Dear DPS members, friends, dwellers of the tents and campodios, and all who love the wild and thorny places.

As for me, I’m newly back from the Nederlands and leaving the windmills of my mind for more arduous endeavors in Colorado. As I heard the lyrics to a great song, “You raised me up, so I could stand on mountains.” I couldn’t help but think about a family who raised boys to stand on mountains, as third generation Shane Smith celebrated his HPS List Finisher on Bailey Peak, July 11th. It was a nice and tender touch when Shane took out a large photo of a similar List Finish back in 1979 with a summit shot of Grandfather Fran, Dad Steve, and a tiny boy named Shane. Fran Smith was known to most of us for his multiple leads of Rabbit in an annual event called Fran’s Follies. Fran would have been 90 years old in the same week that Shane finished the List. Thanks, Shane for continuing a great family tradition and for hosting us on a wonderful day and an easy peak. Shane, Steve, and Fran are also DPS List Finishers.

More List Finishers on the horizon in the next few months. If you haven’t experienced the Spirit of DPSing, do join us for the best of climbs and parties coming up in September, October, and November. There’s Asher Waxman, Sept. 27th, on Spirit. Dan Richter finishes the HPS List on San Guillermo, Oct. 25th. John Hooper will gain his DPS List Finisher pin on Mopah, in November. Jim Strauch climbs his final DPS summit in the fall, according to Sue Holloway. And then there’s Sue herself becoming DPS List Finisher #2, New Year’s, 2010. Hopefully, Ed Herrman (Mr. Man Man) will bag the Big P., and pleasantly invite us for an amble up Pleasant for a grand party, 2009 or 2010. There are others stealthily adding those final peaks for their second time around.

And then there are the true zealots such as Doug Mantle closing in on DPS List Finish, #8.

Thanks to all you writers who submit these wonderful trip write-ups, book reports, and desert themes. Sometimes, we’re happily overwhelmed with the abundance, and your worthy submissions are bumped to the next issue. Tina Bowman, you did a spectacular job in chasing down our leaders and getting them to submit trips, training sessions, and potlucks for our upcoming Schedule running through Feb. 28th. The Perkins are leading Palmer and Grapevine, Nov. 21st, an important birthday for Gary Craig and including string alongs, Rich Gnagy and Mary Mac.

And the best news of all and the latest news flash. The cat is out of the bag, the book is nearly hot off the presses, as our own Bob Sumner has written a new glossy guide for the Nevada County High Points. This book encompasses driving and hiking guides to the summits of Nevada’s 17 counties. (Published by Wynne Benti, www.spotteddogpress.com.) Included are camping and lodging hints, a “bonus” peak to be combined with each county high point, and historic background and side trips for each peak. And we thought Bob was busy solely with our Sage and his marathon day hikes. Congrats Bob, and let’s see about a book signing party in the near future.

Lots of climbing yet to be done, so get on those lug soled boots and discover the joys of taking roads and paths less traveled. Be a cloud walker and return to us safe, happy, and full of bragging rights.

Until we meet again,

Mary Mac

Inside this issue:

- Last Chance Mtn, Sandy Peak
- Mary Peak, Carey’s Castle
- Table Top, Tortoise Shell Mtn
- Lela, Joshua, & Sheephole Mtn
- Devil’s Tower
- Inyo Mountains Traverse (2)
- Desert Tortoises
- April Potluck, Book Reviews

NEXT SUBMISSION DEADLINE OCTOBER 10, 2009

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

**SEPTEMBER 2009 Through FEBRUARY 2010**

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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://sierracircle.org/outings/chapter/foms or call 415-977-5528.

In the interest of facilitating the logistics of some outings, it is customary that participants make carpooling arrangements. The Sierra Club does not have insurance for carpooling arrangements and assumes no liability for them. Carpooling, ride sharing or anything similar is strictly a private arrangement among the participants. Participants assume the risks associated with this travel.

CST 2087766-40. Registration as a seller of travel does not constitute approval by the State of California.

