CHAIR’S CORNER
by Michael Gosnell

Holiday Greetings!

First and foremost, I wish to express my regrets and thanks to Charlie Knapke who lost a home in the recent Slide fire. While rebuilding, he will be unable to continue as our webmaster. So 'Thank you, Charlie' for all your hard work for our section over the past years. You will be sorely missed as our webmaster.

Unfortunately, there is some bad news from Organ Pipe National Monument. Several of our members were turned back from Kino Peak by park rangers. They were told the area around the peak is closed due to drug trafficking dangers. We temporarily suspended the peak until we could find out more information about the dangers. We definitely do not want to put our members into harm’s way. If you were planning on climbing Kino, please call ahead. Hopefully, this is temporary and we can work out something with park rangers so we can continue climbing the peak. I’ll report back on this topic in the next issue of the Sage.

I trust everyone is enjoying the holidays as well as our desert mountains. So far there have been several well-timed storms hitting the deserts. Death Valley has 1.20 inches pretty good!) since July and most of that is since September. So, it's looking like (fingers crossed) we'll have a beautiful climbing season come February. Make sure to check out our upcoming outings and join fellow members on a scheduled trip or two. I know many, including myself, go out on private trips. I've always wished there was a DPS/SPS bulletin board to announce private trips. Climber.org and the SCHiker Yahoo bulletin board are great places to announce such outings, but I still wish there was one specifically for my two favorite climbing sections.

A big thanks to Mary McMannes for hosting our Christmas Party! I am hosting the next potluck January 12th. We live in Glendora at 836 Glendora Mtn Rd, CA, 91941, and as usual we'll start the management meeting at 4:30 and the party will start around 6 pm. Please RSVP to michaelgosnell@hotmail.com.

Gloria Miladin will be hosting the following meeting, February 9th at 11946 Downey Ave, Downey, CA, 90242 with the same times. I'm sure she would also appreciate an RSVP: gm500@yahoo.com.

Hope to see you soon,

Michael Gosnell

NEXT SUBMISSION DEADLINE FEBRUARY 9, 2008

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://angeles.sierraclub.org/dps/

The Desert Peaks Section explores the desert mountain ranges of California and the Southwest, stimulates the interest of Sierra Club membership in climbing these ranges and aids in the conservation and preservation of desert wilderness areas.
TRIPS / EVENTS
JANUARY THROUGH JUNE 2008

JAN 12 SAT DPS DPS Monthly Meeting & Potluck/Party
JAN 12-13 SAT-SUN DPS, HPS Rabbit Pk, Villager Pk
JAN 26 SAT LTC, DPS, SPS, HPS Local Baldy Snow Practice
JAN 26-27 SAT-SUN DPS Old Woman Mtn, Sheephole Mtn
FEB 2 SAT DPS, HPS, WTC Rabbit Pk #2
FEB 9 SAT DPS DPS Monthly Meeting & Potluck/Party
FEB 9 SAT LTC, DPS, SPS, HPS Local Baldy Snow Practice
FEB 9-10 SAT-SUN DPS Canyon Point, Panamint Butte
FEB 23-24 SAT-SUN DPS Virgin Pk, Muddy Mtn
FEB 23-24 SAT-SUN DPS Chemehuevi Peak, Stepladder Mts
MAR 8-9 SAT-SUN DPS Spirit Mtn, McCullough Mtn
MAR 29-30 SAT-SUN DPS New York Mtn, Clark Mtn
APR 5-6 SAT-SUN DPS Palen Mtn, Big Maria Mtn
APR 12 SAT LTC Leadership Training Seminar
APR 19 SAT DPS, HPS Garnet Mtn, Sombrero Pk
APR 27 SUN DPS DPS Annual Banquet
MAY 17-18 SAT-SUN LTC, DPS, SPS Sierra Snow Checkoff/Practice
JUN 13-15 FRI-SUN DPS, Others Telescope Pk, Wildrose Pk

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 on an outing, please go to:
http://www.sierraclub.org/outings/chapter/forms/ or contact the Outings Department at (415) 977-5528 for a printed version.
Seller of Travel Identification # 2087766-40. Registration as a seller of travel does not constitute approval by the State of CA.

♦ JAN 12 SAT DPS

O: DPS Monthly Section Meeting and Potluck/Party: Potluck dinner at 6:00 pm. Please bring a dish to share.
Management Committee Meeting earlier at 4:30 pm. December event at the home of Michael Gosnell, 836 Glendora Mtn Rd, CA, 91941. Please RSVP to michaelgosnell@hotmail.com.

♦ JAN 12-13 SAT-SUN DPS, HPS

I: Rabbit Peak #2 (6640+), Villager Peak (5756'): Very strenuous but traditional backpack near the Salton Sea, 21 miles round trip, 8000' gain overall. Terrain is steep, rocky, and infested with groves of cholla, agave, and other thorny obstacles. Must carry all water for the overnight camp near Villager. For trip details, send recent conditioning, backpacking experience, and phone/rideshare info to Leader: Tom Hill. Co-Leaders: Patrick Vaughn, Pat Arredondo.

♦ JAN 26 SAT LTC, DPS, SPS, HPS

M/E: Local Baldy Snow Practice: Come review snow climbing, rope travel, ice axe, and snow anchors. Practice your skills or brush up on new techniques. Especially for aspiring M & E leader candidates. Restricted to SC members with prior experience with the ice axe. Lack of snow may cancel. Email SC#, climbing resume, email address, phone # to Leader: Nile Sorenson (nsorenso@pacbell.net). Co-Leader: Tina Bowman.

♦ JAN 26-27 SAT-SUN DPS

I: Old Woman Mtn. (5,325’), Sheephole Mtn (4,593’): Escape to the Mojave Desert for 2 moderate hikes and famous DPS car camp and potluck. Sat hike Old Woman, 5 miles, 2200’ gain. Sun drive to Sheephole trailhead and hike 5 miles and 2100’ gain to summit. Send SASE or e-mail to Leader: Barbee Tidball (lttidball@earthlink.net). Co-Leader: Larry Tidball.

♦ FEB 2 SAT DPS, HPS, WTC

I: Rabbit Pk # 2 (6640+): Very strenuous outing in Anza Borrego State Park (6,700' gain, 16 mi rt on use trail and prickly x-country). Bring lunch, 4-5 quarts water to trailhead, lug sole boots, flashlight. Limited participation. For more information/reservation email leaders with recent hiking experience. Leaders: Joe Young (joengert@ca.rr.com) and Asher Waxman.
♦ FEB 9 SAT DPS
O: DPS Monthly Section Meeting and Potluck/Party: Potluck dinner at 6:00 pm. Please bring a dish to share. Management Committee Meeting earlier at 4:30 pm. December event at the home of Gloria Miladin, 1946 Downey Ave, Downey, CA 90242. Please RSVP to gm500@yahoo.com.

♦ FEB 9 SAT LTC, DPS, SPS, HPS
M/E: Local Baldy Snow Practice: Come review snow climbing, rope travel, ice axe, and snow anchors. Practice your skills or brush up on new techniques. Especially for aspiring M & E leader candidates. Restricted to SC members with prior experience with the ice axe. Lack of snow may cancel. Email SC#, climbing resume, email address, phone # to Leader: Nile Sorenson (nsorenso@pacbell.net). Co-Leader: Tom McDonnell.

♦ FEB 9-10 SAT-SUN DPS
I: Canyon Point (5,890’), Panamint Butte (6,584’): Moderately strenuous hikes in Death Valley. The trip will be two day climbs with a car camp and happy hour on Saturday night. We will climb Canyon on Saturday (7 miles with 4,700’ gain) and then climb Panamint on Sunday (5 miles with a gain of 3,100’). Participants should have good conditioning. Send email with experience to leader. Leader: Alex Amies. Co-Leader: Virgil Popescu.

