I am proud to serve the great Desert Peaks Section along side my fellow elected Leadership members. Audrey Goodman will serve as Vice Chair/Outings, Gloria Miladin is Treasurer, Paul Cooley remains Secretary, and Edna Erspamer is the Programs/Banquet Chair. Edna has already served the DPS as Chair, Treasurer and Secretary, so her experience will be welcome. Of course there are those serving appointed positions and their ongoing help is invaluable to the section. We are also thankful to Dave Baldwin for helping us transition into our new positions.

As the weather warms and the desert climbing season winds down, we will crank up our year of work looking at some old, nagging issues for the DPS (and for any SC section that doesn’t advocate watching TV). There seemed so few outings this past year and we will look at trying to increase the number as well as work on increasing our membership. The desert can be a hard sell, but I believe that if we spread the good name of the DPS and our deserts, we will attract more members. Our section can be compared to a desert. Both have trouble attracting people, but if one looks closely and spends some quality time within, there are many rewards to be reaped.

Our 15th Annual Chili Cookoff is scheduled for Halloween weekend, Oct. 27-28. There is also a pumpkin carving contest and a scheduled climb of Sombrero Peak. Prizes will be awarded in categories such as taste, heat, presentation among others. Cooks are free and tasters cost $5. The Sombrero climb and the cook-off are scheduled for Saturday, and Sunday is open for another peak or, perhaps, an early start for home. I hope you can all make plans to be there!

Safe and Happy Climbing,
Michael Gosnell
TRIPS / EVENTS
OCTOBER THROUGH DECEMBER 2007

OCT 14  SUN  HPS, DPS  Mt Baldy, Duane McRuer Memorial Hike
OCT 21-22  SAT-SUN  DPS  Nopah Range, Pahrump Point
OCT 27-28  SAT-SUN  DPS  15th Annual Chili Cookoff/Sombrero Peak
NOV 3-4    SAT-SUN  DPS  Porter Peak
NOV 10-11  SAT-SUN  DPS  Mopah Point, Chemehuevi Peak
DEC 1-2    SAT-SUN  DPS  Old Woman Mountain

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.sierraclub.org/outings/chapter/forms/
or contact the Outings Department at (415) 977-5528 for a printed version.

♦ OCT 14  SUN  HPS, DPS
O: Mt Baldy (10,064), Duane McRuer Memorial Hike: Join us on what would have been close to Duane's 82nd birthday to celebrate his life in the mountains he loved. From Manker Flats to the summit via the Sierra Club Ski Hut, the hike will be 8 miles r.t., 3900' gain. Strenuous but moderately paced. Ski lift option for $10 and potluck immediately following hike. Meet 8 AM at Manker Flats, 9 AM at the ski lift, or 7:15 AM at the parking lot at the corner of Mills Avenue and Mt. Baldy Road. Bring food, water, good hiking shoes, great memories to share. Leaders: Doug Mantle, Mary McMannes, Tina Bowman, Gene Mauk, Mike Manchester, Bob Hicks. Honorary Leaders: Betty and Lara McRuer. (Email Mary McMannes for additional info, marymuir@earthlink.net)

♦ OCT 20-21  SAT-SUN  DPS
I: Nopah (6394'), Pahrump (5740'): No, this is not a misprint but, instead, the third time we’ve scheduled this trip! Join us as we climb Nopah from the ‘east ridge’, a route not described in the Peaks Guide. We’ll climb Pahrump via the traditional route on Sunday. There will be time on Saturday for soaking at the Tecopa Hot Springs before we set up camp nearby and enjoy a potluck. Good conditioning and the ability to keep up with a moderate pace are required. Send e-SASE (preferred)/SASE to Sue. Leaders: Sue Holloway and Richard Carey.

♦ OCT 27-28  SAT-SUN  DPS
I: 15th Annual DPS Chili Cook-off/Pumpkin Carve Challenge, Sombrero Peak (4229'): Join us for a weekend in Imperial County of climbing, cooking, carving, and/or tasting and judging various recipes from magnificent cooks and their culinary chili delights! This year we will add a pumpkin carving contest to accompany the culinary exposition. Whether your chili specialty is Spicy, Texas Style, Vegetarian, Traditional, or your own unique concoction, please share with us at this fun event. Prizes are awarded based upon several categories, including, taste, heat, presentation and more! Cooks are free, tasters are $5.00 each. Bring umbrellas and tarps for shelters in case of rain. Saturday climb class 1 Sombrero Peak, 2100’ gain, 3 miles, then enjoy a happy hour and the cook and carve-off at an easily accessible 2wd site. Sunday is open for possibly another peak, or an early start home. Well-behaved canines welcome. Send sase with $ for tasters, H&W ph #s, carpool info and indicate whether you will be a cook or a taster to Reserve: Yvonne Jamison. Leaders: Scot Jamison, Barbee & Larry Tidball.

♦ NOV 3-4  SAT-SUN  DPS
I: Porter Peak (9101'): Join us for a climb of this nine thousand foot peak in Death Valley. We will approach Porter from the west side driving up Pleasant Canyon to the stone corral. The climb itself is 3100 feet gain, seven miles (2WD) or 2000 ft gain and 4 miles (4WD). We will decide based on available vehicles and current road conditions. On Sunday we can explore this area of Death Valley, perhaps hiking up to Panamint City. Email or sase with recent conditioning experience to Leader: Dave Perkins or Co-Leader: Ann Perkins.

