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A short history of microbreweries

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Mad Hatter
Art Merrill

Publisher
Erica Ryberg

Contributing Editor
Candace McNulty

Contributors
Jason Bordonaro • Sonja Dougherty
Caere Dunn • Chase Edwards
Ember Larrington • Mark Mauldin
Susan McElheran • Ron Smith

Art Director/Designer
Bridget Reynolds

Advertising
ads@readitnews.com
928-308-7650

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P.O. Box 2943
Prescott, AZ 86302
(928) 713-9401

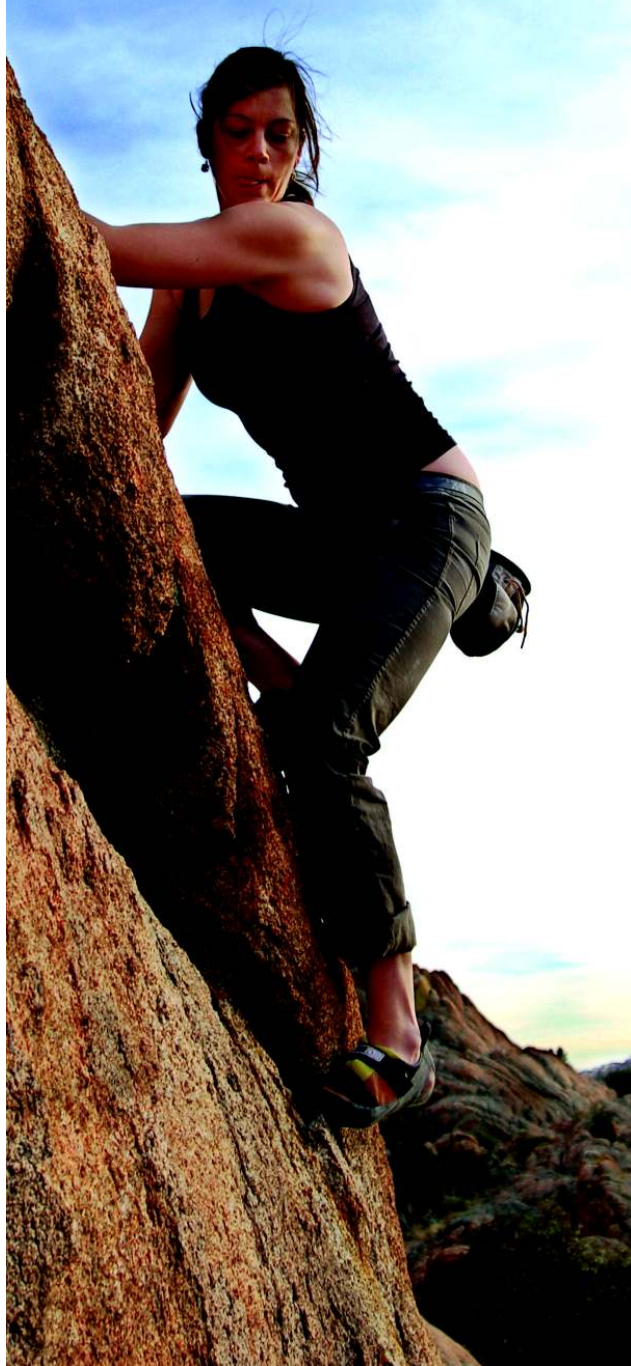
editor@readitnews.com

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On the cover: Courtney demonstrates that bouldering is mostly fingers & toes.
RIH photo/Jason Bordonaro.

WOMEN ROCK

Shredding on No Man's Land (that's the name of this particular boulder problem) took a couple of tries and an intricate, chess-style breakdown of the possible hand and foot holds to launch Jessi over the top.



Photos by Jason Bordonaro, text by Erica Ryberg

It's women's climbing night at the Y. There's pizza and about six times as many men as women in the room, but no one's climbing anyway. Arno Ilgner, a motivational speaker and climbing guru, has arrived to help the climbers learn the Warrior's Way. Arno talks about the necessity of mastering fear as a climber and having a firm plan of action. The climbers are captivated.

