



MUSEUM
NOTES

SPRING 2024

The long history of horses

The new exhibition "Horse and Rider: A Southwest Story" combines art, culture, and science

DOGS MAY BE MAN'S BEST FRIEND, but people prefer to draw horses. The museum's art collection contains only a couple images of dogs, but more than a hundred paintings, drawings and sculptures of horses, some of which are on view in the new exhibition "Horse and Rider: A Southwest Story."

The first art piece recorded into the MNA collections was a pencil drawing of two "Horses in a Sandstorm" by Mark Seecody, a Diné boy from Tuba City. He'd entered the drawing into the 1936 Junior Indian Art Show, where it caught the eye of the Coltons. They bought the drawing for the museum, the first of many pieces of horse art in the collection, many by well-known artists like Allan Houser, Beatie Yazz, Harrison Begay, and Pop Chalee. Today MNA has more than a hundred pieces of horse art.

The bond between people and horses can be seen through the art itself, but to bring a deeper understanding we consulted with Zuni, Hopi, and Diné people who could share their personal experiences and cultural insights. These interviews were recorded and incorporated into the exhibition, both as part of a video that plays on a loop, and in the text panels and choices of what to display and how to display it.

"Me and my buddies would saddle up the horses and just go ride around all day," said Merwin Lomayestewa, IT Support Specialist at MNA, who grew up at the Hopi Village of Shongopovi. "Some of the places we would go were pretty steep and they were surefooted, they wouldn't trip on things like we would normally do and also going up the steep inclines they were good at that so that's what we would use them for."

Horses also run through the childhood memories of Curtis Quam, who is a member of the Pueblo of Zuni Cultural Advisory Council.

"I have snapshots in my mind of just seeing horses running through different places and running back and forth and how valuable this was to the task at hand and communicating with people when there was no cell phones," Quam said. Even today, "there's some places where you can only get by foot or by horse, where it's not accessible by vehicle."

Horses remain culturally important, particularly for the Diné (Navajo). The traditional Diné lifestyle involved moving regularly between summer and winter homes and relying on freerange

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Dear Supporters,

It has been a busy and creative start to 2024 here at MNA, where we have launched two new exhibitions in the past two months, *Selling the Southwest* and *Horse & Rider: A Southwest Story*, and are hard at work designing *The Grand Canyon Dragon Map*, opening in May. Together these three exhibitions shed new light on diverse aspects of the art, science, and culture of the Colorado Plateau. I am looking

forward to spending a lot of time in the galleries this summer enjoying these beautiful and engaging shows.

Both *Horse & Rider* and *Selling the Southwest* are largely made up of pieces from the MNA collections. While there are many opportunities to see the collections on public tours, these exhibitions give visitors another opportunity to see pieces that have not been on display in recent years, or in some cases, ever. You won't want to miss these exhibitions!

The *Grand Canyon Dragon Map* is particularly exciting to me personally, as the idea for this exhibition was born while I was deep on a Grand Canyon river trip in the summer of 2022 guided by Wayne Ranney. Wayne pulled out his tattered copy of the "Blue Dragon Map" every day as he taught our group about the canyon's spectacular geology, noting that the map had been created at MNA. That sparked the idea for an exhibition about the map with Wayne as curator, and just two years later, it is a thrill to see it coming to fruition.

In addition to a lively exhibition season, I am pleased to share with you that MNA has recently been reaccredited by the American Alliance of Museums. This means MNA meets the museum field's highest standards for our operations and impact, including care for collections, meaningful educational and research programs, financial stability, and more. . You can read more about the significance of reaccreditation on page 3.

Your support is crucial to the programs and initiatives described in this edition of Museum Notes, and so much more. Thank you! I look forward to seeing you at the museum this summer at some of our many wonderful events!

Sincerely,

Mary J. Kershaw
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR & CEO

MNA RECOGNIZED FOR EXCELLENCE

MNA EMERGED from one of the most difficult times for museums stronger and with a stamp of approval from the American Alliance of Museums (AAM). In March MNA received an AAM certification of reaccreditation after a rigorous process of self-study and peer reviews. The process verified that MNA continues to be a good steward of its resources held in the public trust, meeting high standards for care for collections, meaningful educational and research programs, and financial stability.

MNA is among just 3% of US museums accredited by AAM. The AAM reviewers noted that "energy and an entrepreneurial spirit has brought the Museum not only safely through the pandemic but also having made major steps towards a firmer footing and shared mission."

