SEDONA WESTERNERS
HIKING CLUB

Sedona Westerners Yearbook

1976 - 1977

Time for the Fun Stuff, Westerners

Are you tired of summer visitors and traveling? Do you find yourself thinking wistfully of trails winding beneath tall, wind-murmuring pines or along peaceful creeks? Do you grow misty-eyed when you drive past the east end of the Bayless parking lot, and get a lump in your throat at sight of your hiking boots neglected and dusty in the back of the closet? The signs are unmistakable, Westerners. It's time to get back to the important things of life: hiking, climbing, sweating, freezing, blistered heels, sunburnt noses, catclaw snags, and cactus punctures. The fun stuff. Pack away the Bermuda shorts, charcoal starter and grand kids, it's here at last.

Thursday, September 9, at the Brewer Road School, life begins again; not at forty, but at 7:30 p.m. when Trail Boss Dick Stout steps to the mike to open the first Sedona Westerners meeting of the season.

Bob Watts, Cactus Dodger, will be on hand to tell about all the hikes he has lined up, including the first one Sunday, Sept. 12 -- a tour of Bell Rock.

Program for the evening will be presented by Art Harvey who will be showing a selection of his wonderful slides. Some of them will be of past hikes, so come out and see if you can identify familiar faces or behinds. (Art likes to take "going away" pictures.)

Refreshments for the evening will be served by Calico Queen Jean Wolfer. Jean's been working hard getting cookie donors for each meeting, so you might come prepared to put your name on her list.

The Sedona Westerners is a non-profit organization dedicated to community service and building a friendly, close relationship among its members. Its activities include hiking, picnics and an Easter breakfast. Newcomers and visitors are welcome. Dues, if you can believe it, are a dollar ($1.00) a year. The most enjoyment for the least money in town. Mark your calendar. Thursday, Sept. 9, 7:30 p.m. Brewer Road School. See you there.

L. Jaquith

Westerners First Hike a 'Ringer'

Summer for Sedonans -- nearly all of them from other states -- is a time of "going back home to visit" or entertaining friends and relatives from that same back home. It is an enjoyable season, but unsettled, lacking the ballast of routine and familiar events. By August vacation time feels a year long, electric blankets, a crackling blaze in the fireplace and the streets empty of tourists looked forward to eagerly.

Sunday, September 12, life settled into a known, well-loved pattern for 70 Sedonans and near-Sedonans. Summer was officially over and, glory be! the hiking season was off to a grand start.

Bell Rock Tour was the first hike. A new one, easy, as befitting a first hike. At the parking lot Jim Bryant, leader for the day, with a red bandana tied to a long staff so all could keep track of him, assured everyone that the hike would be mostly horizontal. On one somewhat steep incline a group wondered if Jim knew the difference between horizontal and vertical, but they were only kidding. It was good to be hiking again, good to see trail companions once more.

It was also good and hot. At first, Westerners breathed deeply and appreciatively of sun-warmed rock and juniper, grasses and soil, all the heady scents of a sunny northern Arizona day. Then, as the hikers became sun-warmed also deep breathing was somewhat less enjoyable. 70 hikers trying unobtrusively to stay upwind can add a lot of footwork to a climb, but it's all part of hiking and, anyhow, it's like eating onions. If everyone's doing it, who cares.

Three widely separated view points had been chosen along the way, each one a little higher than the last, each providing a slightly different angle down across green shag carpets of pine. A number of familiar, pink-to-red landmarks were visible in the distance, but there appeared to be less concentration on them this first time out and more quiet enjoyment of being part of the day, the group and a site to beautiful you were probably going to wake up some morning back in Michigan, New York or the midwest and discover it had all been a lovely dream.

At the second stop for viewing, with Church Rock, sturdy, foursquare and solid behind, and Courthouse Rock, pinnacled and intriguing out by Red Rock Crossing, a lively discussion about place names developed. Those two great, looming rocks are good for an argument anytime more than two people get together. But the fact remains that their names were duly recorded on General Land Office Forest Reserve maps a long time ago, and however much Johnny-come-latelies would like to switch them around, it can't be done.

Fortunately, Bell Rock is so decidely bell-shaped there's never been any disagreement over it. It was given its name in the late 19th century by Abraham James, maternal grandfather of Albert E. Thompson, one of Sedona's oldtimers. From a distance, or on its lower slopes it remains a giant, red rock bell, its smooth convexities green-dotted with pinons and juniper. Westerners didn't get very far up on it, but it was a beautiful way to start the season.

Probably most everyone in Sedona knows of the Westerners, but would you believe California does, too? Cars had to be left in the Bell Rock Vista parking area and highway 179 crossed on foot to begin the hike. Traffic both ways obligingly stopped to permit the crossing, and from a front car -- California plates -- a lady leaned out to ask eagerly, "Are you the Westerners?" On being told yes, she beamed and said, "Oh, we've heard all about you."

Westerner's - A Crow's-Eye Look For A Mind's-Eye

Four miles up, and four miles down -- as the crow flies. But what do you do if you're not a crow? Well, if you were a Sedona Westerner Saturday, September 18, you walked and walked, you climbed and climbed; you sweat and panted, stumbled and slipped, and wondered why in the blazes you HADN'T stayed home and listened to your arteries harden. "The 'quick' and the 'dead,'" someone said of the group, noting the disparity in action on the slope. Then, finally, the top of Mund's Mountain was reached, 7200 feet, and every inch, every struggling, slipping-backward, rock-rolling step was worth it. Truly a crow's-eye view -- all of Sedona, houses and buildings, reduced to tiny flat colored squares; Cockscomb, Chimney Rock and all the other distant and toy-sized.

Most intriguing of the entire view was the change in perspective. Down on Sedona and Oak Creek Canyon level all the familiar mountains and buttes tower, overwhelm and dominate. At Saturday's height, the sweep and magnitude of the great green valley could be seen, Sedona's landmarks reduced, not in grandeur, but in dimension, becoming striated red islands in a panorama which spread out and out.

Highway 89A was a gentle curve of asphalt up the pine-lined cleft of Oak Creek Canyon, while Schnebly Hill Road, a pink-brown ribbon, played loop-the-loop on the mountainside. Far to the north, pale blue and pointy against the horizon, were the San Francisco Peaks, Kendrick and Bill Williams mountains. The only clouds to be seen were a far-off ruffle of white, fastening earth and sky together.

Words are no substitute for those who've never been on Mund's Mountain, and we're sorry, because 57 fortunate Westerners have imprinted in their mind's eye a treasury of sights they'll never forget.

They won't forget that trail on the steepest part of the climb, either.

"I thought switchbacks were supposed to make it easier," Mary Helen Sharp exclaimed, rounding one difficult corner. They really do. To think of that trail without benefit of switchbacks is to grow pale.

"Long legs would certainly be an asset," Barbara House, not the world's tallest lady, said as she stepped high over a rocky obstacle.

"Not if you're riding a short horse," countered Dick Stout, legs up to here, clearing the obstacle easily.

Adding to interest along the trail was bear sign; good incentive for stragglers to close ranks. On the mountaintop deer and elk signs were plentiful. Unfortunately, Westerners seldom get to see anything but the sign. Unfortunately? Bear?

While lunch was being eaten in the shade of a giant Aligator Juniper atop the mountain, a pack rat came out to investigate, causing at least as much agitation among the ladies as a bear would have. The poor little thing is probably still huddled and quivering high up in the juniper where it ran, wondering what happened.

Cliff roses, long finished blooming in the valley, still bore their fragrant blossoms up there. And speaking of fragrance -- the next time you see a Ponderosa Pine, put your nose close to one of the cracks in its bark and inhale deeply. The scent is pure vanilla -- an anomaly we hope to have explained someday.

We promised last spring to give you the final word on the manzanitas which at that time bore clusters of tiny round green berries. Now the berries, each depending from a short stem, are russet red, giving truth to the name manzanita, which means "little apple."

Jack Sherman says they don't look like apples to him, but mining engineers are probably very practical people. Speaking of Jack -- no, it wouldn't be fair. After all, that beef was lying down when Jack pronounced it a cow. Too bad it didn't stay down until the Westerners had gone.

At 7200 feet, it's a different world to Sedonans accustomed to living among the red rocks. The familiar buff and red layers of sandstone have been superseded by limestone, grayish-white and stark after the warmth farther down. There is a broken, bone-yard feel up there, and however much we deplore that ground-up rock known as dust which we sweep out, breathe in, and probably, if truth be known, eat, it is far preferable to the lifeless-looking stratum which tops the mountain.

"A nice place to visit," but after the viewing and exclaiming are over, it's good to come down and take one's appointed place in the panorama.

Bob Watts said to tell you that next week's hike will be easy. So get out of that hot shower (if the aches aren't gone now, they're permanent) or rocking chair, patch up the blisters, and be there.

Fay Canyon. Sunday, September 26. Departure time from east end of Bayless parking lot - 1:30 p.m.

Saturday's crows (I did not say old crows) were: Mike Nardello, Mabs and Stan Altpeter, Bill Eggert, Bob and Virginia Watts, Barbara House, Arnold Wehmann, Rudy Klassen, Boyd Keith, Charles Jorgensen, Bob Harper, Linda Herrmann, Robbie Herrmann -- P. Brodt, Art Harvey, Alice and Dick Stout, Hazel Lytle, Rose Mark, C. W. Comer, Jerry and Betty Spencer, Jean Wolfer, Mark Leonard, Faye and Arthur Frost, Michael Trendler, Bill Helmcke, Chet and Lynne Tingley, Elizabeth Parks, Elmer and Dorothy George, Mildred Janney, Virginia Gilmore, Betty Holman, Vernon Estelle, Geri and Gwen Bass, Laura and Clyde Morgan, Bettie and Al Herron, Nat and Sue Egelston, Dix Fagerberg, Jack Sherman, Mervin and Mary Helen Sharp, Charles and Elizabeth Darby, Marcia Mae and Lyle G. Roles, Mr. and Mrs. S. J. Fitzpatrick, and Lorraine Jaquith

Wednesday, September 29, 1976 - 5

Abraham James, bestower of many of our landmark names, must never have been up Fay Canyon to that standpoint, and probably just as well. Molar Rock doesn't have much class, does it?

All in all a splendid day. A weather challenge met, a hike enjoyed, a repletion of sights, odors and sensations. The name of the game for Westerners.

Next week's hike - Sunday, Oct. 3rd - Grasshopper Point. Departure time from east end of Bayless parking lot - 1:30 p.m.

Sunday's cwazy people were: Mike Nardello, Bob and Virginia Watts, Hazel Lytle, Mildred Janney, Edna Souter, Linda Herrmann, Marge Kinch, Laura and Clyde Morgan, Barbara Joukovsky, Morris Heckerman, Robbie Herrmann, Rose Mark, Alice Etter, Alice and Dick Stout, Rudy Klassen, Lothar Kolbig, Charles Smith, Jean Wolfer, Ed Long, Will Coe, Virginia Gilmore, Harry and B. J. Monheim, Evelyn and Bill Helmcke, Bob and Linda Harpur, Fletcher Preston, Lorene Hammial, Dix Fagerberg, Fitz and Virginia Fitzpatrick, Will Osborn, Nat Egelston, Laurel Brodt, Anne and Arnold Wehmann, Jack Sherman, and Lorraine Jaquith.

Wet, Witless Westerners

You don't HAVE to be crazy to be a Westerner, but it certainly helps.

All Fay Canyon needed Sunday, September 26 was Tarzan. Rain dripped through the trees, wet leaves underfoot softened the sound of boots on the narrow path which wound alternately from open space to dense foliage. Wild grape trailed tendrils from high above, there was even a snake. Not a boa constrictor or python swaying long and bloated down from a branch, but a rattlesnake which was too busy trying to curl up and get warm to bother hikers. It was given plenty of room anyhow.

Rain began just as Westerners left the Bayless parking lot, intensified during the drive out Dry Creek Road until windshield wipers could barely cope. But just three weeks into the hiking season, the 42 enthusiasts (read that, depending upon your opinion, core group, cream-of-the-crop, or nuts) had no intention of calling off the hike. Rain gear of every color and description was donned when the cars were parked, and with thunder rumbling dire warnings and the god of rotten weather doing his dampest (sorry) to send the hikers home, the trek began.

It was a great hike. A beautiful, sense-satisfying afternoon. All the outdoor scents changed or intensified in the rain. Particularly ingriguing was the pungency of wet juniper. One runs the risk, in the midst of such an olfactory feast, of hyperventilating.

Appearances changed also. Rocks and leaves, washed free of dust, glistened and became deeper red or green. The buttes enclosing the canyon streamed with water, looking as though they'd just washed their faces and were groping blindly for a towel. Even viewed from above, Fay Canyon seemed more jungle than forest, with a wet, rank look. Thatched native huts, plus monkeys and Johnny Weismuller, would have been most appropriate.

Midway up the canyon, the group divided; those wishing more exercise turned right for a climb up the side of the canyon, while others went ahead to the end of the trail and a shorter scramble up.

Indian ruins on a sandstone shelf beneath an overhang were the objective of both groups. Plus view, of course. But those taking the higher way had the bonus of seeing Fay Canyon Arch at close range. From canyon bottom it is barely discernible; appearing to the uninformed as one more carving on the cliff face. At the ruins, though, it can be seen standing at least ten feet out from the mountainside. A great red stone arch serving as a portal for the shelf; enclosing the outlook back down the canyon in a sweeping rock curve. The long-ago Indians who chose that dwelling spot must have had particular sensibilities.

The other viewpoint offered riches also -- a vista far out beyond the mouth of the canyon to Courthouse and Bell Rocks. A mist of dark clouds and rain squalls swirled about the familiar promontories, then the clouds pulled back, totally obscuring Bell Rock and leaving Courthouse standing alone. From that angle it looked astonishingly like a giant molar in an otherwise toothless gum.

10 - RED ROCK NEWS Sedona, Arizona Wednesday, October 6, 1976

Day of the Locusts for Westerners

Wet Beaver

Perspiration gleamed on faces of the long straggling line of hikers caught between the force of the sun and heat rising off the rocky trail. Off to the right and down Wet Beaver Creek splashed in the deep shade of cottonwood, ash, alder, sycamore and some silver beeches. Anne Wehmann reported a Sunday afternoon concert, the sound so unremitting it took on densities and became an invisible wall between trail and hills beyond.

These hills, rising out of the creek trees and clad in the darker green of juniper and pine, looked rather like stern old gentlemen garbed in sober, tailored robes, with their feet thrust into bright green, fuzzy slippers.

This was not the hike planned for Sunday, October 3, but water was up in Oak Creek so the trek down into it from Grasshopper Point had to be postponed. Bell Trail along Wet Beaver, always a pleasant jaunt, was a satisfying substitute.

Four miles round trip made for good exercise. There's very little grade on the creek trail so hikers could set a brisk pace if they desired. Trail's end just beyond the water gauge on the creek brought welcome coolness beneath the trees. The creek, golden and green where it ran through spotlights of sun, was ebony in the shade. And cold. Hikers broke rank, removed their shoes to dabble hot feet, or perched on creek boulders to catch their breath and become pensive.

Tree shadows merging into black water, and a feeling of withdrawn stillness. What was that glade like at night, set deep in the creek bed and miles back from the road? If the sun could barely penetrate starlight and moon must be turned back high above. Did wild animals slip quietly through? Did leaves rustle there in the dark, the water murmur softly and unseen, the coolness rising up from the creek become chill and enveloping as the night . . ?

High above the creek, from a cable stretched tautly across, hangs a bucket-like conveyance which can be manually propelled back and forth. Its official purpose is for an aerial check of the creek, but Linda and Robbie Herrmann, Jeff Kemp and Larry Leigh took an impromptu ride strictly for pleasure. From below, more cautious Westerners watched them swaying and creaking across, some wishing they were not so accident-conscious, while others thought fervently they wouldn't be caught dead, or alive, in such a venture.

When all were rested and refreshed, the return trip began. And we finally figured something out. The hills on the opposite side of the trail from the creek are covered with prickly pear. All the way in, staring up at that low forest of cactus we were reminded of something. Then, at last, it came. Ears! Thousands and thousands of broad ears catching the sun, alert as jackrabbits', listening, listening. "Even the walls have ears," it's said. There's not much privacy along Wet Beaver, either.

There was a lot to hear that day, too. With no Westerners weren't winded and dimbing to do, the second-best love — talking. could indulge in their cooling air, hung Conversation rose and ebbed in the over the long line of hikers in a subdued echo of the locusts.

Leisure became the keynote on the way back, and the hike wound down to the feeling of another Sunday well-spent.

Red rocks are discussed here frequently, now we'd like to talk about a red face — your reporter's. Remember "Molar Rock" in last week's article? Well, it was NOT Courthouse as stated, but our foursquare Church Rock. No excuses, we just typed it up that way. And after all the pains we've taken to label those two landmarks correctly. Tsk.

Next monthly meeting, Thursday, October 14. Program will be presented by Dick and Gine Dickieson who will be showing slides of their trip last year to Antartica. Jack Sherman reports the pictures are the best he's ever seen.

Next week's hike Saturday, October 9. This is the

Lorraine Jaquith.

Mike Nardello, Bill Eggert, Barbara House, Lorene Hammial, Mabs and Stan Altpeter, Lothar Kolbig, Mildred Janney, Laura and Clyde Morgan, Jean Wolfer, Jim Bryant, Dan Gardner, Edna Souter, Ford Grant, Will and B. Coe, Elizabeth Parks, Arek Barden, Virginia and "Fitz" P. Brodt, Charles Jorgensen, Fagerberg, Laurel Fitzpatrick, Ellen Hoerr, Dix Michael Trendler, Virginia Gilmore, Volney A. Peck, Maria Mae and Lyle Rolee, Rose Mark, Charles and Elizabeth Darby, Betty Holman, Art and Maris Harvey, Fletcher Preston, Albert Macejak, Gertrude Mooney, Linda and Robbie Herrmann, Larry Leigh, Bill Peeler, Casey and Irv Reimann, Will Osborn, Nat and Sue Eggleston, Barbara Johnstone, Anne and Arnold Wehmann, Bob Watts, Ray Heym, Mary Armstrong, and Jeffrey E. Kemp, and

Building of Beaverhead Stage Monument
Westerners: Steve Miller, Paul Skelton, Ed Long
by Lew Goddard

Westerners at Grandma's Cave
2-24-74
by Lew Goddard

November '75

Schuerman Hill by A. Corley

Bell Rock
Next Mund's

Secret Canyon

Next week's hike, an all-day one on Saturday 18 to Mund's Mountain won't be exactly horizontal either, but don't let that decide you to just stay home and listen to your arteries harden. You've done that all summer. It's not necessary to go to the top, or even half way. Bring a book, a lunch and water and get back to nature under some nice shady tree. And next time maybe you'll be able to go a little higher. The aim of Sedona Westerners is more than just showing off the beautiful scenery. It would like to bring youth back to your muscles and love of life and living back to your heart. High hopes, but it's been done.

Be sure to bring a lunch and water next week. And, Bob Watts will get you if you don't, STURDY shoes, or boots.

Sunday's bell ringers were: Jim Bryant, Bill Eggert, Mike Nardello, Barbara House, Shelby and Barbara Johnstone, Vince and Lee Spoor, Reed Hallock, Bob and Virginia Watts, Charles H. Smith, Mabs and Stan Allpeter, Chet and Lynne Tingley, Elmer and Dorothy George, Margaret Connaway, Lew Goddard, Will and B. Coe, Val — ?, Betty Holman, Helen and Merv Hoffman, Rose Mark, Jerry and Betty Spencer, Michael and Lillian Trendler, Val Hirsch, Clyde Morgan, W. G. Stoneman, Bill Helmecke, Linda and Bob Harper, Elizabeth Parks, Lothar Kolbig, Linda Herrmann, Marcia Mae Roles, Lyle G. Roles, Charles Jorgensen, Volney A. Peck, May and Herb Gross, Barbara Joukovsky, Alice and Dick Stout, Casey and Irv Reimann, Nat and Sue Egelston, Jack Sherman, Mervin and Mary Helen Sharp, Rudy Klassen, Anne Wehmann, Jean Wolfer, Hazel Lytle, Charles and Elizabeth Darby, Harry and B. J. Monheim, J. Kendal Wallis, Sue Coleman, Joann Allen, Fletcher Preston, Ray Heym, and

Lorraine Jaquith.

by Lew Goddard

Westerners Close to Millennium

There was sound on Kendrick Mountain - the steady flow of wind through pines. There was color - aspens and ferns, golden and brown, banked here in solid stands of vividness, scattered there, interspersed among the green like fingerprints of sun. There was motion - aspen leaves twinkling, shimmering, catching the eye with that constant delicate movement. And for comic relief there were grasshoppers. Big fellows. Startled up out of trailside grasses by Westerners, sounding akin to tinny little motorbikes as they sputtered a few feet, alighted, only to arise noisily again.

