

Utah Restoration

April and May, 2022

The Cave to Camel Hike

Happy Canyon and Stoned Gorillas

New Faces in the Rocks, Dunes, Trees, and Clouds

The Cockscomb and Other Remarkable Birds,
Including Robin, Jay, Perry, and Atticus

Wind, Sand, and Stars...and Six Bright Planets

Bluster from Baker to Barstool to Boron

Great Friends and Vintage Bodie

The last 12 months have brought fresh misery and cowardly violence to our country, new bully depravity to the world, and bleakness for our children. On a trivial scale in comparison...they have been rough for me, too. Utah has reliably offered inspiration and invigoration in the past, sometimes solace, and this time restoration. Here are a few images to share the uplift!

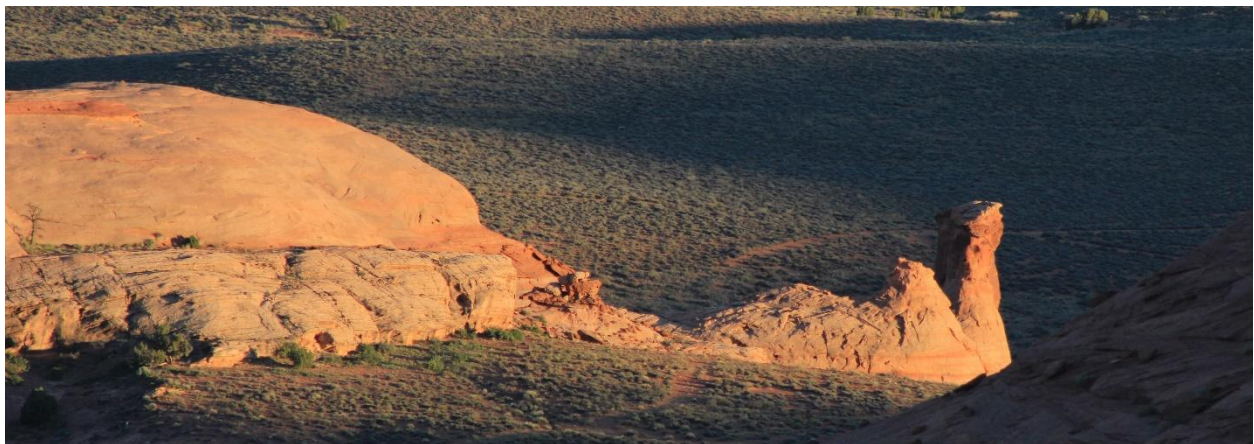




Panorama of a spectacular hike below Burr Point Overlook...Slickrock Paradise, Brassiere Butte, the Cave, the Loneliest Ponderosa in Utah, and the Camel



Here they are a little closer



The Camel in last Light



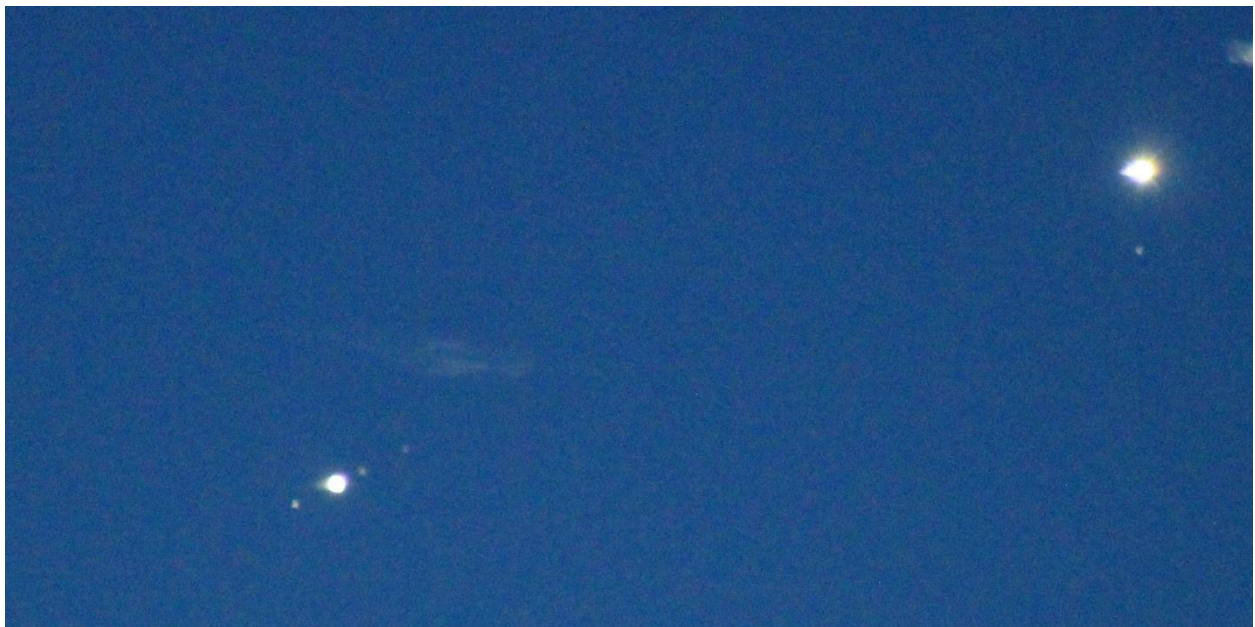
Dedicated to Light at the Warm End of the Spectrum



