This just in! It looks like the annual banquet, set for May 19th, will be held at the Reef restaurant in Long Beach near the Queen Mary! Stay tuned for details!

Many thanks to Jim Morehouse for having been our web master for some years. We now have a new web master, William Chen, who has developed a whole new design for the site, which will probably go live soon. Our old site served us well for many years, but the redesigned site really looks fantastic. I think you’ll enjoy using it.

Good news, I think! The rumor is that Keith Christensen and Lisa Hazan will volunteer to take over the chili Cook-off! I’m awaiting confirmation. I really hope this fine tradition will continue; it’s a great social event often combined with a peak climb in the area. Did you know that once upon a time the DPS had a burro bake? Thankfully, that evolved into the Chili Cook-off.

The management committee voted to extend the first-year-free program for new members and subscribers. It’s a nice way to welcome new folks to our section. Speaking of the management committee, it’s time to start looking for members willing to serve on the committee. If you are willing to serve, please contact one of the current members of the committee. Thanks!

Happy trails,

Tina
## Elected Positions

**Chair**  
Tina Bowman  
283 Argonne Avenue  
Long Beach, CA 90803-1743  
(562) 438-3809  
tina@bowmanchange.com

**Vice Chair / Outings / Safety**  
Sandy Lara  
5218 East Parkcrest Street  
Long Beach, CA 90808-1855  
(562) 522-5323  
ssperling1@verizon.net

**Secretary**  
Diana Neff Estrada  
138 La Fortuna  
Newberry Park, CA 91320-1012  
(818) 357-1112  
hikinggranny@aol.com

**Treasurer**  
Laura Newman  
11755 Entrada Avenue  
Porter Ranch, CA 91326-1933  
desertpeakstreasurer@gmail.com

**Program / Banquet**  
Jim Fleming  
538 Yarrow Drive  
Simi Valley, CA 93065-7352  
(805) 405-1726  
jimf333@att.net

## Appointed Positions

**Archives**  
Barbara Reber  
PO Box 1911  
Newport Beach, CA 92659-0911  
(949) 640-7821

**Conservation Chair**  
Dave Perkins  
1664 Buttercup Road  
Encinitas, CA 92024-2451  
(818) 421-4930  
david.perkins@csun.edu

**Guidebook Editor**  
Jim Morehouse  
3272 River Glorious Lane  
Las Vegas, NV 89135-2123  
(702) 528-3712  
desertpeakssection@gmail.com

**Mailer**  
Elaine Baldwin  
3760 Ruthbar Drive  
Hawthorne, CA 90250-8473  
(310) 675-4120  
DWBaldwin@aol.com

**Membership Records Chair**  
Ron Bartell  
1556 21st Street  
Manhattan Beach, CA 90266  
(310) 546-1977  
ronbartell@yahoo.com

**Mountaineering Committee Chair**  
Sandy Lara  
5218 East Parkcrest Street  
Long Beach, CA 90808-1855  
(562) 522-5323  
ssperling1@verizon.net

**Mountaineering Committee**  
Ron Bartell  
ronbartell@yahoo.com  
Tina Bowman  
tina@bowmanchange.com

**Mountain Records (Summit Registers)**  
Mark Butski  
6891 Rio Vista  
Huntington Beach, CA 92647  
(562) 716-9067  
hbmark58@yahoo.com

**Newsletter Editor (The Desert Sage)**  
Greg Gerlach  
23933 Via Astuto  
Murrieta, CA 92562  
(626) 484-2897  
gregrg1955@verizon.net

**Webmaster**  
William Chen  
25005 Magic Mountain Parkway, Apartment 434  
Santa Clarita, CA 93155  
(805) 284-7385  
William101.chen@gmail.com

## Cover Photo Credit...

go to Austin from Chicago, who tagged along with a WTC/DPS group on a climb of Pyramid Peak. The photo shows the WTC/DPS group on the summit of Pyramid Peak on October 7, 2018. Fortunately, Austin’s last name is not known. Please see the story on page 14 in this issue of *The Desert Sage.*
Trips & Events
January 2019 — October 2019

JAN 11-12  FRI-SAT  DPS  Manly Peak and Needle Peak
JAN 12-13  SAT-SUN  LTC  Navigation: Indian Cove Navigation Noodle
JAN 26      SAT      LTC, SPS, DPS, HPS  Local Baldy Snow Practice
FEB 2-3     SAT-SUN  DPS, HPS, WTC  Corkscrew Peak and Tucki Mountain
FEB 16-17   SAT-SUN  DPS  Nopah Range High Point and Corkscrew Peak
MARCH 10    SUN      DPS  DPS Management Committee Meeting and Potluck
APRIL 5-7   SAT-SUN  DPS  Sentinel Peak and Porter Peak
APRIL 6-7   SAT-SUN  LTC  Sierra Snow Check-off and Practice
APRIL 14    SUN      DPS  DPS Management Committee Meeting and Potluck
APRIL 17    WED      LTC  Advanced Mountaineering: Knots and Basic Safety
APRIL 20    SAT      LTC  Advanced Mountaineering: Belay Skills
APRIL 26-27 SAT-SUN  DPS  Dry Mountain and Tin Mountain
APRIL 27    SAT      LTC  Advanced Mountaineering: Rappelling
APRIL 27-28 SAT-SUN  DPS, HPS, WTC  Grapevine Peak and Mount Palmer
MAY 4-5     SAT-SUN  LTC  Advanced Mountaineering: Anchors and Systems
MAY 19      SUN      DPS  DPS Annual Banquet—Save the Date!!
OCT 9       WED      LTC  Advanced Mountaineering: Knots and Basic Safety
OCT 12      SAT      LTC  Advanced Mountaineering: Belay Skills
OCT 19      SAT      LTC  Advanced Mountaineering: Rappelling
OCT 26-27   SAT-SUN  LTC  Advanced Mountaineering: Anchors and Systems

♦ JANUARY 11-12  FRI-SAT  DPS
M-R: Manly Peak (7,196’) and Needle Peak (5,803’): Join us for two peaks in the Butte Valley area of Death Valley National Park. Saturday we’ll climb class 2 Needle Peak, first caravanning into Butte Valley in 4WD vehicles. The cross country hike might have a bit of an old road and some use trail to follow (7 miles RT and 2,900’ gain). Saturday night we’ll camp in Butte Valley. Sunday we’ll hike cross country up class 2 Manly Peak (5-6 miles RT and 2,300 - 2,800’ gain, depending on the route). Sierra Club members with prior roped climbing experience who also submit a medical form may climb the 3rd class summit block, provided they also wear a harness and helmet; many people do not climb the block. Icy conditions will nix climbing the high point. Everyone, please send the Leader your vehicle/carpool information and conditioning; those wishing to climb the summit block should also send their Sierra Club number, expiration date, and experience on class 3 and higher rock to Leader: Tina Bowman (tina@bowmanchange.com, (562) 438-3809. Co-leader: Nile Sorenson (nsorenso@pacbell.net, (714) 203-1405).

♦ JANUARY 12-13  SAT-SUN  LTC, WTC, HPS, DPS, SPS
I: Navigation: Indian Cove Navigation Noodle: Navigation Noodle in Joshua Tree National Park to satisfy Basic (I/M) level navigation requirements. Saturday is for practice, skills, refresher, altimeter, homework and campfire. Sunday is for checkoff. Send email/sase with contact info, navigation experience/training, any WTC, leader rating, rideshare, to Leader: Robert Myers (310-829-3177, rmmyers@ix.netcom.com). Assistant: Ann Sheilds.

