

In Focus

Member Club of the
Photographic
Society of America.



A Newsletter of Grand Photos of Sun City Grand

“Yummy!! It’s dinner time!”

Vicki Dillon found these hungry fellows in Peru. Enjoy the rest of her sights and experiences as she shares her exploration of South America with us. Her article starts on Page 12.



the president's memo



by Dik Salsbury

Grand Photos seems to be off to a great start for 2010. We have about 450 members as I write this near the end of January. We're offering more workshops, classes, Special Interest Groups (SIGs), photo shoots, and other events than ever before. Those who take advantage of these opportunities will find that they're taking better pictures and finding new ways to share them, and they'll find new friendships along the way. Enthusiastic participation is the key.

You may have noticed some changes in our building. We

recently bought and installed a 55 inch high definition TV for use as a large monitor when sparking accurate color is critical for demonstrating enhancements to photos in our many workshops. A new ceiling-mounted projector and sound system have just been installed for use when even larger images are necessary. New print display racks were built by Charlie Ferrell so that more prints can be displayed. Charlie did a great job and we thank him for that. Gail Vosburg has just finished reconfiguring the track lights at the front windows. They do a nice job of illuminating the prints on display. He also installed a timer system for the display lights. Thank you, Gail.

And thanks also to all the people who make Grand Photos such a vibrant organization. You're doing a fine job!

What's Inside...

the president's memo	1
Club Reports	2-7
PSA Report	8
Lab Recurring Events	9
Focusing in on Gene McDermott	10-11
Exploring South America	12-14
Photo Gallery	15-16



Membership Report

By Liz Burke

In January of 2004, we had 139 members in the club. In January of 2007, we had 233 members. Now for 2010 we have 350 paid members (so far). As many of you know already, we are a very friendly, active club. So please wear your name tag for every club event. If you have lost your name tag, please let me know and I will be glad to order you a new one. The cost is \$6.00. It's always nicer to be able to call each other by name rather than, "Hey, you in the green shirt!"

Vice President's Report

By Sue Marrugi

We continue to enhance our communications efforts from the Club to the members. Starting in 2010, Marshall Oseas turned over his position of webmaster of the Grand Photos website (www.grandphotos.org), which he had very creatively built from scratch. In order to fill Marshall's very big shoes (meant as a compliment, Marshall), we now have a three-member team designing and publishing the website. They are Sue Marrugi, Webmaster and her two team members, Rita Skarbek and Dan Jacob. We look forward to your input and ideas to make our site even more attractive and informative. Many thanks to Marshall for his great work!

Dan has started to build a member slideshow to showcase your images. It's currently located on the Home Page of the website and can be entered by clicking on the large flower. Each member can submit a maximum of three photos by e-mailing them to Dan at djjacob911@aol.com. He will take care of sizing your photos and fitting them into the slideshow. This is a great way to "share" your work with friends and family over the Internet.

Rita, along with the help of Alice Cooperman, is starting to restructure our "Tutorial" page. Our member instructors have put together a wealth of written informative tutorials they have used as handouts during their workshops. We hope many of them are willing to share their tutorials on our website.

Rita and Alice have put out the "call" to the membership asking for presenters who would like to share their tutorials on the website. If you are interested, please e-mail your tutorial(s) in a Word format to Rita Skarbek at 2grandfotogals@gmail.com.

We invite you to look at the website (www.grandphotos.org) and see the great variety of club information that is there, along with websites and addresses of other photography organizations, resource centers, and vendors.



What's New in the Grand Photo Library?

by Mary Gamble

Our Grand Photo Library has a wealth of information available for your use, to help increase your photographic knowledge. Adding to our wonderful collection, you will find these eight new titles: [Rick Sammons's Digital Photograph Secrets](#), [Lighting Photo Workshop](#), [HDR Photography Photo Workshop](#), [PSE 7 Digital Classroom](#), [Top 100 Simplified Tips & Tricks for PSE 7](#), [iphoto 9](#), [Adobe Camera Raw for Digital Photographers Only](#), [Teach Yourself Visually Digital Photography](#), [Teach Yourself Visually PSE 7](#), [Lightroom 2](#), and [Teach Yourself Visually Adobe Photoshop Lightroom](#). All of these titles, as well as many more, are ready for you to check-out. Check-out directions are located behind the Grand Photo Library cabinet doors.

