

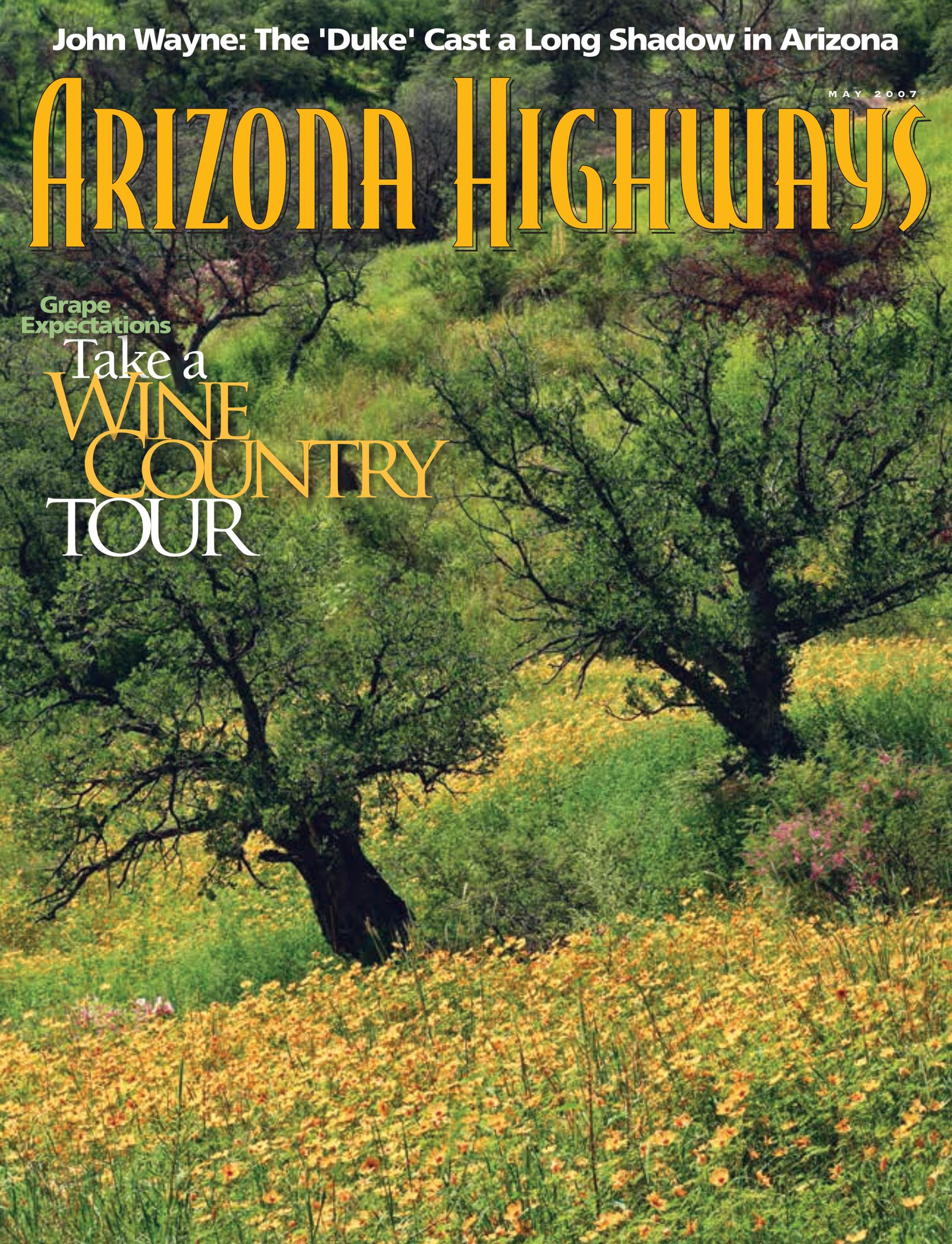
John Wayne: The 'Duke' Cast a Long Shadow in Arizona

MAY 2007

# ARIZONA HIGHWAYS

Grape  
Expectations

Take a  
WINE  
COUNTRY  
TOUR



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**NIGHTLIGHT** Rising over the Chiricahua Mountains, the May moon reflects its glow on spring growth at the Keeling-Schaefer Vineyards in southeast Arizona. See story, page 8.

DON B. AND RYAN B. STEVENSON

**FRONT COVER** During a summer of record-breaking rain, gnarled scrub oaks stand their ground amid a profusion of golden summer poppies and pink velvet-pod mimosas on Atascosa Mountains' hillsides in southern Arizona. See story, page 22.

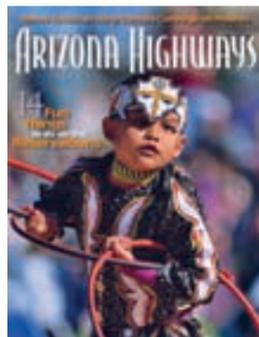
JACK DYKINGA

**BACK COVER** At the eastern edge of Keeling-Schaefer Vineyards, dawn's light bathes nearly ripe grape clusters awaiting harvest. See story, page 8.

DON B. AND RYAN B. STEVENSON

**Photographic Prints Available**

■ Prints of some photographs are available for purchase, as designated in captions. To order, call toll-free (866) 962-1191 or visit [www.magazineprints.com](http://www.magazineprints.com).



**Loved Love**

I must comment on the piece “Love on the Edge” (“All Who Wander,” February ’07) and the accompanying photograph. What an incredibly beautiful sight to behold, two people with love in their hearts and our beloved Grand Canyon as their backdrop. That bird flying by is the icing on the cake. The poetry of the piece itself is deeply moving. Thanks so much for all of it. Keep up the excellent work. I love it!

—Diana Minton, Arcata, CA

**Enough Fluff**

I’ve been reading *Arizona Highways* since grade school in Tucson. I’ve just turned 60 and find myself inspired and fascinated by your wonderful metaphors, adjectives, verbs and revelations of your soul. February 2007’s “All Who Wander” column, “Love on the Edge,” was easy: “. . . three jumping bean kids . . .” Thanks for turning *Arizona Highways* off the “fluff” road and back into a magazine I treasure each month.

—Sandra Cortner, Crested Butte, CO

**Don’t Feed the Wildlife**

The magazine is great, but the mention of squirrel feeding in “All Who Wander” (“Love on the Edge,” February ’07) was disturbing. It is unlawful to feed, approach or harass the wildlife in any national park. The National Park Service puts notices to this effect in all their Grand Canyon visitor publications. Some people reading this article may conclude that feeding squirrels is okay since *Arizona Highways* makes it sound pretty benign.

—Mary Gentry, Espanola, NM

Good point, poor role-modeling. Don’t feed the squirrels, folks. —Peter Aleshire, Editor

**A Hooping Hunk**

In your most beautiful issue of February 2007, on page 32, I saw the hoop dancer Dallas Arcand. He is the hunkiest, most gorgeous-looking man I have ever seen! Oh darn, I am 82 years old.

—Carla Allan, Surprise

Age, dear reader, is a state of mind—as you so aptly demonstrate. —Ed.

**Misplaced Scenery**

Your article about the Apache Wars and the battle in Bear Springs Canyon in the Whetstone Mountains of southeastern Arizona (“Blood Enemies,” February ’07) was very interesting. I was surprised and

puzzled as to why you used a full-page illustration of a scene that resembles Monument Valley on the Navajo Indian Reservation in northeastern Arizona.

—Janice Fancher, Tubac

Heck of a good point. Hollywood movies do that all the time. Shame on us, and thanks for keeping us on our toes. —Ed.

**That Was a Great Letter**

I want to add my feelings to those expressed in Larry Weaver’s letter, “Poetry—Ugh!” (“Dear Editor,” February ’07). I couldn’t agree more with Mr. Weaver’s thoughts on your writing style. In my opinion, it does not fit what *Arizona Highways* magazine is all about, including the style expectations of the readership. Western magazine—Western style. No flowery words or sentences required.

—Paul Premo, Scottsdale

Ouch. —Ed.

**Horn or Antler?**

In the February 2007 piece, “Do Fence Me In,” Dexter Oliver states pronghorns “shed their strange, black-forked horns annually.” Horns and antlers are different. That’s why there are the two words. Horns—think of cows and buffalo—are not shed. Antlers—think elk and moose—are shed. The pronghorn sheds his antlers, not his horns. In actuality, the animal is misnamed—technically it is not an antelope—it’s a sheep. But that’s a whole different story.

—Richard LaBree, Apple Valley, MN

On the point of horns (or antlers), Dexter didn’t have the space to explain the whole messy business. You’re right, antlers are made of bone and shed annually. Horns are not shed and are made from keratin, the same material as fingernails. The pronghorn sheath is a bit of both, a keratin covering on a bony core that’s shed annually. Moreover, the male pronghorn’s horn/antler branches like an antler, while true horns never branch. —Ed.

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**How About Them Toad Suckers?**

*How about Them Toad Suckers  
 Ain't they clods?  
 Sittin' there suckin'  
 Them green toady-frogs.  
 Suckin' them hop-toads,  
 Suckin' them chunkers,  
 Suckin' them leapy-types,  
 Suckin' them plunkers.*

—“THEM TOAD SUCKERS” BY MASON WILLIAMS

Sitting.  
 And thinking.

I was just sitting . . . and thinking . . . when the croak of true love sounded among the bulrushes.

Roused from my reverie, I tried to home in on the bullfrog’s call booming through the bulrushes in the languid lake in Papago Park. Could it be a Colorado River toad? At this moment, a great, slurping splash deflected my search for the bullfrog, which immediately fell silent—likewise awaiting the source of the din.

Turning, I watched a young fellow stagger along the shoreline, moving with the delicacy of a drunken wildebeest. He stumbled to a halt at the marshy shore of the lake, caked with mud below the waist. He swayed and turned with exaggerated care to examine me.

“Hey, dude,” he said, through an off-kilter smile.

“Hey,” I said, noting the small silver skull dangling around his neck and his black T-shirt sporting two skeletons.

“Seen any toads?” he asked.

“Pardon?” I asked.

“Toads. You know. Like, big toads.”

I thought instantly of Mason Williams, that quintessential ’60s poet of inordinately silly verse. Unaccountably, a stanza leapt to mind, two decades after I last read it:

*Look at Them Toad Suckers,  
 Ain't they snappy?  
 Suckin' them bog-frogs  
 Sure makes 'em happy.*

“Nope. No toads,” I answered.  
 “I thought I heard one here.”

**DO NOT LICK**  
 Colorado River toads can survive 100 times the dehydration it would take to kill a human. G.C. KELLEY

“Oh, that,” I said, gesturing vaguely with my bird book. “That was a bullfinch.”  
 “A what?”  
 “A bullfinch. Big one.”

He stared at me through narrowed eyes, trying to decide whether I might be mocking him. The effort appeared painful, so he abandoned the thought and returned to surveying the bulrushes.

I watched quietly, confident I’d encountered a recreational toad sucker. No doubt, he sought a Colorado River toad, a marvel of biology that can burrow some 2 feet into the mud after a monsoon and spend years waiting out droughts. The toads shrivel to a wilted memory of themselves, like mummified pharaohs. The drumming of just enough rain at just the right time summons them from their tombs. Struggling upward to emerge into the rain-blessed world, they swell as their thirsty skin absorbs the moisture. Crooning passionately, they rush to find mates, then feestoon every available pool of water with frog eggs. The pollywogs hatch in record time and tear through the miracle of metamorphosis from wiggler to frog in summer pools that last mere days.

One other remarkable quality of the Colorado River toads has lately attracted the attention of the counter-culture—the chemistry of self-defense. These toads can grow to 7 inches, which makes them nearly 2 pounds of toothless, shell-less, croaking juiciness in a world oversupplied with raccoons, coyotes, bobcats, dogs and other toothy critters. The toad’s defensive system involves glands that produce bufotenine, a squirt of which can cause paralysis and even death in animals. This defense system has served the croakers well for millions of years.

Until lately.  
 Turns out, this toad’s poison mimics a hallucinogen if dried, crystallized and smoked with a pipe.

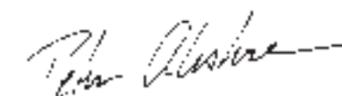
Of course, you can overdose and get very sick. Mercifully, no known deaths attributable to toad-sucking have trickled into medical literature—although some dogs have paid the ultimate price for experimentation. Arizona forbids the collection of toads without a fishing license, and outlaws the possession of more than 10 even with a license.

I suspected my new acquaintance lacked the requisite license. Then again, it appeared more likely that he would drown himself than surprise a toad in his current condition.

He studied me blearily and added, “Holler if you see any.” He managed a lopsided but heartfelt smile and blundered back into the reeds.

I sat contentedly until the sound of his splashing faded. The shadows lengthened, the rippled waters reflected the clouds overhead and the light deepened into psychedelic hues. From among the rushes came the haunting call of an unidentified bird.

At just that moment, the bullfrog resumed his song.



editor@arizonahighways.com

# Riding Fences

Cowboys and photographers live a dream and pay a price

A DUST DEVIL was dancing galleta grass high as I exited Interstate 8 at Sentinel some 27 miles west of Gila Bend. Watching nature's own whirling dervish from the bottom of the off-ramp made me think of the cyclical nature of life—things I'd learned and forgotten and learned again.

After regaining my earthly bearings, I noticed the most prominent features visible at this isolated freeway oasis were a clay-colored gas station and a semi-sized cattle truck. Comfortably seated inside the red cab was Pat Lauderdale, someone I hadn't thought of for more than 25 years. No reason to. In 1981, I'd photographed him for an *Arizona Highways* story about working cowboys. Normally, I shoot a story, put it behind me and move on to the next project. But this one had stuck with me—and now came rushing back as I got out of the car and walked toward the semi.

That article had affected me—since it was my first major magazine piece and my introduction to the cowboy life. Growing up back East, I knew little of livestock, native grasses or leather chaps. So documenting the CO Bar Ranch outside Flagstaff launched me as a young photographer into visual nirvana—rough men in Montana-peaked hats with massive brims and cowboy boots with rowel spurs that made an unmistakable “ching” with each stride. However, breaking into that exclusive and rough-hewn men's club proved to be an entirely different story. Fortunately, Pat would step up and occasionally grace us with an anecdote that offered a glimpse into the real world of hard knocks, broken bones and lonely times that lay behind the myth of the West.

