


Subject: Oct Newsletter, The Curmudgeon Chronicles
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Sent: Tuesday, September 30, 2025 9:03 AM
To: akosathome@hotmail.com <akosathome@hotmail.com>
Subject: The Curmudgeon Chronicles

September 30, 2025



I explore Arizona one hiking trail
and one restaurant at a time.



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The Curmudgeon Chronicles

This won't come as a surprise but I am a crotchety curmudgeon. I'm an old man out of step with today's world. I'm not bothered by this, just stating a fact.

I received yet another reminder of my general disconnectedness when a buddy and I recently hiked to the prominent natural arch in Sedona known as Devil's Bridge. This has always been a popular trail but since becoming a superstar on social media it has taken on a very different character.

What makes Devil's Bridge unique is that hikers can walk out across the span. That's a pretty special photo op and it's always been fun to snap a shot of friends atop the arch. Nothing wrong with that. I've done it myself. But as is the case with any striking photo opportunity, social media has drastically skewed the experience. I hadn't been there in many years but since I was writing an article about Sedona hiking, we hit the trail.

Even though we went at an off time it was still very crowded. But here's what surprised me. What you don't see in the image is the line of people waiting for their turn to pose atop the arch. While I wandered around snapping photos for my article, I eavesdropped on conversations. And they all revolved around people planning their poses for their spotlight moment. Or critiquing other folks poses. Or handing their phones to friends or strangers and discussing the poses they would be doing and what settings to use. One girl wondered whether she should change tops. Who hikes with a wardrobe?

Everything—absolutely everything—revolved around the photo op. Not once did I hear anyone comment on the beauty of the red rocks, the crystal-sharp sky, or the remarkable setting. They didn't seem to be there for any of that. It felt like they were there to acquire a photo of themselves in a slightly different location than all the other photos they have of themselves.

Sorry. I don't mean to sound snide. I'm not part of selfie culture. That's a young person thing, and that's their prerogative. Young people are allowed to do lots of idiot stuff, just like I did in my idiot youth. I'm not crabbing about behavior. It just pains me to think of people working so hard to manufacture a moment instead of simply being present in the actual moment. My only concern is that they're letting so much amazing stuff slip past them while they prepare for their endless series of close ups. My advice to them—when I'm not yelling at them to get off of my lawn—is to go forth and take all the selfies you want. Just be sure to put the phone down long enough to revel in the incredible world around you. That's all I'm saying. I'll climb off my soapbox now.



Making the hard sweet choice

It's the time of year when we look inward on an important journey of self-discovery. It is time to buy Halloween candy.

Candy holds a magical and lifelong sway over us. Candy may not solve problems but it lowers our angst level and helps us regain an emotional footing. It transports us back to a time when life seemed sharp and sure and worry-free. Better than food of the gods, candy is the food of toddlers. Mother's milk weaned us but candy gave us a reason to drag our Underoo-swaddled behinds out of bed each morning.

What kind of candy you buy as an adult says a lot about the person you have become. Here are a few personal observations.

Chunky, KitKat, Nestle Crunch, Mounds, Almond Joy: You are warm, witty, and universally loved. Genius doesn't begin to describe your towering intellect. The Nobel Prize Committee keeps you on speed dial. If Sinatra were still alive, he'd have people beaten up for you.

Snickers, Mr. Goodbar, Twix, M&Ms: You are generous of spirit and popular at parties. You move with a feline grace. Strangers comment on how good your breath smells. You're often referred to as the fifth Beatle.

Smarties, Gummy Bears: You were the first member of your family to graduate from college. It was clown college but still a glowing achievement.

Dots, Necco Wafers, Jujufruits, chewing gum, candy corn: Your hobbies include staring at things and poking things with a stick. You have appeared on the show *Cops* so many times you're listed as executive producer.

Tootsie Rolls: You are the wind beneath my wings. Expect me Halloween night. Several times.



On the air

When it comes to Arizona yakkety-yak, I can sling it with the best of them. That's probably why I keep popping up on television and radio and other similar conveyances. I was honored to appear as a guest on some of my favorite programs last month. There I was on PBS's *Arizona Horizon* with host Ted Simons. My segment was right after Ted hashed out important issues with Secretary of State, Adrian Fontes. (Guess who was the most underdressed person out of that trio?) We talked about my 50-year Arizona anniversary and some of my favorite places in the state. Always a pleasure. You can watch the interview right [here](#).

I also chatted with Lauren Gilger on KJZZ's *The Show*. Lauren is wonderful and she's like a therapist. She gets me talking about feelings and junk. In this case, we talked about how the end of summer always makes me sad. While fall is a gorgeous season it comes with a bit of back-to-school melancholy and a Midwestern low-level winter dread. Still, weather-wise, it's tough to beat October. I always say this is the absolute best time to travel Arizona and I explain why and offer some tips on where to go. You can listen to the broadcast [here](#).



Upcoming book talks

Here's your chance to meet me in real life and see if I'm as delightful in the flesh as I am on the page. (Spoiler alert: I'm not.) I'll be back on the road in October giving presentations that are open to the general public. First up will be back-to-back dates in Payson. On Monday Oct. 20, I'll be at the Payson Library at 10:00 a.m. giving a talk on my book, *Arizona National Parks and Monuments*. It's always such a fun crowd that turns out here.

The next day, Tuesday Oct. 21, I'm doing the same at the always informative Rim Country Museum right there in Payson's Green Valley Park. That talk is at 1:00 p.m. It's a great little facility, and they often have cookies for my talks. Yum! I always like supporting our libraries and museums.

On Oct. 23, I'll be at Western Spirit: Scottsdale's Museum of the West. This time, I'll be giving a presentation on my book *The Amazing Kolb Brothers of Grand Canyon* at 6:00 p.m. This is one of my most popular talks about two incredible characters, the last of the Grand Canyon pioneers. Seats are limited so reserve a spot now. You can purchase tickets for just the talk, or you can get tickets to tour the museum as well. Come early and explore this amazing facility then end the evening by listening to a suave, charming raconteur spin yarns about the exploits of these river-running photographers and daredevils. Purchase tickets by clicking [here](#).

Arizona National Parks and Monuments

Scenic Wonders and Cultural Treasures
of the Grand Canyon State

ROGER NAYLOR

Author of Arizona State Parks



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