

The Plane That Crashed in Sedona's Red Rocks

ARIZONA HIGHWAYS

NOVEMBER 2007

Arizona's **Secret Sanctuary**

Hint: It's not far
from **YUMA**.
We're not kidding.

See page 22

PLUS

**Louise Serpa:
The Grande Dame
of Rodeo Photography**

AND

**Juan Miller Road:
One of the Best Drives
in the White Mountains**

8 Rodeo's Grande Dame

Tucson photographer Louise Serpa won her buckle and spurs with true grit and broken bones. BY TIM VANDERPOOL

16 In Plane View

Of Sedona's many scenic wonders, Vulture Arch is among the most impressive. Prior to a plane crash in 1938, however, few people, if any had ever seen it. BY LARRY LINDAHL

22 Western Exposure

If you think Arizona's natural beauty is limited to its northern, southern and eastern regions, think again. The Cibola National Wildlife Refuge, just north of Yuma, is a natural wonder that attracts sandhill cranes, deer and the occasional burro. BY GEORGE STOCKING

34 Earp Lives

Tombstone re-enactors step back in time to keep the spirit of the Old West alive. BY LEO W. BANKS PHOTOGRAPHS BY DAVID ZICKL

40 Virile Reptile

Mountain spiny lizards are usually laid-back, but once a year, the males puff up their chests and overdose on testosterone. BY JOHN ALCOCK

Departments

- 2 DEAR EDITOR
- 3 EDITOR'S LETTER
- 4 VIEWFINDER
Ansel's legacy.
- 5 TAKING THE OFF-RAMP
Arizona oddities, attractions and pleasures.
- 42 ALONG THE WAY
Boys will be boys.
- 44 HIKE OF THE MONTH
Cottonwood Creek hike offers rugged wilderness close to Phoenix.
- 46 BACK ROAD ADVENTURE
A rough road winds through brilliant fall color on the way to the Blue River.

online arizonahighways.com

The natural beauty of Western Arizona is showcased at Cibola National Wildlife Refuge, which plays host to a wide variety of species year-round. To find out more about Cibola and other Arizona wildlife refuges as well as the state's western region, visit arizonahighways.com and click on our November "Trip Planner."

WEEKEND GETAWAY Soar past Yuma's Marine Corps Air Station and land a tour at the Saihati Camel Farm and Yuma Territorial Prison State Historic Park.

SLIDESHOW See more Louise Serpa rodeo photography at arizonahighways.com.

EXPERIENCE ARIZONA Plan your Arizona getaway with our events calendar.

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 arizonahighwaysprints.com.

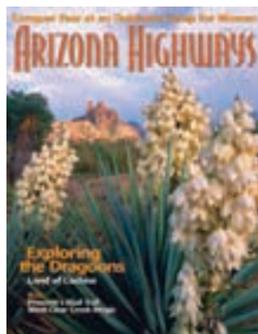
HOO BLINKS FIRST? A burrowing owl, roughly the size of a feathered football, stares from a roadside post on the Cibola National Wildlife Refuge near Yuma. See story, page 22. GEORGE STOCKING

FRONT COVER Viewed from the California side of the Colorado River, a bank of clouds at sunrise mimics the river's course through the Cibola refuge. GEORGE STOCKING

BACK COVER Bigtooth maple leaves coat the forest floor along the Sterling Canyon Trail in the Coconino National Forest near Sedona. See story, page 16. LARRY LINDAHL

■ To order a print of this photograph, see information on opposite page.





Picture Perfect

My wife recently bought a house in Green Valley, south of Tucson, and after her last trip, she brought back a copy of your magazine [August 2007]. I'm a professional photographer—my work is mostly shown in art galleries and museums of contemporary art—so I'm not exactly your average customer who's happy to see a couple of pictures in a magazine. Usually, most of the photos are taken as a job, no love, no passion, just boring color on paper.

But now comes one of those exceptions, actually, two of them, in one magazine—that is really rare! I

don't know who Mr. Steve Bruno is, but I can see he's an outstanding photographer by the way he composed the photos on pages 22-31 ["Wet Wizard"]. It's very impressive and a real joy.

In addition, I have a question: Why show only two photos by somebody who really knows how to photograph animals? Mr. Marty Cordano's job on the cicadas ["Troubadours of Summer," page 36] is among the best I've seen in a long time, so I'd love to see more work of this superb artist with the lens.

Heinz Lechner, New York, New York

Headed West

We live in Connecticut and will eventually be moving to Buckeye. I wish to commend you on a great magazine. We look forward to receiving it out there and using it as a guide for future travel in what will be our lovely home state of Arizona. We've already begun an itinerary for future travels in Arizona, and we'd love to capture the essence of Arizona in pictures as well as you do.

Ron and Diane Bedard, Newington, Connecticut

Beep! Beep!

I recently "discovered" your magazine, and now I'm a brand-new subscriber. On our vacation out to Arizona I (briefly) saw a roadrunner. I was quite taken by him, and wondered if you've had any stories about them recently. If not, are you planning any in the near future? Sure would like to learn about them. By the way, love the photos. Keep up the good work.

Bob Burrell, Pocasset, Massachusetts

Editor's Note: We haven't done anything recently on roadrunners, but if you'd like to learn more, visit desertmuseum.org.

Engulfed by the Canyon

Your June 2007 issue, which featured the Grand Canyon, was one of sheer majesty. Like the Canyon itself, you managed to leave the reader in a state of awe and majesty. From the beginning "appetizer" article, "Father and Son Create a 'Mystery of Grand Canyon'" [page 5] showing a young David Muench, to the "main course piece de resistance" article, Charles Bowden's "Point of View" [page 28], I felt like I was one with the Canyon. I needed to reread

Bowden's article several times, because each time I read it, I was brought to tears. And that's what the Canyon wants from us—to be totally engulfed in all its glories.

Celia M. Horwood, Cowley, Alberta, Canada

Looming in the Distance

I was quite interested to read about Leo W. Banks' encounter with Elijah Blair in the July 2007 issue ["Satisfying Serendipity," page 42]. I met Mr. Blair when I went to Blair's Trading Post in Page in 2005 to look for wool for a rug. I'd been told by a Navajo woman that I'd met earlier that it was the best place, locally, to find wool. My plan was to make a "Navajo" rug, but on a floor (or horizontal) loom, not on the traditional vertical loom used by the Navajos. My husband and I were traveling through Southern Utah and Northern Arizona and every Navajo I shared my plan with asked, "Why?"

At any rate, Mr. Blair was in the trading post the day I was there and started talking to my husband, who told him my plan. He expressed surprise, saying he'd learned weaving on a floor loom in Kentucky, but he'd never heard of anyone making a Navajo rug on one. If I succeeded, he asked me to send him a picture.

I bought the wool I needed that day and started the rug in the fall. It took nine months, but I did it—in the traditional Ganado red style. I sent a photo to Mr. Blair, of course, to let him know that almost anything is possible if you're dumb enough and stubborn enough to try it!

Mary Christner, Detroit, Michigan

ARIZONA HIGHWAYS

NOVEMBER 2007 VOL. 83, NO. 11

- Publisher** WIN HOLDEN
- Editor** ROBERT STIEVE
- Senior Editor** RANDY SUMMERLIN
- Managing Editor** SALLY BENFORD
- Book Division Editor** BOB ALBANO
- Books Associate Editor** EVELYN HOWELL
- Editorial Administrator** NIKKI KIMBEL
- Editorial Assistant** PAULY HELLER
- Director of Photography** PETER ENSENBERGER
- Photography Editor** JEFF KIDA
- Art Director** BARBARA GLYNN DENNEY
- Deputy Art Director** SONDA ANDERSSON PAPPAN
- Art Assistant** DIANA BENZEL-RICE
- Map Designer** KEVIN KIBSEY
- Production Director** MICHAEL BIANCHI
- Promotions Art Director** RONDA JOHNSON
- Webmaster** VICKY SNOW
- Director of Sales & Marketing** KELLY MERO
- Circulation Director** HOLLY CARNAHAN
- Finance Director** BOB ALLEN
- Information Technology** CINDY BORMANIS

Inquiries or orders Toll-free: (800) 543-5432
Or visit arizonahighways.com

For Corporate or Trade Sales (602) 712-2045

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

Governor
JANET NAPOLITANO
Director, Department of Transportation
VICTOR M. MENDEZ

ARIZONA TRANSPORTATION BOARD
Chairman Joe Lane
Vice Chairman S.L. Schorr
Members Delbert Householder, Robert M. Montoya, Felipe Andres Zubia, William J. Feldmeier, Barbara Ann "Bobbie" Lundstrom

International Regional Magazine Association
2005, 2004, 2003, 2001, 2000 Magazine of the Year

Western Publications Association
2006, 2004, 2002, 2001 Best Travel & In-transit Magazine

Society of American Travel Writers Foundation
2000, 1997 Gold Awards Best Monthly Travel Magazine

Arizona Highways® (ISSN 0004-1521) is published monthly by the Arizona Department of Transportation. Subscription price: \$24 a year in the U.S., \$44 outside the U.S. Single copy: \$3.99 U.S. Send subscription correspondence and change of address information to Arizona Highways, PO Box 653, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0653. Periodical postage paid at Phoenix, AZ and at additional mailing office. CANADA POST INTERNATIONAL PUBLICATIONS MAIL PRODUCT (CANADIAN DISTRIBUTION) SALES AGREEMENT NO. 41220511. SEND RETURNS TO QUEBECOR WORLD, P.O. BOX 875, WINDSOR, ON N9A 6P2. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Arizona Highways, PO Box 653, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0653. Copyright © 2007 by the Arizona Department of Transportation. Reproduction in whole or in part without permission is prohibited. The magazine does not accept and is not responsible for unsolicited materials.



highways on tv

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

by Robert Stieve

Louise Serpa isn't your typical rodeo photographer. She grew up in New York, went to school at Vassar and excelled in a world dominated by men.
EDWARD MCCAIN



BRANDON SULLIVAN

WESTERN ARIZONA IS A LITTLE like Rodney Dangerfield. It gets no respect. Other than Lake Mead and Lake Havasu, there aren't a lot of postcard opportunities in that part of the state—if you want to impress somebody in East Lansing or South Bend, you send them something from

Sedona. That's the theory, anyway. Even the Colorado River, which is exalted for its run through the Canyon, gets little regard for its 250-mile stretch along the Arizona-California border. And then there's Yuma, apathetically known to Phoenicians as the "rest-stop on the way to San Diego." Needless to say, there's much more to Yuma than that, including the Cibola National Wildlife Refuge, which is hidden along the river just north of the city. As the name implies, this place is a sanctuary for sandhill cranes, deer and the occasional wild burro. There are coyotes and other mammals, too, but mostly there are birds, especially this time of year, when the snow geese and Canada geese settle in for the winter. They're attracted by the water and the nearby cornfields. The fact that it's beautiful means nothing to them. It means something to us, though, which is why we put the refuge on this month's cover and featured it in this month's portfolio.

As you'll see in "Western Exposure" by photographer George Stocking, Cibola is worth visiting and worth writing home about. Really, if you think the state's natural beauty is limited to its northern, southern and eastern regions, George's gorgeous photos will change your mind. Take a look. The place is beautiful, and George is an excellent photographer. So is Louise Serpa.

Unless you're a rodeo enthusiast, you're probably not familiar with Louise. You should get to know her, though. In the same way that Annie Leibovitz is the high priestess of celebrity photography, Louise Serpa is the grande dame of rodeo photography. Her ascent, however, was hardly expected.

