We’re starting a new DPS year and our roster of management committee members has already met and gotten started on this year’s events and important issues. My job is going to be easy with the wonderful group I have to work with. Pat Acheson as our treasurer has worked hard to keep our budget current and meticulously correct. Ann Perkins had a wonderful Banquet Speaker last year and this year promises to be even more entertaining. Dave Baldwin brings a wealth of experience for the outings chair. He has his work cut out for him with national’s leader guidelines looming on the horizon. Diane Dunbar as secretary will keep a log of our meetings and have an agenda to help us pay attention to key issues. We have a great team, and we’re all anxious to get started.

I look back on all the wonderful times I’ve had since I found myself drawn into the Desert Peaks. I have found my best friends here, my most memorable times here, and my husband here! (Actually he was hiding at work, disguised as a mover of ketchup instead of a desert peak bagger). The Desert Peaks experience takes you to a place that is so rare, so special and so life altering you are never the same again.

I recently went hiking with my husband Ron, Pat and Dean Acheson, Tom Sumner and Vic Henney and Sue Wyman and as we all sat around the campfire, we reminisced on whatever possessed us to want to do this list? For each and every one of us it was a thrill of a lifetime. Little Picacho, the Disneyland of peaks; North and South Guardian, the Grand Canyon of awe and wonder that such natural beauty exists; Big Picacho, the defining peak that can make or break a DPSer. My first peak was Boundary, one I shall never forget. One of the reasons it was my most memorable is because I proved to myself I could do it. I feel a kinship with that mountain, and every time I look up at it, something speaks to my very soul. Montgomery Pass for me is one of the most beautiful places on earth.

Ron and I had our list finish this year on Orocopia. As I mentioned that night around yet another wonderful campfire, I owe my list finish status to those who helped me achieve it. I could never have done this without them. That is what the DPS is about. Helping each other achieve a goal of a lifetime. That is what makes me so honored to be able to work as the chair this year. In my small measure, I hope to give something back to those who made my dream come true. -Ellen

Inside this issue:
- Panamint Butte & Canyon Point
- Chili Cook-off & Eagle Mtn #1
- Chile Verde Recipe
- Banquet 2005
- El Capitan, Yosemite
- Mt Perkins, AZ
- Book Reviews

NEXT SUBMISSION DEADLINE AUGUST 14, 2005

The Desert Sage is published six times a year by the Desert Peaks Section of the Angeles Chapter of the Sierra Club. Subscription to The Desert Sage is ten (10) dollars a year. See back cover for ordering details. The Desert Peaks Section’s Sage is the property of the Desert Peaks Section of the Angeles Chapter of the Sierra Club. All rights reserved.

The Desert Peaks Section maintains a website at:
http://angeleschapter.org/dps/

The Desert Sage 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
JULY THROUGH DECEMBER 2005

JULY 7-11    THU-MON    DPS, Many Sections    White Mtn, Bristlecone Pines Dry Car Camp
JULY 23      SAT       DPS, WTC    Charleston Peak, Mummy Mtn
AUG 5-7      FRI-SUN   DPS, SC PAC    Telescope Peak
AUG 20       SAT       DPS    Mt Dubois
SEPT 24-25   SAT-SUN   DPS    Hayford Peak, Mt Stirling
OCT 1        SAT       DPS    Desert Peaks Section Monthly Party, Potluck and Meeting
OCT 15-17    SAT-MON   DPS    Sentinel Peak, Porter Peak
OCT 29-30    SAT-SUN   DPS    Pahrump Point, Stewart Point
NOV 5        SAT       DPS    Desert Peaks Section Monthly Party, Potluck and Meeting
NOV 5-6      SAT-SUN   DPS, HPS    Martinez Mtn, Sheep Mtn
DEC 3        SAT       DPS    Desert Peaks Section Monthly Meeting and Christmas Party

All participants on Sierra Club outings are required to sign a standard liability waiver.
If you would like to read the Liability Waiver before you choose to participate, please go to:
http://www.sierracclub.org/outings/chapter/forms/
or contact the Outings Department at (415) 977-5528 for a printed version.

♦ JULY 7-11    THU-MON    DPS, Wilderness Adventures, Natural Science Section, Palos Verdes South Bay Grp, Long Beach Grp, Pasadena Grp, Orange County Sierra Singles
O/I: White Mountains/Bristlecone Pines Dry Car Camp: Join us for four days of hiking and naturalizing in the spectacular Bristlecone Pine Forest and White Mountains. Advanced level hike to climb White Mountain. Lower level hikes in the Patriarch and Schulman Groves. Other hikes and tours as time and conditions permit. This trip satisfies the Natural Science requirement for “I” rating. Includes naturalist instruction on hikes, Pot Luck Dinner Saturday Night. Dry camp, no water available after leave 395 (approximately 14 miles away). Send sase, $40 (Natural Science Section), carpool information, intended date of arrival to Resv Leader. Keith Martin. Assistant Leaders: Kent Schwitkis, Sherry Ross, Ginny Heringer, Jim Heringer, Jim Murphy, Gwen Sharp, Virgil Talbot, Barbara Reber. Naturalists: Jean Dillingham, Kathy Keane. No refund after June 7 unless trip fills and have suitable replacement.

♦ JULY 23      SAT       DPS, WTC
I: Charleston Pk (11,915’), Mummy Mtn (11,528’): A mere 45 minutes from the Las Vegas Strip awaits an alpine forest offering a wealth of Aspens, gnarled Bristlecone pines and enormous ridge top views. This truly is one of the most beautiful hikes you’ll ever do. We’ll head up the South Loop Trail and down via the North Loop, picking up Mummy Mtn. off trail on the way down encompassing 19 miles and 4600’ gain. This will be a long, strenuous day. Camp or hotel it Sat. night and Sunday’s all yours to explore, gamble or beat the crowd back to L.A. Send 2 sase or email (preferred), conditioning, experience, H&W phones and rideshare info to Leader: Edd Ruskowitz. Assistant: Wayne Vollaire.

♦ AUG 5-7     FRI-SUN   DPS, SC PAC Fundraiser
O: Telescope Peak: Join us as we meet to camp at the 4000’ elevation in the mountains above Death Valley National Park on Friday night. Saturday we'll hike to Telescope Peak, the highest Peak in the Park at 11,000’. This is a 3000' gain, 14 mile rt outing. With a trailhead at 8000' the trail should be in the 60's or 70's. Sunday optional peaks are available. Trip includes happy hour and Saturday night pasta dinner. Reservation required. Send $25 donation check payable to "Angeles Chapter Pac" to leader with H & W #'s, e-mail, ride share info plus SASE. Leader: David Hyman 16300 Calahan St Sepulveda, Ca. 91343-3804 davidahyman@aol.com 818 893-8613  Assistant: Howard Strauss

♦ AUG 20      SAT       DPS
I: Mount Dubois (13,559’): Join us as we try again for this quality peak northeast of Bishop. Strenuous climb, 9 miles round trip, 5300' gain. We will meet at the trailhead so 4WD & high clearance is required. Sunday is open for exploring or drive home. Send car info, phones info, conditioning info, & sase or email to Leader: Charlie Knapke. Assistant: Sue Holloway.

♦ SEPT 24-25   SAT-SUN   DPS
I: Hayford Peak (9912’), Mt. Stirling (8218’): The DPS tries again on these peaks after getting snowed-out in 2004. Flop out under the stars for two nights in S. Nevada sage and pinyon country rather than drown in the neon

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glow of nearby Las Vegas. By day, climb two peaks with the DPS: Hayford (15 miles r.t., 4100' gain), and Stirling (4 miles r.t., 2200' gain). Potluck dinner Sat. night. Long dirt roads make high clearance helpful but not mandatory. Send email (preferred) or SASE to Leader: Gary Craig. Assistant: Sue Holloway.

♦ OCT 1  SAT  DPS
O: Desert Peaks Section Monthly Party, Potluck and Meeting: This year we will be trying something new – a monthly party and potluck at the homes of various DPS members where we can socialize and enjoy some of the great food we always have on our trips. Everyone is invited – bring a dish to share. Potluck at 6:00, management committee meeting earlier at 4:30 (all members welcome). October event will be at the home of Tom Sumner, 14060 Bermax Ave., Sylmar (phone 818-364-6628).

♦ OCT 15-17  SAT-MON  DPS
I: Sentinel Peak (9634’), Porter Peak (9101’): On this Columbus Day weekend we will backpack to historic Panamint City (4000’ gain/ 5 miles) on Sat. The rest of the day we can explore the area or relax. Sunday we’ll climb both peaks and return to camp (approx. 6000’ gain/ 13+ mi). Mon. we backpack to the cars. Excellent conditioning and leader approval req. Send email or SASE with conditioning, relevant experience and phone numbers to Leader: Dave Perkins. Assistant Leader: TBA.