"That's going to be the hardest part because my plan of action is going to involve a lot of falling." Jessica Waltenburg says the next day. She's behind the wheel of a big, pretty gray Ford F-250 crew cab that she'll call home this summer when she goes to work as a Hotshot firefighter.

Courtney Osterfelt, her climbing partner of several years, nods understandingly as they make their way out to do some climbing in the Granite Dells.

The women discuss climbing for the entire ride. No other point of conversation even comes close to providing the degree of entertainment that climbing does. They're still discussing the Arno's grains of wisdom.

"Even though you're going to climb above your gear, you can't let your mind climb above the gear," Courtney says.

The gear, meaning the protection climbers use that make falling a bit less deadly, isn't going to be a big deal today because they're going to climb boulder problems instead of tall rocks. But being women, they've got to have

unusual strength and technique if they're going to have any fun.

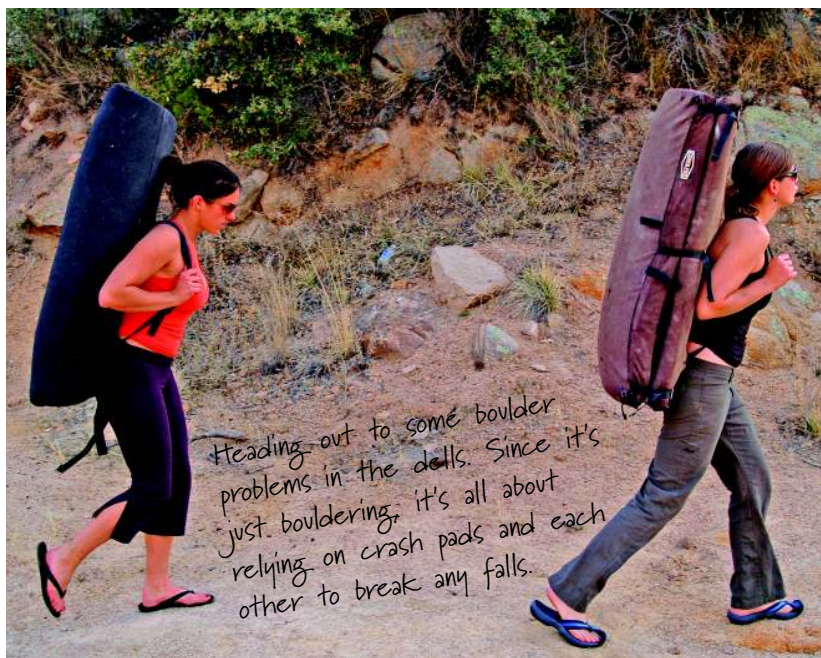
"Guy climbers who don't have that much experience but are fit can climb really hard boulder problems because they have these strong fingers and their weight-to-strength ratio is very different than females," says Courtney.

Jessi agrees. "Women have to work on their upper body and their core a lot harder than guys do. The core makes a huge difference—your abs and your arms and your chest, all that stuff," she says. "But girls seem to be better oftentimes at technique."

At the Dells, they don't flip flops, stuff their climbing shoes and a guide book, *Prescott Bouldering* by Bill Kramer, into their crash pads and head out to the rocks.

Unlike traditional climbing where you have to have one person on belay, bouldering could be a solitary sport. But it's clear that with these two, it isn't. Boulder problems like the ones that Courtney and Jessi climb are like puzzles and the women work them out together. As Jessi climbs on the rock, Courtney helps her plan the sequence of hands over feet that gets her to the top. It's a non-stop banter, part strategy and part motivational speaking.

"You got this thing here," Courtney says, pointing with one metallic turquoise enameled fingernail to a nearly invisible ledge on the appropriately named problem (for them), No Man's Land, a zig-zag of granite with an overhanging flake about halfway up.