As a young socialite growing up in New York, the "wild West" was a world away. That is, until age 9, when her mother headed to Nevada for a quick divorce. Louise was in tow, and along the way she caught a glimpse of her future. It took her

awhile to get there, including a detour through Vassar, but when she had the chance, she embraced John Soule's (not Horace Greeley's) "go-west-young-man" mantra—so what if it wasn't politically correct, she knew where she wanted to be.

In "Rodeo's Grande Dame" by Tim Vanderpool, you'll learn more about this remarkable woman's journey, and her ultimate rise to the top of a profession dominated by men. You'll also see a sample of her work—exquisite black-and-whites that normally grace the walls of museums—and when you do, you'll be impressed. If you think it's tough taking a picture of a 5-year-old on a pony, imagine trying to capture a cowboy on a bucking bronco with a three-second window of opportunity. It's not easy, which is why Tucson's Louise Serpa is the reigning champion of rodeo photography.

Like the grande dame, Gerard Vultee was a champion of sorts. And likewise, he made a name for himself in Arizona. As an aeronautical engineer, Vultee was renowned for designing some of the fastest planes in the world, as well as the first fully retractable landing gear. In 1938, however, his story took a dramatic turn in the rugged backcountry near Sedona.

He was flying one of his own planes from Washington, D.C., to California when he and his wife encountered a snowstorm about 60 miles southwest of Winslow. As Larry Lindahl writes in "In Plane View," "Vultee desperately tried to escape the blinding storm . . . But flying without instrument training, he soon grew fatally disoriented. Three miles north of Wilson Mountain, 37-year-old Gerard Vultee flew his plane into the ground, igniting a huge explosion."

Both passengers died, but in the search for the wreckage, rescuers "discovered" an incredible 40-foot sandstone arch. No doubt Native Americans were familiar with the spectacular landmark, but prior to the crash, European settlers had never seen it. Today, Vultee Arch—named, of course, for the man who helped unearth it—stands as one of the area's most scenic wonders. And like the Cibola National Wildlife Refuge in Western Arizona, it's yet another way to impress the folks back in East Lansing. Postcards are available in Sedona.

— Robert Stieve
rstieve@arizonahighways.com

The Return of Ansel

"THE FUTURE IS SIMPLY THE PAST crouching in the present." Or so I was told as a student at Arizona State University. This revelation came about the same time I interned at *Arizona Highways* magazine.

Little did I know that an incident involving the lowly task of organizing photographs in filing cabinets would educate me about the cyclical world we live in. Sometimes, only in looking backward do we realize that things appear as if they were all laid out according to a master plan. Inspiration and vision, coupled with courage and a dash of luck, can form a perfect storm out of which true magic is manifest, much like *Arizona Highways*.

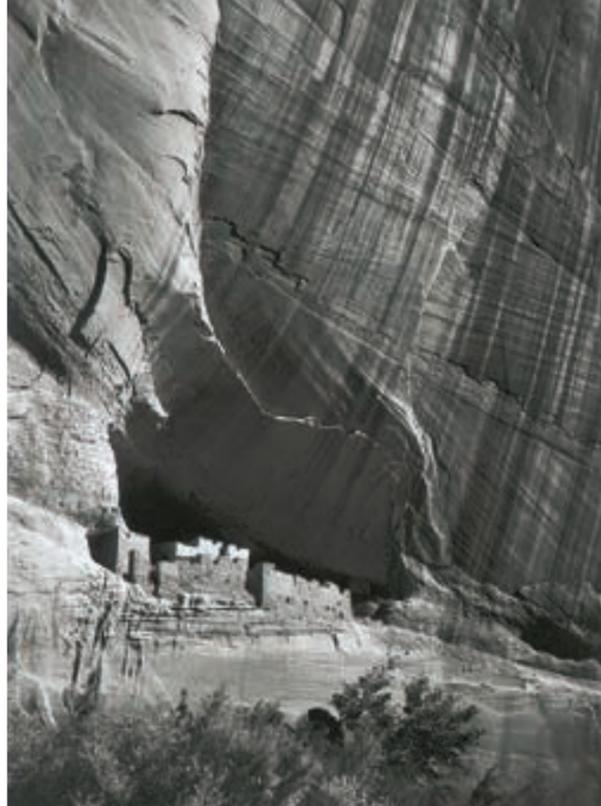
Tom Cooper, the magazine's editor in 1978, assigned me to sort and organize what seemed to be a room filled with filing cabinets containing black-and-white photographs. These were archives on loan from contributors to be used as the editors needed. One of the cabinets was stocked with yellowed mat boards, each containing multiple images. A plain rubber-stamped inscription affixed to each read simply, "Ansel Adams." The quality of the images wasn't very good, but I was assured these were work prints for review and not for actual reproduction. The final selections were printed specifically for the magazine's use and called in later as needed. These assemblages were acquired in the early 1950s, born out of a wonderful relationship that developed between Adams and then-*Highways* editor, Raymond Carlson.

I recently found some correspondence reflecting the enthusiasm of both the photographic genius and Carlson, the "philosophical architect" of *Arizona Highways*. What began as a strictly working relationship between the two men grew rapidly into a genuine friendship. Their mutual respect for each other generated visual concepts that spawned brilliant photographic essays filling the pages of the magazine from 1952 to 1954.

"I am pregnant with ideas!!!!" wrote Adams to Carlson on March 14, 1953. "Maybe there will be a multiple birth!! Luff to you and yours."

Ansel Adams' style, the unique vision, powerful foregrounds and dramatic use of light was a catalyst that slowly transformed the look of the publication from its documentary roots into the stylistic and inspired magazine it is today. Looking back, it's as if it was meant to be.

Sorting the images geographically, I waded through the collection, bin by bin. As I got to the bottom drawer of one cabinet, I noticed something different about one of the mats. Peaking out from beneath the now-familiar boards was a different color and texture. Anxious and curious, I hurried to



uncover it. What I held in my dusty hands was amazing. I held an 11-by-14-inch finished black-and-white image of White House Ruin mounted on rag board. This wasn't a work print. It wasn't discolored or stamped. It was signed by Ansel Adams, master photographer. A legend. I would be lying if I told you I didn't think long and hard about a new personal acquisition. How long had this stuff been here? Who, if anyone, knew about this particular image?

After some serious soul-searching, I walked into Tom's office and laid the print on his desk, suggesting it needed to be properly displayed, either in our offices or possibly in my apartment. It was his call.

Needless to say, it was cleaned up, meticulously framed and hung appropriately at the magazine, a reminder of our heritage.

Those long-forgotten work prints were recently donated to the Center for Creative Photography in Tucson. A fitting destination considering the center retains the archives of Adams and many other great 20th-century photographers. Among the notables are Edward Weston, Richard Avedon, Lola Alvarez Bravo and W. Eugene Smith. Not only is this an amazing repository and research center for students and educators, but it's also open to the public, free of charge. Individuals and groups are invited to view works in the art collection by advance appointment, having selected the photographs they would like to view. I sometimes wonder if anyone ever asks to see the Adams/*Arizona Highways* work prints.

If you're in Tucson, check out the center. Who knows, maybe there's a budding Ansel in our midst, searching for just the right conditions to set the wheels of inspiration in motion. Maybe it will happen to you, and your future will be realized by looking ever so closely at the past. ■■

For more information, contact the Center for Creative Photography, (520) 621-7968; www.creativephotography.org/.

This photograph of White House Ruin was made in 1951 by Ansel Adams close to midday from the floor of Canyon de Chelly. The image was first published in *Arizona Highways* in June 1952 and later reclaimed from the depths of a filing cabinet. ANSEL ADAMS

taking the

off-ramp

Sign of the Times

IF YOU FIND YOURSELF at the crossroads outside Cibola National Wildlife Refuge, you might be overwhelmed by all the choices on the signpost. With so many options, just pick an arrow and jump back on the highway. You could take a back-road adventure to Hart Mine or a quick trip to Paradise. Inside the refuge, loop around Canada Goose Drive to see many of the birds that take sanctuary there. In fact, close to 85 percent of Arizona's wintering goose population lives on the refuge, so you're bound to spot a few. Of course, you could bypass it all and head straight to Miller Time.

—Marilyn Hawkes



GEORGE STOCKING



Shrine for a Sinner

JUAN OLIVERAS, A YOUNG SHEPHERD living in Southern Arizona in the 1870s, had the misfortune to fall in love with a married Tucson woman—some say she was his mother-in-law. Caught in a moment of passion, he was murdered by the cuckolded husband, and his body, being that of a sinner, was buried in unconsecrated ground.

Neighbors came bearing candles and prayers for Juan's lost soul until his resting place was saturated with wax. And Tucsonans still come to Main Avenue south of Cushing Street in the Barrio District to light candles at El Tiradito ("the little castaway"), left, the only shrine in the United States dedicated to the soul of a sinner. Many versions of the El Tiradito story exist, and new ones are being created. But everyone agrees on one thing: If your candle stays lit until morning, your wish will come true.

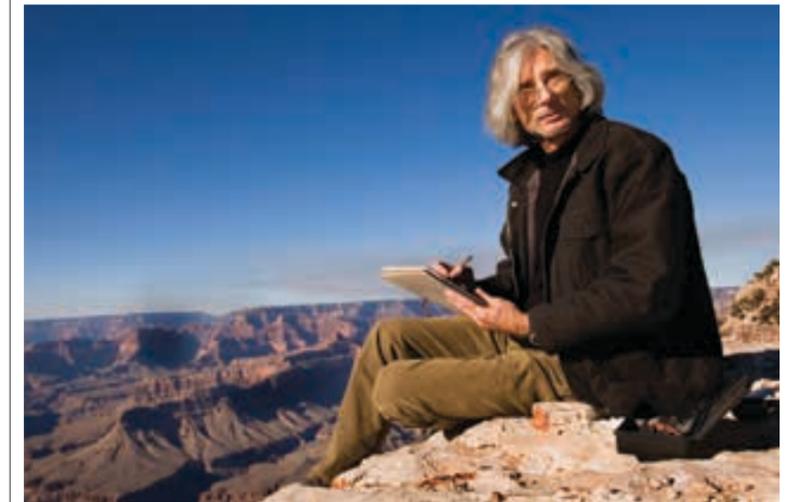
—Joyesha Chesnick



TRIMBLE'S TALL TALES

ARIZONA'S FIRST AUTOMOBILE arrived in 1899, and was appropriately named Locomobile. It was shipped in by train from Boston to Tucson for Dr. Hiram Fenner (above). Six years later, the city required that all horseless carriages be licensed, and the doctor was given license number 1. Dr. Fenner also has the distinction of having Arizona's first fender-bender when he crashed the steam-powered vehicle into a saguaro cactus.

—Marshall Trimble, Arizona State Historian



Bruce Aiken: Grand Canyon Treasure

IN THE TRADITION OF THOMAS MORAN, Samuel Coleman and Maynard Dixon, artist Bruce Aiken (above) uses his intimate knowledge of the Grand Canyon to render stunning illustrations of the Canyon's scenic landscapes.

In *Bruce Aiken's Grand Canyon: An Intimate Affair*—a new book from the Grand Canyon Association written by Susan Hallsten McGarry that features 130 full-color reproductions of his work—the artist explains his relationship with his muse.

Says Aiken, "I've been accused of adding detail for the sake of detail, but the truth is that the Grand Canyon is vastly more detailed than I could ever hope to convey. After 33 years of painting the Canyon, I've concluded that it is my job to point out her distinctive features—to say, 'Look at that beautiful spectacle and savor her magnificent complexity.'"

