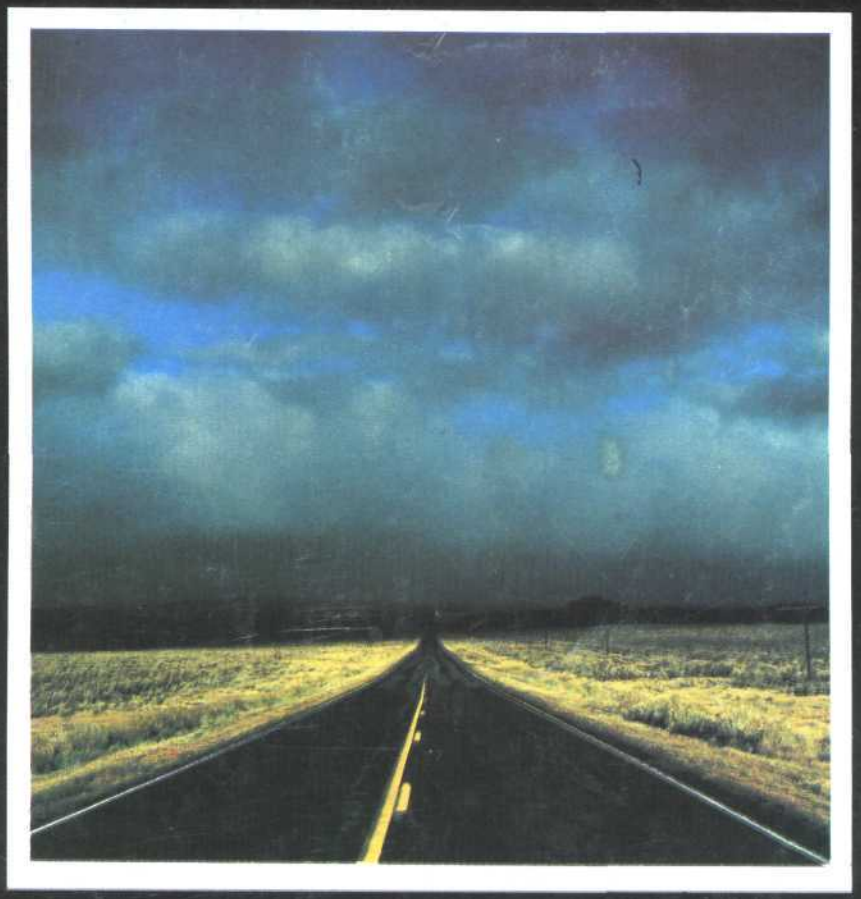
THE Desert MAGAZINE

NOVEMBER, 1979 $1.50

OUR 42nd ANNIVERSARY



IN THIS ISSUE :

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1980 DATSUN KING CAB— THE ROOMIEST SMALL TRUCK IN HISTORY.

A DATSUN EXCLUSIVE!
2 REAR JUMP SEATS INSIDE THE CAB.

It took Datsun to come up with the biggest small pickup news in 20 years: the new Datsun King Cab® GL. With more space, legroom and luxury than you may experience in any small truck—including two reclining bucket seats up front and two jump seats behind that fold up to create more inside storage space than ever. That's "Grand Luxury" as only the King Cab GL can deliver it. With everything from cut-pile carpeting to a road-smoothing new ride.

GONNA PICK YOU UP LIKE NEVER BEFORE.

When you add up the standards, no truck's gonna pick you up like the new King Cab GL. Check out this check list: • Styled wheels • Radial tires • Quad rectangular headlamps • Engine compartment lamp • 5-speed overdrive • Full instrumentation including tachometer • Quartz clock • AM/FM radio • Electric rear-window defroster • Center console • Even a dome lamp that swings down to light the cargo area.

DATSUN MILEAGE: MONEY IN THE BANK.

There isn't a bigger rig that can match Datsun pickups for economy. Yet Datsun trucks, with their gutsy 2-liter overhead cam engines, can haul 1400 lbs. of cargo and passengers—more than some bigger pickups. Now that's a truck you can drive all the way to the bank.

25 EPA ESTIMATED MPG **32** EPA ESTIMATED HIGHWAY

EPA estimates for comparisons. Actual mileage may differ, depending on speed, trip length and weather. Actual highway mpg will probably be less than est. California mileage lower.

PERSONAL PICKUPS: THE RIGHT CAB, THE RIGHT BED.

For 1980, Datsun gives you choice like never before. From standard 6-foot beds... to the super-size Datsun long bed with over 7-feet of cargo length. And cabs ranging from Datsun's lowest priced Standard Li'l Hustler to the luxurious King Cab GL. We're dedicated to building you the right truck for your trucking needs.

THE TOUGH KEEP GETTING TOUGHER.

Over 37 percent of all small trucks on the road today are Datsuns. That's a tough act to follow—but durability is a Datsun tradition built on quality. We test and retest under demanding conditions until every pickup is Datsun-perfect, and ready for a tough life ahead. Datsun trucks: their first job is to last. Test drive the big news in small trucks at your Datsun dealer—the small truck expert.

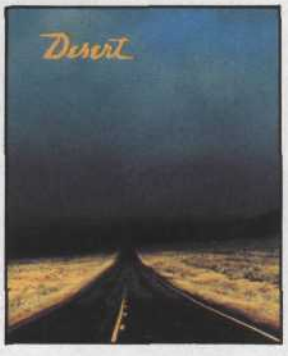
DATSUN
WE ARE DRIVEN

THE NAME OF QUALITY
NISSAN
NISSAN MOTORS

Volume 42, Number 11

Make a road for the Lord through the wilderness;
make him a straight, smooth road through the desert.
—*Isaiah 40:3*

November 1979
USPS 154-940



The cover photo for this the 42nd anniversary issue is unusual, but Jed Wilcox captured the theme of Desert Magazine's past...and our future: the chosen road, frequently lonely but straight and beautiful, stretching to the horizon and beyond. To be technical, it's Hwy. 64 west of Taos, N.M., shot with Ektachrome 64, f16 at 1/125.

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There Are Two Deserts

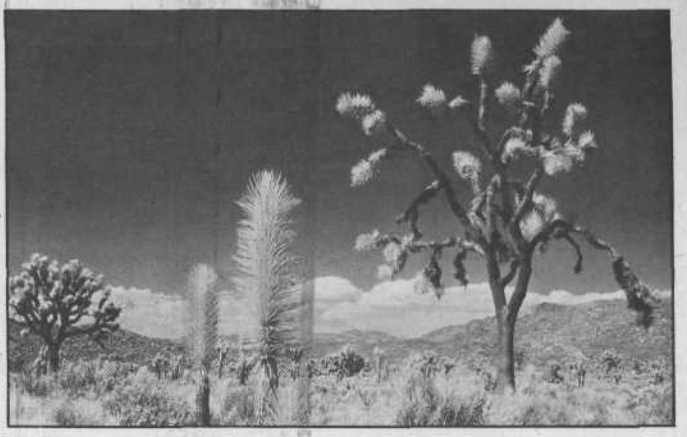
(EDITORIAL)

ONE IS A GRIM desolate wasteland. It is the home of venomous reptiles and stinging insects, of vicious thorn-covered plants and trees, and of unbearable heat. This is the desert seen by the stranger speeding along the highway, impatient to be out of "this damnable country." It is the desert visualized by those children of luxury to whom any environment is unbearable which does not provide all of the comforts and services of a pampering civilization. It is a concept fostered by fiction writers who dramatize the tragedies of the desert for the profit it will bring them.

But the stranger and the uninitiated see only the mask. The other Desert—the real Desert—is not for the eyes of the superficial observer, or the fearful soul or the cynic. It is a land, the character of which is hidden except to those who come with friendliness and understanding. To these the Desert offers rare gifts: health-giving sunshine—a sky that is studded with diamonds—a breeze that bears no poison—a landscape of pastel colors such as no artist can duplicate—thorn-covered plants which during countless ages have clung tenaciously to life through heat and drought and wind and the depredations of thirsty animals, and yet each season send forth blossoms of exquisite coloring as a symbol of courage that has triumped over terrifying obstacles.

To those who come to the Desert with friendliness, it gives friendship; to those who come with courage, it gives new strength of character. Those seeking relaxation find release from the world of man-made troubles. For those seeking beauty, the Desert offers nature's rarest artistry. This is the Desert that men and women learn to love.

. . . one is grim, desolate . . .



. . . one is fascinating, mysterious . . .

NEARLY every creed and industry and locality has its journal—except the Desert. Here, within the boundaries of Arizona, California, Nevada, New Mexico and Utah resides a great family of human beings—the highest type of American citizenship—with a common heritage of environment and interest and opportunity, yet residing for the most part in regions that are remote from the so-called cultural centers.

This is the last great frontier of the United States. It will be the purpose of the Desert Magazine to entertain and serve the people whom desire or circumstance have brought to this Desert frontier. But also, the magazine will carry as accurately as possible in word and picture, the spirit of the real Desert to those countless men and women who have been intrigued by the charm of the desert, but whose homes are elsewhere.

* * *

This is to be a friendly, personal magazine, written for the people of the Desert and their friends—and insofar as possible, by Desert people. Preference will be given to those writers and artists—yes, and poets—whose inspiration comes from close association with the scented greasewood, the shifting sand dunes, the coloring of Desert landscapes, from precipitous canyons and gorgeous sunsets.

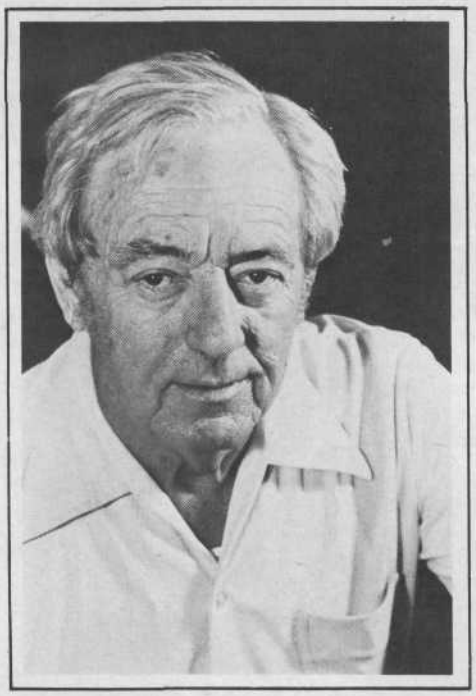
The Desert has its own traditions—art—literature—industry and commerce. It will be the purpose of the Desert Magazine to crystallize and preserve these phases of Desert life as a culture distinctive of arid but virile America. We would give character and personality to the pursuits of Desert peoples—create a keener consciousness of the heritage which is theirs—bring them a little closer together in a bond of pride in their Desert homes, and perhaps break down in some measure the prejudice against the Desert which is born of misunderstanding and fear.

It is an idealistic goal, to be sure, but without vision the Desert would still be a forbidding wasteland—uninhabited and shunned. The staff of the Desert Magazine has undertaken its task with the same unbounded confidence which has brought a million people to a land which once was regarded as unfit for human habitation.

We want to give to the folks who live on the Desert—and to those who are interested in the Desert—something that will make their lives a little happier and a little finer—something worthwhile. In the accomplishment of this purpose we ask for the cooperation and help of all friends of the Desert everywhere.

RANDALL HENDERSON,
J. WILSON MCKENNEY.
Publishers.

November, 1937



Now There Are Three

By Donald MacDonald

Today, forty-two years after Randall Henderson wrote the words on the preceding page, there are *three* deserts. One, of course, is still the "grim and desolate wasteland" seen by the unappreciateve "children of luxury." A second desert remains "the land whose character is hidden except to those who come with friendliness and understanding," that land which "offers nature's rarest artistry."

The third desert of which I speak sprang inevitably from the second. It is the desert of man. It is, say, Palm Springs, Palm Desert, and Indio slowly becoming one as man spreads along the highway. It is Scottsdale meeting Phoenix. It is Lancaster-Palmdale as the globe-circling jetliner approaches for a landing. It is the baroque of Caesar's Palace and the MGM Grand. It is London Bridge transplanted to loom incongruously from a backdrop of sand. It is that shabby stucco dinosaur watching over Cabazon.

The exodus from Megalopolis starts on Thursdays. It is man seeking relief from his tensions, a few nights under the star-splattered desert skies in his Minnie-Winnie, trailing a rack of dirt bikes or a metal-flaked ski boat. And precariously spaced among the motorhomes speeding down the Interstate will be the occasional young couple and child, bedrolls burdening their tiny car, obviously tent campers who "really appreciate" the desert and who will protect it and the whales in an all-encompassing "Greenpeace." Present, too, are the Cadillacs and Lincolns of those addicted to Las Vegas or of those who turn off on S111 toward Palm Springs or continue past the River to Tucson. Then, ominously flanking the hurrying multitude are the rumbling four-wheelers, a suspect bunch who if not headed for the border, tend to disappear off the highway to places no one knows where. These people in all their wondrous diversity are the visitors we who live in the desert selectively fear.

The fact we should accept is that it's everybody's land. Our complaints, our suspicions, our sometime lack of hospitality, yes, our avarice, invite the depredations, the spray paint on "our" rocks, the beer cans littering "our" sand. It is not the visitor who is always ugly, however he travels and whatever he seeks. It is often we.

It is we, certainly, who have made this third desert a land of controversy. He who may have grabbed a piece of it for himself cries "keep out" to those less foresighted. He who would profit levels the groves and windrows, erects condominiums, and cries "welcome" to visitors of substance. He who would cheat trades barren, windlaced parcels to the unwary of less substance.

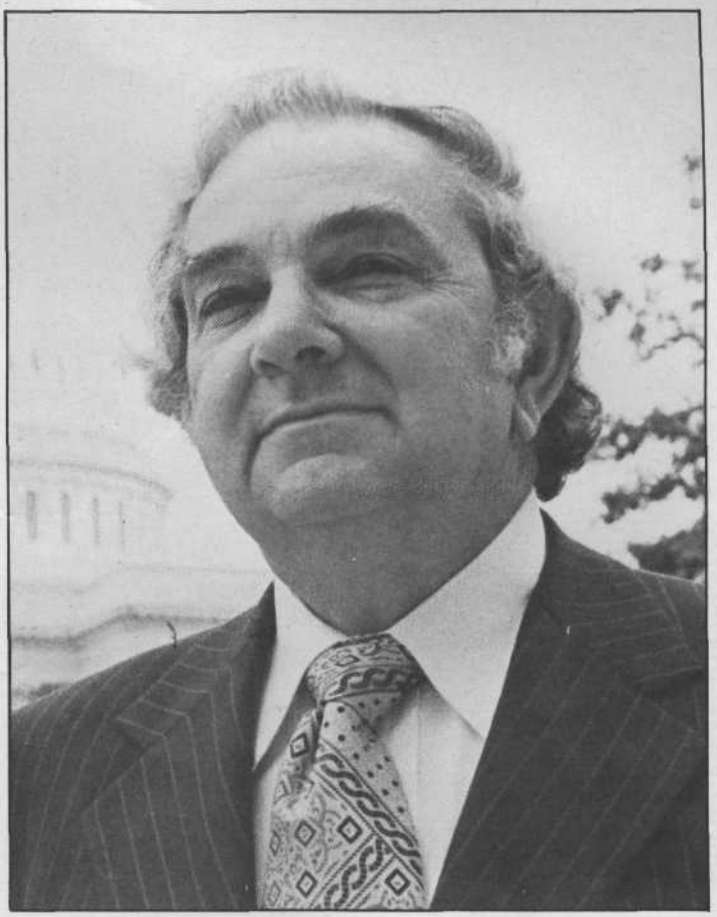
This is the season, you see. Our rooms are $75 a night for two and you pay for Sunday whether you stay over or not. White man, red man, pioneer family, absentee corporate owner—each is equally tainted. By greed. Jo-jo nuts, date milkshakes, Big Macs, Century 21, Frank Sinatra Drive, Waltah Clarks are everywhere. PS, I love you.

I suspect we who live here could begin by remembering from whence we came. I was a visitor once. So, probably, were you. I was allowed to settle at a price I could afford. So, too, I must assume, were you. A garden with paths is seldom trampled. Let's, then, unlock the gates to "our" public lands and put up signs saying: "Friend or Stranger, You Are Welcome Here." So assured, the stranger may become our friend and tread gently.

I think if Randall Henderson were alive he would approve, for those were his words of welcome on the door to this magazine's original Palm Desert offices. There are some, I understand, who thought Randall naive and even some, I hear, who called him cold. I think not. He had more vision than most. He founded *Desert* not to immure this land but to spread love of it.

"...to impart to (our) readers some of the courage, the tolerance, and the friendliness of our desert." That was Randall Henderson's goal and it remains ours, your fifth generation of editors', today. Please drop by and chat with us, browse in our bookstore and art gallery, or just say hello. It is your magazine.

WHERE WE STAND...



(As seen by)

REP. GEORGE E. BROWN JR.

Editor's Note: Four Congressmen and two senators were invited by this magazine to submit current "position statements" on issues of their choice; hopefully, topics such as the Bureau of Land Management's controversial Desert Plan, development of geothermal energy, the return of public lands to private usage, and, certainly, water resources. Included in the invitation were Senator Alan Cranston, Democrat, of Los Angeles; Senator Samuel I. Hayakawa, Republican, of Mill Valley, California; Representative William M. Thomas, Republican, of Bakersfield, California; Representative George E. Brown, Jr., Democrat, of Riverside, California; and Representative Clair W Burgener, Republican, of La Jolla, California.

Our invitation was badly timed, the Congress being on recess throughout September and its members scattered to all points in the Free World [and some beyond] but nevertheless, four Members sent us their statements in time for our deadline. However, only two of these officials in our opinion, Messrs. Brown and Burgener, had anything of significance to say, our criteria not being agreement but the simple rule we apply to anything printed in the pages of this magazine; specifically, will it interest our readers?

The statements of Mr. Brown and Mr. Burgener follow. If anyone wishes a copy of the statements received from Messrs. Hayakawa or Lewis, we will be glad to send a copy if your request is accompanied by a stamped, self-addressed envelope.

Everyone has a right to be concerned about the future of the Great California Desert, with a special right for those who are actual stakeholders in the desert. Many stakeholders, such as property owners or regular visitors, recognize their rights and their role while others, such as non-residents, have much less awareness of the issues and options facing the desert

Congressmen have a rather formal role under legislation enacted in 1976 due to the determined and foresighted efforts of the late Congressman Jerry L. Pettis and his wife, Shirley, who succeeded him in Congress and completed his efforts to create the California Desert Conservation Area. Next year under this law the Bureau of Land Management will submit to the Congress its comprehensive, long-range plan for the "management, use, development, and protection of the public lands within the California Desert Conservation Area." Among the proposals which will be submitted to the Congress will be plans for new wilderness areas, parks, recreational vehicle areas, and similar controversial proposals. There will probably also be proposals for new agricultural activities, energy development, and other recreational, educational or cultural activities.

It should come as no surprise to anyone who is remotely familiar with the desert that many existing or proposed land uses are incompatible with other proposed uses. This has always been true but is becoming an acute problem with growing population, the proliferation of relatively inexpensive recreational vehicles, and the improved access to the desert by excellent highways. The role of the Congress will be to reconcile these certain conflicts. The Desert Plan legislation recognized them and directed that they be analyzed and resolved by a conscious planning process rather than an irrational spur-of-the-moment decision-making process.

My own perspective on the California Desert is more personal than that of most Members of Congress. I was born and raised in the Imperial Valley and have spent my entire life in Southern California, where I have regularly visited family and friends throughout the desert. The Congressional District I presently represent contains the county seats for both Riverside and San Bernardino counties, and the homes of a large percentage of the weekend users of

the desert. In addition, my Committee assignments in the Congress have given me an opportunity to examine the more difficult aspects of desert life, particularly the questions of long-term sustainability of agriculture in the desert and the impacts of climatic change.

To understand the California Desert, one must place it in the proper time and space perspective. For long-term management purposes we need to keep this in mind, and also that rainfall averages will change, possibly in our lifetime. When the major source of water is the Colorado River, and the water quantity commitments are made based upon past historical averages and not on actual rainfall, reductions in water supply become a significant development.

The space perspective one must keep in mind is that the desert does not stop at the California border, or more particularly, at the Mexican border. We essentially have a continuous land mass reliant upon the same sporadic rainfall, and the same mountain ranges which supply the water for the same river systems. Plant and animal populations are similar and throughout history, the human populations have migrated without regard to political borders. The efforts today to stop migration from Mexico may succeed but the lessons of history are against this outcome. A far more likely outcome is the gradual fading away of what is not a clearly marked international border. A border like the one with Canada is a much more likely outcome.

For the entire desert, agricultural uses may be the most important for future generations. The present forms of agriculture, basically adapting water and energy intensive methods to arid lands, cannot last for long. New lands which use such methods will almost certainly not be brought into production and existing lands depending on them will be forced, by economics if nothing else, to find ways to use less water and less energy. What can be expected in the future is the cultivation of indigenous desert crops such as jojoba and guayule.

Jojoba, as most desert dwellers know, is a native crop whose seed produces an oil which has properties almost identical to that of valuable sperm whale oil. It is being actively developed with federal government support and is likely to become commercially developed on Indian lands in the near future.

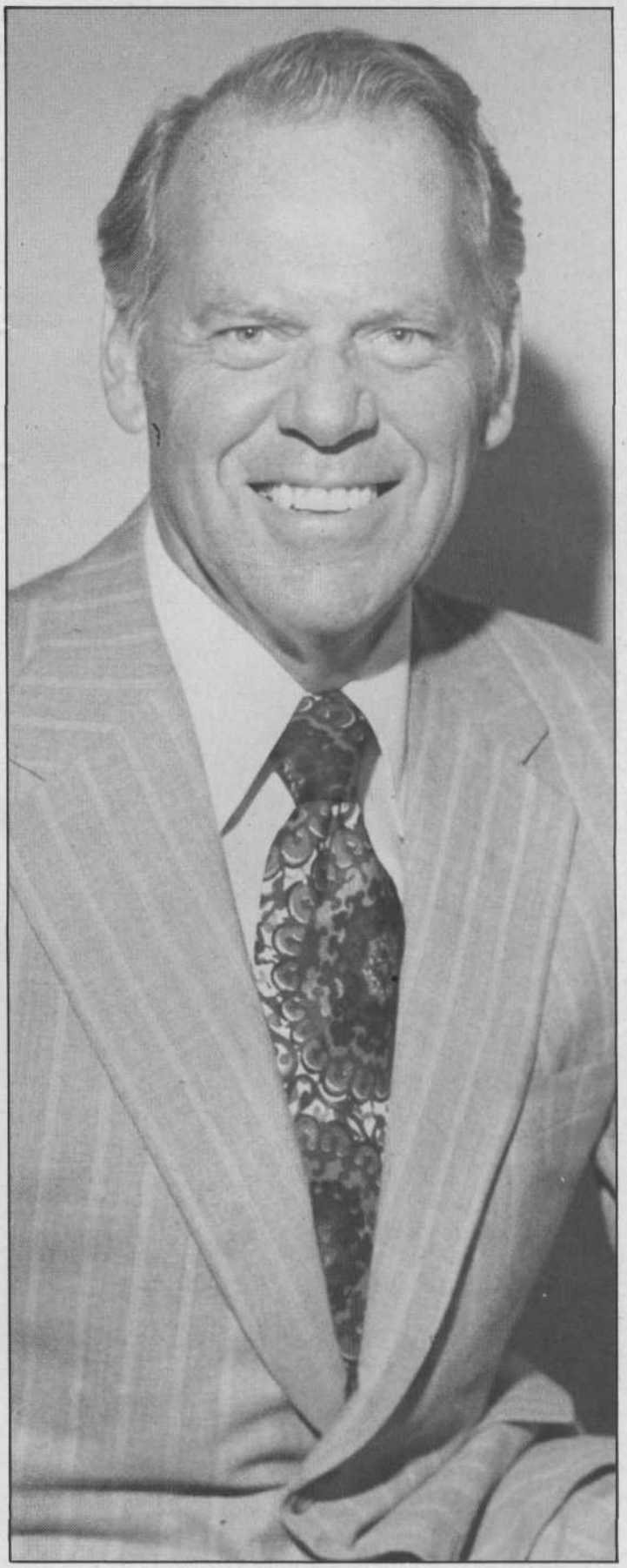
Guayule, or the Native Latex Plant, has already been commercially developed. In World War II this native crop was an important source of our rubber. Unfortunately the government pulled out of the program at the end of the war and only last year re-entered the field.

