

IT'S NOT THE DESTINATION, IT'S THE JOURNEY.



## A LANGUAGE OF OUR OWN

*Hey there railfans, I'm going to tell you a tale of how the gandy dancers, pin-pullers, snakes, and hog-heads take control of the battleship and work it with a full head of steam, at least until it's time to go to beans.*

**A**t the Verde Canyon Railroad, we are proud of our lash up of covered wagons, and string of varnish. Our cushions are the best you'll ever see, a cut above the rest, indeed.

We're no hot shot, but we do stretch 'em on the stringlines out there in the Verde Canyon. We run the consist year 'round, blocked-train style. The plush run starts from our Crystal Palace in Clarkdale, heading out to the beautiful wilderness. Some foamers are on the lookout from the library of the head-shed, though some might call it the crow's nest of the crummy, crib, chariot, or temple of knowledge.

We highball at about 12 mph, passing the holes at Sycamore and Perkinsville where we pinch it down, and let the power's knuckle loose. There the hogs take the scenic route and give the eyeball as they pass by the buggies. The pin-puller laces 'em back up, pins it, and gives it the green light for the ride back to the tie-up point.

At full drag, with the glass cars and the rubberneck cars, the grabber will collect 412 tickets. There's never any glory, that train's always full, so you'd better get your head cut in and make your reservation soon!

### TRANSLATION:

*Listen here railroad enthusiasts, I'm going to tell you a tale of how the trackmen, brakemen, switchmen and engineers take control of the locomotive and push it with full force, at least until it's time for lunch.*

*At the Verde Canyon Railroad, we are proud of our pair of FP7 engines, and our passenger train cars. Our passenger cars are the best, a group of rail cars above the rest, indeed.*

*We're not a high speed train, but we do take out the slack as we follow the curves in the Verde Canyon. The assortment of cars runs year 'round, always assembled in a particular order. The passenger train begins at our headquarters in Clarkdale, heading out to the beautiful wilderness. Some railfans like to sit in the caboose's cupola.*

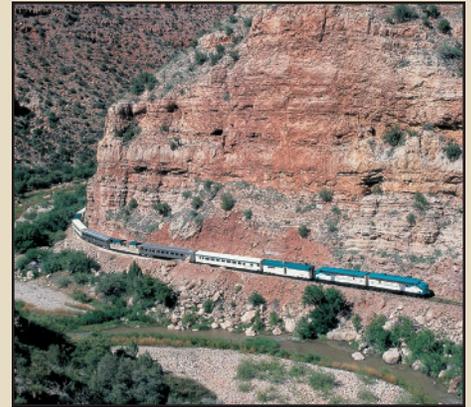
*Our top speed is about 12 mph, passing the sidings at Sycamore and Perkinsville where we come to a stop and engines disconnect. There, the engines pull out onto the siding and flash the headlight as they pass by the passenger cars. The brakeman reconnects the hoses and couplers and gives the clear signal for the ride back home.*

*At full capacity, with the passenger and observation cars, the conductor will collect 412 tickets. There's never a string of empty cars—the train is always full, so you'd better make your reservation soon!*



# CELEBRITY RAILS and IMAGINARY TALES

*Accompanied by the incredible scenery framed in the Verde Canyon Railroad's panoramic window, nostalgic reminiscing may sometimes induce passengers to take a make-believe train ride in the world of literature, music and movies. Relaxing in a beautifully appointed vintage rail car, it is easy to slip in to a starring role in an imaginary story.*



From the first tracks laid in 1826 near Quincy, Massachusetts through the turn of the last century when thousands of people hit the iron road in search of a better life, railroads have provided artistic inspiration. Some of the most timeless songs in American folk music came from this early American period; tunes that have endured through history.

In 1996, African-American railroad work-song singers John Mealing and Cornelius Wright, Jr. of Birmingham, AL, received the National Endowment for the Arts' National Heritage Fellowship, the government's highest honor in folk and traditional arts. These artists celebrated and preserved the unique cultural legacy of 'gandy dancers' (a slang term for rail line maintenance workers) for future generations.

Many contemporary musicians have sung the praises of the great iron horse, creating a demand for classic railroad songs. Woody Guthrie, Pete Seeger, Bob Dylan, John Denver and Johnny Cash have sung some of the most notable railroad standards. Doc Watson, a famous traditional musician, is best known for his authoritative vocals and dazzling guitar work in legendary railroad tunes. What other musicians can you name whose tunes invoke a longing to ride the rails?

1903's *The Great Train Robbery* heralded the longstanding love affair between film and trains. This twelve minute moving picture, created by Thomas Edison's cameraman Edwin Porter, pioneered many cinematic techniques. The movie milestone was the very first film to feature such modern standards as the single scene shot, parallel editing and even the first to depict violent death.