♦ OCT 29-30  SAT-SUN  DPS
I: Pahrump Pt. (5740’), Stewart Pt. (5265’): Join us for two fun peaks near Shoshone. Climb Pahrump Sat. 8 mi rt, 3400’ gain. Campfire and potluck planned for Sat. night after a trip to the hot springs in Tecopa. Sun climb Stewart 6.5 mi rt, 2600’ gain. Send SASE or email with contact information, experience, conditioning, and phone numbers to Leader: Greg Roach. Co-Leader: Mirna Roach.

♦ NOV 5  SAT  DPS
O: Desert Peaks Section Monthly Party, Potluck, and Meeting: Potluck at 6:00; bring a dish to share. Management Committee Meeting earlier at 4:30 (all members welcome). November event at the home of Ellen and Ron Grau, 3700 Blue Gum Drive, Yorba Linda (phone 714-777-4644).

♦ NOV 5-6  SAT-SUN  DPS, HPS
I: Martinez Mtn (6560’), Sheep Mtn (5141’): Join us for a leisurely fall backpack of two fine peaks on the Hundred Peaks list (and as a bonus, Martinez is also a Desert Peak). Weekend totals, 22 miles, 5500’ gain. We'll pack in Sat morning 5 mi to Cactus Spring (elevation loss and gain), and climb Sheep (4 mi rt, 1000’ gain) in the afternoon. Climb Martinez on Sunday (8 mi rt, 2500’ gain from camp) and pack out, probably back to the cars by late afternoon. Be prepared for some brush on the Martinez climb. Send SASE or email with contact information, experience, conditioning to Leader: Ann Perkins. Assistant Leader: Tom Hill.

♦ DEC 3  SAT  DPS
O: Desert Peaks Section Monthly Meeting and Potluck: Christmas Party, Potluck, and Management Committee Meeting at the home of Ellen and Ron Grau, 3700 Blue Gum Drive, Yorba Linda (phone 714-777-4644). Management Committee meeting at 4:30 (all members welcome) and Party at 6:00.

SUBSCRIPTION REMINDER

If you haven’t already done so, please consider renewing your Sage subscription. Dues are $10 per year and multiple year subscriptions are encouraged. If you feel even more compelled, the DPS offers a “sustaining” dues option ($20) which delivers your Sage via first class mail. Send your check made payable to “DPS” to:

Mirna Roach
4547 Viro Road
La Canada, CA 91011-3763

Include accurate address information. For your convenience, you may choose to use the order form on page 18.

COVER PHOTO: Mt Dubois and The Jumpoff, from Middle Creek. Photo by Bob Sumner.
DEATH VALLEY UPDATE


California Highway 190…OPEN with 10-20 minute delays 24 hours a day between Furnace Creek and Hwy 127. Vehicles must follow the pilot car in the construction zone. No stopping allowed at Zabriskie Point.

Charcoal Kilns Road……..OPEN to standard vehicles, then 4X4 high clearance beyond the kilns to Mahogany Flat.

Special Information……….Telescope Peak Trail: spotty patches of melting snow on the trail beyond Bennett Peak to the top of Telescope. Last 1/4 mile has knee deep snow.

OUTINGS CHAIR

As one of the newest members of the DPS Management Committee, I would like to first thank you for your votes and your confidence. In return I will do my best to serve as your new Outings Chair. In this role I'll be depending upon our cadre of fine leaders to organize the outings that are the essence of the DPS.

The warm days of summer turn our attention to the high peaks of the DPS list. We have trips scheduled his summer to Charleston, Mummy, Telescope, Dubois, and our highest peak, 14,246' White Mountain. That reminds me of my own trip to White Mountain Peak a few years back which got off to a good start owed to the Open House that allowed us to drive to the Barcroft complex. As Elaine and I set off for our hike we were amazed to be joined by a group riding knobby-tired mountain unicycles.

A couple of hours later we were perhaps more amazed to be passed, as we struggled to breathe the thin air at 12,000', by a middle-aged man clad in spotless T-shirt and shorts and jogging. After a cheerful greeting he disappeared over a rise and we didn't see him again until the summit where we found him nimbly navigating the top of the summit shelter with a camera photographing the unicyclists who had hauled their cycles onto the roof and were riding circles there. Later, seeking someone to snap a picture of us on the summit, I turned around to see our jogging photographer who took this image. But only later did I find that the credit for the picture belongs to one of the greatest mountain photographers of our time, Galen Rowell. -Dave Baldwin

PAID ADVERTISEMENTS

BHUTAN CULTURAL TOUR

Rich Henke is leading a 15-day trip to Bhutan in Oct 11-25, 2005. There are 3 slots still available. This hotel-based cultural tour will include visits to festivals and short day hikes to monasteries and other points of interest. It is suitable for almost anyone. The cost is $4300, which includes everything except international plane fare to Bangkok. People with more time can combine this trip with a visit to Cambodia (Ankor Wat) or Northern Thailand for minimal additional cost. Call or e-mail Rich if you want more information. 310-316-5050 (rich@adventureplus.org)

SLOT CANYONS IN SOUTHERN UTAH

If there are any retirees interested in rappelling slot canyons in southern Utah then contact Bob Greer at nowerrman@hotmail.com. This would be in late spring and early fall. If you're not retired you'll need a week off. If you can do technical DPS peaks you can do these canyons. Expect slow responses to emails.

Notice of Advertising Policy Change

The DPS Management Committee has decided to increase the price of advertising in the Sage. The new cost is $3.00 per line, with a maximum of 5 lines per ad.

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MEMBERSHIP CHAIR / ACTIVITY REPORT, JUNE 5, 2005

Membership Summary

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Activity Report

**Achievements**

- **List Finish #1**
  - Ellen Grau 3/26/05 Orocopia Mtns

- **List Finish #2**
  - Ron Grau 3/26/05 Orocopia Mtns

Address Changes

- **Daniel Goul**
  - 4963 Moiunt Royaldrive
  - Los Angeles, CA 90041-2140
  - home: 323 712 0360

- **Robert Hethmon**
  - Po Box 2683
  - California City, CA 93504-0683
  - home: 213-654-0373
  - rhethmon@aol.com

- **Frank Meyers**
  - 12109 Shadow Ridge Way
  - Northridge, CA 91326
  - home: 818-366-5575

- **Le Roy Russ**
  - 4225 Via Arbolada #557
  - Los Angeles, CA 90042-5518
  - home: 213-227-4973
  - Fax: 323-225-2450

- **Carleton Shay**
  - 1229 Cabrillo Park Drive
  - Santa Ana, CA 92701-3080
  - home: 323-666-1480
  - carletons@aol.com

**Membership Renewals**

- Ted Brasket 1 year
- Kevin & Lisa Heapy 1 year
- Thomas R. Hill 1 year
- Mark Conover 1 year
- Ute Dietrich 5 years
- Frank Dobos 1 year
- Diane Dunbar 1 year
- Beth Epstein 2 year
- Audrey Goodman 1 year
- Brian (Wolf) Leverich 2 years
- Mike Manchester 1 year
- Ann Perkins 1 year
- Ray Soucy 1 year
- Don Sparks 1 year
- Jan St. Amand 1 year
- Tom Sumner 3 years
- George Toby 1 year
- Joseph Wankum 2 years

PEAK GUIDE UPDATES

The accuracy of these reports is solely the responsibility of those reporting.

**UTAH**

**South Guardian Angel**  Jennifer and Gerry Roach

Camping is no longer allowed in the Subway, and traffic is one-way down. Thus, the route to SGA is now the cross canyon route. You need to use the NGA approach, reverse the old NGA climb route from the Subway, and finish with the SGA climb from above the Subway as currently stated.

To begin your climb from the canyon to SGA, look for a 4-foot jug-handle arch on the SGA side of the canyon, then begin your ascent just up canyon from the arch. I have more pitch-by-pitch detail on both NGA/SGA if you want it.

**ARIZONA**

**Castle Dome Peak**  Jennifer and Gerry Roach

The route described in the guide should be Route B, and the route mentioned in Sideline 1 should be Route A on this peak. The NE (Sideline 1 Route) is only Class 2+, and is much less exposed than the western route. I’ve done the NE route twice, and most recently went up the W route and down the NE route. BLM rangers in Yuma will give directions for the NE route if asked, and that’s how I first learned about and did the peak before I had the DPS guide. Since this is a significant change, perhaps a DPS trip is in order to get a consensus on this?

**Kino Peak**  Henry Arnebold  April 19, 2005

In the third line of the DRIVE/ROUTE A: directions after Bearing left onto the Bates Well Road replace (drive 6.5 miles to a fork. Bear right and drive 0.9 miles to a fork. Bearing left here, drive 2.8 miles to a fork. Bearing left, in 0.3 miles) with "drive 10.9 miles where". Then continue with the guide and you'll pass over a cattle guard and enter Organ Pipe National Monument. So just drive the main road 10.9 miles and forget about the forks.