Appreciation for Eight Luminous Heavenly Bodies ¹



Mercury setting over the Petroglyph Rock from Salem's deck at dusk



Jupiter (left) and Venus, several days before they kissed each other in passing in the pre-dawn light a few days later. You can see three of Jupiter's Galilean moons, even in this not-so-crystalline photo. The dot below crescent Venus is a lens artifact.

Photo from Doug's deck.

¹ Our Sun and Moon, Mercury, Venus, Mars, Jupiter, Saturn...and Earth...and a few billion stars for good measure



Our Sun meets the Henrys in May...every day at a more northerly notch



God Rays: Headlights at dawn above the Abajos...and Baroque Splendor at Sunset



Venus (by now the lower of the two) and Jupiter ² before a ferociously windy dawn.
The Hollow Hills Wilderness forms the eastern horizon a little north of Baker, CA.
Taken from Wells' sleeping bag.



Crescent beauty through the Ponderosa, Fish Creek Cove

² Mars and Saturn were also visible before dawn...a string of 4 planets along the ecliptic

Speaking of moons, what do eloquent dogs do when they feel expressive?



(They Howl...and they Prowl...as we all occasionally do)



Note the fuzzy margin of the dune...windblown sand streaming through Bodie's legs!



Either that or just take a nap in the back seat of Wells' truck



Best imaginable friends

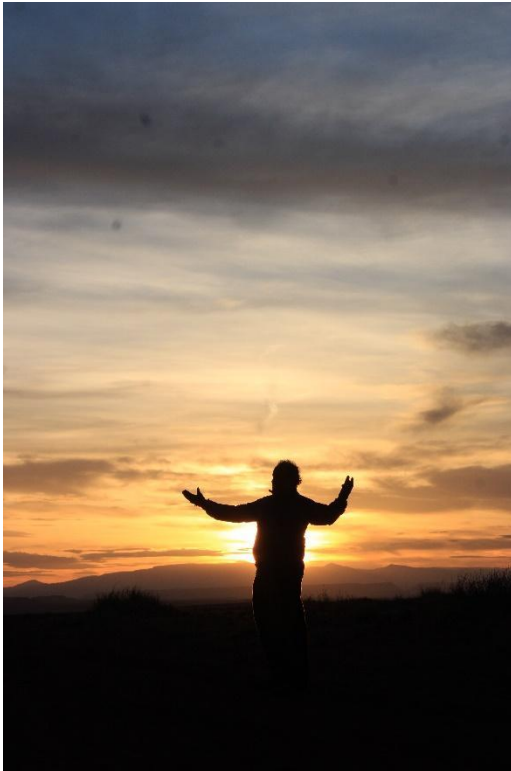


Another loyal friend, too...Whitey Ford, along for the ride



This is trust and devotion...a boost up the last pitch to the rim above Happy Canyon
(Bodie got a chewy treat...and we opened a frothy beer)

Friends Under a Brilliant Sky



Silhouettes of Salem—Conductor of the Sun



Shoeless but never Clueless in the Wilderness...Cave Man Doug



Pinnacle Happiness in a Serendipitous Reunion on the way back to the Coast:
Robin, George, and Not-Quite-Spritley-Enough Wells



Collaborative Quesadilla Chefs—Devotees of Dirt Road Cooking



Scott and Barbra, Guardians of the Cockscomb



Craig, Honored Guest



Raiders of the Red Cave



Exultant Echoes of Ecohike: Grant and Doug Relaxing at the Rock House



Buddies in the Chute



Cocktails on the Rim on Cinco de Mayo
That's Brassiere Butte in the Background



Then there's Bill Hopkins!
The guy just won't go away...just hangs around, shooting the breeze.
But, Man, can that guy turn a bowl!

(I didn't take this photo!)