♦ FEB 23-24 SAT-SUN DPS
M: Virgin Peak (8,071’), Muddy Mountain (5,431’): Climb these two desert peaks with us in Southern Nevada. The trip will be two day climbs with a car camp and happy hour on Saturday night. We will climb Muddy on Saturday (class 3 rock) and then climb Virign on Sunday (class 1 hike). Participants should have experience on class 3 rock. Trip is restricted to Sierra Club members. Send email with experience and SC# to leader. Leader: Alex Amies (alexamies@yahoo.com). Assistant: Asher Waxman.

♦ FEB 23-24 SAT-SUN DPS
I: Chemehuevi Peak (3694’), Stepladder Mts (2927’): Join us for two class 2 peaks in the beautiful desert wilderness near Vidal Junction. Saturday 7.5 miles with 2000’ of gain, Sunday 12 miles with 1500’ of gain. Car camping Saturday night. Please bring a potluck item for a fun shared feast. There will be some dirt driving requiring high clearance, 4WD/AWD vehicles on Sunday so we will ride-share as needed. Please email a leader with contact info and conditioning. Leaders: George Wysup (geowy@charter.net), Gary Schenk.

♦ MAR 8-9 SAT-SUN DPS
I: Spirit Mtn (5639’), McCullough Mtn (7026’): Join us for these two easy and scenic peaks in southern Nevada – McCullough is rated as Class 1 and Spirit as Class 2. Spirit is short and somewhat steep – 3 miles and 2000’ elevation gain; McCullough is 7 miles and 2000 elevation gain. We’ll climb Spirit on Saturday and then caravan to the roadhead for McCullough for a Saturday night potluck. Email or sase with contact information and conditioning to Leader: Dave Perkins (david.perkins@csun.edu). Assistant Leader: Ann Perkins.

♦ MAR 29-30 SAT-SUN DPS
MR: New York Mtn (7532’), Clark Mtn (7907’): A climb of 2 desert peaks in the Mojave National Preserve. 2 dayhikes with a carcamp in the local desert. Sat climb NY via Keystone Canyon with a class 3 rock portion near the summit (5 mi, 2100’ gain). Sun climb Clark from the SW via a class 3 rock route (2 mi, 1900’ gain). Class 3 rock experience is required. Restricted to SC members. Will require medical form. Send sase or email (preferred) to Leader: Greg Mason. Assistant: Tina Bowman (tina@bowmandesigngroup.com).

♦ APR 5-6 SAT-SUN DPS
I: Palen Mtn (3,848’), Big Maria Mtn (3381’): Saturday dayhike Palen, 5 miles 2600’ gain. Car camp with happy hour and potluck dinner. Sunday hike Big Maria 5 miles, 2300’ gain. Send SASE or e-mail to Leader: Barbee Tidball (bgtidball@earthlink.net). Co-Leader: Larry Tidball.

♦ APR 12 SAT LTC
O: Leadership Training Seminar: Become a qualified Sierra Club leader. For info, see LTC section in front of Schedule. Deadline for receipt of application and payment is Mar 31. No registration after this date or at door. Next seminar: Fall 2008. Registrar: Steve Botan.  
(Continued Next Page)
APR 19 S A T  
DPS, HPS

I: Garnet Mtn (5,680’), Sombbrero Pk (4,229’): Join the celebration as Gene Mauk finishes 2 lists. First we will climb Garnet Mtn to finish the HPS list. Then, after a drive of about 60 miles, we will climb class 2 Sombbrero Pk to finish the DPS list. Festivities will continue with a potluck dinner and campfire at Borrego Palm Campground in Borrego Springs. Send e-SASE (preferred) or SASE to Gene Mauk (grmauk@att.net). Leaders: Doug Mantle and Mary McMannes.

APR 27 S U N  
DPS

O: Desert Peaks Section Annual Banquet: The Desert Peaks Section will host their annual banquet on Sunday April 27, at The Reef, 880 S. Harbor Scenic Drive, Long Beach, CA. Rich Henke will be the presenter. Menu choices will be fish or prime rib.

MAY 17-18 S A T-S U N  
LTC, DPS, SPS

M/E: Sierra Snow Checkoff/Practice: For M & E candidates wanting to check off leadership ratings or others who wish to practice new techniques. Restricted to SC members with some prior basic training with the ice axe. Send SC#, climbing resume, email, H&W phones to Leader: Nile Sorenson (nsorenso@pacbell.net). Co-Leader: Doug Mantle.

JUN 13-15 F R I-S U N  
DPS, LONG BEACH, NAT SCIENCE

O: Telescope Pk (11,049’), Wildrose Pk (9064’) Weekend: Car camp to explore the "sky islands" high above Death Valley. See ancient bristlecones and bag an emblem peak. Telescope Pk: 14 mi rt, 3100 ft gain. Wildrose Pk: 8.4 mi rt, 2300 ft gain, both strenuous. Email (preferred) or SASE with recent experience, conditioning to Leader. Sharon Moore (justslm@earthlink.net). Co-Leader: Jean Konoff.

PHOTOGRAPHY CONTEST

The DPS is now accepting entries for the photo contest. Winners will be presented awards at the banquet. Please send in your entries soon to give the judges time to review all entries before the awards are decided upon. Email your digital entries to michaelgosnell@hotmail.com.

HELP WANTED

On October 23rd, Charlie Knapke lost a four bedroom home in the Slide Fire. He is beginning the process of recovery & rebuilding and it will take up the majority of his free time for the next 2-3 years. The Management Committee and, I'm sure, all DPS members send along our regrets and, at the same, our thanks for all his work for this section. If anyone is interested in becoming our new webmaster, please email Michael Gosnell (michaelgosnell@hotmail.com).

COME CLIMB WITH ME

Send notices to Audrey Goodman, Outings Chair, at music2835@yahoo.com for forwarding to the Editor.

COME CLIMB WITH ME Notices:

1) Small group looking to climb Big Picacho in April/May, and would like to be joined by someone(s) who has already done it, and would like to do it again. Contact Gloria Miladin (gm500@yahoo.com) if interested.

2) Bob Greenawalt is looking for companions to climb the following peaks in Death Valley National Park: Schwaub, Nevares, and Winters Peaks. For more information, contact him at 626-572-0419 or av261@lafln.org.

THE DESERT SAGE 6 January/February 2008
MEMBERSHIP CHAIR / ACTIVITY REPORT, December 6, 2007

Membership Summary

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Activity Report

Address/Info Changes

Henry Arnebold
harnebold@roadrunner.com

Beth Davis
23638 W Lyons Ave #115
Newhall, CA 91321

Marcia Faulkner
2200 E Desert Squirrel Ct
Green Valley, AZ 85614
marciaff@cox.net

Eric Sieke
eric.sieke@roadrunner.com

Jack Wickel
jawickel@all.net

New Members

Daryn Dodge
2618 Kline Ct
Davis, CA 95616
530-763-1095
dmdodge@sbcglobal.net

John Hamann
2202 Desert Pine
Alamogordo, NM 88310
john.hamann@holloman.af.mil

New Subscribers

Meg Montgomery
1 year
700 Valley Quail Dr
Mt Shasta, CA 96067-9166
530-326-1028
mtnmage4me@yahoo.com

Membership Renewals

Steve Corona
1 year
Beth Davis
2 years
Steven Cover
1 year
Marcia Faulkner
1 year
Ryan B. Gilmore
1 year
Michael Gosnell
3 years
Dave Halligan
2 years
Edward Herman
1 year
Gary James
2 years
Karen Leonard
1 year
Christopher Libby
1 year
Linda M. McDermott
1 year
Barbara Reber
3 years
Dennis Richards
1 year
Gerry & Jennifer Roach
1 year
Peter Rosmarin
5 years (sust)
Gary Schenk
1 year
Carleton Shay
1 year
Eric Sieke
2 years
R. Steve Smith
3 years
Nile Sorensen
1 year
Mike Sos
3 years
Jack Wickel
2 years

Renewed Lapsed Members

Tom & Linda Armbruster
1 year
P.O. Box 12177
Orange, CA 92869-8177
714-289-0073

Jim Scott
1 year
140 Twinberry Circle
Reno, NV 89511
seismc@charter.net

Bruce & Terry Turner
1 year
1550 SW Pine Court
Warrenton, OR 97146
503-661-9252
theresaturns@msn.com

NEWCOMER FAIRS

To promote our section I've attended three newcomer fairs in the Los Angeles area; one on July 25th at Palos Verdes Peninsula Library, another one on September 8th at Eaton Canyon Nature Center in Altadena, and the third one on November 5th in Costa Mesa - Orange County. Michael Gosnell was also present at the Eaton Canyon and Costa Mesa events. We made a poster with pictures of our activities; climbing peaks, having chili cookouts, beers of the world tasting parties at our famous car camps, and the desert scenery of wildflowers, cacti and rocks. Some pictures got a little distorted as Michael left the poster on my fountain in my patio, as water was slowly eroding colors away from the pictures leaving a big smudge. We printed extra copies of the Desert Sage to give away at the fair to interested participants. Our goal was to attract the younger generation with a hope that one day they might join our section. As you all know our members are getting older and we need new blood. For Costa Mesa we added a few new pictures of our most recent Chili Cook-off 2007, and also the pumpkin carving contest. The pumpkins were done by our artistic members. Each one had a special uniqueness reflecting the talent of its owner.

