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A story originally published in the June 1941 issue of *Arizona Highways*.

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"There isn't a mile of Navajoland that does not have much to offer the admirer of beauty and grandeur, but nothing in all that vast, lonely expanse is as interesting or as picturesque as the people themselves." Those are the words of Editor Raymond Carlson, from our August 1950 issue. Seventy years later, his words still ring true. The Navajo people are fascinating, ambitious and beautiful, and the landscape is an endless series of scenic wonders.

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► An American coot glides across the water's surface at Cibola National Wildlife Refuge, along the Colorado River north of Yuma.

Jack Dykinga

NIKON D5, 1/4000 SEC, F/9, ISO 3200, 1200 MM LENS

FRONT COVER: Hunts Mesa offers a striking view of Monument Valley, one of the Navajo Nation's best-known destinations.

Suzanne Mathia

CANON EOS 5D MARK II, 1/250 SEC, F/9, ISO 1000, 100 MM LENS

BACK COVER: Mexican goldpoppies display their colorful blooms. Paul Gill

CANON EOS 5D MARK II, 1/2 SEC, F/22, ISO 100, 24 MM LENS

MARBLE VIEWPOINT Just about every road on the Kaibab Plateau qualifies as a scenic drive, including this route, which leads to one of the most beautiful panoramas in Northern Arizona. **BY NOAH AUSTIN**



Have you ever put on a jacket for the first time in months and found a dollar in the pocket? Have you ever done that, then reached into the other pocket and found 20 dollars? If so, you're pretty lucky. And you also have some idea of what the drive to Marble Viewpoint, on the Kaibab Plateau, feels like. At the end of this gorgeous drive, you'll reach a nice vista that you'll think is the destination. And then you'll go a little farther, and ... wow.

But this 12.8-mile journey offers plenty of beauty before that — starting at DeMotte Park, one of several picturesque meadows along the North Rim Parkway

(State Route 67), which leads to the Grand Canyon's North Rim. From the highway, head east on Forest Road 611, which is near DeMotte Campground and Kaibab Lodge. After crossing a small bridge, the road turns to gravel as it climbs into a forest of tall ponderosa pines. The road is mostly in excellent condition, but a high-clearance vehicle is advisable for the rough patches. The same is true of Forest Road 610, onto which you'll turn right after 1.3 miles.

You'll start to see evidence of forest thinning — this road was used as a firebreak during the 2016 Fuller Fire, which scorched a section of the Kaibab

National Forest and part of Grand Canyon National Park. Thankfully, the fire doesn't appear to have made it to FR 610, which runs south before turning east and skirting the park's northern boundary. At Mile 6.3, you'll pass through two grassy meadows ringed by aspens and ponderosas. They're good places to spot wild turkeys or mule deer, and if you stop for a picnic lunch, don't be surprised if a Steller's jay tries to steal a bite.

ABOVE: Marble Viewpoint offers an expansive view that includes Marble Canyon and distant Navajo Mountain. *Jack Dykinga*
OPPOSITE PAGE: State Route 67 winds through DeMotte Park, where the drive begins. *Tom Bean*

Eight miles into the drive, you'll turn left onto Forest Road 219 and head north. Thick stands of aspens line both sides of this road, which is narrower than the previous two. Even up here, you'll be thankful for the shade the aspen canopy provides on a summer afternoon. The road gets more rutted around Mile 10, so proceed carefully until Mile 12.5, when you'll arrive at a clearing, on the left, with a sign that reads, "Marble Viewpoint."

Hmmm, you'll think. *This is ... nice.* And it is nice — there's a good view of a pine-covered ridge to the west. But not much else. *This is it, right? There's a sign and everything.* And then, just northeast of the clearing, you'll see a small road that's

marked as Forest Road 219B. It won't be long before you'll wonder where that leads. After a quarter-mile, you'll see a clearing, jutting from the forest. That offers seemingly endless views of the canyon. They are the same views you see from the North Rim, but with a different perspective. The views are the same, but the perspective is different. The views are the same, but the perspective is different. The views are the same, but the perspective is different.

it's windy, maybe a little cold. So put on a jacket. And make sure you check the pockets.



ADDITIONAL READING: For more adventure, pick up a copy of our book *Arizona Highways Scenic Drives*, which features 40 of the state's most beautiful back roads. To order, visit www.shoparizonahighways.com/books.



MAP BY KEVIN KIBSEY

OUR GUIDE

Mileages are approximate.

From DeMotte Park, head east on State Route 67 for 26.3 miles to Forest Road 610. Turn left (east) onto FR 611 and continue 1.3 miles to Forest Road 610. Turn right onto FR 610 and continue 4.5 miles to Forest Road 219. Turn left onto FR 219 and continue 0.3 miles to Marble Viewpoint.

