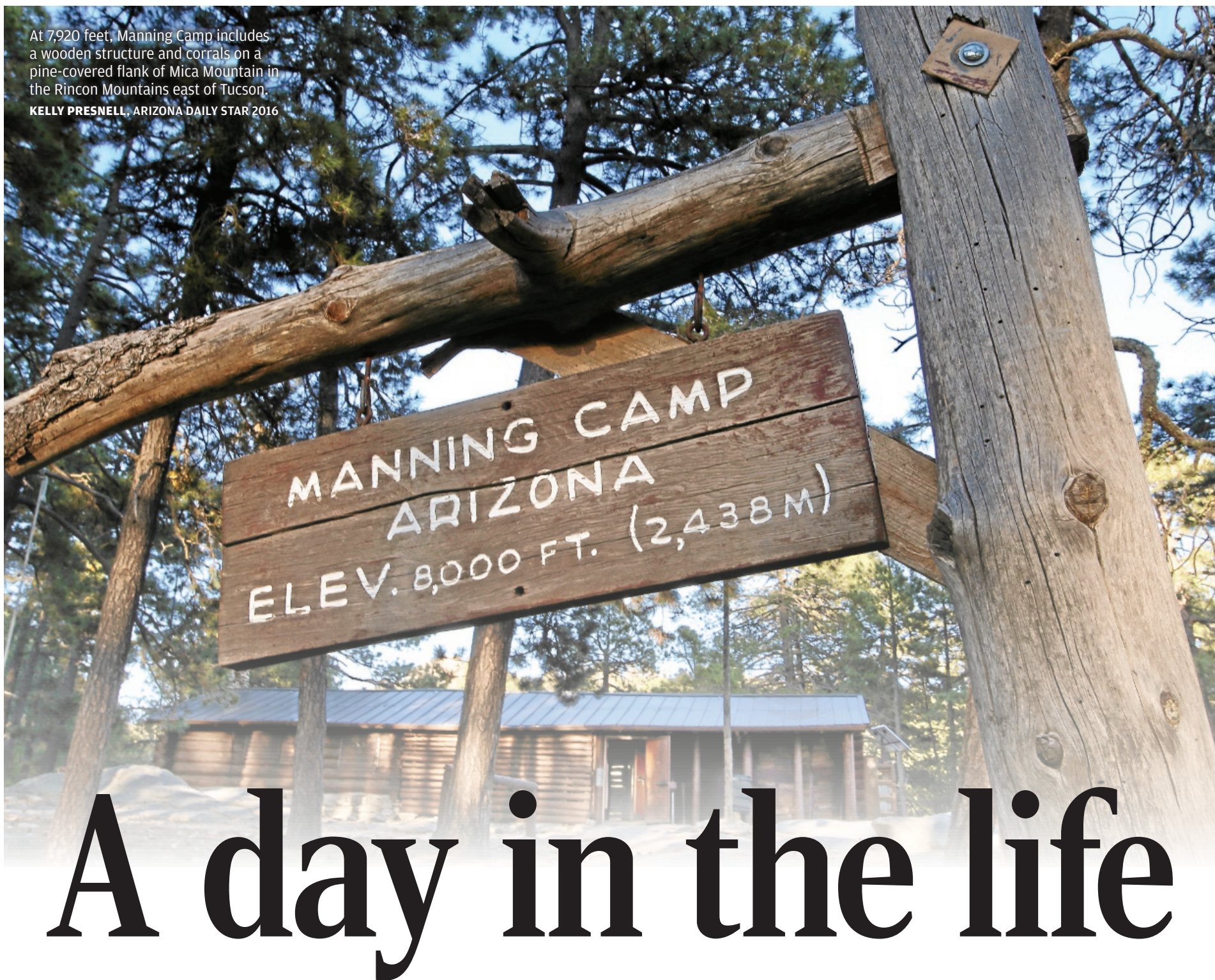


# HOME+LIFE

SUNDAY, JUNE 4, 2023 | [tucson.com](http://tucson.com) | SECTION E

At 7,920 feet, Manning Camp includes a wooden structure and corrals on a pine-covered flank of Mica Mountain in the Rincon Mountains east of Tucson. **KELLY PRESNELL, ARIZONA DAILY STAR 2016**



## A day in the life

Take a hike in the shoes of a local wilderness ranger

**CINDY COFFER CHOJNACKY**  
Special to the Arizona Daily Star

Tsipora (pronounced Si-Por-a) Prochovnick always starts her work week with a hike — 10 miles and nearly a 5,000-foot climb.