The reviewers also recognized MNA's longstanding relationships with the Indigenous tribes of the Colorado



Plateau as one of the museum's major strengths and noted that "the deep and lasting partnerships the Museum has developed with regional Tribal Nations [provide] a wide-ranging and inclusive basis for the development of exemplary interpretive activities."

They called the Easton Collections Center "a model of inclusivity and partnership with Tribal Nations," noting how collections staff "facilitate interaction with the collections,

particularly in supporting Tribal members in developing their own cultural and artistic practices. It is, in every way, impressive."

During the pandemic many museums ran deficits and some have not recovered. More than 100 U.S. museums permanently closed in the last four years, including at least six in Arizona.

The AAM reviewers noted that MNA used the pandemic to plan, build capacity and ownership, and set the institution on an ambitious trajectory. In their final report the reviewers wrote:

"The Museum of Northern Arizona is also to be commended for using its time during the pandemic to regroup, refocus through a new strategic plan, create a robust development plan, and establish a new approach to managing its finances."

The reviewers go on to say that "MNA is now at a pivotal moment having spent the last few years working to set the institution onto a sustainable and mission-focused path."

The tasks ahead include increasing museum attendance. In 2023 MNA attendance was about 67% of what it had been in 2019. This is a common situation for museums. Only a third of the museums responding to AAM's 2023 survey had recovered their pre-pandemic attendance. Those that had not bounced back were, on average, experiencing only 71 percent of their 2019 attendance.



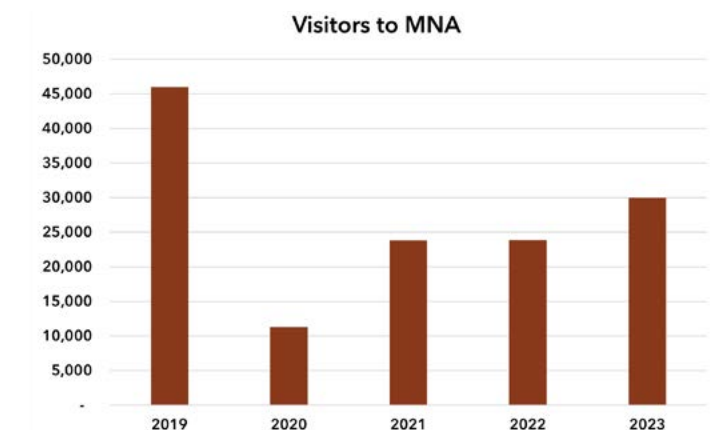
The Museum of Northern Arizona is among just 3% of the museums in the country accredited by the American Alliance of Museums.

YOUR IMPACT IN 2023 BY THE NUMBERS

Thanks to your support...

- 141** Researchers used museum collections
- 1,170** People attended a museum tour
- 1,892** Children visited took a school field trip to the museum
- 5,050** People attended a talk, tour, performance, festival, or event at MNA

And much more!



WELCOME TO OUR NEWEST TRUSTEE



DAVID KRING spent the first half of his career at the University of Arizona in the Department of Planetary Sciences, Department of Geosciences, and the Institute for the Study of Planet Earth. While there he led student trips to Colorado Plateau destinations including Meteor Crater, the San Francisco

Volcanic Field, the Grand Canyon, Painted Desert, Arches and Canyonlands. He is currently at Houston's Lunar and Planetary Institute helping NASA develop a lunar exploration program. He often returns to Flagstaff to train students and astronauts how to explore the Moon and other planetary surfaces using the area's geologic sites, many of which were first studied by MNA geologists. He loves the Colorado Plateau because it provides a window into the Earth's past and the spectacular forces that shaped the surface of our planet today. He enjoys MNA's integration of natural and human history, the storytellers who bring that history to life, and the insatiable hunger of museum members to learn more about northern Arizona and the Colorado Plateau.

SAYING GOODBYE TO TROY GILLENWATER



IN MARCH Troy Gillenwater completed his term as MNA Trustee, having served on the board since 2014. He was board chair from 2021 – 2023, guiding MNA through post-pandemic challenges with dedication and generosity. His leadership was instrumental during the creation of a new strategic plan for

MNA, mapping out priorities for the next five years. Prior to serving as board chair, Troy chaired MNA's development committee for four years. During that time he conceived of and spearheaded the Colton Meadows project to conserve 89 acres owned by MNA on the north side of Highway 180. This effort raised \$3 million and placed the majority of this land in conservation easements, meeting the dual goals of conserving the land in perpetuity and utilizing the property to provide financial stability for MNA. These funds have now been invested in the MNA General Endowment, where they will be utilized to sustain the museum over the long term. Troy will continue to serve MNA as a member of the Board of the MNA Foundation.