♦ NOV 10-11  SAT-SUN  DPS
MR: Mopah Pt (3530'), Chemehuevi Pk (3694'): Join us for two climbs in eastern San Bernardino Co. Sat. Mopah, class 3, 8 mi, 2000'+ gain. Sun climb of Chemehuevi, class 2, 7.5 mi, 2000’ gain. Must be Sierra Club member to climb Mopah and submit medical form. E-sase or sase with recent experience on rock and conditioning to Leader: Tina Bowman. Co-Leader: Tom Bowman.
MEMBERSHIP CHAIR / ACTIVITY REPORT, June 7, 2007

Membership Summary

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<td>Rabbit Peak</td>
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New Member

Kathryn Rich

4/15/07

Brown Peak

New Sustaining Subscriber

Michael Dillenback

22611 Evalyn Ave

Torrance, CA 90505-3430

310-378-7495

Address/Info Changes

Mark Adrian

5116 Park Rim Drive
San Diego, CA 92117-1044
858-270-2843

Ted Brasket

P.O. Box 403
Challis, ID 83226
928-713-7028

Gregory Gerlach

5405 Warman Lane
Temple City, CA 91780
626-484-2697
drougeaugerlach@worldnet.att.net

John Gibba

661-992-1772
Desrtdog01@verizon.net

Igor & Suzanne Mamedalin

ismamedalin@gmail.com

Mary Sue Miller

7520 E 102nd St
Tulsa, OK 74133-6824
918-298-4644

George Quinn

5679 N Crimson Way
Boise, ID 83703-2841
208-343-2949
quinngw1@yahoo.com

Neal R. Scott

5534 S 6th St. PMB 176
Klamath Falls, OR 97603

Mike Sos

m_isos@verizon.net

Robert Young

4815 Briercrest Ave
Lakewood, CA 90713

Sustaining Renewal

Susan L. McCreary

1 year

Membership Renewals

David Boyle

1 year

Ted Brasket

2 years

Cindy Couty

3 years

Diane Dunbar

1 year

Beth Epstein

3 years

John Gibba

1 year

Bill Hauser

1 year

Edward H. Lubin

1 year

Igor & Suzanne Mamedalin

1 year

Martha Piepgras

5 years

Julie Rush

1 year

Edd Ruskowitz

2 years

Le Roy Russ

1 year

Theodore Tassop

1 year

Peter Yamagata

1 year

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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 “Desert Peaks Section” to:

Ron Bartell, 1556 21st Street, Manhattan Beach, CA, 90266

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

COVER PHOTO: Needle Peak from near Gold Hill. Photo by Bob Sumner.
OUTINGS CHAIR

I am just back from a 60th birthday celebration of a sweetheart of a lady in our section. Being a DPS party, it was fittingly held in a desert campground in the Southern Sierra, involved a peak climb for those who were interested, or a wonderful place to relax and visit for those who weren’t, and of course culminated in the ‘infamous’ potluck feast once the hikers triumphantly returned. About 40 DPS folk, several family members, and 7 adorable canines participated. Needless to say, it was a blast.

While driving back, I was trying to formulate my introductory column for this issue. I thought of my own attraction to this group and it’s adventures since I first learned of it almost four years ago, and it occurred to me that the birthday gathering I was returning from contained all of the best elements of the Desert Peaks Section:

*it brings together a wonderful community of people who are intelligent, warm, and greatly appreciate the natural gifts our deserts and mountains offer to us (and who know how to party!).

*it creates numerous opportunities for one of the most wonderful workouts for the body and soul that a person can find in this world, in my humble opinion.

*it gives it’s members a chance to set and accomplish goals of varying levels such as; hiking all the peaks on the list, just getting a few emblem peaks done, learning about our desert flora, fauna and geology, or simply gaining stamina, knowledge and confidence in the wilderness.

*it offers competent and experienced leaders who volunteer to do the training and thus guide the rest of us during our various wilderness excursions.

*it teaches it’s members about Broadway musicals...Huh?? (Well, it did at this birthday fete anyways).

*Did I also mention that it provides it’s members with some of the absolute BEST potluck feasts money can’t buy? All for a fairly paltry annual sum I might add.

This is what sets DPS apart - the land use is generally free, except for the occasional park fees. Anyone can go online and “Google” to find out what peaks are out there, some sort of route, and even a climbing companion or two who may or may not know what they’re doing.

What DPS offers is a high quality experience for someone who wants to feel a connection with interesting, ecology minded people, our public land, it’s evolution as mountain and desert, it’s plants, animals, etc. And it’s our club folks-ours to create and keep alive, or allow to atrophy and ‘grey out’ as some fear could occur in the not too distant future.

I returned from this past weekend feeling so darned grateful that DPS existed and I was a part of it. It’s what led me to accept the offer of a leadership position to give back something to the club. Now, I will be the first to say that as Outings Chair, I will not be the one who inspires you with tales of my amazing climbing prowess. However what I can offer is to be a conduit for expression of your needs as members in terms of which peak trips you’d like to see, what other types of outings you’d like to participate in, what ideas you may have for modification of our overall list, our goals, etc. I encourage the free discussion of such things as an important element of a ‘living’ community which is viable and can attract new members, while providing continuing value to older members. Discussion doesn’t imply vast or immediate change, but it does begin a process for necessary evolution where we may need to modify some aspects of activities to meet current needs.

I also encourage (beg?) all our leaders to pick a climb or two you’re passionate or just curious about, and lead a trip this season. We currently have only five outings for Fall and I am anxious to receive trip proposals for all levels of peak bagging trips, AND other desert outings that may be of interest to those who are not into peak bagging, but want to continue the camaraderie of our group and the enjoyment of and learning about our gorgeous wilderness areas. Geology trip to Death Valley? Is there a sequel trip to last year’s well attended train history
outings? Don’t be shy guys- get creative. Invite your friends to join. We need your participation. The only bad news is that a number of people on this board are fairly new members with no prior board experience, and we may require a wee bit of patience as we learn the ropes. The GOOD news is exactly the same thing and I for one am looking forward to opening up new possibilities to keep our group alive and flourishing within the existing structure and mores of The Sierra Club.

Please feel free to e mail ideas to me at music2835@yahoo.com. Put “DPS Feedback” in the subject heading so my filter doesn’t pop your correspondence into the trash bin (please be kind with constructive criticism). For those list finishers out there, please e mail me ASAP a list of peaks you would like to see on the schedule so we can help you in your endeavors. Let’s make this season, one we will be telling stories around the campfire about for many years to come, with friends old and new alike.

All the best ‘out there’, Audrey Goodman

Did you know? DPS bon vivant, Betty McCosker writes from San Diego that she received a mailing with big letters on the envelope--It's 2007, and You're Not Married? Betty looked at Joe, then again at the envelope, and said, "Sorry, but you're 63 years too late!"

Speaking of legends, did you know that Gordon MacLeod's mentor was none other than Ansel Adams?

