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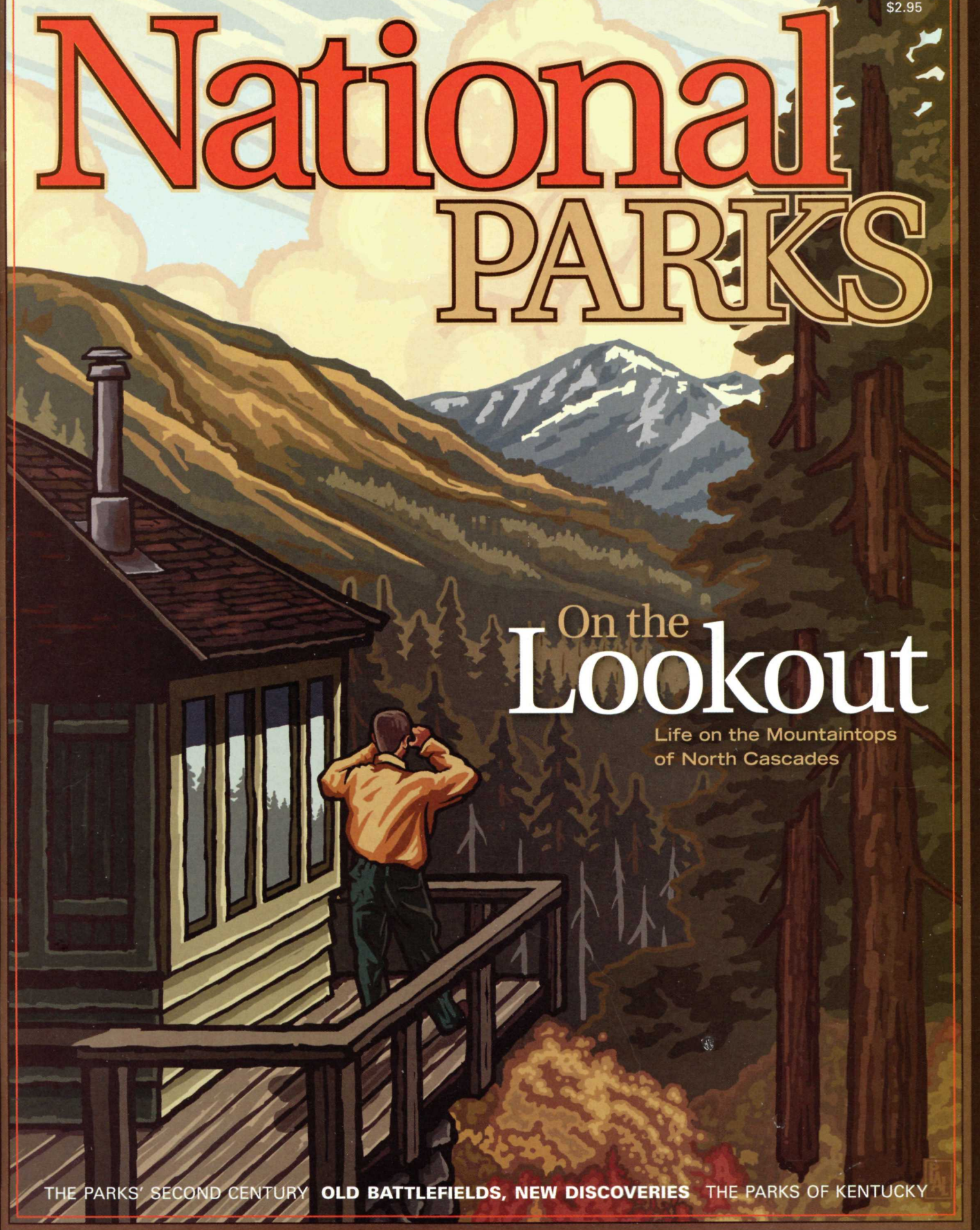

On the Lookout

Life on the Mountaintops of North Cascades

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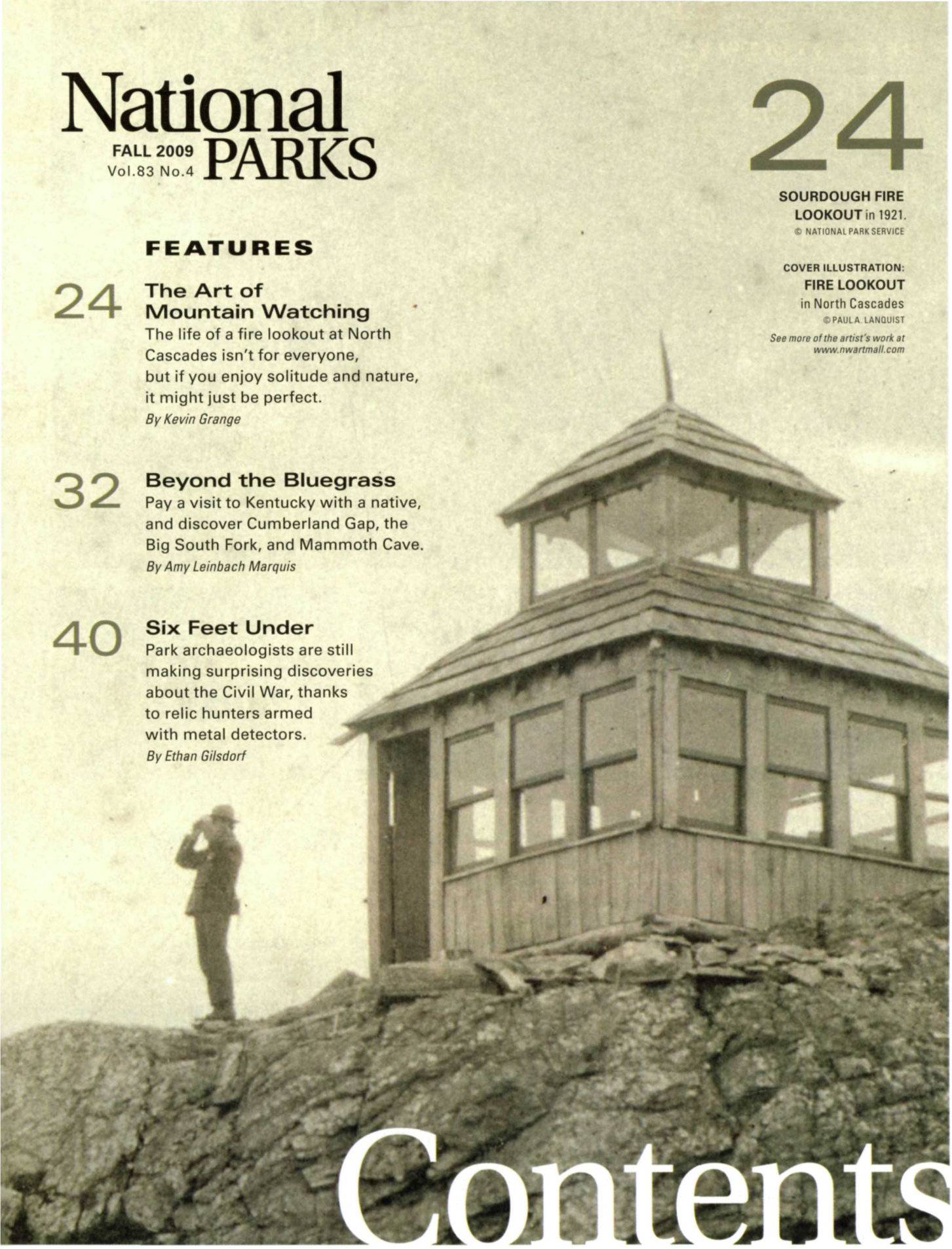

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SOURDOUGH FIRE LOOKOUT in 1921.
© NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

COVER ILLUSTRATION:
FIRE LOOKOUT
in North Cascades
© PAUL A. LANQUIST
See more of the artist's work at www.nwartmall.com

FEATURES

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A WHITE TAIL DEER HIDES in the thick brush of Canada's Flathead River Valley, north of Glacier National Park.

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CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: © ANDREW S. WRIGHT; © WALTER BIBIKOW/JON ARNOLD IMAGES LTD/ALAMY; © CHRIS JOHNS/NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC STOCK; © SCOTT KIRKWOOD/NPCA

ON THE WEB

Want to get more involved with Ken Burns' latest documentary on the national parks airing at the end of September? Go to www.npca.org/bestidea to read about park champions, host a premiere house party, watch a film clip, and send an eCard to other park lovers.

Renewing the Promise


© IAN SHIVE

This summer, I traveled to Alaska to see filmmaker Ken Burns present footage from his film, *The National Parks: America's Best Idea*. The event, which was organized by NPCA and the Alaska Geographic Society, attracted more than 2,000 people to a downtown theater on a summer evening. Beginning September 27, millions of viewers will tune in to Burns' 12-hour documentary, shown over the course of six evenings.

Days before the film's premier, the National Parks Second Century Commission released a report, produced by the National Geographic Society, outlining recommendations for the national parks, including one that would make them a central component of education programs in schools across the country, a step that would engage a broader audience of children and their families in the value of national parks. (For more details, see article, page 50.)

Taken together, these events demonstrate the extraordinary interest of Americans in the future of our national parks and the important role they play in our society.

The release of the film and the report, along with a new President, Congress, and Park Service director, create the perfect confluence of events to increase public support for our national parks. NPCA and its partners must take advantage of this time to move our park-protection work forward, renewing the promise we made nearly a century ago to leave the parks "unimpaired for future generations."

Our national parks already have countless admirers and advocates, including nearly 500,000 NPCA members and activists, as well as a number of partner organizations, including Friends of Acadia, the Student Conservation Association, and the National Park Foundation, to name just a few. Each group takes a slightly different angle, raising funds for individual parks, attracting young volunteers, or advocating for action to protect the parks.

Recently, Friends of Acadia gave NPCA its highest award, The Marianne Edwards Award, for helping to give voice to all park advocates and partners. Although we were honored by this award, we recognize that we have much more work to do if we are to engage a broader constituency of Americans in protecting the national parks, and we know we cannot do this work alone. Over the coming months, we will be working closely with our partners and the new Park Service director to engage the American public in a broader dialog about a vision for the second century of the National Park System. Ever since Yellowstone was established as the world's first national park, individuals have played key roles in both establishing and protecting our national parks and monuments, whether it was Virginia McClurg at Mesa Verde, Enos Mills at Rocky Mountain, or Galen Clark at Yosemite. Each of these people worked for years to protect the places they loved.

Over the coming years, we will be looking for individuals like them—and you—as well as organizations that are part of the larger parks community to join us in furthering the national parks movement. To quote Margaret Mead: "Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has."

THOMAS C. KIERNAN

Storytellers

© AMY LEINBACH MARQUIS / NPCA

Filmmaker John Grabowska with his daughter, Sierra

At the confluence of the Potomac and Shenandoah Rivers in West Virginia lies Harpers Ferry National Historical Park, a site full of stories, from the earliest stages of the Civil War to a pivotal moment in the nation's Civil Rights movement. But when Associate Editor Amy Marquis and I made the 90-minute drive from D.C. to Harpers Ferry in July, we discovered two more stories—those of John Grabowska and Dennis Frye.

Frye was only 13 years old when he volunteered in a national park, portraying living history at Antietam, before taking on his second role as apprentice to a blacksmith in Harpers Ferry at the ripe old age of 14. Now, more than 30 years later, Frye is leading an effort that engages the next generation of students to tell the story of John Brown. Turn to page 18 to learn more.

If you've ever seen a film in a park visitor center there's a good chance you've enjoyed the handiwork of John Grabowska, a filmmaker working out of the Park Service's Harpers Ferry Center. The son of two professors who taught at a South Dakota university, Grabowska uses the power of images to create compelling learning experiences for millions of park visitors. And he's instilled a love of the parks in his children, including his daughter, Sierra (pictured with her father, above), who's now a part of Harpers Ferry's living history program as well. You can learn more about Grabowska on page 10.

As much as Amy and I love to talk about the places we visit, the photos we take, and the mountains we climb during our nine-to-five jobs, encounters with these Park Service professionals remind us that in the end, the parks are about people, about stories, and about shared experiences. Now we've got two more to share.

Scott Kirkwood
NPMAG@NPCA.ORG

National PARKS

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National Parks Conservation Association®
Protecting Our National Parks for Future Generations®

WHO WE ARE
Established in 1919, the National Parks Conservation Association is America's only private, nonprofit advocacy organization dedicated solely to protecting, preserving, and enhancing the U.S. National Park System.

WHAT WE DO
NPCA protects national parks by identifying problems and generating support to resolve them.

WHAT WE STAND FOR
The mission of NPCA is to protect and enhance America's National Park System for present and future generations.

EDITORIAL MISSION
National Parks magazine fosters an appreciation of the natural and historic treasures found in the parks, educates readers about the need to preserve those resources, and illustrates how member contributions drive our organization's park-protection efforts. The magazine uses the power of imagery and language to forge a lasting bond between NPCA and its members, while inspiring new readers to join the cause.

MAKE A DIFFERENCE
Members can help defend America's natural and cultural heritage. Activists alert Congress and the administration to park threats; comment on park planning and adjacent land-use decisions; assist NPCA in developing partnerships; and educate the public and the media. Please sign up to receive Park Lines, our biweekly e-mail newsletter. Go to www.npca.org to sign up.

HOW TO DONATE
To donate, please visit www.npca.org or call 800.628.7275. For information about bequests, planned gifts, and matching gifts, call our Development Department, extension 145 or 146.

QUESTIONS?
If you have any questions about your membership, call Member Services at 800.628.7275. *National Parks* magazine is among a member's chief benefits. Of the $25 membership dues, $6 covers a one-year subscription to the magazine.

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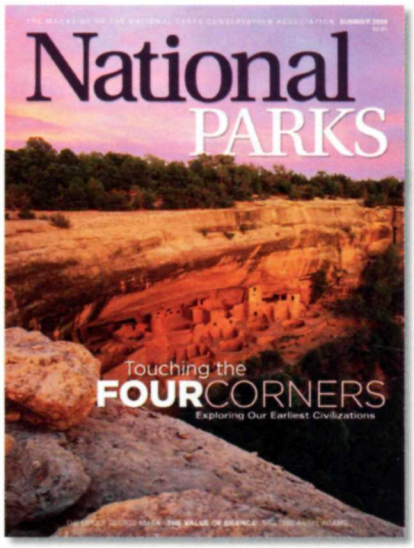

THE GREAT DEBATE

I was disappointed to see the magazine promoting cap-and-trade legislation ["On the Horizon," Summer]. It should be called "cap and tax" because that's what will happen. Two minutes of research will tell you that's how it works in England, where it has been in place for years. Mr. Wenzler is overjoyed that "hundreds of billions of dollars each year" will be taken from U.S. businesses and given to the government. Where does he think these dollars are going to come from? This is a massive tax increase that will add to the cost of every product we buy—like soap, or paint, or heating and air-conditioning services. In turn, consumers like me will have less money available to donate to NPCA.

MIKE CRONE
Piperton, TN

Mark Wenzler, director of NPCA's clean air and climate programs, responds:

We understand that some individuals, industries, and members of Congress believe that cap-and-trade legislation amounts to an unfair tax on energy that will harm consumers. We respectfully disagree for the following reasons: First and fundamentally, we believe that there is no right to emit harmful pollutants into our atmosphere for free. Cap-and-trade forces the largest emitters of greenhouse gases to develop less polluting alternatives to current practices. Second, cap-and-trade has proven to be an economically efficient way to lower emissions of other pollutants as the trading system drives emissions reductions to the industries that are best able to innovate at the lowest costs. Third, according to the Environmental Protection Agency, the cap-and-trade bill enacted in the House will have "a relatively modest impact on U.S. consumers"—about 0.1% increased consumer spending over 10 years.

NPCA believes that it is absolutely essential to stabilize and reduce greenhouse gases in our atmosphere. There is overwhelming scientific consensus that if we fail to act, there will be profound ecological consequences, such as mass extinctions of wildlife, severe droughts, the spread of wildfire, and the loss of coastal marshes. Our national parks and the wildlife they support will pay a major price for inaction. While NPCA supports measures in climate legislation that reduce the impact on consumers and businesses, we do not believe that the necessary transition to less polluting energy can be achieved without any impact at all. In our view, cap-and-trade's relatively modest effect on energy prices is a reasonable price to pay to safeguard national parks, wildlife, and ourselves from the potentially devastating consequences of unnatural climate change.

GIVING THANKS

Thank you so much for the wonderful news about H.R. 146, legislation that designates new wilderness areas in six national parks ["Protecting the Past," Summer]. This law is one of the most exciting bills ever passed on behalf of our national parks and other public lands—and a wonderful gift to the American people.

JOSEPH ARNOLD
Dry Prong, LA

MEMORY LANE

Eugene Sims' article, "Good Morning, Mr. Adams," [Summer], brought an amazing coincidence to mind. In 1943, as an Army Artillery Officer, I was stationed at Camp Cooke, California (now Vandenberg Air Base), near Lompoc. My wife and I were about to move to the South Pacific, but decided to visit Yosemite National Park before we left. I was taking photos with a 35mm Kodak, using Kodachrome film. One day, the film cartridge stuck, resisting my attempts to wind it further. Not wanting to waste the shots I'd already made, I began looking for a dark room. A ranger directed me to one at the upper end of the Valley. I introduced myself to the photographer inside, but soon forgot his name. Years later, after reading his biography and seeing his famous Yosemite photos, I realized it must have been Ansel Adams—and now, Eugene Sims' article has confirmed it. Thanks, Eugene, for a wonderful reminder of that vacation and of Ansel Adams, whose photograph of Half Dome graces my office wall.