♦ JANUARY 26  SAT  LTC, SPS, DPS, HPS
M/E: Local Baldy Snow Practice: Come review snow climbing, rope travel, ice axe, and snow anchors. Practice your skills or brush up on new techniques. Especially for aspiring M & E leader candidates. Restricted
to Sierra Club members with prior experience with the ice axe. Lack of snow may cancel. Email Sierra Club number, climbing resume, email address, and phone number to Leader: Nile Sorenson (nsorenso@pacbell.net). Co-leaders: Neal Robbins, Phil Bates, and Jack Kieffer.

✦ **FEBRUARY 2-3**  SAT-SUN  **DPS, HPS, WTC**  
**I: Corkscrew Peak (5,804') and Tucki Mountain (6,726')**: Join us for a mid-winter weekend in the Mojave Desert at Death Valley National Park for a couple of moderately strenuous climbs of two classic desert peaks. Saturday expect about 7.0 RT miles and 3,200' of gain for Corkscrew Peak, and on Sunday 8.8 RT miles and 2,700' of gain for Tucki Mountain. Festive Happy Hour – Pot Luck Saturday night under nearly moonless night skies!!! High clearance, 4WD vehicles are required to reach the trailhead for Tucki Mountain. This DPS outing is co-sponsored by WTC and HPS. Email Mat Kelliher at mkelliher746@gmail.com with contact, vehicle type and carpool info, recent conditioning, and experience for trip status and details. Leaders: Mat Kelliher and Neal Robbins.

✦ **FEBRUARY 16-17**  SAT-SUN  **DPS**  
**I: Nopah Range High Point (6,394') and Corkscrew Peak (5,804')**: Join us for two peaks in the eastern Death Valley ranges. Saturday we'll climb Nopah Range High Point, either 10 miles, 4,200' gain RT or 14 miles, 4,000' gain RT, depending on the route we choose (if it has rained recently, we'll go for the longer route, which doesn't involve driving through a mud pit). Sunday we'll enjoy a jaunt up Corkscrew Peak, 8 miles, 3,300' gain RT. Email Leaders with contact and recent conditioning info. Leaders: Tina Bowman (tina@bowmanchange.com) and Gary Schenk (gary@hbfun.org).

✦ **MARCH 10**  SUN  **DPS**  
**O: DPS Management Committee Meeting and Potluck**: Join us at the home of Tom Sumner in Sylmar for the DPS Management Committee meeting at 4:30 p.m. and potluck at 6:00 p.m. Please bring a beverage of your choice and a potluck item to share. RSVP to Tom at Locornnr@aol.com.

✦ **APRIL 5-7**  FRI-SUN  **DPS**  
**I: Sentinel Peak (9,634') and Porter Peak (9,101,):** Very strenuous 3-day backpack in Death Valley to climb two desert peaks and visit the mining ghost town of Panamint City (water there). Friday backpack 6 miles with 3,800' gain up Surprise Canyon to Panamint City and explore the area. Saturday hike 14 miles with 5,800' gain over the summit of Sentinel Peak to Porter Peak and back the same route. Sunday hike out Surprise Canyon. Three day totals: 26 miles and 9,600' gain. High clearance 2WD needed to get to trailhead. Participants must be in top physical condition. Send current conditioning, experience, and vehicle info to Leader: Megan Birdsill (mbirdsill@gmail.com), Co-leaders: Sandy Lara, and Peter Lara.

✦ **APRIL 6-7**  SAT-SUN  **LTC**  
**M/E: Sierra Snow Checkoff and Practice:** For M & E candidates wanting to check off leadership ratings. We welcome others who wish to practice new techniques. Restricted to Sierra Club members with some prior basic training with the ice axe. Send Sierra Club number, climbing resume, email, and home and work phone numbers to Leader: Nile Sorenson (nsorenso@pacbell.net). Co-leaders: Neal Robbins, Phil Bates, and Jack Kieffer.

✦ **APRIL 14**  SUN  **DPS**  
**O: DPS Management Committee Meeting and Potluck**: Join us at the home of Larry and Barbee Tidball in Long Beach for the DPS Management Committee meeting at 4:30 p.m. and potluck at 6:00 p.m. Please bring a beverage of your choice and a potluck item to share. RSVP to Larry or Barbee at lbtidball@verizon.net.

✦ **APRIL 17**  WED  **LTC**  
**E-R: Advanced Mountaineering Program: Knots and Basic Safety Systems:** First of four climbing workshops aimed at developing skills for 3rd, 4th, and 5th class climbing, both as a participant or a future Sierra Club M and E leader. This will be an indoor workshop held in the evening reviewing ropes, harnesses, helmets, basic climbing gear, and knots in preparation for later workshops. All participants must have prior roped climbing experience and commit to all four classes. Registration opens at 8:00 a.m. the Monday two
weeks after the final previous class outing. Please see website for cost. To register, please see http://www.advancedmountaineeringprogram.org. Leaders: Dan Richter (dan@danrichter.com), Patrick McKusky (pamckusky@att.net), and Matthew Hengst (matthew.hengst@gmail.com).

✧ APRIL 20 SAT LTC
E-R: Advanced Mountaineering Program: Belay Skills: Second of four climbing workshops aimed at developing skills for 3rd, 4th, and 5th class climbing, both as a participant or a future Sierra Club M and E leader. This workshop will focus on belaying and related principles starting with standard sport climbing all the way up to advanced techniques to move large groups across dangerous terrain. All participants must have prior roped climbing experience and commit to all four classes. Registration opens at 8:00 a.m. the Monday two weeks after the final previous class outing. Please see website for cost. To register, please see: http://www.advancedmountaineeringprogram.org. Leaders: Dan Richter (dan@danrichter.com), Patrick McKusky (pamckusky@att.net), and Matthew Hengst (matthew.hengst@gmail.com).

✧ APRIL 26-27 FRI-SAT DPS
I: Dry Mountain (8,674’) and Tin Mountain (8,953’): Join us for two class 2 peaks in northern Death Valley off the Racetrack Road. Friday we'll follow DPS guide route C for Dry Mountain (about 13 miles and 5,900’ gain RT). Saturday it'll be Tin Mountain (6-7 miles and 4,200’ gain RT). Both are cross-country hikes, partly following ridges. Send conditioning and vehicle information (high clearance may be needed, but not 4WD) to Leader: Tina Bowman. (tina@bowmanchange.com, (562) 438-3809). Co-leader: Nile Sorenson (nsorenso@pacbell.net, (714) 203-1405).

✧ APRIL 27 SAT LTC
E-R: Advanced Mountaineering Program: Rappelling: Third of four climbing workshops aimed at developing skills for 3rd, 4th, and 5th class climbing, both as a participant or a future Sierra Club M and E leader. This workshop will focus on rappelling using a variety of techniques with a heavy emphasis on redundancy, safety, and efficiency. All participants must have prior roped climbing experience and commit to all four classes. Registration opens at 8:00 a.m. the Monday two weeks after the final previous class outing. Please see website for cost. To register, please see: http://www.advancedmountaineeringprogram.org. Leaders: Dan Richter (dan@danrichter.com), Patrick McKusky (pamckusky@att.net), and Matthew Hengst (matthew.hengst@gmail.com).

