



THE MONOLITH

A PUBLICATION BY THE COLORADO NATIONAL MONUMENT ASSOCIATION ■ WINTER 2005–2006

Colorado National Monument Welcomes New Chief Ranger

By Denise Hight

With over twelve years of experience in the National Park Service, including positions at Rocky Mountain, Bandelier, Joshua Tree, Yosemite, Glen Canyon, Organ Pipe Cactus, Hawaii Volcanoes, and most recently at Dinosaur National Monument, Phil Akers has been appointed as the new Chief Ranger, replacing Ron Young who retired in July.

Phil decided he wanted to be a park ranger when he was an undergraduate at Old Dominion University in Norfolk, Virginia. As a student, he worked as a seasonal forestry technician for the US Forest Service, and he graduated with a degree in Park Management in 1991. He earned his law enforcement credentials at the NPS Seasonal Law Enforcement Academy at Colorado Northwestern Community College in Rangely and at the Federal Law Enforcement Academy in Glynco, GA.

Phil's Park Service career began in 1993, and he has held positions at a variety of different parks. He says he particularly enjoyed his three years at Hawaii Volcanoes, where he had a great time scuba diving, sea kayaking, and island hopping. He also has a sentimental attachment to the



Chief Ranger Phil Akers

Island of Hawaii, since it was the place he and his wife Jana first moved to after getting married. But moving from place to place was something Phil was already accustomed to before joining the Park Service: Because his father was an officer in the Navy, Phil was born in Okinawa, and he grew up in San Diego, Puerto Rico, and in Virginia.

Even before his most recent assignment at Dinosaur National Monument, where he served as Acting Chief Ranger for eight months, Phil hoped to move to Colorado. "I always wanted to live out west, near the mountains. We had relatives in Colorado we would visit while I was growing up, and I have wanted to live in Colorado

since I was ten years old." Many of Phil's relatives live on the Front Range, but he also has family connections in Grand Junction. "My grandparents grew up in Grand Junction. My grandmother recently told me she used to drive up the Serpents Trail to gain access to her sheep in Glade Park."

As Chief Ranger, Phil reports directly to Superintendent Bruce Noble, and he supervises the law enforcement, fee collection, and interpretive divisions of the Monument. One of their goals is to develop and expand the interpretive program at Colorado National Monument. They would like to hire a year-round permanent interpreter, and if funds are allocated, hire a Chief of Interpretation. Phil also plans updates to ensure that the fee collection and law enforcement divisions are running efficiently and effectively.

Phil is excited about his new job, and he is also excited about settling in the Grand Junction area with Jana and their sixteen-month-old son, Kyle. "I particularly like the recreational opportunities in this area. I like the pleasant climate and location close to both the mountains and the desert. Jana and I also like the convenience for shopping

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New Ranger

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and for medical facilities. When we lived in the Dinosaur area, we would travel two hours to get to Grand Junction to go shopping or for a doctor's appointment."

The local area offers plenty of places where Phil can partake in the outdoor activities he enjoys, including hiking, mountaineering, and back-country skiing. But it is the local community's involvement with Colorado National Monument that Phil is especially pleased about. "I feel fortunate to work at a wonderful park surrounded by a great community."

The Monolith is published by the Colorado National Monument Association for its members. The CNMA is a 501(C)3 not-for-profit organization working in cooperation with the National Park Service. The CNMA supports educational programs and projects at Colorado National Monument.

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Calling all photographers!

The CNMA is looking for photo submissions for the 2007 Colorado National Monument calendar. Images may be submitted in digital, print, or slide formats. Please call Renee at (970) 858-3617, ext. 307, or e-mail her at renee_creeden@partner.nps.gov for the calendar submission form and list of guidelines. Submission deadline is February 6, 2006.

CNMA Bookstore Bests

By Renee Creeden

Making a list and checking it twice? Don't forget to stop at the CNMA store when doing your Christmas shopping this year.