**Mt Ajo**  Jennifer and Gerry Roach

There is now a pretty good trail all the way up Ajo, and the route could be downgraded to Class 1+.

Note from the Editor: Updates for other areas of the DPS list will appear in upcoming editions of the Sage.
The Leave No Trace (LNT) Program is a national outdoors skills and ethics education program that promotes land stewardship through research and education. Seven principles from the framework of the LNT’s program are as follows:

**Plan ahead and prepare.** This includes gathering information from government agencies, like maps from BLM or the Forest Service. Know the rules, regulations and special concerns of the area before you visit it. (For example, the regulations for a Federal Wilderness Area can be found in Code of Federal Regulations, 36 CFR Part 261 (Forest Service), 43 CFR Parts 6500 and 8560 (BLM), or 50 CFR Part 35 (Fish and Wildlife Service).) Visit the backcountry in small groups. Check ahead to see if there are group size limitations in the area you plan to visit. Avoid popular areas at times of high use. Repackage food in reusable containers. The more packaging you carry the greater the chance of something getting lost in the backcountry. Prepare for extreme weather, hazards, and emergencies.

**Travel and camp on durable surfaces.** Use and stay on trails where they exist. Do not cut switchbacks. When traveling off trail look for durable surfaces like bare ground, rocks, gravel or snow. Use a map and compass to navigate. There is no need to build rock cairns or leave unsightly ribbons on trees or bushes. Protect riparian areas by camping at least 200 feet from lakes or streams. Look for campsites that have already been established. If you pack it in pack it out. Bring extra trash bags and carry out any trash you find at camp. Trash bags also can be used as rain gear should the weather get wet.

**Dispose of waste properly.** Deposit solid human waste in catholes 6 to 8 inches deep at least 200 feet from water, camp, and trails. Pack out all toilet paper in plastic bags. Wash yourself and dishes 200 feet away from water. Use biodegradable soap and use it sparingly. Remove food particles before scattering your dish water.

**Leave what you find.** Preserve the past. Do not touch any cultural or historic structures or artifacts. Leave rocks and plants where you find them. Do not build structures or dig trenches.

**Minimize campfire impacts.** Use a stove for cooking. If fires are permitted use established fire rings, fire pans, or mound fires. Keep fires small. Do not scar rocks or overhangs. Burn all wood and coals to ash. Make sure your campfire is completely out. When cool scatter the ashes. Make it look like a fire was never there.

**Respect wildlife.** Observe wildlife from a distance. Do not follow or approach them. Never feed animals. Protect your food from wildlife by storing properly. Control pets or leave them at home. Avoid wildlife during sensitive times such as mating or raising young.

**Be considerate of other visitors.** Respect other visitors and protect the quality of their experience. Be courteous. Yield to faster hikers on the trail. Step to the downhill side of the trail when encountering pack stock. Take breaks, and camp away from trails and other visitors. Let natures sounds prevail. Avoid loud voices and noises.

This is only the framework of LNT principles a more detailed program can be found on their website at [www.lnt.org](http://www.lnt.org), which is supported in part by BLM and other agencies. The LNT Principles of Outdoor Ethics are copyrighted by National Outdoor Leadership School and Leave No Trace, Inc. I hope you find this site interesting and informative as I did.

The Sierra Club, along with like-minded groups, helped build the groundswell that resulted in the Wilderness Act of 1964. It is especially important to observe the principles of Leave No Trace when in a Federal-designated Wilderness Area. It is against the law to operate motorized equipment or a motorized vehicle in a Wilderness Area. (43 CFR Section 6302.20(d)). In conclusion I would like to quote Mountaineering The Freedom of the Hills 7th Edition, pg 129. 

“As Mountaineers we do our part to protect and preserve the wild country we explore by applying Leave No Trace principles, using good judgment, and educating others. There is no more positive way to help ensure continued access, unfettered by restrictions and excessive rules and regulations. When we enter the backcountry we are active stewards and contribute to the lasting protection of wild resources for ourselves and future generations.”

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Brian “needed” these peaks so Larry and I decided that was as good a reason as any to lead Panamint Butte and Canyon Point. We were joined Saturday morning by Brian Smith, Audrey Goodman, Bob Hoven, Jack Wickel, and Saturday night Anne and Dave Perkins also joined the group.

Saturday morning was sunny with scattered groups of billowing clouds over snowy peaks all around the Panamint Valley. We drove up the dirt road to the trailhead past the now wet lakebed of the ancient dry lake adjacent to Lake Hill. The desert was green all around us, although wildflowers were not yet in bloom except for a few Brown-eyed Evening-Primrose (Camissonia claviformis ssp. Funerea?) and Golden Evening Primrose (Camissonia brevipes) and these were found off the Panamint Valley Road.

We climbed the ridge following route A from the peak guide. There were a few Rock Mimulus (Mimulus rupicola) and small Mohavea in bloom. At about 2800 feet we came across the rare Panamint Daisy (Encelopsis covillei) blooming on the warm eastern slope of the ridge. We continued up along the ridge past lots of green plants, but it was too early for flowers.

At about 4200 feet this route is up a steep, loose rocky section and here the group separated, Jack, Bob, Larry and Brian continued on towards the peak and Audrey and I headed back down. Audrey’s knee was not yet strong enough for the steep, loose section. Taking advantage of turning back, I decided to explore a different route down. We headed down a side gully just SE of 3850. The map indicated that this side canyon would join up with the main wash and lead out past the Big Four Mine. The scramble down went very well. We came into the wash just below a spectacular series of dry waterfalls. I had hoped to find flowers in the warmer regions of the wash, but here too, it was too early for bloom. The hike though was an interesting route and it provides good views of the mining operation, the canyon and wash made a good alternative route back to the parking area. We were back with time to relax and explore the lakeshore near Lake Hill. It was interesting to observe how much the water in the lake receded in just a few hours, in the morning water covered most the once dry lake bed, but by afternoon it was reduced to small ponds covering about 1/3 of the lake bed.

The climb of Panamint went well for the guys. There is a small forest of Joshua Trees on the ridge and they encountered snow for the last few hundred feet as they ascended the peak. Snow in Death Valley is melting fast – after only 15-20 minutes on the summit the 4 climbers headed down and found the snow had melted and they were walking in mud down the summit ridge.

From Panamint we headed on over to Stove Pipe Wells and out towards Marble and Cottonwood Canyons. We camped where the road drops into the wash. Tables were set-up quickly and the usual DPS feast of appetizers was
laid out followed by a pasta dinner for everyone that Barbee heated up on the Perkins’ camper stove. Campfires are not permitted in DV backcountry, but the night was warm and we all relaxed talking after dinner.

The next morning we said good-bye to Jack and consolidated into 3 vehicles to drive to the Canyon Point trailhead. The trailhead is 8.2 miles South of the junction to Marble Canyon per the peak guide, however this may change in the future. At 6.8 miles we encountered an impassible section of road. We had been cautiously driving in a wet wash with a small side stream for about a half a mile when the stream widened into a small fast moving creek at least foot deep. Larry drove on up the creek/wash bed a few hundred feet further and we came to a section where the road was completely washed away and the sides of the creek were too steep to drive up. We were blocked from crossing the creek.

The decision was made to park our vehicles on dry ground about ½ mile back, above the wet wash and where fast moving water was just a small foot wide stream. This added about 1.5 miles to the climb each way – but we were rewarded with a beautiful hike along the creek, crossing it many times as the new water course cut across the old road in many places. The flat sandy benches were lush green lawns and the cottonwood trees were just beginning to leaf out with a few displaying catkins.

The climb up Canyon Point begins with a steep 50 plus foot climb out of the wash. The recent rains have probably made this section of the climb steeper and looser, our group scrambled up easily, but the down climb was difficult for climbers not accustomed to down climbing with hands and feet. We hiked up the small wash towards the peak, and at the suggested 3800 foot elevation turned and hiked the ridge to the summit. The trip up the ridge took a couple hours, the trip down 15 minutes on the sandy slope below the summit. What would have been a miserable ascent route is a wonderful descent.

As we hiked back along the wash towards Cottonwood wash we were treated to a display of large yellow Evening-Primrose (*Oenothera primiveris?*) scattered all over the sandy hill sides. The flowers, true to their name were opening in the later afternoon hours.

Upon our return to Canyon Point wash, we found the water had receded some and we walked in a now damp wash for the last ½ mile back to the cars where chips and beer awaited us. It looks like the Canyon Point climb in future years could be up to a mile longer.

