

On the trail of movie history in Sedona

By Craig F. Eisenbeis
Correspondent

Right now, it's kind of a "shoulder" season for hiking in our area, when the high mountains may not be the best choice and other possibilities come to mind. For more than a few residents of Sisters Country, however, those "other possibilities" might include giving some thought to warmer and sunnier climes to the south. One of the most popular southern destinations is Arizona; and, as far as my wife and I are concerned, there is no better place than Sedona.

So, each year I like to feature a Sedona hike or two.

As I was studying my Sedona trail map to plan our next Sedona outing, I happened upon a trail name that caught my attention. It was the Broken Arrow Trail, and that name brought back a childhood memory. The movie "Broken Arrow" was first released in 1950, and I remember seeing it in my youth.

"Broken Arrow" became one of the most popular movies of the entire 1950s, which is impressive considering that it came out in the first year of the decade. It was also a landmark movie in pioneering a more even-handed portrayal of the American Indian. In fact, the movie's pro-Indian sympathetic viewpoint managed to arouse some rather rancorous backlash among certain segments of the population that held more Eurocentric points of view.

The list of movies shot among the unique red rocks of Sedona is a long one; and when television and advertisements are factored in, the list is almost endless. In any event, some quick research confirmed that portions of "Broken Arrow" were, in fact, filmed in the vicinity of the trail of that same name.

So, off we went to explore it, even though Jimmy Stewart, Jeff Chandler, Deborah Paget, and Jay Silverheels are long gone from the former movie setting.

The Broken Arrow Trail is a fairly easy 3.4-mile round trip that offers plenty of the spectacular red rock scenery that has made Sedona one of the most popular off-season hiking destinations for people from all over the world. I say "fairly easy" because there is no significant elevation gain or loss, but there is a fair amount of undulating ups and downs. Also, the trail offers more than a few obstacles and rocks to step or climb over; so, in reality, it technically should probably be classified as "moderate."

However, my wife liked it, so you know that it can't be too bad, since she is not a fan of long or difficult or uphill hikes. We saw families and hikers of all ages on this trail, along with a few trail bikes, as well. Dogs must be kept on leashes.

Trailside vegetation is more abundant than might be expected in a desert-like climate, but there is not much shade. I was very impressed with how well this trail is marked. Anyplace where there is a trail junction or decision to be made, signage is very good. Occasionally, the trail meanders over long stretches of bare rock. In spots such as this, wire-caged rock cairns have been constructed to create an unmistakably clear path.

This trail connects to many others for myriad choices of distances and destinations. The presumed destination of the Broken Arrow Trail is traditionally a place called Chicken Point, a prominence of modest height amid towering formations of red rock. Chicken Point purportedly draws its name from some trail users who are too

"chicken" to approach the precipitous far edge.

There are a couple of interesting sidelights along this trail. The first is only about a half-mile from the trailhead and allows trailside viewing of a bat cave! Referred to as the Devil's Dining Room Sinkhole, the cave itself is fenced off for the protection of the bats; but the main entrance is easily viewed.

The second diversionary interest involves a side trail leading to Submarine Rock. Take this trail to add a 1.2-mile bonus excursion to your hike. Submarine Rock is a shallow, bare rock protuberance from the valley floor that is vegetation-free and really does bring to mind a surfacing submarine. From an elevated point, farther along on the Broken Arrow Trail, the submarine aspect of this feature is particularly apparent.

Be sure to bring plenty of water because this is dry country. On this day, we drank every drop that we were carrying, so we doubled our supply for subsequent hikes. If you think this outing sounds like fun, but you just can't bring yourself to walk that far, I have good news. Local Jeep tours cover much of the same terrain on (separate) Jeep trails. If what we saw is any indication, Pink Jeep Adventure Tours must have a monopoly.

The Broken Arrow Trail is very close to town and easy to find. Heading south from Sedona proper on Highway 179, it is only a couple of miles from town. The trailhead lies at the end of Morgan Road, which is east off the third roundabout south of town. Unlike some of the trailheads in the area, the parking area for this one is fine for any type of car. Some of the permit requirements for red rock areas have



PHOTO BY CRAIG F. EISENBEIS

Hikers in the red rocks of Sedona enjoy reaching Chicken Point, at the end of the Broken Arrow Trail.

been relaxed in recent years, and federal park and forest permits are now valid for most federal areas.

VETERANS: Local schools welcome veterans

Continued from page 1

On Tuesday, November 13, Sisters Elementary School will host a light breakfast in the gym at 7:45 a.m., followed by an assembly program at 8:15 a.m. in the SES Commons. The program will end at 9 a.m.

Veterans Day, which falls on a Sunday this year, is an official U.S. holiday recognizing all who have served in the United States Armed Forces. The date coincides with Armistice Day, where nations mark the formal end of World War I on November 11, 1918. This year marks the centenary of that event (see related commentary, page 18).

The United States changed the observance from Armistice Day to Veterans Day in 1954, in the wake of the Second World War and the Korean War.

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