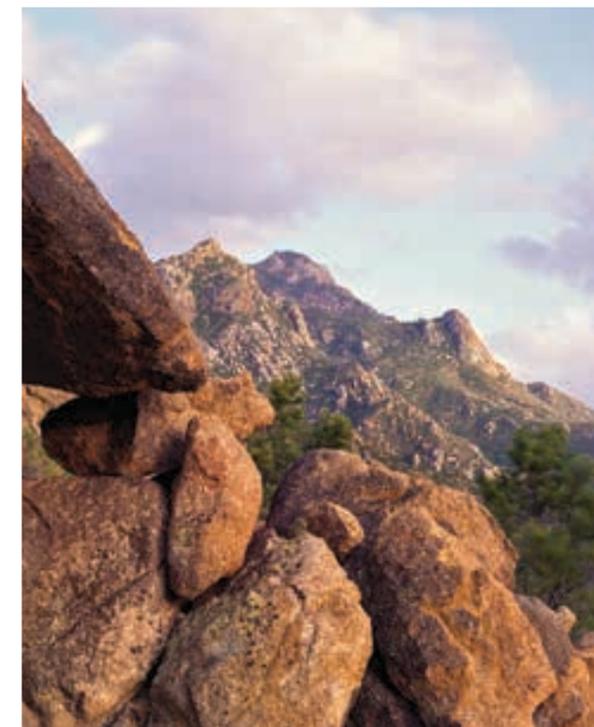
Another four hikes leave the trail and require some orienteering or off-trail knowledge. Browns Peak, the southernmost of the famed Four Peaks, will take a short off-trail scramble up a talus chute to reach the top. Opinions differ on the best route up Navajo County's Black Mesa to reach the unnamed high point at 8,168 feet, but all agree that any approach and hike will be complicated by lots of dirt-road driving, locked gates and cliffs. Mohave County's Hualapai Peak requires some careful scrambling to safely reach the summit. Signal Peak, the Yuma County high point, is a "Choose Your Own Adventure" route, inside the trail-less and nearly roadless Kofa National Wildlife Refuge.

Two of the counties are what seasoned county high-pointers know as "liners": a high point that sits on a county line, but not a summit. A liner is usually a point on a ridgeline that rises on its way out of a county, such as on the side of Rice Peak. The highest point in Pinal County falls on the north side of Rice Peak, the summit of which actually resides in Pima County. The high point of Gila County is also a "liner"—actually two points that are so close in elevation, you have to visit both of them to be sure you've bagged the high point—Myrtle Point on the Mogollon Rim on the Gila-Coconino County line, just off Rim Road, or Promontory Butte, a few miles east on Rim Road and a short hike.

- GILA COUNTY
- MYRTLE POINT, PROMONTORY BUTTE 7,470 feet

LOCATION: About 15 miles northeast of Payson
 MAP: USGS Diamond Point Quad

Just off Rim Road north of Payson, both Myrtle Point and Promontory Butte are less than a 10-minute walk from the car, and 10 miles of driving from each other. A visit to both is necessary to claim the high point.



- MOHAVE COUNTY
- HUALAPAI PEAK 8,417 feet
- LOCATION: About 10 miles southeast of Kingman
- MAP: USGS Hualapai Peak Quad



This 8-mile round-trip hike, starting at Hualapai Mountains County Park, will require a tricky and sometimes exposed scramble to the summit. Many will choose to just touch the summit with an outstretched hand, instead of trying to stand on it.

So why would anyone bother finding a place like the Pima/Pinal County line, on the side of a mountain?

Ask Andy Martin, a software engineer and mountain climber from Tucson who has so far collected the high points of 49 of the 50 states, leaving only Alaska's 20,320-foot Mount McKinley, the highest peak in North America. When he ran nearly out of states, he decided to compile a list of the high points of all the interesting counties in the United States.

"I was looking for another list to go chasing," Martin said.

He decided to find the county high points of the 12 Western states and 13 Northeastern states. A few states such as California, Utah and Washington already had county high point lists, but for many states Martin had use of USGS topographic maps from the University of Arizona library, checking out as many as 50 at a time. After completing the list of 742 county high points in 25 states in 1994, he published the first 32-page version of his book. He was ready to quit then, but fellow fanatics helped him tackle the punishment of poring over maps for hours at a time to produce *County High Points*, which now lists all 3,142 county high points in the United States.

That book was just what Arizonan Bob Packard needed. The former Northern Arizona University math professor operates from his home base in Flagstaff and has so far bagged nearly



1,400 county high points. Packard calls Martin's book "the Bible," and has been faithful to it since 1988.

Packard's son, Erik, had suggested he summit the high point of every county in Arizona. Packard discovered that he'd already

SEA OF TRANQUILITY What looks like a rocky shoreline is actually the summit of Santa Cruz County's Mount Wrightson, south of Tucson, a renowned "sky island," where waves of clouds roll gently over the Sonoran Desert and an ocean of scenic beauty. JACK DYKINGA

unknowingly done most of them while climbing Arizona's mountains, so he took Erik's advice and decided to finish the rest of the list.

Using a state map, Packard headed up each high point. But after he thought he'd finished, a friend pointed out that he'd misjudged the high point of Pinal County, so he returned to the Santa Catalina Mountains north of Tucson to correct his error. He walked along the Oracle Ridge towards the Pinal-Pima county line and stopped where he figured the high point to be.

"I looked down, and by golly, right there was a little cairn,"

Packard said. "In the cairn was an aspirin bottle, and in the aspirin bottle was a long, thin piece of paper. And the long, thin piece of paper said, 'This is the high point of Pinal County.'"

The 69-year-old Packard has since gone on to summit 1,375 county high points across the country. He's been to the summit of every county in 21 different states, including the 11 western-most states.

He's the most accomplished county high-pointer in the world, or at least the world that knows about county high-pointing. The County Highpointers Association Web site, www.cohp.org,

- SANTA CRUZ COUNTY

- MOUNT WRIGHTSON 9,453 feet

- LOCATION: About 15 miles southeast of Green Valley

- MAP: USGS Mount Wrightson Quad

When the Wrightson summit is reopened, a variety of trails will offer routes to the summit of this "sky island." The altitude can keep the summit snowy and icy until late March.





KINGS OF THE HILLS Strong arms of ocotillos and blooms of bladderpods carpet the vast empire of Signal Peak (left) and the Kofa Mountains (coined from the King of Arizona gold mine). PAUL GILL

Boulders create a united front (below left), while a protective army of ponderosa pines surrounds the noble Mount Union, near upper Wolf Creek. PAUL GILL

The granite rock formation known as the Fortress (below) is just one of the unique stone subjects that make Mount Lemmon stand out as the crowning glory of the Santa Catalinas. PETER NOEBELS

boasts only 82 nationwide “Century Club” members who have summited 100 or more counties.

Still, Andy Martin acknowledges that county high-pointing isn’t exactly for everyone. “It’s a fringe activity,” Martin said, “especially to the 99 percent of the population that likes to golf on the weekends.”

A few months after my climb of Humphreys Peak, I headed west out of Phoenix to Harquahala Mountain, Humphreys’ low-desert, warm, snowless opposite. I couldn’t convince anyone to go with me; even my co-workers at a Phoenix outdoor equipment store had never heard of the mountain.

Harquahala is the highest peak in La Paz County, rising just

south of U.S. Route 60, a few miles east of the tiny town of Wenden, where the sign outside the Brooks Outback promises “Hot Beer, Lousy Food, Bad Service.”

The mountain grows nothing but desert shrubs and saguaro

— PIMA COUNTY

— **MOUNT LEMMON** 9,081 feet

— LOCATION: About 20 miles northeast of Tucson

— MAP: USGS Mount Lemmon Quad

— The Marshall Gulch Trail offers a popular 6-mile round-trip for those who choose not to drive almost all the way to the summit.

— YUMA COUNTY

— **SIGNAL PEAK** 4,877 feet

— LOCATION: About 25 miles southeast of Quartzite

— MAP: USGS Palm Canyon Quad

Route-finding skills are a must on this steep, cacti-laden, barely blazed climb in the Kofa National Wildlife Refuge.



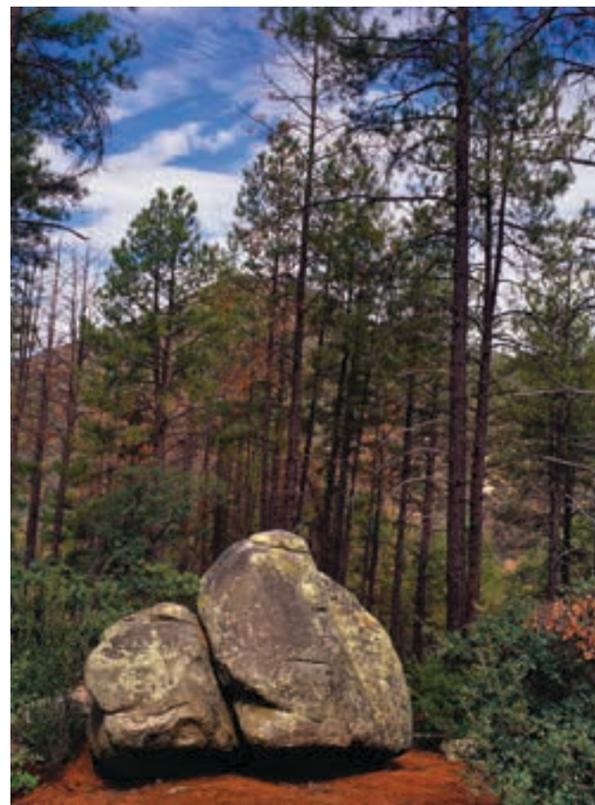
— YAVAPAI COUNTY

— **MOUNT UNION** 7,979 feet

— LOCATION: About 5 miles southeast of Prescott

— MAP: USGS Groom Creek Quad

The only hike to the summit of Mount Union is on a road. For the most unique driving experience, take the old Senator Highway north from the town of Crown King to Forest Service Road 261, which leads to the lookout tower atop Mount Union.