And did you know, Dan Richter is one of our celeb climbers in the DPS? His father was Misha Richter, cartoonist and cover illustrator for the New York from 1940-2001? Dan, himself, once lived with John Lennon and Yoko Ono as they all worked on album covers and films. In 2001: A Space Odyssey, Dan was the man-ape in the first scene. Check out his website at www.danrichter.com

Rob Roy McDonald was seen at the Athenaeum (Cal Tech) celebrating Robert Burns' birthday, making much of his McDonald coat of arms, and cavorting in a kilt. He sends greetings to all as he moves to Olympia, Washington. .

Did you know Gene Mauk is wearing rotor cuff surgery apparatus but is still closing in on the DPS, HPS, and High Points of the states. Whatta guy is that Gino!

Cuno Ranschau was recently seen at a potluck still in high form with his puns, jokes, and "Rindercella." He was overhead to say, "Who's tsarry now?" when speaking of the Russian Revolution.

On a serious note, Katie Hicks, our good friend, superb cook, and loving spouse of Bob Hicks passed away recently. We will miss her, but her good cheer and recipes she shared with us will live on.

DPSers, climb on, climb high --and I'll see you on the summits. - Mary McMannes

CONSERVATION

Greetings fellow DPSers! I hope that the Memorial Weekend found each of you doing well, and as many of us prepare for our summer vacations, please let me say “Bon Voyage” and be safe out there. For this issue, I would like to look at the proposed White Mountains Wilderness.

The proposed White Mountains Wilderness would set aside nearly 235,000 acres of wild land, as well as 22 miles of the Cottonwood Creek Wild and Scenic River in an area bordered by HWY 6 to the north, HWY 395 to the west, HWY 168 to the south and HWY's 264/266 on the east. The Whites are celebrated as America’s highest desert mountain range and the second largest “Inventoried Roadless Area” in the Lower 48 states, which makes it a prime candidate for wilderness inclusion. The Whites are not only the home to some of the most challenging and highest peaks on
the DPS List, but are also home to Ancient Bristlecone Pine forests, and at 5,000 years old, they are the oldest living things on the planet. It could contain the only protected river, in the Great Basin, from its mouth to its terminus. And of course, it would protect evidence of human existence dating back 10,000 years.

The proposed White Mountains Wilderness is part of Senator Boxer’s proposed “California Wild Heritage Act of 2007”, which would include additions to San Bernardino National Forest (Sugarloaf Wilderness), here in Southern California. Threatening the wilderness is illegal off-road vehicle use, mining, and interestingly enough, failure for support from local residents. In the Saturday, May 19, 2007 issue of The Inyo Register “4 out of 5 member of the Bishop City Council officially oppose Sen. Barbara Boxer’s proposed ‘California Wild Heritage Act of 2007’” due to the following reasons: Sen. Boxer has never asked for input from those who know the region the best- its residents; there is already “plenty of wilderness within the boundaries of Inyo National Forest;” plus, what seems to be a major sticking point with city council members, is a threat of losing vehicular access.

While it is of the author’s opinion that the wilderness is a bit more important than vehicular access, or the minor inconveniences that it may imply, I think that concessions can be made, and what I find troubling is the fact that there seems to be little to no support on the local level for the additions to California wilderness areas. There already is the Boundary Peak Wilderness that surrounds Boundary Peak on the north-end of the range, so why not extend the wilderness south towards White Mountain and its environs? If usage is such a major sticking point for local residents, then why not set up a quota system for trails in, out and within the wilderness, they way they are for Inyo NF wildernesses in the Sierra Nevada. Is it not our duty as Sierra Club members, especially since we are DPSers, to forge the protection of this, one of our finest regions?

On two quick, final notes, I will be keeping a close eye on the proposed WMW and keeping all of you abreast of the situation. Also, it was pointed out that I had mistakenly misquoted Emerson, as “In wilderness is the preservation of the world.” It should have read, “In wildness is the preservation of the world.”

With that, Very Sincerely Yours, Peter

p.s. If you have any questions, comments, or updates, please do not hesitate to contact me!

p.p.s. I just received this week's copy of the Big Bear Grizzly and they are reporting that due to an overwhelming dis-sention for the Sugarloaf Wilderness addition to SBNF, Sen. Boxer is going to scrap Bill S. 493 "California Wild and Heritage Act"...at least until the next session of Congress. I would imagine that if the whole bill is going to be placed by the way-side, then the same can be said of the proposed White Mountains Wilderness.

“Great things are done when men and mountains meet.”--- William Blake

OUTINGS SAFETY

In order to “explore, enjoy, and protect,” we lead groups to wild places on outings we want to be safe, enjoyable, and environmentally responsible. Recently a task force looked at safety on mountaineering outings and developed a document, “Safety Management on Restricted Mountaineering Outings,” which you may see at the Mountaineering Oversight Committee’s page of the Clubhouse extranet site at http://clubhouse.sierraclub.org/outings/Mountaineering/SafetyManagement.PDF. I strongly suggest that leaders of all our outings review the full document. While the focus was on mountaineering outings, some parts of the document apply to almost any outing. The main point to emphasize here is remaining aware of changing environmental conditions and the physical and mental condition of the group.

Mental Aspect of Safety Management

Fatigue—physical fatigue can dull mental awareness of risk and diminish concentration on the task at hand, such as descending a relatively easy slope and taking a misstep or misjudging the size of a rock in the trail and tripping.

Distractions—similar to fatigue in removing concentration from one’s movement over the terrain, such as looking back to respond in a conversation and then tripping over a root.

Over-confidence—over estimating the ability and experience of the individual or group, for example, assuming a group will move as quickly at the end of a long day as at the beginning or assuming that a roped team on a snow slope can arrest the slip of one member.

Complacency—for example, what the group climbed up with confidence may present challenges on the way down because of fatigue or awkward moves. What has been done before may present challenges in the current circum-

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stance. Talus slopes can change in their stability as the slope changes.

**Awareness of these factors**—the leaders’ knowing and applying safety protocol and good judgment—is key to accident prevention. For example, leaders should remind participants on the descent that the climb is only half over and that they must stay focused on the climb. Monitoring the physical, emotional, and mental condition of the group is an essential aspect of good leadership and safety management.

**Examples of Keeping Safety Paramount**

These examples apply to leaders and participants.