Heading out to some boulder problems in the dells. Since it's just bouldering, it's all about relying on crash pads and each other to break any falls.

Jessi gives it a shot, stands on it for a moment and tries another tack. She told us earlier that she felt uncomfortable being photographed. But now that she's on the boulder, she forgets about the world and the lenses pointed at her.

“Climbing is like a dance, it pushes me, step by step, move by move, until finally, it all comes together.”

– Local climber Tina Ooly

To read more comments from local women climbers go to www.rockgirls.readitnews.com.

Both women have been climbing for about 7 years. Courtney says she went to a climbing festival to learn how to do it.

“I went by myself, but it's hard not to meet a climbing partner at the climbers festival. You would have to hide in a hole,” she says. “Especially if you're a female, because there's not very many of us.”

Courtney and Jessi managed to find each other about five years ago at the YMCA climbing wall on women's climbing night. Now, they have such a close rapport that they come close to finishing each other's sentences:

Courtney: “You don't hear about women climbing in Prescott all that often...”

Jessi: “Every time I go to Groom Creek, I hardly ever see any other women there. Hardly, and if you see one..”

Courtney: “...she's usually spotting her boyfriend and drinking a Slurpee...”

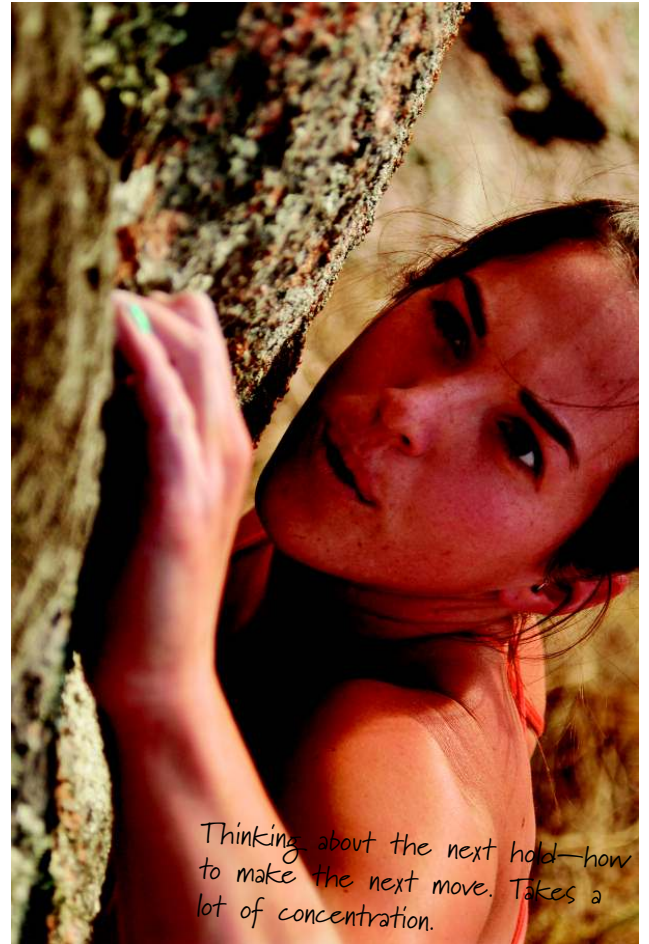
Jessi: “..not climbing.”

They bust up at the idea of Slurpees.

