

MOAB HAPPENINGS

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TRAIL HAPPENINGS

Hazards of Hazzard County

by Tom Dillon

Hazzard County is generally ridden downhill. It is a three mile long, fast, swooping ride which leaves you with a grin so big that the top of your head might just fall right the heck off. What if you left sanity and, well, even more sanity behind and rode it up?

There are a veritable plethora of reasons not to ride up Hazzard County. Your mom would think you're insane. Your friends would think you're insane. And you would even question your own sanity until you were half way up, then realize you are, in fact, insane. Sanity is vastly overrated. So, leaving sanity behind, let's look at riding it up.

Riding up Hazzard is easier than you'd think. It's about a thousand feet vertical and only three miles long. And, if you get tired, no matter where you are, you can simply turn around and you'll be back to your car in a few minutes. Riding up a relatively nontechnical trail would seem to have few, if any, hazards. But, there are a few.

The first hazard you encounter is looking the other way when you start at the bottom of Hazzard, down the Kokopelli Trail thinking, "Hey, wouldn't that be a lot more fun than riding up a thousand foot climb?" This is an evil Siren who tempts you with the sweet call of unending downhill, only to dash you against the stony shores of the realization that you have no easy way to get back to your car.

kidding about it being "easier than you'd think." After a time, you nod to yourself thinking, "Yeah, I knew it was going to get steeper, but I'm warmed up now. This is great."

The next hazard you run into is downhill riders. Unlike what some people say, these folk don't make much noise when they're screaming down the trail. You gotta keep your ears wide open for those sane riders and your eyes peeled for places to get off the trail. And, you really, really don't want to pull off the trail just after the downhill turn lest you surprise a rider and cause them to



You begin your climb with a smooth, undulating trail through the brush with only a slight incline. You think that the guy who wrote the article about this climb wasn't

go careening off the trail. That's just bad manners.

After awhile the trail gets steeper and somewhat rockier. Thoughts of, "What was I thinking? The writer's an idiot" enter your mind.

A thousand feet of Pure-D elevation gain, starting at 8300 feet, can be a hazard to some folk. It's a good thing you have two lungs, 'cause if you pop one on the way up, you have a spare to get you back down. When you get back to your car, a Deadhorse Amber Ale will cause your lung to spontaneously regenerate.

When you finally get to the top you'll turn around and see the view. Take it in for longer than you think you should. First, holy shift into my lowest gear, what an awesome view. Second, it's gonna take you a tenth as long to get down. Third, you gotta get that selfie with the background just right. Fourth, you have to think about the downhill hazards.

Riding down, the hazards come flying at you like one of those downhill riders you couldn't hear over your panting as you rode up. Then there's those rocks you were so proud of cleaning on the way up who sing their song of endo on the way down. And chipmunks or ground squirrels or whatever those damn things are diving for your spokes, just before you get to a patch of those rocks I just mentioned. The awe you feel from the spectacle of incredible views can easily cause you not to notice the quickly approaching cattle guard. But, the biggest hazard is running into those insane riders climbing up!

Then, back at your car, your thoughts turn to "Wow, he was right. What an awesome ride! The climb was totally worth it."

When we first got to the parking area, I struck up a conversation with Rob, a guy sitting next to his bike. Nestled comfortably within the talk about where we were each from, the weather and our favorite rides around Moab, was "Yeah, I broke some ribs just now riding down Hazzard."



Rob

"But, wait, really, what? Holy shift lever! Do you want some ibuprofen?" His face gave no hint of pain, until I tested him with a joke. It's the best way to test for broken ribs. I left him the whole bottle. We helped his wife with directions to get to him before we headed up. Be careful out there. That be Hazzards.

Access: South on Main St. (Hwy 191) to Ken's Lake turn off (turn left) to Spanish Valley Dr. (turn right). This becomes La Sal Loop Rd. Continue to a parking area just past the Kokopelli trail entrance on the left and Hazzard County trail exit on the right. From the center of Moab, it's about 27 miles.



Trail Mix is an advisory committee to Grand County in the development and maintenance of non-motorized trails. The committee represents non-motorized users including bikers, hikers, equestrians, and skiers. Many government agencies and private citizens make up the "mix" that makes this group work so well. Come join us on the 2nd Tues. of each month from 12-2 at the Grand Center (500W. 182 N.). Everyone is welcome. Contact Sandy Freethey 259-0253 or find us online at www.grandcountyutah.net/trailmix/. You may also reach us at moabtrailmixinfo@gmail.com.



Journey Stories

Smithsonian's Museum on Main Street Comes to Moab's Center Street!

Join us for Journey Stories, local exhibits, and free activities through July 11th.

Museum of Moab, 118 E. Center St. Monday to Saturday, 10am-6pm

www.utahhumanities.org/journeystories.htm

Journey Stories is part of Museum on Main Street, a collaboration between the Smithsonian Institution and the Utah Humanities Council, in partnership with the Museum of Moab.

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MUSEUM HAPPENINGS

Smithsonian Exhibit in Moab

Don't miss the opportunity to see the Smithsonian *Journey Stories* exhibition, now on view at the Museum of Moab (118 East Center Street) through July 11, as well as *Uranium Stories: The Pilgrimage to Moab and Those Who Stayed*, a local exhibit created to complement and bring a Moab flavor to the national show that is being toured through Utah by the Utah Humanities Council.

Organized by the Museum, is its local exhibit called *Uranium Stories: The Pilgrimage to Moab and Those Who Stayed*. The exhibit showcases the journey stories of those who came to Moab during the uranium exploration and mining boom that swept the region in the 1950s and 1960s. Curated by the Museum's new director, geologist John Foster, with the help of public history graduate student and Moab local, Resford Rouzer, *Uranium Stories* brings to life many voices – those of miners, their families, and people who moved to Moab to supply the boom.

Mining of radioactive elements had been going on in the Colorado Plateau since the early part of the 20th century. Back then it was mainly radium and vanadium. But in the late 1940s the Atomic Energy Commission (AEC) wanted uranium and encouraged prospectors and miners to find and extract the ore containing this element by giving them a guaranteed customer – the AEC would buy whatever could be mined. This program only lasted a few years but was a deal many could not pass up. The Colorado Plateau rush really took off in 1952 when Texas geologist Charlie Steen located a 14-foot-thick deposit of pitchblende (pure uranium oxide) in the Chinle Formation near Lisbon Valley south of Moab. The presence of this high-grade ore brought in people from all over the country to prospect for and mine uranium, and the Moab area was transformed by the influx. Many of the people moved on after the market slowed down, but the transformation of the town was more permanent. And many chose to stay in this area even after the uranium rush, in some cases charmed by the landscape in ways we are even today.

Uranium Stories touches on the varied reasons people came to Moab, their experiences along the way, and the reasons many stayed:

- We arrived looking like *The Grapes of Wrath*, but we were in fine spirits and full of hope. We rented a tarpaper shack for \$15 a month, scavenged railroad coal to heat it, and our first night there [my wife] M.L. came down with pneumonia. **- Charlie Steen, 1996**
- My dad came to Moab in 1954, and it was a booming little uranium town...and he went home and told my mom that's where we were going to move and strike it rich. We moved here and never struck it rich, [laughs] like I think many thousands of people that did that. But we stayed here, and it's been great, it's a great place to live. **- Doug McElhaney, 2013**
- Well, I've [moved] back here three times, so I must think it is the greatest place on earth to live. **- Harvey Merrell, 2003**



Moab's Main Street, 1954, just as the boom was taking off. Photo courtesy Museum of Moab.



Shops selling Geiger Counters and other engineering equipment sprung up to support the miners. Photo courtesy Museum of Moab.

The Utah Humanities Council supports local organizations like the Museum of Moab to bring the Smithsonian to their communities and round them out with local exhibits and public activities. *Journey Stories* is part of Museum on Main Street, a collaboration between the Smithsonian Institution and the Utah Humanities Council, which is touring the exhibition through Utah in the coming year. For more information about the *Journey Stories* exhibition in Moab, contact the Museum of Moab at 435.259.7985 and www.moabmuseum.org, or to learn more about the statewide tour, contact the Utah Humanities Council at 801.359.9670 or visit www.utahhumanities.org/journeystories.htm.



La Sal mine exploration drilling, 1954. Photo courtesy Museum of Moab.

Be sure to mention you read about it in *Moab Happenings*.



www.moabmuseum.org



JOURNEY Stories



Photo by Arthur Rothstein. Library of congress, LC-USZ62-130705



What do you think of when you think of a journey? A favorite trip, moving to a new city, growing up, or maybe an object, something that reminds you of a memory from an important life event? Come see artwork that illuminates our global cultural landscape through a common theme of journey stories.

The Utah Museum of Fine Arts Traveling Museum Project installs exhibitions in communities and schools throughout Utah. Thanks to Grand County library for hosting.



Charlie Steen's

MI VIDA

by Maxine Newell

Charlie Steen's
MI VIDA

The story of the world's first uranium boom, the man who started it, and the effect of both on Moab, Utah.

By Maxine Newell

ON SALE

at
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