MNA'S RESPONSE TO NAGPRA CHANGES

SOME MUSEUMS MADE NATIONAL NEWS when they closed portions of their Native American exhibits in January. Chicago's Field Museum and the American Museum of Natural History in New York City were among those that covered portions of their Native American exhibits in reaction to changes to the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA), which now requires consultation with tribes before a museum can display cultural items covered by the law.

As a museum that has long followed both the letter and the spirit of the 30-year-old law, MNA didn't make the headlines. However, our NAGPRA specialist, Kate Compton-Gore, was interviewed several times, bringing in the perspective of a museum that has long worked with tribal consultants to determine which items are appropriate to display in all sections of the museum.

"I think the closing or covering of exhibits indicates that museums don't know what they have and they haven't been accurately talking and having conversations with their tribal communities and doing proper consultations over the years," Compton-Gore said during an interview on the podcast Native America Calling. "This is the right of tribal communities. These items belong to and come from Native American communities. and it shouldn't have to continue to be a fight to receive them back."

MNA developed the Native Peoples of the Colorado Plateau gallery in close collaboration with tribal partners. When this



Acoma tribal consultants examine pottery during planning meetings for the Native Peoples of the Colorado Plateau exhibition.

updated gallery opened in 2018, the first people to come see it were those who had worked on it – culture bearers and tribal leaders from all the tribes represented in that exhibition. They came to bless the opening and see their own stories told in their own words. Every object on display in that gallery was chosen by tribal delegates to represent their tribal history and culture and to educate our visitors. All of the text in the gallery was likewise developed or approved by the tribal co-curators.

MNA staff continue to consult with tribal partners about the content and information displayed. MNA staff are currently reviewing the Archaeology Gallery and Babbitt Gallery. Sometimes an item that was approved for display at one time is later identified as culturally sensitive or sacred and ceremonial. In those cases, MNA promptly removes the item from display.

"That is their history, that is their story, that is their right to be able to use that information and know how their items are being handled, how they are being cared for and getting them home as quickly as possible in the way that the tribes want them," said Compton-Gore.

Visitors coming to MNA to learn about the many cultures of this area can feel comfortable knowing we follow best practices and remain in compliance with the updated NAGPRA regulations.



Havasupai tribal members discuss which objects to include in the Native Peoples of the Colorado Plateau exhibition.

UPCOMING EASTON COLLECTION CENTER TOURS

Each tour takes place on the following Fridays from 3:00 - 4:00 pm:
MAY 10 | SEPTEMBER 13 | OCTOBER 11 | NOVEMBER 8

ECC tours offer a rare and intimate peek into the museum collections. Each tour group is limited to 10 people so that attendees feel comfortable asking questions or commenting on collections, or any other relevant topics such as NAGPRA, use, access, etc. MNA members receive special pricing on tour costs!

2024 HERITAGE FESTIVAL OF ARTS AND CULTURE

THE NATIVE PEOPLES of the Colorado Plateau gallery impresses and informs equally. Designed to be conversational, interactive, and dynamic, the impact of this space is its deep interpretation of the diversity of the ten Colorado Plateau tribes. Each year, the annual Heritage Festival of Arts and Culture offers a three-dimensional reflection of the diversity represented in the gallery.

The festival supports MNA's commitment to continually creating space that honors the ongoing presence and vitality of the Colorado Plateau tribes. It is MNA's invitation to Native artists and cultural representatives to share current expressions of their traditions amidst the noise of a busy world. It is MNA's invitation to local, regional, and global audiences to watch, listen to, and participate in cultural meaning-making among a backdrop of towering pines and the mountain held sacred by the tribes. A microcosm of time and space, the festival immerses visitors in the unique region that is the Colorado Plateau.

Held the fourth weekend of June, the 2024 festival spans the weekend of June 22-23. This year, the main stage tent will be located directly adjacent to the art market, allowing visitors to browse the artists' booths while enjoying the sounds of the musical and dance performances. Grammy-nominated flautist Aaron White returns to offer his reed-flute-making workshops, and Tha 'Yoties perform each day. Artist demonstrators will dot the market, and cultural talks on language revitalization, the intersection of Indigeneity and running, and a talk by Nanibaa Beck (Beyond the Kitsch: The Pervasive Spirit of Our Indigenous Creative Community) will be featured.

