Hi climbers and ascenders of great desert peaks and avoiders of cholla, cat's claw, and alcohol tinged jello cups, can you believe they got this old timer out of the attic, dusted me off, and are deeming me DPS chairman? I'm looking at a long line of greats, that's for sure; and I thank Michael B., Audrey G., and Gloria M. for bringing in new blood and enthusiasm in the last few years working alongside long-time seasoned DPS members. At the Edna potluck (back in April), I was primed with wine and hair raising stories about how the section was going to become a committee and lose our section status (hear the song Desperado playing in the background) and no longer be known as the DPS (Desert Peaks Section). I offered to run for management, and now hopefully the rest of my longevity friends and cronies plus some new ones will come forth and be team members with the rest of us. Ellen Grau's idea of monthly potlucks was a genius idea, and at least now, people want to attend DPS “meetings”. The banquet was a great success, and that's a good foot to start out on for the new season. Thanks Rich for a wonderful program and being so generous to the DPS. Ron Grau's and Larry Tidball's train trips, the Jamison’s chili fests, and Ron Jones/ Sherry Harsh’s latest idea of Peaks and Songfests have added pizzazz and variation to our normal peak bagging schedule.

We're studying the By-Laws and will stick to them. I'd like to see some trips called, "Introduction to a Desert Peak, the E-Z Way." Tina Bowman has agreed to lead some 1-peak weekends and give newcomers suggestions for sight-seeing on Day #2 (Death Valley, Anza Borrego, and other desert sojourns). It would be great to advertise these events in the Southern Sierran as they come up.

Tuesday night, I hiked Griffith Park with Virgil Shields (remember him as Mr. RCS--Rock Climbing Section?), and we were talking about the huge groups who are returning to our beloved urban Park. This would be a good place to hand out some flyers and make friends with people who might want a different hiking experience. We'd say, "Hey, how about coming out for an easier desert peak and an evening potluck?"

By the time you read this, we will have had our management organization meeting at Paul and Lee Cooley's to start things rolling for ’08 and ’09. We'd love to have persons contact us about a potluck in his or her home. And we'll be calling you leaders to lead a peak or two. If you are rusty with First Aid, you'd be surprised how easily you can re-instate your qualifications. I actually enjoyed re-taking my First Aid course, and the life we save may be one of our loved ones. Reading the Leadership handbook was easy and fast. Audrey calls it the "Q.T.", the Quick Turnaround.

I'll be journeying to Cincinnati, periodically, to check on my elderly parents. (It's not easy being a caretaker two thousand miles away.) I'd be grateful with any help you can give me and my fellow management members. Email or drop me a personal note. Let's continue to revitalize ourselves and outings. John Muir would be proud that we are upholding his tradition of being peak-baggers and not simply political beings watching the news from our comfy armchairs. Do you agree? John Muir was also known for being the most entertaining host at his many potlucks held in his Martinez home. Following in the well trod foot paths of John Muir, I leave you with this thought. Via Treta, Via Tutti..."the beaten path is the safe path." - Mary Mac

COVER PHOTO: Mummy Mountain from Fletcher Peak. Photo by Bob Sumner.

Nelson Peak
Garnet Mtn & Sombrero Peak
DPS Annual Awards Banquet
Dry Mountain
Annual Membership Roster
Book Reviews

THE DESERT SAGE

NEXT SUBMISSION DEADLINE AUGUST 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.sierrclub.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.

July/August 2008
DESER T PEAKS SE CT ION LEADERSHIP, 2008 - 2009 SEASON

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THE DESERT SAGE
July/August 2008
TRIPS / EVENTS
AUGUST THROUGH NOVEMBER 2008

AUG 2-4  SAT-MON  DPS  Wheeler Peak, Ruby Dome
NOV 1-2  SAT-SUN  DPS, WTC  Moapa Peak, Virgin Peak
NOV 22-23  SAT-SUN  DPS  Old Woman Mountain

In order to participate on one of the Sierra Club's outings, you will need to sign a liability waiver. If you would like to read a copy of the waiver prior to the outing, please see http://sierrabc.org/outings/chapter/forms or call 415-977-5528. In the interest of facilitating the logistics of some outings, it is customary that participants make carpooling arrangements. The Sierra Club does not have insurance for carpooling arrangements and assumes no liability for them. Carpooling ride sharing or anything similar is strictly private arrangement among the participants. Participants assume the risks associated with this travel. CST 2087766-40. Registration as a seller of travel does not constitute approval by the State of California.

♦ AUG 2-4  FRI-SUN  DPS
I: Wheeler Peak (13,063'), Ruby Dome (11,387') Get away from the Los Angeles summer heat and join us for climbs of these two fine Nevada high altitude peaks. Climb Wheeler on the 2nd (3100' gain, 8.5 miles); on the 3rd visit the nearby Lehman Caves in the morning and drive to the Ruby Dome trailhead in the afternoon. Climb Ruby Dome (5400' gain, 12 miles) on the 4th. This will complete the official DPS trip, but there are many interesting areas to explore in the vicinity of Ruby Dome if you have additional time. Email or SASE with experience and conditioning to Leader: Dave Perkins (david.perkins@csun.edu) or Assistant Leader: Ann Perkins (aperkins@csun.edu).

♦ NOV 1-2  SAT-SUN  DPS, WTC
MR: Moapa Peak (6471'), Virgin Peak (8071') Climb these two desert peaks in Southern Nevada. The trip will be two day climbs with a car camp in the local desert; happy hour on Saturday night. Sat climb Moapa via a class 3 route (6 mi, 3400' gain). Route entails 3rd class ledges and a knife-edged ridge. Sun climb Virgin, a class 1 peak, via SE ridge (4 mi, 2200' gain with 4WD vehicles). Class 3 rock experience is required. Restricted to Sierra Club members (medical form will be required). Send detailed resume including class 3 rock experience via SASE or email (preferred) to Leader: Kathy Rich (KathrynARich@gmail.com). Assistant Leader: Alex Anies.