For the Manning Camp wilderness ranger, that's the only way to get to work.

At 7,920 feet, Manning Camp includes a wooden structure and corrals on a pine-covered flank of Mica Mountain in the Rincon Mountains east of Tucson. It's the National Park Service backcountry office for summer fieldwork: plant surveys, prescribed fire, trail maintenance and other activities.

"It's basically a cabin host job," Prochovnick explained. In April, she got the facilities ready for a Saguaro National Park leadership team meeting. Everyone hiked up, but the Park Service's pack string of mules brought food and supplies.

"I checked the water system and filled the water trough for the mules," Prochovnick said.

Maintenance is a key part of the job at Manning, a 118-year-old building built as a private residence in 1905 and supporting federal management agency crews since the 1920s.

Tsipora Prochovnick is working her second season as Manning Camp wilderness ranger. **DAVID CHOJNACKY**



### Ranger life

"We usually open the cabin in March and keep it open until November," Prochovnick said. Due to heavier snow this year, the opening was late March. Her seasonal appointment runs March through November, with eight 10-hour work days and six days off. Days 1 and 7 include the hike up or down to Manning; Day 8 is an office day. This is her second year on the job.

"I love how diverse the job is," she said. "You get up there and you have seven options of what you want to do today. But you have to be self-directed."

Prochovnick arrived at Manning on May 15 to find that one of two refrigerators powered by propane had gone out, leaving a whole fridge full of rotten food.

"I have plenty of food," Prochovnick said, "but I was disappointed about the (formerly frozen) chickens."

She also interacts with visitors and checks permits. Manning Camp has an adjacent campground for hikers — with reservations required on the government recreation.gov site (see [tucne.ws/1ng7](http://tucne.ws/1ng7)). But it's a small part of the job.

Despite a prime location in cool ponderosa pine, "we don't get that many visitors," she said. It's a long hike up the mountain, and "no matter how early you start, it's pretty hot in the summer."

The Park Service takes a fairly direct route to Manning through the mothballed Madrona Ranger Station on the east side of the Rincons. This requires crossing private land closed to the public, but the Park Service has access. (The X-9 Ranch owner closed the area in 1967, and the closure remained after the land was sold and subdivided for private homes.)

With five camping areas (Juniper Basin, Grass Shack, Happy Valley, Spud Rock Spring and Manning) and a large trail system, the Saguaro Wilderness Area offers many loop trips for backpackers but almost all routes start around 3,000 feet, so the first 5 miles are hot in the summer.

Trailhead distances to Manning: from Douglas Spring (end of Speedway) — 12 miles; Loma Alta — 13.7; Italian Springs — 12; Tanque Verde ridge (Javelina Picnic Area) — 16. The shortest hike from the far side of the mountain (1.5-hour drive from Tucson) is Turkey Creek Trail, about 9 miles. The Arizona Trail joins Manning Camp Trail; from the park boundary, it's 13.5 miles to Manning.

"By far the biggest use of Rincon high country is the Arizona Trail thru-hikers usually in late March and April and then again in October-November," Prochovnick said. "I see probably 20 a day during the season."

Most don't camp at Manning because the reserved six-site campground does not work well for thru-hikers. It allows six people per site. Since most thru-hikers plan and hike alone, this means six single hikers might reserve the whole campground. The Park Service is looking at an adjacent site that might be set up for single-hiker sites with permits still obtained through recreation.gov.