- NAVAJO COUNTY
- **UNNAMED POINT ON BLACK MESA** 8,168 feet
- LOCATION: About 5 miles south of Kayenta
- MAP: USGS Kayenta West Quad
- Orienteering knowledge and a map and compass are necessary to find a good route to this high point on the north rim of Black Mesa, visible from the town of Kayenta. Approach from the southwest and stay as close to the north rim as possible, and the round-trip hike will be about 13 miles.

- COCHISE COUNTY
- **CHIRICAHUA PEAK** 9,759 feet
- LOCATION: About 10 miles south of Chiricahua National Monument
- MAP: USGS Chiricahua Peak Quad
- Don't expect any great views as a reward for your 5.5-mile hike to the summit—the top of the peak is thick with trees.



HALLOWED HEIGHTS Because of their “elevated” status, several county high point areas are held in high spiritual esteem. Navajo County’s Black Mesa (above left) is honored by both the Navajo and neighboring Hopi Indian tribes. Protected by the White Mountain Apache Tribe, Mount Baldy (above) is a sacred burial ground. **BOTH BY ROBERT G. MCDONALD**
 Chiricahua Peak (left) once sheltered Apaches but now nurtures mostly wildlife. **JERRY SIEVE**

cacti. The summit is only 5,681 feet high, and one can climb 3,300 feet up the north side of the mountain on the trail or drive the four-wheel-drive road on the south side.

The road and the trail meet at the Harquahala Mountain Observatory, where scientists lived and researched the sun’s effect on the Earth’s climate from 1920 to 1925. Now, it’s where the people who hike up and the people who drive up stare at each other, astonished someone would drive when they could hike, or alternately, waste all that energy walking somewhere they could drive.

The first person to identify and climb all the county high points of Arizona, Bob Walko, stood atop Harquahala Mountain when it was the high point of Yuma County. When La Paz County split from Yuma County in 1983, it took the highest point, Harquahala Mountain, with it. After the split, Yuma



- APACHE COUNTY
- **MOUNT BALDY** 11,403 feet
- LOCATION: About 20 miles southwest of Springerville
- MAP: USGS Mount Baldy Quad

The summit of Mount Baldy is closed to all non-Apaches, but the 16-mile round-trip on the West Baldy Trail follows the scenic West Fork of the Colorado River, and the altitude makes this a cool summer hike.

County’s new high point became Signal Peak. Walko never returned to Yuma County to hike it, but still gets credit as the first person to “complete” the high points of Arizona.

Surveying the checkerboard of farm fields in the valley below from the summit, I understood why Walko never felt drawn to this nondescript desert mountain. I would have skipped it myself if someone hadn’t drawn new county lines in 1983.

But on my hike down, the warm breeze whistling through a forest of saguaros in the canyon reminded me that Harquahala wouldn’t freezer-burn my face a la Humphreys Peak. If I want that treatment again, I can head down to Cochise County in February and try to get up to the top of Chiricahua Peak.

After that, there are only 12 more to be had. **AH**

ADDITIONAL READING: *County High Points* by Andy Martin. To order, visit www.cohp.org.
ADDITIONAL INFORMATION: County Highpointers Association, www.cohp.org.

Brendan Leonard studied high-pointers as part of his master’s thesis at the University of Montana. He spent a year living in Arizona, where among his other outdoor adventures, he climbed the “Seven Summits of Phoenix” in one day. He now lives in Colorado.



- GRAHAM COUNTY
- **MOUNT GRAHAM** 10,720 feet
- The summit is closed to the public, and the next highest point is Hawk Peak at 10,627 feet.
- LOCATION: About 10 miles southwest of Safford
- MAP: USGS Webb Peak Quad
- With the summit of Mount Graham closed, Hawk Peak, less than a mile down the road, is the second-highest point in the county and a short hike.

- GREENLEE COUNTY
- **UNNAMED POINT** 9,441 feet
- LOCATION: About 20 miles southwest of Alpine
- MAP: USGS Strayhorse Quad
- This point is a knoll less than a quarter-mile off U.S. Route 191, just north of mile marker 227. Look for the small rock cairn and register that mark the high point.

- LA PAZ COUNTY
- **HARQUAHALA MOUNTAIN** 5,681 feet
- LOCATION: About 10 miles east of Wenden
- MAP: USGS Harquahala Mountain Quad

This trailhead is located opposite the only palm tree growing on the north side of U.S. Route 60, east of Wenden. A 5.5-mile round-trip hike will take high-pointers to the summit.

- PINAL COUNTY
- **NORTH SLOPE OF RICE PEAK** 7,575 feet
- LOCATION: About 7 miles south of Oracle
- MAP: USGS Campo Bonito Quad
- Hike up Peppersauce Canyon just south of Oracle to the north ridge of Rice Peak. The high point of Pinal County, and a cairn and register, are about 300 vertical feet below the summit of the peak.

Home of the Heart

A Tohono O'odham Woman Teaches
a Thoroughly Modern Writer
an Ancient Truth

by Kathleen Walker

illustration by Joseph Daniel Fiedler

"Where is your home?" my friend asked as we drove west with the morning. We were heading across the Sonoran Desert to the capital of the Tohono O'odham reservation in Sells. The Tohono O'odham, the Desert People, number about 24,000. Their reservation, their traditional homeland, is the size of the state of Connecticut.

When we crossed the invisible line between the rural outskirts of Tucson and the reservation, my friend, an O'odham, sighed deeply. "We are on the People's land," she said. "I always feel better."

"No matter where we go, we come home to be buried," she told me, her eyes on the straight-as-a-ruler road. "We always come home." Then she asked me that question.

"Where is your home?"

I had to think about that one. "Going way back, I suppose

Ireland, Scotland, France," I said with a shrug, but with the words came the reality. I didn't have her kind of homeland. Still, I wasn't short of a burial plan. I told her I wanted to be cremated, my ashes flung into the wind. She looked at me in shock and, I think, sadness. I had no home, not even in death.

The land of the O'odham people runs west from Tucson to the Gulf of California and south to the border with Mexico. "There are some places out there where you think you can see the curvature of the Earth," as one friend said of his experience on this great patch of desert. And yes, it can seem desolate, achingly empty, breathtakingly silent.

"We are quiet people," my O'odham friend tells me. She and her people told me about themselves during the communications seminars I led on the reservation. The seminars were based on courses I've taught at Pima Community College in Tucson. With the money now flowing in from the casinos, with new investments being made, the O'odham must deal more and more with the world of corporations, small businesses and the media. Seminar participants were interested in how communication works in the business world outside the reservation.

They asked me questions about the Anglos, the not-so-quiet people. Sitting with their arms folded across their chests, their eyes often averted, they asked about our right-in-their-faces ways. They wondered about how we use our eyes and our mouths, about our demanding answers to questions that they feel should require long, silent contemplation. They asked me to explain these ways of the people they call Mi:lgan.

Well, we do use our eyes differently. We tend to stare, widen our eyes and forever try to catch theirs. They look away, down, off, guarding their privacy and ours. We invade with our eyes; they retreat with theirs.

We assault with our questions. "Why do you ask how do you feel?" one seminar participant demanded. "Why do you do that?"

I had no answer. Such a question seemed normal to me.

"We want to think," the woman went on. "Why do you want an answer right away?" She was angry. Such a demand for an immediate response was too personal, delving again into a private realm.

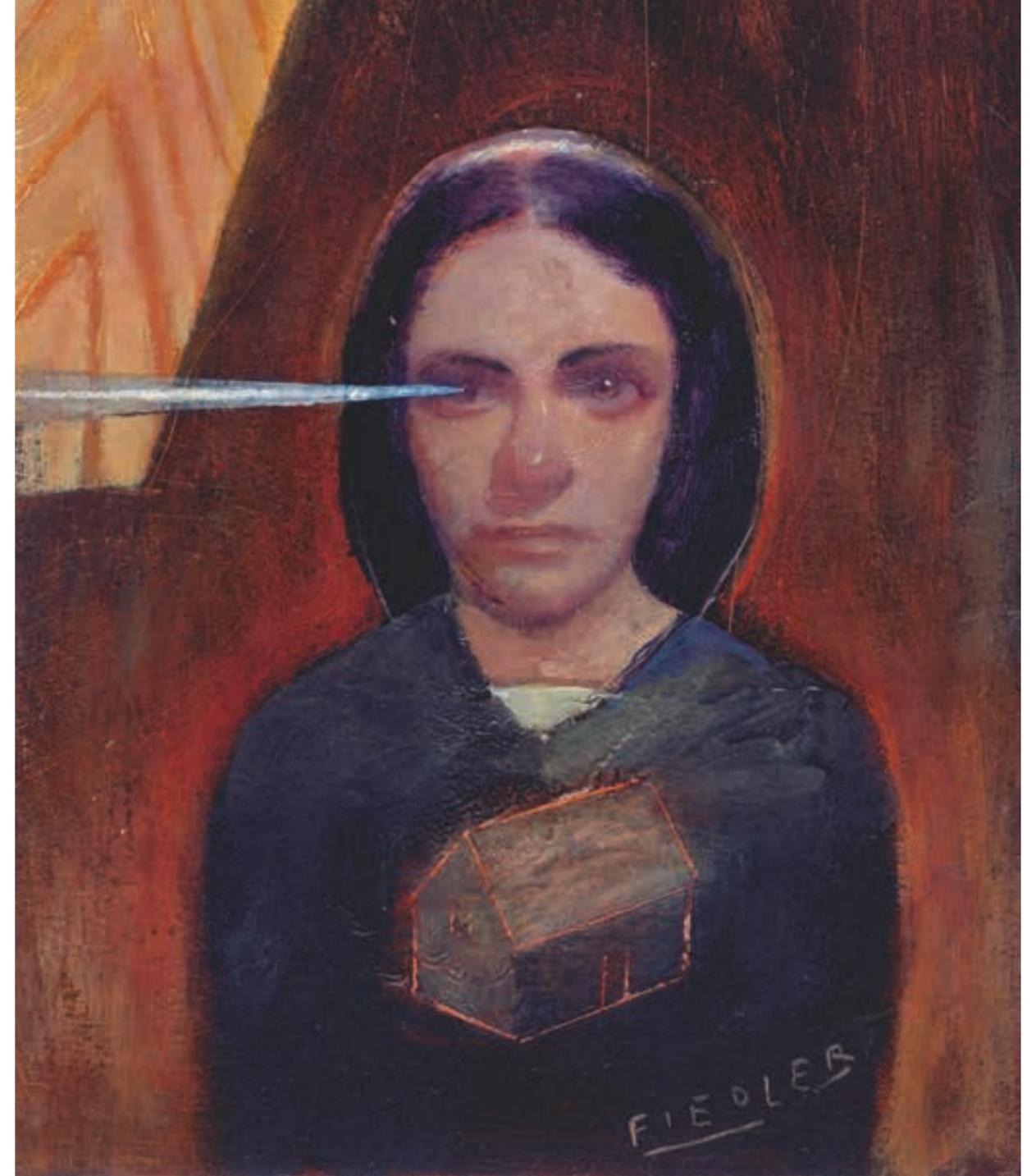
For weeks, I thought about that reality, the way my culture snaps out the "What do you think? How does that sound? What are you going to do?" questioning that peppers our every interaction.

