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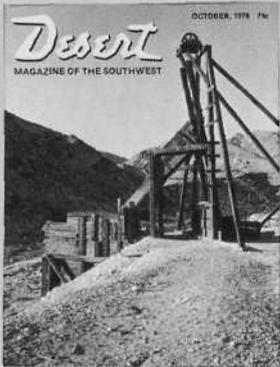
Volume 39, Number 10

OCTOBER 1976

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THE COVER:  
A weathering ore chute in  
the Old Dale Mining Dis-  
trict in Southern California.  
Photo by George Service,  
Palm Desert, California.

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# A Peek in the Publisher's Poke

ASK ANY psychiatrist what is one of the major problem areas in our modern society and it's an even-money bet he'll say "lack of communication." We should be minus one problem area at the rate CB radios are being sold and all that communicating going on!

Two articles this month point out the basics of CB radio and its use in the desert area, and the dos and don'ts of the use of the National Emergency Channel 9. The popularity of CB units has grown so phenomenally that the existing 23 channels are seriously overcrowded, making it necessary for the addition of 17 more channels in January, 1977.

I'm sure the articles by Ernie Cowan and Mary Frances Strong will be of interest to all.

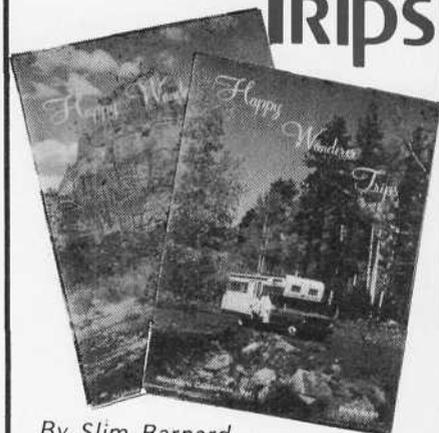
For the treasure hunter, Ken Marquiss tells about lost loot and his fruitless search for same as the result of some "deathbed confessions." Having taken his best shot, he challenges the readers to find them.

Bob Barns gives us an insight to the Seri Indians of Mexico and how they have carved their way into a more modern life-style, and over in Arizona, Richard Dillon describes the remains of a Hohokam village called Snaketown.

Naturalist K. L. Boynton will keep snake-lovers happy with his piece on the Glossy Snakes, of which there are six species. And if creepy crawlers are not your bag, then Barbara Bigham may satisfy your palate with her recipe for cactus candy, made from our old friend, the Prickly Pear.

This issue also features our Annual Book Catalog, but it does not include every title available. Try to come by and visit with us and browse through over 300 titles stocked in our Book Shop. And to make it more convenient, the shop will be open on Saturdays from 10 to 3 commencing October 1st.

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1239 Yucca Kings-May you and yours this Christmas Day...be blessed with health and happiness



1242 Roadrunner Santa-Christmas bells ring loud and clear with wishes for a Bright New Year



1137 Britches patched...Ol' cow gone dry. Both horses lame, But Merry Christmas just the same!

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1272 San Augustine Mission, Isleta Pueblo Story inside-May the...Happiness of Christmas abide, etc.



1254 "May the trail rise up to meet you...and may God hold you in...His hand."-Merry Christmas

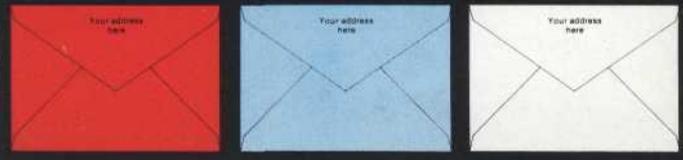


1123 "May your moccasins make happy tracks, etc."-Merry Christmas and Happy New Year



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# Cactus Candy

by  
**BARBARA  
BIGHAM**

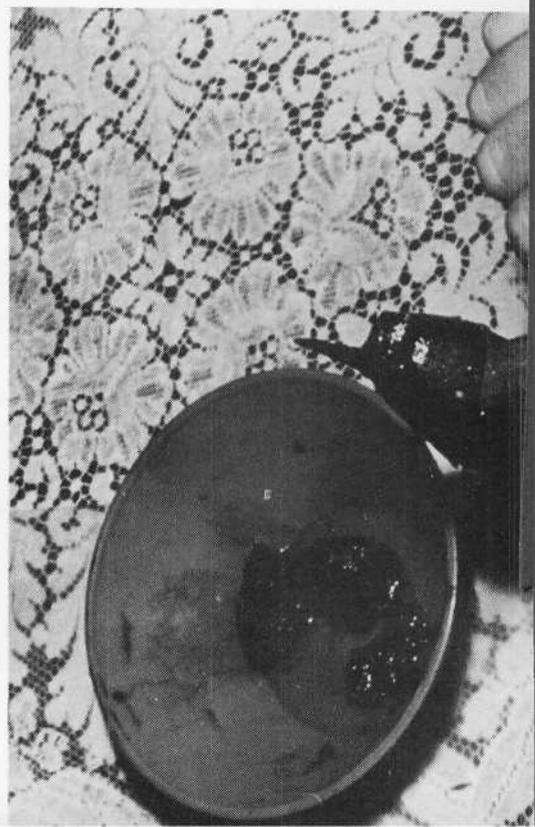
**S**URE, YOU know that a cactus can save your life in the desert—but did you know that it can satisfy your sweet tooth as well? Those ungainly desert plants, with their porcupine quills, have been a basic part of the native diet in the Southwest for centuries. They're used in soups, salads, shishkebabs and sherbets, but the one cactus food that's winning the most popularity is cactus candy—a sweet, chewy desert dessert that's easy and fun to make.

Commercial manufacturers of prickly pear cactus candy grow their own "orchards" of cactus, but the wild fruit that you find growing all around the desert

areas of the Southwest is just as tasty. Just about everywhere you travel you can spot clusters of red pear-shaped fruit hanging from the tips of the prickly pear cactus. Although cactus is protected by law on government lands, you can harvest the fruit without a permit. But be careful. The spines on a prickly pear are so tiny and light colored that you hardly notice them, until you touch one and come away with a "whiskered finger." Be sure to wear heavy rubber gloves or use tongs to pluck off the bright red fruit. If you forget and wind up with a finger full of spines, soak it in warm water until they come out or use tweezers to pull them out individually. Be especially careful not to break them off at the skin line and leave the end in your finger where it can become infected.

A single cluster of cactus can yield several pounds of fruit—enough to make several cups of juice and plenty of candy. The fruit will vary depending on the altitude, soil, moisture and weather. Those growing in a cooler, rainier area are larger and juicier, but the smaller ones are normally sweeter.

Once you've collected the pears, rinse them in hot water (don't forget the gloves), then drop them into boiling water. After a few minutes, spear the pear with a knife and peel the skin. The spines will come off with the skin. The small "eyes" can be removed with the



tip of the knife or with a potato peeler.

Cut the peeled pears into small pieces and place into a saucepan, adding enough water to nearly cover them. Boil over a medium heat until the cactus is soft (about one-half hour), then strain. Several layers of cheesecloth make the best strainer, but even a wire mesh strainer, which is fine enough to hold the cactus seeds, will do. The pulp can be thrown away after the juice has been strained through.

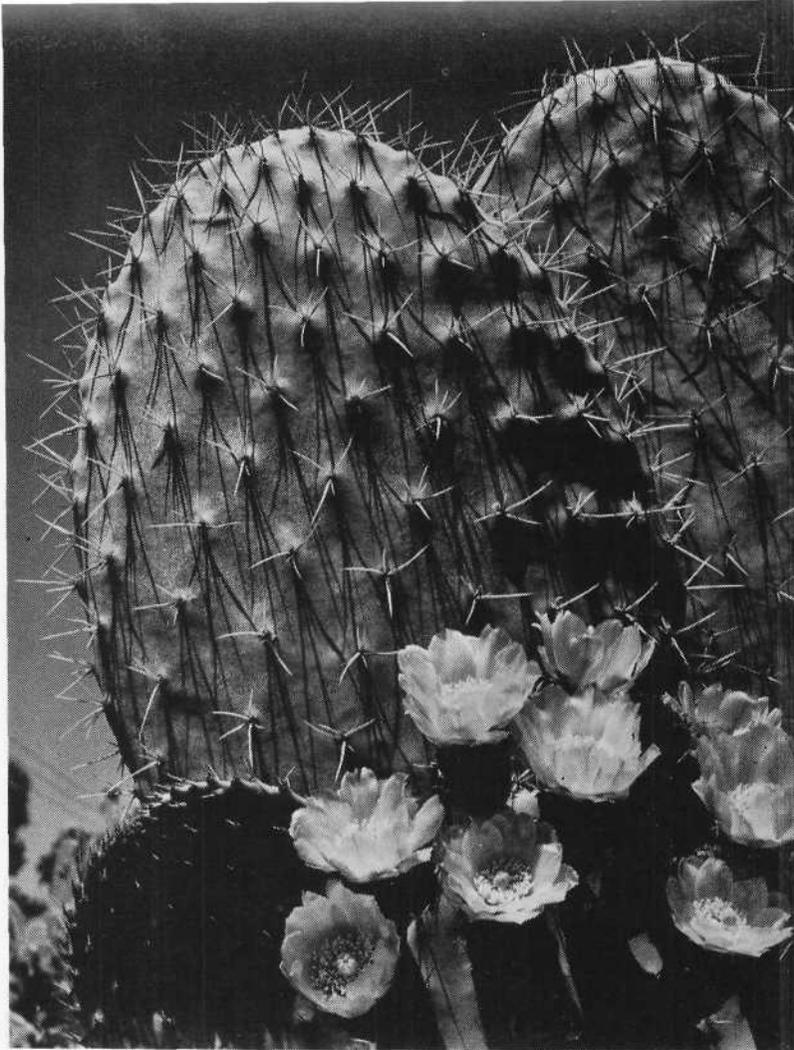
With this juice, just follow the recipe for cactus candy as below:

- 4 cups granulated sugar
- 1½ box fruit pectin
- ¾ cup water
- 3 cups cactus juice

Mix the pectin and water in a large saucepan and bring to a boil over a high heat, stirring constantly. Add the juice and sugar and turn heat down to just below boiling to dissolve sugar. Heat for about five minutes, then remove from heat, skimming the top if necessary. Pour into a square pan and allow to cool. The mixture will gel into a candy jelly as it cools. Before it starts to gel, add nuts, coconut or, when hard, roll in colored sugar to add an even more flavorful treat.

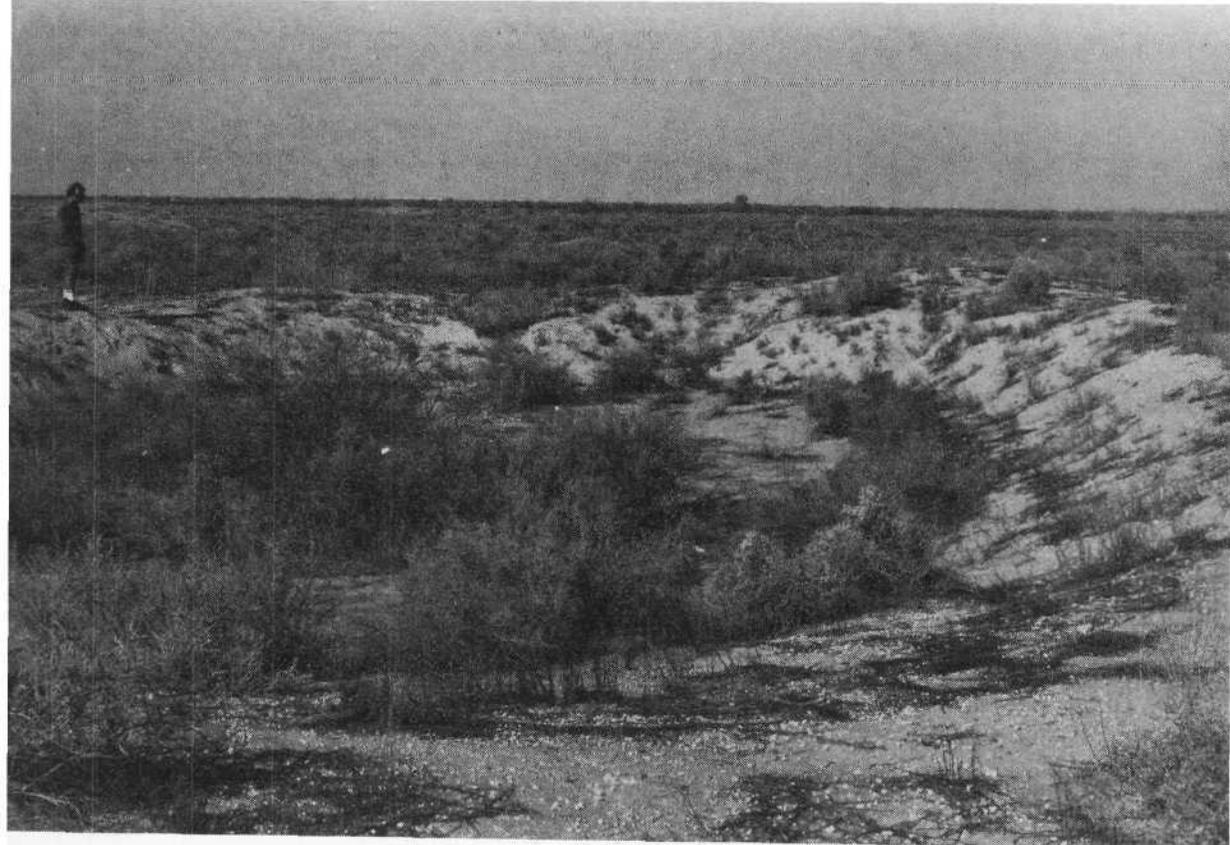
They may not look appetizing when they're growing in a sandy wasteland, but once they're whipped up into cactus candy, they're a real desert dessert. □

*Beauty and the Beast. The fragile loveliness of the blossom of the Prickly Pear Cactus is always in surprising contrast to the wicked looking barbs on the pads. Photo by Josef Muench.*



*Far left: Plunge the fruit [speared on a knife] into boiling water to help take out the spines. Left: Peel the skin as you would a boiled salad potato—be careful not to let too much juice escape. Below: Strain pulp with a preserve strainer or a metal mesh.*





Left: Small ballcourt. Completely excavated in 1934-35, but now brush and weeds have partially reclaimed it.

by  
RICHARD DILLON

# HOHOKAM'S

**T**HE NAME SNAKETOWN might bring to mind a roadside reptile attraction with live serpents luring tourists to buy gaudy souvenirs. In reality though, Snaketown is one of the most important archaeological sites in the United States.

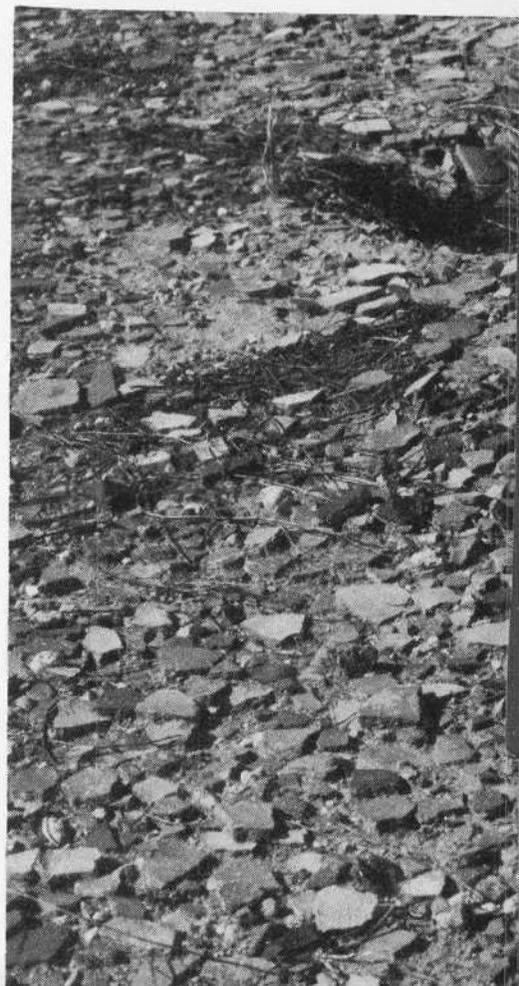
For almost 2,000 years the Hohokam Indian civilization flourished at Snake-town, located 25 miles southeast of Phoenix, Arizona. Scientific investigations there have provided the major source of information we have on those remarkable people who are noted for both their artistic and technological achievements.

Unlike many other southwestern Indian ruins, Snaketown lacks cliff dwellings or massive buildings. However, in spite of the lack of impressive architectural remains, the culture at Snaketown was one of the most advanced in the world. For instance, the Hohokam people made some of the finest pottery and stone carvings ever found in the U.S. They also developed techniques for etching shell jewelry hundreds of years before Europeans discovered the pro-

cess. But by far their greatest achievement was the development of an irrigation system to make the desert bloom.