In addition, we have some tutorial and competition DVDs for check-out. We also have available to you, many magazines to simply borrow **without** check-out. Browse the covers to see if there's an article waiting for you!

Just recently, we received six new titles from Wiley Publishing Co. for us to review, then add to our library. If you would like to be one of the first members to get a look at any of the books, please consider writing a review. It is easy and I will show you how. The six new titles involve CS4, Compact Camera Use, Shooting Close-ups, Night Shots, Shutter Speed, and PSE 8. Contact me by email: marygamble10@sbcglobal.net

In addition to Wiley supplying our library, members are always welcome to donate books that are just sitting on their shelves or photo books they are no longer using. For editing and processing, we are no longer accepting anything lower than CS3 or PSE 5.

Annual Spring Banquet

by Gale McCall

Do NOT miss out on the annual major social event of the year! The Annual Spring Banquet will be held on Friday, April 16th at the Cimarron Center. This is a time for all of us to come together and enjoy each other's company, see photos that have been winners and listen to some fun music from the 50's and 60's. There will also be door prizes!!! The menu is incredible:

Cup of Minestrone
Chicken Divan
Roast Pork with apricot sauce
Garlic mashed potatoes

You do not have to choose between the two entrees, you can have both if you like. Notice that the ice cream sundaes are back by popular demand. The price is only \$22 per person which includes tip, tax and everything in between. It will be a fun evening! Don't be left out. The easiest way to sign up is to leave your check at the club made out to "Grand Photos" and Ron Szwiec will pick it up. Call Gale McCall if you have any questions at 623-975-3253.



www.blurb.com

by Ada German

I recently discovered the above website and thought that it may be of interest to some of our members in the Photo Club. It is a website for creating books. A while back I met Lucy Dickens, an Arizona artist at a City of Peoria art show. She had beautiful paintings, was very nice, and I signed her guest book. I now regularly receive emails of her latest paintings and upcoming events. In the last email she invited viewers to see her new book (still in the making) at www.blurb.com. I went into the website and typed her name in "search" and her book came up. I was so impressed that I perused some of the other books on the website and was amazed at the quality and diversity of books being created. Up to now, I thought only artists like Thomas Kinkade or Brownell McGrew made books of their art. It looks easy to do and the prices seem affordable so I hope to eventually make a book of my paintings primarily to pass on to my children. Blurb even has software to do this. There is a good choice of sizes and choice of hardcover or soft cover. When I saw some of the books of photographs I thought of our Photo Club and the beautiful photos our members make and wanted to pass my discovery on to you.

Competitions

ACCC and Grand Photos

Arizona Camera Club Council Competition (ACCC)

by Larry Lindner

Grand Photos digital and print entries for the 2010 spring competition were accepted on February 16th. Once the ACCC judges the images and assign awards, they will be displayed at the Spring Roundup and ribbons will be awarded.

The Spring Roundup is scheduled for **Saturday, March 27, 2010** from 8:30 AM to 4:00 PM at the Sundial Recreation Center (14801 Boswell Blvd. Corner of Boswell Blvd & 103rd Ave., Sun City, Arizona. Registration, with a fee of \$28.00 per person, begins at 7:45 AM and a continental breakfast and lunch will be provided. You can also pre-register by either picking up one of the flyers at the Photo Lab or by downloading the Registration form on the ACCC webpage and mailing it, with your check, to the listed address. If the hotlink doesn't take you there, you may have to copy and paste the link to your browser.

The keynote speaker at the roundup, Adam Jones, is another Canon "Explorer of Light." The ACCC webpage has Adam's bio as well as a link to his website. The ACCC webpage is at:

<http://www.arizonacameraclubcouncil.org/>

You can wander around the site for the latest information about the club or go directly to the flyer at: <http://www.arizonacameraclubcouncil.org/Assets/Chronicles/Spring%20Round%20Up%202010.pdf>

Join the Grand Photos Spring 2010 Photo Competition

By Lyle Patton and Larry Lindner
Spring GP Competition Chairmen

It's Showtime! One of the best ways to show off what you've done with that new camera, or those new photography techniques and digital image optimization skills you've been learning, is to enter your favorite images in the Grand Photos Spring Competition.