WILLIAM SCHOTANUS
Atlanta, GA

SILENCE IS GOLDEN

"The Listener's Yosemite" [Summer] might be one of the most important articles your magazine has ever published. Natural quiet, and the opportunity to hear and enjoy pristine natural sounds in the absence of "the harsh mechanical sounds of man," have indeed become exceedingly rare—even in our national parks. We are losing one of the most restorative aspects of our nation's magnificent natural areas at an ever-increasing rate.

NPCA has for a number of years been a leader in the fight to protect these invaluable resources. But it's a tough battle, and one we can't win until the American public demands that our natural soundscapes—which have been largely ignored by land management agencies—be protected. Articles like Gordon Hempton's help alert Americans to what is being lost, and set the stage for what I fervently hope will be a successful campaign to protect and restore what a few decades ago we could hardly conceive losing: the peace and quiet of our great outdoors.

SUSAN OLSEN
President, Alaska Quiet Rights Coalition
Anchorage, AK

I'm writing this from Great Smoky Mountains National Park, where silence seems in

short supply at times. But even in this busy park, traffic noise is usually replaced by the sounds of nature 15 minutes into a hike. The most extraordinary silence I have ever experienced was while driving into Death Valley at three o'clock in the morning and parking on a side road. Standing out in the moonlight, the only sound I could hear were the "ticks" from the car engine as the metal cooled. It was truly remarkable.

GEORGE McCRARY
Raleigh, NC

PEDESTRIAN FRIENDLY?

While paging through the contents of the Summer issue, I was initially excited by the lead in of a new trail in the Northwest ["A Mighty Flood"]. But as I continued reading I was dismayed to learn that it would not be a 'trail' at all, but a driving route with little or no development on the ground.

Brilliant? I don't think so, especially in this economy, amidst an ever-diminishing oil supply and the need to reduce our carbon footprint. What's next? Web-based tours of trails that encourage people to never leave their homes or laptops? Ugh!

BOB KUTELLA
Mount Prospect, IL

The Ice Age Floods Trail will cover hundreds, if not thousands, of miles when it's complete, so the idea of a complete hiking trail wasn't practical for most visitors. But many sections of the route will, in fact, contain hiking trails so that visitors can get out of their cars and experience the landscape up close. The Park Service's primary goal is to take advantage of an opportunity to teach people about science and geology on a broad scale, in a simple, inexpensive way. The trail is unlikely to significantly increase the country's fuel consumption, but may just encourage a few people to stop along a route that they were travelling anyway. –The Editors

CORRECTIONS:

In Gordon Hempton's "The Listener's Yosemite," female elk should have been referred to as ewes, not cows. The hike to White House Ruin in Canyon de Chelly ["Cities of Stone"] is two-and-a-half miles roundtrip, not a quarter mile. And we overlooked the Ice Age National Scenic Trail in Wisconsin when stating that the Ice Age Floods Trail ["A Mighty Flood"] was the first trail devoted to a geological process. We regret the errors.

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or e-mail npmag@npca.org. Include your name, city, and state.
Published letters may be edited for length and clarity.

A REVOLUTIONARY HOME

An innovative land swap protects Valley Forge's historical character.

GENERAL GEORGE WASHINGTON AT VALLEY FORGE

© LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

On the surface, the idea of adding a historical museum to Valley Forge National Historical Park in Pennsylvania might not sound like such a bad idea. But when the nonprofit American Revolution Center (ARC) announced plans to build on private, historically significant land within the park's boundary, NPCA began seeking out alternative solutions.

"We've always supported the concept of a museum dedicated to American Revolution," says Cinda Waldbuesser, senior program manager in NPCA's Pennsylvania office. "But as proposed, this project would have changed the park's historic character, created storm water runoff harmful to park wetlands, and paved over important wildlife habitat."

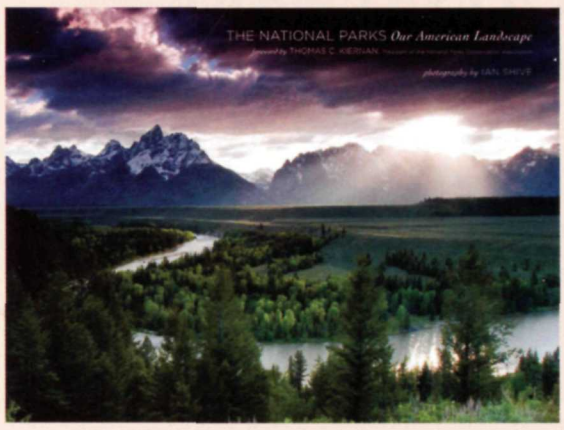
Almost completely surrounded by national park land, the private, 78-acre parcel within Valley Forge was included in the 1980 boundary expansion approved by Congress. But the park never received the necessary funding to purchase the land. Thankfully, the Park Service and the American Revolution Center struck a creative deal: In exchange for the land at Valley Forge, the Park Service will give ARC about an acre at Independence National Historical Park in Philadelphia, including the building that once housed the park's visitor center.

Although no battles were fought at Valley Forge, it served as military headquarters for General George Washington and the Continental Army during the winter of 1777 through 1778, helping to transform a disorganized troop of soldiers into a ready-to-fight army.

"Historians say this encampment changed the course of the war," Waldbuesser says. "So preserving the landscape not only honors those events, but ensures that visitors can continue to envision what Washington's army saw more than two hundred years ago. And thanks to this innovative land exchange, they will be able to learn even more about the American Revolution by visiting a new museum in a historically-rich area at Independence National Historical Park."

—Amy Leinbach Marquis

EYE-OPENER



You've seen his work in nearly every issue of *National Parks* magazine for three years running—from the railyards of Steamtown National Historic Site to the waters of the Everglades and the peaks of Denali. In August, photographer Ian Shive collected hundreds of his best images for a new book entitled **THE NATIONAL PARKS: OUR AMERICAN LANDSCAPE**, and he's set aside a percentage of the profits to benefit NPCA. An introduction from our own Tom Kiernan accompanies essays by *National Parks* editors who detail the experience of collaborating with Shive in our Washington offices and in the field. But the photos are the real draw, and the iconic landscapes are all here: Arches and the Grand Canyon, Glacier and Zion, Yellowstone and Yosemite. So, too, are the sights that many of us overlook: the pure white gypsum of White Sand Dunes, a jellyfish floating in the Channel Islands, a tarantula and a scorpion underfoot in Big Bend. It's a great gift for any park lover you know, and it's not a bad way to pick your next vacation, either. Through special arrangement with the publisher, NPCA members can purchase the book at 35% off the cover price by entering coupon code EANP0454 at www.earthawareeditions.com (Earth Aware Editions, $39.95 retail, 204 pp.). To learn more about Shive or find out if his book tour will bring him to a city near you, visit www.waterandsky.com or follow him on Facebook and Twitter.

INTERPRETIVE DANCE

Wolf Trap choreographs a celebration of Glacier National Park.

WOLF TRAP FOUNDATION FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS

GLACIER NATIONAL PARK

If you happened to be hiking through Glacier National Park this summer, you may have been startled to see a handful of tuxedo-clad dancers throwing themselves to the very edge of a cliff at Sun Point. No, you weren't witnessing the birth of a new extreme sport, you were just fortunate enough to witness members of a dance troupe being filmed for a production by choreographer Trey McIntyre. The performance, which also incorporates live dance and music, debuted at Wolf Trap National Park for the Performing Arts in Virginia a few weeks ago, and is set to tour the country for more than a year.

"Face of America: Glacier" is the sixth installment in the Face of America series, which turns national parks into the ultimate stage—a project of the Wolf Trap Foundation for the Performing Arts. Given Glacier's 100th anniversary next spring, and its emergence as a poster child for climate change, the park seemed an obvious choice. Previous performances have focused on Mammoth Cave, Virgin Islands, Yosemite, several of Hawaii's park units, and a celebration of flight featuring sites devoted to the Tuskegee Airmen and Wright Brothers.

Although photography and painting have a long history with the national parks, Terre Jones, president of the Wolf Trap Foundation, believes the performing arts are too often overlooked. "Film and photography capture an image that's as close to what the human eye sees, but dance and music can capture the spirit through motion," says Jones, "When you see Trey McIntyre's dancers on Sun Point, with wind gusts up to fifty miles per hour, it's the perfect environment to illustrate man's struggle with nature—a key message in the piece."

Which brings us back to those tuxedos. The formal attire is McIntyre's attempt to illustrate that we are, in many ways, strangers on this landscape, at odds with the natural world, often unaware of the ways we contribute to its problems. It's one part of a broader message that Jones hopes will find a wider audience, even as some people cut back on entertainment, given the troubled economy: "The arts are important in these times," says Jones. "They help us connect with each other and help us understand one another by capturing the human spirit, and giving us the opportunity for a real communal experience."

To learn more, and find out if "Face of America: Glacier" will be coming to your area, visit www.wolftrap.org/face.

—Scott Kirkwood

ECHOES

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In tough economic times, our nation has mobilized millions of people to conserve and protect its most vital resources, producing lasting benefits for society and providing individuals with opportunities and new skills. The Public Lands Service Corps can do this and more by employing people… in jobs that would enhance their future employability, invigorating them with an enhanced sense of civic pride and supporting President Obama's call for people to serve.

SALLY JEWELL, *president of outdoor gear retailer REI and a member of NPCA's board of trustees, testifying before Congress in support of a bill that would put Americans to work rehabilitating campgrounds, restoring historic structures, and eradicating invasive species (above) in parks and other public lands.*

Part of telling the story of a battle depends on the views… what the soldiers were seeing, the night skies, and soundscapes. [We need] to protect those parts of the resource as much as the actual battlefield itself.

EMILY JONES, *program manager for NPCA's Southeast regional office, quoted in the* Arkansas Democrat-Gazette, *regarding the development threats to Pea Ridge National Military Park outlined in a recent report issued by NPCA's Center for the State of the Parks.*

FILMMAKER JOHN GRABOWSKA in Harpers Ferry National Historical Park.

Q&A

LIGHT & SHADOWS

Ken Burns is about to bring the parks into millions of living rooms this month, but John Grabowska has been putting America's best places on the silver screen for nearly 20 years.

John Grabowska has a lot of stories to tell. Three hundred ninety one, to be exact. He's been chipping away at that list for nearly two decades by writing, producing, and directing films for the National Park Service. And there's a good chance you've seen the results in a cool, dark visitor center on a hot summer day, or from the comfort of your couch. Grabowska's films have been screened in 28 national parks, and many have found a second life on public television stations throughout the country.

Raised in South Dakota, the son of two professors is driven to educate his viewers on issues that affect the parks—global warming has become an increasingly common theme—but he never fails to include a healthy dose of gorgeous cinematography, music, and poetry, to keep spirits up. Grabowska's films tend to be so big and sweeping, in fact, that you might think 50 people went into the making of each of them—but if you were to stumble on one of his production crews in the field, it wouldn't look like much. Besides a rather large camera, there are usually just two people at work: a cinematographer and Grabowska himself—who, despite his title, usually ends up hauling much of the gear.

His best-known films include Crown of the Continent, *featuring Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve in Alaska;* Ribbon of Sand, *featuring Cape Lookout National Seashore in North Carolina's Outer Banks; and* Remembered Earth, *featuring El Malpais National Monument in New Mexico. Grabowska recently finished a film on Yellowstone National Park, and will soon wrap up another on Bandelier National Monument in New Mexico. Future projects depend on which parks can scrape together the funds—whether through different pots of fee money, a budgeted line item in Congress, or a generous friends group. He has also overseen the production of films on historical parks like New Bedford Whaling in Massachusetts and Dayton Aviation Heritage in Ohio, to the iconic Yosemite National Park in California and Shenandoah in Virginia. Associate Editor Amy Leinbach Marquis traveled to Harpers Ferry, West Virginia, to ask Grabowska about his experiences focusing on the national parks.*

Q: What was your first experience on the job?

A: I had just come back from the Peace Corps and my bags were packed. My wife and I were going to relocate to New Mexico, a place that I love—I've been going there for 30 years. The cultures, the landscape diversity, the high desert, I love it all.

But I thought it would be foolish to go without checking out this job that I'd heard about from a friend at National Geographic. So I visited Harpers Ferry, and never left. One of my first assignments was to direct a shoot at Pu'uhonua o Honaunau, on the Big Island of Hawaii.

The Peace Corps does a great job of preparing people for the developing world. You're ready for a hardship post, for a dirt floor and a thatched roof, for illness, for loneliness. But back then they did a miserable job of preparing you to come back to the richest, most technologically advanced nation in the world. And culture shock was overwhelming. I was blown away by the wealth, the number of white people, the obsession with cleanliness. Everybody had two vehicles!

Going to the Big Island of Hawaii was

such a tremendous relief. The pace, the friendliness, the relaxation; working with people who lived within and valued their own traditional culture. It was a wonderful reintroduction to the United States—ironically enough, going to Hawaii, the 50th state. It helped me cope.

Q: What are you working on now?

A: I'm just starting post-production on a film for Bandelier National Monument. As is usually the case with the films I make, it's a look at the broader ecosystem. I'm doing two versions: A shorter version for park visitors who don't want to be warehoused in a theater too long, and a longer version that will be submitted to PBS for consideration. Airing on PBS is not a given—the network has their layers of approval processes and review boards and groups and committees. Just because I have a track record doesn't mean I get a free pass the next time. You're only as good as your next film.

I also just wrapped up a film on Yellowstone, which is experiencing many of the impacts of global climate change, but the aim of this film was to show an even bigger picture. A film takes a long time to make, so this one will have to last a decade or two. The information needs to be grounded in solid science but can't be so of-the-moment that it's dated a year later. Otherwise we've wasted a lot of money on a film that's no longer relevant.

Q: Why is the big-picture so important?

A: Because flora and fauna don't recognize park boundaries. Nor does pollution. Nor does climate change.

So far I've been fortunate to work with open-minded superintendents and chiefs of interpretation. It doesn't usually take much convincing. These are Park Service professionals who look at ecosystems and understand the necessities of dealing with things outside the park boundary because they affect what's inside the park boundary.

I sent a rough cut of the Wrangelll-St. Elias film to the park's superintendent, and when he saw the underwater footage, he said, "Our management area ends at the water's edge." And I said, "But the tides go up and down, and the salmon don't know that your management ends there. They spend four to five years out in the ocean, then they come up the Copper River and come into your park. Why don't we take a look at the environment and talk about how at the core is a national park?" So we did, and I think it made for a better film, instead of the insularity of saying, "Well here's the boundary. We're only going to talk about what's inside this political boundary."

Stewardship is the responsibility of every American citizen, if not every member of humankind.

Q: What do you hope viewers take away from your films?

A: The Park Service is often referred to as the premier preservation agency in America, if not the world. And part of preservation is letting people know that they need to be responsible for their park. Stewardship is the responsibility of every American citizen, if not every member of humankind. But we don't want to depress them. There are so many formulaic environmental documentaries with the doom-and-gloom syndrome. And it actually may be counterproductive, because it can lead to a feeling of hopelessness in the viewer: "Everything is so bad, the forces at work are so big, I'm just an individual, what can I do..." Then they leave the theater or turn off the TV with slumped shoulders and that feeling of helplessness. Our job is not to soft-pedal the threats to the resource. But we also have to inspire people, to make them care, to put things into perspective.

You could describe every natural history film I've made in five words: "Humankind in the natural world." We evolved in the natural world, and it was only the Medieval and Industrial Ages—and now the Information Age—that created this artificial barrier between us and nature.

So a primary goal is to remind the viewer that we are natural beings; that we are part of this and it is part of us. This isn't an original idea. Jean-Jacques Rousseau wrote about it, Aldo Leopold wrote about it, Rachel Carson wrote about it, E.O. Wilson wrote about it. So just like Alfred Lord Tennyson wrote, "I'm a part of all I've met"—every book I've read, every place I've been to, every person I meet—all of that goes into every film I've ever worked on. So that's where it comes from, and it builds.

I have such respect for the audience, because the act of watching, listening to, thinking about a film, is as creative a process as making the film. Similarly, the act of reading a book is as creative as writing it. Everybody who comes into the theater is an individual, is unique, has their own experiences and their own feelings and interpretations about those experiences. People see things that the author or the creator of that work of art may not have intended.

Visitors don't drive across the country to see a John Grabowska film—they drive across the country to make that great American pilgrimage to Yellowstone or Mesa Verde or Yosemite. So we only have them for a short time—the poor captive audience. Or maybe they're in there just because it's air conditioned and it's 100 degrees outside and there are nice, clean bathrooms. So they come into the theater, and we have a responsibility to them to deliver the best possible interpretation we can based on good science and history, while incorporating, I hope, the best of the arts—photography, music, editing, writing.

Q: But you also work hard to get the films beyond the national park crowd. Why is that important?

A: The people sitting in the theater at the park visitor center aren't necessarily the people we have to convince that national parks are important—they've already demonstrated that they know that. They're there. They've made the trek. These are our people. And I want to inspire them, I want to reward them. But we do need to reach beyond them. We need to reach the

© RAYMOND GEHMAN/NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC STOCK

A RIBBON OF SAND addresses climate change threats to Cape Lookout National Seashore.

people who don't have the opportunity or the funds to come all the way across the country. I'm lucky—I grew up going to Yellowstone because I grew up out West, but I know more people who have not been to Yellowstone than who have.

I first went to PBS in search of a broader audience after making the film for a spectacular place, Wrangell-St. Alias, and realizing most people can't afford to go to Alaska. I have wanted to take my family to Wrangell-St. Elias for the last 10 years but I can't afford it. I can't even take my own girls.

So I sent it off to PBS, and fortunately they loved it. It showed nationally in prime time several times during the first year, and affiliates continue to show it. The Wrangells film is probably on television right now, somewhere in the nation. So it has reached millions and millions of people. A park that most people have never heard of, even though it's the largest national park in the United States—it's 13 million acres. It's larger than Switzerland, and has bigger mountains. If we're going to put all this time and effort into a film, then yes—let's reward those visitors who come here, let's inspire them, let's inform them. But it's a great big nation out there. Let's try to reach some others as well.