✧ APRIL 27-28 SAT-SUN DPS, HPS, WTC
I: Grapevine Peak (8,738’) and Mount Palmer (7,958’): Join us for a spring weekend in the Mojave Desert at Death Valley National Park for a couple of moderately strenuous climbs of two classic desert peaks. Festive Happy Hour – Pot Luck Saturday night!!! This DPS outing is co-sponsored by WTC and HPS. Email Mat Kelliher at mkelliher746@gmail.com with contact, vehicle type and carpool info, recent conditioning, and experience for trip status and details. Leaders: Mat Kelliher and S. McDonnell.

✧ MAY 4-5 SAT-SUN LTC
E-R: Advanced Mountaineering Program: Anchors and Real World Application: Fourth of four climbing workshops aimed at developing skills for 3rd, 4th, and 5th class climbing, both as a participant or a future Sierra Club M and E leader. This weekend completes the series of AMP workshops at Joshua Tree National Park and focuses on building anchors and applying previously learned skills in real world climbing situations and multiple participants. All participants must have prior roped climbing experience and commit to all four classes. Registration opens at 8:00 a.m. the Monday two weeks after the final previous class outing. Please see website for cost. To register, please see: http://www.advancedmountaineeringprogram.org. Leaders: Dan Richter (dan@danrichter.com), Patrick McKusky (pamckusky@att.net), and Matthew Hengst (matthew.hengst@gmail.com).
MAY 19  SUN  DPS
O: DPS Annual Banquet: Save the date for this great event. Additional info to follow in a future issue of The Desert Sage as well as on the DPS website.

OCTOBER 9  WED  LTC
E-R: Advanced Mountaineering Program: Knots and Basic Safety Systems: First of four climbing workshops aimed at developing skills for 3rd, 4th, and 5th class climbing, both as a participant or a future Sierra Club M and E leader. This will be an indoor workshop held in the evening reviewing ropes, harnesses, helmets, basic climbing gear, and knots in preparation for later workshops. All participants must have prior roped climbing experience and commit to all four classes. Registration opens at 8:00 a.m. the Monday two weeks after the final previous class outing. Please see website for cost. To register, please see http://www.advancedmountaineeringprogram.org. Leaders: Dan Richter (dan@danrichter.com), Patrick McKusky (pamckusky@att.net), and Matthew Hengst (matthew.hengst@gmail.com).

OCTOBER 12  SAT  LTC
E-R: Advanced Mountaineering Program: Belay Skills: Second of four climbing workshops aimed at developing skills for 3rd, 4th, and 5th class climbing, both as a participant or a future Sierra Club M and E leader. This workshop will focus on belaying and related principles starting with standard sport climbing all the way up to advanced techniques to move large groups across dangerous terrain. All participants must have prior roped climbing experience and commit to all four classes. Registration opens at 8:00 a.m. the Monday two weeks after the final previous class outing. Please see website for cost. To register, please see: http://www.advancedmountaineeringprogram.org. Leaders: Dan Richter (dan@danrichter.com), Patrick McKusky (pamckusky@att.net), and Matthew Hengst (matthew.hengst@gmail.com).

OCTOBER 19  SAT  LTC
E-R: Advanced Mountaineering Program: Rappelling: Third of four climbing workshops aimed at developing skills for 3rd, 4th, and 5th class climbing, both as a participant or a future Sierra Club M and E leader. This workshop will focus on rappelling using a variety of techniques with a heavy emphasis on redundancy, safety, and efficiency. All participants must have prior roped climbing experience and commit to all four classes. Registration opens at 8:00 a.m. the Monday two weeks after the final previous class outing. Please see website for cost. To register, please see: http://www.advancedmountaineeringprogram.org. Leaders: Dan Richter (dan@danrichter.com), Patrick McKusky (pamckusky@att.net), and Matthew Hengst (matthew.hengst@gmail.com).

OCTOBER 26-27  SAT-SUN  LTC
E-R: Advanced Mountaineering Program: Anchors and Real World Application: Fourth of four climbing workshops aimed at developing skills for 3rd, 4th, and 5th class climbing, both as a participant or a future Sierra Club M and E leader. This weekend completes the series of AMP workshops at Joshua Tree National Park and focuses on building anchors and applying previously learned skills in real world climbing situations and multiple participants. All participants must have prior roped climbing experience and commit to all four classes. Registration opens at 8:00 a.m. the Monday two weeks after the final previous class outing. Please see website for cost. To register, please see: http://www.advancedmountaineeringprogram.org. Leaders: Dan Richter (dan@danrichter.com), Patrick McKusky (pamckusky@att.net), and Matthew Hengst (matthew.hengst@gmail.com).

In order to participate in one of the Sierra Club’s outings, you will need to sign a liability waiver. If you would like to read a copy of the waiver prior to the outing, please see http://sierraclub.org/outings/chapter/forms or call 415-977-5528.

In the interest of facilitating the logistics of some outings, it is customary that participants make carpooling arrangements. The Sierra Club does not have insurance for carpooling arrangements and assumes no liability for them. Carpooling, ride sharing or anything similar is strictly a private arrangement among the participants. In addition, participants assume the risks associated with this travel. CST 2087766-40. Registration as a seller of travel does not constitute approval by the State of California.
Greetings Fellow Climbers!

We have already had some nice hikes in Death Valley and the Inyo Crest (New York Butte) this fall. Snow has since fallen which may make trailhead access more difficult for some of the higher peaks if you want to climb them in snow. Be sure to check on current conditions before heading to a trailhead and be prepared for transitional weather.

We have some new leaders who are doing I-provisionals on DPS peaks. Sunny Yi is leading Avawatz Mountain as a backpack December 22-23, including a navigation exercise in searching for a Section Corner marker. Lawrence Lee is leading Martinez Mountain and Sheep Mountain December 22-23 as a backpack. We look forward to them, and others, leading more DPS trips!

Our schedule is coming together with more trips in the planning stages. Please check our website for new additions.

We were able to clarify the fire closure for Ruby Dome. Hennen Canyon was not affected as had been feared, and neither were Griswold Lake and the peak itself. However, there is a corner of the closure area that juts into the usual route between Griswold Lake and the peak. Be sure to contact the ranger if you plan to climb this peak.

As always, I welcome your trip submissions!

Sandy Lara
DPS Outings Chair

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Treasurer’s Report

By Laura Newman
DPS Account Summary from January 1, 2018 to November 30, 2018

Income

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<td><strong>Total Income</strong></td>
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Expenses

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<td>Merchandise Expenses</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total Expenses</strong></td>
<td><strong>$4,063.34</strong></td>
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Pay Pal Balance $9.41

Checking Account Balance $3,426.28

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Special Offer to New DPS Members and Subscribers

Beginning in 2018 the DPS would like to welcome new members and subscribers (who don’t yet meet the criteria for membership) with a year’s free subscription to *The Desert Sage*. New members as well as new subscribers should send the membership application form to the Membership Chair, Ron Bartell, by email ([desertpeaksssection@gmail.com](mailto:desertpeaksssection@gmail.com)) or USPS (the form with the address may be downloaded in Word or Adobe Acrobat format at [http://desertpeaks.org/aboutus.htm](http://desertpeaks.org/aboutus.htm)), or may be found in this issue of the Sage. Although the *Sage* is available to all on the web site, members and subscribers receive an email with a link as soon as a new issue is published.
Climate change will harm the entire nation if the U.S. doesn’t act now, federal report warns

This is the title of a *Los Angeles Times* article by Tony Barboza published on Nov 23, 2018.