The Turn-in Date is Thursday, April 1st from 9:30 AM to 11:30 AM in the Cimarron Center Gila Room. Later, all the judged images, with any awards, will be displayed at the Competition Show on **Wednesday, April 21st** from 2:00 PM to 4:00 PM in the Cimarron Center, Agua Fria Room. All the prints will be displayed around the room, and there'll be a projected slide show of the digital entries.

Don't be shy; if you've got something you're proud of, show it off! Whether you win an award or not, the experience of actually preparing your favorite photos as a digital or print entry and seeing them displayed with all the others from our club is both educational and rewarding.

If you're new, you don't compete with the "experts" - Grand Photos has two Divisions - new competitors compete in Division A with those having 0 to 24 accumulated points - those with more points compete separately in Division B. (This year, however, anyone in Div. A who really wants to compete in B may choose to).

Photos may be entered as prints mounted on 16" x 20" mat boards, or as digital image files sized to maximum pixel dimensions of 1024 wide by 768 high for projection. Prints and digital images will be judged separately.

This fall, the Print categories will be Nature, Open, B&W (including sepia), Vistas, and the Rotating category "Faces and/or Hands". The Digital categories will be Nature, Open, Creative, Rotating ("Faces and/or Hands") and another new category "Macro". One additional Small Print category, "My Favorite Grand Image", will be available only to Division A. (This category - limited to 8.5 x 11" max. print size mounted on 11x14 or 10x16" mat boards - will allow beginners to enter inexpensive prints such as those from home printers.)

For details see the Grand Photos Spring Competition Announcement, Entry Forms, Category Definitions, and the Competition Guidelines on our club website www.grandphotos.org.

Photo Shoots

By Mort Berman

2010 PHOTOSHOOT CALENDAR

March 18 - Motor Coach Tour (Promenade Travel)
Frank Lloyd Wright in the Valley - Docent led tour
of FLW designs and Taliesin West. \$86.00.

March – TBA – Japanese Friendship Garden

March 25 – Hassayampa River Reserve

April 30 – May 5 – Bryce & Zion National Parks
(contact Ken Squiers)

May 4 - Sedona area and Doe Mountain

May 7-9 – Monument Valley & Canyon de Chelly -
(contact Joe Scanlon)

May 15 – Western Caribbean Cruise (contact
Darlene Eger)

If there are wildflowers, we will definitely have one
or more trips on short notice.

Ideas for future photo shoots are always welcome.
Also, leading one can be fun as well as a learning
experience. Contact Mort Berman -
Mort.Grandphotos@gmail.com.



“Camelback Shoot”

by Richard Coles



“Christmas Shoot”

by Ken Squiers



“Sedona in the Snow Shoot”

by Larry Lindner

Education Report

by Jim Smith, Chairman

The March calendar for the Photo Club is almost completely full and April is filling up just as fast. For you new beginner folks, I've been concentrating on providing lots of classes for your enjoyment. In March **Bill Graczyk** is repeating his class on *Taking the Mystery out of Camera Controls*. This class has been filled to capacity each time he has taught it. He will continue to teach it every month until we have reached everyone. His next classes will be Wednesday March 24th and the 31st. Please email him so you can reserve a spot.

Steve Shank is running another of his 4-week sessions on *Elements of Photography*. They will run on every Monday beginning March 1st (missing March 8th) and then continuing through March 29th.

On the next page of this newsletter, you'll see some of the photos taken at Colleen Miniuk-Sperry's all-day workshop that was held on February 19th. We had 75 seats available and it got sold out. Those of you who missed getting into **Colleen Miniuk-Sperry's** all day workshop in February will have another chance for a more advanced class. This class will be held on Friday March 26th. The price will be \$27.00. I will have seating for 90 this time. If you are interested, get your check to the Photo Lab. I currently have 56 signed-up.

In addition to SIGs and other groups, there are a couple of new groups either formed or being formed.