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When Yvonne and I were offered to take over the organization of the Chili-Cook-off a couple of years ago by Igor and Suzanne Mamedalin, we were honored and pleased to do so. Not only is the cooking, tasting and judging of the chili very fun, but the camaraderie, the tradition, the usual peak climb, and especially the site location of the CC-O is a large part of the event.

We thought that a good site for the 2004 cook-off would have been the campsite normally used for the ascent of Old Dad Mtn. We organized the trip, and sent off “trailers” to Ron and Leora Jones and the Mamedalins. I got a quick reply from Ron Jones, letting me know that the chili cook-off site had to be 2WD, because it was attended by many who loved the desert, but did not have 2wd vehicles. He was concerned about the sandy area just before the camp site, where 2wd vehicles might not make it.
have problems. I remembered Larry Tidball’s and my trip there in the early '90s, when Delores Holladay drove her little Chevette, slewing crazily through the sand, but arriving and departing ok. She drove that little car ruthlessly through the deep trap, and I suppose I thought that since that little POS could do it, so could any other 2wd. Ron’s comments were correct, however, so we changed the site to a spot near East Ord for last year’s affair. That site was “low rider available”.

This year we wanted to be camped near Black Butte for the Saturday climb, and within range of a possible climb of Chuckwalla on Sunday. We scouted an area near the TH for Black Butte, and were encouraged by the condition of the roads leading there in early January. It was slightly sandy in spots, but we got thru ok in 2wd. So we set it all up for there, hoping for an abundance of wildflowers surrounding the huge spot of desert pavement we found.

Then Ron and Ellen Grau had their double list finish 2 weeks before the cook-off at a neat site close to Orocopia. We climbed the peak Saturday, celebrated that night, and decided to re-scout the site for the cook-off after all the record rains. Brian Smith and Audrey Goodman, driving their AWD Forester, went with us, taking the Red Cloud Road from the 10 Fwy off toward what would eventually lead to the Bradshaw Trail. We hit heavy sand on the Gas Line Road, but managed to stay in 2wd out to The Bradshaw Trail. We ran into heavier and deeper sand on the way to Black Butte turnoff. The site was beautiful, full of flowers and a huge chuckwalla just soaking up the sun. We figured that not many 2wd vehicles could get in from Red Cloud, so we decided to check out the balance of the Bradshaw Trail and leave via Graham Pass. The road looked good for a few miles, but then we hit some sandy spots, and we knew the chili cook-off was in trouble for our site. Then we hit the “living desert”! Over a mile of very deep, very loose, sandy 4wd road that both vehicles had problems with. We finally arrived at the road for Graham Pass (TH for Chuckwalla), and found that the Bradshaw Trail was closed to traffic in the direction we had come. Graham Pass was totally washed out. We stayed on the Bradshaw Trail, which had been graded to below sand level, all the way to Wiley’s Well Road, which we took back to the 10. Rats! Our fabulous site was out, and the cook-off was only two weeks away.

We reviewed other sites we had scouted in November—an area near Randsburg, an old airport near California City, a fairly flat spot by Ballarat, and a pretty good site south of Red Mountain. All were kind of questionable, because of the chance of ATVs and possible washouts and sandy spots from the recent rains.

We decided to take advantage of the site used by the Graus for their list finish. It was pretty weird to go to the same place in our huge, wonderful desert for two events within three weeks, but we had a good turnout and some mighty fine chili was cooked and consumed.

We had 17 hikers Saturday morning who met at the closed ranger station in Joshua Tree for the ride to the trailhead for Eagle #1. The hike started at 7:45 on the long haul across the desert. By the time we hit the canyon leading up toward the summit area, it was around 10 am. We all met on the summit by 12:15, but the group was a bit spatulated. We used binoculars to find our campsite, and several people claimed that they could see the chili preparations. We decided to cut summit time short-didn’t even get a group shot! So--the following climbers topped Eagle that morning: Jack Wickel; Dave and Ann Perkins; Barbee and Larry Tidball; Neil Jenkins, Donna Elliot; Bob Hoeven; Ann Rolls; Delores Holladay; Necia Bower; Patrick Wood; Jane Gibbons; Ed Herrman; Gary Craig; Mike Baldwin and myself.

We saw a nice fat rattlesnake in the canyon going down,
and it waited for me to take a picture! The happy hour for the cook-off was supposed to start at 4:00, with the tasting beginning at 5 pm. Larry and I were still hoofing it across the desert, shepherding stragglers towards the cars at 5:15, and figuring that we had missed a fabulous happy hour and most likely the tasting events. Once we hit the cars we hustled back to the site.

The last of the hikers pulled into the chili site after 5:45, but … “behold”! Yvonne had held up the Happy Hour for our return. All the goodies were brought out, and the cooks kept on cooking. So it all worked out ok!

A meeting was held just prior to the tasting, and all the cooks explained what their chili was about, rating it one thru 10 on a heat scale, and naming their concoction. We had nine cooks, and nine excellent chilis!

Ballots were passed out, and the tasters milled about, going from each numbered cook station to the next. They were taking notes, eating chili and condiments, fueling and storing gas, and trying to make the decision on various categories of chili, including the coveted Best Overall.

The Chili Cook-off, during the tasting, had around 40 to 50 participants. It took a while for everyone to get their chili samples, and soon the campfire was blazing, stories were being spun, and the judging was finished. With the help of Jack Wickel, the Jamisons compiled the results in the huge ‘prize tent”, gathered the goodies and trophies, and lugged it all out for the presentations.

Per the cook-off tradition, all cooks were awarded vast amounts of various foodstuffs donated by Conagra. In addition, monies collected from the tasters were split up and given to the cooks for their efforts and as a small reimbursement for costs incurred. This year, thanks to Carrs Trophies and Engraving of Lake Forest, individual trophies were awarded to each winner of the 8 categories listed on the ballots. Additionally, Yvonne found some really cool chili-type prizes and games in an Oriental Trading catalog, and they were added to the loot.

Winners of the 2005 DPS Chili Cook-off are as follows:

Honorable Mention: Ed Cattone; for his “35 minute” chili:

Honorable Mention: Ann Perkins: Vegetarian chili

Best Texan: Dave Baldwin for his Chili Verde

Best Vegetarian; Sandy Houston

Spiciest chili: Laura Webb (currently hiking the Appalachian Trail)

Most Unusual Chili: Audrey Goodman

Best Traditional Chili: Neko Colevins (he made the kind of chili you can eat all night!)

Best presentation: Yvonne Jamison-but her spicy chili was a very close second!

Best runner-up chili: Audrey Goodman

Best Overall Chili; (For the third time!!!) David Baldwin

For the first time in three years we did not have rain for this event, which was a pleasant surprise. There must have been enough chili and happy hour for everyone, as the campfire was not an “all-nighter event”, as in many past cook-offs. Sunday morning most attendees left for various climbs or wildflower excursions. Brad Jamison and Amanda Roseen and dogs Marley and Kiah left early to cool off in the Colorado River.

Gary Craig, Brian Smith, Audrey Goodman, Charlie the Dog, Yvonne and Scot Jamison, accompanied by Nevada the Dog visited the Corn Springs petroglyphs, where lunch was shared. We’re pleased to report that as far as we know, the trip only suffered one flat tire.

Thanks to Larry and Barbee Tidball for assisting the hike and the fire marshalling.

Included in this report is David Baldwin’s fabulous recipe for his 2005 champion chili verde. It reads like a book!

David is the CHEF TO BEAT! All you chili aficionados are invited to partake in next year’s event. David Baldwin is a very gracious winner, but we know that he is already planning his strategy and recipe for the 2006 event. We are also wondering where it will be!
**CHILE VERDE**  
*By David Baldwin*

### Food List / Ingredients

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### Preparation

Toast coriander and cumin; grind  
Cut pork in 3/4” pieces  
Dust meat with coriander, cumin, garlic powder, pepper; bag  
Dice onions  
Dice celery  
Wash tomatillos  
Wash green onion  
Wash cilantro; pat dry  
Bring to a boil, ham bone and water to cover  
Fry bacon; reserve fat; crumble bacon  
Roast peppers; set aside in paper bag  
Remove ham hocks; discard  
Strain broth; return to chili pot

Add bay leaves to chili pot  
Brown meat; add to chili pot  
Fry sausage; add to chili pot  
Chop tomatillos  
Fry tomatillos; add to chili pot  
Peel, wash, seed, de-vein, and chop peppers; add to chili pot  
Add oregano  
Add thyme  
Saute onion and celery; add to chili pot  
Chop garlic; sauté; add to chili pot  
Add bacon to chili pot  
Add diced serrano chiles to taste  
Add salt, pepper, ground cumin, green sauce to taste

**15 Minutes Prior to Tasting**

Dice green onion; add to chili pot  
Dice cilantro; add to chili pot  
Squeeze limes into chili pot  

A trip to the DPS Chili Cookoff has always been a journey for me. The first time it was a journey by car on a “shortcut” from East Ord to the Granite Mountains. In the years since it has been more of a mental journey from one Cookoff to the next. A disappointing performance can lead to despair and thoughts that I’d be better off as a taster while a top award leads to dreams of the next Cookoff. So it was that after being honored with the Best Overall Chili award in 2004 I was soon thinking what I could do for an encore. I have long thought that someday I would like to put together a classic green chili, flavored with the sweet heat of roasted chiles, yet slightly tart, and loaded with pork. Over the past year I researched the dish in cookbooks...
and on the Internet -- including World Champion recipes from International Chili Society competitions -- eventually settling on the composite combination of ingredients below. With these I arrived at our Colorado Desert campsite to prepare my 2005 DPS Chili Cookoff entry, Chile Verde.