Lauderdale was born into that world, a third-generation cattleman earning his first paycheck at age 9 on the back of a horse. Even then, he was told that the lifestyle wouldn't last and his cowboys days were numbered. It didn't seem to matter; he loved it and wasn't about to change.

At 71, Pat is still a cowboy. Now at the R-TEX Ranch near Gila Bend, his once jet-black moustache has turned frosty white. Powerfully built, he's still punching cows—the years have been surprisingly good to him.

“I've been lucky. I've never wanted to do anything else and fortunately never had to try. There's plenty of work for a good cowhand willing to look for it,” he explained.

As we revisited the old days, names, faces and experiences, I was struck by the parallels between the cowboy life and the lot of a freelance photographer. For one thing, if you throw a cowboy into a swift river, he'll just naturally float upstream. Most photographers I know are just as stubbornly independent.



At 71, Pat Lauderdale shows no signs of giving up the cowboy life. He's looking forward to attending the cowboy reunion in Williams this July. The Arizona Cowpuncher Association will dedicate this year's rodeo to Pat, who is a founding member.

Of course, cowboys and photographers have different black-hatted enemies. For cowboys, it's the relentless development that keeps gobbling up ranchland, subdividing the wide-open spaces into disjointed Scrabble squares on a topo map.

For photographers, point-and-shoot digital cameras and the gush of Internet images have flooded the marketplace with mediocrity. This combination has all but killed the stock photography trade that keeps many working photographers in business, and effectively fences our once-verdant pastures. All the smart people saw it coming. Back in the '70s, people told me that still photographers ought to be added to the endangered species list. Get a real job, they said. But I had the bug bad and refused to listen. No matter how many part-time jobs I had to cobble together, I was going to, somehow, somehow make a go of photography. No doubt, if I'd taken all that good advice, I'd be driving a newer truck today. But what would have come of the inner creative drive—that need to tell visual stories? Losing that would be like ranching through a 10-year drought. Like Pat Lauderdale, I had to listen to my heart.

Oddly enough, despite all the technological and economic changes of the past quarter century, Pat and I still ply our respective trades much as we always have. We rise long before sunup and work on past dusk. We share the joy and burden of witnessing nature's uncommon beauty, alternately cursing and reveling as the storm breaks over us. We have each befriended the solitude that accompanies our chosen lives, knowing that sometimes you have to go it alone. We both hate fences.

Maybe we are both members of our particular “vanishing breeds,” but what a great ride it's been.

We do what we do, because really, our job is our hobby. ■■



## Fragile Icons

“I PAINT BECAUSE I HAVE SOMETHING TO SAY,” asserts figurative artist Tina Mion.

Her visual narrative “The Last Harvey Girl” depicts the passing of an era. Harvey girls served Santa Fe Railway passengers at Harvey House hotels, such as Winslow's La Posada, recently restored by Mion and her husband, Allen Affeldt.

Architect Mary Colter designed Southwest-themed uniforms especially for La Posada's Harvey girls. In a life-sized portrait of the late Dorothy Hunt (right), and Ruby McHood, two of the last Harvey girls from Winslow, Mion captures their fragile essences offering to passersby one last cup of tea and a cake with flickering candles.

An art school dropout, Mion realized her childhood dream when her painting “Glory” was chosen for display at the Smithsonian Institution's National Portrait Gallery, which reopened July 1, 2006. She'll have her own room as part of a seven-month, five-artist exhibit, “Portraiture Now,” beginning May 25 and continuing until January 6, 2008.

Information: (928) 289-4366; [www.tinamion.com](http://www.tinamion.com).

—Pauly Heller



### Come On Down to the C.O.D. Ranch

**IN THE LATE 1800s**, Bill and Elna Huggett settled in the juniper-and-mesquite woodlands north of Tucson along what is now the Arizona Trail. In those first days, the Huggetts received a saddle that was delivered with a C.O.D. stamp on a piece of leather—and the C.O.D. Ranch was born. The Huggetts and their daughter, Wilma, ran the ranch for more than 50 years, before moving operations and letting the property run wild. In 1995, poet Stephen Malkin purchased the ranch and spent the next five years restoring the old outbuildings.

Bordered by Coronado National Forest land, the old adobe buildings have hosted everything from Western-style weddings to Tohono O’odham youth camps. Chef Brent Warburton whips up a rancher’s-style breakfast spread—a range of hearty favorites including scrambled eggs, pancakes, sausage, bacon, fresh fruit, yogurt and homemade granola. Malkin often stretches out on the porch of the main house, chatting about the history of the ranch, and if you’re lucky, you might even get the chance to hear him recite a poem or two.

Information: toll-free, (800) 868-5617; [www.codranch.com](http://www.codranch.com).

—Carrie M. Miner

### TRIMBLE'S TALL TALE

**ARIZONA IS TRULY A LAND OF ANOMALIES.** The town of Gila Bend isn’t in Gila County, it’s in Maricopa County. The town of Maricopa is in Pinal County. The ghost town of Pinal is in Gila County. The town of Pima isn’t in Pima County, it’s in Graham County. Fort Apache isn’t in Apache County, it’s in Navajo County, and Navajo is located in—now you’re gettin’ it—Apache County. If you’re not confused by now, you just ain’t thinking clearly.

—Marshall Trimble, Arizona State Historian



### Jesse James in Tombstone

**THE PRO-EARP TOMBSTONE EPITAPH** on April 24, 1882, commented on the cowboy-outlaw element’s undue influence on Tombstone’s civic life:

“The Honorable Jesse James, late of Missouri, is being made the recipient of much gush and ‘sym,’ while his ‘murderers’ are being severely condemned. Mr. James’s great mistake was in not settling down in Cochise County while here last summer. He would probably have received the appointment of deputy sheriff, and more than likely would have been a member of the next Arizona Legislature from San Simon. But we are all liable to make mistakes.”

—Leo W. Banks



### Children’s Desert Tour

“**BUGS, HOLES IN THE GROUND**, anything that moves,” says Susan Quillen of what her tiny tourists like to see. She and her husband, Jack, lead children on tours of Tohono Chul Park in northwest Tucson. The children set the itinerary. The parents follow along.

“If they’re really into lizards, we will go on a lizard hunt,” says Susan, who can also take them off on a hunt for rocks, plants or birds. She carries a backpack filled with the kind of paraphernalia guaranteed to please anyone under 3 feet tall—dead bugs, pieces of cactus, magnifying glasses, magnets and some story books.

Dubbed the Family Ed-Venture, the tours within this urban desert park start at 2 P.M. on the second Sunday of every month and include a free desert-activity book for each child. Paid admission to the park is required.

Information: (520) 742-6455.

—Kathleen Walker

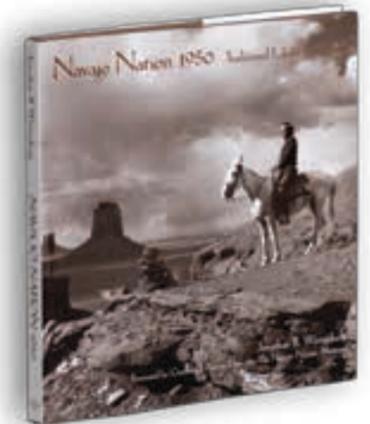
### Starry Starry Nights in Greer

**FLAGSTAFF MAY BE** the world’s first international “dark sky” city, but at 8,300 feet elevation, the little town of Greer can hold its own when it comes to celestial observation. Combine the area’s elevation with its low light pollution and you have a stargazing mecca. And if you add in high-tech equipment like a computerized telescope that pinpoints night-sky objects, you can set your sights for dazzling beauty.

The Peaks Lodge in Greer offers area visitors and residents a chance to see the rings of Saturn and the craters of the moon from the lodge’s “star deck.” A computerized, high-power telescope (Celestron Starbright) lets Peaks owner Don Poyas choose which stars or planets are the best for viewing depending on the time of year. Summertime is an optimal season to gaze at M13, a globular star cluster 23,000 light years from Earth, or in winter, view Saturn and its rings. If you happen to visit during a full moon, view its surface, pockmarked with craters.

Information: (928) 735-9977; [www.peaksaz.com](http://www.peaksaz.com).

—Sally Benford



### 1950s Navajo Nation Remembered in Photographs

**IN 1950, YOUNG SCIENTIST-IN-TRAINING** Jonathan Wittenberg decided to visit the Navajo Nation, and lugged along his twin-lens reflex camera. More than 50 years later, the images of the summers of 1951 to 1953 have become a book titled *Navajo Nation 1950: Traditional Life in Photographs*, a celebration of history, culture, fine art, photography and the rich heritage of the Navajo people.

Others perhaps found his blend of cutting-edge studies and fascination with Navajo heritage incongruous, but Wittenberg found it natural—literally. “By innate bent perhaps, I am a naturalist,” Wittenberg declares in the book’s introduction. The naturalist bent spurred him to study biochemistry and biophysics, to learn about marine life and microbiology—and to learn traditional Navajo ways.

Wittenberg’s coffee-table volume, an illustrated, intimate narrative of his time spent with the Navajo people—the only non-native to do so at the time—includes 100 black-and-white photographs and captures traditions and customs now fading away.

—Kimberly Hosey



Southeastern Arizona vintners earn new respect but weather a vintage bad year

# NO PLACE FOR WHINERS

BY KATHLEEN WALKER PHOTOGRAPHS BY DON B. AND RYAN B. STEVENSON



"GOOD LUCK" CABERNET Red, gravelly and well-drained Sonoita-area soil southeast of Tucson provides ideal growing conditions for grapes, as long as the weather and pests cooperate. Here, on an early October morning with the Mustang Mountains to their northeast, workers harvest cabernet grapes at Callaghan Vineyards' Buena Suerte Vineyard near Elgin.



GRAPE POTENTIAL Immature flower clusters hold promise of maturing into ripe grapes within 95 to 125 days following pollination.



VINEYARD BLESSING In a spring ceremony attended by workers and wine enthusiasts at Dr. Gordon Dutt's Sonoita Vineyards, Father Gregory Adolf (left) and Pastor Stephen Springer pronounce blessing on the about-to-bud vines.

# NOVEMBER 25, 2006...

The vines look tired. The gnarled limbs stretch out like prizefighters reaching for the supporting shoulders of others after a tough fight. They had one, these vines, the vintage year 2006.

A few yards away, Kent Callaghan sits on a bench. He planted those vines on his 20 acres in Elgin, 55 miles southeast of Tucson. He harvested a few weeks ago and has some time to wait before he knows the real results. He can, however, speculate.

“Interesting,” he says of the possible end product. For many people, “interesting” has a tinge of faint praise at best, a striving to avoid the social bugaboo of being negative. However, when Kent Callaghan says “interesting,” people should, and do, listen. He and his vines have made some fine wine.

The wines of The Callaghan Vineyards, a family operation started in 1988, have earned 27 favorable nods in 10 years from famed wine critic Robert M. Parker Jr. His influence extends far beyond the wine-producing borders of the United States, due to the impact of his bimonthly consumer guide, *The Wine Advocate*. Which means: They know about Callaghan in France. The names of other Arizona wine growers may not have reached such lofty heights, but they’re working on it.

From the start of their fledgling industry, the dozen or so Arizona growers had that proverbial hard row to hoe. First of all, who believed it would be possible to produce a wine that’s drinkable, much less notable,

in Arizona? Too much heat, too much desert, too little Napa, Bordeaux or Tuscany. A crisp pinot gris from the land of the saguaro? A silky merlot? Never.

Wrong, said Dr. Gordon Dutt who came to Arizona in 1964 after learning about wine at the University of California Davis. He was “flabbergasted” that no one grew wine grapes in Arizona. A Ph.D. in soil physical chemistry, Dutt believed it could be done and decided, “I am going to put my money where my mouth is.”

His Sonoita Vineyards now cover 30 acres. A bottle of his 1984 Private Reserve Cabernet Sauvignon carries a price tag of \$100. Thousands of people show up every year for tours, tastings and annual events like the Blessing of the Vines held in April. At the first blessing in 1979, a double rainbow appeared over the ceremony.

From Dutt’s standpoint on a hill above his vines, nature offered far more than a colorful portent of the future. Southeastern Arizona had the climate, the almost endless sunshine for photosynthesis and cool nights to ensure good sugar content. The elevation also allowed for relatively cool days, even with all that sun. “Just like Burgundy,” Dutt says.

Callaghan likens his land to parts of Spain, Australia and central California. From his vineyard, the gold-colored grasslands roll to the horizon. Windmills and



**ROOT, SHOOT, FRUIT** Rod Keeling (left) of Keeling-Schaefer Vineyards plants dormant vine benchgrafts grafted into drought-resistant rootstock chosen for its adaptability to southern Arizona's growing conditions.

**VINEYARD UPS AND DOWNS** Taking the low road, while Keeling takes the high, Jan Schaefer demonstrates the down-and-dirty labor involved in caring for their 18-acre vineyard.

## FROM THE START OF THEIR FLEDGLING INDUSTRY, THE DOZEN OR SO ARIZONA GROWERS HAD THAT PROVERBIAL HARD ROW TO HOE.

cattle-holding pens bespeak the land's ranching history.

"This is not a desert," he says.

You don't need to take a trip down State Route 83 to Sonoita and Elgin to see that, although, it is certainly worth the trip. Stretches of this road feel like a lush oil painting—rolling land, soft and high, golden, too, and dotted with greenery.

Head east down the back roads toward the Chiricahua Mountains where other vineyards have taken hold. At elevations higher than 4,000 feet, the land has been receptive to the vines. Rod Keeling and Jan Schaefer chose this area for their Keeling-Schaefer Vineyards, founded in 2000.

Their first harvest in 2005 produced 9.5 tons of grapes from 18.5 acres, resulting in 400 cases of wine. Neither of them had been involved in growing wine grapes before. In fact, they spent their careers in offices, in nonprofit and government work. Purchasing a vineyard came with their plans for a life after retirement.