Festival hours are 10:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. each day; members get a first chance to buy with 9 a.m. entry on Saturday. Members will also be invited to view artwork that was awarded a prize and mingle with the winning artists at an exclusive event



A young performer during the 2022 Heritage Festival.

on Friday, June 21 from 4:30 – 6:00 p.m. The Exhibits galleries are open all weekend long, from 10:00 a.m. until 5:00 p.m.

Artists who apply to the festival are juried by a committee of Native artists for inclusion in the art market. This ensures that the market is representative of authentic, diverse artwork that both the new buyer as well as the seasoned collector can enjoy. The full slate of artists, performers, and speakers will be available on MNA's Heritage Festival webpage on May 1.

This weekend filled with fresh air, sunshine, music, food, and the beauty of the communities that enrich this region is a wonderful way to expand engagement with everything MNA has to offer.

ADVANCE TICKETS GO ON SALE MAY 8

SUMMER IN THE MUSEUM GARDENS



Students from Kinlani dorm work in Colton Garden each spring and fall, learning how to grow, harvest, and cook their own food. In 2023 the squash, corn, and peppers they grew were included in the Kinlani Farm Share.

AS THE WEATHER WARMS, the gardens spring to life. This summer there are many events and ways to get involved with the MNA gardens, kicking off with the Spring Garden Event & Master Gardener Plant Sale on Saturday, May 25th.

The gardens are always open and all are welcome to visit during daylight hours. To learn more about the plants, join us on a free docent-led Garden Tour at 10:00 am on third Saturdays from June to September.

Volunteering is another great way to get involved, enjoy the beauty of the garden, and learn more about the flora of the Colorado Plateau. The volunteer hours adjust to the weather through the season. In May volunteers will meet in the Colton Garden on Wednesdays and Saturdays from 10 am to noon. Volunteers tending the native plants on the MNA campus work from 8 am to 11 am on Wednesdays and Fridays. To volunteer, please contact volunteer coordinator Mari Soliday at msoliday@musnaz.org or call her at 928-774-5213 ext 275.



GARDEN TOURS:

- June 15** - Medicinal Garden
 - July 20** - Colton Garden
 - August 17** - Medicinal Garden
 - September 21** - Colton Garden
- Tours start at 10:00 am
 Details at musnaz.org/events

The Map

Until the Grand Canyon's geology was mapped in color on a single sheet, nobody knew the canyon contained a hidden dragon. That sinuous shape carved by the Colorado River only emerged in the 1970s, as a team of geologists painstakingly drew out and colored in the canyon's rock layers. Once "The Geologic Map of the Grand Canyon National Park, Arizona," was published in 1976, people spotted a shape reminiscent of a Chinese dragon and the map became known as the Blue Dragon Map. Popular among geologists and the general public, the map had four separate editions and became the best-selling geologic map of all time.

The Blue Dragon Map was not the first map of the Grand Canyon, nor the last, but is the most famous. By presenting fascinating geologic information in aesthetically appealing colors, the map became both a scientific tool and a piece of art. It also established MNA as experts in geologic mapmaking. Following on the Grand Canyon geology map, MNA created similar full-color geology maps for Canyonlands (1982) and Capitol Reef (1987).

The Mastermind at the Museum



Bill Breed

By the late 1960s William J. (Bill) Breed and MNA, where he was Curator of Geology, were well established as central to Northern Arizona geology. Each August, Breed organized a geology symposium at the museum which brought together geologists working in Northern Arizona.

It was at that symposium in 1969 that a young graduate student, Peter Huntoon, presented his thesis paper, which included mapping he'd done of a small portion of the Grand Canyon. Huntoon's research caught the attention of two National Park Service managers, who were looking for someone to complete a geologic mapping project of the Grand Canyon.

"So I gave my little paper and they were on me right after," recalls Huntoon. "They said, 'Hey, would you be interested in finishing this up?' and I said 'Yeah!' Well Bill (Breed) was standing right near me and we start talking and he said 'Gee, we should put that together.'"