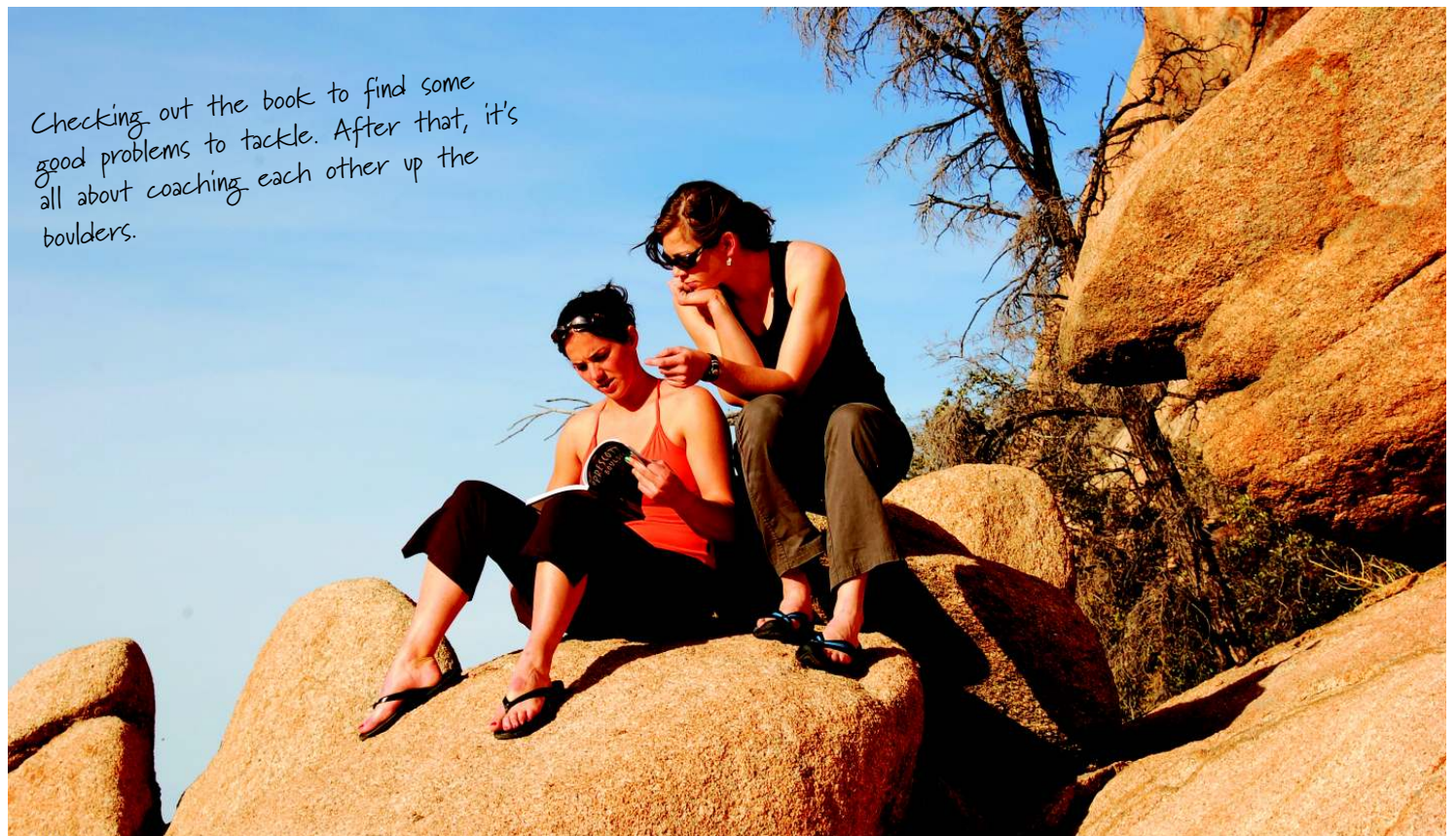
I love Slurpees says, Courtney.

I gather that Slurpees are hardly the iconic drink of women climbers. But then, in the tiny women's climbing scene of Prescott, there's not much that is iconic.

*Are you a woman interested in climbing?
Try women's night at the YMCA climbing wall at 750 Whipple on Thursday nights from 6-9.
And pick up Prescott Bouldering at Manzanita Outdoor or Granite Mountain Outfitters.*



Thinking about the next hold—how to make the next move. Takes a lot of concentration.



Checking out the book to find some good problems to tackle. After that, it's all about coaching each other up the boulders.