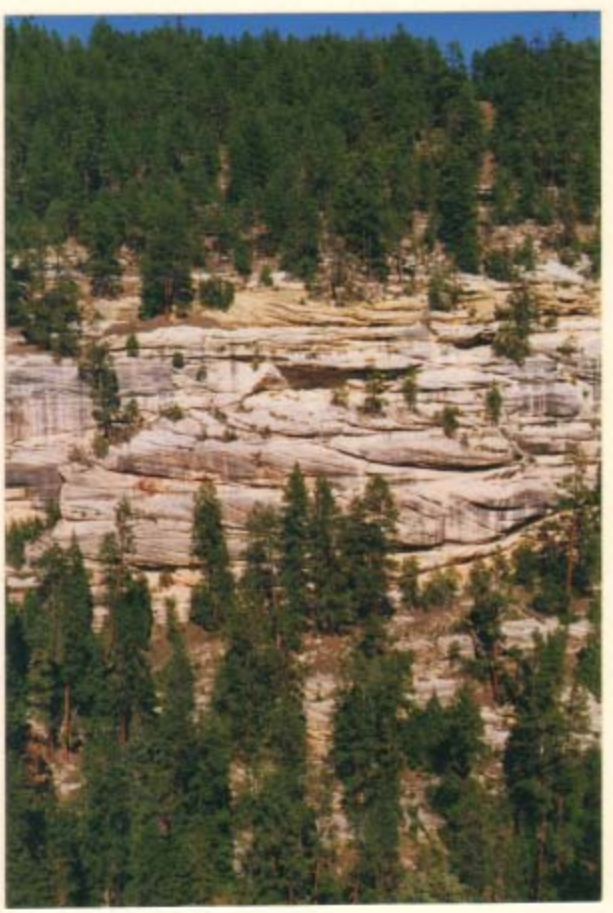
SEDONA WESTERNERS
HIKING CLUB

# Sedona Westerners Yearbook

## 1996 - 1997

Views from Mexican Pocket
9-15-1996
by Jack Stratton



ELDON 9-96



**Sedona Westerners**

# Westerners take first hike

On Saturday, a small group left for Flagstaff to hike Elden Mountain from the Schultz Tank trailhead. This was the first Saturday hike of the new season.

Before leaving Sedona, hike leader Olga Ostrom read to the group about the hardships, courage and pain of the Elden family who, in the 1880s, settled on the mountain named after them.

From Schultz Tank to the top of Elden is a four-mile walk, mostly through evergreen forest. The cool air and shady, rolling trail made the 2,000-foot climb very pleasurable. There were many other trail users, mostly bikers. Politeness and greetings were the rule of the day.

Soon after starting the climb, a large area where there had been a controlled fire was shown to the group. This burn resulted in a park-like setting, where the large trees were spaced well apart.

Other nature lessons on the trip were about the differences between white and Douglas fir, and how to spot a limber pine. An early migrating green-tailed towhee was identified. Someone noticed a large pile of cone tailings dropped by a squirrel who preferred to dine consistently on the same branch.

Close to the summer there is a view to the north toward Sunset Crater. There is a wrought iron bench there, a memory to a man who came in 1924 and left in 1991.

A fire tower on the top of the mountain seems forlorn, surrounded by a mishmash of communication dishes and lightning rods, yet the views are spectacular. A scratch in the desert was the Little Colorado, far in the northeast. Flagstaff spreads directly below, with the edge of the rim in the background. To the west was the dark green mass of the San Francisco Peaks.

Lunch was eaten quickly because of a change in the weather. A shower started and multicolored rain gear appeared, brightening the trail ahead. The monsoons were kind because the walk was completed in bright sunlight with rolling thunder all around. A memory of the cool, damp, fresh smell of the forest remained.

The Westerners hiked to Mexican Pocket on Sunday, Sept. 15; the Dogies on Tuesday, Sept. 17, will hike to the Harding Springs-Upper Cookstovearea; and Amblers on Thursday, Sept. 19, will hike to Thomas Point.

All hikes leave from the east end of the Artisan's Galleria. Both weekday hikes start at 9 a.m.; bring lunch. On all hikes, at least a quart of water is needed, and a hat. Also, wear hiking boots, a requirement on westerner hikes. Visitors may always join.

*The Sedona Westerners gather regularly from mid-September to mid-May to hike and explore Northern Arizona's scenic and historic spots. The westerners column is written by a different member of the group each week and is published on Fridays. The scribe this week was Dave Jackson.*

Thomas Point Hike
9-22-96

Sedona Westerners

# Westerners hike Thomas Point, Harding Springs on first day of fall

**THE WESTERNERS'** hiking season always brings out the start of the sunny days and Sept. 22 was no exception.

The hiking group, including forest service ranger Catherine "Cat" Sampson, joined leader Norman Herkenham who has been hiking the trails around Sedona for more than 19 years.

The hike started from the West Fork parking area traversing the old apple orchard. Herkenham pointed out some of the local flora: scarlet morning glory, golden eyes and careless weed, which is an edible plant for both humans and wildlife. Also spotted was a small watermelon.

Thomas Point Trail, which departs opposite the West Fork, is a steep 1,100-foot climb. During the ascent, the A.B. Young Trail came into view as well as several interesting formations on the opposite site of the canyon. One was the Baby Buggy, one of the Scouts' favorite destinations. Just about that time leader Herkenham saw one of his favorite plants plastered against the limestone rocks. Rockmat, appropriately named, is a member of the rose family.

The next stop, coffee break time, was at the point which provides views in three directions. The trail continues to the top through the forest until Lunch Log was in sight. This log is also one junction which goes to the cave.

**SOME CALL** the cave "Grandma's," others using "Grand, Pa, Dad or Father." Today it will be called "Ma." Well, Ma was up to her old tricks. This is not a hike for a greenhorn or one who doesn't like to slide down steep embankments. Those who started down all made it and visited the depths of the cave with the help of flashlights.

On the way back to the Log, cactus dodger Len Ostrom found a pair of six-point elk antlers. They were so big that Dave Jackson pitched in and carried one out to the descent trail.

In the meantime, ex-trail boss Norm Hause led the other hikers through the forest to the Cookstove Trailhead and then back to Sterling, where the groups joined to finish the hike.

The next weekend hike, Sunday, Sept, 27, leaves from the Artisan's parking lot at 1:30 p.m. to Kelly Canyon. This is rated as an easy hike of two miles with only a 100-foot climb. The Doggies all-day hike Oct. 1 goes to Hart Prairie (maybe the aspen leaves will be turning). This hike leaves at 9 a.m., 4 to 6 miles, 300-foot climb, and gets the easy rating. The Amblers on Oct. 3 are also looking for the leaves to turn by going to Little Horse Trail. The starting time is 9 a.m., and the pace is slow and easy all day.

Hiking boots, water and lunch for the all-day hikes are necessary. Visitors are always welcome.

**THE OCTOBER** monthly meeting, Thursday, Oct. 10, is the cookout at Red Rock State Park — 11 a.m. a good time to arrive. If reservations have not been made, call Olga or Len at 284-9290 or show up at the start of a weekend hike to make arrangements.

The Nov. 13 meeting is at The Church of the Red Rocks at 7:30 p.m. Enter the side door at the lower parking lot.

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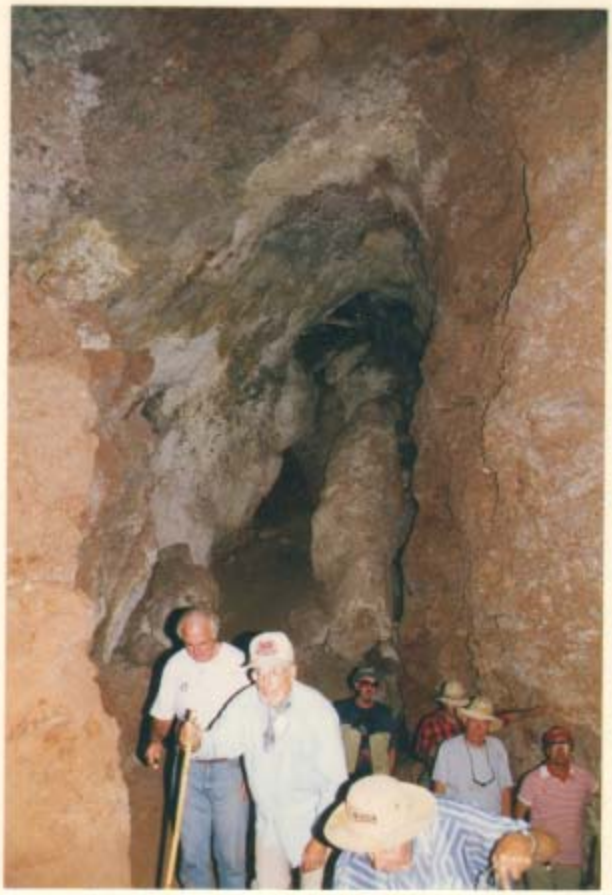
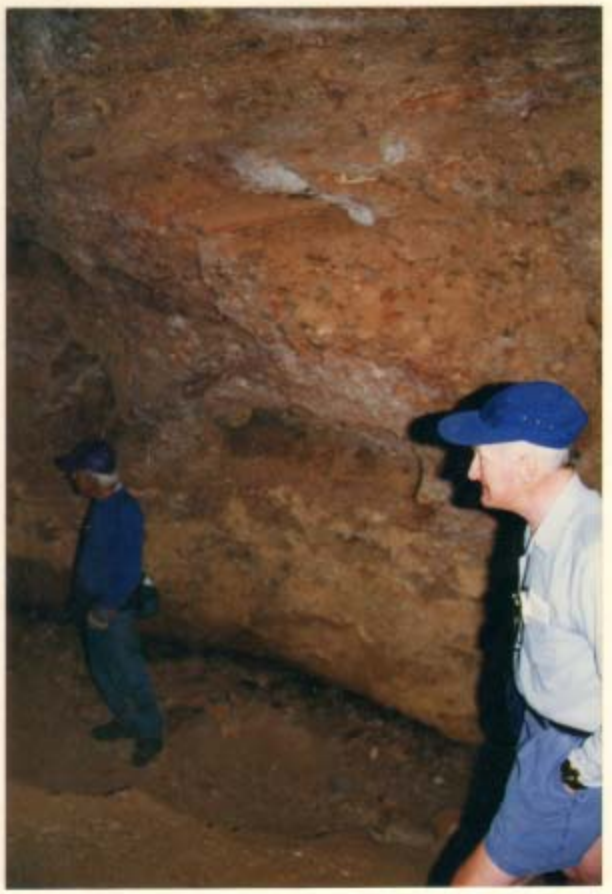
RED ROCK NEWS, Sedona, Arizona Friday, September 27, 1996





Thomas Pt. / Harding Springs
Grandma's Cave
by J. Stratton

Westerners Cookout
October 1996

Cookout
Oct. 1996

RR News 10-11-96

Sedona Westerners

# Humphrey's Saddle: Westerners add to repertoire of over 100 hikes

**ON A** crisp and sunny Saturday, Oct. 5, a new hike to Humphreys Saddle and Summit was added to the Westerners' repertoire of over 100 hiking trails.

Starting at the Snowbowl, Rose Hager led the group past the ski lift to the trailhead. She pointed out that if any were considering an easy way up, the lift was not going where we were anyway. Tailgater, Jack Stratton, made sure that all were accounted for.

Within a short distance we stopped to view a plaque. This was a memorial to eight crewmen who had lost their lives on Sept. 15, 1944 when their B-24 Bomber crashed on a night training mission.

Hager also gave some information on the history and geology of the area. The San Francisco Peaks were named in honor of St. Francis by Spanish missionaries in 1629, at their mission in the Hopi Indian Village of Oraibi. These peaks are considered sacred, and the home of the Kachinas, by the Hopis.

Mount Humphreys was named for an army captain in charge of survey being done in the area by one of his dedicated men. Humphrey went on to become a brigadier general, but it is doubtful that he ever saw the peak that was named for him.

**THE SAN** Francisco Peaks were formed by a series of volcanic eruptions occurring from 1.8 million to 400,000 years ago. Today there are still two hot spots that melt snow, and have a continuous temperature of about 70 degrees. The other three peaks are Agassiz, Freemont and Doyle.

The hikers proceeded along a well-marked trail surrounded by ponderosa and limber pines, douglas and white firs, as well as aspens, whose leaves had turned to gold. Some hikers with a good imagination remarked that they felt like they were walking on golden coins and medallions from some ancient treasure.

The ascent of about 2,300 feet to the saddle was a good resting point to view the Weatherford trail and the inner basin. The inner basin was formed by a violent sideways explosion similar to the one that occurred in 1980 at Mount St. Helens, heaving a great horseshoe-shaped cavity. Since it was noon, some hikers chose to have lunch here, and were treated to aerial displays by ravens and peregrine falcon.

More than half of the Westerners continued to climb for another three quarters of a mile across the tundra, an additional 800 feet to the summit of 12,643 feet. In spite of chilling winds along the trail, it was relatively calm and sunny at this highest point in Arizona. They were treated with magnificent 360 degree views of patchwork colors caused by the changing season surrounding the area. Many hikers remarked on a desire to return soon to this trail or others in the Flagstaff area during this fall spectacular.

The next weekend hike will be on Sunday, Oct. 13, leaving at 1:30 p.m. from the Artisans Galleria parking lot to Capitol Butte Saddle and Cave. The Doggies hike on Tuesday, Oct. 15 leaves at 9 a.m. and will go to Brinds Mesa.

**THE AMBLERS** next hike will be to Hart Prairie-Nature Conservancy property. This hike will not leave until noon in the hope of viewing a large elk herd that grazes in the meadow in late afternoon. This is scheduled for Thursday, Oct. 17.

Visitors are welcome on all hikes. Everyone must wear sturdy hiking shoes and carry at least one quart of water. Bring a lunch on all day hikes.

*The Sedona Westerners' column is written by a different member of the group each week. The scribe this week was Len Ostrom.*

Hiking to Submarine Rock 12-5-1996

LOCKETT MEADOW RR NEWS OCT 14, 96

Sedona Westerners

# Amblers hike to yellow-green Lockett Meadow

**THURSDAY, SEPT.** 26, began rather ominously for the Amblers Westerners.

Channel 2 news had predicted a 20-percent chance of thundershowers, and the clouds looked as though this should be changed to 100 percent. However, 10 Westerners decided to take their chances and proceeded to Lockett Meadow.