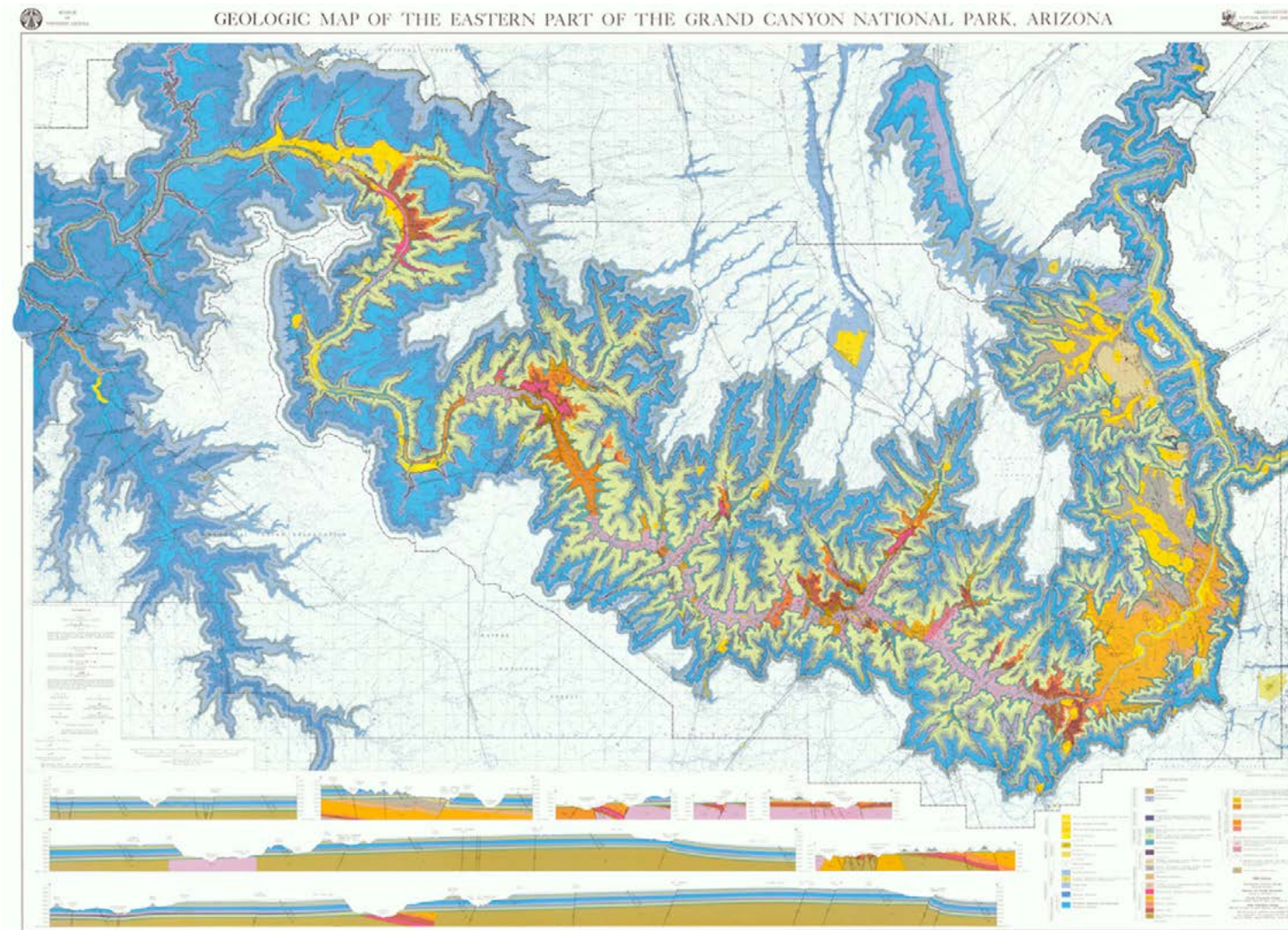
Breed quickly assembled a team of eight geologists, each responsible for specific rocks layers that matched their specialties. He also obtained financial support from the Grand Canyon Natural History Association. By the summer of 1970 the project was underway, with Breed making sure the many people and parts meshed together smoothly.

"He was one of the most gregarious and enthusiastic people you could run into. He knew everybody and that was a real asset. He was a superb networker he could work with people and bring people together on subjects of interest," recalls Huntoon.

Besides managing the massive project, Breed chose the colors for the map. This seemingly small detail was important to the final map, which appealed to people as an object of beauty.

"He was following a convention, but he had a lot of leeway, and Bill had a good eye for it, so it came out dynamite," said Huntoon.

THE MAP, THE MUSEUM, AND A HIDDEN DRAGON



The Makers

Huntoon became one of the core members of the map-making team, alongside George Billingsley. Both had worked for MNA as students. Huntoon's thesis work was funded by a research grant from the museum. Billingsley had been a summer work-study student assigned to assist Huntoon before going on to complete his own master's project, which included mapping a small section of the Grand Canyon.

