

**March 2009**  
**V-V Discovery Days**

By Roy Julian, Friends of the Forest

Come on out to V-V Discovery Days on the 28<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup> of March to see and participate in a wide variety of archeological and prehistoric activities. The event will be held at the V-V Cultural Heritage Site which is also home to the largest collection of petroglyphs in the Verde Valley. The site is located just one half mile past the Beaver Creek Ranger Station on road 618. As you cross over beautiful Wet Beaver Creek, watch for the sign and turn at the next right.

This event, which is now going into its 9<sup>th</sup> season, is free to the public, although a Red Rock Pass is required to park at the site. There will be activities and events for children of all ages to participate in and enjoy.

Come and throw an atlatl dart at one of Ruth Cornell's fantastically hand-painted ice-age creatures, and see how challenging it was for our early ancestors to bring home supper! This activity will be supervised by Ranger Will Hill of the Red Rock Ranger District. Using an atlatl or spear thrower is a great lesson in how early man understood the concept of leverage and applied it to this remarkable weapon to greatly increase its power and range.

Al Cornell, former President of Friends of the Forest, will be on hand demonstrating numerous methods of how to make fire by primitive means. People are fascinated watching Al make a hand-drill or bow-drill fire, using all primitive technologies. They really get interested when he brings out the Arctic strap drill, the fire plough, or the fire saw. And if that's not enough, ask him to use the fire piston, or light your dress on fire with your cell phone battery, or a coke bottle full of water or. well, you get the idea. Al calls himself a "pyro-technologist," and I really believe he can light a fire with virtually anything. While visiting his booth, be sure to look over his educational displays showing the many, many types of plants, woods, and weeds that can be used for primitive drills, hearth-boards, and tinder.

Monica Marquez, of the Yavapai-Apache Nation, will be on hand showing how her people make a delicious tasting drink from the red berries of the sumac bush. This beverage, which is high in vitamin C, has a tart-sweet flavor which is quite refreshing. Monica, along with other members of her tribe, will also be cooking up a savory pot of acorn stew, a traditional dish of her people. Acorns, a food high in protein and fiber, have a very low glycemic index compared to most contemporary foods. The Yavapai Bird Dancers and Gourd Singers will also be performing.

Lisa Deem-Edmonson will be there from Elden Pueblo demonstrating and supervising the use of rabbit sticks. These devices were used by many peoples in the Americas to hunt for small game. Usually made of some type of hardwood and often curved, the stick was frequently thrown from a side-handed position to try to make it skim along the ground as far as possible, thereby increasing the probability of hitting a running rabbit, squirrel, or quail. These weapons were relatively simple and quick to make compared to, say, a bow and arrow rig, and were quite effective in the hands of a skilled practitioner.

Ken Zoll, President of the Archeological Society, will be down at the rock art site at 1pm, explaining his captivating research on archeoastronomy, or how ancient peoples in our area may have used the sun to help them determine crop planting and harvesting cycles, as well as other time-related events such as rituals, festivals or dances. Ken has published a book on the topic, called Sinagua Sunwatchers, which lays out in detail his research and documentation for solar calendars. His extensive knowledge of the hundreds of petroglyphs at the rock art site makes listening to his presentation a real treat.

Skip Larson, Park Ranger at Montezuma Castle, has a great display on ethnobotany. This exhibit shows how native plants of our area were possibly used by prehistoric peoples for food, medicine, cordage, weapons, and ceremonial purposes. Photos or samples of the actual plants are available in most cases.

If you have ever wondered how cultures in the Southwest made their footwear, stop by the primitive yucca sandal booth, where Roy Julian, President of Friends of the Forest, will be demonstrating the simple plaited style of sandal. These sandals, often made from the leaves and fiber of banana yucca, were a quick way to obtain tough and reliable footwear in an area where leather was often a precious commodity. The effective weaving techniques of the ancients demonstrate their ingenuity, intelligence and skill in dealing with one of man's age-old dilemmas

A special treat for everyone will be seeing the authentic mountain man display put on by Rob Erb and his "Les Miserables Primites". These fellows have really done their homework when it comes to presenting what a mountain man camp may have looked like a couple of hundred years ago. Replete with birch bark canoe, authentic tents, wardrobe, medicine, food, flintlocks, knives, and hatchets of the era, these friendly guys really know their stuff and enjoy talking about it. If you have ever wondered what it would be like to live during that time period, be sure to stop by this incredible display!

Also come and see Roger Dorr making Northern Sinagua paddle and anvil pottery, or sample some of Ruby and Lenore's Hopi parched corn, or watch expert flintknapper Robert Schultz make an arrowhead from stone, or check out one of the many, many other exhibits.

See you there!!

If you are interested in making a difference, become involved with the **Friends of the Forest**. For more information visit our website at: <http://www.friendsoftheforestsedona.org> or contact the Red Rock Ranger Station at (928) 203-2900.

*Roy Julian is President of Friends of the Forest.*