



# The Desert Sage

**OUR 75th SEASON**

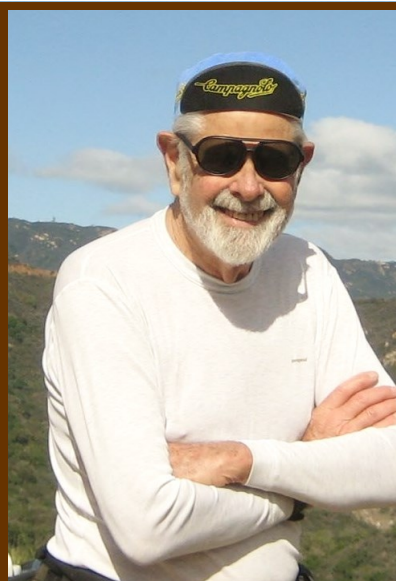
**MAY–JUNE 2016**

**ISSUE NO. 363**



<http://desertpeaks.org/>





## Chair's Corner by Paul Cooley

Spring is here, and the desert is beautiful - but isn't it always?. I have heard reports from Death Valley and have seen the area near Palm Springs

and in Joshua Tree National Park, with flowers galore. I had the good fortune to visit Murray Canyon, near Palm Springs, and Indian Cove in Joshua Tree National Park with my son and his two daughters, ages 11 and 14. The girls scrambled around the rocks in the Indian Cove campground for a while, then we went to Rattlesnake Creek, at the east extreme of the Indian Cove road, and walked up for a bit seeking water (none) and birds (not very many). I stopped past Morongo Valley Nature Center the next day for a hike and ran into Dee Zeller. He and his wife Betty are the resident keepers of the reserve.

I remarked on the paucity of birdlife and Dee observed that the winter migrant birds had departed and the spring migrants had not yet arrived. Good timing for flowers, not so good for avian life; oh well. I did commune with a local Scrub Jay and saw several gorgeous butterflies at close



A Scrub Jay

range.

Welcome and thanks to our new Banquet Chair, Tracey Thomerson, and thanks to Kathy Rich for encouraging her participation. We encourage DPS members to come to the next Management Committee meeting in October and participate. And as always, if you are a leader, please schedule some trips for the next season.

We hope to see everyone at the DPS Banquet on May 15 at the Luminarias Restaurant in Monterey Park and hear Doug Kasian's report on climbing remote peaks in Arizona. Please reserve your seat, if you have not already done so.

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### THE NEXT SAGE SUBMISSION DEADLINE

IS JUNE 12, 2016

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The Desert Peaks Section maintains a website at:  
<http://desertpeaks.org/>

# Desert Peaks Section Leadership for the 2015 - 2016 Season

## Elected Positions

### **Chair**

Paul Cooley  
4061 Van Buren Place  
Culver City, CA 90232  
(310) 837-4022  
[prc.calif@gmail.com](mailto:prc.calif@gmail.com)

### **Vice Chair / Outings / Safety**

Leo Logacho  
11150 Dunning Street  
Santa Fe Springs, CA 90670  
(562) 714-1272  
[leologacho@hotmail.com](mailto:leologacho@hotmail.com)

### **Secretary**

Jim Fleming  
538 Yarrow Drive  
Simi Valley, CA 93065-7352  
(805) 405-1726  
[jimf333@att.net](mailto:jimf333@att.net)

### **Treasurer**

Laura Newman  
11755 Entrada Avenue  
Porter Ranch, CA 91326-1933  
(626) 665-7937  
[lanewman@me.com](mailto:lanewman@me.com)

### **Program / Banquet**

Tracey Thomerson  
6808 Falconview Lane  
Oak Park, CA 91377-3949  
(805) 901-1330  
[tthomerson@roadrunner.com](mailto:tthomerson@roadrunner.com)

## Cover Photo Credit...

goes to Mark McCormick. The photo is of Little Corkscrew Peak, which is located in Death Valley National Park, and was taken on November 1, 2014. Also, Keith Christensen can be seen on the summit.

## 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](mailto:david.perkins@csun.edu)

### **Guidebook Editor**

Jim Morehouse  
3272 River Glorious Lane  
Las Vegas, NV 89135-2123  
(702) 528-3712  
[desertpeakssection@gmail.com](mailto:desertpeakssection@gmail.com)

### **Mailer**

Elaine Baldwin  
3760 Ruthbar Drive  
Hawthorne, CA 90250-8473  
(310) 675-4120  
[DWBaldwin@aol.com](mailto:DWBaldwin@aol.com)

### **Membership Records Chair**

Ron Bartell  
1556 21st Street  
Manhattan Beach, CA 90266  
(310) 546-1977  
[ronbartell@yahoo.com](mailto:ronbartell@yahoo.com)

### **Merchandising**

Laura Newman  
11755 Entrada Avenue  
Porter Ranch, CA 91326-1933  
(626) 665-7937  
[lanewman@me.com](mailto:lanewman@me.com)

### **Mountaineering Committee Chair**

Leo Logacho  
11150 Dunning Street  
Santa Fe Springs, CA 90670  
(562) 714-1272  
[leologacho@hotmail.com](mailto:leologacho@hotmail.com)

### **Mountaineering Committee**

Ron Bartell  
[ronbartell@yahoo.com](mailto:ronbartell@yahoo.com)  
Tina Bowman  
[tina@bowmanchange.com](mailto:tina@bowmanchange.com)

### **Newsletter Editor (The Desert Sage)**

Greg Gerlach  
23933 Via Astuto  
Murrieta, CA 92562  
(626) 484-2897  
[gregrg1955@verizon.net](mailto:gregrg1955@verizon.net)

### **Webmaster**

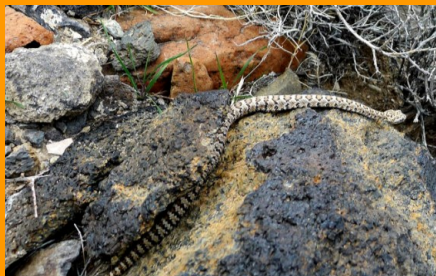
Kathy Rich  
2043 Berkshire Avenue  
South Pasadena, CA 91030  
[Kathrynrich@gmail.com](mailto:Kathrynrich@gmail.com)

### **Mountain Records (Summit Registers)**

Mark Butski  
6891 Rio Vista  
Huntington Beach, CA 92647  
(562) 716-9067  
[hemark58@yahoo.com](mailto:hemark58@yahoo.com)

## The Desert Peaks Section

explores the desert mountain ranges of California and the Southwest, stimulates the interest of Sierra Club membership in climbing these ranges and aids in the conservation and preservation of desert wilderness areas.



## Trips & Events May 2016 — December 2016

**A baby rattlesnake seen on a recent DPS climb of Panamint Butte (photo taken by Mark McCormick).**

APRIL 30-1	SAT-SUN	LTC, DPS, WTC, SPS	Advanced Mountaineering (Techniques/Anchors)
MAY 7	SAT	LTC, WTC, HPS	Navigation: Beginning Clinic
MAY 15	SUN	DPS	Desert Peaks Section Annual Banquet
JUNE 11-12	SAT-SUN	LTC, WTC, HPS, DPS, SPS	Mount Pinos Navigation Noodle
SEPT. 18	SUN	LTC, WTC, HPS, DPS, SPS	Mount Pinos Navigation Noodle
OCT. 5	WED	LTC, DPS, WTC, SPS	Advanced Mountaineering (Basic Safety Systems)
OCT. 8	SAT	LTC, DPS, WTC, SPS	Advanced Mountaineering (Belaying)
OCT 8	SAT	LTC, WTC, HPS	Navigation: Beginning Clinic
OCT. 15	SAT	LTC, DPS, WTC, SPS	Advanced Mountaineering (Rappelling)
OCT. 22-23	SAT-SUN	LTC, DPS, WTC, SPS	Advanced Mountaineering (Techniques / Anchors)
NOV. 19	SAT	LTC, WTC	Navigation: Workshop on Third Class Terrain
NOV. 19-20	SAT-SUN	LTC, WTC, HPS, DPS, SPS	Indian Cove Navigation Noodle
DEC. 11	SUN	LTC, WTC, HPS, DPS, SPS	Warren Point Navigation Noodle

### ♦ APRIL 30– MAY 1      SAT-SUN      LTC, DPS, WTC, SPS

**M/E-R: Advanced Mountaineering Program (AMP12): Rock climbing techniques and anchors:** Fourth of four climbing workshops open to Sierra Club members with prior roped climbing experience. This weekend completes the series of AMP workshops at Joshua Tree National Park and focuses on climbing and anchors. As space is limited, priority will be given to participants who commit to all four workshops. Send email or sase, phones, Sierra Club number, resume to Leader: Dan Richter (818-970-6737, [dan@danrichter.com](mailto:dan@danrichter.com)). Assistant: Patrick McKusky (626-794-7321, [pamckusky@att.net](mailto:pamckusky@att.net)).