Almost all of the participants came over to our table and got fascinated with our activities asking a lot of questions. Climbing our peaks they all thought is very difficult, but when they heard that we have car camps in the open desert and that to participate you don't always have to climb a peak, they became more interested in our DPS section. A few even subscribed to the SAGE.

We welcome all new members with open arms and warm hearts.

With love of the desert,

Gloria Miladin, Treasurer
OUTINGS CHAIR

Dear fellow DPSers: Firstly, I hope you’ve all been enjoying a terrific holiday season, and getting out with family and friends. This is the time of year when we can really feel grateful for the beautiful desert environs we have access to, as the cooler weather allows for more trips and adventures in the wild.

If I may get on a soapbox for a moment I’d like to suggest a prayer for us all at this joyful season of Kwa-hanu-mas (what, you never heard of this one?). My prayer would be that our currently protected lands always remain so, and be expanded by size and quality of it’s care. I would also pray that in 08 we will have a new administration of any denomination whose officials will put the health of our people and our planet far above the size of their and their crony’s bank accounts...so if you can, please join me in a rousing A-MEN!!!

Now, as I gingerly step down from my soapbox carefully avoiding the missed rotting tomatoes and pies on the ground...(can’t blame a girl for trying can you?) On to other things.

As some of you may already know, our dear DPS webmaster Charlie Knopke lost his home in the recent Slide fire and is resigning from this position while he’s handling this loss. We are soliciting for a member(s) who would like to step up to the webmaster job. Obviously, it would have to be someone fairly savvy with such things, and who has some time to contribute. The bulk of the job as I understand it, is keeping the site upgraded as new trips are printed in the SAGE every other month, and or any changes in the DPS list or policies. I imagine the time involved would be a couple hours every other month, and minimal maintenance during the summer when there aren’t many, if ANY hikes going on with DPS. Please let Michael Gosnell know if you’re interested in taking the reins of this from Charlie as we don’t currently have a person on our management team who can even temporarily manage this job.

Some of you may have noticed that Kino Peak is marked ‘suspended’ on the current list. We received a report from member Ann Perkins that states the following:

"Regarding the Arizona trip, we had planned to do Kino, but when we talked to the ranger in the Organ Pipe visitor's center, she told us that the whole area around Kino, as well as the Bates Well road going in, was restricted. The park rangers can't even go in there. Evidently the border patrol has it closed off due to problems with drug runners and 'coyotes' bringing in illegal immigrants."

As a result of the above, Ann and Dave cancelled a trip previously planned. We are looking into this to get some first hand information and see how long these restrictions will be in force but for the time being, Michael thought it best to suspend the peak so our members won’t fall into a dangerous situation and/or won’t go out there to climb and be turned away by rangers or the border patrol. Will update further as he gets precise information as to when the restrictions will be lifted. It’ll be reinstated then. If anyone’s been out there in the last couple months, let us know what you found out.

Speaking of peaks, there are many wonderful peaks I’ve gotten suggestions about from many experienced members and I look forward to getting them scoped out in 08. All I need is YOU, our leaders, to please let me know you’ve got interest to pursue one or two exploratory hikes. We can’t send out bonafide groups and vote on their results without an actual rated SC leader on the trip. So...it’s up to you my friends if you want to breathe some new life into the list, as so many have requested of us, you gotta step up and help lead.

Lastly, I need to get emails from leaders who know they’re losing their First Aid rating in 08. According to current SC rules, a rated leader needs to update their FA every 4 years so if you’re OVER 4 years by whatever month in 08, I need to know. I’m going to try and arrange something where we can do a group DPS leader renewal day or some such at minimal cost, so a bunch of folks can get this problem taken care of easily. I will let you know as soon as I hear how many individuals would like to renew in 08 whether you’re about to expire, or

Audrey at "Rainbow Vista" canyon in the Valley of Fire State Park, Nevada, Thanksgiving weekend.
have been expired already and would like to re-up. We'd love to have you.

Happy days everyone, Audrey Goodman, Outings Chair

PS: A lot of people have contributed fine ideas for peak additions to our list, and now I am hoping we will have a few adventurous leaders who will lead trips in 08 so we can see current conditions on each peak being considered and you all can see the writeups in the SAGE in anticipation of voting for the peak choices.

DID YOU KNOW?

Did you know the last column of D.Y.K. (?) evoked lots of verbal comments and emails; and what a pleasure it was to hear from Bob Michael, long-time DPS member and climber, bon vivant. Bob, now residing in Colorado, writes, "I cannot believe Paul (Lipsohn) or anyone else walked the outline of the U.S. within 5 miles. The West Coast except for San Francisco Bay is pretty straight but incredibly rugged. Then we have the fiercely rugged and densely forested wilderness in Washington/Montana; did he walk in the cleared strip that contains the actual border? Did he walk the south shore of Lake Superior? ...around Cape Cod? Long Island? Zillions of estuaries and inlets in Tidewater Virginia? Did he walk/wade/swim the south end of Florida where it blends into the sea as the Everglades? You see how I have a lot of trouble believing that statement."

So, back to the drawing board and collecting even more info about Paul Lipsohn (now deceased) who did indeed keep a journal recording his twenty year pursuit of walking 15,000 miles and finishing on Labor Day Weekend, 2002. He became so well known through out the U.S., people affectionately referred to him as, "Long Haul Paul." Paul's credentials are impeccable, and along with U.S. border (perimeter) walking, he earlier finished the HPS and DPS Lists, climbed many Sierra Peaks, and was the recipient of the Chester Versteeg Award, 1976. I contacted his son, Paul Jr., with the help of Mr. Resource Man, Bob Cates. Paul Jr. wrote me and said he has hopes of publishing a book one day on his father's amazing but true journey. Then, Bob (Michael), all these questions and queries will be answered. Bob Cates said he remembered Paul being a real stickler on details, so let's keep urging Paul Jr., to start working on that book!

And back to List discussions, Bob Michael finished the Colorado 14ers and had plenty to say about Death Defying Little Bear Peak (the one where Vic Henney and Sue Wyman forged their own route to miss the Hour Glass...66 hours in all!). Bob had the bad fortune of being on the peak twice and being a witness to two casualties flying down through Little Bear's Hour Glass. One memorable line from Bob's letter, "I remember the hazy nightmare while Art's blood saturated Mary's lap." For more comments on Little Bear, see Bob's Letter to the Editor (next page). So, if you're going to work on the Colorado 14ers as many of our DPSers are doing (and have finished), gird your loins on Little Bear!

Did you know our eminent editor, Bob Sumner, has his favorite lists, too? Did you know he was the 9th person ever to finish the Tahoe Rim Trail (165 miles) in 1999? He reports that over 600 people have now finished it. Hawthorne Bob writes, "This past September, I completed the "Big Three" routes of Nevada. Two summers ago, I did the Ruby Crest Trail (with Erik Siering), and last year I did the Toiyabe Crest Trail. This year it was the Highland Ridge Route in Great Basin National Park. The route runs from Decathlon Canyon on the south end of the park to the DPS's own Wheeler Peak trailhead on the north end. Most of the route follows the crest of the Snake Range, and passes over or near 8 of Nevada's 11,000 foot and higher peaks. September was especially nice as it had cooled down some, and the aspens in Decathlon Canyon were turning." So...DPSers, when you finish the DPS List a few more times, there are more climbs and hikes to be had.