Calendars



The *2006 Landscapes of Western Colorado* panoramic calendar by Rob Kurtzman features four stunning images of Colorado National Monument along with other beautiful scenes from the Grand Valley and Western Colorado. The calendar is 18 inches wide and 12 inches high when opened (\$14.00). The *2006 Peaks, Plateaus and Canyons of the Grand Circle* calendar in both wall (\$8.95) and desk styles (\$4.95) feature the parks and monuments of the Colorado Plateau, including Colorado National Monument.

Books and Maps

We carry a terrific selection of books for readers of all ages, including titles on natural history, geology, environmental education, field guides, national park guides, blank books, a wide variety of children's titles, and various maps, plus books just about Colorado National Monument.

Christmas Cards



We have various styles of photographic Christmas cards featuring images of the Monument taken by local residents David Davis, Bonnie Lange, and Steve Traudt, and Moab resident Tom Till. All cards come in packs of 12 single images, and there are several seasonal sentiments to choose from. Prices range from \$12.00 to \$16.95. We also have a great selection of packs of cards and individual note cards of the Monument that are suitable for any occasion.

We also have a new poster by Rob Kurtzman titled *Winter Inversion 2004*. This panoramic image of the Monument's monoliths peaking out of the fog measures 28 inches wide and 12 inches high and sells for \$19.95. A panoramic note card with the same image sells for \$1.25.

Music

Local singer and songwriter Paul Jensen presents *Man of the Canyon*, a ballad to Colorado National Monument and its early caretaker, John Otto (CD, \$12.95). We also carry a wide selection of other CDs celebrating the desert southwest (\$14.95).



Stocking Stuffers



America's National Parks collector playing cards will fit nicely in a Christmas stocking (\$4.95). The *Little Critters* cube puzzle will delight young and old alike as they try to figure out how it works (\$5.95). For the scrapbooker on the list, the *America's National Parks* scrapbook page kit features papers and stickers with national park designs to help create a fun remembrance about your trip long after you've arrived home (\$9.95). And for those other empty stockings, we also carry puppets, Monument T-shirts, pins, and patches, and National Park memory card games and puzzles.

Thank you for shopping the CNMA store. Your purchases benefit both the CNMA and Colorado National Monument. Winter store hours are 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. daily; the Visitor Center will be closed on Christmas Day but the Monument will be open.

CCC Camp Used as German POW Camp

By D. A. Brockett

Several milestones marked the summer of 1934: Madame Curie died of leukemia caused by exposure to radiation; John Dillinger, who had terrorized the Midwest, was slain by FBI agents in an alley outside the Biograph Theater; and Donald Duck made his debut in the cartoon "Wise Little Hen." In the Grand Valley, several Civilian Conservation Corp camps were being assembled as the result of a Roosevelt program to help the American people through the Depression.

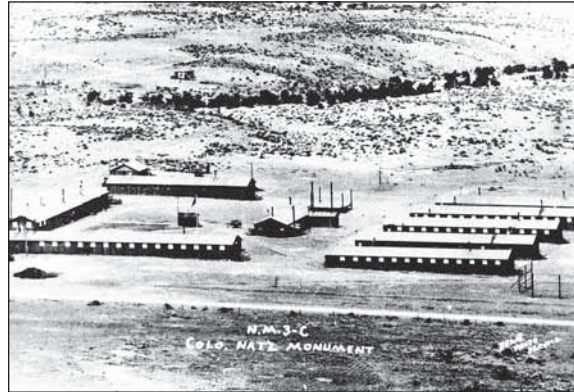
One of these camps was at the base of the Colorado National Monument close to the present-day West entrance. CCC Company 825 (or NM3C-National Monument Camp 3) started out as a tent camp, but eventually featured permanent buildings including five barracks with 40 beds each, a mess hall, infirmary, recreation hall, and other buildings.