Recently, the Manning area was decked out with tents: for five biological technicians, a Saguaro Trail Crew member and three packers who came with two "pack strings" (mules for hauling supplies). Sid Kahla, a rancher from Sierra Vista, has packed for the Park Service since 2009. He rode one of his horses and led his four mules; the other

seven mules belong to the park and were wrangled by two Park Service employee packers. Field crews buy their own food and supplies brought up by the mules. Manning has a few big on-site tents, but most field people have their own.

The pack train also brought propane fuel and mule feed. The big May project was moving a camp for the Saguaro Trail Crew. The winter crew was based at Grass Shack, working on the Manning Camp Trail. The summer trail crew will have a "spike camp" on Heartbreak Ridge between Manning Camp and Happy Valley Saddle. Tents, food, water, tools and fuel will be packed in. The pack string will spend a night at Manning, a day packing supplies to the spike camp and then another night at Manning, requiring a lot of pellets for the mules.

### The evolution of Manning Camp

Manning Camp was built as a private summer home. Levi Manning, who came to Tucson from the South in 1884, worked as a reporter and later was Tucson mayor. In 1904, he homesteaded 160 acres in the Rincons; he built the Manning Cabin and a 12-mile wagon road in 1905. The cabin included a fireplace, kitchen, bedrooms and a piano.

The land became Coronado National Forest in 1907, and the cabin fell into disrepair until 1922, when the Forest Service reconditioned it to house fire and trail crews. In 1935, most of the Rincons were transferred to the Park Service as Saguaro National Monument, now Saguaro National Park. In 1975, the cabin was listed in the National Register of Historic Places. In 1976, much of Saguaro Park was designated wilderness.

The camp water supply is a spring developed by the Manning family and excavated by the Park Service into a large pond. Below that, a tinaja (water pocket) drops into a large pool. A nearby pump-house powered by a small solar panel filters the water, which is pumped to a large tank on the hill. It's then gravity flow for water to the cabin.

Please see **RANGER**, Page E7

## Get a moonlit view of Sabino Canyon

**ELVIA VERDUGO**  
Arizona Daily Star

Locals can now check out Sabino Canyon in a new light — the moonlight, to be exact — every Saturday with the Sabino Canyon Crawler's night tours.

The night tours run every Saturday at 8 p.m. through October, according to the Sabino Canyon Crawler website. The tour is 7.4 miles roundtrip and will return to the visitor center by 9:30 p.m. (Start times may differ in the fall, so make sure to check your ticket before arriving.)

Tickets for the tour cost \$15 per adult and \$8 per child, ages 3 to 12. Children under the age of 3 are free, according to the website. Shuttle rides sometimes sell

out, so get your tickets online to guarantee your spot.

It's important to note that the tour ticket prices do not include the Sabino Canyon Recreation Area amenity fee of \$8 per vehicle.

The tour features a "special narrative program" in English and Spanish that includes historical and cultural information about Sabino Canyon, such as the canyon's origins and details about the fauna and flora of the area.

The Sabino Canyon Crawler is an emission-free electric shuttle that can seat up to 56 passengers. Depending on demand, two shuttles will be in service, carrying a total of up to 112 people. The new shuttles were implemented in the fall of 2019.

During the monsoons, the shuttle service closely monitors the Sabino Creek flow and operates "conservatively to ensure the safety of our passengers," according to the website. This means the shuttle route may change depending on weather.

For more about the tour, visit [sabinocanyoncrawler.com](http://sabinocanyoncrawler.com).

The Sabino Canyon Recreation Area is located at 5700 N. Sabino Canyon Road.

**VIEW:** Take a look back at Sabino Canyon over the past 100 years with this historical photo gallery. Point your smartphone camera at the QR code, then tap the link. **NEWSVU**



**REBECCA SASNETT, ARIZONA DAILY STAR**

Sabino Canyon's Crawler takes a group of visitors up to a number of outlook spots along the Sabino Creek on the newly repaved road at Sabino Canyon Recreational Area in Tucson on June 3, 2022.