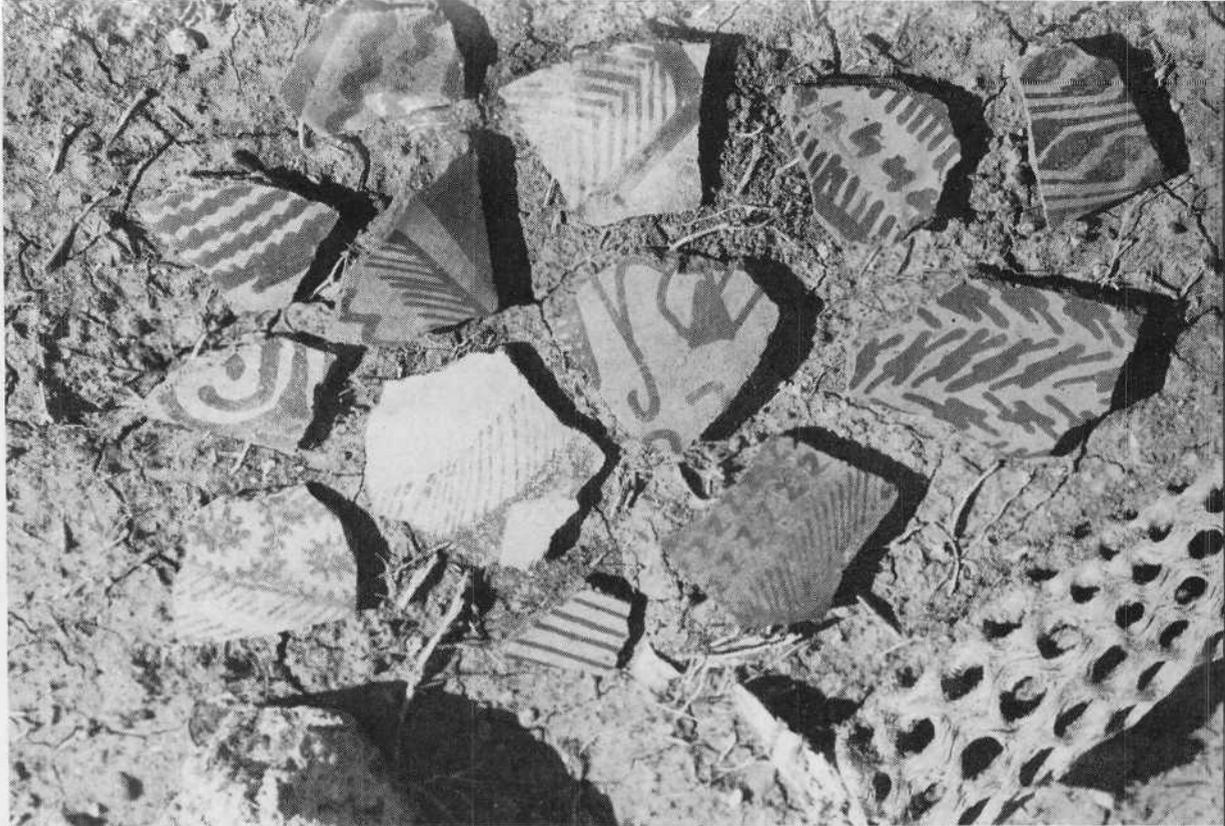
As early as 300 B.C. the Hohokam irrigated the lands along the Salt and Gila Rivers of central Arizona. They were the first irrigationists in North America and their canal system is the largest and most extensive ever found. The canals that now irrigate the modern agri-business farms around Phoenix and Casa Grande follow the same routes the Hohokam chose over 1,000 years ago. White settlers simply cleaned out the old Hohokam canals. The Hohokam had done such an excellent job that modern engineering has not been able to make many improvements on their system. Several hundred miles of canals were constructed and tens of thousands of acres were made fertile by the Hohokam engineers. The stable food supply created in a desert wilderness made all other Hohokam accomplishments possible.

Many of the discoveries at Snaketown have amazed archaeologists. But one find did so more than others. It was a sea shell with a design of a frog etched into

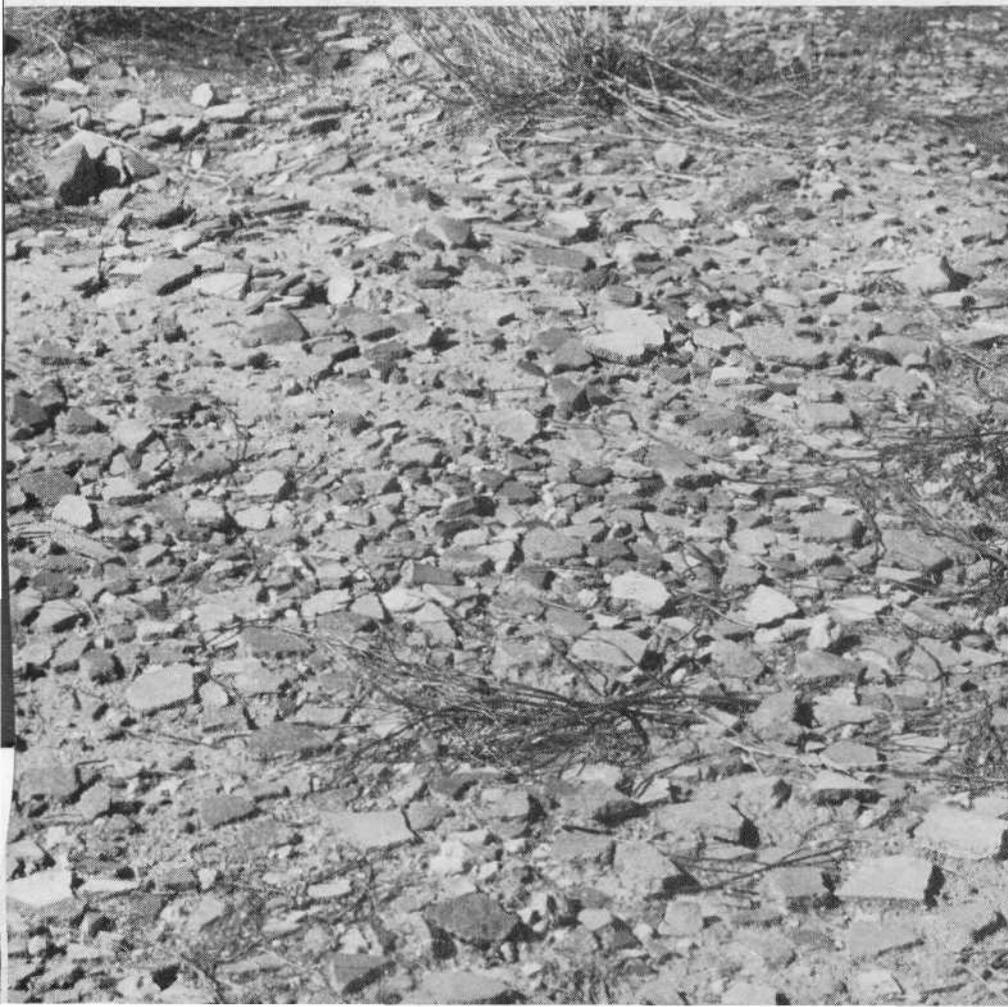


Right: Snaketown potsherds. These examples of Snaketown red on buff pottery show mostly geometric designs.

Below: Carpet of pottery. Snaketown is literally covered with potsherds. Archaeologists estimate there are one billion potsherds at the site.



# SNAKETOWN



it. The process of using acid to cut designs into materials was not invented in Europe until about 1500, but the Hohokam mastered the craft several hundred years earlier. Juice from saguaro cactus fruit was fermented until it became a weak acid. Pitch, obtained from desert trees, was used to coat the part of the shell not to be etched. The shell was then dipped into the acid. The etching process creates much finer details in design than can otherwise be obtained by carving the shell, but it is a difficult process. So far only a handful of etched shells have been found and thus they are much-treasured specimens.

Probably the most unusual and fascinating features at Snaketown are the two ball courts, large oval bowls dug out of the earth. Just what their purpose was remains conjecture. However, the many similarities between the ball courts of Mexico and those of Snaketown lead most experts to assume a common origin and purpose.

The game played in the ball courts of Mexico appears to have been a combination of religious ritual and recreation. Two teams competed, attempting to pass

a small rubber ball through a ring attached to the wall of the court. The ball could be hit with thighs, hips or torso but the use of hands and feet was not permitted making a score very difficult. Some reports of the game say that the man scoring a point could claim all the clothing and jewelry from the spectators. Other reports say that his reward was to be sacrificed.

The large ball court at Snaketown measures about 60 yards by 30 yards. The smaller ball court is half that size. Stone markers were found at each end and at one time the walls had been plastered. Buried beneath the surface, in the center of the large ball court, an unusual rock was found. The stone had been purposely broken and then put back together before burial. The sig-

nificance of this rock will probably never be known.

Ball courts remain something of a mystery. They were obviously an important part of life at Snaketown. However, like so many other things from the past, we can only speculate on the spiritual meaning from the material remains.

A recent discovery at Snaketown seems to confirm that a close relationship existed between the Hohokam and the culture of Mexico. Two platform mounds with similar characteristics to the early pyramids of Mexico were found in 1964. These ritual mounds are new finds in Hohokam archaeology and little is known about them. It is probable that other such mounds will be discovered now that archeologists will be on the look-out for them.

The first excavations at Snaketown were conducted in 1934-35 by Gila Pueblo, a private organization headed by Harold Gladwin. In 1964-65 the University of Arizona and the National Science Foundation combined to make further explorations at the site. Essentially, the second dig confirmed the results of the first, but several important facts were learned from the later work.

One of the most significant results was that the date for the earliest known occupation of Snaketown was pushed back several hundred years. During the 1934-35 excavation potsherds used in conjunction with three ring dating set a date of about 500 A.D. for the beginning of Snaketown. Although an earlier date was suspected it was not until the 1964-65 dig that a new date was established. Using carbon 14 method it was learned that Snaketown was occupied as early as 425 B.C. — give or take 100 years or so. This proved that beyond a doubt the Hohokam were the first people to use irrigation canals in what is now the U.S.

Snaketown may be disappointing from an architectural point of view lacking as it does any surface remains of Hohokam dwellings. But from another angle Snaketown is quite remarkable. Snake-town is literally covered with a carpet of potsherds. From the enormous amount of broken pottery it would seem that all the Hohokam had time for was the making and breaking of pottery. Dr. Emil Haury, director of the 1964-65 dig, estimates that there are one billion potsherds at Snaketown. More than 1,500,000 potsherds were excavated and analyzed during the last dig alone.

Unfortunately, for archeologists and art lovers alike, the Hohokam believed in breaking the possessions of a person upon his or her death. Belongings were often buried with the ashes of the deceased but they were always cracked or deliberately broken in some manner. However, many bowls and pots have been repaired and are testimony to the skill of Hohokam craftsmen.

Primarily, the Hohokam made two types of pottery. One was ordinary plain ware without any decorations. The other was the beautiful red on buff decorated pottery for which they are now famous. Although geometric designs are the most common, the painted pottery also portrays a number of life forms.



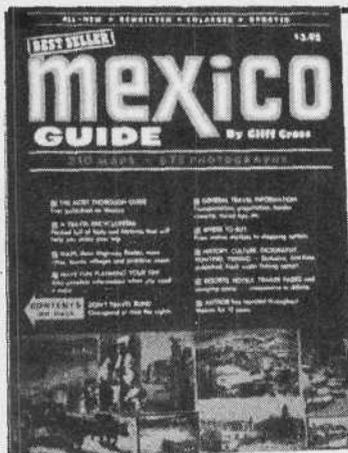
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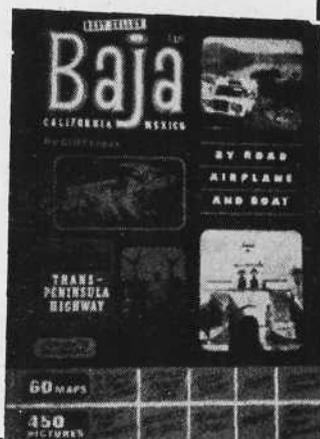
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Animals of all sorts including birds, snakes, lizards and sheep were used. Dancers and persons carrying baskets on their backs are also common.

The most mysterious and puzzling thing about the Hohokam is why they disappeared. About 1400 the Hohokam culture abruptly vanishes. Why they vanished is open to speculation but several events may have been determining factors. One was the arrival of the Athabaskan peoples, the Navajo and Apache, from Canada to northeastern Arizona. As these newcomers arrived they pushed other peoples out of their way. The Salado, probably descendants of the Anasazi cliff dwellers, came down and joined the Hohokam in the river valleys of central Arizona about 1200. The large structures at Casa Grande and Pueblo Grande are the result of these intrusions and not purely Hohokam developments. But for some reason the Salado and Hohokam cultures collapsed not long after the arrival of the Salado. Perhaps the land could not support both groups. Or maybe the many years of Hohokam irrigation had so waterlogged the soil as to make it unproductive. Another factor could have been destructive Apache raids against the settlements.

But all of this is purely guesswork. No one really knows for sure. For whatever reasons the highly developed Hohokam civilization disappeared about 1400. When the Spanish arrived in the late 1500's and 1600's, the canals had fallen into disuse, the ball courts were empty and the large villages deserted.

Today Snaketown is a desolate place. Although it sits beside a great river, it is dry and dusty. The Gila River water, which once made Snaketown a garden on the desert, is now diverted to other locations up river. Even the signs of the important archeological work done here are gone. Excavations, trenches, test pits and the like were all carefully filled in by a bulldozer after the work was completed. But the bleak scene at Snake-town may soon change.

The federal government has plans to make Snaketown a National Monument. The houses will be reconstructed, the canals redug and the Hohokam way of life recreated. It is still a number of years away but it is something to look forward to. Someday part of the Hohokam's vanished civilization will be made visible again. □

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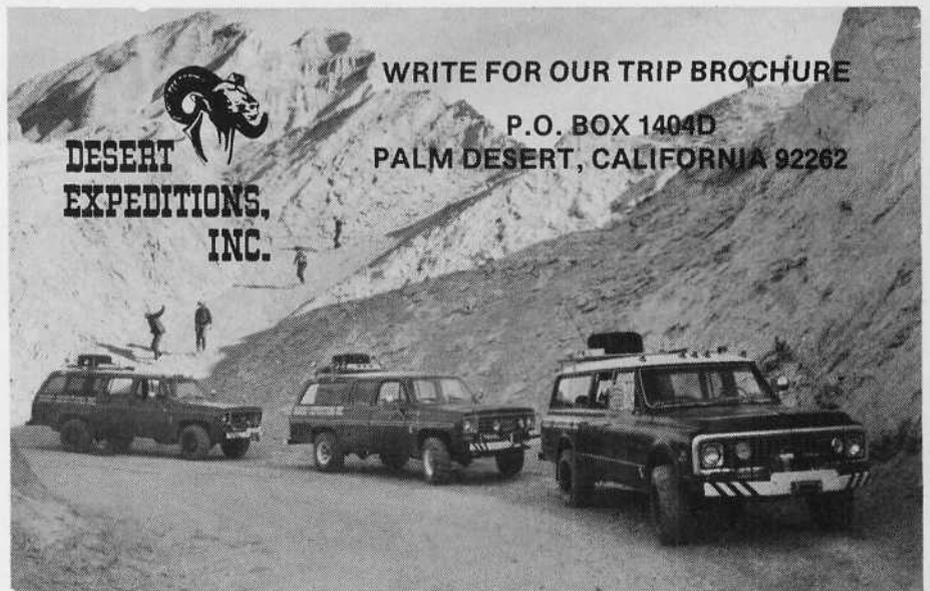
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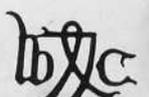
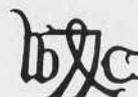
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# Sonora's Secret Tribe Carving a Future