- Being in good condition to climb safely (cardio-vascular conditioning as well as muscle strength and endurance)
- Staying stable and completely in balance on and off the trail
- Monitoring changing environmental conditions
- Making sure all members of the group have appropriate and necessary clothing and gear
- Keeping ice axe self-arrest skills well practiced
- Staying firmly attached to the ice axe
- Keeping away from exposure by anchoring oneself or staying well back from a cliff while waiting on a climb
- Not touching rocks above unless one is sure that the rocks are completely stable
- Staying well hydrated and eating enough to keep up with the energy demands of the outing
- Carrying a first aid kit appropriate for the outing and your level of first aid training. For suggestions see [http://clubhouse.sierraclub.org/outings/medical/first_aid/kits.asp](http://clubhouse.sierraclub.org/outings/medical/first_aid/kits.asp)
- Reviewing your first aid training prior to leading an outing
- Having a safety management plan for alerting rescue services if needed


These are just a few ideas of ways we consciously can make outings as safe as possible.

Tina Bowman, Chair, Mountaineering Oversight Committee

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**Bob Cates Awarded Phil Bernays Plaque**

Robert (Bob) Cates joined the club in 1971 and became an outings leader in 1972. He led outings primarily for the Hundred Peaks Section and Natural Science Section, but also for Desert Peaks Section, Sierra Peaks Section, Camera Committee, Local Hikes, San Fernando Valley Group, and the Desert Committee. He edited the Hundred Peaks Lookout for several years in the late 1970s. He is now in his 10th year of editing Naturalist Notes, the newsletter of the Natural Science Section. Bob also provided historical photographs and captions for 33 covers of the Schedule of Activities, plus one scenic cover. And in 1986 he was in charge of the committee that organized the Chapter's Diamond Jubilee event. In 1976 Bob wrote and self-published the first guidebook to the Joshua Tree National Monument: A Visitor's Guide. It was revised after passage of the California Desert Protection Act in 1994 and is still in print. Frank Wheat saw fit to summarize his contributions in his book California Desert Miracle: The Fight for Desert Parks and Wilderness (Sunbelt Press, 1999).

The following is quoted (pp. 175-178) from Frank Wheat’s book:

Robert Cates was a mechanical engineer working at Litton Guidance and Control Systems, a division of Litton Industries, Inc. He was also an avid hiker and mountaineer who had come to love Joshua Tree National Monument. Surprised by the lack of information about the monument, especially when compared to the plethora of books, magazines, and articles dealing with Death Valley, he decided to put together an illustrated visitors' guide to Joshua Tree. In his words, "It was a niche just waiting to be filled."

Assisted throughout by his wife Maureen and drawing upon Sierra Club hiking acquaintances for companions in

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field research, he assembled a fat notebook of historical and cultural information about the monument as well as its natural history. It never occurred to him, he said, to seek a publisher for the resulting guidebook. He and Maureen simply created their own company, Live Oak Press, printed up 5,000 copies, and sent samples to potential retailers. In the book he told wonderful stories about the monument, including that of Minerva Hamilton Hoyt, no "sun-hardened desert rat" but a prominent society matron in Pasadena, who had asked then-Governor James Rolph of California to introduce her to newly elected President Franklin D. Roosevelt. She bearded the President in the oval office and told him he should act to establish a national park or monument in the area. Thereafter she held his feet to the fire and, three years after their first meeting, she prevailed; Joshua Tree National Monument was established by the President's proclamation.

Demand for Cates' book was high, especially at the monument's visitor centers where it continues to sell, joined by an ever-growing host of Johnny-come-lately competitor publications. The revised edition, taking into account the adjusted boundaries and change of status from national monument to national park, was issued in 1995.

After the Desert Bill was introduced in the Senate, Cates found he had several acquaintances in the workplace who were hard-core off-roaders opposed to the proposed legislation. For a while, he gave them copies of articles in the magazines of conservation organizations to introduce them to the problems caused by abuse of the desert by careless off-roaders. "Any form of criticism of their adopted life style just made them madder," he said. He noted that they were long on complaints about the double-damned government and its restrictions on their "right" to use the desert as they chose, but short on doing anything about it. Annoyed, he decided that he would do something, quietly and independently, to help the Desert Bill pass.

Cates had seen a memorandum from the Wilderness Society in 1987 listing some 300 scientists as supporters of the bill and thought he could do better than that. What he needed first was a good solicitation kit. He started with an inspirational letter written by Dr. Robert Stebbins, the great naturalist at the University of California, Berkeley. Editing that letter down to one page, he sent it to Stebbins for approval. He next procured a strong one-page letter from Professor Arthur Montana, chair of the Department of Earth and Space Sciences at UCLA, a strong supporter of the bill. Printing them back-to-back on a single sheet of paper, and including several preprinted endorsement petitions, he had what he needed in the way of a kit.

Who to contact? Most of the original 300 endorsers represented UCLA and UC Berkeley but the original Wilderness Society solicitors had obtained a fair sprinkling of representatives of other institutions, evidently by circulating early petitions at several national scientific gatherings. Off went his kits to these original endorsers, along with a request to circulate the solicitation packet in their respective departments and institutions.

The response was overwhelming. Every week's mail brought in filled-out petitions. In the meantime, Cates spent several weekends at the UCLA Research Library searching the scientific literature for works dealing with aspects of the California desert. The authors of these pieces then would find one of his kits in their mail. He estimated that he obtained a 90% return rate on his investment: that is, nine out of ten contacts eventually resulted in returned endorsements. He never received a negative response.

Cates prepared a specific letter of endorsement that he circulated to the executive directors of seven major botanic research gardens and arboreta around the nation. It was signed by every executive director and formally entered into testimony at the 1989 House subcommittee field hearing in Barstow by Dr. Thomas Elias, then serving as executive director of the Rancho Santa Ana Botanic Garden in Claremont, California. By 1991, Cates could list more than 1,600 scientists and academicians nationwide who had endorsed the bill, including 136 scientists and educators from the great California universities, UCLA and UC Berkeley. The list, submitted in petition form to Congress, also represented a corps of scientists who could be and were drawn upon to testify before Congressional Committee hearings in Washington and California. It was a prime example of a highly successful, invaluable, self-imposed task done by a single volunteer.

-from the May 2007 Angeles Chapter Conservation newsletter
Trip reports from scheduled DPS outings and private trips to any peaks or areas of interest to Sage recipients are welcomed and encouraged. Please refer to the back cover for CORRESPONDENCE submission details. Next submission deadline is AUGUST 11, 2007.