At each stop for breath there was view. No red rocks this time, but a vast panorama spreading, flattening as higher perspectives were gained. Deep blue of sky, misty blues of far mountains, green forests varigated with bright aspens sweeping down on all sides.

A dandelion-like puff wafted across the trail before us on the warm air; going about its chosen purpose of propagating life, exquisite in form and motion.

"God's in his heaven, all's right with his world." The thought arose again and again on the way up to the watchtower atop the mountain. The world for Westerners Saturday October 9, was a great inverted curve of totally cloudless sky, forests and mountains sun and wind, all flowing and blending, enfolding the hikers so they became one with the perfection. The sort of day which send a Westerner home knowing he's had a foretaste of heaven.

And just as hard work is necessary to achieve heaven so was Kendrick's topmost elevation of 10,418 feet attained. Fewer than half made it all the way, but the hikers had wisely been told before they started not to push beyond their limit and wisely they followed the advice, stopping in clusters or singly along the trail to lunch and enjoy the day.

Not only were there four miles of trail to the top, but nearly 3000 feet of lift. Before the watchtower was reached some of the hikers (this one included) were plodding so slowly you had to stand a post alongside them to see if they were moving. One foot in front of the other; take it easy, heart, we're almost there; why, oh, why, didn't I stop lower down with the smart people.

And then the top. You collapse, remove tea or coffee and a sandwich from backpack with a slightly palsied hand; eat, drink, relax. Soon the mist clears from before the eyes, the heart returns to being unnoticeable and the magnificence of the vistas are yours to savor. You've earned it.

The North Rim of the Grand Canyon and the Painted Desert far to the north and east, the San Francisco Peaks, remote beauties from Sedona, now close at hand, mountain pageantries, Bill Williams Mountain to the west, and to the south Mingus Mountain and the tops of our own Gray and Mund's Mountains, plus many, many more. It's an entire world of mountains up there; so reduced in size they resemble topographical hummocks hazed over by blue distances. On a clear day from the top of Kendrick you might not be able to see forever, but you can see a king's ransom worth of Arizona, so who cares about forever.

Two p.m. was departure time from the top, the trip down much different from the one up. Toes might be mashed into the ends of boots by the downward slant of the trail, knees creaking a bit, but the strain was over. Hikers could talk instead of pant, step out a little after the snail's pace upward. And once in awhile when the view was clear of trees it was highly satisfying to stop and stare back up at the watchtower, now tiny and incredibly high above. "Were we REALLY up there?" We really were.

By the way, homeowners, we spotted a freshly dug gopher hole at 8500 feet, so you might as well learn to live with the little rascals. There is apparently no getting away from them.

Back down and loading gratefully into the cars our thought returned to the tower, to Jack Sherman coming up those last few demanding steps, exhausted as all the others, but still able to joke as he approached the top of the world group.

"Tell me, oh, Guru," he gasped, "What is the meaning of life?"

We think Jack knows. Everyone knows. It is perfection. And on that hike all of us - not perfect - but caught up in the glory of a perfect day on a perfect mountain were close.

Remember the meeting Thursday October 14, 7:30 p.m. at Brewer Street School. Next hike Steamboat Rock from the Mormon Canyon approach. Sunday October 17.Departure time from east end of Bayless parking lot 1:30 p.m.

Saturday's near-paragons were: Linda and Robbie Herrmann, Jerry and Betty Spencer, Arthur A. Frost, Bill Eggert, Will and B. Coe, Elizabeth Parks, Mary and George Armstrong, Harvey and Connie Carey, Virginia and "Fitz" Fitzpatrick, Jim Bryant, Nat and Sue Egelston, Rose Mark, Hazel Lytle, Barbara Joukovsky, Lorene Hammial, Mike Nardello, Barbara House, Alice and Dick Stout, Dan Gardner, Arnold Wehmann, Jean Wolfer, C.W. Comer, Will Osborn, Jack Sherman, Vernon Estelle, Dix Fagerberg, Boyd Keith, Jeffrey Kemp, W.G. and Steven Stoneman, Mervin and Mary Helen Sharp, Fletcher Preston, Harry E. Monheim, Charles Jorgensen, Charles and Elizabeth Darby, Evelyn and Bill Helmcke, Mabs and Stan Altpeter, Virginia Watts, Bill Durland, Lyle and Marcia Mae Roles, Albert J. Macejak, Lothar Kolbig, Bob Harpur, Obed Westphal, Charles Smith, Ed Long, Vance and Lorraine Jaquith

Fe, Fi, Fo, Fum, Westerners

Sometime before 1887, Jim Thompson, homesteading up Oak Creek Canyon at Indian Gardens, built a road along the creek bottom from Sedona to his home. After only a few years, the creek flooded and the road washed out leaving no trace. Profiting from that experience, Jim's next road was built high above the creek. Starting from Sedona about where Jordan Road is now, it wound up the hill and around the base of Steamboat Rock, crossed Wilson Canyon above the present Midgely Bridge, went up over the next high ridge and down to the creek a short distance from Indian Gardens.

As they had very little spare time, it took Jim and his sons several years to build that road, but they did a good job. Nearly a hundred years later, Sunday, October 17, 62 Westerners took an afternoon jaunt along it; afoot where Jim would have traveled horseback or by wagon, leisure-bent as opposed to his hardworking purposes for the rocky thoroughway. Jim might not quite have approved of that many people with nothing more to do than go for a walk, but the Westerners, mostly retired, have earned their ease, and give honor and praise to the hardy folk who opened the wonderland of Sedona and Oak Creek.

The original plan of hiking up to the high notch in Steamboat Rock from Mormon Canyon was abandoned because so much erosion has taken place that loose rocks have become a danger. In addition, hillside vegetation, much harmed by the erosion, would have suffered further damage from such a crowd of hikers. The Westerner policy is to admire native growth and protect it so it will still be here the next hundred years. We think Jim Thompson, father of Sedona's "Ab" Thompson, would have approved of that.

The hike was relaxed, leisurely, the day beautiful, but there were subtle differences. The sky, generally a cerulean arch -- thank you, Mary Armstrong, looked lowed and was gauzed over with cirrus. A blue autumn haze faintly obscured outlines of familiar landmarks. Mountains and bluffs looked more rockribbed (if possible) and jagged; appearing to thrust up warning fingers against the skyline. The hikers seemed to be traveling through a dreamscape. Twin red moons and crater pits would not have been surprising, the stark, gray-white crags of Mund's Mountain no longer looked out of place.

Arnold Wehmann said sometimes when he reads our writeups of a hike he gets the feeling he'd been on a different expedition. How about it, Arnold, were you with us Sunday? And if you weren't, who was that gentleman with the Connecticut accent we were talking to?

Dix Fagerberg added to our "other world" fantasy by pointing out a natural phenomena on the hillside known as a recess. Water pouring downhill along the redrock capstone in a gully will at intervals find a section free of stone and wash out, over untold years, a deep drop-off, continuing on down at that lower level until the next section of loose dirt allows another abrupt drop. Dix says that, interestingly enough, most of the recesses, or dropoffs, are almost perfectly U-shaped. Thinking about it, we could envision those recesses running down the mountain on all sides like giant stair steps. And who's to say, in this larger-than-life, redrock world of ours that there were not, at some time, giants.

Did we, by any chance, climb up a beanstalk Sunday, Westerners? That would account for the entire day.

Seriously, though, it was a lovely day, a lovely hike. Westerners circled the base of Steamboat in the sun and breeze looking like a fleet of colorful little rowboats paying bobbing respects to an oceanbound queen. Stan Altpeter, leader, is to be congratulated on his decision to keep the hikers off the fragile terrain on the hillside. He is a good Westerner.

Next hike Sunday, October 24. Harding Springs. Departure time from east end of Bayless parking lot 1:30 p.m.

Sunday's dreamboats were: Linda Herrmann, Anne Marie Wangel, Jeffrey Kemp, Dan Gardner, Will and B. Coe, Harry and B. J. Monheim, Clyde and Laura Morgan, Pumkie Byrer, Jean Metts, Lynne and Chet Tingley, Ray Heym, Mary and Lennie Lemke, Lothar Kolbig, Evelyn and Bill Helmcke, Bob and Linda Harpur, Dix Fagerberg, Arthur and Faye Frost, Alice and Dick Stout, Nat and Sue Egelston, Albert Macejak, Norm and Marge Herkanham, Fitz and Virginia Fitzpatrick, Charles Jorgensen, Jack Sherman, Fletcher Preston, Anne and Arnold Wehmann, Irv and Casey Reimann, Mary Armstrong, Betty Holman, Will Osborn, Anne Rennie, Mike Nardello, Bill Eggert, Charles Smith, Edgar C. Long, Alice Galloway, Mabs and Stan Altpeter, Rose Mark, Edna Souter, Hazel Lytle, Larry Leigh, Paul Rudesill, Bob and Virginia Watts, Lorene Hammial, Ford Grant, and

Lorraine Jaquith

Westerners Elect Harding

No, the Sedona Westerners didn't elect Harding (Warren G.) in 1920, but last Sunday afternoon, October 24, they did elect to hike the Harding (Col. O.P.) Springs Trail.

Of course, right off you'll be dying to know who tagged along. Well, the 46 in the game's starting lineup included none other than Mike Nardello, Lothar Kolbig, Lovene Hammial, Caroline and Ed Long, Dan Gardner, Linda Herman, Laura and Clyde Morgan, Will Osborn, Jim Bryant, Harry Monheim, George and Mary Armstrong, Betty Holman, Mary and Herb Gross, Virginia and Fitz Fitzpatrick. Also Chet and Lynne Tingley, Cactus Dodger Bob Watts and Virginia, too, Nat and Sue Egelston, Albert Neaceford, Mary Helen and Marvin Sharp, Paul Perminth, Alice and Dick Stout, Ray Hoyt, Chuck Jorgensen, Valley Peck, W. G. Stoneman, Fletcher Preston, Anton and Faye Frost, Dix Fagerberg, Casey and Ina Reimann, Charles and Liz Dailey, Evelyn and Bill Helmcke.

Upon reaching Troutdale (we all know where that is) our genial leader, Ed Long, allowed as how this is one trail where it's impossible to get lost. So everybody immediately strung out loose, smiling and relaxed.

The trail baner as usual was more than lightly sprinkled with Nature talk. As we passed Maple Gulch, a botanizer explained the color process (pinched petiole, etc.), a geologizer suggested the name of Harding Palisades for the rib-like sandstone cliffs on the west, and at the top, Bob Watts authoritatively identified a wild pigeon while Charley Smith modestly pointed to where he thought Grandma's (or was it Grandpa's?) Cove ought to be. As for Harding Springs, well, we didn't happen to encounter it.

If you crave further description, this could be labeled a "not too" expedition. It was not too long or too short, too easy or too difficult, too hot or too cold, too wet or too dry, too wild or too tame. Everything, you will gather, was "just right."

Well, that the way it was, more or less. All in all, a most salubrious and pleasant autumn afternoon.

Substitute Scribe
D.F

Westerners Roam Brind's Mesa

Once upon a mesa lived a brindle bull, unbranded and wild. He was called Old Brind and his grazing ground has been named Brind's Mesa (or, as the forestry folk call it, Brin's Mesa). For the story of his life and demise, look him up in "Those Early Days" published by the Sedona Westerners.

On the day of Hallowe'en, when spirits return to this world, about sixty spirited Westerners headed for the haunts of Old Brind. In four-wheel-drive and similar vehicles, we bounced out Dry Creek Road (which in places has become too tortuous and torturous for most passenger cars). From our parking area, we hiked along the dry Dry Creek bed and an abandoned jeep trail – following our leader Bill Helmcke. Clyde Morgan commented on the bush tits that squeaked their protest as we passed.

Lothar Kolbig led 44 from the main group on a side trip to a large but shallow cave decorated with many petroglyphs or pictographs. Under an ominous canopy of tons of rock, some could feel the ghost-presence of the primitive artists who had painted and inscribed this message for us. "I've seen this symbol before," said a young hiker. "What does it mean?" "Oh," replied Linda Herrmann, "that's something native!"

As the group carefully descended the wash below the cave, a human-like tree trunk peered over the edge of the roof; and on the ancient wall within fifty man-symbols stared after us.

We were passing through an area with a faint black-with-white-stripe odor when Fletcher Preston remarked to his trailmate, "Alice I like that perfume you're wearing." I believe he was also the one who commented to someone, "You have a good shape, but you're out of shape." To which the confused object of his comment agreed while the group walked on in thoughtful silence.

We finally emerged from the wooded area to the flatter pasture were Old Brind had led his solitary life. We saw no cattle, but on the ground we saw hoof prints

At two points, we walked to the edge of the mesa: first at the head of Soldier Wash where we could see the back of Coffee Pot Rock and part of distant Sedona. Second, we wandered to a point above Mormon Canyon. From here we could look beyond a thimble-sized water tower to Munds Mountain, the locale of an earlier hike. We were impressed by the immense size of Wilson Mountain when seen from the west.

The rapid downward walk toward the cars was pleasant and exhilarating. The cirrus clouds (in which some claimed to see a rainbow) occasionally filtered the sun down upon us. The late and hazy sun cast deep shadows which turned the cliffs into dramatic stage sets below which a line of puny men and women walked. they were eyed, I am sure, by the ghosts of red men and Old Brind.

Those who signed in on the hike were: Mike Nardello, Lorene Hammial, Edna Soutes, Hazel Lytle, Eleanor Fisher, Bob Fisher, Monnie and Lew Goddard, Marge Kinch, Laura and Clyde Morgan, Alice Etter, Charles and Elizabeth Darby, Marion Janney, Virginia Gilmore, Helen and Merv Hoffman, Jean Wolfer, Ed Long, Evelyn and Bill Helmcke, Bob Sykes, Albert Macejak, Charles Smith, Nat and Sue Egelston, Charlotte and Bill Knight, Lothar Kolbig, Bob and Virginia Watts, Mabs Altpeter, Harry Monheim, Mary and Dix Fagerberg, Alice and Dick Stout, Reed Hallock and Fletcher Preston.

Also, May and Herb Gross, Linda Herrmann, Lynne and Chet Tingley, Arthur and Faye Frost, Gloria and Jack Sherman, Virginia and Fitz Fitzpatrick, Peg and Andy Anderson, Bill and Hazel Seaman, Al and Charlotte Coxley, and Charles Jorgensen.

Contrary to other publicity, the next Westerner outing will be an all-day hike this Saturday, November 6, when we will follow the famous A. B. Young Trail up Wilson Mountain. Members and visitors are to meet at the east end of the Bayless parking lot at 9:15 for a 9:30 departure. Take a lunch and water and wear shoes suitable for a rugged climb.

Charles Jorgensen,
Reporter pro tem.

Lothar Kolbig "Trail Boss"
Westerners - 1975-76

Westerners to See Exotic Film

The Westerners - Sedona's famous hiking club -- will hold a regular evening meeting at the Brewer Road Elementary School gym on Thursday, November 11, at 7:30.

The program will be presented by the club's president, world traveler Lothar Kolbig, whose adventures to remote parts of the globe have always been unusual. He will show his latest film, "From the Vale of Kashmir to Western Tibet." With him we will hike along Himalayan trails, cross tributaries of the Indus River, meet the nomads of India, journey to imposing Buddhist monasteries, and end with a visit to the holy city of Benares, where Buddha preached under the Bodhi Tree. On the bank of the Ganges, we will witness the cremation of the dead.

Visitors will be welcome to this meeting which should be most interesting.

CR News 11/3/76

Westerners Hit the Trail

The A. B. Young Trail leads up the west wall of Oak Creek Canyon starting near the Junipine Cabins and Bootlegger Campground and ending at the West Pocket Nob Ranger Tower. The Sedona Westerners traversed this trail on November 6 on their third all-day hike of the season.

The Andersons, owners of Junipine Cabins, kindly let us park on their property, and we thank them. There is a twenty-five-foot ford across the creek at this point. Ordinarily the Westerners would have found or made stepping stones or waded, but to save time, Bob Watts, the leader, ferried us across in his pickup.

After walking through the Anderson orchard (are those lonely apples left on the trees to be destroyed by frost or are they yet to be picked?) we came to the base of the climb. "There are thirty-three switchbacks," said Bob Watts, "and this first one is the longest." Before we reached the top, many of us questioned the truth of each statement.

Who was A. B. Young? No, Volney, he wasn't a Jewish pioneer. Arnold Wehmann was disappointed that he wasn't a famous explorer involved in romantic adventures. Ed Long told us that A. B. Young was the engineer in charge of the CCC boys who built the trail in the thirties. Ed was one of the many Westerners who, with the help of the forest service, repaired the trail in the sixties. It needs work now in places where rock slides have covered the trail with rubble.

Many stops were made during the ascent. As exhaustion increased, we found that the view became more appealing! At one point, a windowed, eroded pillar showed clearly the sand dune formations that are characteristic of much of the canyon wall.

We had with us two exuberant boys: Lesley Merli and Robbie Herrmann, ten and eleven (respectively, as Robbie said). Lesley shouted down from above to those on a lower switchback, "Better get rested up!" Robbie found what he believes is a geode which he hopes to have cut and polished.

After the top of the switchbacks was reached, there was a long walk through a pine forest which was especially pleasant because of leveler ground. Finally, despite Clyde Morgan's doubts of its existence, the ranger tower was reached. It is a wooden structure anchored in concrete and tied down with cables.

We found it inhabited by a charming young ranger named Ingrid Lamphere and her two dogs, a large red setter and a small terrier mix. Ingrid has two small children not with her this day who have spent four summers with her and her husband, a high school teacher, in this secluded post. Communication is by radio with the Flagstaff headquarters or with other stations. Her one-room "home" at the top of the tower has kitchen, beds, maps and sighting devices used in locating fires. She has a shelf of books and a partly-finished embroidered hanging which will be beautiful.

From here we had a bird-view of the canyon. The forest service had been making controlled burns; as a result the distant ranges were floating on a sea of haze; reminiscent of a Japanese painting.

While we ate lunch below the tower, the setter went from group to group looking for handouts. Howevér, when he came near one group, he stopped and showed good judgment by pointing at Linda Herrmann.

After lunch, most went on a mile or so to a point overlooking Dry Creek Canyon. There is a rumor that Mike Nardello also took most of the women off on a hike of his own. This may bear investigation!

Before starting down the trail, we paused to look again down Oak Creek Canyon. We could see that we were on an extension of the formation that to the south becomes Wilson Mountain. The afternoon sun backlighted dramatically many walls and turrets on the west side of the canyon.

On the way down, Dix Fagerberg gave some financial advice. "The best investment anyone can make is to keep in good health." He added, "Staying in condition through hikes like this is a good way to stay healthy."

Those who made an investment in health this day included: Fletcher Preston, Dan Gardner, Volney Peck, Bob and Virginia Watts, Dick Stout, Ed Long, Mike Nardello, Bill Eggert, Charles Smith, John Gibbs, Will Osborn, Virginia Gilmore, Albert Macejak, Geri Bass, Gwen Bass, Les Merli, Lynne and Chet Tingley, Clyde Morgan and W. G. "Stoney" Stoneman.

Also present were Nat Egelston, Dix Fagerberg, Arnold Wehmann, Mildred Janney, Betty Holman, Mary Armstrong, Robbie Herrmann, Jack Sherman, Linda Herrmann, Charles and Elizabeth Darby, Bill Helmcke, John Kline, and Charles Jorgensen.

Everyone is invited to join the Westerners on their next hike, an easier one, on Sunday, November 14 when we will explore Oak Creek in the vicinity of Grasshopper Point. Meet at the east end of the Bayless parking lot at 1:15 for a 1:30 departure. We hope, Lorraine Jaquith, that you will be recovered sufficiently from your back problems to be present and to write your usual fine report of the hike.