First is Bill Graczyk's new High Dynamic Range (HDR) SIG. That is held on the fourth Thursday of every month at 1:00 PM. If you're interested, drop in. The next is the Macintosh Photography Group (Not a SIG). **Marty Schwerin** will hold this gathering on the third Thursday of the month.

There have been requests to form a Digital Scrapbooking group. There will be a class on Friday, March 12th at 3:00 PM conducted by **Kathy Fluellen**. If there are enough attendees for this class we can decide if everyone wants to form a monthly group meeting. So all you gals and guys who have been looking for a not-too-technical and fun class this should do it. Keep me posted. I like to hear your wants and needs.

Stan Bormann put together a "marathon" series of nine classes on Elements 8 on Friday afternoons, beginning on February 26th and continuing thru April. There will be two Fridays excluded - March 26th, Colleen's 2nd class, and April 2nd, Good Friday. Stan announced his class at the members' meeting on Wednesday, February 17. Send him an Email to make sure this class hasn't filled yet. snbormann@yahoo.com If this class does get filled, I'll find another instructor and try and put together more Elements 8 classes.

Those of you in the intermediate and advanced levels, watch the March Schedule. **Joyce Seddon, Mark Lange, and Colleen Miniuk-Sperry** who will be back bringing you some more challenging classes. Do not feel intimidated. If you have a DSLR camera and/or Elements or CS4 software, you belong in these classes.

Don't forget our travelogues. In January and February, we had one every Thursday night. I am sure March and April will be the same. It pleases me to see so many of our members sharing their nice trips with all of us. If you have been or are planning on going somewhere, please consider putting a presentation together and showing it some Thursday night. If you are not familiar with putting a slide show together contact any board member, including myself and we will help you put something together. All of us enjoy seeing good photography.

Speaking of full classes, Until recently, I can't recall ever seeing a class that had to close due to too many participants. For the most part, classes have always been just walk-in and sit down. We have experienced nearly a dozen classes recently where we have had to limit participation. You members are to be complimented for all the enthusiasm you have been showing. Thank You!



See you in the Photo Lab.

Colleen Minluk-Sperry All Day Seminar Wows Members.

**Grand Photos
2/19/2010**



How it all works together.



Thanks to the hard work of Jim Smith, 77 members enjoyed a seminar with both hands-on, a 45 page handout and a lively lecture



Some members discovered things they never knew their cameras could do.



Lots of attention to members' questions

We filled the room with cameras and eager learners.



Lots on quick note taking.

Photos Copyright Gene McDermott 2010

Photographic Society of America

by Stan Bormann

The PSA Journal of February reports that Shirley Bormann and Sue Marrugi of Grand Photos have completed the PSA "Individualized Photography Course" for new members. Congratulations to Sue and Shirley. Grand Photos is using the book PSA uses for this class, John Hedgecoe's Complete Guide to Photography as the text of a new SIG group, "The Creative Eye". This is just another example of Grand Photos and Grand Photos members benefiting from our relationship with PSA.

If you join PSA, you want to take this course soon after you join. It is a special benefit for new members of PSA and it will provide some challenges and opportunities to practice and improve your skills with individualized feedback from a very qualified PSA member, Jon Fishback, who you might notice is one of the contributors to the PSA Journal in February with his article "The Pain and Pleasure of Critical Analysis".

Grand Photos members continue to excel in PSA competitions. Jim Urquhart won the Chairman's Award – PSA Silver for his image "Home on Oak Creek" at the "77th Detroit International Salon of Photography – 2009" which was held last fall. Jim had the additional honor that his image was chosen to be the image printed on all the CDs that were distributed to competitors with the accepted images from the competition.

There are efforts to get some additional PSA sanctioned competitions started in the Phoenix Valley. Those competing in PSA sanctioned competitions should make a special effort to support these competitions. Bill Dart is trying to get a "Print Circuit" started in the valley. In a circuit you can submit an image once and it is moved from competition to competition for you. This would be a print circuit with perhaps four to six judgments and therefore four to six opportunities to win an acceptance or a medal. This essentially provides extra benefit from the effort to enter the competition. Shirley Bormann just entered eight prints in the Minneapolis – St. Paul print circuit

and won 19 acceptances. I entered 16 prints and received 29 acceptances. If you do the math on that you will find that her win ratio was a significantly higher than mine was. I just try to keep up! We are trying to get the Grand Canyon digital competition restarted in the valley. John Frehlich of Sun City West is considering chairing this event and some of us might want to offer to help him in this effort.

