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# A Desert Place

by: Geoffrey Platts

THE FIRST “A DESERT PLACE” COLUMN FROM 1983

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**The first *A Desert Place* column was submitted in 1983 to the *Black Mountain News* by the CCIA (Cave Creek Improvement Association) Conservation Committee, which is now<sup>1</sup> the Desert Awareness Committee of the Desert Foothills Land Trust. The following initial article was penned by the late Geoffrey Platts and printed under the original logo above.**

Botanically, the Great Sonoran Desert of Arizona is the richest of all deserts on the face of this earth. It is truly magnificent in the diversity of its fauna and flora; and the adaptability of each of its plants and creatures, great and small, to the arid, often inhospitable climate is a miracle unto itself. Mammals, reptiles, birds and insects of a great variety and number have made this desert their home and in spite of its usually parched dryness, they are supremely at one with it. Some, indeed, would languish and die if removed to another more “benign” environment.

Each cactus, shrub and animal has a marvelous story of endurance and ingenuity to tell...and the conservation committee’s column, “A Desert Place,” is here to help tell it, proudly, with loving respect.

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<sup>1</sup> December 2000



“The desert has mothered many magical things,” wrote John Steinbeck, and never was a truer word written. Each week, courtesy of the *News/View* we strive to bring you some of this magic in the telling of the Sonoran Desert’s tale... for it is our sincere belief that, by doing so, we will contribute to the greater awareness so critically needed to protect and preserve the desert from unnecessary violation and rampant encroachments.

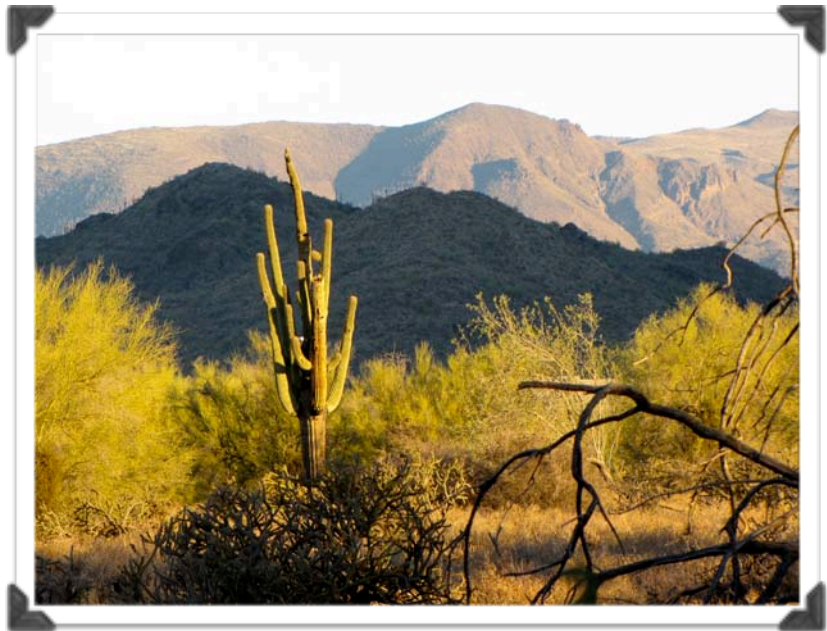


photo: Dave Mills

We feel that ultimately the people of Arizona must accept responsibility for the guardianship of our state’s biological diversity, geological marvels and overall natural heritage. The protection of Arizona’s natural endowments can be accomplished in harmony with man’s other needs provided that planning accompanies progress.

In conclusion, a brief word on the origin of the committee’s logo and column title, “A Desert Place.” It has been taken from the New Testament (Mark 6:31) and the complete verse reads as follows: *And he said unto them, ‘come ye yourselves apart into a desert place and rest a while;’ for there were many coming and going and they had no leisure so much as to eat.* Jesus and the newly-called 12 Apostles thereupon *departed into a desert place by ship privately* (6:32) and it was there, at the end of the day, that the miraculous feeding of the 5,000 took place.

And, thus, here in the Great Sonoran Desert, are the multitudes of animals and insects (and indeed human beings) fed and cared for, as if by a miracle of nature. Come with us, then, to our “desert place.”

Editor’s Note: The above article’s author, Geoffrey Platts, an inveterate poet, hiker, author, preservationist and gadfly, met an untimely death at age 62 in December, 2000. The cause was



accidental drowning while attempting to save a companion. Thousands of people whose lives were touched by him mourned the loss. In the words of one of his many friends, Margaret Stewart, “Geoffrey Platts was the conscience of the Foothills—the person who called us to task when he saw the desert in danger. He never minced words about the environment. He always thought of Nature with a capital **N**.” To see more about Geoffrey Platts, refer to:

*“There’s something about Cave Creek - It’s the People”, by Gene K. Garrison, Chapter 18 entitled Geoffrey Platts.*

*“TREK, man alone in the Arizona wild” by G. Platts.*