The congressionally mandated report by 13 federal agencies reaches the summary conclusion that climate change is taking an increasing toll on the nation’s environment, health and economy, and that the damage will intensify over the century without swift action to slash greenhouse gas emissions. The assessment paints a dire picture of the worsening effects of global warming as nearly every corner of the country grows more at risk from extreme heat, more devastating storms, droughts and wildfires, waning snowpack and other threats to critical infrastructure, air quality, water supplies and vulnerable communities. By century’s end, the report projects thousands of additional deaths annually from worsening heat waves and air pollution, as well as declining crop yields and the loss of key coral reef and sea ice ecosystems.

Some $1 trillion in coastal real estate is threatened by rising sea levels, storm surges and high-tide flooding exacerbated by climate change, according to the report.

The report also warns of economic consequences of inaction. Without substantial global emissions reductions and local adaptation measures, the report says, “climate change is expected to cause growing losses to American infrastructure and property and impede the rate of economic growth over this century. If emissions continue to climb, economic losses will be in the hundreds of billions annually in some sectors by the end of the century — “more than the current gross domestic product (GDP) of many U.S. states,” the report says.

The assessment found climate change already affecting California and the Southwest through extreme drought, rising sea levels, heat-related deaths and increased wildfire risk. The area burned across the Western U.S. from 1984 to 2015 was twice what it would have been if climate change had not occurred, according to analyses cited in the report.

The report also details regional-level climate impacts across the nation in an effort to provide local officials with tools to respond and adapt.

The assessment leaves no doubt that humans are to blame for the changing climate, and that the extent of the harm we will experience depends on decisions we make today.

“Earth’s climate is now changing faster than at any point in the history of modern civilization, primarily as a result of human activities,” the report says. “But the severity of future impacts will depend largely on actions taken to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and to adapt to the changes that will occur.”
# DPS Membership Report

by Ron Bartell

## Membership Summary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
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<tr>
<td>Member</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Totals:</strong></td>
<td><strong>162</strong></td>
<td><strong>36</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Activity Report

### New Member

William Chen  
Charleston Peak

### New Subscribers

- Jeff Buchholz
- Bob Gallandt
- Hal Paver
- Sherry Ross
- Kent Schwitkis

### Sustaining Renewals

- Richard L Carey  
  2 years
- Ron Eckelmann   
  1 year
- Gregory Frux    
  1 year
- Karen Isaacson & Brian (Wolf) Leverich  
  1 year
- Jerry & Nancy Keating  
  1 year
- Jim Prichard     
  2 years

### Renewals

- David & Elaine Baldwin  
  2 years
- Larry Edmonds         
  1 year
- Gerry & Pat Holleman   
  1 year
- John Palka            
  1 year
- Kathryn Rich          
  2 years
- Jennifer & Gerry Roach 
  1 year
- Le Roy Russ           
  1 year
- Jim Scott             
  1 year
- Elena Sherman & Scott Sullivan  
  1 year
- Tobi Tyler & Howard Steidtmann  
  2 years

## Donations

- $5 from Gregory Frux
- $20 from Jim Prichard

## DPS Potluck

Hosted by  
Ron and Christine Bartell  
December 9, 2018

Clockwise, from left: Don Weiss, Gerry Holleman, Pat Holleman, Dave Sholle, Barbara Sholle, Tina Bowman, Jim Fleming, and Ron Eckelmann. Please join us on Sunday, March 10, 2019 for the next Potluck at the home of Tom Sumner located in Sylmar. RSVP to Tom with a potluck item to share at locornnr@aol.com.
Mount Jefferson (11,949’)
By Gregory Frux
June 22, 2018

Mount Jefferson, elevation 11,949’, is the sixth highest mountain in Nevada and makes the list of ultra prominent peaks in the United States. These facts and its remote location combined with an easy route made for an enticing destination for Ron Beimel and myself in June 2018. Heading out from Reno, we made it to the Big Smoky Valley the day before our climb. This is one of the large north - south valleys that characterize Nevada’s Basin and Range terrain. We’d been anticipating the quiet isolation of Central Nevada and had booked ourselves into a tiny hotel in the town of Carvers. We were quite surprised to see that the motel was full and that there were large trailer parks just a couple miles to our south along Route 376. It turned out that a gold mine is currently in full operation outside of Hadley, with very prominent tailing piles visible to the east of the highway.

On June 22, 2018, we headed south to Route 377, swinging east around the Toquima Range and passing the fascinating looking ghost town of Belmont. The DPS directions accurately guided us on smaller and smaller dirt tracks. Condition had deteriorated due to erosion on the highest section of the two wheel drive road and we were obliged to stop about 200’ lower than hoped, at around 8,540’ in elevation. We road walked to the trailhead at a saddle on the ridge at 8,771’ in elevation, then turned north following the four wheel drive track for another two miles. This part did make me wish we had a jeep. However, the vistas east and west of mountain ranges and desert valleys expanded as we ascended. Up high were fields of flowers, a lush note in a rather barren landscape.

I must admit that this class one route began to give me considerable difficulties. Firstly, I had come from sea level two days before and began to feel the altitude. Second, we had chosen to climb right at the solstice and the sun was high and unremitting. Trees and shade were vanishingly rare. While I had glacier glasses, a hat and a bandanna, the intensity of the light was daunting. Our few rest stops involved rigging tiny sun shelters from our wind shells, covering little except for our eyes and heads. Fortunately, temperatures were moderate and there was a pleasant breeze.

The upper portions of Mount Jefferson steepened somewhat and gave us a little aerobic challenge. High up we found the trail which crossed scree slopes to be level and pleasant. It appeared almost constructed, but it might also be a game trail. We arrived at the summit in early afternoon, savoring unsurpassed views. The summit log didn’t have any entries from 2018, which pleased us. We found a little shade on the north side of the summit weather station and below some solar panels.

I had a minor crisis early in our descent as I lost my baseball hat somewhere near the summit. In lieu of the hat I rigged a kheffiyeh from my t-shirt and bandanna. It served. An uneventful descent after that got us to our car around 5:30. We had a wonderful wildlife sighting of a group of curious jack rabbits at around 8,000’ in elevation. One flat tire delayed us only a little bit as we had a spare on hand. We arrived in Tonapah with ample time for pizza and a good motel.

The Two T’s: Tucki Mountain & Telescope Peak
By Tina Bowman
November 10-11, 2018

Originally, Sandy and Peter Lara and I planned this as a three-day trip including Porter Peak on Monday, November 12th, the Veteran’s Day holiday. After checking with Ranger Alexandra in Death Valley
about the road conditions for our peaks, I decided Porter by routes A or D was out because she wrote, “Pleasant Canyon and South Park are in very, VERY rough condition. They need rugged 4WD/high clearance. There are very large boulders. The road was heavily hit by a storm in July.” Good thing I checked! It was bad enough when I drove up Pleasant Canyon in March 2013 for a trip Gary Schenk and I led to Sentinel and Porter Peaks. We were down to a two-day trip on November 10-11.

Jim Fleming was unable to join us because he was evacuated from his home by the Woolsey Fire; fortunately, I had phone reception at Stovepipe Wells and was able to hear his message and leave a message for him in return. We worried about him and later Diana and Jorge Estrada, who were also affected by that huge fire. Fortunately, they and their homes were safe. We had only my Tacoma that I knew could make it in for Tucki; the Laras’ Ford F350 has 4WD but is tall and wide. There’s a spot on the drive in for route B for Tucki, the shorter route, that has questionable clearance for their truck with its pop-up camper and another narrow spot because of boulder placements beside the road. It would be some work to get the F350 in there. We had one participant, William Chen with 2WD, and I had to turn away Lisa Barboza from the outing because she didn’t have high-clearance 4WD. We were still expecting Jim at that point, and six people in my truck didn’t sound like a good idea. The jump seats are quite cramped.