The farther they drove the clearer the skies became, and on the hike only a rare Kodachrome-white cloud appeared to decorate photographs. The aspens cooperated with a schedule made out last May and afforded views of yellow-green leaves and brilliant yellow leaves which should yield a number of spectacular photographs.

The trip up the canyon was longer than expected as California tourists thought 25 miles an hour was too fast. Thus, by the time the Amblers reached the green buildings, it was time for lunch. After lunch, Hike Leader Bill Sexton led the group about a half mile to the Inner Basin. Meanwhile, Hike Leader Boss Joan Sexton led the rest leisurely down the hill to the cars.

Dogie leader Clyde Morgan likes to ask a trivia question at the beginning of a hike and collect answers at the lunch break. Tailgater John Schaeffer prefers to give answers to questions you never would have thought to ask.

The subject for the day was the Clivus Multrum outhouse at the trailhead. This facility uses a photo-galvanic panel which converts solar energy into electricity to charge a couple of car batteries which operate a fan. This supplies a constant flow of oxygen enabling aerobic bacteria to deodorize the detritus below.

**OVER A** longer period of time it converts human excrement into compost which may be used in flower beds or lawns. Although it is probably safe for vegetable gardens, the Arizona Department of Environmental Quality advises against this use.

The Sedona Westerners have three hikes a week, with alternating Saturday and Sunday hikes. Saturday hikes are the most strenuous. The next will be Oct. 5 to the Mt. Humphreys saddle and summit. This hike will leave Sedona at 8 a.m. and will be 8 to 10 miles, with a climb of 2,300 to 3,100 feet. Sunday hikes are shorter and easier.

The Dogies are an intermediate group. The next hike will be Tuesday, Oct. 8, to Fay Canyon Overlook, with departure at 9 a.m. The Amblers are the slowest hikers, including those who like to stop and look at flowers, watch birds or take pictures. They hike on Thursdays.

The Amblers will not hike Oct. 10, however, as this is the date of the Westerners' Fall Cookout which will be at Red Rock State Park. Social hour will be at 11 a.m. Hamburgers and all the trimmings will be served at noon. Jennifer Burns of the Forest Service will present a brief program.

**ADVANCE CAR** pooling is advised. The Westerners will pay the $5 admission fee to the park for cars with three or more people. Cars with fewer people will be charged.

There will be no Amblers hike Oct. 17 as all Westerners have been invited to the Nature Conservancy property at Hart's Prairie. We will leave Sedona at noon and return after dusk. This is a repeat of a popular program of last May. The unusual hours were selected in the hope that we may see a large herd of elk coming to graze in the meadows. Advance car pooling is advised as some may wish to have dinner in Flagstaff; others come directly home.

All hikes are open to visitors. Everyone must wear sturdy, lugged hiking shoes, a hat, and carry and drink at least one quart of water. For the next month bring two quarts. Bring lunch for all-day hikes.

All hikes begin at the east end of the Flicker Shack and Artisans Galleria parking lot in West Sedona. Sedona hikes begin at 1:30 p.m., others at 9 a.m. with the exceptions of the Oct. 5 and 17 hikes.

Red Rock News 10-18-96

Westerners

# Dogies set out for favorite hike in Flagstaff area: Hart Prairie

**ON OCT.** 8, the Sedona Westerners' Dogies set out for Hart Prairie, a favorite hike in the Flagstaff area when the aspen leaves turn gold. Viewing the peaks carpeted with gold and brilliant sunshine heightened anticipation.

An easy hike of about five miles begins after parking on the left side of Hwy. 180 going out, just past mile marker 228. After carefully crossing the highway, the hikers regrouped.

Starting up Little Horse Trail, Dogie leader Clyde Morgan pointed out a beautiful horse carved into the bark of a large aspen, the first of several "I was here" messages, including one left by an elk recently.

Frequent stops were made, backward views were rewarding, cameras appeared. At morning coffee break, Morgan suggested we lie on our backs and observe the incredible blue sky through the frame of golden aspen leaves. Upon reaching Hart Prairie, purple lupine complemented the fallen leaves covering the ground.

The remains of the Hart log cabin from the 1850s and the larger Michelbach cabin were viewed, probably the site of the second westbound stage stop from Flagstaff. Lunch was at the site of a former potato farm. Investigation of the remaining buildings revealed one windowless stone building with a new metal door, shiny round chimney, a handsome roofed porch and kerosene lantern visible inside.

**CONTINUING, THE** Dogies were delighted by swirls of gold leaves falling, backlighted in the sun; and returning to the cars for a slower trip down the canyon, agreed the colors had peaked.

A weekend hike on Saturday, Oct. 19, will be to Taylor Cabin, leaving from Artisans Galleria parking lot at 8 a.m. It is a longer nine-mile hike with a steep and difficult climb of 1,800 feet; access with high-clearance vehicles is advised.

The Dogies will hike to Narrow Canyon Loop on Tuesday, Oct. 22, a six-mile hike of moderate difficulty, with a 700-foot climb. The Amblers, always slow and easy, hike to Viet Spring Oct. 24.

Visitors may go along on any of the hikes. Meet at the east end of the Artisans Galleria parking lot in West Sedona for all hikes. Dogies and Amblers hikes leave at 9 a.m. Everyone must wear sturdy hiking shoes, a hat, and carry at least one quart of water. Lunch is advised for all-day hikes.

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Sat. Oct. 19 - 1996

Sedona Westerners

# Westerners take 'easy' route to Taylor Cabin

Taylor Cabin is in Sycamore Canyon a hard day's hike from the Canyon's mouth. That is one way to get there. On Saturday, Oct. 19, the Westerners took the "easy" way to the cabin, down the Taylor Cabin trail. The hike was led by Norm Taylor. For the first time in at least five years, a group of Westerners had lunch at Taylor Cabin.

Guests Marc and Georgette Symkowski from Yverden Les Bains, Switzerland, and Harry Pugh from Brighton, England, made the group an international one.

The trailhead is a long drive west through the forest, starting just above the switchbacks on Hwy. 89A. The Mooney Trail, hiked earlier the year, ends at the same spot. The weather was windy and cool with a sense of a change in seasons in the air and foliage.

As the trail started down, there was an immense limestone "white castle" directly ahead. Someone laughingly suggested stopping for sliders. There wasn't much conversation during this part of the hike because the steep descent through the forest required concentration. A solitary hiker going uphill said we were the first people he had seen in two days. A red rock-lined stream bed was reached, which was followed to the wise expanse of Sycamore Creek.

The downstream mile and a half walk down Sycamore Canyon was special. Red rock vistas, open spaces with bits of rusting barbed wire, strange volcanic formations and the overall feeling of remoteness made this a memorable visit to this Wilderness Area.

Taylor Cabin was named for Ben Taylor, who came, with his brother John, from Kansas. Ben must have been a popular cowboy, because the cabin was built after he died and was named for him. The walls are cut stone, except for the rear one which is a Sinagua style, natural rock wall, a part of the creek bank. The chimney follows the rock face upwards at a 70-degree angle, a practical, yet whimsical, touch.

A stone at the door is inscribed with brands and the words, "Dos Poy." The cabin, which is in remarkable good condition, is equipped for overnight campers. The three army cots inside looked inviting also, but a five-mile, 2,000-foot return climb before dark was the stronger urge.

Tailgator Jack Stratton pushed the puffing train of hikers successfully to the top in about three hours. The elk were feeding as we drove through the darkening forest, a last memory for a tired but rewarded group.

The next weekend hike, on Sunday, Oct. 27, will be to Bear Wallow, leaving at 1:30 p.m. The Dogies go to Wet Beaver Creek/Bell Crossing on Tuesday, Oct. 30, and the Amblers, in a more leisurely fashion, hike the Kachina Trail on Thursday, Oct. 31. Both the Dogies and Amblers leave at 9 a.m. All hikes leave from the east end of the Artisan's Galleria parking lot.

Visitors may come along on all hikes. Everyone must wear sturdy hiking boots and carry at least a quart of water. Bring a lunch on all-day hikes.

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Hike to the Nature Conservency
Hart Prairie near Flagstaff

San Francisco Peaks in background.

The cabin - The Homestead

Oct 29 '96

Sedona Westerners

# Sedona Westerner's Dogie division enjoys Wet Beaver Creek hike

**WET BEAVER** Creek hike, always a great one, was thoroughly enjoyed by the Dogies, a division of the Sedona Westerners on Tuesday, Oct. 29.

Clyde Morgan, the leader, greeted a few hikers in Sedona and the rest in the Village of Oak Creek before traveling Hwy. 179 beyond I-17 to the trailhead near the Beaver Creek Ranger Station.

One of the visitors on the hike was Peter Putrello, grandson of Otto and Jean Wolfer who for years were popular members of the Westerners. He had come from North Carolina to Sedona because of Otto's recent death.

The primitive road was dry, and the world was sunny as the group walked parallel to the creek and an irrigation ditch which were sometimes hidden by trees and brush. Clyde called attention to a few Italian cypress trees and glimpses of rooftops across the creek, and said that was the location of the Southwest Academy, a private school.

At a large, lone rock standing near the trail, the hikers paused to study some pictographs, a message from the original Native American inhabitants of that area.

**"I WONDER** what it says," someone said. There is always some Westerner who can answer any question, and from the crowd came a voice saying, "I know. It says, 'White man, go home'."

On each Dogie hike, Morgan has tried to exercise the mind as well as the body by asking a trivia question.

He said, "You all know that the last night of this month is Halloween. What is the next day called?" He was surprised by the quick general response of "All Saint's Day."

"That's right," he said. "Now, can you tell me what the next day is?"

Someone knew that it is All Souls' Day, and that seemed the end of the subject, but a voice from the crowd said, "And do you know what the next day is?"

**MORGAN REPLIED**, "No. What is the next day?"

"My birthday" said Yona Salsberg. And scattered applause was heard.

At a division of trails, the one to Bell's Crossing was taken to an idyllic rocky place where some early herder named Bell would ford the creek taking his cattle to better pastures. Morgan said he left little but his name to the crossing; and now he, too, is gone to other pastures.

The trail started to climb, and so did the Dogies. At each new height, the creek could be seen and heard far below, causing some hikers to exclaim at the loveliness. Chuck Reintsma, the tailgater, called attention to agave stalks which seemed to have had their blossom heads chewed off, and he raised the question of what creatures could have done that, considering their height. Guesses were ventured. Could it have been eagles?

The destination was reached, a jumble of huge boulders and shoulders overlooking the creek where it pauses to become a pool glistening among sycamore trees, a perfect setting for lunch. The new hikers will join many veteran ones in remembering this as a charming place to pause on a favorite hike.

**VISITORS ARE** welcome on Westerner hikes which start from the east end of the parking lot of the Artisans Galleria in West Sedona. However, everyone must wear good hiking shoes and carry plenty of water. For all-day hikes, take a lunch.

The next weekend hike will meet before 1:30 p.m., Sunday, Nov. 10, planning to go to the Bell Rock area.

On Tuesday, Nov. 12, at 9 a.m., the Dogies will hike again, climbing North Wilson Mountain.

The next Amblers' hike, which will go at a more leisurely pace, will be to Marge's Stable. Meet at 9 a.m., Thursday, Nov. 14.

The regular monthly meeting of the Westerners will be at 7:30 p.m., Thursday, Nov. 14, at their new meeting place, the lower level of the Church of Red Rocks off Hwy. 179.

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West end of the fin.
11-2-1996 by J. Stratton

Sedona RR News

**Sedona Westerners**

11-1-96

# Amblers hike Veit Spring through Flagstaff

**MULTIPLE LAYERS** clad the Sedona Westerners Amblers as they gathered for their Oct. 24 hike to Veit Spring to bid adieu to autumn in the high country. Hike leader Sam Waldrip was the exception to the layered look. He's so cool that an unfastened, thin nylon windbreaker sufficed all day.

Car pooling was advised due to limited parking at the trail head, but caravaning up the switchbacks through Flagstaff and onto the Snow Bowl Road proved challenging.

Veit Spring is in the Lamar Haines Memorial Wildlife Area. This 160-acre refuge was formerly homesteaded by a German sheepherder, Ludwig Veit (rhymes with site), in 1892. Inside the gate at the trail head stands a large sign with the history, as well as a map, of the area.

The original Veit Spring is now gone, as well as Veit's potato patch. But a well-defined square entry cave in an enormous lava boulder remains, which Veit used as a root cellar to store his potatoes, as well as other root vegetables and milk. Nearby, other springs still flow.

Veit's homestead cabin has been moved to Northern Arizona Museum's grounds, but the log foundation of a small out-building still stands.

**IN 1949** the land was sold to the Arizona Game and Fish Department by the owner then, Randolph Jenks. Later it was purchased with private funds and is maintained through the Federal Aid in Wildlife Restoration Act. It was dedicated in memory of an outstanding educator and conservationist, Lamar Haines.

The glorious gold on the San Francisco peaks of a few weeks ago has given way to a more somber look. The fallen aspen leaves, dampened by a heavy overnight frost, remained leathery under foot. Although some of the aspen stands stood totally barren, others still quaked their browning leaves with the whisper of high breezes, while ominous clouds began gathering.

Someone once said he couldn't see the forest because of the trees. Senior-of-the-day, nearly 90-year-old Sidney stated, however, that he couldn't even see the trees because he was too busy watching his feet.

Aspens are said to be among the first trees to reappear after a natural disaster, such as a wildfire, and this area is no exception. At one point two aspen trees crossed like swords saluting as each person walked underneath. In some areas, pine trees appeared in unseemly places, as out of cracks in lava rocks.

"Starting out at an 8,000-foot elevation forces one to really breathe deeply," remarked Jennifer, a relative newcomer from sea level. The hike along a well-defined path gradually climbs until a final steep scramble to about 8,500 feet.

**OPEN AREAS** in the aspen groves brought welcome rays of warm sunshine, which reminded all of how shade was sought in the hotter months. Even lunch time found the hikers sprawled on some fallen pine logs in a sunny spot. Although a wildlife area, the only sign of wildlife was a distinct elk track, pointed out by tailgater for the day, Harry Brown.

Another nearby area recently visited by the Amblers and guests was the Nature Conservancy's Hart Prairie Preserve Oct. 17. The group gathered early afternoon that glorious day. Ed Smith and Shelley Silbert were our patient and knowledgeable ecology guides, as the group divided and walked the prairie land that was homesteaded in 1883. In late afternoon, a herd of at least 16 deer was viewed for some time, as well as a few elk spotted by a very patient few, as the last rays of the sun set.