Speaking of supporting local PSA Sanctioned competitions, the 53rd Saguaro Nature Exhibition is scheduled for March. The deadline for submissions is March 16th, but it is good to get these in a bit early. This is a Nature and Wildlife exhibition. The Nature category is similar to competitions we have had in club and ACCC Nature categories. The Wildlife Section has some additional requirements you should study if you wish to enter. Entries in this category cannot include images of captive animals. This is a good opportunity to compete with your shots of animals in the wild so you are not competing with zoo shots as an example.

Learn more at: http://suarocameraclub.com/uploads/53RDSaguaroyellowInternationalNatureExhibition62709_rev_2.pdf

Some of you might be thinking about going to the PSA Conference this fall in Charleston South Carolina. The conference is October 3 to October 9th. As always it will include many excellent programs along with photo opportunities on tours. Adam Jones, the speaker at the March 27th ACCC Roundup, is one of the featured speakers along with Joe McDonald, Wendell Philips, and Julianne Kost. Julianne is with Adobe and teaches the use of Photoshop products. I have been at conferences where she is a speaker and she is a talented educator. Shirley and I are going to this conference, and we would welcome planning for the conference with other members of Grand Photos. Give it some thought; we hope to see you in Charleston!!!



Lab Recurring Events

General Club Activities

Open Lab (9:00 AM - Noon)

Every Monday, Wednesday and Friday

Workshops

Monday through Friday

Travelogues every Thursday (6:30 PM - 8:00 PM)

Membership Meetings (Cimarron Center)

2nd Wednesday of each month (2:00 PM - 4:00 PM)

3rd Wednesday of each month (2:00 PM - 4:00 PM)

Board Meeting (Lab)

2nd Tuesday of each month
(9:00 AM - Noon)

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Special Interest Groups and Get - Togethers

Canon 20D and up (formerly Canon Red Team)

1st Tuesday of each month (10:00 AM - 12:00 PM)

Canon Rebel (formerly Canon White Team)

2nd Thursday of each month (3:00 PM - 5:30 PM)

Nikon Digital D80 and up (formerly Nikon Red Team)

2nd Thursday of each month (10:00 AM - 12:00 PM)

Nikon D300 and up (formerly Nikon Blue Team)

3rd Thursday of each month (3:00 PM - 5:00 PM)

Elements Red Team

1st Thursday of each month (3:00 PM-5:00 PM)

Elements White Team

2nd Thursday of each month (3:00 PM - 5:00 PM)

Elements Green Team

2nd Thursday of each month (1:00 PM - 2:30 PM)

Lightroom 2 (formerly Lightroom Red Team)

1st Thursday of each month (10 AM to Noon)

Photoshop CS (formerly Photoshop White Team)

1st Thursday of each month (1:00 PM-2:30 PM)

Hiking (formerly Hiking Red Team)

2nd Wednesday of each month (Following membership meeting)

Slideshow Skunkworks

3rd Thursday of each month (10:00 AM-12:00 PM)

The Creative Eye (new group, currently filled)

1st Wednesday of each month (3:00 PM - 5:00 PM)

HDR - High Dynamic Range Photography

4th Thursday of each month (1:00 PM- 2:30 PM)

Macintosh Photography Group

3rd Thursday of each month (1:00 PM - 2:30 PM)

Focusing in on...Gene McDermott

By Linda McKean

Like a gentle Arizona breeze, refreshing but bringing a bit of gusto with it, Gene McDermott “blew” into Zuni’s. He had a new toy mounted on his Nikon D300 and he was barely seated before the exclamations began. He had attended a meeting where a sports photographer demonstrated the capabilities of a power battery grip. The motivation for acquiring the grip is not because Gene is particularly interested in sports photography, but because he has a grandson, who is a national champion gymnast. With the grip Grandpa can now catch him in different positions at 10 frames per second. Besides that, he got a “great deal “ when he purchased it! Such is the air around Gene; always filled with anticipation, interest and excitement.