Edna Ersamer, on the other hand, works on her List via airplane rides to exotic places, as she collects countries. Edna is in the Century Club where one must have set foot in 100 countries to join this elite bunch of people. To finish the Century Club List, you must collect 317 countries and destinations. Edna meanwhile has 193. Our good friend Roy Magnuson is working on this List, too (Roy now resides in Washington - contact Mary Mac if you'd like to send him a Christmas card.)

Did You Know the Dead Sea Scrolls are on exhibit in San Diego, right now? Being old desert rats and ratties, this is the place for you. It seems a DPSer (posing as a Bedouin shepherd) threw rocks in a cave looking for a runaway goat...and ping pong, some jars broke and out popped the D.S. Scrolls. Later, various hikers (posing as archeologists) would be rooting around ten more caves and find even more. What is truly amazing is no American university...
wanted to buy these old manuscripts ... and some were on sale in the Wall Street Journal for a few hundred bucks back in the early fifties. For your info, these scrolls predated the existing Hebrew Bible by 1,000 years ... and nary a word had changed in those 1,000 years. It's a wonderful exhibit, and the huge photo boards of the caves will remind you of climbing in the Guardian Angels area.

Did You Know legendary climber from 30-40 years ago, Diana Dee, is still around and residing in Huntington Beach? This girl was one of my great climbing heroes (along with Barbara Lilley) and did some magnificent ascents. I found it ironic that Diana was quoted, "My greatest exercise is walking in the neighborhood with my husband." Hello to Diana, you are not forgotten.

Strength of webbing - Did You Know that Erick Schumacher towed his wife's car home the other night using his old climbing webbing? And we worry when we find old slings on Weaver's Needle, etc., that they may not hold our weight.

Did You Know? Our good friend and fellow climber from Chile, Marcello, is the proud father of a new baby boy (Marcello has been climbing with Doug on the Classic Climbs of North America).

Cuno and Carol Ranschau celebrated their 50th anniversary at the end of November. Cuno as a bachelor was reported to have cooked the same meal (a pork chop and apple sauce) for years until he met Carol. The Daily News ran a story on these two, and when Carol was asked the secret of staying married to Cuno for half a century, she said, "I never served apple sauce and pork chops to him---ever!" Carol was known to many of us on DPS trips for sending a mean Harvey Wallbanger cake to be shared by all!

Hope you all had great fun during the holidays celebrating with each other at various parties and potlucks. The DPS potlucks, by the way, are simply terrific. See the write-up in the next issue! In '08, we'll look forward to DPS List Completion parties--Gene Mauk in April (finishing DPS and HPS on the same day), Dave and Ann Perkins (to be announced), and finally Ed Herrman (also to be announced.)

And Did You Know the biggest troublemaker you'll ever have to deal with watches you from the mirror every morning? With the winter months here, let's go get those desert peaks and sit around the campfire well-fed and happy that we're climbers, and we always get our peaks! (Contributions to D.Y.K. are always welcomed.) – Mary McMannes

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Dear Editor: OK, this is NOT about desert climbing, but it was in the SAGE....Vic and Sue's (Congratulations, guys!) tribulations on Colorado's 14,037' Little Bear Peak certainly brought back some vivid and awful memories. To quote the article..."The nemesis and crux move for them was a peak called Little Bear...(it) gets over-run in a loose chute called the Hour Glass. Vic and Sue talked to various people who told hair-raising stories of bodies falling from the top of the Hour Glass. Vic...actually figured out a route to bypass the Hour Glass -- however, they were on the climb for 18 hours." I immediately flashed back to my single most horrible day in a lifetime in the mountains, which probably WAS in the Hour Glass, although back in 1970 it wasn't known by that name. The top of Little Bear is a shattered knife-edge north-south arete, with the high point at the north end. There are no easy routes. The southern and eastern approaches are (currently) closed private property, so the only open route today is from the west, up the west face to the top of the arete just south of the summit. In the fall of 1970 I was on the west face route with Dick Painter of Denver, his fiancé Mary, and a fellow named Art who was a teacher in Pueblo. We got into this rotten chute which steepened relentlessly; Art, a damn-the-torpedoes fellow, was way in the lead; then came Dick and Mary; I was lagging as I was increasingly unhappy with the terrain and questioning whether we should turn back...suddenly there was a roar and screaming from above and I saw the stomach-wrenching sight of a rockfall pouring down the chute a few inches to my right with a body in the middle of it. Art came to a stop below, not moving, and we scrambled down to him expecting the worst. Art was still alive, but barely, delirious with badly bleeding head wounds. Dick, who was quite an athlete, immediately told Mary and me to stay with Art while he ran for help. I remember as a hazy nightmare the hours while Art's blood saturated Mary's lap, as we kept him warm and immobilized him, expecting every second to be the end, until as night was falling a helicopter landed below on a tiny semi-level patch below and we carried Art to it -- still the most exhausting load I have ever carried in my life. After emergency surgery in Colorado Springs, Art did survive, although I understand he was somewhat brain-damaged; I lost touch with him long ago. All in all, not a Colorado Rocky Mountain High day; the sort of thing that might inspire you to move to Omaha, Nebraska, and take up golf. (It gets even worse -- a few years later Dick died in a fall down Saint Mary's Glacier on the Continental Divide west of Denver.)

THE DESERT SAGE 10 January/February 2008
I finally did climb Little Bear a couple years later. The property owner on the south at the time was relaxed about letting people in to the southern, or Blanca Basin approach, so on a PERFECT and rare July weekend with no storms a friend and I backpacked into the great cirque on the east side of Little Bear and the south side of 14,345' Blanca. There was also a Colorado Mountain Club party in the basin with us. While we romped up Blanca, they were climbing Little Bear. The south/east route on Little Bear goes up a long steep class 2 slope which narrows to a point at the south end of the summit knife-edge (remember the high point is at the north end). Presently from the direction of Little Bear there was the most ungody screaming and caterwauling. When we returned from Blanca, of course we went over to the CMC camp to see what had happened -- and the LEADER had fallen to his death from the crux pitch. The next day we climbed the awful thing. The crux of the knife-edge consists of a step-across on, as I remember, an ample but exposed ledge below the crest on the west side with good solid holds -- piece of cake EXCEPT right in the middle of the step-across is this boss or bulge of smooth rock on the wall you're facing that contacts you right at the breastbone and so forces your torso and center of gravity back out over the abyss. There are a few horrible moves that are so burned into your consciousness that you remember them the rest of your life, and that's sure one of them. (I might add that among others are moves on Mopah and Moapa.) Now, the frosting on the cake was that there was a fresh corpse splattered a couple hundred feet below -- the poor guy had lost his balance at that EXACT SAME PLACE and peed off in a swan dive into eternity. I don't know how I made myself do that move -- I guess I really wanted that damn Fourteen. Horrible, accursed peak of death! Needless to say I will never go there again and that is the biggest single reason I will never repeat the Colorado Fourteener list. - Bob Michael

CONSERVATION

Greetings fellow DPSers! I hope that the holiday season is finding each of you well, and with Winter upon us, it is time to be heading out into the deserts and up onto the peaks that we love and strike our curiosities. However, juxtaposed to the joyousness and carefree attitudes of the season, it is with concern that I report that on 15 November 2007, it was reported by The Wilderness Society, on their website, that “Energy Corridors Threaten National Wildlife Refuges, National Parks and Other Sensitive Lands in 11 Western States.”

According to their website: “National parks, national wildlife refuges, wilderness and other conservation units across 11 western states (CA, NV, AZ, UT, CO, ID, MT, MN, OR, WA, & WY) could suffer irreversible damage under the Department of Energy’s (DOE) Draft Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) that sites corridors for oil, gas and hydrogen pipelines and electricity transmission and distribution facilities on federal lands.”