Doug contemplates a hanging garden...invisible from the rim



Tiptoe...through the Slickrock

Utah, above all else, is a Land of Expressive Rocks



Petrified Gorillas in Teasdale



Ice Age Giant Bearclaw Slash



Carnivorous Red Monster in the Slot



Forget the Cow & Moon stunt, this Petro-Bunny Jumps over Australia



Red Ghosts Rising



Red Ghoul Warrior



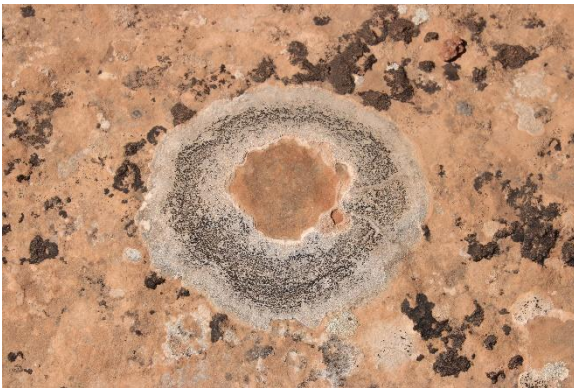
Fossil footprint of a large, ancient amphibian...or the hand of a prehistoric hitchhiker



Took Anger Management Class. Failed.



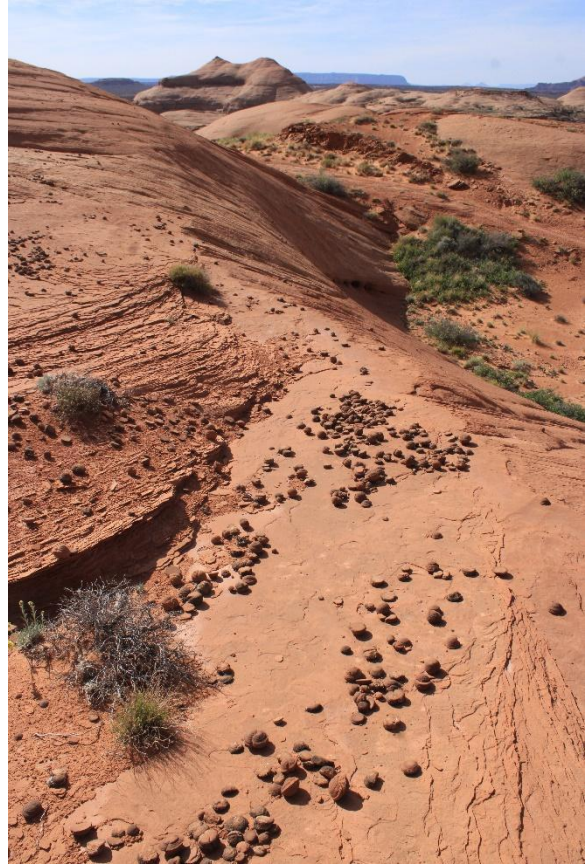
Barbra's Sheepish Petroglyph Discovery



Natural Biology Lessons in Lichen-o-Graphs: Pleistocene Frog Egg and Embryo Tadpole



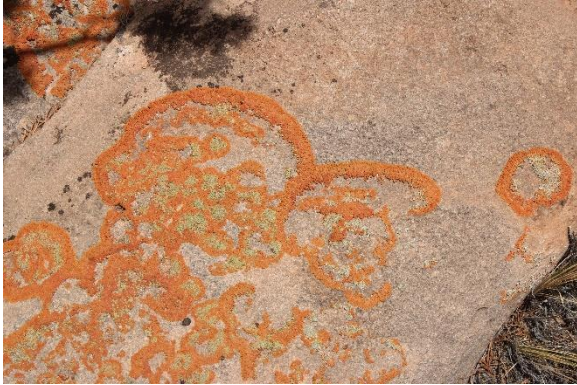
Stone Age Sex Education Glyphs



Pretty Mokis All in a Row



This one will tweak your imagination...or it should!



Beetle Lichen Glyph with Serious Mandibles



Fossilized Alien Larva



Hostile Alien in his Lair



Undignified, Lignified Piñon Monster



Alien Landing Pad

Ironies and Coincidences in the Outback



En Route to Hans Flat...what a difference a century makes!



Mary Eastman, Guy Fawkes Day, 1940. Good birthday!
Forgiven Modern Petroglyph in the Precious Shade next to the Lone Ponderosa



End of the Dirt Road after 3 days of bliss in the slickrock. Is that you, Angus, eh?



Obliterated dam and scoured terrain on the Fremont River above Hanksville
...in a legendary drought year, a flash flood unsurpassed in centuries

As Craig Childs wrote in *The Secret Knowledge of Water*,

*There are two ways you can die in the desert:
Dehydration and Drowning.*

Believe it.



