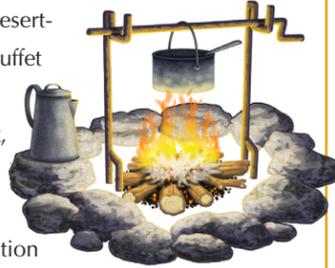


### 16 Annual Cookout at the Ranch

Saturday, September 29, 2012 5:30 pm to 9:00 pm

Unforgettable evening in the desert-great entertainment and BBQ buffet to benefit the Desert Foothills Scenic Drive, Pinnacle Peak Park, McDowell Sonoran Preserve, and wildlife conservation efforts. Information and registration available at: [www.gppaaz.org](http://www.gppaaz.org) or (480) 361-6498.



### Become a Park Volunteer



PHOTO: FRANK BIONDO

Volunteer training starts October 1-30 class room hours on hike safety, plants & animals, geology, history, and more. Sign up at trail head office. Watch "Friends of Pinnacle Peak Park" video for more information.

Friends of PINNACLE PEAK PARK  
PMB 288 • 8711 E. Pinnacle Peak Road • Scottsdale AZ 85255

Non-profit Organization  
US Postage PAID  
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# The Regal Queen of the Sonoran Desert

By Adriane Grimaldi

While hiking Pinnacle Peak Park trail on a fall evening, one might notice a regal-looking butterfly fluttering about. The Queen butterfly is one of a species of about 334 butterflies found in Arizona. It is one of the most common butterflies living in the Sonoran Desert area. Its chocolate-colored wings are dotted along the inside with white spots, and on the outside with white spots with dark veins.

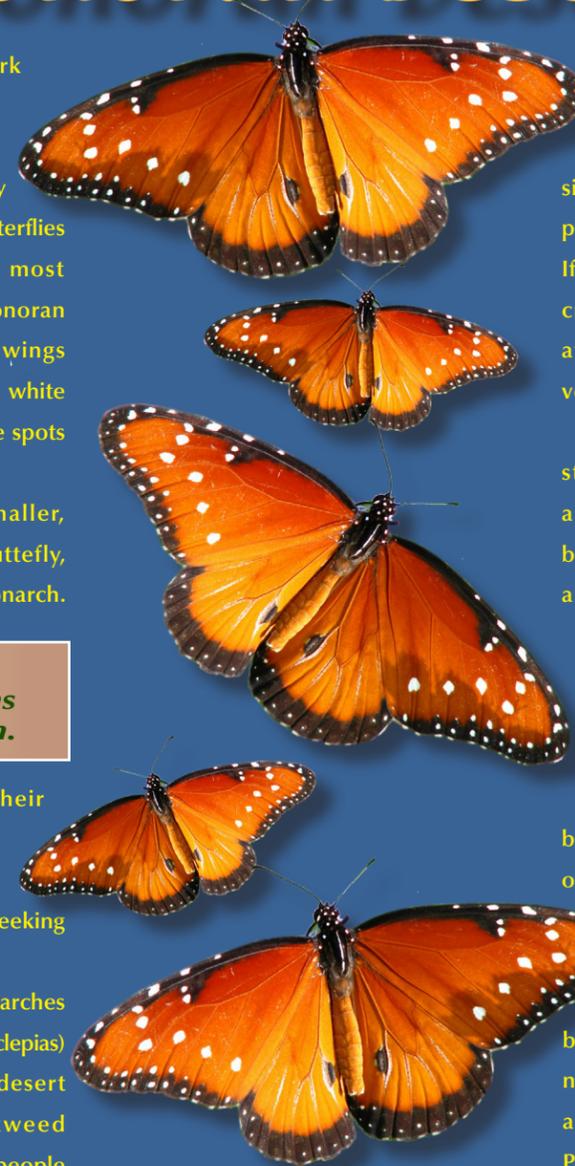
The Queen butterfly is the smaller, darker relative of the Monarch butterfly, and commonly mistaken for the Monarch.

**If more people planted milkweeds, more Monarchs and Queens would be seen.**

While Monarchs are known for their long-distance migration, Queens remain around desert landscapes and trails, searching for nectar and seeking out mates.

After mating, the female Queen searches for various species of milkweed (Asclepias) to lay its eggs. Some indigenous desert varieties include Climbing Milkweed Vine and Desert Milkweed. If more people planted milkweeds, more Monarchs and Queens would be seen.

The female will lay its eggs on the milkweed host plant and 7 to 10 days later,



Just like some varieties of snakes have red to warn that they are poisonous, Queen caterpillars use a similar defense. The caterpillars feed on poisonous milkweed as their host plant. If a bird, lizard or spider tries to eat these crawling critters, they will become sick after taking a bite of them, sometimes vomiting.