On 8 November, new maps (concerning possible corridors for oil, gas, hydrogen and electricity) were made available to the following federal departments: Energy, Interior, Agriculture and Defense, so that the departments could “share” information regarding the “best possibilities” for utilizing land use. Again, looking to The Wilderness Society: “The West-wide Energy Corridors alone threaten six national wildlife refuges, three national parks, seven national monuments and more than 60 current and proposed wilderness areas. The impacted areas include renowned places such as the Havasu National Wildlife Refuge on the Arizona/California border, Grand Staircase National Monument in Utah, New Mexico’s Sevilleta National Wildlife Refuge and Arches National Park in Utah.”

What this means is that instead of one department being held “responsible” for the destruction of public lands, as well as those that are already protected under federal laws could be, might be, and will be opened up for further exploration for possible viabilities, that more than one department could use that land, thus making it harder to pinpoint the culprit in the destruction of land.

Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid (D-NV) has introduced a bill that would force the federal departments to reexamine the maps and DOE’s DEIS before any irreversible decisions are made. We, as members of the Sierra Club, the voting public, and individuals with a collective consciousness, must write our state and federal representatives, as well as our state and federal senators and bring this environmental abduction to their attentions.

With that, very sincerely yours,

Peter

“There is probably no pleasure equal to the pleasure of climbing a dangerous Alp, but it is a pleasure which is confined strictly to people who can find pleasure in it.” –Mark Twain
Fifty years ago this month...
Not yet called the DPS Sage, the Desert Peak Newsletter No.52, December 1957, was a one and a half page typed, stencil-cut, mimeographed letter by DPS Chair Bob Bear, summarizing the trips of the past few months. Bear welcomed new members Tom Ross, Peg Sullivan and Frank Ewing to the section. (Today, Tom lives in Bishop with wife Candy and is author/photographer of "The Border of the Sky," a book of his black and white Sierra photographs.) At their October 24, 1957 meeting, the DPS Management Committee planned a new edition of "Guide to the Desert Peaks of the Southwest," a simplified version of the state scenic guide written by DPS member Weldon Heald. Nineteen people showed up for a dedication climb of Mount Inyo on October 19, 1957. The group placed the first DPS register on the peak. Bear noted that [Barbara] Lilley, [Tom] Ross and [Bill] Sanders headed for Mt. Keynot as a warm-up for Mt. Inyo." In November, "outlaw trips" (aka private trips) were led to Glass Mountain, Pyramid Peak, Big Maria, Clark Mountain, and Providence Peak.

Forty years ago...
Bob Greenawalt was the editor of the Desert Peaks Section Newsletter which sported a rather crude line drawing of today's classic desert bighorn logo. Abe Siemens was chair. New members included Norm Rohn (later of DPS burro roost fame), The Akawie family (Richard, Shirley and Carol; Mt. Akawie on the HPS list is named in Dick's honor), Cy Kaicenor, Ben Neffson, John Castel, Leon Pimple, Francis F. Smith with a note that "son Steve Smith talked him into this!" and Dale Stein. Norm Rohn, Cy Kaicenor, Edward Stork, Warren E. von Pertz and Leon Pimple attained their emblems. The annual banquet with "the usual" steak dinner, was set for April 18, 1958. DPS emblems were to sell for $5.50. The secretary issued an up-to-date peak list. Sonic booms were causing serious damage in several areas, including Canyon de Chelly and Bryce Canyon. On November 11, 1967, 43 people went on a DPS hike jointly led with the Death Valley 49ers to Telescope Peak. Called a great success, plans were to make it an annual event during the 49er Encampment. Steve Smith led Clark and Old Dad, October 21-22. Dick Beach led a Thanksgiving weekend climb of El Picacho del Diablo. Snowed out on Little Devil and Devil Peaks in Southern Nevada, Andy Smatko opted for several obscure peaks in San Bernardino County with Bill Schuler and Ellen Siegal (who, today, lives in Bishop).

Thirty years ago...
The Desert Sage, no longer called the DPS Newsletter, was edited by Barbara Reber. The masthead included the same roughly hewn line drawing of the beloved bighorn logo. New members included Burton Falk, Dale Van Dalsem, Martin Clark, Jim Scott, Walter Hill, Ben Pryor and Brent Washburne. Theresa Rutherford was emblem holder #360 on Rabbit Peak. Chuck Pospishill finished the list as #27 on Baboquivari and Jerry Keating was #28 on Cerro Pinacate. With his DPS list finish, Jerry joined Andy Smatko, Arkel Erb, Gordon MacLeod and Barbara Lilley as having finished all three lists (DPS, SPS and HPS). Joe Coskader and Paul Nelson led Patterson and Glass, June 11-12, with 16 climbers. They noted the "Prince Albert" register can on the summit of Patterson was without a book and only two scraps of paper, so they started a new one, including the name of Barbara Lilley who completed the list on Patterson. Bill T. Russell led Cerro Rasco (Pico Risco) and Cerro Pescadores with participants Jerry Keating, Cuno Ranschau, Henry Huiskenveld, and Chuck Pospishil. Over Labor Day of 1977, John Hellman and Dick Banner led the Northern Nevada four.

Twenty years ago this month...
Anna Valkass was Sage editor. The DPS logo had evolved: a nice line drawing of the desert bighorn and a nice Helvetica typeface in the circular border. The Sage masthead typeface changed from a 1920s "Broadway" face to a Western face. Randy Bernard's "From the Chair" column was written in the warm morning sunlight of the Superstitions, on a New Year's DPS trip to Superstition and Weaver's Needle. A total of 36 people climbed Weaver's and 34 summited Superstition. Walt Kabler was #52 list finisher. New emblem holders included #453 Fred Johnson (Inyo), and #454 Paul Freiman (Kofa). New members included Ron Grau, Spencer Buckner, and Jerry Zagories. The conservation chair called for letters to Senator Pete Wilson and Congressman Jerry Lewis urging him to support the Desert Protection Act. Trip reports included Baboquivari, Weaver's Needle and Mt. Humphreys, November 25-26, by Bruce Knudsen and Stephanie Rea.

Ten years ago...
Chair Bill Bradley described how his attempt to do Big Picacho from the east was thwarted by water in Diablo Dry Lake, opting instead to do Pico Risco. He mentioned that while doing Telescope Peak with Darrell Lee they heard a huge sonic boom as Chuck Yeager flew his final mission from Edwards Air Force Base. The DPS logo had reverted
to its original line drawing but the Sage masthead serif typeface was quite elegant. Sage editor John McCully noted that he is retiring and looking for a new editor. Tom Sumner was list finisher #118 on Eagle #1. Patty Kline advertised for assistance to get three of the five remaining peaks she needed to finish the list: South Guardian Angel, Moapa, and Baboquivari. Obituary of former DPS chair and La Siesta Press publisher Walt Wheelock by Wynne Benti. Conservation notes include the proposed Sierra Club policy on fixed anchors, possible expansion of the Mountain Pass Mine in Mojave National Park (known for a radioactive waste spill in the park) and the reopening of the Rainbow Talc Mine in Death Valley. Trip reports included John McCully's vintage first ever trip submission to the Sage, Martinez Mountain from Coachella Valley by McCully and Reber, February 7, 1981; Tom Sumner's List Finish, October 25 in which he was heard to say, "You know, this pin cost me $40,000."); The Sisters: More Rambles off the List by Bob Michael, October 1997; Trekking in Nepal's Annapurna Region by John McCully; and a Story from the North Rim by Bill Oliver. Parting shot was of a smiling Wendy Rucss by Ron Hudson during crevasse rescue practice on Mt. Rainier in 1991. - Wynne Benti

ROAD INFORMATION

Organ Pipe Cactus National Monument:
http://www.nps.gov/orpi/planyourvisit/road-closures.htm

Death Valley National Park:
There has been some storm damage and snow issues on certain roads in Death Valley. Before going, be sure to check the Death Valley Morning Report (new url) at: http://www.dvnha.org/morning_report/Morning.pdf

DESERT PHOTOS

Cliff faces on the southeast slope of East Ord.
Photo by Ryan Gilmore.