♦ NOV 22-23  SAT-SUN  DPS
I:  Old Woman Mountain (5325')  Yes, I know it's been led recently, but Ann and Dave Perkins are finishing the list on this peak and invite you to join them. We will also be celebrating the list finishes of Anne Rolls and Bob Hoeven, who recently completed the list on other peaks. We will be doing Drive and Climb route A; 3200' gain, 7 miles. 2wd ok. Bring an appetizer or dessert to share for the potluck; main courses will be provided. Email or SASE to Leader: Dave Perkins (david.perkins@csun.edu) or Assistant Leader: Ann Perkins (aperkins@csun.edu).

THE POISON WILDFLOWER

To the list of nasty plants - poison oak, poison ivy, sumac - should be added Phacelia. When the southern deserts of California and Arizona turn green after good winter rains, among the resulting wildflowers are two types of phacelia that cause dermatitis similar to poison oak. One, known as "scorpion weed" due to its curling flower heads that sort of resemble an erect scorpion tail, has pinkish flowers. The other, called "wild cantebury bell", also has curling flower heads; the flowers are dark blue. Both can grow as high as 2 feet.

The rash they cause develops a maddening itch which can persist for weeks. Long pants may not protect unless perhaps tucked into short gaiters or socks. The usual poison oak remedies do work - be prepared. Often these plants cannot be avoided; they can cover the entire mountain that is being climbed! They generally grow below 5000 feet.

- Barbara Lilley
MEMBERSHIP CHAIR / ACTIVITY REPORT, JUNE 11, 2008

Membership Summary

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Activity Report

Achievements

List Finish
#149  Gene Mauk  4/19/08  Sombrerado Peak

Renewed Lapsed Member

Bob Henderson
344 N Orange Grove Blvd
Pasadena, CA 91103-3539

New Subscribers

Wayne Martin
108 Andrew Ct
Mt Shasta, CA 96067
509-393-3714

[Address/Info Changes]

Jim & Susan Conley
2608 Willowhaven
La Crescenta, CA 91214

Gregory Gerlach
626-355-5964
626-484-2897 cell
greg@verizon.net

Penelope May
951-659-5343
951-659-4929 fax

Sustaining Renewals

Sara Danta  1 year
Steven Gabel  1 year
Vicky Hoover  2 years
Susan L. McCready  1 year
Jim Throgmorton  2 years

Membership Renewals

Alex Amies  3 years
Pat Arrendondo  1 year
Misha Askren MD  1 year
Winnette Butler  1 year
Diane Dunbar  1 year
Brian & Janice Elliott  2 years
Bill & Robin Eschenbruch  4 years
Barry Holchin  1 year
Ron Hudson  1 year
Scott & Yvonne Jamison  1 year
Laurie Lushaek  1 year
Edward H. Lubin  1 year
Penelope May  1 year
Ret Moore  1 year
Robert Morrill  1 year
Richard Parde  3 years
Dave & Ann Perkins  2 years
Randolph Pitts  1 year
Julie Rush  1 year
Chris Schmardt  3 years
Jan St. Amand  1 year
David Stepsey  1 year
Tom Sumner  2 years
Bruce Trotter  1 year
Judy Ware  1 year

OUTINGS CHAIR

DPS LEADERS: In the next month we need you to refresh your leadership training. Under the new Sierra Club requirements all leaders (except those who became leaders after July 1, 2004) need to “refresh” OLT101 (basic leader training) by July 1, 2008, under the requirement of the national leader standards (every four years).

It is easy and quick to do. The self assessment test is fully optional and you do not need to do this test or report any results to anyone. Please put aside one-hour this month to keep your leader rating current under this new Sierra Club requirement.

Note: some of you may have already completed the refresher reading. If so we apologize for this duplicate notice. Otherwise all leaders please complete this requirement by July 1, 2008. If you lead for more than one group or section, you may have already done this refresher and notified another outings chair. Please let us also know you have completed this refresher so we can put you on the list as complete and not nag you any more.

Methods for completing the retraining are listed at the LTC web site at the bottom of the home page: www.angeles.sierraclub.org/be. If you go to the LTC web site please also look over the Angeles Chapter Supplement, found in the same spot on the LTC web site, so that you know about Angeles-specific items such as the Incident Report Form, which is modified for Angeles Chapter use.

I hope all our leaders will refresh OLT 101 and keep on leadin’ our wonderful Desert Peaks. I also hope that our leaders are planning future trips for the upcoming season.

Thank you, Michael Gosnell

THE DESERT SAGE  5  July/August 2008
FIRST AID RENEWAL VIA WEB PROVIDERS

In August 2007, the Outdoor Activities Governance Committee (OAGC) authorized standard/basic first aid renewal via web providers. Info is at this website:
http://clubhouse.sierraclub.org/outings/medical/first-aid/providers.aspx#web-based%20first%20aid%20course%20provides where it says:

Web-Based First Aid Course Providers

There are several web-based first aid, CPR and first aid/CPR combination courses (basic first aid is the minimum requirement) available on the web. The Outdoor Activities Governance Committee (OAGC) recommends face-to-face first aid classes due to their interactive nature. However, the OAGC has reviewed web-based first aid courses and accepts them only as a renewal for an existing face-to-face basic first aid class (alternating each renewal cycle with a face-to-face training).

CPR Today (cprtoday.com)

CPR Today offers a Standard Basic First Aid Certification for about $29.95. This course includes information on bites, poisons and environmental issues, however it is lacking pictures for the visual learner.

Professional Training Institute (ptitraining.net)

First Aid Certification Training costs about $24.95. The course included very good written and visual training materials. The material did not cover information about shock, bites, poisons, or environmental issues. However, in order to pass, trainees must also complete a blood born pathogens training (which the Sierra Club doesn't require).

First Aid Web (firstaidweb.com)

First Aid Web offers a free first aid class. Training materials are limited and text based but are clear.

Pro First Aid (profiristaid.com)

Pro First Aid offers a free first aid and CPR recertification tests. The focus of the course is on CPR and targets medical professionals (CNA, EMT and RN) which doesn't meet the outings leader needs. The course does a really good job with written materials and video.

While in-class renewal is preferred (and required every other four-year renewal cycle), this web-based option may be attractive to some of your leaders.

NEW M RATINGS

The Outings Management Committee at its meeting on April 7, 2008, approved a motion to include new M-rock and M-snow ratings besides the traditional full M. Below are the M ratings and requirements.