Growing up in Manhattan's Greenwich Village, Aiken listened to his artist mother's stories about her childhood in the Southwest. When he turned 20, Aiken decided to see the state for himself. After studying art at Phoenix College, he moved to the Grand Canyon and worked for the National Park Service tending the water supply at Roaring Springs near the North Rim. Aiken, with his wife, Mary, and their three children, lived there for 33 years and studied the Canyon's geology, wildlife and plant life, giving him the knowledge he needed to bring the Grand Canyon to life on canvas.

For more information on the book, contact the Grand Canyon Association, toll-free (800) 858-2808, ext. 7030; grandcanyon.org.

—Sally Benford

Going for Gould's—What a Wild Idea

DIMINISHED TURKEY POPULATIONS might seem unlikely as photos of turkey farms become ubiquitous this month, but Gould's turkeys (below)—one of only two wild turkey subspecies in Arizona—had disappeared from the state a few decades ago. A reintroduction effort joining the Arizona Game and Fish Department, National Wild Turkey Federation, Forest Service and the Mexican government has brought them back.

Twenty-five turkeys captured in Mexico were released in the Santa Catalina Mountains, darting like feathered racehorses from cardboard boxes. The release was the first in the Santa Catalinas and part of an ongoing effort to repopulate the birds in Arizona's sky-island habitats.

Since 2003, 82 turkeys have been transferred from Mexico to the Chiricahua, Huachuca and Pinaleno mountains of Southern Arizona. Some of the birds sport radio telemetry devices, and biologists have watched their numbers and range grow dramatically. A 2005 survey of the Huachuca Mountains showed 321 turkeys, up from 90 the previous year.

—Kimberly Hosey



Wicked Hot

"IT IS SAID THAT A WICKED SOLDIER died here [Fort Yuma] and was consigned to the fiery regions below for his manifold sins; but unable to stand the rigors of the climate, sent back for his blankets."

—J. Ross Browne, 1869



Danielle McCurley of Peoria.

Hummingbird Fun

RECIPE FOR FUN: Before heading out on a family camping trip, pack some sugar-water and a hummingbird feeder. After setting up camp, hang the feeder from a low branch, and before you know it, you'll have a host of hummers swooping in for a visit.

—Nikki Kimbel



A Bottle of Bubbly Awaits 'The Last Man'

A CURRENT PHOENIX MUSEUM EXHIBIT looks a lot like a New Year's celebration just waiting to happen. A bottle of champagne and two glasses sit in the Arizona State Capitol Museum in Phoenix, awaiting the surviving sailor who will indulge in the bubbly.

In 1976, 21 shipmates organized the *USS Arizona* Reunion Association, which later expanded to include wives, relatives and friends, and now boasts 700 members. When the number of the battleship's survivors diminishes to just one man, he will open the champagne and knock back the vintage chosen to commemorate Gerald Ford's visit to Spain in May 1975.

Lt. Commander Oree Weller, now deceased, donated "The Last Man" bottle of champagne, which has a gold-plated label affixed atop a piece of satin. The sailor will toast the memory of the men who served aboard the ship, before returning the empty bottle to the museum.

The museum houses other exhibits and *USS Arizona* displays at 1700 W. Washington St., Phoenix. It is open Monday through Friday, 8 A.M. to 5 P.M. and Saturday, 11 A.M. to 4 P.M. Information: (602) 926-3620; lib.az.us/museum.

—Carley Partridge

Rodeo's Grande Dame

A champion photographer won her buckle and spurs with true grit and broken bones.

By Tim Vanderpool



Out her stories tumble, like cowboys off a bronc: tales of bucking horses and chest-deep mud, of calf-riding kids bursting from chutes like miniature hellions, of rodeo's royalty and all those magical honky-tonk nights.

More tales spill from exquisite photographs filling Louise Serpa's home on a onetime ranch now swallowed up by Tucson. As rodeo's first woman photographer, she spent decades portraying this American tradition in all its grace and beauty and muscle and sweat. Her images are gorgeous thrillers, brilliantly rendered in taut black and white.

To Serpa, rodeo is life itself. But it's life laced by deadly risk. Like that time in Boulder City, Nevada, when she crossed paths with one particularly nasty bull.

"Thank God he didn't have horns," she recalls with a chuckle. "He came out of the chute, took one look at me, and made a beeline my way. I was trying to get up the fence, but there was a cattle truck full of cowboys parked there, so there was no place to go."

When the bull tossed her into the air, she says, "I thought, *Is this all there is to it?* But when I came down inside the ring, he started after me. I went into a curl because I'd just bought a new Leica camera, and didn't want him to hurt it."

Forcing a hoof inside her curl, the bull snapped ribs and split her sternum before bareback riders lured the animal away. Then a cowboy hollered, "Did you get his picture, Louise, or do you want us to run it through again?"

She kept her cool. If she had cried or made a fuss, they would never have let her near another arena. "So I finished shooting the bull ride," she says. "I went to the hospital—and then I fell apart."

"Never don't pay attention."

—Louise Serpa

Rodeo has little use for bellyachers. Nor is Louise Serpa much for moping over war wounds. After all, nobody promised her a rose garden back in 1963, when she earned her Rodeo Cowboys Association card through sheer grit and an eye for action. In those days, the RCA hadn't yet tacked "professional" to its name, and most little ladies were firmly kept to the side. Even Serpa ate plenty of crow before they let her shoot from inside the arena.

"I wasn't trying to prove anything," she says. "Rodeo was being billed as the world's most dangerous sport, which it was in some ways. I just didn't feel that a woman should be in the ring. So I started from the side. In fact, I backpedaled quite a bit with the RCA in the beginning."

But soon she was inside the fence, and shaping her signature style. Working beside the chutes, just a whisper from the action, conferred an intimate intensity to her photographs, elevating them into fine art. These days, Serpa is acclaimed in the arena and in galleries and museum exhibits. She's ranked among the top Professional Rodeo Cowboy Association-sanctioned photographers ever. Her images have appeared in magazines across

PICTURE THIS Surrounded by photographs in her Tucson home gallery, Louise Serpa (left) looks over her work. Although not professionally trained, Serpa's natural ability to capture the rough-and-tumble rodeo action jumpstarted a career that has lasted more than 40 years. EDWARD MCCAIN



BUCKLE UP

Serpa shows off her Pro Rodeo Cowboys Association 2005 Photographer of the Year belt buckle. EDWARD MCCAIN

the planet, and by the 1980s, she'd already achieved that nexus of celebrity—a profile in *People* magazine. In 1994, *Rodeo*, a book of her photographs with text by Larry McMurtry, was published by the prestigious Aperture Press.

Meanwhile, generations of ropers and riders have passed through her

lens. And although she's a legend, some rodeo newcomers don't always know her face. "A lot of those young guys probably wondered who that old lady out there was," she says. Never mind that this "old lady" photographed their fathers 20 years back, or that some of those images, like *Skeeter in the Dust*, are now classics.

Serpa's story is also classic, kind of Horatio Alger in reverse. She was born into New York's social set, where young ladies were to be refined and delicate. But she tasted the brawny West at age 9, traveling to Nevada so her mother could get a quick divorce. They decamped to the scruffy hills near Virginia City.

"We were just on a dusty little dude ranch," she says, "but I thought I had died and gone to heaven. Number one, I was allowed to get dirty. And number two, I was allowed to ride horses as much as I wanted." In short, she'd found home.

By the summer of 1943, she was working in wide-open Wyoming. "A friend from high school had a grandfather who owned the Valley Ranch in Cody," she says. "It was during the war, and he was having a hard time running the dude ranch—the kitchen and everything—by himself. We worked at that ranch for six weeks, washing johns and waiting on tables. I knew how to ride pretty well, so I also wrangled for dudes."

That's also where she first found true love. A writer-turned-cowboy, Lex Connelly was another Easterner in flight. "When he told me he was going into rodeo, I thought, *What nonsense, what a waste of time,*" she says. "I thought he should finish college, learn to write and do all the things he was going to do. I told him to forget about rodeo."

By fall, Connelly was fighting overseas and Serpa was studying music at Vassar College. But whenever she heard about a rodeo in New York, she'd bribe her way out of the dorm, catching a two-hour train to Madison Square Garden. There, she'd always find Connelly's pals.

"We'd be riding horses through the chutes in back, just messing around and having a blast," she recalls. "I'd do my homework on the train, and get back to my hall at 2 o'clock in the morning. The only reason I got away with it was because the night watchman at my hall came from Wyoming. If I'd bring him day sheets from the rodeo, he wouldn't say anything."

"Rodeo is the great equalizer—there's no room for braggarts, bullies or the fainthearted. No guts, no glory. . . . As long as you have heart and try, and never take yourself too seriously, you can belong to the greatest fraternity imaginable."

—Louise Serpa from her book, *Rodeo*

Although her romance with the cowboy turned star-crossed,

(Text continued on page 15)

'He came out
of the chute,
took one
look at me,
and made a
beeline my
way.'

"SKEETER IN THE DUST" Roy "Skeeter" Humble
rides a feisty bronc during a dust storm at the
1964 Chandler Junior Rodeo. LOUISE SERPA





"MISCALCULATION" Rodeo rider Clay West attempts to wrestle a steer. (1983) LOUISE SERPA

(Continued from page 11)

Serpa's brush with rodeo did not. After a brief marriage to a Yale graduate to make her family happy, she headed West again. She met Gordon "Tex" Serpa in Nevada in 1952. They married the following year and eventually bought their own spread in Oregon's Rogue Valley. While there, Gordon Serpa gained fame for leading the On To Oregon Cavalcade, a wagon train retracing the original Oregon Trail.

By 1960, however, Louise was divorced and living in Tucson on a tight budget with two little girls. That budget snapped when she wrecked her car and one daughter was diagnosed with rheumatoid arthritis. Medical bills piled up. "Suddenly, I had to figure out how I was going to make a living with two kids," she says.

About that time, Serpa went to a junior rodeo with friends. It was such a hoot—wide-eyed youngsters clinging to calves or roping goats—that she asked to get into the ring and snap photographs with her little \$27 camera. "I guess the officials didn't see where I could do too much damage," she says. "Then I got the kids' names. And the secretary was kind enough to give me addresses, so I could write their mothers and fathers and say, 'I've got a picture of Johnny coming out on a calf, and would you like a 5x7 copy for 75 cents?'"

People loved it, and a career was born as she hit the circuit, traveling back roads and visiting languid hamlets. "I'd sleep in the back of my station wagon if there were no motels," she says. "I'd shoot a junior rodeo on Saturday, and another on Sunday."

Serpa started making connections, and three years later she'd moved up to the pros. It was a joyous hustle, shooting all day and processing film on the fly. "Many times I have taken duct tape or tinfoil," she says, "and blacked out a bathroom in a motel and then done the proof sheets overnight, so the guys could look at them the next day."

It was also a moving classroom, as she learned the dynamics of each event. "For instance, there's only one place to get a good team-roping shot or one place to get a calf-roping shot," she says. "And each horse has its own different pattern, as far as bucking goes. Bulls, too. One will go to the left, one will go to the right or drop a shoulder. They have certain habits, and if you know your stuff, you'll be ready instantly when they come out of the chute."

She also began to work hunter-jumper events, becoming the first woman on the course of England's Grand National Steeplechase in 1970, and first in the ring of Dublin's Horse Show. But after a time, rodeo would always tug her home.

Today she pauses, glancing at the saga framed against her

walls. Then she grins. "I'd start to get sludgy in my shooting," she says. "When that happened, I'd always just go back to rodeo."