A PATH TO ROSA AND RABBIT
(Rosa Point, Mile High Ridge, Villager Peak, Rabbit Peak)
March 3-4, 2007
By George Wysup

I noticed in the schedule that Tom Hill was to lead Rabbit and Villager. I had been trying to figure a good way to bag Explorers on these 2 peaks. [For the uninitiated, an Explorer route is an HPS term for a third substantially different route to a peak.] What if I went to Rosa Point first, then ran Mile High ridge to Villager and on to Rabbit? Sure, that would be different enough by my loose standards.

I had done basically this trip in 3 days, but in the reverse direction, in Nov, 2000 and didn’t remember anything being particularly difficult. But my aging memory tends to selectively discard unpleasantness. And most things—especially, tying my boots—are just becoming more difficult for me to accomplish.

I checked out the miles and gain on my topo map. Hmmm—6.5 miles, 4400’ gain to Rosa Point; then 3.2 miles, 1500’ gain to the Villager ridge; then 1.4 miles, 1000’ gain to Villager summit. That’s only about 11 miles, 6900’ gain on the first day. How heavy would the pack be? Well, a summer bag, a bivy sack, a sleeping pad, food, a few incidentals . . . and a lot of water. How much water? With moderate temperatures 8 liters should do it, and add another liter for a margin of safety. At 2.3 lbs per liter, including bottles . . . that comes to about 21 lbs of water. So maybe a pack weight of 40 lbs. It looks feasible, but not in hot weather. After all, I am Burt Falk’s age and, like him, fast approaching geezerhood.

One problem— I don’t want to do this alone— I need companions, strong companions. Amazingly, I actually get positive responses from the e-query I sent. From Bill Simpson, who is capable of doing this while carrying all my water in his pack; from Bill’s friend Sylvia Swinford, who has done some monster hikes; and from Greg Daly, who I am sure can do this if the pace isn’t too frenetic. Some other strong hikers also responded, but managed to think up face-saving excuses to bail. I must mention that Bill S has hiked the cactus-to-tram trail twice in a single day. Yeah, he may not be totally sane, but he’s quite pleasant to hike with.

Another issue— we must get this done in 2 days because the others have important things to do on Monday. But a third day is an option if bad stuff happens. Yes, I know; Tina B. day hiked this set of peaks to prepare for her recent 2x triple list finish. If I were 75 pounds lighter maybe I could do that. No, I couldn’t.

I accumulated all my gear, food and water and packed it. It weighed in at 41 pounds. There was nothing I could safely get rid of. The latest forecast was for 38 degree temp with a moderate wind Saturday night on Villager ridge.

Greg and I slept at Thimble trailhead (elev. 940’) in perfect weather. A full moon (minus a day) made lamps unnecessary. Bill and Sylvia met us in the morning and we commenced hiking at 5:30. The Tom Hill group was to depart at about 8 am, and we rather wanted to beat them to the camp. On the other hand a fast pace might kill the mission. So we hiked at a gentle pace across the desert floor and up pretty Palo Verde wash to where we ascended the ridge through a cholla garden. There were a few good-natured complaints about having to descend 300 feet to cross Palo Verde again. Our pace got us to Rosa- and lunch- shortly after 11 am. I am enjoying both the hike and the company of this good-humored group.

The only concern is that the wind is quite strong, but not...
dangerously so, and the temperature is lower than we expected. We figured to have a surplus of water. They stared at Mile High ridge. It looked long and there were a number of significant undulations. But no one complained. The going was no worse than we had already done until we neared the Rattlesnake Canyon saddle (4230'). Here we had to negotiate about 400 ft of steep and loose downhill.

During a short break at the saddle we contemplated various routes up to Villager ridge, where we would join the use trail. No route looked particularly good. We decided that a route pretty much straight west along a shallow ridge looked best because a lot of dry grass indicated that the footing might be decent. We were somewhat disappointed to see the other group cruise by, but we were happy for them.

We negotiated the almost 800 ft ascent with no major difficulty. The first priority was to decide how much liquid to stash there. I deposited about 2 quarts there. The 4 lbs seemed not to lessen my pack weight at all. We all still had enough energy to go on to Villager. We arrived at the Tom Hill, et al, camp at around 5 pm. I'll speak for myself- I was quite beat and I wondered if my legs could carry me to the Big Bunny tomorrow.

The weather was much cooler and windier than the forecast had implied. I donned all my clothing, but my legs were still cold. I think as a result of being cold they began cramping, though I had consumed plenty of food and Gatorade on the hike in. We all retired at about 6:30. Despite some shelter, the wind howled around us and the heat re-radiated quickly into outer space through the clear air.

Greg usually thrives on little sleep. He commented that he got 2 nights worth of rest. His first call of nature was answered at 10:30- well before he usually goes to bed. I was toasty enough in my 32 degree down bag and half inside my bivy sack with a ridge rest foam pad between me and the ground. Wearing 2 fleece hats, 2 pair of wool socks, all my top layers, and my hiking pants served me well.

I arose at 6:15 and noted that there was ice in my water bottles. One camper’s thermometer had registered 26 degrees early in the morning. As usually happens with bivy sacks my exuded body moisture condensed out on the inside of the sack and soaked the outer layers of my sleeping bag. I don’t like to use a bivy sack for that reason, but at least it is light in weight. My legs were lactic acid sore but at least the cramping didn’t persist.

We got a (rather late) 7:30 start for Rabbit, several minutes behind the Tom Hill group, and signed in on Villager. Hiking with only 2 liters of water and no sleeping gear was a pleasant change. I measured the route from Villager summit to Rabbit on my GPS. The answer was 4.05 miles each way. The terrain is quite easy but the undulations result in an elevation gain of about 2100’ plus 1100’ on the return to Villager. I was hiking quite slowly, more because the pounding hurt my sore quadriceps than from being tired. Sylvia suggested I pop a couple of vitamin "I" pills (ibuprofen). She was correct, of course. Hiking without quad pain was similar to getting a second wind. Hiker Jennifer Washington told me that a recent study indicates that vitamin "I" may combat Alzheimer’s disease. Learning this I was tempted to down the entire bottle.