by BOB BARNES



*The newest trend in carvings is birds in flight with their wings outstretched.*

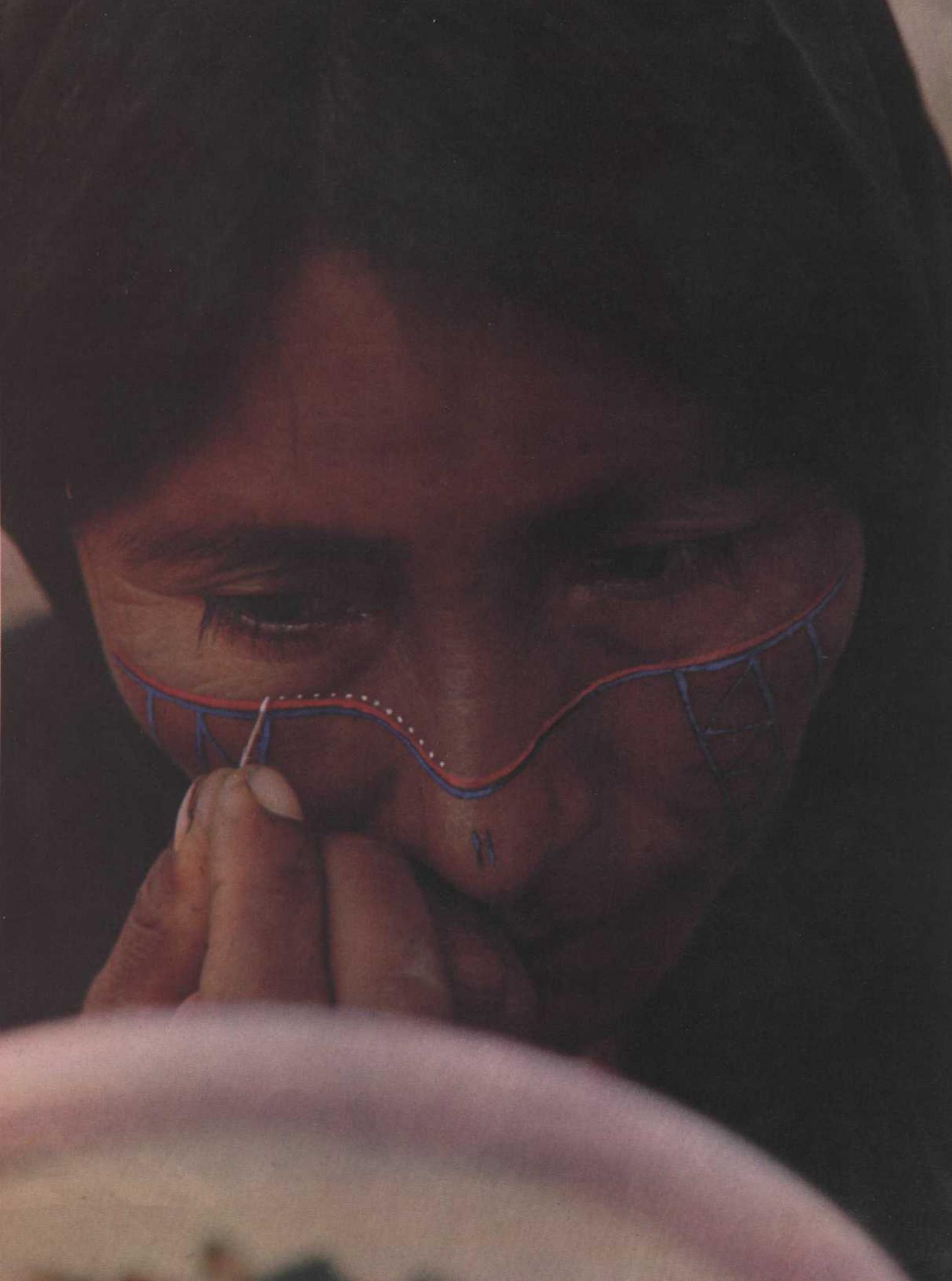
THE DOUBLE paths that would be a road when they grew skirmished their way among the cardon, the ocotillo and the palo verde. The desert's dry deck tilted down until it was awash in the waters of the Infernillo, to re-appear on the other side mirroring our part of the Sierra Seri. Massive shadow-fingers stretched toward us from the contorted peaks of Tiburon Island as the slowly spinning earth brought the beginnings of night again to the western coast of Sonora. Our truck and the spaghetti-like set of "road" tracks were the sole alien-to-the-desert forms visible for 40 and more miles along that coast. Wild, isolated, peaceful, with a grandeur that only those who appreciate the desert can fully understand, this was the middle of the land of the Seri Indian of Sonora.

I was hot, dirty, stinking, tired, thirsty, sweaty and unshaven — in short, all those things that would have made me wholly unwelcome where I'd come from. But those minor social drawbacks were forgotten as I soaked in this visual bath of desert splendor. I was doing exactly what I wanted to do, where I wanted to do it and to be able to do *that* in this Van Gogh of color and form was filling my cup to the overflowing . . .

Here at Paso Noche Buena (Christmas Eve Pass) we were about halfway from the Sonoran state capitol of Hermosillo to Desemboque, the Seri village we were living and working in. Under the best of conditions it was an all-daylight hours trip in or out and the conditions were rarely good to us. Drifting or washed sand in the arroyos often altered matters; trucks took things into their own hands; tires had a way of non-cooperation at highly ill-advised moments. It was a very long and hard trip in and back, for Desemboque was isolated physically, psychologically and spiritually from the remainder of Sonora. Almost everyone in the state of Sonora knew of the Seri, for there had been a bitter 300-year history of Seri-white contacts, but only a relatively few had ever seen one.

They were in truth a secret tribe, hidden in many aspects from the then bur-

*Seri woman applying face paint. Color photo by Western Ways, Tucson, Arizona.*



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This crane stands 14½ inches tall.

geoning world of northwestern Mexico. A large portion of the tribe still retained the nomadic patterns of the old days as they moved up and down the coast, using highly seaworthy boats made from dressed lumber that had replaced the primitive reed "balsa" of their grandparents. More often than not they returned to Desemboque Seris — a settlement on a shallow bay about two miles south of the mouth of the San Ygnacio river — as frequently as they went to any single place.

And Desemboque Seris was a good place to come to. Ample fresh water was available in a shallow well cut into the river's sides. Cabo Tepopa to the south and the low dunes to the northwest cut off the long open water swells of the Sea of Cortez. Firewood was available in the nearby desert or slightly further back in an area known as Poso Coyote — a break in the Sierra Seri that provided a channel for the annual floods of the San Ygnacio. In the hot months there was usually an on-shore breeze along the beach. In the days when they had been hunters and gatherers it had been a good place for clams. Logically, they had named it "Place-of-Clams." There was a

magnificent view to the south: Cabo Tepopa lifted its lava headland seaward at the end of many miles of curving bay, with the eastern and western side of Tiburon visible behind it. Just off Tepopa the lone dull spire of Isla Patos (Duck Island) whitely made its point above the blue waters of the sea and to the west the peaks of Isla Angel de la Guardia were usually visible just above the horizon.

Here at Desemboque the Seri had centered, in this second year of the second half of the 20th century. Once upon a time their forefathers had roamed much of the western half of Sonora, east to Ures, south to Guaymas, north to about Puerto Penasco, but the power of the white soldiers and missionaries had been too much and both the territory they were driven into and the size of the tribe had shrunk. Thousands strong in the late 1600's, they were now down to about 200. Once fierce and unrelenting fighters, for the past 40 years they had realized that such fighting as they might do with the whites was suicidal and had thus given it up.

Slowly they had learned to work with a few Mexican fish buyers and with some government help and the resources of the traders had partly edged into the money-trading economy. At best they survived, at worst the children died of malnutrition and diseases brought on by lack of adequate sanitation. The life was hard and bitter much of the time, dependent upon the vagaries of wind and weather and the hunter's good luck. Their poverty, their abysmally bad road system, their lack of need to trade with the rest of the world except in the limited way of the fish buyers all served to keep them secreted in this barren strip of the coast of the Sea of Cortez.

But a few people found out about them. In the early '30s Alfred Kroeber, an anthropologist, came, stayed six days, left and wrote a short technical paper. Later a fellow named Coolidge spent some time, took some pictures and wrote a book called "The Last of the Seris." What a poor prophet he turned out to be! In 1951 a linguistic missionary couple started to work among them; they are still there. In 1952 a "work camp" sponsored by a Quaker organization came at their request to help them build a schoolhouse; I was part of that group. Simultaneously an experienced Mexican



*Standing ram.  
Ram's heads alone  
are fairly commonly  
made, often  
standing 15 to 18  
inches high.*

rural teacher and his family came, to stay seven years.

Because these people were there in the early '50s, others came, out of curiosity and to see their friends who lived in such a far-off place. In turn they brought more in, slowly, until a tiny "cadre" of people with some firsthand knowledge of the Seri was formed and some word about them spread, particularly in the Tucson area.

In 1961 a small but incipiently powerful event occurred. Jose Astorga saw that a friend of his, a man from Tucson, often had trouble with his papers blowing about in the wind. He made a simple rectangular paperweight about an inch and one-half square and a foot long from *palo fierro* (*Olneya tesota*). This simple act and ordinary piece of desert *ironwood* turned out to be the

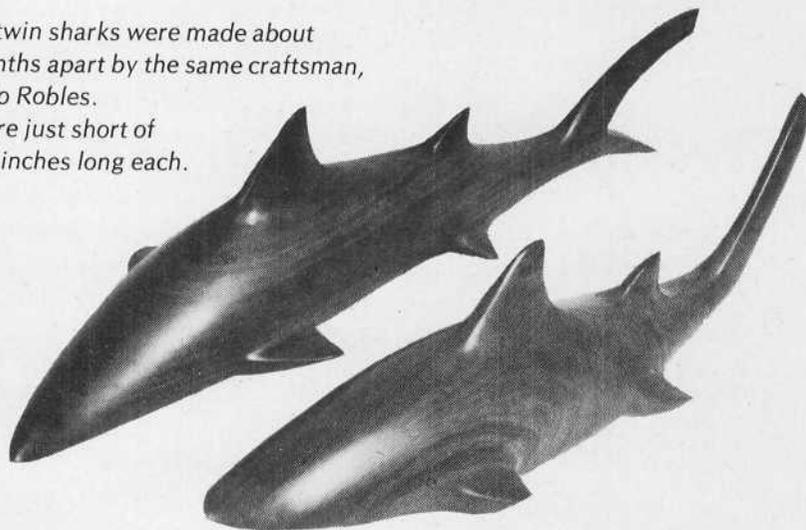
counterpart to the match that lit Mrs. O'Leary's lantern in its significance.

When cut, finished, and polished ironwood shows a strikingly beautiful surface. Hard, heavy, closegrained, a deep brown color with nearly black striations, it takes a finish of wax (even shoe polish!) that makes even a mediocre object glow with a rich sheen. This one piece of wood started, very slowly, a chain of carvings that over the past decade and a half have catapulted the Seri into the cauldron of the money economy in a wholesale way. It did not happen overnight, for it took almost five years before experimentation by Jose and others evolved into forms that had a style and grace that has become the characteristic of the Seri *figura* carving. But once formed it has been an activity that

*Continued on Page 40*

*These twin sharks were made about six months apart by the same craftsman, Antonio Robles.*

*They are just short of twelve inches long each.*



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# LONGSHOT LOOT

THE NICE guys, who button their collars in back, claim that "your confession is good for the soul;" and my local "legal beagle" states learnedly that a death bed confession has high validity status in any court of law.

NO disrespect of any kind is intended for these gentlemen, of course; I deeply admire the first for their selflessness, and have a healthy wary esteem for the second breed . . . BUT . . . deathbed confessions sure don't seem to be worth much as waybills, to indicate where the wicked have cached their booty!

All that the "last words" recorded here led to were: frustration, wasted time, sweaty bootleather, handfuls of burned out detector batteries—and a lot of fun in beautiful country, trying to outsmart some ghosts of the past.

Perhaps the answer is plain old *luck*, since I can't seem to rope and/or bridle an inherited patron leprechaun! On the other hand, maybe my practical-minded, long-suffering Executive Officer is right in her opinion of my penchant for "longshot gambles." *Quien sabe?* Or, since the subject matter is confessions, maybe it's my abominable packrat instinct that is responsible?

Mine isn't an ordinary sensible "collecting hobby"—so I was probably bitten in my sleep one night, out on the

desert, by a union organizer for the Packrat's Brotherhood. Because I have this mania to "organize things for future reference." And the trouble with that is, I often can't find what I later want. I had cached it away too well!

That's what happened in this case.

Back in 1938 the hard times were supposed to have eased up a little, and I found enough work to take my prospecting and treasure hunting dreams out of my "hope chest." So I butchered my fun budget and bought the best metal detector I could find (a big shiny boxes-and-sticks contraption)—which didn't leave much money to go prospecting with.

However, I "dieselized" an old straight-6 Nash sedan, and managed to penny-pinch an autumn treasure hunting trip up into the old ghost town and mining camp country of central Nevada.

At the Tonopah dime store I bought a spare handy-sized note book with a pretty red cover, so I would always be sure to have paper available to keep shorthand notes of any lost loot accounts I might run across. Some of the old-timers' stories I heard that trip—about where money had supposedly been lost or buried—went into that new red notebook.

About 50 miles east of Tonopah, at the

road junction known as Warm Springs, I pulled into the shelter of the combined cafe and gas station building to get out of the whistling sting of an early blizzard. (See *Desert Magazine*, December, 1964, "Tybo 3-Shot.")

Inside, while waiting out the storm, I fortunately met a local Nevada resident—also marooned—who seemed to know everybody in that part of the country.

The upshot of our long hours of shooting-the-breeze around the big wood stove was that we threw in together for three fun-filled weeks of money hunting in some of the most interesting parts of Nevada.

Paul's contacts, beside providing a welcome "Grub-line" to ride, proved a bonanza of information; and we wound up with a lot *more* leads than we could possibly check out before the big winter snows put a final end to our project.

It wasn't until after World War II, when there was a construction job slack period and I had a little spare money, that I decided to check out the rest of the leads I had picked up in '38. And *that* was when I found out the red notebook was "lost, strayed or stolen!" I looked high and low, and it was nowhere in my packrat collection.

So I had to make do with the other dope I had in the black notebook, for that trip.

Only a couple of years ago—when I needed some miscellaneous car fuel line fittings—did I finally discover where the red notebook had been all that time; all carefully wrapped in a brown paper sack. How it ever got in that box under those fittings I can't imagine. After all those years, the shorthand was dead cold, and transcribing the notes back into readable secrets was almost as hard as trying to round up your burros when the grass is green.

Three of the more interesting, confession-type leads from the notebook

*I started ingot-bugging near the old mill ruins below Shermantown, and worked down canyon.*



# DEATHBED CONFESSIONS

by KEN MARQUISS

*About halfway down from Treasure Hill, I lunched at this beautiful old log house, still giving shelter from the elements.*

centered around the old Hamilton-Treasure Hill area, and were given to us by three separate oldtimers, now certainly long dead.

Treasure Hill was the name given to a north-south, two-mile-long, 9000-foot-high ridge—and to the town subsequently built there—that is located over between the present two cities of Ely and Eureka, Nevada; and lies about 14 miles south of Highway 50. A good graded dirt road gives access to the region.

An Indian sheepherder, who picked up a rock to kill a rattlesnake, is reputed to have discovered the first fantastically rich gold/silver/lead ore; and started a real stampede. At one time, the ghost town of Hamilton (down below the north end of Treasure Hill) had over 10,000 inhabitants; and at least that many more people lived and worked in the mines and camps around the town of Eberhardt (down in the canyon east of Treasure Hill) and over around Shermantown in the west canyon. So things were booming and a lot of money was changing hands.

The first story was about three big silver ingots, that had been stolen—one at a time—from a mill in the area.

Our informant lived in an old log and shake ranch house in the Ely country. He was a spry, soft spoken old man; but his wit, memories and eyes were still plenty sharp. Paul and I had brought along some fresh fruit and a big package of liver (dirt cheap back in '38) when we made our call; and the old man was delighted. He flatly warned us of the danger of his "cow-camp cooking" and when I volunteered my small culinary talents we were in-like-Flynn.

So while I cooked supper he and Paul really had a time talking about the days and people of the long ago Nevada. Paul described how my new metal detector worked, and grinned as he asked if the old man knew of any "beanpot spots" where money might be hidden?



The prompt answer was "Nope!"—and I figured that was that. So I almost dropped the skillet when he asked Paul, "Do you reckon that 'lectric thing could bird-dog some mill-sized silver ingots, buried shaller?"

He said that when he was "just a sprout" he and his father were coming back from Duckwater valley with a load of "spuds and turnips in our shiny new Studebaker wagon, with four good horses" bound (via Eberhardt) for Porminco's store in Hamilton. (The farmers used to ship potatoes from Duckwater to Idaho in the old days!)

They were just entering the canyon area when they came up on a "light spring wagon, with some camp stuff in it for traveling" hitched to a couple of big raw-boned mules. The driver of the rig lay between the two near (left) wheels, and it was obvious he was in really bad shape, although he could still mumble. He had been kicked high up on the back by one of the mules, when he stooped to fasten a loose whiffle-tree snap; was paralyzed from the shoulders down, and bleeding from the mouth.

The boy's father piled bedding in the back of the light wagon, hobbled the mules, and hitched two of his own best horses in their place. The boy rode with the crippled man as they started for the Hamilton doctor; but he died within the hour, before they arrived.

On the way he said he wanted to confess; he had stolen the bars when he worked at the mill, and had cached them at night "along the fence of the livery stable corral, down below the mill, that is in the narrows south of Shermantown." Just before he died, he grasped the boy's hand and pleaded, "You and your daddy please take the silver back where it belongs, Boy! It's gotta be turrible bad luck—look what it's dun ter me; just when I was going up to lift it!"

Our host concluded the story by saying that the mill's old rock walls were still standing down below Shermantown. He said he and an older brother had "looked for the silver I guess 40 times—but all we had to work with was a shovel and a slim four-foot steel probe. All we hit with that was rocks!"

The second story we heard from a de-



Vast boom-time wealth, in bullion, once passed through these old Wells Fargo office ruins, at the north end of Main Street on Treasure Hill. In the southeast distance, the main ridge above Shermantown.

lightful—and peppery—elderly pioneer type lady; a long time friend of Paul's. She was of Basque descent, remembered the boom days, and would qualify for any modern day "woman's lib" zealot platoon! For obvious reasons I'll call her "Mrs. T."

