

Making Our Way



A McMAHON / CHEYNE PODCAST

Season 2 - Episode 30

4/23/25

National Parks

Our Hosts

Janet Cheyne McMahon is a lover of family, dogs, nature, travel, books, and music. Born south of the Mason-Dixon line, she left after 9 months for parts north, landing eventually in Michigan, which will always be “where I’m from.”

Love of learning led Jan to a Bachelor of Arts (History, Political Science) at the University of Michigan-Dearborn (Go Blue), and a Master of Arts (Library and Information Science) at the University of South Florida. Amid all that, studied for a time with Rob at Colorado State University, a pivotal time in their lives.

Worked at the U of M-Dearborn Library, and then The Salvation Army Florida Divisional Headquarters, with the greatest reward being in serving as the Divisional Librarian. A librarian is who Jan is “in my soul.”

Jan and Rob have made our home in Florida since 1983, and live now in retirement with their dog, Skye, who makes it all the best adventure. They travel as much as possible, spending time in nature and in diverse places on this amazing planet. It has all been, and continues to be a fascinating journey, with hope of making a difference, in small ways, by being brave enough to speak and act on behalf of others.

Rob McMahon is a native Michigander, born in Saginaw and raised in the suburbs of Detroit. Rob attended Michigan State University, graduating in 1978 with a Bachelor of Science degree. He did graduate studies at the University of Michigan and the University of South Florida. Rob is retired, having spent 36 years in public education teaching both high school chemistry and biology and middle school science. He worked as a total quality management trainer for the Pinellas County School District and served four years as the president of the Pinellas Classroom Teachers Association. Rob cofounded a non-profit total quality management training center, The Learning Co-op, for Teacher Unions interested in applying the W. Edwards Deming continuous improvement principles to their day-to-day operations. He worked with teacher unions in Colorado, Maryland, New Mexico, North Dakota, Texas and Michigan. He also worked in a similar capacity with Jim Shipley & Associates. In retirement Rob has written a series of science related children’s books, and enjoys traveling with his wife, Jan, and their black Labrador Retriever, Skye.

Deanna Cheyne, born in St. John’s, Newfoundland, earned a Bachelor’s Degree in Vocal Performance from the University of Toronto (1996), studying with such luminaries as Elmer Eisler, Doreen Rao, Greta Kraus, Lois Marshall, and Rosemarie Landry.

Dee taught music at Mississauga Christian Academy, served as music director for Meadowvale Bible Baptist Church (Mississauga, Ontario), served as Assistant Divisional Music Director for The Salvation Army in Florida, is a former member of Tampa’s Master Chorale, and, for the past 18 years, has been a public school teacher.

Dee has visit 36 of the 50 U.S. states, and 12 countries. Her favorite destinations include France, Prague, New Orleans, National Parks, & Hawaii.

Dee & Jim live in Florida with Brigus (Golden Retriever) and Pip (Teacup Yorkie).

James Cheyne, born in Galesburg, Illinois, earned a Bachelor of Music degree (Theory and Composition) from Michigan State University (1978); and a Master of Music degree (Theory and Composition) from the University of Illinois Urbana/Champaign (1981), studying with David Liptak, Salvatore Martirano, and Ben Johnston.

Jim has served as music director for The Salvation Army in Central Illinois & Eastern Iowa, Orlando Area Command, and the Florida Division, served as a pastor with The Salvation Army, and was a public school teacher for 17 years.

In travel so far, Jim has visited 50 states and 27 countries. His favorite travel destinations include National Parks, New Orleans, Newfoundland, Argentina, Prague, & France.

Jim continues to write music and support Dee’s musical endeavors, and cooks whenever absolutely necessary. Jim & Dee live in Florida with their dogs Brigus & Pip.



L-R: Brigus, Jim, Deanna, Skye, Jan, Rob.
Inset: Pip

This transcript of the podcast, Making Our Way is housed at
cheynemusic.com/podcast/transcripts.
©2025 by James Cheyne, all materials, unless otherwise noted.
All rights reserved.

National Parks

Season 2; Episode 30

4/23/2025

Hosts: Jan, Rob, Dee, & Jim.

We conclude our discussion of our National Parks experiences; the economic argument for National Parks; Niagara Falls: a cautionary tale; Nature as witness to Creation; Ranger talks; Rob's career goal; the Canadian Rockies; and dogs in the National Parks.

[Music]

JIM (voice-over): English is a tough language to learn, and just when you start to get the hang of it, words can change on ya. I think this was all part of England's strategy to confuse foreigners, particularly the French.