The future of the California Desert really depends on those who are present today. Many of the choices before us are essentially irreversible. The land area within California alone is some 16 million acres. Some acres which were previously neglected or inaccessible are now under the same pressures as the more developed areas. One of these areas is the vast region east of Barstow, between I-15 and I-40. Other regions of the California Desert closer to population centers have received federal protection as national parks, most notably Joshua Tree National Monument and Death Valley National Monument, while the State of California created Anza-Borrego Desert State Park to protect this critical area. While it is premature to prejudge the results of the California Desert Conservation Area Plan, it is clear that areas like the Kelso Dunes in the Eastern Mojave Desert deserve similar protection. For this reason, and at the urging of most California conservation and environmental groups, I've introduced legislation to create the Eastern Mojave National Park. This legislation will be available as a back-up to the Desert Plan now in preparation.

Readers of this magazine can help improve the quality of the decisions to be made about the California Desert. While the contribution of an individual frequently seems insignificant, and as only one of 535 Congressmen I often feel that about my own efforts, there are endless examples of an individual making the difference.

In the case of the California Desert Plan, one conflict appears to predominate, which is the conflict between using up the desert resources today versus saving desert resources for tomorrow. Pressures to maximize, however temporarily, the use of the desert for present pleasure and profit without regard for the future are increasing. Those who feel, as I do, that planning for the future is equally important need to speak up.

WHERE WE STAND...



(As seen by)

CONGRESSMAN CLAIR W. BURGENER

In 1976, Congress enacted the Bureau of Land Management's "Organic Act," updating the BLM charter over the federal government's vast Western real estate. Almost as an afterthought, an amendment was added to the legislation to establish the California Desert Conservation Area and provide for future use and protection of the California desert within a multiple-use concept.

The irony of this legislation was not readily apparent but has become so since. The desert, once viewed as inhospitable because of its climate and transportation difficulties, discouraged visitors and settlers, but those very qualities have, over the years, beckoned those looking to escape the hordes of the cities or those who simply wished to challenge the terrain. The once uninviting and unforgiving desert of wagon train days had been relatively tamed by the internal combustion engine and easy highway access.

Given its vastness and the lure of its sparsely-populated quietude as a counterpoint to the hectic Monday-Friday existence of many Southern Californians, the desert was bound to be found by thousands of people for recreation over the years, and indeed, it has been. It is also the destination of many thousands of vacationers from other states.

Increasing numbers of campers, off-road vehicle enthusiasts, rockhounds and other weekend desert users have poured out to the east from Los Angeles and San Diego on Friday evenings and Saturday mornings, necessitating, in Congressional eyes, some form of future protection.

The products of the California Desert Conservation Act have been brushfires of resentment among competing desert user groups and year-round desert residents, as was bound to happen when thousands of people perceive the desert's values differently.

In order to minimize bureaucratic discrepancies, the BLM decided first to inventory the desert's resources, use patterns

and values using criteria parallel to the U.S. Forest Service's Roadless Area Review and Evaluation (RARE II), another assessment of U.S. land holdings mandated by the Wilderness Act.

Because the inventory was the first step in a process eventually leading to a management plan, and beauty is in the eye of the beholder, the clamor by various groups over what areas deserved special protection or open use began early.

In an effort to legitimately involve citizens in the planning process, the BLM created a Desert Advisory Committee, made up of citizens from all walks and areas of California and conducted numerous public hearings throughout the state to assess citizen wishes and desires.

However, as often happens at public hearings, those in attendance often reflected the views of the well-organized environmental and user groups, and casual desert partakers were often lost in the zeal between the partisan protectionists and the advocates of total open use.

BLM, under the reasoned direction of California State Director Ed Hastey, searched for the middle ground, and, by and large, their preliminary management plan was a sensible one which took all sides of the public argument into account.

The BLM plan was bound to please no one entirely, and that has been the result. Organized environmentalists claim the management plan would permit continued destruction of desert resources by off-road vehicle users, while four-wheel drivers cringe at a lockup of public lands.

What likewise must be found in the eventual Congressional review of the California Desert Management Plan is a sensible solution which will permit protection for those truly unique desert resources which cannot be reclaimed once they are despoiled while permitting the optimum amount of general public use, for the lands truly belong to all of the people.

I have been troubled by previous Congressional actions which I think have gone a bit too far in limiting public access to the public lands. The concept of multiple use in public land management has been the keystone of our public lands policy in this country for years, but recent actions have tilted toward protective measures which have the effect of excluding from the land many of the people who have a part-ownership of it.

Limiting access to certain sensitive areas to entry only by foot excludes the handicapped and the aged, and demands specialized equipment and experience. It has not been vehicles alone which have denigrated the wildlife values of some of our public lands and national parks, but the sheer numbers of people and vehicles which certain species eventually cannot accommodate.

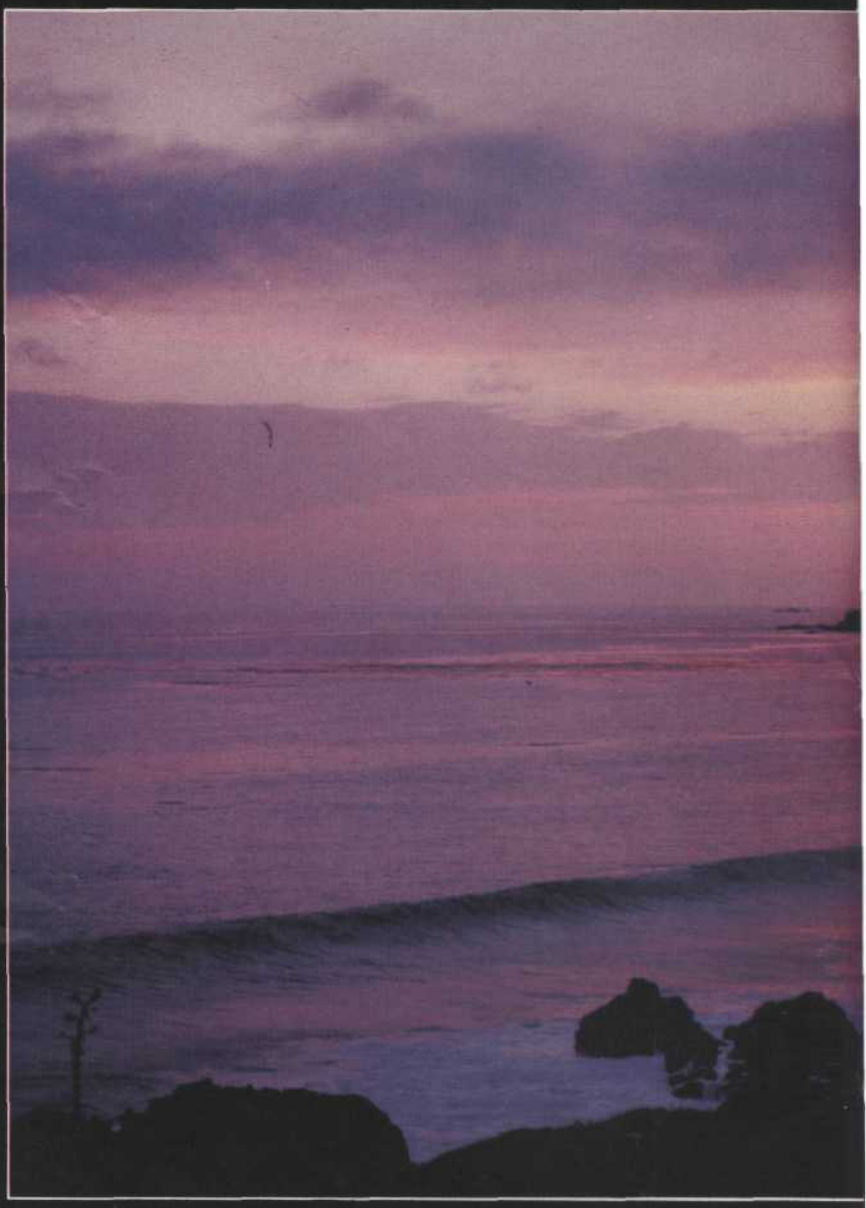
True multiple use planning will not be exclusionary or elitist in its outlook but will permit public entry to the public lands by all of the people, perhaps in limited numbers at any given time.

Also figuring into any eventual management equation for the California Desert must be our very real energy needs and the potential of the desert for providing some of that energy. Geothermal development, which provides much promise for the future in delivering power to Californians, must be calculated into the plan. This clean power source must not be "locked up." Similarly, the substantial solar potential of the desert must be weighed and handled with foresight.

Congress will soon be called upon to resolve the many inherent conflicts involved in parceling the public land for the maximum potential public benefit, and it must do so with sensitivity and sensibility.

THE HOUSE TH

Jack Smith



It has been nearly twelve years since my wife and I stood on a desert terrace overlooking Bahia de Santo Tomas, on the Pacific shore of northern Baja California, and made up our minds to lease a lot from a man named Gomez and build a house.

I should point out that there was no actual **lot**, with a front and a back and sidelines and stakes to mark the boundaries. There was just raw land. By **lot**, Mr. Gomez meant the spot we were standing on, and a rather vague amount of space surrounding it. It was this indefinteness that made it possible for the lot to move about in the following months, so that each time we drove down to look at it again, and reinforce our dreams, it would turn up in a different place.

When I pointed this out to Mr. Gomez, observing that it was not a phenomenon Americans were used to, he answered with the kind of magnificent logic that we were soon to expect of him, a sort of Solomonic simplicity that seemed somewhat short on eternal truth, but was invulnerable to contradiction.

"Senor," he said, "if I build a house on your lot it will not move."

Since then we have built the house, or rather Mr. Gomez built it for us, we have furnished it and enjoyed it and suffered with it—from mice and rattlesnakes and burglars, and scarcities of water and gas, and balky appliances—and yet, sometimes, it seems as much an illusion as it did that first day in February 1968.

People in Los Angeles are always asking: "Do you still own your house in Baja? Whatever became of Mr. Gomez?"

Of course, we have never **owned** our house in Baja. It dawned on me gradually while Mr. Gomez was building the house—very gradually, since the building of the house was exquisitely unhurried—that we could never actually own the house.

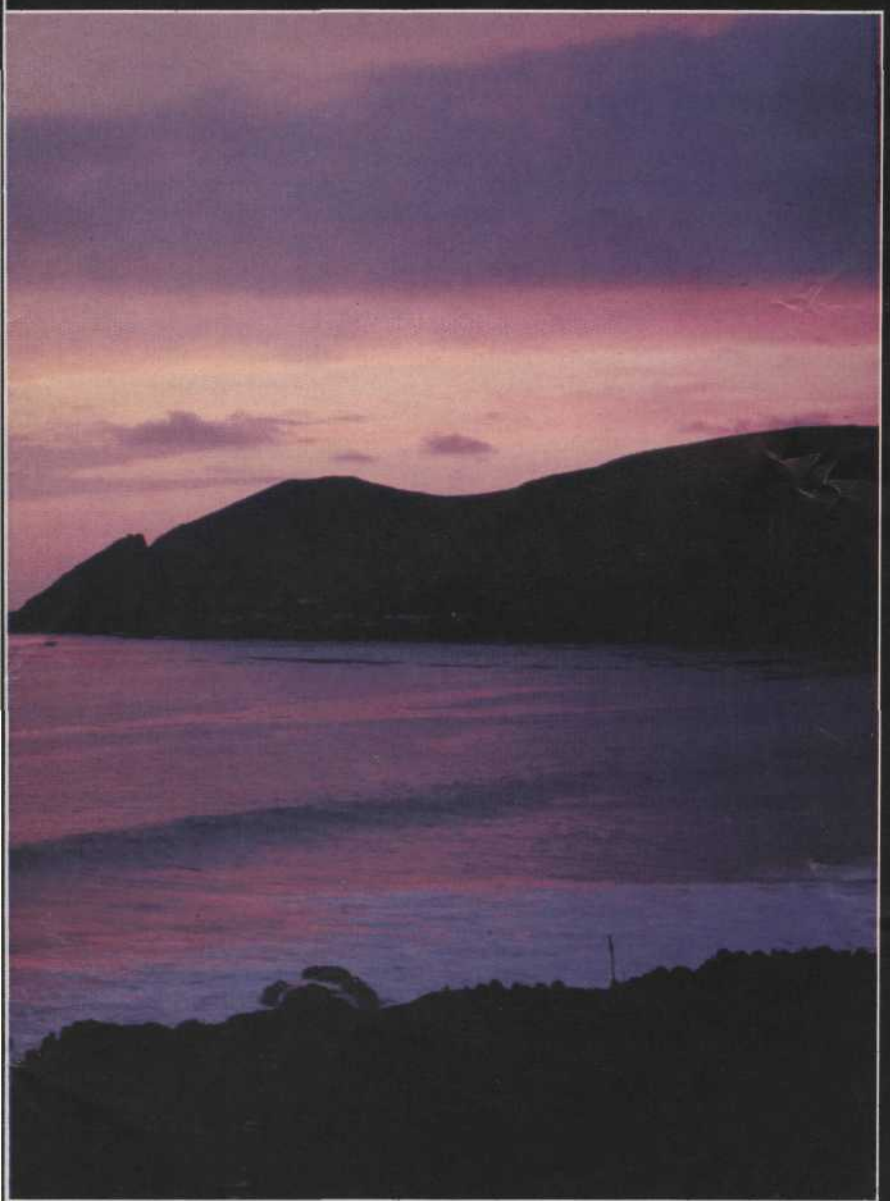
Americans can not own land in Baja, but can lease it for ten-year periods. Thus, we had leased our little plot from Mr. Gomez, who assured us he was the owner, and he was building our house on it, with our money; and he always referred to it as **your** house, your **mansion.** But it had gradually dawned on me, as I say, that if we did not own the land, then how could we really own the house, since it was being built of honest and heavy Mexican bricks and could not easily be uprooted and trundled off to the United States, like some lightweight prefabricated mobile home.

One day in 1969, when the house was beginning to look as if someday it would actually be completed, I broached this subject to Gomez, by then having dropped the formality. We were sitting on the broad front porch—a Guadalajara porch, according to Gomez—drinking Carta Blanca and looking out across the Pacific.

"When the house is finished, Romulo," I said, "how will we know it is ours?"

Once again he rose to the question with that magnificent simplicity: "I will give you the key, senor."

AT JACK BUILT



An autumn sunset seen from the veranda of the house that Jack built.

Photo by Curtis Smith

To this day, except for a lease that is already two years past its expiration date, our key is really all we have to show that we own our house in Baja.

It is hard to explain this to Americans, but somehow we are not concerned. For the time being, that is. Someday, of course, we must get down to Ensenada and meet Gomez at Hussong's bar and, after a beer and a tequila, set off on the rounds of government offices for the rituals of rubber stamping and document signing, which will mean that once again our lease is legal. We still won't own the house, but it will be legal.

We might have done this at any time during the last two years, I suppose. But even before the old lease expired we paid Gomez for a new one, also covering only ten years, as required by law. Gomez was in need of the money, and there seemed no reason why he shouldn't have it, since we had his word that he would renew the lease when the time came. Since he had our money and we had his word, what then was the hurry about signing a lot of papers, which is rather a bore, anyway, except for the beer and the tequila.

Also, I injured my back not long after the lease expired, and was not able to make the trip down to Ensenada for the rendezvous at Hussong's. Then, there was also the weather. For two straight winters the rains had washed out the road. For a time it was so bad that even Jeeps and Broncos couldn't get through, and my wife and I certainly had no intention of challenging it in her Nova.

For more than a year, in fact, we never saw the house, but some of our hardier neighbors would chance the road and come back to assure us that the house was still there. And occasionally Gomez would make one of his mysterious journeys to Los Angeles, and we would meet him here or there, once or twice at our house, in the hope of bringing ourselves up to date and re-establishing some sense of reality about the house.

Was it still there? Had he got someone to paint the window grilles? Had there been any break-ins? How was the road? Had the rats moved back into the water heater?

To all these anxious inquiries Gomez responded with his exasperating re-assurances: "You have nothing to worry about, senor."

The incredible thing is that we really aren't worried very much. It isn't that we don't care about the house. It has been too much a part of our lives ever to be cast aside. It is just that we don't care too much about technicalities, about time, about uncertainty, about the fact that nothing can be quite tied down, nothing can be guaranteed, nothing can be made secure.

Our friends in Los Angeles still can't understand how two normally anxious middle-class American people can have been overcome by this apparent apathy, this lack of respect for such traditional American values as punctuality, predictability, propriety, and most important of all, good roads.

Ironically, if the road hadn't been so bad in

"There were three things I had always loved—the city, the surf, and the desert."

the first place, we would never have built our house at all. We discovered on our first visit to Bahia de Santo Tomas that Joseph Wood Krutch was right: "Baja proves what bad roads can do for a country."

When we first drove it, the road from the Baja peninsular highway to Labocana, where Gomez keeps his little store, was seventeen hard miles, running through the Santo Tomas River valley. It was not a good road. I learned later that for Baja it was not a **bad** road. But for two people who had lived twenty years within sight of the Los Angeles City Hall and hesitated to use surface streets when a freeway was handy, it was a bad road.

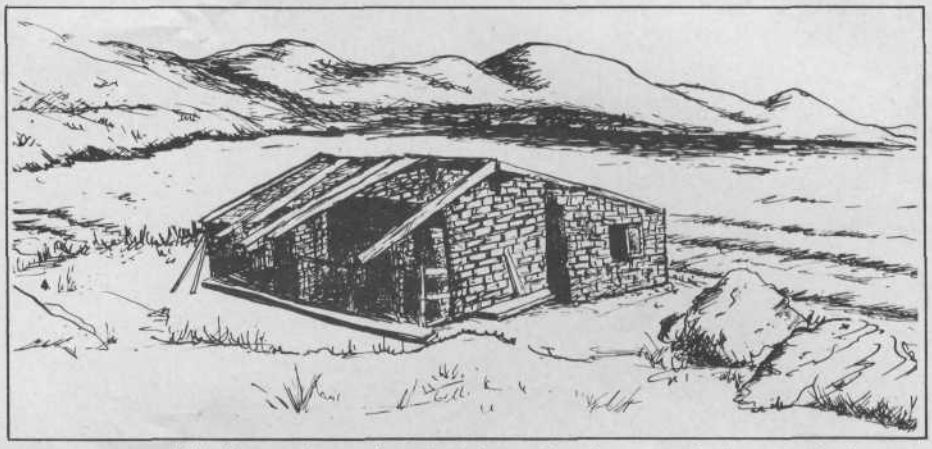
But there was one good thing about it. It helped to keep people like us out. When we first stood on Gomez's land there were only two houses there, both built of brick by Gomez himself. Though neither of us had ever dreamed of building a house in Baja, had never even discussed it, we both knew, without exchanging a word, as we stood there beside Gomez, that we would somehow be bound forever to this man, whom we had never seen before that day, and to this land.

I was enchanted, I suppose, by the setting. There were three things I had always loved—the city, the surf, and the desert. The surf and the desert, of course, were for getting away from the city. I was born within half a block of the Pacific Ocean, and had always had the idea that its tides were in my blood. As a boy, living in Bakersfield, I had many times gone to Randsburg and Mojave with my father, who had come west from an Illinois farm as a boy to work in the Cripple Creek gold district, and could never get gold and mining and the desert out of his blood.

Here, on a cliff above this unheard-of bay, the desert and the sea had come together. As I was to write later in a book about our Mexican adventure:

"We stood on a desert terrace between low green mountains and the sea. Below us the surf pounded into the cliffs, bursting against black rock castles and washing back from a moonscape of glittering tidepools. To the north a dark headland reached out to sea, holding within its arm a shining bay. A fisherman's boat, bright green, lay out on the water like a Van Gogh brushstroke. Sea gulls wheeled and dived, and a flight of pelicans glided over the bay in exquisite formation. Shells and driftwood shone in the coves. All around us the cactus was in red bloom and the maguey plants were higher than our heads, topped by voluptuous purple buds the size of melons.

"It was February, but the sky was blue. The air was pure and warm, and vibrant with the cries of gulls and the scent of salt and kelp and something elusive and vaguely primitive. It might have looked exactly like this a million years ago, except for the fishermen's shacks out on the point and the two brick houses of the Americans on the bluffs a quarter of a mile to the south..."



"Here, on a cliff above this unheard-of bay, the desert and the sea had come together."

Illustration by Pat J. Williams

"Senor," he said, "it comes from God."

Today, instead of three, there are seven houses in Gomez's little colony, but it has grown at a rate of less than one house a year, a pace that Gomez would like to step up, perhaps, to improve his own prosperity. But the development of La Bocana is restricted by certain realities, one being the scarcity of water, the other being the condition of the road.

Where the water comes from I have never been sure. Gomez has what appears to be a well and a pump in back of his store, and he pumps water up the hill to a cistern, from which it goes by pipes to the various houses, sometimes.

One day, however, I happened to see that the pump had been removed from the well and was sucking up water from the fresh water lagoon that lies between Gomez's store and the ocean.

"Romulo," I asked him, "where does your water really come from?"

"Senor," he said, "it comes from God."

So far, God has not helped much with the road. Swollen by the disastrous rains of 1977 and 1978, the river went beserk. It crossed the road no fewer than twenty times, with such depth and force that even trucks bogged down midstream and all traffic was shut off.

The road will never be the same. The river has changed course dramatically, and does not seem inclined to resume its old ways. But there are certain people who need that road, besides Gomez and his American tenants. There are fisherman at the little port of Santo Tomas who must get their catches back to Ensenada; there is a lively sea urchin factory at La Bocana, a

certain inner organ of the urchin being a table delicacy in Japan; there is a cement plant on a point to the south of La Bocana, and its employees must be brought in and out through the valley by bus. Also, the valley is a thriving ejido, or communal farm, and the road is its only means of commerce with the outside world, which is Ensenada.

