



November 2011

zoom **in on america**

A Monthly Publication of the U.S. Consulate Krakow

Volume VIII. Issue 87.



In this issue: Canyon de Chelly

Zoom in on America

Canyon of Life and Death

The road stretched ahead in a single thin line as far as the eye could see. Past Monument Valley, the landscape became flat and dull. Were it not for a huge black cloud that hovered ominously on the horizon, the journey might have seemed monotonous; not a tree in sight, not even a bush, the ground just sparsely covered in yellowish, feverish-looking grass. Here and there, pools of water that were a reminder of the recent rains glimmered momentarily as the Sun made a short appearance in the overcast sky.

As the cloud got closer, it grew bigger and darker. It now resembled a gigantic mushroom. The road I was driving led directly into it. I had little experience with tornadoes, but the cloud looked threateningly similar to the ones I have seen on TV. There was no place in sight where I could escape. Just when I was pondering whether to turn back and try to drive away from it, the cloud suddenly changed its path and glided smoothly past me.

My sigh of relief, however, was rather short-lived. Out of the corner of my eye, I noticed another mushroom-like cloud far away in the distance, this time on the right. "What is going on? Where has the hot and dry weather of Arizona gone?" I wondered. "Maybe I should recalculate my plans, shorten my visit to Canyon de Chelly, where I was heading, and proceed towards the Grand Canyon without delay?"

I stopped at the Visitor Center at the mouth of Canyon de Chelly, just outside the town of Chinley. A park ranger advised me to take the South Rim Drive (37 miles round trip,) if I was short of time.

"You can make it in about two hours," he said.

I glanced at my watch. It was 2 p.m. That would get me back on the road towards the Second Mesa, where I planned to spend the night, by about 4 p.m.

My overnight stay in the Second Mesa never materialized. And I was totally wrong about the two hours...

I realized my mistake at the first scenic stop called the "Tunnel Overview". I descended a few steps down a metal staircase until I came to the sign: "Visitors prohibited beyond this point without authorized guide..." I looked into the canyon and the view left me speechless. I got hooked on Canyon de Chelly at first sight. And with every stop my fascination grew bigger.

My South Rim Drive lasted until well after the sunset and I was fortunate to find lodging at Thunderbird Lodge at the mouth of the Canyon. This allowed me to start on the North Rim Drive (34 miles round trip) early the next morning.

While the South Rim lets you explore Canyon de Chelly, the North Rim opens on the adjacent canyon called Canyon del Muerto. Both canyons have been inhabited for thousands of years. Archaic peoples, who were the canyons' earliest inhabitants, lived in rock shelters, hunted deer, antelope and rabbit and gathered food between 2500 and 200 B.C.E. Basket Maker, a group named after their extraordinary weaving skills, lived here between 200 B.C.E. and C.E. 750. They learned to farm and grew corn, squash and beans in fields established in corners of the canyon. The Basket Maker people left rock paintings which are now an invaluable tool for studying their life and social structure.

There are many remains from the times of Puebloan people (750-1300). These great builders constructed their houses in the canyon walls. The color and the material used made their homes one with the rock, almost indiscernible from the distance. The White House trail - the only trail accessible in the Canyon without an authorized guide - leads a visitor to the ruins of one such pueblo. You descend a narrow path among the orange rocks to a tunnel which opens to an idyllic valley at the canyon bottom, with trees, grass pastures, and flowing river.

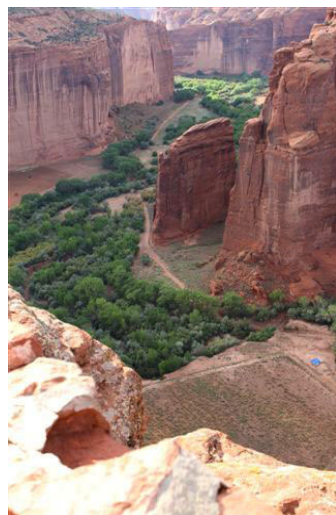
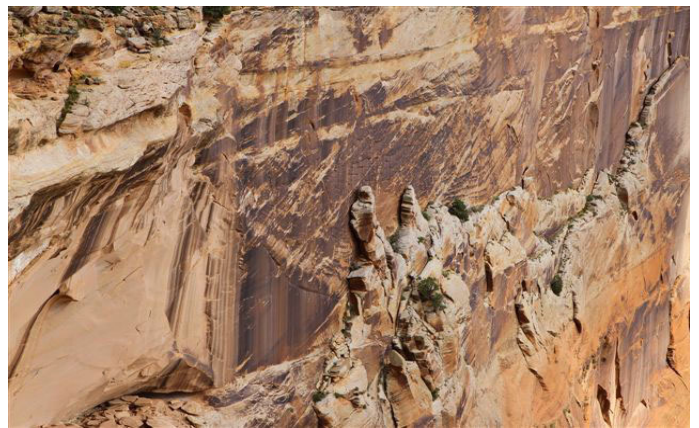
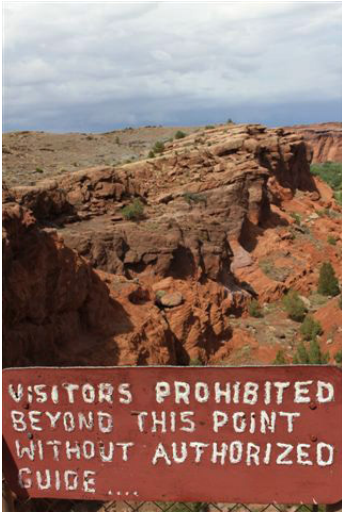
Native American women sell hand-made jewelry at the foot of the pueblo. For those visitors who do not venture on the 2.5 mile round trip, the jewelry sellers open their little "shops" on the hood of their cars at all of the lay-bys. All but at the Massacre Cave Overlook, where I saw no traders. "Is it from respect for the place?" I wondered.