Brad Jamison's puking pumpkin at the Chili Cook-off.
Photo by Terry Flood.
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 FEBRUARY 9, 2008.

MT BALDY DUANE MCRUER MEMORIAL HIKE
October 14, 2007
By Mary McMannes

The weather was blustery on Friday, and it was cold and bone-chilling on Saturday, but on Sunday (the day chosen for Mac's memorial climb), skies were blue, and we hiked in tee-shirts. Somehow I felt Mac must have had something to do with this. Approximately sixty or more climbers and notable leaders gathered at Manker Flats as Doug Mantle greeted one and all. The hikers took off for Mt. Baldy (Mt. San Antonio) via the Ski Hut trail while others chose various routes to the top. Bob Hicks, Byron Prinzmatal, Betty McRuer (Mac's wife) walked up the road to the Notch. Frank Dobos and Rich Gnagy led riders up the ski lift to the Devil's Backbone to gain the summit. There were even the die-hards who led a hike from the Village (Laura Joseph, Pat Arredondo, Ron Hudson, Kathy Rich). Once convening on top, photos were taken and everyone simply enjoyed one another as Mac would have wanted us to do. Great thanks to the sweeps who showed great patience in bringing up the rear - Tina and Tom Bowman (ski hut stretch), Mike Manchester, Ed Lubin, and Gene Mauk.

Many opted to take the ski lift down to Harwood Lodge (and thanks to Nick and company for discounting the tickets), where we continued our commemoration of Duane by eating and drinking, while stories were spun bringing us both laughter and a few tears. Doug, always the brilliant emcee, was there to jog our memories for more stories or simply to give a cheery hug when emotions took our words away. Many thanks to Lara McRuer, Betty McRuer, Steve and Rosemary Harsey, and Armando for orchestrating the potluck and serving the food. Overseer Richard Booth and his fiancé,
Jeannie, made us forever indebted for their kindness in staying three extra hours beyond their usual duties. Mac's favorite "in-town peak" was Baldy, and he was proud to show off Harwood Lodge to newcomers climbing the peak for the first time.

Long-time leader, Joe Young, so aptly described Duane's life-time contribution to the Sierra Club, "The entire framework of outings leadership practiced by the Sierra Club would not be what it is today without Duane McRuer. He personally developed and articulated most of the concepts we take for granted today in the areas of leadership and safety. This is a legacy of which Duane and all of us can be proud."

Thanks to all who climbed the summit, and later shared anecdotes, food, and personal comments about this unforgettable and wonderful friend, Duane McRuer. I am sure his spirit was there with us smiling that great Mac smile when he was amused and pleased.

*Photos this article by Gerry Holleman.*

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**GLASS MOUNTAIN**

October 25, 2007

By Mary McMannes

While climbing Baldy for Duane McRuer's memorial hike, Doug Mantle reminded Gene Mauk and me that we gotta get those remaining desert peaks (for Gino) while the getting is good--so we scheduled Oct. 25 to bag Glass (and Tucki would come, later). When Doug says, "Climb!" we answer in chorus, "How high?" (and "Give me a second to throw my knapsack in the car!") Away we went, and we were especially happy to escape the orange fire-skies of the S.F. Valley and our coughing and hacking, results of the Malibu and Santa Clarita fires.

We all met at Nicely's Restaurant, Lee Vining, fairly early in the morning, and Bob Sumner drove down from Hot Horn (now Cold Horn) to meet us. I reminisced about how nice the Nicelys had been to me back in the old days. One time when emerging from the back country, we found no motels available anywhere ... we were hungry and trail-weary and told Mrs. N. about our dilemma. She gave us keys to one of her apartments in the back, and there we spent the night. I'll never forget that sweet Midwestern lady who was so kind to strangers. She passed away ten years ago - but her recipes and spirit live on as one smacks his lips over chicken fried steak, mashed potatoes and gravy.

After the breakfast banter, away we went to the Glass Mtn. roadhead. We turned 5 miles south of Lee Vining and went east on Hwy 120 for 32 miles. Then we turned south on Sawmill Rd (FS 1501) - drove 11 more miles on various roads to the standard north side trailhead for Glass (class 1 to the top.) There were patches of snow on Glass which made us do a few fancy maneuvers here n' there - but hey, we were following in the footsteps (and expensive boots) of Doug Mantle who had done the Hillary Step. This was a piece of cake. Hawthorne Bob (our beloved Sage editor) left us in the dust, but he has all those peaks in his backyard that he can climb daily. We reconnoitered on top and congratulated Gene for his new peak, and for the rest of us, Glass was a saunter we'd done four or five or six times before. Since this is a climb that takes an hour or so...people love it for a List Finisher peak. There's another summit beyond us with a little weather shack on top--but that's not the summit of Glass (phew!). Snacks, photos, and conversation were shared, and away we went back down to the cars. Bob found a variation on the route, so we could avoid the snow-covered rocks.

Gene, Bob, and Doug bagged Tucki a few weeks later (while Mary "bagged" the Dead Sea Scrolls exhibit in San Diego), and now Gene is sitting pretty for his DPS List Finisher in April. Thanks Doug and Bob for your time, efforts, and friendship in paving the way for Gene's long-desired milestone (he'll be a 3-way List Finisher as he finishes the HPS List, same day.) On our way home, all the Sierra peaks were ghostly outlines as the smoke had wafted up through the Sierras on its way to Reno and beyond. I had a few samples of black shiny obsidian in my pocket which is the reason it's called Glass Mtn.

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*Photo by Bob Sumner.*
MT AJO, WEAVERS NEEDLE, BABOQUIVARI PEAK
October 26-31, 2007
By Ann & Dave Perkins

Anne Rolls, Bob Hoeven, and Dave and Ann Perkins met at the campground in Organ Pipe National Monument on October 26th for a series of climbs in Arizona and Mexico. First on the list was Ajo, and we started out early the next morning since the weather was predicted in the low 90’s. Fortunately, we had cloud cover most of the day, and enjoyed the climb, mostly on trail, through a scenic area of organ pipe and saguaro cactus. The summit is a series of bumps that we explored, but did not find the register. There was a large metal box which was locked, but it seemed unlikely that the register was there. We made it back to the cars in 6 hours RT and stopped by the Visitor Center before returning to the campground. Here we encountered a setback — when we told the ranger of our plans to climb Kino the following day, she informed us that the entire area was restricted, including the Bates Well road which provides access to the trailhead. The Border Patrol had closed the area to Park Staff and visitors because of problems with drug runners and illegal immigrants. The DPS should look into this and find out how long this restriction will be in effect — if the answer is indefinitely, then we might consider taking it off the list as we have Argus and Maturango.

Changing our plans, we drove to Phoenix the next day for a climb of Weaver’s Needle on Oct. 29th. Bob had climbed it once and Dave twice, but they were determined to get me and Anne up the peak, so we reluctantly (being somewhat leery of 4th Class climbing) agreed. We started out this time at 4 a.m. to beat the predicted heat, and were at the start of the 4th Class section while the air was still cool. Fortunately we had cloud cover again, so didn’t have to add heat to the other difficulties of the climb. We used Route A as described in the guide, and with a small party and careful placement of feet, rock fall was not a problem. Dave and Bob did a good job with coaching and belays, so the climb was completed with only one or two moments of real terror (on my part), and the rappel down was enjoyed by all. We were moving slowly on the way back to the trailhead, and had used all our water by the end, but were elated to have completed the climb. The next day we enjoyed the Casa Grande Monument (well worth a stop) while on the way to the campground near Baboquivari, where we met Sue Holloway for the next day’s climb. The procedure for reserving spaces at the campground is now to contact the tribal office, and then fax them a sheet with the names of the people in the party and the number of cars. But at this point, there is no charge.