The three leaders camped at the free Emigrant Campground off highway 190 about 9.5 miles from Stovepipe Wells. We met William at the parking area below the restroom, where there once was an entrance station. We piled in the Tacoma (I did not assign the carpool!) and headed off for Tucki. I used 4WD in two spots to get to the junction where we turned left and made a steep climb in 4WD to the parking spot for route B. The first time I hiked up Tucki, also from route B, it was legal to continue to drive on the other side of the hill, past Old Martin’s Crossing to where the road turned east and park. The sand then was very deep near the crossing, and the road back up to the current parking spot even steeper than what we encountered to our parking spot. There is a long section of cable near the wood blockade of the road now, and there used to be a rod in the rock, presumably for winching vehicles up. I remember it being a rather scary ride getting back to the top after the fear of bogging down in the sand.

About an hour after leaving the Emigrant parking area and a little before 8:00, we started down the road and on our way to Tucki Mountain. Because I was in the lead, I opted this time to go to the saddle rather than the steeper, more direct climb up the slope above where the old road turns east. From there it’s a roller coaster of up and down. We took one short water break and another fairly short snack break before reaching the summit about two and a half hours later. A layer of smoke obscured our views, both east and west, but it was a pleasant day, the morning wind having died down not long after we started hiking.

About 11:00 we started down, Sandy in the lead, mostly retracing our steps. We stopped to check out the very detailed sign for Old Martin Crossing before the trudge uphill to the truck.

On the summit of Tucki Mountain, left to right: Peter Lara, Sandy Lara, and William Chen.

We made a short side trip to the old Journigan cabin and Tucki Mine. The cabin (please see photo located on the next page) seemed in worse shape than when I was there in January 2013, and a second cabin was now a heap on the ground (maybe it was before, and I just don’t
remember). Back we went to the other vehicles and proceeded toward Telescope Peak.

Now the plan was for William to park at the Wildrose charcoal kilns and then hitch a ride with us to go to the Mahogany Flats campground by the trailhead for Telescope Peak. For some reason, I remembered the road as paved to the kilns. Wrong! Despite some rough spots, William drove to the kilns with no trouble, and we loaded his gear in the truck and followed Sandy and Peter toward Mahogany Flats. A short distance beyond Thorndike Campground we came to a halt. A Corolla had gotten high-centered when it moved over for another truck to pass. Behind it was a Tacoma PreRunner (2WD) that kept slipping forward when the driver tried to back up. A proper 4WD truck was behind those two and was eventually able to unsnarl the mess. My truck was the fourth vehicle below the mess, so I backed down to a wide spot, turned, and went to Thorndike to camp. Sandy and Peter soon did the same. Because it was a holiday weekend, most of the sites were taken. By getting a group to move two of their vehicles, William and I had a site for his tent and my truck. The Laras parked at a clearing at the top of the campground. William and I watched in amusement as a 2WD SUV tried to drive into a spot. After much spinning of wheels, the driver finally backed down and got a better running start, making it into the parking spot. Just beyond the charcoal kilns is a sign that indicates four-wheel drive and high clearance are needed for the road ahead. Sigh. I had hoped we could

camp at Mahogany Flats where Dave and Ann Perkins camped; they had planned to join us for the hike to Telescope Peak, one of the two peaks Dave needs to complete the DPS list for a second time.

The four of us left Thorndike at 6:30 for the short drive to Mahogany Flats. I knocked on the door of the Perkins’ camper and was disappointed that they wouldn’t be joining us for the hike. One of Dave’s hips was complaining, so he was being smart in deciding not to hike. We signed in the trail log and started up Telescope at 7:01. Though I would have been happy to sweep or walk in the middle, I was appointed to lead, so off we went. I had hoped that the wind, which had come up early in the morning, would ease off, but it was not to be. At times it was quite strong, enough to cause us to stagger drunkenly in one section as it buffeted us. We put on and shed layers all day. Aside from clothing breaks, we took two snack breaks on our way to the summit, getting there at 10:45. Again, smoke obscured our views, but blowing dust was down in Death Valley itself. The dust stopped blowing while we were on the summit, and the smoke seemed to have shifted so that the view improved somewhat. We could see the Sierra, at least the spine that includes Olanche, Whitney, and Williamson, but a further view of the Kaweahs was denied us. Charleston was a line on the horizon to the east.

At 11:17 we started down, getting back to the truck at 2:10. We stopped at the Laras’ truck, where they planned to stay another night, and took William to his car at the kilns. I followed him down to Wildrose and out to the Trona road. It was good to meet a young, strong, friendly hiker who loves the desert and desert peaks.
A Very Last Minute Trip to Pyramid Peak (6,703')
By Megan Birdsill
October 6-7 2018

Leaders: Megan Birdsill, Saveria Tilden, and Geoff Mohan

Participants: Guangchao Dong, Tiffany Duke, Jill Douglas, Joanne Edge, Lauren Flemming, Steven Frein, Sara Kim, Elyse Lattanzio, Megan Miller, Kyla Tolentino, and Errin Vasquez

Pyramid Peak (6,703') is just east of Furnace Creek in Death Valley. It is on a few desirable lists: over 2000' of Prominence, the Western States Climbers Star Peaks, and our very own Desert Peaks Section. Quite colorful with very interesting geology, it is a wonderful destination that I recommend.

It just wasn't the one I had been planning for almost a year.

That would be Last Chance Mountain at the northeast boundary of the park. For that peak, and to qualify for a WTC experience trip, the plan was to secretly send a leader ahead in a high clearance vehicle to the DPS trailhead with twenty-five gallons of water, camp chairs, and pumpkins to decorate for the holiday while two leaders backpacked in with ten WTC students. This would be one of their last chances for an experience trip before graduation. But an hour before leaving home my co-leader discovered the road from Big Pine was closed for flash-flood damage earlier that week, not an uncommon occurrence in Death Valley. So, with a few phone calls, the DPS guide, and advice from fellow climbers (special thanks to Sandy Lara), we quickly changed our destination from Last Chance Mountain to Pyramid Peak.

For many, this was their first time in Death Valley and the change made it possible to explore some of the park's highlights. After camping at Furnace Creek Friday night, we used Saturday morning to explore Badwater Basin, Natural Bridge Canyon and the Artist's Palette. At 2pm we gathered the group at the Visitors Center to break the bad news: everyone needed to add two gallons of water to their packs for the three-mile hike to camp near Benchmark 3900.

A few hours later we settled into camp. Upon the conclusion of happy hour and dinner, a light rain began to fall. One participant and I hadn't brought a tent, so we quickly wrapped ourselves in our emergency bivies and hoped it would pass quickly. It didn't. The rain got heavier as we fell asleep but eventually stopped around 11pm and clear skies emerged to highlight the abundant stars. The wind picked up to help the desert dry out before dawn.

In the morning we started up DPS Route A. Without prior scouting we encountered a few route-finding puzzles up the gully until we gained the ridge and enjoyed amazing views to the east. It was remarkably different from Last Chance Mountain - much steeper and rockier terrain filled with sharp cactus. But like true adventurers, everyone rose to the occasion with flexibility, strength, teamwork and great attitudes to bag this classic desert peak.