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**SEPTEMBER EVENTS**

**SEPTEMBER 13**

*O: DPS Potluck and Management Meeting*

Come to the home of Michael and Julia Gosnell. Meeting starts at 4:30, and the potluck starts at 6 pm. Bring a beverage of your choice and a potluck item to share. Please RSVP.

(michaelgosnell@hotmail.com)

**SEPTEMBER 19**

*LTC*

Deadline for 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 Sep 19. No registration after this date or at

- **SEPT 19-20**  **SAT-SUN**  **DPS, WTC**

**O:** Glass Mountain (11,140'), Mount Patterson (11,673')**: First Day, pitter pattered Patterson with Tina and Mary Mac for 5 miles and 1600' gain. Day #2, climb the black obsidian peak for 3 miles and 1900' gain. Evening potluck will add to our merriment. Well-bchaed K-9s welcome. E-mail Leader: Tina Bowman (tina@bowmandesigngroup.com). Assistant: Mary McMannes.

- **SEPT 26**  **SAT**  **DPS, WTC**

**MR:** McFarland Peak (10,742')**: An “exploratory” climb of McFarland Peak - a beautiful, rugged and imposing limestone peak hidden deep within the northern portion of the Spring Mountains of southern Nevada. We will climb the peak via the Bristlecone and Bonanza Trails (13.5 mi rt, 4,500' gain). Cass 3 rock experience required. Restricted to Sierra Club members (medical forms required). Join us for Asher Waxman’s list finish on Spirit Mtn the next day. Send email/sase, detailed resume including class 3 rock experience to Leader: Dan Richter (dan@danrichter.com). Assistant: Asher Waxman.

- **SEPT 27**  **SAT**  **DPS, WTC**

**I:** Spirit Mtn (5,639')**: Join us for Asher Waxman’s list finish on this sacred and magical peak above Christmas Tree Pass. The peak overlooks Lake Havasu and Laughlin. We will climb the mountain from the pass by a beautiful cross-country route. (3 mi rt, 2,000' gain). Join us for our “exploratory” climb of McFarland Peak the day before. Send email and sase to Leader: Asher Waxman (anuirman@yahoo.com). Assistant: Dan Richter.

- **SEPT 27**  **SUN**  **LTC, WTC, HPS, DPS, SPS**

**I:** Grinnell Ridge Navigation: Navigation noodle in San Bernardino National Forest for either checkout or practice to satisfy Basic (I/M) or Advanced (E) level navigation requirements. Send email/sase, contact info, navigation experience/training, any WTC, leader rating, rideshare, to Leader: Robert Myers (rmyers@ix.netcom.com). Assistant: Harry Freimanis.

- **SEPT 30**  **WED**  **LTC, WTC**

**M/E:** Advanced Mountaineering Program - Basic Safety Systems: First of 4 climbing workshops. Today’s indoor evening workshop of 4 hours reviews ropes, knots, harnesses, helmets, and basic climbing gear and will take place in Pasadena. Based on book: “Mountaineering Freedom of the Hills, 7th edition”; today: Chapter 9. Open to climbers who are SC members and have some climbing experience. As space is limited, priority will be given to participants who commit to all 4 workshops. Send or e-mail SC#, resume, phones to Leader: Dan Richter (dan@danrichter.com). Assistant: Pat McKusky.

- **OCT 3**  **SAT**  **LTC, WTC**

**M/E:** Advanced Mountaineering Program – Belaying: 2nd of 4 climbing workshops. Today, at Stoney Point in Chatsworth, focus is on belaying and principles of anchor building. Based on Chapter 10 of the book: “Mountaineering Freedom of the Hills, 7th edition”. Open to climbers who are SC members and have some climbing experience. As space is limited, priority will be given to participants who commit to all four workshops. Send or e-mail SC#, resume, phones to Leader: Dan Richter (dan@danrichter.com). Assistant: Pat McKusky.