We returned to camp shortly after 2 pm and took our sweet time packing up and eating lunch. It was obvious that headlamps were in our future. But no matter; I have been there, done that more than once on this hike and I had entered a batch of waypoints into my ETREX. We departed camp at 3:30, following a fine use trail, and reached about 2300’ elevation before needing to don the lamps at 6:20. Even with clouds obscuring the (slightly past) full moon we had no problems hiking in the dark, not even with the rugged crossing of Rattlesnake wash, and we reached the vehicles at 8 pm. My dear friend Jennifer had, so thoughtfully, left some strawberries and some chocolate caramels for us. That was just what we needed to perk up for the drive home.

I estimate the stats for our hike to be 26 miles, 10100’ gain over 2 days. Fortunately, a good part of the hike is on good use trail. The terrain is mostly class 1, with a few areas of easy class 2. Note to a prominent HPS multi-list bagger: NO, it’s NOT class 5.1 and there is no need to grind steps in the rock.

All photos this article by Greg Daly.

Bill Simpson and George Wysup signing in atop Villager.

THE DESERT SAGE  12  July/August 2007
Our group met at the Babo campground at 6 am on Saturday morning for the Babo climb via the standard DPS Guide Route A (west side). There were five of us: Tom McDonnell (co-leader), Greg Mason, Ed Herrman, Brian Roche, and me. Edna Erspamer and my mother relaxed at the camp during the day.

We started at 6:30 am. It took about 3 hours along a good trail to get to the base of the rock.

Our group had two ropes (a 50 m and a 60 m rope), climbing harnesses, and other basic gear. We all used hiking boots for the class 4 rock. The hangers mentioned in the DPS Guide provided adequate protection for leading the only pitch. There was a new two-bolt anchor at the top of the pitch not mentioned in the guide. This was very useful but placed at an exposed position on the rock face requiring careful belaying of participants from the safe area further up and to the right for the descent.

We topped out at about midday and headed back to camp, arriving at about 4:30 pm. Overall, route finding and climb were straightforward.

After the climb we stopped by Picture Rock, which is a short drive from the camp, to look at the petroglyphs. While there we saw a crested kara kara – an eagle like bird with black and white markings, identified by Tom. Then we began the approximately four-hour drive to Kofa National Wildlife Refuge for the next day’s climb of Signal.

There is primitive camping but no toilets or water at the trailhead for Signal Peak in Kofa.

Signal Peak is spectacular and with the surrounding mountains rise sharply from the desert plain. We were down to three for this climb: Greg, Tom, and me. We climbed the Palm Canyon / west side, listed as Route A in the DPS Guide. This proved to be considerably more difficult than the previous day’s climb on Babo both in terms of route finding and technical climbing.

We left the trailhead at about 6:30 am. We checked out the California fan palms from a distance as we stopped by the trail. This is the only native palm in Arizona and there are only a few stands of them.

Luckily, I decided to pack in my rock shoes, which I appreciated when leading the technical pitch. There were two pitons providing protection for the pitch, which were not listed in the DPS Guide, but I appreciated nonetheless. A new bolted rappel station, also not listed in the Guide had been placed at exactly the right position for rappelling with a 60 m rope. However, it was not placed in a good position for a belay station for the climb up so I used a large boulder at the top. The technical climbing on this pitch is considerably more difficult than the pitch on Babo.

After finishing the roped pitch we had difficulty finding the route for the next section. I don’t think that the DPS Guide is entirely accurate for this section. There are three gullies at this point. The middle one turned out to be the best option, as we found on the way down. The left one is not an option and the right, which we took for the ascent, one requires hacking through a considerable amount of desert holly.

We reached the top at about 11:30 am. Unfortunately, we did not see any big horn. We descended the same route as we came up and got back to the trailhead at about 4 pm.

Overall, both climbs were excellent. We did not see any other parties on either peak during the entire weekend.
On Sunday May 6, 63 DPS members and guests gathered at The Reef restaurant in Long Beach for the Annual Desert Peaks Section Awards Banquet. After a chance for old friends to catch up during the social hour, emcee and outgoing DPS Chair David Baldwin invited the group to dinner with the traditional recognition of accomplishments. After guests, Subscribers, Members, Emblem holders, List Finishers, two-time List Finishers, and Desert Explorers had been seated, three-time List Finishers Vic Henny and Sue Wyman remained as the most accomplished among those assembled. After dinner, outgoing Outings Chair Ellen Grau drew raffle tickets. After a couple of false starts, Gene Mauk won an original watercolor of Mount Patterson donated by Elaine Baldwin; newcomer Kevin Gray won a desert serigraph donated by Edna Erspamer; Doris Gilbert won a copy of *Mountaineering in Patagonia* donated by our speaker; Paul Cooley donated a *Trader Joe’s* gift certificate; and Michael Gosnell and Sue Wyman took home copies of *Chessie Bligh and the Scroll of Andelthor* donated by Ellen Grau. After the introduction of the outgoing and incoming DPS Management Committee members, Dean Acheson took the podium to present the Service Award to past Chair and prolific trip leader Gary Craig. The next awards were poignant and emotional as Edd Ruskowitz presented the Bill T. Russell Mountaineering Award to Carl Rambert in memory of Patty Rambert for her enthusiasm for mountaineering and her outstanding achievement of climbing 97 DPS peaks in just 5 years, and Dean Acheson accepted the Fran Smith Lifetime Achievement Award from Karen Leonard in memory of Pat Acheson for her achievement of finishing the DPS list, her many years of dedicated service on the DPS Management Committee including the past 5 years as Treasurer, and her great love of the DPS. Secretary Paul Cooley next introduced climber, photographer, author, world traveler, and speaker for the evening, Alan Kearney. The crowd was first treated to a video of a solo climb from the floor of Death Valley to the summit of DPS emblem Telescope Peak. Next came a presentation of beautiful slides of the American southwest, many with breathtakingly airy views from climbs of Washerwoman, Monster Tower, and Shiprock. With a few closing remarks, and as encouragement to return, the presentation of the cactus centerpieces to the least accomplished among the guests, the banquet adjourned bringing another DPS year to a close. Have a great summer!
Counting Sheep: 20 Ways of Seeing Desert Bighorns (1993), edited by Gary Paul Nabhan

Let me slant this review at the outset, declaring that Counting Sheep is one of the most interesting desert-related books I’ve read in a long time. Curiously, the editor of this twenty-essay collection on the desert bighorn—or *ovis canadensis* or *borrego cimarron*—is none other than Gary Paul Nabhan, an ethnobotanist, whose books, *Gathering the Desert* (winner of the John Burroughs Award for outstanding nature writing), *The Desert Smells Like Rain* and *Cultures of Habitat*, have been reviewed in previous issues of *The Desert Sage*.