Take the word "AWE" for instance, A-W-E. "Awe" and "awful" used to mean something that elicited respect and fear. That's the way Shakespeare used it when he said the king's hand holds "an awful princely scepter." That's supposed to be a good thing.

Then someone invented the word "awesome," and then "awful" turned to the dark side, while "awesome" meant something good, which is where we are today. I say that to say this: There is an awful lot of awe in this episode. We'll leave it to you to decide if that's awful or awesome.

[Music ends]

JAN: Zion has become one of my new favorite places. It's magnificent, and again it changes as the Sun goes through the day. But I had a moment where I was walking a trail by myself early in the morning, which is the best time in that park. I'm alone. That's it. I'm out there. And these huge cliffs on either side of me, the Sun coming up, the sky is blue, it's cold and - I don't know - it's just like this moment. I can't describe to somebody unless you've done it. And the thing about the parks is you're with people frequently in a national park depending on where you are, but you also have the ability to be alone in a natural world and experience it privately, and that's a little bit of a different touch of it in your soul. I could take that walk every morning...

ROB: Mm-Hmm.

JAN: ...and I'd be a better person for sure. I want to make that economic argument and it's not really the one that I like but it - sometimes you make the argument to the person who needs to hear it. The national parks make money. They don't cost us money. The budget - I wanted to get the actual figures for this because I knew it in a removed sense but I wanted numbers. The national park budget for 2025 is 3.57 billion. Whether it's still that now that we've been slashing and burning I don't know. That was the projection. From the number of visitors which are over 325 million, those visitors will spend 26.4 billion dollars in the

communities around the park, and contribute 55.6 billion in economic output to the national economy. So for this drop in the bucket, 10, 20 fold more do we get. If you went to the communities near a national park, say Estes Park, and asked about the impact of the visitors who come to that park on that community and beyond, it's huge.

DEE: Yeah but then you've got those who are gonna argue, "Oh but drilling in the Arctic," or whatever they're opening up in national parks, "that's gonna bring in so much money over this so many years." And it's, like, how do you convince something? Because and I'm gonna say no we're not just tree huggers, we're not those granola crazy nuts tree huggers.

JAN: Well I am but no the point is...

DEE: No but you know you can hear, "Oh they're just tree huggers" sort of thing. No, there's something more. There's something of value that you cannot necessarily define, and I'm just gonna say people who would make that argument about being tree huggers and, "Oh let's just drill baby drill" or whatever, and they have no concept of the value of what's being lost.

JAN: The reason I would make the economic argument is to appeal to those people.

DEE: Yeah, no, I understand what you're saying.

JAN: I think it's important to see that what we're doing right now in this approach is NOT weighing the cost long term of the changes that we're making. And that seems like poor fiscal policy to me.

DEE: Yeah well.

JIM: This cannot be up to capitalistic interest.

DEE: Exactly.

JIM: It can't be left to that. Let's take Rocky Mountain National Park, or Yellowstone. Let's take those national parks. That's what happens when you deliberately manage and preserve and keep development from just - just keeping money interests out of the borders of that park. That's what happens when you have a management of a national park service that is purposefully and adequately funded. Niagara Falls is what happens when...

ROB: Yeah.

JIM: ...capitalism comes in and says, "Let's find out what our monetary bottom line is and how can we do it." Now Niagara Falls is still magnificent, but I don't need a "Ripley's Believe It or Not" for a sense of wonder. I need to see those Falls, and I've had experiences there that are life-changing experiences. When we went down behind the Falls, that's when I discovered claustrophobia. And when you walk and you're now in a tunnel that's looking out from behind the Falls and right in front of you is all that water falling in front of you, that's the first time I experienced a very uneasy feeling of being inside there. This was also the first place Deanna and I kissed.

DEE: Aw!

JIM: So awesome experience there.

ROB: You guys, wow.

JIM: And no money was involved in it. *[Laughter]* I should add that right away. She was wearing a yellow shirt.

ROB: Like everything else people are not going to react until it affects them. Until you go to the park and you are in a mile-long line just to get in, or when you go to the visitor center that's closed because they don't have the personnel to operate it, to answer your questions. And it's happening, and it's starting already.

JAN: It's happening now.

ROB: It's happening now and going into this major season with the summer coming, a lot of the parks are just - Yosemite. We're talking about the Valley. They're just they are scared out of their wits at what's going to happen because they don't have the personnel to manage the number of people that are going to come and visit that place.