- **OCT 4**  **SAT**  **DPS**

**O:** DPS Potluck and Management Meeting: Come to the home of Tom and Tina Bowman in Long Beach. Meeting starts at 4:30, and the potluck starts at 6 pm. Bring a beverage of your choice and a potluck item to share. Please RSVP. (tina@bowmandesigngroup.com)

- **OCT 10**  **SAT**  **LTC, WTC**

**M/E:** Advanced Mountaineering Program – Rappelling: 3rd of 4 climbing workshops. Today, at Stoney Point in Chatsworth, focus is on rappelling. Based on Chapter 11 of the book: “Mountaineering Freedom of the Hills, 7th edition”. Open to climbers who are SC members and have some climbing experience. As space is limited, priority will be given to participants who commit to all four workshops. Send or e-mail SC#, resume, phones to Leader: Dan Richter (dan@danrichter.com). Assistant: Pat McKusky.
- OCT 10  SAT  LTC, WTC, HPS

I:  Mt Lowe (5603') Beginning Navigation Clinic: 4 mi, 500' gain. Spend the day one-on-one with an instructor, learning/practicing map and compass. Beginners to rusty old-timers welcome. Not a checkout, but it will help you prepare. Many expert leaders will attend; many I-rated leaders started here in the past. Send sase, phones, $25 deposit (Sierra Club, refunded at trailhead) to Leader: Diane Dunbar (dianedunbar@charter.net). Co-Leader: Richard Boardman.

- OCT 17-18  SAT  LTC, WTC

M/E: Advanced Mountaineering Program – Rock Climbing Techniques and Anchors: 4th of 4 climbing workshops. This weekend completes the series of AMP workshops, at Joshua Tree National Park, and focuses is on climbing and anchors. Based on Chapters 12 & 13 of the book: “Mountaineering Freedom of the Hills, 7th edition”. Open to climbers who are SC members and have some climbing experience. As space is limited, priority will be given to participants who commit to all four workshops. Send or e-mail SC#, resume, phones to Leader: Dan Richter (dan@danrichter.com). Assistant: Pat McKusky.

- OCT 18  SUN  LTC, WTC, HPS, DPS, SPS

I:  Indian Cove Navigation: Navigation noodle at Joshua Tree National Park to satisfy the Basic (I/M) level navigation requirements. Send email/sase, contact info, navigation experience/training, any WTC, leader rating, rideshare, to Leader: Robert Myers (rmyersrix.netcom.com). Assistant: Phil Wheeler.

- OCT 30 – NOV 1  FRI – SUN  LTC, Harwood Lodge, WTC

C:  Wilderness First Aid Course: Runs from 8 am Fri to 5:30 pm Sun. Fee includes lodging, meals and practice first aid kit. Proof of CPR within previous 4 years required to enroll. Fee $205 with SC#/S215 non-member (full refund through Sept 25). For application contact Leader: Steve Schuster (steve.n.wfac2@sbcglobal.net).

- OCT 31  SAT  DPS

O:  17th Annual DPS Chili Cook-Off and Pumpkin Carving Challenge, Ord Mountains Petroglyph Tour: Join us for a day of fun in the Ord Mountains near East Ord Mountain. Whether you like your chili traditional, Texas-style (no beans), or vegetarian, bring your favorite recipe or just stalwart taste buds to this DPS classic. Cooks prepare chili from scratch at the site; then all enjoy happy hour followed by chili tasting and judging. Prizes will be awarded by category, with special recognition for spiciest chili, best presentation, and the coveted Best Overall Chili. Cook for free or taste for $10. Pumpkin artisans bring your gourd and carve your best design at the site to be judged for a prize alongside the chili. Optional Petroglyph tour. Send ESAUSE with choice of Cook or Taser to Hosts: Dave & Elaine Baldwin (dwaldwin@aol.com) and Leaders: Larry & Barbee Tidball (lbtidball@earthlink.net).

- NOV 1  SUN  DPS

I:  East Ord Mtn (7532'): Climb East Ord (2.8 miles, 2200'). Follows DPS Chili Cook-Off on previous day. Send ESAUSE with experience and conditioning to Leaders: Larry & Barbee Tidball (lbtidball@earthlink.net).