She said her people generally put great stock in family ties; and she had a kissin' cousin named Jerome who used to live over in Shermantown around the decline era of the boom—"but, frankly, I wouldn't spit on the dirty \*#/#! Just a plain no-good—one of the kind that should be born out behind the barn in the dark of the moon! And would you believe it, he was married to the kindest, sweet, angel of a woman I ever met. Now you tell me, how come do varmints like him so often manage to marry wonderful sweet women like Martha, huh?"

Since I wasn't just about to get trapped in that speculation, I nudged the conversation back to the money angle.

She continued that Martha had nurses training, was a regular local Florence Nightingale, and "half of Shermantown owed her money" for past emergency nursing services.

Mrs. T. related that late one fall a big brawny Cornishman had sold his slice of a claim up on the side of Treasure Hill for \$3,200 in gold coin and a \$4,000 promissory note. So he decided to go down to Shermantown to celebrate "which included plans to beat the hell out of a saloonkeeper he didn't like!"

An incipient storm was already dropping a few snowflakes and the miner's friends at Treasure Hill told him he had better stay put—"but he just laughed, threw his money and a few personal things in an ore sack slung over his shoulder, and headed down the foot trail from Treasure Hill to Shermantown." Several hours later the dogs in the back store room of a Shermantown saloon began to bark wildly; so several men followed the dogs out into the swirling blizzard—and found the big ice-coated Cornishman almost dead with cold, "and about out of hollering wind!"

"So, who took care of the big dummy before he died! That's right, sweet, good-hearted Martha, of course, and she never got a dime out of that mercy job either; because he had less than \$10 on him when they found him."

Mrs. T. figured the money had to have been cached up along the trail somewhere; but there wasn't much to go on. She said Martha told her the man kept moaning about "... sweet little Phyllis over home ... I'm coming back, and ... under west (or wet?) side of big stump ... just below the fork ... trail steep ... in me billy (whatever *that* means?) ... flat rock ... remember ..."

She added, "That's the way Martha told it, so it's gospel! Jerome told me he heard something else, too—but I wouldn't believe *him* if he swore to it while doing a handstand on two open Bibles!" She was convinced Jerome's clue was worthless because, "If that blowhard bum had found half that amount, he would have been big mouth-ing bartenders from Pioche to Reno!"

The third story in the red notebook, I heard on the return trip when I was running—any way that was downhill—from the icy snows of that '38 winter. We were sitting around the table (under the aromatic halo of coffee, pork chops and fried potatoes/onions) at the home of an old Arizona buddy who had moved to the southern warm tip of Nevada.

His wife had a visiting older friend who said, when she heard what I had been doing, "You know, that reminds me, I heard a treasure yarn once when I was a little girl." She made it plain she didn't want *her* name in *my* notes—"Don't you ever tell *anybody* who told you this, because most of my family were respectable!"

She related she had once had a half-aunt (her father's older half-sister) who "had been a madam who ran one of those kind of houses in The Gulch below Hamilton." (I found out later that this was the nickname of the little valley that curves down north west below Hamilton, and which also contained the local Chinatown.) After this aunt died, they found a diary—poorly kept—but with one interesting entry. The item referred to a brawl (a real "dog-fight") under the rosy rays from the red-globed kerosene porch light. The loser had been well knifed. He was carried inside to the madam's bed, and one of the girls went running for the doctor and the marshal. Dish towels were torn for temporary bandaging, and while the madam was trying to stop the blood flow, the man talked softly between pain gasps.

"You're a real friend. I'm the last one.



Treasure Hill doesn't LOOK very steep from the air, but on the ground it's "sweat country!" Over \$3,000,000.00 worth [at the old price] of metallic gold/silver alloy was once hacked from a single lens-shaped deposit 70x40x25 feet—called by some "THE Glory Hole."

We buried the stuff near a squarish rock. Like a pulpit. Twenty-three steps along the ridge from the roost. A cave with a winze in it. So we could cook in the back. Over above Shermantown." By the time the doctor arrived the was unconscious, and never recovered.

Apparently the aunt never pursued the information, for "she died poor as a churchmouse, and my father had to pay for her funeral!"

As you can imagine, it wasn't long after I unearthed the red notebook that I started to get busy. I double-checked my old truck camper, tuned up the trail bike and detector, started packing, and told my wife, "It's fruitcake baking time again!" (She makes a fruitcake that is out of this world, keeps well, and a big slice with cocoa is my favorite bedtime snack out prospecting.)

In spite of some bad weather, I shook down the Shermantown-Treasure Hill area pretty well without finding anything of importance. The main problems I found were:

1. The old mill walls still stand, but there are no traces of structures below it; not even the background-tone-rise on the detector to indicate a corral perimeter.

Plus masses of thick sagebrush six to eight feet high to fight.

2. The erosion of time has erased any one clear trail down from Treasure Hill; and there are hundreds of stumps and/or flat rocks, along a dozen "maybe routes" that might fit.

3. I could find only two "caves" and no pulpit rocks in the time I had; it would take weeks to make a real search for that alone. What "the stuff" was, how much, where it came from, are secrets lost behind the dark curtains of time; and since a winze is mentioned (in mining vernacu-

lar, a narrow ventilation slope) could "his" cave be a small abandoned workings? More problems!

4. A lot of the Treasure Hill area is still valid patented mining ground; so act, walk and talk like a gentleman. It helps!

And now, since I've made my try and had my fun up there, you are welcome to what I know—and what I have guessed at. Only *one* thing is certain: you will deserve anything you find, for in my opinion "confession clues" are like beggars' horses—strictly longshot hopes! □



There are hundreds of big old stumps, along a dozen "possible foot trails!"

# CITIZEN'S BAND and the Desert

by ERNIE COWAN

IT WAS going to be a great shot on film. I was getting some home movie footage of our Sunday outing and was recording the efforts of a friend's wife as she bumped her four-wheel-drive rig over a little mound.

But as she topped the mound, she struck a small tree that acted like a spring. The tree bent, then sprang back and toppled her rig on its side.

I dropped the still-running movie camera and dashed to her aid, hearing only the screams of her infant son from inside the overturned vehicle. Fortunately, the only injury was minor damage to the vehicle.

Our Sunday outing into the back country had suddenly turned into a serious situation. It was nearing dark, we were 15 miles from the nearest help and the overturned rig blocked the only road into what turned out to be a box canyon. Since I had driven in first, my vehicle was now trapped.

But I had one piece of equipment that would save us a long walk and bring help—a Citizen's Band two-way radio.

I topped a nearby hill and put out a call that was answered by another CBer in a town 15 miles to the south. He was able to relay my message to another CBer 20

*Dash-mounted mobile radio can be put in many locations, but should be easily accessible to driver for ease of operation.*



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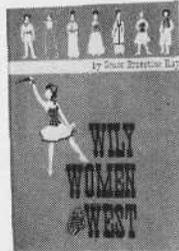
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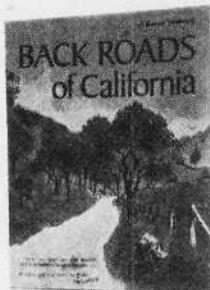
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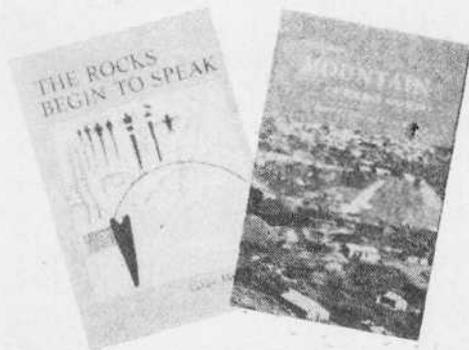


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**RETRACING THE BUTTERFIELD OVERLAND TRAIL THROUGH ARIZONA** by Gerald T. Anher. This book was written to mark the physical route and station locations in the most hazardous segment of the Butterfield Trail—Arizona. The author's original intent was merely to find, follow and map the Trail, however, the long and difficult task resulted in putting this vital information in a book which makes it easy for others to follow, or to provide a delightful armchair journey over this dramatic route. Profusely illustrated with maps and photos, this book is a visual hand-tool to the explorer; an exciting segment of Americana to the scholar and historian. Large format, hardcover, \$9.75.

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**DESERT EDITOR** by J. Wilson McKenney. This is the story of Randall Henderson, founder of DESERT Magazine, who fulfilled a dream and who greatly enriched the lives of the people who love the West. Hardcover, illustrated with 188 pages, \$7.95.

**THE GOLD HEX** by Ken Marquiss. A single man's endeavors, Ken has compiled 20 of his treasure hunts in book form. His failure to hit the "jackpot" does not mean he is treasureless. From gold panning to hardrock, from dredging to electronic metal detecting, he enjoyed a lifetime of "doing his thing." Slick paperback, illustrated with photos and maps, 146 pages, \$3.50.

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**GHOST TOWNS OF THE COLORADO ROCKIES** by Robert L. Brown. Written by the author of Jeep Trails to Colorado Ghost Towns, this book deals with ghost towns accessible by passenger car. Gives directions and maps for finding towns along with historical backgrounds. Hardcover, 401 pages, \$7.95.

**WHERE TO FIND GOLD IN THE DESERT** by James Klein is a sequel to *Where to Find Gold in Southern California*. Author Klein includes lost treasure tales and gem locations as he tells where to find gold in the Rosmond-Mohave area, the El Paso Mountains, Randsburg and Barstow areas, and many more. Paperback, 112 pages, \$4.95.

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**DEEP CANYON, A DESERT WILDERNESS** Edited by Irwin P. Ting and Bill Jennings. This is the first effort to describe both for the informed layman and the general scientist the environmental relationships of plants, people and animals in this special area of the Colorado Desert. It is also the first book ever to feature the low-desert photography of incomparable Ansel Adams. Large format, hardcover, \$12.50.



**NAVAJO SILVER** by Arthur Woodward. A summary of the history of silversmithing by the Navajo tribe. Woodward presents a comprehensive view of the four major influences on Navajo design, showing how the silversmiths adapted the art forms of European settlers and Indians in the eastern United States, as well as those of the Spanish and Mexican colonists of the Southwest. Paperback, well illustrated, 100 pages, \$4.95.

**OUR HISTORIC DESERT, The Story of the Anza-Borrego State Park.** Text by Diana Lindsay, Edited by Richard Pourade. The largest state park in the United States, this book presents a concise and cogent history of the things which have made this desert unique. The author details the geologic beginning and traces the history from Juan Bautista de Anza and early-day settlers through to the existence today of the huge park. Hardcover, 144 pages, beautifully illustrated, \$9.50.

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**THE NORTH AMERICAN DESERTS** by Edmund C. Jaeger. A long-time authority on all phases of desert areas and life, Dr. Jaeger's book on the North American Deserts should be carried where ever you travel. It not only describes each of the individual desert areas, but has illustrated sections on desert insects, reptiles, birds, mammals and plants. 315 pages, illustrated photographs, line drawings and maps. Hardcover, \$6.95.



**GHOST TOWN BOTTLE PRICE GUIDE** by Wes and Ruby Bressie. A new and revised edition of their popular bottle book, first published in 1964. New section on Oriental relics, plus up-to-date values of bottles. Slick, paperback, illustrated, 124 pages, \$3.95.

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**BLUE GOLD, The Turquoise Story** by M. G. Broman. Information on the identification, history and mining of turquoise, as well as an introduction to the lapidary and silversmithing techniques used in making turquoise jewelry. This book is intended for the general reader who is interested in knowing more about the origin of turquoise as well as the interesting facets of buying, collecting and assembling of turquoise pieces. Paperback, color and b/w photos, \$4.95.

**GOLD RUSH COUNTRY** by the Editors of *Sunset Books*. A revised and up-dated practical guide to California's Mother Lode country. Divided into geographical areas for easy weekend trips, the 8x11 heavy paperback new edition is profusely illustrated with photos and maps. Special features and anecdotes of historical and present day activities. Four-color cover, 96 pages. \$2.95.

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**PALM CANYONS OF BAJA CALIFORNIA** by Randall Henderson. The beautiful palm canyons and isolated areas of Baja California are described by the late Randall Henderson, founder of *DESERT Magazine*. Although these are his personal adventures many years ago, little has changed and his vivid writing is alive today as it was when he first saw the oases. Paperback, illus., 72 pages, \$1.95.

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**BYROADS OF BAJA**, by Walt Wheelock. In addition to describing the many highways now being paved, this veteran Baja explorer also tells of back country roads leading to Indian ruins, missions and abandoned mines. Paperback, illus., \$1.95.

**BOTTLE COLLECTOR'S HANDBOOK** by John T. Yount. Contains a listing of 1850 bottles and their market value (including the prized Jim Beams), where to sell and buy, identifications, etc. Although contains few illustrations, it has more listings than any other bottle book. Paperback, 89 pages, \$3.95.

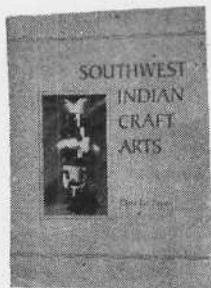
**FOUR WHEEL DRIVE HANDBOOK** by James T. Crow and Cameron Warren. Packed into this volume is material gathered from actual experience and presented in a detailed manner so it can easily be followed and understood. Highly recommended for anyone interested in back country driving. Paper, illus., 96 pages, \$2.95.



**HOSTEEN CROTCHETTY** by Jimmy Swinnerton. This delightful book by famed desert painter, cartoonist and story teller, Jimmy Swinnerton, is an interpretation of a centuries-old Hopi legend. The fable, told to Swinnerton more than 50 years ago by an Indian story-teller, involves Old Man Hosteen, the Owl People, and how they were outwitted by the pueblo children, aided by the Termite People. Beautiful 4/color illustrations throughout. Hardcover, large format, 48 pages, \$7.50.

**FIELD GUIDE TO WESTERN BIRDS** by Roger Tory Peterson. The standard book for field identification sponsored by the National Audubon Society. 2nd Edition, enlarged, 658 pictures in full color. Hardcover, 6.96.

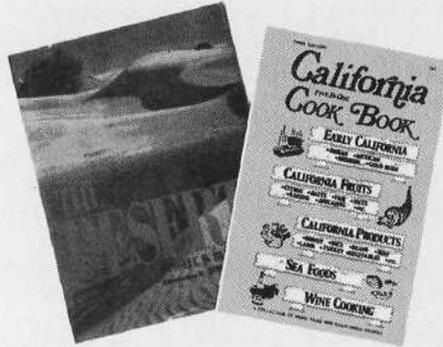
**BALLARAT**, Compiled by Paul Hubbard, Doris Bray and George Pipkin. Ballarat, now a ghost town in the Panamint Valley, was once a flourishing headquarters during the late 1880s and 1900s for the prospectors who searched for silver and gold in that desolate area of California. The authors tell of the lives and relate anecdotes of the famous old-timers. First published in 1965, this reprinted edition is an asset to any library. Paperback, illustrated, 98 pages, \$3.00.



**GHOSTS OF THE GLORY TRAIL** by Neil Murbarger. A pioneer of the ghost town explorers and writers, Miss Murbarger's followers will be glad to know this book is once again in print. First published in 1956, it is now in its seventh edition. The fast-moving chronicle is a result of personal interviews of old-timers who are no longer here to tell their tales. Hardcover, illustrated, 291 pages, \$7.00.

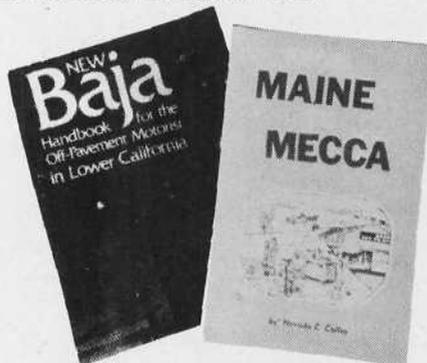
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**CALIFORNIA GOLD CAMPS, a Geographical and Historical Dictionary of Camps, Towns and Localities Where Gold Was Found and Mined, and of Wayside Stations and Trading Centers**, by Erwin G. Gudde. Includes 7 excellent maps, in addition to a List of Places by County, a Glossary and Bibliography. Highly recommended. Hardcover, 467 pages, \$19.50.



**TO HELL ON WHEELS** by Alan H. Siebert. A must for every desert traveler, this is not just another survival book, it is a manual of mobility for the recreational vehicle driver who is looking for something more than the organized campground. Highly recommended for both the newcomer and old-timers. Paperback, 64 pages, well illustrated, \$2.95.

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**BIG RED: A WILD STALLION** by Rutherford Montgomery. There was a time when there were many wild horse herds on our western ranges. These herds, jealously guarded by the stallion that had won them, met with real trouble when the hunters found they could get good prices for them from meat processors. **Big Red** tells how one stallion successfully defends his herd from both animal and human enemies. Illustrated, hardcover, 163 pages, \$4.95.



**EARTHQUAKE COUNTRY** by Robert Jacopi. New, revised edition brings maps and descriptive text up to date as nearly as practicable. Well illustrated, the book separates fact from fiction and shows where faults are located, what to do in the event of an earthquake, past history and what to expect in the future. Large format, slick paperback, 160 pages, revised edition is now \$3.95.