In his “other life” Gene was a medical photographer or, as denoted in the professional world, he worked with photomicrography. He used a film camera to image medical technicalities through the lens of a microscope. How, you may ask, does a person find himself such a career. Again that gusto for life enters the so called “picture.” Gene was serving in the US Navy in the ‘60s as an aerial photographer. One day, he was approached by a physician who had an “idea” and asked Gene whether he could help him with it. He wanted an image taken through a microscope. Gene had never done this, but thought he could figure something out. Eventually, the light bulb lit up, although somewhat accidentally. After months of viewing fuzzy images, a sharp one magically appeared in his lab work. He had forgotten to put a lens on his camera, and, of course,



Gene displays covers he has photographed and designed for *Grand Times*, Sun City Grand’s magazine.

the microscope became the camera’s lens. Thus, a career was born!

After serving in the Navy, he earned a Bachelor of Arts in Communication Arts and Science, from Queens College, NY. and began his career at Bellevue Hospital in New York City as a medical photographer. Now, the arrival of another “only to Gene” story. One day, he was asked if he did photomicrography. Let’s remember the experience while in the Navy. Gene asked if the doctor meant using a microscope with film photography, and the answer being ‘yes’, Gene could answer with a yes. Off he and the doctor went into the kind of conversation that Gene is capable of leading, from the beginning idea to a firm conclusion. Not surprisingly, he left that “interview” with a new job at the New York Institute for Rehabilitation Medicine as the lead photographer. The coming years found him at the State University at Stony Brook NY, as the senior medical photographer, then on to the University of Arizona Medical Center as the chief medical photographer and finally at Elbogen Medical Photography Studio in Los Angeles as an independent contractor. Then, one fine day a nurse entered the studio with a digital camera in hand. What had once taken Gene hours to accomplish with film, well...with digital, we all know what the outcome was. The 1200 square foot lab

(Continued on page 11)



**“Trains”
by Gene McDermott**

(Continued from page 10)

where Gene had spent hours fine tuning files, was reduced to an office where digital images can be presented in a fraction of film time. Gene was not familiar with digital photography, so off he went in pursuit of a new career.

He became a Master Catechist, an educator for children and teens, for the Archdiocese of Los Angeles. How, you might think, does a Catechist get the children interested in learning about the Bible? Again, here comes that gentle Arizona breeze of creativity and excitement, Gene introduced the first lesson with the idea that the Bible is actually the story of baseball. As a few eyes wandered from the floor to his face, he went on. "See, in the first line of Genesis it says 'in the big inning'". Thus, the new career he sought was born.

In 1993, he and his wife traveled to Sun City Grand to see what interest it might hold for them in the approaching retirement years. Gene entered the woodworking shop and saw no reason to ever leave the shop or the community. He settled into retirement quite comfortably, while Eileen finished out her working years in California and then also moved to Sun City Grand. During his formative retirement days, Gene added the



"Back Off"

by Gene McDermott

Art Club and digital photography to his woodworking "job".

Gene had been a professional film photographer, but the world of photography was quickly sliding into digital. He cannot give enough credit to John Hertia, who worked tirelessly, mentoring Gene, taking him from the baby step stages in digital to the excitement he now holds in experiencing everything new and challenging in the world of digital photography. Does he miss film? His feeling is the art found through film photography is gone, but digital gives results quickly and is very efficient when used as a teaching tool. Now Gene teaches digital



"Waiting for Dinner"

by Gene McDermott

photography as a class offered through Osher Life Long Learning Center and said, "If you really want to learn about something, teach it."

At the moment, his preference in photography, leans toward the creative side. From a folder, he pulled an interesting image, which brought the exclamation of, "That is so cool!. How did you do that?" He spattered different colors of paint onto canvas, photographed it, then using Extrude, within Photoshop, he pulled the colors out into cubes, so that the image was hundreds of little cubes of different colors and shades. He also, had an image where he painted with light. It is a 45 minute exposure on B, pointing north and into the starlit night. In the last 15 seconds he took a spotlight and painted the rocks and ground in front of him so that light whitewashed the front. Because light pollution is so prevalent in Surprise, he and his wife needed to drive to Flagstaff to do the photography. He made many attempts creating this image before finding the night settings and filters. One of his discoveries was that because digital produces heat, the copper on the card produced little red flecks of color in the image. He needed to rethink the process to reach the desired end result.