Charles Jorgensen
Scribe pro tem

Oak Creek Casts Spell on Westerners

We have a new love. Heretofore West Fork has been our favorite creek hike, but last Sunday's expedition down into Oak Creek from Grasshopper Point is making us feel both fickle and delighted.

For the last month, Northern Arizona has been blessed with such perfect Indian summer weather that all the hikes, taking their cues from the flawless skies and praiseworthy temperature, have been perfect also. Sunday's sky was gray with a rain-any-minute look, the air cool-to-chill ("Westerner weather," someone said, "Sightseers stay home, leaving it all to us.") Despite that, or because of it, the hike was a joy, the creek and environs needing nothing to enhance their beauty.

The yellow leaves of alder, copper brown of Arizona sycamore and bright red of sumac gave such color and brightness to the scene that sunshine would have been redundant. As the hikers descended to the creek from Grasshopper Point's parking area, one beautiful vista after another opened, giving us the feeling that the pages of an Arizona Highway were being slowly turned.

A wide, deep part of the creek was pointed out as being a favorite swimming spot of the college kids. A favorite, also, of one rather post-grad, we think.

Down at the creek and making our way along a rocky, woodsy trail to the high, anomalous metal arch of Midgely Bridge in nature's grandeur, Charlie Smith observed that the view upstream always seems better than that downstream. Agreeing with him, we became quite philosophical (fresh air does that to us) thinking that the view upstream of life, the future, is much more rewarding than dwelling on what's already passed.

We have hiked along many creeks, seen them widespread and nearly still, with a look of secrets in their depths, heard them roaring and tumbling whitely after heavy rains, seen sparkling little fingers over rocks and deep green pools. Sunday's creek chattered and laughed like a happy child skipping rope. The sound of it was constant, permeating being, becoming a part of the hikers.

Not that Westerners need an excuse to laugh and behave in a somewhat giddy fashion, but they outdid themselves that day. Up at the parking area, the group had been divided, half, led by Jim Bryant, going upstream first, the trail taking them past Indian ruins beneath a cliff and through stark skeletons in a long-ago apple orchard, sounds of the creek so conspicuous they formed an almost visible boundary beyond the trees. The others, with leader for the day Dix Fagerberg, at their head took the downstream trail. On reaching trail's end, each group turned back to the opposite leg of the hike. At the point where they met and passed, Jim Bryant's happy bunch had a surprise for the others. "Yippity, yippity, yippity yak, here we meet you coming back," they chorused, in perfect time from much practice, "Yippity, yippity, yippity ho, what makes you so goldurned slow?" (Lyrics by Faye Frost and Charles Jorgensen; music? by the Upstream Gang.) At one point, Jim Bryant, red bandanna tied to his tall hiking stick mounted a towering rock to be pronounced King of the Mountain. And Stan Altpeter, retrieving for his trash can someone's, not a Westerner's, carelessly discarded soft-drink bottle, dubbed it an Anglo-artifact. Fresh air and creek promixity affect different people in different ways.

Several miles up the creek, atop a looming mountain, could be seen what were probably two telephone poles with cross-pieces, but Marge Kinch said they looked like crosses. We agreed, but while we were staring up at them, liking their sacrosanct look against the sky, Charlie Smith came along and said it was REALLY where they used to string up horse thieves long ago. Charlie, Charlie.

Our thanks to Chuck Jorgensen and Dix Fagerberg for taking over for us while we talked our sacroiliac into behaving. It's good to have such people to call on. It's also a good curb on the ego learning the capabilities of others.

Westerners -- new ones in particular -- have you ever wondered about the history of the hiking group, when and why it was begun, its past activities and aims, etc.? Your reporter wondered also, the result being an article which will be in the December issue of Sedona Life Magazine. Watch for it.

Next hike Sunday, Nov. 21, Saddle Mountain. A short hike, but quite a scramble, according to Bob Watts. Departure time from east end of Bayless parking lot - 1:30 p.m.

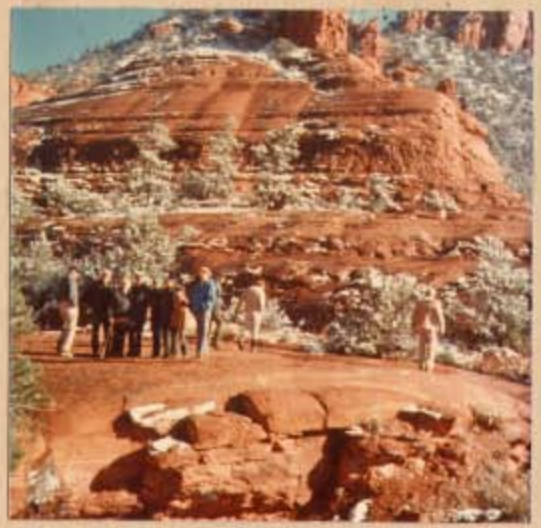
Sunday's creek-inebriated were: Mike Nardello, De dePucella, Jean Wolfer, Hazel Lytle, Dix Fagerberg, Phil Jordan, Marion Leonard, Jean Metts, Punkie Byrer, Joe Assenmarher, Laura and Clyde Morgan, Charlotte and Alfred Coxley, Casey and Irv Reimann, Linda Herrmann, Ray and Berta Mikesell, Ray and Marian Fullerton, Dick Stout, Pat Boufford, Stan and Mabs Altpeter, Anne and Arnold Wehmann, Edna Souler, Ernestine Duck, Bob and Virginia Watts, Bill Eggert, Marjorie Kinch, Mr. and Mrs. James Leadbetter, Jim Bryant, Virginia and "Fitz" Fitzpatrick, Arthur and Faye Frost, Albert Macejak, Dan Gardner, Charlotte and Bill Knight, Harry Monheim, Vince and Lee Spoor, Charles Jorgensen, Volney A. Peck, Gladys Thumson, Will and B. Coe, Chet and Lynne Tingley, Jack Sherman, Shelby and Barbara Johnstone, Fletcher Preston, Michael Trendler, Charles Smith, Evelyn and Bill Helmcke, Betty Holman, and

Lorraine Jaquith

Dec. '75 The SPIRES
by A. Corley

JUNE '75
SUBMARINE ROCK

by A Corley



Dec. '75 The SPIRES
by A. Corley

MAY '76
CATHEDRAL ROCK

by A. Corley

Early Thanksgiving for Westerners

'Twas the weekend before Thanksgiving
And high on a trail
A long line of hikers
Fleetfooted as quail.

Back down at the cars, and
All were still perky,
Fifty-nine Westerners
In training for turkey.

Blame that on Volney Peck. A remark of his set us thinking, and when that happens, watch out. It was Volney, also, who had a "likin' for lichen." Thanks, Vol. Charlie Smith wouldn't open his mouth the entire hike -- can't imagine why -- and we'd begun to think we'd just have to write about the scenery.

And that would have been no hardship. The previous week's hike, with its cloudy skies and chill air, made it seem that winter was on the doorstep; then, suddenly, Indian summer returned. The sun was hot, perspiration streamed, small spots of shade were fully occupied during rest periods and thermoses of water and iced tea greatly enjoyed. The sky was cloudless, but thinly curtained by a haze of smoke from Forest Service burnings. That smoke is a part of the fall season in this area, though. Sometimes, when the thermometer stays high, the only way to tell it is fall.

Sunday's trail, boottop deep in dust at times, led up to the saddle between twin buttes overlooking The Chapel of the Holy Cross and Chapel Bell Estates. Only about a mile from cars to saddle the hike was a stiff one, even so, because of the 600-foot rise. "Yippity, yippity, yippity yack; we're a little tired, but what the hack." Volney again. What did you feed him for lunch, Reggy?

The clouds of dust settling stickily in perpiration, and the scramble were worthwhile, though; making possible a high view in all directions. South and west was a panorama of the chapel in the foreground (backview) with its looping ribbon of entry way road, the street-gridded Chapel Estates, and Church, Bell and Courthouse Rocks standing guard on the perimeter. The smoke haze was particularly thick in that direction making Oak Creek discernible only by its bright-foliaged trees. Far beyond Bell and Church Rocks, pale blue mountain ranges looked dream-like and afloat in the haze.

North and east of the saddle was a quieter view -- Submarine Rock, with its jeep tracks on one end, riding at anchor in the long, long narrow valley which supports one of the largest and finest stands of Arizona cypress to be found.

Regal is the word for those cypress as they haven't the robust appearance and color of pine and juniper. They are pale, almost silvery green, frequently perfectly conical. And when their shaggy outer bark peels away, sleek trunks faintly striated with red are revealed. We saw young trees, two or three feet tall, beautifully shaped; little princes or princesses of the forest. And the twisted ancients are majestic even as they give up life.

Farther out, toward town, upper Oak Creek was visible; not so dimmed by haze. The brilliant yellow cottonwood, poplar and alder appear to be reservoirs of summer's blazing sun; almost afire themselves with captured light and heat. The thought, carried in another direction, could compare fall trees to older people with their accumulated knowledge, aptitudes and wisdom. Earlier civilizations might not have had indoor plumbing or plastic, but they venerated their elderly for their worth. Fall foliage to the mores of civilizations is quite a jump, isn't it?

Going up to the saddle and coming down, we sensed in everyone a feeling of quiet happiness and satisfaction with hike and day. It seemed particularly appropriate to the season and makes us certain that we speak for all the Westerners now.

We came to Sedona, as the Pilgrims came to Plymouth, fugitives, not from religious oppression, but from freeways, smog, nine-to-five days and pressure. We landed, not on one rock, but in the midst of many; beautiful red monuments to the timelessness of nature. We have, as the Pilgrims had, pumpkins and squash and corn from the gardens we now have time for, and we have Indians. We have a totally new lifestyle and peace as, eventually, the Pilgrim fathers had. Most important of all, we live each day in Sedona, knowing how fully blessed we are -- mortal trials made bearable by the surrounding reminders, in red rock form, skies and forests, of God's abiding presence and power. Thanksgiving Day is every day for Westerners, for Sedonans.

Next hike Sunday, November 28. Vultee Arch. A good one and a favorite. Departure time from east end of Bayless parking lot - 1:30 p.m.

Sunday's trainees were: in absentia, Paul Perminas -- visiting hiker some weeks ago whose name was badly misspelled -- his good friend Al Macejak, Bill Eggert, Geri and Gwen Bass, Mabs and Stan Altpeter, Robbie and Linda Herrmann, Hazel Lytle, Charles Smith, Ed Long, Harvey and Connie Carey, Elizabeth Parks, Jim Bryant, Dan Gardner, Vince and Lee Spoor, Mike Nardello, Alvin Adair, W. R. Peeler, C. W. and Elizabeth A. Reese, Dorothy and Elmer George, Will and B. Coe, Bob and Virginia Watts, Vic Sterzing, Lennie and Mary Lemke, Anne and Arnold Wehmann, Lothar Kolbig, Fletcher Preston, Clyde Morgan, Michael Trendler, Nat Egelston, Art and Faye Frost, Alice and Dick Stout, Mary Armstrong, Volney A. Peck, Charles and Loraine Jorgensen, Ray Heym, Ray and Marian Fullerton, Ray and Berta Mikesell, Ford Grant, Dix Fagerberg, Bill Helmcke, Betty Holman, Ginny Lucas, C. W. Comer, and

Lorraine Jaquith

Long-John Weather for Westerners

Westerner hikes are normally accomplished against a backdrop of talk and laughter. Sunday's expedition to Vultee Arch was characterized by a new sound -- nose blowing. It was COLD in Sterling Canyon. Bright sunlight on high red bluffs to the front, back and sides could not reach the bottom of the canyon where the trail lay. All was in deep shadow and there were scattered patches of snow. It was long Johns, ear muffs and fur-lined gloves weather. Faces were stiff with the cold, noses were red and it was either sniff or blow -- or both.

But if you think that means it was a rotten hike, you don't know the Sedona Westerners. They glory in extremes, be they mountain tops, canyon bottoms or uncomfortable weather. Come to think of it, though, there is one extreme all could do without -- Vultee Arch Road. If you've ever been over it, you know that we're talking about. If you haven't, give thanks and try to avoid it.

Vultee Arch is a frequently-done hike, but it never fails to satisfy. A change in weather or season can, as it did Sunday, turn a familiar hike into a new one. Trees and underbrush, even the ground underfoot, are different, landmarks, hidden by full summer foliage are strikingly visible when trees are bare, the air feels different, the hiker, reacting to the change is different.

The entire hike was a study in contrasts. Boots labored in deep sand one minute and scuffed through fallen drifts of crisp oak and sycamore leaves the next. Side by side were sycamore and Ponderosa, which shouldn't be growing at that low elevation, but are. There were elegant Arizona cypress and seamy-barked alligator juniper, green-leafed Live oak and bare-branched Gambel oak; the familiar bush-type manzanita and specimens twelve feet tall. And high overhead in the bright blue sky a pale half moon was underscored by a jet contrail.

About two miles up from the parked cars, Sterling Canyon butts into a red cliff and divides. At the base of that cliff on the face of a rounded stone shelf, the Sedona Westerners have affixed a bronze plaque in memory of Jerry Vultee and his wife who were killed many years ago when their plane crashed nearby. Two large pieces of crumpled metal are beneath the plaque but these are not parts of the plane. They are jettisoned auxiliary wing tanks from a military plane which someone has placed there.

From the plaque site, most of the hikers continued about a quarter of a mile more, mostly straight up, through thickets of brush to the arch. Those who wished to view the world from the middle of Vultee Arch were aided out onto it by a rope. Seat of the pants and fingernails driven into the sandstone would have been enough, but the rope was a comfort.

While all this was going on, Bob and Virginia Watts had taken off by themselves in search of another arch. It turned out to be a nice big cave; which undoutedly will turn out to be a new hike. And so it goes. "Big oaks from little acorns grow," and old hikes beget new ones.

We have a new word for you, Westerners. "Dux." Ever hear of it? We hadn't. It's another term for what all of us know as cairns, or trail markers. The information comes from Dana Morgenson, new hiker, who is director of guest activities at Yosemite.

The Christmas potluck is coming up. Thursday, December 9, 6:00 p.m. It's to be at the Elks Club this year. Bring your own table service and salad, dessert or main dish for eight. If you bring guests, please increase your food proportinately. Trail Boss Dick Stout will be showing moving pictures of his float trip down the Grand Canyon this past summer.

Next hike Saturday, December 4. House Mountain. AND, your gal and mine, Virginia Watts, will be leader for the day. Departure time from east end of Bayless parking lot - 9:30 a.m. Bring lunch and water. Bob Watts said to tell you there are apparently going to be enough rough-road vehicles, so don't stay home for fear of not getting a ride.

Saturday's rambling red noses were: Mike Temmen, Mike Nardello, Bill Eggert, Linda Herrmann, Hazel Lytle, Bob and Virginia Watts, Bill Helmcke, Ray Fullerton, Lennie Lemke, Clyde Morgan, Ray and Bert Mikesell, Fletcher Preston, Virginia Gilmore, Lothar Kolbig, Rudy Klassen, Ed Long, Albert Macejak, Charles Smith, Shelley Hayes, Mildred Janney, Alice Etter, Virginia and "Fitz" Fitzpatrick, Alice and Dick Stout, Vince and Lee Spoor, Elizabeth Parks, Lorene Hammial, Art and Faye Frost, Anne and Arnold Wehmann, Dana Morgenson, Will Osborn, Betty Holman, Afred Coxley, and

Lorraine Jaquith.

Mountain Plays House with Westerners

My goodness, you'd think they'd fix this driveway. It's worse than the Vultee Arch Road. But maybe inhabitants of a House this size hope to discourage visitors. There's nothing to worry about, though. Westerners are welcome guests anywhere and used to multitudinous bumps and billowing dust. At least the meadow about Turkey Creek Tank makes a good parking area.

The road was only a preliminary difficulty we see immediately. It adds a rustic touch, don't you think, to use a cattle trail as a path to the House? A trail still in use, too. Not all the obstacles in it are rocks. That might be a discouragement to some callers, but not Westerners whose agile footwork has been perfected on many a still-in-use trail.

What a beautiful day. The only clouds in sight are a low white bank on the northern horizon, no wind stirs, the sun is so warm the strongest desire is to stop and bask, like a lizard on a rock. And only three weeks to Christmas.

Up and up now. If the cows can climb it, we can. Will Coe wishes he had a horse, but shank's mare will have to do. Mike Nardello tries to get a head count; Arnold Wehmann suggests a new method -- count legs and divide by two.

At last; trail's end at a high ridge. The door to this House in the sky stands open in welcome. The invitation is for lunch. Fortunately, it's only 11:30 a.m. because the dining room is at least a quarter of a mile away, and up some more.

Those who dine here do so in style. There is atmosphere -- the green-wooded upthrust of the dining area against a deep blue sky, a lone raven curving and gliding high above. There is the quiet to be found only on a mountain and the peace which is its companion. And there is view. Some dining rooms atop buildings revolve slowly, offering patrons at table a changing panorama. Here, after they've eaten and are refreshed, the diners move; from one vantage spot to another. The view, familiar to all climbers of mountains in this area, never failing to awe and delight, spreads out and out. It moves from the tiny parked cars far below to Sedona -- white specks and sparkling window specks; to a glimpse here and there between hills of Oak Creek, its cottonwoods almost bare now, with their winter's cobwebby look, to the background border of red pinnacles and buttes; and far, far to the north the five blue points of the San Francisco Peaks. 'West' is Jerome, nestled in the lap of Mingus Mountain. Look where you will, there's a jewel of a vista in a pine green setting.

To the south is Housetop, a squared-off peak; the penthouse, promising even more remoteness and view, a prerogative of the highest of the high. But there's not time for it today. Consolation lies to the east -- another high level of the House. There are apartments there -- caves of long-ago inhabitants. Their viewing won't be easy, though. The mountain is sheer-faced at its top there, the way to the caves designed to discourage all but the most avidly curious.

The group divides on the ridge, those satisfied with the day returning leisurely to the cars by way of the cow trail. The rest, determined to stay until they are asked to leave, puff and wheeze up to this higher story, second, third or fourth, who knows? But just before it's reached, the way veers left and down and the scramble to the cave area begins. When Bob Watts says it'll be a scramble, he's not kidding. The caves aren't large -- pink-shale erosions at the base of a pink-sandstone cliff. When asked why there are no smoke traces on the cave ceilings, Bob says the inhabitants, departed centuries ago, were vegetarians. We think he's kidding this time.

It's really time to go now. The sun is dropping lower and there's a hint of chill in the air. The mountain is withdrawing its hospitality. But if it wants to be rid of its visitors, why make departing so difficult? The trail lies far below, nothing between it and the caves but deep rock-obstructed clefts, steep boulder-strewn slopes and wide expanses of solid red rock inclines to be inched across -- a foot set and tested before the next step is made. Lower down, at last, Turkey Creek, a red rock chute is followed until the trail is reached. The end of the day's visit draws near.

The sun has a golden, late afternoon appearance now, that northern rim of clouds is drifting up into the sky. It's been a most satisfactory visit, the House's reception the very best. The last caller comes down and makes his way across the meadow to the cars. Close alongside the trail, a stalk of wild oat, bent by someone's passing, straightens, standing tall and slender and untouched-looking once more. We turn and gaze back up the way we've come. The same undisturbed air is settling on the slopes and trail and among the trees a beautiful wilderness area. The fantasy is over. The "house" was really the House Mountain area, a complex of ranges and peaks southwest of the Verde Valley School; the "visit" a thoroughly enjoyable new hike -- eight long, hard miles of it -- for the Sedona Westerners.

All load into the cars and start for home. The road out to the highway hasn't improved a bit since morning, but nobody minds at all.

If you didn't read last week's article -- shame on you -- the Westerner Christmas potluck is Thursday, December 9. At the Elks' Club this year. 6:00 p.m. Bring salad, dessert or main dish for eight, as well as table service. Please increase amount of food if guests are brought.

Next hike Sunday, Dec. 12, Hot Loop Trail. Departure time from east end of Bayless parking lot 1:30 p.m.

