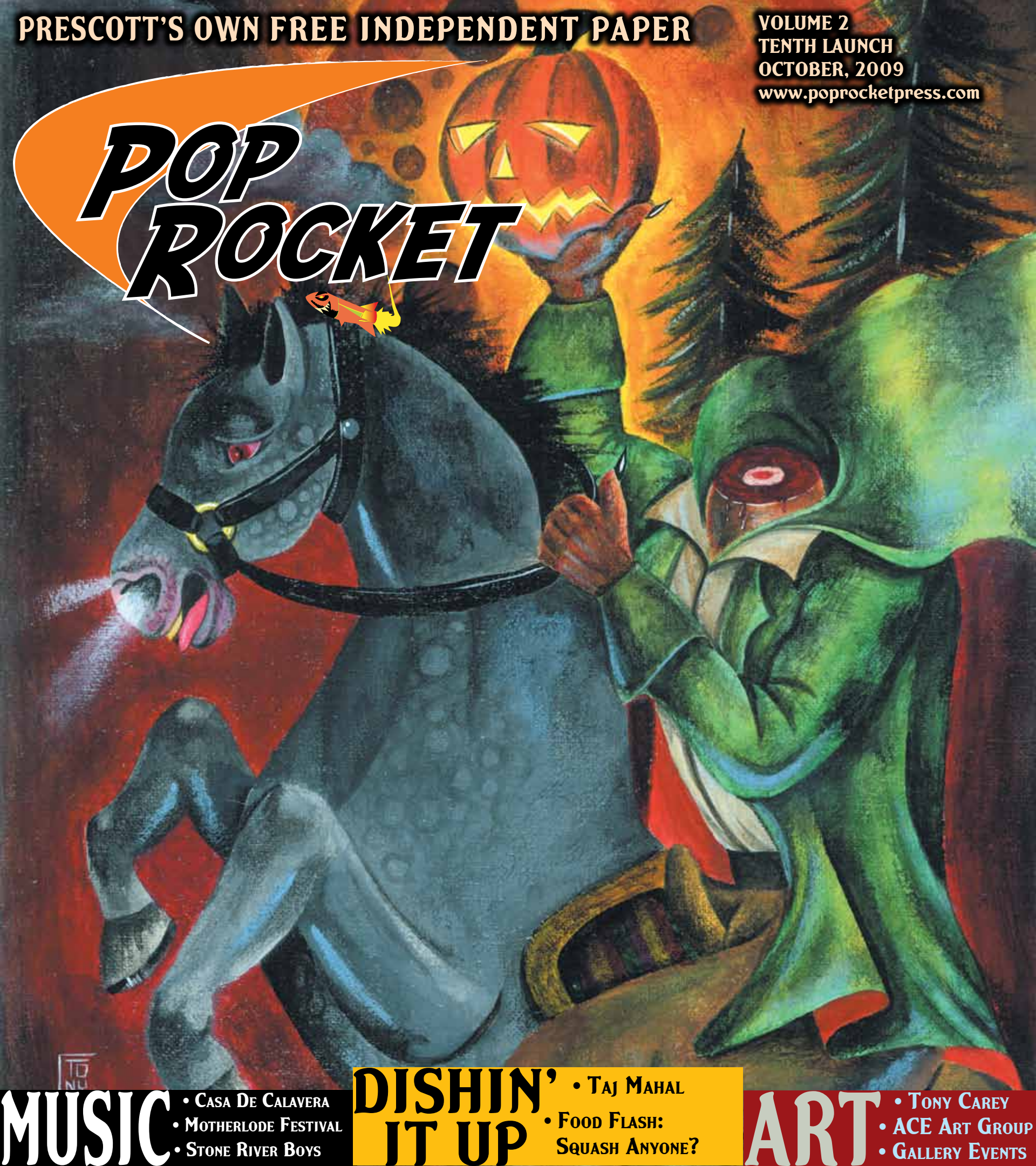


PRESCOTT'S OWN FREE INDEPENDENT PAPER

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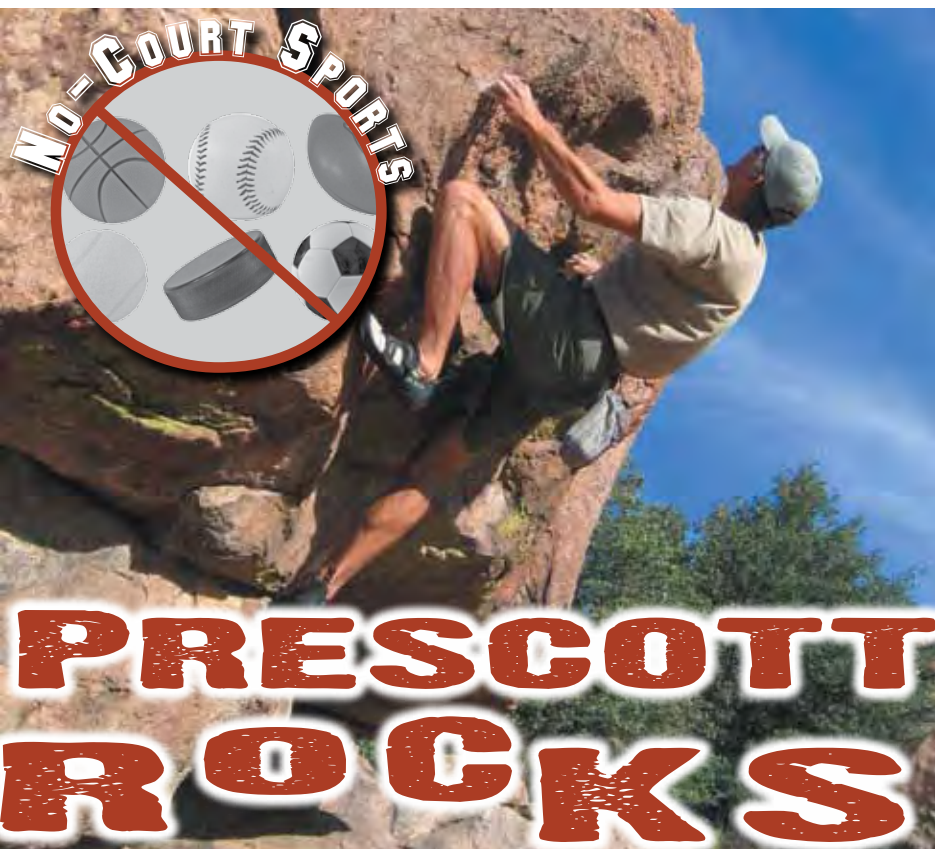
- CASA DE CALAVERA
- MOTHERLODE FESTIVAL
- STONE RIVER BOYS