Many may dream of the romance of owning a vineyard, those chatty late afternoons on the patio sipping your own wine with the scent of the Rhone Valley of France drifting on the breeze. The reality takes place out back.

As Schaefer likes to say, "Good wine is made in the vineyard." Creating that vineyard from sandy red soil up takes time, hands-on labor and know-how.

Dr. Michael Kilby spent his career as a specialist in horticulture at the University of Arizona, and early on saw the potential of wine grapes in Arizona. Today, he advises growers and those who would like to join their ranks. "You've got to educate yourself, and you've got to have money," he says.

According to Kilby, the cost of preparing, planting and tending the vines over a three-year period can run \$20,000 an acre. That does not include the cost of the land, nor have you yet harvested as much as one skinny grape.

Keeling did have an edge over other first-timers, since his family has farmed in Arizona for three generations. On the other hand, Callaghan came to the industry armed with a degree in philosophy—an edge of his own. Being philosophical can't hurt when it comes to dealing with wine, especially

during the year that produced the wines of 2006. Forget seeing a rainbow at the beginning of this season. These folks were too busy looking for rain.

Down in Elgin, any winter with 6 to 8 inches of rain would be fantastic, but they got less than 2. A dry winter can cause an erratic budbreak. The buds come in weeks apart, and the subsequent grapes also ripen weeks apart, a harvesting nightmare.

As Charron Vineyards owner Leo Cox puts it, "A lethal combination."

Hungry deer ate the leaves and left the grapes unprotected from hammering hailstones.

Callaghan had his own hail problems, three times over the summer, the latest on September 10.

"Horrible timing," he says, "because everything is soft then."

Summer 2006 brought the threat of something tiny but ferocious, the glassy-eyed sharpshooter.

"Insect Menaces State's Vineyards," warned headlines in Tucson's *Arizona Daily Star*. The bug could carry Pierce's disease, a bacteria, from one plant to another, from one vine to another. While the bugs did not seem to be having an immediate impact, the need to study and control them called for more money. To add insult to possible infestation, nature dealt southern Arizona a relatively mild summer. Desert-dwellers loved the balmy change, but not so the grape growers. The grapes required sunny heat as part of the conditions impacting the sugar content that would later become alcohol. They also needed to ripen.

While the wine growers' year would never reach the level of the saga of Job, it certainly moved into an arena Noah would have recognized. The much-awaited summer rains arrived late. What they lacked in timeliness, they more than made up for in muscle. In the Tucson area, floods hit as roads closed, homes flooded and television cameras rolled.

The nearby Chiricahua Mountains got drenched by 11.5 inches of rain, and bunchrot, a fungus, afflicted the Keeling-Schaefer syrah grapes. The streams flowed for weeks. Down in Elgin, Callaghan had expected about 3 inches. He got 14, plus rot and



CREATING THAT  
VINEYARD FROM  
SANDY RED SOIL UP  
TAKES TIME,  
HANDS-ON LABOR  
AND KNOW-HOW.



**DESTEMMING DE GRAPES** After picking, grapes get destemmed in a crusher, which starts the juices flowing. Then red-wine grapes go to a fermentation tank, while white-wine grapes are pressed and separated from their skins prior to fermentation.



**PURPLE MOUNDS OF MAJESTY** A truckload of cabernet grapes fresh from the vine awaits transport to Callaghan's winery (above).

**TASTE TESTS** Keeling and Schaefer's nightly dinners include two trial varieties (right) concocted in beakers and sipped with supper as the pair seeks an ideal blend of qualities for the season's offerings.

**A REAL CORKER** Just-filled bottles of Charron Vineyards' signature white merlot wait their turn as, one-by-one, they're held in place for machine corking (far right).

**NOW WE WAIT** On the first day of the grape harvest, Rod Keeling (below, right) moves a 300-gallon vat of crushed grapes into a 58-degree cooler where the contents will soak for two days before yeast inoculation and about 10 days of fermentation prior to aging in casks.



infections. He lost his zinfandel harvest.

"I didn't even pick it," he says.

Waiting for the right moment to harvest meant putting off the vineyard's usual October harvest until November. He brought in about one ton per acre. He would have liked two. So it ended, the vintage year of 2006. *Yee haw*. But wait a minute. Farmers do. They wait and see. And, what they've seen in southeastern Arizona doesn't look all that bad. In a year of cool weather when it should be warm, dry when it should be wet, a deluge when you want sun, wine growers still planted about 400 acres with an estimated production of more than 20,000 cases of wine. While many of the resulting bottles may not earn award-winning swirling, sniffing, sipping and spitting distinction at tastings, some undoubtedly will.

The Keeling-Schaefer Vineyards have three wines to offer willing palates: the Two Reds Grenache 2005, the Three Sisters Syrah 2005 and the Rock Creek Rosé 2005. A successful 2006 harvest produced 29 barrels of syrah and Grenache, which are resting in the cellar.

Callaghan says of his 2006 offerings, "They're much more European, earthy, meaty." He seems particularly positive about his new red, C2, a blend of mourvedre, syrah and petite sirah.

Of course, some first-timers had it rough, like those who

showed up at the Charron Vineyards near Bowie for help in stemming and crushing the vineyard's first harvest. They produced less than 30 gallons of juice.

"It could be the most expensive wine we ever drink," owner Leo Cox called out.

One can surmise the quality will not match the price, not yet. Things do change in wine country.

In the past few years, some national magazines and newspapers have given approving nods to southeastern Arizona vineyards. The wines have earned ribbons and a place on some of the best linen-covered tables, including the White House's. A homegrown pinot gris 2000 from the Dos Cabezas Wineworks made that trip to Washington, D.C., in 2002. The vines that produced that wine stand on land between the Chiricahuas and the Dragoons. You can't get more Arizona than that.

As for all those who still pooh-poo the very idea of good Arizona wine, Gordon Dutt has a few words.

"So opinionated that they can't really taste," he says.

The comment has the spicy nose of a good Arizona petit verdot, the earthy sense of a fine Arizona cabernet sauvignon and a bit of the long finish of an outstanding Arizona syrah.

Like the man said, "Interesting." **AW**

*Kathleen Walker of Tucson now adds fine wines to the long list of reasons she loves the land of southeastern Arizona.*

*"Wildly surprised" best describes photographers Don B. and Ryan B. Stevenson's reactions upon sampling a variety of Arizona's wines during the six months they photographed for this story. The father-and-son photography team is based in Tempe.*





# GRAPE EXPECTATIONS

WINE TOUR OF SOUTHEASTERN ARIZONA BY MICHAEL FAMIGLIETTI

## SONOITA VINEYARDS, ELGIN

Opened by Dr. Gordon Dutt more than 30 years ago, the Sonoita region's first commercial vineyard offers gourmet cheese, six to eight wines and a souvenir glass at its \$3 tastings, as well as the winery's three annual festivals, including the Blessing of the Vines that takes place each April. Open daily 10 A.M. to 3 P.M.

**CONTACT:** (520) 455-5893;

[www.sonoitavineyards.com](http://www.sonoitavineyards.com).

**GETTING THERE:** From Tucson, take Interstate 10 east to State Route 83. Drive south on State 83 to State Route 82 and turn left (east), driving for about 8 miles to Upper Elgin Road. Beyond the town of Elgin, continue on the same road, which changes to Elgin-Canelo Road, where the winery sits 3 miles south of Elgin.

## CALLAGHAN VINEYARDS, ELGIN

As Arizona's most well-known and respected vineyard, Callaghan leads the way with its wines aged in French oak casks. Keep the glass from this vineyard's \$3 tastings, which happen each weekend, Friday through Sunday.

**CONTACT:** (520) 455-5322;

[www.callaghanvineyards.com](http://www.callaghanvineyards.com).

**GETTING THERE:** From Tucson, take I-10 to 83 and turn right, driving 28 miles to Elgin Road. Turn left (east) and drive 3 miles to the vineyard.

## CHARRON VINEYARDS, SONOITA

This vineyard's startling white merlot seizes enthusiasts at its online store, at weekend tastings and during its three festivals, two on site and one in Tempe at the Tempe Festival of the Arts. The winery will custom-label limited quantities of the wine upon request.

**CONTACT:** (520) 762-8585;

[www.charronvineyards.com](http://www.charronvineyards.com).

**GETTING THERE:** From Tucson, take I-10 east to 83 and drive south for approximately 6 miles to an unmarked, unpaved road on the left-hand side where you will see a group of mailboxes. Turn onto that road and follow it for about a half-mile, then make a right-hand turn to the winery entrance.

## THE VILLAGE OF ELGIN WINERY, ELGIN

For just a buck, customers can sample up to four of the 15 wines offered at this tasting room, where wine accessories, T-shirts and postcards are sold in the winery's gift shop.

**CONTACT:** (520) 455-9309;

[www.elginwines.com](http://www.elginwines.com).

**GETTING THERE:** From Sonoita, take Upper Elgin Road to the Village Complex in downtown Elgin.

## KEELING-SCHAEFER VINEYARDS, PEARCE

Leaving their boxy offices for the romantic life on a vineyard, partners Rod Keeling and Jan Schaefer ventured into the business of wine growing in 2000. The vineyard's location at the foot of the Chiricahua Mountains, combined with hot days, cool nights and the sandy, red soil help create a special Arizona character to their Rhone-style wines. Their Three Sisters Syrah 2005 will be released in May. Tastings and tours by appointment only.

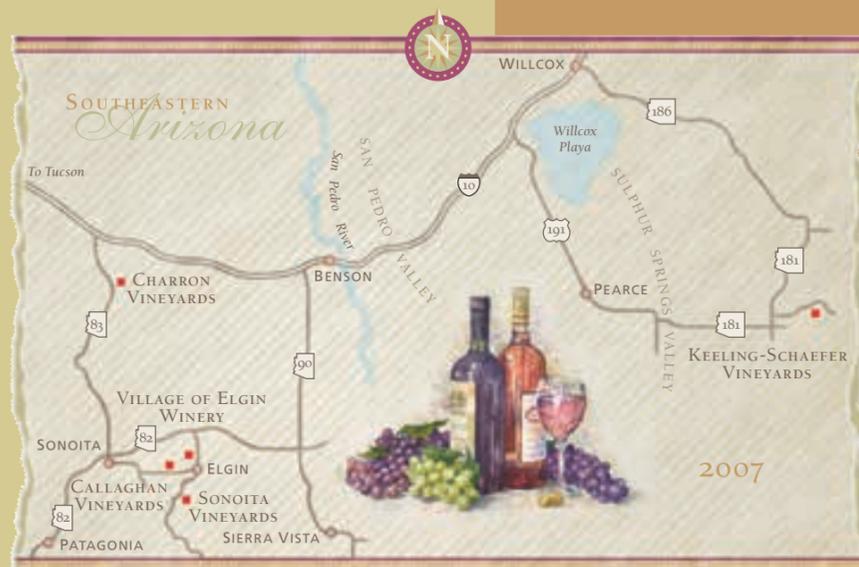
**CONTACT:** (520) 824-2500;

[www.keelingschaefervineyards.com](http://www.keelingschaefervineyards.com).

**GETTING THERE:** From Tucson, take I-10 east for 67 miles to U.S. Route 191 south. Drive 28 miles to State Route 181 and turn left onto State 181. Follow 181 as it turns north to Rock Creek Road and turn right. The vineyard sits a mile down the road.

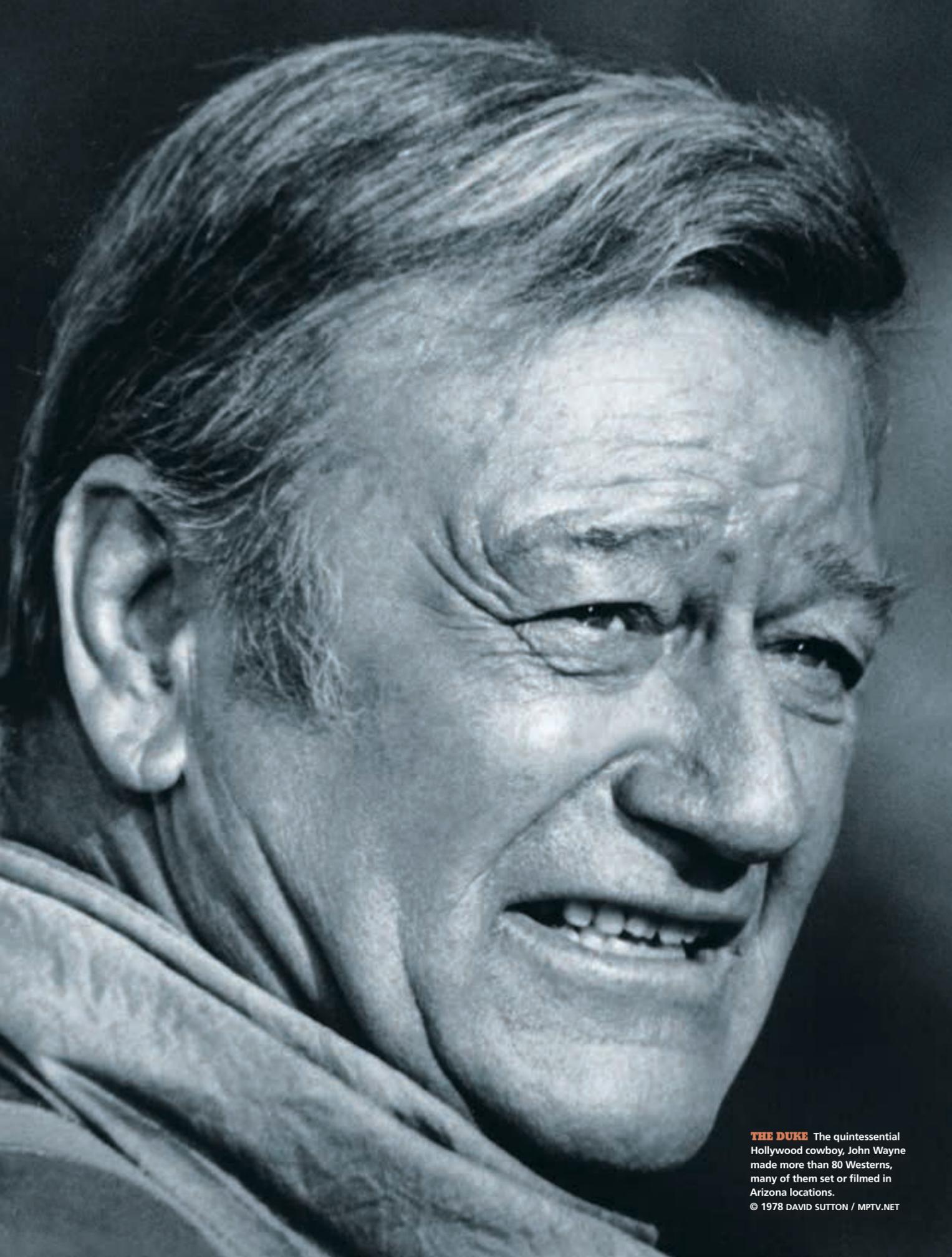
**PERSONAL TOUCH** Individually filled and corked during one labor-intensive 6 A.M. to 4 P.M. day by 81-year-old owner Leo Cox and his friends, every bottle of Charron Vineyards' white merlot receives a hand-applied label.