Saturday's Houseguests were: Mike Nardello, Clyde Morgan, Ada and Barry Everett, Geri and Gwen Bass, Fletcher Preston, Bob and Virginia Watts, Dan Gardner, Rudy Klassen, Virginia Gilmore, Charles Smith, Ed Long, Bill Eggert, Ray Fullerton, Lennie Lemke, Will Coe, Arnold Wehmann, Elizabeth Parks, Harry Monheim, Linda Herrmann, Dix Fagerberg, Albert Macejak, Jack Sherman, Lothar Kolbig, Lynne and Chet Tingley, Nat Egelston, Dick Stout, Volney Peck, Mary Armstrong, Charles Jorgensen, Ginny and Mark Lucas, and

Lorraine Jaquith.

Outrageous Westerners

Two weeks before Christmas. The entire Christian world is frantically writing notes in Christmas cards, wrapping packages, baking, making last-minute shopping lists and wondering why, why hadn't they started earlier as they'd sworn to do the previous year. But, wait a minute! What's that group of people doing out there on the trail up to the saddle between Horse Mesa and Sunset Mesa? Hiking? Don't they know what time of year it is? That there's work to be done? That everyone is supposed to be harried, hurried and haggard? Why, they're laughing. They look happy. And not only that, they're sweating -- in December. It's -- it's outrageous.

Not a bit. It's the Sedona Westerners; a relaxed group of individuals who believe in first things first.

There are many pleasant ways to spend a Sunday afternoon during the Christmas season. Vesper services, open houses, trimming the tree. Compared to those crossing a meadow occupied by an unfenced herd of very large, staring cattle -- very pointed horns, too -- climbing the side of a mountain on a trail so dusty fungus is probably sprouting in lungs this minute, teetering and stumbling up and down rock-covered slopes and, yes, sweating, might seem very far down the list of desirable activities. But to a Westerner it's wholesome exercise, companionship and a renewal of spirit which makes the Christmas frenzy bearable.

Hot Loop Trail has an intriguing sound, but the history of its naming is unknown. South of Highway 179, its higher elevation affords on one side a panoramic view of the Village of Oakcreek and the entire Big Valley area. On the other side can be seen the dark slopes of Woods Canyon, Hot Loop Canyon and in the far distance a southerly loop of 179 with shiny little moving specks of autos.

There was the soothing sound of wind in the trees along the trail, the golden weight of the sun on open slopes, and with them the peace and particular enjoyment hikers seek.

Rather than a day or a few weeks, Christmas is supposed to be a feeling; joy, love, sustentation. It's just possible that Christmas was on the Hot Loop Trail Sunday, December 12.

Next hike Sunday, December 19. Old Stage Coach Road. Northeast of Hwy. 179 and just beyond the Dry Beaver Creek bridge. This will be an easy hike. If you don't have the cards or packages mailed by now, they're going to be late anyhow, so come on out and rediscover the wonders to be had from an afternoon of hiking. Departure time from east end of Bayless parking lot -- 1:30 p.m.

Sunday's outrageously Happy Hikers were: Mike Nardello, Bill Eggert, Barbara House, Virginia Gilmore, Jeff Kempe, Lorene Hammial, Ed Long, Dan Gardner, Charles Smith, Linda and Robbie Herrmann, Lothar Kolbig, Dorothy and Elmer George, Chet and Lynne Tingley, Bob and Virginia Watts, Chuck Armstrong, Elizabeth Parks, Lew Goddard, Kelsey and Mike Tumpson, Charlotte and Bill Knight, Mabs and Stan Altpeter, Alfred and Charlotte Coxley, May and Herb Gross, Bob Boat, Will and B. Coe, Virginia and "Fitz" Fitzpatrick, Harry and B. J. Monheim, Eloise Kinley, Vince and Lee Spoor, Al Macejak, Alice and Dick Stout, Clyde and Laura Morgan, Ray Heym, Arthur and Faye Frost, Nat Egelston, Lennie and Mary Lemke, Jim Bryant, Ray and Marian Fullerton, Dix Fagerberg, Mike Trendler, Fletcher Preston, Anne and Arnold Wehmann, and

Lorraine Jaquith

Westerners Ramble

Under clouds and pallid sun
Westerners began their fun
Along the old Stagecoach Road,
Quite a historical episode,
Just beyond Dry Beaver Creek
We all turned in – this western clique.
Our fearless leader, Ed Long, said
It was just a gravel bed.
So it turned out quite a shock
As gravel turned to foot-long rock.
Then as the upper trail grew older
It changed to prickly pear and boulder.
Even with a hiking pole
We found we had to rock and roll.
The trek came easy but persistent
That caused a breathing most insistent.
Some had to pant, some had to puff,
The neophytes to gasp and huff.
We noticed then with envied fall
Some hikers did not breathe at all.
The upper lava rock was strikin'
Pretty with its chartreuse lichen.
Linda found a blue verbena
Mathing her demure demeanor.
Hazel spotted a rusty pin,
To hold an ancient wheel within?
If next to Lothar you should be
You find he whistles spasmodically.
And as for jolly Mike Nardello,
He's the helpful tailgate fellow.
In Sedona it is said
You wake each morning and see red.
Here the rolling hills grew green
Bounded by far Mingus' scene.
Up we stumbled to the edge
Of the high basaltic ledge.
Charlie went down over the rim.
That was the last we saw of him.
Dixon decided to go along, too,
And also disappeared from view.

Next weekend do not come at all
Since Christmas holds the west in thrall.
January 2nd be on hand
To prowl the Soldier's Wash's land.
And so we close lest the hike be lost
In terse verse or worse –

Faye Frost.

Hikers: Mike Nardello, Bill Eggert, Hazel Lytle, Lorene Hammial, Bob and Virginia Watts, Barbara House, Edgar Long, Charlie Smith, Linda Hermann, Ellen Hoerr, Dan Garoner, Will Coe, Lothar Kolbig, Laura and Clyde Morgan, Anne and Arnold Wehmann, Alice Etter, Mildred Jenney, Lennie Lemke, Shelley Hayes, Rudy Klassen, Harry Monheim, Arthur Frost, Casey and Irv Reimann, Annette Vass, Laurie Ahrenberg, Ed Jujan, Dixon Fagerberg, M. Trendler, F. Preston and J. Cotton.

Westerners Win 19 to 0

With rain and snow threatening, the Sedona Westerners came up with a winning play which put Old Man Weather to route. With quarterback Jim Bryant calling the play and Dix Fagerberg as substitute coach, the Westerners racked up a winning score with 19 members going around end of the airport hill.

The hike planned for this week got off to a zilch start when the assigned leader had to leave town and the subsbitute hike was washed out on account of snow. In spite of such a poor start for Sunday afternoon, all hikers agreed that the view from the top of the airport road was magnificent, with snow bringing into relief the ridges and washes of our beautiful Mogollon Rim. The beauty of the scene and our appreciative oohs and aahs were suddenly interrupted by a snowball fight between Linda Hermann and Virginia Gilmore.

The nineteen stalwarts were: Clyde Morgan, Bill Eggert, Lothar Kolbig, Alan Wehmann, Jim Bryant, Charles Smith, Arnold Wehmann, Mike Nardello, Dan Gardner, Alvan N. Adair, Vince and Lee Spoor, Linda Hermann, Harry Monheim, Mildred Janney, Alice Etter, Fletcher Preston, Virginia Gilmore, D. Fagerberg and Will Osborn.

The first monthly meeting of the new year (Happy New Year!) will be held on January 13, Thursday, at 7:30 p.m. at the Brewer Road School, and we will be entertained by Arthur and Faye Frost with a slide show of their travels titled "Far Flung Treks." Let's all show up and find out just how far a Frost can fling a trek.

Jim Bryant

Young Westerner Leads Hike

"And a little child shall lead them." Bob Watts, Trail Boss of the Westerners, did his part in making that propheey come true when he appointed Robbie Herrmann leader of the hike to the top of Cockscomb Mountain. Robbie, who is about twelve, is well-qualified to lead for he had lived several months at the Tupper Tree Farm and has thoroughly explored the area.

To toss in another scriptural quote, "those of little faith" missed a hike that must rank with the best in the Westerners' repertoire. Sunday's weather had been foreboding – cloudy and chilly – but by the time the hike had turned into a climb the clouds yielded to the smiling sun. Before we neared the top, many had shed the extra sweater or jacket.

Part way up someone pointed out a shrub as Mormon Tea. When some indicated an interest in brewing it, Hazel Lytle warned, "Be careful; that has LDS in it."

"LSD?" we gasped.

"No," replied Hazel. "LDS – Latter Day Saints!"

The final scramble to the mesa required a boost or a helping hand for some, but the view was worth the struggle. The sun's warmth and the stimulus of the prospect will provide an inward smile for days to come.

On the flat top, pools of water lay evaporating coolly in shallow basins. Pinnacles had been shaped by centuries of erosion into rounded figures. One resembled a salt shaker.

A great chasm cuts into the mesa and disappears under the top rock layer. On the other side, the beginning of a similar split can be seen. Robbie said he had explored it part way and could crawl through, down and out the other side with the aid of a rope. "Don't do it alone!" we said.

Far below the Tupper Tree Farm lay in its geometric exactness. A tiny earthmover scuttled back and forth like an orange beetle. The pulsing sound of its motor floated clearly up to us reminding of man and his temporary effect on nature. The hills, too, look down. "We can wait," they say.

A huge rock platform projecting over an abyss was inspected by engineer Volney Peck. He claimed that much of its mass was beyond its center of gravity. B. Coe bet him that it would be still there five years from now. That wager is now officially recorded in this publication. Dixon Fagerberg made a learned comment about static friction versus dynamic friction and ended with this deathless observation: "When something isn't stable, don't horse around!"

Lorraine Jaquith, our regular reporter, could not be present. She is recovering from back trouble and from giving birth to a grandson in California. The following, Lorraine, all missed you:

Mike Nardello, Bill Eggert, Mildred Janney, Hazel Lytle, Virginia Gilmore, Alice Etter, Bob and Virginia Watts, Clyde Morgan, Ed Woods, Geri Bass, Alvin N. Adair (who put his x's on the roll), Charles Smith, and Jean Wolfer (who objected to being called boisterous in last week's report. Should it be girlsterous?), Pat and George Hugill.

Others who climb Cockscomb were Fletcher Preston, Will Coe and B, Volney Peck, Mabs and Stan Altpeter, Randy and Nancy Powell, Andy Sullivan, Art Frost, Robbie and Linda Herrmann, Lothar Kolbig, Harry Monheim, Bill Helmcke, Alice and Dick Stout, Romeo D'Angelo, Dix Fagerberg, W. G. Stoneman, Betty Holman, Mary Theresa Mertz, Nat Egelston, and Will Osborn.

Our next hike will be an all-day mystery jaunt led by Jim Bryant on Saturday, January 29. Meet with lunch and water at the Balas parking lot at 9:30.

Charles Jorgensen.

Alphabet Stew for Westerners

High clouds, high patches of snow and high-spirited Westerners; good things do indeed come in threes.

Sunday's hike, entitled, A GRAND TOUR OF CENTRAL PARK, became, before it was over, a grand scramble to the top of Sugar Loaf Mountain but, tour or scramble, it was a fine way to spend a Sunday afternoon.

Sedona's Central Park is a large wilderness area surrounded by a small town, uptown and West Sedona. New York's Central Park is a small oasis in the middle of a vast city. But the two do have at least one thing in common. Jim Bryant was sporting a bandage over his left eye and claimed he'd been mugged in Central Park. Not true, of course. Dixon Fagerberg only twisted Jim's arm a little getting him to say he'd be co-leader of the day.

From the lower reaches of Brewer Road the 57 Westerners started up a narrow watercourse which divides Airport Hill and Sugar Loaf. Part way up, the group separated, everyone with last names beginning with A through L going on up the waterway, while those with last names from M through Z started up Sugar Loaf proper (at least we think they were proper). We did hear a lady Westerner complain that her shirt was too hot and an -- ah, gentleman suggest she take it off. She had another one underneath it, though, so we still say proper. Then the A through L's came back down the watercourse and started up Sugar Loaf, while the M through Z's returned down Sugar Loaf and started up the little canyon. But not all the M through Z's or the A through L's went up Sugar Loaf, and we don't know how many of the M through Z's went on up the canyon. Before you could say Abracadabra, the entire alphabet was scattered over the mountainside, stewing beneath a hot -- in February! -- sun, wondering where the path was that they'd followed last year and stopping every few minutes, on the pretense of admiring the view, to catch their breath.

The scenery was so picturesque, though, that no one's stopping was suspect. Oak Creek Canyon curled around the foot of Sugar Loaf, its trees, winter etchings, its water, glimpsed here and there, somber and colorless. On the horizon, Bell Rock was a crown jewel set in a wide red rock gap and far below on the cold-weather-browned grass of Poco Diablo golf course, sun glinted off the shaft of a golf club as a tiny figure swung it.

On top of Sugar Loaf, which is surprisingly quite level, a small room-sized circle of rocks was the object of much conjecture. Not Indian ruins or a Druid circle it was definitely decided. Its origin undoubtedly Anglo. The reason for its creation? Well, since when do Anglos have to have reasons for the things they do?

Thursday night, February 10, at the Brewer Road School, 7:30, the Westerner meeting. Edward Danson, former Director of the Museum of Northern Arizona, now Chairman of the Board, will be in charge of the program, discussing the work of the museum, its exhibits and its studies of the archaeological and anthropological background of the area. There will be slides to illustrate his speech and he will be happy to answer questions.

Next hike - Saturday, Feb. 12, Sunset Mesa. Meet at Bayless parking lot at 9:30 a.m. Bring lunch and water.

Sunday's A through Z's were: Volney A. Peck, Charles Jorgensen, Bill Eggert, Marie and Art Harvey, Helen and Merv Hoffman, Dix Fagerberg, Casey and Irv Reimann, Charlotte and Al Coxley, Hazel Lytle, May and Herb Gross, Bob and Virginia Watts, Alice and Dick Stout, Dorothy and Elmer George, Chet and Lynne Tingley, Louis Middlestrob, Rene LaRue, Dan Gardner, Jean and Jack Stratton, Harry Monheim, Maurie Haywood, Alvin A. Adair, Randy Powell, Jim Bryant, Betty and Ford Grant, Virginia Gilmore, Linda Herrmann, Will Coe, Anne and Arnold Wehmann, Nat and Sue Egelston, Russ Johnson, Bettie Johnson, Betty Holman, Mary Theresa Mertz, Fletcher Preston, Sarah Pierce, Jeff Kemp, Mildred Janney, Alice Etter, Art Frost, Barbara House, Romeo D'Angelo, Charles Smith (forgot to sign in, didn't you?), Dana Morgenson (you, too, Dana), and

Lorraine Jaquith.

Westerners Spend Day In Mystery Canyon

Jim Bryant, leader of the Westerners' all-day hike last Saturday, spoke to the assembled hikers. "I called this a mystery hike because I wanted to keep it a secret from the rain gods."

Jack Sherman glanced at the sky and muttered, "Maybe there was a leak."

However, the fifty hikers climbed into vehicles and drove to the eastern boundary of Chapel Vista. Over a barbed-wire fence, a piece of sheet metal had been folded; this proved to be a great invention -- an unpatented pants protector.

Here, one by one, we stepped over the fence leaving suburbia and entering the mystery of an unnamed canyon and following a trail that is also a mystery. Who built this well-planned path? Markers are frequent. Turns are lined with rows of rocks or indicated by sticks. "When you come to a stick, turn," advised Jim, "and you won't get lost." Of course, the wags had fun with that! "How small a stick counts?" "If the stick turns and hisses, run!"

Was this trail built by the CCC boys? (After noon when we found the markings petering out, someone said that it probably marked the end of the depression.) Was it done by someone in more recent times? The lichens and moss on some of the curve-marking rocks indicate they were laid many years ago. Can any old-timer give the Westerners the history of this mystery? In the meantime, we'll call it the Mystery Trail into Mystery Canyon, a most enchanting place.

Jim pointed out Chicken Rock. Later in the day when we passed another similar rock with a knob on top, someone identified that too as Chicken Rock. Each was said to be the place where the jeeps cruise to determine which of the passengers are "chicken." Are there two such points in addition to Submarine Rock?

We hiked on the innocent side of Bad Boy Rock. It is strange that this landmark, easily seen from uptown Sedona, is not familiar to more people. We walked through secret patches of snow that for weeks have stayed hidden from the sun.

Reggie Tucker was back with us this day and compared cameras with Art Harvey, the Westerners' "official photographer."

Lothar Kolbig talked of his upcoming film show at the Camera Club meeting, of the countries in which he has hiked, and of his need for more pictures from Nepal -- an excuse for another trip to the other side of the world.

We stopped for lunch in a rugged amphitheater where Ginny Watts pointed out a sentinel rock known as Aunt Jemima. It has been long since she last called "Y'all come!" but she still stands aloof, waiting, trying to ignore the syrup she has spilled down her apron.

Here most relaxed for a noon hour while others walked on to see what was around the next curve. These included Arnold Wehmann, Rudy Klassen, Jack Sherman, Bill and Evelyn Helmke, Charlie Smith, Dix Fagerberg and Linda Herrmann. They played a game of adding rocks to the trail-marking cairns, attempting to be the last to add one more smaller one. Evelyn was declared the winner.

We studied the possibilities of climbing from this canyon to the top of Lee Mountain which Dix says is a part of the greater Munds Mountain. The most likely way would be up Charlie Smith Gully, by golly! Also studied were the pock-marked walls. Those holes, Charlie said, were made by Havasupai woodpeckers (rockpeckers?) whose beaks have carbine tips. Despite that, we would have given Charlie credit for being an expert outdoorsman and trail-finder had he not shown his weakness by leading Linda away from the trail into the mysterious juniper forest. It's a good thing we were there to save them from getting lost!

Beside those mentioned above, these spent a day following Mystery Trail: Mabs and Stan Altpeter, Mildred Janney, Bill Eggert, Virginia Gilmore, Bob and Virginia Watts, Ed Long, Hazel Lytle, K. D. Gardner, Pat Boufford, Chris Whitman, Barbara House, John F. Kline, Helen Hoffman, Alvin Adair, Jo Barthold, Ed Edwards, Alice and Dick Stout, Eric Jensen, Geri Bass, Fletcher Preston, Art Frost, Charles Armstrong, Chet and Lynne Tingley, Virginia and Mark Lucas, Romeo D'Angelo, Betty and Russell Johnson, Betty Holman, Lew Goddard and Jean Wolfer.

The hike this Sunday will be, according to Bob Watts, "a Central Park tour to Sugar Loaf Mountain." Visitors are welcome. Meet at the east end of the Bayless parking area at 1:20 for a 1:30 departure.

Charles Jorgensen.

Westerners, Nature Celebrants

"It's a long way to go to milk a cow," said Charlie Smith. And it certainly was. Especially when everyone knew there were no cows on Sunset Mesa. Not even any sign of them. Absent, also, was the tail wind promised by Bob Watts, dashing the Westerners' hopes of being airborne to the mountain's flat top.

That was the only dashing to take place all day. A quick pace was out of the question, either going up or down the trail. Trail? Read that, ghost of a trail. Years ago, cattle actually were grazed on the mesa, but only remnants of the way up there remain now. And what a trail it must have been. Some of the switchbacks are so sharp a cow would have to be hinged in the middle to make them. Matter of fact, we saw a few Westerners just about come unhinged. Frequent rest stops (a Westerner euphemism for "Drop in your tracks and pant") were necessary but, although it was a stiff scramble, it wasn't too long and the top was reached shortly after eleven.

Lunch was eaten on the east edge of the mesa. Blue sky, warm sun and a gentle breeze presided over the scene while white contrails streaked overhead like Fourth of July rockets.

Relaxing while they ate, and a little quiet, the hikers contentedly surveyed one of the reasons for their being there -- the view. (Another reason, perhaps the most important, is the inner compulsion a Westerner has to be out of doors, celebrating nature, reduced in stature, but not significance. There are many ways to restore one's soul, but none better.)

Down below, on the opposite hillside, the narrow brown tracery of Hot Loop Trail caught the eye. Farther down, on the bottom, Dry Beaver Creek was a rock-mosaic curve appearing out of the far reaches of Woods Canyon. Woods is a favorite of ours. Its looming, thickly forested sides, unbroken by red rocks, always look dark and somber, the effect heightened by the black basalt crowns they wear. It has an untouched-by-civilization look and its depths are blue as though the sun never quite penetrates there either.

