**I. Walking the labyrinth (Reprinted from Jim Lowery, Dirt Times, Summer 1999)**

In a matter of minutes everyone was smiling. Our eyes were on the winding path each of us walked, and there was no sound but the crunch of boots in the snow.

When you walk a circular maze you expect to spiral toward the center, but every turn was in fact a surprise. You stepped teasingly close to the center, then radiated to the outside circle and back to the middle, wondering how this could happen. A straight walk from the rim to the center would take perhaps thirty seconds, but the full maze walk was taking fifteen minutes. After a little while you said what the heck, I have no idea where I'm going next so I'll just walk. Every couple of minutes you'd pass another walker, and you'd never know whether it would be on the inside or the outside. Wild. Hence the smiles.

Christof Hagen, our igloo building instructor from Switzerland, had brought the maze with him from Europe. He called it the "sun dance." It was associated with Scandinavia. I since discovered that Sweden has thirty some prehistoric labyrinths and more than 250 historic ones, and that the Swedish name for it is "Trojeborg." Christof said that in addition to its spiritual significance, the maze has a practical use in winter. Walking the maze before going to bed in your snow shelter, you get the blood circulating and sleep more warmly. That's what we were doing in the igloo class.

As soon as Christof had created the maze near our camp, I remembered having seen an almost identical labyrinth on some Southwest earrings Mary has. Sure enough, the same maze appears on many Pima and Papago baskets, and is called "man in the maze." I found that there is also a Greek maze, recorded on a clay tablet dating from around 1200 B.C. Although the Swedish name translates as "Troy-fortress," perhaps referring to an ancient Roman drawing of the maze which had the word "Troy" on it, the prehistoric labyrinths in Sweden reflected some expression to the Norse god Frey or fertility goddess Freya.

The "man in the maze" appears on the welcome sign to the Salt River-Pima-Maricopa Indian Community near Phoenix. A version of the legend associated with this maze is told by Christine Manuel:

*In ancient times, Se-eh-ha...needed a safe place to live. He still had a lot of work to do getting the world ready for the Pima and Papago people but he could not do his work because his enemies were always following him.*

Above: Papago Basket, image from Turnbaugh, Sarah and William, *Indian Baskets*, 1986

*Even when be went to live in a cave, his enemies followed him. They did not want him to be able to help his people.Finally he decided to build a home underground in the center of a mountain. At the edge of the mountain anyone could see the opening that led into his house but getting there wasn't as easy as it looked.*

*Anyone who wanted to find Se-eh-ha had to follow many narrow winding paths that went around and around. His enemies did not know which path to take. If they chose the wrong one they got lost and ran out of air and died down there in the darkness.*

*While his enemies were searching for him, going around and around in all directions, Se-eh-ha was sitting safely in his cave. The only trouble was that he wanted his friends to be able to come to him without getting lost. He made a map for them, and anyone who followed that map could make his way in without getting lost.*

*Even now the Pima and Papago Indians use that map. The women make a design of it and weave it into baskets so we never forget how to find the right path through life. It can lead you to a safe place.*

**II. Tracking Bats**


Whatever touches the ground is fair game for a tracker's study, and though rare to see, we recently found an impression of a pallid bat (*Antrozous pallidus*) on a Death Valley sand dune. Curiosity drove me to discover whether this was a once-in-a-lifetime occurence, or whether bat-tracking might merit some additional attention.

I found out that the pallid bat, indeed, forages for ground prey, by flying low, swooping often and hovering briefly as it listens for sounds from fluttering or crawling insects – beetles, Jerusalem crickets, moths and grasshoppers for example. It also often catches scorpions, and one bat biologist observed this bat even taking a pocket mouse! When hunting, the pallid bat apparently uses echolocation for navigation, but switches to its extraordinarily sensitive low-frequency hearing to locate and lock onto a target.

In studying pallid bat hunting methods, biologist G. P. Bell writes, "The bat flew directly towards a target at a height of about 1 m above the ground, dropping altitude at 1 to 2 m range and landing on feet and wrists beside or on top of the prey." Pallid bats take their prey to roosting spots where they consume their meals, dropping guano as well as discarded heads, legs, wing covers and other feeding debris, onto the ground below. Roosts are usually occupied by 12 to 100 individuals and may be 0.5 to 11 km from hunting areas, in trees, rock crevices, caves or outcrops. (This suggests other interesting explorations for trackers, since only this bat drops such debris from its roost.)

The pallid bat ranges from Oregon and California east through Nevada, Utah, Arizona, New Mexico and parts of Wyoming, Colorado and Texas. They can be observed foraging 1.5 to 3 hours after sunset, and again shortly before dawn.

Some bat species may move short distances along the ground, using their feet and "elbows" to walk, but in all of the tracking field guides on my shelf, only two show illustrations of a bat trail: Olaus Murie's *Animal Tracks* shows a drawing of tracks of a bat released onto a sandy substrate, and Barbara Triggs' *Tracks, Scats and Other Traces* (an Australian tracking guide) has one bat track drawing.

*Thanks to Jim Dine of the Los Angeles County Museum of Natural History for his assistance in interpreting this photo.*