### ♦ MAY 7      SAT      LTC, WTC, HPS

**I: Navigation: Beginning Clinic:** Spend the day one-on-one with an instructor learning and practicing map and compass in our local mountains. Beginners to rusty old-timers welcome, and practice is available at all skill levels. Not a checkout, but it will help you prepare. Many expert leaders will attend; many I-rated leaders started here in the past. 4 miles with 500' of gain. Send sase, phone, rideshare info, \$25.00 deposit (refunded at trailhead, check made payable to the Sierra Club) to Leader: Diane Dunbar (818-248-0455, [dianedunbar@charter.net](mailto:dianedunbar@charter.net)). Co-leader: Richard Boardman (310-374-4371).

### ♦ MAY 15      SUN      DPS

**O: Desert Peaks Section Annual Banquet:** Join your fellow DPS members and friends for a wonderful evening at the Luminarias Restaurant in Monterey Park. This year's speaker will be Doug Kasian, who will present "Climbing Remote Peaks in the Mountain Ranges of Arizona". The Social Hour and No Host Bar starts at 5:30 p.m., followed by dinner at 7:00 p.m. and awards. Please see the banquet flyer located on page 7 in this issue of the Sage or on the section's website for more information, or to sign up for the banquet.

### ♦ JUNE 11-12      SAT-SUN      LTC, DPS, WTC, HPS, SPS

**I: Navigation: Mount Pinos Navigation Noodle:** Navigation noodle in Los Padres National Forest for either checkout or practice to satisfy the Basic (I/M) or Advanced (E) level navigation requirements. Saturday is for practice; Sunday is for checkoff or additional practice. To participate, send email, contact info, navigation experience/training, any WTC, leader rating, rideshare to Leader: Robert Myers (310-829-3177, [rmmyers@ix.netcom.com](mailto:rmmyers@ix.netcom.com)). Assistant: Ann Pedreschi. Note: Early (at least two weeks prior to the event) sign-up for all navigation checkoffs and practices is recommended. These outings require substantial pre-outing



preparation work, including completion of both a comprehensive written exam and a route planning assignment that will be mailed to you prior to the checkoff. See Chapter 6 of the Leaders Reference Book for more information. Send contact information (including mailing address) and your qualifications to the leader as soon as possible.

♦ **SEPTEMBER 18**                      **SUN**

**LTC, DPS, WTC, HPS, SPS**

**I: Navigation: Mount Pinos Navigation Noodle:** Navigation noodle in Los Padres National Forest for either checkout or practice to satisfy Basic (I/M) or Advanced (E) level navigation requirements. Send email, contact info, navigation experience/training, any WTC, leader rating, rideshare to Leader: Robert Myers (310-829-3177, [rmmyers@ix.netcom.com](mailto:rmmyers@ix.netcom.com)). Assistant: Ann Pedreschi. Note: Early (at least two weeks prior to the event) sign-up for all navigation checkoffs and practices is recommended. These outings require substantial pre-outing preparation work, including completion of both a comprehensive written exam and a route planning assignment that will be mailed to you prior to the checkoff. See Chapter 6 of the Leaders Reference Book for more information. Send contact information (including mailing address) and your qualifications to the leader as soon as possible.

♦ **OCTOBER 5**                              **WED**

**LTC, DPS, WTC, SPS**

**M/E-R: Advanced Mountaineering Program (AMP14): Basic Safety System:** First of four climbing workshops open to Sierra Club members with prior roped climbing experience. Today's indoor evening workshop of four hours reviewing ropes, harnesses, helmets and basic climbing gear will take place in Pasadena. As space is limited, priority will be given to participants who commit to all four workshops. Send email or sase, phones, Sierra Club number, resume to Leader: Dan Richter (818-970-6737, [dan@danrichter.com](mailto:dan@danrichter.com)). Assistant: Patrick McKusky (626-794-7321, [pamckusky@att.net](mailto:pamckusky@att.net)).

♦ **OCTOBER 8**                              **SAT**

**LTC, DPS, WTC, SPS**

**M/E-R: Advanced Mountaineering Program (AMP14): Belaying:** Second of four climbing workshops open to Sierra Club members with prior roped climbing experience. Today, at Stoney Point in Chatsworth, focus is on belaying and principles of anchor building. As space is limited, priority will be given to participants who commit to all four workshops. Send email or sase, phones, Sierra Club number, resume to Leader: Dan Richter (818-970-6737, [dan@danrichter.com](mailto:dan@danrichter.com)). Assistant: Patrick McKusky (626-794-7321, [pamckusky@att.net](mailto:pamckusky@att.net)).

♦ **OCTOBER 8**                              **SAT**

**LTC, WTC, HPS**

**I: Navigation: Beginning Clinic:** Spend the day one-on-one with an instructor learning and practicing map and compass in our local mountains. Beginners to rusty old-timers welcome, and practice is available at all skill levels. Not a checkout, but it will help you prepare. Many expert leaders will attend; many I-rated leaders started here in the past. 4 miles with 500' of gain. Send sase, phone, rideshare info, \$25.00 deposit (refunded at trailhead, check made payable to the Sierra Club) to Leader: Diane Dunbar (818-248-0455, [dianedunbar@charter.net](mailto:dianedunbar@charter.net)). Co-leader: Richard Boardman (310-374-4371).

♦ **OCTOBER 15**                              **SAT**

**LTC, DPS, WTC, SPS**

**M/E-R: Advanced Mountaineering Program (AMP14): Rappelling:** Third of four climbing workshops open to Sierra Club members with prior roped climbing experience. Today, at Stoney Point in Chatsworth, focus is on rappelling. As space is limited, priority will be given to participants who commit to all four workshops. Send email or sase, phones, Sierra Club number, resume to Leader: Dan Richter (818-970-6737, [dan@danrichter.com](mailto:dan@danrichter.com)). Assistant: Patrick McKusky (626-794-7321, [pamckusky@att.net](mailto:pamckusky@att.net)).

♦ **OCTOBER 22-23**                      **SAT-SUN**

**LTC, DPS, WTC, SPS**

**M/E-R: Advanced Mountaineering Program (AMP14): Rock climbing techniques and anchors:** Fourth of four climbing workshops open to Sierra Club members with prior roped climbing experience. This weekend completes the series of AMP workshops at Joshua Tree National Park and focuses on climbing and anchors. As space is limited, priority will be given to participants who commit to all four workshops. Send email or sase, phones, Sierra Club number, resume to Leader: Dan Richter (818-970-6737, [dan@danrichter.com](mailto:dan@danrichter.com)). Assistant: Patrick McKusky (626-794-7321, [pamckusky@att.net](mailto:pamckusky@att.net)).

♦ **NOVEMBER 19**      **SAT**

**LTC, WTC**

**M-R: Navigation: Workshop on 3rd Class Terrain:** This navigation workshop is limited to individuals participating in the Indian Cove Navigation Noodle and is intended to explore special navigation issues that arise on 3rd class terrain. Class 3 rock travel experience required. Restricted to Sierra Club members. Helmets and medical forms required, group size limited. Send email/sase, Sierra Club number, class 3 experience, conditioning, and contact info to leader: Robert Meyers (310-829-3177, [rmmyers@ix.netcom.com](mailto:rmmyers@ix.netcom.com)). Co-leader: Jack Kieffer.