Upcoming hikes: Fin Loop, Saturday, Nov. 2, difficult; Dogies, Tuesday, Nov. 5, difficult, steep; Amblers, Thursday, Nov. 7, Devils Bridge, slow, easy.

Everyone must wear sturdy hiking shoes, a hat and carry at least one quart of water. Bring lunch on all-day hikes. Meet at the east end of Artisan's Galleria parking lot in West Sedona. At 1:30 p.m. for Sunday hikes and 9 a.m. for all others.

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RED ROCK NEWS, Sedona, Arizona Friday, November 15, 1996

Sedona Westerners

# Westerners climb Bell Rock: A startling rustness up 550 feet

**A QUARTER** hour's drive between West Sedona and the Oak Creek area brought Sunday's Westerner hikers to the starting point, Bell Rock. The heat of this 1996 Nov. 10 could make one believe the location was southern Italy.

Bell Rock is named for its appearance. If imagination is allowed additional freedom, one could even see it as a campanile — bell tower — rising high over the flatness of its immediate surrounds, with a startling rustness that reaches up 550 feet. Geologists classify such sedimentary rock forms as buttes: conspicuous, isolated hills with precipitous sides, and often turret-shaped tops.

The hike's leader, Phyllis Lindberg, reminded adventurers of two ongoing important rules: stay between your leader and your tailgater (this day, Jack Stratton, "Cactus Jack"), and remember hiking manners. In short, care for and respect the often-unrecognized fragility of Mother Nature.

Terrain was gentle. However, since any footfall might find itself on uneven ground, the hikers' pace was also "gentle," with rests along the way. Our two and a half hour hike was a loop of about three miles, which included the equally well-known Courthouse Rock, and a short climb up the Muffin to appreciate a spectacular 360-degree panorama.

The anomaly of the buttes which Sunday's hikers viewed are in stark contrast to the higher and more common solidity and length of formations, such as nearby Lee Mountain; though, in this part of the Colorado Plateau even mountains may sport their own peculiarities, such as vertical layers descriptive of Queen Anne collars — narrow, lacy rock ruffles, here sporting a whiteness that stands in even greater contrast because of their rust bases and even deeper rust surrounds.

**LOCAL REDWALL** limestone beginnings are believed to have their origins some 330 million years ago! While hikers footfall sounds across this terrain vary from a decided crunch as if upon a pebbly beach to the impact of human frame on solid surface, nearby motor vehicles "zap" across a cattle guard, and air traffic makes itself known overhead.

Such diverse partners could be a reminder that the magnificence of this area, once isolated from all but the most adventurous of travelers, must now be coddled in order to survive the impact of the multitudes who, like ourselves, want to witness firsthand the majesty of things that cannot be duplicated by human effort.

Future hikes include:

Saturday, Nov. 16, to Boynton and Hartwell canyons, departing 9 a.m., involving car shuttle (no high clearance vehicles necessary), eight miles of terrain to cover, elevations up to 1,500 feet, and rated by the Westerners as steep and difficult.

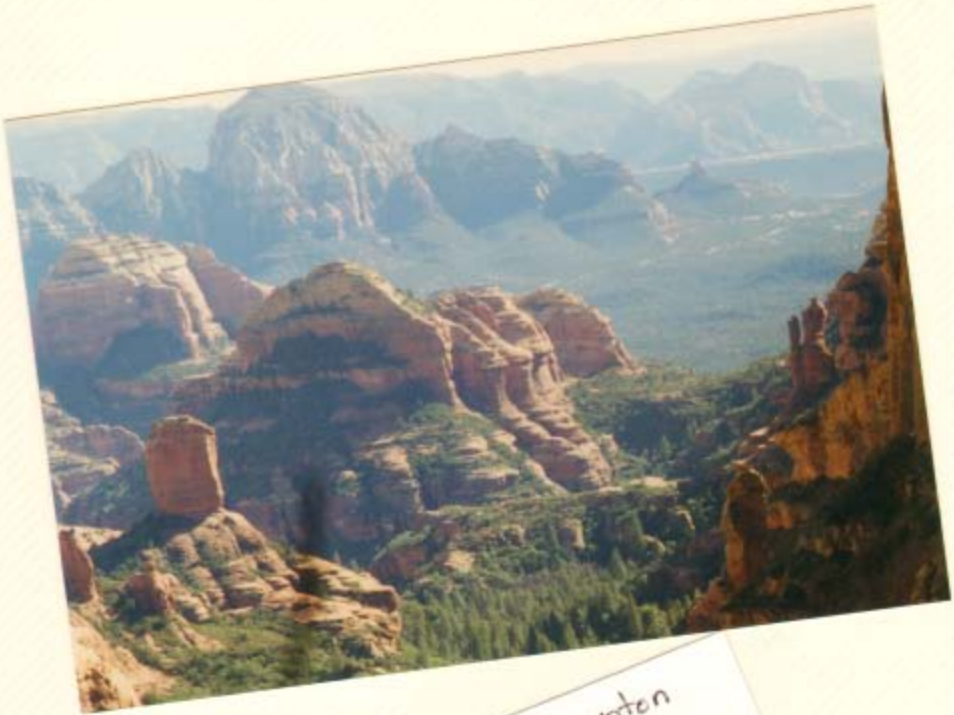
Tuesday, Nov. 19, the Dogies depart at 9 a.m. to Verde Falls. This time some high clearance vehicles will be needed to transport hikers. It is a five-mile walk, some rock scramble, highest elevation climb could include 300 feet, rated as easy.

**THURSDAY, NOV**. 21, Amblers travel at their slower pace to Deadman's Pass. Ample time to "stop, look and listen" and readily take advantage of a camera.

The Westerners welcome visitors. Although seldom, scheduled hiking assignments may be changed. Hikes vary in challenge from the scope, length and pace of the Amblers, through today's two and a half hour effort, and on to others that may last several hours and involve steep elevations and occasional ledges.

All hikers must wear sturdy hiking shoes and a hat, and carry at least one quart of water; all-day hikes bring two quarts and a lunch. The Westerners meet at the east end of Artisans Galleria parking lot in West Sedona, at 1:30 p.m. for Sunday hikes and 9 a.m. for all others (unless otherwise indicated).

*The Sedona Westerners gather regularly from mid-September to mid-May to hike and explore Northern Arizona's scenic and historic spots. The Westerners' column is written by a different member of the group each week and is published on Fridays. The scribe this week is Ellie Jackson.*



From top of Boynton Canyon
11-16-1996 by: J. Stratton

RR News
11-22-96

Westerners

# Amblers hike to Marg's Stable

**THE THURSDAY** hiking Amblers, led by Norm Taylor and tail-ended by Joan Sexton, left the parking lot at Artisans Gallería at 9 a.m. Nov. 14 under partly cloudy skies, bound for Marg's Stable.

After a 20-minute drive down Hwy. 179 to the Broken Arrow Trailhead, the intrepid Amblers began their trek. The weather continued to toy with them, sometimes sunny, other times cloudy. However, the temperature remained balmy, and the hike went smoothly.

Norm led the group on some well-used trails, including the Norm Herkenham Loop, which is part of the proposed Sedona loop. The route led past the invisible waterfall and Gerda Kuntsman was kind to point out Snoopy Rock to those who were interested.

After a leisurely lunch atop a flat plateau, just beneath Snoopy, the hike back to the trailhead began.

Back at the invisible waterfall, a vote was taken to decide if all the water containers should be emptied to produce a semblance of flow. It was decided not, and the hike continued. All arrived safely at the trailhead at approximately 2 p.m.

**THIS HIKE** was not very difficult, even though some loose rock and soil posed some slippery footing. Even 90-years-young Sid Feinberg made it all the way, with a little help from his friends.

Upcoming events include:

Weekend hike on Sunday, Nov. 24, to Cockscomb, departing at 1:30 p.m. This hike is rated moderate/steep with ledges, at a distance of approximately two miles and elevation of 400 feet.

Tuesday, Nov. 26, the Dogies hike to Robbers' Roost at 9 a.m. This hike is rated moderate, with a distance of five miles and elevation of 500 feet.

The Amblers' hike on Thursday, Nov. 28, will be superseded by Thanksgiving Day. Happy holiday to all!

**THE WESTERNERS** welcome visitors at any time. Bear in mind that hikes are subject to change and that they may vary in difficulty, length and time. All hikers must wear sturdy hiking shoes and a hat. Carry at least one quart of water (for all-day hikes in warm weather carry two quarts and bring a lunch).

Due to circumstances beyond their control, the Westerners have changed the meeting place for all future hikes. The new meeting place is in the parking lot of the Elks Club, just as you enter the lot off Airport Road, on the left in the vicinity of the RVs. The times remain the same: 1:30 p.m. for Sunday hikes, and 9 a.m. for all others, unless otherwise indicated.

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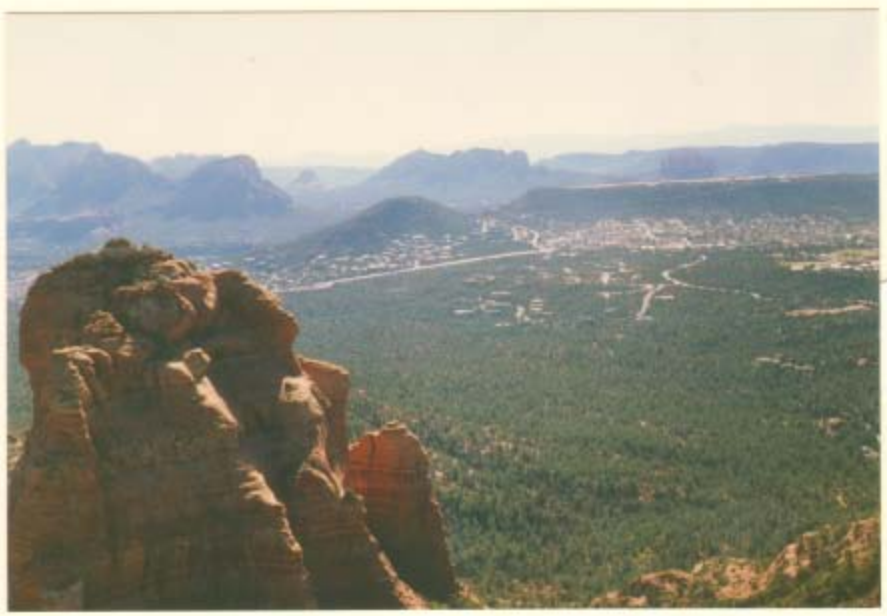
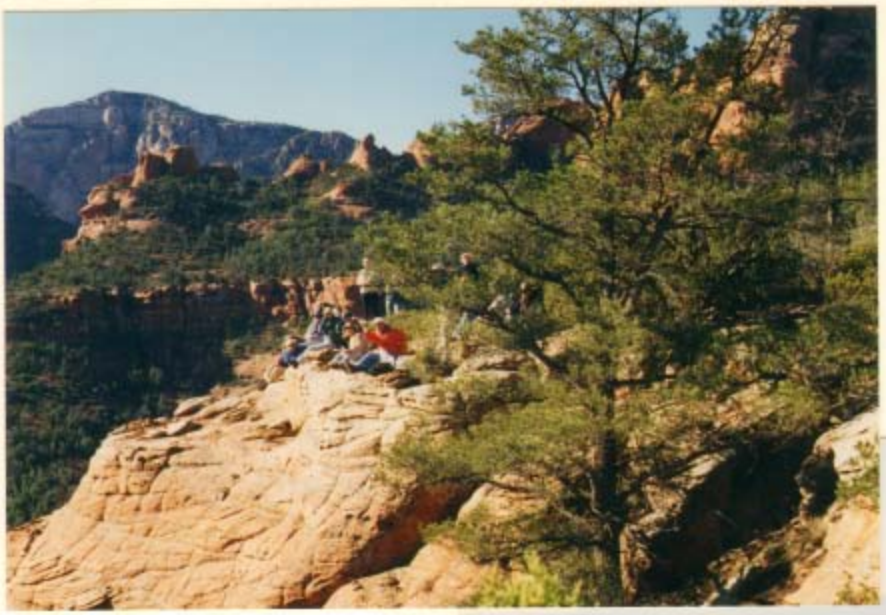
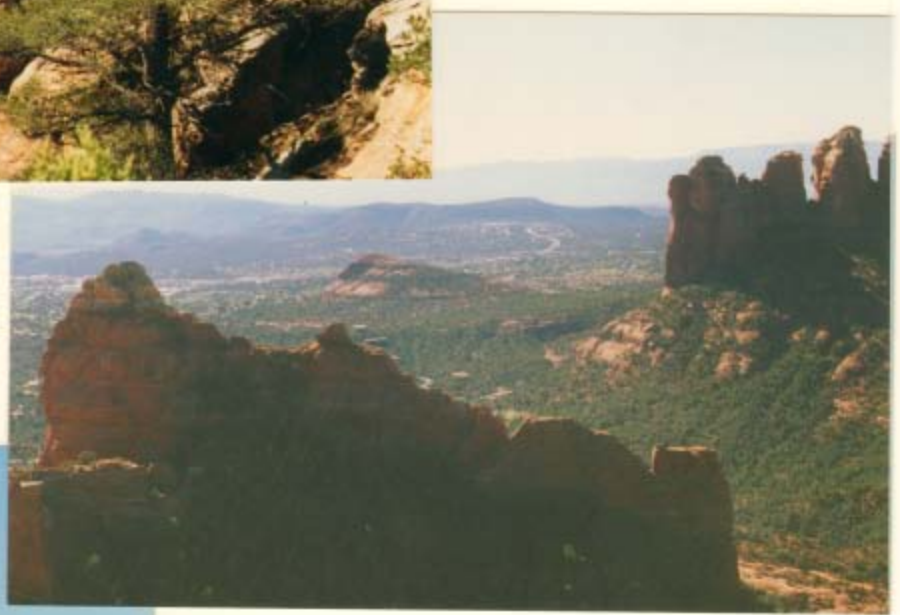
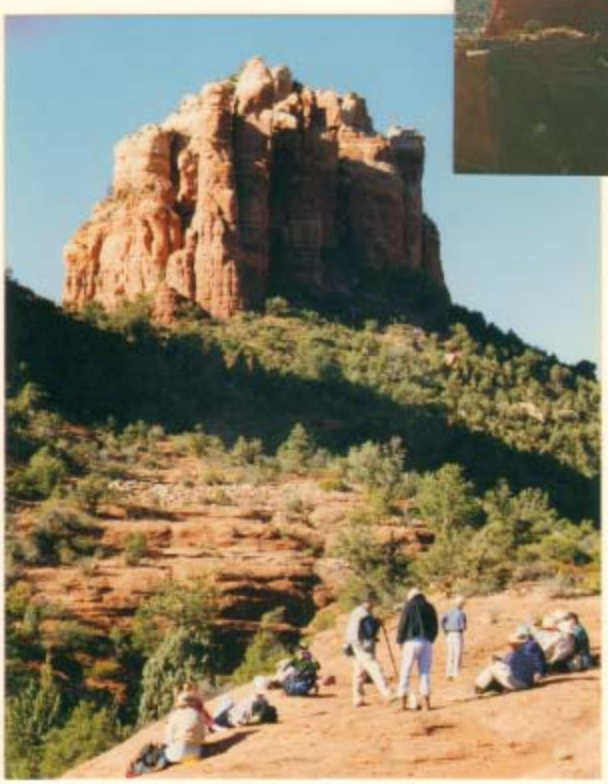
**Editors note:** *The headline on the Nov. 15 edition of the Westerners column read that the Westerners climbed Bell Rock. Actually, the Westerners did not climb Bell Rock, they walked the trail around Bell Rock and Courthouse Rock.*



From Brins Ridge
11-30-1996 by J. Stratton







Brins Ridge/Soldier Pass Loop
11-30-1996 by. J. Stratton

RR News 11-29-96

Sedona Westerners

# Switchbacks leave Dogies breathless

**THERE WAS** not a cloud in the sky, but the air was a bit brisk at 8:45 a.m. when the Tuesday Dogies met at the Elks Lodge parking lot.