## SOUTHERN ARIZONA AUTHORS

# Adventure, poetry, outdoor reads perfect for summer

SPECIAL TO THE ARIZONA DAILY STAR



**“DeadWare”** by R.L. Clayton. Independently published. 421 pages. \$17.99; \$3.99 e-book.

Sniper par excellence Kiki Russell and interrogator sans peer Dr. Nick Sabino are back in this seventh “Dead” techno-thriller by Tucsonan R.L. Clayton. This time the husband and wife are hired by an anonymous private U.S. consortium to take out Russian cyber criminals targeting American businesses. And “take out,” they do — through explosions, slit throats, shots through the head or chest, and one particularly heinous Sarin attack. When Russia immediately blames the U.S. government, and usual international suspects Iran and Israel grab the opportunity to nuclear-rattle and threaten the world, greater forces than Kiki and Nick might need to step in.

Clayton’s settings here are well drawn, his action is fast-paced and sustained, but he adds elements that add nuance to this thriller: For one, he gives us an intelligent Russian detective adversary you rather respect. For another, he explores the ethical, psychological toll that being an interrogator sans peer can take on human psyches. They’re nice complicating touches.

—Christine Wald-Hopkins



**“Finding Grace”** by Starr Sanders. Independently published. 200 pages. \$12.95 paperback; also available on Kindle.

To anyone who wonders why someone would suffer the indignities of being a public school teacher — lousy pay, public disrespect, political targeting — but still love teaching, this teacher-reviewer says check out Grace in Tucsonan Starr Sanders’s fourth novel, “Finding Grace.”

A smart, irreverent, retired Minneapolis English and history teacher, Grace decides to load up a U-Haul and drive across country to start life afresh in San Diego. She does this over the objections of her family. And she does it harboring the secret that macular degeneration is destroying her eyesight. When the inevitable occurs, and her cloudy vision forces her off the highway, she meets Frieda, a smart, irreverent, young college student harboring her own secrets. Frieda needs a ride to Tucson. Grace needs a driver. So they agree to Thelma-and-Louise it as far as Tucson. Come to find out, Tucson suits Grace. It’s where the teacher in her emerges. It’s also where the teacher learns lessons of her own.

Sanders enriches what is essentially a family-secrets story with contemporary social concerns. She humanizes homelessness, immigration and LGBTQ issues, highlighting Tucson programs addressing them. She does it with snappy dialogue and attitude. And, yes, as novelist Sanders was once a popular high school teacher in her own right, she knows of which she writes.

—Christine Wald-Hopkins

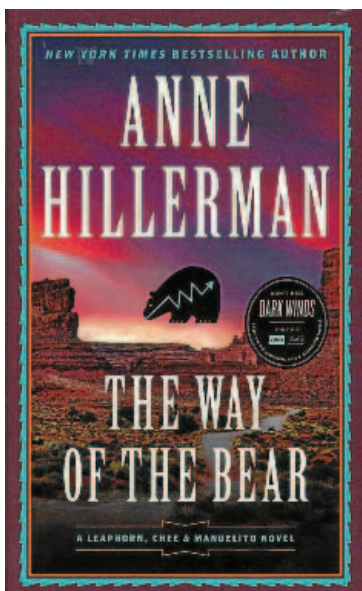


**“Palpitations”** by Eugene Lowe. Independently published. 144 pages. \$10.

The Eugene Lowe we saw in his two memoirs — “Jiggling: A Gradual Release” (2019) and “My Army Vacation & Other Struggles” (2021) — was a bright, restless, risk-taking, troubled, unconventional romantic. Add to that list “imaginative,” and you have the Eugene Lowe reflected in this collection of his poetry and prose poems.