**NAME BRANDS** While Lisa Callaghan holds a goblet of her namesake Lisa's Selection, her husband, Kent's, glass contains Claire's, a Rhone-style blend, named for their younger daughter, that was served at former Supreme Court Justice Sandra Day O'Connor's White House retirement dinner.



online Find our expanded wine-country guide at [arizonahighways.com](http://arizonahighways.com) (click on the May "Trip Planner").





**THE DUKE** The quintessential Hollywood cowboy, John Wayne made more than 80 Westerns, many of them set or filmed in Arizona locations.  
© 1978 DAVID SUTTON / MPTV.NET



by  
Gregory  
McNamee

## JOHN WAYNE'S ARIZONA

John Wayne was a big man, 6-foot-4 and 225-plus pounds, big enough to fill a film frame and big enough to stand tall without shrinking to insignificance against the spires of Monument Valley, the red rocks of Sedona or the sky islands

of southern Arizona. He cast a long shadow in other ways, too. John Wayne was still a young man when he emerged as an American legend, no less so now—a hundred years after his birth on May 26, 1907, in Winterset, Iowa—than in his long film heyday. The landscapes and history of Arizona contributed much to both the man and the myth, and in Arizona he found pleasure and inspiration.

The movies first brought Wayne to Arizona at the dawn of his career. As the story goes, the famed director Raoul Walsh was looking for a male lead for the follow-up to his film *In Old Arizona* (1930), billed as the “first outdoor sound feature.” On the 20th Century Fox studio lot, the director caught sight of a tall, slender young man named Marion Morrison working in the prop warehouse and doing bit parts and stunt work. Walsh recalled that he looked just right for the part. “To be a cowboy star, you’ve got to be 6-foot-3 or over,” Walsh said. “You’ve got to have no hips and a face that looks right under a sombrero.”

The description fit Morrison perfectly, and the former University of Southern California football star got the lead in Walsh’s movie *The Big Trail*. Walsh liked everything about the young man but his name, which, he protested, “sounds like

a circuit preacher.” Walsh and studio head Winfield Sheehan brainstormed, making lists of characters out of frontier history until Walsh hit on Anthony Wayne, the Revolutionary War commander. “Not Mad Anthony,” Walsh said in that eureka moment. “Just John. John Wayne.”

Wayne soon found himself in the sand-dune country near Yuma, then, as now, a favorite spot for filmmakers seeking an authentic desert setting. He had done some early work on film crews there, but now, while waiting to take his place before the camera, he learned useful tricks such as knife-throwing. He took naturally to riding a horse, leading Walsh to conclude that he’d found a promising young star in Wayne.

The movie flopped, and Wayne spent the next few years playing bit parts, including a boxer, an aviator, a railroad engineer, even the manager of a department store. Someone finally cast him as a cowboy, and he made 16 Westerns for Monogram Pictures as Singin’ Sandy Saunders, the first singing cowboy in film history. Unfortunately, he couldn’t carry a tune. He was eventually replaced by a fellow named Gene Autry, who knew his way around both a song and a horse.

It wasn’t until the end of the decade that Wayne earned a

THE ICON WHO MADE ARIZONA ICONIC LOVED ITS FRONTIER FEEL

**'I won't be wronged. I won't be insulted.  
I won't be laid a hand on.'**

—John Wayne in *The Shootist*



major role in a Western of any quality, one filmed in south-eastern Arizona's Peloncillo Mountains, in Texas Canyon between Willcox and Benson, and—famously—in Monument Valley. Based on the story of a perilous passage between Lordsburg and Tucson in the wildest of the Wild West days, *Stagecoach* cemented Wayne's reputation as a strong but sensitive—and eminently sensible—cowboy. The 1939 film, directed by the tough-as-nails veteran filmmaker John Ford, was nominated for an Academy Award (it lost to *Gone with the Wind*); it would also be the first of many collaborations between Ford and Wayne, many filmed in Arizona.

Ford's interest in the history of the West helped make Wayne the personification of the frontiersman. "I won't be wronged. I won't be insulted. I won't be laid a hand on," he famously said, speaking in character as gunfighter J.B. Books in Don Siegel's great film *The Shootist* (1976). "I don't do these things to other people. I require the same from them." Those resonant words are of a piece with the ones he spoke in Ford's 1948 film *Fort Apache*, playing a composite figure out of Arizona history, the cavalry officer Capt. Kirby York. This first film in Ford's "cavalry trilogy" stars the haunting Monument Valley landscapes just as much as any human actor.

In the end, Wayne made 84 Westerns, many of them set or filmed in Arizona. (As for the rest of his films, he said, "I play John Wayne in pretty much every film I do, and I've done pretty well so far, haven't I?") The landscape, he said, was part of the story, and the story was part of the folklore of America, a story

**END OF THE LINES** John Wayne portrays an aging gunfighter in the 1976 movie *The Shootist*, his last film, and one that some film buffs say mirrored Wayne's career and life. EDDIE BRANDT'S SATURDAY MATINEE



**A STAR IS BORN** Shot against the backdrop of Monument Valley, the movie *Stagecoach* made John Wayne a star as he played the Ringo Kid, opposite Claire Trevor, who played an outcast prostitute named Dallas. Because the filming location was on the Navajo Indian Reservation, director John Ford cast Navajo Indians to play the parts of Apache Indians. EDDIE BRANDT'S SATURDAY MATINEE  
Wayne's kerchief (left) worn in *Big Jake*. COURTESY OF EDWARD MCCAIN/PINNACLE PEAK TUCSON COLLECTION

that bore retelling again and again, even when it sometimes reflected badly on its protagonists.

Wayne loved acting in Westerns. "You don't have too many worries about what to wear in these things," he said, tongue in cheek. "You can wear a blue shirt, or, if you're down in Monument Valley, you can wear a yellow shirt."

Monument Valley was John Ford's trademark setting, but before he filmed *Stagecoach* there it had provided the backdrop to only one other film, George Seitz's silent drama *The Vanishing American* (1925). Ford found the place after Kayenta-based rancher and trader John Wetherill heard Hollywood location scouts were poking around Flagstaff. Wetherill reported this to his friend Harry Goulding, who had a trading post on the other end of Monument Valley. Goulding immediately assembled a portfolio of photographs by Josef Muench, a frequent contributor to *Arizona Highways*, and took these images to Los Angeles. There, he wangled an appointment with Ford and showed him Muench's images of Monument Valley. Ford was instantly smitten, and so it was that he and John Wayne found themselves in that most rugged and striking of settings. "I have been all over the world," Ford recalled, "but I consider this the most complete, beautiful, and peaceful place on Earth."

Other directors brought Wayne to other parts of Arizona. *Rio Bravo* (1959), with Dean Martin and Ricky Nelson, *El Dorado* (1967), co-starring Robert Mitchum, and *Rio Lobo* (1970), all directed by the peerless Howard Hawks, were among the many films that Wayne would make at the Old Tucson Studios. Andrew V. McLaglen's *McLintock!* (1963) found Wayne filming



**CAMERA, ACTION!** Perennial Western sidekick Walter Brennan played "Stumpy," alongside Wayne's portrayal of Sheriff John T. Chance in the film *Rio Bravo*, shot on location at Old Tucson Studios. EDDIE BRANDT'S SATURDAY MATINEE  
Wayne's cavalry hat (below) worn in *Rio Lobo*. COURTESY OF JOHN WAYNE BIRTHPLACE MUSEUM

on the outskirts of Nogales and Patagonia, while segments of Henry Hathaway's ensemble film *How the West Was Won* (1962) were shot in Tucson, Oatman, Superior and the Tonto National Forest. And James Edward Grant's 1947 film *Angel and the Badman* showed off Sedona to the advantage of both the movie and the place.

Wayne's Arizona films weren't always Westerns. He played, perhaps improbably, a Roman centurion in George Stevens' *The Greatest Story Ever Told* (1965), shot in part around Page as the newly formed Lake Powell filled with water. Action sequences for the World War II drama *Flying Tigers* (1942) were shot around Flagstaff, which also figures in Mervyn LeRoy's light comedy *Without Reservations* (1946), pairing Wayne with Claudette Colbert.

Wayne's films enabled him to explore every corner of the state and prompted him to buy property in Arizona, including 4,000 acres at Stanfield, near Casa Grande, where he grew cotton and built a feedlot to accommodate prize Hereford cattle.

From the late 1950s until his death in 1979, Wayne was a familiar presence in western Pinal County, often entertaining guests and locals alike at the Francisco Grande Hotel or at area ranches. At about the same time, Wayne entered into a partnership and bought the 26 Bar Ranch on the grassy high plains near Eagar, a place also known for top-quality Herefords.

Wayne often stayed at Flagstaff's Monte Vista Hotel, where it's said that he reported seeing ghosts on several occasions.

**online** Check out John Wayne's "Arizona Hangouts" guide at [arizonahighways.com](http://arizonahighways.com) (click on the May "Trip Planner").



He spent much time in the company of another Arizona legend, Barry Goldwater, whose 1964 presidential campaign he vigorously supported.

Goldwater returned the favor by nominating Wayne for a Congressional Gold Medal after his death: The medal reads simply, "John Wayne, American," wording suggested by his frequent co-star Maureen O'Hara.

Wayne spent warm winter days riding in the foothills of the Santa Catalina Mountains while staying at Tucson's Hacienda del Sol, a favorite Hollywood retreat in the 1940s. He vacationed at several ranches near Wickenburg and the famed Rancho de la Osa just outside Sasabe, where Tom Mix and Zane Grey also spent time. Reportedly, he even inscribed his name on a wall of the Hannagan Meadow Lodge, high in the White Mountains, before an elaborate hand-carved mantel was installed over it. No one alive today, it seems, can say for sure—and so far, no one has undertaken the hard work of dismounting the piece to check.

"Whether Wayne is looking at the land that might make a great ranch, or turning in the doorway to survey his true home, the desert, every gesture was authentic and a prized disclosure," writes the noted film historian David Thomson. That's exactly right. John Wayne found a second home, close to his heart, in Arizona. And though he has been gone for more than a quarter of a century, it seems entirely reasonable to say that John Wayne, larger than life itself, lives here still. ■■■

Gregory McNamee, who lives in Tucson, writes about film and literature for *The Hollywood Reporter*. He has been a John Wayne fan from his earliest days and claims to have watched *The Shootist* more than a hundred times.



# WILD EDEN

Tumacacori Highlands harbor a lush fragment of grassland

**WHAT LIES BENEATH** Lush landscapes of ancestral blue oaks, flowering velvet-pod mimosa and dense grass create a masterpiece along Ruby Road, near Peña Blanca Lake. The area's rich overgrowth covers what is believed to be another magnum opus: a wealth of gem, mineral and ore deposits.

■ To order a print of this photograph, see inside front cover.



**REVERSAL OF FORTUNE** Commonly referred to as water shamrocks or water clover, the pretty four-leaf plants atop a pool in Peck Canyon are actually invasive ferns native to Europe. ■ To order a print of this photograph, see inside front cover.

BY DOUGLAS KREUTZ 🍄 PHOTOGRAPHS BY JACK DYKINGA

RED EMBERS OF SUNSET SMOLDER, THEN FLARE, ON THE WESTERN HORIZON AS I PEER DOWN THOUSANDS OF FEET FROM A NARROW CATWALK OUTSIDE AN OLD FIRE-WATCH CABIN CALLED THE ATASCOSA LOOKOUT. 🍄 “BABO LIGHTING UP!” HOLLERS PHOTOGRAPHER JACK DYKINGA, HUNCHING OVER A TRIPOD AND FOCUSING HIS LENS ON THE DISTANT STONE SPIRE OF BABOQUIVARI PEAK GLOWING IN THE LAST RAYS OF THE DAY.

We're perched on the rugged crown of a 71,000-acre expanse of national forest terrain south of Tucson known as the Tumacacori Highlands. From the 6,249-foot aerie of the remote Atascosa Lookout to the sheer-walled splendor of Hell's Gate in Peck Canyon, it's a landscape to dazzle the eye, test the stamina and soothe the spirit.

People have noticed. The area's mountains, canyons and oak-studded grasslands are so beautiful, so ecologically diverse that a coalition of environmental groups has proposed protecting the Tumacacori Highlands as a federally designated wilderness area. Organizations supporting the proposal include the Sky Island Alliance, Tucson Audubon Society, National Wildlife Federation and two dozen others. However, many ranchers, miners and off-highway vehicle enthusiasts oppose the designation.

Jack and I—long familiar with the region, but seeking a clearer sense of the place—are making a series of visits to climb high into its mountains, drive its bumpy back roads and backpack deep into its canyons.

This sunset moment at Atascosa Lookout offers the grand overview. Price of admission: a steep 2.75-mile hike to the summit from a trailhead on Ruby Road northwest of Nogales. While Jack exhibits blatant symptoms of what I call *neurotica photographica*—a condition in which a photographer waxes rhapsodic about some impossibly beautiful scene, and then frets himself silly about the zillion things that could go wrong in trying to capture it on film—I survey the vast kingdom below the catwalk.