Maybe next year we'll have another chance at Last Chance.
The Desert Sage

January-February 2019

The Amargosa River, An Illustrated Map

Back in 2005, my wife Janet Morgan and I were invited to be Artists-in-Residence in Death Valley National Park. We became fascinated with this extreme landscape and returned to the region numerous times since then, painting and sketching along the way. Among the many wonders of the area is the Amargosa River just east of Death Valley, one of the most important desert waterways in the southwest. At 185 miles, the Amargosa River is the longest and the only free-flowing river in the hottest and driest desert in North America.

About the Map

As a consequence of our visits we decided to create a large, illustrated map of the river. We hoped that it would help inform the public of the great value of this fragile river. The Amargosa Map provides crucial information for visitors to find hikes, wildlife, springs, marshes, mountain peaks, as well as areas to avoid. It gives the traveler a simple graphic overview of this precious and difficult landscape. In many places along the Amargosa you can’t see any sign of the river, while in others you can only see evidence of its powers in the carving of canyons and of flash floods.

The map was first published in a large limited edition print, 72” x 24”. If interested, an archival edition of the map, printed on fine matte paper, can be purchased from me online at artandadventures.com/shop. A copy of this map is on display at the American Mountaineering Museum in Golden Colorado and is part of their permanent collection.

The Amargosa Conservancy obtained funding from the BLM to print a half size (36” x 12”) version of the map for economical distribution to the public. It can easily fit into a pocket and can be carried for easy reference in its folded format. The map can be obtained directly from the Amargosa Conservancy for more information please visit their website at https://www.amargosaconservancy.org.

About the River

Essentially a series of oases, the Amargosa River is home to many unique and endangered species such as the Shoshone Pupfish, Amargosa Vole and Amargosa Toad. The river also makes possible several small human desert communities along the California-Nevada border including Beatty, Death Valley Junction, Shoshone and Tecopa. This remarkable stream flows south into California, then turns to the north, eventually vanishing into the salt flats of Badwater Basin in Death Valley National Park, the lowest point in North America.

The Amargosa River is very unusual. It is fed from below by springs, not by precipitation and snowmelt as most rivers are. For much of its course, it runs intermittently -- only about 30 miles are perennial -- the rest flows below the surface. Those 30 miles are the result of springs that allow water to reach the surface from deep, ancient aquifers holding water that hasn’t been on the surface since the Pleistocene age, at least 12,000 years ago. In 2009, the year-round portion in the Shoshone/Tecopa area was designated as Wild and Scenic River, based on the wilderness qualities of one stretch, the scenic qualities of another, and the recreational qualities of a third.

About the Amargosa Conservancy

The map was created in collaboration with the Amargosa Conservancy, whose mission is to “stand up for the wilds, waters, and communities of the scenic Amargosa Basin and Eastern Mojave.” The following people provided crucial information and support in the creation of this map: Executive Director Tanya Henderson, Director of Finance and Operations Julie Vargo, Advisor and well-known desert mountaineer and author Andy Zdon, and Len Warren of the Amargosa Valley Songbird Project.
Mount Rose  
By Sharon Marie Wilcox

Renoites are lucky to have the Mount Rose Wilderness in their backyard. Designated as wilderness in 1989, this area gets a lot of use year round. It is a short drive from town and easy to access for summer and winter sports. The trail system allows for various loop hikes or hikes to specific destinations.

Many are drawn to hike Mount Rose (10,776’), which sits in this wilderness. Mount Rose has a well-maintained trail to the top, so it is user friendly for all ages. It has a spot on numerous peak lists making it a desired peak for peak baggers pursuing those lists.

As the Washoe County Highpoint, the trail makes it one of the easier Nevada County High Points to summit. Those pursuing this peak list will find Bob Sumner’s book, *Hiking Nevada’s County High Points*, a great resource.

I never tire of hiking this mountain because of its proximity to town. It can be a leisurely jaunt or a fast pace conditioning hike, though either way the summit gifts fabulous 360-degree views.

If you want some solitude, it is best to avoid weekend and holiday hikes. There are also various off-trail routes that help avoid the crowds. The off-trail routes create possibilities to plan hikes linking surrounding peaks for a longer adventure.

Whether you are planning a leisurely day hike or working on one of the many peak lists that contain Mount Rose, this Nevada wilderness highpoint will not disappoint.

Planning notes:

The view from all of my front windows is Mount Rose. On this sunny December day, the mountain is blanketed in snow.

The bathrooms at the trailhead parking lot have been closed all year.

On the summit of Mount Rose, left to right: Ruby, Mark Johnson, Larry Dwyer, Linda Blust, and Bob Ralston. Photo credit: Sharon Marie Wilcox.
Did you know that as Mono Lake receded during the drought of the 1980s, several tree stumps emerged from the water? It turns out that the lake was even smaller at one time, and that trees grew on its beachfront which was several feet lower. Radiocarbon-dating of sediment samples indicated that the lake experienced an extended low stand that began about 1600 years ago and dropped to an even lower level between 1050 and 550 years ago. Did you also know that in 1932, four years into the Great Dust Bowl, the water level in Lake Tahoe dropped by fourteen inches below its sill, exposing a cluster of tree stumps rising above its surface? Samples taken from those stumps, rooted yet another twelve feet below, were found to be 150 years old, indicating that the lake’s shoreline had at one time been much lower. Radiocarbon dating determined that the trees were submerged 4,800 years ago after a long and severe drought.

At the opposite end of the West’s wildly swinging climatic past, the worst flood in California’s recorded history occurred in 1861-62, when rainfall was three times the average annual amount and huge areas were submerged under ten feet or more of water. William Brewer, field botanist for Josiah Whitney’s 1860-1864 Geological Survey of California, noted, “The great central valley of the state—the Sacramento and San Joaquin Valleys, a region 250 to 300 miles long and an average of at least twenty miles wide, or probably three to three and a half millions of acres—is under water! America has never before seen such desolation by flood as this has been.”

These climate-related extremes are samples of the complex weather history of the West as described by B. Lynn Ingram (Professor of Geography and Earth and Planetary Science at the University of California, Berkeley) and Frances Malamud-Roam (Senior Environmental Planner, Caltrans) to support their thesis “that extended droughts and catastrophic floods have plagued the West repeatedly in the past.” Based on climatic events that have occurred during the post-Ice Age epoch, spanning the past 11,000 years or so, the co-authors contend that those of us living here in the West should be concerned as to whether the relatively benign climate of the past century will continue into the future.

Ingram and Malamud-Roam are well-suited to write The West Without Water, as both have had hands-on experience with paleoclimatology—the study of recent and ancient climates. Both, for example, were active in the study of fossil shells found in sediment cores taken from beneath San Francisco Bay, which indicated that the river flow into the bay had “undergone major swings over the past 5,000 years. The alternating wet and dry periods lasted decades or even longer.”

Other paleoclimatic research projects considered include the study of the White Mountain’s ancient bristlecone pines employing dendrochronology—the use of tree growth rings to re-create a timeline of climate information—and the study of cores taken from on the ocean floor of the Santa Barbara Basin, where annual sediment layers have been relatively undisturbed. Core samples taken from western lakes containing ash layers from specific volcanic eruptions have also been helpful in dating weather events.
What causes the weather patterns to make major climatic changes? Well, the Pacific Ocean, immense and containing half the water on Earth, is a vast heat engine as well as the source of water for the western United States. Slight changes in the temperature of the top 300 feet of the eastern, tropical portion of the Pacific can affect the climate in the West by altering large-scale patterns of atmospheric pressure and circulation. During winters when the usual easterly trade winds diminish, warm waters from the western Pacific may flow eastward, sometimes creating El Ninos (wet events). Conversely, should the trade winds blow harder than usual, La Ninas (dry events) can be created. An even longer-term event, the Pacific Decadal Oscillation (PDO), during which warmer and colder ocean water temperatures can last two to three decades has also been evident in historic weather periods in the West. The transition between a cool and warm phase of the PDO that occurred during the winter of 1976-77 marked such a change, a period which brought extreme drought to California and the Pacific Northwest.