- NOV 7  SAT  DPS

O:  DPS Potluck and Management Meeting: Come to the home of Elaine and David Baldwin for an Oktoberfest-themed event. Meeting starts at 4:30; potluck at 6 pm. Bring a beverage of your choice and a potluck item to share. Please RSVP to Reservationist: Elaine Baldwin (DWaldwin@aol.com) or 310-675-4120.

- NOV 7  SAT  DPS

O:  Charleston Peak (11,915'): Do the “Charleston,” a day hike of a DPS Emblem Peak, the highest peak in Southern Nevada, and the 8th most prominent peak in the U.S. This strenuous 17 mile, 4300' gain/loss route will feature outstanding panoramas, groves of aspen, and bristlecone pines. Send email or sase, altitude experience, recent conditioning to leader. Leader: Anne Anglim (anne.anglim@sbcglobal.net) Co-Leader: Michael Gosnell (michaelgosnell@hotmail.com).

- NOV 7-8  SAT-SUN  DPS

M:  Mt Wilson (7070'), Potosi Mtn (8514'): Sat an exploratory 3rd class scramble up one of the highest peaks in Red Rock Cyn Natl Cons Area (6 mi rt, 2600' gain). No rope so only experienced climbers need apply. Mt Wilson is SW of Las Vegas with spectacular views to the desert floor far below. Sat night campfire and happy hour. Sun a leisurely
climb of listed Potosi Mtn (6 mi rt, 2900‘ gain). Email resume and conditioning to Leader: Dan Richter (dan@danrichter.com). Assistant: Asher Waxman.

♦ NOV 14-15  SAT-SUN  DPS

I: Tucki Mtn. (6726’), Canyon Pt (5890’): Ramble in the western ramparts of Death Valley. Tucki (8 mi, 2700‘ gain, 6+ hrs) has scenic, friendly terrain. Car-camp, potluck Sat. Sun Canyon Pt (3100‘ gain, 5 mi, 4+ hrs) has a fast, fun, scree slope descent. 4WD high-clearance vehicles. Send email (preferred) w/cond/exper/email/phone to Leader: Gary Craig (gary@usc.edu). Co-Leader: Sue Holloway.

♦ NOV 14-15  SAT-SUN  LTC, WTC, HPS, DPS, SPS

I: Indian Cove Navigation: Navigation noodle at Joshua Tree National Park to satisfy the Basic (I/M) level navigation requirements. Sat for practice, skills refresher, altimeter, homework, campfire. Sun checkout. Send email/sate, contact info, navigation experience/training, any WTC, leader rating, rideshare, to Leader: Robert Myers (rmyersix.netcom.com). Assistant: Harry Freimanis.

♦ NOV 21  SAT  LTC, SPS, DPS, WTC

E/M: Stoney Point Rock Workshop/Checkoff: This intermediate and advanced workshop is based on the rock requirements for M and E leadership. Checkoffs for M and E rock must be pre-arranged. It is a restricted trip; to participate you must be a member of the Sierra Club and have suitable rock climbing experience. Helmet and climbing gear required. Email or send climbing resume, completed medical form (2 copies—including SC# on form), address and phone to Leader: Ron Hudson (hudsonrf@verizon.net). Co-Leader: Greg Mason.

♦ NOV 21-22  SAT-SUN  DPS

I: Mount Palmer (7938’), Grapevine Peak (8738’): Climb Palmer on Sat (3100‘ gain, 11 mi). This is a long day hike on an undulating ridge with good views. On Sun climb Grapevine (2500‘ gain, 6 mi). Depending on the vehicles and the condition of the road, we might be able to continue for an extra mile on a 4WD road and eliminate 2 miles and 900‘ of gain from both climbs. In any case we will meet Friday night and camp near the end of the 2WD stretch. Enjoy the beauty of Death Valley and a great DPS potluck on Saturday night. Email Leader: Dave Perkins (david.perkins@csun.edu). Assistant: Ann Perkins.

♦ DEC 5  SAT  DPS, Wilderness Adventures

I: Pinto Mtn (3983’): Join us for a nice stroll across desert flats and the ascent of Pinto in Joshua Tree NP (9 mi, 2400‘ gain). Great views of other DPS peaks. Send email or sase with conditioning to Leader: Tina Bowman (tina@bowmandesigngroup.com). Co-Leader: George Denny (george_denny@earthlink.net).