M rating: Qualified to lead all currently-defined M-level outings, rock, snow or rock and snow combined

M-rock rating: Qualified to lead all currently-defined M-rated outings where M-level rock travel (but no M-level snow travel) is required

M-snow rating: Qualified to lead all currently-defined M-rated outings where M-level snow travel (but no M-level rock travel) is required

Training and certification for the new M-rock [snow] rating will be based on current standards for the M-rating, including

- Be an I-rated leader (or see below for new leader candidates and O-rated leaders)
- Pass an M rock or snow technical check-off
- Provide evidence in a climbing resume of experience on an appropriate number of rock [snow] experience trips at Class 3 or higher to reach provisional status, as assessed by the Provisional Lead Committee of LTC
- For M-rock: lead a provisional outing including at least 100 feet of 3rd class rock climbing
- For M-snow: lead a provisional outing consisting of at least 400 feet of elevation gain on a snow slope between 25 and 35 degrees and requiring the use of an ice axe
- Complete an M-level written exam.

If a leader candidate for M-rock or M-snow is not a rated leader or is an O-rated leader, these are the requirements:
- Be current in wilderness first aid and CPR
- Complete two days of environmental awareness training
- Pass the I/M-level navigation check-off
- Pass the M rock or snow technical check-off
- Provide evidence in a climbing resume of experience on an appropriate number of rock [snow] experience trips at Class 3 or higher to reach provisional status, as assessed by the Provisional Lead Committee of LTC
- Lead two provisional outings: one I- or M-level provisional outing that demonstrates navigation, and one for M-rock or M-snow (see above) (one provisional lead must be a back pack)
- Complete an M-level written exam.

The requirements for the full M (both rock and snow) remain the same.

CONSERVATION

Greetings fellow DPSers! I hope that the year is finding you well and that you have had a chance to get out and climb a few desert peaks.

Once again, our esteemed editor-publisher Bob Sumner has provided me with the venerable “jackpot” of wilderness legislation. Legislation was introduced through the bipartisan efforts of Senator Barbara Boxer (D) and Representative Buck McKeon (R) in the House of Representatives in the late afternoon of 22 May 2008.

If passed, H.R. 6156/S.3069 would protect, expand, or establish the following wilderness areas:

Hoover and Emigrant Wilderness additions: 77, 233 acres
Granite Mountain: 34,564 acres
Owens River Headwaters: 15,247 acres/19 miles
White Mountains: 223,516 acres
Joh Muir Wilderness additions: 80,112 acres
Magic Mountain: 13,709 acres
Pleasant View Ridge: 28,424 acres
Amargosa River: 26 miles
Piru Creek: 7 miles

As well as: 51,000 acres for Wilderness Study in: Masonic Mountain, Mormon Meadow, Walford Springs and Granite Mountains.

As far as I know, the additions to Hoover and Emigrant wilderness would not close snowmobiling access in Leavitt Bowl. However, the area would still be managed as wilderness once the snows have melted. Also, I would imagine that the additions to the White Mountains would include protecting Crooked Creek (Wynne, am I correct?).

Nevertheless, the news of such significant wilderness passage is great especially with the bipartisan support of both Boxer and McKeon, who, I might add, have had trouble seeing “eye-to-eye” on wilderness legislation in the past. Let’s keep our fingers crossed that the bill passes, and if anyone finds out any new, pertinent information, please do not hesitate to contact me.

All the best, Peter
MEETING MINUTES

DPS BOARD MEETING MINUTES  June 8, 2008 at the home of outgoing Secretary, Paul Cooley.

Present at the meeting were:
Mary McMannes, new Board Chairperson
Michael Gosnell, outgoing Chairperson and new Outings and Vice/Chair
Paul Cooley, outgoing Secretary
Audrey Goodman, new Secretary
Edna Espramer, outgoing Programs Director
Elaine Baldwin, new Programs Director
Gloria Miladin, Treasurer

Also in attendance, Dave Baldwin and Brian Smith, DPS members and Dave is a past Chair.

Mary chaired the meeting which was a casual format to allow the old and new board to do their turnovers and become acquainted or re-acquainted a bit.

Programs Report: Edna reviewed our April Banquet and whether we would want to book at the Reef again. Happily we didn’t lose any money on this one as with the prior year, but we essentially broke even. Elaine will contact the Reef and check into prices and dates available for next year before choices are made for next year, and she would also like to see if there are possibilities for another place which is a) less expensive and b) more centrally located.

Treasurer Report covered from 4-1-08 until end of June 08.
It was reported that DPS has an available balance of $5,227.57.
Merchandise sold was $180.00
Membership Dues sent in were $560.00

Outings Report made by the outgoing Chair.
1. 3 excellent new outings submitted since last meeting, including outings to Nevada; Ruby Dome and Wheeler with the Perkins, and Moapa and Virgin led by Kathy Rich and Alex Amies.
2. The Chili Cookoff was discussed and tentatively planned for mid Fall or Spring. The Baldwins will run it this year. TBD then TBA.
3. Audrey introduced an idea about event for older members who aren’t actively climbing as much, which would center around a grand potluck and Hootenanny/Desert Songfest sort of thing, which had been asked for by a couple of our longtime members. We again discussed holding an event for new/prospective members to attend in order to get acquainted with current DPS members, some of our ‘culture’ and history, etc. Someone thought it would be good to combine the two, and Mary thought it should entail an optional peak climb which was an easier one. All in attendance thought it a good idea, and such is to be followed up on.
4. We also discussed possibly scheduling another train history weekend, or something of that nature (gold mining? geology hike?) such as hosted by Ron Grau and Larry Tidball a few years ago which was a success. Followup needed to see if there are leaders willing.
5. Issue of leaders losing their rating due to expired FA was brought up along with various e mails sent down from the Chapter and National Offices. New Outings Chair is going to see what the status is of current DPS leaders vis a vis their eligibility to lead currently, and when such will expire during the upcoming season. Further discussion and determinations will follow once reported on.
6. Is anyone keeping track of changes in outing routes which need to be noted for revisions in the Guide? These new observations have been written up in the SAGE in the past and should continue. Last person working on this was Dean Acheson and he’ll be contacted to see if he’s still interested in doing this.
7. The Outings ‘box’ was handed over to Michael, who is now officially on the job.