"Billingsley had really good expertise with the Paleozoic section and with mapping it, so he was a natural," said Huntoon.

"We had a pride that we'd gotten the Grand Canyon," Huntoon said. "All of us knew that this is going to be a big deal because it's the best geology park."

The young geologists had no idea how big a deal the map would be, only that there were thousands of miles to cover.

"We didn't walk in every canyon. You couldn't live long enough to do that," said Huntoon.



Peter Huntoon

Instead they used aerial photographs to do the initial mapping. By looking at two nearly identical aerial photos through a stereoscope, they were able to see a three-dimensional view.

"We got to look in every nook and cranny of the place. That's how we managed to cover so much ground, because you couldn't do it all by foot," said Huntoon.



George Billingsley

After carefully examining the aerial photos, they would venture into the canyon to confirm what they were seeing and further investigate areas that were unclear.

"You really have to look at the rock, you know, just sit there and look. You have to climb down and pick it up and examine it because the rock tells a story. It's got the environmental history of how it was formed," said Billingsley. "If it was formed on the sea floor it has fossils and other creatures there that tell you. If it was formed on the riverbank there's plants, fossils, and other things that tell you that's what it was."

These multi-day forays into the canyon could be grueling. Sometimes they depended on the rainwater collecting in potholes to refill their water and had to follow the sound of frogs at night to find a water source. Sometimes their way would be suddenly blocked by giant boulders or landslides.

While Huntoon and Billingsley worked on the Paleozoic and post-Paleozoic rock layers, which make up nearly 80 percent of what is seen on the map, other geologists focused on the older Precambrian rock layers. Then Billingsley had the painstaking task of hand coloring each rock layer.

"Obviously George put the lion's share of the time in 'cause he was doing the most tedious compilation work making these color separations," Huntoon said.

The map was printed in 1976 and quickly sold out. Three more editions followed and each time the geologists took the opportunity to improve on the map.

"We were obviously maturing as professionals and we got better, so the last edition is a heck of a lot better than the first edition in my opinion," said Huntoon.

By the time the Dragon Map went out of print, it had sold between 90,000 to 100,000 copies.

The Mentor



Wayne Ranney, left, using the map.

at the Grand Canyon, where Breed extended an invitation to join him on a river trip. Thus began a scientific mentorship that propelled Ranney into a lifelong career as a geologic educator.

The map hung in Ranney's bedroom two years later, when he was enrolled as a geology student at Northern Arizona University. As part of his work-study job at MNA, Ranney accompanied George Billingsley on a week-long trip to Capitol Reef and Canyonlands, helping with the final ground-truthing of the maps at those parks.

Since then, Ranney has completed more than 100 river trips through the Grand Canyon working as a geologic educator, always bringing the Dragon Map with him.

"The geologic map of the Grand Canyon is the one tool I've never ceased using while in the canyon," said Ranney, who has hung the map in all of his homes since the 1970s.

"Staring at the map for nearly 50 years engendered an interest in me for how the canyon formed. In fact, my book, "Carving Grand Canyon" is a direct outgrowth of the "Dragon" map."

100 YEARS AGO...

One hundred years ago this March, the women of Flagstaff filled glass cases in a room in their new Women's Club with archaeological treasures donated by local residents. Though small and provincial, this display had links to the first American museum, opened in 1784 by Charles Willson Peale. The cases were also the first attempt at something the Flagstaff community had been discussing for years – a museum.

The display cases were donated by Harold Colton, who in 1924 was a sometimes summer resident of Flagstaff. He also happened to be Peale's great-great-grandson. Though Colton was born after Peale died, he was well aware of his illustrious forefather. Peale's self-portrait hung in Colton's dining room and in 1908 Colton read through Peale's letters and diaries to write a 35-page history of "Peale's Museum."

Until the 18th century, most museums were personal collections displayed in palaces and mansions. The first public museums opened during the Renaissance, but the idea really spread during the Enlightenment with the idea that the public should be able to see and learn from these collections.

Peale's museum began as a gallery of portraits and taxidermy specimens in his home, which he later moved to the Philosophical Hall in Philadelphia.

Colton took after his ancestor in both a deep scientific curiosity, and an interest in sharing what he learned with the general public. A year after publishing his paper about Peale's museum, Colton was put in charge of the invertebrate displays at the University of Pennsylvania, where he was a professor of zoology.