Two adjacent sets of tracks

One belongs here



First trip: Upper Happy Canyon on a hazy morning



Second trip: Last light below Burr Point. The protruding butte can be seen from the other side from the place where the above photo was taken.



Blue Plateau Island in upper Happy Canyon. Only the flying dinosaurs have left...



From the Blue Plateau Island, binoculars in hand, we thought we found a route to the rim through a collapse in the overhanging red rock ledge that stretched for a mile.
"It went." (See p 9)



Welcome to Nevada in Spring...Snowy Toiyabe Range from US 50



Entry to Red Canyon State Park...Welcome to the Red Rock Splendor Zone



The North Face of the Cockscomb at first light from Doug's Moenkopi Plateau



Welcome to Fish Creek Cove

Painted Sandstone Palette for Bonsai Ponderosas on the South face of the Cockscomb

The Next Few Pages are for the Birds



You can cavort and soar like a raven lunatic in Salem's back yard, but
You'll not likely prevail in an argument with Atticus (House) Finch...



Domestic pecking order dispute under Salem's birdfeeder

More Birds



Jay



Robin



Cockatiel on a Branch: A Natural Petroglyph

The next pages are a true story.
Perry, you're up!

Peregrine Rescue

A happy, true story from May, 2022

Salem built a log cabin among cliffs of Navajo Sandstone in Southeastern Utah, not far from Capitol Reef. He took a little nap, so I took a little walk on a brisk, fiercely windy day. After that, I decided that I, too, would benefit from a little down time...on the deck in the lee of his cabin.



The view from the deck

I was drifting gently when I heard a loud bang...which was puzzling. There are no trees over the roof to drop branches or big cones. The cliffs are too far away to drop rocks. While wood planks can "pop" or squeak when they expand and contract, this sounded more like something striking the side of the house. The back door was open, and it had a pane of glass which might have been reflecting sky with ponderosas and junipers.

I got up after a while and found a peregrine falcon lying on its back on the small porch next to the door. The bird was breathing, and it looked directly at me with blood orange, piercing eyes. I picked him* up, cradled him in a more normal position, kept him warm, and gently stroked his slate gray back. Those predator eyes became more active, and that flesh-tearing beak slowly stopped gasping frantically. He had a wormlike, black tongue, which also slowed its thrusting with time. His legs were folded under him. At first he didn't move them, which made me fear he was paralyzed...but...*no!* He started moving his talons, and when I slipped my pinkie under one, he gripped it tightly enough to demonstrate that those talons are sharp! The other leg followed.

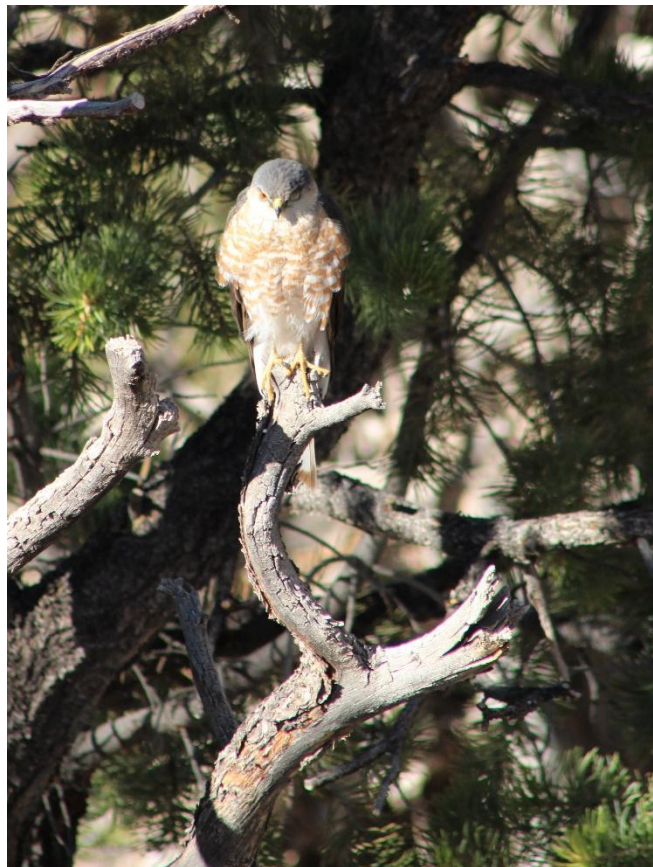
Meanwhile, a chipmunk started squeaking and showed himself about 5 feet away (probably the only time he'll get that close to a peregrine and live to tell the tale.)