"We really don't want an answer," I explain at the next seminar. "We just want some kind of assurance that we've been heard. So, just say anything, like, 'Yeah, that's interesting. I'll get back to you.' Just let us know we've been heard."

My culture apparently looks for constant assurance that we exist. O'odham need no such assurance. They exist, have always existed, will exist as part of this land forever while one out of three new settlers in Arizona will move on to some other temporary home. Like me, many won't even stay put at death, happy to let their ashes blow higgledy-piggledy across the earth and sea.

"You taught us things, brought us things," my friend said of her people's seemingly benign acceptance of the Anglo intrusion into their desert world.

We brought them a dependable source of food, cattle, fruit and grains. But we certainly didn't have to teach them farming. They had that one down since ancient times and could have taught us a few things about irrigating a desert. What we added to their diet and their movement away from the natural foods of the Sonoran Desert led them down the path of diabetes. They have one of the highest rates for any group in the world. We provide insulin; they have their own ways.



One O'odham acquaintance heard I had been troubled and ailing since the death of my aunt. He came to me unannounced while I was signing books at the gift shop at Mission San Xavier del Bac on the reservation southwest of Tucson. He placed his hand on mine, hard. He looked at me and then away and began a healing. The crowd of tourists, pilgrims, artists, historians, parted around my little desk, moving away, back, as he moved his hands in the air over my head, shoulder, arms.

"Don't think about it so much," he whispered as he continued his movements.

"Am I better?" I asked.

Oh, will I never learn? I had asked that direct I-want-an-answer, a change, a response-right-now question.

He smiled at my foolishness. "I don't know, I haven't looked at

you," he said, looking right at me. We needed more time, I and my question and my healing and my culture, O'odham time.

As my friend and I drove across the People's land, I believed I knew why some native people of this continent just watched as we Anglos came tromping into their territory. I believed I knew why they let us come on with little resistance. They must have thought we would go back to our homeland someday, in the O'odham way. Do they still wait? **AW**

Kathleen Walker of Tucson has spent much of her writing career driving the highways and telling the stories of people of southern Arizona. Her book, San Xavier—The Spirit Endures, was published by Arizona Highways.

Joseph Daniel Fiedler, nom de guerre "Scaryjoey," was born and raised in western Pennsylvania. His work has appeared in numerous national and international publications.

HOODOO VOODOO

Bizarre
Shapes of
Fused
Ash
Inspire
Geologists
and
Storytellers

by Gregory McNamee photographs by Jack Dykinga



This
is a story
of rock
and
stone.

In the manner of rock, it enfolds other things—in this case another story, one that is very old, so old that its origins may lie far in the Hohokam past.

One day, years and years ago, it began to rain, and rain, and rain, so hard that the world began to flood and the People climbed high into the Superstition Mountains, hoping to outrun the rising waters. They did not; they might have known they were doomed when a dog spoke to them and said, “The water has come.” If you are ever on the southeast side of the Superstitions, the story concludes, you can look up and see those people, turned to stone.

Here is another story, one from our own time. In this story, those “people” are the outcome of an inexorable, unending process of changes: lava spews up from below the world’s surface, cools, and solidifies in the form of igneous (that is, fire-born) rock. With the passage of much time, this rock can be bent and warped like so much clay. Water, too, can break it down into tiny flecks of sand, which will someday be compressed and turn into stone, ready to be melted down into lava—and so the process begins anew, an endless cycle of transformations.

Rock begins with rock, the second story tells us. Rock has been there always, since the creation, both stories agree. The first story is literature, the second—no less dramatic—science. Both have the same purpose, though: to explain why things

(Text continued on page 26)

And the Thunder Rolls

Vermilion Cliffs National Monument: With hoodoos formed over millions of years by nature, and bearing names like Bowling Giants, Red Rolling Hoodoos and Gnome Hoodoo, the formations evoke science and superstition, legend and lore. Petrified sand dunes forming stark white contours are dotted by isolated piñon pines and a small glassy pool under a stormy afternoon sky.

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



Mirrored Monuments

Vermilion Cliffs: Hoodoo rock is reflected in the potholes filled with rainwater at dawn. Experts are particular about what may be called a hoodoo—only tall, totemlike spires technically qualify. Formations such as those shown here earn the name hoodoo rock, while the columnar shapes found elsewhere in the monument and around the state, formed through differential erosion, are “true” hoodoos.

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

(Continued from page 23)

are as they are, to puzzle out why the world looks as it does.

From every vantage point, Arizona looks to be a rocky place. It is a land of cacti and forests and rivers, to be sure, but Arizona is pre-eminently a land of stone, with mountains on every horizon and pebbles beneath every footstep.

The stone can take peculiar shapes that require peculiar names. Hoodoos, for instance—which old-timers also called “goblins”—are, in formal geological terms, columns of stone protected by a hard caprock that keeps the softer material beneath it from eroding away. The different layers are marked by different degrees of hardness, but none is hard enough to withstand the forces of geological change. Water, ice, wind, tree roots, blades of grass, all conspire to bring stone down, and the softer layers are the first to go, so that the stone comes, over time, to take odd wavering forms. Thus hoodoos, a strange word of uncertain origin, and one that seems just right for the job.

One hoodoo of which I'm particularly fond, a weathered sandstone column—well, more like a blob, really—in the Santa Catalina Mountains north of Tucson, bears a remarkable resemblance to the late Richard Nixon. Another, nearby, looks quite a bit like Donald Duck, sailor cap and all, at least from a certain viewpoint. Whole fields of hoodoos greet visitors to the Colorado Plateau, where soft sandstone formations are quite amenable to the work of the elements in carving forms that look like—well, goblins, or the stone heads of the Polynesian divinities of Easter Island, or dozens of other fanciful, fantastic resemblances.

Hoodoos and goblins: The suggestion of ghosts is a very old one, and many Native American stories find human forms in the rocks. One variant on the theme, told by an Apache storyteller, has it that the hoodoos lining many ridges in the Superstition Mountains mark the places where strong people who refused to help their weaker fellows escape the flood were transformed into stone and forever condemned to watch silently over the land, as if to say, this is the price of discourtesy.

Hoodoos can take many forms, though some geologists insist that only a tall column of rock properly qualifies for the term. “Tall” is a loose term, of course, and somewhere within it lies a dividing line between hoodoo, column and spire.

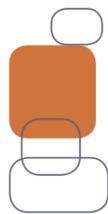
(Text continued on page 30)

In the Spotlight

Vermilion Cliffs: The setting sun lays a final ray of gold light on eroded sandstone. The area evokes biology as well as fable—neighboring hoodoos (not shown) include Elephant Rock, bearing a prominent trunk; Snail (or Brain) Rock, a red-orange globular dome on a thick “pool” of base rock; Toadstool Rock, which seems almost ripe for picking, and Thin Hoodoo, a slender spire topped with an “eye” of rock.

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





HOODOO HUNTING

Hoodoos, pillars of eroded rock, stand in silence throughout Arizona, sharing rocky slopes with Indians, pioneers, animals and tourists. Here are a few places to spot the spires.

BABY ROCKS MESA 15 miles east of Kayenta on U.S. Route 160

Near Kayenta, the silty, twisted sandstone of Baby Rocks Mesa gives way to a small clique of hoodoos. A Navajo legend tells of a girl who refused to share bread with her sister, upon which she was changed to one of Baby Rocks' standing sentinels. Information: (928) 697-8451; www.kayentatownship.com.

RED MOUNTAIN Coconino National Forest, 25 miles northwest of Flagstaff

The Red Mountain hoodoos protrude like the fingers of a giant hand poking up through the ground. Red Mountain, a volcanic cinder cone that rises 1,000 feet above the surrounding landscape, has a large "amphitheater" on its northeast flank. Tapering hoodoos 10 to 20 feet tall stud the region. Information: (928) 527-3600; www.fs.fed.us/r3/coconino.

SUPERSTITION MOUNTAINS Outside of Apache Junction, 20 miles east of Phoenix

If you're driving east along U.S. Route 60, they might just appear as stubble along the ridges and peaks of the Superstition Mountains. But the region's famous hoodoos loom larger in person. Try the craggy Siphon Draw Trail 53 climbing the front range of Superstition Mountain for some good hoodoo sights. As you climb the increasingly steep, rocky trail to the summit, passing through mesquite, jojoba, prickly pear, saguaro and other upper-Sonoran treasures, hoodoos roll into view. Information: (480) 610-3300; www.fs.fed.us/r3/tonto/home.shtml.

BOYNTON CANYON Red Rock-Secret Mountain Wilderness, adjacent to Sedona and Oak Creek Canyon

With lush riparian vegetation, towering red sandstone formations, hoodoo rock spires and ancient Sinagua cliff dwellings dating back to A.D. 1200, Boynton Canyon's most popular hoodoos are the "wedding couple," embracing

Water-worn Windows

Vermilion Cliffs: Light filters through holes eroded over time in multihued sandstone. In Arizona during the Pleistocene period, cold lakes covered much of the state, which was lushier than it is today. With more water in the Ice Age lakes to move and deposit sediment, as well as more rainfall percolating through crevices and cracks, conditions were ripe for the weathering and creation of all kinds of whimsical shapes.

red pillars near Cathedral Rock. Information: (928) 282-7722; www.visitsedona.com.