♦ **NOVEMBER 19-20**      **SAT-SUN**

**LTC, DPS, WTC, HPS, SPS**

**I: Navigation: Indian Cove Navigation Noodle:** Navigation noodle in Joshua Tree National Park to satisfy the basic (I/M) level navigation requirements. Saturday for practice, skills refresher, altimeter, homework, and campfire. Sunday, checkout. To participate, send email, contact info, navigation experience/training, any WTC, leader rating, rideshare to Leader: Robert Myers (310-829-3177, [rmmyers@ix.netcom.com](mailto:rmmyers@ix.netcom.com)). Assistant: Ann Pedreschi. Note: Early (at least two weeks prior to the event) sign-up for all navigation checkoffs and practices is recommended. These outings require substantial pre-outing preparation work, including completion of both a comprehensive written exam and a route planning assignment that will be mailed to you prior to the checkoff. See Chapter 6 of the Leaders Reference Book for more information. Send contact information (including mailing address) and your qualifications to the leader as soon as possible.

♦ **DECEMBER 11**      **SUN**

**LTC, DPS, WTC, HPS, SPS**

**I: Navigation: Warren Point Navigation Noodle:** Navigation noodle in Joshua Tree National Park for either checkoff or practice to satisfy the Basic (I/M) level or Advanced (E) level navigation requirements. To participate, send email, contact info, navigation experience/training, any WTC, leader rating, rideshare to Leader: Robert Myers (310-829-3177, [rmmyers@ix.netcom.com](mailto:rmmyers@ix.netcom.com)). Assistant: Ann Pedreschi. Note: Early (at least two weeks prior to the event) sign-up for all navigation checkoffs and practices is recommended. These outings require substantial pre-outing preparation work, including completion of both a comprehensive written exam and a route planning assignment that will be mailed to you prior to the checkoff. See Chapter 6 of the Leaders Reference Book for more information. Send contact information (including mailing address) and your qualifications to the leader as soon as possible.

In order to participate on 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. 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.

## **Explore · Sketch · Paint Southern Utah**

October 17 to 21, 2016. Immerse yourself in the quiet, colorfully textured beauty of Southern Utah's labyrinth of canyons, for a unique fully catered fun filled 4-night 5-day tour within the Escalante Grand-Staircase National Monument. Base camp located off the famous Hole-in-the Rock Road. Guided hikes and art instruction will be held at gorgeous settings like Harris Wash, Big Horn Slot Canyon, Cedar Wash Arch & Devils Garden.

Hikes will vary from 2 to 5 miles round trip. You will receive lessons and work alongside two professional artists with over thirty years experience each. Gregory Frux is an expert in outdoor oil painting, Janet Morgan is an accomplished watercolorist, both teach outdoor sketching and they can provide individual instruction at all experience levels.

All gear and transportation from Escalante to base camps and hikes will be provided (tents, sleeping bags, pads, food). \$1399.00 plus tax per person. Group size is minimum four guests, maximum eight, insuring personalized attention. [info@artandadventures.com](mailto:info@artandadventures.com)

(This is a paid advertisement)

# DPS ANNUAL BANQUET

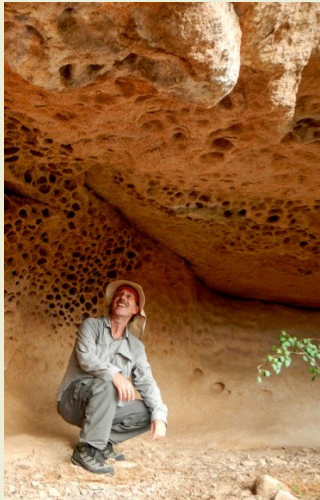
**Sunday May 15**

**Where:** Luminarias Restaurant  
3500 Ramona Blvd.  
Monterey Park, CA  
*near junction of 10 & 710*

**Time:** 5:30 pm Social Hour  
7:00 pm Dinner  
*Includes complimentary  
wine at each table*



*Kino Peak from the south*



**Doug Kasian presents:**

## ***“Climbing Remote Peaks in the Mountain Ranges of Arizona”***

Although originally from Canada, Doug has lived and climbed in Arizona for the past 30 years. He created the list of the 193 Mountain Ranges of Arizona and climbed all of their high points back in the 1980s. As a peakbagger, he enjoys working from lists and has climbed over 1000 peaks in AZ. Nowadays, he spends much of his time working on climbing all the peaks on quads, and all peaks in mountain ranges. However, his greatest passion is climbing peaks that have never been previously climbed, and in remote areas. Over the years, he has climbed with a number of current or former DPSers. He also writes a blog (<http://www.desertmountaineer.com/>) which tells of his many climbs and recently wrote a fascinating 2-part series featuring our very own Barbara Lilley.

### **Silent Auction**

We continue our silent auction of donated items. Please contact Mark Allen for more info.

### **Classic Wilderness and Climbers Cheap Book Sale**

(Be sure to bring books to donate to the Sale)

-----  
Name(s): \_\_\_\_\_ Phone or e-mail \_\_\_\_\_

Dinner selection: Prime Rib/Potatoes \_\_\_\_\_ Salmon/Rice \_\_\_\_\_ Pasta Primavera \_\_\_\_\_

Desert selection: Chocolate Mousse Cake \_\_\_\_\_ Raspberry Sorbet \_\_\_\_\_ *Indicate number of each*

Number of reservations: \_\_\_\_\_ \$45 until April 28 \_\_\_\_\_ \$50 after April 28 Total enclosed \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Please reserve by May 9. Mail check payable to DPS and completed form to DPS Treasurer:

Laura Newman, 11755 Entrada Avenue, Porter Ranch, CA 91326. Tickets will be held at the door.

For questions, e-mail Laura Newman at [lanewman@gmail.com](mailto:lanewman@gmail.com) or Mark Allen at [markallen4341@socal.rr.com](mailto:markallen4341@socal.rr.com)



# Conservation Chair

by *Dave Perkins*



## California Desert: President Obama Protects 1.8 Million Acres

President Obama designated three new national monuments in the California desert on February 12, 2016, expanding federal protection to 1.8 million acres of landscapes that have retained their natural beauty despite decades of heavy mining, cattle ranching and off-roading. He used his power under the Antiquities Act to sign a proclamation designating the Mojave Trails, Sand to Snow and Castle Mountains as national monuments. These designations expand the 1994 California Desert Protection Act which covered nearly 7.6 million acres, elevated Death Valley and Joshua Tree to national park status, and created the Mojave National Preserve. The move bypasses similar legislation, introduced by Senator Dianne Feinstein, (D-California), that has languished for years in Congress.

**Mojave Trails** preserves about 1.6 million acres of public land and protects major wildlife and recreational corridors between Joshua Tree National Park and Mojave National Preserve, plus additional acreage in Bristol Dry Lake, Cadiz Valley and Sacramento Mountains. Included within this monument is the largest intact section of Route 66, Native American trading routes, World War II-era training camps, extinct volcanoes, prehistoric lava flow areas and fossil beds, and part of the Bigelow Cholla Garden Wilderness, California's largest cactus garden. It is home to desert tortoise, bighorn sheep and fringe-toed lizards.

**Sand to Snow** rises from the desert in Coachella Valley to Mount San Geronio, the region's tallest peak. The 154,000-acre monument preserves wildlife corridors between San Bernardino Mountains, San Jacinto Mountains and Joshua Tree National Park. It supports more than 240 species of

birds and 12 threatened and endangered wildlife species. Sand to Snow protects alpine peaks, conifer forests, pinyon forests, Joshua tree woodlands, mountain rivers and desert wetlands and coastal chaparral. Included are 30 miles of the Pacific Crest Trail, Black Lava Butte and Flat Top Mesa, and the headwaters of the Whitewater and Santa Ana rivers.

**Castle Mountains** includes 21,000 rugged acres to conserve a missing piece in the northern part of the Mojave National Preserve, almost to the Nevada border. The Castle Mountains encompass native desert grasslands once inhabited by pronghorn, the only antelope-type animal in North America, and the mountains provide habitat for golden eagles. The range includes some of the finest Joshua tree, pinyon pine and juniper forests in the California desert and the remnants of Hart, a Gold Rush ghost town.

This information is based on articles from the February 11<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> Riverside County Press Enterprise and the February 12<sup>th</sup> Los Angeles Times.