Many worthy projects were undertaken by the CCC. On the Monument, drainage tunnels, sandstone walls and buildings, picnic shelters, and road turnouts were completed, as well as extensive work on the Rimrock Drive.

By 1943, the sale of pre-sliced bread was banned to reduce bakers' need of metal parts, a new house cost \$3600, and Donald Duck was a staple in the daily comics. The CCC had dissolved the previous year because so many men had joined the armed services. America was in the unrelenting

grip of WWII, and the Home Front was sacrificing much to help her beloved fighting men.

In the Grand Valley, a unique problem presented itself: as harvest time neared, it became apparent



Aerial view of the wooden barracks at NM3C, later used to house German POWs during WWII.



The same site as it appears today. The house is remodeled from one of the original buildings. Photo by D.A. Brockett.

there would be a labor shortage. The Peach Board of Control and the Mesa County Cannery Association decided to utilize the German POWs incarcerated at Camp Carson, south of Colorado Springs. The military-style CCC camps in Mesa County proved to be perfect for housing these POWs. One was established at the old CCC camp in Palisade, where the water treatment plant now is, and the other at NM3C, known as the "Fruita" camp.

One person who had a unique relationship with the prisoners was Martin Mayer, who was pastor of Lutheran Church of the Messiah in Grand Junction. Pastor Mayer recounts in his memoir: "Then they also had a German Prisoner of War Camp just out of Grand Junction in the National Monument area. These were prisoners captured in North Africa, Hitler's Juden Kor. The commander came to me and said that he heard that I could speak German and would I conduct services for these men. I was, of course, happy to do so. Again, I made sure that I preached the Gospel in the simplest possible way. We had no hymnbooks, so I chose a few of Luther's hymns, and we sang them over and over again. Could they sing!"

Pastor Mayer's memoirs reveal that he dealt mainly with a doctor who was a prisoner and a very intelligent man. "One Sunday when I got to camp, he was not there. They told me that he had escaped that week.

He had headed across the rugged Uncompahgre Range, thinking that if he got across he would then be in Mexico." A *Daily Sentinel* article, dated October 27, 1944, reported that three German POWs had escaped the prior Thursday night. A posse was sent out and had "found part of an egg omlet (sic) and other evidence of a camp fire the trio had built." Dr. Willie Graner, Sgt. Heinz Bermann, and Corp. Karl-Heinz Petersen were found November 1st fast asleep in

a haystack one-quarter mile west of Loma, and returned to the Fruita camp for punishment.

Fortunately, escapes were rare.

Most of the prisoners were content with their roles and worked hard. Ida Shrum's father owned an orchard, and she remembers a time when she and her father were delivering fruit at the railroad tracks. A guard fell between the rails and the platform because he was drunk. One of the Germans climbed down, picked up the man and propped him against the truck before going back to work. There were plenty of instances when fruit growers and their families bestowed food and other kindnesses upon the prisoners. Just as the Germans exhibited excellent work ethics so as not to dishonor the German race, Americans were unable to suppress their generous spirits.

POWs were paid 80 cents a day—in the form of canteen coupons—for working in the canning

factories, beet fields, and orchards. Every morning, trucks came in to pick up the prisoners. Dave Sundal remembers seeing about 50 standing POWs in the bed of a



The interior of one of the barracks at NM3C as it appeared just prior to WWII.

truck heading east on Main going toward Palisade. He noticed they avidly took in the scenery as they passed. A single American soldier was guarding them and at least one other was driving.

By July 1946, all German POWs had been shipped from America back to Germany. These and other POWs used for labor

shortages during the war had unwittingly contributed to a prosperous Home Front effort.

Later, a Fruita teacher bought the old CCC property and converted one of the barracks into a home. When the current owners, Mark and Betty Morgan, were remodeling, they found 3½ inches of layered flooring, and the decades old concrete entombed broken toys and other flotsam used to increase the fill.

There are still quite a few of the camp's foundations left on the surrounding acreage. One might even hear, on a quiet summer's day, distant cadences tinged with German accents.