SUPERIOR Viewable from the car on a drive through Superior, hundreds of hoodoos and saguaros stand together in a maze in Devil's Canyon in the Pinal Mountains. Wildlife, from golden eagles and rattlesnakes to javelina and Gila monsters, frequents area. Information: (480) 610-3300; www.fs.fed.us/r3/tonto/home.shtml.

SANTA CATALINA MOUNTAINS Northeast of Tucson

It's a little like cloud-watching. You may or may not see faces in the weathered sandstone columns—Donald Duck and Richard Nixon keep company here, according to some; petrified ne'er-do-wells of the past, according to others—but either way it should make for some fun viewing. Information: (520) 388-8300; www.fs.fed.us/r3/coronado/index.shtml.



NORTHERN SIGHTS Page, Lee's Ferry, Vermilion Cliffs National Monument

Monoliths just south of Page greet viewers with undulating waves and mounds of peach-tinted sandstone, culminating in protruding pinnacles. East of Page, near Marble Canyon and Lee's Ferry along U.S. Route 89, "mushroom hoodoos" resemble towering fungi and "balanced rocks," formed by the wind eroding the soft rock below, look deceptively fragile. A few more hoodoos hide in the House Rock area of the Vermilion Cliffs National Monument, reached by House Rock Valley Road off U.S. 89, south of the Vermilion Cliffs. Information: (928) 660-3405; www.blm.gov/az/vermilion/vermilion.htm; www.nps.gov/glca/lferry.htm.

CHIRICAHUA NATIONAL MONUMENT Southeast of Willcox via State Route 186

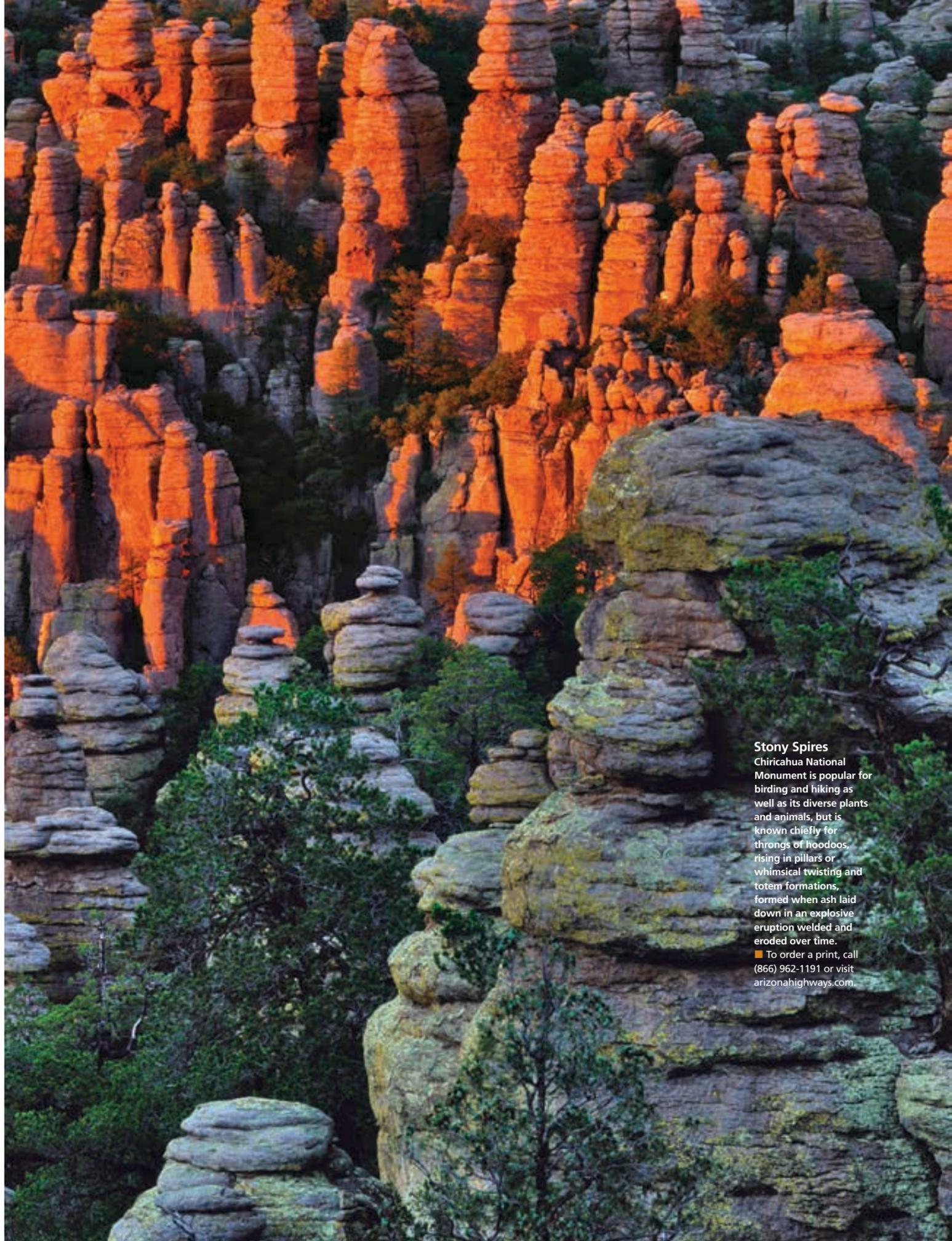
Nature's hand drew the intricate outline of Arizona's premier hoodoo haven. About 27 million years ago, the Turkey Creek Caldera erupted in a spectacle 1,000 times greater

than the 1980 eruption of Mount St. Helens, spewing volcanic ash and pumice in a layer nearly 2,000 feet thick. The viscous ash blanket cooled, contracted and welded together, forming rhyolite tuff. When the ground beneath the caldera began to rise again, the rising pressure cracked the ground like dry pizza dough pressed from beneath, forming ring-shaped cracks and radial fractures. When water, salt crystals, ice, dust and temperature changes wore along the cracks over millions of years, the result was a forest of hoodoos in a circle-and-spoke pattern. Called The Land of the Standing-up Rocks by the Chiricahua Apaches, the area's oldest hoodoos are hundreds of feet tall and 2.4 million years old. The visitors center features displays and literature about the hoodoos along the area's Heart of Rocks and Rhyolite Canyon trails. Information: (520) 824-3560; www.nps.gov/chir.

Stony Spires

Chiricahua National Monument is popular for birding and hiking as well as its diverse plants and animals, but is known chiefly for throngs of hoodoos, rising in pillars or whimsical twisting and totem formations, formed when ash laid down in an explosive eruption welded and eroded over time.

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





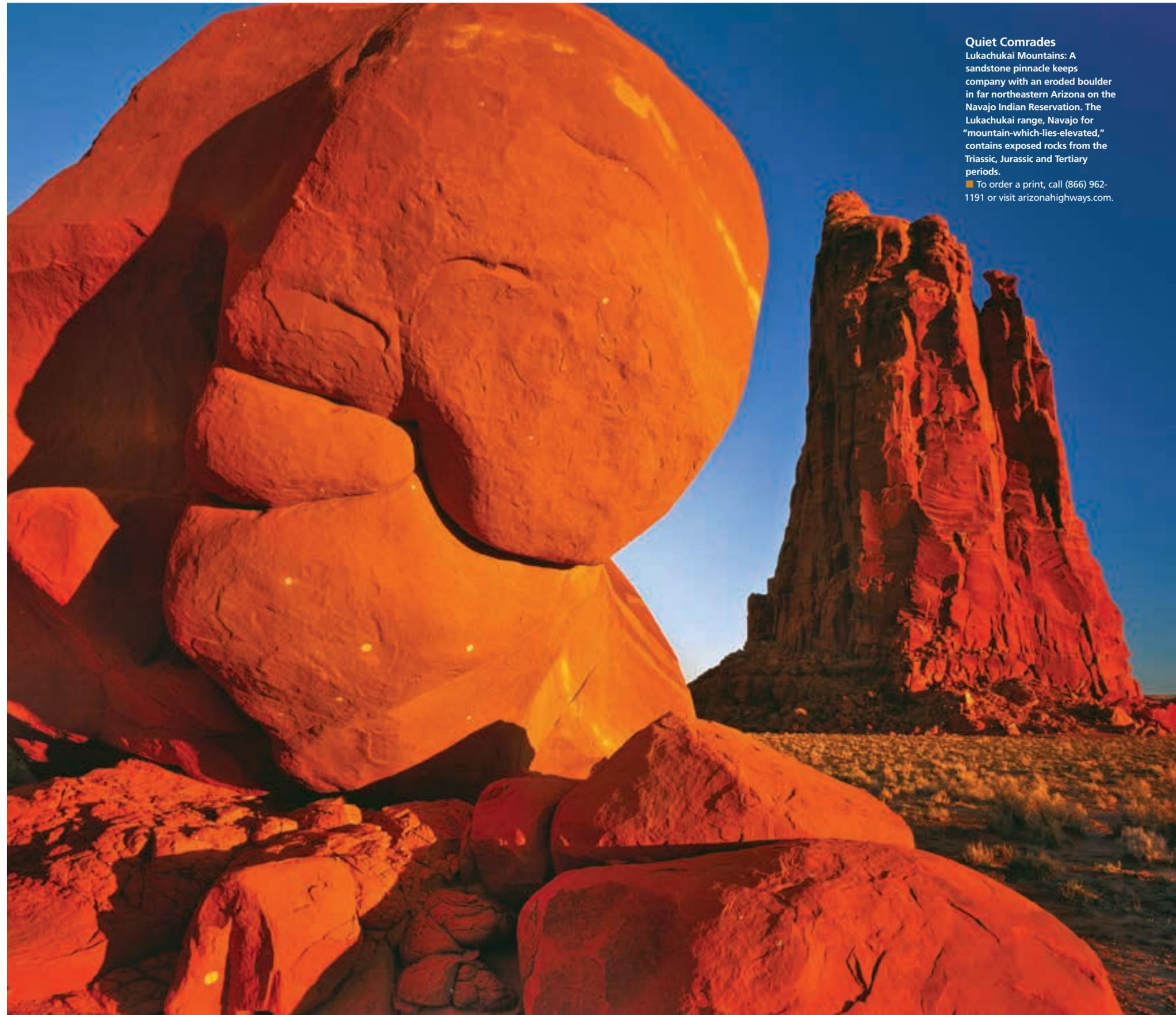
Petrified Patterns

Vermilion Cliffs: The monument, created in the year 2000, protects myriad treasures, from early rock art to a geologic palette in the monument's northwest region, where crossbeds of Navajo sandstone display banding in yellows, oranges, pinks and reds, caused by the precipitation of manganese, iron and other oxides. Above, sandstone climbs in ranks of polygonal joints to rolling pale mounds, while red rock cliffs on the horizon gleam in the setting sun.