Describing “Palpitations” as “a rhythmic collection from a metaphorical arrhythmic heart; ... words with a variable beat,” Lowe includes pieces written from 1976, at age 21, through 2022, when he was 67. They’re varied in form, sometimes arcane, sometimes in clear narrative, sometimes so mythological you need to Google, sometimes so personal you can’t quite get ‘em, at times a bit concupiscent, but always creatively nimble. They offer insight into the writer’s maturing ... and aging.

—Christine Wald-Hopkins



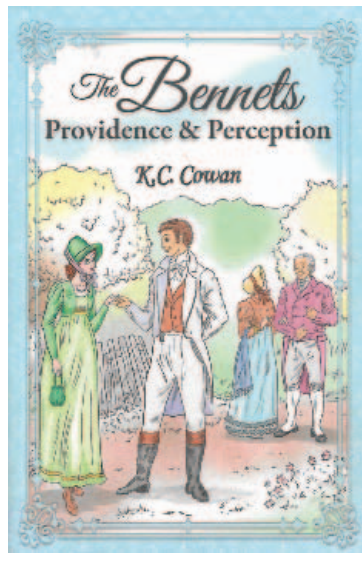
**“The Way of the Bear”** by Anne Hillerman. HarperCollins. 272 pages. \$30 hardcover. Also available as an e-book.

The setting in this new mystery by Anne Hillerman — Bears Ears National Monument — is as significant a presence as fan-favorites Bernadette Manuelito and Jim Chee. The monument is a “treasure trove for fossils,” muses paleontologist character Chapman Dulles (hiding out from a killer, but still awed by the setting.) It’s like “a great library, not of books, but of bones, teeth, scales and claws preserved in stone, an archive of animals and plants ... alive during the Paleozoic era.”

Husband and wife Navajo Tribal Police Officers Chee and Manuelito have come to the national monument so Chee can make a PR call on paleontologist Dulles. Newly promoted to lieutenant, Chee’s been tasked with representing the department. Manuelito, who was not promoted to detective and is questioning herself, is encouraged by Chee to join him for a restorative trip. In no time, though, she’s shot at and nearly run down in the Valley of the Gods, and two men show up dead. There are fortunes and reputations to be made in collecting and selling ancient artifacts, it seems, and discovering and publishing original findings, is potentially lethal. Manuelito and Chee are soon involved.

Anne Hillerman is hitting her novelist’s stride in this book. That she can thread subtle political and scientific/historical/ecological observations through an engaging story is a testament to her deepening contribution to the Tony and Anne Hillerman legacy.

—Christine Wald-Hopkins



**“The Bennets: Providence & Perception”** by K.C. Cowan. Meryton Press. 236 pages. \$15.20; Kindle \$5.99.

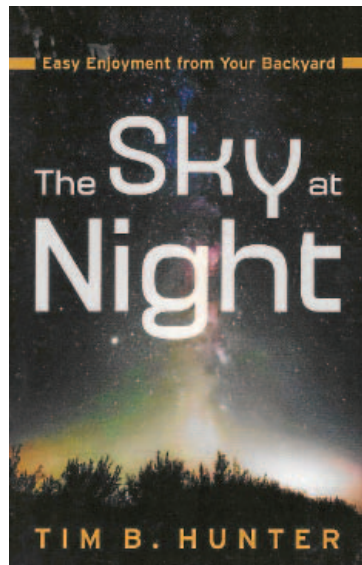
K.C. Cowan draws back the draperies of Longbourn House for a look at how the Bennet family has fared in this sequel to Jane Austen’s much-beloved “Pride and Prejudice.” The action picks up a few years after Austen’s novel concluded; the two eldest sisters are securely ensconced in their happily-ever-after, and the focus of the narrative has shifted to characters with unresolved love lives, and others whose paths have taken surprising turns.

Mary, the “unseen Bennet girl” — plain, ignored, and socially awkward — gets a star turn here, and Austen’s readers will be interested in the transformative possibilities that await when she steps out from the large shadow cast by her more marriageable sisters. Likewise, Mr. Bennet, the long-suffering father of five daughters, demonstrates that he is not too old a dog to learn new tricks. It isn’t that the author takes liberties with their personas; rather, she allows them, in a satisfying way, to develop more fully while remaining within Austen’s original parameters.