So the road is being rebuilt. According to Gomez, it will be finished in three months. That is encouraging news for us Americans who have houses there, since it means the road could actually be finished, or in rather good shape, in three years.

My wife and I have been down to La Bocana only once since the road vanished. That was last spring, after that year's rains.

Even then it was negotiable, though its new segments had been bulldozed into higher ground above the river valley floor, and the roadbed was a tumble of rocks and boulders that always threatened to rip out the bottom of anything lower than a Jeep or pickup. It had tortuous turns and was so narrow that we prayed not to encounter anyone coming the other way, for then would begin the contest of wills, a delicate diplomatic confrontation that the foreigner who spoke no Spanish was destined not to win. Thus, you must be prepared to back up over this monstrous path, observed with sardonic pleasure by the driver of the other vehicle until the winner of the contretemps churned by. The Mexicans are unfailingly polite, however. They always wave as they pass, just before you are enveloped in their dust.

We borrowed a four-wheel-drive Subaru wagon for this adventure, and it performed valiantly. But we are resigned to the probability that never again will my wife be able to set off some Friday night, on a whim, and drive down to the house alone, unafraid of the valley even in the dark of the night. Unless, as Gomez says, the road is finished in three months.

Oddly, we are not discouraged. The house exists. It is an adventure just to think about it as we sit home in Los Angeles, having a cocktail in the evening. True, we've thought about selling it. But what do we have to sell? At this point, we have only Gomez's word. That is enough for us, of course, but that is because my wife and I have long since gone over. We think like Gomez. I am not sure I could get that into a contract with an American who hadn't had our experience.

". . . Never again will my wife be able to set off alone . . . unafraid in the dark of night . . ."

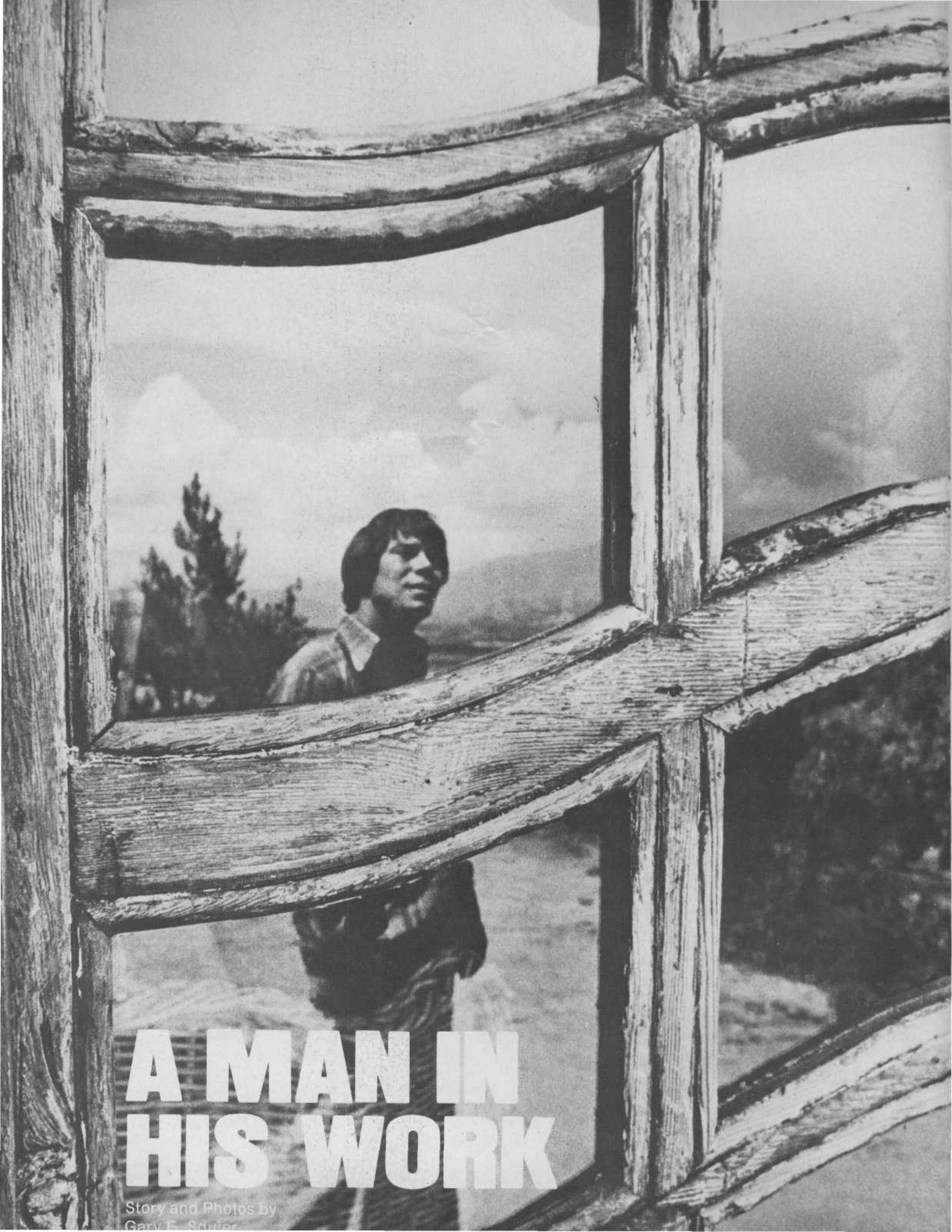
No matter how long we neglect the house, it is always waiting for us. Already, though we have had it less than a dozen years, it exerts a powerful nostalgia on us. Every time we reach it, no matter how arduous the trip has been, we are overcome by pleasure in its familiar sights and smells: the upholstery my wife made herself; the candlewax; the old ashes in the fireplace; the windows filmy with seaspray and dust; the sunset and its afterglow—that magic, ephemeral hour that makes everything seem worthwhile.

It is said that the instant the sun sinks below the horizon of the sea there is a green flash. It is an evanescent thing, and you must be watching at precisely that moment, or you will miss it. I have spent many sunsets sitting on the front porch of the house, sipping a vodka tonic or a tequila or a glass of wine, and watching for that green flash. I thought I saw it once, and was so excited I fell over backwards in my chair and broke a window in the front of the house. But perhaps it was only an illusion.

Sometimes I think the whole thing is an illusion. There is no house in Baja. There is no road. There is no Gomez. Then one day the phone will ring at our house in Los Angeles and that musical voice will say, with that undertone of humor in it: **"Buenos dias, Senor. Como esta usted?"**

No, we will not part with our Baja house.

I have to keep watching for that green flash.



A MAN IN HIS WORK

Story and Photos by
Gary E. Sauer

Ray Robirds is a hard working son-of-a-gun. Up at six a.m., he works ten, twelve, fifteen, however many hours it takes to do the job, seven days a week, fifty-two weeks a year.

And working right beside him are his wife Rachael, his son Allen, and even their daughters Heather and Laurie have chores to do although they are a little young for the kind of muscle it takes to build furniture the way craftsmen of the 18th and 19th Centuries did.

Ray literally runs a woodworking sweat shop which is about thirty steps from his house. "When I sweat, everybody sweats," he says in his best W. C. Fields imitation. But it does take a lot of sweat lifting, cutting, drilling, fitting, rubbing, laquering, finishing, and occasionally even delivering and installing the floors, doors, tables, windows, armoires, and almost any other furnishings in the country-farmhouse style.

"Except chairs," Ray says. "I don't do chairs." No reason given, although it's probably because he seldom sits. The whole family is on the move all day.

One of the most important moves they ever made was to the high desert valley of Anza, California. What they did in effect was to defy one of the laws of the marketplace. They moved away from it. But there was method in this apparent madness.

"I had a shop in the Melrose-antique-interior decorator area of Los Angeles," Ray said, "but I couldn't get any work done. I had fifteen people working for me in the shop, and all day long customers were either calling or knocking on my door. I talked with clients during the day, and at night I fixed up all the mistakes my employees made. It was crazy. I was working eighteen hours a day trying to stay even, and I wasn't even staying even!"

So Rachael came in and took over the business end and a little more. "Running a small business is tough," she said. "We were doing the Mark Twain Jumping Frog Saloon in Brentwood. Ray knew how to build the stuff; he's an artist, the only one of a kind who works on every piece he contracts for. But he didn't know about business."

She renegotiated the contract, and they moved to Anza. "All the arguments were against moving so far away from our market which was Beverly Hills, Malibu, and Sherman Oaks," Rachael recalls. "But it was the market that was stopping Ray from doing his work. Constant interruptions. Here it's ideal for him to devote full time to creating."

And creating is exactly what Ray and his family cottage-industry do for private clients such as comedian Buddy Hackett and his wife Sheri, TV producer Aaron Spelling, Cheryl Tieggs, and writer Tom Tyron ("The Other"); and for commercial clients like Dallas' Hyatt House, La Quinta Country Club, Commerfords of Palm Desert, and the Cannery Restaurant in Newport Beach.

His pieces are simple with country-style lines, uncomplicated like his life. In fact they are his life: hard, rough, and sturdy with beautiful inner grain values that are accentuated by the high desert's dry air.

"That was another plus for us," Ray added. "Working with solid wood requires a dry climate. Our move to the desert has worked out extremely well."

So everything seems perfect at the Robirds' woodworking shop. They have a beautiful home, a well-equipped workshop, a pool for play, a Corvette Sting Ray for speed, and a family that truly works together.

Except it wasn't always this way. It took a lot of work, Ray remembers: "After fifteen years of sweat and losses you learn there just isn't any easy money out there. I'm not stupid and if there was an easy way, I'd know about it. Nope, you have to work . . . twelve to fifteen hours a day, every day, always with the thought of improving your product. Do that for two or three years and you just begin to know something about the stuff you make."

Now that life is a little easier and clients are lining up for his products, does Ray see the load getting any lighter? "Nope. If you want to make your mark in life you've got to use up all your talents. That's what I want, to be all used up."

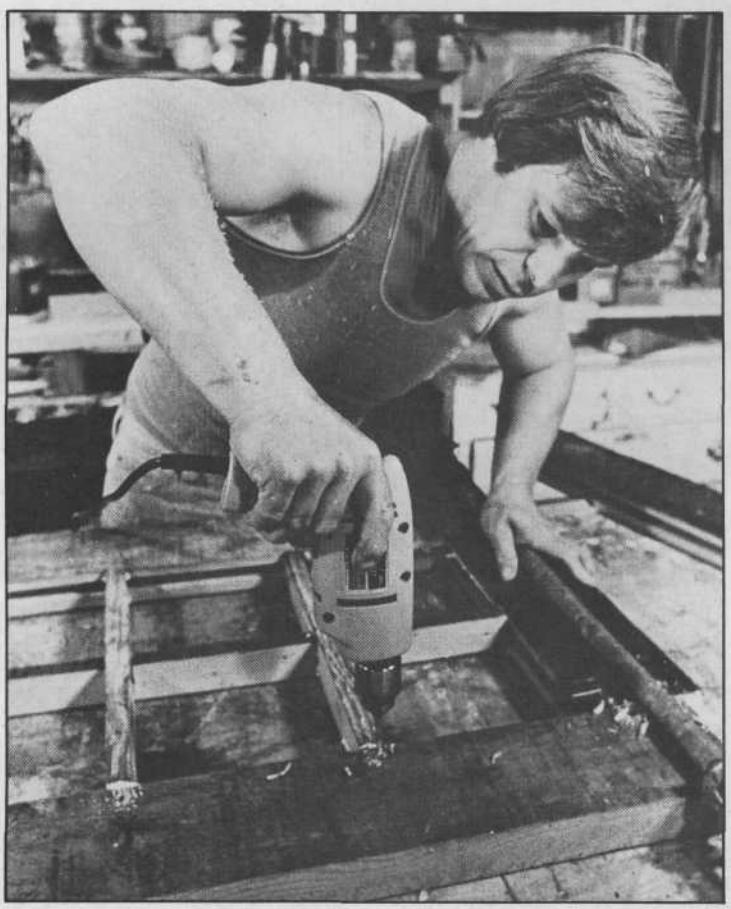
Working as Ray and Rachael and the whole family do obviously feeds their bodies and certainly sustains their spirits. But isn't all this hard work a little too much, too Victorian? Not to the Robirds. They say, as Bishop Cumberland did when advised to take it easy, "Better to wear out than to rust out."

"Work must not only feed the body; it must also sustain the spirit." Daniel Bell

The Robirds Work & "Work"

Work is needed to express what is true, also to receive what is true. We can express and receive what is false, or at least what is superficial, without any work.
Simon Weil.

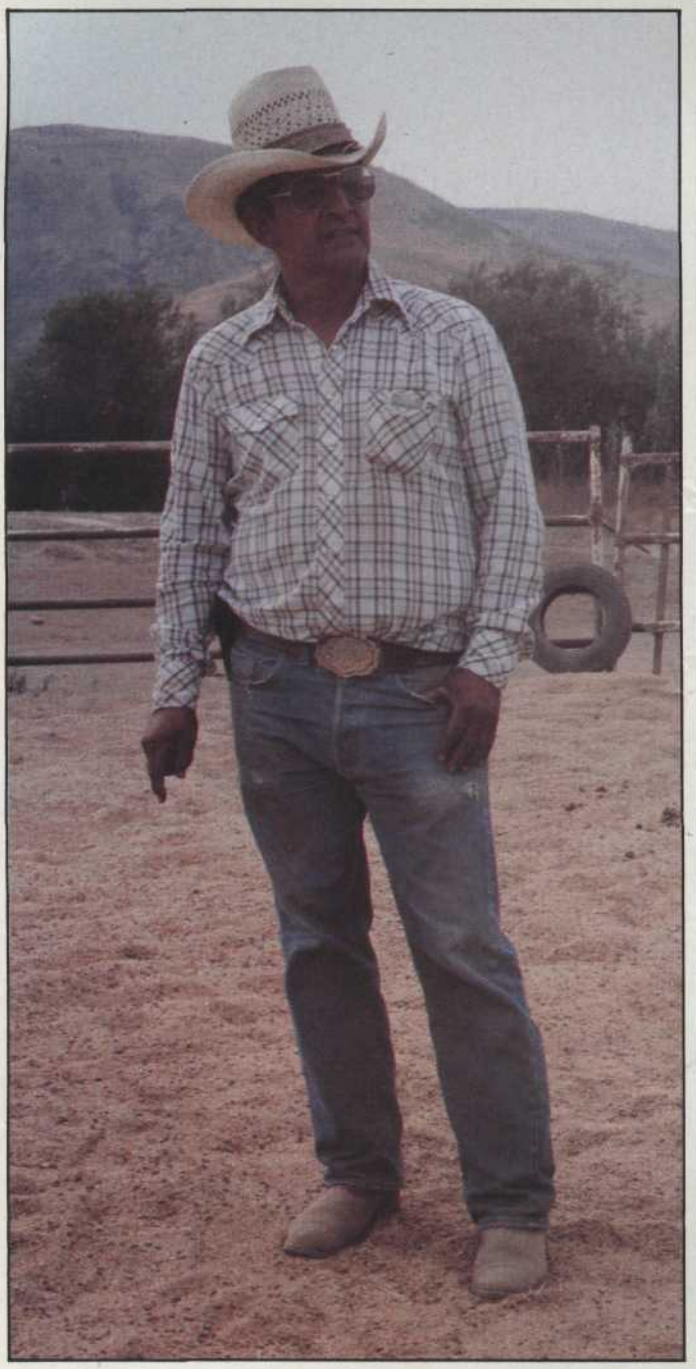
All the best work is done the way ants do things—by tiny but untiring and regular additions.
Lafcadio Hearn.



No man is born into the world whose work
Is not born with him; there is always work,
And tools to work withal, for those who will;
And blessed are the horny hands of toil.
James Russell Lowell.

All work is noble.
Thomas Carlyle.

Work and play are words used to describe the same thing under differing conditions.
Mark Twain.



ROCKY III

by Donald MacDonald
Photos by Gary E. Squier

THE STAR OF THIS STORY is not Sylvester Stallone. This story has no stars. Everybody in it is a loser. And it's not about boxing unless you think in terms of containers, containers in the form of a one-and-one-half-ton "U-Haul" truck like the ones you or I might rent if we want to move. But instead of furniture the truck contains people, maybe twenty-five people, with only standing room in the sealed, unventilated body.

Each of those people will pay $250 for their 120-mile move from the border town of San Ysidro to Baldwin Park near Los Angeles. That's a lot of money when their possessions to be transported consist of but the clothes on their backs. Any one of them and a couple of friends could ride the distance in the comfort of an air-conditioned taxi for a lot less, but they'd never get there in the taxi and they know it.

They pay this money to swelter in the sometimes 130-degree heat inside that truck because they're Mexican aliens dreaming a dream. It's the same dream members of our own families two, three or four generations removed dreamed. Come to North America to strike it rich.

'Ironically, the land upon which Baldwin Park is built once belonged to the same peoples who now risk their freedom and sometimes their lives to reach it. And striking it rich means $1.50 an hour in the sweat shops of East Los Angeles or in the lettuce fields of the Imperial Valley.

Stretching ahead for seven long years will be a new kind of poverty. Too little money in an affluent society which can be worse than no money in a poor society. Always for those seven years will be the fear of getting caught and deported and having to make the trek all over again. Only one in five make it the first time. Four out of five eventually do.

Some don't even know it's just for seven years for the US government hasn't publicized this fact until lately. If an illegal alien lives and works here undetected for that length of time and can find a few influential citizens to swear at a hearing that he's led an exemplary, productive life and additionally, if he can show his deportation would cause hardship to loved ones, then he's allowed by this little known law to stay.

There's nothing special about Baldwin Park; it was just one of several destinations in use at the time Rocky was a driver for the Mexican Mafia, the *Nostra Familia*. And there's nothing special about that family, either. This loose collection of *coyotes* isn't even acknowledged by its Italian and Jewish peers in the North.

There is a big barn of an unused building in Baldwin Park where quiet activity late at night went unnoticed. Or let's say the police would rather not notice it for obviously, their jail wasn't big enough. Here, Rocky delivered his human cargo, to be joined within minutes by the *coyote* he worked for. Here waited anxious relatives, ready to pay $250 to the *coyote* for a face they recognized.Rocky got $50 of that, sometimes $1,250 a load, sometimes a couple of loads in one night.

Rocky was born Vincent Antonio Aguilar in San Gabriel on November 25, 1924. His family had settled this community in 1786, so Rocky calls himself of Spanish extraction. And rightfully so, for Mexico did not become a Republic until forty-seven years later. Then it was another twenty-five years before the flag of the United States flew over the Aguilar homestead. Thus, when Rocky talks about "his" country, he

can date his claim to U.S. citizenship back before many an Indian tribe.

Why did he risk his freedom to help aliens find their freedom illegally when the rap could mean five years for each live body found in his truck, a possible 125 years in the federal penitentiary? He needed money, lots of money by his standards, and he needed it in a hurry. It was as simple as that.

Rocky ran a riding and boarding stable in San Juan Capistrano where you'll find him today. There were heavy rains everywhere in Southern California in 1969 and hardly anybody rode Rocky's horses that winter. But they had to be fed so Rocky found himself owing $15,000 to several feed suppliers. He juggled his debts for a while, until 1974. By then Rocky was about to lose his stable.

The *coyotes* stay tuned to the needs of the Spanish-speaking community and when a respected member of it must earn some quick money, they have a job for this man. That's how it all started. Rocky said: "Okay, as long as we don't hurt anybody.

Rocky drove for several months without getting caught, but he knew he would be. Eight out of ten drivers are. But he earned $12,000 and got his debts down to where they were manageable. And that's when he got caught. "Hanging Judge" Gordon Thompson in the Federal Court at San Diego sentenced Rocky to six months at Camp Lompoc with five years probation. He went there on April 22, 1975, and was out by October.

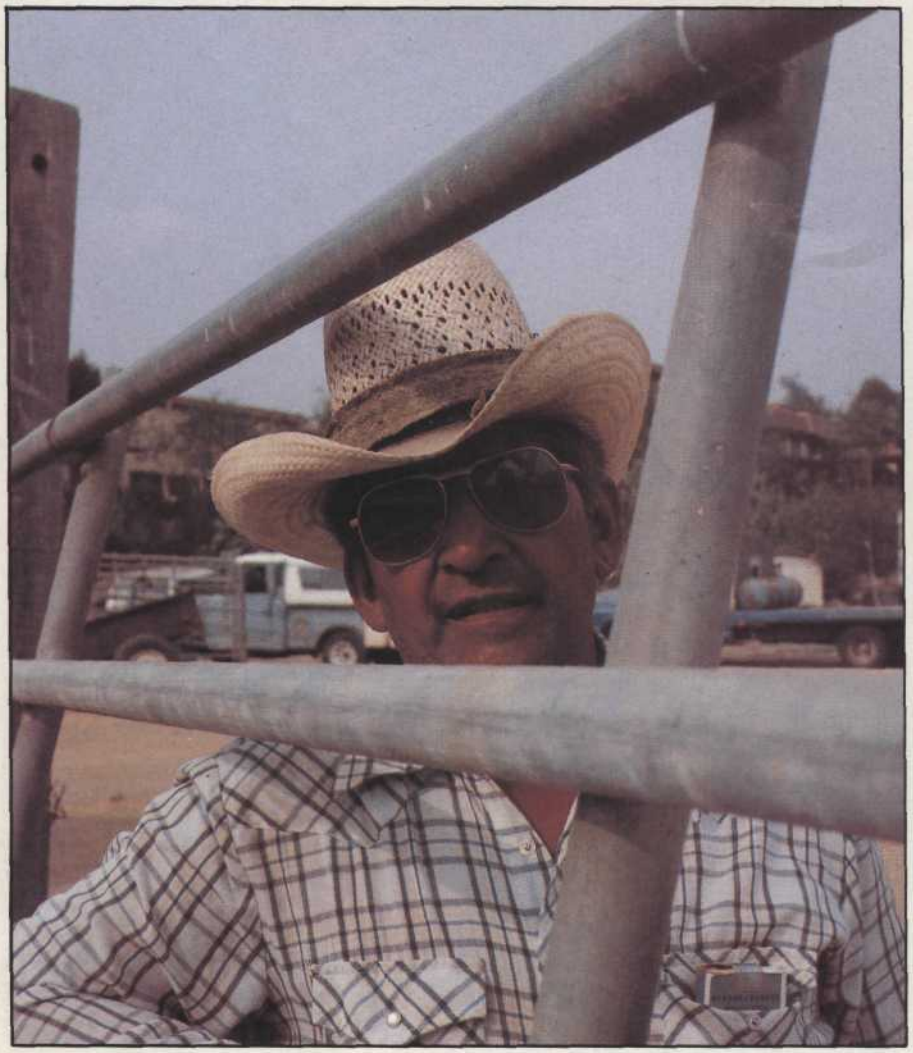
Rocky was lucky. He wanted to be caught and he was properly penitent at his pre-trial examinations. Why did he want to be caught? This time, his answer was more complex.