Gene and Eileen experienced a wonderful photographic journey on a steam engine railroad trip out of Durango, Colorado. The trip was put together for photographers, and Gene pointed out that the stopping points along the route were wonderful for photographers to enjoy the scenery and their art. However, 168 people hopping off the train, with more than half suffering from arthritis, makes for difficulty in finding "the best spot". After the first stop, he found himself, veering away from the yellow taped area meant for photographers, and finding his own unique area.

Unique is a fitting word to end this biography, as it is so very descriptive of Gene McDermott; creative, personable, an Arizona breeze, with gusto.

Exploring South America

By Vicki and Pat Dillon

Amazon

We left Miami at midnight, and arrived in Lima at 5am. Our guide took us to our hotel and met at noon to start an afternoon walking tour of Lima. We were on our own for dinner where we went to Casa Nautica on the waterfront for the most fantastic meal of our entire trip. Waiters were in tuxes and there was fabulous food and service.

Next morning we were up at 4am to catch our flight to Iquitos, Peru, 2300 miles up the Amazon where the river is 2 miles wide and deep enough for ocean going cruise ships to visit the city. The city has a population of 370,000 people can basically be described as a complete madhouse. Buildings are no more than 2-3 stories high. Transportation consists of tens of thousands of small motor bikes, each with a bench seat covered to keep passengers dry during the abundant rains. The bikes all move in the same and opposite directions at the same time having a hand on the horn. It was a wild scene.

We got on our speed boat to take us a hundred plus miles down river to our lodge. We arrived approaching the low water season when the river drops 50-60 feet in vertical height. In the spring, when the snow in the Andes melts, the river is at its highest point. In some places the Amazon can be 100 miles wide when the river is at its flood stage.

We spent close to a week exploring the jungle. Our lodges were fascinating. They were quite primitive – no electricity, kerosene lamps, rooms with open walls for the top 3 feet over the ceiling which allowed birds and bats to fly into the room. You should have heard the screams from us girls when bats flew out from under our beds where they had been nesting. Our lodge had about 70 rooms spread out over several buildings. We did have private baths with no hot water. We were fortunate as the bathrooms had just been installed. For all the previous years, guests had to use outdoor latrines and showers. Oh yes, we slept under full mosquito bed netting. The exception was our last night in a lodge which had electricity, air conditioning, and even a small pool. The big plus for us ladies was that we could finally use our hair driers. What a surprise and treat after roughing it for the first few days. And, yes, this lodge was still in the middle of the jungle.



These two beautiful birds stayed together in the same tree for almost three days.

“Macaws In Love”



“Visiting Local Indian Tribes”

The highlights were visiting Indian Tribes, medicine men, walking on the world's longest & highest tree top canopy, local villages, night boat trips, fishing for piranha, looking for wild life, and visiting monkey island. Our guide, Lucio, was born and raised in a village just down river from our lodge. He knew everything, even the technical names for all the animal and fauna/flora life. This portion of the trip was my favorite because my connection with nature felt the strongest in this area.

(Continued on page 13)

Lima, Peru

We spent a total of 3 days in Lima. These were mostly forgettable. Lima is a fairly drab city trying to recover from 20 years of terrorists playing havoc with the country. Homes and stores were protected by iron grills and barb wire or electric fences. We saw the usual sights, churches.

Cuzco, Peru

This was an amazing part of our trip. We could easily have spent a week in Cusco as there was so much to see and do. The town is a delight. It was the capital of the Inca Empire. There are many ruins surrounding the city and the markets were a delight. The clothing worn by the native Indians was extremely colorful. Oh yes, Cuzco is 11,000 ft in elevation, so it took a bit of adjustment. Some of the children in Cusco earn their living by posing for photographs.