VEHICLE RECOMMENDATIONS: A high-clearance vehicle is recommended for this drive.

WARNING: Driving on gravel can be hazardous, so be aware of road conditions. Carry plenty of water. Do not drink and drive, and let someone know where you are going and when you plan to return.

INFORMATION: Contact a Grand Canyon National Park Ranger District, 928-643-7395 or www.nps.gov/grca or www.az511.gov for more information.

TRAVELERS: Visit www.az511.gov or dial 511 to get information on road closures, construction, delays, weather and more.



Yellow-headed blackbirds take flight from the Tucson area.

Q&A: Jack Dykinga

PHOTO EDITOR JEFF KIDA

JK: How did this shot come together?

JD: I photographed these yellow-headed blackbirds in the Tucson area. I had heard they were “erupting” from this one area, and taking off in a steady two-minute stream, every morning. One of my rules of thumb is that you never get the shot the first time — you have to learn about your subject. I went out there for several mornings and tried different techniques to

capture them. When you’re shooting for a magazine or a newspaper, as I have in my career, you’re telling a story, so it’s good to have a deep mix of imagery that reflects different approaches and meanings.

JK: Tell me about the camera settings and equipment you used.

JD: I shot this using a Nikon D850 and a 600 mm lens, and I used a relatively

slow shutter speed, for a lens of this focal length, to shoot motion. I decided to use a Nikon strobe with a flash extender called a Better Beamer. Birds do a lot of their movement in low light during the early morning hours, so I used the strobe light to freeze their action while panning the camera at the same time. On some of my

shots, I chose not to use the strobe and blurred the birds’ flight, but this time, I wanted to try something a little different to get a really crisp, brightly colored shot.

JK: One of the things I like about this photograph is the contrast between the cool blue background and the

PHOTO WORKSHOP



Cibecue Falls and Salt River Canyon October 10-13, Globe

Secluded waterfalls, hidden hoodoos and other rarely seen sights are on display at this workshop, which centers on one of Arizona’s most dramatic canyons and most important waterways. It’s led by frequent *Arizona Highways* contributor Shane McDermott. Information: 888-790-7042 or www.ahps.org

birds’ yellow heads. Was that something you did intentionally?

JD: Yes. Basically, I’m slightly underexposing the overall image, then letting the strobe brighten up the targets, giving me that effect of a deep blue background. I shot this at an ISO of 2500, and at a high ISO like that, you tend to get a lot of noise, but by making a large image and then downsizing it, you can eliminate most of the noise.

JK: What draws you to photographing wildlife?

JD: Like many subjects, it’s ephemeral. This flock of blackbirds did not return the following year, because the farmers in that area changed their crops from corn to cotton. The birds had been feeding on the corn stover, so they didn’t come back. I suspect a lot of them went to Whitewater Draw instead. It just goes to show that you have to make the most of whatever time you have to photograph a subject, since it might not come around again.

To learn more about photography, visit www.arizonahighways.com/photography.

San Pedro River

When it comes to wildlife, few rivers can compare to the San Pedro, which provides habitat for 200 species of butterflies, 68 species of reptiles and amphibians, and 80 species of mammals. In addition, 45 percent of the 900 species of birds in North America use the river — the last major free-flowing river in the American Southwest.

ANNETTE McGIVNEY

When 16th century Spanish explorer Francisco Vázquez de Coronado entered the arid grassland in what today is Southeastern Arizona, he was looking for cities of gold. What he encountered instead was a bounty of environmental riches along the San Pedro River. He made note of the verdant “arroyo” in his journal. And another member of his party described grasses as high as “a man on the back of a horse.”

Back in the 1540s, as Coronado’s party pushed north, the San Pedro was just the first in a series of lush riparian habitats that formed ribbons of green through an otherwise waterless desert. Today, those pristine oases are gone — except for the San Pedro. While desert rivers such as the Santa Cruz, Gila and Salt have all been dammed and diverted to support Arizona’s booming cities and agricultural industry, the San Pedro remains the rare exception: It’s the last major free-flowing

river in the American Southwest.

According to the Center for Biological Diversity, which advocates for San Pedro protections, nearly 45 percent of the 900 species of birds in North America use the river habitat. The San Pedro is unusual in that it originates in the mountains of Sonora, Mexico, and runs north for 140 miles to its confluence with the Gila River in Winkelman. In addition to supporting 350 bird species, it provides habitat for 200 species of butterflies, 68 species of reptiles and amphibians, and 80 species of mammals. Around 600 plant species are found there.

Arizona State University associate professor Heather Bateman studies reptiles and other terrestrial wildlife in riparian environments, and she started conducting research along the San Pedro three years ago, after being drawn to its biodiversity. She felt like she had hit the jackpot. “It is one of the coolest ecosystems in the Southwest,” Bateman says. “It’s not just the number of species that are there, but the broad ecological diversity and richness of the habitat.”