**DISHIN'
IT UP**

- TAJ MAHAL
- FOOD FLASH:
SQUASH ANYONE?

ART

- TONY CAREY
- ACE ART GROUP
- GALLERY EVENTS



BILL CRAMER AT WATSON LAKE, PHOTO BY BILL CRAMER (TIMER SHOT)
 BILL CRAMER IS THE AUTHOR OF *PRESCOTT BOULDERING* AVAILABLE AT GRANITE MOUNTAIN OUTFITTERS AND MANZANITA OUTDOOR

~Jen Swacina

Dismantling the YMCA’s indoor climbing wall, built more than ten years ago by Prescott College students, saddened Director, Allan Klinikowski. But, Klinikowski said the climbing wall was just not profitable and the expanding gymnastics programs needed the space.

“It never got a lot of usage,” he said. “It was a good practice wall if it was raining outside.”

Fortunately, natural rock surrounds Prescott and the climate is usually conducive to outdoor climbing. Rock climbers from the Flagstaff and Phoenix areas trek to Prescott when it’s too hot in the desert or too cold higher up. Here in October, as the monsoon season winds down, the rock climbing conditions are classic and local climbers refer to the month as “Rocktober.”

This time of year, Prescott’s two most prominent peaks – Thumb Butte and Granite Mountain – are open for climbing. The Forest Service restricts access in those areas from the first of February to mid July to protect nesting Peregrine falcons. Lon Abbott, author of *Weekend Rock Arizona*, urges climbers to respect the stated closures, “for the sake of the peregrines as well as for the sake of future relations between climbers and the Prescott National Forest.”

In his book, Abbott describes Granite Mountain as “Arizona’s premier multi-pitch traditional crag” and he points out that Mountain Magazine listed the mountain in our backyard as one of North America’s ten best crags.

Abbott taught *Rock Climbing and Geology* at Prescott College. I took an introductory rock climbing course at Prescott College myself, and I’ve found the majority of the local climbing scene has some sort of connection with the college. Titiana Shostak-Kinker, who currently heads up the Prescott Climber’s Coalition, also teaches a *Rock Climbing and Yoga* course at Prescott College. Her course explores connections between climbing and meditation. I know when I’m gripping onto the side of a mountain, my mind tends to be in the present moment!

Another Prescott College faculty member, Rusty Baillie, originally founded the **Prescott Climber’s Coalition** over 20 years ago. The group is an associate member of the Access Fund which “keeps U.S. climbing areas open and conserves the climbing

environment” (Accessfund.org). Shostak-Kinker invites climbers to attend their next meeting at 6 p.m. on October 22nd at the Raven Café, covering access issues at the Granite Dells. The group also plans to host a climbing film festival and an adopt-a-crag event in November. Contact tshostakkinker@prescott.edu for more information.

Access and environmental issues are hot topics among climbers. “Trad” (traditional) climbers place removable pieces of gear into cracks of rock as they climb, while “sport” climbing requires drilling permanent bolts into the rock. Publishing climbing guides can stir up debate among climbers too. Making information available to the public about a favorite climbing area tends to increase use and environmental degradation.

As a long-time resident of Prescott, Bill Cramer, author of *Prescott Bouldering*, belongs to a very small climbing community. Transient students make up the majority of climbers around here. Cramer said climbers now find a sense of community online. He recommended visiting mountainproject.com, an updateable database of climbing information. The site even has directions to **The Promised Land**, a spot infamously hard-to-find, but worth the effort.

Cramer’s *Prescott Bouldering* offers an introduction to Prescott’s most popular climbing spots. “Bouldering” is essentially climbing short routes without ropes. Cramer said he likes bouldering because it takes less time to “throw down a crash pad and go” then to set up ropes. Groom Creek is one of his favorite bouldering areas. However, his book also contains information about top-rope routes at Granite Basin and Upper Sullivan Canyon and includes some lead climbs at Watson Lake Dells. You can pick up a copy of *Prescott Bouldering* at Granite Mountain Outfitters or Manzanita Outdoor.

Of course, rock climbing can be a dangerous sport and no one should attempt to learn alone from a book. A local company offering guided rock climbing tours, Rubicon Outdoors, can “show you the ropes.” The company provides all the necessary equipment, including climbing shoes, helmet and harness. A half-day of climbing for two people runs just under \$200. As the size of group increases, the price per person decreases. Matt Brown of Rubicon Outdoors said they regularly take families out who are looking for some adventure and want to try rock climbing for the first time. Check out rubiconoutdoors.com. And, “Climb On!”



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