I have such respect for the audience, because the act of watching, listening to, thinking about a film, is as creative a process as making the film.

Q: You're careful not to keep park visitors in the theater for too long. Why?

A: I have this fantasy: People walk in expecting a beautiful natural history movie. They sit down in their seats. The lights dim, the curtain opens, and two words appear on screen: "Go outside."

The idea of a national park is not a visitor center. It is the canyon. It is the Maggie Lena Walker House. It is the glacier. It is the remains of the mission at Salinas Pueblo Missions. If a visitor drives into the park, goes to the visitor center, absorbs some interpretation, and leaves, well at least they've received some interpretation, but that's not the goal of the National Park Service. Our goal is for the visitor to have a personal experience with the reason the park was established. And so sure, I would love for them to see my film. But I would rather that they get out on the trail. That they walk through Fort Jefferson. That they experience what attracted those of us who work in the national parks in the first place: the authentic.

My poor daughters have grown up moaning that they never got to go to Disney World. Because their evil ogre of a dad says, "No, we are not going to have a contrived experience." Let's not seek out a fake experience, however wonderful it might be. There's already an audience for that—they don't need us.

The authentic is the reason I work in the Park Service. The authentic is the reason that when I try to stay in shape, I put a kayak on the river instead of going to the gym. The authentic is what my daughters—against every inclination of childhood—have absorbed. One of my daughters is working as a living history volunteer, just down the hill at Harpers Ferry National Historical Park. John Brown's Raid took place steps from where we're sitting. That's real. The first time I visited Yosemite Valley I nearly drove off the road because my head was out the window—I couldn't believe what I was seeing. That's real. And getting out on the trail where John Muir walked—to "seek the good tidings"—that's authentic.

Sure, watch the film. I hope you admire the arts that are in it. But if you just leave having watched a film and seen some exhibits and used the bathrooms, then I've failed.

Q: Do you have a favorite park? A place you'd go again and again?

A: I don't have a favorite park—that's like asking me if I have a favorite daughter! But I would take my family to Wrangell-St. Elias in a heartbeat. I have a personal history with it—I went through it when I was six years old, before it was a park. It is so jaw dropping. There are parts that look like the desert southwest and parts that look like Antarctica. You could drop Yosemite in there and it would be one more beautiful valley. It's like no other place on Earth.

3,000,000

ACRES OF PARKLAND and protected areas that stand to benefit from a renewed commitment to conservation along the U.S.-Mexico border. In August, Interior Secretary Ken Salazar and Mexico's Minister of Environment and Natural Resources Juan Elvira agreed to develop a plan to better coordinate environmental efforts between borderlands in Texas—including Big Bend National Park—and federally-protected areas in Mexico. Their goals? To highlight the biodiversity of the region, strengthen environmental cooperation, and provide a positive model for U.S.-Mexican relations. The effort brings advocates one step closer to a decades-old dream to create an international peace park between the U.S. and Mexico. Salazar and Elvira will report back this winter.

THE FLATHEAD RIVER VALLEY provides pristine habitat to an incredible amount of wildlife, from trout to white-tailed deer.

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: © GARTH LENZ; © ANDREW S. WRIGHT; © MICHAEL READY

TROUBLED WATERS

Photographers focus on Canada's Flathead River Valley to preserve Glacier National Park.

Just north of Glacier National Park, the rivers and streams in Canada's Flathead River Valley run so pure that you can cup your hands in the water and drink it straight from the source. Endangered bull trout and some of the last remaining genetically-pure populations of westslope cutthroat trout thrive here. And so many carnivores roam this region—including more inland grizzlies than anywhere else in North America—that the place has been dubbed North America's Serengeti.

Such vast, pristine wilderness sounds too good to be true, which is why the International League of Conservation Photographers (ILCP) spent ten days focusing their cameras on its wildlife and natural scenery. The images produced by this RAVE, or Rapid Assessment Visual Expedition, are designed to bring awareness to the region and shed light on forces that threaten its ecosystem—and in the Flathead, those threats are serious.

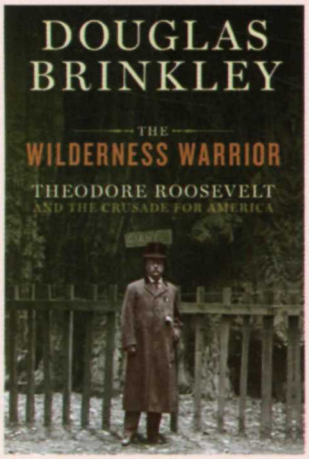
Just upstream at the valley's headwaters, mining companies are proposing two potentially catastrophic projects: Coal-bed methane drilling, which produces millions of gallons of toxic water as a by-product; and strip mining that shaves off a mountaintop to expose thin layers of coal.

"When you move an entire mountaintop, you disrupt the entire ecosystem," says Trevor Frost, iLCP's RAVE director. "And everything is connected in the Flathead. If the river gets polluted, then fish habitat is destroyed, and everything else to starts to break down."

"Mining here would be a tragic mistake," says Will Hammerquist, program manager at NPCA's Glacier field office. "The Boundary Waters Treaty of 1909 states that neither Canada nor the U.S. shall pollute rivers that flow into the other country. And both countries made a further commitment to protect these parks when Waterton-Glacier was designated as a UNESCO World Heritage site. This is the world's first peace park, and an international treasure worth protecting."

Thankfully, most Canadians agree. In fact for decades, the country's political leaders have wanted to expand Waterton Lakes National Park to include a portion the Flathead River Valley—but objections from industry and local politicians have halted this effort. A recent poll, however, shows that more *(contd. on p 16)*

EYE-OPENER



Douglas Brinkley's book, **WILDERNESS WARRIOR: THEODORE ROOSEVELT AND THE CRUSADE FOR AMERICA**, begins as our 26th president interrupts a cabinet meeting with important news: He's just spotted a chestnut-sided warbler in Washington, D.C., in February, and he can't contain his excitement. It's just one of the many stories you'll find sprinkled throughout this 900-page book illustrating Roosevelt's passionate for nature, wildlife, and the outdoors. *Wilderness Warrior* isn't so much a biography of Roosevelt as it is the biography of a conservation movement launched by a charismatic figure who seemed uniquely qualified for the job. Brinkley introduces pivotal characters who influenced Roosevelt's thinking, including John Muir, John J. Audubon, and Charles Darwin. And of course, there are the national parks where the drama unfolded and where the results were made real: Crater Lake, Devil's Tower, Grand Canyon, Petrified Forest, Yellowstone, Yosemite, and dozens of places that, despite our affection for them, many of us take for granted. In an age when it's become exceedingly difficult for a single leader to make meaningful change in a short amount of time, the book is staggering testimony to all that Roosevelt accomplished by sheer will (Harper, $34.99, 940 pp.).

ILCP'S PHOTOGRAPHS help conservation partners like John Bergenske, executive director of Canadian nonprofit Wildsight, spread awareness about threats to the region and its wildlife.

TOP: © GARTH LENZ; BOTTOM: © JOE RIIS

than 70 percent of local residents are opposed to mining in the valley and support a national park expansion. In the meantime, an international team of scientists will travel to the region this fall to assess potential impacts of proposed mining activities on the World Heritage site.

"We need strong, credible images to give a voice to places that cannot speak for themselves," says Cristina Mittermeier, iLCP's executive director. "It's so easy for mining companies to claim that there's nothing in the Flathead—so we used our cameras to show how much there is to be lost. Images are irrefutable evidence of the beauty of our planet and the critical resources we can't afford to lose."

To learn more about mining threats to Glacier National Park and to see more photos from the RAVE, visit www.npca.org/glacierendangered.

– Amy Leinbach Marquis

3,509

NUMBER OF MARIJUANA PLANTS eradicated from California's Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area this July. Thanks in part to NPCA's advocacy, the park received more than $200,000 to keep funding the good fight—and it's a good thing, because clean-up efforts aren't cheap. Restoring one cultivated acre costs as much as $12,000, not to mention dozens of hours of staff time to reestablish native plants, remove toxic pesticides, and ensure that healthy habitat remains for endangered species.

UPDATE

© SAMUEL A. MINICK

INDEPENDENCE DAY celebrations began especially early this year when the National Park Service reopened the Statue of Liberty's crown to the public at 9 a.m. It was the first time visitors had been allowed to climb to such heights in the statue since September 11, 2001.

"Americans have the right to visit every corner of our National Park System," says Alexander R. Brash, NPCA's northeast regional director. "Closure of the crown illustrated the chronic funding shortfalls facing the national parks—so we're thankful for the hard work by Interior Secretary Salazar and the members of Congress who helped ensure that visitors can once again experience more of the historic landmark that symbolizes freedom in America."

If you're among the "huddled masses yearning to breathe free"—or climb 354 stairs, for that matter—you'll have to wait your turn. Visits to the crown are limited to groups of 10, and only a few groups are allowed up every hour. In fact, shortly after the reopening, tickets sold out for months in advance. To ensure your place in line, call 877.523.9849, or visit www.statuecruises.com.

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PARK HISTORIAN DENNIS FRYE strengthened a community's ties to Harpers Ferry by engaging local youth.

THE LESSON PLAN

Harpers Ferry reaches out to local students, and the impact spans generations

In 1988, West Virginia Senator Robert Byrd watched as construction of a shopping mall was narrowly averted near Manassas National Battlefield in nearby Virginia, and he was determined to prevent the same thing from happening at Harpers Ferry. So he required elected officials in the county to consult with the Park Service before making any key decisions. And that's how 30-year-old park historian Dennis Frye ended up speaking to a thoroughly disinterested audience of county commissioners that December, as the rolling hills of Schoolhouse Ridge were being eyed for a sprawling residential development. Frye told how Confederate General "Stonewall" Jackson forced the largest surrender of U.S. troops during the Civil War, in the hopes that he might impress a few of the guests with his stories, and perhaps earn a few converts.

It didn't quite work out that way.

After his presentation concluded, Frye and the commissioners drove to Schoolhouse Ridge in complete silence. It's a story he still tells with all the drama and detail you'd expect from a park ranger: "We got out of our vehicle to await the others, and I found myself surrounded by the commissioners—five giant sequoias casting dark shadows over me," he says. "One of the commissioners put his left hand on my shoulder and grasped it tightly, and extended his right index finger to within one inch of my nose, and he said, with a voice that thundered, 'Nothing happened here, boy. Do you understand me? Nothing happened here.'"

That was the day Frye decided to make education a key component of the park's outreach efforts. "Those men were totally ignorant of the events that had unfolded in their own backyard," he says. "And that wasn't their fault. It was a lack of education—a failure to learn about their own history. I knew that generation was lost forever, but I saw hope in future generations."

Six months later Frye reached out to the next generation, with help from the chief of curriculum at the Jefferson County Schools, who just happened to be a former park ranger. The school arranged a field trip for every fifth- and sixth-grader in the county and the destination was—you guessed it—Schoolhouse Ridge. Seven hundred students learned about the history of Harpers Ferry in the Civil War, and the hope was that they would take the story back to their parents, too.

Over the next 11 years, more than 5,000 fifth-graders went through the same program; rangers visited their classrooms in the days before, and teachers offered more instruction in the weeks that followed.

Surprisingly, although Schoolhouse Ridge had indeed been zoned for development in 1988, a recession and banking crisis meant the land was practically un-

changed. Then in 2000, another development proposal emerged, followed by a series of public meetings that stretched into 2002. This time around, the Park Service received hundreds of letters in support of the park; the county commission voted 5-0 in favor of battlefield preservation. "That's what education did in a generation," says Frye. "It completely changed people's perspective."

And Frye isn't done yet. As the park's chief of interpretation, he now oversees an active education program that continues to evolve. The latest incarnation resulted in a series of video podcasts produced by Harpers Ferry Middle School students, focusing on the 150th anniversary of John Brown's ill-fated revolt—the spark that lit the fuse of the Civil War.

The Advisory Council for Historic Preservation provided the initiative for a new service-learning program, school principal Joe Spurgas threw his weight behind the idea, and the whole project was overseen by Angela Stokes, education program manager with the Journey Through Hallowed Ground, a nonprofit that links Civil War sites in the region. Seventy students from sixth- through eighth grade volunteered for the video podcast project. Each grade was tasked with producing two podcasts for their peers, choosing whatever angle sparked their interest. The Park Service gave the students primary source material like photos, and copies of journals and newspapers from the era. Each team had to create storyboards, write screenplays, choose their actors, cast their roles, and memorize their lines; students even made their own period clothing and some recorded their own music.

Then the real learning began. As the students recognized that they had no more than two minutes to convey the story to their peers, they were forced to make difficult choices about what to leave in and what to leave out, and they soon realized that history isn't simply about dates, but about individual people simply living their lives. The resulting podcasts hit close to home: One team looked at how the children of John Brown responded to their father's ambitious campaign to end slavery. Another looked at the experiences of the local children of Harpers Ferry, whose town was thrown into chaos 150 years ago. With the end product online for all to see, one generation of local students is planting a seed for yet another generation.

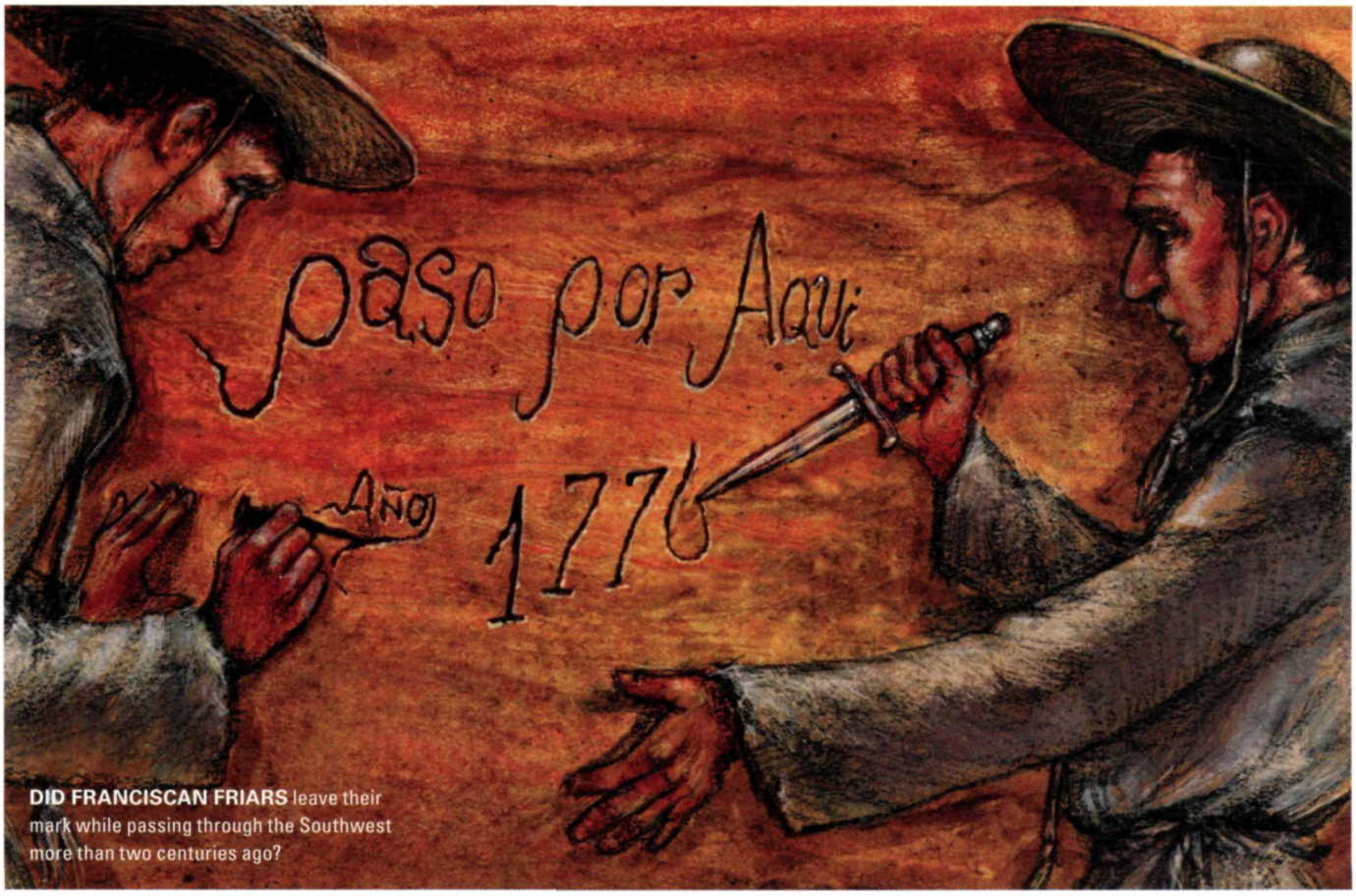
"Some of the younger kids we worked with years ago are voters now, and their children are already going through our second-grade program," says Frye. "The national park is really woven into the fabric of the community through education. And it has led to improved relations with the county government, the city government, and all of our neighbors. That's the value of education. No longer is there ignorance, no longer will somebody point a finger and say, 'Nothing happened here.'"

–Scott Kirkwood

ON THE WEB

View the Harpers Ferry video podcasts at www.harpersferryhistory.org/johnbrown/videocasts.htm.

By Michael Engelhard



DID FRANCISCAN FRIARS leave their mark while passing through the Southwest more than two centuries ago?

Etched in Stone

Was Glen Canyon graffiti carved by an ancient band of travelers?

Sprawling graffiti is no longer just a phenomenon of inner cities. In spite of advice to leave nothing but footprints, each year, thousands of visitors to the Southwest scratch their names into boulders and cliffs rather than trail registers. The signatures and initialed hearts damage rock art and historic inscriptions—records created by missionaries, traders, scientists, and pioneers that can add to our knowledge about the past. "Perhaps even more important," says Max King, chief of interpretation at Glen Canyon National Recreation Area, "they provide a tangible, inspiring connection to the determined spirit of the early explorers of this land."