"I owed the money and wanted to pay it," he said. "And I wanted to help some fellow human beings who had no chance where they came from. We'd have 95-cent lettuce if it weren't for the aliens. You can't get a North American to pick potatoes. They bring in Vietnamese but deny the Mexicans. In some things, these wetbacks are the backbone of our system out here. What would we do without them?"

Rocky was thoughtful for some long moments. His handsome tanned head turned towards his horses. "But I broke the law," he said. "Now I know friends who would've loaned me $50,000. All I would've had to do was to take off my hat."

But Rocky's moral struggle makes not the slightest dent in the problem of illegal aliens. Drivers get caught, aliens get caught, and even sometimes a *coyote* is snared by the harrassed and woefully undermanned U.S. Border Patrol.

Despite the hazards, though, an estimated 50,000 illegal aliens cross each month at Tijuana alone which when you deduct the casualties leaving a net increase in the U.S. population of over 480,000 people annually. The *coyotes, in* fact, show their lack of respect for the Border Patrol by regularly guiding groups of aliens across the border between Tijuana and San Ysidro through a gap in the fence that opens onto the Patrol's parking lot. Groups of fifty or more file across enemy territory undetected on a regular schedule simply because the Patrol's building has no windows facing out on the lot. Or if the hole in the fence has been temporarily fixed, there's a five-foot diameter water pipe nearby.



Why do the vast majority of aliens choose Tijuana as their port of embarkation rather than less well guarded points further to the east? Past El Paso is where the term "wetback" originated; the Rio Grande is not an easy crossing even for a strong swimmer and most Mexicans don't grow up with pools in their backyards. From there west but still short of Tijuana, the desert, not the Patrol is the enemy. A ten-mile strip above the Arizona border alone yields thirty to forty bleached human skeletons every summer, and only a fraction of it gets searched.

It being easy, the *coyotes* headquarter in Tijuana and send out signals from sleazy hotels like the Alaska. The would-be alien gravitates to these places after a sometimes hazardous bus trip from mainland Mexico or Honduras, or Guatemala or even as far away as Nicaragua. One needs a visa to approach Tijuana from outside Baja and the Mexicans have their own *Al*tos or checkpoints where buses and cars are stopped and the occupants made to prove their identities and purposes. Then, once in Tijuana, aliens and *coyotes* alike must dodge

the Direcion Federal des Seguridad, Mexican equivalent of our FBI, whose agents take a dim view of "exporting people." The alien can be charged with attempting to "export" himself and the penalty is seven years.

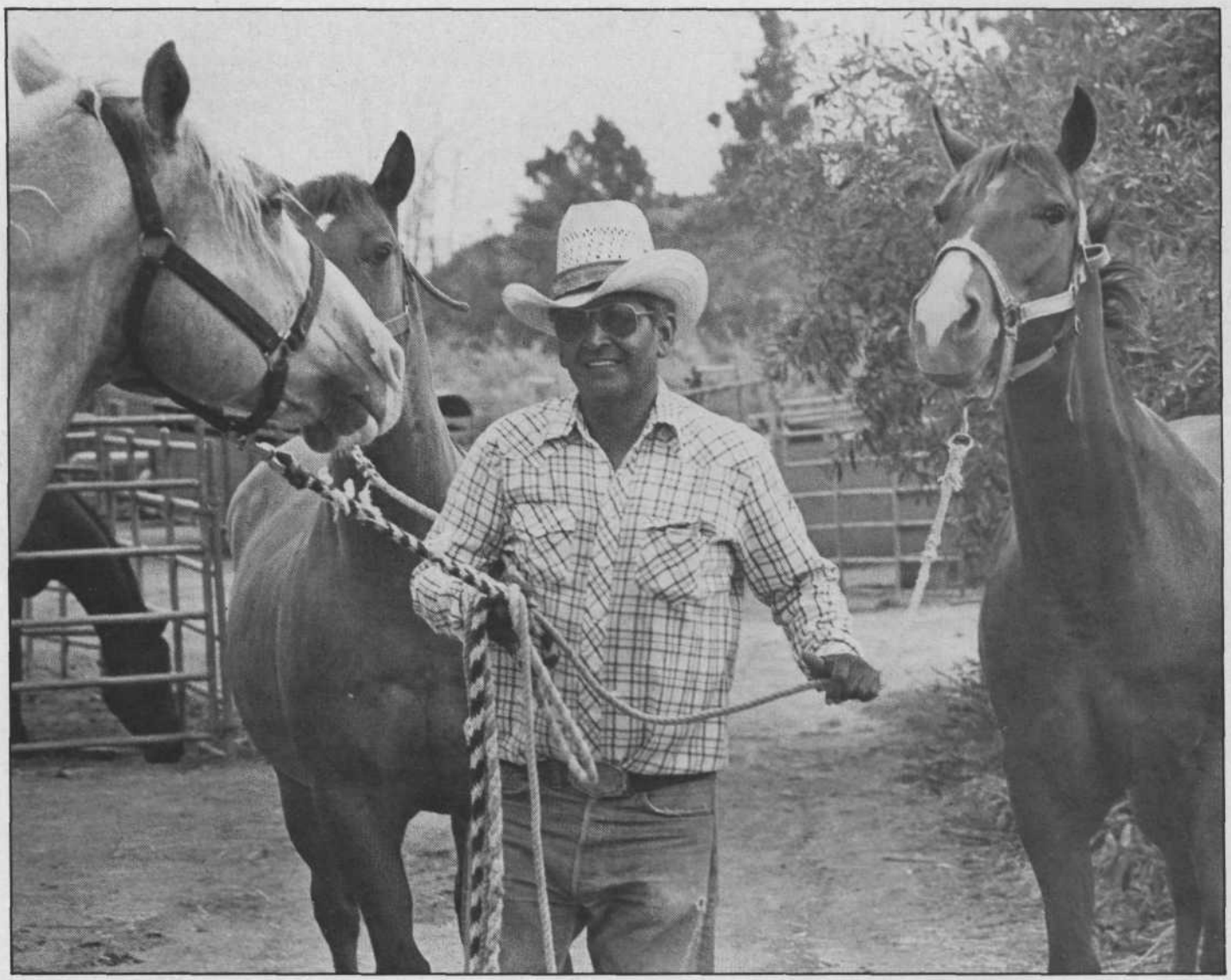
Some *coyotes,* according to Rocky, can be considered "honest" and others not. The alien has no way of knowing who to trust though the drivers, of course, do. There's a brisk trade on the Mexican side in forged U.S. documents which are of absolutely no use if the alien buys his ride north. Then, if he elects to walk across on his own, he finds the forgeries he bought are so crude, the Border Patrol doesn't even bother to confiscate them.

Rocky flatly refused to carry women or children. The women, separated from their families, face an obvious hazard which occurs mostly on the San Ysidro side while they wait in motels for transport. The *coyotes,* not the drivers, demand these favors, enforcing their lust with threats of exposure. Kids under sixteen fare the best. Those too young to talk are transported openly in cars for $500 by couples with valid U.S. documentation who claim them as their own. Older kids, being considered unpredictable, command the same premium even though they are usually trucked.

Drivers get caught with their loads for the most stupid of reasons. Border Patrol officials still talk about one with a big semi containing maybe a hundred people. He passed over the scale at San Clemente too fast and was called back. He exceeded the 3 mph limit a second time and was about to be lectured by the weighmaster when liquid was noticed dripping from the truck. Officials still suspected nothing more than a potentially hazardous leak until they opened the truck and found the liquid was urine.

Other drivers panic, crash the San Clemente checkpoint, and force the Border Patrol into a high-speed chase. More than one of these in recent times has ended in a crash and fatalities, sometimes involving innocent second parties. Tom Gaines, Assistant Chief Patrol Agent at San Ysidro, says there will be no more chases. Public opinion, tending to side with the underdog anyway, is against them. And so, of course, is Rocky who gave up rather than run when his turn came.

An obvious question, and one which occurs to the aliens themselves, is that if the *coyotes* are somewhat less than trustworthy pillars of the community, can they be trusted to take 250 hard-earned dollars and deliver the owner of the money to his destination? The answer is no and for that reason, the *coyote* is paid upon delivery by relatives of the alien. The *coyotes* have the phone number of these relatives, and if he can't deliver the first time, he guarantees to try twice again at no extra charge. The alien, in turn, works for $1.50 an hour to save up the money to pay back his relatives



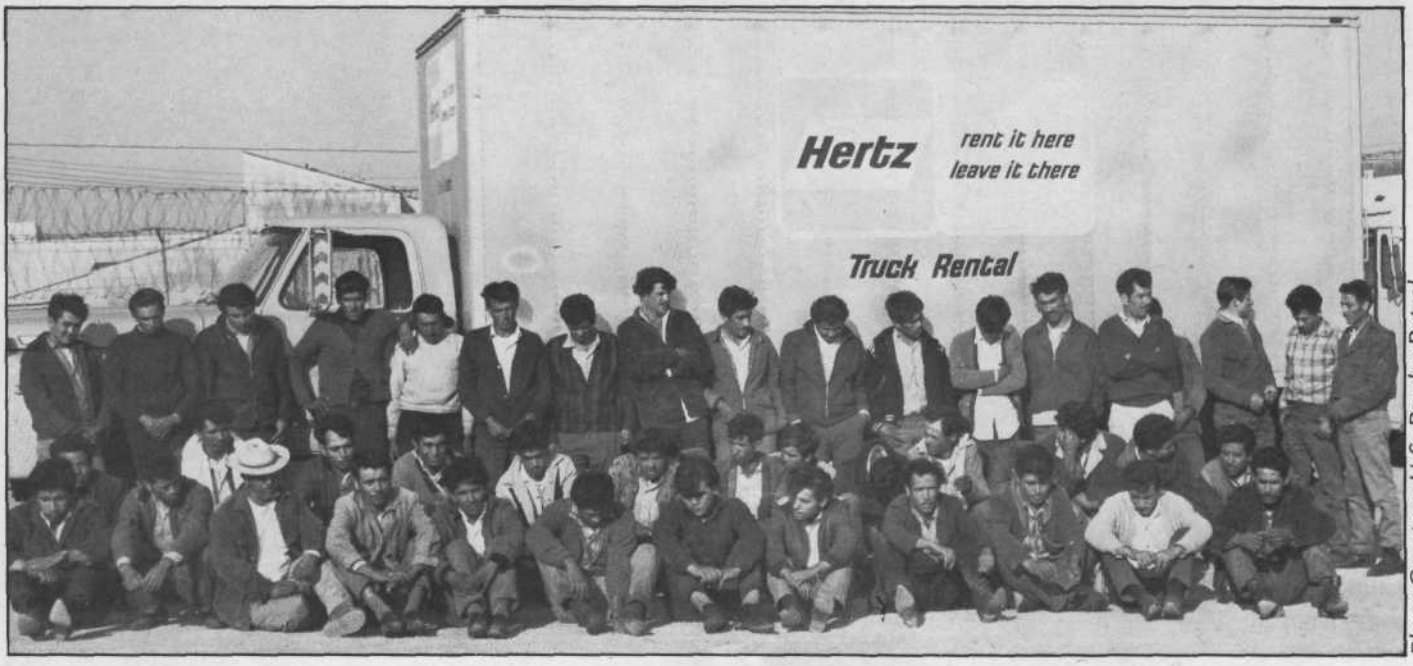


Photo Courtesy U.S. Border Patrol

Rent a truck—fill it with people.

and on it goes, each newcomer eventually sponsoring another in a self-perpetuating, never-ending flow.

"Would you do it again, Rocky?" I asked.

"No way," came his quick answer. "But you know," he continued, "if we keep them out completely, our crops will rot in the fields. They're the cream of their kind, untrained but sharp. They're ambitious enough to not want to wait for the promises they get down there. They've had it with that *bracero* program of theirs. What can one man and his family do with five acres of desert? Starve? Go to Tijuana yourself and see if you could live on *plata,* 35 or 50 cents an hour which is what they get in the cities. Try begging from people as poor as yourself."

"Camp Lompoc was nice," Rocky went on. "They've got the best food in the country up there. John Dean and I became friends. He handed out clothes, but you don't have to work unless you want to. But I won't go back. Not for five years which is what I'd get if I drove again."

Chief Gaines has a different, strangely conflicting perspective: "The illegal alien is exploited by everyone involved because who can they complain to? What can we do, though? If I arrested every alien I saw on the streets around here (San Ysidro), I'd never get to work. But that's wrong about them doing the work no one else will do. The legals in the *barrios* are turning them in now—too much competition. And that 95-cent lettuce, the farmers would develop a machine before it got there. But, as I said, what can we do? We can't even break into a known drop house. We've got to have a warrant first."

Rocky was unkind only once about the Border Patrol, which he basically respects: "If you're going to drive, do it in the rain. Those guys don't want to get wet."

Photo Courtesy U.S. Border Patrol

Left. Now back in San Juan Capistrano, Rocky is surrounded by friends.

Right. Sometimes even the best camouflage doesn't work.

SPINY LIZARDS

By Karen Sausman
Director — Naturalist
Living Desert Reserve
Palm Desert, California

Over fifty species of lizards can be found in the southwestern United States and northern Mexico. They range in size from tiny night lizards that measure no more than three inches from the tip of their snouts to the ends of their tails to fourteen-inch-long desert iguanas. There are slow moving, spine-covered horned lizards and shiny, slender legless lizards. One of the largest and most common of the groups of southwestern lizards is the heavy bodied, pointed scaled *Sceloporus*, often referred to as spiny swifts, fence lizards, or blue-bellies. The genus *Sceloporus* has more representatives within the boundaries of the United States than any other group of lizards—fifteen species and at least twenty-seven subspecies.

With such a great number of species and subspecies, one might expect the members of the genus Sceloporus to come in a great variety of shapes and sizes. However, they all look somewhat alike. All are covered with dorsal scales. These have a ridge or "keel" running down the center of each scale which ends in a short, sharp projecting spine. The keeled scales overlap like the shingles on a roof. In almost all of the species the males have a blue patch on each side of their bellies and on their throats. The blue coloring is absent or much reduced in the females. Spiny lizards are usually gray or brown with a pattern of stripes or dots running down their backs. Their tails are usually longer than their bodies.

Spiny lizards inhabit almost every sort of terrain except the highest peaks and aquatic or sub-terrestrial environments. They are found in steamy tropical forest, harsh desert, and at the timberline. Some are ground dwellers while others climb, ascending rocks, stumps, tree trunks and the sides of buildings with ease. All are confirmed baskers and they are frequently seen on the tops of rocks or fence posts in full sun. Spiny lizards are strictly diurnal (active during the day). If any are seen at night it is because of some unusual circumstance.

Male spiny lizards establish territories which they defend from other male lizards of the same species. Often they can be seen raising and lowering their bodies in a series of "push-ups." The push-ups allow the male lizards to expose their bright blue undersides to their adversary. Usually the trespassing male will make a hasty retreat at the sight of the blue undersides of the owner of the territory. If the push-ups are not enough to discourage the newcomer, the male will often chase the trespasser and occasionally, the two will fight a short, harmless battle. Territorial boundaries are not sharply defined and are continually shifting. Where food and shelter are abundant, several males may live in close association with one of the males being dominant. Female spinys also defend small territories but they freely roam through the territories of the surrounding males.

Mating season starts soon after the lizards emerge from hibernation in late spring or early summer. Most species lay eggs, though a few are live-bearing. The eggs hatch sometime in August or September. As with most species of liards, female spinys have little or nothing to do with their young. Among those that

Illustrated by Pat J. Williams

lay eggs, the females search out a place under a log or rock where they can dig a small hole and deposit anywhere from two to twelve eggs depending upon the species. The eggs are covered and left to incubate in the warm soil. The young lizards hatch and dig their way to the surface. They are perfect miniatures of the adults and are capable of taking care of themselves. Some species of spiny lizards appear to be live-bearing; however, the term "live-bearing" is not strictly accurate when applied to lizards. In "live-bearing" lizards, the young actually hatch from eggs that have been incubated within the female's body.

The adult lizards are tolerant but not solicitous of the young. The young lizards grow rapidly between the time of hatching and the time of their first hibernation. Hatchling lizards are often more terrestrial than the adults and are more easily captured. Mortality during their first few months is quite high. Because of their small size, the hatchling lizards are able to remain active later in the fall than do the adults. The amount of growth of individual hatchlings is very erratic and unpredictable. Individuals of the same age living in the same locality may differ greatly in their growth rate. Following their second hibernation spiny lizards are usually sexually mature and have nearly reached their adult size.

Almost all species of spiny lizards hibernate during the winter months although desert species may only do so for a short period. When they disappear and emerge in any particular year depends on the latitude and elevation and also on local variations in climate. Hibernating spinys often use abandoned rodent burrows or dig their own. Some move under or in between rocks while still others find security within logs or stumps.

Spiny lizards are primarily insectivorous but some species will occasionally nibble on young leaf buds or other vegetation. In hunting insects, the lizards will sometimes run long distances and stop near their prey. They then creep slowly up on it until they are within grabbing range. However, many of the lizards are more passive hunters. They will sit very still, waiting for a suitable insect to land near enough for them to be able to make a dive for it. Spiny lizards are of major economic importance because of the large numbers of insects they destroy. The lizards, in turn, are preyed upon by snakes, roadrunners, hawks, owls and small canivores such as ringtailed cats, foxes, and coyotes.

Lizards avoid predation in a variety of ways. Many will freeze, making it almost impossible to see them. Others will dart quickly under a rock or into the brush. As a last resort spiny lizards, like many other species, are able to part with their tails in response to being grabbed by a predator or from receiving a glancing blow from some other source. The structure of the vertebrae in the tail facilitates easy separation. The tail's separation points lie through the vertebra. The cleavage extends through the skin, fat layers, and muscle tissues so that the break is complete and does as little harm as possible. In addition, thick-walled areas in the artery of the tail act as sphincters to close the artery and prevent undue loss of blood. Occasionally

Continued on page 46

Ghost Towns I Remember...

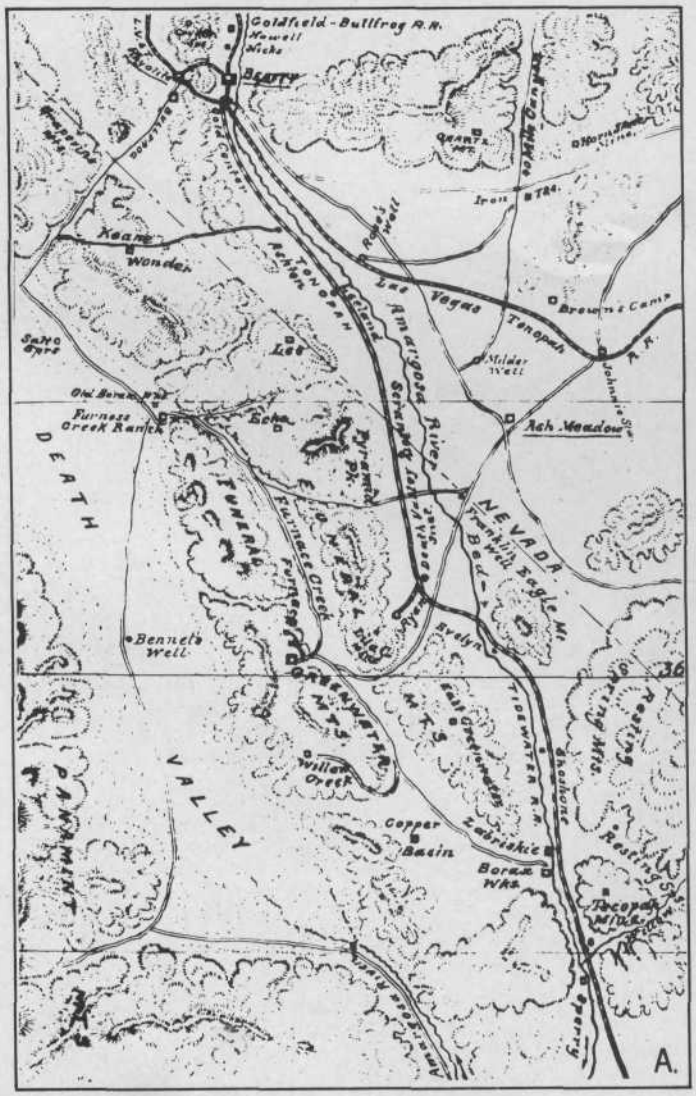
by Russ Leadabrand

Each year that passes sees accessibility to the classic California desert ghost towns diminishing. Our most rewarding ghost town visits may already have taken place. The Mojave Desert's deserted and uninhabited mining camps are little more than sites today—lonesome, wind-picked, vandalized sites. Those vandals and the weather and the wood thieves and the ghost town junk collectors and the metal scroungers and the over-zealous treasure hunters have reduced more than one happy ghost town community to rubble. Add to this the growing forest of "keep out" signs posted by federal agencies, both military and non-military, and one must recognize that the splendid era of ghost town exploring and collecting can never come again.

Still there are the faithful, those who have been there and seen it, who will make annual pilgrimages into the back country hoping to catch sight of almost any recognizable ghost town. They seek that quickening of the heartbeat when they round a bend in the wash or jog in the track and see the rubble, the debris, the standing stones, or the fragile wooden walls of a storied ghost camp such as a Panamint City or an Aurora. This is heady stuff for almost anyone. A ghost town anywhere in the West is raw excitement.

These boom camps of yesteryear, scattered from the Little San Bernardino Mountains on the south to the mystic mid-regions of Death Valley on the north, are magnets too strong to pull away from. To visit a camp alone in winter with a soldiering wind and a hard blue sky overhead can infest you with a virus that calls for you to return and return and to see more and more during all the unspent years of your life.