The Verde Canyon Railroad line was featured in the 1962 academy award winning movie *How the West Was*

*Won* starring Henry Fonda, Gregory Peck, George Peppard, Debbie Reynolds, Eli Wallach, John Wayne, Richard Widmark, Lee Marvin and Walter Brennan. The old water tank that once stood at the end of the passenger line at Perkinsville was blown up for a scene in the movie. Unfortunately, the footage ended up on the cutting room floor and never made it into movie theatres.

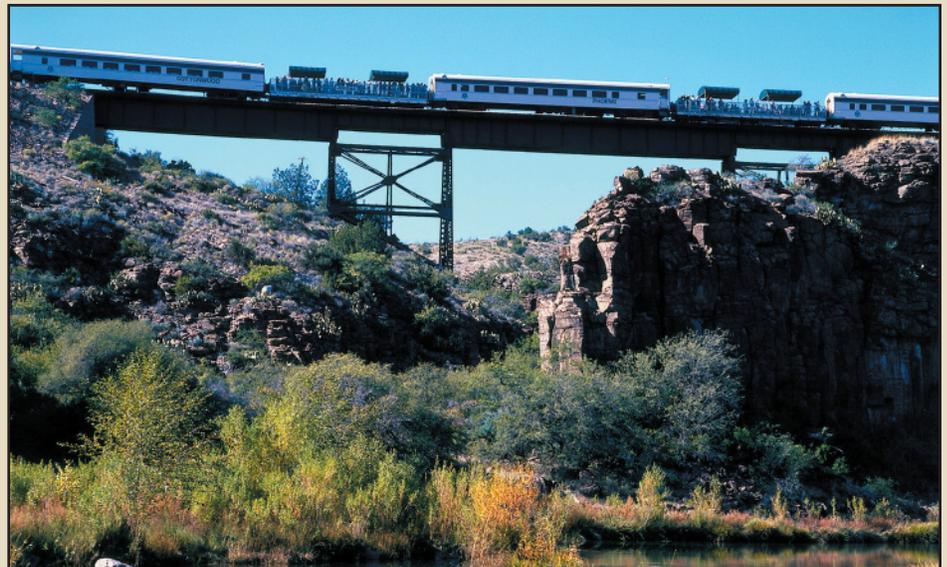
*"The Verde Canyon Railroad has often been a retreat for celebrities, where they can sit back and enjoy Arizona scenery at its best, away from adoring fans, paparazzi and studio cameras."*

The Verde Canyon Railroad has often been a retreat for celebrities, where they can sit back and enjoy Arizona scenery at its best, away from adoring fans, paparazzi and studio cameras. Ted Danson brought a car full of kids to ride in coach-class, while Senator John McCain and anchorman Hugh

Downs chose the comfort of first-class.

The literary connection to the Verde Canyon Railroad is most notable through the writings of renowned western author Louis L'Amour in *Education of a Wandering Man*, his beloved best selling autobiography. Published in 1989, just one year before the renewed Verde Canyon Railroad made its debut through the scenic Verde Canyon; the book includes this treasured memory: *Another place I often went was the wilderness area of Sycamore Canyon in Arizona. In those days there was a small railroad—the Verde Mix, I believe it was called—and for a couple of dollars one could buy a ticket and the train crew would drop you off and pick you up later. It is a beautiful area, near Oak Creek Canyon and Sedona, but kept even now as a wilderness, as well it should be.*

Mr. L'Amour would certainly be pleased to know that the Verde Canyon Railroad continues its historic route carrying passengers into this vast and scenic chasm. Despite its "celebrity status," wilderness is still a priority in the Verde Canyon.



# LIFE IN THE FOOD CHAIN

## *as seen from the Verde Canyon Railroad*

**S**oaring high above the vermilion cliffs of the Verde Canyon, the adult bald eagle fears no natural predator. From the Verde Canyon Railroad, he can be seen cruising the river or perched motionless on a nearby branch. At all times he is waiting for the right opportunity to prey upon one of the other canyon inhabitants who plays another key role in the ecological balance of the Verde Canyon.

All inhabitants of the Verde Canyon are part of the evolution of the canyon and its rich riparian habitat. Riparian refers to that which sustains life, and because of the lifeline of the Verde River, the Verde Canyon is one of Arizona's most distinguished riparian ecosystems. Even the smallest of insects in the canyon serve as a main course for fish, birds and small mammals, as well as a universal snack for almost all desert creatures. The bass that leaps from the river to devour the dragonfly as a predator now becomes prey to any number of larger species, either furred or feathered. And thus, the food chain creates one more link.

The many species of snakes inhabiting the Verde Canyon bring small rodents to death's door, but while waiting to strike, the snake is vulnerable to an air attack from an eagle, hawk or owl; or may be stalked by an elusive mountain lion, coyote or fox.