New business:
There is a new member event at the LA Zoo which ideally all chapters will be represented at. This one is June 26th. Gloria and Audrey will attend to pass out flyers and speak about DPS to new Sierra Club members.

- Audrey Goodman, DPS Management Committee Secretary
DID YOU KNOW?

Did You Know, I’m sitting in a Cincinnati public library using their computer and trying to make the Bob Summer Sage midnight deadline. The cicadas are making a tremendous roar outside - I haven’t heard them for seventeen years as they’ve been dormant since then. The eggs hatch, the worms wiggle up the trees, mature, make a heck of a noise doing their mating ritual, lay their eggs (which fall to the ground), and the cicadas die. We are talking tens of millions of these crusty little beings, and the empty shells are heaped up in piles. And thus, the eggs lie dormant for another seventeen years.

Do You Know about List Fever mania? Congrats to dear friend Gene Mauk for a great and glorious List Finisher on Sombrero (DPS) and Garnet (HPS). I thought of many dear friends who had finished the DPS List on Sombrero such as Maris Valkas and Pat and Dean Acheson. It was good to see Dean again, as he and Cinnamon climbed to the summit with all of us. Other List Finishers coming in November are: Dave and Ann Perkins, Bill Hoeven, and Annie Rolls. I climbed my first DPS peaks with Dave Perkins (Pico Risco and Pesca Dores), and he also led the climb for my Senior Emblem on Starr King. I was touched by the fact that he gave me my Senior Emblem pin in a little ceremony on top of the peak. He dug around in his pants saying, “I have something wonderful in here, if I can find it.” And he did. Giving someone a List Finisher pin on his/her final summit peak is the creme de la creme crowning one’s achievement. More List Finishers are: Ed Herrman who needs the Big P., and Jeff who is four short of DPS peaks even as I write this. Ron Bartell and Christine Mitchell have perhaps 20 DPS peaks to go for List Finishers #2 & #3.

Did You Know Mike Manchester (the designer of the DPS List Finisher pin) was not present in the DPS List Finishers photo on top of Sombrero? When asked, he wasn’t sure how he missed being there with the rest of us. He, Doug Mantle, and George Hubbard finished the DPS List simultaneously in the early 1980s. Mike related that he had purchased the world’s best wine (or nearly the world’s best) for their List Finisher party, a 1969 Mondavi red. It cost him over $100 way back then, and Mike, Doug, and George were secretly sipping in the bushes away from other partygoers. Bill T. Russell wandered into the scene, Bill being a wine connoisseur who could sniff Gold medal wines from miles away. He asked for a drink not seeing the wine label as it was concealed in a brown paper bag. After the first sip, he declared, “Ah...Mondavi 1969 cabernet.” The boys were astounded, but that was our multi-faceted Bill T. Robert Mondavi recently passed on to the great vineyard in the sky, and his obit writer actually mentioned the 1969 cab which had knocked the pins out from under French and European wine makers.

Did You Know that Mandy (McCully) the Miracle dog is alive and still kicking at age 14? Mandy disappeared in the Sierras many years ago, when John McCully and Sue Hollaway were climbing Split Mountain. Mandy was lost for 19 days much to the grief and anguish of John and Carol McCully. Maybe it was John’s penchant for interesting backpacking food (a bag of mayonnaise slathered burgers) which made Mandy wander away, but she appeared in a lady’s backyard (Big Pine) after being lost in the wilderness for nearly three weeks. Mandy, a Rhodesian razorback, had survived eating elk and cattle droppings which John said gave her horribly bad breath. But she was alive and now still doing well living out her days with Carol McCully. John writes in an email, “Mandy was easily the strongest hiking dog I have ever had and always able to keep up. But now at 14 years old, she has slowed down quite a big like the rest of us old timers.” Mandy’s breed hunts lions in Africa which explains her great strength & tenacity in returning home.

Did You Know that recently at a celebration, Don Sparks ordered a chicken fried steak with lots of gravy, and I commented that I had a theory that such a dish had led to Gene Olson’s early demise. Gene, a favorite DPS leader, led the Nevada peaks back in 1988. It was a huge undertaking, and tons of people (including myself) got all those Nevada peaks in one grand sloop. Well, maybe it wasn’t a sloop as people ran out of gas (Owen Malloy), had flat tires (Gail Hanna), and lots of other shenanigans going on non-stop. I recall Judy Ware wandering into a Tonopah bar requesting a soft drink. The brassy bar maid took one look at little Judy in her floppy hat and earnest request, and proclaimed, "I'm running a bar here, honey, not a soda shop!"

There are many more stories to relate, but the little library computer clock is ticking away, and the computer keys are sticking in the most stubborn way. Stay tuned for next month’s Did You Know-- more anecdotes about you and yours, brave and bold climbers of the desert peaks. There’s a bee story about Bob Hartunian, and some recent ghost sightings near our favorite peaks. Be sure to send emails to marymuir@earthlink.net if you have some good reportings to share. Congrats to Barbara Sholle and Tina Bowman who are way too young to retire, but they did so in June. There’ll be no stopping those girls, now. We’re happy to report that Eric Schumacher, Ron Young, and Don Sparks are mending well from surgeries. Have a great climbing summer on all your favorite peaks whether here or abroad. Hope to see you soon at a DPS potluck or campfire. - Mary McMannes, Roving Girl Reporter
NELSON PEAK
March 26, 2008
By Mary McMannes

The Mauk Climbing Team had knocked off Smith Mtn., and Gino is getting close to the wire. Peakbagging is no longer, "just for fun." Now it's a business as one must make his List Finisher Party by April 19th. No lollygagging for this group. Thank goodness, the remaining peaks are easy pickin's (no Babos or no Big Pee Cauch ee os as Dave Perkins so affectionately calls Big P.) Off, we go up Highway 395 again for Nelson Peak (known as Nelson Range). Mary Motheral (now referred to as Mary Mo.) is with us plus Steve Mauk, Gene's oldest son.