(Continued from page 26)

Another story from the Earth's ancient past: A volcano spews out a field of lava, which cools atop layers of sedimentary rock that lie below it. In time, the surrounding sandstone without that protective cap wears away, leaving a plateau called a mesa—a landscape feature that, like hoodoos, is near and dear to the hearts of Roadrunner cartoon fans, and characteristic of just about every part of Arizona. In time, mesas, like everything else, wear away, leaving behind fingers of rock that stand tall in the sky.

Those fingers are spires, a fittingly grand term, for, like cathedrals and skyscrapers, they are wonders to behold. Visitors to Monument Valley, in the far northeastern part of the state, can see plenty of examples of mesas and their eroded offspring and kin, such as the 7,096-foot-tall rise called Agathla Peak, the root of an ancient volcano. One classically grand, imposing spire, 4,553-foot



Quiet Comrades
Lukachukai Mountains: A sandstone pinnacle keeps company with an eroded boulder in far northeastern Arizona on the Navajo Indian Reservation. The Lukachukai range, Navajo for "mountain-which-lies-elevated," contains exposed rocks from the Triassic, Jurassic and Tertiary periods.
■ To order a print, call (866) 962-1191 or visit arizonahighways.com.

In few places on Earth are the forces of geology on such extravagant display as in the Chiricahua Mountains...

Weaver's Needle in the Superstition Mountains, alternates layers of volcanic basalt and ash, materials of different hardness—so that, perhaps, in millions of years rain and ice will wear it, too, into a hoodoo, bearing resemblance to some icon of the future—if not Donald Duck, then perhaps Duck Dodgers.

To the south of Monument Valley, in Canyon de Chelly, stands one of the greatest spires of them all: 800-foot-tall Spider Rock. The sandstone pillar, which forks into two above the canyon floor as if split by a mighty thunderclap, seems to be a magnet for wondrous weather, marked by lightning flashes and threatening clouds. Indeed, a Navajo origin story tells that a huge storm once passed through a gentle valley, tearing off the soil and grass and aspen trees; in the wake of the storm, tall single pillars of rock stood on the valley floor, flanked by steep canyon walls of red rock, the Canyon de Chelly we know today.

Such tempestuous weather, and such a dramatic story, is just as it should be for a divine abode—for, in Navajo belief, the great rock is the home of Spider Woman, a protector who, among other things, taught the People how to spin. The ancient Greeks told much the same story about the unfortunate Arachne, who taught humans her craft but then spun her life away in a cave, despised by everyone. Spider Woman, a beloved if sometimes scary presence, had the better lot on her windswept, lightning-lashed rock, one of the most beautiful places on Earth.

When spires, canyons, finger rocks and mountains grow tired and old, they fall. Where they do, they leave behind pieces of their former selves. These can be grains of sand, cobbles in streambeds. Or they can take the form of great boulders, stones that attest to the power of water to reshape everything it touches.

The Granite Dells of Prescott, for instance, are unfathomably old; the Grand Canyon is a baby by comparison. Here, millions of years ago, an outcrop of Precambrian granite was exposed to the elements when the younger rocks atop it eroded away. And over those millions of years, the action of water and ice pocked that hard rock, bit by bit, until it split into great angular blocks and slender fingers of stone. With the passage of still more time, water and wind and sun weathered them

away, rounding off their sharp corners and giving them the pleasant appearance of old elephants resting at a water hole.

Another fine boulder field lies in Arizona's southeast, above the San Pedro River valley between Tucson and Willcox. Texas Canyon is very much younger than the Granite Dells, and, though it looks somewhat the same, its rocks are not granite but quartz monzonite, another product of ancient volcanic action. Tough and laced with hard minerals, the rocks of Texas Canyon have nonetheless spent their time in the elements, too; water has broken them up along their joints, so that one rock balances improbably atop another, looking very much as if it could come crashing down at any moment.

Geologists call this process of boulder formation "exfoliation," as if the Earth's skin were being peeled. In a sense that is so, and the process is ongoing. In a few million years, we can guess, the boulders of Texas Canyon will be rounder, a little lower, softer to the eye. But they will still be there.

In few places on Earth are the forces of geology on such extravagant display as in the Chiricahua Mountains, in the southeastern corner of the state. There old walls of granite are overlain by younger layers of tilted sandstone and shot through with weird dikes, intrusions and lava flows, signs of what geologist Halka Chronic calls "a wild orgy of volcanic eruptions 30 to 25 million years ago." Here, deep within the mountains, whose name means "standing rock" in the Apache spoken there, visitors can see just about every kind of curious formation that Arizona has to offer, from spooky hoodoos to finger rocks, from boulder fields to rank after rank of spectacular spires and impossibly balanced rocks—and, as a bonus, the rare finds called volcanic hailstones, bits of mud and rock thrown up by ancient eruptions and cooled into strange lichen-covered forms, the mess left over after that orgy of fire. It must have been quite a party. But that's another story. ■

Gregory McNamee of Tucson is the author of several books about Arizona's human and natural history. He dabbled in rock-climbing as a young man, before deciding that it was safer to study geology from below.

Jack Dykinga of Tucson finds that hoodoos provide a beautiful way to photograph change in the seemingly unchangeable face of the Earth. Eroded spires or balanced caprocks always stop him in his tracks.



Twisted Totems

Vermilion Cliffs: A lavender sky and setting moon illuminate gnarled red formations at dawn. Surprisingly, geologists say the more-whimsical shapes are stronger when it comes to hoodoos. Straight, blocky, columnar hoodoos bear forces of nature throughout the structures, while more eccentric, spindly shapes or hourglass figures refocus stresses into the narrower regions, where it is counterbalanced.

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EL Tejano

Buried Twice, Infamous El Tejano Terrified Tucson, Which Plugged Him, Then Covered Him Up by Leo W. Banks

Billy Brazelton deserves every bit of his legend. Even if Tucson tried to eliminate the man known as El Tejano (“the Texan”) from its historical ledger, the facts would keep his story alive.

In the Southwest of the late 1870s, Brazelton became infamous for robbing stagecoaches while wearing a hideous mask—until lawmen left him face down on the ground, his back perforated by buckshot fired from ambush.

Dramatic dying words? Yes, we have them, too. Brazelton, gasping, exclaimed: “I die brave! My God, I’ll pray till I die!”

Even that dramatic declaration can’t match the words Tucson still hears Brazelton speak from the grave.

They echo at night across the darkness of Cat Mountain on the city’s west side, faint murmurings through the rocky redoubt that sound a chilling warning to anyone hunting the gold from Brazelton’s heists.

As the legend goes, these are among the last words the searcher hears.

What are those words? Their power derives from the facts, which must come first.

William Whitney Brazelton, 26, drifted into Tucson in 1877 and first landed a job at Leatherwood corrals downtown, then at Lee’s Mill, 3 miles south of town, Roy O’Dell wrote in the summer 1982 edition of *Westerners Tally Sheet*.

But Brazelton’s outlaw career started near Wickenburg before he even reached Tucson, and the newspaper account suggests the first stirrings of legend-making.

“The coolness with which the orders were given and the jokes issued by the robber,” reported the *Prescott Enterprise*, “shows him to be possessed of a most enviable nerve and unprecedented quantity of unadulterated cheek.”

Brazelton’s profile rose dramatically in the summer of 1878, when he pulled two jobs in eight days. The passengers in the first heist, on July 31, included John Clum, editor of the *Arizona Citizen*, then based in Florence, who wrote of his good fortune at witnessing “the modus operandi by which these members of the shotgun gentry

STAGED COACH ROBBER

Linked to at least nine stagecoach robberies in New Mexico and Arizona, Billy Brazelton made a name for himself as the elusive and arrogant ace bandit, El Tejano. After his life and reign of robbery ended in an ambush, El Tejano’s corpse (right) was propped up outside the Pima County Courthouse and photographed with the hope of bringing his victims forward to identify him. ARIZONA HISTORICAL SOCIETY/TUCSON





STREET OF TROUBLES

It would be a year before Tucson's Congress Street (shown above in 1877) would be awash with the troubling word of El Tejano. His "all or nothing" notoriety came in 1878 with a string of back-to-back robberies, after which he was located by tracker Juan Elias (left), and killed by a group of Arizona lawmen, including Peace Officer Charles Shibell (below). ARIZONA HISTORICAL SOCIETY/TUCSON



extract the valuables from the stagecoach and passengers by the simple but magical persuasive power of cold lead."

Brazelton stepped from the shadows at Point of Mountain, 18 miles northwest of Tucson, and ordered the coach to stop. "The first one that moves I'll kill deader than hell!" the bandit bellowed.

Both Clum and a co-passenger, identified only as Wheatley, carried guns—Clum's kept on the coach floor, Wheatley's under a blanket on the seat.

But neither drew down on Brazelton. The attack was "so unexpected that we were wholly unprepared," Clum wrote, "and once under the cover of his arms were quite willing to obey his commands."

The bandit's work drew more notice on August 8 when he hit the same Tucson-to-Florence stage, in the same spot.

Under the headline, "Here We Are Again," Clum's newspaper described driver Arthur Hill and passenger John Miller, who sat beside Hill atop the coach, nearing Point of Mountain as Miller inquired as to the place of the earlier robbery.

"There," Hill replied, "the robber was

behind that bush." Then Hill shouted, "And there he is again!"

"Yes, here I am again!" Brazelton snarled. "Throw up your hands!"

The robber's description traveled widely: 6 feet tall, broad-shouldered, and with shoulder-length wavy hair. He wore his pants tucked into his boots, equipped with brass spurs, and cartridge belts over his shoulders.