The *New Yorker* magazine wrote of her: "[Serpa's photographs have] extended what Eadweard Muybridge did with horses in the 1870s, and with the human form in the 1880s. In her own way, Serpa has revolutionized thinking about bodies in motion."

Over time, rodeo has changed. No longer can a single person command the arena. At the Tucson Rodeo, for example, scores of photographers now jostle for a handful of slots. And no longer do cowboys rumble from town to town in sprawling, chummy caravans. Instead, they fly, often working several competitions over a weekend. "You don't have that personal feeling so much anymore," Serpa says.



THAT AIN'T NO BULL Pam Rogers, then 6 years old, maneuvers her horse around a barrel and kicks up a little dust. In the background, Debbie and Hal Earnhardt watch with interest. (1969) LOUISE SERPA

Then there is the shutterbug's body, finally rebelling against years of demanding, very physical work. Now in her 80s, Serpa says: "I'm old enough that I don't think I have any business being in the arena anymore. So I mostly retired from the arena in 2005. It was the first year I hadn't worked the Tucson Rodeo."

"That's also the year they gave me the buckle for 'Best Photographer of the Year' for pro rodeo. I said 'What on earth for? I only went to one rodeo that year!'"

"And they said, 'Well, it's about time.'"

Time. To Louise Serpa, that's just space between stories, all told in stunning black and white. ■■■

Tucson-based writer Tim Vanderpool might be full of bull, but he's not yet chanced to ride one.



In Plane View

Of Sedona's many scenic wonders, Vultee Arch is among the most impressive. Prior to a plane crash in 1938, however, few people, if any, had ever seen it.

WRITTEN AND PHOTOGRAPHED BY LARRY LINDAHL

The winter cold cuts deeply into Oak Creek Canyon as Jean Kindig and I step across the stream, north of Sedona, onto the A.B. Young Trail. Before tackling 33 heart-pounding switchbacks up 1,996 vertical feet to the canyon rim, we listen to the melody of rippling and rushing cascades.

Jean spots a water ouzel (American dipper) among shiny wet rocks. She tells me about its transparent inner eyelids allowing the tiny dark bird to forage underwater.

"Come spring," she adds fondly as the dipper flits into the water, "both parents take turns tending the nest. It's one of my favorite birds."

In her early 70s, Jean's curiosity and youthful spirit keep her busy. She's an active hiker with the Sedona Westerners Hiking Club, and recently compiled into a book the history of each Sedona trail and landmark, an interest we share.

On today's adventurous 8-mile quest, we step into the Depression-era story of a man's passion for flight lifting him to international prominence, and then carrying him to death. His wrecked and rusting plane sits on the brink of the Mogollon Rim, somewhere on an outcrop called East Pocket Mesa that we'll access from the A.B. Young Trail.

Roughly 1,500 feet below the tragic site, and less than a mile as the raven flies, Sedona's most graceful sandstone arch hid—virtually unknown and without a name—until Gerard



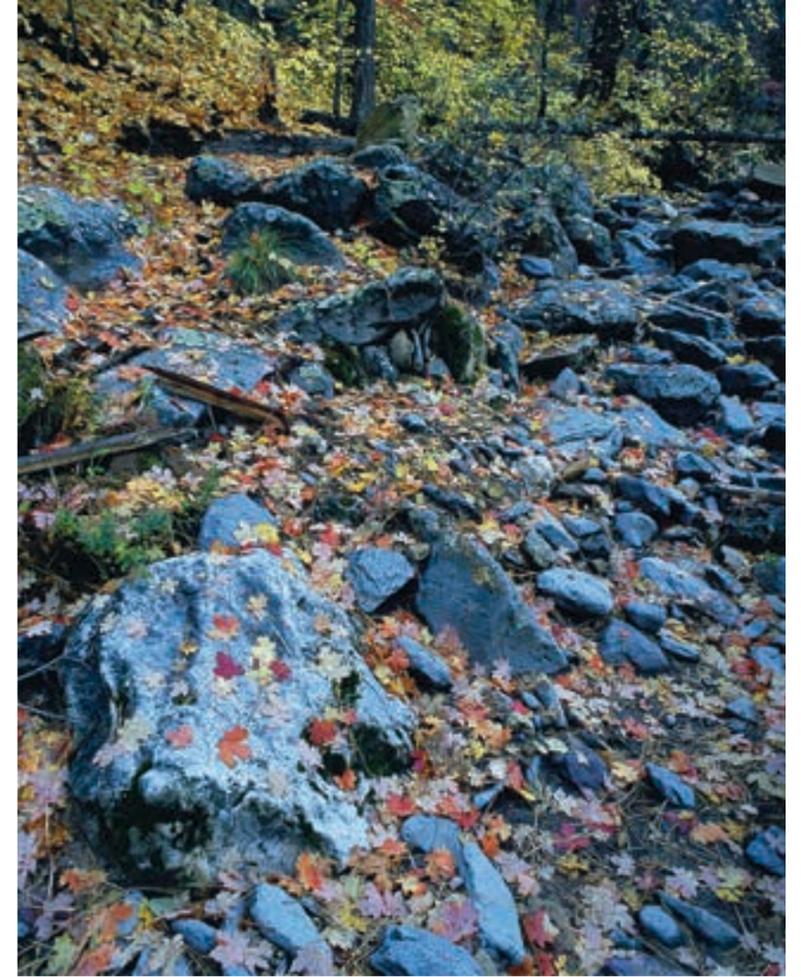
FINAL RESTING PLACE The tarnished landing gear of Vultee's plane (above) has forever retired on East Pocket Mesa, an outcrop of the Mogollon Rim.

TALE OF AN ARCH The graceful sandstone arch was virtually unknown and nameless until Gerard Vultee's fatal plane crash on January 29, 1938, when it became known as Vultee Arch. To order a print of this photograph, see information on inside front cover.



MOUNTAIN SILHOUETTE Wilson Mountain casts shadows over the ridged chasms of Oak Creek Canyon (left). On the left horizon sits East Pocket Mesa, the site of Vultee's crash. The San Francisco Peaks loom in the background. ■ To order a print of this photograph, see information on inside front cover.

FALL SPRINKLES Bigtooth maple leaves blaze small trails of autumn color on the floor of rocks that line Sterling Pass Trail (right).



... a landscape where deer and mountain lions still occasionally roam makes this a special place indeed.

Vultee's fateful day in 1938. Weeks before searching for the crash site with Jean, I had taken a solo journey into Sterling Canyon to visit the arch.

Traversing the banks of a gentle wash, the 1.6-mile Vultee Arch Trail follows an ancient Indian route through a scented forest of Arizona cypress northwest of Sedona. Ancestors of the Hopi people traveled Dry Creek Basin—evidenced by their stone shelters and pictographs hidden in the basin's many cliffs—over to the clear-running waters of Oak Creek Canyon and back again.

Scattered agaves, yuccas and manzanitas give way to a canopy of oak, spruce, maple and Douglas fir trees shading the sandy trail. As I approached a wooden sign pointing to a spur trail venturing left, a woodpecker rattled the silence between 6,810-foot East Pocket Mesa to the north and 7,122-foot Wilson Mountain to the south.

I took the left turn and climbed the quarter-mile onto red rock terraces where the trail stops. Here, the south-facing rampart steadfastly holds the graceful 40-foot span of Vultee Arch.

Scrambling up a short, rough route far below the East Pocket rim, I crossed a cactus-studded chaparral slope with an awkward final descent onto the arch. Triumphant sidling across sandstone only 8 feet thick, I warily eyed the sharp drop and the ground 35 feet below. The bird's-eye view of Sterling Canyon and a landscape where deer and mountain lions still occasionally roam make this a special place indeed.

The mountain rising beyond was named for the respected pioneer Richard Wilson, who was mauled and killed by a large grizzly bear in 1885. Sterling Canyon, I later learned from Jean, gained its name from settler Charles Sterling, reputed for hiding out in Oak Creek Canyon counterfeiting money when he wasn't stealing cattle. But who was Vultee?

.....
FOR A MAN NOT YET 40, Gerard "Jerry" Vultee had amassed an impressive résumé. He worked at Douglas Aircraft, and then Lockheed Aircraft, which promoted him to chief engineer at age 28. Vultee designed the Sirius plane for Charles Lindbergh, sporting a top speed of 185 mph, and innovated the fully retractable landing gear. He left Lockheed in 1931 and joined E.L. Cord, whose empire included three automobile companies (Cord, Auburn and Duesenberg), five engine-manufacturing companies and the Airplane Development Corp. of which he named Vultee vice president and chief engineer.

Vultee's fast planes began setting speed records, including one he set himself in 1934—while on his honeymoon with his wife, Sylvia, a Hollywood debutante he met while surfing in Southern California.

A year later, Jimmy Doolittle—who would lead the U.S. air attack on Tokyo near the beginning of World War II—flew a Vultee aircraft coast to coast in the record-setting time of 11 hours, 59 minutes. Wiley Post, Amelia Earhart and Charles Lindbergh all adored Vultee's planes.

American Airlines bought 10 Vultee V-1A eight-passenger commercial air transports, each with a top speed of 235 mph, but the Depression slowed commercial sales, and Vultee changed focus to military planes. He began selling Vultee V-11 dive-bombers to China, the Soviet Union and Turkey. With sales going well overseas, he flew to Washington, D.C., hoping to interest the U.S. Army Air Corps in a new plane design. He took Sylvia on this trip, and they flew in his small Stinson monoplane.

On the return flight, they landed in Northern Arizona at Winslow Airport, which served as one of TWA's transcontinental stopovers, and slept in town overnight. After refueling on



WILDERNESS GRAVEYARD The rusting tail section of Vultee's plane disintegrates near Barney Pasture on East Pocket Mesa.



HIKERS' RETREAT The 40-foot-long, 8-foot-thick Vultee Arch (above) makes a perfect resting spot for hikers.

when you go

Location: Coconino National Forest, about 125 miles north of Phoenix.
Getting There: To reach Vultee Arch Trail, drive west 3.2 miles on State Route 89A from its intersection with State Route 179 (the Y intersection in Sedona). Turn right (north) onto Dry Creek Road, drive 5.2 miles and turn right onto Forest Service Road 152 labeled as Dry Creek Road, but also called Vultee Arch Road. Drive 9.6 miles on this rough, dirt road to the trailhead. To reach Sterling Pass Trail from the Y intersection, drive 6.2 miles north on State 89A toward Flagstaff. Park on the east side of the road opposite Manzanita Campground. To reach A.B. Young Trail from the Y intersection, drive 8.8 miles north on 89A toward Flagstaff. Park along the road near Bootlegger Campground. The trail begins across Oak Creek. To drive to East Pocket Lookout from Flagstaff, drive west 2.6 miles on Historic Route 66. Turn left onto Woody Mountain Road (Forest Service Road 231). The first mile is paved, and then it becomes a dirt road. Follow the signs to stay on FR 231 for 27.7 miles. The gate may be closed a half-mile from the fire tower. If so, park

off the road so other vehicles can pass, and walk up the road to the tower. The tower is open to visitors in the summer only.
Fees: Red Rock Pass, \$5 per day, \$15 per week, \$20 annual pass.
Travel Advisory: *Vultee Arch Trail*—Hiking distance to Vultee Arch is 3.2 miles round-trip (300 feet elevation change). A bronze plaque near Vultee Arch commemorates the plane crash.
Sterling Pass Trail—Hiking distance to Vultee Arch is 4.8 miles round-trip (1,000 feet elevation change).
A.B. Young Trail—Hiking distance to East Pocket Lookout is 5.7 miles round-trip (1,996 feet elevation change). A Red Rock Pass is required for recreation on National Forest Service land in Red Rock Country. The passes are widely available throughout the Sedona area.
Warning: Roads may be impassable or closed during winter or wet weather.
Additional Information: Coconino National Forest, (928) 527-3600; www.fs.fed.us/r3/coconino; Red Rock Ranger District, (928) 282-4119; www.redrockcountry.org; Sedona Chamber of Commerce, toll-free (800) 288-7336; www.visitsedona.com.