The anthology is the result of an archival project sponsored by the Southwest Center of the University of Arizona, the purpose of which was to collect historic field notes, previously published essays and newly commissioned essays into one volume.

Nabhan divides his assembled material into four sections, the first of which, “Remembering Traditions,” discusses the centuries-long relationship between the early desert inhabitants and the bighorn. Essays by Danny Lopez, a Tohono O’odham folklorist; Mauricio Mixco, a linguist specializing in the Yuman peoples of the Baja Peninsula; and Anita Alvarez de Williams, an ethnographer whose field of interest in the Cocopah people of the Colorado River delta, plus others, describe the ritualistic connection between the Indians and the sheep, dating back perhaps three thousand years ago, when subsistence depended more on gleaning wild resources than on crops grown in irrigated fields.

Charles Bowden (*Killing the Hidden Waters, Frog Mountain Blues, Blue Desert, Desierto*, et. al.), notes that the huge piles of horns which the early Spanish explorers found scattered around the desert had been placed there by the Sand Papago to stop the wind, which, especially in the area around the Pinacates, was a potent force. Bowden continues, “Scholars also found sheep bones, usually vertebrae, which had deep burns on them. They had been fired at high heats for long periods of time, far longer than necessary to cook the flesh…No one is sure why this happened either. The Papago at the turn of the (19th) century said it was to placate the sheep, to calm them and win them over so that their spirits would not be angry and go visit the living sheep and say bad things about men, things that would scare away the herds.”

Part II, “The Sporting Life,” consists of three essays, the first of which, “Picturesque Game-Lands: The Wildest Corner of Mexico,”(1908), by William T. Hornaday, author of *Camp-Fires on Desert and Lava* (also reviewed in a prior *Sage*), and first director of the New York Zoological Society, describes an expedition to the Pinacate/Cabeza Prieta area; the second, a 1912 publication, “The Sheep of the Desert,” by Kermit Roosevelt, the son of President Teddy Roosevelt, also describes a hunt in the Pinacate area; and the third, “An Expedition to the Sierra del Rosario,”—a low range west of the Pinacate volcanoes—is a transcription of field notes as compiled circa 1913 by Charles Sheldon, who, between 1898 and 1902, supervised the construction of the Chihuahua and Pacific Railroad.

Part III, “Watching Game,” however, is my favorite section. Here several noteworthy contemporary desert authors—including Charles Bowden, Ann Zwinger, Terry Tempest Williams, and Nabhan himself—describe the time they spent in a blind, near a tank, in the Cabeza Prieta Wildlife Refuge, counting sheep, an activity which necessarily takes place in June, at or near the hottest time of the year.

A few abbreviated examples:

Bowden: “I wanted to be alone. I wanted to see what heat was really like when there was no escape. I wanted to think big thoughts; I have a completely empty notebook sitting on my lap as evidence of this last goal.”

Zwinger: “In the noon stillness, the heat presses down, lies as heavy as a mohair wool blanket on my head, on my shoulders. It’s only 108 degrees; knowing it can get up to 130 in these close canyons, I am thankful for small favors. The air around the rocks near the rock tank...
wavers with banners of heat.”

Nabhan: “It’s 5:15 a.m., and the wrens, woodpeckers, flickers, and quail are making a racket. Who said the desert is so quiet you can hear your underwear brush against your legs...The sunlight strikes my skin at 6:00 a.m. and activates gnatcatchers nearly...The morning proceeds as a patter of various sounds, none predominating. I simply lean back, read a little, watch a little, and listen, savoring my last few hours in the blind.”

Williams: “I scan the hillside with my binoculars. The small black boulders are covered with petroglyphs. The etched images are pink. I walk across the wash for a closer look. Miniature rock murals are everywhere. Who were these artists, these scribes? When were they here? And what did they witness? Time has so little meaning in the center of this arid country. The land holds a collective memory in the stillness of open spaces. Perhaps our only obligation is to listen and remember.”

Part IV, “Changing Contexts,” muses “on the ways human interactions with wildlife are in flux, in peril, or in conflict.”

The six essays therein describe the host of problems faced by today’s desert bighorn population—problems which are mostly, but not all, due to incursions by man into the animal’s habitat. Fire suppression, for instance, has caused much of the bighorn’s favored range to become overgrown—and the animals don’t survive well if they can’t use their excellent vision to spot mountain lions. Diseases spread by domestic cows and sheep have also taken a large toll. In addition, Interstates and other highways, plus expanding metropolitan areas, are causing the scattered bands of bighorns to become more and more isolated, thus causing serious inbreeding.

In the end, the question remains—can the wild bighorn survive the modern world?

Desert Lore of Southern California, 2nd Edition (1999), Choral Pepper

A repository of legends, mysteries and many other interesting facts and stories, Desert Lore of Southern California is a perfect read for those who have heard the siren call of the desert, and are looking for a good excuse to visit its beautiful expanses.

The author, Choral Pepper, a former syndicated travel columnist for fourteen metropolitan newspapers, and still a special features author for the Los Angeles Times and the Christian Science Monitor, is probably best known to arid land aficionados as the publisher, during the 1960s, of Desert Magazine.

Limiting the scope of her 174 page, copiously illustrated, 2nd Edition of Desert Lore primarily to the Colorado Desert, Pepper divides the volume into eight chapters: Imperial Valley Area, Salton Sea and Environ; Anza-Borrego Desert; Palm Springs-Coachella Valley; Twenty-nine Palms-the High Desert (actually part of the Mojave Desert); Desert Center Area; Needles to Parker Dam, and, lastly, Blythe to Yuma.