(Continued next page)
DEC 5
I: Mt Lowe (5603') Beginning Navigation Clinic: 4 mi, 500' gain. Spend the day one-on-one with an instructor, learning/practicing map and compass. Beginners to rusty old-timers welcome. Not a checkout, but it will help you prepare. Many expert leaders will attend; many I-rated leaders started here in the past. Send sase, phones, S25 deposit (Sierra Club; refunded at trailhead) to Leader: Diane Dunbar. Co-Leader: Richard Boardman.

DEC 6
O: DPS Potluck and Management Meeting: Come to the home of Ann and Dave Perkins. Meeting starts at 4:30; potluck at 6 pm. Bring a beverage of your choice and a potluck item to share. Contact Reservationist: Dave Perkins (david.perkins@csun.edu).

DEC 12-13
I: Pyramid Peak (6703'), Smith Mtn (5913'): Climb 2 desert peaks in Death Valley. Pyramid first, moderately paced 9 mi RT, 4000' gain over rocky and steep XC routes. Drive to carcamp at Smith Mt trailhead. Smith, 6 mi RT, 2500' gain over easy XC terrain. 4WD/high clearance needed for Smith trailhead. Leader: Greg Mason (greg@nosam.org). Assistant: Paul Garry (pwgarry@earthlink.net).

DEC 13
I: Warren Pt Navigation: Navigation noodle at Joshua Tree National Park for either checkout or practice to satisfy the Basic (I/M) or Advanced (E) level navigation requirements. To participate, send email/sase, contact info, navigation experience/training, any WTC, leader rating, rideshare, to Leader: Robert Myers (rmmyers@ix.netcom.com). Assistant: Harry Freimanis.

JAN 9
I: Stepladder Mtn (2927'): Join us for a cl 2 peak in eastern San Bernardino Co. Hike on dirt road, up a wash, and fun ledges to the summit of Stepladder (15.5 miles, 1450' gain). Leader: Tina Bowman. Co-Leader: Tom Bowman.

JAN 10
O: DPS Potluck and Management Meeting: Come to the home of Gloria Miladin. Meeting starts at 4:30; potluck at 6 pm. Bring a beverage of your choice and a potluck item to share. Contact: Gloria Miladin (gml500@yahoo.com).

JAN 30-31
MR: Turtle Mtn (4298') & Mopah Point (3530'): Escape to the Eastern Mojave Desert for early season climbs along with a great DPS car camp and BBQ chicken potluck dinner. Sat hike Turtle, 13 miles, 2700' gain. Sunday climb class 3, Mopah 8 miles and 2000' gain to summit. Participants must be comfortable with class 3 rock climbing; leaders will carry rope and provide belay if needed. Send SASE with climbing experience or e-mail to Leader: Barbee Tidball (lbtidball@earthlink.net). Co-Leader: Larry Tidball.

FEB 7
O: DPS Potluck and Management Meeting: Come to the home of Audrey Goodman and Brian Smith in Santa Monica. Meeting starts at 4:30; potluck at 6 pm. Bring a beverage of your choice and a potluck item to share. Directions will be provided when RSVP is received. Contact Reservationist: Audrey Goodman (music2835@gmail.com, 310 433-1998).

FEB 20-21
I: Pahrump Pt (5740') and Stewart Pt (5265'): Climb these peaks situated in eastern part of the Death Valley area. Sat climb Pahrump (3400' gain, 8 mi). Sun climb Stewart (2600' gain, 6.5 mi). Happy hour Sat night. Send email with conditioning and experience to Leader: Virgil Popescu (gillypope@ca.rr.com) or Co-Leader: Patricia Arredondo (paarredo@verizon.net).

FEB 27-28
I: Granite Mtn #1 (6762'), Kelso Peak (4746'): Climb Granite Sat (6.5 mi, 2900' gain) in San Bernardino Co. Fine car camp. Sun explore unlisted Kelso Peak (6 mi, 1100' gain) and Kelso sand dunes, among the highest in the country. Send email or sase to Leader: Tina Bowman (tina@bowmandesigngroup.com). Assistant: Mary McMannes.