He also carried a Spencer rifle and two Colt six-shooters.

But his mask drew the most notice. The *Arizona Weekly Star* for August 22, 1878, described it as a white sack with holes cut in the eyes, a raise or puff in the cloth for his nose, and a piece of red flannel over the mouth.

"This mask extended down over his shoulders," the paper wrote, "a most frightening thing to look at, when placed over the head of a man."

Facts unearthed later by O'Dell indicate that despite his nickname, El Tejano likely was born in Missouri, not Texas. Brazelton also had a well-traveled past that included a stint as a strongman in a San Francisco beer garden.

So great was his physical strength that Brazelton delighted in inviting men to climb his back before throwing them collectively to the floor, O'Dell reported.

The *Arizona Miner* newspaper wrote that it was probably the devilish Brazelton who showed up outside the courthouse in Prescott, claiming he could swallow an entire wagon wheel, among other feats.

After taking bets, Brazelton left, saying he had to gather other members of his traveling troupe to begin the show.

"He never returned," wrote the *Arizona Miner*, "neither did his troupe, and now comes a dispatch to the Governor saying Wm. Brazelton is killed. . . . He is in all probability the same man who didn't swallow the wagon wheel."

Lawmen found Brazelton with the help of tracker Juan Elias, who followed the hoofprints of the bandit's horse to Tucson, and the home of David Nemitz, a co-worker.

This young German admitted to providing supplies to the bandit, but insisted he did so out of fear. The still-terrified informant

the remains as he appeared in his dress when robbing stages . . . for the purpose of having his victims identify the robber, if possible."

With that odd, macabre photograph, Brazelton seemed likely to earn history's notice. But that probability became a certainty, when, four days after his death, the *Star* noted that his stolen loot hadn't been recovered and wondered about its hiding place.

A week later, Prescott's *Enterprise* noted that Brazelton had told Nemitz that he'd buried \$1,300 near Camp Grant, in southeastern Arizona. "We expect to see the whole country dug up around the post," the paper reported.

Evidence of such a frenzy exists, according to the unpublished memoirs of Thomas Cruse, a soldier during the Apache Wars. In 1927 he wrote that when he was stationed at Tucson's Fort Lowell in 1883, search parties were still hunting for Brazelton's loot.

"He evidently never traveled very far from the scene of his exploits," Cruse wrote, "and there are many people who

Arizona Twilight Tales: Good Ghosts, Evil Spirits & Blue Ladies. The stories she tells include that of young Antonio, who announces to his father that he knows the location of the cave in which Brazelton hid his gold.

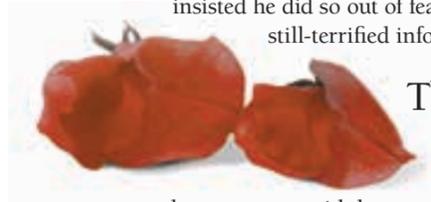
Weary of being poor, Antonio says, "Tonight I am going to get it," and rides off on his horse. After filling a gunnysack with nuggets, Antonio feels a strange presence and hears those three bone-rattling words, *todo o nada*.

Now filled with terror, he looks up and sees a masked horseman. In Eppinga's telling, the figure removes the mask, and Antonio sees that he is headless.

Sometime later, Antonio's father finds his son unconscious in the cave and brings him home. When the boy awakens, he asks, "Where is our gold?"

When the father tells him there is no gold, Antonio raves wildly, and three days later he dies.

Like most contemporary tales of Billy Brazelton, this story centers on Cat Mountain, which consists of two jagged black-rock masses separated by a pass in



The sky had returned to black by the time Brazelton uttered his unforgettable final words . . . *todo o nada*.

agreed to cooperate with lawmen in luring Brazelton to a meeting, as long as it resulted in the outlaw's death.

With the population in an uproar over the holdups, Sheriff Charles Shibell entered into the conspiracy to kill Brazelton after learning the bandit intended to pull one more job before returning to assassinate Shibell and Town Marshal Adolph Buttner.

On August 19, 1878, in a remote area just south of Tucson, Shibell and eight deputies hid in the brush surrounding the meeting place. When the bandit arrived, they lit up the night with muzzle flashes.

The sky had returned to black by the time Brazelton uttered his unforgettable final words.

The coroner found 10 holes in the outlaw's body, including a charge of buckshot to the back. His report also linked the "bloody-mouth bandit" to at least nine stagecoach robberies, in New Mexico and Arizona.

In Tucson lawmen roped Brazelton's corpse to a chair and put him on display outside the jail.

There, reported the *Star*, "Mr. [Henry] Buehman, the artist, took a photograph of

think his treasure is buried in the Santa Catalina Mountains nearby."

Time hasn't dimmed Brazelton's legend, but it has undergone several mutations, each a reflection of the age, and ultimately of ourselves, because legends say more about those who hold them than they do about the truth.

In his own time, Brazelton went from being a rogue of "unadulterated cheek," to a dangerous potential cop killer.

Then, in the early 1900s, authors such as Dan Rose, in *Arizona Magazine*, presented him as a Robin Hood, a handsome, brave and chivalrous "prince of nerve and daring" who never "took a cent from any poor devil on the road."

Bunk, of course. But readers of that age liked their prose purple and their heroes uncomplicated.

Now, Brazelton has changed faces again to become a ghost in the night who whispers three Spanish words that precede death for anyone hunting for his gold.

Todo o nada—in English, "all or nothing." Take all the gold or die trying. Can you feel the cold creeping along your spine?

Author Jane Eppinga captured the enduring power of El Tejano in her book,

the Tucson Mountains. Locals call them Big Cat and Little Cat.

In daylight, they stand against the sky like massive ships on a desert sea, their boulder-strewn slopes studded with saguaros that appear to grow from the rocks themselves.

But as the day wanes, Big and Little Cat become a haunting mix of sun and shadows, light and menace.

Then the coyotes begin their mournful cries, the desert wind moans through splits in the rocks, and the night air fills with the sound of pounding hooves and the jingle of spurs, as the ghost of El Tejano returns.

This is where we need Billy Brazelton now, on Cat Mountain.

In late August of 1878, we needed him roped to that chair in downtown Tucson, a hulking, powerful, bearded ruffian in a slouch hat, a man the law killed and handed to us to make over as we chose.

We chose to make him a legend. *Todo o nada*. ■■

Tucson-based Leo W. Banks has extensively explored Arizona's Old West past in his articles and books, but he still stays far away from Cat Mountain at night.



SNAKE-OF-ALL-TRADES

The black-tailed rattlesnake (left), *Crotalus molossus*, grows to about 30 to 40 inches long and lives 15 to 20 years. It can climb, swim and detect infrared radiation with pits in front of its eyes, and it can change between sidewinding or straight movement.

Hardy never knew if the surgery troubled the snakes, but was heartened by the fact that when the newly telemetered rattlesnakes were released back into the wild, they would resume normal behaviors.

Hardy and Greene created a study area in the Chiricahua foothills. It was a 6-square-mile swath of rolling hills cut by a creek bed lined by trees. For nearly two decades, Hardy, who is now 73, would hike the area with an H-shaped antenna attached to a receiver in a canvas bag. He carried with him his pencils, notebook and, in recent years, a Global Positioning System receiver. A gentle man with thick gray hair and lively blue eyes set beneath square glasses, Hardy would bound across the creek bed and up the rocky bank past wild grape and hackberry bushes. A hawk might scream from the sky, a white-tail doe might dart out of a mesquite thicket, but Hardy's ears would be tuned to his radio receiver. Each snake had a different radio frequency, and when the radio made a strong *blip, blip, blip* sound, Hardy would know exactly which snake was near. He would



A (GENTLE) SNAKE IN THE GRASS

Dave Hardy releases a black-tailed rattler after implanting a radio transmitter to track its behavior and movement. The snakes, often unseen and timid unless provoked, are active in warm months, especially following rainstorms. Females typically give birth to three to 16 live young between July and August and defend the litter for several days.

discovery helps people care more about snakes," Greene says.

Hardy and Greene learned that the black-tailed rattlesnakes are intimately familiar with their home ranges; that they return again and again to the places where they have met their mates or given birth or found ample supplies of food—woodrats and other rodents. They learned that a rattlesnake will become disoriented and starve to death when it is out of its home range.

Because of this, they believe it is wrong for humans to relocate snakes to a different landscape. It is, they believe, kinder to humanely euthanize a snake that humans consider a threat.

The two herpetologists are now writing a book about their findings, hoping that what they have learned about the behaviors of the black-tailed rattlesnakes of the Chiricahuas will help people know and respect these misunderstood creatures of the Arizona desert. ■■

Terry Greene Sterling of Paradise Valley grew up on an Arizona cattle ranch, where she learned to avoid rattlesnakes. She became fascinated with the reptiles when she hiked the slopes of the Chiricahua Mountains with Dave Hardy.

Bisbee-based Marty Cordano specializes in nature and environmental issues. Previous experience as a wildlife biologist for the Bureau of Land Management helped prepare him for his new hobby—snake charmer.

Snake LOVE

Radio Transmitters
Implanted in
Rattles Reveal
Maternal Instincts
and Strange
Mating Habits

As a child, Dave Hardy was fascinated by snakes. He yearned to become a herpetologist, but he came from a family of doctors and eventually ended up as a Tucson anesthesiologist. His medical practice, however, did not diminish his interest in snakes. Whenever the busy doctor had a chance, he would hike into the desert to observe the reptiles.

About 30 years ago, Hardy found an area particularly suited to his obsession—a stretch of high desert beneath the lichen-tinged limestone cliffs of the Chiricahua Mountains near Portal in southeastern Arizona. On these rugged slopes, amid the ocotillos with blood-red blooms, the sea-green agaves and the white-thorned acacias, Hardy became intrigued by the native black-tailed rattlesnake.

The doctor marveled at the snake's highly evolved physiology: flat heads with built-in heat sensors to monitor prey; creamy white underbellies; ochre-and-umber geometry spilling off delicate spines; black tails that give way to rattles resembling ears of brown corn.

All species of rattlesnakes have long been viewed as ferocious icons of the American West, animals that are better dead than alive. Hardy knew rattlesnakes are timid animals that rarely bite humans unless they are provoked.