The infamous massacre happened in 1805. The Canyon was then inhabited by its present owners, the Navajo. Spanish soldiers, who proceeded settlers interested in animals and land, shot about 115 Navajo who tried to find shelter, all huddling together in the rock alcove. The Navajo said that many men were away hunting at that time, which explains the deaths of so many women, children and old men. They called the alcove *Adah Aho'doo'nili* - Two Fell Off. This refers to the story that one brave Navajo woman fell off the ledge as she grappled with an enemy soldier.

The most conspicuous witness to all that has ever happened in the Canyon is Spider Rock. This famous landmark, featured in movies (e.g. *Mackenna's Gold*) and commercials, is a 800-foot sandstone spire. The taller of the two spires has a place in traditional Navajo beliefs. According to them it is the home of Spider Grandmother.

On the next page you are invited to take a photographic tour of Canyon de Chelly.

Photo Tour of Canyon de Chelly



Activity Page

Win a Prize!

November 2011 CONTEST

In which state is Canyon de Chelly located?

Send the answer
(with your home address) to:
zoom@usinfo.pl

Deadline: December 5

Win a Prize!

The answer to the October contest was:

She was 36

Thank you for participating

The winners are:

Grazyna from Krakow, Wojtek
from Zarki Letnisko and Joanna
from Nowy Sacz

CONGRATULATIONS

The prizes will be sent to you by mail.

zoom
in on america

Zoom is online at
www.usinfo.pl/zoom/

Free subscription
Write to: zoom@usinfo.pl

Contact us at
zoom@usinfo.pl

American Information
Resource Center
Krakow
Konsulat Generalny USA
ul. Stolarska 9,
31-043 Krakow
KrakowAIRC@state.gov

Become a fan of Zoom in on America on Facebook

Exercise 1. Listening, reading and writing

Listen to the recording of the article on p. 2. Pay attention to the pronunciation of the Canyon name. Then **read** some facts about Canyon de Chelly:

1. Area: about 84,000 acres (339 square km)
2. Location: northeastern Arizona, east of the town of Chinle
3. Name: The name derives for a Navajo word "Tséyi" meaning "inside the rock"
4. Established as a National Monument in 1931 by president Herbert Hoover
5. The longest history of habitation in Colorado Plateau - almost 5,000 years.

Now **write** a short paragraph about Canyon de Chelly. Then read it to the class.

Exercise 2. Read a paragraph about the climate in Canyon de Chelly. All temperatures are given in Fahrenheit. What is the temperature in Celsius? Write 2 sentences about the climate.

e.g.: The highest summer temperatures are almost 38 degrees Celsius.

Generally, spring is cool and windy, with possibilities of dust storms. Highs range from 50 to 70 degrees, with lows averaging 35 degrees. Summer is hot and dry with highs ranging from 85 to 100 degrees and lows averaging 50 degrees. Fall is warm and often wet, so expect thunderstorms. Highs range from 60 to 80 degrees, with lows averaging 40 degrees. Winter is cold and breezy often bringing 1-4 inches of snow. High temperatures range from 40 to 60 degrees, with lows averaging 20 degrees. (from National Park Service site: <http://www.nps.gov/cach/index.htm>)



Photos Bożena Pilat

Exercise 3. Speaking

Work with another student. Take turns and speak about one of the photographs above. What is your favorite holiday pastime? What do you consider when choosing your holiday destination? Where did you spend your holiday this year?