Changes in the energy from the sun caused by sunspots, increases in air pollution due to massive volcanic eruptions, and slight changes in the tilt of the earth’s rotational axis have also been linked to alterations of climate patterns.

A back-cover blurb of West Without Water cautions that while our region “may be buffered from...harsh climatic swings by dams and reservoirs, our modern civilization may be unprepared for the effect of climate change. It is time to face the realities of the past and to plan for a future in which fresh water may be less available.”

STORM OVER MONO (1996), John Hart

The long battle to save Mono Lake from slow extinction and to restore the streams that feed it concluded on Sept. 29, 1994 when the California State Water Agency handed down a historic decision reversing what many had thought to be an irreversible situation.

The fight began in 1934, sixty years earlier, when the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power began capturing virtually all the water flowing into the Mono Basin, then sending it, via a tunnel bored under the Mono Craters, into its already functioning Owens Valley system and from here on to the thirsty, ever-growing Los Angeles area.

The residents of the Mono Basin were the first to be affected by the diversions—a marina completed by Mono County in 1962 was abandoned in 1970 due to Mono Lake's receding shore level. It wasn't until September 9, 1979, however, that a crowd of 250 gathered on the shores of Mono Lake to protest the looming environmental disaster. Bearing placards that read “Save Mono Lake,” “California Gulls Need Love, Too,” “Only God Has Water Rights,” the group dumped symbolic buckets of water taken from nearby “captured” Lee Vining Creek into the lake, launching the first major public effort to confront the giant
utility, one of the most powerful bureaucracies in the country.


Hart begins the Mono Lake saga three to four million years ago at which time a lower Sierra Nevada was merged with a high plateau to the east, and from which a major stream flowed westward to the sea. It was about that time also that the crust over present-day Nevada began to fracture along parallel north-south lines, forming new mountains and valleys. One of those valleys became the precursor of today's Mono Basin, and, due to subsequent faulting and lava flows, “the river that flowed across the Mono region became a casualty.” As Hart explains, the Mono Basin “seems to have become an isolated bowl, a likely place for standing water.”

Much later—but still 36,000 years ago—massive glaciers began to form in the Sierra above the lake, and 12,000 years ago, at the end of that icy period, the lake filled to its highest known level, leaving an ancient shoreline still visible on the slopes above the town of Lee Vining.

During the post-Ice Age period (the early Holocene), volcanic activity created new summits on the nearby Mono Craters; formed Negit, the smaller, darker island in the lake; and—a mere six or seven hundred years ago—built the Panum Crater, on the south shore of the lake.

By the 1970s, due to Water & Power’s diversion of creeks, Mono Lake's shore level was falling and land bridges to its islands were about to form. Should that occur, coyotes and other predators could wreak havoc on the habitat of thousands of gulls, grebes and phalaropes nesting thereon. Another issue was that the salinity of the lake was increasing, threatening the lake's brine shrimp and alkali flies, the main sources of food for the birds.

*Storm Over Mono* explains how a small group of people who cared about saving the lake and its birds grew into the “Save Mono Lake” coalition. Some of the early heroes include Tim Such, a U.C. Berkeley undergraduate, who in 1974, while working on a project for an environmental studies course, became passionate about the lake's survival; David Winkler, another Berkeley undergraduate, who whipped up concern in regard to the possibility of a land bridge forming; and Gayle Dana, a brine shrimp researcher and David Herbst, an expert on the Mono Lake alkali fly, both of whom were worried about the increasing salinity of the lake. Those four and many others eventually formed the Mono Lake Committee, which, along with lawyers for Friends of the Earth and the National Audubon Society, filed suit against Water & Power on May 12, 1979.

In February 1983, in a six-to-one decision, the California Supreme Court ruled that the public trust—
“the concept that certain lands and resources belong to the whole people and that the government, which serves as a guardian, has an inescapable duty to manage these properties well”—existed at Mono Lake, that it had not been properly considered in the past and, therefore, the Los Angeles' water rights were subject to revision.

Neither Water & Power nor the State Water Resources Control Board, however, made efforts to change the ever-worsening situation. By the spring of 1984, even as area creeks dried up, the diversions continued.

It was then that a party not previously involved in the conflict came forward to save the lake from disaster. Indeed, California Trout (CalTrout), a group with considerable political clout (apparently more so than that of the birders), unearthed the fact that there was already a provision of the State Fish and Game code, section 5937, that forbade “the dewatering of creeks below dams.” The anglers' specific concern was that Rush Creek, a major provider of water to the lake, had been almost totally impounded in the Grant Lake Reservoir, and that the situation needed to be remedied.

Although it took another ten years of legal proceedings, the combined force of CalTrout and the Mono Lake Committee eventually saved the lake. On September 16, 1994, the State Water Resources Control Board published an Environmental Impact Report in which Water & Power, along with several other environmentally-positive goals, was obligated to make no further diversions from Mono Basin creeks until Mono Lake's surface reached the 6,377' above sea level—the level at which the lake's islands would be safe from predators. After that level was reached, small amounts of water could be diverted until the lake surface level reached an agreed upon level of 6,390'.

Hart, an accomplished writer, sums up the battle for the Mono area, thusly: “The often-flouted principal of conservation is, you may use, but you must not ruin.” It reminds us that this is a country in which determined citizens can take on mighty established powers and, occasionally, bring about real changes in the world.

MONO LAKE: From Dead Sea to Environmental Treasure (2014), Abraham Hoffman

In his excellent 2014 volume, Abraham Hoffman explores the human historical record of the Mono Basin, which, along with the consideration of its geological and ecological background (see review above), he believes is necessary to complete “the true portrait” of the area

Before the arrival of the white man, untold generations of Indians frequented the Mono Lake area. The word Mono derives from the Shoshonean term for brine-fly larvae, an important food source for the Mono Paiute Indians who gathered the “worms” along the lakeshore.

The first recorded history of the area was made in 1833 by members of the Joseph Walker expedition. Zenas Leonard, a clerk for Walker, described the then unnamed lake as having “no outlet, except that which sinks into the ground,” and that its waters “were admirably calculated to wash clothes without soap.”

John Muir first visited the Mono Basin in July 1869, while herding some 2,500 sheep across the Sierra. Initially reacting negatively to the uncleanliness of the local Indians, he wrote, “Nothing truly wild is unclean.” Later he changed his mind, “Perhaps if I knew them better I should like them better.”

It was Samuel Clemens, however, before he became better known as Mark Twain, who established the lake's reputation. In his first successful book, Roughing It, published in 1872, Clemens described the lake as, “The loneliest spot on the earth,” and that its alkaline waters held, “nothing to make life desirable...The ducks eat the flies—the flies eat the worms (larvae)—the Indians eat all three—and the wildcats eat the Indians...”

Similar to many remote areas of the early West, prospectors and miners were the first to populate the Mono Basin. By the 1860s and 70s, several nearby strikes had been made—Monoville, Aurora, and Bodie—and even as the hungry miners raided the
lake's island rookeries for gull eggs, they and their families created new markets for local ranchers and farmers.

