

# Author to discuss, sign book of photos of White Sands National Monument

By Adrian Gomez / Journal Arts and Entertainment Editor

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“Soaptree Yucca Blooms Spring” by Craig Varjabedian.

Imagine spending nearly seven years working on a project.

While it’s not unheard-of, Craig Varjabedian recently completed a long-term journey.



Craig Varjabedian

The result is book of photographs – “Into the Great White Sands.” He will lead a discussion and a book signing at 2 p.m. Saturday, March 10, at the Albuquerque Museum.

“(The project) was a significant amount of time,” he says. “I’ve got thousands of files backed up on my hard drive and the book represents my journey.”

For about seven years, Varjabedian trekked out to White Sands National Monument to photograph the area at various times of day.

“One of the great things that happened with this project was that I received a lot of help from the rangers there,” he says. “There are places I could have never hiked to because they are just too far out. I couldn’t have gotten this project done without their help. They know every inch of the area.”

Varjabedian has spent decades photographing the many moods of the magnificent and ever-changing landscape of White Sands National Monument.

His photographs reveal snow-white dunes of gypsum, striking landforms, storms and stillness, panoramic vistas and breathtaking sunsets, intricate windblown patterns in the sand, prehistoric animal tracks, exquisite desert plants, and the people who come to experience this place that is at once spectacular yet subtle.

The photographs in the book also have essays written by Jeanetta Calhoun Mish, noted poet and author; Dennis Ditmanson, retired White Sands National Monument superintendent; Jim Eckles, retired White Sands Missile Range public affairs officer; and Varjabedian, who shares his insights and experiences of photographing this inspiring landscape and offers tips on making better pictures of White Sands.

“Inside the dunes, I started reacting, and it’s all very metaphysical,” he says. “I began to listen, and it became a very profound experience. The biggest one was when I was walking between two dunes and I could hear my heart beating. I never heard it like that before.”

**‘Into the Great White Sands’**

Presented by Craig Varjabedian


**WHEN:** 2 p.m. Saturday, March 10

**WHERE:** Albuquerque Museum, 2000 Mountain NW

**HOW MUCH:** Free

Contact the writer.

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