# DPS Membership Report

by Ron Bartell

## Membership Summary

<u>Type</u>	<u>Regular</u>	<u>Sustaining</u>
Member	123	23
Household	29	
Subscriber	23	2
Totals:	175	25

## Activity Report

### New Member

Miriam Khamis New York Butte

### New Subscriber

Rick Craycraft

### Sustaining Renewals

David Comerzan	1 year
John Hooper	1 year
Don Ricker	1 year
Joseph Wankum	1 year

## Renewals

Misha Askren MD	1 year
David & Elaine Baldwin	2 years
Randy & Joyce Bernard	1 year
John Bregar	1 year
Jim Conley	1 year
Ute Dietrich	1 year
Rich Henke & Rena Tishman	1 year
Bob Hoeven	2 years
Sue Holloway	2 years
Laura Newman	5 years
Virgil Popescu	3 years
Gary Schenk	2 years
Carleton Shay	1 year
Penelope Smrz	1 year
Don Sparks	1 year
Ed & Joan Steiner	1 year
Bruce Trotter	1 year

## Donations

\$20 from Virgil Popescu

THE DESERT PEAKS SECTION NEEDS  
MEMBERS TO RUN FOR THE DPS  
MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE.

Please contact any Management  
Committee member if you're  
interested in serving on the  
DPS Management Committee.

## Outings Chair

by *Leo Logacho*



Greetings Everyone,

It's spring at last and summer is almost here!

"In all things of nature there is something of the marvelous."  
*Aristotle.*

The Desert Peak Section had a great winter and early spring hiking and climbing season; DPS trip participants were able to visit many wonderful peaks in Death Valley and other places. Thanks go out to the leaders who led trips. I also want to encourage leaders to schedule and lead trips during the last spring and summer hiking and climbing season; as the weather warms up, these are ideal times to lead many of the higher peaks on the DPS list. Like Aristotle said, there is something marvelous when visiting nature.

In addition, I would like to encourage hikers to become leaders. Please check the following link for more information:

[http://angeles.sierraclub.org/get\\_outdoors/becoming\\_leader](http://angeles.sierraclub.org/get_outdoors/becoming_leader)

Leaders, please report any accidents or incidents promptly to the link below. There is a new website for Leaders (live since December) that also incorporates the LTC, OMC and Safety websites, which can be found at:

[http://angeles.sierraclub.org/leadership\\_and\\_outings](http://angeles.sierraclub.org/leadership_and_outings)

Regards,

Leo Logacho  
DPS Outings Chair

### DPS Peak List Update

Kino Peak is back on the list! In addition, Navajo Mountain has been suspended from the list.

## Treasurer's Report

by *Laura Newman*

*DPS Account Summary from  
January 1, 2016 to  
March 31, 2016*

### INCOME

Banquet Book Sales	\$-
Banquet Silent Auction	\$-
Banquet Ticket Sales	\$-
Merchandise	\$45.00
Subscriptions	\$740.00
Donations	<u>\$20.00</u>
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>	<b>\$805.00</b>

### EXPENSES

Banquet Expenses	\$375.46
Postage	\$25.04
Page Printing	\$151.39
Sales Tax	\$5.13
Supplies	\$20.69
Web Page Expenses	\$-
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>	<b>\$577.71</b>

**CHECKING ACC. BALANCE** **\$3,895.73**

**TOTAL BALANCE** **\$3,895.73**

### UPDATES ARE NEEDED TO THE CURRENT DPS ROAD AND PEAK GUIDE!

Please send road and climbing route updates to the DPS Road and Peak Guide Editor, Jim Morehouse, at [desertpeakssection@gmail.com](mailto:desertpeakssection@gmail.com). Jim is working on a new Version 6 of the guide, so be sure and send him a quick email after climbing a peak with suggested updates to the Guide while the information is still fresh in your mind. The DPS and Jim also welcome volunteers to join the DPS Road and Peak Guide Committee to assist with updating the current Guide. Please contact Jim via email for further information.





# Trip Reports

**Basque tree carving in the Ruby Mountains of Nevada (photo taken by Tina Bowman).**

## **King Lear Peak (8,923') and Duffer Peak (9,397') Leaders: Daryn Dodge and Kathy Rich September 6-7, 2015**

Probably not many DPSers are aware that by climbing the DPS list they also get a head start on the Great Basin Peaks list as 20 peaks are on both lists. With this in mind, we planned a joint DPS/Great Basin Peaks Section (Toiyabe Chapter) climb over Labor Day weekend, 2015. We chose two rugged and remote peaks in northwestern Nevada – King Lear and Duffer Peaks. They are both reputed to have class 3 routes to the summit and in terms of remoteness, the nearest town of any size is Winnemucca, almost 100 miles away.

King Lear Peak is a prominent peak in the Jackson Mountains, on the northeast border of the famous Black Rock Desert. It can be seen from Highway 80. By co-incidence, our visit coincided with the Burning Man event that same week and we saw a number of dusty vehicles at road stops along the way. King Lear Peak is an unusual mountain in that the top 2,000' is comprised of solid volcanic rock, while the lower parts are limestone. Duffer Peak at 9,428' is located near the Oregon border and is the highest peak in northwest Nevada. It also had glaciers on it in the past. Lakes in the Great Basin region are rare, but Duffer has a small group of glacial carved lakes, one of which, Blue Lake, we passed by on our way to the peak.

Most of the group met at the McDonald's in Winnemucca at 6:30 AM Sunday morning for the drive to the trailhead for King Lear Peak. Participants on the trip included Greg Vernon, Lisa Barboza, Sean Casserly, Asaka Takahashi and Al Sandorff.

We chose to use the east side approach to King Lear, as described in Brad Boester's 2013 report on Peakbagger.com. We headed north on Highway 95

from Winnemucca and then west on signed Jungo Road for 43 miles. We then turned right and headed north on the signed and graded Bottle Creek Road for 16 miles to a Y junction with Trout Creek Road, taking the left fork and driving about 4 miles to a metal "Designated Route" signpost on the left. This marks the beginning of the rough high clearance, 4 wheel drive dirt road up Big Cedar Creek. The road ends in 3.4 miles at a fence line and grassy area marked with a large solitary rock, elevation 5,400'.

From the road end, we climbed up the slope, eventually reaching a gully that headed west-



**The gully leading up to the summit blocks of King Lear Peak (photo by Kathy Rich).**

northwest up under the final summit blocks of the peak. At the top of the gully at a saddle, we circled counter-clockwise on a ledge under the massive, near vertical summit rocks around to the northwest side of the peak. Here, we continued south a short distance on the narrowing ledge where we encountered a short section of exposed class 3. Just beyond this section was a nice class 2 ramp heading steeply up to just north of the summit. It then took only a few more minutes to reach the top. From the summit one has 360 degree views - the Great Basin stretching to the north, while to the west was the 100-mile expanse of

*(Continued on page 12)*

# Trip Reports ... continued.

*(Continued from page 11)*

playa and dust that is the Black Rock Desert. The climb was 5.5-6 miles round trip and 3,420' of gain. We tried to write a famous quote from Shakespeare's "King Lear" in the register - although we mangled it a little, this is what we wanted to say: "Many a true word hath been spoken in jest".

Following the climb, we drove north roughly 70 miles to Onion

Valley Reservoir so that we could camp near the trailhead for Duffer Peak. There are two ways to drive to the reservoir. We took the easier, but longer, drive through Denio Junction and approached from the north. High-clearance and 4 wheel drive is recommended for the last several miles to the reservoir. Six semi-primitive camp sites are located at the reservoir, but there is plenty of open space for camping elsewhere. We shared the campground with numerous range cattle roaming about. Although it was nearly dark when we got there, we managed to



**Trailhead for Duffer Peak near glacial Blue Lakes (photo by Kathy Rich).**



**From left to right, Daryn Dodge, Sean Casserly, Al Sandorff, Asaka Takahashi, Greg Vernon and Kathy Rich on the summit of King Lear Peak (photo by Lisa Barboza).**

have a traditional happy hour potluck before turning in for the night.