JIM: And the personnel are essential. I don't I can't name any place in a national park where a person is just sitting around doing nothing. And the thing about wanting to become a park ranger, that all seems wonderful because you're standing on the side you're educating crowds of people and it's beautiful, and I'm thinking, "That's the job for me." But then also they have to maintain trails. They have to maintain the safety of the place. They have to take care of the bear that's invaded the campground. They've got to take care of all of that. It's managing the whole thing. You've got people right now who, for the Grand Canyon, okay? There's a water pipeline that has to lead from the from the valley up to the ridge. They have had to cancel that project because there's no ranger available anymore to replant to cover over the scars of that construction, which is necessary construction. But they have no people to do that so the whole project has been put on hold. And someone, "Oh it's only two rangers per park." It's not two per park. You went to the Grand Canyon. I think they lost 11 rangers there. You go to Yellowstone. There are like 12 rangers that are lost there, and they're trying to say they're, they're - what was the word? Probationary?

DEE: Mm-Hmm.

JAN: Yes.

JIM: Yeah that only means that they're new on the job and ready to put all energy into it. It doesn't mean that they're expendable.

JAN: There's a hike closed right now in Arches because of Staff shortage. One of their most famous hikes.

ROB: Which one?

JAN: Fiery Furnace.

ROB: Oh, okay.

JAN: And it's because these experiences require ranger-led expertise to happen.

ROB: Mm-Hmm.

JAN: So we get these little potshots of stories. I get them all the time because I follow news sources that tell me that these things are happening. There's these potshots all the time, and there's going to be a cumulative effect that we're not aware of yet. Summer will come

and there will be. And somebody's going to get hurt in the National Park who wouldn't have, because the safety measures aren't in place that were there. There aren't people there to make sure that people are okay. This is a loss we cannot stand for, and I still try to figure out how to be a voice for this.

ROB: I think we're doing it.

JAN: Well we are.

JIM: Remember an episode of - this was the live episode of West Wing - do you remember this?

DEE: Oh, yeah.

JIM: And it was the debate, presidential debate, between Matt Santos the Democrat and Arnold Vinick the Republican. And in the actual debate, I remember Alan Alda playing, uh...

DEE: The Republican.

JIM: ...playing Senator Vinick was talking about the Arctic Wildlife Refuge, and he asked this question. He says, "Well, have you ever been there? Have you ever been there?" He asked that to Santos. He asked that to a crowd and the answer is no. And the implication of the question is, "What are you so worried about a place that you've never seen?" This is a key.

DEE: Mm-Hmm.

ROB: Yeah.

JIM: Even if I haven't seen it, knowing that it is preserved...

ROB: Yeah.

JIM: ...is of value to me.

DEE: Right.

JIM: Not in an abstract way, in a real way, that we have within us that instinct for preserving rather than destroying, rather than just making use of everything. "Oh, it's just ours to play with as we will." And I'm trying to think of who are the allies in this thought? Speaking from a religious perspective, you would expect that you could make an appeal to stewardship...

ROB: Mm-Hmm.

JIM: ...to Christians, and anyone else whose religion speaks of stewardship. You would expect you could make that case. But I've noticed something very different recently, and that is, among evangelicals who have a certain apocalyptic point of view, and I see it posted on Facebook; anytime things get rough for them they just start calling for Jesus to come back. "That's going to solve our problem. The only way we can solve our problems is Jesus comes back." That "the Lord will come soon," and that's it. The problem is that people with the point of view think this is a temporary place place no value in preserving the ecology.

ROB: Right.

JIM: "What's the point of it? We're all going to be gone, and it's going to be soon." It's been going to be soon for two thousand years.

DEE: Yeah.

ROB: That's right.

JIM: "It's going to be soon, so why should we even invest in preserving this? It's wasted money and we should just make use of it because we have dominion. I'll go back and find it in the Bible for you, if you like. We have dominion on all of our things, that means we get to use it any way we want, and everyone else is denying the Lord if you say we can't just start drilling up there." So we may not see the results of it, but it still affects us.

ROB: Yeah.

JIM: These decisions. And so how do you convince someone who has that point of view that, "No, really, we should preserve this"? And it shouldn't be a practical thing. It should be an ideological thing.