Chile Verde started with 7 lbs pork shoulder that I trimmed of most fat and cut into 3/4” cubes. I then toasted in a cast iron skillet until aromatic 2 tsp whole coriander seeds and 3 Tbsp whole cumin seeds. I ground the seeds with mortar and pestle, mixed in 1 tsp garlic powder and 2 tsp ground black pepper, then mixed the spices with the meat and set the mixture aside. Taking a flavor hint from one of last year’s competitors, I fried 1 lb bacon until crisp, reserved the rendered fat, and crumbled the bacon. To make a base for the Chile, I covered 2 smoked ham hocks with water, put the pot on the stove to simmer, then set to work on the main ingredient. Chile Verde would be nothing without green chile peppers and mine would have 8 pasilla, 4 anaheim, 4 jalapeno, and 2 green bell peppers, each roasted until black over an open flame and tossed into a paper bag to steam. I chopped and sautéed 1 large white onion, 8 celery stalks, and 2 lbs tomatillos, then began to assemble my creation. I removed the ham hocks, strained the smoky broth, and returned it to the pot with 2 bay leaves. To enhance the flavor, I browned the meat in the reserved bacon fat before adding it with the sautéed vegetables to the simmering pot.

The most time consuming part of the cooking was the process of peeling, seeding, and chopping the cooled roasted peppers – a special challenge in the desert where running water is hard to come by. With the peppers in the chili pot, I added a chopped and sautéed head of garlic, 2 Tbsp oregano, and 1 tsp thyme. Sticking with my all pork theme, I fried 8 oz pork sausage and added it to the pot along with the crumbled bacon. After 6 hours, my creation was nearing completion and I waited until the final half hour before the tasting to add the final ingredients: salt to taste, 4 green onions (sliced), 2 serrano peppers (seeded, diced), the juice of 4 limes, 2 oz jalapeno hot sauce, and 1/2 cup Italian parsley (OK, at the store I thought it was the same as cilantro). Sour cream as an optional topping completed my offering. I hope you enjoyed tasting Chile Verde as much as I enjoyed making it for you!

Note: Following a convention lifted from Sunset magazine, I have used chile to describe my entrée and the peppers it contains and chili for the competition. I have and will use chili to describe other recipes, but not this one.

The Desert Peaks Section Banquet of 2005 was once again held at the Reef Restaurant in Long Beach. This year 66 DPS members and their guests enjoyed the beautiful views across the water, talking and catching up with old friends, and a good dinner. Awards were presented to Mark Adrian (Service Award) for his many years as editor of the Sage; Christine Mitchell and Ron Bartell (Bill T. Russell Mountaineering Award) for their many climbing achievements; and Edna Erspermer (Fran Smith Award) for her many life time achievements, also including service on the Management Committee and donation of her beautiful serigraphs for raffles. List finishers this year were Ellen Grau (first time) and Ron Grau (second time). We are awaiting Doug Mantle’s six time list finish next year (only one peak to go!) For the raffle in addition to Edna’s serigraph, Elaine Baldwin donated another of her lovely watercolors (not won by Dave this time!), and Linda McDermott donated a t-shirt and rock from her adventures in Antarctica. Welcome back, Linda! We would also like to thank Betty McCosker for her donation of 12 beautiful handmade sets of notecards which we sold along with the other DPS merchandise.

The speaker this year, Hans Florine, entertained us all with his adventures in the world of speed climbing. The presentation was well-organized and interesting as well as humorous, and he described both the technical challenges involved in climbing El Capitan and Half Dome in shorter and shorter periods of time (less than a day!), and also the logistical and endurance challenges of his attempt to climb all of California’s 14,000 footers in three days.
Next year we may return to our former banquet location at the Castaways in Burbank to give our members in the north L.A. area equal time, or try to find a centrally located venue. Suggestions are welcome both for location and time. We always have comments that a weekend evening would be better – send your thoughts on this to next year’s banquet chair: ann.perkins@csun.edu. At next year’s banquet we will also be celebrating the DPS’s 60th anniversary (formally organized in October 1945). Get ready for a big party!

In November, 2003, feeling like I needed something great in my life, and knowing I didn't even lead yet in my climbing career, it occurred to me that I could hire a guide ad climb El Capitan. It actually was within my grasp. Now after having climbed it and written so many pages documenting the 5 day climb that I can't figure out how to condense it into reasonable size for an article, I have decided to outline the information that will give non-big wall climbers an idea what was involved. Statistics show that only 9 out of 10 climbers who start it make it to the top (they bail). It makes sense to me that hiring a guide who had climbed it 64 times in 20 years gave me a good chance of making it. Safety was my main concern - a guide also gave me an edge on that.

Training required: Jumarring 5 days up a rock face, to me, meant learning techniques to make it easy as possible to conserve energy and be safe. I hired Bob Gaines in January, and was shown:

1. The original Jumars, which proved much easier on my small hands than other ascenders (Petzl's, etc.). I had to order them from Switzerland on E-Bay, the local mountaineering stores don't carry them.

2. How to set them up, using 2 small tied runners, a locking biner, 2 etriere’s on regular oval biners to make them easily movable from one place to another as needed and because my arms are short, 2 sewn runners as leashes instead of the recommended daisy chains. I had to tie a knot in one of them to make it shorter as a top leash. If the top leash is too long the added effort of pulling oneself in as well as up when the top Jumar is moved is tiring, especially that many days in a row.

3. I had to buy a more comfortable harness. Local mountaineering stores don't even carry Yates catalogs...Nomad Ventures in J Tree carries the Yates harnesses themselves, which have luxurious lambs wool linings, but are so wide in the midriff that I would have broken a rib if I fell so I tried on multiple harnesses and chose the most comfortable for 5 days of hanging belays.

4. My hand tailored fingerless gardening gloves wore out quickly and I had to buy mountaineering fingerless gloves to minimize finger gashes.

5. Jumaring a wall, how to work past the pro while cleaning it, how to Lower out, work my way over walls and overhangs more easily, especially when the pro was in the way, handle haul bags, etc., etc. I hired Bob a total of 4 times in 8 months and practiced in between. The most
important thing he taught me was to TIE IN SHORT every 20 to 30 feet. He was also my advisor for my training regimen. Because I knew I had to be in the best shape of my life and jumaring had to be as familiar as walking to me, I jumared up ropes anchored to trees in my yard. One was set up for the "up a wall" technique, one was set up for the "mid-air" technique, which I actually taught myself with advice from Bob on the phone. It was very awkward at first, but became second nature after 8 months of it. I went to the gym with a routine that targeted specific jumar muscle groups and worked out 1 1/2 hours a day along with 1/2 to 1 hour on the ropes in my trees and, with the advice from the Yosemite Mountain-eering guide which I hired with Bob, I pounded nails in a shed in my back yard for 1 1/2 hr a day so I would have good strength and aim to remove pitons, necessary for a vertical route on El Cap. This was an eight month training regimen and I had little time for anything else in my life but working and I told the hospital since I'm Per Diem, that I wanted to work less days and why. I was able to practice jumaring once a week, midweek with a climbing partner that I had a great "deal" with: I would belay him on what I considered horrendous climbs and as he was resting, I would jumar up a fixed rope nearby.

6. Noticing that I would have to rest too much on the rope, I realized that the hiking I had given up to climb was necessary for stamina, so I added hiking Mt. Baldy once a week to my regimen.

7. Highlights of my training: Good opportunities to thoroughly observe climbs I had never seen as I jumared by or belayed my partner, notably in J Tree Hercules, Comfortably Numb, Leave it to Beaver, Clean and Jerk, and more; On Suicide Rock, Blade Runner, Pirate and Insomnia; On Tahquitz, Green Arches and Flying Circus. All of these are 5.10 to 5.12. It was quite an adventure.