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Editor's Note: D.A. Brockett is the award-winning author of two historical mystery novels set in Grand Junction: Our Darling and Stained Glass Rose.

Memorial Benches



There are two new benches at Bookcliff Overlook. These benches offer the visitor a wonderful view of the Grand Valley and the Bookcliffs. One of the benches was paid for from proceeds from the John Patrick Pewters Memorial Fund, and the other one from donations to the Edward J. Purcell

Memorial Fund and the Robert H. Zeis Memorial Fund. There are two more benches on the back porch of the Visitor Center. These two benches were purchased with proceeds from the Al & Wilma West Memorial Fund. The CNMA administers the donations to these memorial funds.



Fruita Monument High School student Zack Cooper stands next to the new Colorado National Monument sign he created in shop class. Some of the tools used to fabricate the sign were donated by CNMA.

A few thoughts from the superintendent...

By Bruce Noble



With summer gone and the holiday season upon us, I want to take this opportunity to update everyone on the many

changes and activities that have recently taken place.

We have lost some familiar faces and acquired some new ones. I'm very pleased to have Phil Akers on board as the Monument's new chief ranger. Michelle Wheatley has also been a very welcome addition to our seasonal interpretive staff, working primarily with school groups. We are fortunate to be able to keep her on duty over the winter.

Chief Ranger Ron Young recently retired from the Monument staff. Ron had well over 30 years of federal service, including more than a decade in the Monument, and he will be missed. Administrative Assistant Leslie Spomer recently left the staff as well. Leslie had only been at the Monument for a few years, but she had extensive experience elsewhere in the national park system, and I am sorry to lose her. I was also saddened to hear that Diana Hoffman will be leaving the Monument after 14 years as a Visitor Use Assistant. Her smiling face in the entrance stations always made a great first impression, and that will be hard to replace.

If you've been to the Visitor

Center lately, you may have noticed that the auditorium is now sporting a new screen complete with a caption box, a fancy new projector, fresh paint on the walls, and new acoustic wall panels that improve the sound quality. We are now screening the new geology program produced by the University of Colorado. (We are very grateful to CU for donating their services on this exciting new program and for the assistance provided by Bill Hood.) We also have converted the old slide show to a digital format, which has improved the visual quality tremendously. New chairs are next in line for the auditorium.

The improvements we've made to the auditorium were funded through entrance fee money. This fund source enables us to accomplish important visitor improvements that we can't otherwise afford to pay for. Given the importance of this revenue stream, we are planning to increase our entrance fees on March 1, 2006. The single vehicle fee will increase from the current \$5 to \$7, the per person fee that applies to pedestrians and bicyclists will increase from \$3 to \$4, and the annual park pass will increase from \$15 to \$20. The National Park Pass will remain at \$50 for 2006. This will be our first entrance fee increase since 2001, and it will greatly enhance our ability to provide the sort of experience that the public has come to expect from Colorado National Monument.

We are also nearing completion of an Environmental Assessment for the Corkscrew Trail connec-

tor. This trail is accessed from the trail head parking lot on Wildwood Drive. The Corkscrew Trail was originally constructed by John Otto around 1909 and remains in excellent condition, but it has become harder to use over the years because there is no well defined connecting trail leading back to the Wildwood parking lot. The vast majority of the comments received on the Environmental Assessment were supportive, and we hope to construct the new trail in time for the start of next spring's hiking season.

