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**Field Guide to the Sandia Mountains, edited by Robert Julyan &
Mary Stuever**

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Field Guide to the Sandia Mountains. Edited by Robert Julyan & Mary Stuever: Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2005. Pp. 255. \$19.95 spiral-bound paperback.

This easy-to-absorb handbook does not pretend to be an exhaustive manual to the Sandia Mountains. Early on, editor Robert Julyan, who is best known for his book *The Place Names of New Mexico*, makes it clear that the intention among the guide's many contributors is to provide an introduction to the various elements that combine to make up the Sandia Mountains, a compact mountain range that provides the eastern backdrop for Albuquerque. With hundreds of plants and animals, not to mention microbes and soil types, Julyan points out that it would be impossible to represent them all in a guidebook. Therefore, the book focuses on the species and features that visitors are most likely to encounter.

Because of the range's proximity to Albuquerque, a city of nearly 500,000 people, it is probably trampled on more than any other mountains in the state. The Sandia Ranger District, the state's smallest, in the Cibola National Forest, manages the mountains' 100,555 acres. For such a small range, the Sandias have many identities. Traveling from the foothills to Sandia Crest, you pass through four vegetation zones, the equivalent of driving along the Pacific coast from San Diego to British Columbia, a 1,500-mile trip. I learned all of this in the introduction.

The book begins with brief chapters on the mountains' ecology, weather, and wildfire history. In the three-page fire chapter, I learned about the Crest Aspen Regeneration Project, which is increasing the number of aspens in the mountains, along with providing additional sources of food for the 221 animal species that are known to live in the range.

Then comes a 29-page chapter that presents the range's complex geology. In keeping with the promise of brevity, you will find the description of how the Rio Grande Rift allowed for the upthrust that created the mountains to be very basic, but adequate. Likewise for the discussion of the Great Unconformity, a mysterious gap in geologic time between the 300 million-year-old Madera limestone laid atop a layer of 1.4 billion-year-old Sandia granite. No one knows what happened to the years in between.

Full-color charts are inserted throughout the chapter, along with on-site photos of the actual rock layers, both distance and close-up shots of each, along with a brief description of the rock. This was a nice touch. For someone who has tread many miles in the Sandia Mountains, it was fascinating to learn that they are one of the few places in the world where you can see orbicular granite, which has been arranged in spherical nodules that resemble eyes. "Each orb consists of a core of

typical granite surrounded by a zone of dark-colored mica alternating with the mineral feldspar, and finally with an outer shell of feldspar." At the end of the chapter, geologic maps of a few of the mountains' most popular routes, such as the La Luz Trail, show the different rock layers the trail passes through.

The heart of the book is in the following nine chapters, the field guide portion. Here you will find the wildflower chapter, divided into color-coded categories of the most common wildflowers found in the mountains. Much like an Audubon field guide, a small photo of each flower is accompanied by its genus and a brief description. In the tree chapters, descriptions accompany black-and-white illustrations of tree branches and, in some cases, illustrations of the entire tree and pine cones or seeds. I would have preferred more consistency here: photographs of every tree, close-ups of the branches, and illustrations of the seeds.

This field-guide format—photos, genus, description—continues for arthropods, reptiles and amphibians, birds, and mammals. Descriptions are longer in the mammal section, and a nice touch was paw-print and scat illustrations adjacent to the color photo. Throughout the book, the contributors, all of whom are experts in their fields, made sure to include details that were new to me, one being that the remains of ringtails were found in Sandia Cave, where spearpoints and scrapers were discovered of the earliest civilization to prowl the mountains, some 11,500 years ago. Hopefully, I can identify the fresh black bear scat in time to leave the area before the bear decides to investigate me.

Human beings are not left out, and our chapter appropriately comes after the plants and animals. We did arrive last, after all. Here, we learn about the different cultures that have left their mark on the mountains, including Elena Gallegos, who received a 70,000-acre Spanish land grant and whose name is now as familiar as the mountain range. She came to New Mexico in 1692 with her family, married, her husband died, and a captain in the army awarded her the land grant. For the first time, I found out about Doc Long, after years of driving past a picnic area named for him on the mountains' east side; in 1910 he was one of three forest pathologists in the United States and he lived in a cabin at the site of the picnic area. There he researched tree diseases.

Place names, hiking and skiing trails, and a list of the projects built by the Civilian Conservation Corps in the 1930s are also discussed briefly. The most fascinating new piece of knowledge, trivial I'll admit, I gained from the book was about "the eye of the Sandias." Years ago, someone painted an eye on a rock in a remote area of the mountains. Since then the eye has been repainted, tears have been added, along with a Zia symbol. Now I have to find it.

At the very back, the book contains checklists, giving readers an opportunity to begin their own life lists of species of the Sandias.

Overall, I found this book to be exactly what it set out to be: an introduction to all the parts that came together to make up the Sandia Mountains and continue to keep the ecosystem thriving. It stands up to any field guide I have and through its comprehensive approach is all I will need to explore the mountains with a fresh eye.

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Global City Blues. By Daniel Solomon. Washington, D.C.: Island Press, 2003. Pp. 253. \$24.00 hardback.

Take a moment to conjure these three scenes in your mind: First, you are driving down a nondescript three-lane highway, sun glancing off the other cars that surround you, a never-ending parade of strip malls and chain restaurants choking the view as far as you can see (which is most likely only to the bumper of the SUV in front of you). Second, you are on an airplane, descending over the outskirts of a city. Below you stretches a rolling tide of cookie-cutter houses, sparkling cars nestled in wide concrete driveways hugging the empty streets that wind through a sprawling suburban landscape. Third, you are sitting in a fluorescent-lit cubicle on the whatever-floor of a high-rise building, hugging your sweater around you in the frigid air (it's the middle of July), with the glare of a computer screen illuminating your pale, un-sun-touched skin.

My guess is that almost everyone has experienced these three scenarios in some form or another and the sensations they evoke are generally not very pleasant. If you have ever been in a place like those just described and found yourself wondering exactly how the places where we live became so devoid of life, Daniel Solomon, in his book *Global City Blues*, provides an answer from an architectural perspective. Solomon proposes that the notions of modernity and progress that dominated the post-World War II social, economic, and political environment resulted in the building of urban environments that disconnect us from our fundamental, genetically-wired needs. Such needs include the need for human interaction; for gathering places; and for a sensory link to the natural world, the air, the quality of light at different times of day and in different weather. The practice of architects and town planners under the tenets of modernism has resulted in a systematic demolition of town fabrics that located people in time and space. Such integrated town fabrics have been replaced with isolating and dislocating urban topographies comprised of air-conditioned