They signed in and arranged car pooling for the 15-minute ride out to the Encinoso picnic area, the starting point for the seven-mile hike on North Wilson, the highest point in the area.

Clyde Morgan, Dogie boss, and tailgater Chuck Reinstma led the frisky hikers attired in sweaters and jackets up the initial part of the trail, which rises in elevation, quickly enough to pep up the breathing process.

The trail was pretty well littered with leaves from the deciduous trees, although many trees were fairly golden in color. The group proceeded through what most agreed is the most beautiful part of the hike, the area through the large ponderosa and pine forest.

Hiking the switchbacks left a few people rather breathless, but everyone arrived at the first bench in good shape, and eager to continue to our promised goal at the top. Then the finish. What a view. Lunch time was welcome.

**THE CHATTER** on the trip down was mostly kids, politics, personal ailments and the stock market.

Pertinent facts: Only one person was in shorts and five hikers carried staffs.

Upcoming events include:

Saturday, Nov. 30, Brins Ridge/Soldier Pass Loop, departing 9 a.m. A seven-mile hike, 1,100-foot climb, this is rated moderate/steep.

Tuesday Dogies, leave at 9 a.m., Dec. 3, for the Jim Bryant trail, five miles, 500-foot climb, rated moderate.

**THURSDAY AMBLERS**, leave at 9 a.m. Dec. 5, for Submarine Rock, rated easy.

Sign up for the Christmas party, Dec. 12, at the Elks Lodge. Sign in at the hikes or for information, call Kirk Kirkley at 282-2278.

Visitors, be aware. Everyone must wear sturdy hiking shoes, a hat, and carry at least one quart of water (for all-day hikes in warm weather, carry two quarts). Bring lunch on all-day hikes.

New Parking Area: Posse Grounds Park. Go up Posse Grounds Road four-tenths of a mile, stay to the right at the fork, to the gravel lot on the left. This parking is effective now.

*The Sedona Westerners gather regularly from mid-September to mid-May to hike and explore Northern Arizona's scenic and historic spots. The Westerners column is written by a different member of the group each week and is published Fridays. The scribe this week is Kirk Kirkley.*

RR News. 12-6-96

Sedona Westerners

# Westerners encircle Brins Ridge

**AS SEDONA** Westerners know, some days are made for hiking. Last Saturday, Nov. 30, was one of those days.

Skies don't come any bluer or more cloudless than they were for the Brins Ridge Loop hike that day. If there was any drawback, it was the freezing temperatures, as expected following the autumn storm that had brushed the area the day before.

But the bundled-up hikers found that the crisp air only added to the exhilaration of the trail. Anyway, the cold gradually moderated as the bright sun climbed ever higher, resulting in the shedding of successive layers of hikers' jackets and sweaters.

Dave Jackson was the very able leader of the hike, with Jack Stratton the veteran tailgater. The hike is rated at 7 miles, 1,100 feet climb, and moderately steep with ledges.

Starting at the Soldier Wash trail head, the group proceeded through a pristine forest of Arizona cypress on the new trail built last year mainly by Friends of the Forest. Enroute the trail passes the Devils Kitchen sinkhole, then the Seven Sacred Pools, which are never dry, but which some wag claims are reduced to the "Five Putrid Puddles" after prolonged dry spells.

**SOON AFTER** that the new trail reaches the wilderness boundary and the route continues on the old trail, climbing steeply to Soldier Pass. Along the way, Dave pointed to the summit of Brins Ridge looming high and almost vertically above, and announced that the day's lunch site would be up there. Mumblings could be heard: "He's got to be kidding!"

Swinging around to the east from Soldier Pass, Dave led the hikers to the morning coffee-break spot, an overlook of the entire Soldier Wash basin and the sweeping vista beyond, with Sedona in the distance.

Dominating this scene is the imposing feature which Westerners have dubbed Brins Ridge for lack of any official name. It rises like a junior Matterhorn from the southern edge of Brins Mesa, so the name is logical. Newer hikers who had not climbed it before could not be blamed for skepticism about its accessibility. Actually, the ascent is not difficult, though steep.

Before the climb, Dave and Norm Herkenham recounted the tale of how Brins Mesa got named, one hundred years ago. It immortalizes an unbranded maverick brindle bull, named old Brind, who ranged wild up there until killed in a bungled attempt to capture him. (Map makers streamline the mesa's name from Brind's to Brins.)

Upon reaching the ridge top, the hikers learned there was still another half-mile to go along the knife-edge crest before the lunch stop. Attention to one's footing on this precarious perch is of paramount importance, but keeping eyes off the incredible scenery is difficult. Virtually every formation around Sedona is visible from this ridge, both near and distant. Probably nowhere else offers such a 360° view.

**AFTER LUNCH**, in which turkey sandwiches seemed to predominate, the return route left Brins Mesa going down Mormon Canyon, then crossing over the dividing ridge to Soldier Wash and the starting point, completing the loop about 3:30 p.m.

Upcoming events include:

Sunday, Dec. 8, Back-o-Beyond Wash, departing at 1:30 p.m., three miles, 150 foot climb, rated easy.

Dogies' hike Tuesday, Dec. 10, Soldiers Heights Loop, departing 9 a.m., five miles, 500 foot climb, rated moderate, steep.

No Amblers' hike because of the Christmas party, Dec. 12, at the Elks Club. Sign in at the hikes, or for information call Kirk Kirkley, 282-2278.

**VISITORS ARE** welcome on hikes, but everyone must wear sturdy hiking shoes, a hat, and carry at least one quart of water (for all-day hikes in warm weather, carry two quarts). Bring lunch on all day hikes.

New parking area: Posse Grounds Park. Go up Posse Grounds Road four-tenths of a mile, stay to the right at the fork, to the gravel lot on the left.

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Sedona Westerners

RR News Dec 13, 96

# Amblers wind their way up Submarine Rock in a 'Sexton sandwich' on Dec. 5

**THE AMBLERS**, a division of the Sedona Westerners, enjoyed their Thursday hike to Submarine Rock on Dec. 5.

Perhaps it should be called a Sexton Sandwich, for the leader was Bill Sexton, the tailgater was June Sexton, and they kept all others between them.

The first stop was at Devil's Dining Room, a deep sinkhole surrounded by a protective fence. One newcomer gazed into the dark pit and asked, "Was it caused by a meteor?" Bill Sexton explained how underground water worked for centuries dissolving the limestone to form a cave, and when the roof drops down due to erosion, a sinkhole is formed.

A side jaunt was made to a great rock platform from which the hikers looked above to Twin Buttes and looked down into the wooded Marg's Stable which was named for a mare that belonged to an early rancher named Abraham James. His horse was named Margaret, but was called Marg, not Marge. The mare learned that getting new shoes meant a long trip ahead, so after being shod she would disappear into this area that became known as Marg's Stable.

On the trail toward Submarine Rock, the Amblers stopped at a well-eroded open area which the leader said was Coffee Break Rock. Here all enjoyed relaxing under a perfect sky.

**WHEN THE** famous Submarine Rock was reached, it was immediately climbed. It was noted that this submarine had two towers rather than the customary one. The lower tower became the site for lunch which was less than ideal, for a brisk wind had developed. After lunch, the higher tower was mounted by several who later found the descent more difficult.

The return trip was pleasant and leisurely following wooded ways below red rock cliffs. In discussing the easy pace, one hiker commented, "After all, that's what Amblers are supposed to do."

"Yes," commented Sidney Feinberg, "I'd rather amble than scramble."

The next weekend hike will be on Saturday, Dec. 14, when the Westerners will go to Lincoln and Long Canyons.

On Tuesday, December 17 the Dogies will have a long hike to Long Canyon.

**THE AMBLERS** will hike again on Dec. 19 when they will explore HS Canyon.

For all these hikes, meet at 9 a.m. at the new regular meeting place. To reach it, go up Posse Grounds Road, take the right fork, and assemble in the travel parking area on the left.

All hikers are expected to take a lunch on all-day hikes and carry plenty of water. They are also required to wear sturdy hiking shoes with deeply lugged soles.

*The Sedona Westerners gather regularly from mid-September to mid-May to hike and explore Northern Arizona's scenic and historic spots. The scribe this week is Charles Jorgensen.*

RR News. 12/20/96

Sedona Westerners

# With clouds boiling overhead, intrepid Westerners hike up Soldiers Heights

**TUESDAY, DEC.** 10, a number of intrepid Westerners met at the Posse Ground parking lot for the Soldiers Heights hike.

Leader Clyde Morgan and tailgater Chuck Rientsma waited anxiously as rain had fallen during the night and clouds were boiling overhead.

Hikers soon gathered, however, replete with rain gear, to drive via Dry Creek Road and the dirt road toward Vultee Arch, parking at the Brins Mesa trail head.

Morgan led them up the damp trail to Brins Mesa, through manzanita and Arizona cypress. Moss along banks and puddles in the creek beds, as well as the moist soil, evidenced the evening rain.

Soon the turnoff through the woods was located. A moderate climb brought them to the site of the 10:30 coffee break, with views of the red-rock formations, including the Mittens, Sphinx, Brins Ridge and Wilson Mountain.

**ANN HAMILTON** wore a perky Santa Claus hat reminding all procrastinators of waiting unwritten Christmas cards and unmailed gifts.

However, they all said, "First things first," as they enjoyed one of the favorite hikes of the year.

The hikers then proceeded along a ledge. Anyone with acrophobia avoided looking down at a large ponderosa growing in the bottom of the chasm. Someone spotted a "print," conjectured possibly bear. Other, wiser, opinions were that it was made by some extinct animal, or even a print of a hiking boot.

While this learned discussion occurred, other hikers were discussing the Lewis and Clark expedition. By dint of concentrated effort, precarious footholds and grasping of bushes, all climbed the 40-degree incline to the ridge, hoping no one took a photo of the not-too-graceful positions. Of course, someone did, naturally. Ann celebrated by releasing bubbles.

The next challenge was sliding down the other side. The large cliffs of Soldiers Heights (Westerners' name) loomed on the right. Large boulders had broken off many years ago. Lunch was at a sheltered spot but a later weather report mentioned 25- to 30-mph winds with gusts to 40 mph.

**THE PATH** taken after lunch was not for "confirmed cowards," so concentration was needed at every footstep. Morgan pointed out the Devil's Bridge on the left across the canyon. They saw the House of the Open Door (Westerners' name) below the cliff. They then made their way down a precipitous incline to the cars. Another great hike without getting wet.

Upcoming hikes — Sunday, Dec. 22, to Steamboat Rock. Moderate, steep, with ledges, a three-mile hike. Meet at 1:30 p.m. at the Posse Ground parking lot, 0.4 miles from Hwy. 89A up Posse Ground Road. Right at the fork.

No Dogie hike Dec. 24 nor Ambler hike Dec. 26 (watch for Santa). Next Dogie hike Jan. 7 and Ambler hike Jan. 2.

All hikers must wear sturdy, lugged hiking shoes and carry at least a quart of water. Wear a hat. Bring lunch on all-day hikes.

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Sedona Westerners

RR News 12-27-96

# Amblers hike beautiful canyon that deserves a better name

**ON DEC**. 19 the Westerners' group, known as the Amblers, had a leisurely hike into H.S. Canyon. Since the temperature had dropped into the low 20s during the previous night, it was surprising that quite a number of Amblers showed up at the group rendezvous at the Posse Grounds parking lot.

Since the drive out the Vultee Arch road is bone-jarring, the group car-pooled in high- clearance vehicles. After parking at the same trailhead that is used for Secret Canyon, the group crossed Dry Creek and proceeded up the Secret Canyon Trail to reach the sign for H.S. Canyon.

Bill Sexton was the leader, and John Schaeffer was the tailgater.

Bill explained that he had tried very hard to learn the origin of the name H.S. Canyon. Even an old-timer he had consulted could not explain the origin of the name. Everyone agreed that such a beautiful little canyon deserved a more attractive name.

When scouting the area before the hike, Bill decided that H.S. might well be changed to B.S. for the copious droppings of bear scat about.

**THE DAY**, which had dawned so very cold, turned out to be warmer than expected. The sun was bright, and the sky was deep blue above the red rocks. Marge Schaeffer, a dedicated birder, spotted a robin also enjoying the canyon's pristine beauty.

There was abundant evidence that coyotes, along with the bears, frequent the canyon. Places where javelina had been rooting were seen. Bill Sexton spun a tale about an 800-pound javelina, which had grown in the retelling from a 40-pounder that Norm Herkenham's dog, Pigeon, had spooked in a past foray into H.S. Canyon.

Stands of Pringle's manzanita lined the trail. Some of them looked dead, except for one narrow stripe of healthy bark growing up the tree. The hikers learned that it was a "ribbon of life" to the live growth at the top of the tree.

The group had a successful hike, even though none of the bears or coyotes appeared in person.

The upcoming hikes will take place on Saturday, Dec. 28, to Rose's Volcano Loop. Hikers will meet at 9 a.m. at the Posse Grounds. The trail climbs 20 feet in five miles and is rated as an easy trek.