But if Bateman had visited the San Pedro 35 years ago, she might not have recognized the place. “The river corridor was completely beaten down by cattle grazing,” says Ron Stewart, who has lived in the Sierra Vista area since the early 1980s. “It was full of manure and flies. The only people who went there were teenagers having keggers.”

Owned by private ranchers for more than a century, the upper portion of the river was acquired by the federal government in 1988 to create the San Pedro Riparian National Conservation Area. The 56,000-acre preserve, encompassing 40 miles of river, removed cattle from the riparian corridor, and the lush environment Coronado had witnessed five centuries earlier began to return.

The ecological heart of the San Pedro is its cottonwood-willow forest canopy, one of the largest in the Southwest. When you walk the conservation area’s trail system, it’s hard to imagine that many of the 50-foot cottonwoods arching over the river’s glassy surface weren’t there 35 years ago. The path weaves through

dense willow thickets and along sandy banks where the river bends as water trickles over smooth rocks on its way to shaded pools. In the distance, beyond the mesquite bosques, the purple silhouette of the Huachuca Mountains rises on the western horizon.

But there is trouble in paradise. Since the conservation area was created three decades ago, the population of the Sierra Vista-Fort Huachuca area has increased dramatically. And the water to support this growth comes from an aquifer that also sustains the San Pedro. According to Stewart, who now is vice president of the volunteer organization Friends of the San Pedro River, there’s been a visible change in the water level. “When I first moved here, the river flowed year-round,” he says. “Now, parts of the river go dry for months at a time, especially during the summer.” Some of that is due to the riverbed’s geology, but the group is concerned that the river might eventually go completely dry, despite help from municipal programs that recharge the aquifer.

As the aquifer is drawn down by groundwater pumping, developers drill deeper wells to support more growth. But the cottonwoods and willows along the San Pedro get their water from just below the surface. “If the groundwater retreats, the complex gallery forest won’t survive,” Bateman says. And if the forest disappears, the wildlife it supports vanishes, too.

Environmental organizations such as the Center for Biological Diversity and the Maricopa Audubon Society have filed lawsuits that led area governments to implement conservation measures. And Friends of the San Pedro River works to raise awareness by hosting guided walks along the river. The group’s historic San Pedro House Visitor Center is filled with natural history and conservation literature.

Bateman is hoping for a change in values. “With global warming and development pressures, we have all these demands on our water sources,” she says. “Who are going to be the winners and the losers?”

With luck, the winners will be the plants and animals that call the San Pedro home.



SOUTHEASTERN ARIZONA Friends of the San Pedro River, 520-459-2255, www.sanpedroriver.org

time at the Canyon. Particularly the North Rim.”

It was on the South Rim, however, where the love affair began.

Ken first came to the Grand Canyon with his parents, Manfred (“Slim”) and Pansy, in the mid-1930s, when Ken was about 3 or 4. He went to school there while Slim worked as a laborer on trail construction in the Canyon. Pansy was a homemaker then. Later, she was an operator for the Trans-Canyon Telephone Line, which connected the North and South Rims in 1935 and is now listed on the National Register of Historic Places. When the trail work was finished, Slim got a job working for the railroad in Northern Arizona. However, after World War II broke out, he was transferred to Indiana, the one place that Ken never liked. That aversion, combined with his parents’ divorce and a “Go west, young man” sense of urgency, prompted Ken to run away from home at the age of 14. A year later, he made it back to his beloved Grand Canyon.

“He never talked about the journey,” Tomie says, “other than to say that he was lucky to have survived.” Although he reunited with his father on the North Rim, Slim was in no position to care for a teenage boy, so he got his son a job at a logging camp in Heber, Arizona — they lied about Ken’s age. When Ken got a little older, he returned to the North Rim, where his father was working as the winter caretaker. Among other things, Slim would send out weather reports and shovel snow off the roofs — as they are today, the North Rim facilities were shut down in the winter.

When they weren’t shoveling snow, the two Patricks played music together. Slim was a talented banjo player, and Ken, with his father’s guidance, taught himself how to play guitar. It was the beginning of a lifelong passion for music, which is the first of many proficiencies listed at the bottom of his headstone. The inscription reads: “MUSICIAN, SONG WRITER, SINGER, WOOD CARVER, PACKER, MECHANIC, HEAVY EQUIPMENT OPERATOR, ARIZONA HIGHWAY PATROLMAN, PARK RANGER, BROTHER, SON, FATHER, AND FAITHFUL LOVING HUSBAND.”