And that’s the fun of this lively Austen fan fiction. Familiar players have the same familiar foibles, but they’re enhanced. In Cowan’s capable hands, virtue is rewarded, hubris gets its comeuppance, and just desserts are on the menu. Love still conquers all. Austen fans will be delighted.

K.C. Cowan, a former news reporter and host of an arts program on Oregon Public Television, now divides her time between Portland, Oregon, and Tucson. She has authored several books, including a fantasy series.

—Helene Woodhams



**“The Sky at Night: Easy Enjoyment from Your Backyard”** by Tim B. Hunter. University of Arizona Press. 208 pages. \$22.95; Kindle \$19.37.

Tim Hunter’s byline will be familiar to readers of the Arizona Daily Star, where his weekly column, “Sky Spy,” has been enlightening Southern Arizonans about all things astronomical since 2007. With this excellent book, Hunter has collected insights, information and observations from more than 750 columns and produced a highly readable reference that will be a boon to amateur astronomers and, indeed, to anyone who’s ever looked up at the sky and wondered.

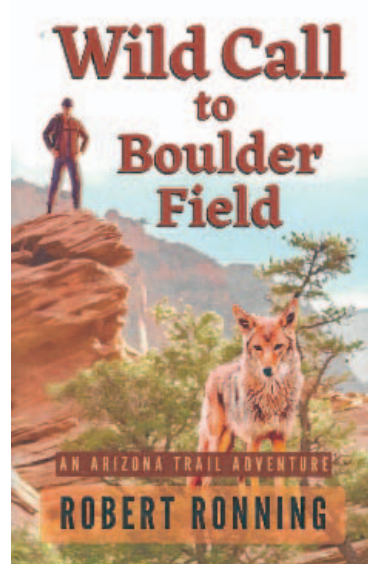
Hunter began star-gazing at a tender age, and he’s an erudite guide to the galaxy. By profession, he’s a radiologist, a gig that back-burnered his hobby until a move to the University of Arizona’s Department of Radiology exposed him to Tucson’s famously starry skies, rekindling his interest.

His book is a font of celestial knowledge, thoughtfully arranged into subject areas, illustrated

and indexed. The moon, planets, stars and constellations each get a chapter filled with how-tos for identification, important terminology, useful aids and resources for observation, and fascinating facts (enjoy the Big Dipper now: due to the movement of the stars, in a few thousand years it will be gone). Astronomical happenings, seasonal night sky events and notable figures are all grist for Hunter’s mill, and any questions you may have, from meteor showers to the length of a day on Jupiter, he’s likely answered. In fact, he devotes a chapter to his experiences, writing a weekly column in which he addresses the subjects he’s asked about most often.

The joy of this book is its accessibility, in the sense of “science for the rest of us.” Hunter never talks over the reader’s head and focuses primarily on “naked eye” observations — no fancy or expensive equipment needed. Just head outside, have a seat, and look up — chances are you’ll see something intriguing, and Hunter wants you to know all about it.

—Helene Woodhams



**“Wild Call to Boulder Field: An Arizona Trail Adventure”** by Robert Ronning. Desert Paws Books. 351 pages. \$11.99; Kindle \$4.99.

Park Ranger Wade Conrad, with his well-deserved reputation as a “wildlife whisperer,” is finely attuned to the call of the wild. But Wade has a short fuse when it comes to people — a boneheaded species he avoids — and prefers the company of his golden retriever, Abby. When she goes missing, and his anger management issues boil over, he heads out on the Arizona Trail, seeking the balm of wilderness.

But peace is elusive when he finds himself rescuing a rambunctious West Highland terrier — not the best companion for the trail, but one that brings out the protective dog-lover in him. Less welcome is the appearance of trail biker Jesse Hayduke, a wannabe activist prone to anxiety attacks. The mismatched trio soon discover they are unwitting participants in a deadly cat-and-mouse game with a mysteriously but frighteningly vocal predator, setting the stage for a life-changing ordeal with implications that border on the mythical.