LEAFY MOSAIC Along Sterling Pass Trail, the sun peeks through the mixed-conifer forest (right) that includes ponderosa pine, bigtooth maple and dwarf canyon maple trees.



REMEMBERING VULTEE Located at the end of the Vultee Arch Trail, a bronze plaque (right), erected in 1969 by the Sedona Westerners and the Vultee Club of California, commemorates the plane crash.



the fateful morning of January 29, 1938, Jerry and Sylvia lifted off—both anxious to get back to their 6-month-old baby in Downey, California.

On her hand glistened her wedding band, set with multiple diamonds, and a large diamond-solitaire ring, along with an expensive bracelet of carved stones. A ruby ring sparkled on his hand, and he wore the watch he received from the Los Angeles Athletic Club after his 1925 rescue of passengers from a sinking boat in Newport Channel.

But neither his wealth nor accomplishments could help him on that winter morning. About 60 miles southwest of Winslow, a snowstorm overtook them, and suddenly in the blinding, swirling whiteout, the Vultees were engulfed in trouble over the cliffs of the Mogollon Rim.

.....

With a slow but steady pace, Jean and I tackle the chaparral-covered western slope up the A.B. Young Trail to the Mogollon Rim. Like many trails out of Oak Creek Canyon, Jean tells me, this route was originally used to move cattle between seasonal pastures and for transporting goods to and from Flagstaff. Early pioneer families had carved these routes, later improved by the Civilian Conservation Corps during the 1930s. Retaining walls shoring up this trail serve as reminders of their labor under the leadership of Arthur "A.B." Young.

As the A.B. Young Trail climbs, the views expand, revealing Slide Rock State Park far below. Above us a scrub jay squawks before flying from our sight toward huge sandstone columns that give false hope of the Rim being near.

Tackling several more switchbacks, Jean and I finally crest the Rim. Under tall ponderosa pines, we rest and study Jean's topographical map on which the crash site is hand-marked. We resume our hike through oak groves to the wooden fire-lookout tower crowning East Pocket, to find it locked up tight for winter.

In the summer, the platform offers views of West Fork Canyon, the San Francisco Peaks, Dry Creek Basin, Wilson Mountain and Sterling Canyon. But our destination is still 45 minutes away.

.....

VULTEE DESPERATELY TRIED to escape the blinding storm, flying a crisscross pattern seeking a break in the clouds. But flying without instrument training, he soon grew fatally disoriented. Three miles north of Wilson Mountain, 37-year-old Gerard Vultee flew his plane into the ground, igniting a huge explosion.

Earl Van Deren heard the boom from his ranch in Dry Creek Basin, and saw the rising smoke. Rancher F.A. Todd heard the plane go down from Oak Creek Canyon. He joined the sheriff's search party offering his knowledge of the rough country, while his wife made coffee and sandwiches for the searchers. The snow-covered, thickly wooded terrain proved difficult, and after hours without success, darkness overtook their effort. Not until noon the following day was the crash site located.

"The wrecked plane was found near East Pocket, Barney Pasture, just a few hundred feet from the canyon brink leading into the deep, rocky chasm," reported Flagstaff's newspaper The Coconino Sun.

Forest Service Ranger H.C. Fosburg, along with Edward Robinson and James Honea Jr. from the Civilian Conservation Corps, discovered the crash site. Vultee's charred body still bore his watch, which had stopped at 9:56 A.M.

.....

Southwest of the fire tower, Jean and I begin hiking cross-country along a ridgeline, spotting the fresh tracks and moist, dark pellets of elk. Bending around undergrowth and fallen trees, we bushwhack to an abandoned dirt road, and bear left to parallel the distant rim of Dry Creek Basin. A stone cairn marks a turn taking us toward the pale-blue basin appearing like a vast ocean through the trees.

Jean suddenly grabs my arm.

At first I look for an elk in the clearing. But then I see it. A hundred feet from the rim, the tail section of Vultee's plane rests peacefully near an old juniper. The tragedy of two young lives cut short causes us to pause and feel the sudden chill of mortality.

The pale winter sun rakes across the broken plane's framework. Scattered metal parts lie among pine needles and snapped twigs, the rusting colors and texture matching their surroundings as the old plane slowly returns to the elements.

Looking down from the edge of the Mogollon Rim into a land of red rocks and ancient Indians, I realize that despite the tragedy, the spirit of Gerard Freebairn Vultee lives on. And tucked into the canyon far below, a gravity-defying arch endures, forever carrying his name. ■■■

Larry Lindahl of Sedona wrote and photographed the recent Arizona Highways book *Secret Sedona*. He first learned of the Vultee story by talking to the ranger at the East Pocket Lookout.

A large flock of birds, likely sandhill cranes, is captured in flight against a golden, hazy sky at sunset or sunrise. The birds are silhouetted against the bright light, creating a dense pattern of dark shapes against the warm, yellowish-gold background. The birds are in various stages of flight, with wings spread wide, some appearing to be landing or taking off. The overall scene is dynamic and captures a moment of natural beauty.

WESTERN EXPOSURE

If you think Arizona's natural beauty is limited to its northern, southern and eastern regions, think again. The Cibola National Wildlife Refuge, just north of Yuma, is a natural wonder that attracts sandhill cranes, deer and the occasional wild burro.



A PORTFOLIO BY GEORGE STOCKING

Wild burros will make an appearance at the Cibola National Wildlife Refuge, along with deer and coyotes, but the majority of the wildlife is made up of birds—both residential and migratory.

The migratory species, including sandhill cranes, snow geese and Canada geese, flood the area in late fall—there are so many birds, the cacophony can be heard from the highway. The best place to see them is along Goose Loop Drive. There's also a hiking trail that leads to a viewing platform, and boats can be launched into the marsh.

Although the migratory birds are the main attraction, resident species are worth a look, too. Coveys of red-shouldered blackbirds will catch your eye, while grebes and American coots cruise the waters of Cibola Lake, diving repeatedly for food. And then there are the deer that wander the verdant pastures in the early morning, the coyotes that gaze hungrily at the geese in the fields, and the occasional burros, which are better left alone.

It's not Yellowstone or the Serengeti, but the Cibola National Wildlife Refuge, which is situated in the flood plain of the Lower Colorado River north of Yuma, is one of Western Arizona's natural wonders.

For more information, visit fws.gov/refuges/.

BLACKBIRDS' BYE-BYE Red-winged and yellow-headed blackbirds (preceding panel, pages 22-23) migrate through the Cibola National Wildlife Refuge in Western Arizona by the tens of thousands en route to Mexico's Baja Peninsula in autumn and as far north as Canada in spring.

PREDANCE STRETCH A sandhill crane (above) stretches its wings as though preparing for the elaborate mating-dance ritual the males perform during their winter stay at the refuge.

PERSONA NON GRATA Unwelcome competitors for native fauna, descendants of miners' burros (right) forage on Bureau of Land Management property south of Cibola Lake.

online Go wild and discover birds, mammals and reptiles that winter at many of Arizona's wildlife refuges at arizonahighways.com (Click on the "Wildlife Refuge Guide").



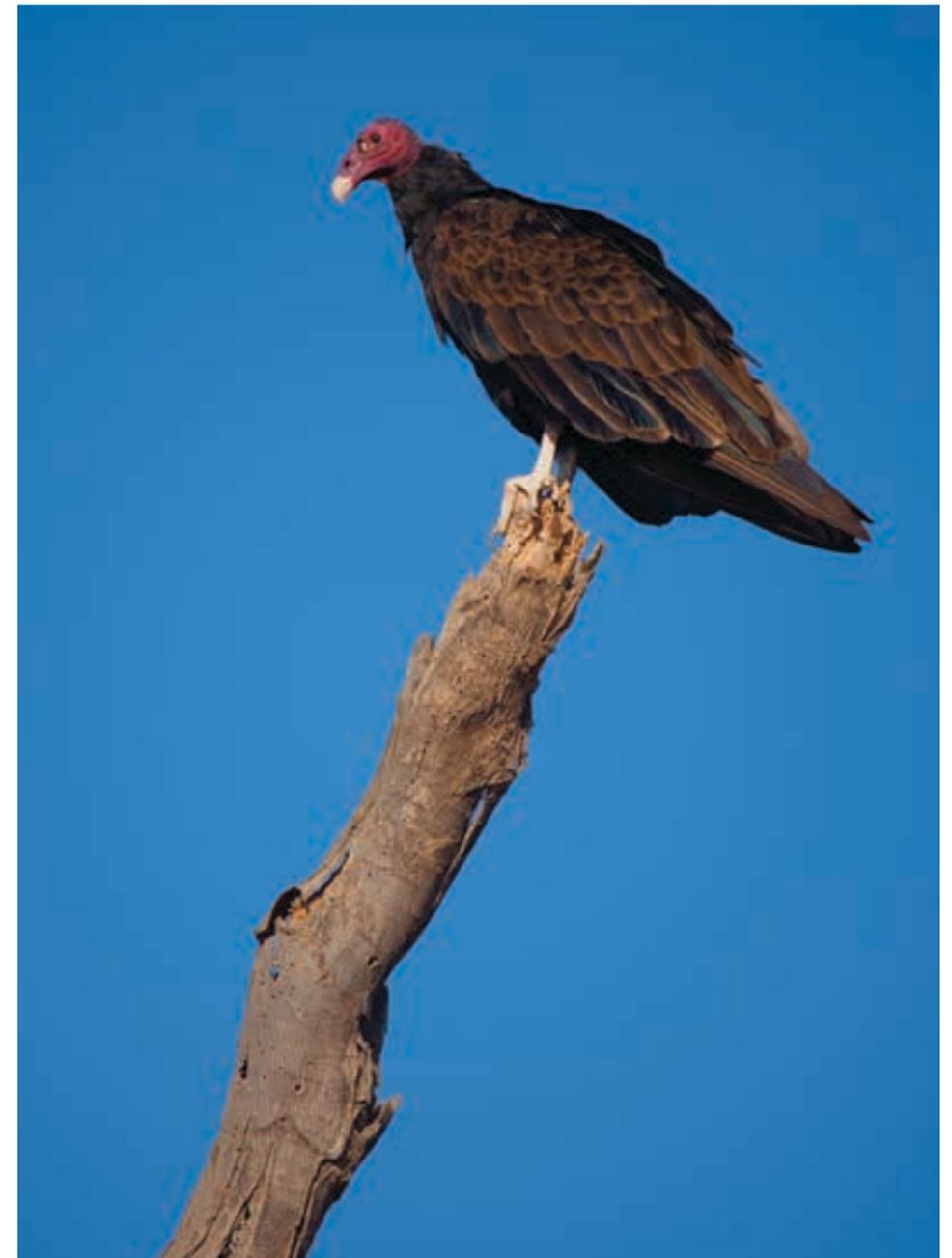




FOR FISH AND FOWL Home to sport fish such as bass, crappie and flathead catfish, (preceding panel, pages 26-27) Cibola Lake provides an ample roosting area for waterfowl in winter.

THE EARS HAVE IT Two does, a fawn and a yearling buck (left) stand up to their shoulders in nutrient-rich alfalfa cultivated by the refuge, mainly as food for waterfowl.