Mountains: The surrounding Atascosa range is all about standing-up stone—pinnacles, cliffs, bulging boulders and tall towers. To the north are the Tumacacori Mountains, namesake of the highlands and the nearby Tumacacori National Historical Park. To the south rise the Pajarito (Spanish for “Little Bird”) Mountains. Farther out, beyond the proposed wilderness, lie Baboquivari, the

Santa Rita range, Sierra La Esmeralda across the border in Sonora, Mexico, and the distant Catalinas shrugging over Tucson.

Canyons: Calabasas, Beehive, Bartolo and Pine, to name a few. And another called Peck, where Jack and I will later bed down on a backpacking trek.

High-lonesome: Miles upon miles of rolling grassland—cut here with arroyos, dotted there with oaks, trimmed in spring and wet summers with wildflowers practically shouting out hues of blue and yellow.

At home in this wild Eden are white-tailed deer, black bears, mountain lions, javelinas, coyotes and winged wildlife ranging from canyon wrens and ravens to red-tailed hawks and peregrine falcons. Add to that fauna list a would-be newcomer—rare, endangered jaguars that may have visited, or moved into the area from Mexico.

It's all quite splendid. But the day grows late. “Jack!” I yell to the tortured perfectionist who's trying for one last dusk shot from a spot below the lookout. “We should start down! It's gonna be dark soon.”

“Yeah, I just want to get this before we go!” he bellows back, clearly less bothered than I am by our lack of overnight gear.

In the fast-fading light, I poke around inside the lookout, a 14-by-14-foot structure that has been restored since its last days as an active fire post in the 1970s and is now open to the public.

Two metal bunks with no bedding. A wood-burning stove. Three chairs. A table. A deck of cards. Candles. A pot. A pan. A sign-in book for visitors. And two ragged documents: One is a clipping of a newspaper story I wrote earlier in the year about restoration work on the lookout. The other is a photocopy of journal entries by the lookout's most famous fire-watcher: the late author Edward Abbey. *(Text continued on page 30)*



**PROTECTIVE  
PALISADES**

South-facing sheer cliffs of volcanic rock in the Atascosa Mountains keep solid watch over the grass-gilded and oak-studded Tumacacori Highlands, shown here in late fall.

■ To order a print of this photograph, see inside front cover.

THE HILLS ARE ALIVE Verdant arms of  
ocotillos and cheerful pink blossoms of velvet-pod  
mimosas push through the thick Atascosa Mountains  
grassland in the Coronado National Forest after  
unprecedented summer showers.

■ To order a print of this photograph, see inside front cover.





**POP ART** Unleashed by record rainfall, topping 300 percent of normal in some areas, a rare profusion of summer poppies (left) springs forth from the Tumacacori Highlands. Congress is currently considering a proposal to designate the highlands as a federally protected wilderness area.

**PEAK OF PRESERVATION** Author Douglas Kreutz (right) surveys the surrounding mountain ranges from the historic Atascosa fire lookout. Built in the early 1930s, the sparsely furnished 14-by-14-foot cabin is undergoing gradual restoration by the Forest Service and volunteers.



(Text continued from page 25) Abbey, known for *Desert Solitaire*, *The Monkey Wrench Gang* and numerous other books, manned the lookout for some of the 1968 fire season.

Several of his journal entries are preserved in a book called *Confessions of a Barbarian: Selections from the Journals of Edward Abbey, 1951-1989*. A sampling:

May 22, 1968—Atascosa Lookout, Coronado National Forest, Arizona  
A golden eagle floated by under the kitchen window this morning as I poured myself a cup of coffee. Hot, dry, windy weather.

This lookout is merely a flimsy old frame shack perched like an eagle's nest on a pinnacle of rock. . . . Built in the 1930s by the CCC, of course. Held together by paint and wire and nuts and bolts. Shudders in the wind.

June 5, 1968—Atascosa  
A great grimy sunset glowers on the west. Plains of gold, veils of dust, wind-whipped clouds. The big aching tooth of Baboquivari far and high on the skyline.

July 5, 1968—Atascosa  
Woke up this morning on an island in the sky, surrounded by clouds. Wild swirling banks of vapor, flowing and passing

to reveal brief glimpses of rocky crags, dripping trees, the golden grassy hillsides far below.

Desperately seeking a little shot of fame by association, I come down from the lookout, stroll over to Jack and proudly announce that Edward Abbey and I both have our work on exhibit on this particular mountaintop.

"We should get moving. It's almost dark," Jack replies, shouldering his camera pack and starting down the now-moonlit trail.

Fortunately for those who might want a taste of Tumacacori Highlands' splendor without braving the backcountry, the unpaved but well-maintained Ruby Road provides a vivid sampling.

During another trip on an unseasonably cool monsoon day in August, Jack and I rumble into a wildflower paradise on Ruby Road, which starts as paved State Route 289, heading west from Interstate 19 about 57 miles south of Tucson, then becomes unpaved Forest Service Road 39 that runs northwest past the closed ghost town of Ruby toward Arivaca.

Just a few miles into the drive, we're raving about the explosion of new green growth in the surrounding oak woodlands, transformed by torrential monsoons into something more out of the emerald mountains of Japan than the arid outback of Arizona. Then we round a bend and hit a mother lode of yellow—bright yellow caltrops, sometimes known as summer poppies, draping a blanket of color across a hillside. Around the next bend wait

unfurled acres of wildflowers.

By now, Jack is fairly sputtering superlatives: "Incredible!" "Unbelievable!" "Once-in-a-lifetime sight!"

I know what this means. The truck will stop suddenly. The tripod will come out. The camera will come out. Precious boxes of film will come out. It will all be so beautiful. But so many things could go wrong. A gust of wind could ruffle the flowers. Rain could fall. The clouds might not be right. In short: a full-blown episode of *neurotica photographica*.

As Jack worries over a green glade of gnarly oaks, I jot these words in my notebook: "Be sure to bring a camera if you drive the highlands in the season of wildflowers. Your problem will not be what to shoot—but when to stop shooting."

A dot on the map says "Hell's Gate." Of course we wish to go there. We can only hope the rugged hike to Peck Canyon will not prove quite as daunting as the steep rocks and ice-plastered volcanoes we have climbed together in the past.

Relying on maps, signs and a special "sixth sense" that is wrong roughly 50 percent of the time, we somehow find our way to the starting point of the trek at an abandoned rancher's camp known as Corral Nuevo, thanks to a rugged four-wheel-drive vehicle to navigate the rough road leading from Ruby Road.

Near the dilapidated remains of an old windmill that harkens back to another era of ranching, we saddle ourselves with backpacks and slip into Peck Canyon.

Turns out we're not exactly Lewis and Clark. In the first mile of the canyon, we see signs of others who didn't just pop in for a night with flyweight camping gear and freeze-dried vittles—but who actually made a living here. Indian grinding holes mark streamside rocks, and segments of pipe left by ranchers building water projects rust in the canyon bottom. Makeshift trails suggest that border crossers also travel this terrain.

After an initial stretch of easy walking in a broad, sandy, dry watercourse, we find the canyon narrows dramatically and winds through a deep-cut chasm choked with enormous boulders. Heeding advice to skirt a narrow section that would force us to swim pools of water 2 miles in, we climb steeply out of the canyon and creep carefully along a narrow passage above a don't-slip-here drop-off.

"Good place to pay attention," Jack observes on a steep, unstable scramble back to the canyon bottom.

Once there, Jack goes to work photographing a lovely clear pool upon which delicate water shamrock plants float. When he begins to worry aloud about all the things that could go wrong with the shot, I suddenly find the need to explore farther down-canyon on my own—worrying the whole way about all the things that could go wrong with my notebook.

Later, we hike to Hell's Gate, a spot less ominous than its name, where rock walls on either side of the canyon create a gate-like effect. We search for a flat campsite in this boulder-strewn

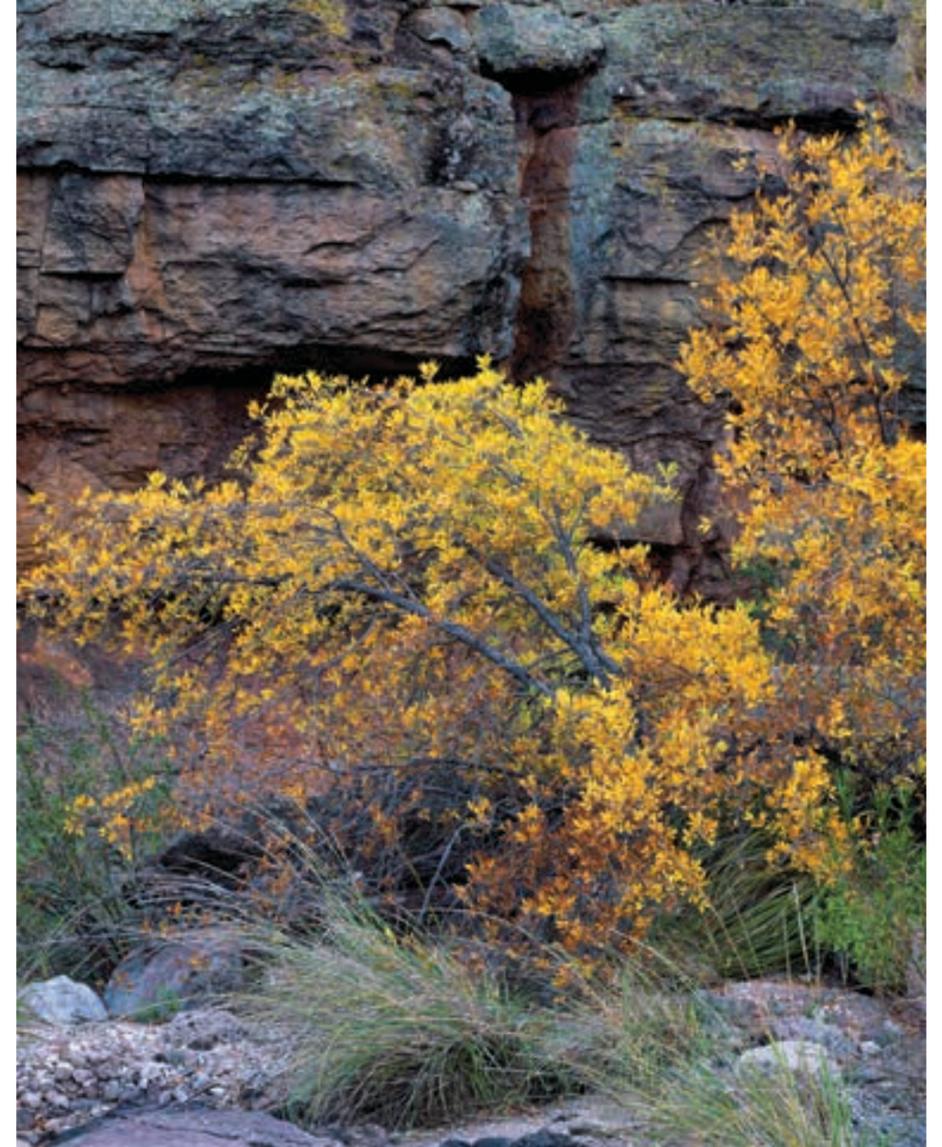


### BORN TO BE WILD

Seen from the rocky summit of the Atascosa Mountains, hues of sunset kiss the scenic, solitary expanse of the Sonoran Desert and distant Baboquivari Peak (left).

### GOLDEN GULLY

The proposed Tumacacori Highlands Wilderness includes Peck Canyon (right), a riparian corridor. As in the remote canyons of the sky islands, a perennial stream sustains a diverse ecosystem of plants and wildlife, complete with leafy ash trees, that otherwise would not survive in the desert.



landscape. Fortunately, years of backcountry travel have made us minimalists. We pull out bivouac sacks—little waterproof envelopes for our sleeping bags used in lieu of a tent. I set up a tiny gas stove on a rock and boil water to reconstitute our wonderfully light and perfectly tasteless freeze-dried dinners.

The last light of day leaks quickly out of the canyon and is replaced immediately by cold air plunging uninvited from above. We sit up jawing about the beauty of this place, the wild feel of it, although it's not more than 10 miles or so, as the crow flies, from Interstate 19.

Tomorrow we'll explore some more and discover new Tumacacori Highlands treasures. But now, before bidding each other goodnight and bedding down in our snug bivouac sacks, Jack and I can't help but wonder: Will Congress act soon on the proposal to protect this grand landscape as federal wilderness? Should it? Well, we're not legislators. We're not land-use experts. But we have wandered a lot of wilderness. We know it when we're in it. And tonight we are. ■■■

*Douglas Kreutz, an avid hiker and traveler, is a staff writer at the Arizona Daily Star in Tucson. He and photographer Jack Dykinga learned an important lesson while working on this story: If you go to a place with the word "Highlands" in its name, you're in for some serious uphill walking.*

*In 30 years of tramping around the Arizona backcountry, Tucson-based photographer Jack Dykinga has never seen such intensely emerald-colored grasslands punctuated by splashes of pinks and yellows from mimosas and summer poppies.*

### when you go

**Location:** Approximately 55 miles southwest of Tucson.

**Getting There:** The most direct and scenic access is on State Route 289, also known as Ruby Road. From Tucson, drive 55 miles south on Interstate 19 past Green Valley and Rio Rico to State 289 at Exit 12. Follow paved 289 west toward Peña Blanca Lake for about 9 miles to its intersection with unpaved Forest Service Road 39. To reach the trailhead for a hike to the Atascosa Lookout, continue west on FR 39 about 5 miles. The trailhead is on the right side of the road, 14.5 miles from the Interstate 19 exit, with parking on the left side of the road. To reach the Corral Nuevo trailhead into Hell's Gate, continue northwest on 39 for 6.4 miles past the Atascosa Lookout trailhead and watch for a 2.5-mile-long side road on the right marked "Hell's Gate." A high-clearance four-wheel-drive vehicle can cover the rough road leading to unsigned Corral Nuevo.