II. The climb itself started August 27, 2004: TANGERINE TRIP, 19 pitches, 5 days A. Route: I told my guide, Scott Stowe, that I wanted a completely vertical route, no ledges at all, portaledges and the whole scene. Bob Gaines had suggested Lurking Fear but Scott preferred Zodiac for us. When I arrived Scott had just learned that ZODIAC WAS BACK TO A MORE DANGEROUS CLIMB: SOMEONE HAD STRIPPED OFF ALL THE BOLTS TO MAKE IT HARDER. So he suggested TANGERINE TRIP.

1. El Cap itself: Alive with life!! Covered with springs dripping out of cracks with weird mosses and grasses. Frogs!! Tiny grey bugs resembling silverfish swarming over the rock at night, not interested in us. Birds!! Golden Eagles, Falcons; Swifts that flew in a tight flock into caves every night at sunset and held what sounded like a singles bar, chattering all night long and flew out en masse at dawn to, of course, zoom past all day, only apparent by the zoom noise, too fast to see. Ground life, lizards and ants, hummingbirds, butterflies still visiting the rock and springs within 300 feet of the base or top. "Hover bees" seen on the top, gentle inquisitive guys that hang in the air 18 inches from your face as if to visit and say hello. The wind is a constant companion.

2. The route: Tangerine Trip is vertical, completely overhung, with only 2 or 3, 10 inch ledges that I remember to stand on for belaying. Lots of roofs, many with dripping springs under them. Some sharp edges in rope-fall areas, covered with duct tape, left by other climbers in desperation. All of our belay stations were nice 3 bolt places, thanks to some kind recent soul. Very narrow and sometimes shallow crack systems. As experienced by me and confirmed by my guide, at least the lower part is difficult technical cleaning. Multiple places for long lowerouts. Few bolt ladders, but they did exist. I liked the overhang - rain didn't happen for me, but it would have been in a sheet 20 feet away, rockfall not as much of a hazard for the same reason.

3. "Big Wall Mode" is something required for a body up there. You eat less and work harder than shorter climbs. You drink more and pee less. You sleep around 4 hours a night and it's OK. As the days go by, your knuckles get scraped and then infected (what is outside your fingerless gloves) as do your cuticles. They swell up and get yellow. They first ache in the mornings and I took Advil and flexed them then made them work for me all day and by the time I got to the top, descended and was in Camp Curry 6 days later, I had "Big Wall Hands". Everyone gets those. They were swollen 3X normal size like claws, unable to bend with all the infections I mentioned on them. It took fully one month to have normal hands afterwards.

4. I liken it to living on a Space Shuttle. Lots of surprises, everything is done differently up there. Nothing can be set down, ever. Everything has to be hung up and
clipped in. Eating is an adventure. On the top, afterwards, it really bothered me that when I lifted things up on biners, there was no place to hang anything. Set it down? What is that? I never took my harness off for 5 full days and never untied from the rope. After reclipping the things on my harness onto the loops on the portaledge above me, I found my harness perfectly comfortable to sleep in, gear loops and all. Scott used a hanging stove to heat water for us, and I had a kitchen hotpad with a pocket in it rigged up to hang from my neck to hold my coffee cup, or noodle pot (which I used rarely) I usually ate my neglected lunch, which I had carried all day too busy to notice it, for dinner as I fell asleep in my sleeping bag on my portaledge at 2 in the morning. I ended up using a ziplock bag to hold my bowl with hot oatmeal in it as I handed it down to Scott for hot water and as I held it sitting up in my portaledge in the mornings, still in my sleeping bag. Grandma and Mother Diane, who has battled spitting by little baseball playing boys for years was now forced to forcibly expectorate to avoid getting toothpaste water on the edge of the portaledge. That is, the first few days when she still brushed her teeth. Don't worry, you can always get what you want out of the haul bag...Sure. The things were as big as me and my arm isn't that long. Oh, did I mention that the portaledges require sleeping bag pads? There may not be cold ground to insulate against, but the air will chill you if you don't use an ensulite pad under your sleeping bag.

5. The most memorable part of the whole climb to me was JUMARING UP A ROPE IN THE PITCH DARK THOUSANDS OF FEET ABOVE YOSEMITE VALLEY WITH THE FULL MOON HANGING IN THE SKY BESIDE ME. Keep in mind, the only part I could see of that 200 foot long rope in the dark was the small circle of light from my headlamp. I had no idea how far I had come or how much farther I had to go. It was OK, now I'll do 10 jumar strokes. OK, now 10 more then hang on my harness and rest a second. When I passed the poop tube, I knew I was getting close to the belay station.

6. The system: We had 5 ropes. One climbing rope, one belay rope (Yes, I was on belay on a separate rope the whole climb, in addition to tying in short every 30 feet or so on the climbing rope. A guy died on that climb one week later in a jumaring accident on the same route. Bottom line, I'm here and that poor guy is not.) the haul rope and a lower-out rope for both haul bags. 2 haul bags, width gear and a poop tube attached. One "Butt Board" to sit on to save our legs during hanging belays, at least until the wind tore it out of my hand and it sailed away as I was trying to hang it up again while dismantling the anchor system once. El Cap is the only time in my climbing career that I dropped anything. Only a very few things, and I hate that, but on extended climbs like that, according to my guide, it's common. Try and find a place on your double shoulder harness to clip something, in the dark by the light of your headlamp, when your whole body is covered 12 inches deep with so much metal (pro removed) that you look like a beetle and you not only can't see a gear loop under all that, you can't even see a biner, just pieces of metal sticking out. If you've been there, OK go ahead and criticize me. If you've never done it, shut up. Also attached to the haul bags were the Portaledges.

7. Aidclimbing-I watched my guide, who has a reputation for being their fastest climber (Yosemite Mountain-eering School) meticulously pound in a piton, or place a little offset alien into a crack, attach his etriere, bounce on it to test it, then stand up on it and put in the next. Roofs were fun to watch. As he traversed across the bottom of one, hanging in midair as usual, I said, "I don't know how you do this, Scott!" and he said, "I don't either". He would proceed the rest of the pitch as I belayed him, the yell, "Release the haul bag". I would untie it from the anchor on the haul rope and lower it out with it's lower out rope, and yell "Ready to haul!" He would send the haul line back down to me on a biner on the belay rope, I would tie it in to the second haul bag, lower it out on the second lowering rope and yell "Ready to haul!" again.
8. Technical Cleaning The main thing to know about leading and cleaning an aid route, especially one with the tremendous winds of El Cap, is that the whole thing is continually a process of preventing or solving multiple ever-present dilemmas, notably tangles in the ropes. With 5 ropes, you can imagine the opportunities for tangles between themselves, the belayer, the haul bags with piles of gear hanging on them etc. when the wind gets strong. I saw Scott once, sitting on the Butt Board, have a huge gust of wind deposit a 2 foot pile of tangled ropes in his lap in about 2 seconds time. Controlling all these ropes while still belaying him in a safe manner was something. I used my feet a lot to make sure the ropes he was trailing weren't yanked off their careful butterflying all at once. The wind was ever present, swinging me around, as well as previously one at a time tangling as they did so. The wind that had pulled them. Attached to my harness were: tie-in's to both the climbing rope and belay rope on either side of my belay/rappel loop, and on the belay/rappel loop were girth-hitched both leashes for my jumars and a small daisy chain to clip into the bolts in the belay stations as I hung there dismantling the system, also a locking biner with my rappel device for lowering out, and a locking biner to hold my tie-in-short knots. That's a lot of bulk for a little belay/rappel loop to hold. Dismantling the belay stations was always a challenge, to end up on my jumars on the climbing rope, with the belay rope not tangled somewhere between me and the climbing rope and no tangles in the individual jumar leashes or daisy chain on my harness. The other ropes had, of course, ascended previously one at a time tangling as they did so. The wind was ever present, swinging me around, as well as the ropes.