“Machu Picchu”



“Children in Cusco, Peru”

We then headed to Machu Picchu. It took a 2 hour bus ride through some magnificent scenery and climbs up to 12,000 feet. The mountains are roughly 21,000' and the snowline doesn't start until 15,000'. We also had to take a 2 hour train ride along a valley floor. We stopped in a small village along a mountain stream where we would spend the night after a day exploring the park. To get to Machu Picchu we had to ride buses, climbing vertically 3000' along on a scary road with dozens of hairpin turns and vertical drops that turned your hair white. At the end of the bus ride was the entrance to the Machu Picchu National Park. It is without a doubt one of the most magnificent ruins we have ever seen. We spent two days exploring all there was to see.

Next we returned to Cuzco and Lima where we caught our flight to Quito, Ecuador and catching a flight to the Galapagos the next morning. These islands are about 600 miles off the coast of Ecuador. We spent the first three days on a private yacht, exploring several of the islands and seeing all sorts of wildlife unique to the Galapagos under the guidance of our next wonderful guide, “Gustavo”. Since there are no predators on the islands to scare the wildlife, you can walk right up to them – be it various types of birds, seals, turtles, penguins, iguanas, etc.

(Continued on page 14)



“Sea Lion - Galapagos”

We spent 3 nights in a small hotel on one of the populated islands, Santa Cruz. We saw more wildlife on this island including the 800 pound tortoises. We did a lot of hiking, boat rides in a Zodiac, and took a gazillion pictures. At the end of six days we flew back to Quito to start a four day drive along the ridge of the Andes at roughly 12,000 feet elevation on what was known as the Pan American Highway. It was not much more than a narrow two lane highway filled with rocks and potholes.

In Ecuador, we were at the equator. The sun rises at 6am and sets at 6pm 365 days per year. They raise crops all year and reap several crops per year as the growing season is all year long. What is amazing to see are the terraces built into the sides of steep mountainsides which are planted with crops. We stopped at a Rose Farm which consisted of roughly 50 acres of greenhouses where they raise hundreds of varieties of roses. Because it is the equator, the roses grow 5' or 6' tall with absolutely straight stems. The country exports 3 million roses per day, 365 days a year. Ecuador is the largest exporter of roses in the world. Russia is the champ for importing long stem roses. They buy roses with stems 6 ft or longer. France is the second biggest importer of long stem roses. Our roses



“800 Pound Tortoises - Galapagos”

in the USA are puny by comparison, having stems only 2-3 ft long and almost all are imported from Ecuador

We then went to an orchid farm. Orchids are much more complex to grow. It takes a full year just to germinate the seeds of the thousands of varieties they have. The plants are then transferred to “flats” where they are allowed to grow until they are strong enough to be transferred to their final growth site. These vary according to the type of orchid.

One of the final stops was the Panama Hat Factory. Panama hats are **not** made in Panama; all are made in Ecuador. It takes 2 weeks and 13 specific steps to make one Panama hat. It starts with the growing of the straw/thatch material. This is then given to weavers who start the basic weaving of the hat in their 1 or 2 room farm houses. These starter hats are brought to the factory to be finished. Hats from the factory start at \$50 and go up to \$25,000. Rejects go to the local markets. The photo below is of a lady in a wedding dress wearing an elegant hat. Her complete outfit including the hat, dress, and flowers were all made from the same special woven thatch as that from which hats are made. Total cost for the outfit - \$50,000.



“Fancy Dress”

No one knows exactly how the hats got to be known as Panama hats, but one story says it dates back to the days when the Panama Canal was being built. All field workers in Peru and Ecuador wear these hats, and so did all of the workers on the Panama Canal. When Teddy Roosevelt came to christen the opening of the canal, he was given a hat. His picture was taken wearing his Panama hat and so the legend was started...so some say!

We saw fascinating things on this journey and stayed in some amazing and very charming hotels. We ended up in Cuenca - a large town with a rich historical and architectural history. Then a short flight back to Quito where we caught a flight back to Miami and finally home to Phoenix.

Photo Gallery

“Serenity”
by Margaret Anne Coles



“First Born”
by Peggy Boike



“Cosmos”
by Liz Burke

Photo Gallery

Continued...

“Life on the Edge”
by Richard Coles



**“Straight Lines and
One Big Curve”**
by Jeannette

**“Night Descends on
Juneau”**
by Bill Haskamp