With wire brushes, hammers, squirt bottles, and much stamina, volunteers with the Graffiti Removal Intervention Team (GRIT) scrub rock surfaces near Lake Powell, in Utah and Arizona, to remove signs of vandalism. For a week at a time, they live on a donated houseboat, the *True GRIT*. In a typical year, they log 1,400 hours and clean 17,280 square feet of sandstone tagged mostly by recreational boaters. Two years ago, at Padre Bay, near an old ford across the Colorado River, one team discovered a faint phrase beneath a scrim of modern graffiti: *paso por Aqui Año 1776*. The phrase "passed by here" is typical of 17th-century Spanish inscriptions, like those in New Mexico's El Morro National Monument. James Page, the *GRIT* houseboat pilot and president of the Armijo Chapter of the Old Spanish Trail Association, almost immediately thought of the Dominguez-Escalante expedition, whose journal he had studied. "I knew we had a winner," says Page, recalling the thrill of discovery. "There was never any doubt in my mind that it was authentic."

The Franciscan friars had attempted to find a route between Santa Fe, New Mexico, and Monterey, California, where they hoped to establish new missions. They had already been forced to eat some of their horses, when a fierce storm trapped the party. "Stopped for a long time by a strong blizzard and tempest consisting of rain and thick hailstones amid horrendous thunder claps and lightning flashes," reads their terse journal entry of that day. As they carved into the soft Entrada sandstone, they may have thought they were writing their own epitaph.

The newly discovered inscription would be the only known physical mark left by the expedition. But first, it would have to undergo a battery of sophisticated tests to prove its authenticity.

The inscription's placement yielded a first clue: chest-high, in the panel's center, it fills exactly the place a person would choose if given a clean slate. A laser scan helped map and document the find and also provided information about its reflectivity, which contrasts with that of modern graffiti.

The script was identified as 18th Century New World Spanish Cursive. Comparing the inscription with samples from El Morro, paleographers found striking similarities, like flourished descenders (strokes below a word's baseline) on the letters *p* and the upper case *A*. Ornamental hooks or "serifs" were evident at both sites, and the slight elevation of the date's last numeral is consistent with usage on period maps.

An investigation of the rock varnish showed varying levels of thickness and lead contamination. The patina on modern graffiti was thinner (thus newer), with higher lead concentrations indicative of industrial air pollution. The varnish on *paso por Aqui Año 1776* was thicker, and its deeper layers contained no lead residue; it likely predated the 20th century by several centuries. Slow-growing lichen led one ecologist to estimate that the underlying inscription was at least 100 years old.

Additional support for the inscription's antiquity came from the friars' journal. Though they did not mention carving an inscription, its location matches the diary entry for November 6. A nearby alcove could well have been the one that sheltered the storm-bound padres.

Based on the available evidence, Glen Canyon officials declared the inscription genuine. King compares the discovery to "finding a lost speech of Lincoln." The site's exact location is kept secret to protect it while further archaeological work is conducted.

The battle to preserve the Southwest's cultural resources is far from over. Since 1998, the Park Service has funded archaeological preservation and restoration projects in 45 parks between Texas and California, as part of its Vanishing Treasures program. Land managers, whose budgets are stretched to the maximum, bank on legal deterrents. Defacing rocks in national parks and monuments can result in a $6,000 fine and misdemeanor charge, and all inscriptions 50 years and older are protected by federal law. But many consider educating the public the more effective part of a two-prong strategy of prevention. Novel approaches to educate visitors include hands-on programs that incorporate archaeology and scientific methods used in "digs." "All of us recognize that we need to maintain this public connection," says King. "Without that, we will gradually lose our support as a park." **NP**

Michael Engelhard is the author of *Redrock Almanac* and editor of *Wild Moments: Adventures with Animals of the North.*

By Jennifer Bogo

A PAIR OF NENE GEESE nesting in the grass.

Nene Crossing

Despite predators, traffic, and wayward golf balls, the Hawaiian goose mounts a comeback.

Make a phone call to Hawaii Volcanoes National Park, and you might be struck by an unusual voice prompt as you navigate the automated menu: "If this is a Nene emergency, please dial zero." For when it comes to protecting the Hawaiian state bird—one of the most endangered geese in the world—park biologists consider every hazard an urgent matter. Nene (pronounced "nay-nay") emergency calls range from injured birds on the Big Island's main highway, which slices through nesting and brooding areas, to birds struck by golf balls at the adjacent 18-hole course.

Like its Canadian ancestor on the mainland, the Hawaiian goose readily inhabits altered landscapes such as roadsides, pastures, airports, and fairways—anywhere with acres of short grass to graze. And like most island fauna that evolved without predators, Nene are a little too laid back for their own good. "By nature, they're not real skittish animals," says Kathleen Misajon, a wildlife biologist at Volcanoes, "and I think that sometimes gets them into trouble."

Although an individual bird may wander into dangerous situations, the species has squeaked by the most treacherous one of all: the devastating period since human colonization, which wiped out 71 of Hawaii's 113 endemic bird species. First Polynesians, then European settlers, exploited the Nene for food, introduced predators, and irrevocably changed its natural habitat. Fossilized Nene bones have been found on six of the eight main Hawaiian Islands—but by the 1950s as few as 30 wild birds remained, and only on the Big Island.

"The Nene presumably survived all of that mayhem because it could fly," says U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) biologist Paul Banko. Eight other duck or geese species were flightless, and went extinct.

The Nene's ability to walk in a way that most birds can't—like over long distances, rocky surfaces, and hardened lava flows—makes it equally resilient today. Slightly smaller than the typical Canada goose, the Nene also has smaller wings, longer legs positioned farther forward on its body, and less

webbing between its toes. While Nene will happily swim if the opportunity presents itself, they have evolved to traverse harsh Hawaiian landscapes. In fact, since the first captive-bred birds were released on Hawaii in 1960, the geese have been known to nest anywhere from sea level to the tops of volcanoes, 7,900 feet in elevation.

Despite setbacks, including a severe drought that dramatically reduced the population, Nene have been reestablished on four islands—Hawaii, Kauai, Maui, and Molokai—and the total number of birds has climbed to about 1,950. In Hawaii Volcanoes National Park, which hosts the largest Nene population on the Big Island, 210 Nene thrive; Haleakala National Park on Maui supports up to 350.

Both parks are actively reducing predators in key Nene habitat, including mongooses—the Nene's biggest enemy—as well as feral cats, dogs, and rats. Park managers also maintain fencing—52 miles in Haleakala and 120 miles in Volcanoes—to keep out goats, deer, and pigs that trample Nene habitat. Managing such large, rugged tracts of land with so many remote areas is expensive and logistically difficult. But the biggest challenge for biologists may be helping Nene to reestablish their traditional behavior.

"We believe that Nene were what we call altitudinal migrants," says Annie Marshall, a wildlife biologist with the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service. "They nest in the lowlands, and then after the goslings fledge, move up and forage in the upland areas."

During reintroduction efforts, captive birds were released mainly in upper elevations, says Misajon, because that's where Nene had been spotted. "By the time anyone started taking note that Nene were almost gone," she says, "those were the only birds left." More suitable breeding habitat had already been lost. As a result, many goslings died of exposure and malnutrition.

Park managers have since intervened to make sure Nene don't starve. But Nene need to resume migration on their own. That way, they can pursue better habitat as the climate dictates and increase their genetic diversity as well. So biologists are trying to link established populations by introducing birds to new locations. The USGS and the Park Service have also outfitted five Nene with custom-fit backpacks holding transmitters. Using satellite telemetry, they hope to learn where Nene move on the Big Island. Early results have been surprising: One bird flew 45 miles to Hakalau Forest National Wildlife Refuge and on to the base of Mauna Kea.

Identifying the birds' destinations will help park managers focus on those areas. But, "we also want to see how much time these guys are spending outside public lands as they travel back and forth," says Misajon. Then biologists can work with private landowners to ensure Nene have suitable habitat throughout their migrations, even outside the borders of the parks. **NP**

Jennifer Bogo is the science editor at *Popular Mechanics*.

A 1972 PHOTOGRAPH shows Desolation Fire Lookout in North Cascades National Park.

THE ART OF MOUNTAIN WATCHING

BY KEVIN GRANGE

At North Cascades National Park, rangers posted in fire lookouts get a unique perspective on one of our nation's most fascinating ecosystems.

When you work as a fire lookout in Washington's North Cascades National Park, your day begins at 5:30 a.m., when the sun rises over miles of immense glaciated peaks, blasts through your window-walled cabin, and pin-balls off the propane stove, lightning stool, and Osborne Fire Finder, sending diamond light in all directions. There is no snooze button on this "alarm clock," and even if there were, North Cascades park rangers like Gerry Cook and Kelly Bush wouldn't push it. There is work to be done: snow must be boiled for drinking water, the cabin must be tidied should a park guest come to visit and, most important, a vast expanse of pristine wilderness needs to be looked after. It is July, fire season in the North Cascades, and despite the early hour, the day is hot, forest dry, and punctured purple clouds brood on the horizon.

Sitting quietly in the upper reaches of the Pacific Northwest, these 684,000 acres, which house two national recreation areas and half of the glaciers in the lower 48 states, could be the best kept secret of America's National Park System. Thanks to its Swiss-like snowy peaks and subalpine meadows teeming with wildflowers, the North Cascades has long been called the "American Alps." It is a good description—if you're talking about the park from the neck up—for below these jagged peaks and flowery meadows lies a wooded wonderland of ancient, moss-dripping trees, thundering rivers, and the cascading waterfalls for which the park was named. Rather than one defining feature like its national park neighbors to the south, Mt. Rainier and Crater Lake, the North Cascades has a diversity of offerings—300 glaciers, 240 lakes, 75 species of mammals, 200 species of birds, and eight "life zones." Together, these distinct regions combine to give the North Cascades more plant species than any national park.

But perhaps the best statistic of all is the low number of tourists—fewer than 300,000 in 2008—which means that instead of bumping into other hikers on the 400 miles of trails, you're far more likely to encounter the park's more permanent inhabitants, including deer, black bear, mountain goats, bald eagles, and, perhaps, the western tanager—a striking red, yellow, and black bird that migrates more than 3,000 miles to the North Cascades every year from Mexico.

Another migration occurs within the park each summer as park rangers trek into their mountaintop cabins and lift the storm shutters to stand as sentinels for the surrounding peaks. Ironically, the first fire lookout in the United States was "manned" by a woman (the term "fire lookout" is used for both the structure and the person on duty). A timber-camp cook named Mabel Grey was hired to watch over the North Fork of Clearwater River in Idaho in 1903. Years later, when a 1910 forest fire in Idaho killed 85 people and destroyed more than 3 million acres, a "housing boom" occurred on America's high peaks. At the request of Franklin D. Roosevelt and based on the doctrine of total fire suppression, the Forest Service's Civilian Conservation Corps flocked to the mountains for the next 30 years, drilling eye bolts into rocks, setting wind cables, and assembling fire lookouts from prefabricated pieces. The lookouts were square 14 × 14-foot "glass cabins" with rope-webbed mattresses, kerosene lanterns, and a glass-shoed lightning stool on which to stand during electrical storms. When lookouts spotted smoke, they'd call the coordinates in on their radios after identifying the location with an Osborne Fire Finder—a circular, topographic map with two rotating sights that allowed lookouts to scan 22 miles in every direction and pinpoint a fire within a 160-acre quarter-section. By 1930 more than 9,000 fire lookout structures perched on high crags all across the United States, but there was just one problem—staffing them.

FIRETOWERS LIKE DESOLATION LOOKOUT were designed for staff to scan 22 miles in every direction and pinpoint a fire within a 160-acre section.

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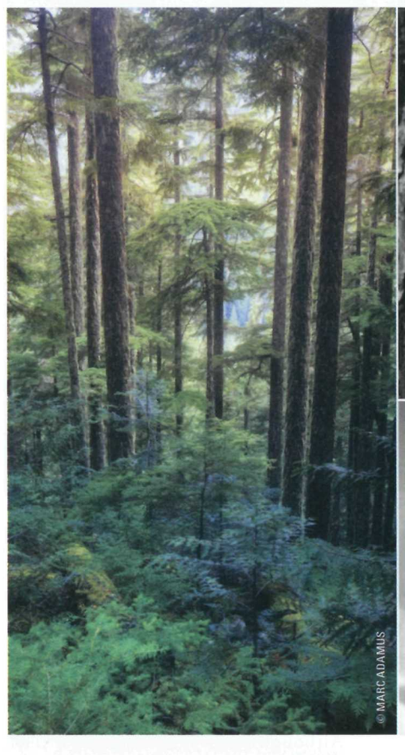
The duties of a fire lookout were easy enough: to learn every peak, ridge, hill, road, trail, lake, creek, building and false smoke and spend at least twenty minutes every hour scanning the mountains for smoke.

The duties of a fire lookout were easy enough: "to learn every peak, ridge, hill, road, trail, lake, creek, building and false smoke" and spend at least 20 minutes every hour scanning the mountains for smoke. The hard part, of course, was spending months in complete isolation. Back then, park rangers packed into their lookouts for the entire fire season and saw virtually no one. With mountains bearing such ominous names as Terror, Challenger, Fury, and Desolation and the hard-luck stories of the fur traders and miners who followed the local indigenous people into the North Cascades, it's no wonder lookout work was a hard sell in the upper Skagit Valley. But for a group of Zen-seeking writers in the 1950s, the life of a North Cascades fire lookout sounded perfect.

WHEN POET GARY SNYDER applied for a lookout position in 1952, the North Cascades was still being managed by the Forest Service. Snyder had high hopes of reading the collected works of Geoffrey Chaucer and William Blake during his stint as a seasonal ranger, and when he asked for the "highest, most remote and most difficult-of-access lookout," he was granted lookout duties atop 8,129-foot Crater Mountain. Snyder enjoyed the experience so much that he spent the following summer atop Sourdough Mountain and began telling his friends. Soon the North Cascade lookout logbooks were being signed by two other famed writers, Philip Whalen and Jack



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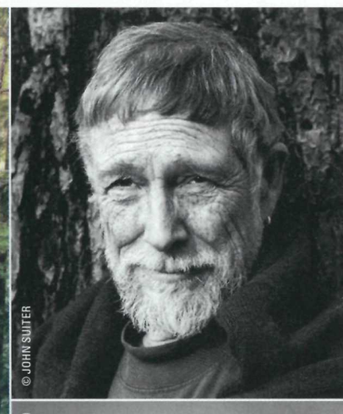

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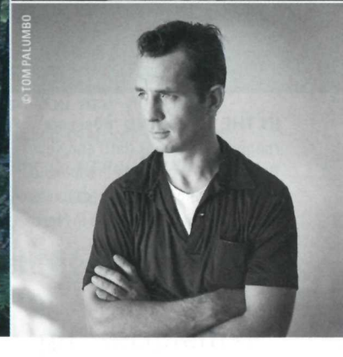
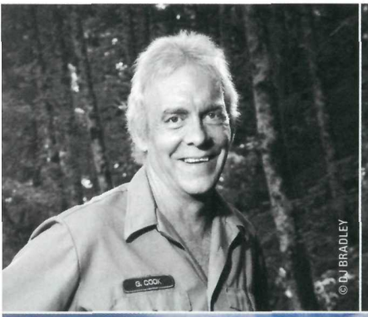
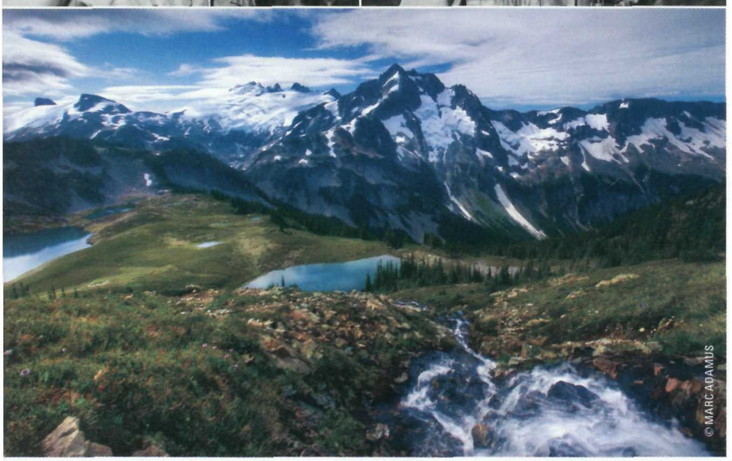


© TOM PALUMBO

NORTH CASCADES DREW famed poets and writers like Gary Snyder (top) and Jack Kerouac (bottom), whose immersion into mountain solitude allowed them to live like their Buddhist heroes.

Kerouac. As John Suiter suggests in his excellent book, *Poets on the Peaks*, Snyder and his pals also saw lookout life as a chance to imitate their Buddhist heroes, Hui-Neng and Han Shan, by retreating to a high mountain hermitage. In their lookout cabins, they envisioned a Japanese teahouse; the fog-shrouded Northwest woods reminded them of Chinese silk paintings. By learning what Snyder called "the art of mountain watching," they hoped to reach enlightenment… or at least get one step closer. The life of a fire lookout was the perfect chance to, as the Diamond Sutra instructed, "awaken the mind without fixing it anywhere."





IN THE 1970s AND '80s, park rangers Gerry Cook (left) and Kelly Bush (right) worked as fire lookouts, strengthening their connections to places like High Meadows in North Cascades, shown here.