Again, we're feeling pretty happy and confident. The weather is perfect, and the peak stats read 1200' elevation and 2 miles in 2 hours (almost as sweet as Smith Mtn., a few weeks before.) At Olanocha, we drove east on State Highway 190 eventually turning left on the Saline Valley Road until the pavement ended. We kept reading the guide book carefully until we were sure we had found the, "rapidly deteriorating road" (on our right) which ultimately ended up at an attractively furnished and refurbished cabin. There we parked! The road hadn't been that bad. We had left home at the Ruxford offramp around 8:30 a.m., and now it was noonish. Off, we went for the peak ambling down the wash briefly until we started up the fairly steep ridge. I felt sure the gain must be 2000' in two miles; but that was my subjective response to lots of panting and sweating. Steve Mauk was way ahead of us obviously in his Mach IV mode. All in all, everything went well, and we made it to the ridge enjoying the cool breezes, beautiful pinyon trees, and some patches of snow here and there. Then we saw the summit or what we thought was the summit—big boulders to crawl up and over. Up we went, boulder by boulder. Oops...it wasn't the summit, and there was Steve waving the register from next door, the real summit, more benign and definitely less boulder-fled.

We had the usual conversation, "Now does this look higher or does that look higher?" A reminder when you go there--don't climb the summit with massive boulders. Go beyond that one to the easy walking summit and definitely the high point of Nelson Range.

The view was stupendous with the sweeping sands of Saline Valley below us. We took lots of photos and held up our index finger indicating Gene had one to go. He was looking real happy! On the way down, Mary and Steve followed the original ascent route; Gene and I chose the prominent wash S of the ridge, "because good sand makes for a quick and painless descent." Not so! The sand was way down at the bottom, and it was not quite a quick and painless descent. One picks his way as if on a cobblestone road with many cobbles missing. The surprise at the bottom, though, was another great cabin, and from that cabin, it was a ten minute walk (or so) back to the car.

When one gets to the Nelson road head, be sure to take time visiting the furnished cabin and latch the door when leaving. It's worthy of induction in Home and Cabin magazine with framed old photos, canned goods, and more. As we drove away, we made one more stop at another "luxurious" cabin and met the cabin-keepers and their dog. Steve lost his cell phone, so we tramped around a bit until it was found lodged between the car seats. I've learned most lost keys are either between the car seats or down in the recesses of the couch.
A fine dinner and burgundy wine was consumed at a familiar and well-loved place, Graziano's in Mojave. The young boy gave us all the senior discount even without asking. Harumph! We ate, drank, and played a rowdy game called, "Name the SPS Emblem peaks." Gene, being a peakbagger through and through, carries the SPS emblem peak list in his wallet. Whatta guy! We'd had the perfect day and evening in the desert, and Gene was now ready to claim the Great and Long-Sought After Prize of joining our prestigious group of DPS List Finishers. Oh...oh, we can't forget he still has Kratka Ridge (HPS), and there's snow and ice on it. Better break out the ice axe* and crampons. But that's another story for another day. Nelson Range is a mighty fine day hike, and you can bag a peak, have a delicious dinner, and return home to sleep in your own bed, all on the same day. And now on to Sombrero, and a Fiesta, muy grandiosa!

(In her early climbing days, Mary Motheral was known as Mary Gygax. Doug Mantle once explained, "That's ice axe spelled backwards!" Sorry, Mary, I couldn't resist!)

GARNET MOUNTAIN, SOMBRERO PEAK
April 19, 2008
By Gene Mauk

The culmination of many years of effort was realized on April 19th when I completed both the HPS and DPS peaks lists. I could not have reached these goals without lots of help from many people. But first the day in review.

At the 8:00 am post time 27 Hardy souls met at the roadhead for Garnet Mountain in the midst of a cold and fierce wind which apparently had been blowing all night according to reports from a few roadhead overlookers. I was assigned the lead to the peak and almost immediately screwed up by taking us too far north along the Pacific Crest Trail. Before long a revolt developed among the ranks and my error was corrected. Soon after, the summit of Garnet was conquered thus completing the HPS list, a quest that began unintentionally 66 years ago on Strawberry Peak in the San Gabriels. The ensuing celebration was quite lively with a surprisingly large amount of champagne consumed considering the early hour. Pictures of various groups were taken. I was especially honored to have my wife, Jan, and sons, Steve and John, join me on the summit. After about a half hour of carrying on we all trudged back to the cars and prepared for the 60 mile drive to the roadhead for Sombrero Pk.

After a lunch break at roadend in Indian Valley the group assembled once again. Here we had a round of introductions along with more sign ins. Doug Mantle took over the lead at this point and up we went for some 2100 feet of gain. The wind and temperature were more agreeable now. The route traversed many spectacular wildflower displays. As I approached the summit I was tickled to see my daughter, Cindy, and son, Rob, waiting to join me and the others for the final steps. Most of the group had reached the summit area earlier but had kept the pathway clear for me to be first to the top. The DPS list was now mine. Another goal of many years realized. It was an emotional few moments to be sure.

In the midst of more good cheer and flowing champagne I was surprised to have Mary McMannes present me with my very own DPS list finish pin. Thank you, Mary. Then more pictures. More champagne. Finally it was deemed time to go back down the mountain.

We regrouped once more a few miles south in Carrizo Canyon for the evening campfire and potluck dinner.

Thank goodness for the campfire because it was a cold and windy night. I sincerely thank all who brought the many delicious entrees. Mary McMannes, representing several contributors, presented me with a beautiful plaque, a collector's item if ever there was one. Doug Mantle's remarks stretched the truth in certain places but were much appreciated. Rob Mauk rounded out the evening with a recitation of Poe's "The Raven."

All in all it was a day to remember for me. It would never have come to pass without the help of so many of my climbing friends. At the risk of leaving out some important names I want to give personal thanks to those who helped me climb those many peaks. Starting with this day's leaders: Doug Mantle, who has led (sometimes hauled) me up more peaks than I can count, and Mary McMannes, who has joined me on innumerable climbs and hikes. Continuing: Duane McRuer (Are you listening, Duane), Rob, Steve & John Mauk, Dave Comerzan, Al Conrad, Gary Craig, Bob Hoeven, Sue Holloway, Mary Motheral, Dave & Ann Perkins, Greg & Mima Reach, Don Sparks, Larry & Barbee Tidball, Jennifer Washington, George Wysup and, most especially of all, my wife, Jan, for putting up with me these many years while I pursued my impossible dream.