This was Dave’s third time climbing the peak, and Bob and Sue’s second, so there was plenty of experience to lead Anne up for her first time. Ann had climbed Babo, and decided to remain in the campground enjoying the peace and solitude (it is a beautiful place), and the company of some Indian workers who were giving the area a thorough cleaning in preparation for a dance and celebration the next week. The elevation gain and mileage make this a difficult climb, but all did well on the relatively short 4th class section. Dave (and others who have attempted Babo recently) report that the first 20 feet of the climb seems to have smaller hand and foot holds than in the past, so they started further to the left. There are also now beefier anchors and chains in place near the famous rappel tree than in the past. The climbers were back at the campground by 5 p.m., and Dave and I left and drove on to Gila Bend to get a start on the trip back home. We enjoyed a meal in Ajo at Marcela’s café and bakery — good Mexican food.

Photos this article by Dave & Ann Perkins.
PORTER PEAK
November 3, 2007
By Dave Perkins

Eight people were signed up for this scheduled DPS climb, but we had two cancellations and two no-shows, so we ended up with a party of four – Greg Gerlach, Gary Murta, Ann Perkins, and me. We met at the campground next to the Ballarat store and started off at 6:30 a.m. up Pleasant Canyon (or as Edna Erspamer described it in a recent Sage issue “Unpleasant Canyon”). As it turned out, our Toyota Tundra with pop-up camper was the only 4WD among us, so Ann, Greg, and I sat in front and Gary was relegated to the back. Not a bad place, except that during one of the more bumpy sections, he slid off the bed on to the floor and decided it wiser to stay there. The guide describes the road as far as the Stone Corral as 2WD, but that seems a stretch of the imagination. At times the stream and the road are one and the brush threatens to enclose the road occasionally, but many large rocks in the road, especially when coming out of the streambed, would present the greatest challenge to a 2WD vehicle.

We had intended to do Route A, but missed this stopping point and so ended up doing a modified version of Route D, omitting the last mile of driving. The road actually gets better past the point where we would have stopped for Route A. The climb ended up being about 5 miles and 2700 feet of gain, not the workout that we had anticipated, but an enjoyable climb. We hiked east to the ridgeline, discovering on the way up a puzzling feature: a broad rocky path (about 6 feet wide) which looked as though it had been carved out purposely by some kind of equipment, but which didn’t seem to lead anywhere. The path went on for about 1/8 mile and then stopped.

Has anyone else noticed this? Once we got to the ridge, the climb was straightforward, and we enjoyed views of Sentinel and Telescope from the summit. I remembered my last climb of Porter, which was over Sentinel, on to Porter, and then back over Sentinel to Panamint City. This climb was decidedly easier!

We were back to the camper by about 1:30 p.m., and Greg took his turn in the back this time. On the way down, we passed a large pick-up truck and the driver said “Did you bring that vehicle up the canyon?” I wonder how he thought we had gotten there. We were back to Ballarat at about 3:00, and Greg needed to get home so he departed. We chatted with Gary for a while, and the wind began to come up with blowing sand, so we decided to forego the Sunday part of our adventure and headed for home. I hope to see Greg and Gary again on Desert Climbs – they are good hiking companions, and we learned that Greg is very close to finishing the SPS list!

MOPAH PT & CHEMHEUEVI PK
November 10-11, 2007
By Tina Bowman

We had a group of ten for Mopah: Allan Chang, Keith Christensen, Paul Garry, Ron Hudson, Ken Jones, Doug Owens, Kathy Rich, Chi Truong, and the leaders, Tom and Tina Bowman. Saturday night Virgil Popescu joined us for Sunday’s climb of Chemehuevi.

Saturday morning we left the parking spot at 7:00 a.m., following the usual route to Mopah per the guide without any trouble. Several folks used a belay at the first bit of real climbing, and we belayed everyone up the awkward crux. Thanks to Ron Hudson for leading the crux and belaying there. Tom helped keep the rope well aligned through several carabiners just above the pitch since the belay anchor was a little ways back along the ledge. We were on the summit at 11:00, enjoying a rather hazy view and the fine weather. On the way back to the cars, some in the group saw two tarantulas.

We caravanned to highway 95 and then north to the dirt road to the parking spot for Chemehuevi, where we found a flat area the was great for camping. This is where Virgil met us. Since Doug’s Honda Insight had trouble with the sand at the beginning of the dirt road, Doug and Chi didn’t join us at the camp but stayed in Needles instead and, amazing but true, hiked in the 4.2 miles in the morning to meet us well before we started our hike to Chemehuevi a bit after 7:00.

With another day of fine weather beginning, we went right to the mouth of the canyon and headed up that wash.
after a nice break. The only problem was that we should have been one wash to the right in the really big wash. Because it looked familiar, I led us up this smaller canyon without paying attention to the map. This was great until we were stopped by a dry waterfall. A big, smooth dry waterfall. I see now after checking my notes from when I was there in January 2004 that I went up that same wrong canyon and crossed over to the main wash. So, no wonder it was familiar. Someday, I might learn, but there's no real evidence to suggest this. All I remembered was that I had summited without problems (perhaps I was brain dead after doing Stepladder that morning). Oops!

While the group rested in the shade and studied the map, I went left up a steep, somewhat loose but easy slope to where I could see that the ridge on the right hooked up to the plateau area we wanted to go to. Tom went up on the right to the ridge, and I called to the others to join Tom. I crossed easy terrain above the dry waterfall and joined the group on the ridge where we found many ducks as well as cholla. From there we had no troubles up to the summit of Chemehuevi, arriving there just after 10:00. We went down the route described in the DPS guide. Most people liked our way up better—less cat claw, fewer short waterfalls to go around, fewer boulders slowing progress in the steep part of the wash. When we were out of the canyon and heading toward the cars, we had a rare treat: two bighorn sheep rams crossed the broad wash and headed up to the ridge separating "my" canyon from the main route. They frequently stopped to look at us before disappearing over the crest of the ridge. We were back to the cars about 1:15 and soon on our way home after a fine weekend of DPSing.

I bought this volume several years ago, but because other desert-related books always seemed more compelling, I kept passing it up. Well, big mistake on my part.

In fact, author Lynne Foster has compiled an excellent, comprehensive, user-friendly travel guide to the three deserts of California, i.e., the small section of the Great Basin that intrudes into the State north of the Owens Valley, the Mojave, and the Colorado. The vast amount of information she includes in this 496 page Sierra Club Publication staggers the imagination.

Part I, “Getting to Know the Desert,” is a seven section, 105 page dissertation on what every potential desert visitor ought to know, i.e., “What is the Desert?,” “The Making of Deserts,” “Reading the Rocks,” “Desert Plants,” “Desert Wildlife,” “Desert Survival,” and “Seeing the Desert by Foot and Car.” Granted, most DPS members will be familiar with this information, however I think even the most confirmed desert rat will find enough surprises to at least make scanning this material worthwhile. Did you know, for instance, that the plant Mormon Tea is actually a conifer? That snails live in the desert? (Left over from wetter times, they survive heat and dryness by secreting a thick substance that becomes a tough membrane, closing the opening into their shell). That, if your car breaks down, you can make a smoke signal visible for miles by burning a quart of engine oil in a hubcap? That a sealed-beam headlight can be removed and used as a signal beam at night? That a burro, possessed of a strong territorial instinct and a willingness to fight, make it an animal to be reckoned with? Don’t get close enough to let it whirl and kick you.


Each chapter, too, is divided, e.g., Foster separates “The Colorado Desert” into three sub-sections, “Chuckwalla Mountains,” “Blythe-Winterhaven,” and “Algodone Dunes-Cargo Muchacho Mountains.” Within these sub-sections is an even further breakdown, for example in “Chuckwalla Mountains” you’ll find “About the Area,” including a description of the Wilderness Areas located therein, the facilities available, and where and how to obtain information on the area; plus information on specific things to see and do, i.e., “Cactus Garden Tour,” “Chuckwalla Bench-Bradshaw Trail 4WD Tour,” “North Chuckwalla Mountains Hikes,” and “Corn Springs Wash Hike or Backpack.”

More explicitly still, the “North Chuckwalla Mountains Hikes” section also describes how “To Get There,” and “About the Hikes,” the latter of which describes the Ship Creek Hike, the Black Butte Hike and the Viewpoint Hike.