From Onion Valley Reservoir, the road up to the Blue Lakes trailhead was very rough and required both a 4 wheel drive and gutsy driving. Sean and Greg were up to the task, so we consolidated into their vehicles for the last few miles to the trailhead for Duffer Peak. From the parking area it was a short

hike on trail to the glacial Blue Lakes. From there the route crosses between the lakes. We then headed into trees and brush towards Outlaw Meadow. With a little searching for cattle trails, the bushwhacking was not bad. At a saddle (elevation 8,260') above Outlaw Meadow, most of the group dropped down and followed a trail at the edge of the meadow. Greg and Daryn thought to stay high and thus try and not lose too much elevation. This turned out to be a mistake because the brush eventually became nearly impenetrable. After the meadow we followed occasional use trails through the trees towards Bare Pass. There is a nice use trail up the east side of the small valley leading to the Pass. There are two summits: the north summit is the Great Basin list peak, but the south summit is the true high point. We climbed both.

From near Bare Pass, we turned right and climbed the higher south summit first. It was mostly class 2 with a few minor class 3 challenges thrown in. The ridge



**Descending the higher south summit of Duffer Peak (photo by Kathy Rich).**

from the south summit to the lower north summit is technically easy (nearly all class 2). There were two or three candidate boulders for the north summit, one of which required solid class 3 scrambling. From the north peak, we dropped back down into the small valley just north of Bare Pass and returned the way we hiked in. Distance was about 6-7 miles round trip with 1,800' total gain.



# Trip Reports ... continued.

## **Romping in the Rubies**

**By Lisa Barboza, Kathy Rich, and Daryn Dodge  
Old Man of the Mountains, Thomas Peak,  
and Humboldt Peak  
July 3-5, 2015**

The Ruby Mountains are in northeastern Nevada, close to the Utah State line near Elko, Nevada. Because they stick up so high, they attract a lot of moisture. I will tell you, I have never seen better wildflowers! – It was like a scene out of the movie, Avatar – flowers every few inches, and in some places over six feet tall.

Ruby Mountains – Geology – The Rubies are part of the Basin and Range Province encompassing most of Nevada, and parts of Oregon, Idaho, and Utah – a place where no rivers flow to the sea – and are orphans because they cannot connect with the mother ocean. But have certainly staked out land bound oceans of their own in the many huge basins that in Pleistocene time were as large as seas. The rocks vary from metamorphic gneiss, to granite and pegmatite.

During the most recent ice age, 15,000 years ago, the glaciers swept over the mountains and most trees were wiped out, except for the Bristlecone and a few relict stands of limber pines (all members of family Balfouriana). As the glaciers retreated and the climate warmed, bristlecone, limber pines and common juniper moved in and colonized the mountains. In the Rubies, the Limber Pine and White bark pines dominate the forest from canyon to ridgeline.

This place is a lot like Yosemite – and in fact, it is called Nevada's Yosemite, or Nevada's Swiss Alps. Truly a fantastic place! Most of the peaks can be day hiked, and the wonderful thing – no bears (so no bear canisters) – but there are mountain goats, and native bighorn sheep and mountain lions. The goats were introduced in the mid-1960s, and the lions made their way across the great flats of the basin and range, in Pleistocene time. My thinking is that bears need a more diverse set of fauna and flora to survive,

whereas the lions are more pure carnivores- and are no doubt helped by the vast amount of cattle that roam in the plains around the Ruby Mountains. And don't miss the elusive Himalayan snowcocks – the only place in the US where they have become naturalized.

## **Old Man of the Mountains (10,707'), July 3, 2015**

On a glorious summer morning, we (Daryn Dodge, Kathy Rich, and Lisa Barboza), started in a 4 wheel drive vehicle for the trailhead of the peak. We originally had 7 people for this day hike. But one decided to go another time and 3 others decided to go in the afternoon before and make it an overnight trip. So we had 3 to start around 7 AM. Very little description of the trail to Cold Lakes and the climb itself could be found online. We mainly relied on a blog called [rubymountaintrails.blogspot](http://rubymountaintrails.blogspot) for a description of the hike to Cold Lakes.

The drive to the trailhead is across private property. The best way to get permission to start at the trailhead described on the Ruby Trails website is to contact the local Fish and Game office. The other contacts on the website proved not to be useful anymore. Fish and Game will contact the local landowner, or give you the number to call, so you can contact him yourself. He is a very friendly rancher who will give you the combination for the lock at the first gate. The other update needed for the website is the actual mileage driven once past the locked gate. It is about 2.6 miles, not 1.6 as indicated. Other helpful hints at finding the starting point is take a right at the junction just before the abandoned ranch buildings. Once past the third gate just past the ranch, it is one more mile to the trailhead. When you cross an irrigation ditch (with running water when we were there), you are only 0.1 mile from the trailhead which is alongside the irrigation ditch. You will know you are there when you see a small bridge on the left hand side of a wider part of the road. And it is a small bridge.

We parked off the dirt road and began the hike by crossing the bridge and descending to the trail-less

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# Trip Reports ... continued.

*(Continued from page 13)*

gully below. Going up the other side of the gully, we ran across the trail which travels along the ridge. Turning left, we followed the trail as it circled around down into the next gully over and then up the other side. Soon we reached a trail junction that overlooks Cold Creek. We chose the right fork that dropped down to the creek and faded out before reaching the creek. The river was low, so we easily crossed to the north side to find the trail again, which was quite overgrown with grass. Walking east, we soon came across the only trail sign we saw all day; a trail junction, with the Cold Lakes trail pointing to the right. And up we went. We stayed on the ridge in between the North fork and the middle fork of Cold Creek. The trail came, and went. Mostly went. We often found ourselves bushwhacking through the dense flowers. We passed through several groves of Mountain Mahogany, 25 feet tall, that was reminiscent of the Serengeti. I have never seen these trees so tall!

After about 3 hours, we found ourselves at the granite bench below Cold Lakes, and here the trail actually got better. But not maintained, that's for sure. To the south of the uppermost Cold Lake, at 9,900', we found a gully that went up and left, and looked like it would take us to a saddle along the ridgeline. It was



**Kathy Rich on the ridgeline of Old Man of the Mountains looking towards the craggy gendarmes and the summit (photo by Lisa Barboza).**

an easy climb of about 450' to the saddle. From there, we took an easy clockwise traverse along the ridgeline, to the first of four gendarmes blocking an easy approach to the peak. The first was easily passed on the left (class 2), but the next two gendarmes required a little investigation to

keep the climbing to class 3. The fourth gendarme was an exposed catwalk that went class 3-4. Some



**Lisa Barboza on the descent from the top of Old Man of the Mountains at a short section of class 4 just below the summit with a big drop to the right (photo by Kathy Rich).**

will want a rope here. Finally, we came to a minor crux point: a chimney about 20 feet high that could be stemmed to gain the summit block. Exposure is low but the chimney also goes class 3-4. Some may want a rope here too. Fantastic views! Afterwards, Daryn and Kathy went over to bag Green Peak (10,831'). The hike out was easier – we were better able to follow what was left of the trail in the overgrown areas. All told, about 17.5 miles round trip and 6,100' of gain.



**On Island Lake trail to Thomas Peak (photo by Lisa Barboza)**

**Thomas Peak  
(11,316'), July 4, 2015**

For our next day, we chose an easy climb of Thomas peak. We drove to the end of Lamoille Canyon (pronounced LAM-OIL) to the parking lot at 8,850'. From there, it is

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# Trip Reports ... continued.

*(Continued from page 14)*

a 3.5 miles hike up a good switchback trail to Island Lake at 9,500', then an easy scramble up the south slope, then over to Thomas Peak. On the way up, we saw several mountain goats and their kids. The hike was about 8 miles round trip with 4,200' of gain.

## **Humboldt Peak (11,025'), July 5, 2015**

For the last day, we decided on a climb of Humboldt Peak. This time, we had quite the crew – Laura Newman, Larry Dwyer, Sharon Marie Wilcox, John Ide, Kathy Rich, Lisa Barboza, and Daryn Dodge. To get there, we went on good two lane road that went around to the east side of the Rubies along Secret Creek. After crossing over Secret Pass (6,457'), we turned left at Person Creek Road (40.8089, 115.1886), and drove about 2.5 miles, and opened a locked gate. We had the gate combo and permission



**Foggy start of the hike to Humboldt Peak, from left to right, Larry Dwyer, Laura Newman, Daryn Dodge, Kathy Rich, Lisa Barboza, and John Ide (photo by Sharon Marie Wilcox).**

from the landowner to approach the peak from the south. The Jeep road (40.8127, 115.1434) that paralleled the Franklin River to our east, to eventually stop in Pole Canyon, a few miles up, when we could drive no further, to a flat spot with a few small beaver ponds nearby, and the Franklin River gushing by.