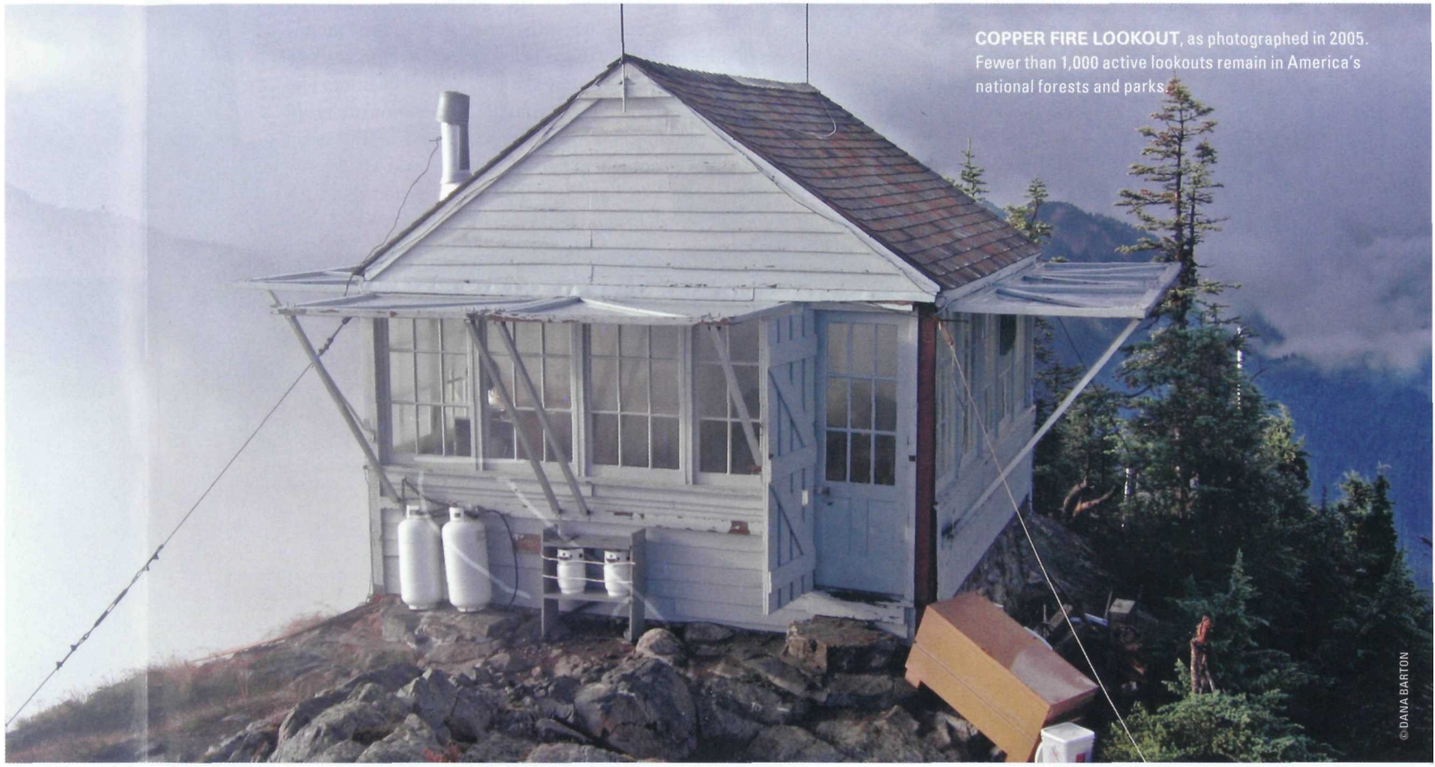
Although both Whalen and Kerouac wrote of their lookout experiences atop Sauk, Sourdough, and Desolation, Pulitzer prize-winning Snyder arguably had the biggest impact on America's pristine natural places. For more than 50 years he has used his poetry to explore the nature of work and human affairs and encourage readers to find "deeper connections to the earth." If Kerouac gave voice to the farmers, migrant workers, and minorities he met "on the road," preaching their place in America, Snyder lent his poetic voice to everything that couldn't speak—wind, water, trees, berries, and bears—and showed that, they too, are equally a part of our country and the people who call it home.

ALTHOUGH NORTH CASCADES park rangers Kelly Bush and Gerry Cook didn't have the Buddhist aspirations of Kerouac or Snyder, their lookout experiences left them equally enlightened. "Being on the lookout really solidified the idea that this is where I belong," says Cook, who worked atop Desolation Peak in 1970 and Sourdough in 1971. "I realized that my roots are the essence of mountains. It taught me to limit my expectations and live in the moment as well as one can." Kelly Bush, a backcountry ranger who worked at Copper Ridge Lookout for three years in the late '80s, agrees. "Back then, I didn't measure happiness and success by how much money I made but, rather, how many days and nights I spent roaming the wilderness. This was the perfect opportunity." To the courageous few who sought an intimate experience with nature, lookout life seemed to be the dream job. But there was one drawback—lightning.

> Being on the lookout really solidified the idea that this is where I belong. I realized that my roots are the essence of mountains. It taught me to limit my expectations and live in the moment as well as one can.

To experience a raging storm atop a fire lookout is to have a lightning-clenched fist coming at you at eye level. "Just before lightning struck my lookout, there was this intense gathering of energy," recalls Bush. "Then suddenly it felt as if someone was moving a silk scarf across my face, and when I looked outside, I saw glowing balls of St. Elmo's fire rolling down the branches of trees next to the lookout." Being at the highest point on the horizon, in a cabin full of metal appliances, one's natural impulse is to descend immediately, but it's during these terrifying, earth-shaking moments that a fire lookout is most needed. If a lightning strike starts a fire, a ranger needs to be there to call the blaze in. "During one storm, I saw three fires break out in the span of five minutes," recalls Cook. Thus during a storm, the lookout rangers must stand atop their glass-legged lightning stools, crouching, flinching, praying, and watching over the mountains, sacrificing their own fear in service of the forest.

A lot has changed in the years since Gary Snyder, Gerry Cook, and Kelly Bush staffed their lookouts in the North Cascades. With airplanes, helicopters, and satellite pictures playing a greater role in spotting fires, fewer than 1,000 active lookouts remain in America's national forests and parks. Instead of packing up for the entire season, today's rangers generally have ten days on and four days off. In addition, fire lookouts today receive more visitors, many of whom, in the North Cascades, make pilgrimages to the sites that Snyder, Whalen, and Kerouac made famous. The policy of suppressing all forest fires has changed as well. "Fire is a natural part of the ecosystem," says Cook. "It helps seeds germinate, diversifies the forest canopy, and clears away underbrush that could act as 'kindling' for a bigger fire." Today, all fires started by a human hand are extinguished immediately, but fires that occur naturally are allowed to continue as closely monitored, controlled burns, unless they threaten people or property.



COPPER FIRE LOOKOUT, as photographed in 2005. Fewer than 1,000 active lookouts remain in America's national forests and parks.

NORTH CASCADES National Park also has changed significantly in the last few decades: Global warming is lengthening the summers and melting glaciers; fifteen of the park's species are now on the endangered list; non-native plants threaten the natural ecosystem; and Homeland Security agents patrol the North Cascades border with British Columbia. But there have been many positive changes in the park as well: In 1976, the North Cascades Highway opened, allowing more people access to this pristine wilderness. Ten years later, the North Cascades Institute opened its doors with the goal of using science, art, literature, and hands-on experience to connect people to this fragile ecosystem. And over the last five years, the park's hiking trails have been extended, and the interpretive programs have been improved and updated.

Many of the early fire lookout buildings in the North Cascades have long since disappeared, but Sourdough, Desolation, and Copper Ridge still stand. Like prayer flags on Himalayan mountain passes, they honor those who once stood there, those who are standing there now, and those who will stand there in the future, gazing out on the surrounding peaks with unspeakable awe. Fire lookouts aren't merely prefabricated pieces of wood, glass, and wind cable; they are also testaments to the human spirit's capacity to seek something outside itself—and higher. And when you serve as a fire lookout in the North Cascades and the day ends, when the moon rises and the mountains have that timeless incandescent snow glow, you don't stay awake with worried questions like what to do with your life, because you're already doing it—you're living and loving. So you say goodnight to the surrounding peaks and fall fast asleep, because in less than seven hours, the sun will rise and signal the arrival of a new day. **NP**

TIBETAN PRAYER FLAGS hang from shutters at Desolation Lookout.

© JOHN SUITER

Kevin Grange is a freelance writer based in Park City, Utah, whose work has appeared in The *Orange County Register*, *Yoga Journal*, and *Seattle University Magazine*. He's currently working on a travel memoir about the "Snowman Trek" through the Himalayas of Bhutan.

To learn more about the history of writers in the fire lookouts of North Cascades, see John Suiter's book, *Poets on the Peaks*, at www.poetsonthepeaks.com.

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BEYOND THE BLUEGRASS

Explore a different side of the southeast in Kentucky's national parks

BY AMY LEINBACH MARQUIS PHOTOS BY IAN SHIVE

IF YOU THINK KENTUCKY IS A SLEEPY SOUTHERN STATE, you're in for some surprises. Here, the fittest, finest Thoroughbred horses compete in some of the highest-stake races in the world. Award-winning bourbon, a Kentucky exclusive, is distilled with the same intense care and knowledge that's applied to wines in Napa Valley. And the University of Kentucky Wildcats frequently topple the most competitive basketball teams in the nation, creating a zealous local following rivaled by few college towns.

In the shadow of these bold and beautiful superstars lie some of Kentucky's greatest assets: its national parks, rich in history, culture, and stunning landscapes. And the fact that they're often overlooked is part of their appeal, because for much of the year you can have these places to yourself. Sure, the crowds swell in May and October when the landscapes burst with wildflowers and fall colors—but if you're willing to step out of the car and onto a trail, you'll discover what really makes this region shine: century-old cabins tucked in a quiet mountain valley. Old, wooden homesteads on a windswept mountaintop. Black bears, little brown bats, and a herd of elk thousands strong; waterfalls, sandstone arches, and the most complex cave systems in the world.

KENTUCKY IS A WONDERFULLY DYNAMIC STATE—from its Thoroughbred horse racing, to world-class bourbon distilleries, to national parks that celebrate local culture, history, and landscapes.


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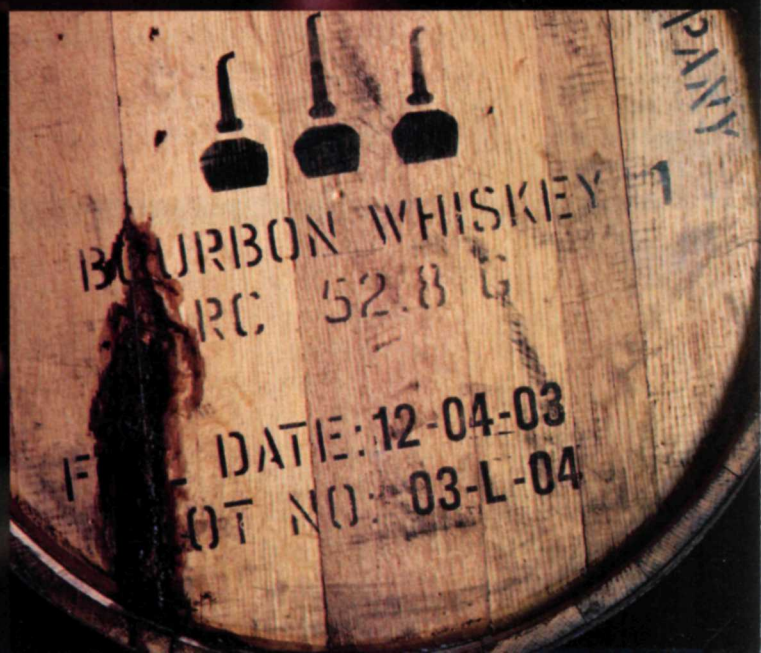
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Cumberland Gap National Historical Park

Lovingly called the "Little Smokies" for its similar natural and historical features—minus the crowds—Cumberland Gap traces the diagonal border between Kentucky and Virginia before dipping into the northern part of Tennessee. Of the more than 24,000 acres protected here, about two-thirds are managed as wilderness, which means that visitors can hike the same trails and gaze at the same landscapes that westward-bound explorers experienced in the 1700s.

But long before that, herds of buffalo, deer, and elk carved the path through Cumberland Gap en route to Kentucky's fertile fields. Settlers hunted buffalo to extinction by 1800, but a handful of elk still roam these hills, thanks to a reintroduction of the species in 1998.

Upon arrival, check in at the visitor center, located on Highway 25 East just before the tunnel into Tennessee. This is the central hub for all guided tours in the park and a good starting point for exploring on your own. Start by driving a short distance up to Pinnacle Overlook, which offers easy hikes, an incredible view of Fern Lake, and access to some of the most significant Civil War sites in the South, from old batteries to small forts.

When you're ready for a guided tour, hop aboard a shuttle to the Hensley Settlement, a 20th-century homestead atop Brush Mountain where two extended Appalachian families lived in isolation for half a century, growing vegetables, raising livestock, and even distilling their own moonshine. Wander slowly through the schoolhouse—you can almost hear the voices of children reciting lessons around the wood-burning stove. Guided tours run from May through October ($10 for adults, $5 for seniors and children) and can be reserved up to a month in advance by calling 606.248.2817, ext. 1075.

If you're up for an eight-mile round-trip hike, it's worth returning to Brush Mountain to explore Sand Cave—a large, cool den that offers a stunning view of the landscape below—and White Rocks, an equally impressive sandstone outcropping rising 3,500 feet above the valley. To get there you'll have to hike the steep Ewing Trail on the east end of the park. Leave your car at Civic Park, and be sure to

THE HENSLEY SETTLEMENT at Cumberland Gap features a charming, mid-century schoolhouse (top left and right). Nearby, a waterfall trickles down Brush Mountain.

MAP: ©KAREN MINOT

TRAVEL ESSENTIALS

KENTUCKY'S PARKS are most beautiful in late spring and early fall—summers are generally hot and humid, and winter can bring ice and snow. Parks are open year-round, but ranger-led tours are limited in the off-season, so call ahead if you plan to go in colder months. You can find contact information on the park websites: www.nps.gov/cuga, www.nps.gov/biso, and www.nps.gov/maca.

// Flights into Lexington's airport can cost a little more than flights into Louisville, but car rentals are significantly cheaper here, and

bring snacks, plenty of water, and lots of energy; the trail gains 2,000 feet in elevation in the first two miles.

Next, journey beneath the surface into one of the park's public caves. In summertime, rangers lead daily lantern tours of Gap Cave, which boasts a stunning variety of stalactites and stalagmites. The deeper you go, the more likely you are to come face to face with furry, hamster-sized bats—surprisingly adorable creatures up close. Take care not to disturb them; many of these species are being wiped out by white-nose syndrome in other parts of the country (see "In Cold Blood," Summer 2009), a disease that's creeping closer to the Southeast. Humans might be vectors, so tell rangers if you've been cave-hopping so they can disinfect your clothes and shoes before you enter.

If you want a unique lodging experience, skip the chain hotels and book a room at the Cumberland Manor ($79–$109/night), a historic bed-and-breakfast perched above the town of Middlesboro. Spacious rooms boast an eclectic mix of antiques, and breakfast includes colorful omelets, flaxseed toast with moonshine jelly, and sweet, crumbly muffins made with blueberries grown in the garden.

Lexington will get you closer to the Southern parks. Consider renting a car with all-wheel drive, because you might have to navigate unpaved roads.

// The most logical route starts and ends in Lexington, hitting Cumberland Gap, Big South Fork, and Mammoth Cave in that order. Following that itinerary, the maximum amount of driving time between sites is three hours, but roads can be winding and poorly marked, so aim to navigate in daylight. You'll cross a time zone and gain an hour going to Mammoth Cave but lose that hour returning east. If you have an afternoon to spare, visit Abraham Lincoln Birthplace National Historic Site (www.nps.gov/abli), an easy and worthwhile stop on the way back to Lexington.

// If you enjoy unwinding with a glass of wine at the end of a day, note that many of the tiny gateway towns surrounding these parks are bone-dry; alcohol isn't sold in stores or restaurants. So grab a few bottles of the local brew, bourbon, or wine in Lexington before heading south.

Big South Fork National River and Recreation Area

In Big South Fork, creeks named No Business, Troublesome, and Difficulty are testament to the hard times settlers faced here. Without modern agricultural techniques, farming on the plateau was difficult. Other industries like saltpeter, coal, and timber peaked and plateaued with the times, and after World War II most residents left in search of a better life. Congress established the park in 1974 not only to preserve local culture and natural landscapes but to help bring life back into the region. And it worked. The park receives just short of a million visits each year.

Because there are few roads within Big South Fork, it takes two hours to get from one end of the park to the other using highways and small country roads outside park boundaries. So rent a car, and give yourself at least three days to explore.

Start on the north end of the park at the Stearns Depot Visitor Center near Whitley City, where, from mid-April through November, you can hop aboard the historic Big South Fork Scenic Railway and wind through mountain passes to Blue Heron, a former mining community. Skeleton structures of a church, a school, and old mining houses along with rich oral histories and life-sized displays bring to life the families who lived and worked here from the early to mid-1900s.

Reflect on their stories with a lazy float down the park's major artery, the Big South Fork of the Cumberland River. Just be sure to choose the right stretch to match your paddling skills—sections like "Washing Machine" and "Devil's Jump" paint an accurate picture of the river's character. Consider hooking up with the pros at Sheltowee Trace, a rafting outfitter in Corbin that guides everything from white-knuckled rafting trips to calm canoe floats. Call 1.800.541.7238 to reserve a spot or to simply check river conditions.

In a park like Big South Fork, where you stay is half the experience. Tennessee's Charit Creek Lodge, nestled between a creek, weeping willows, and pink-flowering bushes that hum with honeybees, should be at the top of your list. Its buildings, which date back to 1813, are accessible only by foot or on horseback, which means you have to carry in your gear. But you shouldn't need much beyond clothes, a headlamp, and a camera.