**Travel Advisory:** Side roads off FR 39 range in condition from pretty rough to nearly impassable. Obey all closure signs. On side roads, use a four-wheel-drive vehicle in good condition and a second vehicle if possible.

**Warning:** Federal officials have posted warnings concerning illegal immigration and smuggling in the area.

**Additional Information:** Nogales Ranger District, Coronado National Forest, (520) 281-2296. The Friends of the Tumacacori Highlands, [www.tumacacoriwild.org](http://www.tumacacoriwild.org).





**POUNGING THE ROAD** Dale Jackson runs along the road between the Hopi village of Moenkopi and Dilkon, on the Navajo Indian Reservation during a 100-mile training relay. Shadows from the red rock badlands (right) on the Hopi Indian Reservation.

# Rain Run

Hopi runners follow an ancient path in a 2,000-mile-long relay for rain

**A**s the sky slowly lightened and the morning stars heralded the dawn, a lone figure steadily loped across the face of a windswept mesa in the heart of the Hopi Indian homeland. Fleet of foot and strong of spirit, the 74-year-old elder paced himself along timeworn trails as he readied himself for a spiritual pursuit shared with other Hopi tribal members.

Several years of drought had withered the Southwest, including the Hopi Indian Reservation. Tribal elder Bob Mack and other Hopi runners were training for a prayer run—a rigorous 14-day adventure beginning in the early morning hours of March 2 at the Hopi village of Moenkopi and continuing south to Mexico City in time to join the 4th World Water Forum. The runners traveled more than 2,000 miles in quarter-mile relays, quietly carrying commingled water sent from as far as Mount Fuji in Japan and the Lake of Galilee near Jerusalem while praying for peace every step of the way.

“Running is sacred, a moving prayer,” says Ruben Saufkie Sr., a member of the Hopi Water Clan and organizer of the 2006 Hopi run. “As [a runner’s] feet hit the ground, the Earth vibrates and carries the message to all corners of the world.”

Although the participants worked as a team to carry the sacred message, most of their training was completed individually. G. Aaron Mockta, 27, has been running all of his life.

“It’s part of doing your duty,” Mockta says. “The Earth is alive. [Running] gives you the strength and ability to carry the message.”

Mack also started running at an early age, but unlike some

of the other participants, this wasn’t the first time he ran for rain. For decades, the sprightly septuagenarian has sprinted in spiritual ceremonies including the rain-evoking Snake-Antelope Ceremony. The route retraced the footsteps of his forefathers along a thousand-year-old path rooted in Hopi history and culture.

Throughout the centuries, Hopi runners have played pivotal roles—carrying water for crops, relaying messages of mutiny, sprinting for spiritual ceremonies, chasing Olympic dreams and pounding pavement in an effort to preserve the world’s water resources.

Inhabiting centuries-old villages situated on three mesas, the 7,000 tribal members struggle to balance the traditions of their religiously ordered lifestyle with fast-paced intrusions from the modern world.

Old Oraibi, one of the 12 Hopi villages, dates back to A.D. 1150—making it the oldest continuously inhabited village in the United States. The Hopis trace their ancestry back even farther, to a time when the clans followed migratory routes that legend claims stretched to the far corners of the Americas. The stories recount how the clans finally rejoined on the mesas of the Hopi homeland—an arid plateau at the “center of the universe.”

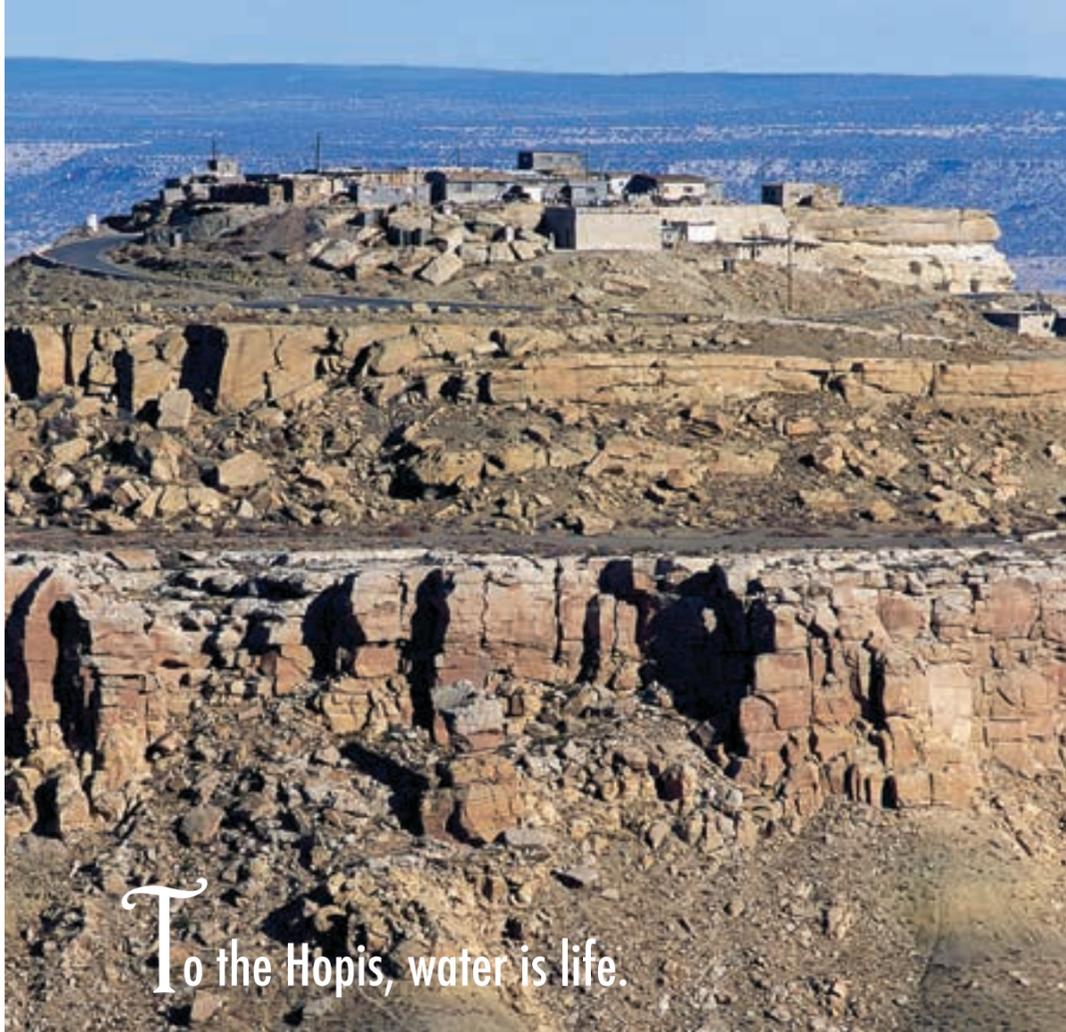
Satellite imagery has revealed those ancient runners’ trails,



By Carrie M. Miner  Photographs by Gary Johnson



**UPWARD IS THE GOAL** Tribal Elder Bob Mack, 72, (above, in gray shirt) runs with companions up the rocky trail at the Hopi First Mesa village of Walpi. Established in 1690, the traditional Hopi village (above, right) sits at 5,000 feet above sea level atop a rocky mesa.



To the Hopis, water is life.



**BROTHERS ON THE TRAIL** Brothers Ned and John Zeena run through Lower Moenkopi on the Hopi Reservation just west of the Hopi mesas.

stretching across the Four Corners region in the United States and deep into Mexico and beyond. Just as long-distance runners once carried messages along the Inca Highway from northern Ecuador to southern Chile, the Puebloan Indians in the American Southwest relayed messages between their remote communities. Runners carried word of the Pueblo Revolt of 1680, and Hopi runners figured prominently in the united attack against Spanish occupation. By using bundles of knotted yucca cords to count down the days, the people of more than 70 Puebloan villages scattered across 300 miles launched a precisely timed uprising that for a time expelled the Spanish.

Centuries later, the American government hired Hopi runners to carry messages. In 1903, George Wharton James documented this willingness to employ stalwart Hopi runners.

“For a dollar,” he wrote, “I have several times engaged a young man to take a message from Oraibi to Keams Canyon, a distance of 72 miles, and he has run on foot the entire distance, delivered his message, and brought me an answer within 36 hours.”

Another fleet-footed messenger, Charles Talawepi of Old Oraibi, reportedly ran a message to Flagstaff at the behest of Walter Runke Sr., the Indian agent at Tuba City. Talawepi covered 150 miles in less than 24 hours, earning a \$20 silver piece for his efforts.

Louis Tewanima ran with the 1908 U.S. Olympic track team

and placed ninth in the marathon. In 1912, he earned Olympic silver for his swiftness in the 10,000-meter race.

In his younger years, the hardy Hopi youth would run barefoot from his village to Winslow and back—a 120-mile trip—so he could watch the trains rumble through the busy railroad town. Sent to the Carlisle Indian School in Pennsylvania as part of the U.S. government’s mandatory school program, Tewanima rose to Olympic fame under the school’s athletic program headed by Glenn Scobie “Pop” Warner.

Eventually, like many of his people, Tewanima returned to his homeland, slipping quietly back into the Hopi way of life as a farmer and a priest, running for rain just as the Cloud people have done for thousands of years.

Long-distance runs play a key role in vital Hopi ceremonials intended to sustain life-giving rains. Living in a desert, the Hopi people perfected the agricultural technique of dry farming. A handful of natural springs scattered throughout the Hopi Reservation’s 1.5 million acres offer the only year-round sources of water. With 10 inches of rainfall annually, Hopi farmers rely on unique planting techniques to block winds and retain the moisture needed to grow their specialized crops of corn, beans, melons and squash.

This intimate relationship with the land keeps the Hopis fine-tuned to the environment and the fragile equilibrium between life and death. To the Hopis, water is life. Like the Katsinam, spirit guides that relay messages from the people to

the gods, the Hopis pray on their feet—sprinting through the seasons and running for rain. The Cloud spirits are believed to rejoice in this display of fleetness, gathering together to watch and reward the swift sprinter with much-needed rain. In effect, the runner becomes the prayer.

Even though men traditionally run in ceremonies, several Hopi women participated in the ritual run to Mexico City.

Like most Hopi children, 44-year-old Vivian Jones began running foot races as a child. With three children of her own, Jones decided to participate in the Mexico run.

“We ran for the whole nation and all living things that need water,” says Jones. “At the beginning, I could feel the heaviness of the burden, but the closer we got, the lighter that burden became.”

It came as no surprise to the runners that rain began to fall as the group approached the U.S.-Mexico border. And when they made a gift of the water they had carried for 2,000 miles, a bald eagle appeared and circled the congregation before winging off into the distance. Loud cries filled the square as the runners rejoiced, hoping the eagle would deliver their prayers for rain.

Coincidentally, or not, a spate of storms in March finally lifted the second-driest winter in history.

“The eagle delivered our prayers and [the gods] heard our message,” says 23-year-old Ned Zeena. Solemn in his spirituality, Zeena recalls a time when he was lost in the matrix of

modernity, enduring hardship and loss in Phoenix. But like many of his people, including Bob Mack and Louis Tewanima, Zeena returned to the Hopi homeland, where the dry, austere landscape binds his people to their sacred center.

Today, the Hopis no longer have to run to relay messages from one village to the other, but they still run with the clouds, race with the wind and sprint for the spirits, each step like a raindrop in the dust. **AH**

*After researching this story, Carrie M. Miner decided to take her own running pursuits outdoors, hoping to find a little spiritual insight along the way. She lives in North Pole, Alaska.*

*Photographer Gary Johnson of Surprise marks his 20th year as a contributor to Arizona Highways.*



**when you go**

**Location:** Second Mesa, Hopi Indian Reservation  
**Getting There:** From Flagstaff, drive east on Interstate 40 for 56 miles, past Winslow to State Route 87. Turn left (north) onto State 87 and drive approximately 60 miles to Second Mesa.  
**Attractions:** The Hopi Museum and Cultural Center is located on Second Mesa. The museum provides information about purchasing arts and crafts from Hopi artisans as well as information about tours and activities on the reservation.  
**Travel Advisory:** The best time to visit the Hopi mesas is during summer and fall. Please be respectful of the Hopi culture; recordings of any kind—photography, video and audio recording and sketching—are prohibited on the Hopi Reservation.  
**Additional Information:** (928) 734-0230 or (928) 734-9549; [www.hopi.nsn.us/village2.asp](http://www.hopi.nsn.us/village2.asp).



# MUMMIES, bomb shelters, **BRAINS** *and* subterranean **SNOWBALLS**

210 feet underground,  
imagination runs amok  
at Grand Canyon Caverns

**ROOMY REFRIGERATOR** Immersed in the red glow of artificial light, Jerry Keeler and Susan Hamilton head toward the Chapel of Ages, one of the giant underground spaces in Grand Canyon Caverns that stored enough food and water to support 2,000 people for two weeks during the Cuban Missile Crisis.



In 1927 Walter Peck, a woodcutter for the Santa Fe Railroad on his way to a poker game, stumbled over a giant funnel-shaped hole, widened by heavy rain, in a sparsely vegetated expanse in northwest Arizona. Sensing there was something special about this cleft in the earth, Walter returned

the following morning after the poker game, with a couple of buddies, ropes and lanterns.

Perhaps Walter was a persuasive friend. Maybe he was owed a poker debt. Maybe he just engaged in the 1920s version of double-dog daring. But the end result was the same: A cowboy found a rope around his waist as Walter and company lowered him into a formerly unknown system of caverns.

Armed only with the glow from a coal-oil lantern, the slightly built cowhand was let down 150 feet until he hollered up that his feet had hit ground. He glimpsed human remains and a saddle. But what really caught his eye were sparkles from the rocks. He collected samples, surfaced and told Walter of the twinkle as his lantern light shone on diamonds and veins of what must be gold. Somewhere between the account and Walter's hopes, even silver figured in.

Walter promptly requested an assay, but couldn't contain himself and bought the land before the report came in. Turns out, the poor guy could be the poster child for buyer's remorse. The "diamonds" were selenite crystals—glassy, crystallized gypsum rocks, easily scratched with a fingernail. The veins of "gold," their color distorted by lantern light, turned out to be bands of lime deposits colored by rusty iron oxide. There was no silver. The most valuable mineral in the caverns was a poor grade of tin. His bejeweled vault was a big, dry hole.