Now, the pro removal...Picture zigzag pro placement requiring double slings with cams and aliens in nooks and crannies, or long low angle crack traverses when jumars just don't like working on a HORIZONTAL rope, they like VERTICAL. Picture me, remember, I'm attached to the rope on my Jumars, using every trick I learned to keep the rope vertical as I passed the pro, and pulling myself or running back and forth on the rock to get over, to reach the pro I had just jumarred past. This was a long way for me on those first pitches. I would grab a quick hand jam in the crack, hang sideways like a flag as I removed the piece of pro next to it, then swing back. A quick hand jam is different from one you can look at and choose, especially in the dark using a headlamp an it took me several times on these. These were the ones short enough to avoid lowering out. (10 feet away or less.) I loved taking out pitons. All those hours pounding in my shed paid off, I did it just fine. You would hit it hard with the hammer up and down until the metallic "ping" became a flatter sound, then pull it out with a biner attached to a line with another biner, attached to the head of the hammer. Yank it and it's out. Sometimes. Or work more with the hammer. Clip it to a gear loop, then on to the next piece. There were times when the belay rope was used to help me get enough momentum in my swing to get back to a piece. As far as lowering out, it worked just fine, I used a rappel device to lower out to the next crack system beside me. There was one instance where the rope was too short for the pitch, however, and Scott had to come down and help me. I was attached to the climbing rope with my rappel device, and the end of the rope went across to a piece and back to me where it was tied in to my harness. I couldn't untie it, it was pulled tight. I couldn't move. At his suggestion, I used an auto block with a biner for a handle, pulled the rope through it for some slack, and untied from the end of the rope. When the autoblock was loosened, the end of the rope zoomed over, went through the lower out sling on the previous bolt and I took a memorable 60 to 80 feet harmless pendulum in midair above Yosemite Valley. As I passed him on the swing back, my guide was laughing. I stopped my "AAAAAH" noise, laughed too, and ahead we went. It seemed that before I could proceed all day, I had to solve a dilemma.

9. As I said before, 9 out of 10 climbers who start El Cap have to bail. Perhaps they ran into the same situation I did. Even though I was successful at the technical cleaning for half the route, it took me longer than I expected. Too long to get to the top in 5 days to meet my daughter. I, however, had hired a guide who decided to facilitate matters by cleaning his own routes the last 1/2 of the trip. I hate that I didn't clean the whole thing; I love that we made the top in 5 days.

10. We topped out at 11:00 pm the 5th day, called Sara on the arranged 2 way radios the 6th morning and when she joined us, we descended the East Ledges. These are hairy with a lot of weight on your back. With only a couple of rappel lessons on Mushroom Rock (Stony Pt.)
West of the Cerbat Mountains and Mount Tipton, across the broad desert prairie of the Detrital Valley, the isolated massif of Mount Perkins rises east of the Colorado River in a lonely little corner of Mohave County. Some maps show it as a northern end of the Black Mountains, but it's pretty much in a little range of its own. We had scoped out this peak on our way to climb Cherum Peak at the south end of the Cerbats last Christmas, and it invited exploration as some of that forlorn profitless terrain only a DPS desert rat could love.

Our access to the peak was from the east, where “Seventh Street” takes off due west from US 93 about 30 miles north of Kingman. There is a paved “legal” crossing of the median here. 4.3 miles in on this good dirt road, turn due north at a big water tank and go about a mile to a fairly good dirt road coming in from the northeast. Turn left on this road and go 1.5 miles to where a fair but rather faint and little-used road veers left; this is the road to the “cow camp” on the topo. Surprisingly, all the roads were readily passable in a Detroit-iron Chevy all the way to the cow camp at 3450 feet. This consists of long-burnt ruins melting back into the desert; a chimney, a well, and some rusty sheet metal hidden in the weeds. The road had not been driven for some time. Incredibly, the creek shown on the topo was a going concern this past March; not a trickle, either, but a lusty, musical mountain brook.

We headed up the somewhat brushy canyon — with numerous creek hops — about 3/4 mile before beginning the climb on a route that ended up being a traverse up the north rim and out the south rim of the canyon on the east flank of Perkins. This route is rougher and more strenuous than it looks on the topo. The terrain is open, as there is evidence that some time ago an intense holocaust of a range fire destroyed almost every stick of vegetation on
the peak; a few unscathed junipers here and there above 5000 feet must have been leap-frogged by the flames. (Of course, our friends the catclaws have regrown in the canyon.) This year, the barren ground was hidden by a lush growth of grass and flowers – in particular, billions of fiddlenecks. Perhaps because of the fire, much of the footing seemed unusually treacherous – you’d take four steps and the fifth would slide out from beneath you. The peak is all Precambrian basement complex, gneisses and schists injected with granite dikes and stocks. A big granite body on the south ridge slowed us down with a tedious weave of boulders at about 4400 – 4500 feet.

A tan haze of blowing dust badly degraded the distant view from the summit. Closer, but still far below the west, Lake Mohave glinted dully like a runnel of molten lead between dark bajadas and the ranges rising on either side. Directly across the river/lake rose the serrated Ireteba Peaks in the Eldorado Mountains which we bagged a few years back; to the southwest, Spirit Mountain rose like a scaled-down Sierra granite palisade.

Although our ascent bore no sign of human existence past the “cow camp”, the summit is not virgin wilderness; a hundred yards or so west of the high point is a shack with robot electronic gear. Fortunately, this installation is accessed by helicopter, so no road profanes the other side of the peak.
On July 21, 1847, an advance party crested a ridge of the Wasatch Mountains and saw before them “the valley where the broad waters of the Great Salt Lake glistened in the sunbeams.” Three days later, on July 24, a date now celebrated throughout the region as Pioneer Day, Brigham Young and the main company of Mormons also reached the valley.

“Before the sun had set that evening, they had planted a crop of potatoes and diverted the waters of City Creek to irrigate them. A stone’s throw from the creek they began laying the foundation for a temple, at the center of what would become Salt Lake City.” The church’s long and troubled seventeen-year journey from western New York State was over. The Mormons had finally found their home.

Indeed, much of the desert west, including virtually every agricultural community in Utah, southern Idaho, western Colorado and eastern Nevada, was settled by Mormons. Even “Sin City” Las Vegas, NV and San Bernardino, CA have deep Latter Day Saints roots. The three books reviewed herein offer up mixed views of the industrious but often beleaguered Mormons.

Under the Banner of Heaven (2003). Climber and author Jon Krakauer (1954-) Eiger Dreams (1990), Into the Wild (1996), Into Thin Air (1997)—was raised in Corvallis, Oregon, where his father introduced him to mountaineering when he was eight years old. As a boy, many of Krakauer’s teachers and coaches were Latter-day Saints, and as one reviewer notes “although he envied the unfluctuating certainty of the faith professed so enthusiastically by these Mormon friends and acquaintances, he was often baffled by it, and has sought to comprehend the formidable power of such belief ever since. The upshot of this lifelong quest is Under the Banner of Heaven, in which (he) examines the nature of religious passion through the lens of Mormon Fundamentalism.”

Indeed, Krakauer weaves together a history of the Church—which was founded in 1830 in Palmyra, NY, by Joseph Smith (1805-1844), a man who Krakauer claims was so charismatic he could “sell a muzzle to a dog”—along with an examination of the brutal, revelation-inspired 1984 murders in American Forks, UT of Brenda Lafferty, 24, and her 15-month old daughter, Erica, by Ronald and Daniel Lafferty, two of the murdered woman’s five brothers-in-law. The book’s sub-title, tellingly, is “A Story of Violent Faith.”

Under the Banner of Heaven also considers polygamy and blood atonement, two early Mormon precepts abandoned long ago by the mainstream Church. In spite of official desanction, however, an estimated 30,000 fundamentalist Mormons, living in a handful of out-of-the-way places in Canada, Mexico and the American West, continue to practice polygamy (and, to a lesser extent, blood atonement). In fact, Colorado City (formerly Short Creek), population 9,000, which straddles the UT/AZ border in the isolated Arizona Strip, lying between the vermilion cliffs of Utah and the north rim of the Grand Canyon—an area almost as large as New Jersey, but with just one paved highway (389) snaking through it—is home to the world’s largest Mormon fundamentalist sect, the Fundamentalist Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, more commonly known as the United Effort Plan (UEP), a faction that continues the illegal practice.

Krakauer writes that the UEP “requires its members to live in strict accordance with the commandments of a frail ninety-two-year-old tax accountant-turned-prophet named Rulon T. Jeffs” (a.k.a. Uncle Rulon), who traces his divinely ordained leadership in “an unbroken chain that leads directly back to Joseph Smith himself.” Uncle Rulon “has married an estimated seventy-five women with whom he has fathered at least sixty-five children; several of his wives were given to him in marriage when they were fourteen or fifteen and he was in his eighties. Not surprisingly, “his sermons frequently stress the need for total submission.”

To avoid prosecution, Colorado City men “legally marry only the first of their multiple wives; subsequent wives, although ‘spiritually married’ to their husbands by Uncle Rulon, thus remain single mothers in the eyes of the
state.” By doing so, the “satanic” governments of Arizona, Utah and the United States, which are out to “destroy” the UEP, provide the good citizens of Colorado City with more than $6 million in public funds per year.

Nine hundred miles north of Colorado City, just over the Canadian Border, lies Bountiful, British Columbia, residence to another seven hundred UEP Fundamentalists, a community from which young girls “are regularly sent south...to be married to men in Colorado City, and even greater numbers of girls from Colorado City are brought north to marry Bountiful men.”