"With the invertebrate museum as my responsibility, I soon became interested in the philosophy of museums in general," Colton wrote in his unpublished autobiography.

Colton had also been part of the conversation in Flagstaff that led to the Women's Club including a 288-square-foot museum room in their new clubhouse. His contribution of \$400 for the cases, the equivalent of \$7,175 today, was a reasonable next step.

Unfortunately, the 1924 attempt at a museum in Flagstaff



The Artist in his Museum, a self-portrait by Charles Peale.

had one more thing in common with Peale's museum. Eventually Peale's museum closed. Similarly, without a museum organization to manage and maintain them, the cases in the Women's Club gathered dust.

As Colton later reflected "At that time, there was no person in Flagstaff with any museum experience, and the project languished. It takes leadership and "know-how" to start a museum, and the time was not yet ripe."

It would be another four years before a second attempt at a museum, this time with a board of distinguished Flagstaff individuals overseeing it and Harold Colton and his wife Mary-Russell committed to running it, would become the Museum of Northern Arizona.

VISIT MNA ANY DAY OF THE WEEK!

STARTING ON MARCH 1ST, MNA returned to operating our exhibits building for visitors seven days a week. This expansion of hours is a milestone in MNA's post-pandemic recovery story, thanks in large part to the generosity of supporters like you!



**NEW HOURS:
OPEN EVERY DAY
10 AM TO 5 PM**



ENCOURAGING YOUNG ARTISTS

JR. INDIGENOUS ART CONTEST

THE MUSEUM OF NORTHERN ARIZONA has been recognizing and supporting young artists for nearly 100 years, with the first youth art show taking place in 1931. In 2024 we are pleased to share the 23 pieces submitted to the Junior Indigenous Art Contest, which can be viewed on our website at <https://musnaz.org/juniorart/>.

Judges for this contest recognized young Indigenous artists for their storytelling, unique perspectives, use of color, and reflection on culture. The winning artists were awarded in four categories, with first-place honors going to students at Flagstaff High School, Page High School, Cromer Elementary, and Flagstaff Junior Academy. The contest judges were artists Janet Yazzie, Jonah Hill, and Curtis Quam.



Above - Winners of the 2024 Junior Indigenous Art Contest at the opening reception of Horse and Rider - a Southwest Story.

Young Adult 2D Fine Art
1st - Katasha Davis
2nd - Justine Sloan and Micah Virgil Butler

Youth 2D Fine Art
1st - Shaunale K. Sloan
2nd - Kennedy Belone

Young Adult Cultural Arts
1st- Jewelienna Tony
2nd - Isaac Naataani Nelson

Youth Cultural Arts
1st- Taylen Polelonema

Right - "Grace" by Katasha Davis



Visit <https://musnaz.org/juniorart/> or scan the QR code.



"Evening Preparations" by Cristoff Keyonnie

NAMINGHA INSTITUTE RESIDENCY

SIX ARTISTS FROM ACROSS THE SOUTHWEST were selected to participate in the 2024 Namingha Institute Residency. The Institute is led by internationally known artists Dan Namingha and his son, Arlo. The Naminghas continue a family legacy of artistry and teaching started by Dan's great, great grandmother, the Hopi potter, Nampeyo. The Institute was created collaboratively by the Namingha family, the Museum of Northern Arizona and the Philip M. Smith Trust.

The selected artists are Edgar Fernandez, Cristoff Keyonnie, Elena Marcozzi, Renee Michele, Xianna Montoya, and Argelia Suarez. For two weeks they will stay on the MNA campus and study under the Naminghas. They will gain valuable insight from exploring MNA's collections in the Easton Collection Center and find inspiration in the beauty and diversity of the Colorado Plateau.

The program will culminate with a show of the resident artists' work in the Courtyard Gallery of the Museum of Northern Arizona. MNA members, gallerists, collectors and the community are invited to see the work produced by these talented artists at a reception on Friday, May 10th.

CONTINUED FROM THE FRONT

livestock. The Diné word for horse translates as “being who carries my burden,” explained Clay Benally: “Because they carry our burden, they take our weight or the things that we struggle with, they help us in our life, they guide us, they give us direction, they protect us, so there’s very unique relationship even within that word about how it carries our burdens with us.”

The horse is also highly spiritual for the Diné. Each part of the horse has a meaning, which is sometimes represented in the art. Artists sometimes put stars in the horses’ eyes, lightning bolts at their joints, or arrowheads on their hooves, all referencing the traditional meaning Diné give to each part of the horse.