I know. I have been thus infected for years. And I was luckier than most. Shortly after World War II, I came by a friend who was a long-time devotee of Death Valley. He had a sturdy off-road military rig that he was willing to push toward any desert goal, however remote. As his frequent back country guest I was rewarded, on one dazzling winter morning, with the frigid vista of old Chloride City in the Funeral Mountains east of Stove Pipe Wells. It was a



A. *An old map of the Greenwater Mining District of Death Valley.*

B. *The Last rail line into Death Valley from Ludlow, the Tonopah and Tidewater served neither Tonopah nor went to the ocean.*

C. *Of all the ghost towns, Rhyolite has the most impressive ruins. It is a big site, but picked over by collectors before warning signs were posted.*

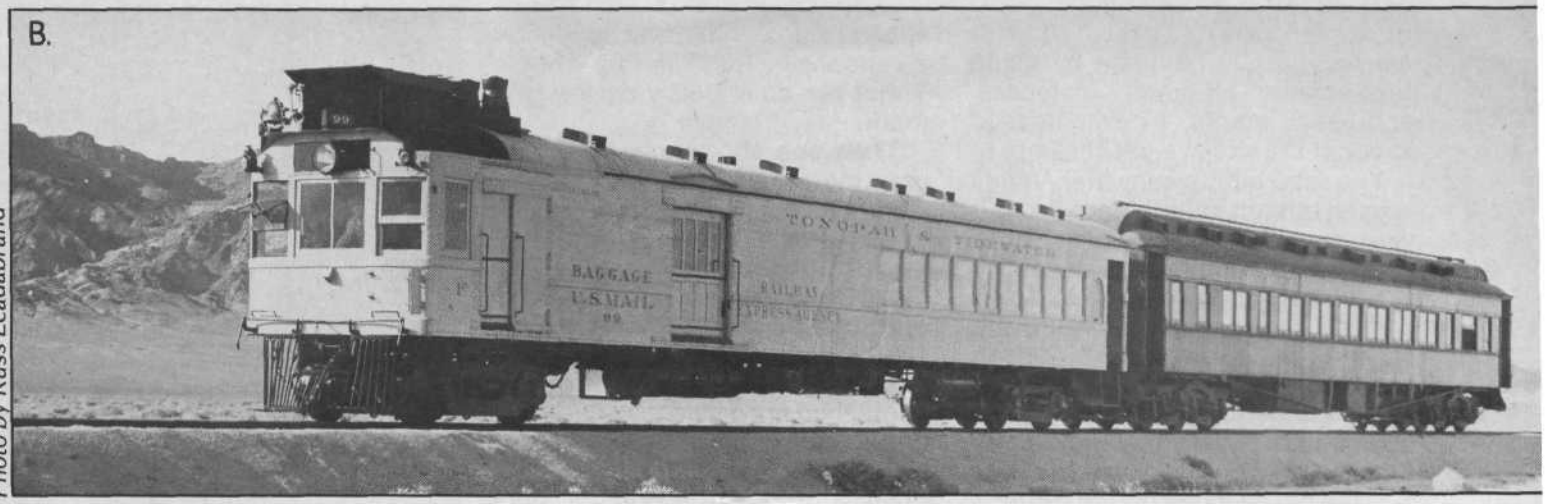


Photo by Russ Leadabrand

frosty delight because at that time the old wooden buildings of the boom era still stood. Here was a house with those period gingerbread decorations along the eaves and lathe-turned wooden geegaws on the front porch still intact. An eight-hole privvy still stood, sort of, and this was a rare prize. We walked around it and pictured half-frozen miners trekking to the windy, wintry convenience.

Chloride City since has been heavily vandalized and is now, according to Park rangers, gone. But the road up the backside of the Funerals from Daylight Pass though unmaintained is passable for Jeeps. People still visit the site and wonder what stood here. I, happily, was there in time.

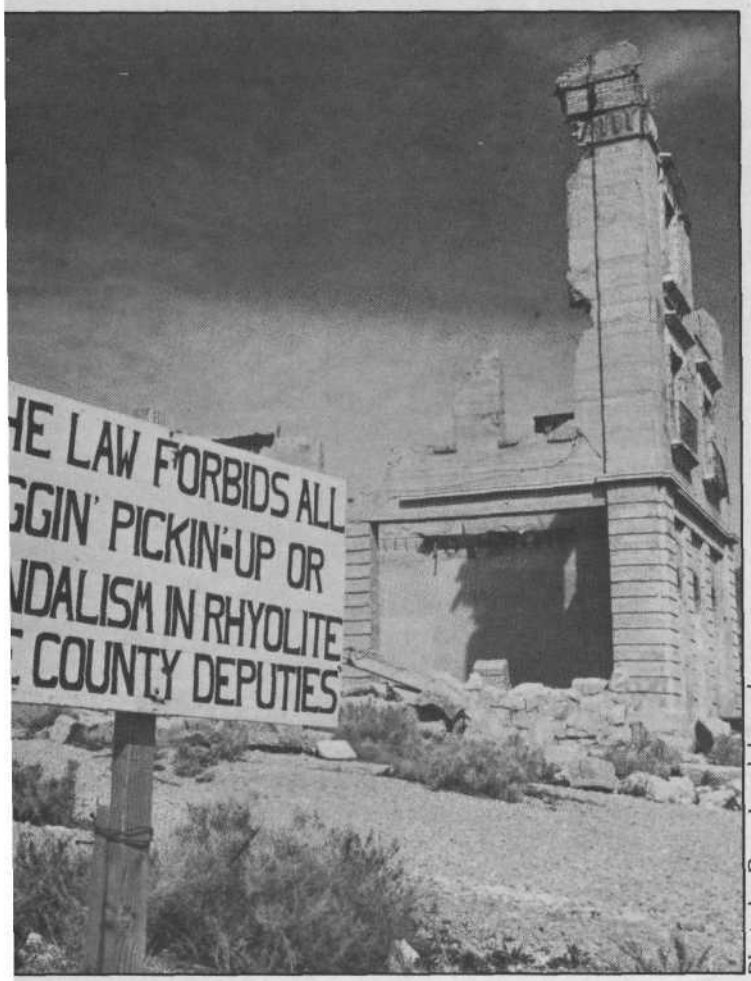


Photo by Russ Leadabrand

My same friend with the Jeep took me to New Ryan, or Ryan if you will, one day. The little narrow-gauge railroad that operated within the camp on winter weekends and took visitors into the warren of the borate mines had been shut down because of injury insurance considerations. The diggings, the last borate mining site in Death Valley, were closed down when the more economical open pit mine at Boron became active. Ryan had a watchman, too, who collected and trained a dog, several cats, and some ravens. He told visitors to the mining site there, just east of Furnace Creek Inn and Zabriskie Point, some wonderful tall tales.

There once was a narrow gauge line that ran all the way from Death Valley Junction to Ryan, and hanging trestles over deep ravines still stood near the mine site but they are gone now. Ryan was largely a tight aggregation of bunk houses, mess halls, and supply buildings. When the mine closed and the miners and support staff moved out, the lights were kept on at night and the watchman was hired. But in time the board buildings fell before the wind and died from loneliness. There is a paved road to the site.

Beyond Ryan, south on a road that seeks Furnace Canyon and Greenwater Valley, past the spur to Dante's View, is an older and more romantic realm. This is the land of the old copper mining boom of Death Valley, nearly forgotten, unsung, and unadvertised.

I visited this site the first time on a turquoise morning with a bannering wind. We hoped to find the remains of old Furnace and Greenwater, the principal camps in the copper district of the Black Mountains. We found one frightened-looking board and batten shack, almost appearing embarrassed that it alone had survived the boom and bust on that bleak field. I had taken with me mental prints of old photographs showing a shoelace of old copper camp buildings here, but the shack alone kept watch. Had we found the site? It is easy to get turned around in the big country of Death Valley. Was the shack site Greenwater town? Furnace? It was Greenwater as it turned out, and not a good place to walk at night without a light. Too many bottomless shafts.

I have, somewhere in my photo collection, an unhappy snap of a Jeep that made that innocent blunder and fell into a mine shaft no different than those

of Greenwater. Later, when I learned how to navigate by using topo maps, altimeter, compass, and bench marks, I never needed to doubt the site of a ghost camp.

The road into Greenwater Valley is open but not maintained. From it you can spill down across BLM land into Greenwater Canyon, a sandy wash, that leads the explorer past the one-time purple bottle site of the old Greenwater Canyon bootlegger camp. On beyond are caves and petroglyph rocks and the plain south of Death Valley Junction that holds Old Ryan (or Lila C.), the big eastside borate camp.

Here are hundred of acres of rubble and debris, all that is left of the townsite of the largest camp east of the Greenwaters. It is hard to admit that one will not find a purple bottle here. There are so many broken ones, and some broken but buried in blow sand so that they look whole from a distance and only reveal that awful flaw when you start digging. It may take hours, or days, to convince a bottle collector that Old Ryan has been picked over and picked clean of bottles years ago. Still the fat leavings sucker you on, and the search is made more tempting with the finding of soldered-bottom tin cans, tobacco tins with the original paint still intact, old lard buckets, and those house-shaped syrup cans, all of long ago and very collectible.

In time my ghost town collecting with my friend in his rig sharpened my appetite. I gave in, bought a hammer-hard old Willys Jeep stationwagon, bulbuous and roomy, and entered a period of wandering across the desert country whenever and however.

I sought out Harrisburg and Skidoo, those Panamint Range camps. The first time I visited Skidoo the camp had only a single, huge, two story, porched boarding house, bleached, blowsy and windsawn. It linked so neatly the not so long ago with the long, long ago of the Lost Gunsight excitement. But back again, in my own rig, I discovered that Harrisburg had lost all its standing memories, and that the cemetery at Skidoo had been shoveled open by ghouls, and the old boarding house had been torched, the felony brightening the Panamint sky for the length of the range one winter night. It was so spectacular a sight, and so hideous a vandalism, that the Los Angeles **Times** ran an obituary on the landmark.

Then one shockingly clear January morning in van with another Jeep, we pushed on from Seldom Seen Slim's trailer bivouac at Ballarat (the old town was beyond being called a ruin even then) to seek the mouth of Surprise Canyon. This defile, spilling steeply down the west slope of the Panamints, had once held a wagon road. We sought it out. We labored off the alluvial fan up to the cottonwood camp of Chris Wicht's, pond and all. I had read Neill Wilson's "Silver Stampede" about what lay on up ahead.

In his life and death story of a mining camp, Wilson captures well the history of one of the most exciting of the big camps, Panamint City. Panamint City was never a hohum place; it spawned at least half the tough town legends of yesterday California, leaving Bodie the other half.

We rumbled up the stream-in-the-road track, up Surprise Canyon's nastiest miles. This was once a good road, a toll road, a road that Wells Farge refused to service because of robbers. Horses once hauled freight and people in, ore and metal out. The day we called, an agile horse would have stumbled in places. But the fat stationwagon made it fine, as it always did, and there was the chimney of the brickwork smelter, finished and operating just before the mines played out and the cloudburst and flash flood hit. That deluge sluiced the town from its grabhold on the canyon and dumped it back down on the alluvial fan that spills out into Panamint Valley. Towns, cribs, cemetery, all went.

We had a joyous, heady day at the site, enjoying an ambrosial picnic lunch made more delicious by the setting, the friendly ghosts, the winey weather. We picked up square nails in the streambed and did not disturb folks who have a ranch on up the canyon. It was difficult to leave.

South of Surprise, down past Happy and Pleasant Canyons, are the scattering of other mining camps and short-lived settlements. Nothing grand. And further south still is the site of the old Wingate monorail, and some wreckage, and

the tantalizing course into Death Valley via Wingate Pass. This has often been closed since the days of regular traffic by washouts and fall-ins. Now the ubiquitous military has angled across the course. Travel is not only naturally impossible but legally off limits.

No one has written about the townsite at the Wildrose charcoal kilns in the Panamints. The kilns have been a tourist attraction for years but few are aware that just

Mine head site near Randsburg. Photo by George Service

across the road, to the west of the kilns, is the litter of the camp where kiln people lived. There are faint suggestions of foundation lines, as if some tent top structures stood here for a while and then vanished when the kilns were closed down. No pictures of the camp remain that I know of, but the evidence is there in the litter—broken bits of purple glass, some badly rusted soldered tin cans, junk that only an archaeologist could love.

Ring Death Valley and you must consider the most elegant of the modern ghost camps, Rholite. In toward Death Valley from Rhyolite's concrete ruins is the rubble at Leadfield, a swindle camp. At Leadfield you find yourself at the beginning of the one-way road down deep, narrow Titus Canyon, one of the best scenic attractions in the Monument.

Drifting southwest out of Death Valley the way is blocked now by staggered military and government holdings. After you scratch off the Naval Weapons Center which is almost always closed to the public, you have said goodbye to any chances of seeing Old Coso, Junction Ranch, Millspaugh, and even the colorful Coso Hot Springs. Cuddeback Dry Lake, a military gunnery range for many years and not yet back in public hands, blocks random desert exploring. The next three government tracts—Mojave Range B, Goldstone Range, and Fort Irwin—effectively close off thousands of acres to the east.

These hold a peppering of ghost camps including fabled Garlic Springs, Copper City, Crackerjack, Goldstone, and the source of a never-built rail line from the Tonopah & Tidewater to Crackerjack. Crutts, now vanished, can be found by topo map navigating and sifting through topsoil for litter. It's there, and your metal locator will go crazy over the rust and rubble.

On one icy day, my bulbous station wagon hauled me up Yellow Grade from the smelter ruins at Keeler to Cerro Gordo, or "Fat Hill." The sawtooth landmarks of the Sierra were sharp-etched on the other side of the pane of reflection that was dead Owens Lake. The buildings that stood in Cerro Gordo were in better shape than most of the camp's contemporaries. Still Cerro Gordo was losing out, aided by weather and time. Vandals had been here, but a watchman patrolled the place and still does. Today, gaining entrance is more difficult. The road up Yellow Grade is usually closed.

Somewhere behind Cerro Gordo is the dry camp of Belmont. and the most magnificent ghost camp of them all, Beveridge, with standing buildings but no longer with tools lying in front of the cabins, is there too. It's impossible to reach by any road and is utterly remote, even lost to most.

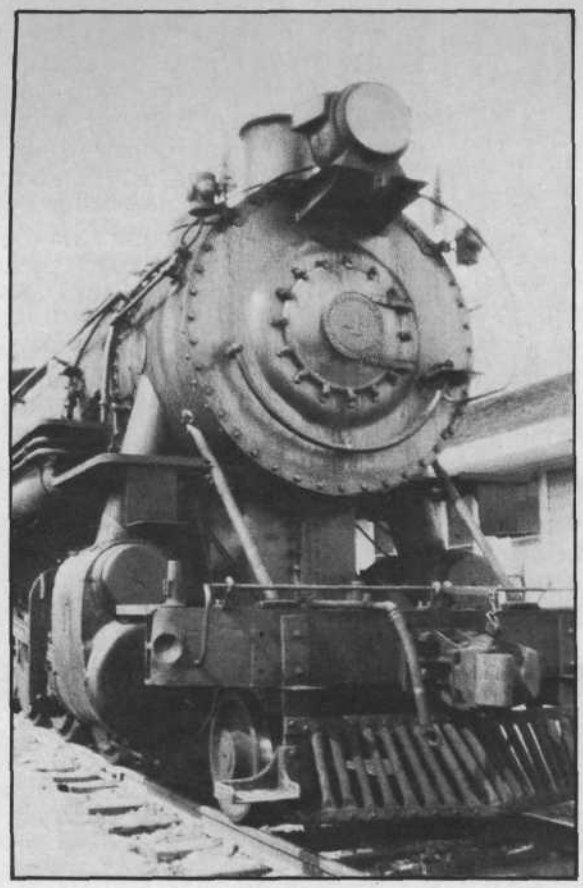
I've talked to folks who've been helicoptered into the site and also to young Boy Scouts whose leader knew the mysterious route and technique for getting there. Once you know how..ah, but few do.

Beveridge, because of remoteness and because of the scores of stories about "the ghost town that looks as if people just walked away one day," has to be the best there is in the Western California desert country. It thus beats out Bodie and its beautiful wooden structures, and the site of Aurora, which once had wooden and brick buildings. Bodie became a state park. Aurora was killed when the brick hunters hauled away the used brick during World War II and was buried when the bottle hunters and treasure hunters and desert ghost town wood collectors took down the houses and stores.

This is the ghost town country that I love. I've been lured to camps in Arizona and have found them just as charming and magnetic. I long to explore high Colorado in the deep summer. I've walked around some marvelous sites in Nevada. Still, this region from Masonic and Bodie down to Crutts and Coolgardie is my favorite.

I'll always keep a sharp eye on Randsburg for the Yellow Aster mine there was one of the best. Randsburg may never ghost if only because desert people just plain like living there.

I shall look for more places to study. And I shall fuss from time to time if more of the sites are placed off limits. This, I feel, is robbing Californians of their heritage. It would be wrong, I feel, to seal off from future examinations these wonderful testimonies to man and his winnowing of wealth from the earth in these inhospitable and lonely places. Each should be a landmark or a shrine. And talked about, written about, and shared.



BACK DOWN THE TRACK

By
R. M. Lowe

Back in 1920 I hired out as a "pearl diver," or dishwasher for Fred Harvey's swank dining station in the Frisco Railroad's depot at Snyder, Okalahoma. Later I made night fry cook but I knew I couldn't stand the smell of cooking food all my life so I told my dad, D.W. Lowe, about it. Dad borrowed a beginner's telegraph set from a fellow operator and brought it to me. His parting words were for me to hit the key every night and that I did, after I learned the alphabet.

After a few months of giving up and starting over, the Morse code began to make sense to me and finally, I got to hanging around outside the big telegraph office at Snyder. Standing first on one foot and then the other, I began to get every other word that came through the window. Then after I got good enough to criticize their work, they opened the door and let me in the office. That's when I found that looking out through the window was a lot different than looking in, but I finally earned the title of "Ham" and took off looking for work.

After some hirings and firings on various railroads, I landed at Silver Lake, California, on old Borax Smith's tracks, the Tonapah & Tidewater line. At that remote station on a sandy road about half-way between Los Angeles and Las Vegas, I relieved agent D. A. Gray who was a Spanish-American War veteran and former train dispatcher out of Chicago.

Mr. Gray explained to me my duties as agent, telegrapher, postmaster, weighmaster, and pumper of water for the railroad and little village, which consisted of one little store and about a dozen shacks laid out on the helter-skelter plan and occupied by old retired miners and prospectors who spent their remaining days sitting in the doorways of their cabins panning gold from surrounding mountains through a haze of pipe smoke.

I wore many hats at Silver Lake, most of which came down over my eyes and rested on my eighteen-year-old nose. The most enjoyable job was reading the postcards that came through my office until I took exception to what was said in one and answered it. What transpired during the visit by a postal inspector that followed made me wish I'd never learned to read, but I never stopped reading them!

The most famous person I ever saw at Silver Lake was General George W. Goethals of Panama Canal fame. He was on his way to the Black Canyon of the Colorado River beyond Las Vegas to appraise a site for a dam, the same one that was to be called Boulder and later changed to Hoover.

While the General's car was being gassed up, he strolled over to where a citizen named Jim Hyten was building a cellar. Jim had come to an impasse in roofing his cellar and was just sitting there between a rock and a hard place, and getting no place, when the distinguished gentleman dealing in dams said to Jim: "How are you doing?"

Jim looked up and replied: "I wuz doin' all right until I got to this dang roof, and I don't know how to brace it to hold up a foot of dirt."

Whereupon the noted engineer picked up a stick, drew a set of rafters in the dirt, explained the stress points, and said: "If you cut your rafters exactly like this pattern, and space them one and one-half feet apart, the roof will hold up two feet of dirt."

With that the General returned to his car and headed for Las Vegas. Our nosey storekeeper rushed over to find out what the General had said and when Jim found out who his famous advisor was, he dropped hammer and rafter into the cellar.

One day I received a letter from Mr. Jack Fry, head of the fledgling Western Air Express, asking me to draw a rough sketch of our part of the desert, and especially the dry lakes where a light plane might land. Later on, President Fry flew the first air mail plane over Silver Lake and landed at Las Vegas for the night.

A while back I stood on the dry bed of Silver Lake and counted a dozen jet tracks so high in the sky I couldn't see the planes. On one of these planes was my brother, Deke Lowe, flying non-stop from Los Angeles to Germany. There's

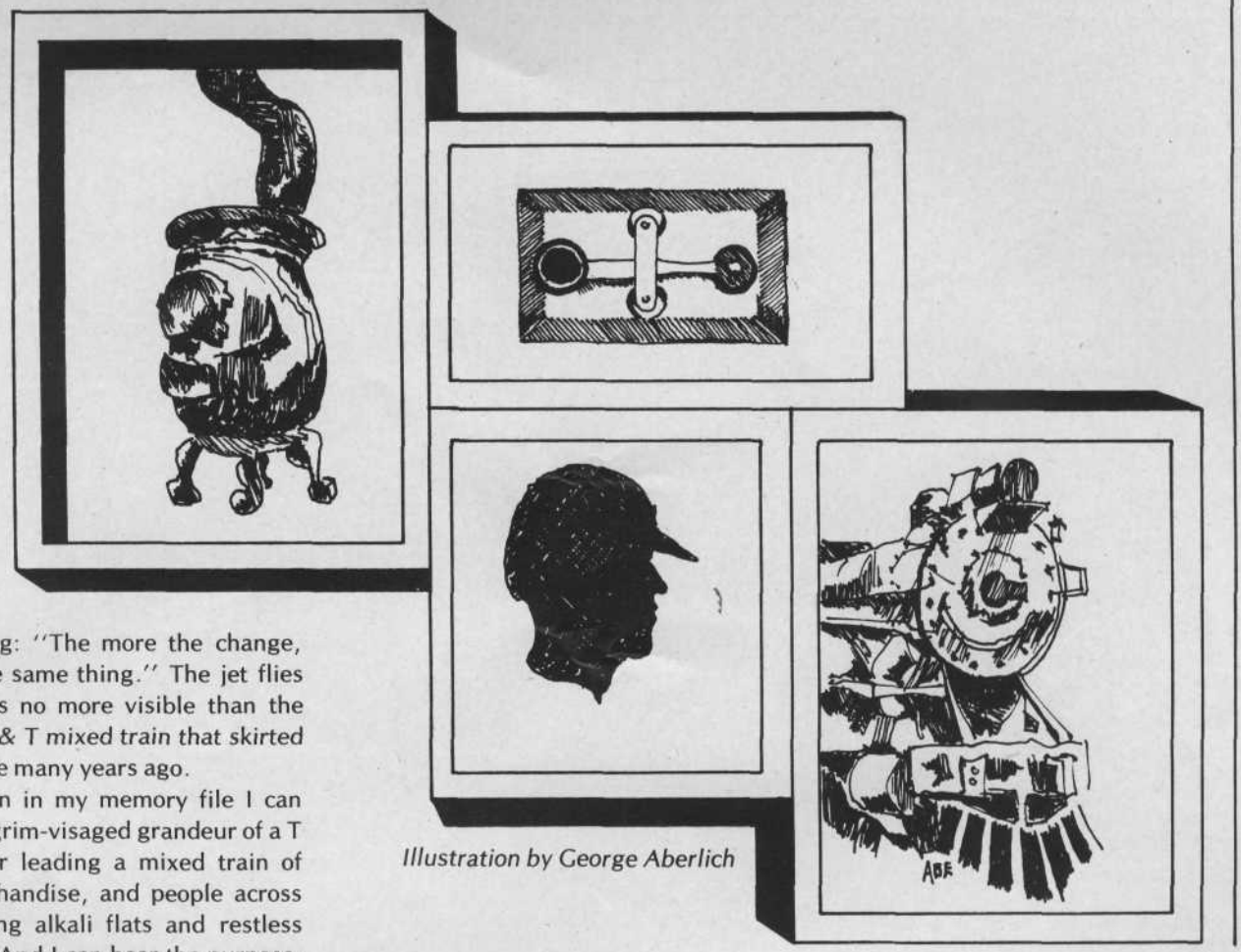


Illustration by George Aberlich

an old saying: "The more the change, the more the same thing." The jet flies so high, it is no more visible than the little daily T & T mixed train that skirted the same lake many years ago.