**TALES OF THE SUPERSTITIONS, The Origins of The Lost Dutchman Legend** by Robert Blair. An intriguing and well documented account of the fabulous Lost Dutchman, the author turns up new clues and signatures which will prove to be both a setback and a stimulus to the search for the legendary mine. Paperback, 175 pages, \$4.95.

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**TRAILS OF THE ANGELES, 100 Hikes in the San Gabriels**, by John W. Robinson. This is the most complete guide ever written to hiking and backpacking in California's San Gabriel Mountains. Hikes vary from easy one-hour strolls to all-day and overnight rambles. Tours of the Mt. Lowe Railway and Echo Mountain ruins. The author has walked, recorded and researched all trips, and has graded them as "easy," "moderate" or "strenuous." Excellent trail map. 256 pages, paperback, \$4.95.



**MINING CAMPS AND GHOST TOWNS, A History of Mining in Arizona** by Frank Love. Dramatic history of the mineral frontier as it affected one section of the vast American West, the Lower Colorado Region. Illustrated, hardcover, 192 pages, \$7.95.

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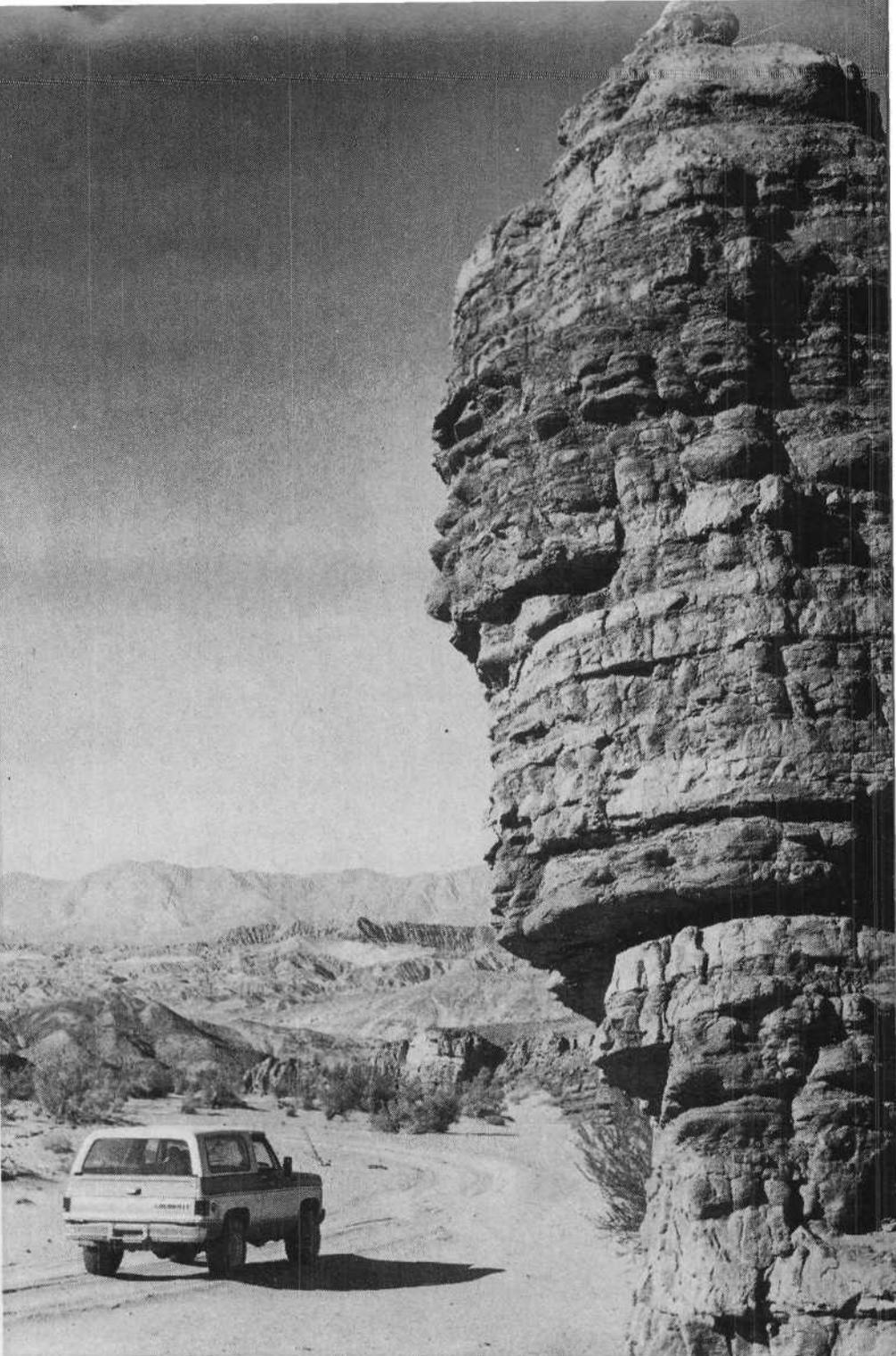
miles west who called some of my friends who were also four-wheelers. It wasn't long before I had the rescue party on the radio and was directing them to our location. To our surprise, 17 rigs showed up like the cavalry in a charge. With winches and manpower, we soon had the overturned rig back on its wheels and we were all headed home.

The CB radio was one of the smallest offroad accessories in my rig, but it did a big job when needed and it has been a help many times since.

Last winter, I was caught in a raging blizzard in the Santa Rosa Mountains, south of Palm Desert, California. Powder snow blanketed the road, making even four-wheel-drive travel difficult. At one point, I became stuck and began to side-slip off the road.

Again, I turned to my CB radio. I contacted another CBer in Ocotillo Wells, many miles to the south. It turned out I didn't need his help, but he was standing by in case I got stuck.

Many people, including off-roaders and motorhomers, are discovering that the Citizen's Band mobile radio is an invaluable addition to any well-equipped



*Backcountry travel is made more assuring when your rig is equipped with a CB unit.*

vehicle on the road. Not only can these two-way radios be life savers, they can add a new dimension of enjoyment to travel. The CB radio can be of great value in finding directions, getting road and weather information and for meeting other travelers.

The Citizen's Band radio service was established in 1958 when the Federal Communications Commission set aside 23 channels for use by the public for personal business use. Today, there are an estimated 10 million licensed CB

operators across the nation and the FCC is issuing more than 200,000 new licenses a month.

While the term "license" might scare some people off, a Citizen's Band license does not require that you take a test to prove any electronic aptitude. A four-year license can be obtained simply by filing an application and a \$4.00 fee with the FCC. License applications come with many new radios, or can be obtained by calling your nearest FCC office.

O.K., you've applied for your license





*Walkie-Talkie is handy for quick portable communications between hikers and base.*

and now comes that trip to the radio store to buy the radio. Once inside, the store you are overpowered by the dozens of models lining the display shelves. Most have the full 23-channel operation, so why do they range in price from \$100 to more than \$350?

Citizen's Band radios are also limited in the amount of power they can put out, so what you are actually paying for in more expensive radios is sophistication and quality.

The average 23-channel transceiver being used by off-roaders today sell in the \$125 to \$200 price range. These are dependable, no-frills radios that do a good job and hold up well.

In my own rig, I have a Hy-Range I made by the Hy-Gain Corporation. I paid \$140 for the set after looking at various radios for about six months. I selected this particular model because it offered complete 23-channel coverage, a meter

to monitor output and signal strength, and most importantly, a good service record according to various electronic repairmen I talked with.

A similar unit might be right for you, or you might want a lot more.

The newest rage in CB radio is the single sideband unit. These radios are more expensive, ranging in price from about \$250 to \$500 or more. But single sideband offers greater reliability in communications, since you can triple your power output using sideband operation. The sideband radios also offer regular AM CB operation as well.

Some of the most advanced sideband radios on the market include the Hy-Range V by Hy-Gain, the Digicom 100 by Palomar Electronics, the Cobra 132, SBE Sidebander 2 and the Siltronix. The range includes dozens more, however.

As you spend more for your radio, you will find more sophistication built into

the unit. This means it will function better, pull in signals better and reject adjacent channel interference better than cheaper models. Like anything, you get the quality you pay for.

After you purchase a radio, you will need an antenna to get on the air. Expect to pay between \$20 and \$40 for a good mobile antenna.

The next question most people ask me when they see my radio is, "Who do you talk to?"

Today, that's not a problem. There isn't any area in the country that doesn't have its share of CBers. In any small town there are dozens of other two-wayers and large towns have thousands who often form clubs that perform civic service with their vast radio network.

In my own community of 50,000 there are an estimated 500 radios in operation. Any recreation area you are likely to visit will also have its share of CBers.

The nice thing about Citizen's Band is the people you meet. CBers seem to be a group who love to help other people.

On one recent trip to Nevada, I needed directions to Virginia City. I contacted another CBER in Carson City who gave me detailed directions and then invited me to his home for coffee.

And while driving into Sacramento late one day, I contacted a friendly radio buff who called ahead and had motel reservations waiting for me on arrival.

Truckers are now using the radios to pass road and weather information on to others as they travel. And in some states, such as Arizona, the Highway Patrol is also using the units to communicate directly with motorists. Women alone on the road are also finding CB radios are a great security aid.

Once you are hooked on CB, you won't be content with a single radio.

Your next investment might be hand-held walkie-talkies, a base station in your home or several other options I will discuss.

How many times have you been out camping and the kids wandered off on a hike just about dinner time? Equipped with a rig in your vehicle and the kids with portable units, you'd be in contact all the time.

Good portable sets that are not toys sell from about \$45 on up. They even have full-power, 23-channel hand-held units on the market. Some excellent portables are made by Pace, Johnson, Mid-

land and Royce, and Enduro even makes a tiny unit designed for mounting and use on motorcycles and snowmobiles.

The portable walkie-talkie units are also handy to have in case you are traveling with others who do not have a radio. Give them one of the portable units and they are on the air.

Your next mobile accessory you might consider is what is called a scanner. These radios are designed to scan anywhere from four to 16 channels at one time and can receive police, fire and public service broadcasts.

As the name implies, the scanner scans various channels electronically, stopping when a particular channel is being used. When that transmission is complete, the radio resumes its scan, stopping at the next channel in use. You can lock them on one channel, or remove several channels from the scan sequence if you wish.

Regency, Johnson, Courier and Bearcat all make a variety of mobile and hand-held scanner receivers. They range in price from about \$100 to over \$350.

Probably the most advanced is the Bearcat scanner that has 16-channel capacity. It can also be programmed for any public service channel you want to receive.

A scanner in your vehicle allows you to monitor such agencies as the Highway Patrol and the local weather service, thus giving you valuable road and weather information.

Be sure to check local laws, since some states do not allow you to have a scanner in a vehicle.

After all this, you may still want more. If you live in a small community or work near your home, you might want to put in a base station. This will allow you to communicate with your family while in your vehicle. I have a photography business in my community and am in my vehicle much of the time. My wife uses our base radio to give me telephone messages.

Base stations are not much different from mobile radios. In fact, with a power converter, a mobile radio can be used in your home.

My personal choice for a base station was a Hy-Range IV by Hy-Gain. My choice was based on satisfaction with my Hy-Range mobile radio.

This particular base radio runs about \$229 and offers simple and efficient com-



Typical base station set-up with radio, scanner on left, watt meter, clock, telephone and directories all within handy reach.

munications. Other base radio manufacturers include Pearce-Simpson ranging in price from \$179 to \$379, Midland, Johnson, Cobra, Browning, Gemtronics, Robyn and Royce.

These radios also come in regular AM or Single Sideband models, the Single Sideband being more expensive, of course.

A base station antenna will cost from about \$75 on up, depending upon the kind you buy and the mast you use.

A word about insurance.

Don't spend several hundred dollars on radio equipment and install it, assuming your insurance will replace it in case of theft. The popularity of CB radio

makes mobile units a prime target for car burglars.

Because of this, many insurance companies are not covering CB radio loss under their regular automobile policy coverage. Some require an additional premium of \$6 to \$12 a year to cover your radio. It's well worth the money to get the coverage. You might also invest about \$35 to \$100 in a good alarm system on your vehicle. A loud siren will discourage theft the moment your door is opened.

I have only scratched the surface on CB radio. Your local dealer is the man to talk to for particular problems. I hope to hear you on the air. □

# If you know how to use it... CB Radio Could Save Your Life!

 FRANTIC, ALMOST hysterical voice comes over the radio, "Emergency, emergency, REACT Monitor I have a 10-33!" A calm voice responds, "This is Antelope Valley REACT Unit A. May I help you?"

It is quickly learned that two men have been seriously injured when a dune buggy overturned on a Mojave Desert Dry Lake. They are miles from the nearest town and a considerable distance from a paved road. Help is needed fast!

Obtaining all the pertinent information, Unit A quickly notifies local emergency services. Due to the seriousness of

the injuries, the Los Angeles County Fire Department dispatches one of its air-ambulances. Though the wait seems unbearably long to those at the scene, the helicopter is the fastest help available. Emergency treatment is given to stabilize the condition of the injured men and they are air-lifted to the nearest hospital.

This is an example of but one of the many calls received during a regular monitoring period on Citizen's Band Radio, National Emergency Channel 9. Not all calls are emergencies, but every one is important. The men and women who provide the equipment, and give of

their time to help their fellow man, are a breed of unusually dedicated people.

In the world of today where "few people want to be involved," the REACT Monitors are involved — all the way. They are the modern counter-parts of the "old-time neighbors" who willingly gave helping hands to those in trouble. That little Citizen's Band radio in your car could possibly save your life — but only if you know how to use it properly.

REACT (Radio Emergency Associated Citizens Team) International, Inc., is a non-profit organization consisting of teams distributed throughout the United

by  
**MARY FRANCES  
STRONG**

Photos by  
**Jerry Strong**

*Although rendering emergency road-side service is not a function of REACT, individual members may elect to help a stranded motorist encountered on the highway, as demonstrated here by John Franklin, Unit 30 [right], who gives a battery jump to Joe Mastro, Unit 8.*



Jim Sanchez [right], senior helicopter pilot, and fireman Pete Peterson, could be air-borne within two minutes, should an emergency arise. This is one of five air-ambulances hangered at Pacoima and deployed daily to various strategic heliport sites throughout Los Angeles County.



States. Each month new teams are formed and eventually every nook and cranny of our country will be covered. Each local team goal is to voluntarily monitor Channel 9 on a 24-hour basis. In times of disaster or national emergency, the teams can be called upon to provide communications for Civil Defense, Red Cross or other authorities.

REACT is of particular importance on California's Mojave and Colorado Desert Regions where it supplies emergency communication to travelers, recreationists and phoneless residents in out-lying areas. Encompassing the eastern half of Southern California, this vast desert land of broad arid basins, separated by low and lofty mountains, plays weekly host to thousands of visitors. Few and far between are the settlements — many are the emergencies.

The rise in emergency calls is due, in great part, to the rapidly growing hobbies of dune-bugging, four-wheeling, cycle riding and racing, plus a sundry of other activities in which desert enthusiasts engage. Vehicle breakdowns, lost children and adults, road hazards and

automobile accidents all add to the growing need for help.

A large percentage of regular desert visitors have installed mobile Citizen's Band radios in their cars. Hundreds more are doing so each month. Most of those with whom we have talked, the number is many, informed us they installed the radio to use in case of an emergency when in the backcountry. "Might get stuck in sand, have car failure, an accident, injury or illness," constitute their major worries. With a CB radio at arm's length, they feel instant help is available. Unfortunately, it is not all that easy.

It is amazing how many CB radio owners do not even know that Channel 9 is the emergency channel or how to properly call for help. When they do reach a monitor, many have difficulty in answering the questions necessary to bring the assistance needed.

The technique is simple; but first let us discuss what REACT can and cannot do. REACT Monitors are volunteers trained to obtain emergency help for motorists or others who need it. REACT

itself does not provide emergency assistance. The monitor notifies proper authorities — Fire Department, Sheriff, Highway Patrol, Automobile Club emergency road service or private wrecker. Some teams have a Search and Rescue Unit; and, at times, individual members will elect to assist, if the emergency is nearby.

Should your vehicle become stuck in sand, snow, mud, etc., the Highway Patrol, Sheriff or Forest Rangers will not respond. If you are in a position where life is endangered or your vehicle is a hazard to other vehicles, they will attempt to come to your aid. Do not make a false statement about this matter or you may find yourself in additional trouble. Even private wreckers are reluctant to answer calls if the vehicle is in the backcountry.

When you have car trouble, belonging to one of the automobile clubs is a great asset, since 24-hour service from the nearest affiliated garage is available. Private wreckers can be called, but you must have cash or an acceptable charge card. If you are low on cash and do not



Most REACT Teams are fortunate to have at least one member who gives of himself "far and above the call of duty." When the first call to Antelope Valley REACT is unanswered, the second call is generally fielded by Les Anderson, Unit 1. Affectionately known within his team as Mr. REACT, Les monitors Channel 9 unselfishly during the greater part of his waking hours.

a 10-33." Do not shout and try to keep calm. Do not use "May Day" or holler "Help."