He always admired rattlesnakes, and the black-tailed rattlers were a stunning, remarkable species he wanted to study in the wild.

"Rattlesnakes might have small brains, but they are complicated organisms with

They learned that a rattlesnake will become disoriented and **starve to death** when it is out of its home range.

complicated behaviors," Hardy says. "Humans have been on this Earth only about 150,000 years, and that's a pittance compared to rattlesnakes, which have been around several million years."

In 1984, Hardy met Harry Greene, a world-famous herpetologist and a professor in the Department of Ecology and Evolutionary Biology at Cornell University. The two friends began in 1988 to design and embark on studies to learn about black-tailed rattlesnake behaviors. The studies would last about 18 years and involve more than 4,600 observations of black-tailed rattlers in the wild.

Because Greene was based on the East Coast, Hardy conducted most of the fieldwork in Arizona. In all, he caught about 45 snakes, which he anesthetized in order to surgically implant radio transmitters.

find the creature, observe it, take notes.

It was through this careful observation that Hardy and Greene learned that black-tailed rattlesnakes have sophisticated behaviors. For instance, male snakes try to court females with ritualized movements that entail a great deal of body-jerking. Females do not respond to the overtures unless they have gained sufficient weight to carry a litter. Although mother black-tailed rattlesnakes lose about 40 percent of their body weight and are emaciated and hungry after giving birth to live babies, they stay with their litters until the young snakes shed their skins and are better able to protect themselves—usually about 10 days.

"I think our most dramatic discovery, made by Dave, was the parental care, and I have absolutely no doubt that such a

by Terry Greene Sterling photographs by Marty Cordano

online Discover rattlesnake realities at arizonahighways.com (Click on "July Trip Planner")



BUTTE-IFUL MESA?
Its long, flat surface and sheer sides of layered Navajo Sandstone and white limestone are what define Red Mesa, both figuratively and literally. LEROY DEJOLIE

a short hike through Arroyo Lingo

WORDS ARE MY HOBBY as well as the tools of my vocation, and there are so many of them to know about that it's a daunting enterprise. During my childhood, when the Western movie was in its ascendancy, I saw hundreds and hundreds of mesas and buttes on movie screens, but it wasn't until earlier today that it finally occurred to me to wonder what precisely the difference is between the two.

Having done a little research, I've got something of a fix on it, although I can't help thinking that the difference between a mesa and a butte is something I'll be eternally fated to forget, like the difference between a stalagmite and a stalactite and a schlemiel and a schlimazel. Two weeks on a troop ship helped me to remember the difference between port and starboard, although at the moment I'm not sure I recall the difference.

My American Heritage dictionary says that a mesa is a broad, flat-topped elevation with one or more clifflike sides, common in the Southwest United States, and that the word is Spanish, meaning "table." A butte is defined as a hill with sloping sides and a flat top that rises abruptly from the surrounding area, taken from a French word meaning "mound behind targets." I can't help wondering—what targets? But I don't want to get lost in digression.

Fortunately, the dictionary offers a photograph for each word, which suggests buttes are abbreviated mesas. Some mesas in Monument Valley are beauts, but I don't know if any buttes are as pretty.

Also, I've never been to Mesa, Arizona, but I have been through Butte, Montana, both of which presumably have at least a couple of members of MENSA. It is interesting to note that in Mexico the organization MENSA is known instead as MESA, because the word *mesa* is a slang term that loosely translates as "stupid woman." I'm not a member of MENSA, but I have been called a mensch by a Jewish friend who may or may not be a schlemiel or a schlimazel. The Latin word *mensa*, incidentally, also means "table," and ain't that another beaut?

I may end up wishing I'd never delved into this. After all

the Roadrunner cartoons I've seen, it never occurred to me to wonder whether my heroically persistent role model, Wile E. Coyote, was falling off a mesa or a butte. And when Richard Dreyfuss made his pilgrimage to Devil's Tower in *Close Encounters of the Third Kind*, I never wondered if it's a butte or a mesa, and I doubt that the extraterrestrials did, either. My dictionary photos lead me to conclude that Devil's Tower is a butte, but then, I'm not a member of MENSA, so don't quote me.

Now consider the synchronicity attending the fact that there's a word, *mesa*, in Malayalam, the language spoken in Kerala, the southern tip of India, that also means "table." And ponder the fact that there's an area in Arizona, called Table Mesa. Table Table? Well, there's Walla Walla, Baden Baden and Pago Pago—places so nice apparently they named them twice. Then there are Black Mesa Butte in Utah and Middle Butte Mesa in Idaho, whose names smack of linguistic miscegenation, with blurred nuances thrown into the bargain, not to mention a soupçon of redundancy. This may be a case for someone from MENSA.

Moreover, there's a joker in this deck, namely the word plateau—that elevated area representing the next highest level on a game show. The word plateau comes from the French word "platter." So flatness remains the dominant characteristic in all mesas, buttes and plateaus. My dictionary describes a plateau as a "tableland," presumably a land that would be the natural habitat of platters. Curiouser and curiouser, in the words of Lewis Carroll.

And, incidentally, while they may not have mesas or buttes in England, they do have Stonehenge, which is more like an itty bitty pinnacle, which is surely some sort of geological kissin' cousin.

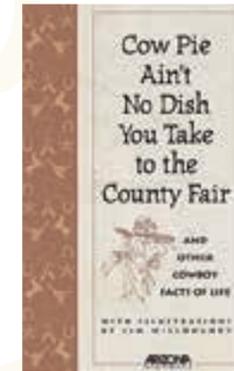
Emilee Riley, a teacher in Salt Lake City, may have the best overview of the whole thing. She has written about her students: "The largest plateau is called a plateau. To help them remember it I called it 'Papa Plateau!' The next size is a mesa, therefore 'Mommy Mesa.' Next, 'Baby Butte,' and finally 'Pee Wee Pinnacle.'" Got it! ■■■

Cheap Laughs...

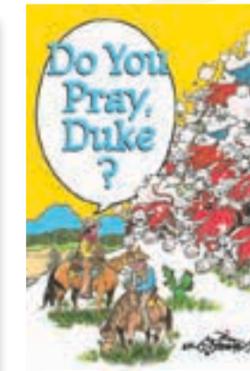
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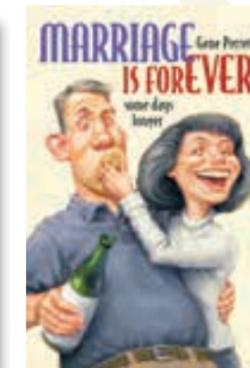
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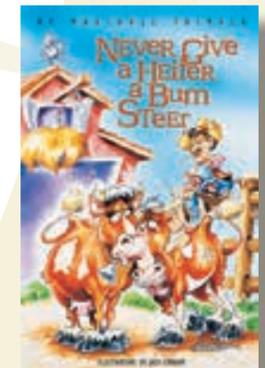
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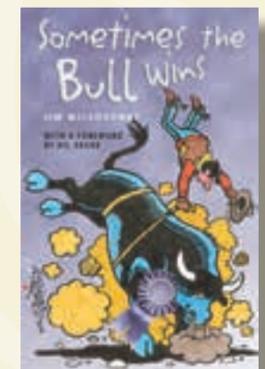
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Amble Through the Pines

Arizona Strip's easy Big Tank trail connects to 750-mile-long state-spanning adventure

WHEN DALE SHEWALTER hiked around the state of Arizona in the early 1980s, he wondered about the possibility of connecting all

the diverse landscapes and one-of-a-kind historic areas in the state into a one-trail experience. That thought led to the creation of the Arizona

Trail, which starts at the top of the state on the Arizona Strip and runs to its southern border at Coronado National Memorial.

"When it's completed," says Arizona Trail Association board member Jan Hancock,

"the Arizona Trail will link the Old West with the New West across nearly 800 miles and six life zones from Sonoran Desert to alpine."

Hikers can see a bit of Old West in the New West in a Canadian life zone on

a slice of the trail's Arizona Strip segment. This hike gives a one-and-a-half-mile glimpse of the state-long trail that starts at an easy access off U.S. Route 89A. This brief portion travels on a relatively level grade through ponderosa "parks"—ponderosa pines scattered across grassy fields—crossed by forest roads to Big Ridge Tank. The old stock tank, a relic from the cowboy days, gets its name from a rise in the

PONDEROSA PARK Early morning sunlight dapples a forest floor thickly covered with ponderosa pine needles near Big Ridge Tank along the Arizona Trail on the Kaibab Plateau in northern Arizona.

plateau called Big Ridge, just east of the trail.

Wildflowers make a big show along this segment of trail after the summer monsoons have kicked in. Clusters of common snakeweed give hillsides a golden glow colored by several dozen different species of wildflowers.

The hike starts on an easy climb up a sun-drenched hillside then relaxes atop the rise. At about mile 0.5, the trail makes a rocky drop onto a logging road and follows the road as it jogs east and continues southward. Along this back-road stretch, silverstem lupines cover the forest floor. The indigo clusters of flowers grow so thick, they exude a sweet lilylike smell.

Arizona Trail signposts direct the way off the road, through more meadows, across another road, and into a final meadow next to Big Ridge Tank, which draws a gathering of wildflowers. Wild roses lean along a rugged old wooden fence, currant bushes drip jeweled fruit and vervain line up along the trail.

Big Ridge Tank makes an excellent spot for a picnic. The surrounding forest and a field of waist-high grass and winged buckwheat have an



inviting feel. Many visitors feel compelled to linger at the location.

Hikers don't have to end their hike at Big Ridge Tank. The Arizona Trail proceeds southward across the Arizona Strip for another 34 miles, through more ponderosa parks, large meadows and aspen forests, to Grand Canyon National Park. If that's

ACHILLES HEAL Western yarrow, properly named *Achillea millefolium* for the Greek warrior Achilles, was used by Spanish settlers and Indians for medicinal purposes.