JAN: Well, but it is in the sense of this - let's go back to the Christian perspective here. Part of the testimony to us of the existence of a God and the presence of a God is this world in which we live, and I would argue - this is my personal experience so I'm just speaking for myself - my best connections to God have come in nature when I've looked around and I've experienced awe, which I don't have very often in my day-to-day life, but I do in nature. And we can help people understand the greatness of God through the voice of nature. That's a little utilitarian, because I think awe in itself is an experience worth having, but for the person who thinks we don't need this as a witness, we do.

DEE: Yeah I have...

JIM: Dee, Dee pointed that out when we were talking about Tony Campolo...

JAN: Yeah.

DEE: Yeah.

JIM:that he had this idea that pushing something to extinction, you're eliminating a voice that is supposed to be there as witness.

DEE: That was created to worship God, and that was the example of whales. When whales were becoming extinct...

ROB: Yeah.

DEE: ...even just specific species of whales, because whales have a distinct song, a unique song, and his argument was when you silence that voice you've silenced a voice that was created to worship the Almighty...

ROB: Mm-Hmm.

DEE: ...and following up on what Jan was just saying about spiritual experiences, and I was thinking of this earlier when we were talking about the national parks, about my own personal experience. The first time we went to the Grand Canyon, and Jim and I sat on the rim, and we watched the sunset, and I remember in that moment sitting there and saying to myself, "Don't forget this moment," and I was thinking about when I go back home, when I go to work and I get overwhelmed, I said, "Remember that moment," because it was unique, and you do - creation is created to worship God and when you see creation

worshipping God you experience a spiritual thing. And for me I feel closer to God in those moments. And it's not it's not the whole, "Oh, God is in a tree," or something like that. No, it's creation doing what God created it to do, and you get to experience that.

JIM: That's when deep time gets inside of you. The frets and worries of everyday life just are crumbled at a moment like that. And that has happened, mostly at sunset in the canyon, where the Sun is coming down, and now the canyon is just golden, orange, beautiful reds; off to the left the Sun is setting. You can feel when the Sun goes away, how the coolness replaces where the Sun had been, and it turns to purples and blues, and then the last little hint of the Sun drops below, and applause breaks out. People start clapping, and, "I'm different now." I don't have to say religious, spiritual, anything like that. It's simply you're experiencing the numinous. There is something beyond me, and yet I am completely a part of it. Those stars up there are where we come from.

Another one. I'm setting up a picture. Now this is another one. I know that dad's camera captured all sorts of things, and I try to do something like that. I'm trying to set up a picture with Deanna on the southern rim. I'm getting the camera set up. I'm getting it ready, and as I'm preparing this picture, up from below the canyon wall, that we can see, a condor swoops, and just...

ROB: We saw a condor.

JAN: We saw one! Oh!

JIM: ...just, and just right behind her. Full wing spread, soars over, and you could hear it.

DEE: Yeah, yeah.

JIM: ...and it's one of these things. I don't have a photo of that...

ROB: No.

JIM: ...but I'm a changed person...

ROB: Yeah.

JIM: ...because of that experience. It's just like this sense of wonder.

JAN: Well, but it is in the sense of this - let's go back to the Christian perspective here. Part of the testimony to us of the existence of a God and the presence of a God is this world in which we live. And I would argue - this is my personal experience so I'm just speaking for myself - my best connections to God have come in nature when I've looked around and I've experienced awe, which I don't have very often in my day-to-day life but I do in nature, and we can help people understand the greatness of God through the voice of nature. That's a little utilitarian, because I think awe in itself is an experience worth having, but for the person who thinks we don't need this as a witness, we do. So.

JIM (voice-over): Just a mid-podcast interruption to note that I am editing this episode having just received the news of the passing of Pope Francis early this morning. While this is not the moment to reflect on the totality of his time as Pontiff, I would like to borrow two brief thoughts from his writings that resonate with our current discussion. These are from 2013.

First, his Apostolic Exhortation called "Evangelii Gaudium," or "The Joy of the Gospel," where he writes,

"God has joined us so closely to the world around us that we can feel the desertification of the soil almost as a physical ailment, and the extinction of a species as a painful disfigurement."

And he carries this thought into his Encyclical Letter called "Laudato Si'" (2013), where he wrote,

"...nature as a whole not only manifests God but is also a locus of his presence. The Spirit of life dwells in every living creature and calls us to enter into relationship with him. Discovering this presence leads us to cultivate the 'ecological virtues.'"

It was that Encyclical that led to the current Laudato Si' Movement, which emphasizes Earth as our common home, and you can explore more at laudatosimovement.org, which is linked through our official transcript at cheynemusic.com/transcripts.

Now, back to the conversation.