Accommodations are basic but cozy: two main cabins sleep up to 12 in bunk beds, and lodge rooms offer a more private retreat. Wool blankets, wood-burning stoves, and hot showers make up for any inconveniences that come with a lack of electricity. Full-paying guests ($66/night) wake to a hearty breakfast of pancakes, eggs, and bacon; lodge staff will pack sandwiches and homemade cookies for day trips, like the short, rolling hike to Twin Arches, the biggest sandstone arches in the East. End the day with a down-home meal of chicken and dumplings, homemade bread, and apple cobbler.

If Charit Creek seems too remote, check out the Bandy Creek campsites in Oneida, just south of the lodge. They offer full hook-ups for RVs ($22/night), separate campsites for tents ($19/night), and private stables.

VISITORS UNWIND—and unplug—at Charit Creek Lodge (opposite), an early 19th-century homestead in Big South Fork.

SIDE TRIP LEXINGTON, KENTUCKY, has become one of the South's most dynamic cities. Despite its small size, it hosts some big things: the University of Kentucky, known for its competitive academics and Wildcats basketball; Calumet Farm, one of the largest and wealthiest Thoroughbred farms in the world; and Keeneland, the track where high-stakes horse races rumble to life.

// Plan a Sunday drive along Old Versailles Road, famous for its mansions and the white-fenced pastures where mares and foals quietly graze. At Route 60, turn left to go to Keeneland, which sits across the road from Lexington's airport. Races run in fall and spring, and yearling sales create international buzz in September and July.

// Afterwards, stop at the Woodford Reserve distillery, designated a National Historic Landmark in 2000. Tours cost $5 and run Tuesday through Saturday year-round, and on Sundays from April through October. Swing by the gift shop for a box of chocolate bourbon balls to bring home to friends and family.

// Next, head downtown for a meal at Stella's Kentucky Deli, a friendly café that features fried green tomatoes and hot browns (a turkey sandwich with a Southern twist). Ingredients are local, organic, and free range, putting Stella's at the forefront of an increasingly eco-conscious city.

// The historic Gratz Park Inn also serves creative Southern fare, including spicy shrimp and grits, and crème brûlée topped with Kentucky bourbon set aflame. After dinner, retire to an immaculate room; prices start at $179. For reservations, call 1.800.752.4166.


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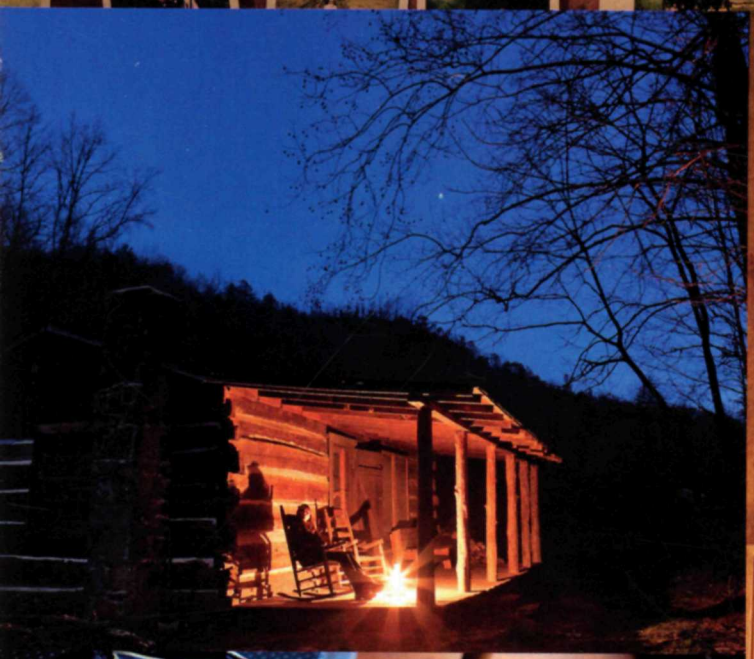

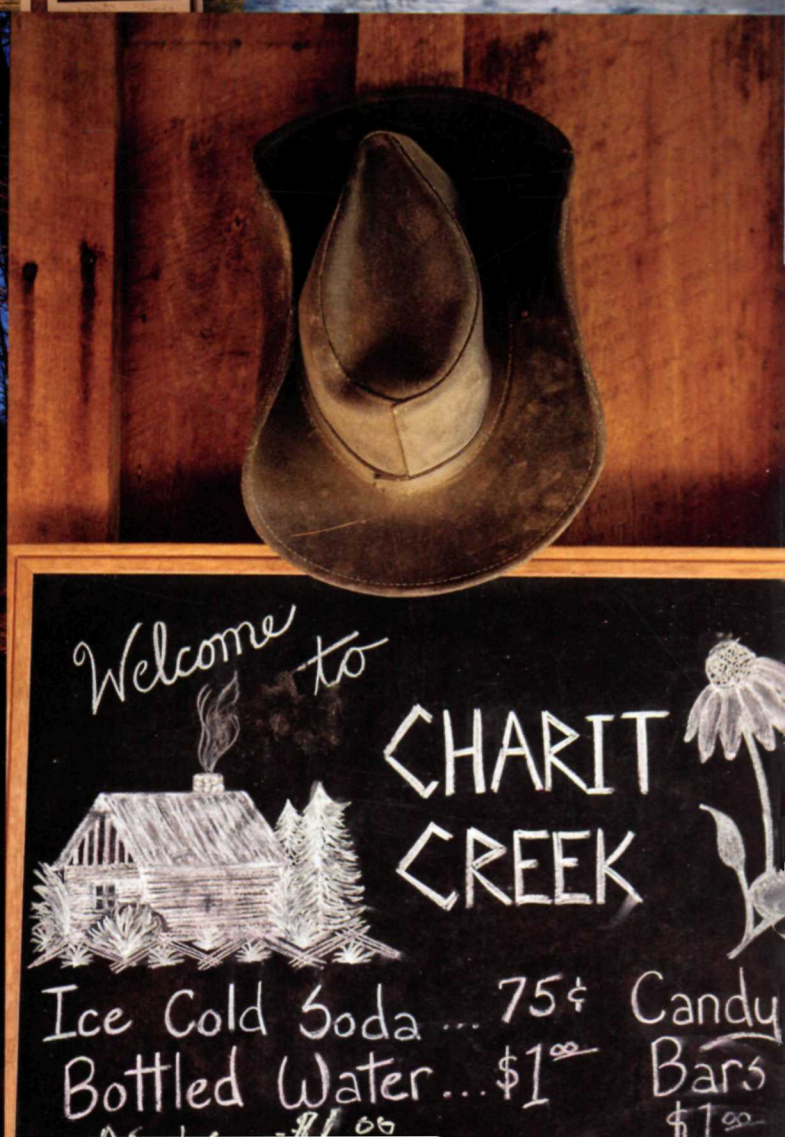
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MAMMOTH CAVE IS THE LONGEST-KNOWN CAVE SYSTEM in the world, boasting 367 mapped miles—including stunning passages that lie just beyond the cave's Historical Entrance.

Mammoth Cave National Park

You haven't experienced Kentucky until you've experienced Mammoth Cave. This place has been making international headlines since the early 1800s, when locals guided cave tours through dark and twisting passages. Scientists have since mapped 367 miles, establishing Mammoth Cave as the longest known cave system in the world.

The park's fascinating geology is matched only by the stories of its earliest explorers, from the first humans who harvested its gypsum crystals to the doctor who believed that a cave environment could cure tuberculosis. Miners carved out their own legends, employing some of the most innovative techniques of their time to extract saltpeter—a mineral used in gunpowder—and ultimately armed the country during the War of 1812.

Hop on a historic tour with interpretive ranger Jerry Bransford, the great-great-grandson of Mat Bransford, an African-American and one of Mammoth Cave's first tour guides. Although the elder Bransford was a slave, he learned about the world's politics, cultures, food, and fashion, thanks to wealthy international tourists who flocked here in search of adventure.

Other excursions include the Snowball Tour, which leads visitors into a gypsum-encrusted chamber. The Focus on Frozen Niagara tour, offered in summer, gives amateur shutterbugs a chance to practice cave photography without the fear of tourists tripping over their tripods. And on the Wild Cave tour, adrenaline junkies can crawl through narrow passages and muddy chambers.

If all that time underground makes you crave sunshine and fresh air, cast your line on the Green or Nolin Rivers, or hike one of the park's many wooded paths. Or make like the locals and bring your own horse to explore up to 60 miles of trails, then camp at the equine-friendly Maple Springs Group Campground. For reservations, visit www.recreation.gov. Otherwise, book a hotel room or cottage at the Mammoth Cave Hotel in the park (starting at $59/night). Visit www.mammothcavehotel.com or call 270.758.2225. **NP**

Amy Leinbach Marquis, *National Parks'* Associate Editor, grew up in Lexington, where she worked on a horse farm, cheered on the Wildcats, and fell in love with the outdoors.

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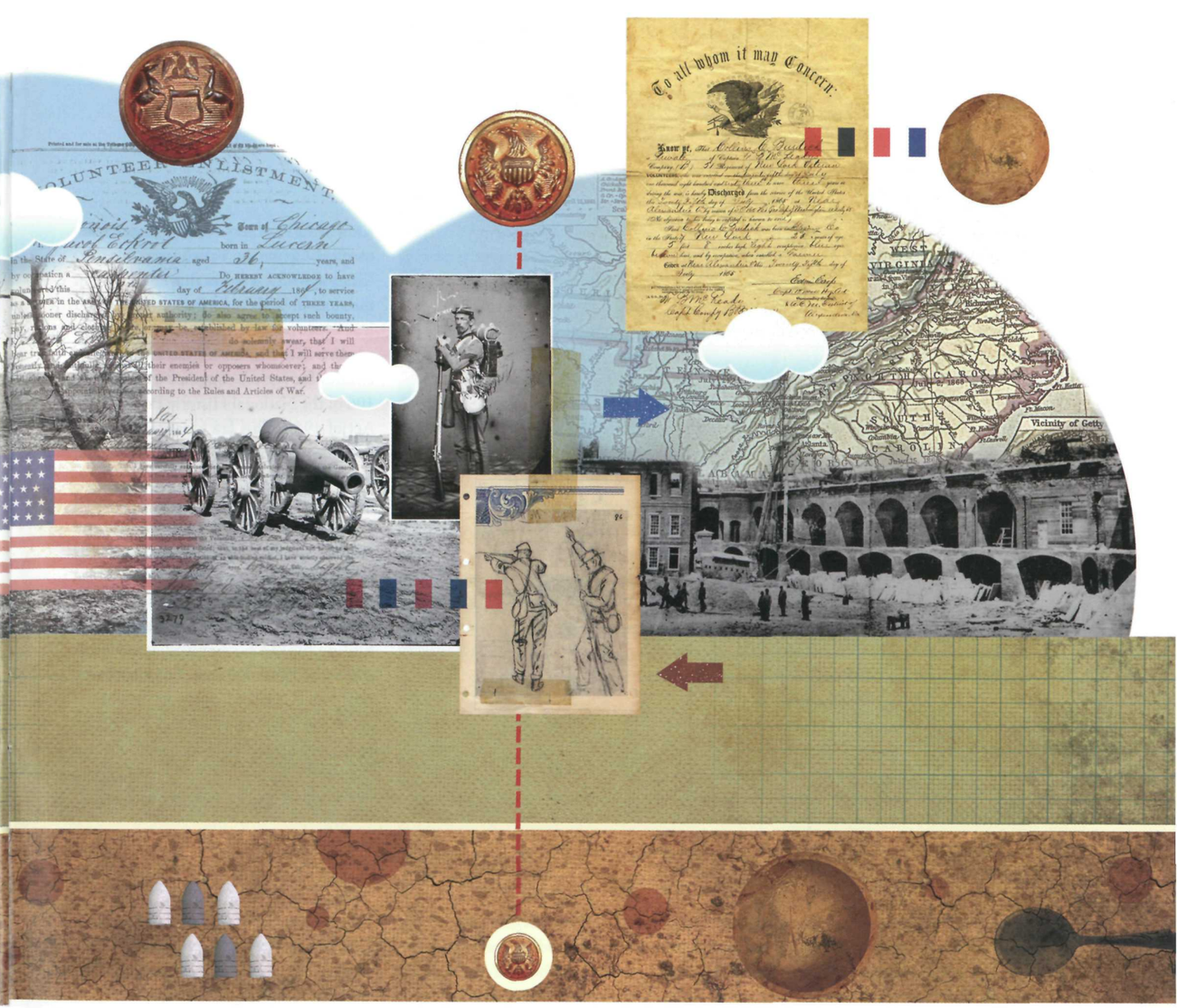


SIX FEET UNDER

BY ETHAN GILSDORF
ILLUSTRATIONS BY WALTER VASCONCELOS

A few years ago, officials at Shiloh National Military Park had plans to build a new interpretive center on a 17-acre site in Corinth, Mississippi, to tell the story of the Civil War. But before a single hole could be dug, the park was required to survey the landscape to make sure the construction wouldn't harm any archaeological treasures lying underfoot. And they made some startling discoveries.

Civil War relic hunters forge a unique partnership with the Park Service to unearth our nation's history.

"Much of the landscape had been disturbed by twentieth-century development, so we didn't expect to find anything beneath the surface," says Woody Harrell, the park's superintendent "And for the most part, we didn't. But there were two acres on a hill designated a Confederate memorial site since the 1920s—the area held some interest, but a standard shovel test didn't reveal anything. Then we asked a group of relic hunters with metal detectors to work with the Southeast Archaeological Center and see what they could find. We bought 500 wire markers with plastic flags, like you'd see along the edge of a highway, so we could flag each hit, figuring that would be plenty for a weekend. But by nine-thirty we were rushing out to buy more flags—we'd had that many hits in those two acres alone."

The Park Service uncovered the graves of several Union soldiers that had been unmarked since the war, and with the help of maps and other reference materials, archaeologists were able to reveal the location of a three-sided fort called the Battery Robinett. They were even able to discern the outline of a canteen that had rusted away; teeth from the soldiers also revealed that the deceased were most likely young men in their late twenties—one an African American from a Union regimen in Corinth

that had been recruited from a contraband camp (former slaves). By combining archaeology, forensic evidence, and the historical record, the park was able to cobble together a story that might never have been revealed with the standard "shovel test" that had been in place for decades. Although metal detectors helped unearth an important story sitting underfoot for more than a century, it wasn't long ago that many archaeologists considered the tools dangerous weapons wielded by enemies of preservation.

AN UNLIKELY PARTNERSHIP

Most Civil War relic hunters are motivated by the thrill of the chase and the desire to unearth forgotten treasures. They painstakingly scour battlefields with metal detectors, stooping with serrated spades often under a sweltering sun, and risking encounters with snakes, scorpions, rusty nails, and broken glass, all to excavate anything old and metal. Relic hunters never know what they'll find. The unknown, the next discovery, always awaits.

But some of them are drawn by the scent of money. While an ordinary "Ringtail" pattern bullet (named for the extra ring of lead at the base of the bullet where the cartridge would have been attached) originally fired during battle from a Sharps rifle might be worth ten dollars, tops; one with teeth marks, evidence of a soldier who "bit the bullet" to endure the pain of surgery, might be worth double that. A button from a Confederate infantryman's uniform could sell for $425, while a rare button from a Confederate Army officer's uniform might net as much as $1,900.

If you're caught removing artifacts from public lands, the penalty is big: "They will take your car, they will take your metal detector, and they will fine you twenty thousand dollars," says Julia Vaughn, former president of the Middle Tennessee Metal Detecting Club. Even so, relic thefts on public lands have doubled in recent years. The most nefarious robbers hunt at night, donning headlamps, and hiding their large-scale excavations under the cover of darkness and tarps, leaving nothing behind come morning but freshly dug holes.

Clearly, the preservation mission of the Park Service conflicts with the aspirations of those relic hunters who don't consider digging on parkland as ransacking our national heritage. But not all relic hunters are out for themselves—many are just as interested in preserving the nation's history as the men and women in the green and grey, and they're beginning to work together more often than you might expect.

The arrangement benefits both sides. The cash-strapped Park Service enlists these volunteers for battlefield work once considered the sole province of academic experts. The park gets to conduct significant research at minimal cost, and learn something from locals who understand the "ping" of a "strike" better than anyone. Amateur clubs donate their labor, but also hunt land that is generally off-limits, a dream come true for many—even if they don't get to keep their loot at the end of the day.

"Relic hunters are quite good at what they do—this is their hobby," says Steven Kidd of the Park Service's Southeast Archeological Center in Tallahassee, Florida. "They can I.D. a bullet that comes out of the ground, [and even tell you] what caliber it is. These people are into it."

As a Park Service archaeologist, Kidd ensures the agency complies with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966. This law states that before any new construction occurs on federal land, such as a road or building, a survey must be conducted to determine if construction would impact any cultural resources, as at Shiloh a few years ago. The typical archaeological field work "shovel method" of digging holes on a grid at 20 meter intervals, Kidd says, works fine for finding broken pottery and arrowheads concentrated in one area. But it isn't very effective on Civil War sites, where artifacts can be strewn everywhere. "With a shovel test, you may find one Civil War artifact," Kidd says. "You go back over with a metal detector and you'll find much more." That's where volunteers with metal detectors come in: Kidd has worked with clubs at Shiloh and Kennesaw Mountain National Battlefields in Georgia and Tennessee, respectively (Civil War); Horseshoe Bend National Military Park in Alabama (War of 1812); Palo Alto Battlefield National Historic Site in Texas (US-Mexico War); and Guilford Courthouse National Military Park in North Carolina (Revolutionary War). In 2007, to examine the impact of new paths planned for Stones River National Battlefield in Murfreesboro, Tennessee, Kidd worked with Julia Vaughn, who quickly collected a three-page list of volunteers,

"Relic hunters are quite good at what they do—this is their hobby. They can I.D. a bullet that comes out of the ground, [and even tell you] what caliber it is."

