

# *Pinal* **NUGGET**

December 2017  
Volume 11 Number 2

**FREE**

Happy Holidays from the Copper Corridor

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in Arizona,  
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**GIORSETTI'S**  
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A community publication of [Copperarea.com](http://Copperarea.com)

Photo by John Hernandez

# A Rocky Mountain Christmas to be presented in Gold Canyon

**Celebrate the holiday season with Jim Curry and his band, as they present “A Rocky Mountain Christmas”, a spiritually uplifting medley of seasonal and John Denver songs on Friday, Dec. 15, 7:30 p.m. at the Gold Canyon United Methodist Church. This concert will send everyone home full of hope about peace, love, and the wonders of earth...just what we need more of today.**

## NUGGET

*Covering the Copper Corridor Communities of Globe, Miami, Superior, Kearny, Hayden, Winkelman, Dudleyville, Aravaipa, Mammoth, San Manuel, Oracle, SaddleBrooke and Catalina.*

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*“We sure could use a little good news today.”*

— Anne Murray

### Advertising Information

For a free media kit, call Mila at (520) 827-0676 or go online to: [CopperArea.com](http://CopperArea.com) and click on “Advertise With Us.”

Jim Curry’s tributes to John Denver have been hailed by critics the world over. Given his remarkable voice and appearance, Curry was selected by CBS to provide the background songs on their production of “Take Me Home, The John Denver Story.”

Purchase advance adult tickets for \$25, and students

for \$5 at:

- Canyon Rose Storage, 6405 S. Kings Ranch Rd., Gold Canyon;
- Apache Junction Chamber of Commerce on the Apache Trail; or
- Through the website [www.gcac1.com](http://www.gcac1.com) via PayPal. Adult tickets at the door are \$30.

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# Concert

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The Gold Canyon Arts Council, a non-profit organization, promotes the performing and visual arts, student Arts education, and is supported in part by the Arizona Commission on the Arts, WESTAF, the National Endowment for the Arts, local corporations, and businesses.

## JOHN DENVER

Jim Curry will perform John Denver songs and other seasonal favorites in Gold Canyon on Dec. 15.



## IF YOU GO ...

**WHAT: Canyon Sounds Artist Series: "A Rocky Mountain Christmas, Jim Curry and the Songs of John Denver"**

**WHEN: Friday, Dec. 15, at 7:30 p.m.**

**WHERE: Gold Canyon United Methodist Church  
6640 S Kings Ranch Rd.  
Gold Canyon, AZ**

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I am a Child of  
the Sun, perhaps  
you have heard  
of me, line up  
your women and  
bring me some  
turquoise.



## Conquistadors in Arizona

**Gary Every**  
**Pinal Nugget**

**How many people know that the first Post Colombian explorer to reach Arizona was a Black Muslim? His name was Esteban. When Esteban first arrived in the New World he was not listed among the crew but the cargo. It was noted that a hidalgo named Dorrantes had brought along two slaves on the Navarez expedition.**

The Navarez expedition was a complete disaster. More than four hundred men set out to conquer Florida under Navararez' command and only four would survive. Four conquistadors, Cabeza de Vaca, Castillo, Dorrantes and his slave Esteban wandered slowly westward, always expecting to find Mexico City over the next hill. From beginning to end the journey took nine years and covered thousands of miles. It is believed they became the first conquistadors to enter Arizona somewhere around the Chiricuahua Mountains.

Faster than Europeans could reach the interior of the North American

continent, germs and disease were racing inland, creating plague and devastation. Everywhere the conquistadors went the local populace was devastated by plague. The four men began to perform faith healings, and were soon given credit for miraculous cures including curing the blind and raising the dead. They soon were accompanied by thousands of Native Americans who believed the lost and wondering conquistadors to be holy men and referred to them as the Children of the Sun.

Upon their triumphant return to Mexico City, Cabeza de Vaca wrote a book about the experience which

contained rumors of undiscovered wealthy kingdoms on the northern frontier. These kingdoms made of gold were called The Seven Cities of Cibola. When the Moors were overrunning the Iberian Peninsula in the 700's there were stories that the seven bishops of Antilles had fitted a sailing ship and sailed west. When Cortes overthrew the Aztec empire, all the looted gold made Spain the richest nation in the world. The Aztecs had an origin story that detailed them migrating from a place called the Seven Caves of Aztlan. Now De Vaca, Esteban and the other members of a long lost expedition arrived with news of

a rich kingdom to the north called Seven Cities of Cibola. Seven, seven, seven, many believed that it could not be a coincidence and urgent demands for an expedition to head north soon followed.

Esteban was the only surviving member of the Navararez expedition willing to return to the wilderness frontier. However, the Spanish never would have allowed for a Black Muslim slave to lead an expedition of Christians. The governor of Mexico put Fray Marcos de Niza, a religious man, in charge of the exploration party. On the Arizona border with Mexico, at the tiny town of Lochiel, a monument was erected to designate the spot where Esteban and De Niza may or may not have crossed into what is now Arizona in 1539.

