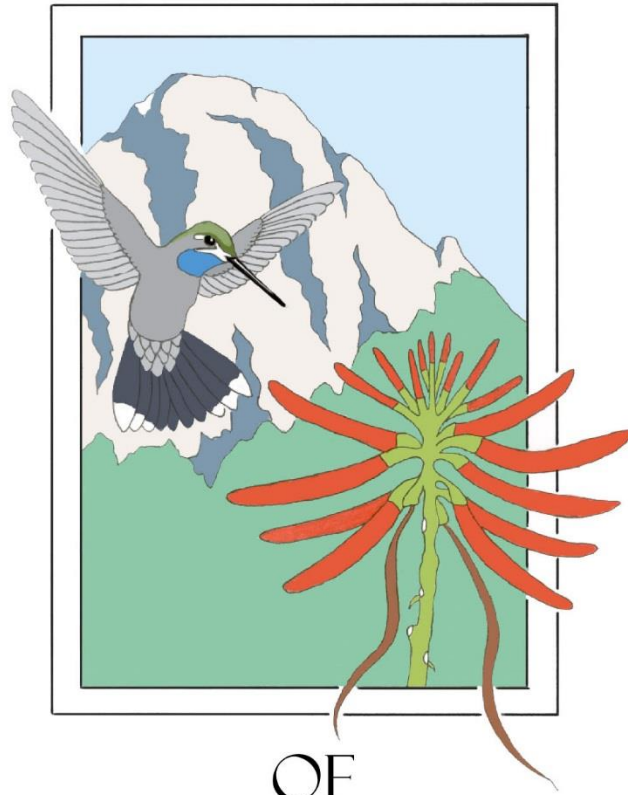


FRIENDS



OF

MADERA CANYON

"Lonesome
Charlie
Finds His
Desert Friends"



Lonesome Charlie
thought he was all
alone...

He was the only
saguaro cactus
growing on a
hill below Madera
Canyon.



All around, Charlie saw mountains and plants, but no other saguaros. "I think I'm all alone."



Then Charlie heard
a happy voice.
"I'm not a saguaro,
but I am a cactus,"
said a barrel cactus.
"I will be your
friend!"

"Me too," shouted
a prickly pear
cactus !



" Me three," laughed
a cholla cactus,
"but no hugging,
please!"



" I can make some leafy shade for you,"
said a friendly mesquite tree.



A dragonfly flying by landed on the cholla cactus. "This looks like a desert party! Can I be your friend too?"

A pipevine swallowtail butterfly hatched from her chrysalis.

"I can add lots of color to your friends, Charlie," she said as her wings dried in the sun.





"Look at me," yelled the Pinacte beetle, "I can stand on my head! Can I be your friend too?"

"Yes!" said Charlie, even tho' these beetles are just a little stinky!



"Mmbb I mmbbbmm your friend mmbb?"
mumbled the silk moth caterpillar.
He was eating leaves and forgot that it is
not polite to talk with your mouth full!!

"I'd like to hang out with you guys," hissed a gopher snake. He looked kind of like a rattler, but was harmless and friendly!





An old desert tortoise slowly walked by,
but didn't say anything. He never stopped
to talk very much!



"I want be your friend!" whispered a shy horned lizard, but Charlie couldn't see her. She was well camouflaged and hiding in plain sight!

"Don't forget me! I'm here too," said the Gila monster. He was easy to see with his bright pattern of orange and black.





"I'll keep you company when it is dark out,"
said the banded gecko. She was nocturnal
and liked to come out at night!



"Me toooooooo!"
hooted the great
horned owl. "I'm
nocturnal toooooo!"

Charlie thought
that was ok, but
the owl's sharp
talons made him a
little nervous!

"Me three!"
chirped the
black-throated
sparrow.

She was not
nocturnal, but
always copied
the cholla
cactus!





A roadrunner
scrambled up a
tree to see
what was going
on. They said
he could stay-
as long as he
promised not to
eat any of
Charlie's lizard
friends!



"Hey, what's all the racket out here?"
A kangaroo rat hopped out of her burrow,
rubbing her sleepy eyes. She was
nocturnal too and all Charlie's noisy
friends had woken her up!



A wood rat popped
in with sticks and
cactus for presents.

"Gee, thanks a lot?!"
said Charlie, but
he was still happy
to have another
cheerful friend!

R. Babb

A young cottontail rabbit asked, "Please Mr. Charlie, can I nibble in your flower patch? They look very yummy!"





Last to arrive was a coyote. He was polite and very well-behaved too.

Never-the-less, he made some of the other friends, like rabbit, very, very nervous!

Suddenly,
Charlie realized
that he was
not so lonesome!

He had lots and
lots of good
friends on the hill
below Madera
Canyon.





Charlie was a very
happy saguaro!

So happy, that he
grew three feet
taller and sprouted
an arm, out in the
desert with all his
friends.



The End