SANITATION WORKER An opportunistic scavenger on the lookout for leftovers from others' kills, a turkey vulture (below) surveys the possibilities for its next meal from a dead-tree perch.





GEESE DREAMS Caught by the camera's eye gazing at snow geese, this coyote will probably dine on rodents and mesquite beans, which, when fertilized by its scat, will help the trees reproduce.

CANADIAN CORNHUSKERS

Against a backdrop of California's Palo Verde Mountains and invasive salt cedars destined for destruction at the Colorado River's edge, Canada geese fly toward corn planted for their benefit by the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service.





BY LEO W. BANKS

PHOTOGRAPHS BY DAVID ZICKL

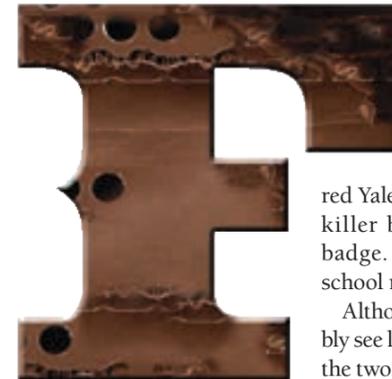


WHAT

LIVES



It's an odd racket . . . that almost always begins with a childhood fascination with the Wild West.



red Yale looks like a righteous killer behind his lawman's badge. He's actually a high school math teacher.

Although his students probably see little difference between the two, there's a larger issue at play here. It has to do with the

reinvention of one's identity, and the West as the place where Americans play out the second acts of their lives.

Yale began his second act in August 2004, when, at age 51, he moved to Tombstone and within days was wearing a pistol and performing in re-enactment shows at the O.K. Corral.

As changes go, this one was Grand Canyon-sized.

He went from teaching at a private school in Connecticut to Tombstone High. He traded in his sleek Ford Expedition for a clunky pickup truck. As for guns, he never owned one before coming West, but now he fancies them. His weapons count has reached 12.

Think of it as keeping up with the Clantons. By the way, the character Yale is most comfortable playing is none other than Wyatt Earp.

"Nobody back home believes that there's really a place where you can walk down the street wearing a cowboy hat, boots, a sidearm and carrying a shotgun," says Yale, a former competitive bodybuilder and former owner of a professional wrestling school. "Or that you can tie your horse up in town and go run errands. I'm still amazed you can live like this. You can relive what you haven't done."

That latter bit of wisdom goes a long way toward explaining the re-enactment business. It's an odd racket, a mixing of eras and life stages that almost always begins with a childhood fascination with the Wild West.

Then the demands of real life commence, and the future actor walks around for a decade or two feeling that something's miss-

ing. The discovery of what that something is often happens by chance.

In 1999, a friend suggested that Robin Friestad sign on with the Highway 50 Association Wagon Train, a group that for 58 years has been putting on eight-day, authentic frontier-style wagon trips from Nevada to Old Hangtown in Placerville, California.

From dawn till dusk, Friestad took care of 20 pack and saddle horses, and rode ahead to block traffic on busy roads to let the wagons pass.

"Whoa!" he'd shout at oncoming cars. Then he'd sit atop his horse in satisfaction as wide-eyed drivers watched time roll backward past their windshields.

Friestad had found his missing piece. He signed on with the El Dorado Outlaws, a gunfighting re-enactors group out of Placerville, and by the time he landed in Tombstone in January 2000, his identity had changed from disabled Navy veteran to Buffalo Bill Cody.

With his wavy blond hair, curling mustache and theatrical goatee, Friestad bears a striking resemblance to the Old West's greatest showman.

Friestad stepped out of his 1966 Dodge van in Tombstone that day wearing a cowhide jacket decorated with beads and conchos, and his stage hat. He looked around, drew a satisfied breath and thought—*I've walked into a cowboy storybook.*

"Sometimes you can't find the words," says the 55-year-old Friestad. "But it was an elated feeling." Within a month and a half, he was packing heat at a Tombstone theatrical venue called Six Gun City. His skill as an actor eventually drew the attention of Allen Dickson, an English pub owner who invited Friestad to his home in Derby, England, for a two-month, all-expenses-paid tour of duty as Buffalo Bill.

Friestad hung out at the Navigation Inn, traveled to Liverpool, North Wales, Cambria and elsewhere, and generally had a blast reliving what he'd never done to audiences of ordinary blokes who'd never done it either.

"For two months I was a celebrity over there," says Friestad. "I never signed more autographs or had more pictures taken."

The experience taught him something about the worldwide power of the Old West, thanks in part to the real Buffalo Bill. As irony would have it—or is it fate?—Bill performed in Derby on Oct. 22, 1903.

The re-enactment game naturally creates such odd bedfellows.

For almost three years, David Weik performed at Tombstone's Helldorado Town, playing a comedic Western character named

PUT UP YOUR HANDS Fred Yale takes on the persona of Wyatt Earp in Tombstone (preceding panel, pages 34 and 35). Many people associate Earp with the gunfight at the O.K. Corral, but he lived in the Arizona Territory for less than three years.

POKER FACE Robin Friestad impersonates Buffalo Bill Cody playing cards at the Crystal Palace Saloon (left). Cody, who is best known for his Wild West shows that dramatized frontier life, earned the nickname "Buffalo Bill" because of his exceptional buffalo-hunting skills.

MAY WE HELP YOU? Waitresses Joyce Ault and Vinnie Jordan (below) pose on top of bar tables at Big Nose Kate's Saloon in Tombstone. Big Nose Kate, who was Doc Holliday's long-time companion, worked as a dance hall girl and prostitute.

GUNSLINGER David Weik (right) plays the part of Percy, modeled after Billy the Kid, a frontier outlaw killed at the young age of 21 by Sheriff Pat Garrett.

Percy, who was much like the character of Gilligan on the old "Gilligan's Island" television show. Weik based this goofy figure on Billy the Kid.

"Billy laughed at the system and so does Percy," says Weik. "Percy dresses like the Kid, laughs like the Kid, wears two guns and has fun just like the Kid did. I was able to make people laugh, and that's what I love."



How strange is that? Weik turned a real-life murderer and adolescent outlaw icon into Gilligan—and made it work.

This gets better. In one of his previous lives, Weik belonged to the U.S. Figure Skating Association and was good enough on the ice to win medals in regional skating competitions.

Which raises a question: What would Wyatt Earp and Doc Holliday say if they had to share Tombstone's testosterone-soaked boardwalks with a figure skater?

"They'd probably say I was a wus; maybe even a huckleberry," says Weik. Then the 46-year-old chuckles and adds, "Hey, I used to operate a front-end loader, too."

Re-enactment work breeds high turnover, because it's hard to sustain the energy over time, and the money is too low to provide much of a sweetener. Fact is, the chances of hanging around are better for women who work the saloons.

Vinnie Jordan spends weekends serving food and drinks

behind the bat-wing doors of Big Nose Kate's on Allen Street, and although waitressing isn't exactly re-enacting, in Tombstone it nudges right up to it.

The job requires explaining to customers the history behind the saloon and wearing those come-hither Wild West-style getups. The saloon used to be the Grand Hotel—the McLaurys stayed there the night before the infamous O.K. Corral gunfight.

So the tips are pretty good, and Jordan, a 43-year-old single mom, could use the pocket cabbage. During the week, she teaches in Sierra Vista.

But she still has her eye on hitting the jackpot and thought the Western myth might be her ticket. When she applied for a spot on the television show "Survivor," Jordan dressed in her saloon outfit and taped her application video inside Big Nose Kate's.

"I said I was a schoolmarm by day and a floozy by night," says Jordan. "I told them I've worked as a chef, lived on the beach and grew up as the only girl in a house of four boys, so I've been on 'Survivor' all my life."

She didn't get the call. Jordan remains one of Tombstone's brassiest saloon girls. And Fred Yale is still a weekend Wyatt Earp on the West's grandest stage.

"I've always wanted to play cowboy at the O.K. Corral, but never thought I'd get to do it," he says over the afternoon din at the Crystal Palace Saloon. "You know when I was getting ready to leave Connecticut, one of my friends said, 'What's the name of that godforsaken place you're going to?'"

Yale nods and glances over at the dirty boots, floppy hats and big holstered guns of the gang gathered at the Crystal's bar. He smiles under his drooping white mustache and doesn't say a word. But this Wyatt Earp understands second acts as well as anyone. ■■

when you go

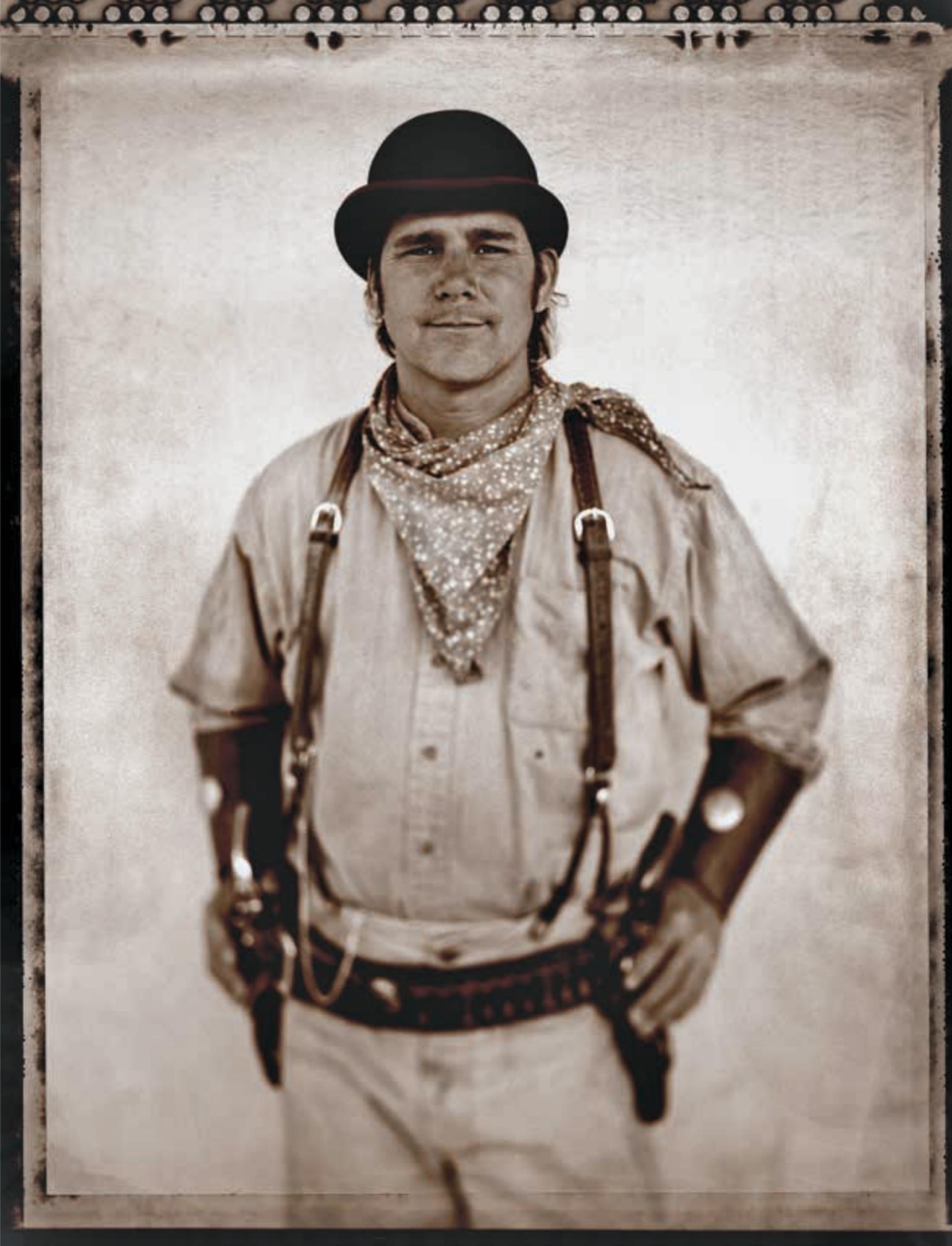
Location: 70 miles southeast of Tucson.