ROB: A lot of the naturalist positions used to be anyway seasonal. Teachers on their summer breaks...

JIM: Right.

ROB: ...they would go, they would be part of that. Less and less. Now it's more permanent employees of the - of the Park Service that do that, and I think the quality of the interpretive - especially the evening programs, the campfire programs - they're not the same as they used to be. You know, a Ranger would get up there, and sometimes there was slides and sometimes there wasn't. The first one that I remember was Yosemite, and a Ranger just got up, had a campfire, and he just got up started talking, but he was so knowledgeable and entertaining it was funny and - he was probably a school teacher working the summer in Yosemite National Park.

JAN: Do you remember the Ranger experience we had in Olympic along the coast?

ROB: Yes. He was...

JAN: So we did a water, a shore walk...

ROB: Yes.

JAN: ...and explored the life that was just under water.

ROB: And why do you remember that?

JAN: Because he was a professor at the University of Michigan, so, I mean that's the quality of the teaching...

DEE: Yeah.

ROB: Yeah.

JAN: ...that we got in that moment. A lot now is replaced I think with the film that you might watch when you get to a park...

ROB: Yeah.

JAN: ...and you're gonna get that overview of what that park's about...

JIM: Yeah.

JAN: ...but it's...

ROB: Yeah.

JAN: ...it's not the same intimacy.

ROB: Right.

JIM: I remember them because the amphitheaters they had would be nearby the campground, so you can walk to it, and it was a little amphitheater. There was a little stage area with a screen on it. To the side would be a place for a fire, so they would have a campfire going. And it would seat - what? - 150 people, maybe...

ROB: Sure.

JIM: ...and they might have a microphone, maybe not, and then you could watch it. Sometimes the Ranger talks were, "Oh, if you want to take a hike, this is the way you would do it." And they would introduce some sort of a hike that you could do on your own, or follow a Ranger with. Sometimes it would be, "Here's the history - the geologic history of this park. "Here's the fauna and flora that you will find on this thing." "Here's how to avoid bear attacks." Things like that. Useful information. And to me as a kid, a National Park Ranger was a hero.

ROB: Yes, that's what I wanted to do. I wanted to be one.

JAN: Original career goal.

ROB: And it was a time where they were trying to add some diversity...

JAN: Diversity.

ROB: ...rather than white men to the - which which I am by the way, those of you can't see me - so...

JIM: I think we could tell.

JAN: Yeah. We know you're a white guy.

ROB: ...so I, yeah, I wanted to do that, but I was pretty much told that it's going to be difficult because the park service was working - was looking to hire more minorities and women, which was fine with me. At that point...

JAN: Well, why wouldn't it be.

ROB: ...I understood. I said, "Yeah, there should be more minorities and women." I don't think everybody thinks that way...

JAN: Do ya think?

ROB: ...but I did at the time, and it was an easy transition for me to go into teaching. But, I

really - I mean, that was that was a dream of mine for a very long time.

JAN: There are two different, two very different Ranger-led talks that we went to that I think are worth - just for the sake of the expertise. One is when we were sitting at Carlsbad, and you wait at night for the time that the bats are going to fly out. So you have this whole presentation about the bats, and then you get to be there at the moment when they all come out at night.

ROB: Hundreds of thousands.

JAN: It's just stunning. But you had expertise explaining to us what's going to happen and what the bats did. And then another one was at Rocky where we went - and if it was a clear night, you could go in these astronomy experiences. So you go and meet the Ranger. They've got telescopes. They've got charts of the stars. And you're there again for that experience of looking up and having somebody who can point through the telescope and say, "There's Saturn; there's" whatever it is, and you're experiencing it in the moment in the park. So, um, yeah.

ROB: For Dee's benefit, the Canadian National Parks are awesome, too.

DEE: Yes, they are...

ROB: The, uh, the Gros...

DEE: ...and they're Canada's...

ROB: That's right.

DEE: ...and will remain Canada's forever and ever.

ROB: That's right.

JAN: Well, until, you know.

DEE: No!

ROB: Gros Morne was - that was a first for us. I'd never been to that one. But it - out west we've been to...

JAN: Jasper.

ROB: Banff, Jasper...

DEE: Yeah, the Canadian Rockies.

ROB: Yeah, the Canadian Rockies. The best idea that we had as Americans, but it's been, you know...

DEE: Yeah...

ROB: ...shipped all over the world now.

DEE: ...in Canada the National Parks are a little different. The areas within those parks were already settled, and people live there. So when you go to our national parks, people are actually - they're towns...