By the 1890s, as the output of the mines diminished, agriculture became even more important. In 1909, one local paper commented, “All around the north and west shores of the lake are farms, pastures, orchards, shade trees and comfortable homes. From the hillsides come bubbling brooks, filled with the purest waters from the springs and snow banks on the mountain tops.”

Sliding into the early 20th Century, the Mono Basin area took a turn toward tourism. With the addition of a garage, a gas station, and a post office, the settlement of Lee Vining—named for a soldier who settled in the area circa 1852—became a town. Soon, telephone and electricity hookups connected the new community to the outside world. After the Tioga Pass road opened in 1915, two new inns followed, the Tioga (1919) and the Mono (1921). In 1928, the twenty-room hotel, the El Mono, was completed, the opening of which was announced in the Bridgeport paper thusly: “Overlooking Mono Lake with its ever-changing rich and wonderful coloration, the new hotel is well situated near in the newest and only modern town in Mono County.”

An annual Mark Twain Days event was inaugurated in August 1929, and in 1961, the County of Mono christened a marina on the lake's shore near Lee Vining. Unfortunately, even as the future looked promising, the lake's water level—due to diversions by Water & Power—began to recede. The marina, stranded far from the water line, was closed; evaporative alkaline residue began to blow off the ever-widening beachfront; and, due to possible formation of land bridges, thousands of nesting birds were in danger of predation. Fortunately, as related in *Storm Over Mono,* reviewed above, by 1994 the lake's level was stabilized and, at present at least, the lake is an environmental treasure.

Did you know that an exploratory oil well was drilled on Paoha Island in 1908, that power boat races were held annually on the lake in the 1930s, or that in July 1957, U.S. Naval Ordnance conducted underwater explosions in the lake? Abraham Hoffman has done a remarkable job reviewing these and hundreds of other facts in assembling the surprisingly complex history of Mono Lake. I highly recommend this always interesting, 168-page volume.

**SAGE PHOTOS AND REPORTS NEEDED!**
The SAGE needs articles and photographs, including cover photos, that pertain to outdoor activities of interest to Desert Peak Sections members and subscribers. Please note that trip reports should include trip dates and identify trip participants and photos should indicate when and where the photo was taken, what it is of, who is in it, and who took it. Please email SAGE submissions to gregrg1955@verizon.net no later than the second Sunday of even numbered months.
## Desert Peaks Section Merchandise

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<td>DPS Emblem Pin</td>
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<td>DPS List Finisher Pin</td>
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<td>Desert Explorer Award Pin</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>DPS T-shirt (see below for shipping and handling), tan with black and gray print (S, L, XL) <em>Sorry, sold out of medium T-shirts</em></td>
<td>$12.00</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>For T-shirt orders, add $3.50 for 1 shirt and $4.00 for 2 or more shirts per order for shipping and handling</td>
<td>$3.50 / $4.00</td>
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For T-shirt orders, add $3.50 for 1 shirt and $4.00 for 2 or more shirts per order for shipping and handling.

*Sorry, sold out of medium T-shirts*

Please make check payable to the Desert Peaks Section.

Questions: [desertpeakstreasurer@gmail.com](mailto:desertpeakstreasurer@gmail.com)

Mail order form and payment to:

Laura Newman  
11755 Entrada Avenue  
Porter Ranch, CA 91326-1933

Grand Total:

[Image of Desert Peaks Section merchandise]

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The Desert Sage

23 January-February 2019

DPS Subscriptions/Memberships:

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Make Check Payable to Desert Peaks Section
Send to:
Ron Bartell, DPS Membership Chair
1556 21st Street
Manhattan Beach, CA, 90266
(310) 546-1977 (home)
ronbartell@yahoo.com

Join the Sierra Club Now and Help Us Make History.

Name:__________________________________________
Address:________________________________________
City:__________________________________________ State:_____ Zip:___________
Phone (_______) ____________________________
Email:________________________________________

☐ YES! I would like to give a gift membership to
Gift Recipient:________________________________________
Address:________________________________________ State:_____ Zip:___________

☐ Check enclosed. Please make payable to Sierra Club.
Name:________________________________________ Address:__________________________
City:________________________________________ State:_____ Zip:___________
Hm Phone:__________________________ Wk Phone:__________________________
Fax:__________________________ eMail:__________________________

SC #: ________ Leader Status (Circle as appropriate): O I M E
☐ New Subscriber ☐ New Member (provide Sierra Club #)
☐ Name Change ☐ New Address ☐ New Home Phone
☐ New Work Phone ☐ New Fax ☐ New Email

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DESSERT PEAKS SECTION

DPS NEWSLETTER - The Desert Sage is published six times a year by the Desert Peaks Section of the Angeles Chapter of the Sierra Club.

SUBSCRIPTION/MEMBERSHIP: Anyone can subscribe to the Sage, for $10/year, or $20/year for a Sustaining subscription. New subscriptions are free for the first calendar year, and subscribers will receive the electronic Sage. We suggest that if you are currently receiving a hardcopy Sage you subscribe at the Sustaining level. Only one (1) subscription is required per household. To become a member of DPS (eligible to vote in our elections), you must be a Sierra Club member, climb 6 of the 95 peaks on the DPS peaks list, and subscribe to the Sage. Send subscription/membership applications, renewals, and address changes to the Membership Records Chair: Ron Bartell, 1556 21st St, Manhattan Beach, CA 90266; ronbartell@yahoo.com. Include your name, address, and email address; and for renewals, a check payable to DPS; and to apply for membership, include your Sierra Club member number and the 6 peaks you’ve climbed (with the dates if possible).

EMBLEM AND LIST COMPLETION STATUS: Emblem status is awarded to DPS members who have been a member for one year, who have climbed 15 peaks on the DPS Peak list, including five of the seven emblem peaks, and who send a list of peaks and dates climbed to Membership Records Chair Ron Bartell, 1556 21st Street, Manhattan Beach, CA 90266, or ronbartell@yahoo.com. Recognition is also given for completion of the DPS list by notifying Ron of peaks and dates climbed. Please see the DPS website for additional Emblem recognition categories.

DPS MERCHANDISE: DPS T-shirts, the DPS Road and Peak Guide, the DPS Peak List, Emblem, Explorer and List Finish pins, and other merchandise is available for purchase from the DPS Merchandiser (see the Merchandise page in this issue of the Sage for more information). Please note that the DPS Peak List is also available as a free download on the DPS Website. In addition, individual peak guides may be downloaded from the DPS website for free by DPS members and subscribers; please contact Ron Bartell at ronbartell@yahoo.com for further information.

SAGE SUBMISSIONS: The Sage editor welcomes all articles, trip reports and photographs pertaining to outdoor activities of interest to DPS members. Trip participants are encouraged to submit a trip report if the participant knows that the trip leaders are not going to submit a trip write-up. The editor may modify submittals in an attempt to increase clarity, decrease length, or correct typos, but hopefully will not modify meaning. Please note that digital documents and photographs are required for submissions to the Sage. Trip reports should include trip dates and identify trip participants and photos should indicate when and where the photo was taken, what it is of, who is in it, and who took it. Please email Sage submissions to the editor no later than the second Sunday of even numbered months; the next submission deadline for the Sage is February 10, 2019.

ADVERTISEMENTS: You can advertise private trips that are of interest to DPS members in the Sage for free. Other announcements/ads are $1 per line or $25 for a half-page space.

EDITOR: Greg Gerlach, 23933 Via Astuto, Murrieta, CA 92562, email: gregg1955@verizon.net.

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