Some 80 years later, on a brisk October morning, my 4-year-old son and I wait to see Walter's treasure trove. Although it never yielded the gold-silver-diamond combo he envisioned, it burgeoned into an attraction off Historic Route 66.

Outside the Grand Canyon Caverns Restaurant, my son spies chickens darting about next door. He asks me what they're eating. "Grains," I say, taking his hand to embark on our 45-minute tour. We make our way to the elevator to the caverns, carrying our purchases from the curio shop—admission tokens, poker chips in honor of old Walter and a toy miner's helmet. Suddenly my son's hand clutches mine in a death-grip.

"What's wrong?" I ask. "The tour's going to be fun."

"I know," he replies, clearly contemplating some-

BY KIMBERLY HOSEY

PHOTOGRAPHS BY GEOFF GOURLEY



**T**he only bacteria are what we've brought along,' Keeler says. 'This may be the cleanest air you'll ever breathe.'

**GIANT GERTIE** Once named Dinosaur Caverns after the discovery of prehistoric sloth remains, the Grand Canyon Caverns are home to "Gertie," a replica (right) of the giant sloth whose claw marks can still be seen on the cavern walls. Keeler and Hamilton meet Gertie's gargantuan figure face to face.

thing troubling. "But why do those chickens eat brains?"

I decide maybe this is a place for misunderstandings. Luckily, troubling chicken-feed ideas are easily and quickly set right.

Walter decided if he couldn't mine treasure from the ground, he'd mine it from pockets. So for 25 cents a pop, he handed folks a lantern, and he and his brother, Miles, lowered them much like the first visitor, descending on a rope winch into the caverns. Today's tour guides, who walk guests through lit walkways and whose tales are a little less tall than old Walter's, refer to those days as the time of "dope on a rope" tours.

Our jovial tour guide, Jerry Keeler, makes easy conversation as the elevator descends 210 feet—21 stories—into the largest dry cavern in the United States.

Grand Canyon Caverns doesn't put on an impressive façade above ground. But tucked beneath saffron grasses is one of the remaining attractions of a once-great swath of Americana.

John Steinbeck, in *The Grapes of Wrath*, wrote, "66 is the path of a people in flight, refugees from dust and shrinking ownership, from the desert's slow northward invasion, from the twisting winds that howl . . . 66 is the mother road, the road of flight."

Historic Route 66 no longer serves as a true mother road. And comfortably out of the dustbowl era, my son and I love the desert—howling winds included. But I felt a tinge of Steinbeckian escapism as I left Interstate 40, the route whose construction spelled the end of America's romance with 66, to sample a roadside attraction and work on slowing down.

So it is with a deliberate attitude of leisurely veneration that I follow Keeler, already reciting from his repertoire of cavern-themed puns (we start our tour with "rock solid" information), into the Grand Canyon Caverns beneath the Route 66 roadside.

One of the early draws for tourists and the press alike, Keeler says, was the human remains. Before you could say "yellow journalism," papers blared headlines about preserved Stone Age men, found in their ancient den in Arizona's high desert. The saddle found with the "cavemen" was conveniently forgotten. Soon, local Hualapai Indians spoke up to explain that in 1917, two of their tribe had died of influenza while out gathering wood. Unable to bury them in the then-frozen ground, survivors in the party lowered their tribesmen into a hole in an area considered sacred, with a saddle to assist in their final ride across the Great Divide.

But there's plenty of truth to fascinate in

**DOWNWARD BOUND** A late-afternoon dinosaur shadow "threatens" the Grand Canyon Caverns Restaurant & Gift Shop (above) where the elevator descends 210 feet to 3 million-year-old fossils.

**DEEP SLEEP** Kaelen and Kalei Lucas-Marinelli (right) grin from a traditional teepee situated near the caverns that serve as a tomb for two Hualapai Indian brothers who died nearby in 1917 and were entombed in the well-concealed natural entrance when frozen ground made a traditional burial impossible.

these caverns, born in a geologic era when there was just one continent and none of the animals we know today. Using water in one hand and earthquakes in the other, Nature began to sculpt the subterranean chasm of interconnected vaults, starting 345 million years ago. The buried limestone layers were cracked by earthquakes and uplift. Underground rivers "dug" chambers beneath the ground. In later, drier times, water percolated through limestone and decked the underground halls with flowstone, stalactites, stalagmites, helictites and other cave oddities.

These wonders went largely unseen until dope-on-a-rope days eventually gave way to a series of ladders descending to a wooden bridge, constructed during the 1930s by the Civilian Conservation Corps. Bridge tours cost 50 cents and you had to bring your own light, but visitors could explore the caverns, albeit at an energy cost akin to walking down and back up the stairs of a 15-story building. Finally in the 1960s, an elevator shaft was blasted, taking two years and 90 cases of dynamite. A modern elevator was installed, which we now exit into the caverns' first huge room, the Chapel of Ages.

The room has served as an actual chapel a handful of times, the first being to join in matrimony Kim Heal, a curio-shop worker, and Bill Moulis. Heal's veil, which affixed to the wall when she threw it in 1977, still hangs today. It's preserved by the constant cool, dry, bacteria-free environment. The caverns are a continuous 56 degrees year-round, with humidity steady at 6 percent. Bacteria don't survive longer than 72 hours.

"The only bacteria are what we've brought along," Keeler says. "This may be the cleanest air you'll ever breathe."

The Chapel of Ages measures 130 yards long, big enough to accommodate a football field. The other huge room, the Halls of Gold (which contain no actual gold, but show what cruel tricks lights can play on the iron oxide above), could enclose two fields in its 210 yards. The room's great acoustics bounce around an irresistible echo. Keeler witnessed it firsthand, he says, when Prescott's Tri-City College Prep High School performed a concert there, even inviting him to croon a few tunes.



The halls hold another oddity: Stacked in the center are survival rations placed there during the 1962 Cuban Missile Crisis, though you'd subsist on stale water, technicolor blobs Keeler identifies as "candy" and food that reportedly has "kept nicely" in the caverns for 45 years. He points out an additional peculiarity: The provisions can nurture 2,000 people for two weeks, but only three woefully small toilet paper rolls top off the stash.

Other rooms provide less-expansive vistas, but reward with views of fantasylike crystal formations—the cheap-but-pretty selenite that poor Walter took for diamonds. In the Crystal Room, an abundance of the deposits grow in whimsical shapes and glow like moonlight as they reflect strategically placed lights. Thick coats of "cave snow," slushy-looking crystals, adorn walls. The Snowball Palace showcases round, white deposits. Overhead, they're almost snow-white. Below, the "snowballs" have become cracked and yellowed, owing to an earlier era of tours when visitors were encouraged to touch the formations. Skin oils and disruptions from grab-happy guests were destroying the formation. Oils traveled upward contaminating a swath of wall. Touching, we're reminded gently but not infrequently, is now prohibited.

"It took 6 million years to form," Keeler tells us. "And in 40 years we ruined much of it."

About halfway through the tour, Keeler informs us we're about to meet a mummy. My son, whose only experience with mummies comes when the word is directly preceeded by "The Curse of" in Halloween commercials, seems dubious. But this mummy isn't going anywhere. It's the cave-air-preserved remains of an unfortunate bobcat, found in 1950. He fell into the caverns a century earlier, breaking his hip. Another unfortunate resident, a giant ground sloth nicknamed "Gertie," was found where she died, trying to claw her way free through a small air hole. Extinct for at least 11,000 years, she was 15 feet long and weighed a ton. Keeler spotlights the place of Gertie's last hurrah, where several scratches crisscross the rock. Her remains were gathered by the University of Arizona in Tucson, but the caverns display a replica of her that now stands below the scratches, thick tongue out, on hind legs with a fat tail spread out for balance.

Near the end of the tour, Keeler tells us to wait while he shows us something. "You might want to hold on to him," he says, indicating my son. A few seconds later, it becomes clear why.

"Early visitors didn't have these easy and safe walkways with all these lights," he begins. With that, he flicks a switch, and every light in the chamber blinks off. Inky black velvet seems to tighten around our faces. This isn't merely dark; it's complete absence of light.

"Wiggle your fingers in front of your face," Keeler says. We do. Nothing. After 3 seconds or so, our eyes give up adjusting. We're told that after 45 minutes we'd begin to experience vertigo and "become totally disoriented and helpless." Fortunately, vertigo and helplessness—undoubtedly deemed unprofitable—are not included in the tour. After teasing us with a lit lantern, then dark, then a match, then dark again, Keeler flips the lights back on.

My son rejoices in the caverns as they're once again illumi-



nated, and talks conspiratorially with Keeler as the guide points out kid-friendly markings in the cave: a giant handprint, the "Giant's Keyhole," a cleft rock that he terms the "Giant's Butt." I hear about the latter for a few hours on the ride home.

I decide my son's got the right idea, as Keeler turns to me and discusses non-butt-themed cave topics. In the Mystery Room an airshaft leads to the Grand Canyon. It was discovered in 1958 when red smoke pumped into a caverns hole drifted out of the Canyon near Havasu Falls—40 miles away—a few weeks later. Lower levels of the cavern have been detected by seismic testing, descending as deep as 1,500 feet, including an underground lake. Keeler continues until we exit the elevator, clearly far from running out of material. Yep, I'll be back. No double-dog daring required. **AH**

*Kimberly Hosey of Mesa remains enthralled by the caverns. Her son, who still swears he saw riches down there, also can't wait to go back.*

*Geoff Gourley is a freelance photographer living in Flagstaff. He loves anything that has to do with the Grand Canyon.*

#### when you go

**Location:** 96 miles west of Flagstaff.

**Getting There:** From Flagstaff, take Interstate 40 west toward Seligman. Take Exit 123 and turn right (northwest) onto Historic Route 66. Take Route 66 for about 25 miles to Grand Canyon Caverns.

**Hours:** Tours run daily except Christmas Day. Hours are 10 A.M. to 4 P.M., October through February, and 9 A.M. to 6 P.M., March through September.

**Fees:** Adults, \$12.95; children, \$9.95 for a 45-minute tour.

**Information:** (928) 422-3223; www.gccaverns.com.





**HONORING HUBE** In a 1921 Tucson-to-Phoenix bike race, cyclist Hube Yates finished the ride (without the benefit of paved roads) in 8 hours, 50 minutes and 45 seconds. He crossed the finish line in downtown Phoenix more than an hour before the second-place rider. COURTESY OF THE YATES FAMILY

At 5 A.M. they waited in downtown Tucson for the pistol shot that would start the longest bicycle race in their piece of Arizona history. They would ride from Tucson to Phoenix, approximately 140 miles.

I suppose all Lance Armstrong wannabes would agree that the length of the race had a worthy ring to it. But, given relatively good roads and a minimal number of homicidal automobile drivers, nothing a pro couldn't handle.

Whoa, pedal pushers. Did I say anything about a road? No, no road for Hube and the boys. The best they got for all but a few miles was a washboard gravel path. Decades later an old Arizona hand described the path as "so rough it was littered with nuts and bolts that had shaken off the cars." The racers could also opt to ride in wagon-trail ruts or go for the 4-inch-deep desert dust.

The challenge of the nonroads was matched by the weather. The day dawned hot—as might be expected at the beginning of summer in southern Arizona. The temperatures would be in the 90s all the way to Phoenix. And these riders didn't have any cute holders for their water bottles or cunning little pockets for their Power Bars.

They did have one very big canteen. Working under the theory that canteens

wrapped in material stay relatively cool, Hube wrapped himself accordingly, in layers of clothes. "I dressed for the North Pole," Hube wrote 50 years later about his attire and his race.

There he went, the human canteen riding like the wind across the Sonoran Desert. Okay, maybe more like a good stiff breeze, but the man moved. Even with a stop for lunch in Florence, Hube made it to downtown Phoenix in 8 hours, 50 minutes and 45 seconds. The riders placing second and third were more than an hour behind. And the others? Nobody else showed up at the finish line. As Hube recalled, a few went, frankly, bug nuts.

"Some of them lost their minds," he wrote. "Someone had to go get them and take them to the hospital."

Must have been the sun. Hube, who died in 1980, went on to a good, full life, a few more races, work as a cowboy, a dude wrangler. He raised a family and is remembered by his son, also Hube, as a loving father.

"He was a strong man," he says of his dad. Ah, yes. In telling this story, I take a risk. Somebody, one of those brightly decaled riders up there in my intersection, protected by men and women in uniform, may decide to go for Hube's record. They may, the whole flock of them, try to cross the desert in Hube's tracks.

I say this: Go for it, pedal pushers, but my money will be on Hube. As for my new mantra, I give it to you with my hope that your heart and your drumming fingers may be stilled in whatever line you sit, at whatever intersection you wait. It goes like this:

*Hube, Hube, Hube Yates  
Hurrah . . . Hurrah . . . Hurrah . . .* ■■■



## The World According to Hube

### Legendary Cyclist Eschewed Hubris

THEY ARRIVE EACH YEAR with all the predictability of migratory birds. Colorful, sleek with their travels, they fly like the wind. However, this human flock never gets but a few feet off the ground. They are forever tied to the Earth by gravity and two skinny wheels.

They come to Tucson by the thousands to take part in El Tour de Tucson, the 109-mile bicycle race held every November. And Tucson welcomes them. Tucson likes bicyclists—it's been named as one of most bicyclist-friendly cities in the nation. However, there are times when some Tucsonans question that hospitality, especially on the day of the race.

I've been there, 10 car lengths from an intersection, waiting for the seemingly endless stream of riders to pass. One needs a soothing mantra at times like that—a few quiet words to replace the yells you feel like throwing at the officers of the law who are intent on holding back all who would travel by car. Maybe something like: *Bicycling is a good clean sport. Ommmmmm. Bicyclists are good, clean folk. Ommmmmm. Bicycle races are. . . .* You get the meditative drift.

Recently, I have found a new mantra, one that involves Hubert "Hube"—as in tube—Yates. Now, there's a name for the record books. He, too, rode a bike.