ROB: Yeah.

DEE: ...and so you're living inside the National Park, because I remember when Jim came, 'cause mom was in Terra Nova - lived in Terra Nova National Park, and Jim was like, "What?" and I was, like, yeah, it's different here, but you have restrictions on what you can do within those areas...

ROB: Yeah.

DEE: ...so...

JAN: That's just the history. It's because of the history...

DEE: Yeah.

JAN: ...which is why - one of the reasons why the American experience was unique, in that, they weren't settled, they were inhabited...

DEE: Mm-Hmm.

JAN: ...by native people...

DEE: Yeah.

ROB: Yeah.

JAN: ...and that is one of the tensions, or has been one of the tensions in the park, is, we're on, basically, on somebody else's land, and what the parks have done a very good job of, in my opinion...

ROB: This is just recently.

JAN: Right.

ROB: Right? In the last 10 years.

JAN: ...is incorporating the tribes that would be in that area and they are part of the decision-making for the parks. They are a presence.

ROB: For the people who love dogs, Acadia is a great park.

DEE: Yeah.

ROB: Petrified Forest National Park is a great park. You can take them anywhere in that park. Zion is a good park because the Pa'rus Trail, which is paved, is open to pets, and that's a great, it's a, you know, three mile round trip. Skye loves it. Grand Canyon is a great park for...

DEE: The rim.

ROB: ...because all the paved trails, you know, the rim trail, and all that the dogs are welcome there.

JIM: You can't go down in, but you can be up on the rim.

ROB: Nope. Can't go in, right. Anywhere above the rim on a paved trail, so.

JIM: Grand Canyon, to manage people you can take your car on the eastern side out to Desert View, but on the western side you have to park and take a shuttle...

ROB: Right.

JIM: ...and so when we were there with Cassie, to go to the west, now, to Hermit's Rest, we had to put Cassie in a kennel. Alright, so this is fine, and they have a facility right there...

ROB: Yes, they do.

JIM: ...so we took her there, took her back, and they have a little room for each one. And what we didn't know is they had a little door that they could go out on a balcony. That's great so we take Cassie there, and she's just going to be there for the afternoon while we go and do the western thing on the shuttle, because the dogs aren't allowed on the shuttle. So we we put her in the kennel, and then we get in the car and we're driving out, but the drive out goes just down the hill from where the kennel is, and there's Cassie. She's come out, sitting on the balcony, watching us drive away.

DEE: Yeah. It was the saddest thing.

JIM: And I'm looking at that, and it's almost like, just stop the car now. Let's go back and get her. What's going through her mind? I have no idea, but I know it was going through my mind on her behalf. And then we came back. And then I did that part when we were there with Brigus. You stayed back with Brigus, and I took the shuttle out to the Hermit's Rest. How about Everglades?

ROB: The campground and down - there's a area - well, yeah, anywhere along the marina.

JAN: No trails.

ROB: Not on any of the trails.

JIM: Not any trails.

JAN: You wouldn't want to. It wouldn't be safe.

ROB: No, we wouldn't even - we wouldn't even take her when we drove up, like, to do the Gumbo Limbo Trail, or the Anhinga trail. There's no use taking her she'd have to stay in the car couldn't do anything with her, so.

JAN: That's the main reason we got on RV, when you think about it, was we wanted to travel with Skye. Pretty big investment for traveling with your dog, but it's been perfect for us, because we can leave her, and do things.

JIM: In the Smokies, one of our favorite hikes...

ROB: Oh, yeah, that one.

JIM: ...is from the Sugarlands Visitor Center into Gatlinburg.

ROB: Gatlinburg, right.

JIM: It's a long hike just to get to where the hike starts...

ROB: Yeah.

JAN: I remember that.

JIM: ...and then you finally get next to the river, and I still remember that beautiful picture of Cassie.

[Music begins]

DEE: Cassie.

JIM: We're walking. She's hot, and she walks into the river...

DEE: She luxuriates in the water.

JIM: ...and just kind of went to lie down in the water.

ROB: Oh yeah.

JIM (voice-over): So, that concludes our visits to National Parks, for now. You might have thought we published these last 2 episodes to coincide with National Parks Week in the U.S. What great planning that would have been. Well, allow me to disabuse you of any such compliment on our behalf. It was purely coincidental, but just in case our episode topics do reflect the national dialogue, maybe next week we'll talk about universal goodwill in our political discussions. Wouldn't that be something!

Until next time.

[Music ends]