In June of 2005, I signed an interagency Fire Management Plan completed in cooperation with the Bureau of Land Management. In the past, the policy of the Monument had always been to immediately suppress all fires within our boundaries. Under the new plan, we have established three management zones that include a high priority full suppression strategy in the Redlands boundary Wildland Urban Interface and a lower priority full suppression strategy in the Saddlehorn/Fruita Canyon area. The third management zone includes nearly 75% of the monument lands and allows opportunities for wildland fire use where naturally caused fires may be monitored under prescribed conditions with limited control actions. This practice is intended to achieve the resource benefits that fire introduces into the ecosystem. This is a change for the Monument, but it is a change that

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Message from the CNMA President

By Greg Gnesios

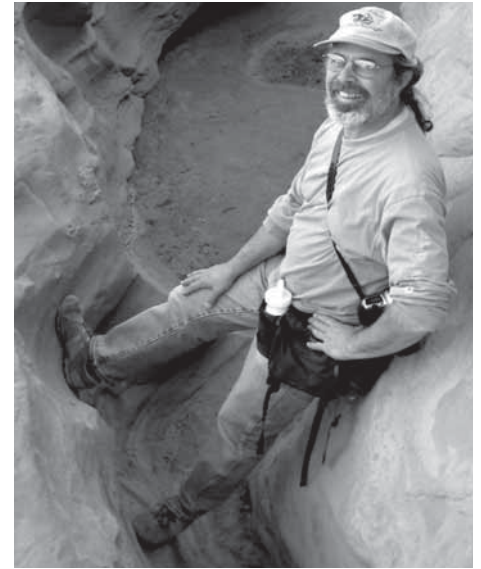
When I was a young park ranger back in 1971 selling books, postcards and maps for the Pinnacles Natural History Association, I would not have guessed that nearly thirty-five years later it would be my pleasure to serve as chairperson of the CNMA board. In those intervening years, I have enjoyed wonderful relationships with cooperating associations. An even longer partnership has existed between cooperating associations and the National Park System.

Over seventy-five years ago, visionary individuals like ranger Ansel Hall of Yosemite and Enos Mills at Rocky Mountain National Park realized the need to furnish eager park visitors with educational information on natural and cultural history of national park areas. From the efforts of these pioneers grew the idea of non-profit "cooperating associations" whose sole purpose would be to further the educational and interpretive needs of national park areas not only by providing

materials such as nature guides, maps, and posters, but in directing the profits from the sales of these items back into the parks in order to enhance their interpretive and research programs.

For over forty years, CNMA has provided similar support to Colorado National Monument in the form of wayside exhibits, research projects, trail guides, site bulletins, and an array of sales items directly related to the mission of the National Park Service. The CNMA also provides the sales support and personnel who meet and greet many of our park visitors.

If you are reading this issue of *The Monolith* right now, you are no doubt already a member of the CNMA. Perhaps you joined because of the discounts on sales items. Or you may have joined because of the realization that, in today's economic and political environment, national parks are often low priority for adequate funding. Or you may simply wish to be a part of the network of friends, admirers, visitors, and others who appreciate the outstanding natural values and scenic wonders



Greg Gnesios

of Colorado National Monument. Whatever the reason, your continued support is appreciated.

I am proud to be part of an organization dedicated to providing better education, research, and interpretation. I hope my perspective of twenty-seven years as a park interpreter for the National Park Service and five years as a land manager for the Bureau of Land Management will help continue the good work of CNMA. After all, cooperating associations have added so much pleasure to my life. It is the least I can do in return.

Superintendent

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will contribute greatly to the ecological health of the park.

Finally, on November 3, 2005, the final Federal Register notice related to the Monument's General Management Plan was printed. To quote from the Federal Register, "As soon as practicable,

the National Park Service will begin to implement the Preferred Alternative" in the General Management Plan. The publication of this notice completes the General Management Plan process that has been underway for several years. This is a major milestone that represents the collective efforts of the Monument staff, park neighbors, and the surrounding community. Special thanks go to Intermountain

Regional Office Planner Suzy Stutzman and former superintendent Palma Wilson for all their contributions to this important plan.

As you can see, the last several months have been busy but productive. Hopefully all of you had enjoyable summers that enabled you to take advantage of some activities and programs in the Monument. I wish you all the very best during the holiday season.



THE MONOLITH
Colorado National Monument Association
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