“Packer,” as in mule packer, was one of his first real jobs at the Grand Canyon. After being hired by Fred Harvey to work in the mule barn on the South Rim, where he shoveled manure, groomed the animals, and cleaned and cared for the stable gear, Ken was promoted to work on the mule trains that hauled supplies to Phantom Ranch. It wasn’t long before he was promoted again. This time to dude wrangler. Turns out, he was a natural at guiding people into the Canyon. “He could really tell a story,” Tomie says with a laugh, presumably hearing her husband’s voice in her head. “And he liked people. He really liked and enjoyed people. Ken was very charismatic.” To wit: He met his first wife, Shirley, when she was a tourist on one of his trips. Tomie was his second wife.

In addition to romance, he also found salvation on the trail. *Damn near died!* That’s how you’d tell it around a campfire. It was a routine pack trip into the Canyon. A trip that had been made thousands of times by hundreds of wranglers. The norm changed when one of the mules at the back of the pack got spooked and went over the edge. That’s where Ken was. Because the pack mules were roped together, when one went, they all started to go — Ken was hanging in the balance. Fortunately, the wrangler at the front raced back, cut the ropes



and saved the day. They lost a mule or two, but it could have been much worse. As for Ken, he just dusted himself off and got back in the saddle. He had a job to do.

“**LIKE HIS FATHER,**” Tomie says, “there was nothing Ken couldn’t do — or couldn’t convince people he could do.” Thus began a period of transition, from the United States Air Force, where he enlisted, to the National Park Service to the U.S. Geological Survey to the Arizona Department of Public Safety. It was during his time as a highway patrolman that he met Tomie. “He was 33 and I was 22,” she says. “At the time, I didn’t even know the difference between the Park Service and the Forest Service. He set me straight.”

Although the jobs changed, Ken’s passion for the Canyon was unwavering, and he explored it every chance he got. At one point, he was among a team of climbers who attempted an ascent of Mount Hayden — the same landmark that steals the show along the Ken Patrick Trail. Not a lot is known about their climb. There’s just a footnote. And if it weren’t for serendipity, even that wouldn’t exist.

The note was discovered on November 18, 2001, when a group of local climbers, including a ranger named Greg Moore, were making their own attempt of Mount Hayden. Around 10 a.m., one of the climbers found an old metal film canister at the base of the peak. Inside the can was a pencil stub and

a fragile note written on a yellowed piece of paper. It reads: “October 3, 1963; Sunday 10:25 a.m./ 5:00 p.m.; First Attempt; Bill Hoy, Leader; Ken Patrick, on Rope; Jim Fain, Ground Man (Observer); 3/4 way to top.”

There are a few technical routes leading to the summit of Mount Hayden, with difficulty ratings of 5.7 to 5.10d. Pegasus, on the east side, is the most difficult route. Fifty years ago, on October 1, 1969, Rick Petrillo and Bob Siegler became the first climbers to reach the summit. Based on the note in the canister, Ken and his colleagues never made it to the top, but that wouldn’t have bothered the young adventurer. He would have been happy just being outside — inside the Grand Canyon. There was nowhere else he’d rather be.

But blazing trails in the backcountry didn’t pay the bills, which is why Ken applied for the job at the Department of Public Safety. Good pay. Good benefits. A good night’s sleep. He might have done a full tour at DPS if he hadn’t been haunted by the past. According to Tomie, her husband was sitting in his car one night, doing paperwork, when he felt severe pain and became disoriented. When it happened again a few nights later, he reported the incident to his superiors and was sent to Barrow Neurological Institute in Phoenix, where doctors traced the symptoms to an injury he’d sustained while fighting a fire on Saddle Mountain in the 1950s. Ken was working a bulldozer, one without a cage, when a piece of a tree broke off and landed

Mount Hayden, which can be seen from the Ken Patrick Trail, is one of the most photographed landmarks in the Grand Canyon. In 1963, Ken Patrick was among a group of men who tried to make history by being the first to summit the peak. *Jack Dykinga*

on his head. In the parlance of wildland firefighters, that’s called a “widow maker,” but Ken beat the odds — his son, Kenny, still has his father’s dented helmet.

Eventually, the team at Barrow cleared Ken for duty. However, the authorities at DPS weren’t comfortable having him out in the field. So, Ken had to choose between a desk job or moving on. It was an easy choice. He formed a band and hit the road.

The Kensmen, as they were known, traveled for more than three years to places like Reno, Las Vegas and Lake Tahoe. They were also invited to perform at the Grand Ole Opry in Nashville. That was a proud moment, but it wasn’t Ken’s only musical claim to fame. Earlier, he’d written and recorded a rockabilly record called *Night Train*. In the December 1961 issue of *Billboard*, it was included in a “review of new singles.”

“I liked all of his songs,” Tomie says. “He had a beautiful voice ... a good Irish voice.” Nevertheless, the music business didn’t come with any guarantees. So, once again, Ken went back to a steady job. This time with the National Park Service, where he worked as a ranger at Organ Pipe Cactus National Monument in Southern Arizona. A few years later, he was transferred to