Finally, I want to thank all the others who joined me on this special day: Cindy White, Dean Acheson, Ron Bartell, Christine Mitchell, Nacia Bower, Tina & Tom Bowman, Dave Cannon, Ron Eckelmann, Edna Ersparman, Rich Gnagy, Mark Goebel, Vic Henney, Sue Wyma, Pat & Gerry Holleman, George & Carol Hubbard, Ron Hudson, Kathy Rich, Karen Leonard, Mike Manchester, Betty McRuer, Lara McRuer, Ret Moore, Rayne Motheral and Ron Young.

Thank you all very much. - Gene Mauk

Photos provided by Mary McMannes

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DPS ANNUAL AWARDS BANQUET
April 27, 2008
By Edna Ersparman

The beautiful Reef Restaurant in Long Beach was the setting for the 2008 Annual Awards Banquet and a spectacular presentation, "Wild Places of the Americas," by renowned photographer and adventurer Rich Henke.

This year we were unable to recruit replacements for our retiring committee members in time to send out a ballot before the banquet. Since 30% of the membership was present at the banquet, Dave Baldwin suggested we have an election on the spot. Two new committee members were voted in by a show of hands: Mary McMannes and Elaine Baldwin. Service Awards were presented to Yvonne and Scot Jamison for their many years hosting the Chili Cook-off, and to Elaine Baldwin for her continuing work for the banquets. The Bill T Russell Mountaineering Award went to Barbee and Larry Tidball. Various raffle prizes: Framed photograph by Rich Henke to Julie Rush, framed oil painting by Betty McCosker to Jim Farkas, framed watercolor by Elaine Baldwin to Ann Perkins, serigraph to Henry Amebold, REI gift certificates donated by Michael Gosnell to Yvonne Jamison and Mark Goebel, various books donated by Gail Hanna and Audrey Goodman to Ed Herrman and Rena Henke.

Next season's committee members will be Mary McMannes--Chair, Michael Gosnell--Outings, Audrey Goodman--Secretary, Gloria Miladin--Treasurer, and Elaine Baldwin--Programs. Photos provided by Edna.
This trip was supposed to be a Sierra snow climb of Black and Diamond, but after sitting in our tents as it snowed for half a day, we bailed and headed for Death Valley. Thus Friday evening saw us hiking toward our desert backpacking site. A hasty stop at the Furnace Creek Visitor Center had supplied maps since all our Death Valley maps and guides were at home. I had jotted down a few route description pointers from the display copy of Hiking Death Valley by Michel Dignonnet. The four of us, Howard Steidman, Tobi Tyler, Richard Stover, and I, approached the mountain from the unnamed canyon to the northeast. We trudged the four miles up the alluvial fan, past assorted rusted relics at an old camp following in places an old wagon track marked sporadically by carefully-aligned rocks on either side. Our packs were made heavy by the gallon and a half of water we each carried. Our trip would entail 22 miles RT and 5100 feet elevation gain.

There were Joshua trees and flowers I had never seen before, since I normally do not visit Death Valley in late May. The abundant Brittlebush cut a golden swath up the wash which was also dotted with the plump blooms of the Panamint penstemon. Golden Prince’s Plume towered on tall stalks, and further up the wash, the cream-colored corollas of the Antelope Bush (Bitterbrush) massed.

Soon on the left we spotted the complete arch which told us we were entering the correct canyon. Here was a desert woodrat nest in one of the niches in the wall as well as bottles of water left by previous hikers. The first 12-foot dry fall was easily climbed even with full packs, and we camped for the night on a bench just before the 80-foot fall, about 6 miles from our start. Although the ranger had told us the temperature had been 120 degrees at the beginning of the week, it was pleasantly cool. That evening, it started to rain.

At 6:15 the next morning, Richard and I set out for the peak. Howard and Tobi decided to sleep in, and since they are much faster we are, planned to hike after the rain stopped. Our first task was to bypass the 80-foot fall by hiking up the west side on scree slopes which eventually turned into a lovely jumble of black and white rock which reminded me of rocks found on some Hawaiian beaches. The habitat transitioned to Pinon pine and juniper. Further up the canyon, we had to surmount the 20-foot fall. We chose to climb it on the west side with a move that entailed a tie-back and a little brush bashing. We didn’t have the advantage of Dignonnet’s recommendation to bypass it 150 yards below.

By now it was snowing. As we emerged from the canyon to the saddle, we caught our first glimpse of the peak which cannot be seen from the road or the canyon. I am joking. All we could see was the base of the east ridge; everything above was shrouded in clouds and mist. We never did see Dry Mountain. We just kept climbing until we could climb no more.

And we were on top: An ancient benchmark, the register, a can with a blanket and water, and no views in any direction. It was 20 degrees and snowing beautiful large flakes.

As we descended, I felt we were headed in the wrong direction. Out came map and compass, and it took a little work to get things right again. Everything was wet and
slippery. The blooming hedge-hog cactus was splashed with snow.

Downclimbing the 20-foot fall became more problematic with everything slippery. I hiked up and around on unstable rock on the west side, then walked back to the base so Richard could hand the packs down to me. With coaching from below as to location of footholds, Richard was able to downclimb the fall. Below the 20-foot fall, we met Howard and Tobi heading up canyon.

They also successfully completed the climb (for the second time having first climbed Dry 21 years ago!) and met us back in camp about 6 p.m. Dinner was a bit on the light side since we had not planned to spend a second night, but the soup, tea, and crackers warmed us up. The afternoon and evening were spent listening to the rain on the tent fly and writing in my journal.

By morning, the rain had stopped, and we hiked out, stopping to examine and photograph the Ordovician snail fossils embedded in the limestone walls of the canyon as well as the many other beautiful rock formations. All in all a satisfying climb. Although we left our crampons in the vehicles, it turned out to be a snow climb after all! We suggestion changing the name of this peak to "Wet."

*Photos by Richard Stover.*

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DESSERT PHOTO

The Stella Cabin in Striped Butte Valley, Death Valley National Park.

Photo taken with a pinhole camera during a trip up Manly Peak, April 2007. Photo by Lynne Buckner.

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*THE DESERT SAGE* 14

*July/August 2008*
DEEPES VALLEY (1962, revised 1978)

In her preface, Smith contends that “mountain ranges, like beautiful women, should not be compared. Each has her special fascination, each her cluster of devoted admirers...We (Smith and her co-authors) happen to love Owens Valley and its bordering mountains—the Inyos, the Whites, the eastern slope of the Sierra Nevada. We feel fortunate to have lived close to them for over one hundred and fifty years among us, long enough to have discovered some of their secrets, which we share with you in this guide.