Of special interest to DPS members, Foster offers rudimentary climbing guides to a surprising number of California desert peaks, including Saline Peak, Pleasant (View) Mtn., Inyo Mtn., Waucoba Peak, White Mountain, Mount Patterson, Montgomery Peak, Boundary Peak, Mt. Dubois, Last Chance Mtn., Eagle Mtn. (the one near Death Valley Junction), Pahrump Peak, Telescope Peak, Wildrose Peak, Porter Peak, Corkscrew Peak, Manly Peak, Providence Peak, New York Mtn., Cima Dome, Ryan Mtn., Sheephole Mtn., Spectre Mtn., Whipple Mtn., Chemehuevi Peak, Old Woman Mtn., Mopah Peak, Rabbit Peak, Sombrero Peak, Black Butte, and (Little) Picacho Peak.

Apparently, however, Foster didn’t consult the DPS climbing guides. The only climbing references she includes in her list of recommended reading are Walt Wheelock’s Desert Peaks Guide: Part I, Rev. ed. (1990), Desert Peaks Guide, Part II (1986) and Southern California Peaks (1993), and John Hart’s Hiking the Great Basin, Rev. ed (1992). Still, some of the routes she suggests give pause for thought, for example regarding Manly Peak, she suggests driving to Butte Valley via Warm Springs Canyon, rather than using the usual west side, Goler Wash approach. Her favored
"easiest" route for Porter Peak is up Johnson Canyon on the east slopes of the Panamints, via Hungry Bill's Ranch.

Foster's description of the Porter climb offers a good case in point of how she embellishes the description of each hike or climb with an interesting fact or two. Regarding Hungry Bill's Ranch, for instance, she writes "you can still see massive stone walls and terraces, along with some hardy apple, walnut and fig trees. These are the remains of what was once a flourishing fruit, nut, and vegetable farm. But why here? Well, according to the records, the farm was the bright idea of several people who wanted to take advantage of the fact that in the mid-1870s it was a looooong way from the mining camps of the western Panamints to any kind of fresh food." Local miners, it seems, had to pay up to $1.20 for a head of cabbage coming from Los Angeles, and that was a lot of money in those days. Foster also reminds us that Hungry Bill himself wasn't one of those entrepreneurial farmers, but instead a Shoshone Indian whose family, for generations, had spent their summers in the canyon. "He was luckier than most native Americans, in that he managed to get official homestead papers on some of the canyon land after the farmers left."

Foster also provides a succinct history of the narrow-gauge Carson & Colorado Railroad, a line built during the 1880s, stretching from near Carson City, NV, over Montgomery Pass, down the east side of the Owens Valley and finally to Keeler (then called Hawley), to serve the mines of the Cerro Gordo area. In 1905, suffering financial difficulties after the mines were exhausted and no new lodes were discovered, the line was sold to the Southern Pacific, which converted some of the roadbed to standard gauge in order to serve the new mining discoveries in Tonopah and Goldfield, NV. After Tonopah went bust and the Los Angeles aqueduct was completed, the railroad went into a long decline. "Finally, in 1960, the last engines were parceled out to museums and civic organizations, and the last tracks were torn up. By 1961, all that was left of the pioneer railroad were the original stations at Laws, Lone Pine Station, and Keeler, and the long roadbed you can now easily see on the east side of the valley."

Foster's appendices are extensive. In addition to a plant list, she also includes a list of public campgrounds, museums and nature centers, chambers of commerce and visitor centers and public land offices. Furthermore, she offers a brief history and summary of the California Desert Protection Act of 1994, a list of the acreage of each of the California Desert Wilderness areas, a glossary, and a list of recommended reading.

This book is a jewel. Trust me...you need a copy for your desert library!

ADVENTURING IN ARIZONA (1991), John Annerino
In the introductory "About the Author" section of *Adventuring in Arizona*, John Annerino is described as an "author, photojournalist, and southwestern scholar... (who) was born on the edge of the desert. He spent most of his life exploring more than 50,000 recorded miles of primitive and Native American routes in the American West and the frontier of Old Mexico by foot, raft, rope, camera and pen."

And, while it's apparent that Annerino is exceedingly knowledgeable regarding the physical layout of his territory, having "personally run, walked, trekked, crawled, swum, climbed, rafted, canoed or driven each adventure," he has also done a good job of providing historical background for the 50 car touring, trekking, climbing, canyoneering and river running excursions depicted in this book.

Breaking Arizona into three geographical areas, Annerino starts off in the south, describing three car tours along the Mexican border—El Camino del Diablo, 108 miles of unimproved road, stretching from Highway 85, near Ajo, to I-8, near Wellton; The Ruby Road, a 37 mile drive (27 miles of which are dirt) from I-19, north of Nogales, to Arivaca; and the Cout's Trail, a 54 mile drive (46.3 miles of which are dirt) from Nogales east to the Coronado National Memorial and Highway 92. Using odometer readings, Annerino provides abundant notes of interest along each route. A good example would be his description of the Tinajas Altas on the Camino del Diablo tour: "(H) is the most famous desert waterhole in the United States. Period. Through the millennia, desperate men have struggled on hands and knees to reach what remains to this day the most reliable natural water source found anywhere on the Barry M. Goldwater Range... Stories have been told of men wearing their fingers to the bone trying to make the precipitous climb... up slick, steep granite to reach the 'high tanks.'"

Annerino also describes his own six-day, mid-August trek on Camino del Diablo, listing the mileage he walked each day, his water sources, the amount of water he consumed per day (21-1/2 gallons total), and the daytime temperatures (average 106).

Regarding all these border trips, Annerino warns: "Smugglers have been using remote border routes... since the Gadsden Treaty of 1853... You are herewith advised to use extreme caution and common sense when traveling remote border routes described in this book. Notify a reliable friend of your itinerary and exact route of travel; travel by day; travel with companions; and carry a cellular phone."

Several other Southern Arizona activities are mentioned, including treks along the Sierra del Ajo, the Pinaleno Mountains (north of Wilcox), and the Mohawk Mountains and Sand Dunes (southeast of Yuma), plus climbs of Baboquivari Peak, Signal Peak and Pichaco Peak (the imposing volcanic plug, just south of I-10, between Casa Grande and Tucson).

In his Central Arizona section, Annerino describes treks in the McDowell Mountains (northeast of Scottsdale), and the Sierra Estrella (southeast of Phoenix), noting that the latter range, considering its proximity to a metropolis, is still relatively unused. "Those who do make the effort to explore that range on its own terms find one of the most rugged, unspoiled desert mountain ranges anywhere in the Southwest." He also describes technical climbs of Weaver's Needle, Eagletail Peak (south of I-10, west of Phoenix), and Granite Mountain, near Prescott.

Annerino's Northern Arizona section is probably of least interest to DPS members, as most of the emphasis is on the Grand Canyon, including river expeditions on the Colorado, hiking the Bright Angel and North Kaibab Trails, and climbs of Braham, Zoroaster, and Shiva Temples. Treks in the San Francisco Mountains (Humphreys Peak), and the Arizona section of the Virgin Mountains (including an ascent of 8,012' Mt. Bangs) are, however, described. Regarding the latter, Annerino writes, "To this day, the rugged and remote Virgin Mountains remain 'veiled in obscurity.' The Bureau of Land Management estimates visitation figures at a paltry eight hundred to one thousand user days per year (one visitor per one day); that total includes picnickers, hikers, backpackers, hunters, and whitewater enthusiasts who run the Virgin River Gorge for a few weeks each spring."

Annerino is reluctant to choose his favorite Arizona adventures, but of the handful that come to his mind he mentions "walking through the desert—any desert—on a moonlit night when the 'buzzworms' (rattlesnakes) are hibernating (and) climbing Baboquivari Peak. He notes, however, that his "list changes from month to month, season to season."

Annerino includes a dandy bibliography, plus a list of all the 193 mountains ranges in Arizona, including the name of each highpoint (if named), its elevation and the quad location.

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**THE DESERT SAGE**

January/February 2008
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