When backpacks were emptied of food, down to the last crumb - nature celebrating is hungry work -- the tour of the mesa began.

In the 12th and 13th centuries, Indians must have hunted there and had temporary lodgings because an occationsl pot sherd can be found, but there are no evidences of permanent abodes. Since then, only the aforementioned cows, wildlife and hikers have enjoyed its remoteness and peace and the complete circle of view it affords. South, running through the hills, is Highway 179 on its way to the freeway. West is the micro-civilization of the Village of Oakcreek, smooth terrain in a land of rocks, neatly parcelled by side roads. To the north, standing solitarily, like a gate keeper to that land of rocks, is Bell Rock. Chuck Jorgensen suggested that Bell is alone because, back in the beginning of time when it really was a bell, it made so much noise its neighbors moved away. Whatever the reason, it is an impressive fairy-tale sight as one drives in from the south; a foretaste of the colorful wonders which lie beyond it.

Full circle of the mesa and Lennie Lemke's red bandana fluttered from the top of a dead branch, marker for the place of descent. The group rested awhile, some visiting, some preparing themselves for the plunge. No stops were called on the way down, primarily because of momentum and the law of gravity. Rocks rolled, feet slipped, a few bottoms plunked down onto the trail, but Westerners tend to bounce and there were no casualties. Back down at the cars, Barbara House called out cheerfully, "Just call me old rubber legs," echoing the limp feelings of a number of hikers. A great hike, a beautiful day, a lovely group of people. Put them all together and you have -- THE GOOD LIFE.

Next hike Sunday, February 20. North trail of Wilson Mountain. Departure time from east end of Bayless parking lot 1:30 p.m. Keep your fingers crossed for no snow and lots of warm sun so the trail will be clear. This hike was rained out last spring and all are looking forward to it now.

Dan Gardner found a red, black and white plaid scarf on the Sugar Loaf hike. Anyone lose it?

Saturday's loverly people were: Charles Smith, Edgar Long, Bill Eggert, Barbara House, Mike Nardello, Lothar Kolbig, Alvin Adair, Maurie Haywood, Dan Gardner, Will Coe, Arnold Wehmann, Net Egelston, Linda Herrmann, Dick Stout, Russ and Bettie Johnson, Virginia Gilmore, Bob and Virginia Watts, Helen and Merv Hoffman, Marvin and Mary Helen Sharp, Mildred Janney, Jeffrey Hatch, Debbie Baker, Betty Holman, Romeo D'Angelo, Mary Theresa Mertz, John Kline, Charles Jorgensen, Lynne and Chet Tingley, Mark and Ginny Lucas, Mary and Lennie Lemke, Jean H. Wolfer, Dick Hamilton, Jack Sherman, Dana Morgenson, Rudy Klassen, Fletcher Preston, and Lorraine Jaquith.

Verde Hot Springs Ferry
by Lew Goddard

by A. Coxley

Chimney Rock

Westerners Get Away from It All

Sedona was jampacked with tourists, Oak Creek Canyon sardine-can-full of picnickers and creek viewers. It was a three-day weekend. The sky was cloudless, temperature in the mid-seventies, a holiday atmosphere prevailed. Through this profusion of California license plates, soft drink cans and city dwellers in tank tops and cut-offs drove the Sedona Westerners, business-like (well, sort of) clad incongruously in boots, wind breakers and gloves.

Had they taken leave of their senses? No. Weren't they aware of the heat and the fun-time spirit? Of course. Sedona Westerners simply know a better way to enjoy life.

It was Sunday, February 20 and the Westerners were hiking the North trail of Wilson Mountain; their objective the first bench, which is about 6200 feet elevation. Within half an hour after setting forth on the trail out of the Encinosa Campground, the hikers had left behind the carpet of pine needles and oak and maple leaves and were in the first snow. From there to the bench they waded alternately through snow, slush, ice and mud. Occasional relief from the damp was offered by dry stretches of trail, but those were, generally, boulder-studded, steep switchbacks. All in all, North Wilson Trail cannot be considered suitable for a relaxed afternoon jaunt -- except for Westerners, of course.

The trail winds up a deep canyon. Alternating with patches of sun are shadowed stands of tall, slender pines which cool the air, while sunshine is a high, distant gilding on the cliffs. In the clearings it was warm and those with snow were rapidly becomine mires of mud and running water. Walking uphill with a pound of mud on each boot may be unhandy, but it's great for developing leg muscles and sense of balance.

As with many of the Westerners' hiking trails, North Wilson was once a cow trail up to the bench and mountaintop where cattle were grazed in the spring. It fell into disuse after the cattlemen quit using it, then, four years ago Myrtle Smith, one of Sedona's first ladies, suggested to the Forst Service that the trail's restoration would be a good project for them. They agreed and set to work, aided by Myrtle who went up with them each day to be certain they followed the right course of that old trail.

All who enjoy that hike now owe you much, Myrtle.

Hike leaders have certain qualifications. They must be willing to be one, first of all. They must be a good hiker, know the trails and have plenty of stamina. Bob Watts, Ed Long, Dick Stout, Jim Bryant, Dix Fagerberg and all the other leaders certainly qualify there, but, fellows, no one could ever say you're pretty, vivacious or have a neat little figure. No way. Sunday's leader had all your abilities, plus those last three. Linda Herrmann, always out in front on all the hikes, accepted and carried out the job like an old timer; setting a good pace and calling the necessarily frequent stops. So, male leaders, if you should ever begin feeling smug, think of Linda. But don't let it get to be a habit.

On the bench, or meadow, a small group of the hikers decided to cross over to the far side in order to look down on Sedona. This was accomplished with much heavy-footed slogging through mud, but it was worth every slog.

Another dream-like vista: Fantasyland and pinnacles and buttresses of red rock rising out of green wooded slopes; Midgely Bridge a distant arched web with shiny specks crawling across it; Sedona, laced into the valley at Oak Creek Canyon's mouth by a multitude of roads; Courthouse Rock far beyond, its clusters of spires explaining the reason it's become known as Cathedral; and on the horizon the omnipresent, misty blue mountain ranges. Worth every slog, indeed.

The city dwellers, tourists and California license plates had a good thing in Sedona and the canyon, but the Westerners knew what they were doing when they sought the heights.

Next hike Sunday, February 27. Wilson Canyon. Departure time from Bayless parking lot 1:30 p.m.

Sunday's non-sardines were: Mike Nardello, Virginia Gilmore, Dan Gardner, Hazel Lytle, Robert, Bill Eggert, Barbara House, Robbie and Linda Herrmann, Mr. and Mrs. McHarrold, Bob and Virginia Watts, Ed Long, Art Harvey, Helen Hoffman, Vera Zimmerman, Laura and Clyde Morgan, Dorothy and Elmer George, Lynne and Chet Tingley, Wilma Williams, Dot and Randy Powell, Arnold Wehmann, Fletcher Preston, Lennie and Mary Lemke, Rockwell Ceir, Will Osborn, Geri Bass, Alice Stout, John Kline, Steve Pietuenti, Albert Macejak, Art Frost, Nat and sue Egelston, Will and B. Coe, Claude and Marion Rogers, Bettie and Russell Johnson, Mary and Dix Fagerberg, Nina and Glenn Braun, Jean and Jack Stratton, Mary Armstrong, Laurel and Lee Brodt, Jeffrey Hatch, Charles Jorgensen, Jean Metts, Punkie Byrer, Charles and Elizabeth Darby, Dana Morgenson, Casey and Irv Reimann, and, of course,

Lorraine Jaquith.

Westerners Hike Into a Memorial

Wilson Canyon, rising gradually from Midgely Bridge for about two miles, ends against high sandstone cliffs. It is a classic box canyon, but it has exits. Leading off to the right shortly after leaving the parking area at the bridge is the south trail up Wilson Mountain. Going up left is the trail to Steamboat Rock.

But for Richard Wilson, an old bear hunter from Arkansas, there were no exits in June of 1885. On his way down from Indian Gardens by way of the wagon road Jim Thompson,his partner, had built, Mr. Wilson spotted a huge grizzly bear in the canyon. He was armed only with a light rifle as his bear gun was in Prescott for repairs. Having hunted bear for years, the old man had no fear of them, though, took a shot at the grizzly, only wounded it, then foolishly followed it up into the box. It was waiting for him in a thicket of brush, and the only thing more dreadful than a grizzly is a wounded grizzly. It pulled the old man down from the tree he was trying to climb, mauled him horribly, then went off leaving him to die.

It was a terrible way to die and if Mr. Wilson could have had a choice, he undoubtedly would have wished for an easier way to go, but because of it, a canyon and a mountain are named for him.

For an old man who thought to end his days as a vegetable gardener in Indian Gardens, that's pretty substantial recompense.

Westerners didn't go all the way up the canyon Sunday, February 27, as the last distance to the cliffs is steeper, brushier and a jumble of rocks. The approximate mile and a half they did hike up, though, was an experience in the quiet beauty to be had in groves of Arizona cypress, the exalting beauty of carved red pinnacles soaring above the trees -- dazzlingly backlighted by the sun -- and the satisfying beauty of being with others who enjoy such outings.

The bottom of the canyon, the watercourse, is an upheaval of rocks and fallen logs in places, solidly paved with red rock in others. It descends from the cliffs in a series of recesses -- step-downs -- some of these with thin trickles of snow-melt falling over them. In deeply shaded spots, pools of water were still iced over, but for all the coolness, Westerners shed layers of jackets and sweaters as they climbed. the heat from all the required exertion to scramble up over the recesses or around them probably melted what was left of the snow. Too bad it won't do the same for the pounds most of us would like to be rid of.

Where the trail led through mud, the Westerners' boot tracks will harden and leave a record of their having been there, at least until the next rain or snow -- Mother Nature's eraser.

When the stopping point up the canyon was reached, a few enthusiasts went on, scrambling and clawing up through brush thickets to high rock promontories. Being such an enthusiast can lead to moments of doubt. When you're flat on your stomach, inching up over a rock shelf, with ground-hugging branches of an Arizona cypress tearing to bits a hairdo supposed to last a week, you tend to think -- what am I DOING here? Then you reach the viewpoint and the answer spreads out and below you. The blue-green swath of the canyon winding away at your feet; distant mountains with a powdered sugar sprinkling of snow; timeless sandstone cliffs at your back reducing you in size while they elevate your spirit. You stand silently and think, then -- No man could ask for a greater monument, Richard Wilson. Wherever you are, we hope you know about it.

Next evening meeting Thursday, March 10, Brewer Road School, 7:30 p.m. John Kline, astronomer and explorer of the High Sierras will show slides and speak about Sequoia National Park.

Next hike Saturday, March 5. Bear Mountain. A different approach which is not so long or high up and Bob Watts promises a view like none we've ever seen. Can that be possible? Come out and see.

Sunday's Kanyon Kids were: Mike Nardello, Hazel Lytle, Bob and Virginia Watts, Geri Bass, Ford Grant, Will Osborn, Barbara House, Fletcher Preston, Linda Herrmann, Ed Long, Dan Gardner, A. N. Adair, Charles Smith, Val, Arnold Wehmann, Herb Haller, Lew Goddartd,

Dick Stout, Charles Jorgensen, Barbara Joukovsky, Laura and Clyde Morgan, Nina and Glenn Braun, Jack Stratton, Dorothy and Elmer George, Chet and Lynne Tingley, Ray Heym, Virginia Gilmore, Eugenia Everett, Jean Metts, Casey and Irv Reimann, Dot and Randy Powell, Jeffrey Hatch, Laurel P. Brodt, Lee Brodt, Elizabeth Darby, Dana Morgenson, Jack Sherman, and

Lorraine Jaquith.

Sedona Westerners View Page from History

Westerners went to look at a "still life" Saturday, March 5. But, before you get too interested, art lovers, read on.

High, high on the side of Bear Mountain is an overhang which shelters a long ledge. One small section of that overhang is blackened by the smoke of many fires, and scattered about on the ledge beneath the dark ceiling are remains of what might have been -- did you guess? a STILL.

There are barrels, all but one of them collapsed into piles of hoops and staves. A rotting burlap bag draped over the one intact barrel bears the imprint, Cane Sugar. There is an old-fashioned metal wash tub, several metal cans -- some five-gallon, some one-gallon. A blue granite coffee pot and sauce pan balance on rocks; there is a rusty skillet, some eating utensils and what appears to be a small, metal salt shaker.

The pun aside, it really was a still life -- a grouping of objects compatible to each other by the uses they'd been put to, telling a story, arousing, if not emotion, at least a lot of curiosity about the long-abandoned site.

Of course, it might have been just a hermit's cave. A flourishing still isn't the type of busines which advertises, with signs pointing the way. But if the cave's occupant was a hermit, he certainly used a lot of sugar in his coffee. And if the wash tub was merely for Saturday night baths, that was a mighty breezy, exposed place to take one.

Hermit or moonshine entrepreneur, the location couldn't have been better. It offered concealment, privacy and unparalleled beauty of surroundings. Not that the latter would have mattered much if the cave was only a place of business.

But perhaps that's why it was abandoned so suddenly that the pots and pans were left behind -- the still owner, exposed day after day to nature's perfection and peace, suffered enlightenment and rejoined society to spend the rest of his life building orphanages and helping little old ladies across the street.

The cave, as objective of the hike, was interesting and worth every bit of the considerable effort to reach it. The rest of the day was pure delight. Wind was so strong at times the usual panting on the inclines became a hazard. Open your mouth for a gasp of air and you took in a bucketfull. Good thing it wasn't helium. The sky would have been full of 41 fatly-inflated Westerners wafting about.

In areas protected from the wind's buffeting, the blue of sky, gold of sun, the panorama of cliffs and pinnacles, trees and canyons became an inner experience rather than visual. One felt steeped in glory. The human perimeter faded and all that was left was quiet happiness in a supreme creation which included oneself.

And that, for those who haven't had the experience, is the reason hikers hike.

For a few, a side excursion up a small canyon was a bonus. In some stretches, the water course was worn deeply through solid red rock, in others it was a tangle of interlaced trees and boulders. There were small pools with ice so thick it bore a hiker's weight, shadowed glades enclosed by sandstone cliffs, fallen drifts of maple leaves in sunlight. And there was Alice Stout working her way through a rock crevice, looking for all the world like a hobbit emerging grom its burrow. Those of you familiar with Tolkien know that hobbits are the dearest creatures there are, Bilbo Baggins in particular; so that truly was a compliment, Alice.

That's the way it goes department: Ed Long, who's survived hundreds of hikes, fell over a footstool in his home and had to miss Saturday's expedition. Your friend, Charlie Smith, furnished this item, Ed. He thought it would cheer you up to see it in print.

Don't forget the meeting thursday, Mardch 10. Brewer Road School. 7:30 p.m.

Next hike Sunday, March 13. Mormon Canyon by way of Soldier's Wash. Or maybe it's the other way around. Better come to the meeting to find out. Departure time from east end of Bayless parking lot, 1:30 p.m.

Saturday's archaeologists were: Mike Nardello, Charles Smith, Barbara House, Bill Eggert, Lew Goddard, Bob and Virginia Watts, Alice Stout, Art Frost, Will Osborn, Ed Edwards, Jo Barthold, Jean and Orv Metts, Fletcher Preston, Geri Bass, Herb Haller, Lennie and Mary Lemke, Arnold Wehmann, Marge Herkenham, Ada Everett, Clyde and Laura Morgan, Linda and Robbie Herrmann, Hazel Lytle, Charlie Kacsun, Russell Johnson, Lorene Hammial, Romeo D'Angelo, Jeffrey Hatch, Virginia Gilmore, Bettie Johnson, Dix Fagerberg, Betty Holman, Jack Sherman, Mary Theresa Mertz, Will and B. Coe, and Lorraine Jaquith.

'Still life' attracts local hike enthusiasts

by Lorraine Jaquith

Westerners (hiking group) went to look at a "still" life last Saturday. But, before you get too interested, art lovers, read on.

High, high on the side of Bear Mountain is an overhang which shelters a long ledge. One small section of that overhang is blackened by the smoke of many fires and scattered about on the ledge beneath the dark ceiling are remains of what might have been — did you guess? — a still.

There are barrels, all but one of them collapsed into piles of hoops and staves. A rotting burlap bag draped over the one intact barrel bears the imprint, Cane Sugar. There is an old-fashioned metal wash tub, several metal cans — some five-gallon, some one-gallon. A blue granite coffee pot and sauce pan balance on rocks. There is a rusty skillet, some eating utensils and what appears to be a small metal salt shaker.

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Don't forget the meeting tomorrow (Thursday) at Brewer Road School at 7:30 p.m.

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Windy Walk for Westerners

Why didn't someone think to take a kite? The wind on that high Schnebly Hill mesa was strong Sunday, and it's March, the month for kites.

Kites and children go together and there were, unexpectedly, three children on the hike. Kevin, Keith and Kathleen Frazier, ages seven, nine and twelve, darting like sparrows, who lighthearted and lightfooted were Westerners, who generally appear agile and fleet, picked their way carefully over the rock-strewn mesa, looking by comparison somewhat ancient.

March is also the doorway between winter and spring and harbingers of that warm, scented season were a few tiny wildflowers thrusting up delicate cups of white or pink or lavender between the gray rocks. We saw more than one Westerner down on his knees examining and exclaiming over the little beauties and it was a heartwarming sight. Anyone can go into raptures over an orange-fired sunset or a picture postcard view of the red rocks, but it takes a hiker, a lover of all aspects of nature, to see such minute clusters of fragile petals and find joy in them.

Lambs gambol in spring and lovers stroll. Sunday's hike had that, too. There was Mike Nardello (a lamb if we ever saw one) frisking about, and there were Linda Herrmann and Jeff Hatch walking hand in hand (sigh).

Why was Mike darting from behind one tree to another? There were still patches of snow at that higher level – just enough for a barrage of snowballs of the unwary hikers as they trailed past. The identity pepperoni, – and who but Mike Nardello would take along a bag of that pungent sausage on a hike?

As for Linda and Jeff – well, wouldn't you?

From the mesa can be seen a new view of Wilson Mountain. Its entire high, sloping meadow is visible, backdropped by its jutting rocky prominence. On the left can be seen the point where South Trail comes up and on the right the higher wooded area which is the head of North Trail. All who love that mountain and its two trails paused to admire it.

The objective of the hike, two miles across the mesa from the parked cars, was a beautiful view of mund's Canyon, a tiny-sized Indian Gardens far below in Oak Creek Canyon and the San Francisco Peaks with a light frosting of snow. For most of the hikers, this was rock protuberances while higher up are, yet, just Mund's Canyon from a different angle. Unlike Woods number of the black stratum. The pebbly looking Woods Canyon's one crowning ledge of basalt, but a though, in its creek bed, are the same bluish shade, rocks, in its creek bed, are the same bluish shade, probably and our geology informed friends could explain that.

On the opposite side of the canyon a trail swings long switchbacks up until it disappears in the rocks. This trail, on more recent maps, is known as Thompson's Ladder, while an earlier map of Charlie Smith's locates a trail by that name a little farther up the canyon.

Charlie and Dixon Fagerberg attempted to climb the northernmost trail and report it has been made impassable by weathering and rock slides. And if those two say it can't be climbed, you'd better believe it.

by Jim Thompson's Ladder, as it's known, was a trail built Indian Gardens where he lived to the mesa high above.

He kept a wagon up there and all the garden produce he intended for market was packed up on horses, loaded into the wagon and taken to Flagstaff. On the return trip, the supplies he'd purchased were packed down.

It takes a whole crew of Forest Service men to build such a trail these days, but Jim Thompson did it alone and that canyon side is high and rocky. Jim had a number of boys, though, and we hope they helped their hardy father.

Next hike Sunday, March 20, Boynton Canyon. Not as easy as this hike was, but worth every step. Departure time from east end of Bayless parking lot 1:30 p.m.