If there isn't an immediate reply, wait a few minutes then repeat the call. Should the regular Monitor fail to answer the second call, it will usually be answered by someone else. If there is no reply, again check your squelch. This is usually the culprit when a mobile cannot hear a Monitor reply from a base station.

In the event you are unable to raise a Monitor on Channel 9 after several tries, do the following before going to another channel. Speaking slowly, give your call letters, state your correct 10-20 (location), the nature of your problem and what is needed. You should identify your vehicle and give the license number. It is wise to repeat all of this information several times. Quite often, a Monitor on a base station can read a mobile loud and clear even though you cannot hear his response. By giving the above information, help can be sent to you.

Obtaining the correct 10-20 (location) of an emergency in desert country is one of REACT's biggest problems. Too often, motorists just follow a dirt road and pay little attention to where they have camped or are riding. They know only the general location and this is not enough. *Emergency services will not roll without an exact location.* Directions such as "on the north slope of Piute Mountain" or "west side of El Mirage Lake" are not acceptable. Always note your route and you should carry a good map of the area with you.

Perhaps covering one of the largest regions on the Mojave Desert, Antelope Valley REACT Team C-40, KEL9917, received its charter in 1970. Though based in the Palmdale-Lancaster area, it is fortunate in having Monitors locally, as well as in outlying regions at varying elevations. This enables good coverage throughout the Antelope Valley and Western Mojave Desert.

No individual Monitor can take calls from every locale within such a vast region. However, as a team, Antelope Valley Monitors can handle calls in the San Gabriel Mountains and south to Solemint Junction; west to Gorman and Lebec; north to Walker Pass and points beyond Little Lake; easterly to Highway 395 and northeast including Kramer Corners, Randsburg, Ridgecrest and Trona. A rough estimate indicates Antelope

belong to an auto club, the REACT Monitor can call (collect) to a family member or a friend.

Do not use "10-33" unless you have a serious emergency such as an accident, fire, ambulance or rescue unit needed. Car trouble — mechanical, running out of gas, being stuck in sand, etc. — is not a 10-33 but a 10-17 (urgent business). Learn the 10-Code and use it properly. A copy of the code generally used appears with this article.

REACT Monitors can give you a 10-13 (report on road and weather conditions). This is important in desert country where severe weather conditions — flash floods, wind and sand storms — can develop rapidly. REACT can also help with 10-46 (assist motorist with directions to highways, towns, businesses, etc.) or with a 10-21 (place a collect phone call for you).

When traveling in desert country, keep your radio on Channel 9. You will be kept up-to-date on a variety of conditions by hearing the response of the local

REACT Monitor to mobile calls. You will also know if you are within receiving range of a Monitor, should you need help. REACT does not give radio checks. Please use other channels when checking your radio. The Federal Communications Commission has designated Channel 9 as the National Emergency Channel and it is not to be used for purposes other than those mentioned.

How to obtain help? Go to Channel 9. Check to make sure your squelch is at minimum. If you have "squelched out" the usual background noise, you may be unable to hear the REACT Monitor respond. Sometimes they are a considerable distance from your 10-20 (location). If Channel 9 is clear, call for "REACT Monitor," then slowly and distinctly give your call letters. If you have been listening to Channel 9 you will know which REACT Team is responding to calls and can use their name — Antelope Valley REACT, Victor Valley REACT, for example. If you have an extreme emergency, you can add, "I have

Valley REACT covers the western quarter of the Mojave Desert.

Victor Valley REACT ably handles calls along Interstate 15 from Cajon Pass to almost Barstow, plus the recreational sites in Stoddard Wells, Apple and Lucerne Valleys. Barstow REACT does a good job of monitoring their local area and sections of Highway 58, Interstate 15 and 40. Edwards REACT monitors the

### CITIZENS BAND 10-CODE

- 10-1 Receiving poorly.
- 10-2 Signal good.
- 10-4 Acknowledgement.
- 10-5 Relay message.
- 10-6 Busy, stand by unless urgent.
- 10-7 Out of service.
- 10-8 In service.
- 10-9 Repeat.
- 10-10 Standing by.
- 10-12 Visitors present.
- 10-13 Weather and Road report.
- 10-17 Urgent business.
- 10-18 Complete assignment quickly.
- 10-19 Return to \_\_\_\_\_.
- 10-20 Location.
- 10-21 Call \_\_\_\_\_ by phone.
- 10-22 Disregard.
- 10-23 Standby.
- 10-25 Report in person to \_\_\_\_\_.
- 10-27 Moving to other channel.
- 10-30 Unnecessary use of radio.
- 10-33 EMERGENCY.
- 10-34 Trouble at this station. Need help.
- 10-36 Time.
- 10-43 Information.
- 10-46 Assist motorist.
- 10-47 Emergency road repairs needed.
- 10-49 Traffic light out.
- 10-50 Accident (personal injury, fire, need police).
- 10-51 Wrecker needed.
- 10-52 AMBULANCE NEEDED.
- 10-53 Road blocked.
- 10-69 Message received.
- 10-70 FIRE ALARM.
- 10-77 Negative contact.
- 10-100 Personal break.
- 10-200 POLICE NEED AT \_\_\_\_\_.

These are the most used 10-codes. A complete list may be obtained from any C.B. dealer.

sizable Edwards Air Force Base and Ridgecrest REACT handles the north-western desert region — Highways 395 and 14.

REACT Teams on the Colorado Desert include Morongo Basin, Indio, Coachella and El Centro. Possibly other teams have been formed since the last directory was issued. Independent monitors such as Unit 302 in Apple Valley are located in small communities across the desert including Trona, Ludlow and Baker. They monitor Channel 9 and do a fine job handling calls that might other-

*Weary travelers over long holiday weekends are cordially invited to break for a cup of free coffee by many REACT teams throughout the nation. Members of Antelope Valley REACT Team C-40 enjoy some of their own brew.*



wise go unanswered. In most cases, if you need help — have a good radio and antenna — you will be able to reach someone. Just don't panic and start jumping from channel to channel calling for help.

There are times when conditions (called skip) are such that what sounds like a local call is not. Late one evening, Hank Bensler, former Antelope Valley REACT Monitor, took a call reporting a highway bridge had been washed out. "Please call the highway department," was the request. "Several cars have plunged into the river." Upon asking the 10-20, Hank learned it was in Montana. The caller said, "We cannot raise anyone here. Place a collect call and hurry. We need help." From nearly 1500 miles away, Hank made the call and emergency help was dispatched. Whenever help is needed — go to Channel 9. It is the fastest means available unless you are by a telephone.

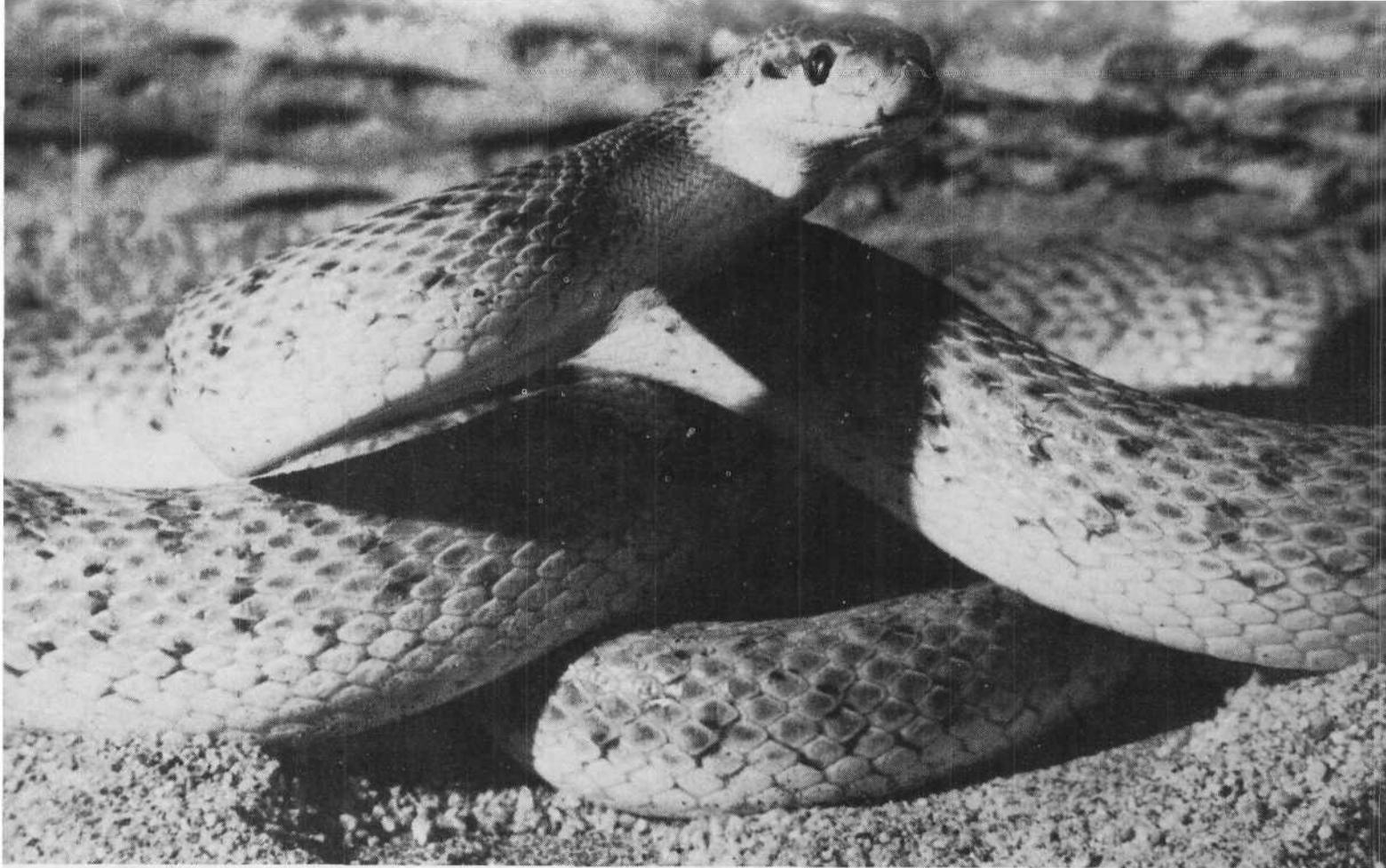
In every Team, there is usually one person who has willingly served beyond the call of duty. Antelope Valley REACT has Les Anderson, Unit #1. He has proven to be #1 in many ways. Affectionately called "Mr. REACT," Les lost most of his sight as a consequence of a motorcycle accident. Yet, he very effectively monitors Channel 9 a large percentage of the day and night. Always willing to encourage new Monitors, assist as Backup Monitor, as well as keeping the group on an even keel, Les has been voted "Outstanding Monitor of the Year" many times.

CB radio is an important link with the outside world when traveling in desert country. Should a serious emergency occur, modern equipment can quickly reach even remote sites. Los Angeles County (including Antelope Valley) is fortunate in having an outstanding air-ambulance service and a modern dispatch center which utilizes an impressive array of sophisticated communication equipment to coordinate its effort.

Jerry and I toured the Los Angeles County Fire Department Heliport Facility with Senior Pilot Jim Sanchez as our guide. Hangared and serviced at Pa-coima is a fleet of five air-ambulances, the three largest of which are also used to transport specially trained fire-fighters when needed. Jim told us an air-ambulance can be underway two minutes after receiving orders. Aboard are paramedics and, on weekends, a doctor.

The pilots of air-ambulances are all very well-qualified and must have had at least 5,000 hours of helicopter flight time before joining the Fire Department. While they have regular duty shifts, they are also on call. Should a disaster occur, pilots can be at the heliport within 15 minutes. Many a life has been saved by this valuable emergency service.

After several years as CBers, Jerry and I joined Antelope Valley REACT Team C-40. We monitor regularly and have found it a rewarding experience of both accomplishment and frustration. We are pleased to be associated with a group of people who take pride in their Team and helping their fellow man. □



IN MANY parts of the desert Southwest there flourishes a tribe of snakes famous for their handsome polished appearance. These are the glossy snakes of the genus *Arizona*, further names *elegans* by admiring zoologists. Patterned tastefully, too, are these two and one-half- to four and one-half-foot-long snakes, with big reddish brown, tan or dark grey blotches down their backs and smaller ones alternating along their sides, all done on a light brown, cream or yellow-grey background.

Variation on the color theme is worn by various of the six sub-species residing in various desert localities, one kind being so much lighter in color as to be called faded snakes. Dark or light, all bear the tribal newly-varnished look—their smooth, slick scales glistening and reflecting the light. Endowed thus by nature with good looks, these *Arizona elegans* also possess a fairly gentle disposition, a matter of considerable merit par-

ticularly since they have become of such interest to inquiring scientists.

The reason for all this attention is the fact that these snakes are so well adapted to desert conditions that they can thrive in a wide variety of arid habitats. Almost barren deserts, sand dunes, dense brush cover, light brush, among Joshua trees, cacti growths—all are home to them—even rocky areas. A sandy terrain is much preferred, of course, since these snakes are burrowers, their tribe catching on long, long ago that one of the best ways to beat the desert is to go underground.

Although they frequently use rodent holes as places for quick refuge, the glossy snakes are excellent diggers, with the tools for the job. The scale at the end of their wedge-shaped snout is a highly specialized augur. Their lower jaw is countersunk and deeply inset, making a good pointed end to a face already well designed for hole boring and tunnel making. What with their slick, smooth

scalation in addition, they almost seem to flow into loose desert soil when digging, disappearing with surprising speed.

Underground is naturally fine for avoiding hot day temperatures, and the glossy snakes avail themselves of it, being abroad mainly at night and during the crepuscular hours, unless special circumstances demand otherwise. Such was the case of the lady observed topside in full sunlight when the temperature was hitting 100 degrees in the shade. Obviously she had something in mind, boring so busily in and out of the ground near a large sandy hummock. The an-

*Above: Although quite harmless, glossy snakes will often coil and strike at intruders.*

*Right: Glossy snakes emerge at dusk to hunt for lizards and small rodents, their principle foods.*

# THE GLOSSY

swer, it turned out finally, was an egg laying job, a magnificent clutch to be sure of some 23 being deposited therein subsequently.

Underground, too, is a fine place for hibernating for those subspecies living where winter temperatures demand it even for a short time, say from the middle of December through January. Then the temperatures even two inches down in dry sand may be as much as 27.5 degrees warmer than that of the air. Biologist Raymond Cowles, investigating glossy snake hibernation, found that while the average body temperature of hibernating individuals was 59F, it might be as low as 55. One snake, snugly tucked four inches below the surface, registered a high 68, making it seem that the deeper burrow might be better. On the other hand, the shallower type, obviously preferred by the majority, would certainly warm up quicker, once the above temperatures rose.

In their warmer underground winter locations, the glossy snakes are probably active long before their emergence from hibernation. Additionally, body temperatures of snakes are generally higher than that of lizards, and hence they can be active at lower temperatures in the cold seasons. This is a great plus for the

glossy snakes, as was clearly evidenced by the one found with a lizard in its digestive works, evidently captured underground while the victim was stiff and helpless with the cold.