A sampling of her mountain-related tidbits for the curious climber:
Superstition Mountain: Lying fifteen miles west of Brawley, 769’ Superstition Mountain is said, because of its sandy mantle, to look something “like a frosted dune.” In fact, however, the mountain is made of rock, and is filled with caves, joints and faults. In 1965, one researcher proclaimed the area to be the fabled Aztlan, where “mother earth gave birth to” the ancestors of the Aztec nation. Indeed, considering the Aztecs’ own description of the area, and because of the legends of creation which the Pueblo Indians had in common with the Aztecs, it is believed that Aztlan was surrounded by yellow mountains to the east (the Algodones sand dunes); red mountains to the north (the sandstone of the Mecca Hills); blue mountains to the west (the Laguna Mountains), and white mountains to the south (the snow-capped peaks of the San Pedro Martir). There is a legend that, to avoid it being confiscated by Cortez, the Aztecs buried a large hoard of gold in Superstition Mountain, where it remains today. Access to the area, which is partially restricted due to ordnance testing, is via Huff and Wheeler Roads, northwest of the town of Seeley.

Signal Mountain: Sprawled across the US/Mexican border, south of Seeley, 2,262’ Signal Mountain, was dubbed El Cero del Imposible by Juan Bautista de Anza during his arduous trek across the area in 1774. Today, treasure seekers search for a wagon full of jewelry, bullion, gold coins, etc., reportedly stashed in a cave there by robbers, who, intending to return to collect their booty at a later, safer date, dynamited the entrance closed.

Orocopia Mountain: Located south of Desert Center on I-10, Pepper describes the range in which the DPS summit is located as “barren as crumpled brown wrapping paper. Its name, meaning ‘plenty of gold,’ was not entirely deceptive as many old mine shafts dropping from the ends of dirt trails suggest.”

Black Butte: In 1906, an Indian woman, dying from thirst and fatigue, stumbled into the railroad watering station at Glamis, 40 miles to the southwest of the Chuckwalla Mountains. Before she passed away, she kept mumbling “Black butte, black butte.” Later, the men at the station discovered that the black rocks contained in the sack that they pried from her dead hand were gold.

Picacho Peak: The lode of gold ore that spawned the town of Picacho, located on the California side of the Colorado River, north of Yuma, was discovered by an Indian in 1860. Later, spurred by an influx of Mexican and American miners, the population of the community swelled to 2,500, with a payroll of $40,000/month. Zane Grey opened his novel, Wanderer of the West in Picacho, describing the DPS summit rising above the town as “towering to the sky, crowned in gold, aloof, unscaleable, a massive rock sculpture of the ages.”

Pegleg Smith’s black gold, Figtree John, the legend of the Viking ship (the hull of which is supposedly buried in San Diego County’s Agua Caliente Park), Oriflamme Mountain and its Ghost Lights, Rockhouse Canyon and the Lost Emerald Mine, the story of Bill Keys and his vindication by Erle Stanley Garner, and the history of the Old Plank Road, which once crossed the sand dunes in Imperial County, are just a few of the interesting, mysterious and historical curiosities related by Pepper in this must read volume.

Nearer My Dog to Thee, (2003), Graham Mackintosh

In the early 1980s, Graham Mackintosh, an Englishman visiting friends in Los Angeles, discovered by sheer chance what was to become his favorite destination, Baja California. Following Into a Desert Place (1988), describing his adventures while walking around almost the entire peninsula, and Journey with a Baja Burro (2001), depicting his walk down the middle of Baja, from Tecate to Loreto, the author in his latest book tells of his four-month camping experience, during the summer of 2001, in San Pedro Martin National Park, home to the DPS Emblem Peak, 10,154’ El Picacho del Diablo.

Mackintosh, who now resides in San Diego with his American wife, Bonnie, leads off by noting that the Mexican National Park is “one of the least known, least visited, least logged, conifer forests in North America. It is a classic ecological ‘sky island’ like those of southeastern Arizona—an ‘elevational’ oasis surrounded by chaparral and desert.” He comments also that, although there is no fire suppression in the Park, in the long run, that may be better for the forest’s environment. Quoting authorities such as Dr. Richard Minnich of U.C. Riverside—“We found that (lightning-caused) fires (in San Pedro Martir N.P.) burned under the trees without burning the trees…the big trees survive and the little ones get burned out, creating perfectly managed open forests,” and Melissa Savage of UCLA—“Tree ring scars in the Sierra San Pedro Martir show an average fire return interval of 13.5 years unchanged over the past 200 years.” Mackintosh notes that at similar California sites, which have the “benefit” of fire suppression, “the average fire occurrence went from about 12 to 30 years”—perhaps explaining why California fires are bigger and more destructive.

The park itself is named after Saint Peter the Martyr, who was born in Verona, Italy, circa 1206, studied at the University of Bologna, and at the age of sixteen was accepted into the Dominican Order of Friars Preachers. Because of his extreme zeal, he was soon appointed Inquisitor General for Northern Italy, where, according to Catholic historians, “It was always with reluctance that he acted with rigor against the obstinate. Never, in fact, did he resort to harsh measures until he had exhausted all mild means suggested by kindness and
Christian charity.” Because of his ardent suppression of the Manicheans—a group of heretics who believed that there were two creators, “one evil, from which came all material things; the other good, which was the origin of all things spiritual”—the saint-to-be was, on April 6, 1252, assassinated by a member of that sect. But that was what Peter had been praying for—martyrdom. It is not unreasonable to believe he died a happy man.

While describing his four-month stay at the Padre Kino Campground—which I’m not sure had been established when I climbed the El Picacho del Diablo back in 1990—Mackintosh also discourses on the local fungi (mushrooms, etc.), the National Observatory located in the park, the indigenous pine trees—noting that there is a remarkable uncertainty as to how many subspecies, varieties and races there are in Western North America, and the idea of releasing California Condors in the Martir area.

What makes Nearer My Dog to Thee most interesting, however, is Mackintosh’s interaction with his two dogs, Pedro and Penny, plus his association with Alfredo, a Park Ranger, and Alfredo’s family. I must admit that I did wonder why, while living in the area for four months, the author made no attempt to climb El Pichacho, or even the less daunting peaks, Blue Bottle or Tres Palomas. I guess he just doesn’t have that good old DPS “let’s bag it” mentality.
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Email : bobsumer@worldnet.att.net

THE DESERT SAGE
SIERRA CLUB, ANGELES CHAPTER
3435 WILSHIRE BLVD, SUITE 320
LOS ANGELES, CA 90010-1904

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED