



The Wonders of Page, AZ

This issue of *Pathfinder Newsletter* is not your usual three- or four-day guided tour. Instead, it's a one-day side trip from Zion National Park to Page, Arizona. (Page is worthwhile as a primary vacation destination; we help you with that in this issue.)

Page is not on most people's radar, because it's a bit remote and requires extra driving to get there. But it does have Lower Antelope Canyon, Lake Powell and Horseshoe Bend, three marvelous attractions that are well worth the trip—and that draw more than two million visitors a year.

What's so great about these three attractions?

Look at the photos above and you'll see that: Lower Antelope Canyon is a magical underground slot canyon; beautiful Lake Powell is a water-lover's paradise; and Horseshoe Bend is a breathtaking deep curve of the Colorado River.

So, as an extension of your visit to Zion (see the Fall 2009 *Pathfinder Newsletter*), why not head on over to Page and enjoy some delicious food for the eyes? Start with the photographic appetizers in this issue.

Pathfinder Newsletter

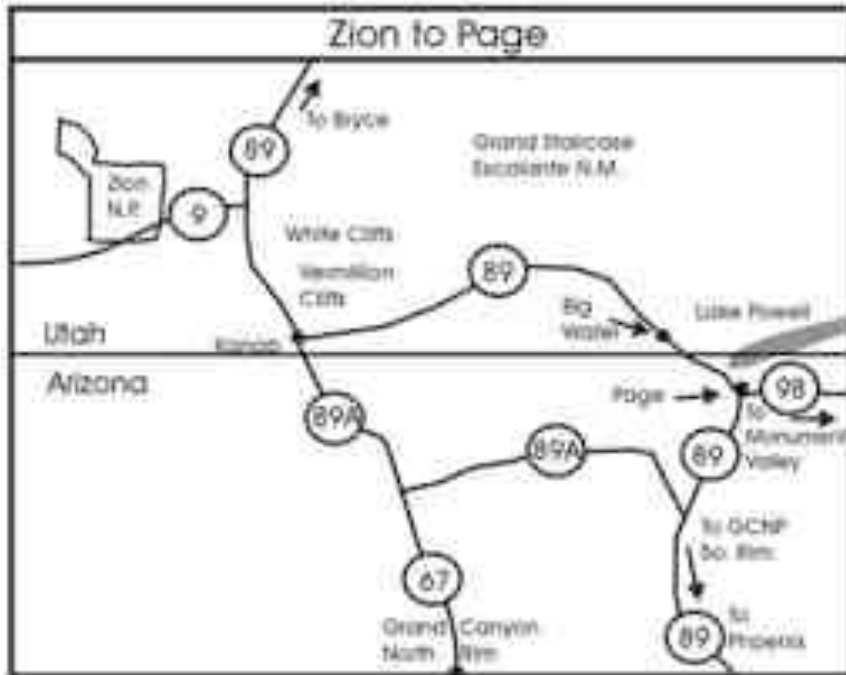
Winter 2010

Guided Tours of Cities, Towns, and National Parks in the American West
by the Authors of *Seven Perfect Days in Arizona*, *Seven Perfect Days in Colorado*,
and *Seven Perfect Days in Northern California*

Here's a heads-up for anyone wanting to take good photographs at Lower Antelope Canyon: The best time for shooting is between 11:00 am and 1:00 pm. You'll need to time your drive to Page accordingly.

The Drive to Page

The drive from the east entrance of Zion National Park to Page is 114 miles (183 km) and will take you a little over two hours. The directions are easy: Head east on Highway 9 to Highway 89, then south and east on 89 to Page. Here are several things to look for along the way:



During the 17 miles (27 km) between the junction of Highways 9&89 and Kanab, look to the left/east and you'll see the White Cliffs of Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument. These cliffs are the front edge of one of five levels of land that ascend a total of 3,500 feet (1,070 m) from the North Rim of Grand Canyon to Bryce Canyon. You'll see another Staircase riser just east of Kanab, on the left side of Highway 89; it's reddish-purple in color and called the Vermilion Cliffs.

If you want to learn about Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument, stop at the Kanab Visitor Center, which is located at 745 East Highway 89, on the east side of town (open 8:00-5:00, seven days a week, from March through the first week in December, 435- 644-4680, http://www.blm.gov/ut/st/en/fo/grand_staircase-escalante.html). This visitor center focuses on the archeology and geology of the Monument.

Because of the picturesque cliffs and the Kanab area's Old West ambiance, more than 100 motion pictures and television shows have been filmed here, mostly during the 1950s, 60s and 70s. They include "The Lone Ranger," "How the West Was Won," "The Outlaw Josie Wales," "Wagon Train" and 20 episodes of "Gunsmoke." For more information about Kanab, go to www.visitkanab.info.

During the 65 miles (105 km) between Kanab and Big Water, you'll be driving within the southern boundary of Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument. There is another GSENM visitor center in Big Water. It's located at 100 Upper Revolution Way (open 9:00-6:00, seven days a week, from April through October, and 8:00-5:00, seven days a week November through March, 435-675-3200, same website as above). This visitor center focuses on paleontology and

geology and has real dinosaur fossils on display. Shortly after Big Water, you'll get your first glimpse of Lake Powell. Bypass Lake Powell for now and, drive on into Page on Lake Powell Blvd.

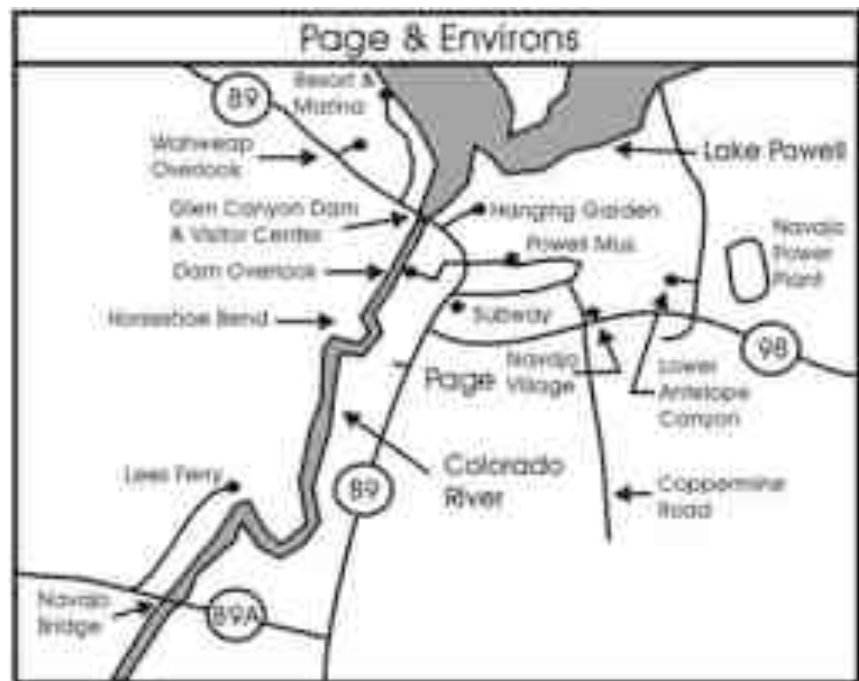
Page, AZ

This is a town that wouldn't be in existence except for Lake Powell. It was started as a construction workers' village in 1956 when work began on Glen Canyon Dam. Over the years, as tourists started coming to Lake Powell, Page gradually grew to its present size of 9,500 permanent residents, most of whom seem to be serving those tourists. It's a pert, new-looking town; you won't find any historic Old West buildings within its city limits. The town was named for U.S. Bureau of Reclamation Commissioner John C. Page.

Today, Page presents itself as the gateway to nearby Lake Powell and to not-too-far-away Monument Valley, and to Zion, Bryce and Grand Canyons. And there are other attractions in the area that draw tourists as well; they're listed in the last part of this issue.

A quick drive-through of Page on Lake Powell Blvd. will take you past Church Row, an unusual collection of 12 churches that were given land by the Bureau of Reclamation. Continue to the

corner of Lake Powell Blvd. and Highway 89, where you'll find a Subway sandwich shop in Gateway Plaza (813 N. Hwy 89, 928-645-3301). We suggest that you order a sandwich or salad there and take it with you to Lower Antelope Canyon (there is no food for sale at the canyon). There is often a line at the canyon ticket booth during the noontime prime hours, and there is a covered picnic table where you can eat while waiting for your tour to start.



Lower Antelope Canyon

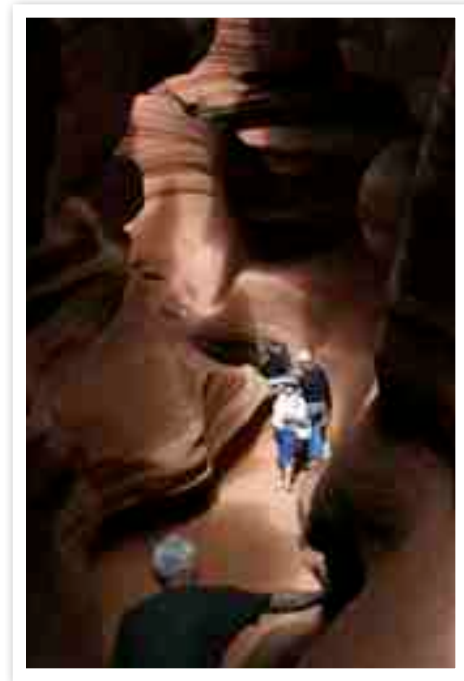
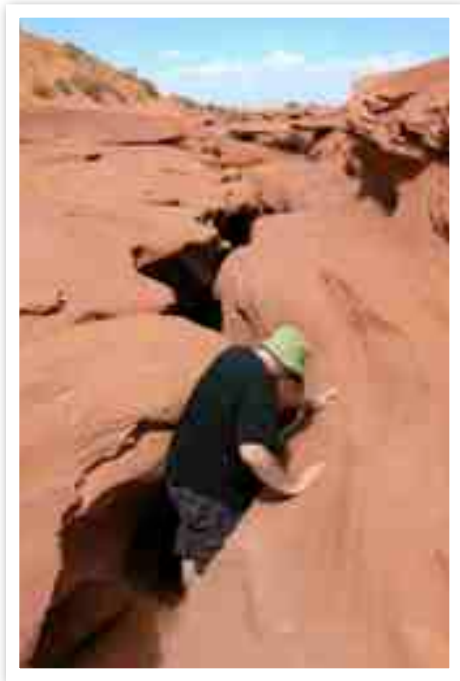
To get to Lower Antelope Canyon from the Subway sandwich shop, drive south on Highway 89 about one-half mile to Highway 98. Then turn left/east and drive about four miles (6 km), mostly on Navajo land, to the intersection that's just before the Navajo Generating Station. Turn left at that intersection and again left about ¼-mile later.

We suggest that you do not turn right at the intersection and go to Upper Antelope Canyon. The Lower Canyon tour is less crowded and does not require a 3-1/2-mile ride in an open-

air truck to get to the canyon. However, if you are not able to negotiate metal stairways, the Upper Canyon tour may be best for you. [For more information, visit: www.navajonationparks.org/htm/antelopecanyon.htm.]

Advance reservations for tours of Lower Antelope Canyon are not taken; it's first come, first served. The cost is \$26 for adults and \$18 for children and worth every penny. For the best photographic opportunities, you'll want to take one of the hour-long tours between 11:00 am and 1:00 pm, and you'll need a sunny day.

Lower Antelope Canyon is one of many slot canyons in the American Southwest, but it's special because it's among the most beautiful. Slot canyons are narrow openings in rock—either above or below ground—that have been eroded by flash floods and wind-driven sand over millions of years. The rock in Lower Antelope Canyon is comprised of petrified sand dunes known as Navajo Sandstone.



Professional and nonprofessional photographers flock to Antelope Canyon to capture the dramatic sculpted and convoluted shapes that change from red to pink to rose to orange to purple, depending upon the illumination that bounces from wall to wall from above. The scene is especially photogenic about noontime when shafts of sunlight pierce the semi-darkness and shine on the sand floor and side walls of the canyon. The graceful curves and swirls—many of them sensuous—change constantly as you progress through the quarter-mile-long canyon (0.4 km).

Entry into the canyon is through a narrow slit in the rock and down several short metal stairways that are bolted into the walls. About half way through the ever-downward path there is another longer metal stairway. Maximum depth is about 120 feet (37 m).

Your group will be accompanied by a Navajo guide who will ensure that you exit the canyon via the last stairway (72 steps).

So, what words summarize a visit to Lower Antelope Canyon? Fascinating. Enchanting.

Horseshoe Bend

To get to Horseshoe Bend from Lower Antelope Canyon, drive back to Page/Highway 89. Turn left and drive about two miles to just south of highway marker 545. You'll see the access road and parking area on the right.

Then, you'll need to hike up a large hill in deep sand and walk downhill about one-half mile (0.8 km) to the edge of the cliff where you'll see a breathtaking view of the Colorado River 1,000 feet (305 m) below you. That's as high as a 100-story building! The elevation where you'll be standing is 4,200 feet (1,280 m) above sea level.

This attraction can be visited in as little as one-half hour (hike included), but we recommend at least an hour. Take photographs. Sit, relax and enjoy the outstanding view. *If the weather is hot, it's important that you have drinking water with you.* If you have kids or teenagers along, make sure they stay well away from the edge of the cliff; there is no railing, just a long way down.



Here is what people had to say about Horseshoe Bend on TripAdvisor.com: “Wow!” “breath taking,” “awesome,” “the most fantastic view ever,” “almost spiritual,” “unique and beautiful,” “spectacular,” “incredible,” “a hidden gem,” and “not to be missed.”

Take a look at the fabulous photo that nature and wildlife professional photographer, Stephen Oachs, took of Horseshoe Bend at sunset:

www.stephenoachs.com/gallery-horseshoe-bend.php.

Glen Canyon Dam and Visitor Center

Next, drive north on Highway 89, pass Page, cross the Glen Canyon Bridge, and immediately turn into the Carl Hayden Visitor Center. There, in this National Park Service facility, you'll be able to learn about Lake Powell and the construction of Glen Canyon Dam, as well as take a tour of the dam itself.

The dam's main purpose is to use the Colorado River's might to provide electrical power for Arizona, Utah, New Mexico, Colorado and Wyoming, and irrigation waters for agricultural areas downstream. Construction on the dam began in 1956 and was completed in 1963. The dam is 710 feet tall (216 m) and got that way one 24-metric ton bucket of concrete at a time—day and night for three years! It then took Lake Powell 17 years to completely fill for the first time.

Forty-five minute tours of the dam are offered daily, on the half-hour, for a small fee. Just register at the reservation desk in the visitor center. There are also exhibits, slide shows, a large-scale relief map of the area, an endangered fish display, and a bookstore to browse (open daily 8-5 from March through October and 8:30-4:30 November-February, 928-608-6404, www.nps.gov/glca/planyourvisit/visitorcenters.htm).

By the way, the adjacent Glen Canyon Bridge was built to allow workers and equipment to cross the Colorado River during construction of the dam. Interestingly, it was built in California, disassembled, then transported to each side of the canyon and reassembled in 1959.



Lake Powell

This man-made behemoth of a reservoir—the second largest in the U.S., behind Lake Mead—is 186 miles long (299 km) and has 96 major side canyons, 1,960 miles of shoreline (3,200 km), and an average depth of 132 feet (40 m). When full, the lake sits at 3,700 feet above sea level (1,130 m). Its entire length, and more than 1 million acres of adjoining land (405,000 hectares), is managed as the Glen Canyon National Recreation Area by the U. S. National Park Service. To put the length of the shoreline in perspective, Lake Powell's shoreline is 670 miles longer than the West Coast of the United States!

The high-desert landscape surrounding the lake—mostly Navajo sandstone—is totally treeless, and has very little vegetation, but it has a beauty that's colorful and serene, especially in the early morning and evening. The average humidity is about 40 percent. The lake is named for John Wesley Powell who explored the Colorado River in 1869 and 1871 with nine companions.

Lake Powell's unique and stunning scenery has attracted movie producers since 1962 when "The Greatest Story Ever Told" was filmed here. Many other movies and TV shows have been filmed here, including "Planet of the Apes," "Flintstones II," "Superman III" and "Maverick."

You know that this is a remote location, right? So, what is it that attracts two million visitors a year to the Glen Can National Recreation Area?

Activities on the sapphire-blue waters are plentiful here: it's probably the #1 houseboat vacation spot in the U.S; it's a great place to water ski, jet ski and wakeboard, and to rent a small boat or kayak (one- or two-person) to explore the lake; and it's a great place to fish. Smooth wa-

ter raft trips on the Colorado River depart from the base of Glen Canyon Dam and end at historic Lees Ferry. You can take a scenic five-hour interpretive boat tour to Rainbow National Monument. You can enjoy an evening cruise and dinner on the lake. Information on each of these activities, as well as land-based activities, can be found later in this issue.

Of course, if you have just a few hours at Lake Powell, you'll have to be very selective. (To create more time, you could skip the visitor center and Glen Canyon Dam tour.) Here are our recommendations:

Enter Glen Canyon National Recreation Area from Highway 89 immediately north of the Glen Canyon Dam, and drive to Wahweap Marina, the largest (850 slips) of six marinas on the lake. ("Wahweap" is a Paiute Indian word meaning "bitter water.")

*Here's a tip: the entrance fee for a 1 to 7-day pass is \$15.00 per car, but if you are a U.S. citizen or permanent resident 62 years of age or older, you're eligible for the Golden Age Passport. It costs only \$10.00 and gives you lifetime access to **all** Park Service facilities in the U.S. Passengers who are with you will be admitted free of charge.*

Looking north from the marina, you'll see Wahweap Bay in the foreground with the Kaiparowits Plateau beyond the bay. Wahweap Bay straddles the Arizona-Utah state line. The Kaiparowits Plateau is one of three major components of Utah's Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument. As-the-crow-flies, the plateau stretches more than 50 miles north to Utah's Highway 12 and 75 miles west to Highway 89.

Next, check out the Lake Powell Resort and its gift shop, which has authentic American Indian handcrafts and a good selection of area-related books.

Then, we suggest that you get out on the water and find out what Lake Powell *feels* like. You can rent a powerboat, jet ski or kayak, by the hour or longer, at the resort's Boat Rental Office just a short drive/walk north of the hotel (928-645-1111), or reserve one by calling 800-528-6154 or 928-645-2433, or online at www.lakepowell.com/houseboats/watercraft.cfm. Or you can take a cruise on the lake; to make a reservation or for more information, call 888-896-3829 or see www.lakepowell.com/activities/tours-overview.cfm.

If you'd rather not go out on the water, we offer four alternatives:

1. Walk down to the resort's dock and take a closer look at the lake and the boats.
2. Drive up to Wahweap Overlook for a panoramic view of Lake Powell and the general Page, AZ area. To get there, drive about three quarters of a mile north of the Carl Hayden Visitor Center on Highway 89 (just past the truck-weighing station) and turn right.
3. Go to Glen Canyon Dam Overlook for a dramatic view of the dam and the Colorado River far below. To get to the overlook, drive 1.5 miles (2.4 km) south of Carl Hayden Visitor Center on Highway 89 to Scenic View Dr., turn right, then right again at the first road.
4. Or you may prefer an easy-to-moderate one-mile round trip hike to Hanging Garden, where you can see a small desert oasis—fed by a seep spring—on the mesa top, high above Lake Powell. To get to the trailhead, drive ¼-mile east of the Glen Canyon Bridge on Highway 89, turn left/north and proceed about 500 yards to the parking area.

If You Want to Spend More Time in the Page Area

The two best online resources that we've found for information about Glen Canyon National Recreation Area and Lake Powell are www.nps.gov/glca and www.utahoutdoors.com/pages/lake_powell-overview.htm.

For informative brochures about the Page area and beyond, we suggest that you contact: 1) the Page-Lake Powell Tourism Bureau and request a copy of its visitor brochure, "Page Arizona: A Journal of Discovery and Adventure" (647-A Elm St., Page 86040, 888-261-7243, www.pagelakepowelltourism.com); and 2) Adventure Publications for its brochure, "Page-Lake Powell Official Visitor Guide" (P.O. 3645, Flagstaff, AZ 86003, 800-440-6507 or 928-526-3666, or visit www.powellguide.com).

For lodging in the area, consider Lake Powell Resort at Wahweap Marina (800-528-6154 or 928-645-2433, www.lakepowell.com). For accommodations in Page, see www.pagelakepowelltourism.com.

Here are some things that we'll consider doing the next time we visit Page/Lake Powell:

Rent a houseboat – This is a great way to explore the lake's canyons, to enjoy the remarkable beauty of the area, and to relax, swim, snorkel, scuba-dive, fish, hike, and look for some of the many American Indian archeological sites in the area. In-season, there is a three-day minimum, and it's wise to reserve a year in advance. For information and reservations: 888-896-3829 or 928-645-2433, www.lakepowell.com/houseboats/index.cfm.

Take the scenic boat tour to Rainbow Bridge National Monument - 100,000 people visit the monument annually to admire the striking 290-foot-high sandstone natural bridge that has a span of 275 feet; the U.S. Capitol Building could fit under its arch. There are full-day and half-day trips. For information and reservations: 888-896-3829 or 928-645-2433, www.lakepowell.com/activities/tours-overview.cfm.