Esteban quickly shed his European clothing, stripping down to a loincloth, feathers, and body paint. At every village Esteban would announce, "I am a Child of the Sun, perhaps you have heard of me, line up your women and bring me some turquoise." Esteban quickly assembled an entourage of five hundred followers and a harem of fifty women. De Niza complained in his journal about Esteban's "frequent, loud and vigorous" enjoyment of his harem. Esteban was soon sent ahead in his familiar role as a scout.

Esteban and much of his entourage were slaughtered by the Zuni at the village of Hawikuh. A frightened de Niza got a glimpse of the adobe pueblo in the distance as the sun was setting and declared that it was made of gold. He returned to the colonial capitol of Mexico City and the stories got grander.

A new expedition set out, this one led by Francisco Vazquez de Coronado with Fray Marcos de Niza as scout. The Coronado expedition was tremendous with hundreds of

men, many of them astride horses as their metal armor gleamed in the sun. There were hundreds of followers, many of them Native Americans from further south in Mexico. There was livestock: cows, sheep and horses. These were the first domestic animals besides dogs to enter North America. From the southwest, horses spread all across the continent, traded from native peoples to native peoples, changing culture after culture.

When Coronado and his soldiers arrived at Hawikuh they were enraged to discover the adobe pueblo walls were made of mud not gold. They were so angry they almost hung the priest Marcos de Niza. They invaded anyways. Coronado was almost killed when one of the Zuni warriors defending the pueblo threw a rock which struck Coronado in the helmet. Dazed, Coronado was pulled from the fray by his officers. The Coronado expedition split up into many smaller groups who scattered and made themselves a terrible nuisance all across the region.

The soldiers under Cardenas were the first Europeans to see the Grand Canyon. They were unimpressed until they sent two scouts ahead to try and cross it. Believing California to be an island, a small force under Alarcon was sent by boat to resupply Coronado in New Mexico. They towed their sailing ship up the Colorado River for many weeks before abandoning their journey. A small band of hearty adventurers under the command of Melchior Diaz was sent across some of the most rugged deserts on planet earth to meet up with Alarcon. The Diaz group consisted of about fourteen conquistadors and forty sheep. The wolves in the area were very happy about the sheep. While battling the wolves, Melchior Diaz impaled

himself upon his own lance and died soon after. His ghost is said to rise from the desert sands on full moon nights, still astride his horse and ready to battle the ghosts of wolves who have been extinct in this region since the 1970s. Coronado and his men conquered the Rio Grande Valley of New Mexico before departing to invade Kansas while looking for another lost mythical city called Quivira. Quivira was never found and the Coronado expedition returned to Mexico City after a couple years, deemed a failure. Cardenas later wrote in his journals that if instead of looking for lost cities of gold they had noticed the wonderful countryside around them, they could have become farmers and ranchers, leaving behind vast estates for their future grandsons. Instead they were consumed only with gold.

## ↓ CONQUISTADOR

Mural depicting a Conquistador in Arizona.



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### GENERATIONS

William Giorsetti, left, and Jeff Giorsetti continue to run their family business in Winkelman.



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# Oracle's Community Chorus to lead Messiah sing along

Have you always wanted to sing the *Messiah*, but never had the opportunity? Your opportunity has arrived! The Voices in the Oaks and the Oracle Piano Society are pleased to present their first *Messiah* Sing Along on Sunday, Dec. 17, at 3 p.m. at the Oracle Center for the Arts (OrCA), 700 E. Kingston St., Oracle.

Singers may bring their own *Messiah* score, or use one of a limited number of chorus copies available at the door. Copies of the chorus parts will be made available for a nominal cost. Don't care to sing? Audience members are invited to participate by either singing OR listening!

George Frederic Handel's masterpiece, *Messiah*, was written in 1741, and has long been a choral standard often performed by professional choruses and church groups alike during the Holiday season. *Messiah* is Handel's most sung and most popular choral work.

The Voices in the Oaks will be joined by members of the Catalinas Community Chorus to lead the audience in the performance of Part I, as well as the often performed and loved "Hallelujah" chorus from Part II. Solos from Part I will be sung by selected chorus members. The concert will be conducted by Chorus Director, Mary Huebner, and supported by piano accompanist, Sheryll McManus, who is also the music director for Oracle Union Church.

The Voices in the Oaks Chorale is presenting this *Messiah* Sing Along for donation only! For reserved seating, visit [www.oraclepianosociety.org](http://www.oraclepianosociety.org) to make your donation and obtain a ticket. You may also enter at the door, as long as seats are available.

In the spirit of holiday giving, the Chorale is also requesting donations of canned goods for those in need this holiday season.

Join the Voices in the Oaks for a spectacular afternoon of singing Handel's *Messiah*!

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