The insects consume the plants and store their poisons into adulthood. As a result, Queen caterpillars emerge with a built-in defense to fend off predators as adult butterflies.

Queen butterflies can be seen quite frequently during late summer and fall, but their numbers decrease during the coldest months of winter. While it takes about a month-and-a-half to become a butterfly, the adult Queen butterfly lives only about a month.

With a good monsoon that can bring back to life some nectar-rich plants along the Pinnacle Peak Park trail, Queen butterflies can be seen fluttering about sharing the trail with hikers.



Go green—sign up to receive the newsletter and event announcements by email at [www.PinnaclePeakPark.com](http://www.PinnaclePeakPark.com)

## The Friends of Pinnacle Peak Park

is dedicated to assist in maintaining the wonderful character of the Park and to support improvements and educational activities through fundraising.

Tax deductible contributions to support the Friends mission may be mailed or made through the website.

This Newsletter is published by the Friends of Pinnacle Peak Park.  
PMB • 8711 E. Pinnacle Peak Road  
Scottsdale, AZ 85255  
Send feedback and inputs to: [Editor@MattLucky.com](mailto:Editor@MattLucky.com)

### Friends of Pinnacle Peak Park

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# Generosity that Rocks!

Earlier this year, a significant project near the mile marker involved airlifting more than 40 tons of rock onto the trail, to be used for rebuilding a support wall that had been progressively eroding. There was a concern that, as the wall slowly eroded, it was having an impact on the stability of the hiking trail. To correct this, the rock wall needed to be rebuilt and reinforced. After the initial funding (through a Grant from Salt River Pima Maricopa Indian Community) for the helicopter to deliver the rock was depleted, we found ourselves lacking approximately 20 more tons of rock to complete the project. As the trail crew discussed options, Trail Maintenance volunteer Walt Conway quietly stated that he and his wife Diane would donate the additional \$5,000 needed for the helicopter to lift the rock up the trail!

Walt has been a volunteer on the trail crew for about a year, and has firsthand knowledge about what it takes to maintain this trail. It was his sense of pride, love of the land, and generosity that compelled Walt to respond with his donation. Without his tax deductible contribution, this trail project could have been delayed for months. We are very grateful to Walt and Diane for their unselfish act of generosity. Thank you does not encompass the gratitude the Park, and the Park patrons, have for Walt and Diane's generosity. *By John Loleit*



PHOTOS: FRANK BIONDO

# IT'S RAINING



The Sonoran Desert is the only desert in the world with two rainy seasons. With shorter dry season(s) between rainfall, vegetation is more varied and lush.

Other deserts either have a winter or summer rainy season. The Chihuahuan Desert in Texas has a summer rainy season, with violent downpours coming from the Gulf of Mexico. The Mojave Desert in California has a winter rainy season, with gentle rains coming from the Pacific Ocean.

The higher elevation and proximity to mountains in north Scottsdale causes more rainfall in the Pinnacle Peak area. The Phoenix area average annual rainfall is about 8 inches per year (compared to Las Vegas, which averages only 4.5 inches per year). There is a weather station at Pinnacle Peak Park, which reports average rainfall of 12 to 20 inches per year.

The vegetation north of the McDowell Mountains is quite different than that south of the McDowells. It is much lush with many plant species including Saguaros, Ironwoods and Palo Verde trees, due to the increased rainfall.

Pinnacle Peak enjoys a warm, arid desert climate, with more than 300 sunny days each year. When the sun is out, it is a great time to enjoy hiking at the Park, and the beautiful desert landscape created by the two rainy seasons.

*By Matt Lucky*

## EVENTS AT THE PARK

### **Full Moon Hikes**

Tuesday October 30 – 6:15pm

Wednesday November 28 – 5:45pm

Friday December 28 – 6pm

### **Astronomy Talk**

Friday October 12 start at 6:15pm

Sunday November 11 start at 5:45pm

Friday December 7 start at 5:45pm

Sunday December 30 start at 5:45pm

### **Southwest Wildlife**

will have education programs the

morning of November 3 and December 1

### **Guided interpretive**

**hikes** start November 1st every

day (except Monday) at 10am starting at

the trail head. This is a great opportunity

to learn about the native plants and

animals of the area and the Sonoran

Desert. This is a slow paced hike that

covers about 1 mile round trip and

takes about 1- 1 ½ hrs to complete. No

reservations required, but please check

in at the office.



PHOTO: FRANK BIONDO