THE DESERT SAGE 8 September/October 2009
OUTINGS CHAIR

Thanks for all the leaders who have planned outings for November through February. Of course, we can always add outings to the Sage that don’t make it into the Schedule, and we can even list last-minute offerings on the DPS website. Please study the trip offerings; we have lots of great outings.

As summer winds down, join us for Patterson and Glass September 19-20, then join the exploratory of McFarland Peak in Nevada on September 26 as a fine warm up for Asher Waxman’s list finish on Spirit Mountain on September 27th.

Note that the chili Cook-off is on Halloween this year with the option of exploring petroglyphs and a trip to East Ord the following day. For the most part, DPS management meetings and member potlucks will be held on the first Sunday of each month through April, with exceptions usually because of holidays. Please mark your calendars for these fun social events!

Finally, it’s never too late to start planning outings for future Sages and the March-July 4th Schedule.
Happy trails, Tina Bowman

CONSERVATION

DESSERT SURVIVORS

The Desert Survivors is an interesting organization with goals similar to ours. They are a 501(c)3 non-profit, public benefit organization founded in 1981 and based in Oakland. Their mission is one of experiencing, sharing and protecting desert wilderness. Recognizing that the places they (we!) love to explore will not remain wild unless they give others the opportunity to experience them, Desert Survivors is committed to actively monitoring and preserving desert wilderness.

They have an outings schedule and a great 'Desert Issues' page which summarizes their views and actions on varied concerns dealing with our local deserts. If you’ve ever wanted to become more involved with the political issues surrounding our deserts, check out their website at http://www.desert-survivors.org/. Perhaps, sometime we can co-host an outing with this fine group.

Governor Schwarzenegger recently signed the state budget and it contained an additional $6M cut to state parks, bringing the total General Fund cut for this budget year to $14.2M. It is expected that this will result in the closure of perhaps more than 100 state parks. There is still no closure list at this time. Check out the California State Parks Foundation website for more information or to take action: http://www.calparks.org/.
- Michael Gosnell

DID YOU KNOW?

Our deepest condolences go out to Harry Sutherland’s family in the passing of their dear father on July 9th, the date of his 100th birthday. In daughter Barbara’s words, “He was never one to turn around right before a summit.” Harry was well known in Sierra Club circles and especially in RCS affairs and activities. As he looked forward to his 100th birthday, he said his body told him, “Okay, Harry, the hundred year warranty is running out.” Get well cards are in order for Jack Koshear who is mending from a broken hip, and DPSers Ron Young and Bob Hicks who’d appreciate hearing from you.

DID YOU KNOW, I’m newly back from a great trip that involved lots of biking instead of hiking across Holland, one of the most efficient and highly evolved countries I’ve visited. It was Mary Mothecal’s idea to go, and she has lured the Sholles and Sue Holloway into experiencing the land of windmills and dikes as seen from a bike’s handle bars. Email me for more details. A dreamy trip, indeed. Thanks to Stan Mavin, Jan Brahms, who put my favorite chartruese rain jacket back to its original pristine condition after its sad encounter with red ink pens of the worst kind.

Congrats to new retirees David Eisenberg and Greg Vernon. DID YOU KNOW, Vic and Sue Henney are up visiting Ted Braskett and Katie and bagging a few pizzas and peaks in Idaho. I think Ted is having a significant birthday
soon, and maybe we can lure him back to town for a party. Ted is one of the most amazing and accomplished mountaineers you’ll ever meet and was past recipient of the DPS Bill T. Russell Mountaineering Award (2003). Ted is known for ushering in many a DPS List Finisher who needed help with those last few difficult peaks.