Sunday's kite-forgetters (shame) were: Mike Nardello, Bill Eggert, Lenaie Lemke, Geri Bass, Herb Hatler, Punkie Byrer, Jean Mettes, Art Harvey, Linda Herrmann, Caroline and Ed Long, Harry and Evelyn Morrow, Charles Smith, Gerald and Ssera Mae Eads, Vince and Lee Spoor, Will and B. Coe, Dan Gardner, Alma and Paul Greene, Laura and Clyde Morgan, Ada and Barry Everett, Alice Etter, John L. Kline, Anne Arnold Wehrmann, Jean and Jack Stratton, Jean Allen, Jim Bryant, Hazel Lyrle, May and Herb Gross, Will Osborn, Lorene Hammial, Ray Hevrn, Wilma Williams, Lynne and Chet Tingley, Robert D. Sykes, Emily Sykes, Barbara Frazier, Kevin, Keith and Kathleen Frazier, Bob and Virginia Watts, Randy Powell, Jack Sherman, Fr. Clem Procopio, Jeff Hatch, Romeo and Lillian D'Angelo, Dana Morgenson, Eleanor A. Hubbard, Sr., Betty Holman, Fletcher Preston and Lorraine Jaquith.

SYCAMORE CANYON
PHOTOGRAPHY BY SANDY SANFORD

Long-Ago Community Charms Westerners

A jeep trail winding up through oak and manzanita brush and juniper, a footpath leading higher through ponderosa where vehicles can no farther go, soaring red canyon walls on either side. A familiar sight to Westerners, but Boynton Canyon has something else – in the neighborhood of 3,000 Indian ruins; and that makes it some neighborhood.

The canyon walls are weathered into uncountable caves or ledges with overhangs and in nearly everyone large enough to provide shelter can be seen fallen rock walls of the ancient Indian structures. Each ruin would have been home to as many families as there were rooms in the cluster. Multiply that by 3,000 and a vision arises of the canyon teeming with life five or six hundred years ago. Small brown figures busy in the caves, going up and down the canyon walls, tilling the corn fields, the laughter of children. As many people as there are in Sedona, and all in the confines of one canyon.

Of course, all the caves may not have been occupied at the same period, but even so, the canyon catches the imagination as much as Adolph Bandelier's Rito de los Frijoles does in his THE DELIGHT MAKERS. And Boynton is a lot classier name. Imagine getting mailed addressed to Bean Canyon.

There are springs in some of the caves, a source of drinking water, but crops would have been planted on the floor of the canyon, perhaps in the meadow where Westerners parked their cars. That would have necessitated much going up and down the cliff faces and some of the ruins are so high and apparently unreachable that it seems incredible they could have housed anything but eagles.

There have undoubtedly been changes in the canyon walls in the half a century or more since the Sinagua (an educated guess) Indians lived there, though. Ledges fallen away into rock jumbles, hand and foot niches weathered smooth. Somehow the cliff dwellers got up there, and if you've never seen an escalator, you don't miss it.

Jeff Hatch, a new leader, who graciously volunteered for the job when Bob Watts had to be away, took the hikers a couple of miles up the canyon while Linda Herrmann conducted a bonus excursion up to one of the ruins which has a spring, a superb view of the canyon and a narrow ledge leading to a window rock for the more daring.

Robbie Herrmann, age 11, and Jeff Comer, age 14, after receiving permission, took a tour of their own up the other side of the canyon and discovered another ruin with springs. If you haven't heard from them yet, Bob Watts, you will, as the find excited them so much they're eager to lead a hike there.

The Westerners are "busting out all over" with new hikers, and it's great. What most of us had to wait until retirement for is now, in part at least because of the Westerners, coming to the attention and enthusiasm of young people. Perpetuity for the organization is thus ensured. And all who saw Robbie and Jeff Comer's faces when they came down off the cliff were delighted.

Boynton Canyon has another intriguing feature – a pink elephant. No, it wasn't all that Irish coffee and green beer from the St. Pat's Day festivities the day before. It's really there. A great, weathered form standing head-on in a two or three-story crevice, with the same look of patient resignation of all elephants.

Some of the hikers turned aside from the trail to climb up above the canyon floor into the crevice and sit at the feet of the elephant. There's a good view from that spot, but after eons it probably has palled a bit. That, plus being stuck in a crack in the rocks for all those centuries probably accounts for the look of resignation. If he hasn't a name, we herewith dub that mighty elephant Job.

Boynton Canyon is jointly owned by the Edward Marslands and the Forest Service. Permission to enter it must be obtained, a gate and a gate keeper passed through and by. Westerners feel fortunate that their reputation as respecters of nature gains them entrance whenever they ask.

It was a day of staring wonder and peaceful contemplation, of standing in last year's dead leaves while admiring shiny, bright green, bead-like buds on scrub oak, a day to send every hiker home to shower, eat heartily and know that among the most fortunate people in the world are the Sedona Westerners.

Next hike Saturday, March 26. Sycamore Canyon. There'll be some rockhopping, perhaps some mud, and a stiff climb back out after you're already tired. But those who know and love that hike won't care. Departure time from east end of Bayless parking lot, 9:30 a.m. Bring lunch and water.

Sunday's charmed charmers were: Mike Nardello, Dan Gardner, Reggie Tucker, Robbie and Linda Herrmann, Jeff M. Hatch, Bill Eggert, Charlie Kacsur, Hazel Lytle, Connie and Harvey Carey, Laura and Clyde Morgan, Ada and Barry Everett, John and Marie Gibbs, Ned and Charlotte Manta, Alice Etter, Mildred Janney, George Pickard, Vince and Lee Spoor, Elmer George, Lennie Lemke, Jean Metts, May and Herb Gross, Geri Bass, Myrtle Smith, Fletcher Preston, Rudy Klassen, Debbie Rejba, Mary Armstrong, Sandy Sanford, Bill and Charlotte Knight, Lorene Hammial, Anne and Arnold Wehmann, Mori Hecherman, Helen and Merv Hoffman, Marge Herkenham, Jean and Jack Stratton, Virginia Bake, Dot and Randy Powell, Bob Powell, Rick Powell, Barbara West, Dana Morgenson, Betty Holman, Jeff Comer, Bob, Jean, Emily and Beth Sykes, Romeo and Lillian D'Angelo, Charlotte and Alfred Coxley, and Lorraine Jaquith.

Enchanted Day for Westerners

You're supposed to go UP to get to heaven, right? Wrong. You drive 14 miles from the Tuzigoot turnoff over a washboardy, dusty (despite rain and snow in Sedona) road to the rim of the Sycamore Canyon. You hike DOWN (what a shock to theology) a rocky trail about a half mile and there it is -- heaven within the walls of a canyon, as incomparable and fulfilling as it is reputed to be.

Rain and snow Friday and Friday night, a cloudy, threatening sky Saturday morning made the wisdom of a hike seem questionable. But, "We'll try it," was the decision at the parking lot despite a flurry of snow. The Pepperoni Kid tossed a snowball at Virginia Gilmore, got one back and the trek to Cottonwood began.

At the canyon rim, Al Adair, another new leader, led off down the trail. The sandy path along the creek bottom was rain-dampened and firmed enough to make walking easier than usual. Another break was the lower level of the creek which made the previous year's strenuous detours unnecessary. Spirits were high and undismayed by news that the objective of the hike, the two springs which are the source of the creek, was a long five miles upstream.

On every side was a kaleidoscope of color and texture. There were red and white canyon walls of such porosity that it seemed they must come tumbling down. Great broken rock spills leading to jumbled piles lower down were evidence that they had at one time, and could again. Staring up at them, the instinct arose to clasp one's arms over the head protectively.

Other walls were of black basalt columnar forms topped with a mightly black stone froth from a later lava flow. Devil's brew? We wondered. But no, not in heaven.

One vista was particularly appealing -- spreading cottonwoods with new, bright green leaves posed before those black walls. The color contrast intrigued, plus the thought that here, tucked away in a canyon, was an interplay of the transitory and forever; trees acting out their changing roles against a time-frozen backdrop.

Alders, standing with their feet in the water, were newly leafed out also; a darker green than the cottonwoods. Ash and sycamore were still bare, the bark of the latter smooth and cold to the touch as though winter were in its heart yet.

The creek boulders, rounded and smoothed by nature's tumbler, were vari-colored, and how else? considering the walls from which they come. There are the red of Supai, the buff of Coconino, the white of limestone, and the gray and black of basalt. A counterpane of color, with one thing in common, as with all creek rocks. Given the opportunity, they will tilt, slide or roll if you trust them your weight without a test first. Rock-hopping is an elusive art. Just when you think it accomplished, you find yourself on your backside stifling groans over the smarts of forthcoming bruises.

There was color in the creek itself. The clouded green of the water sparked with foam at the numerous falls, and the brighter green of watercress, moss, grasses and carpets of algae-type growth on the shallow, slower-moving stretches of creek.

Close to the water was much evidence of beaver. A tree, six inches in diameter, felled neatly; short stumps, cleanly incisored, all that remained of smaller trees. There was much speculation concerning the locations of the little animals' dams, but none were seen.

Accompanying the visual feast was music. The sound of tumbling, splashing water; so loud at times it reverberated against the canyon wall, giving the hiker the auditory sense of having a creek on either side. There was bird song, sweet and clear. Canyon wren, ruby-crowned kinglet, Townsend Solitaire. The short little warble of the paintedredstart, the throaty noise of a kingfisher. There was also the chittering of a squirrel on the cliff, with this unlearned reporter wanting to know what kind of bird that was. A common mistake, we were reassured.

Definitely not music to the ears were three sonic booms; which, within the walls of the canyon, really boomed.

With such a small group, and so much to see and hear, the Westerners were more subdued than usual. They walked slower, talked quietly, stopped frequently to admire yet another aspect of the fairytale day which was theirs by right of their daring to attempt it.

Lunch was eaten in a mixture of sunshine and raindrops, then, leaving backpacks there, the hike continued on to the springs.

On arrival, these were a surprise. Lower down, the creek is broad or deep and rushing, carrying a large flow of water. But its source is a shallow, greenery-choked little streamlet, barely moving, the springs themselves hidden by huge boulders. A disappointment insofar as drama is concerned and yet, if an acorn has within it a great oak, why cannot two small, unseen springs produce the beautiful Sycamore Canyon creek.

The clouds had rolled away when the hike back down began. The sky was a blue, arched canopy over the canyon while sunshine rested on the tired, happy hikers like a benediction. Driving out to the highway, a group was seen sunbathing on a sandy bank of the Verde River, and the gray morning, with its misgivings about the weather, the snow for Mike Nardello's snowball, was painted over with the melange of a joyous, peaceful day.

Next hike Sunday, April 3. Indian caves on Upper Dry Creek. Departure time from east end of Bayless parking lot 1:30 p.m.

Saturday's Sweet Sixteen (Oh, fie and shame on the rest of you) were: Mike Nardello, Bob and Virginia Watts, Bill Eggert, Sandy Sandford, Alice and Dick Stout, Dan Gardner, Alvin N. Adair, Harry Monheim, Mary Theresa Mertz, Linda Herrmann, Jeff Hatch, Dixon Fagerberg, Virginia Gilmore and

Lorraine Jaquith.

Westerners hike into Sycamore Canyon

by Lorraine Jaquith

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The clouds had rolled away when the hike back down began. The sky was a blue arched canopy over the canyon while sunshine rested on the tired happy hikers like a benediction. Driving back out to the highway, a group of persons was seen sunbathing on a sandy bank of the Verde River. The gray morning, with its misgivings about the weather, the snow for Mike Nardello's snowball, was painted over with the melange of a joyous, peaceful day.

The next hike is Sunday. Indian caves on Upper Dry Creek are the object. Departure time from the east end of Bayless parking lot is 1:30 p.m.

Saturday's Sweet Sixteen (oh fie and shame on the rest of you) were Mike Nardello, Bob and Virginia Watts, Bill Eggert, Sandy Sandford, Alice and Dick Stout, Dan Gardner, Alvin N. Adair, Harry Monheim, Mary Thersa Mertz, Linda Herrmann, Jeff Hatch, Dixon Fagerberg, Virginia Gilmore and Lorraine Jaquith.

Bice Ranch Hike, Easter Breakfast Are Number One Items for Westerners

Although Bob Watts, Trail Boss, welcomed the hiking Westerners to the "Land of the freezing and home of the brave," the weather Sunday became partly sunny and entirely pleasant for the thirty who rambled out to Bice Ranch on Dry Beaver Creek. Details of the hike will follow these announcements.

Next Sunday is Easter. On Easter there will be no hike because that is the day of the big breakfast. It is a Sedona tradition that the Westerners will serve breakfast following the Sunrise Service on Airport Hill. Therefore, all you early worshipers, come on down from the heights to the bottom of Airport Road to the Elks Clubhouse where food and drink will be awaiting you to warm your stomach and your heart. Those who can't attend the service are also welcome to eat the Westerners' fabulous fare any time between seven and ten on Sunday. The proceeds will be used for local good causes.

On Thursday following Easter, on April 14, the monthly meeting of the Westerners will be held at the Brewer Road school at 7:30. Come for a fine program.

Meanwhile, back at the ranch -- we followed a road that looped through what appeared to be a cattle grazing area. Jack Sherman said he once saw a cow so hungry that she was eating prickly pear cactus. "Then, I suppose," said Herb Haller, "she produced spiked milk!" Farther on our way down to the old corral, we passed a dry stream bed. Will Osborn asked Bob Watts what its name was. Bob said it is where a stream on occasion flows out of Hog Canyon. "Then," said Will, "it must be Hog Wash!" He later checked the map and found that the forest service prosaically merely calls it Hog Creek.

At the site of Bice Ranch, we found what was left of a dwelling that had once contained a family of seven in two rooms. The walls that had been built of mud and rock had disintegrated. Wood had been used only for the roof. Still nailed to ancient poles were hand-hewn shake shingles. Once how carefully they were overlapped into place to shield a family from the elements! Now, frail and flimsy, they seem useless for anything but kindling. Beneath that roof once lived the Bice family whose children attended the Beaver School taught by Ruth Jordan who told the Westerners about it a couple of years ago. Fun, laughter, work and hope once were part of a family life in this remote bit of Arizona.

Around their homesite these hardy ones had built a wall of blue-gray river rock. Thousands of rocks, each one handled by young and willing hands, had been placed without mortar into a wall that enclosed several acres and proclaimed to all "This is our home!" Here they tried to develop an orchard; here they raised vegetables -- enough for themselves to share with their neighbors; and they raised cattle. What happened? Why didn't they improve their home, cover the dirt floor, make permanent walls? Why did they leave? There are families named Bice now living in the Verde Valley. Perhaps they as children once lived in this home.

We walked on to inspect the largest Arizona cypress tree in this area. It was discovered a few years ago by Virginia and Bob Watts and called to the attention of the forest service. Its trunk must be close to six feet in diameter. Although some of the top limbs are dead, the rest of its wide-spreading branches seem green and vigorous, thanks, no doubt, to its nearness to a pool formed by Dry Beaver Creek.

On our way back to the cars, we saw a great bird leave a large stick-nest in a sycamore. One or two claimed it was an eagle, but ornithologist Will Osborn assured us it was probably a red-tailed hawk.

Our leader said the hike was about three miles long. There were several who walked more slowly than usual the last hill or two who asked, "You mean one way, don't you?"

Our next hike will be an all-day affair on Saturday, April 16, when we plan to go to Clear Creek. Meet at the Bayless parking lot at nine-thirty with water, lunch and a willingness to have fun with the Westerners in our stimulating part of Arizona.

Present on this Bice Ranch hike were Mike Nardello, Bill Eggert, Virginia Vincent (Welcome, Virginia, on your visit here from your forest service lookout post near Missoula, Montana.), Elizabeth Parks, Linda and Robbie Hermann, Charles Smith, Clara Burnett (We're glad you've rejoined hiking after a long absence.), Herb Haller, Bob and Virginia Watts, Ed Long, Hazel Lytle, Lorene Hammial, Alice and Dick Stout, Geri Bass, Fletcher Preston, Will Osborn, Jean Metts, Sandy Sandford, Norm and Marge Herkenham, Art Frost, John T. Sherman, Mary Theresa Mertz, Lynne and Chet Tingley. Loraine, we missed you. We hope your mother had a pleasant birthday.

Charles Jorgensen.

Westerners hike to ranch

By Charles Jorgensen

Altough Bob Watts, Trail Boss, welcomed the hiking Westerners to the "Land of the freezing and home of the brave," the weather Apr. 3 became partly sunny and entirely pleasant for the 30 who rambled out to Bice Ranch on Dry Beaver Creek.

We followed a road that looped through what appeared to be a cattle grazing area. Jack Sherman said he once saw a cow so hungry that she was eating prickly pear cactus. "Then, I suppose," said Herb Haller, "she produced spiked milk!"

Farther on our way down to the old corral, we passed a dry stream bed. Will Osborn asked Bob Watts what its name was. Bob said it is where a stream on occasion flows out of Hog Canyon. "Then," said Will, "it must be Hog Wash!"

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Loraine, we missed you.

Westerners breakfast serves 300

The Sedona Westerners served more than 300 pancakes, ham, scrambled eggs and coffee for Easter breakfasts.

A "very substantial sum" was left after expenses to be turned over to various community organizations, sponsors say.

Club members expressed appreciation for the willingness of customers to stand in line.

V.V. Independent 4/13/77

RED ROCK NEWS Sedona, Arizona Wednesday, April 6, 1977 - 3

Whether the Weather

is good or bad, the Sedona Westerners will serve their annual Easter breakfast this year. As usual, it will follow the Easter Sunrise Service conducted by the churches of Sedona.

Last year, even though Easter occurred on April 18th, the service was moved indoors to the Church of the Red Rocks because of snow the day before, and the Westerners cancelled their breakfast, much to the disappointment of many loyal supporters, but this year it will be held, regardless of the weather.

Under the able guidance of Alice Stout, the crew will be on deck starting at 5 a.m. on Sunday morning to prepare food enough for a hoped-for turnout of 400 hungry souls. And, of course, several days of planning and preparation are required in advance.

Thanks to the community spirit of the Elks, the scene will again be the ELKS LODGE at the food of Airport Road. Serving will begin at 7 a.m. and continue until 10, with the traditional menu of ham, eggs, pancakes and coffee, or milk for those who prefer it. All you can eat, as long as the food holds out.

The tariff will be $1.25 for those under 10, and $2.00 for those from 10 to 99. Anyone born before April 1877 will get a free breakfast.

All income above expenses will be donated to a worthwhile community project. We shall be happy to have visitors, newcomers and oldtimers join us, says Lew Goddard, publicity chairman.

RED ROCK NEWS Sedona, Arizona Wednesday, April 13, 1977 - 15

Westerners Breakfast: Fun, Food and Finances

A smash!! A jolly time had by all the Sedona Westerners who worked hard and fast (skateboards next year) to make their Easter breakfast successful; more than three hundred pancakes, scrambled eggs, ham and coffee filled customers; and most important of all, a very substantial fund left after expenses to be turned over to various community organizations.

Westerners are deeply grateful for Mother Nature for her gorgeous Easter weather, and if she'll come to the Elks Club next year, there'll be a free breakfast waiting for her. Honest. That's not just a sneaky way to ensure good weather next Easter.

The Westerners had such a grand time cooking and serving the breakfast, even cleaning up afterwards, that kudos are superfluous, but thanks anyhow, guys and gals: you're all dolls.

Last, but of greatest importance, the Westerners are indebted to you more than 300 people from Sedona and the Verde Valley who waited patiently in line for your breakfast. That's a lot of customers to take care of in such a short time and we doubt if many restaurants could have coped any better. Your willingness to stand in line a little while means more money for your community; maybe, even, your organization. "They also serve who only stand and wait."

Westerners encounter Eden

by Lorraine Jaquith

Twenty-five Sedona Westerners left the Bayless parking lot in Sedona at 9:30 a.m. Apr. 16 for a hike. It would be rather a long drive — 60 miles round trip — but that happens occasionally.

The sky was clear, the temperature giving promise of warmth. The pavement ended beyond the I-17 underpass and the road was dusty, but that happens occasionally, also. All indications pointed toward a stereotype of all good hikes and who could ask for more.

But, wait! What's that in the road ahead? Camels? No, just cattle. But the strange, humpbacked creatures, a Brahman cross, straying over the Arizona landscape introduce a new note to a familiar hike. It is one of many to come.

The narrow road down to the Bull Pen Ranch area affords a stirring view of Clear Creek Canyon, its winding course defined by the bright, spring-heralding green of cottonwoods.

Cars are parked outside the Bull Pen Ranch fence, sweaters and extra shirts removed in advance of the expected heat, backpacks settled in place and the hike begun. The way is a narrow, rocky road at first, alongside it the shell of a little rock-walled building. On their expeditions, Westerners have seen many long-abandoned homes and sheds, but this one is mightily different.