Deep down in my memory file I can still see the grim-visaged grandeur of a T & T steamer leading a mixed train of borax, merchandise, and people across the forbidding alkali flats and restless sand dunes. And I can hear the purposeful little steam "Jack" fussing and blasting reverberating chunks from the walls of the Amargosa Canyon, its melodious whistle sending curious coyotes scurrying from the cliffs above. It was a train out of never-never land, such as a little boy might draw with uncertain crayons on a nickle tablet—a drawing to be remembered but impossible to duplicate.

Today there's not a shack or a human left in the old town of Silver Lake. The place is quiet and sleeps a deep sleep under a blanket of memories. Today the first tenant of the area, the Ancient Wind, is in charge. He never rests in His work of erasing man's efforts and restoring the old desert according to His whims. We once thought Silver Lake would be a permanent mark on the map. The only thing we learned for sure was that permanence belonged to the elements.

Father Time, another desert character, has a way of distorting past events into something bordering on mythology so in telling old history, I try to remember it was first recorded on the plastic mind of my youth and sometimes, my tales become a little distorted in the hands of Time. But I like to recall those old days when the world was young to me.

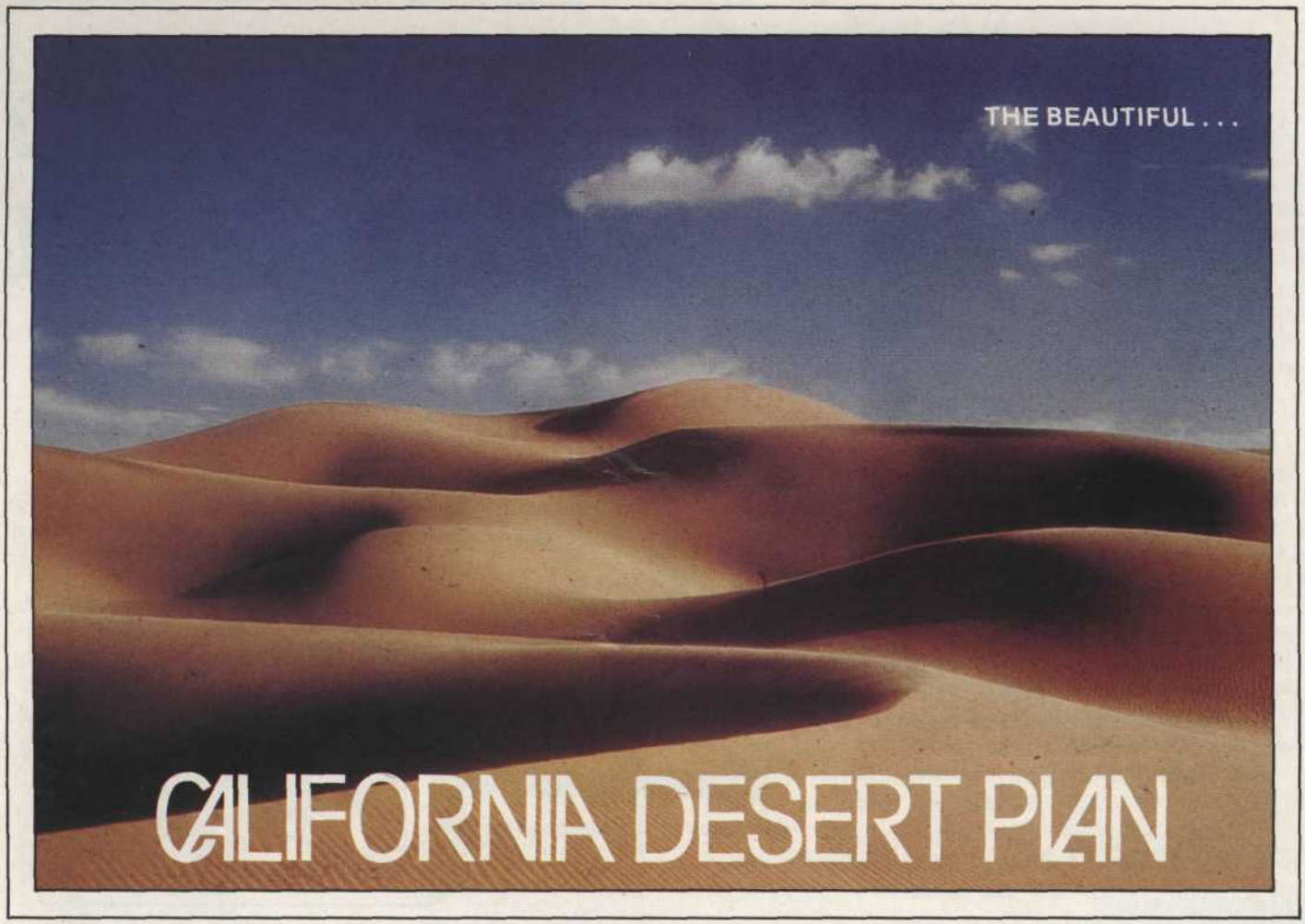
Sometimes, when I want to visit my old friends again, I stroll down by the old depot, at night when all is quiet, and peep through the windows of the telegraph office where I learned my art and made my living for many years. In my mind I can still see the old ghosts of my trade. Over there, in the middle of the office, I see the homely but inviting pot-bellied stove. On cold nights its bright flames would lean out through a crack in its door and sketch wavering and dancing figures on the office walls and ceiling, just the thing to further tranquilize a tired and sleepy operator.

Looking near the bay window, I see myself sitting erect in a captain's chair at a table laden with fussing and throbbing telegraph instruments. Peering from under a green eyeshade, wreathed in a cloud of Prince Albert, I seem oblivious to everything in the world except the telegram I hold in my hand. My right hand at the end of its black sleeve dances, and rolls out a series of metallic clicks that bounce off the high-ceilinged walls like chain lightning. The clicks constitute a mysterious code that crosses the land with the speed of light to another instrument somewhere, making perfect sense to another operator with a typewriter.

Seldom today do we hear the rhythmic click of a telegraph sounder or the melody of a far-off steam whistle riding the night air across the hills and valleys, a loss that breaks the hearts of old-time engineers who in their day were artists when it came to blowing such whistle classics as "Lonesome John" at every road crossing.

Old steam locomotives stand in museums and parks all over our nation, in their rest homes of rust, brooding silently on the glorious days that used to be. The Ancient Wind may solo through the few abandoned depots that knew your name and mine, but He will never blow away our cherished memories.

"30 and 73," old buddies. Keep your wicks trimmed and your lantern globes sparkling and some day, who knows, we may get a steady trick on the big main line up yonder.



by
James B. Ruch
California State Director
Bureau of Land Management
U. S. Department of the Interior

RAPIDLY RISING use of the California Desert, which could be called "people pressure," has created numerous problems for the Desert and its resources in recent years, but fortunately, those who are concerned for the future of the Desert will have an opportunity in the coming months to be a part of the solution rather than part of the problem.

The occasion is the public review of the Bureau of Land Management's draft California Desert Plan. This comprehensive plan will provide the framework for management of the public lands of the California Desert for the balance of the 20th Century. Public lands comprise one-half of the 25 million acres in the Conservation Area, so the management of those lands will interact with and impact remaining lands, including those of Joshua Tree and Death Valley national monuments and private lands.

The California Desert Plan, mandated by Congress in 1976, is being prepared by the BLM as a special project with extensive public involvement.

The Desert is an area of 40,000 square miles, one-fourth of the land surface of California, whose limited resource base is under increasing pressure from competing, often conflicting, interests. These include commodity interests such as mining, livestock grazing, and energy development and transportation, as well as the obvious recreational interests. So, a question we ask ourselves as we consider the many forms of outdoor recreation on the Desert is, "How do you manage adventure?"

It's a very relevant question to those who use the Desert for recreation, particularly those who use recreational vehicles and have felt constricted in recent years. I know many would answer, "Hey, that's obvious; you don't manage adventure—just leave it alone!"

But we don't have that option, even if I thought it were the right one. Too many people have turned to the Desert as a place to play or work or "do their own thing" for the Desert to protect itself. And "adventure" turns to ashes the second or third time you find someone else camped in our favorite desert hideaway on a spring or fall weekend. Then, the problem is aggravated by the small minority of thoughtless desert users, vandals, and outright criminals who leave their scars on the Desert.

The hunter-conservationist has his image—and his existence—threatened by the shooting vandal who blasts signs, structures, and artifacts; the rockhound

must endure the rockhog and share with archaeologists the concern over criminal "pot-hunters" who steal Indian artifacts; and, families who ride off-road vehicles are harmed by the "Hell's Angel" type biker or jeeper who asserts a mythical "right" to ride wherever or over whatever his machine can operate.

The Congress of the United States has charged the Bureau of Land Management to manage the public lands of the California Desert to protect the natural, historical, and cultural resources that are so abundant on the Desert. Congress established the California Desert Conservation Area to provide "for the immediate and future protection and administration of the public lands in the California Desert within the framework of a program of multiple use and sustained yield, and the maintenance of environmental quality."

A two-part program of long-range planning and interim management was required, and BLM was given four years to complete a comprehensive, long-range plan for the management, use, development, and protection of the public lands in the California Desert. The deadline is September 30, 1980, but four years isn't really that long a time when you're looking at a plan for an area nearly the size of New England with diverse resources and contending demands on those resources.

Surprisingly little was known about the resources of the Desert when the Federal Land Policy and Management Act was passed. We at BLM knew we needed a great deal more data to lay the foundation on which we would build the Desert Plan.

As we began the inventory of resources and development of the Plan, we also launched a program to assure the public a chance to be heard in the process, with the California Desert Conservation Area Advisory Committee serving as a focal point of public involvement. The Committee has worked with considerable independence and has done a superb job. Its fifteen meetings have included a series of public forums on resources and issues, and have been attended by more than 2,400 people.

An inventory of the Desert for potential wilderness areas was conducted concurrently but separately, as provided for in the enabling legislation passed by Congress. Congress directed that BLM inventory roadless areas of 5,000 acres or more on all the public lands, including those of the Desert, and study those having "wilderness characteristics" as defined in the 1964 Wilderness Act for possible designation by Congress as Wilderness.

We completed the wilderness inventory with the maximum amount of public involvement, starting with a mailing to 8,000 people who had expressed an interest in wilderness or in the California Desert generally. We conducted a total of fifty-seven public meetings and hearings to explain the program and get your comments.

We found that 138 areas comprising of 5.5 million acres, or forty-four percent of the public lands of the Desert, qualified as wilderness study areas (WSAs). Those are being studied and wilderness values are being weighed against other multiple-use values as part of the preparation of the California Desert Plan. Areas which, based on the plan, are found suitable for designation as Wilderness will be recommended to the President and Congress. Only Congress can designate an area as Wilderness; our job as public land managers is to inventory, study, and report.

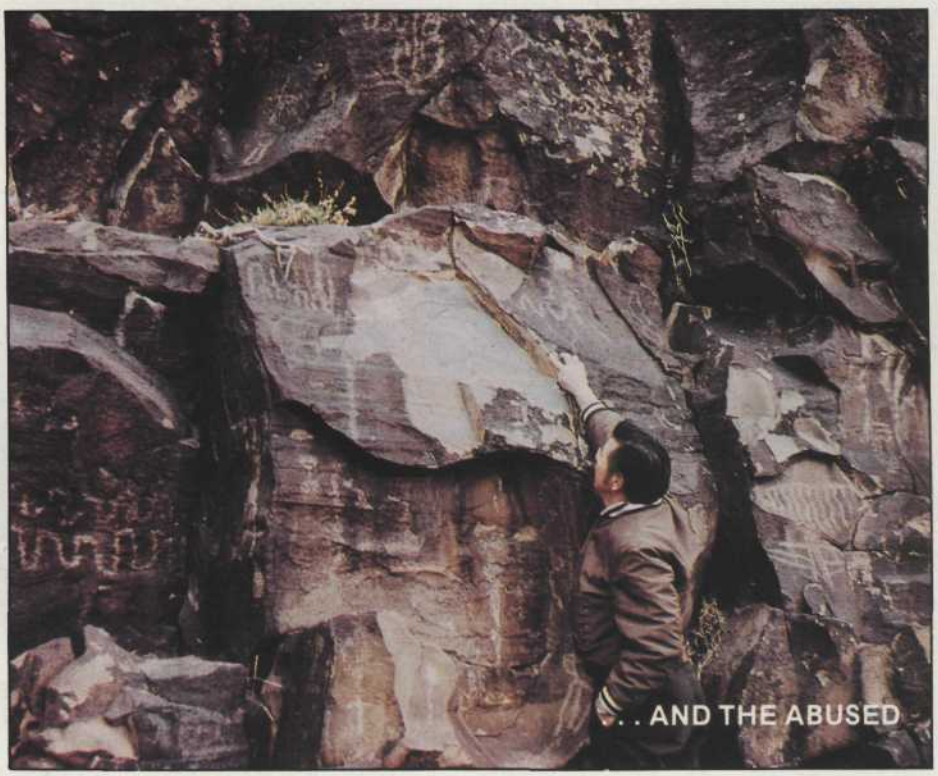
A trip to the Desert is many things: a change of scene; an escape from the pressures of life in the city; a family experience; the camaraderie of friends enjoying the outdoors. It may involve hunting, rockhounding, or just exploring new country.

It almost always involves a vehicle. The explosion of off-road vehicle (ORV) use in the 1960s threatened for a time to overwhelm the Desert, a land that is easily scarred and much slower to heal than less arid lands. BLM moved to institute management, first of competitive events and then of other organized events involving large numbers of vehicles, in 1972.

With the help of four-wheelers, dune-buggy groups, competitive motorcycle riders, rockhounds, and people who just like the Desert, some big strides have been made. However, we still need help to curb the damaging "play-riding" that tears up hillsides and scars the land outside approved areas.

It hasn't been easy, either for the land manager or for the rider who saw the Desert as the last place where he could "do his own thing." From the beginning of our first California Desert study in 1967, we've never forgotten that the California Desert offers adventure, and we've tried to provide a framework for management that left room for adventure.

Recreational access has been highly controversial but it really is one of the less complex problems to deal with in my opinion. The California Desert is unique



partly because it is a vast area of wild land and open space practically next door to one of the world's major population centers. It's also unique because of its accessibility. In addition to its 15,000 miles of paved highways and roads, there are more than 21,000 miles of dirt roads and trails and 6,500 miles of washes that can be negotiated by four-wheel-drive vehicles.

In response to two Executive Orders, the Department of Interior has issued regulations for the management of off-road vehicles to minimize damage to the resources of the land, protect users, and ease conflicts among uses. The regulations provide for designation of areas as "open," "closed," and "limited," depending on the capability of the lands and resources to sustain use. BLM designated the public lands of the California Desert in 1973 in its "interim critical management program," or ICMP, and the designations remain in effect under the new regulations pending completion of the Desert Plan. That program designates only three and one-half per cent of the Desert as "closed" to vehicle travel, six per cent as "open" with virtually no restriction, and ninety per cent limited to existing or designated roads and trails.

Future revisions of the vehicle management program for the Desert based on more complete resource data and the California Desert Plan may mean there won't be new "open" areas. However, there will not be a great change in access to public lands. The extensive road network provides direct access to over half of the Desert for anyone who can walk one mile, and to over ninety percent with a three-mile walk. This is hardly the "closed" or "off-limits" Desert some people talk about.

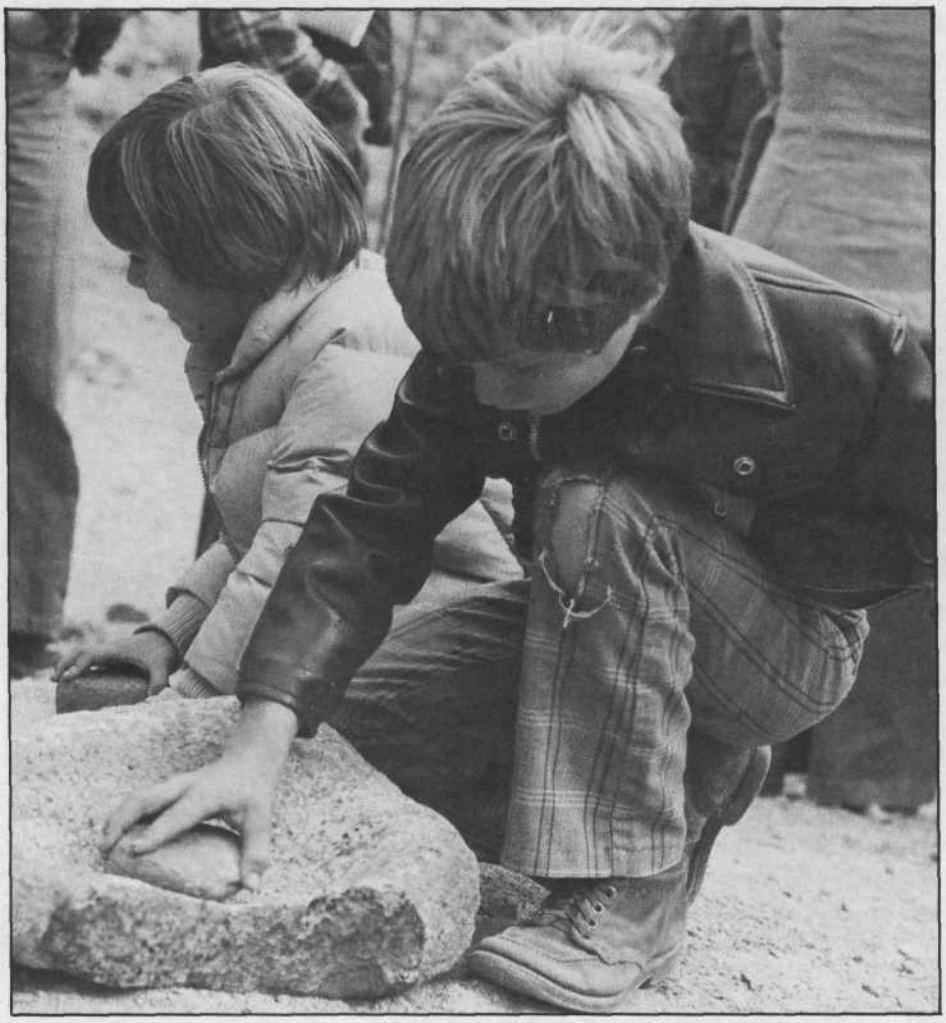
A key part of BLM's interim management program is the Desert Ranger Force, a highly trained group of seventeen natural resource specialists who are there to assist the visitor and protect the resources. Their first job is to help people who use the Desert, to explain the how and why, and to lend a hand if you get lost, stuck, of if your vehicle breaks down. They've received emergency medical training as well as law enforcement training.

Theft of desert plants was a thriving business prior to passage of Native Plant Act. BLM Desert Rangers examine yuccas that were uprooted but left behind.

While the rangers are trained law enforcement officers, emphasis is on information, education, and assistance. We believe an informed desert user will be a thoughtful user. This was the whole idea behind some "desert awareness events" we sponsored; that is, to get the resource specialists, scientists, conservationists, off-roaders, and BLM talking.

The Congress of the United States has enacted a number of laws for the protection and management of the public land and resources. The more pertinent of these include the Wilderness Act, Endangered Species Act, Mineral Leasing Act, Mining Law of 1872, Geothermal Steam Act, Clean Air Act, Historic Preservation Act of 1966, Wild Free-Roaming Horse and Burro Act, Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act, and, of course, the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 which established the California Desert Conservation Area and provided the basic organic law for management of the public lands.

That list of laws underscores an important point which is that the Desert is much more than a recreation area, an open space, or wilderness. It is a storehouse of minerals, from the most common industrial minerals to the rare earths used to put the color in our television screens; it is a valuable grazing area for livestock as well as native wildlife; and it is a potential energy source of the first magnitude. And all these resources will be needed and used by



Kids meet cultural resources. Youngsters examine Indian grinding stones during "Desert Awareness Event" sponsored jointly by BLM and four-wheel drive clubs.

Americans in the years ahead. Therefore, a vital part of the Desert Plan is to provide for the proper use of these commodity resources of the Desert.

The list of laws makes another point. Our job in BLM is to administer those laws in a way that will ensure the long-term productivity of the lands for all the people, and for future generations as well.

Public involvement has been an integral part of the ICMP for vehicle use, the wilderness review, and the development of the California Desert Plan. We've held meetings, field trips, and resource seminars to listen to people who use the Desert, or who are concerned for its future even though they seldom visit it. The effort included national, state, and desert resident opinion polls

Our job is to provide the greatest opportunity for the public to become involved in the planning process and the implementation of the plan. Your job as a citizen is to become as informed as possible and to become involved. Help us to answer the question we ask ourselves about managing adventure, and help us determine the right mix of multiple uses on the Desert.

Release of the draft California Desert Plan early next year will initiate an intensive three-month period of public review. Your first step toward involvement is to become informed, and to assure you're on our mailing list for planning materials. That step can be taken by contacting our Desert Plan Staff at 3610 Central Avenue, Suite 402, Riverside, California 92506. I urge you to take that step and become a part of the solution.

Editor's Note: The Bureau of Land Management's long-awaited and potentially controversial draft California Desert Plan is commonly believed to be a kind of pilot program or model for the management of desert lands everywhere within the United States. This is not so. The Plan's originator, the late Congressman Jerry Pettis of California, was concerned only with his own constituency which was in the heart of what is now called the California Desert Conservation Area. There has been no attempt since, either within the Congress or BLM, to project the Plan beyond its original geographical boundaries.

Left. Erosion is the price of unauthorized off-road vehicle activity.

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.

NOVEMBER 3 & 4, Bear Gulch Rock Club 17th Annual Gem and Mineral Show, Masonic Hall, 1025 N. Vine, Ontario, Calif. Exhibits, demonstrations, dealer space filled. Free admission and parking.

NOVEMBER 10 & 11, The Yucca Valley Gemfest featuring "Desert Rocks & Gems," presented by the Yucca Valley Gem & Mineral Society. The show will be held at the Community Center, 57098 29 Palms Highway, Yucca Valley, Calif. Admission free. Camping and good motels nearby.

NOVEMBER 10 & 11, Oxnard Gem and Mineral Society 10th Annual "Galaxy of Gems" Show, Oxnard Community Center, 800 Hobson Way, Oxnard, Calif. Exhibits, Dealers (spaces filled), Demonstrations. Free admission and parking.

NOVEMBER 3 & 4, annual "Wonderful Weekend in Twentynine Palms," Junior High School on Utah Trail, and Art Gallery on Cottonwood Drive, Twentynine Palms, Calif. Combines Gem and Mineral Show, Weed and Flower Show, Smorgasbord, Art Show, and other activities. Free admission to exhibits and free parking.

DECEMBER 8 & 9, American River Gem & Mineral Society's Fifteenth Annual Show, Winter Wonderland of Gems, Placer County Fairgrounds, Hwy 65 and All-American Blvd., Roseville, Calif. Special exhibits and educational demonstrations.

NOVEMBER 8-11, Death Valley Encampment, sponsored by the Death Valley '49ers, Death Valley National Monument. Four memorable days in the heart of America's desert wonderland. No admission charge. Scheduled activities, Art Show. Make reservations early if staying at Furnace Creek Inn or Ranch, or at Stove Pipe Wells Village.