We could have just gone up the canyon to the peak, but it looked brushy with lots of aspen. We elected to scale a ridge to the southwest of the peak. After a bunch of scrambling, and a few missed turns in the fog, we arrived at the top of Humboldt Peak. An easy scramble led to the summit, a total of 3,100' gain, and 7 miles round trip. On the way back we did actually go down Pole Canyon, and did experience some dense aspens. Best to stay on the west side the whole way, and gain some altitude to avoid the dreaded aspens. However, this was easier and faster than our ascent route.

All in all, I highly recommend the Ruby Mountains as a place to climb. It is about 8 hours from the Bay Area if you leave early to avoid traffic, and about 10 hours from Los Angeles to Elko. And it is well worth the drive.

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## **Sandy Point (7,062') and Last Chance Mountain (8,456') Leaders: Mat Kelliher and Bill Simpson By Cameron McNall April 2-3, 2016**

I am not a peakbagger and have never ventured beyond the more touristy Death Valley locations, so I jumped at the opportunity to join an enthusiastic group of seventeen people led by Mat Kelliher and Bill Simpson to ascend several desert peaks. We collected at the Crater Mine site Friday night. The Big Pine/Death Valley road to the site had only minor washboarding and was accessible by any vehicle. The route to the Sandy Point trailhead on Saturday morning was equally good and everyone was out of cars and hiking by 8 AM. The weather was perfect, hitting the sweet spot of cool air with warm sun, with only a minor breeze. The chosen route was 11.1 miles round trip with 2,800' of gain on easy class 1-2 desert terrain. We ascended the western ridge (rather than the standard north-gully/ridge route) so that we could pick up Peak 6,277 along the way. The view at the top was unparalleled with the Eureka Dunes in the foreground and the long string of snow-capped mountains of the Sierra crest behind. The register

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# Trip Reports ... continued.



*(Continued from page 15)*

contained an entry claiming to have been placed by the DPS on November 21, 1976. It appears that only one other party has visited the peak in February of this year. Many people have adopted the GAIA GPS app and during lunch on the peak Bill Simpson demonstrated its trail tracking and trip stat capabilities offered on a mere iPhone. We returned to the campsite by 4 PM, leaving plenty of time to explore the rusty machinery of the old mine and the surrounding area. Happy Hour started early and an impressive amount of celebratory wine was consumed. Wasim Khan was master of the fire pyrotechnics and it was an impressive performance. Most everyone turned in by 9:30 PM. The next morning some long faces did not prevent a punctual departure at 7:30 AM. From the Crater Mine site we were able to drive only a very short distance to the trailhead of Last Chance Mountain. It was on this drive that I learned about the term “pin striping”, which refers to the horizontal scrapes evidenced by almost all of the vehicles gained by driving past dry sharp brush. We climbed up the class 1 Pinyon Pine and Juniper slopes to the southern ridge system (rather than the standard east ridge) to the summit for a day's total of about 7.0 round trip miles with 3,000' of gain. Our route was a little longer, and experienced a little more up and down than the standard route, but the scenery was a little more varied than it would have otherwise been. The up and down effort produced a running joke about “the final push”, which may be standard fare on DPS hikes but is the first time this DPS neophyte has heard it. Some sore hips, tendons, and feet experienced by the group from



**Top photo: Eureka Dunes and the Sierra Nevada mountains from the top of Sandy Point (photo by Shurovi Masud). Bottom photo: Group shot on the summit of Last Chance mountain (photo by Dan Graef).**

the previous day only slightly slowed the blistering pace set by Mat in the lead. The view was similar to the first day but from a different vantage. Everyone was back in camp by 2 PM, and most left for home shortly thereafter with great photos and two more peaks to enter into the [peakbagger.com](http://peakbagger.com) website. After this wonderful experience I think that I will have to climb more desert peaks.

Trip participants included the following people: Mat Kelliher, Bill Simpson, Amin Faraday, Cameron McNall, Dan Graef, Tom Beckett (Saturday only), Gary Vance (Sunday only), Greg Gerlach, John Ray, Jorge Estrada, Mark Butski, Ron Eckelman, Sharon Marie Wilcox, Shurovi Masud, Valerie Norton, Wasim Khan, Tracey Thomerson, and Peter Kudlinski.



# Great Basin Peaks Section News



## **Snowflower Mountain (10,243') By Sharon Marie Wilcox**

On September 29, 2015, Great Basin Peaks Section members and friends repeated a hike to Snowflower Mountain in the Carson Range. We started at the Mount Rose Wilderness Boundary in Thomas Creek Canyon on a sunny, autumn day. The road to the trail-head is usually rough and a high clearance vehicle is best, especially if there is water in the rocky creek crossing over the road.

The trail has been improved and re-routed since we hiked up it in 2009. This good trail heads to the ridgeline where you depart from the trail to follow the ridge south about a half-mile to the rocky summit.

In autumn the aspens make this a colorful late season hike, but no matter when you hike this trail you will observe the rock formation that locals call Rainbow Rock. In the right lighting it is rainbow striped and a great photo subject.



**Rainbow Rock, which is located in the  
Mount Rose Wilderness.**

Though this peak had been mislabeled on some maps as Sunflower Peak, a query to Jack Hursh, executive secretary of the Nevada State Board on Geographic

Names, confirmed that the peak was named by Alvin McLane and is officially Snowflower Mountain.



**From left to right, Bill Bowers, Linda Blust,  
Sharon Marie Wilcox, Lu Belancio, Gretchen  
Nelson, and Bob Ralston on the summit of  
Snowflower Mountain.**

So what is a snow flower or snow plant (*Sarcodes sanguinea*)? This red-colored alien looking plant comes up after snow melt in conifer forests. It doesn't have chlorophyll and derives nutrition from underground fungi. For detailed information check out the Botanical Society of America at: [botany.org](http://botany.org).

We missed the peak's namesake flower since we weren't visiting in the right season, however we still enjoyed a nice hike with good summit views. Another excellent day exploring a great basin peak!

We now have a page on Facebook. Please add pictures or reports from your trips to share with other hikers. Join the GBPS! For details on membership, recognition categories, peak list, and trip reports check out Great Basin Peaks Section at:

<http://www.sierraclub.org/toiyabe/great-basin-peak-outings>





## DESERT REMINISCENCES, SPRING 2016

### IN THE SHADOW OF THE PALMS, VOLUME I (1986), Art Kidwell

According to legend, the namesake twenty-nine palm trees found at the Oasis of Mara ("the place of little springs and much grass") were planted by the Serrano Indians after a medicine man told them that they should move there and plant a palm tree each time a boy baby was born. In this reviewer's heretic opinion, the palms, similar to most other desert oases, arrived there on their own.

When the Twentynine Palms area was first surveyed in the 1850s, the Serrano living at the springs that rise along the Pinto Mountain Fault were contentedly growing beans, pumpkins, and squash. In 1867, the population increased when several Chemehuevi, intermingling peacefully with the Serrano, also settled at the Oasis. Prospectors found gold in the area in the 1870s--the Anaconda Mine began operation south of the Oasis in 1874, the Lost Horse, the Desert Queen, and several other notable claims followed soon thereafter. Trees at the oasis were cut down and water to support the growing mining operations was siphoned away.

In 1986, Art Kidwell, author of *Ambush: The Story of Bill Keys* (1979)--see review in September/October 2014 issue of *Desert Sage*--published *In the Shadow of the Palms, Volume I*, the first (and, as far as I can determine, the only) of a projected series, recording the memories of Twentynine Palms first non-native residents. Employed for three years as a staff member at Joshua Tree National Monument, Kidwell got to know not only Bill Keys and his family but several other early residents of the adjacent high-desert area as well.

To understand why these pioneers moved to such a remote area, a bit of background information (which Kidwell, unfortunately, fails to provide) is necessary.

Starting in 1863 and continuing until 1977, a series of Federal Homestead Acts allowed citizens to claim 160-acre parcels throughout the Western U.S. Successful claimants needed to "prove up" their property by building a small cabin and an outhouse, and then living on the property for five years.