The coyote, considered to be near the top of the Verde Canyon food chain, is a shrewd hunter that indiscriminately feeds on smaller animals. Equal to the coyote in hunting skills, but smaller in stature, is the fox. As both prey on smaller animals and rodents, they compete in the lush canyon wilderness, complicating the food chain and adding new links. The fox, however, must be cautious, as the ever-diligent eagle may consider him the perfect size for a tasty meal.

The occasional mountain lion that lords over smaller predators in the canyon will leave leftovers from his favorite dinner of elk or deer which becomes easy pickings for those further down the food chain. None are too proud to feast on the lion's prize and keep the food chain in constant motion. Luckily for many in the Verde

Canyon, the black bear and elk are no threat to the smaller of creatures, preferring to subsist on berries and roots.

Whether the creatures of the Verde Canyon live in the cool, green waters of the Verde River, the rugged landscape that reaches from its shores, or from a roost that rises toward the azure sky, all of them have something in common: Smaller is prey to larger, and only the strongest survive. And, for every one of them, the most dangerous predator is man.

The Verde Canyon Railroad is a strong believer that it has a duty to coexist successfully within this lush, riparian environment, as it has done for over a century, without interruption to the natural progression of the food chain as it evolves. The Railroad is proud to be part of this unique and lively habitat.



## PLANES, TRAINS AND HORSES?

If you read this newsletter on a regular basis, you already know that in addition to owning this railroad, I have a passion for aircraft and horses. I guess you could say that "horsepower" inspires me.

Next to a scenic ride aboard the Verde Canyon Railroad, being on horseback in the quiet of mountain country is as good as it gets. Though our reining and working cow horse stallion, Bueno Chexinic, has retired from competition and breeding, his offspring have gone on to become champions on local, regional and national levels in a variety of disciplines. If horses also excite you, visit our Web site at [www.snowyrancheranch.com](http://www.snowyrancheranch.com) to see where our outstanding equines spend their summers. These magnificent animals are not only well bred; they are strikingly handsome and athletic.

I love seeing horses running freely through the pastures outside our windows in Wyoming. You also may enjoy this Western experience when you ride through Arizona's longest-running nature show aboard the Verde Canyon Railroad. At Perkinsville, horses still graze along the railroad's right-of-way just as they did over a century ago.

Gliding through the Verde Canyon in a Caboose cupola seat often reminds me of my time spent in a helicopter. You are soaring above everything, with the resident eagle's view of the canyon, river and spectacular scenery that lies just beyond.

I would like to invite you to share a little of our horsepower this fall. The vibrant color of autumn in the Verde Canyon is a new reason to ride. If beer is your beverage, plan to join us at the depot for *Ales on Rails* every Saturday and Sunday in October. There is music, food and great regional beer-tasting before the "All Aboard!" calls you to make the colorful journey through our spectacular red rock chasm. Whatever your pleasure, you'll find that seeing this canyon during October or November will rank right up there with everything else in life that makes you happy.

Happy trails and scenic rails!  
Dave



## "NATURE ALWAYS WEARS THE COLORS OF THE SPIRIT" —Emerson

This autumn, the Verde Canyon's vibrant spirit will again emerge in a stunning color palette of sunshine yellow, glowing mandarin, fiery crimson and rich butterscotch tones.

Fall in the Verde Canyon is a time to brighten one's own spirit, rekindle old friendships and spark new ones. Embark on a new adventure before winter blankets the northern countryside. Take a ride aboard the Verde Canyon Railroad and witness a new dawning in nature's theatre. The red rock cliffs of Sedona overlook this color-splashed spectacle, highlighted by a symphony of scarlet and amber, crimson and gold. The clear, clean waters of the Verde River, encased by large canopies of sycamores, cottonwoods and mesquite, enhance the beauty of the canyon and the season.

Every autumn, nature puts on a brilliant show of color in many parts of the United States and people from across the globe flock to catch a glimpse of

nature's splendor. One of the most impressive color regions in Arizona can be witnessed from aboard the scenic Verde Canyon Railroad. Photographic opportunities abound from the open-air viewing cars that access the comfortable coaches, also with large panoramic windows. Passengers may contemplate the beauty of nature's dazzling display, or just breathe in the crisp autumn air, unpolluted and fresh.

Mother Nature certainly pulled out all the stops when brushing on the colors of fall in the Verde Canyon. The mild autumn days, coupled with cool and crisp, but not freezing evenings, are the reason the canyon color is striking and vibrant. During September, October and November, the dark green leaves, which defined summer, change dramatically, and each tree or shrub creates a new hue that varies from year to year. Plan to enjoy this year's natural fall theatrics aboard the Verde Canyon Railroad.