I gradually opened my bottom hand and kept stroking the peregrine's back. That went on for perhaps a half hour...just the stunned little falcon and the wistful old man under a big, cold sky. The predator's muscle tone steadily improved, but he did not struggle.

He was a little bigger than a robin...not as big as a crow. I suspect from his aeronautical judgment error that he might have been a rather young one. His checkered beige and brown underside, the slate gray back with subtle, darker stripes on the tail, the black beak with a yellowish base...and oh golly that beak...were all right out of the book. I later googled the ID, and no question about it: The fastest bird in the world resting in my hand.

My hand was almost open. In a blink, he thrust away and flew around the corner of the cabin and disappeared. I had no photos, alas. Nobody will believe this story.

Then, on the other side of the cabin, there he was, perched in a piñon.



A half hour later, he was off. We wish you well.

** Note—Sorry about the “him” pronoun assumption. I don’t know how to tell gender in birds, even lying belly up in my palm. I mostly figured boys are reckless at speed sports, and I just couldn’t do the “they.”*

And then there are Piñons and Junipers



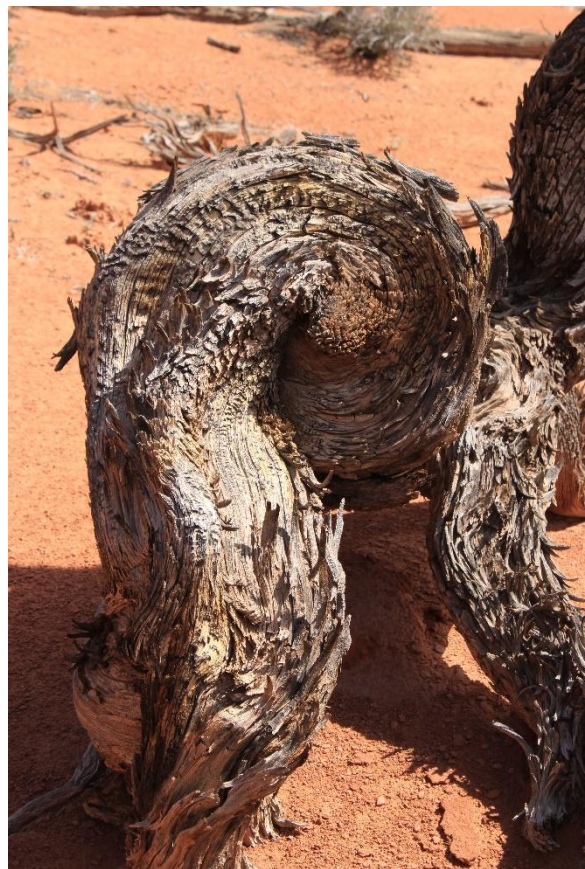
Sandstone funnels water to the crevices and, with luck, provides shelter from the wind.
This juniper lives a rather plush existence for this part of the world.



Spider



Squid



Do the Twist

(Certain woodturners rescue these high desert marvels from firewood piles to make bowls)





Lean on me...when you're not strong
And I'll be your friend
I'll help you carry on

Thank you, Bill Withers

Metaphors along the Way



This Single Leaf Ash has lived 50, maybe 100, years in a half wheelbarrow of nutrient-free sand, sucking fractions of a teaspoon of water from the base of this sandstone cliff.

Rough life! It will not give up.

There's a lesson in that anytime you begin to feel deprived, mistreated, or old.



This one had it worse, rooting in a tiny crack, but every leaf is photosynthesizing resolutely

Not every lifeform makes it out here



Flowers were subtle in this parched year...but determined to make some seeds



Fitting path to finish a hike



Morning Primrose



Johnston's Crypanthus with matching Lichen

Good morning, Sunshine!



Yucca Zombies

Yucca Expressions



Old Men, their glory days passed. It's OK.



Penstemon and yucca in a modern day lens



Yucca and Echinocactus



Flower spike rising and Bodie tracks

Things are Looking Up



Ever so subtle sundog in that feathery cirrus

Find Love and Happiness in Utah



Opuntia says it without words



Camarones al mojo de ajo on the tailgate



New Riders of the Coral Sands



Old Riders, too....





Windy Photo by Doug Campbell...Thanks!

What a wonderful trip, inspirational friends, remarkable places

So happy to be alive!

Wells



Flattering Photo by Doug Campbell

Check out *Dirt Road Cookery* and *Dirt Road Camping*

www.wellsshoemakerwoodcraft.com/uploads/4/8/2/3/4823810/dirt_road_cookery_final_.docx.pdf

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