Getting There: From Tucson, drive east on Interstate 10 for 45 miles to Exit 306, State Route 80 at Benson. Drive south on State 80 for 23 miles to Tombstone.

Additional Information: Tombstone Chamber of Commerce, tombstone.org; Tombstone Visitors Center, (520) 457-3929.

Tucson-based Leo W. Banks has done countless stories in Tombstone over the years. He usually does business over a Diet Coke at the Crystal Palace Saloon.

For photographer David Zickl of Fountain Hills, working on this assignment provided him the opportunity to live a childhood dream, facing down Tombstone's notorious gunfighters. He drew fast and shot.





Virile Reptile

Mountain spiny lizards are usually laid-back, but once a year, the males puff up their chests and overdose on testosterone.

TEXT AND PHOTOGRAPH BY JOHN ALCOCK

AFTERNOON SUNLIGHT filters through the pines near Sentinel Peak in the Chiricahua Mountains of Southeastern Arizona. A small swarm of tiny flies rises and falls within a shaft of light. From far off to the south, the sound of thunder drifts faintly in from a distant summertime monsoon storm.

On the exposed gray boulders that sit as if tossed about on the ridge, a dozen or so fat-bellied mountain spiny lizards (*Sceloporus jarrovi*) lounge about in the sun with their legs splayed out to the side, rounded abdomens pressed close to the sun-warmed rocks. The lizards look as if they are asleep except for one stalking a black fly that made the mistake of landing a few feet away. The lizard creeps across the boulder like a cat, then rushes forward to snap up the insect. A gulp of its big mouth, and the fly disappears.

Although the rest of the lizards appear to be taking it easy, the larger males have been battling one another at intervals over the last month or so. In the days of late summer, male mountain spinies begin manufacturing testosterone, which transforms laid-back lizards into World Wrestling Entertainment reptiles. They start to wander about looking for trouble.

Confrontations often begin when a male struts into another's domain with his back arched and sides flattened, which makes him look as large as possible while also showing off his bright blue throat patch. From time to time, the intruder performs a series of intimidating push-ups. The opponent responds in kind as the two maneuver, sometimes lining up side by side only a few inches apart but facing in opposite directions. The intruder may then concede to the other male, slinking back to the rock from which it came.

But on occasion, puffed-up display gives way to no-holds-barred biting. Sooner or later—generally sooner—the match is over with one male breaking free and departing on the double, often encouraged on his way by a parting nip to the tail. Usually the intruder is the one to give up, but occasionally a male that had been holding out on an attractive boulder is forced to relinquish it.

The result of these fights is the subdividing of lizard habitat into a set of mutually exclusive male territories. But territoriality among mountain spiny lizards

is only a late-summer and early-fall phenomenon. Life is tranquil in June when females give birth to as many as 15 tiny youngsters. During the summer rainy season in July and August, all the lizards, large and small, male and female, stay busy snapping up insects. Adult females use their meals to produce a new clutch of eggs internally, which mature by late summer and early fall. At this time they become sexually receptive. Not coincidentally, adult males get feisty at the same time under the spell of their own testosterone. They stake out their territories, which enclose the smaller patches where females feed, bask and hide. Thus, although males fight directly for possession of real estate, they are indirectly fighting for females, which occur more often in some places than others. The male who is able to control a female-rich territory will leave more descendants than a male who is forced off to the side, where females are scarce.

The fact that males only pump themselves up with testosterone in time for the breeding season suggested to my colleagues, Cathy Marler and Michael Moore, while both were at Arizona State University, that there might be some disadvantages associated with being hormone-soaked, highly combative male lizards. To check out this proposition, they operated on a batch of mountain spiny lizards in June and July, slipping a slow-release capsule of testosterone under the skin of some of their subjects, while others underwent the same operation but received an inert chemical instead.

They put the two classes of lizards back into the wild at a time when untreated males had little testosterone and little interest in being nasty toward one another. As expected, the testosterone-supplemented lizard group became aggressive much sooner than they would have naturally, and experienced a much higher rate of mortality than other males, almost certainly because these hyper-territorial males spent too much time looking for a fight and not enough time feeding. Apparently, for mountain spiny lizards, as well as human athletes, the use of steroids comes with a price. ■■

John Alcock is a Regents' Professor of Biology in the Division of Life Sciences at Arizona State University in Tempe. He is the author of several books on the biology of Arizona's animals and plants, including Sonoran Desert Spring and Sonoran Desert Summer, both published by The University of Arizona Press.

TERRITORIAL TOEHOLD While protecting its territory, a mountain spiny lizard suns itself on a lichen-covered boulder.

Hawks and Boys and Life's Challenge

I WATCHED FOR FEATHERS to flutter indicating breath and life, but the handful of fluff remained as still as its mattress of pine needles. The box once held size 13 sports shoes, but now brown pine needles softened the cardboard under the small pile of feathers and the ugly, bulging head of a baby Harris hawk.

"Maybe we should just stop and put it down by the side of the road and go back home," my husband said.

"No!" I said. We couldn't give up now.

Watching the Harris hawk fledglings in their nest, high in the Aleppo pine tree near our home, had felt like watching my sons growing up, taking risks and sometimes crashing to earth. When the little bird got big enough to pull himself up to the side of the dishpan-sized nest and teeter around the edge, my heart was in my throat. *He's going to fall*, I thought. But I remembered the rule when my sons were growing up: If they aren't going to break a bone, let them explore.

So as I watched and worried, the ball of tan fluff, still far removed from airworthy wing feathers, continued to seek adventure. Every day, while his parents were out looking for food, the toddler hauled himself up to the rim. His oversized head flopped on a pencil-thin neck.

"He's going to fall," I said.

Then one day, I went to pick up what looked like a frayed rope ball under the tree. When I looked closer, the oversized eyes and beak of our little explorer hawk peered back at me.

I made plenty of emergency-room trips when boyish, adventurous spirits went too far. But I wasn't sure what to do with this little creature. His high-pitched squeak warned me off as he lifted his head and wriggled deeper into the debris beneath his home tree.

Racing back to the house, I rifled the Yellow Pages. Looking under "Wildlife," I found "Wildlife Rescue"—just the help I needed.

The calm, experienced rescue worker explained that adult birds would generally continue to feed a little one that has fallen out of the nest. It might be helpful to put the bird in a box and prop it on a branch, she said, but I should not take it away from the tree and feed it. Take one shoe box and call me in the morning, seemed to be the advice.

The next day, I peeked into the box. This time the baby didn't try to wriggle away, and his warning chirp was barely a whisper. I called my new friend, Wendy the raptor rescuer, and she suggested we take our little adventurer to a nearby shelter. When I called the shelter, the caretaker said, "Come right over. I'll thaw some mice."

It was not an image that I wanted to pursue.

My husband drove and I sat in the back, open shoebox in my lap. After a few feeble protests, the bird sagged into the pine needles. I feared the worst.

Suddenly the head lifted slightly and beady little eyes blinked.



At the shelter, freshly defrosted mice proved the perfect medicine. The next day, Wendy returned to our home with our fledgling, climbed the tree and placed the little bird back in his 40-foot-high home.

The baby hawk spent the next weeks changing from fluff ball to feather duster to impressive aeronautical hunter. He graduated from hopping on the edge of the nest to hopping from branch to branch, sometimes with a tentative flapping of wings.

After nearly two months of flight training, the youngster finally swooped low across the desert and landed on a nearby spindly cholla cactus branch. During all this time, he continued to freeload on the adults, hollering for his share of their hunt even when he was nearly adult size.

The hawk's coming graduation stirred mixed feelings. After all, I had held him in my hand when he was mere ounces of feathers attached to beak and claws. For weeks he sat stoically on the low branches of the Aleppo, watching my every move as I photographed him from 5 feet away. Each day, I searched the branches, smiling when I located his hiding place. But still, I longed to see him soar overhead. It was time for him to leave the nest.

I often sit propped on pillows looking at the panorama of sky and mountains outside my bedroom window. Two mesquite trees etch erratic patterns across the pure-blue Arizona sky. One day as my mind wandered across the landscape, a hawk swooped in and landed on a mesquite branch no more than 6 feet above the ground. A small rabbit dangled from his beak. He made no attempt to eat his catch, or move to a more characteristic high perch. His white-spattered chest indicated his youth. One would think that a hawk would quickly eat his prey, before someone else came along to demand a share.

I called to my husband, "Our young hawk is back. And he's brought something with him."

Still, he sat.

I went outside. He stared at me across the swimming pool.

"Good job, hawk," I said.

He flew off to a taller tree nearby and ate his catch.

He had become an adult. And I was as proud as I was when my sons showed signs of trading recklessness for responsibility.

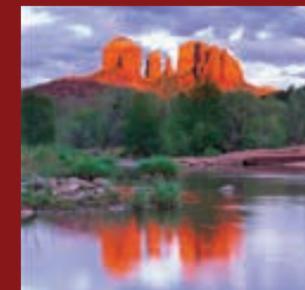
"Goodbye, hawk." ■

Give the Gift of Arizona . . . ARIZONA HIGHWAYS



Give 12 beautiful issues (a full year) and pay just \$24 for the first gift and \$21 for each additional gift.

**Includes
Gift Card**



Arizona Highways magazine makes the perfect holiday gift for anyone who enjoys the beauty and splendor of Arizona.

From the incredible award-winning photography to the fascinating stories on the people, places and things that attract visitors from around the world, Arizona Highways magazine has something for everyone. It's a gift that'll last a lifetime, and giving subscriptions is quick, easy and convenient.

Plus, we're offering our best price!

Give 12 beautiful issues (a full year) and pay just \$24 for the first gift and \$21 for each additional gift.

We'll even mail a gift card announcing your gift. As an added bonus, your name will appear on every issue label as a reminder of your thoughtfulness.

Save up to 54% off the newsstand cover price!

FASTER SERVICE

Order online at arizonahighways.com or call toll-free nationwide 1-800-543-5432. Source Code AHLB7



Desert Oasis

Although a Cottonwood Creek hike is mostly dry, it features a tree-lined route and all kinds of wildlife.

“THEY RIDICULED ME, MY own people, and I was left to wander the Earth alone. I am nobody.” These words, spoken in the 1995 Johnny Depp movie *Dead Man*, strike an inner chord during my trips to places where few people venture. Even walking up mostly dry Cottonwood Creek with my Uncle Ray and friends Mitch and Jerry, I feel alone in that quiet way I

find only in the wilderness. Something about a desert arroyo or mountain meadow gives me hope. This creek, north of Lake Pleasant and about 45 miles northwest of Phoenix, has become my personal Xanadu, where I may sit alone listening to the birds. Or I may impersonate a tour guide for long-suffering friends, pointing this way and that,

saying things like “Well, here on this east-facing rock is a good example of an ancient Hohokam petroglyph,” or “Here, at the base of this outcropping, I nearly stepped on a Gila monster and screamed like a little girl.”