Robert Ronning offers a savvy, fast-paced narrative, informed by his strong convictions about animal rights and wilderness protection in the spirit of Edward Abbey (who gets a sly wink from the author in the form of aptly-named characters). Ronning, whose background is in theater, taught performance literature at City University of New York and directed off-Broadway plays. He now lives in Tucson and devotes his time to lost dog rescue and to writing about wildlife and conservation.

—Helene Woodhams

Helene Woodhams is retired from Pima County Public Library, where she was literary arts librarian.

Christine Wald-Hopkins, a former high school and college English teacher and occasional essayist, has long been a book critic for national, regional and local newspapers.

If you are a Southern Arizona author and would like your book to be considered for this column, send a copy to: Sara Brown, P.O. Box 26887, Tucson, AZ, 85726-6887. Give the price and contact name. Books must have been published within a year. Authors may submit no more than one book per calendar year.



DAVID CHOJNACKY

The Historic Manning Camp cabin serves as the National Park Service backcountry office for summer field work: plant surveys, prescribed fire, trail maintenance and other activities.

## Ranger

From E1

The “cabin” is actually two structures connected with a covered walkway. The central part decayed many decades ago and was removed. One structure contains a propane stove, refrigerators, a large table and supply closets. The other is a toolshed. The breezeway was filled with stock bridles, saddles, harnesses and feed; some backpacks and tools were hung on hooks.

The propane stove was not working too well, so Prochovnick suggested cooking outside either on a large open stove or a big campfire. (She got the stove fixed later in the week). She showed the technicians new to Manning what worked and what did not work in the kitchen. She displayed a whiteboard where she said she’d post names of people assigned to three chores: wash dishes, wipe down all surfaces and sweep. “This year we are winning the battle with mice.”

“Some bats moved in last year,” she said. “I had to go down to the park and get a high frequency rodent repellent to encourage them to move out. They would screech at me when I worked on the tools.”

Trail crew member Kristian Sliwa was helping Prochovnick for the week. He had an overlap between the park winter trail crew and the summer crew coming on the next week. Prochovnick planned to clean out organic matter from the water source, clear logs from trails around Mica Mountain, deep clean the cabin and sort, clean and inventory tools. “Some jobs, like moving a log, are better with two people,” Prochovnick said.

The park fire crew recently camped at Manning while preparing for a prescribed fire. Since they can use chainsaws, Prochovnick enlisted them to buck up firewood for the cabin. Since the area is wilderness, trail crew members use non-mechanized tools: crosscut, smaller saws and hatchets.

Tristan Blue will start in June as the second wilderness ranger. Prochovnick and Blue will alternate at Manning Camp but overlap one day. “Last year we had no overlap and both of us (rangers) were new,” Prochovnick said. “It took awhile to figure out what needed to be done.”

A San Francisco native, Prochovnick got an art degree but fell for wilderness work during a summer trail crew stint in Kings Canyon Wilderness with the California Conservation Corps. She has worked as a wilderness ranger or trail crew member on national forests and parks in Montana, Wyoming and California. “I worked on the Saguaro Trail Crew off and on since 2012.”

## WE RECOMMEND

SPECIAL TO THE ARIZONA DAILY STAR

We celebrated Asian American/Pacific Islander Heritage month in May, but it’s not too late to enjoy these must-read books from Asian/Pacific Islander authors.

Here are four book recommendations brought to you by your friends at Pima County Public Library:

- “Central Places” by Delia Cai
- “Banyan Moon” by Thao Thai
- “Goodbye, Vitamin” by Rachel Khong
- “The Incendiaries” by R.O. Kwon

Like these? Be sure to check out the full list at [tucne.ws/1nhl](http://tucne.ws/1nhl). Visit [library.pima.gov](http://library.pima.gov) for more great reading suggestions and to check out the E-Library.