On May 1, 1921, Hube, 17 years old, joined together with 15 other Arizonans in one of those odd events Arizonans have a tendency to create. Something to do with the sun, I suppose.

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## Sweet Summit Sugarloaf Mountain Offers Chiricahua Monument High Point

THE RISING SUN illuminates with brilliant morning rays Sugarloaf Mountain in the heart of Chiricahua National Monument, some 35 miles southeast of Willcox. The peak juts from the landscape, at 7,310 feet, the highest point in the monument. A trail, built by Franklin D. Roosevelt's Depression-era Civilian Conservation Corps, spirals upward to the Sugarloaf Mountain summit, where a lonely stone firehouse stands. The structure doesn't

require a tall lookout tower, because no trees interrupt the long-distance views.

From the parking lot, empty except for our car, the trail begins modestly on its way to climbing 479 feet in a little less than a mile. After 70 years, the laborious work by CCC picks, shovels and dynamite remains evident. An early stone arch over the trail displays the craftsmanship of the workers nicknamed the "tree army," participants in a national effort that

employed some 3.4 million desperate men. The higher we climb through the diverse flora, ranging from Arizona white oak trees to fruiting Schott's yuccas, the more we appreciate the difficult work done by the Corps.

The views from the trail grow increasingly beautiful toward the summit. The odd-looking formations of the Chiricahua Mountains showcase geologic time, with spires melded and shaped by ice and erosion over a period of 27 million years.

The trail grows steeper with every turn, and resting

spots, like one featuring a stone table and two chairs right out of "The Flintstones," provide welcome reprieves for our burning calf muscles. The elevation gain forces a change in the plant life, from the 6-foot hallways of blood-barked manzanita to stunted Mexican piñon pines closer to the summit. As we climb,

**UPWARD BOUND** As the Sugarloaf Mountain Trail nears the 7,310-foot summit (above), hikers get an early morning glimpse of Echo and Rhyolite canyons in the Chiricahua National Monument. Called the "Land of Standing Up Rocks" by the Apache Indians, the monument covers close to 12,000 acres.

### HEADING IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION

Cochise Head (right) named for the famed Chiricahua Apache chief, serves as a prominent landmark from the lower section of the Sugarloaf Mountain Trail.

we see a few of the wide array of birds that has made the Chiricahua Mountains a top destination for bird-watching. A Strickland's woodpecker, also known as an Arizona woodpecker, gently taps an oak; a hermit thrush forages in reeds; and a titmouse protests our passing with a trill.

The summit's 360-degree view—accented by a turkey vulture soaring effortlessly below us and white-throated swifts darting about in fighter-pilot flourishes—reveals Cochise Head to the east, the San Simon Valley to the southeast, and Echo Canyon to the south. The bizarre fused-ash hoodoos and pillars of the canyon form the heart of the national monument, including the thousand-ton Big Balanced Rock.

The Dagoon Mountains, including Cochise Stronghold, lie to the west beyond Sulphur

Springs Valley, and to the north, the dog-eared Dos Cabezas Mountains watch over Apache Pass. Just beyond, the metallic glimmer of Willcox sparkles in the sun.

Absorbing these sights, I envision a Chokonon



Chiricahua Apache scout looking south for a platoon of Mexican dragoons, north to the pass for a vulnerable stagecoach with a precious load of ammunition or southeast for some hapless pioneers. I imagine the CCC laborers pushing on to reach the summit to take in the views.

Today, Chiricahua National Monument remains unmatched for travelers with a distaste for crowds. With

the quiet day and expansive views, Sugarloaf Mountain Trail offers a beauty equal to more mobbed treasures like Utah's Bryce Canyon and Zion national parks. ■■■

**PEAK EXPERIENCE** The lookout atop Sugarloaf Mountain (below) features a distant view of Cochise Head as well as sweeping vistas of Chiricahua National Monument. The monument, which remains 87 percent wilderness, is home to 71 species of mammals, 46 species of reptiles and 171 species of birds.

### trail guide

**Length:** 2 miles round-trip.

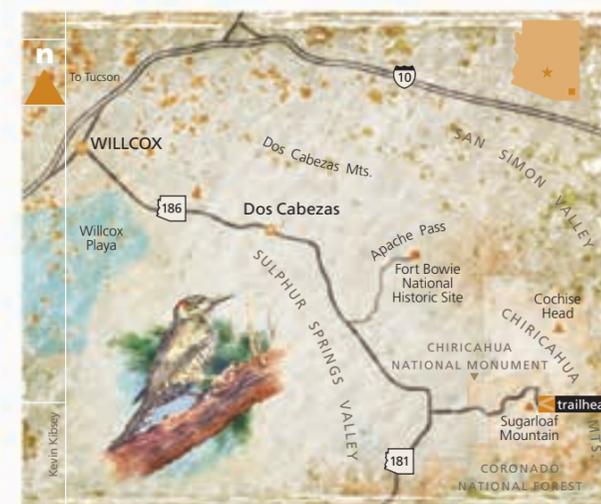
**Elevation Gain:** 479 feet.

**Difficulty:** Moderate.

**Payoff:** Spectacular 360-degree view of Sulphur Springs Valley, Big Balanced Rock (with binoculars), Cochise Stronghold, Cochise Head, Dos Cabezas Mountains.

**Getting There:** From Phoenix or Tucson, take Interstate 10 to Willcox; turn south on State Route 186 to State Route 181 and continue south into Chiricahua National Monument.

**Additional Information:** [www.nps.gov/chir](http://www.nps.gov/chir).



**online** Before you go on this hike, visit [arizonahighways.com](http://arizonahighways.com) for other things to do and places to see in this area. You'll also find more hikes in our archive.

# Scenery Blossoms

## Indian Route 12 Reveals Hidden Treasures on the Navajo Reservation

THE NAVAJO NATION encompasses an astounding assortment of scenery, much of it showcased along the 100 miles of pavement of Indian Route 12, known as Diné Tah (“among the people”) Scenic Road. Sometimes snaking across the Arizona-New Mexico border, the road climbs from coral-colored cliffs to high pine forests then plunges to red rock buttes and flat-topped mesas.

Leaving Interstate 40 at

Exit 357 about 70 miles east of Holbrook, I head north on Indian 12, traveling between undulating pink cliffs and fragrant piñon pine forests. At Milepost 15, red sandstone, twisted and curved, testifies to powerful forces deep in the earth.

Twenty-four miles later, at the junction of 12 and State Route 264, I turn left for a detour to St. Michaels Museum and Historic Site, nestled among green grass

and beautiful old cottonwood and willow trees. The spot’s Spanish name, La Cienega Amarilla, means “swamp of wild sunflowers,” but Navajos call it Chi’hootso or “green meadow.”

The magnificent sandstone church stands nearby, and the original mission now serves as a museum of local and religious artifacts. Built in 1894 as a trading post, the building was purchased in 1898 by

Mother Katharine Drexel, with an inheritance from her wealthy Philadelphia family. Franciscan brothers staffed the new church and, with the help of trader Charles Day’s two sons, learned the difficult Navajo language. In 1910, they published the first Navajo ethnographic dictionary, and operated a mission school for reservation children. Mother Katharine Drexel was canonized as a saint in 2000.

Haystacks. Next door, the 58,000-square-foot Navajo Museum, Library and Visitors Center displays artifacts, treaties, paintings, jewelry and much more. No indoor photography is allowed. The nearby Navajo Arts and Crafts Enterprise sells quality Indian jewelry and crafts. Authentic Navajo rugs come with photographs of the weaver.

Back on the road, I follow 12 northward. Glancing to the right at the first stoplight, I spot the sandstone “window” that inspired the name Window Rock. This is one of only four spots where Navajo medicine men collect water for their Waterway Ceremony.

Four miles farther, the Navajo Veterans Cemetery, with flags flying above each veteran’s grave, emphasizes the number of Navajos who have served in the military. My father, Leo Webb, 90, brought his truck along this route in the 1940s. With high “sideboards” on the truck bed, he stopped at each trading post, picking up drafttees and volunteers and transporting them to the

military base at Inyokern, California. During World War II, Navajo Code Talkers used a Navajo language code never deciphered by the Japanese.

Another mile brings a stoplight and junction with Indian Route 7. Not well marked, 12 turns right (east) to Crystal, New Mexico, following beautiful red cliffs accented with deep green piñon pines. A thin red monolith at Milepost 37 shows the power of weathering and erosion.

The route meanders into New Mexico and near an old sawmill location, home to Annie Wauneka, daughter of first Tribal Chairman Chee Dodge. The first woman on the Navajo Tribal Council, she received the Presidential Medal of Freedom in 1964 for her fight against tuberculosis, a scourge of the Navajo people.

Farther down the road, Red Lake and its variety of aquatic birds appears on the left. Red cliffs are interrupted briefly by a green hill between Mileposts 44 and 45. This is Green Knobs, an area sacred to the Navajo people. The green

hue comes from peridotite. Though not a valuable gem, peridotite is made up of small grains of olivine brought up from the Earth’s mantle through geologic forces, offering more proof of the region’s powerful past. Following 12, I notice herds of cattle and sheep feeding on some of the best grazing lands on the reservation, as they have since the days my grandfather, Frank Dowdle, worked here as a tribal range rider in the 1930s.

Sagebrush, a member of the sunflower family, spreads over the valley. The smell of sagebrush after a rain is a fragrance that defines the West. Burned by Navajos to purify surroundings, the plant is said to cure headaches.

Near Milepost 56, basalt columns top Sonsela Buttes. This “columnar jointing”

### WINDOW TO THE WORLD

Worn into fine-grained Dakota sandstone laid down before the dinosaurs died out, Window Rock overlooks the Navajo Nation’s government offices and a memorial to tribal members who have died while serving in the military.

**WHAT’S IN A NAME** Whether you call it La Cienega Amarilla, Chi’hootso or simply St. Michaels, this 1894 trading-post-turned-Catholic-mission always answers with peaceful and pastoral beauty.

Returning to the junction, I continue east on 12 to Window Rock, capital of the Navajo Nation. With several places to explore, I first visit the small Navajo Nation Zoological and Botanical Park. Started in 1976 to house an orphaned bear, the zoo is surrounded by an unusual rock formation known as The



**BACKUP PLAN** Constructed as a means of controlling floods, the approximately 270-acre Tsaille Lake, located near Diné College, also hosts a steady flow of swimmers, campers and fishing folk.

occurs when lava cools into polygon shapes.

The road climbs steadily through a pygmy forest of piñon and juniper trees, stunted by the poor soil. Still sold in local stores, piñon nuts have sustained Navajos for generations.

Indian 12 wanders back into Arizona before reaching Wheatfields Lake at 7,000 feet elevation, where oaks, golden in the fall, mingle with ponderosa pines. The volcanic formation on the right side at Milepost 72 is Tsaille Butte (pronounced say-lee), another sacred site.

At Milepost 74, a loop drive leads to Tsaille Lake and Diné College where the Ned Hatathli Museum and Gallery contains artifacts of Navajo history.

At Tsaille Trading Post,

#### travel tips

**Vehicle Requirement:** Roads are accessible by passenger car.

**Warning:** Back-road travel can be hazardous. The elevation along this route is approximately 8,000 feet. In the winter months, the roads may be closed due to ice and snow. Be aware of the weather and road conditions. Carry plenty of water. Don't travel alone, and let someone at home know where you're going and when you plan to return.

#### route finder

Note: Mileages are approximate.

- > **From Flagstaff**, drive east on Interstate 40 156 miles to Indian Route 12 at Lupton, Exit 357. Turn north on Indian 12 and follow it for 26 miles to the junction with State Route 264 at St. Michaels. Turn left (west) to visit St. Michaels Museum and Historic Site. Once back on 264, head east for 2 miles back to 12.
- > **Turn left (north)** onto 12 and drive approximately 5 miles, past Window Rock, to the junction with Indian Route 7. The roads are not well-marked here, but stay on 12 (to the right) continuing east to the junction with New Mexico Route 134.
- > **At the junction, follow 12** to the left and drive 51 miles, past Tsaille, to Round Rock and U.S. Route 191.
- > **Turn left (south)** onto U.S. 191 and drive 29 miles to Indian Route 7 that leads to Chinle.
- > **Turn left (east)** and drive a mile to Chinle.

**online** For more things to do along Navajo Route 12, visit [arizonahighways.com](http://arizonahighways.com) (click on "While You're There" for the online bonus), and visit the Arizona Office of Tourism's Scenic Roads Web site, [www.arizonascenicroads.com](http://www.arizonascenicroads.com).



Indian Route 64 leads to Canyon de Chelly, but I faithfully follow 12 farther north. I've been shadowing the Chuska Mountain Range, but gradually melding with red cliffs, it becomes the Lukachukai ("slender reeds") Mountains. Indian Route 13 comes in from the right at Milepost 83, but I stay on 12.

Stripes of purple, green and blue at the Lukachukai's base make up the Chinle Formation, responsible for Arizona's famous Painted Desert. To the left, Round Rock Mesa shows its distinctive west window while two classic buttes, Los

Gigantes, tower on the right.

Near Milepost 98, 12 ends, abruptly joining U.S. Route 191. Just beyond the junction and under the water tower lies the turn-off to Round Rock Trading Post. Established in 1887, this classic trading post has a room made of sandstone with log beams. A herd of sheep wanders around outside, and inside, turquoise bracelets share a display case with videos. In the center, stacks of Blue Bird flour sacks hold the preferred flour for Navajo frybread.

Reminded of frybread, I head south on U.S. 191

to Chinle for a meal and a hotel room. I'm hungry after spending all day exploring 100 of the most beautiful miles in Navajoland. ■■■

**EDITOR'S NOTE:** If you plan to fish, hike, camp or travel on unmarked roads, you'll need to purchase a permit from Navajo Nation Parks and Recreation Department in Window Rock, (928) 871-6647; [www.navajonationparks.org](http://www.navajonationparks.org).

**SPIRITUAL JOURNEY**  
Even the most preoccupied passers-by cannot overlook the sacred and cultural significance of Navajoland's towering red rock formations, like these along Indian Route 12, north of Window Rock.