Today, I can ditch the tour-guide persona and concentrate on this desert oasis. We park, load up and step over the dilapidated barbed wire and onto a path that threads between cholla cacti and paloverde

PRICKLY PEAK A saguaro forest spreads across a hill that sits along Cottonwood Creek north of Lake Pleasant. Other plant life along the trail includes cottonwood, sycamore and willow trees.

trees along the edge of the creek. After a quarter-mile, we drop into the creek bed and a grove of cottonwood trees. We follow the creek bed past occasional burbles of water and pools wriggling with spry tadpoles and tiny frogs.

Wild burros—survivors from when prospectors scoured these hills—also concentrate around Cottonwood Creek, leaving droppings and tracks. The federal Bureau of Land Management more or less

manages the population, keeping a semitight leash on the invasive species. As we hike along the main arm of the creek, we spot 11 burros on the hillside, their ears standing up in unison as a big male snorts a loud, intimidating warning.

At the 2.5-mile mark, a sign notes we’re entering the Hells Canyon Wilderness. This imposing name reflects the hardships of a different time, but today it elevates my spirits with the promise of adventure.

The trail passes a natural amphitheater, pocked with caves up on a ridge. We climb toward the alcove through the paloverde and mesquite. Bird calls echo down to us, and we flush a startled Harris hawk, which drops its lunch and flees. The would-be lunch, a dazed Gila woodpecker, lies for a moment in shock before it recovers, counts its feathered blessings and flurries away.

Noting the dwindling day, we decide to turn back toward the car. The warm autumn weather wears on the senses and allows me to test my old adage about

SURE-FOOTED LABORERS Mining and prospecting in the 1800s were responsible for most of Arizona’s wild burro population. The animals’ sturdy build and capacity for hard work in hot desert climates made burros perfect laborers.

rattlesnakes. I have always believed that the second hiker in line will be the one bitten. The first person makes the hidden rattler mad, but the second hiker suffers the repercussions. Sure enough, we pass a hidden diamondback. The first two in our group pass without incident, Mitch blunders along third in line and gets the snake’s attention just in time for me. The rattler buzzes and I dance out of the way to safety.

My feet hurt after hiking 3.5 miles each way; I sport a sunburned face, and I came within a split second of a good dose of venom, but I’m grinning uncontrollably. The wild has that kind of effect. **AH**

ANCIENT CIPHERS A small group of saguaro cacti looms over a petroglyph on a sandstone boulder. Signs and figures covering rock faces in this canyon attest to a once-vibrant Hohokam society.



trail guide

Length: Varies on how far hikers want to follow the mostly dry streambed. Return along the same route.

Elevation Gain: Negligible.

Difficulty: Moderate.

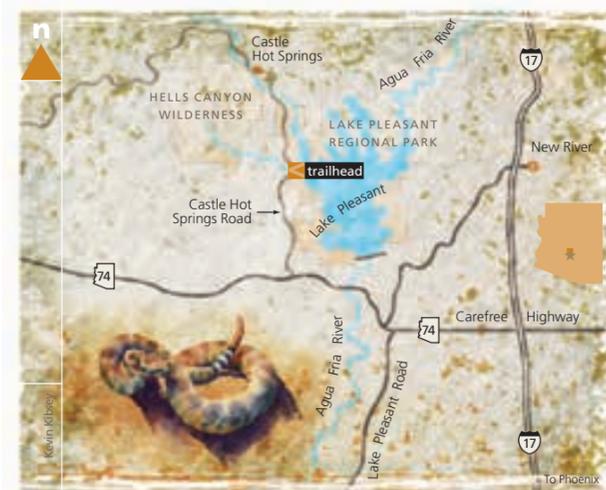
Payoff: A pristine desert experience close to Phoenix with excellent saguaro forests, varied wildlife and petroglyphs.

Getting There: From Phoenix, travel north on Interstate 17 to Carefree Highway. Exit and turn west onto Carefree Highway, State Route 74, for 35 miles to Castle Hot Springs Road. Turn right onto Castle Hot Springs Road, and drive 5.1 miles north to parking area on west side of road. The trail starts at the north side of the parking area beyond a lowered barbed-wire fence.

Travel Advisory: Wear hiking boots and always carry plenty of water.

Warning: Watch for rattlesnakes.

Additional Information: Bureau of Land Management, Phoenix District, (623) 580-5500.



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

Close Encounter Along Juan Miller Road

A rough road winds through bear country and brilliant fall color on the way to the Blue River.

"THERE'S A MOUNTAIN lion down there," said a man pointing eastward toward the Blue River from his campsite in the Lower Juan Miller Campground. "We heard its call last night. We've seen some pretty big bears around there, too. They follow the food, which at this time of year is juniper berries."

That would make Juan Miller country highly favorable to black bears in the fall. The graded Juan Miller

Road (Forest Service Road 475), 27 miles north of Clifton off the Coronado Trail (U.S. Route 191), wends its way about 14 miles to the Blue River over a jigsaw of mesas, plateaus and buttes nubby with juniper trees. Piñon pine trees congregate along the breaks; cottonwood trees fill spring-riddled arroyos. This landscape of rugged and scenic open space could make a cowboy's heart skip a beat.

Back in 1922, the Coronado

Trail went only as far as Juan Miller Road, providing ranchers an alternative route—besides the San Francisco River and ridgeline trails—into Clifton. The Coronado Trail has evolved into a federally designated scenic byway, and Juan Miller Road provides a respite from its restless winding. The small and rustic Upper and Lower Juan Miller campgrounds, situated along the back road's first couple of miles

at an elevation of 5,780 feet, offer limited picnic tables, campsites and vault toilets.

Cocooned in a forest of pine and Gambel oak trees laced with a ribbon of sycamore and velvet ash trees along Juan Miller Creek, the lower campground harbors a relic resembling a hand-dug cistern. A homesteader named von Müellar lived along the creek for years. The road, campgrounds and creek carry a corrupted version of

working T Link Ranch.

The area's first cowboy, Fred J. Fritz, introduced cattle along the Blue River in the late 1880s. He built the XXX (Triple X) Ranch, near the end of what is now known as Forest Service Road 475C, a spur route off Juan Miller Road. Fritz chose this land, some of the roughest in Arizona, because it had water. Even when the ankle-deep ephemeral creeks that cross Juan Miller Road dry out, the Blue River flows.

In 1899, Fritz had an encounter with one big bear—and not an herbivorous black bear that grazes on juniper bushes, but one of the meat-eating grizzlies that once roamed the wilderness. The legendary event nearly took his life, and certainly changed it.

Fritz's son, Fred J. Fritz Jr., described the grueling moment in his memoirs of life at XXX Ranch. "Father, a quick and an excellent shot with a pistol," fired at a male grizzly bear right after it had killed a grown cow. Fritz's five dogs immediately took

PICNIC PARADISE Gambel oak trees provide a colorful canopy for this picnic spot in Lower Juan Miller campground.

chase. The trouble started when Fritz inadvertently got between the dogs and the bear in Maple Canyon, a side canyon of the Blue River near the XXX Ranch.

"The bear charged downhill," Fritz Jr. wrote. "It jumped on the rear-end of his big brown horse, Jug, and the bear's right paw ripped the square-skirted saddle just as Father turned and shot the bear in the mouth with his .45 revolver, and old Jug left." The grizzly turned its attention on Fritz Sr., repeatedly raking its 4-inch claws across the man's neck and back. According to historian Marshall Trimble, Fritz tried fending off the bear with one hand while the bear gnawed on his other hand. He shot at the bruin until he ran out of bullets. Next, he used the gun as a club until the weapon broke. Then he stabbed the bear with his knife until the blade

snapped off. Finally, he lit matches he carried in his pocket in an attempt to burn the bear.

If that first shot hadn't broken the bear's jaw, Fritz Sr.'s life would have ended early. The wrangling continued until Fritz's nephew, Willie, heard the ruckus, followed the noise

CATTLE COUNTRY Ocotillo cacti line the back road to the XXX Ranch (below), where Fred Fritz Sr. introduced cattle to the region in 1894.



BLUE AND GOLD Cottonwood trees shimmer with autumn color along the Blue River, just south of Fritz Canyon in Eastern Arizona.

the German immigrant's name.

The campgrounds' forests glow golden with autumn color at the end of October, one of the best months to explore Juan Miller Road. A drive down the road to the Blue River makes a fascinating side trip into the land that captivated the hearts of those who settled it and still work it. Ranch signs stand along the road, and the route passes right through the

GONE, BUT NOT FORGOTTEN
 Although the cattle are gone, abandoned ranch buildings (right) still occupy the land known as the XXX Ranch, along with the burial place of its founder, Fred Fritz Sr. (below).



to the attack scene, and killed the bear—one of the largest taken in the Blue River country. Though he survived the attack, Fritz Sr. never fully recovered. He went to a specialist in San Francisco for a nervous disorder, and slept on a pillow of hops saturated with alcohol to relieve severe headaches. Fritz Jr., then 16 years old, ended up taking over much of the ranching

travel tips

Vehicle Requirements: High-clearance, four-wheel drive.
Warning: Back-road travel can be hazardous. Be aware of weather and road conditions, especially in the area where several creeks cross the route. Carry plenty of water. Don't travel alone, and let someone know where you're going and when you plan to return. This back road crosses several creeks, so heed signs along the route warning of flash floods during spring, summer and autumn storms. During the mid-to-late fall and winter seasons, the road may be closed due to snowfall.
Additional Information: Apache-Sitgreaves National Forests, Clifton Ranger District, (928) 687-1301; Alpine Ranger District, (928) 339-4384; fs.fed.us/r3/asnf/.

responsibilities. Although he never got a diploma for more than an eighth-grade education, Fritz Jr. became speaker of the Arizona House of Representatives and a state senator.

The signed turnoff for the XXX Ranch lies 2 miles from the Blue River. A few miles' drive in a high-clearance, four-wheel-drive vehicle drops into cloistered Alder Canyon at the old Fritz compound. A dilapidated hanging bridge built by a former caretaker dangles across a spring-fed creek. Ivy vines and rosebushes add a manicured touch to the now-abandoned green and white buildings. Just beyond the home, where the road peters out near the Blue River Trail

(101), lies Fritz Sr.—buried in the land that held his heart.

Back on Juan Miller Road, the track passes some of its most dramatic landscape during a steep descent into the Blue River drainage. The narrow river, retired from its use as a cattle corridor, flows quietly in a wide bed lined with cottonwood trees and teased by floods. The road ends there.

Although the Blue River cowboys and their cattle no longer fill the big open

spaces in this country, and the grizzlies have given the territory to black bears, mountain lions and hunters, this charismatic land is still big enough to make friends with anyone willing to embrace it. **AM**

BLUE BEAUTY The Blue River (right) travels through forests of ponderosa pine, spruce and Douglas fir trees on its journey to the San Francisco River, where farther south, juniper, piñon, cottonwood, alder and cedar trees line its banks.
 To order a print of this photograph, see information on inside front cover.

route finder

Note: Mileages are approximate.

- > **Begin in Clifton on U.S. Route 191** driving north 27 miles to Juan Miller Road, also marked as Forest Service Road 475 and turn right.
- > **Follow Juan Miller road 12 miles** to Forest Service Road 475C and turn left to drive 3 miles to the XXX Ranch.
- > **Backtrack on FR 475C** to 475 and turn left to follow it another 2 miles to the Blue River, where the road ends.
- > **Turn around and reverse the route** on 475 for 14 miles back to 191. Turn right to head to Hannagan Meadow and Alpine or left to return to Clifton.