NOVEMBER 2-4, New Age Fair, San Jose, Calif., Convention Center. Metaphysics, holistic health and ecology exhibits. Lectures, films.

NOVEMBER 3 & 4, Harvest Fair and Children's Festival, Waldorf School grounds, Fair Oaks, Calif. Crafts, puppet show, music.

NOVEMBER 3 & 4, Indian Arts Show and Sale, Foothill College, Los Altos, Calif. Handcrafts, demonstrations. Admission $2.50.

Photographers!

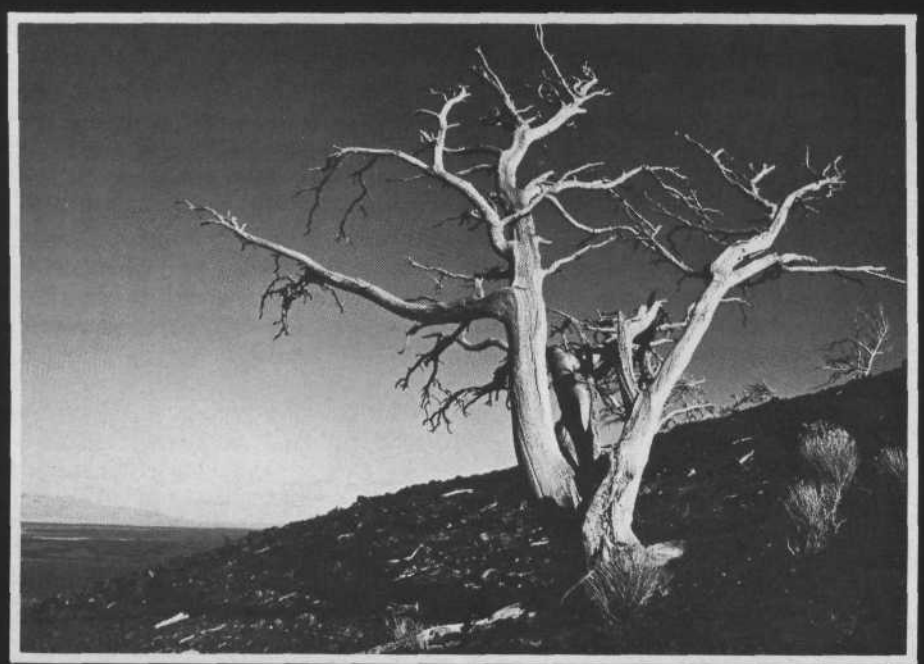
Desert Magazine is reinstituting its monthly photo contest. Each month for the first six months of 1980 (January through June issues), we will award $25 for the best Black and White photograph submitted. The second half of 1980 (July through December issues) will be a color contest. We'll publish the rules for that in our May 1980 issue. Confused? Don't be, it's simple. What we want now are B&W photographs of sunrises, sunsets, desert creatures, desert people, desert plants—there's no limit on the subject matter so long as your photograph is from the desert, any desert. The winning photographs will be published monthly. ($10 will be paid for non-prize winning photographs accepted for publication.) To enter the January contest, your photographs must be in our office by Nov. 1, 1979. For the February contest, get them to us by Dec. 1, 1979, and so on.

HERE ARE THE RULES

1. Prints must be B&W, 8X10, printed on glossy paper.
2. All entries for the January contest must be in the *Desert* Magazine office by November 1, 1979.
3. Prints will be returned only when self-addressed stamped envelope is enclosed.
4. Contests are open to both amateur and professional photographers. *Desert* Magazine requires first publication rights of prize-winning photographs.
5. Judges will be selected from *Desert's* editorial staff, and awards will be made immediately after the close of each contest month.
6. Each photograph submitted should be labelled (subject, time, place, shutter speed, film, and camera).

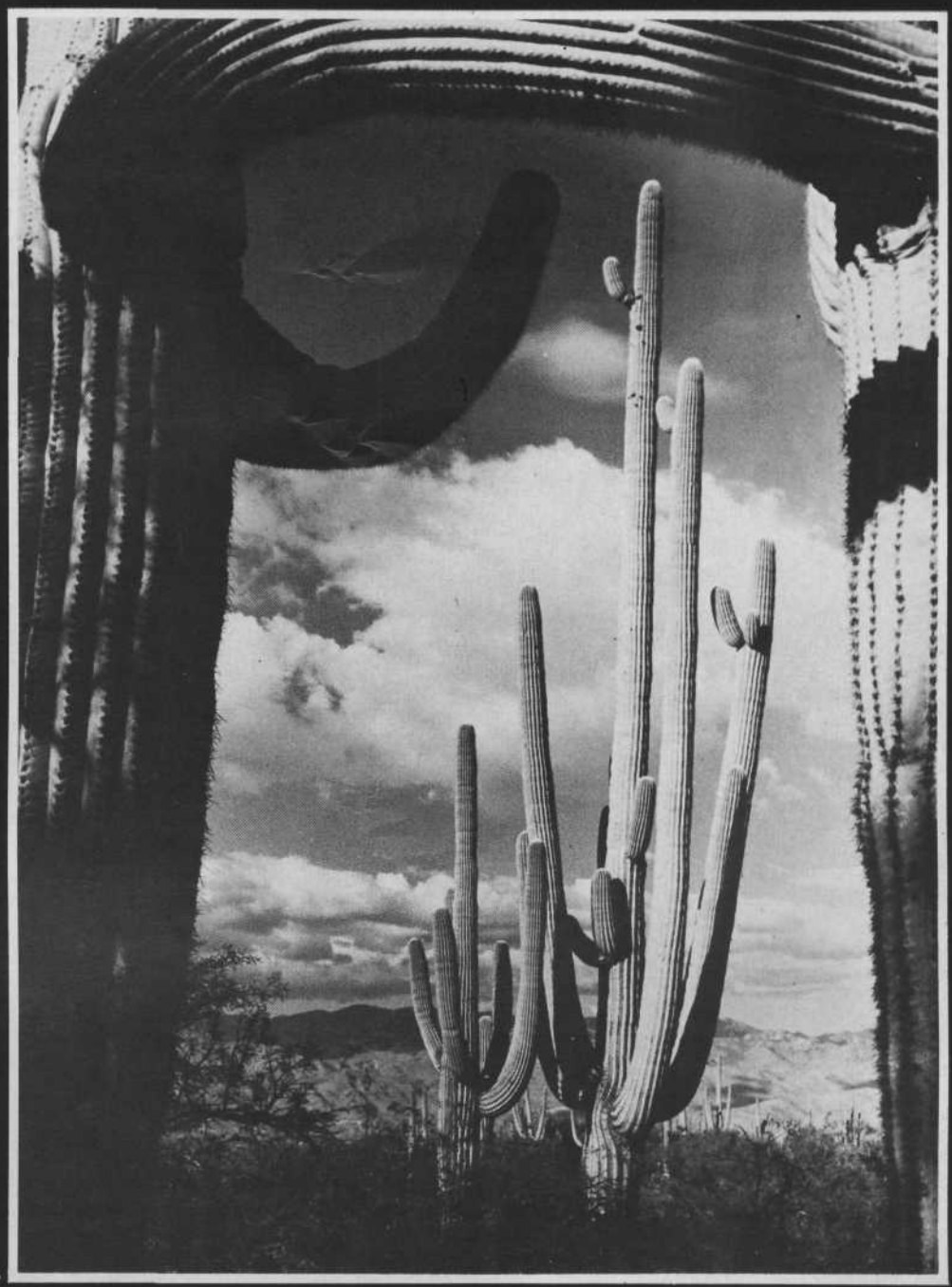
Address all entries to Photo Editor, Desert Magazine, P. O. Box 1318, Palm Desert, California 92260.

A.



B.

C.



D.

Here are some previous winners:

A. *Addie T. May's "Desert Coffee Break"*
B. *Mel Lewis' "Crater of the Moon"*
C. *T. P. Martin's "Desert Star" from Joshua Tree National Monument*
D. *George Olin's "Saguaro," cover winner July 1949*

What's Cooking on the Desert?

By Stella Hughes

It's a funny thing, but when a food is plentiful and cheap it's usually considered inferior. Take molasses for instance. In pioneering days this cane product was used as a sweetener in place of sugar. Sugar was as high as a cat's back, and only the well-to-do could afford to have it on their table. Now, sugar is cheap and plentiful, and wouldn't you know, molasses is expensive! Not only that but the health food enthusiasts cry loud and long how nutritionally worthless sugar is and how molasses contains iron, B vitamins, calcium, and potassium. All that aside, molasses is tasty in a lot of things and today, many housewives are finding more and more recipes calling for molasses, sorghum and corn syrup.

Before the Civil War sugar was a rare treat but even then it was coarse and brown, and so hardened in the barrel or hogshead in which it was shipped that a special auger was needed to loosen it, and a sugar grinder was necessary to pulverise the lumps. By the 1880s a new process for refining sugar was developed and so lowered the price that sugar quickly replaced molasses as a sweetener. Even though both refined sugar and molasses are made from sugar cane, molasses is produced after one process, whereas sugar requires several. During the course of making sugar several kinds of molasses are produced. "First-strike" molasses is the results of the initial evaporation and is light, table-quality syrup. The second run-off produces a tangy dark molasses while the third operation produces a very dark syrup called blackstrap which is most often used as an additive to livestock feeds or as a food supplement. Blackstrap cannot be used as a substitute for sugar, but is loaded with the nutrients so dear to health food nuts.

Sorghum syrup is made from sorghum grain, and sorghum syrup can be substituted for molasses in any recipe one-for-one, but it is necessary to cut the amount of sugar used in the recipe by about one-third, as sorghum is sweeter than molasses. Incidentally, many old recipe books call for "treacle," a substance made in England by combining molasses with sugar syrup.

In early-day cow-camps refined sugar was almost never available; nor was it an item in the chuck wagons on the trails north during the great cattle drives out of Texas from 1867 through 1880. These cow-country cooks used molasses and sorghum as a sweetener when making cobblers and puddings. The cowboys liberally poured either syrup on their sourdough biscuits and flapjacks, and referred to syrup as "lick." Any syrup or honey when used as a substitute for sugar was called "long sweetener."

If you are on a diet to lose weight, don't think by substituting molasses for sugar you'll cut calories, because each contain about fifty-four calories per tablespoon. However, molasses is a natural product and more healthful.

In some parts of the Southwest, at the turn of the century, sorghum-making was an autumn event that was looked forward to all year. Up under the beautiful Mogollon Rim in Arizona, made famous by Zane Grey's western stories, the homesteaders and ranchers set aside a few acres of their best ground each spring to plant sorghum cane. The fact that 95 per cent of the early settlers in the Tonto Basin were Southerners or from the Midwest may have some bearing on their liking for growing sorghum cane and making syrup. Early each fall the sweet juice was squeezed from the cane stalks in a press powered by horses or mules. Everyone in the neighborhood gathered to help each other. When the thick, golden-colored syrup had been boiled down to desired thickness, it was time to celebrate. Pot luck suppers, dances, horse races, wrestling matches and other feats of daring-do were performed by the mountain youths, and many a romance began at the fall sorghum run-offs.

Molasses is used in spicy gingersnaps, shoo-fly pie, Anadama bread, Boston baked beans, taffy, gingerbread, tallow (suet) puddings, mincemeat, fruit cakes, pumpkin pies, and cornbread. I use molasses in toppings for meatloaves, barbecue sauces, sauces for baked ribs, plum puddings, some salad dressings, and I wouldn't dream of baking acorn squashes without dribbling some molasses on them, along with butter. I add some molasses to my candied sweet potatoes or yams and it gives just the right touch of tangy goodness. My favorite cookie recipe is made with molasses or sorghum:

Molasses Peanut Butter Cookies

- 2 cups sifted all-purpose flour
- 1½ teaspoons baking soda
- ½ teaspoon salt
- ½ cup shortening
- ½ cup peanut butter (chunky's best!)
- ¼ cup brown sugar
- 1 cup molasses or sorghum
- 1 egg

Sift together flour, baking soda and salt. Cream together shortening and peanut butter. Add brown sugar and mix. Add

the syrup and egg; beat well. Blend in dry ingredients gradually; mix thoroughly. Drop by the teaspoon on ungreased baking sheets; flatten with fork, criss-cross fashion. Bake in moderate oven (350 degrees) 12-15 minutes. Makes about 3½ dozen cookies.

Oatmeal-Molasses Cookies

8 cups quick-rolled oats
8½ cups sifted flour
1 tablespoon salt
2 tablespoons baking soda
2½ cups sugar
1 tablespoon ground ginger
2 cups melted vegetable shortening
2 cups molasses
4 eggs, beaten
¼ cup hot water
3 cups seedless raisins
2 cups ground walnuts

Reserve ½ cup flour. Sift together 8 cups flour, salt, baking soda. In a large bowl or dishpan mix oatmeal, sugar and ginger. Stir in the melted grease, molasses, beaten eggs, hot water, all the sifted dry ingredients, raisins and nuts. Work dough with hands until well blended. Add the ½ cup flour if needed to make dough workable. Roll portions of dough at a time to ¼-inch thickness, cut with 3½-inch cutter. Place cookies on lightly greased baking sheet. Brush with water; sprinkle with sugar. Bake in moderate oven (375 degrees) for ten minutes. This recipe makes a whole bunch.

Molasses Pie

Molasses pie was an old time favorite and a recipe over one hundred years old gives this one, and claims it is a great favorite with children.

3 eggs
1 teacupful brown sugar
1 teacupful molasses
½ of a nutmeg
2 tablespoonfuls of butter

Beat well together and bake in pastry shell. The juice of one lemon will improve it very much. Sorghum may be used instead of molasses.

Molasses Taffy

1½ cups sugar
1 cup light molasses
½ cup light corn syrup
¼ cup water
¼ teaspoon baking soda
2 tablespoons butter or margarine
⅓ cup chopped walnuts

In 3-quart saucepan, combine sugar, molasses, corn syrup, and water. Stir to dissolve sugar. Cook over medium-low heat for 15-20 minutes, stirring constantly. Raise temperature to medium; cook, stirring frequently to hard ball stage (265) 40-45 minutes. Add soda and butter; mix well. Stir in nuts. Pour into greased shallow pan. When cool enough to handle (about 15 minutes) pull till opaque and lighter in color. Form into ropes; cut with kitchen shears. Wrap in waxed paper or foil. Makes about seventy 1-inch pieces.

Molasses Barbecued Spareribs

4 or 5 pounds spareribs, cut into serving pieces
⅓ cup molasses
¼ cup undiluted frozen concentrated orange juice
¼ cup tomato catsup
¼ cup finely chopped onion
2 tablespoons cooking oil
2 tablespoons vinegar
salt and pepper

Heat oven to 350 degrees. Sprinkle spareribs with salt and pepper. Arrange in pan and bake (not broil) for about 30 minutes, remove and drain off excess fat from pan.

Combine remaining ingredients and pour over spareribs. Return to oven and bake another 30 minutes, basting frequently. Makes 4 or 5 servings.

Molasses, whipped with warm butter, makes a good spread for hotcakes or waffles. During the depression years many a farm kid had molasses mixed with lard, or clean bacon fryings, spread on thick slices of homemade bread for school lunches. In some parts, this spread was called Charlie Taylor, but for what reason I couldn't say. Another butter substitute was beef suet rendered at a very low temperature, mixed with buttermilk, yokes of eggs, and enough molasses to sweeten slightly. Believe it or not, kids thought this was great stuff on hot biscuits. But, then, us poor farm kids in the depression years thought any food was great!

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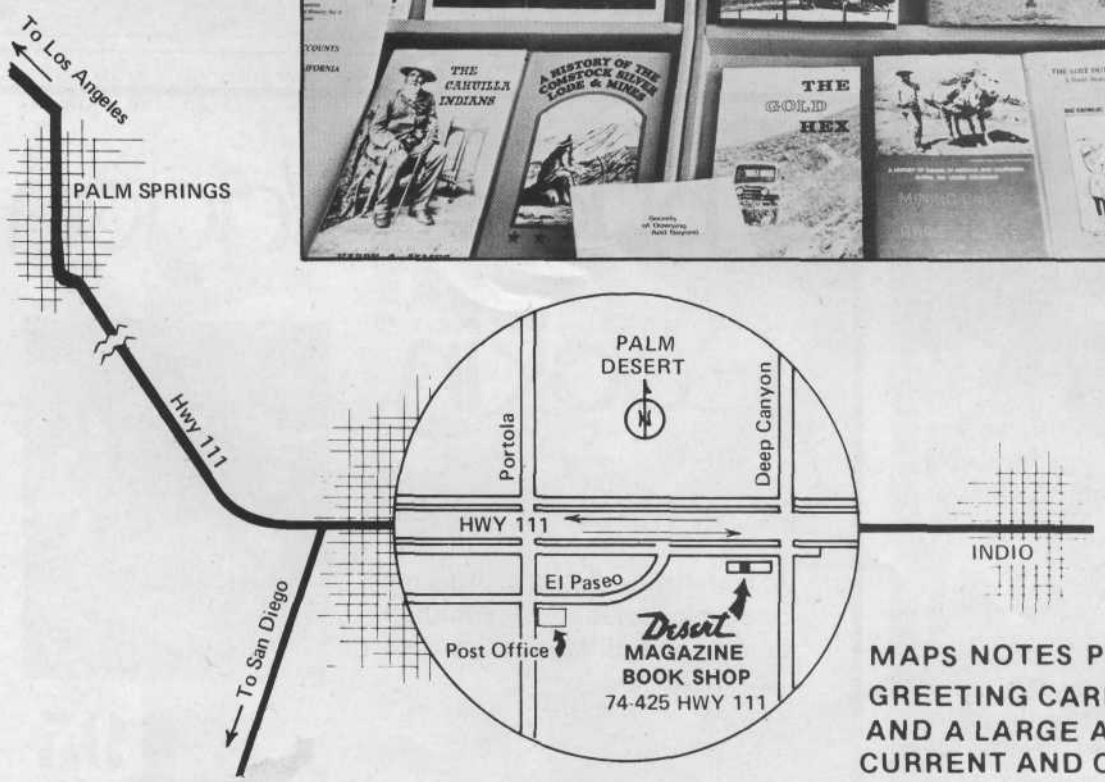

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4. The editors of *Desert Magazine* since its founding in 1937 have ranged across the Southwestern United States and Northern Mexico in search of stories. There are arid areas elsewhere but the Great Colorado and Sonoran Deserts and their neighbors and subsidiaries are our beat. Which areas interest you the most? Central-California ☒ Southern California ☒ Baja California ☐ Arizona ☐ Sonora (Mexico) ☐ New Mexico ☒ Nevada ☐ Southern Colorado ☐ Southern Utah ☐ All ☐ Other DEATH VALLEY

5. Among these specific desert areas, which interest you the most? Coachella Valley ☐ Colorado River Basin ☐ Baja California ☐ Death Valley ☒ Lancaster-Mojave ☐ Grand Canyon ☐ All ☐ Other _____

6. Among places to go in the desert, do you prefer resort communities? ☐ Private full-facility resorts ☐ Improved campgrounds ☐ Primitive campgrounds ☒ Ghost towns ☒ Indian reservations ☐ Designated public recreation areas ☐ Undeveloped public lands ☒ Lakes or rivers ☒ Designated ORV locations ☐ Other _____

7. Aside from the pleasure of escaping for a weekend or vacation, which of these hobbies do you bring with you to the desert? Rock hunting ☒ Buried artifacts ☒ Mining ☐ Ghost towns ☒ Western history ☒ Indian customs and lore ☐ Photography ☒ Backpacking ☐ Four-wheeling ☒ Motorcycles ☐ Dunebuggies ☐ Motorized camping ☐ Tent camping ☐ Nature study ☒ Exploration ☒ Other ___

8. How well has *Desert Magazine* served your interest in (4) through (7) above? Invaluable ☐ Most always useful ☒ Sometimes useful ☐ Seldom useful ☐ Please add your frank comments: _____

9. Which of these subjects would you like to read more about in *Desert Magazine*? Indian lore ☐ Ghost towns ☒ Lost mines ☐ Community history ☒ Community profiles ☐ Western history ☒ Hobbies ☒ Crafts ☐ Camp cooking ☐ Resource management ☐ Remote attractions ☒ Parks and resort facilities ☐ Personality profiles ☐ Economic opportunities ☐ Retirement living ☐ Geological profiles ☐ Current economic development ☐ Off-road driving ☒ Recreational vehicles ☐ Animal and plant life ☒ Desert life styles ☐ Other _____

10. Do you consider the articles in *Desert Magazine* to be thoroughly researched? Entertainingly written ☒ Well illustrated ☒ Poorly researched ☐ Dull reading ☐ Badly illustrated ☐ Please add your frank comment: _____

11. Do you think *Desert Magazine's* past reporting of controversial issues such as land management has been pro-conservationist? ☐ Anti-conservationist ☐ Neutral ☐ None of these ☐ Please add your frank comment: _____

12. In planning your weekends in the desert, you prefer destinations approximately ____ miles from home. Do you stay at a resort hotel? ☐ Motel ☐ In your RV ☐ Camp out ☐ Eat in restaurants frequently ☐ Infrequently ☐

13. For your vacations in the desert, you prefer destinations approximately _____ miles from home. During your trip, will you stay at a resort? ☐ In motels ☐ In your RV ☐ Camp out ☐ Do you plan to patronize restaurants frequently ☐ Infrequently ☐ _____

14. Has *Desert Magazine* been helpful to you when planning your vacations and weekends? Always ☐ Sometimes ☐ Not at all ☐ Please add you frank comment:

_____

We want each issue of *Desert Magazine* to truly reflect your, our readers', tastes and needs. Please take a little time to fill out this questionaire. Then, just cut it out along the line at the left and mail to Desert Query, Box 1318, Palm Desert, Calif. 92260. And if you like what you've seen in this issue, why don't you take another moment and fill out the subscription coupon below. We'll be glad to bill you or charge it to your Visa or Master Charge. Be sure and check the box if you want a free replacement copy of this issue and again, our sincere thanks!

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AS THE SUPPLY OF OIL DROPS, SYNTHETICS BECOME MORE ATTRACTIVE.

General Motors is not in the fuel business. But since the cars we build depend on fuel, we have to be on top of the energy situation. Here's the way it looks to us.

All the cars we build are powered by internal combustion engines. These engines work by burning petroleum-derived gasoline or diesel fuel under high pressure. So far, petroleum has been the safest, least expensive source of these hydrocarbon fuels, which pack a lot of energy per gallon. But automotive fuels can also be obtained from many other sources, ranging from oil shale to coal and even corn stalks. The problem is to turn these solid materials into safe, convenient, environmentally sound, cost-efficient liquid fuels.

At GM, we have evaluated a variety of domestic resources and alternative fuels.

Fuels made from shale oil are the best current alternatives. Shale oil is produced by heat-treating oil shale, an abundant American resource. Gasoline and diesel fuel could be refined from shale oil. What is needed, however, are the plants to convert the shale rock into the shale oil. As petroleum becomes more expensive, it will be cost-efficient to build these plants. The mining of shale, though, still presents serious environmental problems that must be solved.