**THERE WILL** be no Dogie hike Dec. 31, New Year's Eve. Happy trails in 1997.

The next Ambler hike will be Jan. 2, up Wet Beaver Creek to the Weir Box. This hike is always slow and easy. Meet at 9 a.m. at the Posse Grounds.

Visitors may participate in all hikes. Everyone must wear sturdy hiking shoes, a hat and carry at least one quart of water. Bring a lunch on all-day hikes.

To get to the Posse Grounds, go up Posse Grounds road .4 of a mile. Stay right at the fork, then park at the gravel lot on the left. Meeting times for the Sunday hikes are 1:30 p.m. and 9 a.m. for all other hikes unless otherwise indicated.

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January 9, 1997

Oak Creek - Verde River Confluence

Left is Oak Creek - Right is Verde River

1-17-97

Sedona Westerners

# Westerners hike Long Canyon Trail

**ON A** crisp winter morning, eager Westerners started up the Long Canyon Trail, led by Linda Cooper. In less than a mile, we shed the first layer of clothes as the temperature climbed under clear blue skies.

This was a good opportunity to enjoy spectacular views of Mescal and Secret mountains and others. The red rocks are part of the Schnebly Hill formation, while the light-colored upper rocks are the Coconino sandstone and Toroweap formations.

Continuing, it was necessary to make a detour around a tree that had fallen across the trail. Since it appeared to be a healthy Arizona cypress, there was speculation if the wind could have uprooted this tree. One hiker suggested that it could be a very large bear that knocked it over.

There was also confusion at the rear of the line, where Phil Arndt, the designated tailgater, had a hard time staying behind Jack Stratton, whose natural instincts kept him vying for that position.

Cooper said that the regular time for coffee would be slightly delayed to get us to a sunny and extremely scenic vantage point. After a strenuous climb to an outcropping of red rocks, everyone agreed that it was worth waiting for, as the views were magnificent.

**AS THE** group continued, the sights included some caves that contained both ancient Indian signs, as well as more recent signs of car parts and possibly bootleggers' artifacts.

Some members of the group did further exploring of another cliff site before joining the rest for lunch under a large overhang, while several hikers packed away shirts and sweaters to enjoy the midday sun.

On the return trip, Cooper pointed out a vegetation that was growing in rocks rich in lime content. It is called "rockmat" and is a member of the rose family. Its Latin name is *petrophytum caespitosum,* which is derived from the words, petroleum and cushion (watch out, Norm Herkenham, your position as botanist is being threatened).

On the final leg of the journey, Cooper pointed out the "Bear," which is a rock formation resembling a bear standing against a tree sipping honey.

At the parking area, everyone said it had been a beautiful hike, and thanked the leader for a job well done.

**THE NEXT** Westerner hike will be Sunday, Jan. 19, to Snoopy rock. Starting time is 1:30 p.m. The climb is rated moderate, with about a 600-foot incline and about three miles total distance.

The Dogies' hike on Jan. 21 will be to Jack's Canyon, also rated as moderate, and about five miles. Members from the Big Park area may use the alternate meeting place at Bell Rock Plaza in the Village at about 9:15 a.m.

The Amblers' hike on Jan. 23 will go to Red Tank Draw, Ranch House, and Sacred Mountain. This hike is rated slow and easy.

Everyone must wear sturdy, lugged-sole hiking boots, a hat, and carry at least one quart of water. Bring a lunch on all-day hikes.

Please note the new meeting area at Posse Grounds. Go up Posse Ground Road four-tenths of a mile, stay right at the fork, then park in the gravel lot on the left. Sunday hikes meet at 1:30 p.m. and all others at 9 a.m. unless noted otherwise.

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RR News — 1-24-97

Sedona Westerners

EAGLES NEST

# Amblers eagerly greet dry conditions and head for Red Rock State Park

**AFTER A** week of inclement weather, the Amblers eagerly greeted the dry conditions and headed for Red Rock State Park and the Eagles Nest Trail.

On pauses during the ascent, hike leader John Schaeffer told the group how many Westerners, past and present, have volunteered their time and talents for the construction and operation of the park.

At a brief rest at the top, the hikers enjoyed the view to the east, the red rocks dominated by the Cathedral Rocks and the valley and Oak Creek in the foreground.

They went on to the junction of the Eagles Nest and Coyote Ridge trails where they elected to stay on high ground and continued on the ridge to the Apache Fire Trail. At a spot providing an excellent view of the House of Apache Fire, a brief history of the house was given.

Completing this segment of the trail, they proceeded on the Javelina Trail to the east gate of the park, stopping for lunch at the Cathedral overlook. They then made the brief circle of the Yavapai Ridge Trail and the gradual descent along the Kisva Trail to the creek, Kingfisher Bridge and the visitor center. All agreed that it was an excellent trail system. Tailgater Charles West reported that no hikers went astray.

**THE NEXT** Saturday hike will be Jan. 25 to Secret Canyon/Bear Sign loop, 8 miles, 800-foot climb, rough and steep in places. The next Tuesday hike will be Jan. 28 to Cockscomb, 4 miles, 500-foot climb and moderate. The next Thursday hike will be to Loy Canyon ruins and petroglyphs, slow and easy.

All hikes begin at the Posse Ground parking lot, 0.4 miles north of Hwy. 89A, at 9 a.m. Visitors are welcome. Everyone must wear sturdy lugged hiking shoes, a hat, and must carry at least one quart of water. Also, bring a lunch for all-day hikes.

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Red Rock News
1-31-97

**Sedona Westerners**

# Westerners overcome holiday idleness, tackle Bear Sign-Secret Canyons loop

**GATHERING CLOUDS** on Saturday, Jan. 25, did not deter a hardy group of Sedona Westerners from tackling the Bear Sign-Secret Canyons loop hike. Don Hooven was the leader and "Cactus Jack" Stratton the highly experienced tailgater.

It was exactly a month since Christmas, and the troops had by now overcome whatever effects of overindulgence and were ready for serious hiking. Some sported new clothing or equipment received on the holiday.

The hike is rated at eight miles, with 800 feet of climb, of moderate difficulty but with some steep sections and rock scrambling. To reach the start of the hike, cars left the Posse Grounds assembly area at 9 a.m. and traveled out Dry Creek Road and the somewhat muddy Vultee Arch Road to the Dry Creek trailhead.

In less than a mile on the Dry Creek trail, the hikers reached the start of the Bear Sign Canyon trail. Recent storms had made their statement, leaving many stretches of the trail buried in several inches of snow. Crunchy in the morning hours, the snow was never a problem, turning to a friendly mush by afternoon. Still, Bear Sign presented several obstacles in the form of fallen trees from the storms, but all were easily surmounted.

The usual babel of conversation included such subjects as politics, family relationships and Christmas reunions, investments, and of course, the Super Bowl the following day.

**ABOUT TWO** miles up the densely forested Bear Sign trail is an important junction where an obscure trail departs to cross over the ridge that separates Bear Sign from Secret Canyon. The connecting trail has no official name, but veteran Westerners have dubbed it the "Phoebe Trail."

To explain that name, leader Don pried the story out of Norm Herkenham (actually, Norm has related it to many hiking parties and is crushed if he isn't asked again). Phoebe was Norm's trailwise dog who was a member of many scouting trips years ago. About 1980, the trail that bears her name was believed to exist but was completely invisible beneath dense brush that had accumulated since the trail was last used to move cattle from one canyon to the other.

The scouts wanted to find the connecting trail again. Starting from its Secret Canyon terminus, the human searchers couldn't find the trail, but Phoebe sniffed it out and bade the amazed crew to follow her lead and cut out the concealing brush as they went.

The Secret-Bear Sign link was thus restored after a day and a half of work, and is now routinely used by Westerners who will always be indebted to a canny canine.

Toiling up the Phoebe Trail out of Bear Sign Canyon was the most grueling part of the hike, but the troops were rewarded at the summit with a very scenic lunch stop. Then came the long, steep descent into Secret Canyon.

**TURNING LEFT** at the Secret Canyon junction, which has also been called "Salt Box" junction, for a cattleman's salt box that once existed there, the hikers proceed along the main Secret Canyon trail. After only a quarter mile they arrived at another junction, this time a rough trail leading back over the ridge to Bear Sign Canyon.

The Westerners call this link the "Many Ducks Trail." The name refers to the numerous "Duck" that once marked the route. These ducks lack feathers and are quite sedentary, being simply small stacks of rocks. Easterners might betray their origin by calling them cairns, but a dyed-in-the-wool Westerner wouldn't dream of calling them anything but ducks. The term probably originated in California's Sierra Nevada early in the century.

Another tough climb over the ridge on Many Ducks brought the group back to the snow trail in Bear Sign. En route, a cluster of four agave plants were observed, their many spine-tipped leaves all heavily browsed by javelinas. None of the hikers could recall seeing so much cropping by these animals.

The slightly tired troops reached the waiting cars about 3:30 p.m., happy in the knowledge that Christmas was only 11 months away.

**UPCOMING EVENTS** include:

Sunday, Feb. 2, a groundhog watch at Jacks Canyon Bluffs, departing 1:30 p.m.; 3 miles, 800-foot climb, moderate, steep.

Dogies' hike Tuesday, Feb. 4, Twin Buttes Saddle, departing 9 a.m., 4 miles, 600-foot climb, moderate, rock scramble, steep.

Amblers' hike Thursday, Feb. 6, Vultee Arch, departing 9 a.m. Always slow and easy.

Visitors may always attend on hikes. Everyone must wear sturdy hiking shoes, a hat, and carry at least one quart of water (for all-day hikes in warm weather, carry two quarts). Bring lunch on all-day hikes.

New assembly area: Posse Grounds Park. Go up Posse Grounds Road 4/10ths of a mile, stay to the right at the fork, park on the gravel lot on the left.

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Sedona Westerners

Red Rock News
2-7-97

# Hause leads Westerners up Jacks Canyon trail

**LAST SUNDAY** veteran hike leader Norm Hause led a group of Sedona Westerners up the Jacks Canyon trail. The trail begins two miles east of the intersection of Jacks Canyon and Hwy. 89A in Big Park.

The first mile parallels houses in the valley, gently climbing through piñon-juniper woodland sprinkled with prickly pear, cacti and a variety of shrubs, including the "wait-a-minute" mimosa.

Fluffy, benign clouds turned the solar heat on and off. The easy, sandy trail was conducive to conversation. Tailgater Elyse Holland made sure none of the conversationalists forgot to hike.

A pile of gray feathers along the trail were so downy they looked like fur. These "semiplume" feathers began speculation about their former owner and its demise, bringing to mind the adage, "He who hesitates is lunch."

The northern, forested slopes of Horse Mesa rose on the right. On the left the red pinnacles at the south end of Lee Mountain stood out majestically in the sun. The elusive Yavapai-Coconino County boundary runs east-west at their base.

**JACKS CANYON** Trail is one of the old cattle trails used to move stock to lower elevations in winter. Sources vary as to which Jack it's named for.

The group turned back short of the hoped-for destinations of Jacks Canyon Bluffs, deciding it was better left for an all-day hike.

On Saturday, Feb. 8, the hike to Boynton Canyon Mushroom will cover six miles. Not for the faint-hearted, it's rated difficult, with some rock scrambles and steep climbs. It's a dual hike, however, so one can opt to snooze in the sun while thrill-seekers scramble to the "mushroom" for a full 1,000-foot total climb from the trailhead.

The Dogies hike on Tuesday, Feb. 11, to Mescal Mountain, beginning on the Long Canyon Trail and turning left at the fence to ascend Mescal, a flat-topped mesa between the entrances to Long and Boynton Canyons. It's a four-mile hike with some rock scrambling, rated moderate.

The "mosey along" group, the Amblers, will hike on Thursday, Feb. 13, to beautiful Boynton Canyon.

**ALL THESE** hikes leave from the Posse Grounds at 9 a.m. Travel up Posse Grounds Road 09.4 mile, take the right fork and park in the gravel lot on the left.

Visitors are welcome. Hikers must wear sturdy hiking footwear, a hat, and carry at least one quart of water. Lunch is needed on all-day hikes.

The monthly meeting will be at 7:30 p.m., Thursday, Feb. 13, at the Church of the Red Rocks off Hwy. 179. The meeting is open to visitors.

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# Westerners schedule hikes

**THE LIZARD** Head/Coffee Pot hike scheduled for Sunday, Jan. 5, was canceled by cactus dodger Len Ostrum because of rain.

Future hikes are as follows:

- Saturday, Jan. 11 — Long Canyon. A seven-mile, 700-foot climb, rated as easy/rock scramble.
- Tuesday, Jan. 14 — Dogies hike to Doe Mountain. A four-mile hike with a 500-foot climb, rated as moderate, rock scramble and steep.
- Thursday, Jan. 16 — Amblers hike to Eagle's Nest at Red Rock State Park. Fee is $5 per car to enter park.

All these hikes are all day and leave Posse Grounds parking area at 9 a.m. Go up Posse Grounds Road 4/10ths of a mile, stay to the right at the fork to the gravel lot on the left.

Visitors, be aware. Everyone must wear sturdy hiking shoes, a hat, carry at least a quart of water and bring lunch.

Monthly meetings are the second Thursday of each month at 7:30 p.m. at the Church of the Red Rocks. Enter meeting hall at lower level parking lot.

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Jan 1997

R.R. News 2-A-97

**Sedona Westerners**

# Sparkling, dancing snow flakes surprise Amblers at the Vultee Arch trailhead lot

**BLUE SKIES**, sunshine, and sparkling, dancing snow flakes surprised the Sedona Westerners' Amblers on Thursday, Feb. 6, as they arrived at the Vultee Arch trailhead parking lot. A little snow squall in a remote side canyon, whipped by a sweeping wind, carried the snow into these blue skies to greet the morning.

In stark contrast, 59 years ago here one winter morning, the skies were gray, drizzly and foreboding, while ominous clouds shrouded the surrounding Mogollon Rim.

Gerald Vultee, founder of the Vultee Aircraft Co., and his wife, Sylvia, an adventurous California couple who loved flying, ended their flying days forever that morning, as their small plane crashed into a mountaintop. Their bodies and the charred, crumpled wreckage of their plane were not found until several days later.

In memory of the Vultees, in 1969 the Sedona Westerners, along with members of the Vultee Club including the orphaned son of the Vultees, erected a bronze plaque upon the wall of a red butte near the Vultee Arch, far below the crash site. Just this past year the Westerners refurbished and remounted the plaque.

Following a ride over a hardened dirt road off Dry Creek Road for five miles, hike leader for the day John Schaeffer warned, "Anyone who snivels about my going too slow, can join the Dogies next time."