Although I mentioned this in my Chair column, DID YOU KNOW Shane Smith is now a double List Finisher, DPS and HPS (finishing July 11 on HPS Bailey Peak). It was a great surprise seeing Charlie Knapke, Terry Flood, and Rob Langsdorf. Plus, in attendance were the frisky Bobcat Thompson, the Wolfe Leverich, Steve Smith’s family complete with sister Shelby, Shane's mom Susie, and Robert Hyde, Steve Davis, and Mary Mothertal. One person remarked it was unusual to see someone so young finishing the HPS List, and Bobcat added, “AND not only being young, he still has a pulse.” On the summit, we drank champagne, and Steve produced a bottle of Bailey's which was quite appropriate for uh...Bailey Peak. A clever photographer set the bottle on the summit and declared, “Let's get a photo of Bailey's on the rocks.” A toast was made to the Smith family as great mountaineers, and then Steve added, “And a toast to the Smith women who have put up with us.”

It was a nice touch when Shane produced the 3 Generation photo of Fran (Smith's) HPS List Finisher when Shane was a snip of a boy. Fran finished in 1979 on Villager, Steve in 1983 on Gleason, and now Shane in 2009. We'll all hope we're around for the Fourth Generation picture and hopefully on Bailey Peak, 'cause it's a 10 minute hike to the summit which will work well for those of us with lug soled walkers. Lots of photos were taken and beautiful blue Three Generation tee shirts were presented to Steve and Shane by Mom Susie. I didn't help but think of the original Shane starring Alan Ladd, a man with incredible blue eyes. Shane has inherited the same blue eyes, and one can't help remember the little boy who called after the cowboy, “Shane! Shane!” Bobcat up to his usual puns and started singing, “Danke schoen.” Where was Wayne Newton when we needed him?

DID YOU KNOW, Diane Dunbar is back from successfully hiking the Grand Canyon, and it was only a year ago she was airlifted to Flagstaff after going into anaphylactic shock from an encounter with a bee sting on her head. Diane, being wilderness savvy, recognized the symptoms immediately with cars and tongue itching, wheezing and gasping for air. Sad to say, the local EMTs aren't allowed to carry epi-pens, and the same goes for Sierra Club leaders which I am in disagreement with. You can be sure, Diane and I carry our own epi-pens after such near fatal bee and hornet encounters deep in the wilderness. All's well that ends well, but Diane had to figure out how to get a ride back to Grand Canyon and reclaim her pack and car.

DYK, Tina stuck a tiny piece of paper into husband Tom's pack reminding him that his four new peaks on the Inyo Traverse (led by Kathy Rich and the Tidballs) were numbers #33, #34, #35, and #36. Tina stayed home taking care of the ailing cat, Daggoo, while Tom got his peaks. That's what I call the perfect marriage. I express condolences to Tina and Tom in the passing of Daggoo, a cat with personality, courage, and intense loyalty.

If you want to read a wonderful biography this summer, go fetch Mary Austin by Susan Goodman and Carl Dawson. Wow, it's stupendous. As you know, Mary lived in Independence for seven years in a brown, wooden cottage she and her husband built in 1900. "The Austin house still one of the town's most attractive had a study, which Mary called her wickiup shelter, and a fireplace she built herself with rock from the Independence area." This is the very house where Mary raised her mentally challenged daughter while writing, "The Land of Little Rain." I highly recommend your getting this book, and you’ll never feel the same as you drive by Mary's (now Tina and Tom's house) there on the corner of Market Street as you turn off of Highway 395.

Speaking of famous female writers, dear Edna Ersperman met me on the San Diego Freeway, so I could take a copy of her Tell All book on my trip. I was chuckling so much (yes, it is the story of all of us climber types then known in yesteryear as the Young and the Restless) (continued on page 22)
LAST CHANCE MOUNTAIN (8496'), SANDY PEAK (7062')
April 2009
By Debbie Bulger

At my age, one thinks twice before climbing a peak called "Last Chance." Richard Stover and I were celebrating our 17th anniversary, but we didn’t want it to be our last climb. Thankfully, the excursion was filled with fun and good fortune.

Good fortune #1: Spectacular views of the Eureka Dunes from both peaks.

Good fortune #2: From Sandy, a panorama of the snow-capped Sierra, spreading for miles on the western horizon.

Good fortune #3: Discovery of two! federally-endangered Eureka Dunes Evening Primrose on the slopes of Sandy.