Coal is the next best option. Coal can also be turned into gasoline and diesel fuel, but the process is more expensive and complex than that for oil shale. As with oil shale, coal mining also poses environmental problems.

Biomass (vegetation and organic wastes) is another possibility. The main advantage of biomass is that it is a renewable resource. However, biomass is difficult and expensive to collect and process.

The only automotive fuel currently being made that uses biomass is gasohol. Gasohol is a blend of 10% ethyl alcohol and gasoline. The use of gasohol in present-day cars can save gasoline and causes no insurmountable difficulties.

Hydrogen has often been discussed. Although engines can be run on hydrogen, its production potential appears limited, and the practical problems of safe and efficient distribution and storage haven't yet been solved.

Although electricity isn't a fuel, it can be generated from non-petroleum resources. Some electrically-powered cars are already on the road. The problem is that with current lead-acid batteries they're only capable of traveling relatively short distances between battery charges. We're continuing to do extensive research on advanced zinc-nickel oxide storage batteries.

Nothing is more important than ensuring the supply of fuels needed to keep our country strong. At GM we are confident that if government and industry cooperate and work together to explore alternative energy sources, the problem of providing sufficient fuels for the future, at the lowest possible cost, can and will be solved.

This advertisement is part of our continuing effort to give customers useful information about their cars and trucks and the company that builds them.

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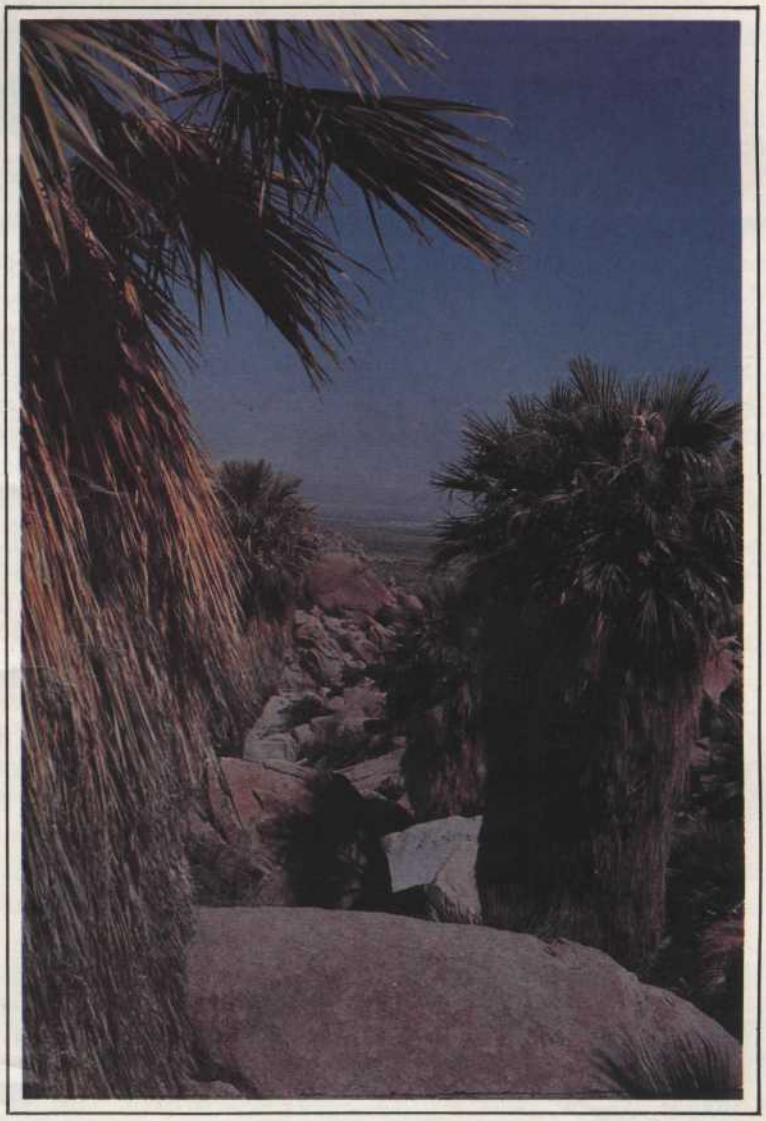
NO. 36 IN A SERIES ON CALIFORNIA PALM OASES

Mortero Palms

By Dick Bloomquist



Several of the oases visited on our desert *pasear* have contained Indian grinding holes, but Mortero Palms (from the Spanish *mortero*, mortar) is the first to be named for them. And, too, Mortero Spring a few miles to the southeast also took its name from a similar clutch of Diegueno grinding mills.

The unpaved Dos Cabezas Road provides access to Mortero Palms. Because of rough spots and possible sandy stretches, a pickup truck is recommended for this route, which begins off County Road S2 four miles from the community of Ocotillo in southwest Imperial County.

Nearly six miles from its starting point, the winding byway crosses the tracks of the San Diego and Arizona Eastern Railway which we saw in far more rugged terrain at Carrizo Palms on our last field trip. One and one-half miles to the right of the crossing, a black water tank at the site of the long-abandoned Dos Cabezas stations stands out above the desert plain. The railroad itself has suspended service indefinitely as a result of washouts from the 1976 flash flood and at this writing, Southern Pacific has requested permission to abandon the line.

Soon we skirt a rock "island" with a deserted cabin nestled amid its boulders. The shack, once part of a sheep camp, was constructed largely of ocotillo stalks and adobe by the McCain family whose handiwork we also noted in North Indian Valley earlier in this series.

A little beyond the cabin our roadway divides, the right fork ending at the Mortero Palms trailhead. The branch continuing straight ahead leads to Dos Cabezas Spring, a fraction of a mile distant. The *Dos Cabezas* (Two Heads) in this case are probably the twin monoliths above the spring. A second, less frequently heard explanation traces the origin of this Spanish place name to the waterhole's two "heads" or sources. The spring once supplied water for the Dos Cabezas station on the S.D. & A.E., and portions of the old pipeline are still visible.

The right-hand fork leading toward Mortero Palms (at mile 19.3 on the log) also halts after a fraction of a mile. A bench near the junction of two dry washes furnishes a convenient place to park. From this point walk up the arroyo that comes in from the right. (Years ago I heard of a lone palm growing in the *left*-hand fork, but I have not as yet explored that branch.) Very soon, at a point where the little ravine apparently peters out in a shallow amphitheater, a tenuous trail veers off to the left, heading toward a rocky ridge set squarely across the watercourse. On a tiny flat several yards to the right of the pathway, a water trough inscribed "R.D. McCain 1940 Dec." serves as another reminder of bygone ranching days.

The trail easily scales the low ridge, beyond which the Washingtonias begin. Here is an outstanding example of a hidden desert oasis. So well immured are the palms in their mountain fastness that the casual hiker without knowledge of the country would miss them completely unless he chanced to climb the intervening cliff. To one side of the first adult palm a cave runs back into the rocks for twenty-five feet or so; here, too, are three of the Diegueno mortar holes which have given the grove its name. I'm confident that a thorough examination of other nearby outcrops would reveal still more grinding mills. Some years ago another designation for the oasis, "Canada del Muerto" ("Ravine of the Dead Man"), began appearing on maps but happily, it has now been replaced by

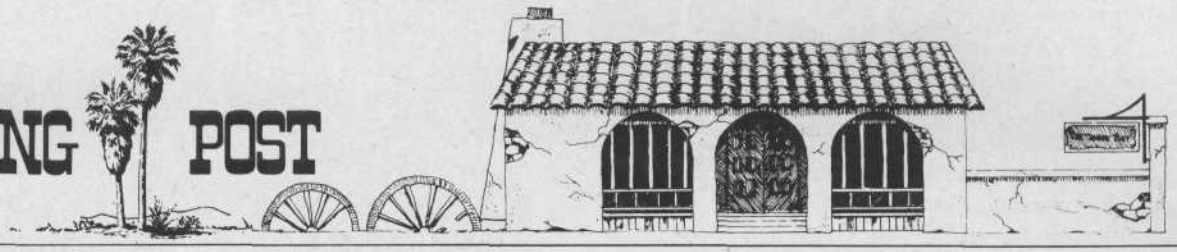
the original name.

Roughly eighty-five Washingtonias of various ages grow in a compact colony at Mortero Palms. They are vigorous trees, thriving on the water supply which lies concealed only a few feet beneath the surface. Erosion has cut the soil away from many of the trunks, providing an opportunity to observe the fan palm's dense mass of small roots. Numerous shrubby live oaks on the canyon's north-facing slope add a distinctive touch to the grove.

MILEAGE LOG

0.0	Junction of San Diego County S2 and dirt road to Bow Willow Campground in southern part of Anza-Borrego Desert State Park. Drive south on S2 toward interstate Highway 8.
0.3	S2 crosses Carrizo Wash. Continue south on S2.
7.8	Imperial Highway monument on left. Leave Anza-Borrego Desert State Park and San Diego County, enter Imperial County.
11.9	Junction. Turn right off S2 onto unpaved Dos Cabezas Road. **Pickup truck recommended.** (For travelers coming from the opposite direction, this turnoff is four miles northwest of the community of Ocotillo.)
13.1	Junction. Bear right.
16.5	Re-enter Anza-Borrego Desert State Park and San Diego County.
17.6	Cross tracks of San Diego and Arizona Eastern Railway. Turn right on far side of tracks.
17.7	Junction. Bear left.
18.7	Junction. Bear left.
18.9	Junction. Bear left.
19.1	Pass old sheep camp cabin on left. Mortero Palms in the Jacumba Mountains is visible to the southwest.
19.3	Junction. Bear right. (Continue straight ahead for Dos Cabezas Spring, three-tenths of a mile distant.)
19.7	Junction. Bear right.
19.7+	Good parking place on flat. Two washes join just beyond this point; walk up the right fork. After a few hundred yards the canyon seems to disappear in a shallow bowl. Bear left, following a faint trail over a low cliff in the watercourse. The palms begin just beyond the cliff. Hiking distance about three-quarters of a mile; elevation at oasis approximately 2,100 feet. (To become better oriented before starting the hike, cross wash coming in from the right near parking spot and climb knoll on the other side. The tops of several palms are visible from this knoll.)

THE TRADING POST



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SPINY LIZARDS

Continued from page 23

one sees a lizard with a forked tail which is the result of an imcomplete break in the original tail. A partial break can stimulate the growth of a new tail segment but regeneration does not involve the restoration of actual vertebrae. Instead, the lost vertebrae are replaced with a row of cartilidge. You can easily tell whether a lizard has broken a its tail at one time or another because the new tail will have a different scale pattern.

Perhaps the most common of the spinys are the desert spiny lizards, *Sceloporus magister*. Desert spinys are one of the largest members of the genus *Sceloporus* with a maximum measurement of about five and one-half inches plus a tail that can be up to seven inches long. Adults are usually light colored with black wedge-shaped marks on each side of their necks. Adult males have a bright blue patch on their throats and on each side of their bellies. The belly patches are edged with black bands and sometimes are joined in the center. The desert spinys are primarily insectivorous although they have been known to eat some vegetation. Ants, flies, bees, and grasshoppers seem to be their main diet but on occasion they will capture small lizards.

In southeastern Arizona, southwestern New Mexico, and portions of northern Mexico the range of the desert spiny lizard overlaps that of the Clark's spiny lizard, *Sceloporus clarki*. Within this area of overlaps it is easy to confuse the two species. Like the desert spiny, the Clark's spiny can be up to five inches long with an additional seven inches of tail. The Clark's spiny prefers a more humid habitat, generally at higher elevations than the desert spiny lizard. This difference in habitat preferance can be used to help identify them. The Clark's spiny prefers trees but occasionally can be found on the ground among rocks. They are very shy and tend to stay on the opposite sides of rocks or tree trunks. Their food consists of insects and occasionally, leaves, buds and flowers.

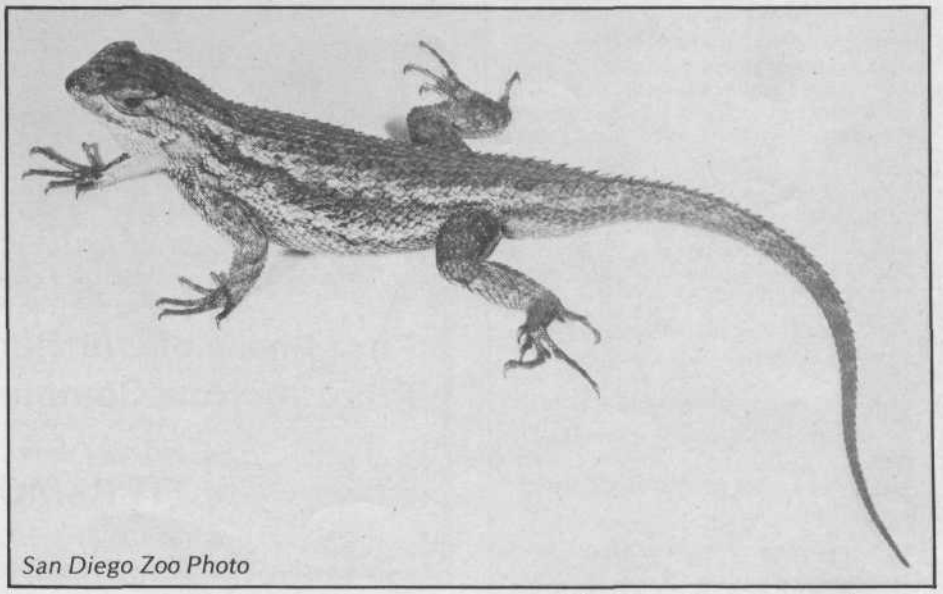
Sagebrush lizards, *Sceloporus graciousus*, occupy areas from high desert to mountain tops. They are most common in the Great Basin region of Nevada and Utah in sagebrush flats, thus their common name. However, their range extends throughout a considerable part of California, Nevada, Utah, and the northern portions of Arizona and New Mexico. They can be found in a wide variety of environments where they seem to prefer relatively open and well illuminated areas. The sagebrush lizards spend most of their time on the ground where they can retreat into mammal holes and rock crevices for cover. Sagebrush lizards can be told from the other members of the spiny lizards by the fact that the blue throat patch is often absent, or the throat will be mottled with a little blue. Also, most individuals have very distinct light stripes running down their backs. They are seldom found below 5,000 feet in elevation.

Sceloporus occidentalis, western fence lizards or blue-bellies, are one of the most common of the western lizards of any species. They can be seen on fence posts, rocks, logs, piles of lumber, and the sides of buildings. They occupy a great variety of habitats from sea level to about 9,000 feet but are absent from the desert environment. Western fence lizards are gray, brownish or greenish with rather distinct dark spots or wavy crossbars on their backs and sometimes, they have longitudinal light stripes. The hind surface of the legs are yellow or orange in adults. The keeled scales on the backs of the western fence lizards are smaller than those of the desert spiny or the Clark's spiny lizards. Subspecies of western fence lizards can be found throughout northern and western California, northern Baja, and almost all of Nevada and western Utah.

Eastern fence lizards, *Sceloporus undulatus*, can be found in eastern Arizona and Nevada, most of New Mexico, and the states further east as well as portions of northern Mexico. They are abundant along canyon bottoms at elevations up to 5,200 feet. Eastern fence lizards seldom reach a body length of more than three inches and their tail is usually about one and one-half times the length of their body. A portion of the ranges of the eastern and western fence lizards overlap. Eastern fence lizards can be told from western fence lizards by the fact that male eastern fence lizards have a blue spot on each side of the throat whereas male western fence lizards have one large blue area under the throat. The eastern fence lizard lives in a variety of habitats including forests, woodlands, prairies, flatlands, and rocky hillsides.

There are five other species of spiny lizards found in the western United States. Of these, one of the most common is a large, dark colored granite spiny, *Sceloporus orcutti*. These lizards have rather flat, unkeeled scales on their body but very strongly keeled and pointed scales on their tails. Granite spinys are found on the coastal side of the mountains in Southern California and in Baja California. They prefer areas of open chapparal below 5,500 feet in elevation. In the deserts they are found in rocky canyons and on the upper rocky portions of alluvial fans. In Baja California they occur primarily in pinyon-juniper woodlands.

The spiny lizards and the many other species of lizards that inhabit the southwest are all part of a complex of ecosystems. With the exception of two species, the Mexican beaded lizard and the gila monster, lizards are harmless to man. When you encounter one along a hiking trail or around your home, take time to watch and appreciate these interesting members of the animal community.



San Diego Zoo Photo

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Open Invitation . . .

Sirs: I found James R. Mitchell's article, "Harqua-Hala, Arizona," well-written and interesting. However, an open invitation to come and prowl and pick up samples, rocks, etc., is like me writing an article in a national magazine telling readers how to reach your home property and help themselves to whatever may interest them. The Golden Eagle and Bonanza mining properties are fully patented claims. They are private property on which taxes are paid each year.

The vandalism that has been perpetrated on this sleeping old town and mines during the past several years has been mind-boggling. When my father first received the deed to these claims in 1960, they were still in a dignified process of returning to nature. Now, everything that could possibly be ripped, broken, torn down, and burned has been done so. Things we treasured have been stolen; "No Tresspassing" signs have been torn down.

Harqua-Hala is a very valuable property and I would appreciate any help you can give to keep the vandals and their irresponsible actions away from other people's private property.

Patsy Ruth Merrill, Trustee
Tucson, AZ.

It is doubtful that vandals bother to read Desert Magazine. But your point is well taken. Private property of historical interest will be clearly labeled as such in future issues.

Ed.

Sirs: The falls shown on the cover of your Sept. '79 issue is incorrectly identified as Havasu Falls. It's Mooney Falls.

Your articles could stand more proof-reading. Grammatical and typographical errors seem to be on the increase lately. Let's bring Desert Magazine back up to its high high standards.

Joseph Szyz
Morgan Hills, CA.

The new management here promises no more transplants and typos. Grammar are in the eyes of the beholder. Ed.

NUDE BATHING . . .

Sirs: I strongly object to the picture on page 47 of your Oct. '79 issue of the man, nude to his waist, sitting in the old bathtub at Cinnabar. Next you'll be printing pictures of young girls in bikinis!

Minnie Contretemps
Truth & Consequences, N.M.

Very possibly. Ed.

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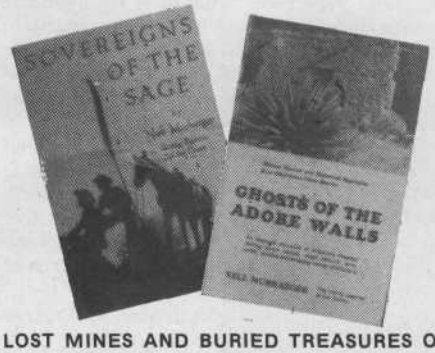

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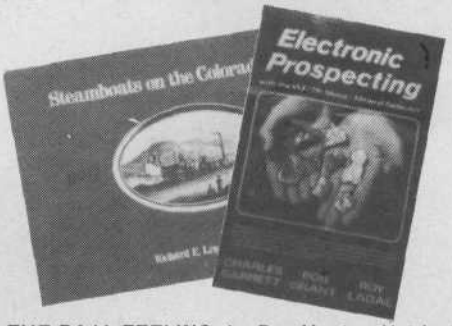

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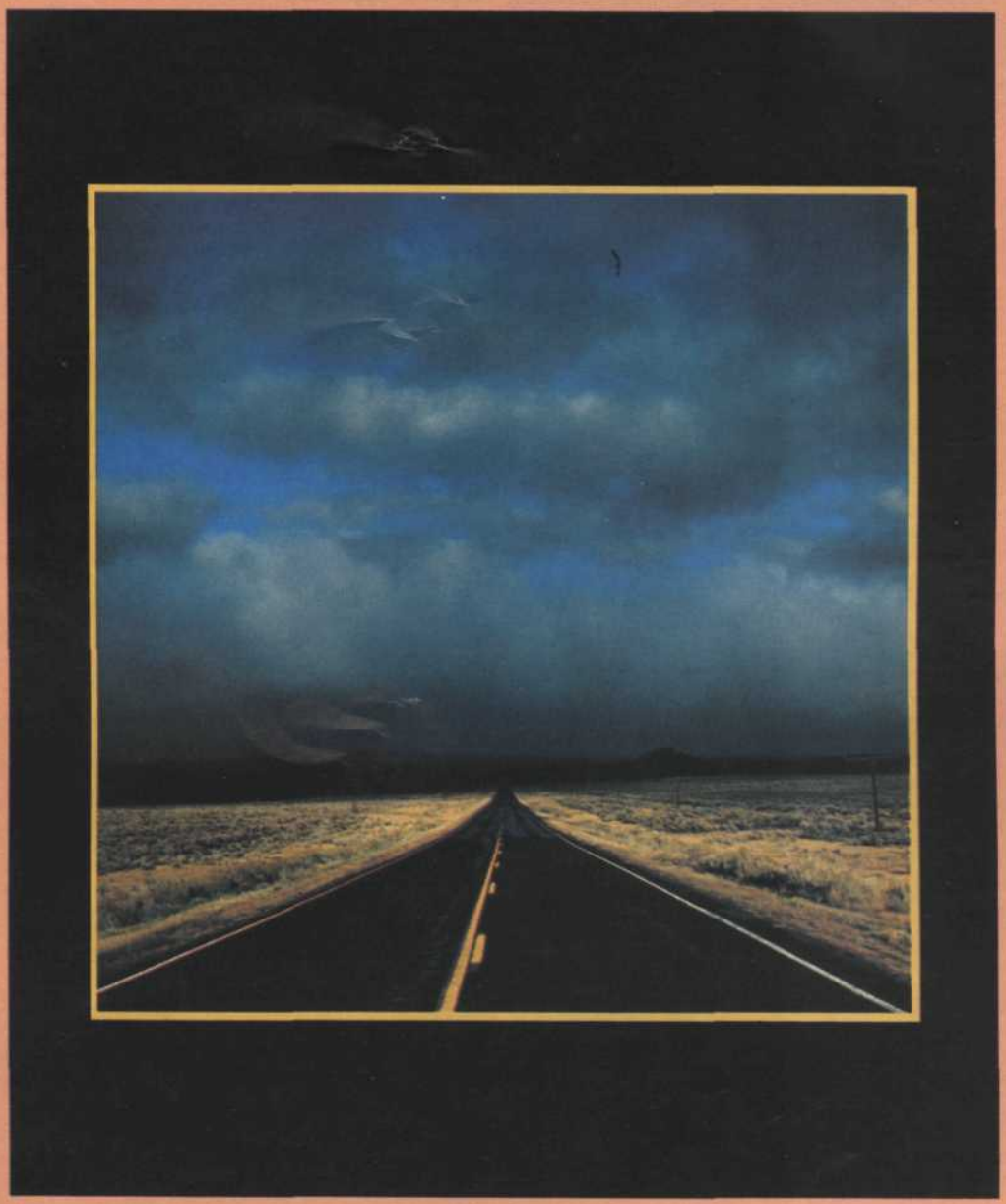

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