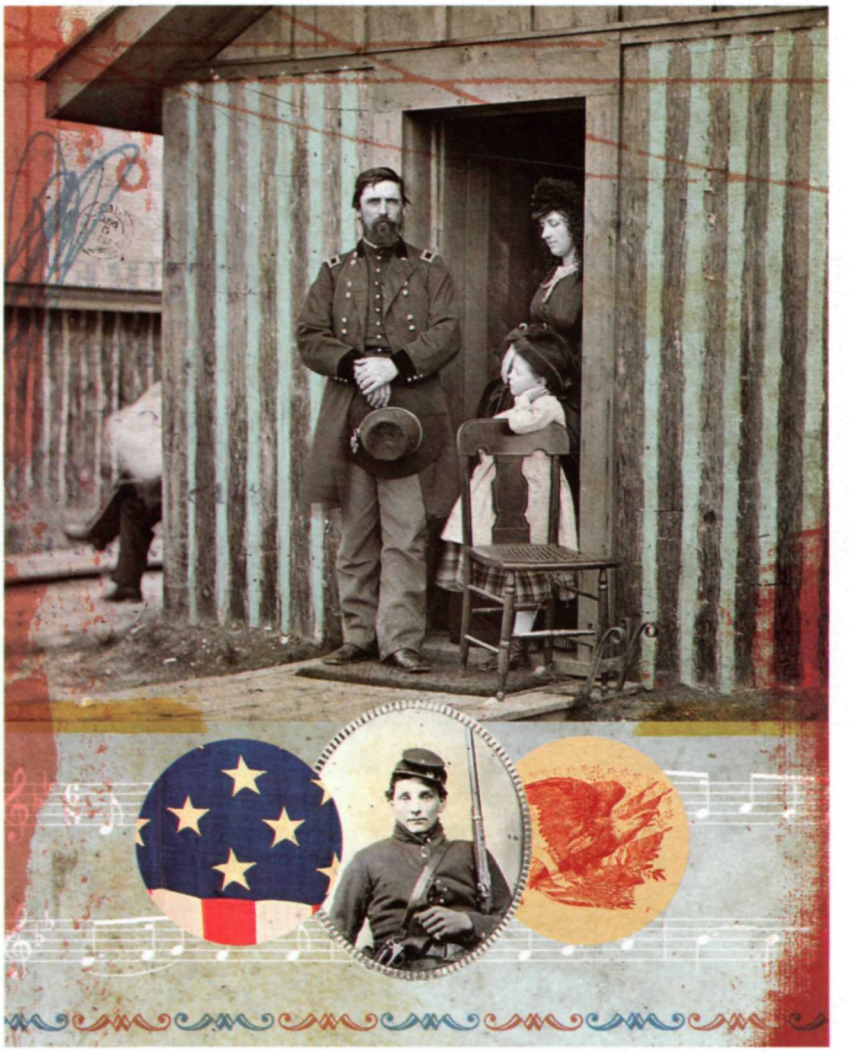
though only 20 were needed. "One of our club members found one of the prettiest spurs," Vaughn remembers. "It was beautiful." At the time, she wished her group could have kept the relic, but it was turned over to the Park Service, an outcome she has come to expect, and respect.

LEARNING TO TRUST

In 2006, the Chattanooga Area Relic Hunters Association (CARHA) helped Kidd survey a suitable location for a new visitor center at Moccasin Bend, a unit of Chickamauga and Chattanooga National Military Park. Kevin Walls, CARHA's "secretary and treasurer for life," has been swinging a metal detector since 1987, and he's fielded plenty of calls from the Park Service over the years: CARHA has collaborated on some 20 digs. They first joined forces in 2004, when Chickamauga officials began building a four-lane, divided by-pass of Route US 27 around the park. Officials first conducted a traditional shovel survey, then invited CARHA relic hunters to bring in their metal detectors. By lunchtime of the first day, Walls' crew had found more than 50 items. By the end of the project, they had swept a 600-foot wide, 1.1-mile long swath of parkland.

"I've been nothing but pleased with the cooperation and the work we did together," says Kidd. "Kevin and those guys are really good people or I suppose they wouldn't travel those distances to metal detect for the per diem," which is typically $39 per day, in addition to accommodations and travel expenses covered by the Park Service.

But the relationship wasn't always smooth. "We couldn't [go to the bathroom] without them watching us," Walls jokes, recalling the Park Service's initial skepticism during their first partnership. Walls suspects that park rangers were worried that relic hunters would pocket a few items for themselves, but after CARHA proved its mettle, Walls says the agency



realized that people who know how to use metal detectors and who donate their time might have a lot to offer.

Any initial mistrust between the two groups may have stemmed less from fears that metal-detector clubs were robbers (most law-abiding "diggers" would never hunt on federal land) and more from their differing philosophies about the artifacts themselves. Relic hunters tend to think a naval fuse, pistol trigger, or shell fragment left in the ground is a waste. "You dig out a spoon that someone dropped and it's going to be all rusty. The fertilizer will just eat that stuff up," says Walls. He believes bullets are better off in a bucket in his relic room than buried in the earth. "To me, it's preserving history." Similarly, Middle Tennessee Metal Detecting Club's Vaughn, like most hunters, would prefer to keep a relic herself, or at least see it on display in a local history museum, than have it sit in a drawer in some government archive. Most archaeologists would prefer that any removal of artifacts be done so in a supervised and orderly fashion—and until then, that they remain in the ground.

Although archaeologists and amateurs don't see eye to eye on every relic hunting issue, they generally agree that hunting on private lands is acceptable when a site is about to be forever sealed in asphalt. For example, in a relic-rich area like Chattanooga—the site of a Civil War artillery shelling campaign—the suburbs are rapidly being cleared for development. Why not scrutinize the work site first? Once the bulldozers come, a big-box store or a subdivision ruins the site for everyone, battlefield archaeologists and relic hunters alike.

State of the Battlefields

In recent months, NPCA has conducted State of the Parks reports on Chickamauga and Chattanooga, Fort Donelson, Stones River, Wilson's Creek, and Pea Ridge, to help park managers identify areas where archeological resources can be better protected. To learn more, visit www.npca.org/stateoftheparks.

"I have no problem with folks using metal detectors in places where it's legal. It can be a great hobby," says John Scott, superintendent of Pea Ridge National Military Park in Arkansas. But on battlefields of historical significance, his beef with undocumented digging is less about losing the physical item itself than losing its context. "When you come in here and remove an artifact from the battlefield, it's like when you're reading a good book, and someone has ripped out the first five chapters and the last five chapters," says Scott. "You don't have the whole story."

A desire to tell the whole story led Scott to call for a survey of almost half of Pea Ridge, one of the best-preserved Civil War battlefields in the country. Trees had overgrown much of the 4,300-acre park's once open land, and the goal was to restore the battlefield to its previous condition. But where did the field end and woods begin?

Pea Ridge employed Douglas Scott, an internationally recognized pioneer in the field of battlefield archeology who views battles sites as crime scenes. Scott's forensic science at Little Bighorn Battlefield helped cast Custer's defeat in a new light. At Pea Ridge, Douglas Scott guessed that concentrations of artillery shells found in now heavily timbered areas meant these areas would have once been open land, and possibly included likely military targets such as encampments and hospitals. He also knew that certain ordinance would have traveled a certain distance from the weapon. Based on where fragments lie, he traced shells back to where they were probably fired.

"The archaeological work was a piece of the puzzle that helped us identify what forest and field would have looked like," says Superintendent John Scott. Over three years, more than 3,000 artifacts were discovered. When volunteers at Pea Ridge and Wilson's Creek National Battlefield in Missouri helped the Park Service return the historic landscapes to conditions in the 1860s, they used artifact distribution to decide which trees to remove. The findings also proved that the Park Service had situated artillery in the wrong location at Pea Ridge, and that army officers had underreported the intensity of the fighting. The park is in the process of revamping its battle maps and interpretive displays to reflect the new discoveries.

"The archaeological record of a conflict is not dependent on human memory

to record it," wrote Douglas Scott in an e-mail. "Rather, it is the debris and evidence left behind by violent events." He calls the data a "partner to history," letting him "build a more complete and accurate story of past events."

BREAKING OLD GROUND

In a typical survey, volunteers sweep an area with metal detectors. Each relic is flagged, identified, and bagged, and its location is noted by global positioning satellite (GPS). Data are plugged into a computer program. "At the end of the day, you have a map of what was where," says Kidd. "You can see battle lines move across the land." In some cases, forensic evidence can be drilled down to an individual soldier—even when the evidence is 150 years old. From the unique markings created on every found bullet fired from a single weapon, experts like Douglas Scott can, amazingly, trace the movements of that soldier during a battle.

Because of these recent discoveries, a park ranger can now point not just to the general area of a battle, but say with confidence that the guns were located at one site, and the infantry moved from one exact position to another. "Such precision in interpretation gives visitors a sense of place—a specific point on the ground where an event occurred," says Douglas Scott. "It strengthens association with the past in their minds, and with the right message of preservation, helps the ranger or manager emphasize the need to protect this very fragile resource." Our national story is narrated better, too.

Despite the occasional objections of relic hunters, given their druthers, archaeologists would actually prefer that artifacts remain in place. And using sophisticated tools, there's often no need to even break ground. Remote-sensing technologies like proton magnetometers (which measure minute variations in the Earth's magnetic field to locate metal objects), ground-penetrating radar (whose microwaves reflect differently off subsurface bedrock, soils, and objects) and soil-resistivity meters (which can detect disturbed soil based on degrees of resistance to an electrical current) let archaeologists locate man-made features and objects like burial trenches without invasive or large-scale digs. If the ground must be disturbed, these technologies help the Park Service decide where to excavate. At Pea Ridge, Superintendent John Scott would like to survey more acreage. But equipment and personnel cost thousands of dollars, and budgets are tight. To economize, partnerships with metal-detecting clubs are bound to continue.

Julia Vaughn says the Park Service partnership might be the best thing that's ever happened to the Middle Tennessee Metal Detecting Club.

"We were looked upon as maybe third-class citizens, not preserving the history the way we should," she says. "Archaeologists now look at us and recognize that we've done our research and we know [what we're doing]." There's more to learn from America's Civil War battlefields and the clubs are proud to be part of history making. The hope is, via word of mouth, the renegade relic hunting element will come to understand the importance of preserving the battlefields for future generations. The more Civil War artifacts remain in the ground for now, the greater the chance that someday down the road, they can help solve the riddles and tell the stories many of these battlefields still conceal. And that, in the end, is the real gold in them thar battlefields. **NP**

Ethan Gilsdorf is a freelance writer whose work has appeared in the *Boston Globe* and *New York Times*. His book *Fantasy Freaks and Gaming Geeks*, about role-playing gamers, was published in September.

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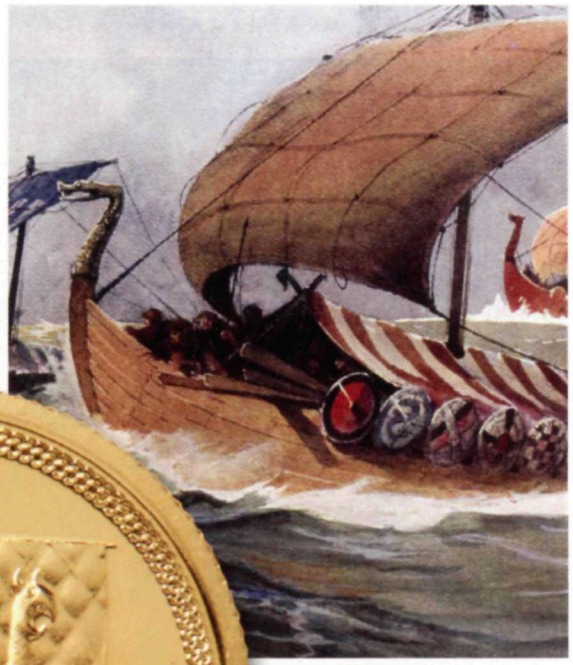
How I Found The Gold Coin That Never Was



And how readers can take advantage of my major gold discovery!

by Nick Bruyer

Over a thousand years ago my Viking Warrior ancestors raided the coast of England in their great longships, striking terror into the hearts of their victims. But some of them stayed and settled on the Isle of Man, situated between England, Ireland and Scotland. It was during a visit to this ancient Isle that I stumbled onto something amazing—a precious piece of history that you can own and pass down through generations of your own family as a gold treasure of lasting value.

Actual size is 15 mm

The Gold Coin That Never Was
As president of an international coin distributor, GovMint.com, I knew that the Isle of Man has its own legal tender coins. So I made a journey to the mint to meet the Mint Master. I was lamenting the fact that there was no gold coin commemorating their Viking heritage, when he told me that such a coin had been authorized, but never minted. The Twentieth Noble was to be struck in 99.99% fine gold. When I asked why it had never been minted, he didn't know. The Mint's official archives did not give a reason, but they revealed a startling fact.

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Nicholas Bruyer is an award-winning professional numismatist and author with more than 30 years of coin market experience. Since 1985, tens of thousands of satisfied customers have acquired over $400 million in coins from his companies. Note: GovMint.com is a private distributor of government and private coin and medallic issues and is not affiliated with the United States Government. Prices and availability subject to change without notice.

**All values were accurate at time of printing*

By Former Sens. Howard H. Baker, Jr. (R–TN) and J. Bennett Johnston, Jr. (D–LA)

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WHILE CHARTING A VISION for the future of our national parks, the Second Century Commission realized that what happens outside the parks—even in a place as wild as Alaska's Glacier Bay—frequently determines the fate of resources inside the parks.

The Next Century

As the Second Century Commission releases its recommendations for the parks' next 100 years, its co-chairs reveal the process that unfolded over the last 12 months.

In August of 2008 we had the honor of leading a distinguished group of citizens who had gathered at Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area to "begin an intensive effort to analyze the condition and function of our national parks and chart a vision for the parks for the next century of service to the American people." That was our official purpose, but the meeting set in motion a journey through the park system. It allowed us to hear about problems, see opportunities, and form conclusions about its future.

There were two dozen of us with varying experiences in the parks. As senators, we had actually voted to create parks and influenced key policies. Others had devoted entire careers to the parks. Some were intrigued by the opportunities the parks provide for science, education, civic engagement, youth programs, reflections on our nation's history, its spectacular beauty, its biodiversity. Some spoke for the changing character of the nation and the need to ensure that the parks serve all of the people. Individually, we were politicians, scientists, historians, biologists, advocates, professors, educators, executives, reporters. Collectively we were a team of advocates interested in the parks—their purpose, problems, and potential.

Such a group does not assemble by chance. Several years of planning preceded this gathering. The National Parks Conservation Association brought us together, funded by a grant from the Robertson Foundation. The National Geographic Society agreed to produce our report. This project was to be supported by a group of consultants with deep knowledge of national parks, programs, and policies.

As senators, we had participated in the creation of the Santa Monica Mountains

National Recreation Area in 1978 as part of the National Park System. One of the principle purposes at that time was to protect air quality in the nearby Los Angeles basin. But as we toured the park and questioned the staff, we found much more than that. In the 30 years since, the area has become a mosaic of living communities and protected lands. The National Park Service owns only 14 percent of the roughly 150,000 acres within the park boundaries—the remainder is managed through creative partnerships among national and state parks, nonprofits, and volunteers. It is a home to movie sets and movie stars, but also hosts inner-city youth and their families who come to pursue challenging outdoor activities. It educates tens of thousands of school children in nature and history. It works to save cougars in the few green corridors left in an intensely urban setting. It was an inspiring way to begin our parks journey.

The complexity of the Santa Monica experience and its lessons would be repeated in our subsequent park visits. When our nation created the parks, we not only set aside land, but we created an idea—a legacy that was alive, expanding, and evolving. If it continues to evolve and grow, it holds great potential for the nation.

Perhaps Commissioner Milton Chen captured the idea best when he observed that there were four great democratic institutions: public schools, public libraries, public broadcasting, and public parks. He went on to reflect that perhaps the 21st Century role of national parks was to "build human capital."

The gold of a late New England autumn greeted us in Lowell. It seemed a jarring contrast to southern California; America's first planned industrial city, founded in 1826, had by the mid 20th Century seen much of its textile industry leave town. Some city visionaries saw these abandoned buildings as an opportunity, and considered historic preservation a key to city's renewal. The programs of the National Park Service were lever and anchor for a rebirth that is now studied worldwide. In fact, in 1978, the two of us worked closely with Sen. Paul Tsongas to pass legislation establishing the complex relationship of city, state, local, and private interests that has driven Lowell's success.

But our Lowell experience caused vigorous debate among the commissioners. National Geographic President John Fahey asked if urban renewal was the mission of the National Park Service. Through discussion with community leaders, we came to see that the park was only part of the larger effort to revitalize the city. Today the agency operates museums and visitor centers. The Tsongas Industrial History Center is a cooperative venture with the University of Massachusetts-Lowell and hosts students from all over the country. Innovative tax credits developed in concert with the Park Service spurred private developers to convert historic mills into offices and residences, breathing new life into the city.

When our nation created the parks, we created a legacy that was alive, expanding, and evolving.

When we were working on the legislation, Sen. Tsongas explained why he wanted the Park Service to manage these components rather than simply setting up a grant program. He wanted a resident in his city that was committed to its success. He was right.

Our second day in the Northeast was spent in the Essex National Heritage Area. It comprises all of Essex County, a 500-square-mile area with a population of 730,000 and 34 cities and towns. The Park Service operates two sites here: Salem Maritime and Saugus Iron Works. A visitor center developed and operated by both parks is situated in downtown Salem.

We were familiar with heritage areas based on our work supporting the creation of Cane River and the Tennessee Civil War Heritage Area in our own regions, and we were heartened to see this successful example.

So although we expected our Lowell meetings to bear little similarity to the Santa Monica Mountain experience, many similar themes emerged. In each case, the Park Service operates in a complex environment—doing what the agency does best, but in ways that support and complement the needs of living communities and acting as convener, catalyst, and storyteller to help create places where past and future frame the present.