Out of its sod roof sprouts a small forest of prickly pear. It would not be surprising to spy a witch peeping out the door. Across, on a dark canyon wall, a red rock outcropping could be a wide-flung medieval castle — a border fortress, perhaps, to keep watch for invaders.

In the pasture, all that remains of the ranch which belonged, in the 1890s to a rancher named Ira Jones, are two mares and one very new, very lively foal. The hikers pause to admire and point cameras; the little creature grew nervous and felt the need of nurture. Its mother, though, was not about to serve lunch before a crowd of staring strangers so the hikers moved on.

The road became a path, dropping steeply to the creek, and the adventure truly began. Tall trees, cottonwood, alder, just-leafing sycamore and oak, stood thickly, their tops interlaced and bound together into a canopy by wild grapevines. Sunlight was diffused by the foliage.

There was a dim, cool, underwater eel; given emphasis by the constant sound of the creek. Before the day was over the hikers were pervaded by that sound, some primordial echo responding to the water's rhythm; pulses slowing, peace moving in and with them.

The world outside the canyon loses reality. Skeletons of agave, standing guard on the rim above, might be the spirits of Indians watching for intruders. Down the wall of the canyon, wet with seepage from some small spring, trails a mass of greenery starred with yellow columbine and scarlet penstemon. On a rock shoulder of the creek, a young woman sits doing some laundry; lazily dipping garments into the water while a little child stands beside her. Both are nude and deeply tanned. They pay no attention to the hikers.

Westerners try very hard to be equally nonchalant (and we'll never tell who peeked).

Alongside the trail are the ruins of a flume which brought water from a higher elevation down creek to the ranch, thus saving the expense of a pump. The flume was, astonishingly, constructed of water heaters welded end to end.

The trail on one side dwindles and the decision is made to cross the creek. Rocks are brought and splashed into place to augment those already stretching across the swiftly moving, grass-sprouting water. Linda Herrmann, Mary Theresa Mertz and Jean Metts reject that proposed method, remove their boots and socks and wade across. The moss-slickened bottom forces them to move carefully. Chivalry flourishes now. On the long, serpentine, hopscotch of stepping stones men stand teetering in midstream to help the loudly reluctant ladis across. A kind of bucket-brigade, as all the gals are a little pail (sic) just then.

After that shaky-legged experience, lunch seems a good idea. Mary Theresa and Sandy Sandford return to stream center and a tiny island for their repast while the rest perch on bordering rocks.

Normally that spot marks the end of the Clear Creek hike. But there is ample time, so the way upstream is resumed when backpacks have been emptied.

The idyllic atmosphere continues. There is bird song. Big yellow butterflies languidly flutter black-bordered wings on the warm air. The trail ends against a red wall. Undeterred, hand and footholds are found and the hikers inch their way onward with water lapping at their feet. Around a curve of the cliff is a little cove with a bench to sit on and an invitingly deep pool below.

The invitation is accepted. Linda and Mary Theresa again remove boots and socks, joined now by Sandy and Fletcher Preston. The swim is enjoyed as much by their audience as by the intrepid four, who report the water delightful despite its stunning cold.

Bill Eggert points out a little fern-lined grotto off to one side, then it's time to start back. The creek is recrossed at the point where the young woman and child had been but only the pile of wrung-out garments is there now. It is also the place of departure from Eden. The cars are reached all too soon, the drive home a slow one so the day and its quiet joy may be extended.

Later it is learned that Arnold Wehmann's VW camper refused to start, delaying those who'd ridden out in it for several hours. Who would ever think that a VW would have more sense than people?

Next hike is Sunday to Soldier and Mormon Washes. This should be an easy one. Departure time from east end of Bayless parking lot is 1:30 p.m.

Saturday's fully clothed Adams and Eves were Mike Nardello, Fletcher Preston, Bill Eggert, Barbara House, John Crabtree, Mae Crabtree, Mary Crabtree, Jean Metts, Laura and Clyde Morgan, Elizabeth Parks, Mildred Janney, George Pickard (so good to have you back, George), Linda Herrmann, Dixon Fagerberg, Betty Holman, Mary Theresa Mertz, Sandy Sandford, Arnold Wehmann, Herb Haller, Charles Jorgensen, Lorene Hammial, Chet and Lynne Tingley and Lorraine Jaquith.

Canyon Idyl for Westerners

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Lorraine Jaquit

RED ROCK NEWS Sedona, Arizona Wednesday, May 4, 1977 - 3

Westerners Return to Paradise

The day was bright and beautiful, a typical April day in Arizona as the 32 hikers descended into the mystical world of Sycamore Canyon.

This was a repeat performance for some of the Westerners as on March 26 a harty group of 16 braved the cold to hike the canyon. Due to the bad weather that day, many who had been looking forward to the hike failed to appear, thinking it had been cancelled. Not knowing the Westerners' slogan: "A hike is never, ever cancelled; no matter come what may; through wind, rain, snow and sleet; we're always on our way." We've hiked them all and the elements only add to the beauty and charm of each new adventure. However, everyone was happy for the second chance to see the canyon in its new spring dress.

The sycamores and cottonwoods looked entirely different compared to a month ago. With the new foliage the canyon now took on a softer appearance. Many of the canyon walls that before appeared so barren and cold now looked warm and balmy in the sunlight with the different shades of green intermingled with the pinks and buff tones of the rock formations. It was indeed a sign of beauty to behold!

We tiptoed across the creek on various-shaped and colored rocks; admired and sampled the luscious watercress (being very careful not to disturb the roots), marveled at nature's handiwork in the beauty of the yellow columbine, the crimson red of penstemon and deep purple of the indigo plant. Many other varieties of wildflowers and cacti were in abundance.

As we hiked along Sycamore Creek, I couldn't help but think of the Apache and his long-lost paradise in this lovely canyon wilderness; no wonder he fought so hard to keep his land; I would have, too!

Lunch was eaten in a shady nook by the stream. Everyone had built up an appetite by this time and was happy when Mike Nardello blew his trusty whistle to inform us it was high noon. After lunch, some went rock hunting, while others scrounged around for driftwood and those lazy ones just reclined in the shade and took a quick 20 winks. Four of us eager ones, Fletcher Preston, Linda Herrmann, Bryan Pfitzer and yours truly: Geri Bass, were determined to find the dam that those busy little beavers were making with all the trees and saplings they had chewed down along the creek. With a little intuition, we succeeded in finding it along with the little fellow's footprints as evidence to the deed.

After our quiet interlude by Sycamore Creek, onward we marched following our trusted trail boss, Mike Nardello (better known as the Pepperoni Kid).

Many places along the stream reminded me of Roman terraces and temples along the Nile. Some were so inviting that I thought to myself how refreshing it would be to spend a day with nothing more to do but lie in the sun and bathe in the cool waters of the creek, just as we saw several skinny-dippers doing earlier in the day.

As we rounded a corner of the trail, there before us was a pool none could resist! Lynne Tingley was the first one in, then Fletcher Preston, Chet Tingley and not far behind was Clyde Morgan. Last but not least was that brave little soul, Ginny Lucas. Everyone watched with envy at their antics, but most of us just satisfied ourselves by dipping our toes, to cool our tired and aching feet.

All too soon it was time to head back up the trail to reality. As we left this wilderness area, we each vowed to come back soon, maybe in a week or two. The vow makers were:

Mike Nardello, Lennie and Mary Lemke, Bryan Pfitzer, Bill Eggert, Ed Long, Barbara House, Fletcher Preston, Linda Herrmann, Hazel Lytle, Pat and George Hugill, Berta and Roy Mikesell, Laura and Clyde Morgan, Lauren J. Fair, Charles and Elizabeth Darby, Lorene Hammial, Herb and May Gross, Mildred Janney, George Pickard, Charlotte and Bill Knight, Chet and Lynne Tingley, Betty Holman, Obed Westphal , Annabelle G. Wehmann and

Geri Bass.

P.S. Don't forget our photo contest. Take your pictures to the Sedona Secretarial Service in the Yavapai building, no later than May 5th. Also, our annual picnic at Montezuma's Well picnic grounds, May 12 at 6 p.m. Bring food for eight people, casserole, salad or dessert, and own table service plus table cloth. Next all-day hike Sat. May 7, Clarkdale to Jerome via old railway. Be at east end of Bayless parking lot at 9:30 a.m. See you there.

1975			Clipping	Issue date
Nov 23	Sun	Deer Pass Ranch	✓	11/26/75
30				12/3/75
Dec 6	Saturday	Little Park Heights	✓	12/10/75
14	Sun	Chicken Point	✓	12/17/75
1976				
Jan 4	Sun	Margi's Draw	✓	1/7/76
11	Sun	Conej Hill	✓	1/14/76
17	Sat	Buci Ranch	✓	1/21/76
25	Sun	Red Tank Draw	✓	1/28/76
Feb 1	Sun	Sugar Loaf Hill	✓	2/4/76
8	Sun	Turkey Tank	✓	2/11/76
14	Sat	Sycamore Canyon	✓	2/18/76
22	Sun	Robber's Roost	✓	2/25/76
29	Sun	The Mittens (Cibola)	✓	3/3/76
Mar 7	Sun	Doe Mountain	✓	3/10/76
13	Sat	Bear Mountain	✓	3/17/76
21	Sun	Brindo Mesa	✓	3/24/76
28	Sun		✓	3/31/76
Apr 4	Sun	Courtrock, Rock (Cathedral)	✓	4/7/76
10	Sat	Baker Battle Flat Top		4/14/76
18	Sun (Easter)	No breakfast 4c Weeks	✓	4/21/76
25	Sun	Wood's Canyon	✓	4/28/76
May 2	Sun	Bear Wallow Saddle	✓	5/5/76
8	Sat	Wilson Mtn	✓	5/12/76
Sept 12	Sun	Bell Rock	✓	9/5/76
18	Sat	Brindo Mtn.	✓	9/22/76
26	Sun	Fay Canyon	✓	9/29/76
Oct 3	Sun	Wet Beaver Creek	✓	10/6/76
9	Sat	Kendrick Mtn	✓	10/13/76
Oct 17	Sun	Steamboat Rock	✓	10/20/76
24	Sun	Harding Spgs	✓	10/27/76
31	Sun	Brindo Mesa	✓	11/3/76
Nov 6	Sat	A B Young Trail	✓	11/10/76
~~14~~	Sun	Grasshopper Pt	✓	11/17/76
21	Sun	Turn Butte (Chapel)	✓	11/24/76

Wind-blown Westerners view Jerome

by Lorraine Jaquith

Did you ever think you'd like to take a peek inside yoru head?

Did you ever think you'd like to take a peek inside your head? (A few people we know, somebody should.)

Anyhow, if you ever have, you just missed a great opportunity. Last Saturday 40 Sedona Westerners stood high on a hill overlooking Jerome, facing into a wind which was blowing so hard — you're not going to believe this — blowing so hard it thrust their gazes right back and there they were, staring into their own brains.

And for that they'd trudged seven or eight miles, round trip, along the roadbed of the old Jerome railroad. They could have stayed in Sedona and gotten an X-ray with a lot less effort.

On the other hand, they'd have missed a very special day. You at home thought it was a rotten day, didn't you? It was, indeed, wildly windy, but those who braved it were rewarded with the joy of joining battle with nature at her most boisterous. The battle was lost by way of wind and sunburn, ruined hairdos, and wrecked dignity — try to maintain that while galloping over rocks in pursuit of a hat or scarf. But compensation for those nonessentials was the glorious, buffeted feeling of being one with wind and sun and all of nature.

The roadbed, a twelve-mile loop-the-loop between Jerome and Clarkdale, is minus its rails now. But still there is a cobbled melange of black slag and stones blue-green with a wash of copper sulphate. One stretch of it, over which sulphur laden water flows, is bright yellow.

There can be no doubt at any time of being in the vicinity of mines. The landscape is mostly dry and barren, with angular hills of tailings looming above. But the same nature which laughs at dignity touches a wand of beauty to ravaged hills. A small forest of mesquite, just coming into bright green leaf, bobs little plumes in the wind.

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Can you think of anything more incongruous to a deserted mining area than the ruins of a small Greek village? (thank you, Dixon.) We can't yet on a barren Jerome hillside, in the midst of a grove of trees, carpets of blue flowering vines and one thriving oleander are the fallen remains of a terraced cluster of homes. Partial shells of each house still stand surrounded by rubble.

There are tumbles of cement block rather than marble and one tall lone chimney pointing to the sky instead of soaring columns. But there are empty doorways and windows and flights of stairs between each terrace. A feeling of beauty persists. Was it there when the homes were intact and occupied by the families of the railroad officials? Or is that grace lent by the deserted quiet and the atmosphere of another time, another life?

Linda Herrmann found some toys, a rusted little gun, a tiny, hard rubber ball and a little rubber car. How we would love to see that still place in the light of a full moon. Surely the spirits of children play in the shadows of those skeleton walls. (Better return the toys, Linda, or their owners might come looking for them).

After lunch, Westerners huffed and puffed, full stomachs will do that to you, up the flights of stairs, found the roadbed again and went on to that aforementioned high windy hill above Jerome. After that hair-raising experience, they returned to the road above the house ruins to keep an appointment with a gentleman who'd promised to show them through a deserted group of nearby buildings.

The gentleman was Duke Cannell, watchman for the area. Cannell, with the clear, straight-gazing eyes one associates with men of the West, was knowledgeable, obliging and courteous.

The name of the old railroad, he reported, was the Verde Tunnel and Smelter, known to some in early days as the Very Tired and Sleepy. It was used to carry supplies between Clarkdale and Jerome. The ore from the mine was taken to the smelter at Clarkdale by way of a haulage railway deep underground. The homes for the railway officials were built in 1928, abandoned when the mines closed in 1953 and partially wrecked to salvage their lumber.

Westerners were shown through a big warehouse, its first floor a jumble of bags of crushed rock and boxes of core drillings. Everything is neatly labeled and someday if the need for copper overwhelms the negative aspects of open pit mining, those bags and boxes will tell where to go into the earth.

Another shell of a big building was once the pay office and the "changing" room. Here miners stripped, showered and, between row upon row of little metal lockers, ran up their perspiration wet garments on pulleys to dry high over head. Jack Sherman, ex-mining engineer, said, sounding nostalgic, that they'd used the same clothes drying methods in coal mines.

Back outside, Westerners wandered around, peered through the grille across the mine opening, admired chinaberry trees growing by the warehouse door and the long feathery, delicate pink plumes of a tamarisk. Then, after thanks to Duke Cannell for his interesting tour, it was time to begin the three and a half miles back down to the cars.

All were tired, but in total agreement that it had been a day well spent, another gem of an experience and memory added to a collection which neither "moth or rust doth corrupt."

Chet and Lynne Tingley, faithful hikers from Cottonwood, originated the idea for the hike, scouted it and led it. Westerners are much indebted, Chet and Lynne. Thank you so much.

Don't forget the potluck picnic tomorrow (Thursday). Bring your own beverages, too. Dinner at 6 p.m. Call 282-3963 or 282-4418 if you have questions.

Next hike is Sunday, Courthouse-Cathedral Rock is the objective. Leave Bayless at 1:30 p.m.

Saturday's warriors were Mike Nardello, Bill Eggert, Barbara House, Arnold Wehmann, Virginia Gilmore, Elizabeth Parks, Ed Long, Romeo and Lillian D'Angelo, Linda Herrmann, Bob and Virginia Watts, Vince and Lee Spoor, Alice and Dick Stout, Geri Bass, Lorraine Seymour, Clyde Morgan, Ada Everett, George Pickard, Mildred Janney, Pat and George Hugill, Harry Monheim, Lorene Hammial, Fletcher Preston, Sandy Sandford, Mary T. Mertz, Lew Goddard, Dixon Fagerberg, Jack Sherman, Ray and Bert Mikesell (Ray's the one with the beard), Chet and Lynne Tingley, Betty Holman and Marge and Obed Westphal.

Westerners Wage Windy War

Did you ever think you'd like to take a peek inside your head? (A few people we know, somebody should.) Anyhow, if you ever have, you just missed a great opportunity. Saturday, May 7, forty Sedona Westerners stood high on a hill overlooking Jerome, facing into a wind which was blowing so hard you're not going to believe this, blowing so hard it thrust their gazes right back, and there they were, staring into their own brains. And for that they'd trudged 7 or 8 miles, round trip, along the roadbed of the old Jerome railroad. They could have stayed in Sedona and gotten an X-ray with a lot less effort.

On the other hand, they'd have missed a very special day. You at home thought it was a rotten day, didn't you? It was, indeed, wildly windy, but those who braved it were rewarded with the joy of joining battle with nature at her most boisterous. The battle was lost by way of wind and sunburn, ruined hairdos, and wrecked dignity -- try to maintain that while galloping over rocks in pursuit of a hat or scarf -- but compensation for those non-essentials was the glorious, buffeted feeling of being one with wind and sun and all of nature.

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Don't forget the potluck picnic Thursday, May 12. Bring your own beverages, too. Dinner at 6:00 p.m. Call 3963 or 4418 if you have questions.

Next hike Sunday, May 15. Courthouse-Cathedral Rock. Leave Bayless 1:30 p.m.

Saturday's warriors were: Mike Nardello, Bill Eggert, Barbara House, Arnold Wehmann, Virginia Gilmore, Elizabeth Parks; Ed Long, Romeo and Lillina D'Angelo, Linda Herrmann, Bob and Virginia Watts, Vince and Lee Spoor, Alice and Dick Stout, Geri Bass, Lorraine Seymour, Clyde Morgan, Ada Everett, George Pickard, Mildred Janney, Pat and George Hugill, Harry Monheim, Lorene Hammial, Fletcher Preston, Sandy Sandford, Mary T. Mertz, Lew Goddard, Dixon Fagerberg, Jack Sherman, Ray and Bert Mikesell (Ray's the one with the beard), Chet and Lynne Tingley, Betty Holman, Marge and Obed Westphal

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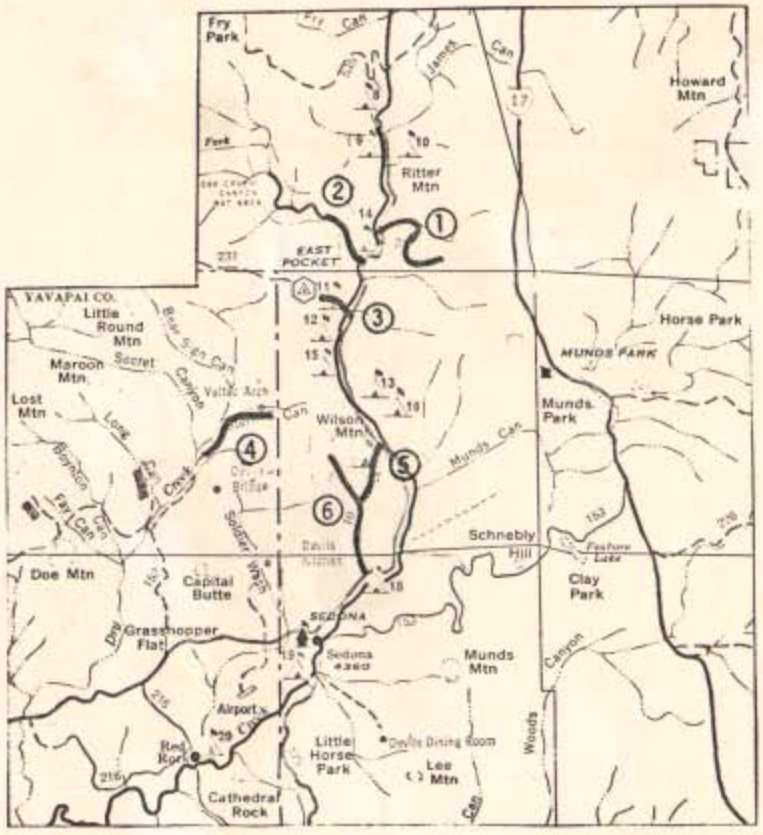
Westerner Hikes 1976-77

Sept.	12	Sun.	Bell Rock Tour	Jim Bryant
"	18	Sat.	Munds Mt.	Bob Watts
"	26	Sun.	Fay Canyon	Dick Stout
Oct.	3	Sun.	~~Grasshopper Point~~ Fay Canyon + ~~Arch~~	
"	9	Sat. 8AM	Kendrick Mt.	Dixon F.
"	17	Sun.	Steamboat from Mormon Canyon	
"	24	Sun.	Harding Springs	
"	31	Sun.	Brin Mesa from Dry Creek	
Nov.	6	Sat.	A.B. Young Trail	
"	14	Sun.	~~Sunset Mesa~~ Grasshopper Point	
"	21	Sun.	Saddle Mt. Twin Buttes	
"	28	Sun.	Vultee Arch	
Dec.	4	Sat.	House Mts. by Turkey Tank	
"	12	Sun.	Hot Loop Trail	
"	19	Sun.	Old Stage Coach Rd. NE 179	
Jan.	2	Sun.	Soldier Wash Tour from 89A	
"	8	Sat.	Chicken Rock-East	
"	16	Sun.	Jacks Canyon	
"	23	Sun.	Coxcomb	
"	29	Sat.	Fin Area upper Mormon Canyon	
Feb.	6	Sun.	Central Park-Sigarloaf	
"	13	Sun.	Wheel Inn-Lomaquaci	
"	20	Sun.	Dry Creek Indian Ruin	
"	26	Sat.	Sycamore Canyon	
Mar.	6	Sun.	Schnebley Hill to Munds Canyon Overlook	
"	13	Sun.	Bear Mt.-First Mesa	
"	19	Sat.	Mingus Mt. South of pass	
"	27	Sun.	Boynton Canyon	
Apr.	3	Sun.	Red Canyon Ranch	
	10	Sun.		
	16	Sat.	Clear Creek	
	24	Sun.		
May	1	Sun.		
"	8	Sat.	Bear Sign Canyon	
"	14	Sun.		
		?	Easter	

(Wet Beaver)

HIKING TRAILS IN OAK CREEK CANYON



① Harding Spring Trail #451

Cave Spring CG to East Rim of Oak Creek (0.7 miles)

② West Fork #424

Mayhew Lodge to West Fork Natural Area (1.5 miles)

③ A.B. Young Trail #4100

Bootlegger CG to West Rim of Oak Creek (1.6 miles)

④ Vultee Arch Trail #422

End of FR 152C To Vultee Arch (1.7 miles)

⑤ North Wilson Mtn. Trail

Encinoso Picnic Area to Wilson Mtn. Trail (2.0 miles)

⑥ Wilson Mtn. Trail #410

Midgley Bridge to Wilson Mtn. Tank (4.3 miles)

Potpourri of Surprises At Westerners Potluck

Preceded by days of cold and tearing wind, followed by a day of rain, Thursday, May 12 - Westerners' potluck picnic day - was warm, the wind moderate. A pleasant interlude in a spring which, to date, has been almost totally lacking in the usual spring attributes. Westerners recognize themselves, though, to be very fortunate people so that gift of a good day came as no surprise. Neither did the tables laden with a mouth-watering assortment of food. Anyone who thinks the accomplishments of lady Westerners stop at mountain scaling should come to one of their potlucks.