Often horses are painted in vibrant colors, including blue. The cultural consultants were able to explain this, tying the colors back to the four sacred directions. For the Diné, blue represents turquoise and the south. The blue horse also stems back to the Diné origin story, in which the Sunbearer sends the Hero Twins back to Earth Mother on two horses, one blue and one white.

Horses are still associated with the idea of the West, with cowboys, Dude Ranches, and Hollywood movies. This exhibition looks at a deeper history between horses and people, and at the value of listening to Indigenous oral history.

Horses originally evolved in North America, but after spreading around the world, the horse went extinct in the Americas. It was reintroduced by the Spanish and Western historians had long assumed that horses didn’t become incorporated into Indigenous culture until after the Pueblo Revolt of 1680. However, a research paper published in March 2023 in the journal *Science* used radiocarbon dating and DNA studies of horse bones to show that Indigenous people were caring for and riding horses by 1550. The horse bones bore the genetic markers of the Spanish horses, but indicate that the horses spread north more quickly than the colonizers did. This should not be surprising, considering the amount of trade and interaction there was between the many Native Peoples of the continent.

“It’s slowly starting to be understood a little bit more,” said Quam, who has seen evidence of Zuni ancestors as far north as



Steve Darden passes around a carved horse during his talk at the Horse and Rider opening reception for the Colton Circle.

“We absolutely believe that these horses did not come from the Spaniards, as the anthropologists say. We believe they come from the Sunbearer... So we have beautiful stories related to that and we have horseriding songs.”

— Steve Darden, Diné

Bears Ears National Monument in Southeastern Utah. “There is a lot of pictographs of depictions of horses around that area. It’s always been one of those really interesting things for me to look at those.”

“Now I think we’re finding different things that are out there, that really support a further understanding. That’s what we should be about, to continue to learn in really respectful and ethical ways.”

DID YOU KNOW?

This drawing, *Horses in a Sandstorm*, by Diné youth artist Mark Seecody, was the very first item in MNA’s fine arts collection!



HORSE & RIDER: A SOUTHWEST STORY will be open until October 28, 2024 in the Waddell Gallery, but most of the art will be new midway through. Because this exhibition features many works in watercolor - which can only be on display for a maximum of three month to protect them - the pieces in *Horse & Rider* will be swapped out in mid-July. Be sure to come before and after to see all the works featured from MNA’s collection in this stunning show!

The Colton Circle is an exclusive giving society whose supporters make the Museum of Northern Arizona a priority in their philanthropy through generous unrestricted gifts of \$1,000 or more annually. We are grateful for the sustaining support of these donors. Learn more at musnaz.org/coltoncircle.

- Robert and Sharon Angelo
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The Museum of Northern Arizona sits at the base of the San Francisco Peaks, on homelands sacred to Native Americans throughout the region. We honor their past, present, and future generations, who have lived here for millennia and will forever call this place home.

UPCOMING EVENTS



- MAY 10** Namingha Institute reception
- MAY 18** International Museum Day
- MAY 24** *The Grand Canyon Dragon Map* Member preview
- MAY 25** *The Grand Canyon Dragon Map* opens
- MAY 25** Master Gardener plant sale
- JUNE 8** Party on the Plateau fundraiser
- JUNE 13** Thirsty Thursday with Mother Road Trio
- JUNE 15** Moore Medicinal Garden tour
- JUNE 22-23** Heritage Festival
- JULY 11** Thirsty Thursday with Colton House Sessions
- JULY 20** Colton Garden tour
- JULY 8-26** Discovery Camps
- AUGUST 8** Thirsty Thursday with Black Lemon
- AUGUST 17** Moore Medicinal Garden tour
- AUGUST 24** Easton Collection Center open house
- SEPTEMBER 7** MNA Birthday Celebration
- SEPTEMBER 13** Easton Collection Center tour
- SEPTEMBER 14** Garden Harvest Festival
- SEPTEMBER 21** Colton Garden tour
- SEPTEMBER 28** Science Day at MNA
- OCTOBER 11** Easton Collection Center tour
- OCTOBER 26 & 27** Celebraciones de la Gente
- NOVEMBER 8** Easton Collection Center tour
- DECEMBER 7 & 8** Winter Art Market

Don't miss the fundraiser of the year!



PARTY
 on the
PLATEAU
 JUNE 8, 2024



New Museum hours:

Open every day - 10 am to 5 pm

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