In the early 1920s, several World War I veterans, suffering from lung afflictions resulting from being gassed during the trench warfare and hoping to benefit from the dry desert climate, began establishing homesteads in the Twentynine Palms area. During the great depression of the 1930s, folks seeking a lifestyle combining healthful living conditions with an inexpensive existence also arrived on the scene.

Life in the desert presented many challenges, however. Summers were extreme for those used to more temperate climates; the work was hard, and the neighbors far away. Few homesteaders met the challenge. Many farms and small homesteads were abandoned, leaving behind the tiny cabins which still litter the area.

*In the Shadow of the Palms* considers the lives of several of the first non-native settlers in the Twentynine Palms area. Introducing each of the twenty-five memoirs with a brief biography of its author, Kidwell then stands aside to let the pioneers tell their stories in their own words.

The first and oldest memoir is that of Maude Carrico Russell, an employee of the U.S. Indian Service Office, who first came to Twentynine Palms in 1909 to visit Miss Clara D. True, who at the time was superintendent of five area Indian reservations, including one at the Oasis of Mara.

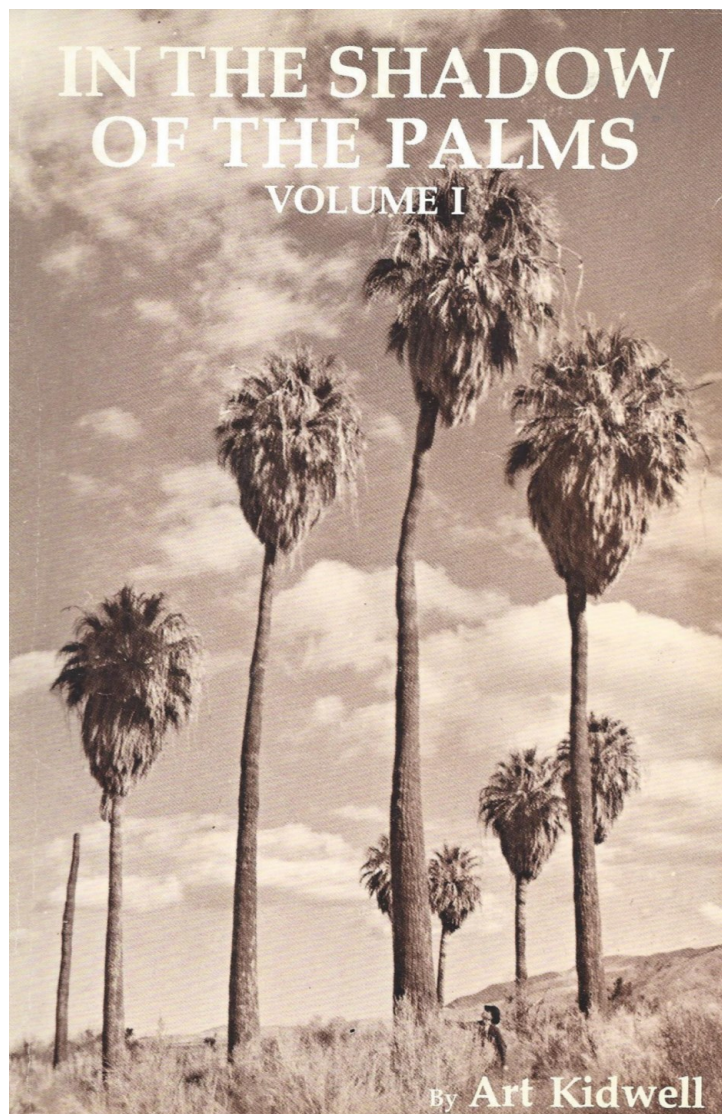
Russell's description of her journey through the desert to the reservation is classic: "There was no highway for traveling (from Banning to the Oasis),

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# Desert Books – continued...

(Continued from page 18)

nor cars that could plow through the desert sand. It was necessary to travel in a big wagon with spring seats, drawn by four horses. Camping needs such as tents, cots, food for the trip, and feed for the horses...were sent out in a freight wagon a day in



advance." "Drinking water for the journey was carried in canteens wet and wrapped in burlap, which were hung in the wind, and refreshed at each opportunity. So, with oranges and grapefruit to be sucked enroute, we survived the heat."

Upon arriving at the reservation, Russell continues: "Our camp was made near the Indian huts...which were mostly made of sticks and arrow weeds, plastered over with adobe mud." The Indians were "hospitable and friendly. They spoke only in their

own Indian language, that of the Chemehuevi and Spanish."

Russell's second trip to Twentynine Palms was made in May 1910, "over the same difficult road through the floor of the desert, and still in a four horse wagon."

That year, however, "we found the Indians had all removed. They had been having some difficulty in holding their land which had been in their possession since the beginning of man's knowledge...However, after the tragic death of old Mike Boniface and his daughter by Willie Boy, they all removed to other reservations."

The Willie Boy incident occurred in September, 1909, when Willie Boy, a Chemehuevi, shot and killed Mike Boniface, then abducted Boniface's daughter, Carlota, who herself was shot and killed (although possibly accidentally by the pursuing posse, not by Willie Boy). The resulting homicides became cause for the last major manhunt in Western U.S. history. Indeed, a 1902 census found 37 Serrano and Chemehuevi living at the Oasis. As more non-Indians arrived, the Indian families began to drift away, and by 1913, the Serrano and Chemehuevi were all gone.

The most compelling memoir of *In the Shadow*, however, is that of Elizabeth Crozer Campbell, who, with her husband, Bill, moved to Twentynine Palms in 1924, in the hopes of curing Bill's lungs which had been damaged during mustard gas attacks in the last days of World War I.

Camping for their first few months at the Oasis of Mara, the Campbells eventually located a section of nearby land upon which they proceeded to homestead. Educated in private schools in Pennsylvania, Elizabeth was a skilled writer who described their first days on the desert in part as follows:

"The events of that first day still are vividly in my mind--eating breakfast in an old Army blanket by the campfire, the smell of bacon and coffee and campfire smoke, exploring the line of springs and resting under the cottonwoods.

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## Desert Books – continued...

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"In a slight depression between two mesquites, we set up our one pole tent and stacked our possessions inside it. Beside this we parked our comfortably ancient touring car. Under the cottonwood tree we built a little fireplace of stones and old scrap metal and here we cooked all our meals.

"Every two or three days, range cattle swayed by impulse came in to the springs to drink. There were lots of cattle in those days for the whole district was open range with sufficient water to support many of them...Flies came with the cattle, and we chased flies all day and into the next one. Then the cows would be gone to wander for three days munching on the desert growth."

Later, on their own homestead and with Bill's health improved, the Campbells began to explore the nearby desert area, and, in fact, discovered the Pinto Man Site--a place inhabited by early man over 20,000 years ago--an accomplishment documented in their 1935 Southwest Museum Paper No. 9, "The Pinto Basin Site."

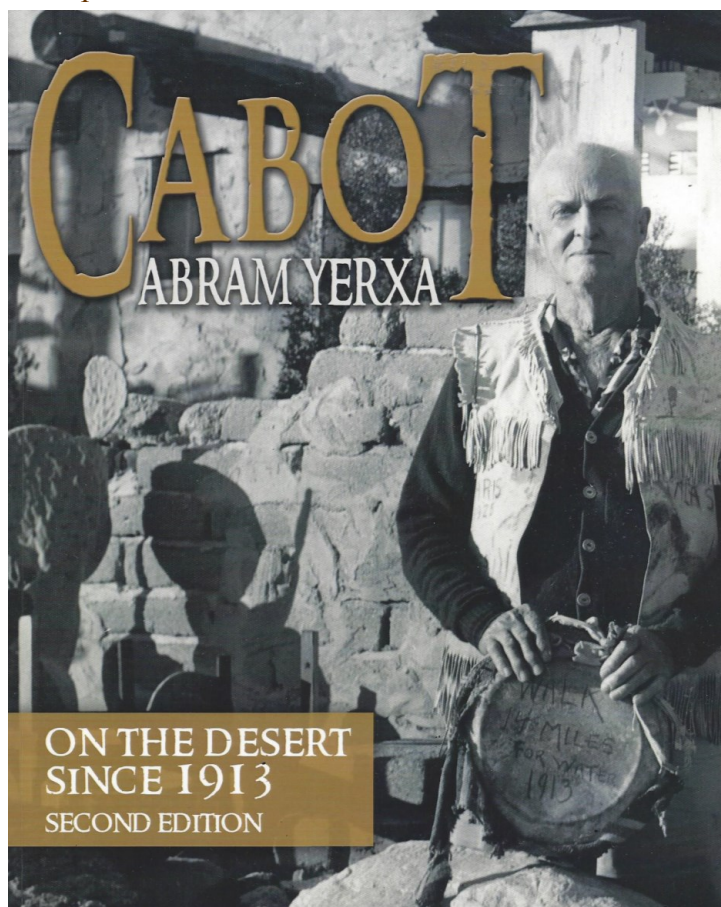
Twenty-three additional memoirs are also included, many of which recall the strong community spirit that developed in the area during the tough times. Not all the memoirs, however, are of the same high quality of the two cited above.