**NOT TO** worry. The chill factor was so bone-chilling that even John didn't amble as he led the bundled-up Amblers along a well-trod trail through the deep canyon, stopping only occasionally in sheltered areas to catch some meager, warm sun rays.

The easy two-mile hike ended with a pause at the bronze plaque and then a short scramble up onto the slick rock of the red butte, where the view — and the cold wind — took away one's breath. But the air was so clear and fresh, Louise recalled her father's description of "air that had never been breathed before."

A handful of hearty souls took off under the leadership of Harry Brown to go to the top of the arch, a short but steep climb away, while the others retreated to a lower slick rock area, a bit more protected from the wind, where everyone sought a spot in the sun. It was one of those rare hikes when no one shed a single layer, but rather wished for more.

Lunch was devoured early, and even before the last bite, tailgater Marge Schaeffer rounded up the group for a brisk return.

Even at midday the ponderosa pines gave off no scent of vanilla this cold day. Thickets of elegant Arizona cypress provided shelter from the wind, while alligator junipers drew admiring glances and fondling with gloved hands. No misery for allergy sufferers this winter day, but noses and eyes watered with the cold. Refreshed and exhilarated, the Amblers ended their hike at the peak of the day.

**UPCOMING HIKES**: Sunday, Feb. 16, Lizard Head and Coffee Pot (with a shuttle exchange), 3 miles, easy; Tuesday, Feb. 18, Dogies to H.S. Canyon, moderate, rock scramble; Thursday, Feb. 20, Amblers to Brinds' Mesa via Dry Creek, slow and easy.

Hikers must wear sturdy hiking footwear, a hat, and carry lunch on all-day hikes.

Note: All hikes leave from the Posse Grounds Park. Take Posse Grounds Road four-tenths of a mile, bear right at the fork and park in the gravel lot on the left.

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Sedona Westerners

# Enthusiasm for the outdoors core ingredient for Westerners' hike of Mescal Mountain

**GENUINE ENTHUSIASM** for the outdoors appeared to be the core ingredient of the Sedona Westerners who hiked Mescal Mountain Feb. 11. This energy and spirit pervaded every minute of the hike.

A brief summary of the type of hike: moderate skill, distance of four miles, a short climb of about 500 feet, and some rock scramble. Dogie leader Clyde Morgan led the hikers through Long Canyon to the Mescal Mountain trailhead. Very noticeable were the leader's big, genuine smiles, giving away his obvious love of leading the group on the day's adventure.

Challenging, a few said of the steep, rock scramble to the top of the mountain, although most hikers moved on ahead, climbing right up to the top of the rocks, obviously quite experienced. One member, however, who had never encountered such a climb said maybe she had better stay behind. But the group offered such sincere encouragement and support that this novice hiker scrambled up rocks that seemed impossible to her at first.

Walking around the perimeter of the mountaintop, murmurs were heard from the group as they chatted with friends and newcomers about the incredible beauty of the views seen from the mesa. Comments such as, "I like each hike even better than the last one," and "I've been hiking these canyons and mountains for 20 years and still I continue to discover something new and fascinating," were a few thoughtful comments overheard.

For lunch, Morgan led the group to the perfect spot. Ochre, lichen-covered rocks arranged like benches in an outdoor stadium provided hikers seating with incredibly inspiring views of Mingus, Bear and Doe mountains in the distance. Below this grand sight lunchers gazed down upon Dead Man's Pass, Long Canyon and even on to the entrance of Boynton Canyon.

**EAGERLY, THE** hikers continued on to the north end of Mescal Mountain through tall, feathery grasses to see more red rock views. Finally, the group turned back, headed down to the main trail and rejoined the Long Canyon trail to the trailhead. And during the entire four-hour hike, tailgater Chuck Reintsma, like a shepherd, made sure that no one strayed; such a patient man, indeed.

"Thank you" to the leader and goodbyes, "see you next week," were heard as hikers came to the end of their adventure.

Upcoming hikes: Saturday, Feb. 22, Devil's Bridge-Soldier Heights Loop, 5 miles, 400-foot climb, moderate, rock scramble, steep, ledges; Tuesday, Feb. 25, Dogies to Big Park Heights, 3 miles, 650-foot climb, moderate, rock scramble (members from the Big Park area may use the alternate meeting place at Bell Rock Plaza in VOC at about 9:15 a.m.); Thursday, Feb. 27, Amblers to Hidden Valley stone yard, slow and easy.

Hikers must wear sturdy hiking shoes, a hat, one quart of water; on all-day hikes, carry two quarts of water and lunch.

Note: All hikes (except Sundays) leave from the Posse Grounds Park at 9 a.m. Take Posse Grounds Road four-tenths of a mile, bear right at the fork and park in the gravel lot on the left. Visitors are welcome.

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Devil's Bridge / Soldier Pass Trail Circle

RR News. 2-28-97

**Sedona Westerners**

# With weather cold and crisp, Westerners journey where no one has been before

**THE FINE** print at the bottom of the hike schedule stated, "subject to change depending on how the leader feels on that particular morning."

On Saturday, Feb. 22, hike leaders Sam Hagar and Tom Curry promised a hike to an undisclosed location that no one had been to before.

"Just follow us." Due to these circumstances, an exception to the rules was made, and sniveling was allowed.

The air was cool and crisp, but warmed gently with no breeze as the trail climbed gradually about halfway up from the valley floor.

Then the trail wound along at this level, providing outstanding views upward of the many buttes and hoodoos, but especially of the formations on the other side of the valley as the sunlight constantly changed and enhanced the colors an infinite number of ways.

**THE GROUP** progressed to the end of the valley where, at the base of a butte with at least one gently sloping side, the stern leaders ordered, "lunch time." This spot afforded a view of the entire valley, and it was magnificent.

However, some hikers are never satisfied and a few hardy ones ascended this butte after lunch. They returned fully gratified with their efforts and reported to the "slackers" that they were high enough to sight the elusive, fantastic, long-fabled Lake Christensen. One slacker suggested that the adventurous ones had been chewing too much agave. Nevertheless, all hikers were sworn to secrecy of the location in an attempt to prevent the developers from leveraging the Forest Service into another land exchange.

The hike resumed by traversing along the other side of the valley and affording views of the area just traveled in the morning. This route was particularly enjoyable as it was fun to be where the prior distant view was, and at the same time be viewing in the distance where one had just been.

Along the way, geology expert and tailgater Norm Botanicus gave a marvelous presentation about the Schnebly Hill formation Fort Apache limestone member and its erosion due to rain having always been acidic. The group was in awe as they had never heard of this geological erosional phenomenon previously and applauded Norm profusely in grateful appreciation for sharing his lifelong acquired expertise.

This hike was executed with such precision that the group was totally surprised by their next view. They had come upon their personal vehicles.

**UPCOMING HIKES**: Sunday, March 2, 1:30 p.m., Cathedral Rock, 3 miles, 400-foot climb, moderate, rock scramble, steep; Tuesday, March 4, 9 a.m., Woods Canyon, high-clearance vehicle, 6 miles 500-foot climb, moderate. Members from the Big Park area may meet at Bell Rock Plaza about 9:15 a.m.; and Thursday, March 6, 9 a.m., Long Canyon, always slow and easy. Departure times are prompt.

Visitors may always attend. Everyone must wear sturdy hiking shoes, a hat and carry at least one quart of water (for all-day hikes in warm weather, carry two quarts). Bring lunch on all-day hikes. Meeting place is up Posse Grounds Road 4/10ths of a mile, stay right at the fork, then park in the gravel lot on the left.

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March '97 Published March 6 '97

Sedona Westerners

# Leader called it quits on hiking; snow began to fall

April 29

**THEY SHOULD** have suspected bad weather when they set out for their usual Thursday amble. Or would have had they listened to or watched any weather news in the past 24 hours. But this bunch of Westerners are laid back and accustomed to fair weather and ignored it all.

So off they drove to a spot near Oak Creek 25 minutes west of Sedona, parked and loaded up backpacks to head south to the Stoneyard in Hidden Valley.

Sam Waltrip was the leader, having been to the Stoneyard previously. Tailgater John Schaeffer rounded up the strays and "rode drag." It was a lot of fun until it began to sprinkle, then rain. Ponchos came out and House Mountain to the east disappeared.

After a mile and 30 minutes, the leader called it quits on hiking.

"And now you know the rest of the story," as snow began to fall.

**HIDDEN VALLEY** will therefore remain hidden until rescheduled. And the story of the Stoneyard is still a mystery.

Attention Saturday hikers: There is a change in the hiking schedule listing for the Thompson's Ladder hike March 8. The rating has been changed from moderate to difficult, rock scramble and steep; length is six miles with 1,600 vertical feet of climb. You have been warned.

The Dogies hike on Tuesday, March 11, is to Secret Canyon and is easy, steep and six miles with 700 feet of climb. The Amblers hike on Thursday, March 13, to Wilson Canyon is as always slow and easy.

The Westerners monthly meeting is at 7:30 p.m., Thursday, March 13, at The Church of the Red Rocks, Hwy. 179. Visitors are invited.

Visitors are welcome on hikes. For the hikes, everyone must wear sturdy hiking shoes with lugged soles, a hat and carry at least one quart of water. For all-day hikes in warmer weather, carry two quarts. Bring lunch on all Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday hikes.

Meeting place is north from Hwy. 89A on Posse Grounds Road four-tenths of a mile, stay right at the fork, then park in the gravel lot on the left. Meet at 1:30 p.m. for the Sunday hikes and 9 a.m. for all other hikes unless otherwise indicated.

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HIDDEN VALLEY STONEYARD

R R News 3-7-97

**Sedona Westerners**

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WILSON CANYON

RED ROCK NEWS, Sedona, Arizona Friday, March 21, 1997

# Amblers learn of prominent settler, weave through Oak Creek Canyon

**THE AMBLERS** group of the Sedona Westerners disembarked for the March 13 hike at the Midgley Bridge Trailhead and gathered at the nearby bronze plaque to listen to leader Norm Herkenham as he explained the history of the plaque.

The plaque briefly details the story of Richard Wilson, prominent early settler and old bear-hunter, who was killed by a grizzly bear in 1885 in the canyon which now bears his name. Westerners paid for the bronze plaque — it was installed on a large basalt boulder by the U.S. Forest Service in 1982.

The trail signs nearby were also paid for and designed by the Westerners and installed by the Forest Service. Not things of beauty, but practically foolproof against vandalism.

Other types of signs come and go, but it looks like the Westerner signs will go on forever. They are made of sheet iron, with the train names burned out of the metal.

Walking on at a leisurely pace, with tailgater Charles West bringing up the rear, it was evident the hikers were following an old roadway, which soon headed up the canyon.

**THE CREEK** bed was crossed on a natural stone ledge, and then the Jim Thompson trail (the original wagon road up the canyon) diverged to the left, while the hike continued up Wilson Canyon.

Soon the Wilderness Boundary sign appeared, giving the information that no motorized travel is permitted past the sign, also no bicycles, and no hang gliders. Imagine alighting in this forest by hang glider; no thanks.

At another trail junction, there is a sign to the right pointing the way to Wilson Mountain. This is a part of the old South Wilson trail, has been superseded by a new trail with better slope and design which was built by the Sierra Club on one of their service trips, to Forest Service specifications.

Proceeding on, a chance soon came to stop and puff, as the group's happy-to-oblige Herkenham delivered a short botanical lesson on a shrub that looks a lot like a holly bush, but is not a holly at all.

Instead it is Palmer oak, an evergreen shrub or small tree with very prickly points on its leaves. Close study reveals that this shrub bears some tiny acorns, so this is for sure no holly. (There are no true hollies in the West.)

**ANOTHER ATTRACTIVE** evergreen shrub, sugar sumac, with smooth leaf edges, was encountered. The flowers on this shrub start to develop in the fall, then their growth is arrested through the winter, to begin to grow again when spring comes. Its berries have a lemony taste.

Happily the "coffee break" was soon reached, so-called by custom, although the group was eating and drinking many things other than coffee. Juice, oranges, nuts, cookie bars, apples, etc., all may serve as coffee substitutes.

The stop was in a lovely little slick-rock area along a small trickle of the creek which has cut a narrow mossy channel through the red sandstone. The view up canyon was to the red Schnebly Hill formation cliffs and the yellowish and whitish cliffs of the Coconino Sandstone immediately above the Schnebly Hill formation.

In idle conversation, the Hale-Bopp comet came up as a subject. Some bright wit asked how you can tell a comet from an asteroid. The answer — comets are like cats; they both have tails and go anywhere they want. Some purists may argue this definition and mutter about Newton's Laws, but it suited these hikers.

The entire hike was in an almost pure stand of smoothbark Arizona cypress. Herkennham explained that the thin whitish peeling bark of this cypress subspecies is a particular characteristic of this tree which only occurs in the Verde River drainage basin, and nowhere else in the world, but nowhere. None of that white bark on the regular species of Arizona cypress.

**AS THE** lunch destination approached, there was some distinct sniveling from the ranks, as the trail suddenly turned into a very steep scramble over ledges and loose small rocks. Mutters of "this was supposed to be a flat hike" were heard.

But the hikes persevered, scrambling under tree branches, through manzanita, and up rocky ledges, stopping their grumbling when the red rock platform that represented the lunch stop and destination was reached, and the sweeping view attained was duly appreciated.

There was a beautiful broad vista down across Oak Creek Canyon and up the far slopes, over the red rock formations to Mingus Mountain and the Schnebly Hill Road in the distance.

After lunch, a leisurely trip back downhill was enjoyed. It had been a beautiful trail, a beautiful day, and the knowledge gained from the trusty leader was much appreciated.

Upcoming hikes:

**SATURDAY, MARCH** 22, H.S. Canyon-Earl's Canyon Loop, six miles, 500-foot elevation gain, moderate but with some rock scrambling. High clearance vehicles advised.

Tuesday, March 25, Dogies hike on South Wilson trail, five miles, 1,500-foot climb, moderate.

Thursday, March 27, the Amblers go to Bear Wallow. Slow pace guaranteed, but somewhat of a climb, some over slick rock.

All are 9 a.m. starts.

Visitors may go on all hikes. Everyone must wear sturdy hiking shoes and carry at least one quart of water and food as appropriate. Meeting place is up Posse Grounds Road four-tenths of a mile from Hwy. 89A; stay right at the fork, park in gravel lot on left.

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Sedona Westerners

RR NEWS 3-14-97

# Hike leader Dannert shares history at trailhead of Thompson's Ladder

**STANDING AT** the Thompson's Ladder trailhead in Oak Creek Canyon, Bob Dannert, hike leader for the March 8 hike, shared some relevant history with the assembled Westerners.