And then there’s Colonia LeBaron, in Chihuahua, Mexico, near Colonia Juarez, about 150 miles southwest of El Paso, a settlement founded in 1944 by Dayer LeBaron after he received a direct revelation from God. In 1972, violence flared in the colony, when Dayer’s son Joel, purportedly a prophet, was shot dead on his brother Ervil’s orders, an act Ervil later claimed was divinely inspired.

Somewhat surprisingly, the six Lafferty brothers—two of whom were directly involved with the murder of Brenda Lafferty—were not brought up in a fundamentalist Mormon environment. Instead, they became interested in the concept of plural marriages after Dan, the second oldest brother, began to study the polygamous history of the Church. The circumstances leading up to the double homicide began after Dan, who had already taken a second wife, attempted to persuade his brothers that they too should make their marriages polygamous. Brenda Lafferty, wife of Dan’s youngest brother, Allen, however, would have no part of any such arrangement. The youngest but also the best educated of the six Lafferty wives, she railed against the idea. Indeed, Brenda successfully urged Dianna Lafferty, Ron’s wife, “to divorce him, for her children’s sake and her own.”

After the divorce, Ron, ruminating on his life (which had become an economic shambles) and his beliefs, claimed to have received three direct revelations from God, the third being that Brenda, her baby and two others “be removed in rapid succession and that an example be made of them in order that others might see the fate of those who fight against the true Saints of God.”

_Under the Banner of Heaven_ goes on to describe the gruesome murders (by knife), which were committed, in fact, by Dan, after Ron got cold feet, and the subsequent trials of the two brothers, both of whom were found guilty.

Krakauer has done a nice job in researching his material. One of his more interesting sidelights concerns the Mountain Meadows Massacre—that September 1857 Mormon attack on the Fancher/Arkansas wagon train, during which, inspired by real and perceived persecution by Gentiles, an estimated 120 innocent emigrants were murdered—informing us that the raid was perpetrated in part by direct ancestors of the current governor of Utah, Mike Leavitt, and by kin of members of the Udall political dynasty, including Stewart Udall, former secretary of Interior under President Kennedy, the late Morris Udall, Stewart’s brother, a former U.S. Representative, and Mark Udall, Morris’ son, a current U.S. Representative from Colorado.

Another of Krakauer’s interesting tidbits is that the three men, William Dunn, O.G. Howland and Seneca Howland, who in August 1869 left Maj. John Wesley Powell’s Colorado River exploration group—exiting the Grand Canyon by way of Separation Canyon and then crossing over Mt. Dellenbaugh in the Arizona Strip—may very well have been murdered by Mormons, still suspicious of Gentiles, especially after the 1877 execution of four of the perpetrators of the Mountain Meadows Massacre, rather than by Indians, as has been generally believed.
Under the Banner of Heaven is a fascinating book. If you have any interest whatsoever in the history of the Great Basin, it’s definitely worth a read.

Wallace Stegner (1909-1993) was born in Iowa, spent his boyhood on the plains of Saskatchewan, his youth in Salt Lake City (as a non-Mormon), did his undergraduate work at the University of Utah, received his PhD from the University of Iowa, taught at Wisconsin and Harvard, and in 1945 he moved to Stanford University, where, until 1971, he directed that school’s Creative Writing Program. Under his aegis in Palo Alto, a number of noteworthy Western authors emerged, including Edward Abbey, Jack Kerouac, Ken Kesey, Larry McMurtry and N. Scott Momaday.

Stegner is also the author of several volumes of fiction and non-fiction on the history and the people of the American West, including an autobiographic novel The Big Rock Candy Mountain (1943) and the non-fictional Wolf Willow (1962), “a portrait of his boyhood home on the Saskatchewan prairies, (that) combines the researches of the historian and the intuitions of the fiction writer to create a haunting and multi-faceted picture of a dying frontier.”

His novel Angle of Repose (1971) won a Pulitzer Prize, his novel The Spectator Bird (1976) was awarded the National Book Award, and three of his short stories have won O. Henry prizes.

Stegner's two books on the Latter Day Saints, Mormon Country (1942) and The Gathering of Zion (1964), concern those “communally oriented, hierarchically led people who are a stark contrast to the exploitative boomers of the frontier.” In Mormon Country, one of the American Folkway series originally published by Duell, Sloan & Pearce, Stegner admires the Mormons, even while viewing them as individuals with particular graces and flaws. In The Gathering of Zion, he describes the manner in which the Saints made their way—their Exodus—to their promised land.

Mormon Country (1942)   Sixty-three-year-old, but still fresh today, this volume provides a friendly look at the Mormons after their arrival en masse in the desert west in 1847, a move made subsequent to the martyrdom of Joseph Smith by Gentiles in Illinois in 1844

Surprisingly, Brigham Young, who succeeded Smith, seemed to have only the vaguest idea—based on John C. Fremont’s report of his exploration of the route to California and from conversations with Father DeSmet—of a “‘valley in the Rocky Mountains,’ secluded from the world, a wilderness that would be overlooked and by-passed by the emigrant trains moving to Oregon and California.” And although sick with fever on the day when Smith “was hauled in his carriage through the mouth of Emigration Canyon and looked upon the valley of Great Salt Lake with the Jordan River winding across the far flats and the late sun glittering of the waters of the Dead Sea, he knew that he had arrived.” “This is the place,” he is professed to have said.

Stegner describes the layout of a typical Mormon settlement as “a medieval village, a collection of farm houses in the midst of cultivable land… In the beginning of every settlement there was a survey, first town lots and then farming land. Every colonist drew his numbered properties from the hat. If he didn’t like what he got he could swap or bargain with someone else, but whatever he got, he lived in the village with the rest.”

After the first wave of immigration, hundreds, then thousands, of new colonists began to arrive in Zion (Mormon Country). Thanks to the success of overseas missionaries, there came “British converts from the Black Belt collieries, broad-spoken proselytes from the dying towns of Cornwall and Wales; they were Manxmen and Norwegians and Danes and Swedes. They were technologically and spiritually unemployed, many of them, the economically-stranded people of Europe’s back doors.”
And because most of these new emigrants were too poor to pay their way to America, Brigham Young organized the “Perpetual Emigration Company, whose funds, gained partly from tithes and contributions and partly from such legally earmarked sources as the fines…and a percentage of the take from ferry concessions, were loaned to foreign converts on the agreement that they would be paid back after the settlement of the newcomers in the West.”

Stegner also touches on the Mormon belief that “one can be baptized vicariously for the dead, (so that) one can have all one’s relative sealed to him to insure the gathering-in of all the souls at the last trump.” This concept explains the Mormon emphasis on genealogical records in which a person can look up his ancestors as far back as possible and have them all baptized. After this rite has been completed, “the dead have in effect an invitation to celestial bliss. If they choose not to accept the gospel, very well. They have had the opportunity.”

Stegner includes a chapter on Colorado City, which at the time *Mormon Country* was published in 1942 was still known as Short Creek. In way of explanation of the polygamous community, he notes that Joseph Smith received a revelation which assured him that “if a young woman is given to a man, and she were a virgin and not promised to another, then that man was justified in taking her. And if two or three or four others were given to him, he was still justified. There was no top limit except that imposed by economic considerations.” This concept became an early tenet of the faith, and remains so today in Colorado City.

In 1890, however, the then President of the Mormons, Wilford Woodruff, “was forced to knuckle under to overwhelming federal pressure and issue a manifesto against plural marriage. The mandate did not repudiate the divine origin of the institution; it merely forsook it as a Church doctrine because it conflicted with the law of the land. Polygamy was not wrong; it was impolitic.”

Stegner continues, “Polygamy is dead, but its soul goes marching on. The belief lingers and even burns fiercely in a few breasts long after the institution...(has) crumbled.” “As long as Mormonism remains a religious force...there will be the unreconstructed. Faith is a weed with a long tap root.”

**The Gathering of Zion** (1964). In *The Gathering of Zion*, Stegner attempts to provide an unbiased—and there was much controversy regarding the movement—look at history of the Mormon Trail, on which, during the late 1840s and throughout the 1850s, thousands made their way across the Middle West, through the Rocky Mountains, and finally to Zion, their promised land.

Although this immense migration took place outside the DPS climbing area, the book is important to desert lovers as it explains the manner in which a vast area of the West was initially populated. Indeed, the chapters on those who made the trek pulling handcarts (oxen and wagons being unavailable), and the one on Dan Jones, “The Man Who Ate the Pack Saddle,” are together worth the price of admission.

Stegner ends his considerations of the Mormons thusly: “They lived and acted, and sometimes died, for what they believed, and their intractable humanity ennobled them about as often as the excesses of their faith led them into tribal suspicion or their misfortunes into demoralization.

“The story of the Mormon Trail is the story of people, no better and no worse than other people, probably, but certainly as sternly tested as any, and with a right to their pride in the way they have borne the testing.”

Amen.
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