Peter Senge was struck by the impact parks made, "not just in bits and pieces, but in the larger sense of the role they play in life. Their preservation is a process that leads to that impact. The impact is the 'what' to the preservation's 'why'."

Deep winter found us in Yellowstone. With sub-zero temperatures outside we watched a preview of Ken Burns' film, *The National Parks: America's Best Idea*. The excerpt focused on the creation of Yellowstone, and reminded us of the struggle and conflict that attends the birth of almost all national parks. We listened to employees of the National Park Service as they described their vision of the future and the current state of the agency. Although more than 2 million acres of the Yellowstone ecosystem have been set aside for 135 years, representatives from the Greater Yellowstone Coalition and the Interagency Grizzly Bear Task Force believe that maintaining the region's health still presents an enormous challenge. Their message: In today's world, no park is large enough—what happens beyond the park boundaries frequently determines the fate of park resources. Former Alaska Governor Tony Knowles pointed to the need for consistent management practices among all agencies and private interests as an answer to this problem.

We had divided into committees to scrutinize in detail particular subjects including science, education, funding, history, and natural and cultural resource protection. Each group's report to the full Commission began

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COMISSIONERS FOCUSED ON the many ways that our national parks have a huge impact on the next generation.

in Yellowstone. Justice Sandra O'Connor, an active member of the education committee, exhorted us to be succinct and practical in our recommendations.

March found us at Gettysburg. We went there not only because it was the site of a great turning point in American history, but because the recently completed visitor center and museum provided an innovative example of a private-public partnership in which philanthropy played a significant role.

Author and commission member James McPherson told us about the importance of parks in civic learning. He placed the battlefield in the continuum of the nation's history, linking it to the promise of the Declaration of Independence. As he said, Americans cannot fully understand the battle without visiting the park—"an idea expressed in place."

We heard from recently established parks that continue to broaden the cultural diversity of the system, including Rosie the Riveter and Cane River. We discussed youth programs with the actual young people served by them.

Our final meeting, in early summer, was at Great Smoky Mountains National Park. The focus of the visit was the role of science in park management. Ten months of committee work had to be synthesized and prioritized.

One of the committees, Connecting People to Parks, chaired by REI's Sally Jewell, made a memorable presentation. The group asked each commissioner to describe their first experience in a national park. Governor Jim Blanchard remembered his family driving from Detroit to Yellowstone when he was six. Maria Hinojosa described a recent trip to Yosemite with her 80-year-old Mexican-born mother. Carolyn Finney reflected on the irony of being a Commission member when her dad could not get a job with the Park Service because he was African American.

In addition to the five Commission meetings, we hosted three well-attended public meetings in Washington, Chicago, and San Francisco. A website (www.visionforthe parks.org) was established to gather further public input. All this informed our final recommendations.

And what were our conclusions? We won't repeat all of the recommendations here, but it is our consensus that the national parks and the National Park Service have the potential to play a larger role in the lives of all Americans. As Commissioner Sylvia Earle observed, "If we didn't have a National Park Service, we would have to invent one."

The traditional role of guardian of our national heritage—flora, fauna, and culture—is an idea that has evolved, and it should continue to grow to meet the needs of the future. We can be better educated, live in more viable communities, slow climate change and its impacts, expand our idea of history to include all our stories, and preserve our continent's biodiversity by making logical additions to the park system, while inviting all Americans to participate. It will, of course, require change: A Park Service that is more catalyst and convener, one with a stronger capability to carry out its mission. An agency with more public funding, though in the big picture, the investment is minimal (the 2009 Park Service budget was one-thirteenth of one percent of the federal budget). The parks will also require an increasing role for philanthropy and the creation of an endowment to support those functions that the agency must perform in perpetuity.

In the beginning we were a group from many backgrounds. As we left the Smokies, new friendships had been formed, new commitments made, new support for the parks discovered. Commissioner Meg Wheatley summed it up best when she said, "I feel like I'm a better American." **NP**

Howard H. Baker (R) served the people of Tennessee in the U.S. Senate for 18 years, beginning in 1967. Baker also served as White House Chief of Staff to Ronald Reagan in 1987-88 and Ambassador to Japan from 2001 to 2005. Senator Baker helped craft important air- and water-quality legislation during the 1970s.

J. Bennett Johnston's (D) political career spanned 32 years, including 24 years in the U.S. Senate. During his time as chair of the Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources, the committee legislated a dramatic expansion in the number of national parks and wildlife refuges throughout the United States.

Denis Galvin, former Deputy Director of the National Park Service from 1985 to 1989 and from 1997 to 2002 and a current NPCA board member, contributed to this piece.

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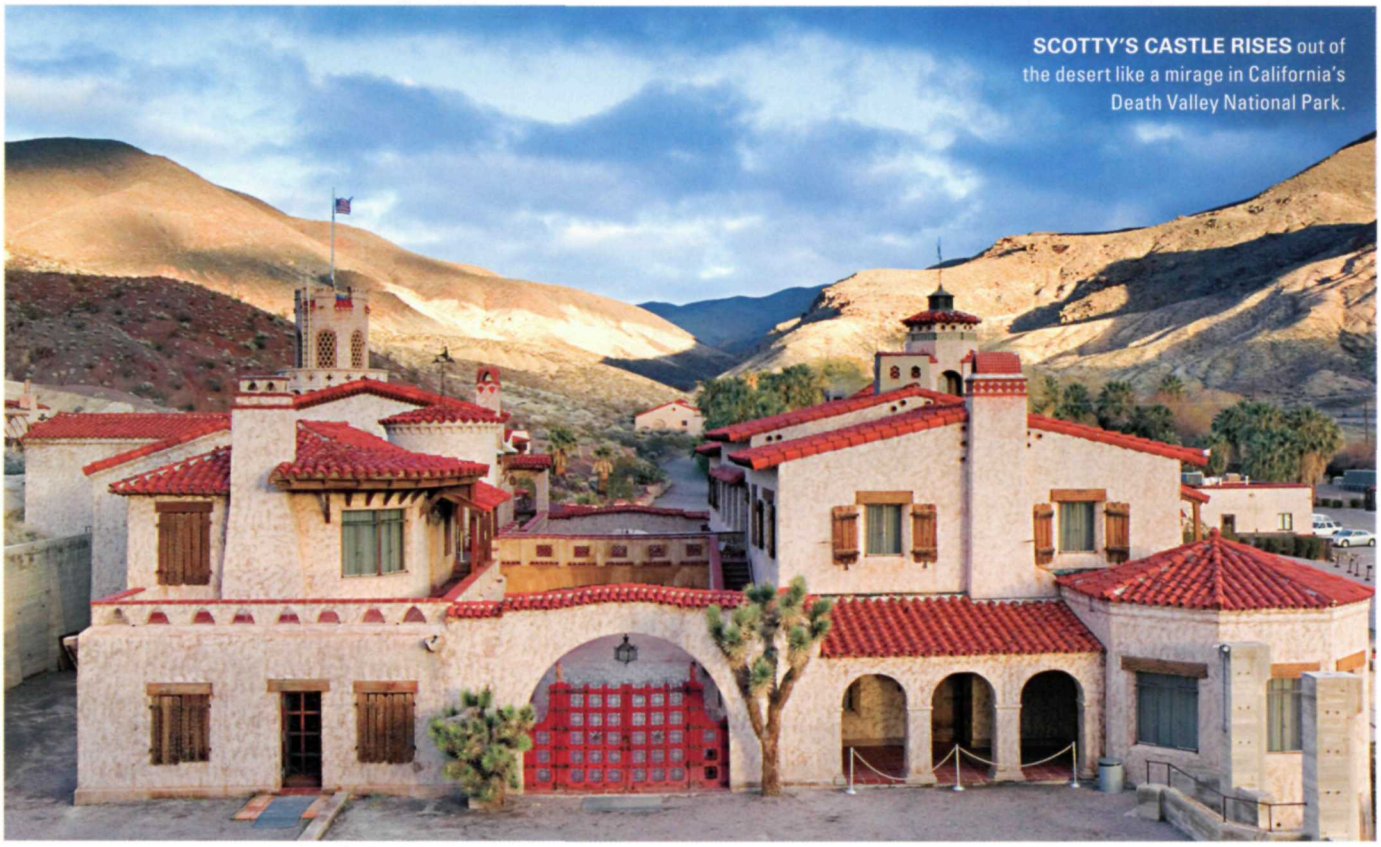
By Jeff Rennicke



SCOTTY'S CASTLE RISES out of the desert like a mirage in California's Death Valley National Park.

Castle in the Sand

Built on tall tales and desert dreams, Scotty's Castle in Death Valley is a monument to the power of good stories and lasting friendship.

Mountain ranges that seem to float in a sea of shimmering heat waves, boulders that dance across a valley floor—nothing is as it seems in the desert, and Scotty's Castle is no exception. Set on the northern edge of California's Death Valley National Park, this ornate Spanish-Mediterranean structure isn't a castle at all. Nor did it ever belong to anyone named Scotty. But the man for whom this place is named wasn't one to let facts get in the way of a good story.

Born in Kentucky in 1872, Walter Scott left home at age 11 to try his luck on a ranch in Nevada. Skilled with horses and blessed with a flair for the dramatic, Scott became a stunt rider with Buffalo Bill Cody's Wild West Show at 16 and toured the United States and Europe for 12 years perfecting his showmanship. When he tried his hand at gold mining, first in Colorado and later in Death Valley, he discovered that a flashy style was of little use at the working end of a pick axe. The real gold wasn't in the ground, Scott decided—it lay in mining the rich ore of people's dreams. All a miner is, he once said, was "a damn liar with a hole in the ground." From his years in showbiz, he knew how to lie and there were plenty of holes in the ground in a place like Death Valley. So Walter Scott became "Death Valley Scotty"—or, as one author put it, "the fastest con in the West."

Spinning tales of lost gold mines and throwing money around like confetti, Scott bilked a wealthy Eastern businessman out of more than $5,000 to finance a supposed gold strike in Death Valley. When the man demanded proof, Scott boarded a train carrying a bag which he said contained $12,000 in gold dust. The bag was mysteriously "stolen" before Scott reached the city. Soon Scott's antics had caught the eye of another deep pocket: Albert Johnson, of the National Life Insurance Company of Chicago.

With a degree in mining engineering from Cornell University in New York, Johnson was a conservative, deeply religious man, and no easy mark. He had made a fortune in zinc, but a train wreck broke his back when he was a young man and left him in frail health. Never able to live out the dreams of the Wild West prospector himself, Johnson was enthralled with Death Valley Scotty's

flamboyant stories, the long red ties that were his trademark, and his happy-go-lucky attitude. The two became unlikely friends.

Johnson began advancing money to Scott as early as 1902. When he traveled to Death Valley in 1905, Scott orchestrated a phony "ambush" meant to scare Johnson off. It didn't matter—Albert Johnson knew there was no gold. But he found the desert climate rejuvenating and enjoyed the entertaining company of his friend. Those things were riches enough in his eyes.

In the early 1920s, Johnson began construction of a $2-million home in Grapevine Canyon. Scotty told reporters, "We're building a Castle," claiming that it was financed with profits from his fabled gold mine. Scotty would later send workers into the basement to rattle pipes, convincing guests that the mine was hidden under the house. Johnson played along, claiming to be "Scotty's banker."

The house itself is a monument to opulence: 32,000 square feet, two music rooms, a $50,000 pipe organ, a 500-pound chandelier, hand-made Italian tile, tapestries imported from Europe, and a fourteenth-century Spanish chest in the guest room. No expense was spared in its finery, or its ingenuity. Faced with the challenge of creating comfort and convenience in the midst of Death Valley, Johnson installed a Pelton water motor to create electricity, used solar power to heat the water, and cooled the house with indoor waterfalls. "It's impressive how much thinking Mr. Johnson did about adapting existing technologies for appropriate uses in this environment," says Mike Wehmeyer, a Park Service volunteer who conducts tours of the home.

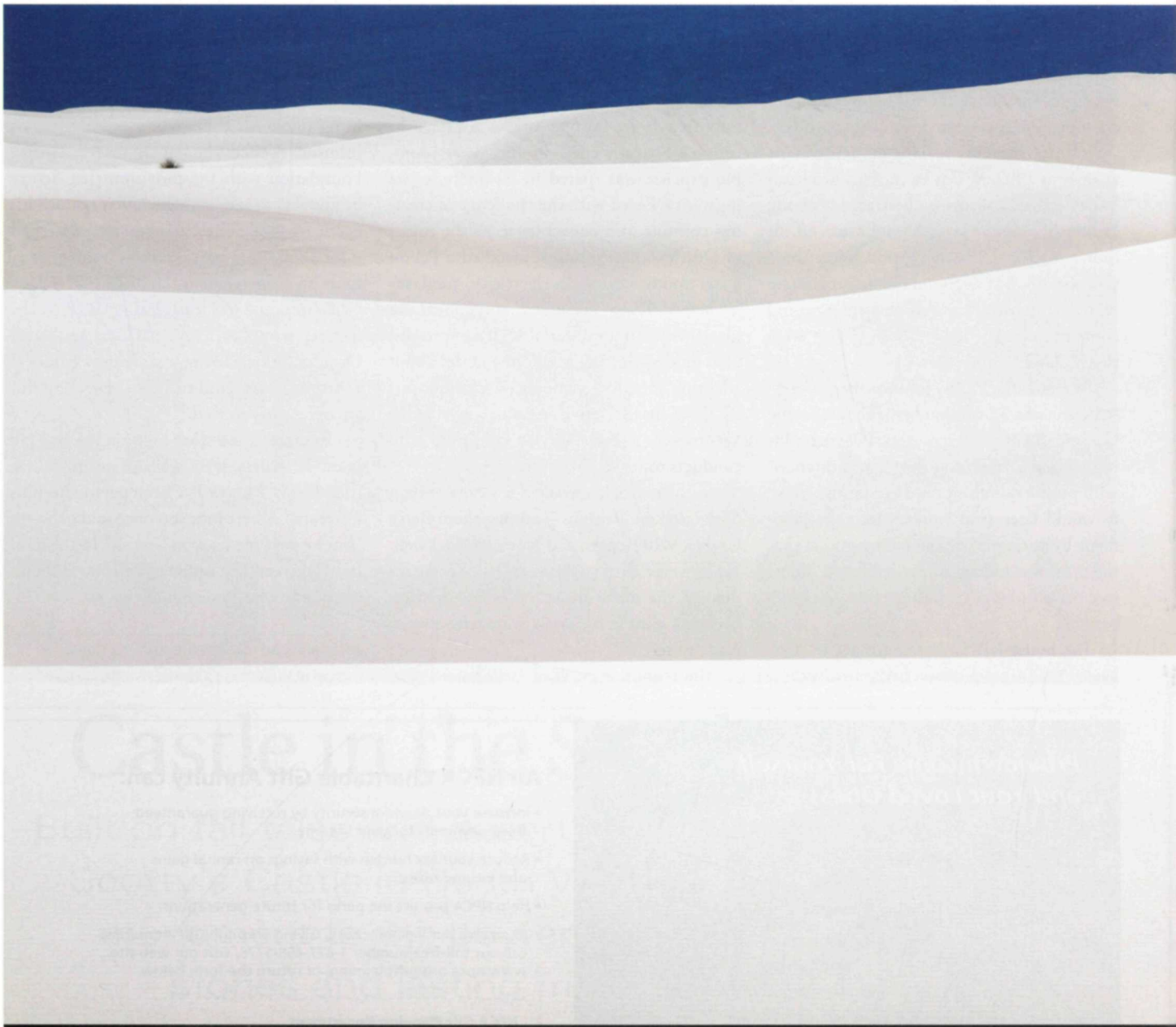
Scotty's Castle attracted a steady stream of the rich and famous—among them Betty Grable, Will Rogers, and Norman Rockwell. Yet however glittery the guest list, Scotty remained the main attraction—hat tilted on his head, glint in his eye, always with a story ready to tell.

The economic crash of 1929 halted construction, leaving parts of the castle unfinished, including the 270-square-foot swimming pool. After his wife's death in 1947, Johnson deeded the ranch to the Gospel Foundation with the provision that Scotty be allowed to stay on, which he did until his death in 1954. The Park Service purchased it for $850,000 in 1970 and now offers daily tours to more than 60,000 visitors a year. "Visitors come to Death Valley to enjoy the natural resources," says park ranger Barry Oost, one of the living history tour guides at Scotty's Castle, "and end up discovering this amazing story as well."

To some, it is a story built on lies and tall tales. To others, it's a story of an incredible friendship. "I know I've been paying his bills for years," Albert Johnson once said of Scott, "but he pays me back in laughs." In the final tally between the unlikely pair, it's difficult to say just who came out ahead. **NP**

Jeff Rennicke teaches literature at Conserve School in Wisconsin's North Woods.

By Ian Shive



WHITE SANDS NATIONAL MONUMENT

New Mexico

It was around midnight in White Sands National Monument when the ground started to shake. I was there to take photographs for my book, *The National Parks: Our American Landscape*, and couldn't tell if thunder was approaching or if a missile from the neighboring test range had found its mark nearby. Turns out it was both. As heavy artillery rained down at the testing facility, a storm began raining down on my tent—and within an hour the campsite started to flood. I knew I had to get to higher ground, so I packed my gear and ventured out into the storm. By the time I finally reached my truck, I was soaked to the core, and spent the rest of the night dozing in the driver's seat. By morning, only a thin layer of clouds blotted out the sun. I hiked back out and set up my camera, thankful that I'd stuck around: The rain-soaked dunes revealed a Georgia O'Keefe painting through my telephoto lens. The resulting image is one of my favorites in the book. (For more about Shive's new book, turn to page 8.)

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The Stauer Times

"It's About Time"

News Flash....

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