In brief, he described how, in 1876, the first homesteader then in the canyon, Jim Thompson, had settled on ground where Native Americans had earlier grown corn, beans and squash; the site was known, then as now, as Indian Gardens.

No road through the canyon yet existed. Hence, in order to transport his produce to market in Flagstaff (and return supplies for his wife Margaret and nine children) Thompson forged a trail up the precipitously steep east wall.

On the canyon rim, he permanently parked a wagon. With the wagon in place, he drove his produce-carrying mules up the trail, hitched them up to haul his wagon to Flag and back, and later packed his supplies down home. His neighbors nicknamed the trail "Thompson's Ladder," and that designation has stuck to this day.

The day dawned with a cloudless sky and early-Spring mild temperature — perfect hiking weather. With Dannert leading, tailgater Jack Stratton in position, and geologist Paul Lindberg providing running commentary on grabens, horsts, faults, volcanic necks and other features, the intrepid Westerners sallied forth on the initial segment of this difficult trail.

**ASCENDING THE** north wall of Munds Canyon (a major tributary to Oak Creek), the group was pleasantly aware of the sight and sounds of water in usually dry Munds Creek. (Obviously, the snowfall of the previous week was melting rapidly.)

A number of blooming Indian Paintbrushes, which dotted the trail's edges, gave rise to oohs and aahs of surprise and appreciation. In contrast, the north-facing slope across the canyon from the hikers was artistically dusted with pure white snow.

At a midway point on the trail, Dannert called for a midmorning break; the spot he had selected afforded a panoramic view — Cathedral Rocks occupied the centerpiece, bordered on the left by Giant's Thumb, on the right by Steamboat, backed by House Mountain, with the snow-covered Bradshaws on the far horizon.

As the party approached the rim, the switchbacks grew increasingly steep. The trail, which seemed to aim straight toward huge rim-capping black lava palisades, cleverly contoured around these ominous appearing cliffs.

The trail found and pursued a challenging, ever-upward trending course over and through blocks and boulders of fallen basalt. At last, Thompson's Ladder topped out on the Colorado Plateau; total elevation gain was about 1,600 feet.

**FROM THE** edge of the rim, facing south, another grand panoramic view was revealed, as if to reward the hikers for their efforts. However, the plateau surface was a quagmire.

Only flat lava rocks (heaved up by nighttime frosts), occasional centuries-old alligator junipers, and a few tiny flowers (Spring Beauties) stood out above the mud. Dannert led the group through this mucky morass to a dry haven: a large outcropping of basalt blocks. Here, perched on the edge of the plateau, looking straight on at a waterfall at the head of Munds Canyon, lunch time was declared.

The day's adventures were hardly at an end. Later, the group crossed the quagmire again in order to attain a viewpoint on the very brink of a cascading, roaring water flow which spread like a curtain down, down toward the bottom of narrow Bee Canyon (another tributary of Oak Creek).

Subsequently, descending Thompson's Ladder, the more muted sounds of Munds Creek wafted up to greet the hikers; as they drew nearer, the growing volume of its music invigorated their final steps.

Back at the trailhead, Dannert once again shared historical data and stories from "Those Early Days." As he finished, the group members enthusiastically thanked him, and as well, Paul Lindberg, for their contributions.

**AS THE** hikers disbanded, someone was overheard to snivel, as follows: "Just another ho-hum Westerner hike."

Upcoming events are as follows:

Sunday, March 16, to Fay Canyon, 3 miles, 200-foot estimated climb, rated Mostly Easy (Note: there will be an additional rock scrambling option for those who choose it). Start time is 1:30 p.m.

Dogies on Tuesday, March 18, to Bear Mountain, dual, 6 or 7 miles, 1,000 to 1,900 estimated climb, rated Difficult, Rock Scramble, Steep. Start time is 9 a.m.

Amblers on Thursday, March 20, to Long Canyon, always Slow and Easy. Start time is 9 a.m.

Visitors may join Westerner hikes at no charge; however, they must be properly equipped with sturdy hiking boots, and water and food as appropriate. Meeting place is up Posse Grounds Road four-tenths of a mile from Hwy. 89A; stay right at the fork, park in gravel lot on left.

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RR News 3-28-97

Sedona Westerners

JORDAN / MIDGLEY

# Sedona Westerners enjoy nature exploration

by Gerda Kunstmann

**BECAUSE OF** bad weather and even snow, some hikes had to be rescheduled. That's why the writing today is about the March 6 hike.

To reach the trailhead, the Amblers drove to the end of Jordan Road. Doris Bragg was the hike leader and Shirley Arndt the tailgater. The sun was out and promised a beautiful day.

The group ambled through an area of Arizona cypress, piñon pine and manzanita. Soon they were in an open area. At coffee break, they admired the view: Cibola Mittens, Brinds Ridge, Capitol Butte and Chimney Rock. In the distance, snow was on higher mountains. Mingus Mountain was robed in white.

A little farther, two small purple flowers had everyone's attention. Below Steamboat Rock is Steamboat Rank. It is a shallow hole made by ranchers to catch rainwater for their roaming livestock. Filled with water, it had a beautiful reflection of Steamboat Rock and the surrounding trees. Soon, a skipping-rock contest was on. But nobody got more than two skips.

The Amblers descended to Wilson Canyon to Midgley Bridge where, at lunchtime, they spread out under and beyond the bridge. Way down was Oak Creek. Fast-running white water could be heard and seen and the sheer rock formation across the canyon admired. The excitement grew when a bald eagle flew up into the canyon.

**ABOVE WAS** the structural beauty of the bridge's intricate underpinnings. The bridge is 280 feet above the bottom of Wilson Canyon, named for Richard Wilson, the unlucky hunter killed by a bear in the area. His name was given originally to the new bridge in October 1940.

Thereafter, however, a movement began to name the bridge for Maj. Midgley who, as county supervisor, had done so much to bring the project into being.

The road the Westerners hiked was the "very first roadway" from Sedona to Indian Gardens, to be reached by horse and wagon. Much later a road was built — what is now Hwy. 89A, to Flagstaff.

To get around Wilson Canyon chasm, cars had to be driven a quarter of a mile into the canyon and across a wooden bridge. After the new bridge was finished, the wooden bridge was dismantled. The old abutments can still be seen.

The Westerners hiked the same way back and after five miles were happy to see their cars at the trailhead.

**UPCOMING EVENTS**:

Sunday, March 30 (Easter), Red Tank Draw, at 1:30 p.m., two miles, 100-foot in elevation, easy. Members from the Big Park area may meet at Bell Rock Plaza.

- Tuesday, April 1, Wet Beaver Creek, Bell crossing, seven miles, moderate.
- Thursday, April 3, Jim Bryant trail, easy.

Visitors are welcome. Everyone must wear sturdy hiking boots, a hat and carry at least one quart of water, more on hot days.

Bring lunch on all-day hikes. Meeting place is up Posse Grounds Road four-tenths of a mile, stay right at the fork, then park in the gravel lot on the left. Meet at 1:30 p.m. for Sunday hikes and 9 a.m. for all others unless otherwise indicated.

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Sedona Westerners

RR News 4-11-97

# Dogies hike Wet Beaver, Bell Crossing

**ON AN** overcast Tuesday, April 1, an enthusiastic group of Dogies met at the Posse Ground parking area. After gathering additional hikers in the Village of Oak Creek, the entire group headed for the West Beaver-Bell Crossing Trail.

Ably led by Dogie Boss, Clyde Morgan, and tailgated by reliable Chuck Reintsma, the hikers trooped along the roadway which begins the trail and is easy to walk.

It is documented that a rancher named Earl Bell built this trail in 1932 so he could take his cattle to the top of the Mogollon Rim in the spring. The Wet Beaver-Bell Crossing Trail is at about the most southerly edge of the lava flow on the ridge.

Almost immediately the group was treated to a visual feast of wildflowers blooming in profusion. Fleabane, Mariposa lilies, globemallow, phlox, spiderwort, Indian paintbrush, evening primrose, golden peavine, locoweed, four o'clocks, Blackfoot daisies, blue dick, banana yucca, filaree, red barberry, red bugle penstemon (a showy, spring-blooming perennial), and many others bloomed along the trail and on the hillside for all to enjoy.

As the group traveled along the trail, someone remarked that the mesquite was leafing out, indicating that there would be no more damaging frosts this spring. This is perhaps an old-timers' saying, but it does seem to hold true more often than not.

**DARKENING CLOUDS** periodically made everyone wonder whether an April shower would be experienced. However, as the group neared the area known as The Gap it became sunnier.

Approximately 100 yards beyond Bell Crossing, the group stopped for lunch on the rocks high above the stream and a pool known as The Crack. Once again, thickening clouds caused concern so the hikers hurried back to the cars in hope of not getting caught in a rain shower.

While traveling back toward the trailside parking lot, two red tail hawks were observed gracefully riding the thermal waves in the sky. Several watched as they dipped and soared, which was a beautiful sight. All reached their vehicles without a drop of rain falling, and a good day's hike was declared.

Future hikes will include the Sunday, April 13, hike to Bull Pen Ranch-West Clear Creek. This is a three-mile hike rated easy with a 200-foot elevation change. The Dogies will hike the Hot Loop Trail on Tuesday, April 5. This is a six-mile hike with a 900-foot change in elevation, and is rated moderate. The Amblers will amble along Fay Canyon Trail on Thursday, April 17.

Visitors are welcome on all hikes. Everyone must wear sturdy hiking boots, a hat, and carry at least one quart of water. For all-day hikes in warm weather, please carry two quarts of water. For Saturday, Tuesday and Thursday all-day hikes, which begin at 9 a.m. unless otherwise indicated, please bring a lunch. Sunday hikes begin at 1:30 p.m.

The meeting place for all hikes is up Posse Grounds Road four-tenths of a mile; stay right at the fork, then park in the gravel lot on the left.

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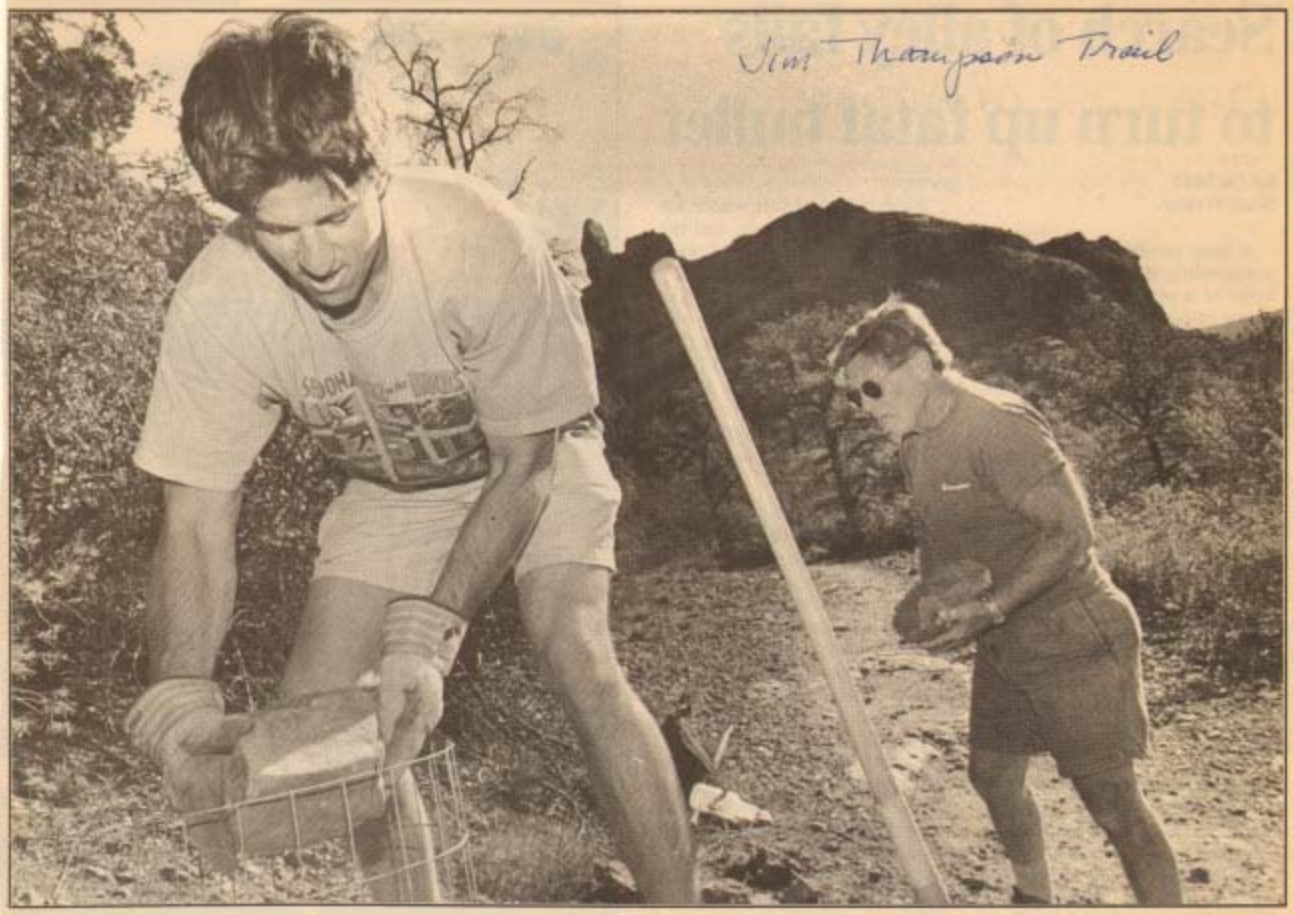

**ON THE** Jim Thompson Trail early Saturday morning, Doug Copp (top photo, left) and Harry Gold work on building a trail marker. A little further up the trail and under the watchful eye of a Forest Service ranger, Geoff Worssam (with pick, left photo) digs a hole for another marker. The trail head begins near the end of Jordan Road in Uptown Sedona and stretches approximately three miles to Midgley Bridge north of Sedona.

Jim Snyder/Staff Photographer

Continued >

# Jim Thompson work furthers trail system

by Julie Welsh
Staff Writer

In the continuing efforts to construct a trail system in and around Sedona, the Forest Service is progressing with the work on the Jim Thompson trailhead and trail.

"It will be a wilderness-access portal," said Bill Stafford, a Forest Service wilderness and trails coordinator for the Verde Valley.