“Here we find adventure, fun, variety, inspiration, challenge, beauty, joy; days of wonder and peace. May you also.”

And, by golly, Smith, et al., have, indeed, assembled an excellent fact-filled volume describing how you can discover for yourself “days of wonder and peace” in this “Deepest Valley.”

Starting with an overview of the area, Smith describes the Owens Valley in near poetic terms: “The Sierra is pale Gray, its slopes angular, its peaks splintered. The Inyos are tawny, their slopes and crest rounded. The highest peaks of both, Mt. Whitney and White Mt. Peak, stand well over fourteen thousand feet. Between these bulky ranges, only twenty miles separating their crests, lies a long narrow trough, Owens Valley. Running its length is the Owens River, fed by short streams which rise from Sierra glaciers and tumble down deep-slash Canyon.”

“Roadsides,” Deepest Valley’s opening section, reviews a host of interesting spots that can be visited by car, including an Owens Lake Loop Trip—with stops at the Saline Valley Salt Tram, Swansea, Keeler and Dirty Socks—and, to name just a few, Manzanar, Mazourka Canyon, the Big Pine Volcanic Field, Charlie’s Butte and the Petroglyph Loop, north of Bishop. The next section, “Trails,” describes a series of hikes on the eastern slopes of the Sierra, all of which should be of interest to DPSers, including: “Haiwee Creek to Haiwee Pass,” “Sawmill Creek to Sawmill Pass,” and “Pine Creek to Pine Creek Pass.”

The “Geology” section, written by Dr. Paul Bateman of the U.S. Geological Survey, is interesting as well, describing the Owens Valley as “a long narrow block of the earth’s crust which is dropped down in the crest of a broad arch that extends from the San Joaquin Valley eastward to Death Valley, and perhaps beyond.”

Dr. Bateman includes several excellent diagrams illustrating the manner in which fault lines along the eastern base of the Sierra and the western base of the Inyos were key to the valley’s formation.

“Plants” describes the trees, bushes and flowers to be found in the several life zones between the valley’s floor.
and its highest surrounding peaks, including, of course, the ancient Bristlecone Pine forest of the Inyos.

The "Mammals and Birds" and "Fish" sections are also filled with interesting facts, most of which are duplicated in the companion book, Mammoth Lakes Sierra, and more extensively in Sierra East (see the following reviews).

The "History" section comments on the Piute Indians who dwelled in the area early on, including a map showing the location of their villages (mostly clustered along the streams descending from the Sierra) and their trade routes over the Sierra, including Olancha, Army, Cottonwood, Taboose, Kearsarge and Piute Passes. Brief histories of mining and ranching are also described in this section.

The second edition of Deepest Valley includes additional chapters, i.e., "Groundwater Conflict 1970-"," by Smith, "Water for the Valley," by Antonio Rossmann (Special Counsel to the County of Inyo), "Water to the City," by Paul Lane (Los Angeles Dept. of Water & Power), plus updates in "New Information."

MAMMOTH LAKES SIERRA (first published 1959, 7th edition published in 2003), edited by Genny Smith

Mammoth Lakes Sierra was published three years prior to Deepest Valley, has sold over 70,000 copies and is now in its seventh edition.

In her overview of the region, Smith notes, "The Sierra Nevada's steep eastern slope is a world apart from the lands to the west. In contrast to the Sierra's western slope that spans forty to seventy miles, from sea-level in the fertile Great Valley to its snowy crest, the eastern slope abruptly drops off thousands of feet to arid valleys below...The land is spacious and open to the sky, the views immense."

In the opening "Roadside" section, Smith and Hettie Willard, the latter a plant ecologist and daughter of Stephen Willard, a noted Mammoth area photographer, describe various sites along Highway 395—between Sherwin Summit at the south and Conway Summit at the north—that can be visited by automobile. "El Camino Sierra," the original name of Highway 395, is a route that gradually morphed from an Indian trail, to two ruts through sand and sagebrush, until, in 1916, a 10 mile section of the worst part of the Sherwin Grade was finally graded and oiled, an event which was celebrated by a thousand people at a barbecue in Rock Creek Canyon. "The long trip from Bishop to Mammoth Lakes could now be made in two and a half hours!"

Now, of course, 395 is a well-maintained, divided four-lane highway, and the same trip can be made in 45 minutes or so.

Smith and Willard leave the main highway at many points to describe side trips in Rock Creek Canyon and Little Lakes Valley, Whitmore Hot Springs and the Benton Crossing, Mammoth Lakes and Devils Postpile, Inyo Craters, the June Lake loop, Mono Mills, Tioga Pass and Lundy Lakes among many others.

The "Trails" section describes over fifty hikes in the greater Mammoth area, ranging from trails out of Rock Creek Lake, at the south, to those out of Lundy Lake, at the north.

Similar to the hikes described in Deepest Valley, Smith has personally taken all the hikes she mentions in Mammoth Lakes Sierra. Although I couldn’t pin her down as to her favorite hike in the area, she did admit that the Deer Lakes loop (over Duck Pass) was spectacular.

The "Geologic Story" section is authored by Dean Rinehart, who, with other members of the U.S. Geological Survey, spent seven summers mapping the geology of the Mt. Morrison, Casa Diablo and Devils Postpile quadrangles. Excellent diagrams illustrate the manner in which the present Sierra Nevada was formed, a history including sediment deposition (circa 500,000,000 BC), rising and folding (400 million years ago), volcanic activity (190 million years ago), more rising and folding (100 million years ago), followed by granitic intrusion, additional volcanic activity, glaciation and stream erosion.

As it turns out, the distinctive dark gray and brown cliffs encircling Convict Lake are among the oldest rocks in the Sierra, probably some 500 million years of age. In the latest edition, Rinehart also describes the tree kill near Horseshoe Lake, which was caused neither by insects nor disease nor drought, but rather by carbon dioxide released from volcanic activity below the surface. Amazingly, the gas can be emitted at the rate of up to 300 tons/day.