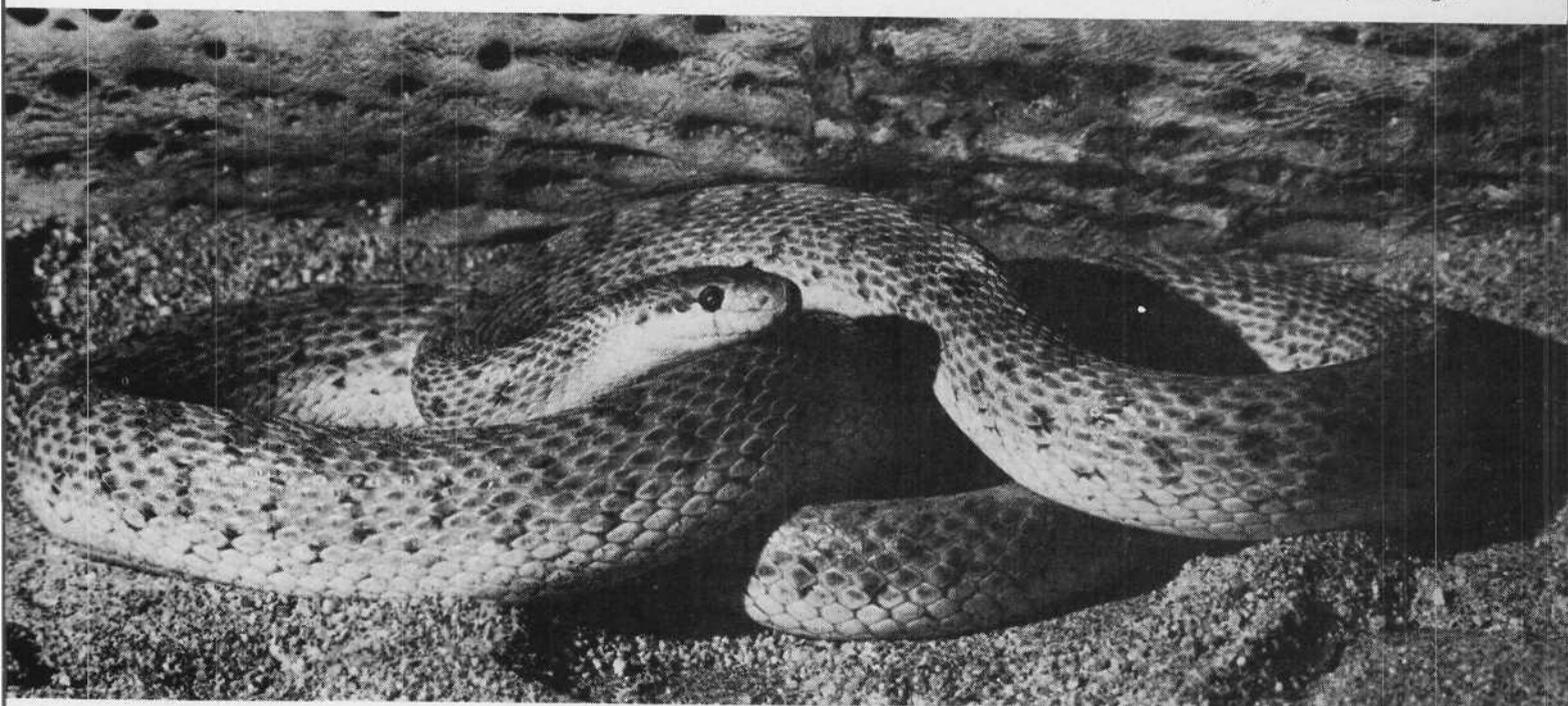
Actually, *Arizona elegans* has a wide range of body temperatures—from a possible low of 60 degrees to almost 90 degrees—during which they can be active. This naturally greatly extends its possibilities, the snakes being out even on cold windy nights. Biologists A. H. Miller and R. C. Stebbins found one active in a sandstorm going about its business with a body temperature of 70 degrees, although the ground it was on was a cool 66 degrees. Best conditions for glossy snake business operations, however, is a warm quiet night of around 75 to 80 degrees, and then the snakes are out and busy immediately after darkness. Not that they are entirely nocturnal or even crepuscular. The Texas contingent, for example, is quite apt to be abroad daytimes.

This special adaptation to light conditions shows in the eye inherited by glossy snakes, anatomist Walls' fine study showing that it is an eye that seems part way between the kind usually found in night snakes such as the leafnose, and the kind typical of day snakes,

say bullsnakes, for example. In the glossy snakes, the pupil is slightly elliptical with the long axis vertical, a definite advantage since a nearly vertical pupil can be more fully closed than a round one, thus preventing dazzle when the snake is out in bright light.

Night times, on the hunt, the glossy snakes depend on the sense of smell. The main part of this equipment is a couple of round chambers (called Jacobson's Organs) located in the roof of the mouth. These are lined with sensory cells that connect by nerves to smell headquarters in the brain. The organs also open into the groove in the mouth in which the tongue rests. Thus the snake, running his tongue out, picks up odorous samples from the air or surrounding objects, and brings them in, the moist forked tip placing this smell "news" right in the sensory chambers for action.

Glossy snakes are big hunters of smaller ones, the little leafnose snakes and shovel-noses being dined on regularly. They also catch myriads of beetles and grasshoppers. Lizards form a big item on the grocery list, *Uta*, *Holbrookias* and *Sceloporus* being headliners, with geckos being added when available. Nor are the glossies bashful about eating under strange conditions apparently. Biologist



# SNAKES

Photos by Jim Cornett.

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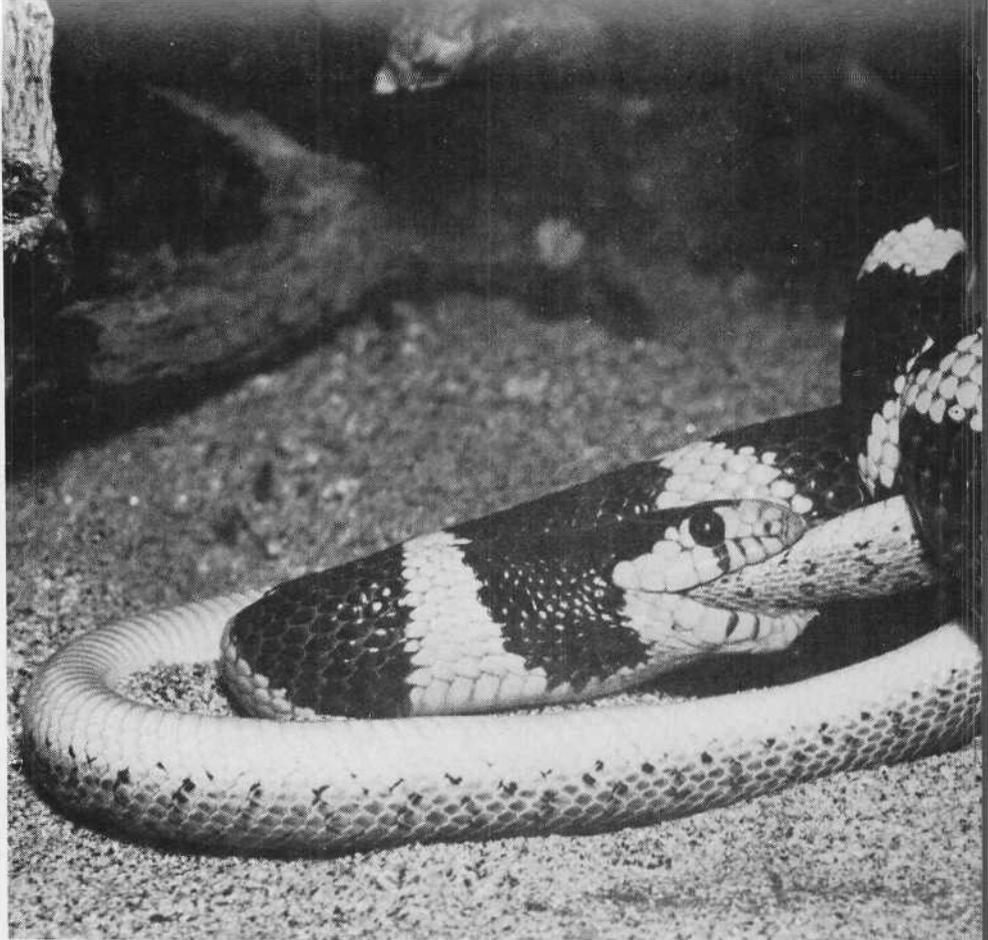
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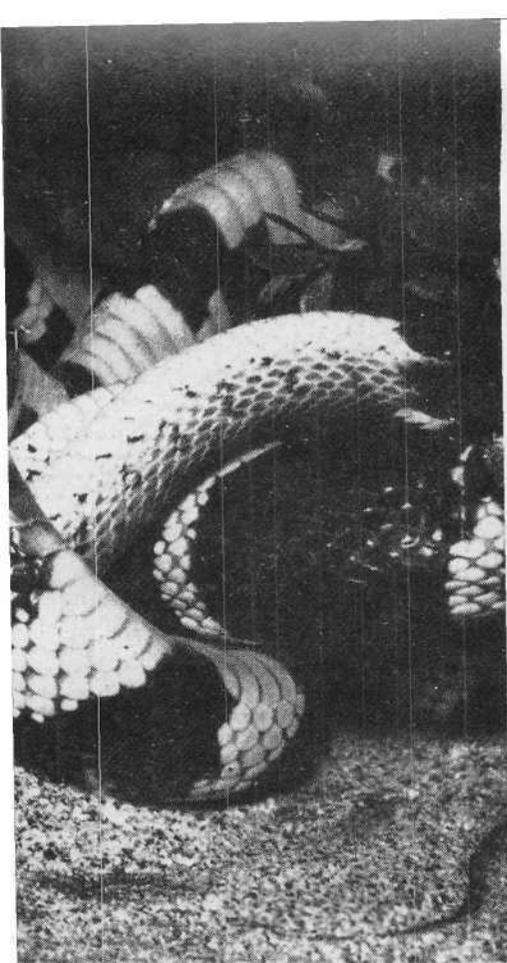


Lorenzo Cook reports capturing one which he added to a bag of lizards he was transporting. When he got to the lab the bag was minus a couple of lizards and the glossy snake was considerably fatter. One glossy in the field, however, made the mistake of trying to dine on too big a *Phrynosoma* and was found quite defunct, punctured by the horned toad's spines.

On more amenable items, the kill is made quickly by constriction. The snake then sets about swallowing it whole. Being snakes, the glossies already have loose skull bones and a big gape to their mouths, which gives them literally a fine head start in handling surprisingly large prey. Gripped by backward recurving teeth, the lunch is moved down the gullet little by little by action of the snake's upper jaw (the bones of which can be moved independently) helped by the lower jaw whose parts can also be advanced alternately. Nature has thoughtfully provided a way to breathe while handling such a mouth and throat full, and added a strong reinforcement to the windpipe to keep it from being smashed as the big object goes on down. Once down the hatch, the lunch is comfortably contained, thanks to the stretch in the snake hide between the scales which allows great expansion to the body.

Shedding in the glossy snake takes place as the snake grows larger, the outer skin sloughing off and a new surface forming on the scales below. The scale over the eye loosens during the process, making the eye opaque for days and loosening skin on the body dulls the colors down. The snake becomes less active. As the time of shedding approaches, the eye clears first. Its covering is shed along with the rest of the skin, which begins by letting go first around the mouth. The glossy snake, now crawling among stiff vegetation or against rocks, rubs the old skin backwards, turning it inside out as he frees himself from it. Handsome again in his shiny lustrous scalation, he's ready for full action. Crawling off, he leaves his old skin behind for some biologist to find and comment on the gussets and pleats that allow such expansion, and the traces of pattern still to be seen.

At the proper season, the glossy snake is also concerned with keeping up the old clan numbers. Just when, of course, differs from place to place depending on weather conditions where the particular species resides. In California, for example, the peak seems to be in May and June. The characters involved find each other mainly by sense of smell. As indicated, glossy snakes are egg layers,



The kingsnake is a deadly predator of the glossy.

the ladies depositing them underground. The number of eggs per clutch varies considerably, averaging about eight or ten, or lows of three and highs of 24 being reported. Like most snake eggs, these are flexible, their membranous shell impregnated somewhat with lime. Small at first, they expand with the growth of the snakelets inside.

Incubation (handled by the sun and warm soil conditions) takes about 68 days. At the time of hatching, the emerging snake youngster, only about eight to eleven inches long, breaks the shell with its "egg tooth" on the lower edge of its nose scale and crawls out. Without a friend in the world, and considered tasty by many a big snake, owl, hawk, coyote and roadrunner, the little glossy is on his own right from the start. But somewhere tucked inside is the old tribal know-how for desert living, and ready for use those special inherited digging tools. In no time at all, the newcomer is safely hidden underground, catching his first insects there. Topside later, under cover of darkness, he's off in style, learning his way around the big desert that is now his home.

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## SONORA'S SECRET TRIBE

Continued from Page 15

has bloomed, blossomed and multiplied beyond the most imaginative dreams of those who first saw that paperweight.

Much has changed in these 25 years of emergence. Water is now pumped in from a well constructed on the bank of the San Ygnacio. The growth of imported tamarisk (salt cedar) trees has changed the town from a collection of huts on a flat brushy plain to a quite pleasant place to be. Domesticated animals are everywhere. Many families have pigs, chickens run about thick as ants, there are small herds of goats and burros. A number of houses have been built of concrete block (the blocks are made on the building site) and the old "quonset hut" style of ocotillo pole and brush shelters has gone. Favorite building materials now are adobe and the Mexican standby "carton": a form of oil-impregnated corrugated cardboard-like material, very similar to the galvanized sheet metal of farm buildings in the United States, but with far less durability. Desemboque has a medical clinic. Punta Chueca, a smaller village 40 miles south, had piped water for the first time in 1975. The government has built a fish processing plant there as well. Both towns have unpaved but serviceable airstrips. Hermosillo is now only four to five hours from Desemboque and less than two from Punta Chueca, which a quarter century ago was accessible only from the sea. The "road" over Paso Noche Buena is almost unused now.

And best of all, the tribe is growing. There is no accurate census, but the best informed observers think there are close to 450 in the tribe now — about double the 1950 population. Small, black-haired children, lithe and laughing, flood the villages. The young blades and maidens do their best to out-dress each other in bright colors and latest fashions, parading the streets in twos and threes as the nighthawk begins to fly and the brown pelicans skim by on their roosting flights.

The secrecy that comes from isolation, from poverty, from distance in miles and concept has lifted for the Seri: from cooking with wood in pits in the sand to propane fueled stoves. From occasional rides in the back of a cargo truck to own-

ership of pickups, cars and motorcycles. From the making of one-stringed fiddles to the use of cassette tape recorders, recording songs and hymns in their own language. From hearsay about the great city of Hermosillo to direct and frequent knowledge of it. From rare contacts with tourists to daily business with them, from the seeking out of a *figura* buyer to the sure knowledge the buyer will seek them money in hand. From crude or no dental care to the use of the clinics and a profusion of gold-capped teeth.

The curtain has been lifted because the *figuras* are much sought after by tourists, who most often come from the United States. They come to buy the quail and the roadrunners, the sharks and the porpoises, the doves and the sea lions, the turtles and the owls. Somewhat more rarely a crane, a curlew, an eel, a rooster, a human figure, a manta ray, a scorpion are made and offered. Occasionally a visitor will see an eagle sitting on a cactus, a group of sea lions in the water, a flying dove with outstretched wings, a ram's head or a standing ram, a porpoise leaping from the water. All are carved from the *palo fierro*. The tourists come over a graveled road only 18 miles from the pavement to Punta Chueca or to Desemboque over roads that now feel a grader with regularity. This road system from Punta Chueca north is now being re-aligned and graveled with an eye to eventual paving.

With these contacts come money. It is much money by the standards of most of Mexico's "indigenistas" (Indians). *Figuras* sell for prices as low as six or seven dollars and as high as \$125.00. (Perhaps there have been higher priced pieces sold but I am not aware of them.) Over the past few years several Americans have been making regular trips to buy carvings for commercial purposes, selling to retail customers as well as to museums and collectors of fine art. *Figuras* (carvings) have been appearing in art shops and stores devoted to the presentation of fine native American craftsmanship to the general public. Some of these stores are a thousand or more miles from the origin of the Seri carvings they offer. It is such strings of commerce as these that have presented the Seri's work to the peoples of both sides of the border and pulled Sonora's secret tribe from its hiding place. □

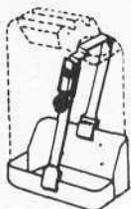


"A Lonely Desert Wash". Photo by George Service

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# Rambling on Rocks

by  
**GLENN and MARTHA VARGAS**

## THE DALLAS GEM MINE: Home of Benitoite

**D**UCKED DEEP in the Coast Range Mountains of California, west of the San Joaquin Valley, is an interesting wilderness area. Until recently, very few people visited it. The Dallas Gem Mine, in the heart of this wilderness, is very little known, even by gem cutters. It is usually referred to as the "Benitoite Mine." Also, benitoite as a gem is not well known outside of gem cutting circles.

Small pieces of benitoite have been found in oil well drill cores in Fresno and Kern Counties. It has been found in sands in Texas and Belgium. Thus, it is a very rare mineral. The above situations put benitoite in the class of very unusual minerals. There is, however, more to the story making it a very unusual mineral.

The discovery was made in 1907, and it was first thought to be sapphire because its deep blue color is identical to some sapphires. It was named for San Benito County, where it was found. Ac-

tually, the story of benitoite begins before its discovery.

All minerals are divided into six groups, depending upon the shape of their crystals. These are known as the crystal systems. Each system is further divided into sub-groups, depending upon the mathematical possibilities within the group.

When mineralogists were sub-dividing the Hexagonal System (to which benitoite belongs) it was decided that there was a crystal shape possible, which no known mineral possessed. This class (the ditrigonal-bipyramidal) was simply set aside as a possibility because of the lack of a mineral to represent it. When benitoite was discovered, it was found to fit this class perfectly, fulfilling the forecast. To date, it is the only mineral known to fit the class.

The mineral, a barium titanium silicate, ranges in color from colorless to deep blue. Very few specimens are colorless, most are from a medium to deep blue. Many gem cutters have had to wait many years to find a perfectly colorless piece.

Benitoite has a medium hardness, about 6½ on the Mohs scale. It has a fairly high refractive index, from 1.75 to 1.8, and can be cut into very brilliant faceted gems.

It has an above average ability to split light rays (double refraction), and a great ability (surpassing that of diamond) to break light into the colors of the spectrum. This property is known as dispersion. These optical properties make it a fine gem in spite of its hardness. As a result, it does nicely for earrings, pins and other jewelry that does not receive much wear.

Crystals of benitoite are seldom large; about one and one-half inches is the maximum. The largest gem to date is only seven and one-half carats, and few are known to be over three carats. A one carat gem is considered to be excellent. All of this adds up to a very desirable gem, in almost any reasonable size.