But the rest of the evening was one surprise after another; the first one being the cows whose grazing area was so suddenly invaded. Tables were set up, and before the dinner hour of 6:00 p.m. there was time for visiting, happy greeting of new arrivals and interminable games of horseshoes. At a little distance, the evicted cows stared, so interested in the strange goings-on of humans that they forgot the deep-green grass they stood in.

With dinner over and dusk standing just beyond the cottonwoods Dick Stout, outgoing Trail Boss, held a short business meeting. And after that, the next surprise.

Westerners are privileged to have as a member Mike Nardello, whose love for the group takes the form of unremitting work in their behalf. Whenever there's a need, there's Mike: scouting, leading, tailgating, scolding if the necessity arises, blasting the eardrums with that whistle of his, always ready with his First Aid kit, a thermos of tea, or a bag of pepperoni slices. It was past time to pay him his due. Called up front, he was presented with a T-shirt emblazoned on its front with a large Westerner symbol, and on its back -- what else? PEPPERONI KID. We know Mike was surprised. We hope he was as pleased as the Westerners were.

Proceedings were then handed over to the new Trail Boss, Jack Sherman, and his slate of officers: Randy Powell, Wagon Boss (vice president); May Gross, Wrangler (secretary); Laura Morgan, Foreman (treasurer). Jack's first business of the year was the announcement of the winners in the photo contest. Geri Bass, Sandy Sandford, Mary Fagerberg, Vince Spoor, Art Frost, Evelyn Helmcke and Jack Sherman were the winners, with Geri Bass scoring in nearly evey category.

The awarding of prizes provided the next hilarious surprise. Gold watches, gift certificates, dusting powder, ties? Not for Westerners. Done up tastefully in Christmas wrapping paper were sections of deer antlers, odds and ends of trivia picked up on hikes and decorated for the occasion with ribbons, paper currency (foreign) and large flat rocks suspended from ribbons. Jack reported that it took him hours with a carbide drill to make the holes in the rocks. A gold watch would have been much easier. Westerners enjoyed the fun so much that they'll probably want the photo contest to become an annual affair.

Last event of the evening, a speech fo Dixon Fagerberg, provided the final surprise. WHERE, was the topic of Dix's speech. Where are we? Speaking with much knowledge of rivers and watersheds, continental divides and oceans, he pinpointed Sedona in the vastness and wonders of our continent. And that's where the surprise entered. Believing all the while that they'd been picnicking in the Montezuma Well picnic area, Westerners were told that they were at 34 degrees, 20 minutes north latitude, 111 degrees, 40 minutes west longitude. How's that for pinpointing? Too bad the cows had gone home. That would have really rocked them.

It was time, then, to leave. In near-dark, cottonwood leaves were rustling their night song. Westerners packed empty bowls, table cloths and awards into their cars. Sedona and the Verde Valley are infinitesimal in the all-encompassing WHERE; but to Westerners they are HERE, home, a cause each day for happiness, and surprise that anyone could be so lucky.

Moods and Memories for Westerners

Old timers dubbed it Courthouse Rock. It is duly and legally recorded as such. But newcomers, responding to its pinnacles and graceful command, the beauty of nature's architecture call it Cathedral Rock. Its pictures and that name are known world-wide.

Ellsworth Schnebly, one of the old-timers, and Westerner reporter for many years, defended the original title vehemently. And if anyone made the mistake of calling it Cathedral in his hearing, they could count on a verbal chastisement.

When Ellsworth passed on, we, having been his substitute for a year, took over the position of reporter and took up his battle. At every opportunity we stressed aloud or in print that it was COURTHOUSE ROCK. Ellsworth would have been proud of us.

Now, knowing that he'll be waiting for us when we pass over and, in that fine bass voice of his give us what-for, we are about to change sides. Why risk an infinity of scolding by becoming a turncoat?

Sunday, May 15, Westerners drove out through the Village of Oakcreek, turned on Verde Valley School Road, turned off that and drove to the foot of Court -- Cathedral! Rock. Forty-eight hikers, strung out and single-file, scrambled and switchbacked their way upward; ascending into beauty. Or, more precisely, the feeling was one of being drawn into beauty. As a church figuratively opens its arms to all, so it seemed that great red monument of rock enfolded us as we climbed. It is, in reality, nature's cathedral. There was the warm benediction of the sun, the music of wind and birds; flowers, not up in front, but strewn lavishly at Westerners' feet; white, purple, scarlet, and all shades of yellow. Even the cactus was blooming, and century plants, their great stalks unfolding pomegranate-like clusters of buds. God's presence is so manifest there that Cathedral is a far more fitting name. Ellsworth was a devout man; we think he'll understand.

In order to achieve the saddle aspired to on that side of the rock a narrow, nearly vertical watercourse must be ascended. It is a jumble of great boulders and a jungle of trees and brush. At times, going on hands and knees with foliage closed overhead the feeling was of being in a burrow. Except that no self-respecting rabbit or gopher would consider such a place. High overhead a big fleecy cloud hovered as though it were watching the entire proceedings with great interest. Thank goodness for inquisitive clouds. It provided some much-needed shadow and cooling.

Not all the hikers cared to tackle the watercourse, or the smooth face of rock which had to be inched across to reach it. But those who did were rewarded with the gratification of personal achievement and a sweeping view on two sides which is familiar to all scalers of heights in our area, but never tiring.

Sitting on an edge with our boots extended into thin air, we viewed a narrow section of Sedona and Oak Creek Canyon through a great V formed by pinnacles standing away from the main body of the rock. Sedona and environs have been captured in many frames, but never one of such immensity or beauty.

On the way down the benches claimed attention. looking like redstone eddies about the base of the rock, they held little pools of water from Friday's rain and were scattered about with chunks of gray basalt tumbled from a gray-ribbon strata high above. Relatively smooth and affording marvelous traction to hiking boots, the benches were the easiest part of the hike. Hazel Lytle and Jim Bryant were the leaders: had scouted and marked the trail so well that there was never any question of direction. A good job by a pair of excellent hikers.

Also on the way down was a rattlesnake. Coiled in a shallow hollow beneath a fallen boulder, it rattled again and again, warning hikers to keep their distance. Which they did. Not only in the interests of their own safety, but respecting its rights. You don't think a rattlesnake has rights? Why not?

Two years ago Westerners climbed the rock on the Verde Valley School side. Ellsworth Schnebly was along. He was healthy, happy and holding forth on many subjects. It was his last hike. Three days later he suffered a heart attack and was gone, leaving a vacancy in the ranks of the Westerners which will never be filled.

We thought of him as we climbed Sunday, missed him, stood staring out over the valley, pummeled by wind and thinking -- along with its beauty Cathedral (forgive us) Rock now has special memories. A legacy from Ellsworth Schnebly to the Sedona Westerners.

Next hike -- last one for the season-- Saturday, May 21. Bear Sign Canyon. Departure time from east end of Bayless parking lot 9:30 a.m. Bring lunch and water.

Sunday's legatees were: Mike Nardello, Ed Long, Barbara House, Jean Metts, Bob and Virginia Watts, Hazel Lytle, Jim Bryant, Bamey and Ginny Goss, Clyde and Laura Morgan, Barry and Ada Everett, Jean Wolfer, Herb and May Gross, Herb Haller, Will and B. Coe, Jack Sherman, Merv and Helen Hoffman, Fletcher Preston, Bill McGrath, Russ and Bettie Johnson, Chet and Lynne Tingley, Virginia Gilmore, Stan and Mabs Altpeter, Will Osborn, Romeo D'Angelo, Obed Westphal, Elizabeth Parks, Charles and Elizabeth Darby, Betty Holman, Mary Armstrong, Dick and Alice Stout, Sandy Sandford, Mary Theresa Mertz, Ray and Bert Mikesell, Dixon Fagerberg, and

Lorraine Jaquith.

RED ROCK NEWS Sedona, Arizona Wednesday, May 25, 1977 - 9

Beginnings and Endings for Westerners

Something felt wrong about Saturday's hike. It was the last one of the season. The end of organized hikes for three months. The usual feeling of regret was there; of finality, but it seemed, somehow, superimposed.

We pondered as we walked the well-defined trail of Bear Sign Canyon, trudged through deep red dust, slid over pine needles, scuffed through the thick-layered mulch of fallen leaves, boulder-hopped the many creek crossings. What was this sensation which persisted? Why did the hike feel out of sync?

Then, staring at a sant of oak trees, their new leaves translucent green-gold in the brilliant sun, the anawer came. One associates the dead or dying with endings; the sere leaf, bare branches, chill air. Yet Westerners hiked up the canyon surrounded by spring, by bourgeoning life. Encompassed by so many beginnings it was impossible to think of conclusion. Regret wavered, became nebulous. Time, we thought, is but a mortal device anyhow; the days, weeks, months until September just an eyeblink away.

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The day and hike came into focus then and happily we went on our way.

"Trees aren't blazed in Bear Sign Canyon," Bob Watts told us at the Bayless parking lot, "they're bear-clawed." Just kidding, of course. There wasn't even any bear sign. To make up for that, though, there was plenty of cow. Fresh. A few head ambled up the trail ahead of hikers, adding life to the scene and hazard to boots. Also lacking along the creek, dry due to the lack of rainfall, was "bare" sign. No water, no skinny dippers. Oh, well, you can't have everything.

There is always a buzz of conversation along a Westerner hike. Something new was added Saturday -- the buzz of insects. Bees, wasps, cedar gnats and others. However pestiferous they are, their noise is a summer sound; a lulling accompaniment to rest stops; so much a part of the warm air that the flying nuisances lose embodiment, and the air itself seems to hum.

There was another addition to the hike; insect repellant. Rising sharply and unmistakeably above the smell of dust, sunwarmed pitch and pine needles was the scent of Cutters and a myriad of other liquids, creams and sprays. Apropos of that, perhaps, Betty Holman observed that if you wear nice perfume, dogs won't bite you. Sandy Sandford said he didn't think he'd put it to the test.

We made an interesting discovery in the canyon. The red dust had given birth to red trees. There was the reddish bark of the giant ponderosas, the striated red of Arizona cypress and manzanita. They echoed the color out of which they grew, seemed a part of it. "Dust into dust, and dust thou art." Not too relevant, or perhaps it is.

There was also the elephant-gray bark of aligator juniper and alder and cottonwood, the silver gray of sycamore. Those sycamores certainly are cautious. While all the rest of the trees are in full leaf, they are still nearly bare, just a leaf here and there unfurled to try the temperature. Too bad the fruit trees in Sedona aren't as restrained.

Did you ever see a red duck? High atop a wall of Bear Sign Canyon is a king-sized red rock duck. A very high and dry red rock duck. Did the creek go down, or the duck's resting place go up? Or is being immobilized forever against the sky within sight and sound of water (occasional) some kind of duck purgatory?

Despite the ruddy colors of dust and canyon walls and tree trunks, the over-all impression in the canyon was cool. Nearly the only flower to be seen was the purple-stalked lupine. Added to that was the just-opened green of leaves and uncoiled ferns and Douglas fir tipped with baby-soft, new green needles. In the dense shade as hikers went higher into Bear Sign were wild grape vines, freshly-opened leaves contrasting to their nearly-black canes, swinging from trees they'd netted or catching at boots. Definitely not a rain forest, but aspects of one were there.

Knowing nothing of botanical zones, and forgetting to ask, it seemed to us that we observed several in the three and a half miles up the canyon. The rise was gradual, with the exception of a few places, but we ascended steadily. On the lower level as we left the confluence of Bear Sign and Dry Creek were cottonwood and their poplar cousins. Higher, flanking the trail, were stands of the pale Arizona cypress; too crowded for normal growth, slender trunks topped with sparse foliage. Adding color to that "host of ghosts" was tree-sized manzanita, the smooth red veins in their gray trunks and branches calling to hands to touch them, to stroke their cool beauty. Here also, the ponderosa began, its vanilla-scented bark affording a treat to the olfactory senses as well as sight. Above that were the Doug fir and white pine.

Seeming indifferent to zones were oak and maple, brightly, brashly green, resisting placement.

Descending from cool to sun, dust and the cars, the hike was over, the season finished. It was difficult just then to remember that regrets were unnecessary. Unloading at the Bayless parking lot, stiff upper lips were required as goodbyes were said. We would see each other in the markets, at church, perhaps even on occasional scouting hikes, but it wouldn't be the same; it just wouldn't be the same.

Have a grant summer, Westerners, and also have a care. We love you all and want to see each and every one of you this September. At that time, amidst the fall colors of summer's end, the Sedona Westerners will have their own "beginning."

Saturday's SPECIAL PEOPLE were: Mike Nardello, Geri Bass, Bill Eggert, Barbara House, Rudy Klassen, Ray and Bert Mikesell, Mike Nickoloy, Charles Smith, Ed Long, Alice and Dick Stout, Lorene Hammial, Bill McGrath, Lee and Orlando Klassen, Bobby Klassen, Linda Herrmann, Bob and Virginia Watts, Mabs Altpeter, Dixon Fagerberg, Elizabeth Parks, Ada and Barry Everett, Romeo D'Angelo, Charles and Elizabeth Darby, Larua and Clyde Morgan, Virginia Gilmore, Fletcher Preston, Norm and Marge Herkenham, Will and B. Coe, Sandy Sandford, Barney and Ginny Goss, Mark and Ginny Lucas, Mary Armstrong, Betty Holman, Marion Mueller, Marge and Obed Westphal, Chet and Lynne Tingley, and

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Westerners end at the start

by Lorraine Jaquith

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There was another addition to the hike — insect repellant. Rising sharply and unmistakable above the smell of dust, sun-warmed pitch and pine needles was the scent of Cutters and a myriad of other liquids, creams and sprays.

Betty Holman observed that if you wear nice perfume, dogs won't bite you. Sandy Sandford said he didn't think he'd put it to the test.

We made an interesting discovery in the canyon. The red dust had given birth to red trees. There was the reddish bark of the giant ponderosas, the striated red of Arizona cypress and manzanita. They reflected the color out of which they grew, seemed a part of it. "Dust into dust, and dust thou art." Not too relevant, or perhaps it is.

There was also the elephant-gray bark of alligator juniper and alder and cottonwood, the silver gray of sycamore. Those sycamores certainly are cautious. While all the rest of the trees are in full leaf, they are still nearly bare, just a leaf here and there unfurled to try the temperature. Too bad the fruit trees in Sedona aren't as restrained.

Did you ever see a red duck? High atop a wall of Bear Sign Canyon is a king-sized red-rock duck. A very high and dry red-rock duck. Did the creek go down, or the duck's resting place go up? Or is being immobilized forever against the sky, within sight and sound of water (occasional — a kind of duck purgatory?

Despite the ruddy colors of dust and canyon walls and tree trunks, the overall impression in the canyon was cool. Nearly the only flower to be seen was the purple-stalked lupine. Added to that was the just-opened green of leaves and uncoiled ferns and Douglas fir tipped with baby-soft, new green needles.

In the dense shade as hikers went higher into Bear Sign were wild grape vines, freshly opened leaves contrasting to their nearly black canes, swinging from trees they'd netted or catching at boots. Definitely not a rain forest, but aspects of one were there.

Knowing nothing of botanical zones, and forgetting to ask, it seemed to us that we observed several in the three and a half miles up the canyon. The rise was gradual, with the exception of a few places, but we ascended steadily.

On the lower level as we left the confluence of Bear Sign and Dry Creek were cottonwood and their poplar cousins. Higher, flanking the trail, were stands of the pale Arizona cypress. Too crowded for normal growth, their slender trunks were topped with sparse foliage. Adding color to that "host of ghosts" were tree-sized manzanita, the smooth red veins in their gray trunks and branches calling to hands to touch them, to stroke their cool beauty.

Here, also, the ponderosa began, their vanilla-scented bark affording a treat to the olfactory senses as well as sight. Above that were the Douglas fir and white pine.

Seemingly indifferent to zones were oak and maple, brightly, brashly green, resisting placement.

Descending from cool to sun, dust and the cars, the hike was over, the season finished. It was difficult just then to remember that regrets were unnecessary. Unloading at the Bayless parking lot stiff upper lips were required as goodbyes were said. We would see each other in the markets, at church, perhaps even on occasional scouting hikes. But it wouldn't be the same, it just wouldn't be the same.

Have a grand summer, Westerners, and also have a care. We love you all and want to see each and everyone of you this September. At that time, amidst the fall colors of summer's end, the Sedona Westerners will have their own "beginning."

Saturday's special people were Mike Nardello, Geri Bass, Bill Eggert, Barbara House, Rudy Klassen, Ray and Bert Mikesell, Mike Nickoloy, Carles Smith, Ed Long, Alice and Dick Stout, Lorene Hammial, Bill McGrath, Lee and Orlando Klassen, Bobby Klassen, Linda Herrmann, Bob and Virginia Watts, Mabs Altpeter, Dixon Fagerberg, Elizabeth Parks, Ada and Barry Everett, Romeo D'Angelo, Charles and Elizabeth Darby Laura and Clyde Morgan, Virginia Gilmore, Fletcher Preston, Norm and Marge Herkenham, Will and B. Coe, Sandy Sandford, Barney and Ginny Goss, Mark and Ginny Lucas, Mary Armstrong, Betty Holman, Marion Mueller, Marge and Obed Westphal and Chet and Lynne Tingley.