In the final "History" section, Smith describes what little is known about the Northern Paiutes, the original inhabitants of the area, a group who called themselves neither Paiutes nor Monos, but "Kuzedika," a term meaning "eaters of the fly pupae," i.e., their food partially consisting of the small white worms gathered from Mono Lake and dried.

SIERRA EAST (2000), edited by Genny Smith

Sierra East, published by the University of California Press and edited by Smith, offers a more detailed description of the natural history of the general area than
described in either of the two preceding volumes. One of a series of the U.C. Press's California Natural History Guides, Sierra East encompasses the entire eastern Sierra Nevada, extending from Tehachapi Pass, at the south, all the way to Plumas County, at the north, while narrowing its scope in width to include only “the High Desert valleys immediately adjacent” to the eastern slopes of the Sierra.

Furthermore, although there are two short sections, “Discovering the Eastern Sierra” and “Wonders and Secrets at the Edge of the Great Basin,” both authored by Smith, the volume should not be considered as a travel guide to the area.

What Sierra East does, however, is take a comprehensive look at all things natural in the area, including geology, climate, plant communities, arthropods (insects, spiders, etc.), native fishes, amphibians, reptiles, birds and mammals.

And because the 488-page volume is too large to consider in detail, what follows is a random selection of some of the more interesting facts included.

For instance, the geological story of the Sierra Nevada is a mere 570 million years old—only 12% of the age of the Earth. Indeed, the first 4 billion years of Earth’s history are missing in Sierran rocks. The main granitic mass of the Sierra first appeared about 210 million years ago, and the gigantic batholith, which now underlies the range to a considerable depth, took more than a hundred million years to form.

Geologic activity remains ongoing in the area, i.e., the Panum Crater, one of the Mono Craters lying south of Mono Lake, which erupted between A.D. 1345 and 1445, the fumaroles and hot springs, such as Whitmore, Casa Diablo and Hot Creek, and the dead trees around Horseshoe Lake in Mammoth Lakes area all “testify that the volcanic furnaces are probably only banked.”

Regarding weather, summer sunshine is considered one of the distinctive elements of the eastern Sierra Nevada. Indeed, with 80-90% of the summer days sunny at the lower elevations, and more than 70% of the summer days sunny at the higher elevations, there are few other high mountain ranges in the world can compare. “It was the ever present sun, shining on the light-colored granite, that led John Muir to name the Sierra The Range of Light.

In “Plant Communities” it is noted that, due to extreme elevation variation, the area described contains several life zones (e.g. subalpine forests, sage brush scrub, alkali sink scrub), plus, since annual precipitation and temperatures vary along the 300 mile-long north-south range, a considerable difference in the flora can be found at the same altitude from one end to the other. The chapter includes diagrams illustrating the life zones found at five east-west cross sections: Ridgecrest, Lone Pine, Mammoth Lakes, Truckee Area and Honey Lake. For example, the tree line is roughly 11,000’ at the Lone Pine cross-section, 10,500’ at the Mammoth Lakes cross-section and 9,000’ at the Truckee area cross-section.

In “Arthropods” we learn that the Western Pine Beetle (Dendroctonus brevicomis), that nemesis of western pine forests, is “attracted to a diseased or weakened tree by the volatile aromas it gives off and by pheromones (air borne chemical sex signals) given off by other pine beetles.” After burrowing into the bark, the beetles lay their eggs in a tunnel system called a gallery. The beetle larvae hatch in the summer and feed on the inner layers of the tree bark. In addition, these beetles transmit blue stain fungus, a tree disease that blocks the water conductive tissue, thus further damaging the tree. While a weakened tree can be killed quickly, a healthy tree can eject a beetle from its excavation by a flow of tree resin under pressure.

And here’s something of interest from “Birds”: “Vultures do not usually kill prey. Lacking powerful talons or bills, they are unable to cut into a fresh, large kill.” Since their feet are not adapted for grasping, they eat mostly carrion and road kill. Furthermore, they have a curious method of coping with heat stress, i.e., they urinate on their own legs, thus cooling themselves with evaporative water loss. “Their legs end up with a white coating of uric acid.”

I highly recommend this trio of books edited by Smith. The first two are invaluable guides to the area, while the third will provide the curious with a much better understanding of the truly wondrous natural features of the area.

Genny Smith. Photo provided by G. Smith.
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**THE DESERT SAGE**

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July/August 2008
DESERD PEAKS SECTION

DPS NEWSLETTER - The DESERT SAGE - Published six times a year by the Desert Peaks Section of the Angeles Chapter of the Sierra Club. SUBMISSION DEADLINE FOR THE NEXT SAGE IS AUGUST 9, 2008.

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EMBLEM STATUS AND GUIDES - To receive DPS emblem status you must climb 15 peaks on the list, five of which must be from the list of seven emblem peaks, and have belonged to the section of one year. To work on the list you will probably want to buy from the Treasurer (Gloria Miladin, 11946 Downey Ave, Downey, CA, 90242) the Desert Peaks Road and Peak Guide 5th Edition - $28 + $2 Postage. If you like to explore without much direction just purchase the DPS PEAKS LIST - $1 (enclose a self-addressed envelope). Send completed peak and emblem lists to Membership Records, Ron Bartell, 1556 21st Street, Manhattan Beach, CA, 90266.

CORRESPONDENCE - We welcome all articles and letters pertaining to outdoor activities of interest to DPS members. Some submittals tend to be too long and space limitations and other considerations are factors in the decision to publish an article/map. The editor may modify submittals in a perhaps, misguided attempt to increase clarity or decrease length but will hopefully not modify your meaning. Trip reports on official DPS sponsored trips are always printed. If you are a participant and know that the leaders are not going to submit a trip report then feel free to submit a report. We welcome reports of private trips to unlisted peaks and private trips using non standard routes to listed peaks. Please DATE all submissions. Please indicate topo map names, dates and contour intervals. Digital (word processor file) content is essential and will help ensure that there are no typographical errors. Send copy to the Editor (see below) by the published deadline. Please include a SASE if you would like to have your material (maps/floppies) returned. If possible, print on the back of a picture when and where it was taken, what it is of, who is in it, and who took it. Email usually works best for simple text-based submissions and minimizes editing complexity. Email editor for details on submitting attachments and/or digital photo scans.

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