Our first experiences with benitoite began better than 30 years ago. Our desire to visit the mine was quickly frustrated because we learned it was at the end of a very poor road, in an almost uninhabited region. It was not until nearly 20 years ago that we were able to visit the mine. The road was better (we were told), the mine was still not easy to



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reach.

When we arrived, we were astounded at the small size of the mine. It was only a pit, less than 150 feet in the longest dimension. The dumps contained almost no benitoite specimens. All was carefully sorted by past operators, and picked clean by subsequent collectors. In the absence of benitoite, we were attracted by the accessory minerals that were sparingly found on the dump.

Benitoite occurs in conjunction with some very interesting minerals. The most common is neptunite, a sodium, potassium, iron, manganese, titanium silicate. It forms as slender crystals, of a square cross section, up to nearly two inches in length. These are a lustrous black.

Another most unique mineral also occurs here. It is known as joaquinite, named for adjacent San Joaquin County. It forms as deep orange-brown, tiny hexagonal crystals. We have never seen one larger than one-eighth inch. It is found very sparingly at the mine, and nowhere else. It was a few years before enough of the material was collected to be able to analyze it. When this was accomplished, it was found to be another complex mineral; sodium, barium, iron, titanium silicate.

Along with these are found crystals of copper mineral; the copper sulfide known as chalcocite. This mineral is seldom found in good crystals, even though it sometimes forms large ore masses. Here it is found sparingly only as crystals.

The above is an unusual group of rare minerals, and all are locked within massive, snow-white natrolite, a sodium aluminum silicate. Natrolite is not often found as good crystals. A few crystals are found in the mine, but a nice deposit of fine crystals was later discovered about a mile away.

Because the benitoite and its associated minerals are locked in the natrolite, recovery of the gem crystals can be difficult. The best method of removal is by dissolving the natrolite with an acid: At first, hydrochloric acid was used, but some people claim that this acid also attacked the benitoite. Later, oxalic acid was found to do the job nearly as well. The acids do not really dissolve the natrolite. Instead they turn it into a soft jelly-like material. As a result, the etching out of benitoite is slow, and re-

quires frequent washing and brushing away of the gelatinous material. It can easily take a number of weeks to etch out a specimen only slightly larger than fist size.

Very recently, either in Santa Cruz County, or on the line between it and San Benito County, a deposit of pink benitoite has been reported. These are extremely small crystals, from which have been cut a few infinitesimal gems. Thus, the only known source of gem benitoite is from the small vein at the Dallas Gem Mine. The present operators now tell us that the vein is either exhausted, or has pinched off. They have not been able to get any crystals out of the mine for a number of years, and they presently have no prospects of getting more.

This unique vein is found in a serpentine which contains a high percentage of asbestos. Shortly after our first visit to the mine, one of this country's largest producers of asbestos began to survey the area with the intention of mining it. They used an interesting method of getting assay samples. A bulldozer roamed over the hills, and at regular intervals the operator dipped the blade, scooping out a pile of rock. A small sample of the scooped-out material was taken to a laboratory for analysis. As we watched the process, we felt certain that one day the bulldozer would stop short in one of its assay dips, and a new vein of benitoite would be discovered.

We were wrong! Nearly 20 years have elapsed, but no such vein has been reported. We understand that the exploratory work has all been done, and the bulldozer has been placed on a different job at the plant that now processes the asbestos. Our hopes of a second vein of benitoite have been deflated. Our only hope now is for the mineral to be found under different circumstances, and probably at a different place. □

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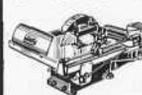
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# Letters to the Editor

Letters requesting answers must include stamped self-addressed envelope

## Outhouse Update . . .

In your article on "Mono's Volcanic Wonderland," by Mary Frances Strong (*Desert*, June, 1976), there is a term which I am not familiar with. On page 23, first column, first paragraph, the sentence reads:

"There is water, a few tables, chic-sales and many good trailer sites available."

I have camped at the campground and have never seen anything marked *chic-sales*. What is a *chic-sales*?

TERRY MORSE,  
Van Nuys, California.

*I certainly dated myself by using the word "chic-sales" in my recent article on Mono's Volcanic Wonderland. Apparently the younger generation is unfamiliar with the term.*

*"Chic-sales" is a slang expression deemed more acceptable than "out-house"—a primitive toilet facility.*

Mary Frances Strong.

## Desert Cut-ups not Funny! . . .

Randall Henderson, *Desert's* founder some 40 years ago, never missed an opportunity to loudly denounce vandalism on his beloved desert. He also often claimed in print that the fun of lost mine hunting was in the hunting, not in the finding.

Randall would be deeply pained by recent vandalism of *Desert* files in the public libraries. So often in my library searches I find the lost mine stories trimmed out of the bound copies.

One of the worst examples exists in the Burbank City Library where story after story has been slashed out until the volumes sag in flaccid discouragement.

This vandalism is a compliment to the importance of *Desert* in accurate reporting and perpetuation of too soon forgotten desert tales. It is also a visible condemnation of the doltish types who wield concealed razor blades to expose their lack of brains.

JOHN SOUTHWORTH,  
Burbank, California.

# Calendar of Events

This column is a public service and there is no charge for listing your event or meeting—so take advantage of the space by sending in your announcement. We must receive the information at least three months prior to the event.

SEPTEMBER 25 & 26, Carmel Valley Gem and Mineral Society's 17th Annual Show "Jubilee of Jewels," Monterey Fairgrounds, Monterey, California.

OCTOBER 2 & 3, Bisbee Mineral Show, National Guard Armory, Bisbee, Arizona. Displays, dealers, special programs. Write: Box 284, Bisbee, Arizona 85603.

OCTOBER 2 & 3, "Nature's Jewel Box" sponsored by the Napa Valley Rock & Gem Club, Inc., Napa Town and Country Fair Grounds, 575 3rd St., Napa, Calif. Dealers, Demonstrations, easy parking and camping.

OCTOBER 2 & 3, "The Hi-Desert Gem & Mineral Assoc. Show," Community Center, 57098 29 Palms Hwy., Yucca Valley, Calif.

OCTOBER 2 & 3, South Bay Antique B.C. and Los Angeles Historical B.C., Hawthorne Memorial Center, 3901 El Segundo Blvd., Hawthorne, Calif. Write: 9260 Steele, Rosemead, Calif. 91770 for information.

OCTOBER 2 & 3, Third Annual Julian Back Country Arts Festival to be held on the grounds of the Julian United Methodist Church, Julian, Calif. Arts, crafts, music, etc. Free admission.

OCTOBER 3, California Turtle and Tortoise Club's (Foothill Chap.) 12th Annual Show, Pasadena Center Exhibit Bldg., 300 E. Green St., Pasadena, California.

OCTOBER 5 to 17th, Fresno Gem and Mineral Society's Silver Anniversary Jubilee, to be held in conjunction with the Fresno District Fair, Kings Canyon Road, Fresno, Calif. Contact: Monte Wheat, 1565 N. Pacific Ave., Fresno, Calif. 93728.

OCTOBER 9 & 10, Annual meeting of the World-of-Rockhounds, 2 miles east of Clay Mine Road near Boron, Calif. Displays, evening campfire, auction, entertainment, field trips. Contact: Mrs. Jean Hazelton, 4845 Sunfield Ave., Long Beach, Calif. 90808.

OCTOBER 9 & 10, Searles Lake Gem & Mineral Society's 35th Annual Show, "Desert Gem-O-Rama" at the Trona Recreation Hall, Trona, Calif. Camping space available. Field trips, dealers, displays, admission free.

OCTOBER 9 & 10, "Earth's Treasures" sponsored by the Nevada County Gem & Mineral Society, National Guard Armory Bldg., Nevada City, Calif. Admission free.

OCTOBER 9 & 10, Campbell Gem & Mineral Guild's annual show "Rock Trails West," corner of Curtner and Canoas Garden Rd., San Jose, Calif. Exhibits, dealers.

OCTOBER 9 & 10, San Fernando Valley Mineral and Gem Society's 32nd Annual Show, Valley Plaza Recreation Center, 12240 Archwood St., No. Hollywood, Calif. Free parking and admission

OCTOBER 9 & 10, Western Collectable Show, sponsored by the California Barbed Wire Collectors Assn., Gray Avenue School, Multipurpose Room, 808 Gray Ave., Yuba City, Calif. Free admission.

OCTOBER 9-11, Ninth Annual National Prospectors and Treasure Hunters Convention sponsored by the Prospector's Club of So. California, Tropic Mine, Rosamond, Calif. Displays, competitive events. All prospecting and treasure hunting clubs invited to attend.

OCTOBER 10, Cactus and Succulent Show sponsored by the Sunset Succulent Society, Marine Park Center, 1406 Marine St., Santa Monica, California. Admission free.

OCTOBER 16 & 17, Golden Gate Gem & Mineral Show, sponsored by the Daly City Rockhounds, Westlake Park Community Center, 149 Lake Merced Blvd., Daly City, Calif. Free parking, \$1.00 donation.

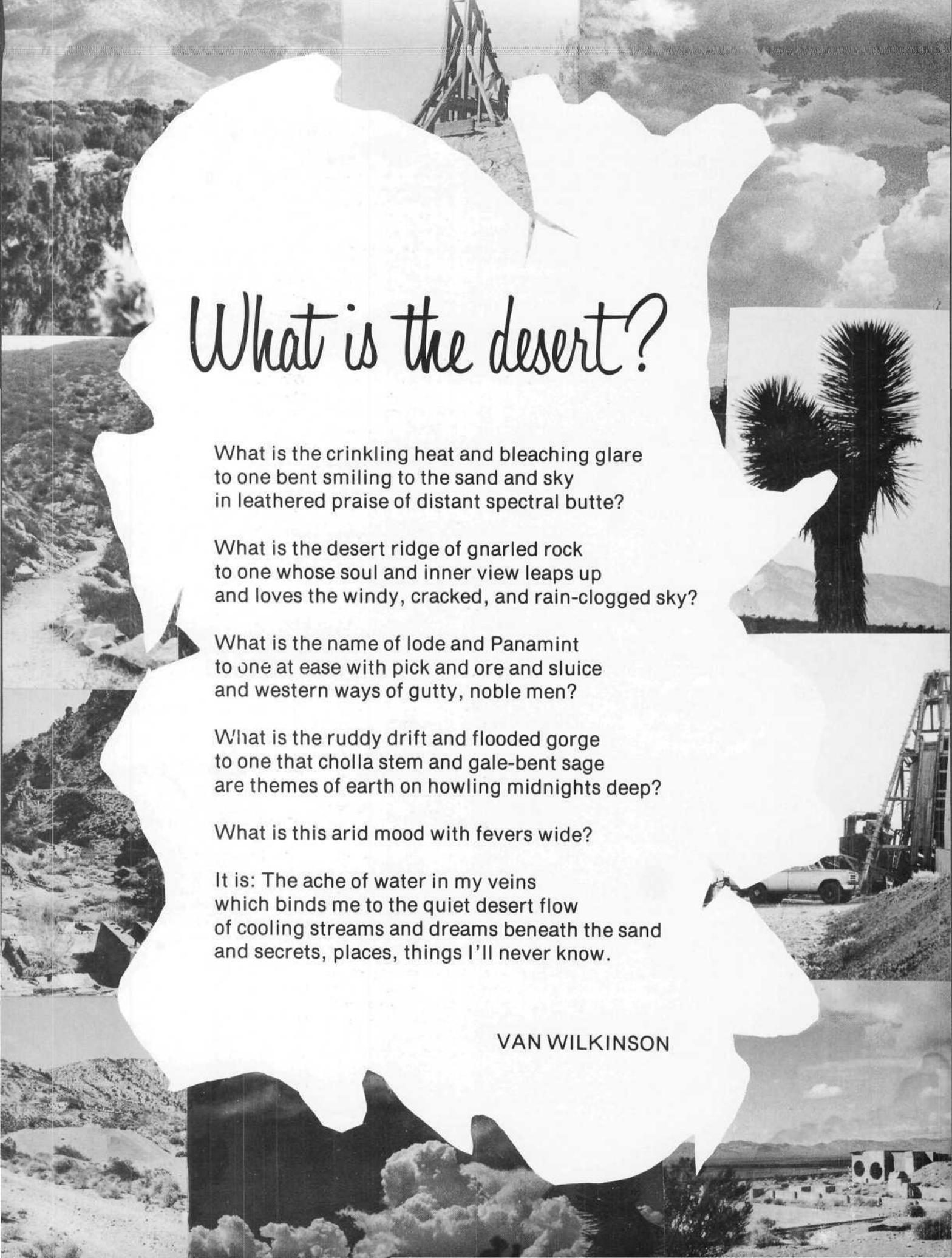
OCTOBER 16 & 17, Whittier Gem & Mineral Society's 27th Annual Show, Palm Park, Whittier, California. Displays, demonstrations, ample free parking.

OCTOBER 17-23, Gem and Mineral and Handcraft Hobby Tailgate Jamboree sponsored by the Sportsman's Club of Joshua Tree, Inc., Joshua Tree, Calif.

OCTOBER 23 & 24, L.E.R.C. Rockcrafters annual show, "October Gem Fest," Lockheed Employees Recreation Club, 2814 Empire Avenue, Burbank, Calif. Dealers, exhibits. Contact: Dick Kinsman, 10401 Nevada Ave., Chatsworth, California 91311.

OCTOBER 23 & 24, Palos Verdes Gem & Mineral Society, National Guard Armory, 2505 Cabrillo Ave., Torrance, Calif. Chairman: Yuzy Sato, 1951 Via Madonna, Lomita, Calif. 90717.

OCTOBER 29-31, Fourth Annual Tucson Lapidary and Gem Show, Tucson Community Center Exhibition Hall, 350 S. Church St., Tucson, Arizona. Exhibits, demonstrations, programs. Admission \$1.00, children under 12 free with adult. Write: Old Pueblo Lapidary Club Show Committee, P. O. Box 2163, Tucson, Arizona 85702.



# What is the desert?

What is the crinkling heat and bleaching glare  
to one bent smiling to the sand and sky  
in leathered praise of distant spectral butte?

What is the desert ridge of gnarled rock  
to one whose soul and inner view leaps up  
and loves the windy, cracked, and rain-clogged sky?

What is the name of lode and Panamint  
to one at ease with pick and ore and sluice  
and western ways of gutty, noble men?

What is the ruddy drift and flooded gorge  
to one that cholla stem and gale-bent sage  
are themes of earth on howling midnights deep?

What is this arid mood with fevers wide?

It is: The ache of water in my veins  
which binds me to the quiet desert flow  
of cooling streams and dreams beneath the sand  
and secrets, places, things I'll never know.

VAN WILKINSON



6084 "... may that Holy Star ... fill the world with light." - May the blessing of Christmas be yours, etc.



6109 Christmas Eve at San Ildefonso Pueblo - May the warmth and love...at Christmas fill your heart...



6120 Santa's Surprise Visit - May your Christmas be the Merriest and your New Year the Happiest



6114 "Christmas is but one more word for love" - Wishing you all the love ... that Christmas brings



6132 Santa's Pack Train - Packing in loads of joy for Christmas with lots of wishes for the New Year

## Western Art Christmas Cards

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6091 "... make of this earth a garden." - Wishing you a beautiful Christmas and a Year of Peace, etc.



6124 "... the candles in the sky ..." - Wishing you a Christmas that is bright with Promise, etc.



6111 "Gift of light...your day has come unto the World" - May the Gift of Light be yours this Christmas



6123 "... a shaft of light ..." - May the ancient miracle of Christmas bring the abiding love, etc.



6108 "Let Christmas be a bright and happy day ..." - May the Radiance of Christmas ... abide with you...



6087 "Keeping Christmas" - May the spirit of Christmas abide with you all through the coming year



6088 "... Let us hold close this day ..." - With every good wish for a Merry Christmas and Happy Year



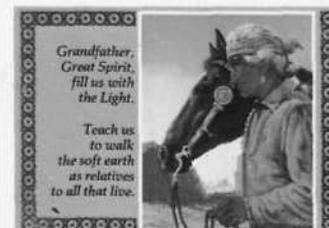
6117 "Such beauty restores my soul." - Thinking of you and wishing you happiness at Christmas, etc.



6092 "The Littlest Angel and most precious lambs, looked down ..." - Hope your Christmas is heavenly!



6150 "May our hearts be open to all ..." - May this Christmas season bring you love and peace



6089 "... Teach us to walk the soft earth ..." - May the Great Spirit honor you at Christmas, etc.



6086 "Come ye ... into a desert place ..." - May you have ... the Heart of Christmas which is Love.



6112 Quaint Spanish Mission - Peace and Hope for all the World, Feliz Navidad y Próspero Año Nuevo



6080 The Desert Bird Express! - Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year

**How to Order:** Select your cards, then fill coupon completely, or order by letter. Mail with your check or money order. No C.O.D. or cash please. Mix and assort at no extra cost. Total cards ordered must add up to quantity breakouts on price list. Shipping and handling fee to be added to total order cost. Canadian residents please pay in U.S. dollar values. 3% sales tax to be added by Colorado residents. 6% use tax for California residents. Thank you and have a Merry Christmas!

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