Take a dinner cruise on the Canyon Princess – 2-1/2 hours on the lake; no dress code. Contact Lake Powell Resorts and Marinas, 888-896-3829 or 928-645-2433, www.lakepowell.com/activities/tours-overview.cfm.

Take a smoothwater raft trip on the Colorado River – This is a 15-mile (24 km), 5-1/2 hour pontoon raft trip—between colorful 1,000-foot-high walls (305 m)—that starts at the base of Glen Canyon Dam and ends at Lee's Ferry. Contact Colorado River Discovery at 888-522-6644 or 928-645-9175, or visit www.raftthecanyon.com.

Visit Lee's Ferry – 42 driving miles south of Page, this is the only place within hundreds of miles of canyon country where you can drive down to the Colorado River. It's also where smoothwater rafting trips from Glen Canyon pull out and where whitewater rafting trips through Grand Canyon put in. If you're a history buff, you'll enjoy the story and the pioneer-era buildings at this much-used crossing place on the Colorado River.

www.nps.gov/glca/planyourvisit/lees-ferry.htm and www.desertusa.com/mag06/nov/leesferry.html.

Visit the John Wesley Powell Memorial Museum - Features exhibits about the one-armed Civil War veteran who explored the uncharted Colorado River with nine companions in 1869 and 1871, as well as American Indian and pioneer artifacts. The museum also serves as a visitor information center for the Page area. Open Monday-Friday, 9-5, #6 N. Lake Powell Blvd., Page, AZ 86040, 888-597-6873 or 928-645-3412, www.powellmuseum.org.

Visit the Navajo Village Heritage Center - Spend “An Evening With the Navajo”—a 2-1/2 hour program that begins at 5:00 or 6:00 pm and includes a Navajo Taco dinner (reserve on-line). Learn about the history, culture and traditions of the Diné (Navajo) people—the largest tribe of American Indians in the United States. See Navajo hogans, a bread oven and a sweat lodge. Meet Navajos and observe a silversmith, a rug weaver and native dancers in action. Located in the Big Lake Trading Post on the northeast corner of Highway 98 and Coppermine Rd.; 928-660-0304, www.navajo-village.com.

Hike - See the Glen Canyon National Recreation Area website for hiking recommendations: www.nps.gov/glca/planyourvisit/hiking.htm. Also see www.utahoutdoors.com/pages/lake_powell-overview.htm for a comprehensive list of local trails, including articles about those trails.

Fish -There are plenty of largemouth, smallmouth and striped bass, walleye, crappie, catfish, brown trout, bluegill and northern pike in the lake. The “Lake Powell Photo Map” tells you where to find them; you can get the map from the Lake Powell Resort’s gift shop, 928-645-2433. Want rainbow trout? Fish in the Colorado River, between Glen Canyon Dam and Lee’s Ferry. Arizona and Utah fishing licenses can be purchased at the Wahweap Marina store.

Enjoy evening ranger programs at Wahweap Campground amphitheater – Learn about the area’s geology, wildlife, and human/cultural history several nights a week during the summer months. For more information, inquire at the Carl Hayden Visitor Center, 928-608-6404 or go online to www.nps.gov/glca.

Potential Day Trips From Page

Each of these trips would involve a lot of driving, and the visits would be shorter than is desirable, but it is possible to enjoy highlights of the following sites in one day. One way distances and estimated driving times from Page are:

Bryce Canyon National Park - 152 miles/245 km, 3 hours (www.nps.gov/brca; also see the Fall 2009 *Pathfinder Newsletter* at www.traveltheamericanwest.com)

Grand Canyon National Park North Rim - 114 miles/183 km, 2.5 hours (www.nps.gov/grca).

Grand Canyon National Park South Rim - 140 miles/225 km, 2.75 hours (www.nps.gov/grca; also see the Spring 2009 *Pathfinder Newsletter* at www.traveltheamericanwest.com)

Monument Valley Navajo Tribal Park - 123 miles/198 km, 2.75 hours, www.navajonationparks.org/htm/monumentvalley.htm /

Zion National Park - 114 miles/183 km, 2.25 hours (www.nps.gov/zion; also see the Fall 2009 *Pathfinder Newsletter* at www.traveltheamericanwest.com)

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Next Issue: “Monterey, Carmel and Big Sur”