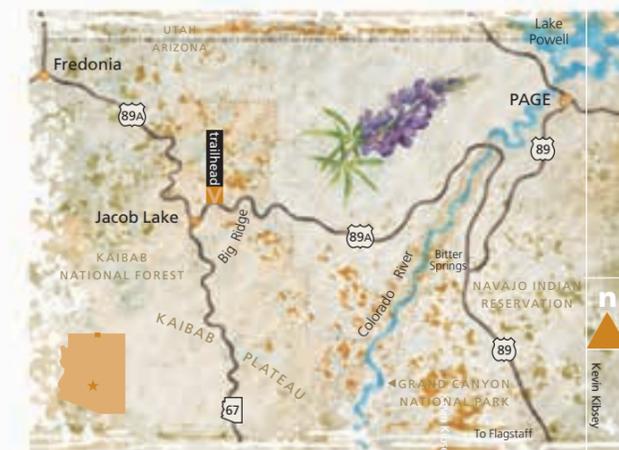
not far enough, they can follow the rest of the trail some 750 miles to points beyond. No need to hike it in one big bite, either. Hikers can experience the rest of Arizona just like Shewalter did—bit by bit. **AH**

trail guide

Length: 1.5 miles.
Elevation Gain: 100 feet.
Difficulty: Easy.
Payoff: Wildflower-filled meadow.
Location: 160 miles north of Flagstaff.
Getting There: From Flagstaff, take U.S. Route 89 north 102 miles to U.S. Route 89A at Bitter Springs. Follow U.S. 89A for 52 miles to the trailhead, which is on the south side of the highway, 3 miles east of Jacob Lake.
Travel Advisory: Always carry

plenty of water, at least 1 gallon per day per person. Hike this trail in the late spring, summer and early fall months. Winterlike snowstorms may occur as early as September and as late as May with a corresponding drop in temperature.

Additional Information: Kaibab National Forest, (928) 643-7395; www.fs.fed.us/r3/kai/recreation/trails/index.shtml; Arizona Trail Association, (602) 252-4794; www.aztrail.org/.



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.



Magic Moment

Whistling elk, gleaming trout and vivid history enliven White Mountain Apache Reservation drive

GOOD THING WE rounded the corner slowly because about 40 elk stood blocking the road. After a curious stare, the animals slowly drifted apart allowing us to drive into the herd and watch them graze.

An elk calf, so young he was still spotted, stood close by my car door emitting soft bleats. From the right, came an answering high-pitched whistle. We had inadvertently separated a mother and baby. It took a few minutes for its mother to hone in on her calf's cries, then she serenely

ambled to the little one and the pair wandered on. My 94-year-old dad, Leo Webb, smiled and said, "I've never seen a spotted elk calf before." I haven't either. What a magical moment.

The moment happened on the White Mountain Apache Reservation, northeast of Whiteriver, where we took back roads to reach beautiful Hawley Lake at 8,175 feet elevation. At Hon-Dah, 4 miles south of Pinetop on State Route 260, we purchased the permit required to travel unpaved reservation roads. With a full tank of gas, picnic supplies and all day to explore, we headed south on State Route 73.

Dad was 14 years old when

WHAT LIES BENEATH

Just under the mirrored surface of Hawley Lake (left), a variety of fish, including Apache trout (above), cruise the cool waters, making it a popular spot for anglers year-round.

**SUN BATHING**

Summer fields of *Viguiera multiflora* (left), also known as showy goldeneye, soak up the warmth of a sunlit clearing in the Apache-Sitgreaves National Forests.

he worked on this road using a team of horses. Each stream, meadow and curve brought back his memories and within the first mile he pointed out a large meadow on the right. "That's the old Cooley place," he said. "Used to be a big house up at the edge of the trees. There's a spring over there where travelers and the soldiers from Fort Apache camped. The house was a showcase. Too bad it burned a long time ago."

Corydon Cooley served as a scout for the Army during the Apache Wars, and is famous for "showing the low" during a card game that earned the town of Show Low its unique name. Originally from Virginia, Cooley married two Apache sisters and built a plantation-style home. In its heyday, the house was the social spot of the White Mountains.

Before Salt River Canyon was bridged in the 1930s, State 73 served as the main road from northeastern Arizona to Phoenix. The long route wound from Show Low to Whiteriver, on to San Carlos, then back to Globe before finally reaching Phoenix.

Another meadow on the left drew Dad's attention. "That's



the old Milk Ranch. See that tree?" he asked. "My brother, Ed, and I camped right there while working on the road."

I saw the trees and a grassy clearing along a small wash. Dad saw a work camp, horses and cooking fires.

Four miles from Hon-Dah, we turned left to Williams Creek National Fish Hatchery. Ponderosa pines intermingled with scrub live oak and red penstemon flowers bordered the road. The hatchery, built in 1939, uses the 51-degree Williams Creek Spring water to raise Apache, brook, brown, cutthroat and rainbow trout. When the fingerlings reach about 8 inches long, they are stocked into lakes and streams. Visitors are welcome to tour the facility, but don't even think about pulling out that fishing pole.

Backtracking 3 miles, we took Upper Log Road and set the odometer. After 1.5 miles of downhill winding road, we crossed a wooden bridge over the north fork of the White River and turned into Upper Log Camping Area. Trout

Creek joins White River not far below the bridge, and both streams, icy clear, with small whitewater ripples, rank as favorites for trout fishermen. You'll need additional permits to camp overnight or fish. Wild grapevines and thorny roses covered with tiny pink blooms grow frantically under the pines lining the riverbanks. At 6,484 feet, the breeze blew cool, and Dad and I got ready for lunch. I brought a deli sandwich and yogurt for our picnic. Dad eyed it and

> travel tips**Vehicle Requirements:**

High-clearance.

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 are going and when you plan to return.

Travel Advisory: Best times to visit are May through November. Check road conditions. Permit required, available at Hon-Dah Ski and Outdoor Sports shop. One-day permits for travel off paved road are \$3/person. Additional permits required for camping and fishing.

Additional Information: www.wmat.nsn.us.

TO DUST, FROM DUST

The grand cycle of life continues as wildflowers claim the moldering remnant of a giant pine tree (above) along the North Fork of the White River on the White Mountain Apache Reservation.

said, "I remember when we always made Dutch oven, biscuits and gravy on an outing."

That was good food, but I'm old enough to remember cleaning those Dutch ovens, and that memory made the sandwich tastier.

An Abert's squirrel watched warily from the base of a tree as we ate. When I tried to get closer, he scurried up the tree, quickly darting behind the trunk. Between the pines, masses of white fleabane and Parrish's yampah were separated by clumps of yellow-headed mountain parsley, decorating the serene summer day.

Back on the road, the route climbed steadily, past fat Hereford cattle and a few horses. The Apache people are well known for extensive cattle ranching. The tribe



EVERGREEN

A source of great pride to the White Mountain Apaches, the North Fork of the White River is also a source of sustenance for its surrounding pristine forests of blue spruce, Douglas firs, lush green grass and seasonal wildflowers.

and we slowed to watch a flock of wild turkeys working their way uphill. “Back in the ’30s I shot a turkey like that. We took it on down to the Aravaipa to your grandparents and ate that turkey for Thanksgiving.”

The road became steeper and much rougher, and it took the hanging pink clusters of the New Mexico locust blossoms to soften the wild look of the forest. Suddenly, we spotted the red gate that leads to McKays lookout tower. During fire season, the gate remains open and you can drive to the ranger-manned tower. The rest of the year visitors must hike from the gate to the tower. At the top, Dad chose to wait while I huffed and puffed up the steep tower stairs, feeling all of the 9,175 feet altitude. From the top, I could see above the treetops and watch rounded hills chasing each other into the purple-hazed distance.

Returning to the gate, we headed on to Hawley Lake. The route drops down

through more cienegas, these filled with lavender-hued wild iris. With plenty of water the aspen trees grow larger, their cracked white bark vivid among the green foliage.

It wasn’t long before we saw an arm of Hawley Lake. A blue heron stiffly walked the shoreline while hopeful fishermen trolled the lake. Summer visitors enjoyed the nice campground and cool temperatures, but they usually arrive via the paved route through McNary. Dad said, “Mom and I used to bring the trailer and camp in this campground.” Mom’s been gone for five years. Dad was quiet, reliving memories most of the 9 miles back to State 260.

On the pavement again, Dad looked at the mileage sign and dryly commented, “You mean we’re only 11 miles from where we started at Hon-Dah?”

He was right. We had spent three hours covering 52 miles, some steep and rough. But you can’t beat a scenic drive with a picnic, a baby elk and an afternoon with your father and his memories. ■■■

REMAINS OF THE DAY

Stoic ponderosas appear unaffected by a light breeze that pushes across the water as daylight dwindles on the rocky shores of Hawley Lake.

continues thinning the forest, clearing out smaller trees and undergrowth, to prevent forest fires. We climbed high enough to see bracken ferns growing under the pines like a shaggy, emerald-green carpet.

The forest sporadically opens into grassy cienegas, where the brown stalks of

cattails ring shallow ponds. Aspen trees, their silvery green leaves fluttering at the slightest breeze, will turn a brilliant gold after the first frost. Douglas firs, the tallest trees in Arizona, dominate the pines on this part of the road.

Dad was first to spot a movement among the trees,

route finder

Note: Mileages and GPS coordinates are approximate.

> **Begin in Hon-Dah** at the intersection of state routes 260 and 73. (34°04.49’N; 109°54.16’W)

> **Drive south on State 73** for 4.2 miles and turn east (left) on Indian Route 69 to the Williams Creek National Fish Hatchery. At .9 of a mile, follow the road to the right and after driving 3 miles, bear left at the fork to the hatchery.

> **Backtrack on Indian 69** for 3 miles to Upper Log Road and turn left, driving 1.6 miles to the bridge crossing the North Fork of the White River; follow the road to Upper Log Campground. (34°02.29’N; 109°50.16’W)

> **From the campground**, take the road to the right, driving 2.5 miles; turn left at the fork. Follow for 9.6 miles to the red gate at McKays Peak. Here, you can drive through the gate and take the road up to McKays Peak and turn around at the top, or stay on the road and continue for 3 miles to the next fork and bear left to Hawley Lake. (33°58.16’N; 109°46.08’W)

> **After bearing left, drive for a mile** and you’ll see Hawley Lake on the left. Follow the road left around the lake where it connects with paved State Route 473. Continue on 473 for approximately 10 miles to the junction with 260. (34°3.07’N; 109°43.68’W)

> **Turn left onto 260** and drive 11 miles to Hon-Dah.