### **ON THE DESERT SINCE 1913, Second Edition (2013), Cabot Abram Yerxa**

Cabot Yerxa (1883-1965) was one of the most colorful characters in a long line of colorful desert characters. Raised in a wealthy family in Minnesota, at the age of 17 he left the Midwest to open a cigar store in Nome, Alaska. Later, he helped his father build a housing development in Cuba (1902-03), acquired a small grocery store in Sierra Madre, California (1908), and from 1908 to 1911 was the postmaster of that city.

In 1913, Yerxa homesteaded on 160 acres of land in what is now Desert Hot Springs, California, where he is credited with being the first to discover the hot mineral water found there.

Yerxa's property, later named Miracle Hill, located on the Mission Creek branch of the San Andreas Fault, was in fact situated atop two aquifers. The first, a natural hot spring with a temperature of 110 F, was a part of the Desert Hot Springs Sub-Basin and would later give rise to the area's spas and resorts. The second, on the opposite side of the fault, was a cold aquifer of the Mission Springs Sub-Basin. This same aquifer today provides fresh water to the city of Desert Hot Springs and has received awards for exceptional taste.



Shortly after "proving up" his property, Yerxa joined the Army where, until 1919, he served under Lieutenant. Colonel. Dwight D. Eisenhower. Next, he became postmaster and the owner of a small general store near Blythe, after which he returned briefly to his desert claim. In May 1925 he was off again, this time for "a year of walking adventure and a life in art schools of London and Paris."

A reporter who interviewed Yerxa in his later years noted, "He did not return (to the Desert Hot Springs

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# Desert Books – continued...

(Continued from page 20)

area) until the 1930s. In 1937 he managed to interest the late L.W. Coffee of Los Angeles in the value of hot water here, which led eventually to the founding of the small village of Desert Hot Springs."

In 1941, Yerxa began his most notable project yet, the building of a rambling four-story pueblo, patterned after those of the Indians of the Southwest, now known as Cabot's Old Indian Pueblo Museum.\*

While reading a morning paper in his Pueblo Museum on March 5, 1965, Cabot Yerxa died of a heart attack.

Between July 1951 and December 1957, a local paper, the *Desert Sentinel*, published Yerxa's memoirs in a series of 280 columns describing his struggles as a homesteader in the Desert Hot Springs area (1913-1918), his discovery of the "miraculous" hot water aquifer, his observations of desert life, and the friendships he made with Hollywood celebrities at the nearby B-bar-H Ranch during the 1930s and 1940s. A few examples of his writing skill:

On his arrival in the desert, 1913: "The train stopped only long enough for us to get off at 2 a.m. in the desert, then disappeared down the track towards Indio in a swirl of dust. The conductor wondered why we wanted to get off at this particular water tank, commenting, 'There is nothing there.' He was right. Just a water tank and a very small depot with the name Palm Springs painted on a white board. He further explained that Palm Springs was a small Indian village with a post office and a dozen white families five miles to the south."

On desert wildlife during a rain storm: "The coyotes slink around with wet feet, dripping with rain and drooping tails, as ever on that ceaseless hunt for food...."

"Overhead one solitary goose flies strongly with head and neck outstretched through the murky rain. He was headed as straight for Mexico and warmer weather, as an aviator could without a compass. The goose was flying low and honking very mournfully at regular and frequent intervals. I heard him minutes

before he appeared in the mist, and I heard him minutes after he was lost to vision. His heart was troubled because of separation from his flock. I might have shot him, but I did not try."

Re Merry Xmas, his favorite burro: "No other burro on the desert acted like Merry Xmas, nor showed equal intelligence...I was much attached to this burro; it was young, strong, all black in color except for a white nose. Its ears were enormous, and its bray could be heard a long distance.

"The going price for any burro was 10 dollars, but several times I have turned down offers of 100 dollars for Merry Xmas...Even though I was often hungry, my one pair of faded, patched blue overalls had noticeable holes in them, and I used flattened tin cans nailed on my shoes to serve as half-soles--but sell Merry Xmas? No sir!..."

The first edition of *On the Desert Since 1913*, was edited by Richard E. Brown, a former professor of English at the University of Nevada, Reno. The Second Edition, which includes over fifty family photos evoking Yerxa's early days in Alaska, Cuba and the Southern California deserts, was revised by Brown and Judy Gigante, the official Historian of Cabot's Museum Foundation. A copy can be purchased directly from Cabot's Museum Foundation at [cabotsmuseum.org](http://cabotsmuseum.org) for \$15.00 per copy.

\* Cabot's Pueblo Museum is open October 1st - May 31st, Tuesday through Sunday 9am to 4pm, and is located at 67616 E. Desert View Avenue, Desert Hot Springs, CA 92240. General Admission, including a guided tour, is \$13.00.

## SAGE PHOTOS AND REPORTS NEEDED !

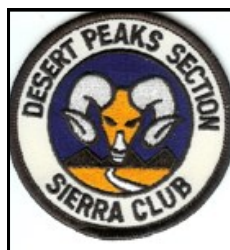
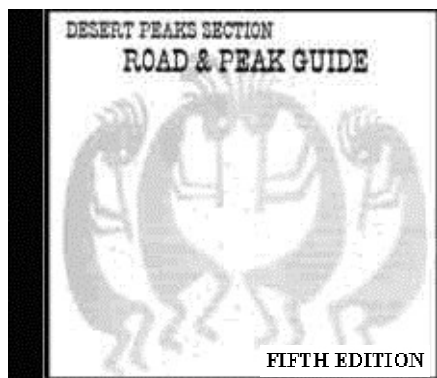
The SAGE needs articles and photographs, including cover photos, that pertain to outdoor activities of interest to Desert Peak Sections members and subscribers. Please note that trip reports should include trip dates and identify trip participants and photos should indicate when and where the photo was taken, what it is of, who is in it, and who took it. Please email SAGE submissions to [gregrg1955@verizon.net](mailto:gregrg1955@verizon.net) no later than the second Sunday of even numbered months.

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**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:** It costs ten dollars a year to subscribe to the Sage. Anyone can subscribe to the Sage, even if not a member of the DPS or the Sierra Club, by sending \$10 to the Membership Records Chair (see below). Please note that a Sustaining membership/subscriptions is also available for \$20. To become a member of the DPS, you must (1) belong to the Sierra Club, (2) have climbed 6 of the 96 peaks on the DPS peaks list, and (3) send \$10 to the Membership Records Chair (see below) for a Sage subscription (\$20 for Sustaining). Non-members who subscribe to the Sage are not allowed to vote in the DPS elections. Renewals, subscriptions, and address changes also should be sent to Membership Records Chair **Ron Bartell, 1556 21st Street, Manhattan Beach, CA 90266, or [ronbartell@yahoo.com](mailto:ronbartell@yahoo.com)**; the membership/subscription form can be found in this issue of the Sage. The subscription/membership year is for six issues, regardless of when payment is received.

**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](mailto: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.

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**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 **June 12, 2016**.

**ADVERTISEMENTS:** You can advertise private trips that are of interest to DPS members in the Sage for free. Also, you can advertise in the Sage; the cost is \$3.00 per line.

**EDITOR:** Greg Gerlach, 23933 Via Astuto, Murrieta, CA 92562, email: [gregrg1955@verizon.net](mailto:gregrg1955@verizon.net)