The Jim Thompson Trail that begins near the end of Jordan Road will stretch to Midgely Bridge area north of Sedona. Eventually, the trail will connect with the Huckaby and Marg's trails, which would link Midgely Bridge with the Broken Arrow trail.

The Forest Service began the preparation work for the trailhead in January by installing a culvert and working on the road at the Jim Thompson trail's Jordan Road access.

**PART OF** the work consisted of constructing the surface of the road to accommodate low-to-the-ground vehicles, including horse trailers.

The nearby roadwork is pretty much complete, Stafford said. The road has been graveled, and the rocks have been removed.

The Forest Service is looking at the next step of the Jim Thompson trailhead.

"The gun range up there has to be cleaned up," Stafford said.

Since the permit for the gun range was up in March, Forest Service engineers and contractors sampled the area for lead from the shooting range to determine what cleanup techniques needed to be implemented.

**A STRICT** degree of cleanup will be applied to the area because of the high use, said Skip Larson, an outdoor recreation planner with the Coconino National Forest. The ground will be scraped and vacuumed to remove the gun debris.

Some time will be allowed for rehabilitation of the area before trailhead construction could begin, Larson said. An exact time frame has not been determined.

Construction of the trailhead will be a joint project between the Forest Service and the city, Stafford said. They have more than $50,000 available for the design and construction of the trailhead and installation of signs.

The trailhead might eventually include a parking lot, barriers, bike and hitching racks, kiosks and toilets, Stafford said.

**THIS IS** a popular area for equestrians and mountain bikers, Stafford said. The new trailhead will give horse riders the opportunity to ride around the old wagon trails and bikers to travel from the trailhead around to Midgely Bridge, which is open to bikes because it is not a wilderness area.

In the meantime, work continues on the construction of the Jim Thompson trail. The trail has been marked, and crews have been clearing the trail and building trail markers.

Both the Marg's and Huckaby trails are awaiting National Environmental Policy Act approval before construction can begin.

Marg's would connect the Broken Arrow to Schnebly Hill, while Huckaby will travel from Schnebly Hill to Midgely Bridge.

"There's been wide support for these," Stafford said.

**THE FOREST** Service is reviewing the comments on these trails, Larson said. Once the environmental impact process is complete, the Forest Service will determine the construction time line.

These trails are part of an effort to establish an official system of trails and eliminate the spider web of random trails that lead nowhere.

The Forest Service plans to work on the eastern section, from Broken Arrow trail to the Jim Thompson trailhead, of the trail loop during 1997. The north urban section that would connect the Jim Thompson with the Dry Creek area is tentatively planned for 1998. In 1999, the Dry Creek section to the Cultural would be constructed. The south side of the loop would be assembled during 2000.

This does not mean that some of the internal sections of trails will be neglected. If an opportunity arose for the Forest Service to form a partnership, Stafford said it would be considered.

However, "the priority is this outer loop," Stafford said.

RED ROCK NEWS, Sedona, Arizona Friday, April 4, 1997 - 15A

April 4, 1997

# Trail leaders reverse roles during 'easy' hike to Red Tank Draw

by Charles West

**LAST SUNDAY**'s hike to Red Tank Draw was rated easy.

It was, if clambering up and down steep cliffs, playing hopscotch on lava boulders and keeping prickly pear out of hip pockets is anyone's idea of easy.

Trail leader Olga Ostrom and tailgater Bob Dannert did make it fun by reversing roles several times during the meandering trip back and forth in the draw to locate and observe the stream bed flora and some rock art.

Enough water was running to keep the stream bed trees and grass green and to encourage the flowering plants. Indian paintbrush and hedgehog cactus were also observed on the side slopes.

There are no ruins in the draw but there were some typical examples of rock art, including identifiable elk, deer and mountain sheep located high on red canyon walls. Two hours, two miles and 2 pints of water later, hikers located their cars for their return to an Easter Sunday in Sedona.

**THE SATURDAY** hike on April 5 is Bear Mountain/Bear Mountain Ridge and is a dual hike: six to eight miles in total length and from 1,500 feet to 1,900 feet of climb. The hike is difficult, with steep areas and a rock scramble.

The Dogies' hike on Tuesday, April 8, is Soldier Heights Loop and is moderate, steep and five miles, with 500 feet of climb. A high-clearance vehicle is recommended.

The Amblers' hike on Thursday, April 10, is to Red Canyon/Palatki Ruins and is, as always, slow and easy.

The Westerners' monthly meeting is on Thursday, April 10, at 7:30 p.m. at the Church of the Red Rocks on Hwy. 179. Gary Lollman of Camp Verde Parks and Recreation will present *Reptiles of the Southwest*. Visitors are invited.

Be thinking about the annual picnic at noon on May 8. Sign up and pay your fee at the monthly meeting or at hike meetings.

**VISITORS ARE** welcome on hikes. For the hikes, everyone must wear sturdy hiking shoes with lugged soles, a hat and carry at least 1 quart of water.

For all-day hikes in warmer weather, carry 2 quarts of water. Bring lunch on all Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday hikes.

The meeting place is north from Hwy. 89A on Posse Grounds Road four-tenths of a mile; stay right at the fork, then park in the gravel lot on the left. Meet at 1:30 p.m. for the Sunday hikes and at 9 a.m. for all other hikes unless otherwise indicated.

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FAY CANYON

RR News 4-25-97

Sedona Westerners

# Westerners admire blooming wildflowers

by Joan Kramer

**THE AMBLERS** took a leisurely hike up Fay Canyon.

The hike which was on Thursday, April 17, covered three to three and a half miles with a gain in altitude of 240 feet. The hike leader, John Schaeffer, was assisted by Gary Carson, acting as tail-gater.

Schaeffer, who is a knowledgeable amateur botanist, enlightened the hikers as they made their way through a profusion of wildflowers. He pointed out white primroses, yellow wallflowers, purple locoweed and bluedicks.

The bluedicks is a perennial lily which has an onionlike bulb that was used for food by the Native Americans and early pioneers.

Other blooming plants and bushes were desert paintbrush, lupine, phlox, ceanothus and Fendler bush. Schaeffer pointed out that its pink and white blossoms have only four petals and that it was named after Fendler, a well-known botanist.

**WHILE THE** late snows this spring have brought on a striking display of wildflowers, they did damage some trees and shrubs.

The most unusual sight on the hike was a live rattlesnake in a tree — hanging there with its head down. He had rattled at a young man and his dog, whereupon the man offered to point out the snake to several adventurous Amblers. Doris Bragg reported that the snake was on a level with her head.

After lunch, a side trip was made to the Fay Canyon Arch, which is on the northeast wall of the canyon. The arch is really a large slab, or "fin," that split off from the canyon wall. There were numerous claret cup cactus in bloom on the side trail to the arch.

On Sunday, April 27, the group will hike the Earl's Canyon Loop. Meet at 1:30 p.m. the hike will be four miles long with a 300-foot climb. It is rated "easy," but with a rock scramble.

On Tuesday, April 29, the Dogies will hike to Mund's Mountain. Meet at 9 a.m. The hike will be six miles long with a 500-foot climb and is rated "moderate."

**ON THURSDAY**, May 1, the Amblers will go to Mt. Elden-Schultz tank. Meet at 9 a.m., and as always, the rate will be slow and easy.

Visitors are welcome. Everyone must wear sturdy hiking shoes, a hat and carry at least one quart of water (for all-day hikes in warm weather, carry two quarts of water). Bring lunch on all-day hikes.

The meeting place is up Posse Grounds Road, four-tenths of a mile, stay right at the fork, then park in the gravel lot on the left. Meet at 1:30 p.m. for Sunday hikes and 9 a.m. for all others unless otherwise noted.

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APRIL 18 '97

Sedona Westerners

# Westerners enjoy blooming of spring flowers, with Bear Mountain on horizon

by Phyllis Lindberg

**HIKING IN** each season has its own wonders, but spring, with flowers blooming at every turn in the trail, is an unmatched joy in our surrounding forests.

The snowy, two- to six-foot shrub laden with hazy white to pinkish blooms is Gregg ceanothus (see-un-NOH-thus), outdoing itself this year. Each bloom, viewed closely, is a marvel with tiny, yellow-tipped stamens thrusting out through cup-shaped petals.

Our earliest blooming cactus is the claret cup hedgehog. Its scarlet bloom is a miracle emerging from a clump of spiny stems.

The sunflower family greets us in April with perky Sue, its yellow, daisy-like flower borne on a leafless stem waving above green, hairy, spatula-shaped basal leaves. It's easy to confuse with the desert marigold which has gray, deeply indented leaves.

Paintbrush often sprouts its red, brush-like bloom from under a shrub live oak. Its purplish stem tells us it is partly parasitic, often getting some of its sustenance from the roots of another plant. The red parts are colored bracts which attract insects. The real flower is small, pointed, green and inconspicuous.

**THE BANANA** yuccas are displaying their large clusters of creamy pendant blooms, protected by stiff, sharp-pointed leaves (ouch!). Note the curly white threads peeling from the leaf edges; they distinguish our local yuccas from agave or beargrass.

The cliffrose shrub is flourishing, its tiny, dark green leaves upstaged by inch-wide, creamy, yellow-centered flowers perfuming the air; a member of the rose family, indeed. Lavender, lily-like bluedicks nod their three-quarter-inch blooms on leafless, foot-high stalks above slender arched green leaves.

The dry spring of '96 brought forth very few flowers; remember to treasure '97. Photograph, sniff, enjoy, watch where you step, and don't pick!

Have you found a mystery plant? Both Sedona Public Library and the Red Rock State Park have identification scrapbooks of local flowers which are organized by color.

On Saturday, April 19, the Westerners will hike on Bear Mountain ridge. Meet at 8 a.m. for this one. It's a six or eight-mile hike, with a 1,500 or 1,900-foot climb, rated difficult, and with steep rock scramble in places.

**ON TUESDAY**, April 22, the Dogies hike Narrow Canyon Loop. Meet at 9 a.m. The six-mile hike has a 500-foot climb and is rated moderate. On Thursday, April 24, the Amblers will visit Schuerman Mountain, situated behind Sedona Red Rock High School. Meet at 9 a.m. for a leisurely hike.

All these hikes assemble in West Sedona. Go up Posse Ground Road four-tenths of a mile, stay right at the fork, and turn left into the gravel parking lot.

Visitors are welcome on these hikes. Just show up at the meeting place with sturdy hiking boots, two quarts of water, a good sun hat, and for all-day hikes, a lunch. You will be expected to stay with the group.

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RED ROCK NEWS, Sedona, Arizona Friday, April 18, 1997 - 15A

CooKout
Red Rock State Pk

Cave Springs - RR News 5-16-97

Westerners

# Westerners' last hike of season takes them to Cave Springs-Chipmunk trail

**THE SEDONA** Westerners' last hike of the season was to the Cave Springs-Chipmunk Loop trail in Oak Creek Canyon.

On Sunday, May 11, a small group of hikers gathered at the parking area on Posse Grounds Road and, under the leadership of Norm Taylor, drove up the canyon to a point near the Cave Springs Forest Road.

Heading north and west through an old apple orchard, the group passed through an area that had been a fish hatchery. At least four stone-walled tanks were noted, some 20 to 30 feet in diameter and several feet deep, now badly overgrown with trees up to 8 inches in diameter.

After crossing Oak Creek with Taylor's leadership and tailgater Olga Ostrom's help, the hikers ascended a long slope, then turned sharply right and, with much heavy breathing, up a sharply sloped hill (later dubbed Chipmunk Hill).

The summit's viewpoint overlooks Hwy. 89A and Oak Creek. Scrambling and sliding down the slope to the original trail, the hikers continued north and east around the base of the hill to parallel Oak Creek on its way south, passing the Harding Spring structure on the east side of the creek.

**THERE ARE** some large ponderosa pines on the Chipmunk Hill slopes, some over 4 feet in diameter. Flowers of note included the long-stemmed wallflower *(erysimum capitatum)*, also known as "Treacle-mustard" and "Prairie-rocket," and the ever-present Lief (Little Yellow Flowers).

After a mid-afternoon break to observe nature at its finest, the ladies of the group, being in the rear, took a wrong turn and were headed for another circuit of Chipmunk Hill before realizing that something was wrong.

When they did find the men they said they felt like they didn't get their money's worth and simply wanted to hike some more. Much heckling here. The group returned via the Oak Creek crossing and to Sedona to end the hiking season until September 1997.

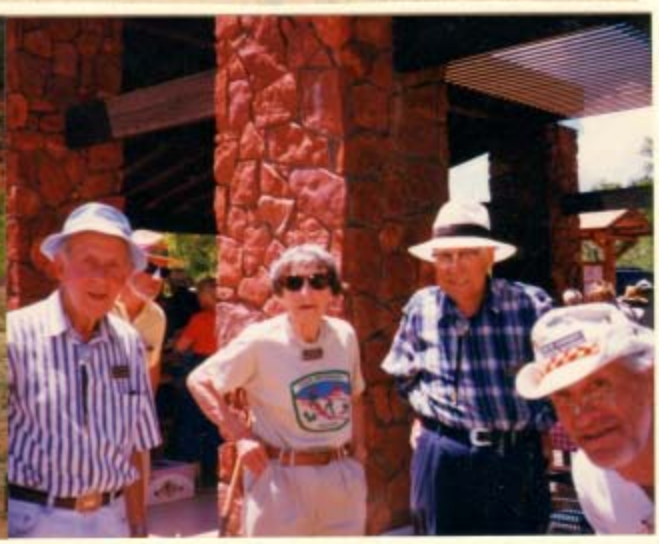
The Westerners' annual meeting and cookout was May 8 at the Red Rock State Park with 105 in attendance.

Gerda and Guenther Kunstmann were awarded a special commendation for their outstanding service to the Westerners over the past four years. Trail Boss "Kirk" Kirkley said the Kunstmanns have been Chuck Wagon Bosses in charge of food and refreshments for 24 monthly meetings, eight cookouts and four Christmas parties.

**IN ADDITION** to the commendation, they were given a clay sculpture depicting St. Francis of Assisi, Patron Saint of birds and small animals, their special favorite. The Kunstmanns agreed to serve in the same capacity next year.

Jim Tanis, as next season's Trail Boss, awarded Kirkley the coveted Westerners' Trail Boss bolo tie for his outstanding service during the past 12 months.

The Westerners' first fall monthly meeting will be at 7:30 p.m., Thursday, Sept. 11, at The Church of the Red Rocks, Hwy. 179. Attend and pick up the 1997-98 hike schedule.

Enjoy the summer and keep hiking in the cool of the mornings.

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