Good fortune #4: Birds, birds, birds attracted by the re-watering in process at Owens Lake.

You get the idea. Wildflowers were in bloom, we saw birds we had never before spotted, and the views were unparalleled. Both peaks are "shy," and once the climb has begun, one doesn’t see the summit until it is almost reached.

Because the passes were still closed for the winter, we reached Highway 395 by way of Highways 88 and 89. Since the long drive took a day and a half, we had half a day for bird watching and botanizing before camping at the trailhead for Last Chance. Richard spent a little time improving the rough dirt road on the approach to the old cabin site; lots of little slides had made the roadbed a little tippy. The highlights of the day were finding an exquisite Newberry milkvetch in bloom and spotting a Loggerhead shrike.

Before crawling into the back of the truck to sleep, we spent a few hours scouting the trail, checking out the springs, exploring mine remains, and enjoying a dry waterfall climb.

Bright and early the next morning we climbed Last Chance. A long hike with about 3000 feet elevation gain.

From the summit we decided to return by hiking south over points 8250, 7978, and down the long east-west ridge to the south as described in Dignonnet’s Hiking Death Valley. That route gave us a good view of the Eureka Dunes and new terrain to explore although it extended the hike by about a mile.

After the climb we identified the trailhead for Sandy by counting the mileage from Crankshaft junction then proceeded to the Crater Mine Road where we camped. That night the wind blew so hard it was difficult to cook on our camp stove. Even with strategically-placed wind blocks, the stove heat dissipated almost as soon as it was generated. We must have used a half bottle of gas just to heat dinner.

Climbing Sandy took the entire next day. The three and a half mile ridge offers spectacular views both of the snow-capped Sierra and the Eureka Dunes. DPSer Robert Young passed us (on a slightly different route), and we finally met as he was descending and we were nearing the summit. Did he also see the Federally-endangered Eureka Dunes Evening Primrose and the Parish’s Desert Delphinium? We didn’t ask.

Not wanting to spend another hour trying to heat up food, Richard and I had the same thought, “It’s less than 50 miles to Big Pine.” So we opted for a restaurant and motel, albeit one with a very narrow shower opening.

That gave us an entire next day to circle Owens Lake. What a delightful day. The re-watering has drawn migrating birds once again to this stopover. There were American Avocets, White faced Ibis, Cinnamon Teal, White Pelican, and Least Tern.
my first Blue Grosbeak, a LeConte’s Thrasher, a Black-throated Sparrow, Yellow-headed Blackbirds, and my first Virginia Rail.


MARY PEAK
April 4, 2009
By George Wysup

I have been trying to add some more peaks to the Great Lower Peaks List. The list may be great, but at 81 peaks, isn’t impressively extensive. There are several nice candidates in Joshua Tree NP and in the Borrego Springs area. I’d like to see added: Coyote Mtn, Borrego Mtn, and Lela Peak. We did add Malapai Hill. Erik Siering suggested that Mary Peak would be a good addition.

Laura Joseph and I had Saturday, April 4 to kill on the way to an April 5 trek to Carey’s Castle, so we decided to check out Mary. We drove to Cottonwood Visitor Center, where I stumped them with my Golden Age pass. Then we drove about 14 miles north along Pinto Basin road, just past the often used trailhead for Pinto Mtn, and parked here at elev 1756’. This is almost due north of Mary.

Patty Furbush’s book “On Foot in Joshua Tree National Park” discusses this hike. It shows 2 routes. The shorter route goes up a broad ridge from the north, and a longer route goes up a wash which curls around and goes to the peak from the south. We thought we would try a loop, going up the ridge and down via the wash. Of course this is in violation of an old mountaineering rule – never to descend anything you haven’t ascended. But this route is published in a hiking book, so what could go wrong?

We crossed the desert floor alluvial fan toward the peak and decided to modify the Furbush route and ascend by a sharp ridge, marked from spot elev 2250’T, directly north of the summit, then bend to the east to pick up the Furbush route. This went swimmingly, with just a bit of class 2, and we reached the unremarkable summit after 4 miles with 1800’ elevation gain. The route was botanically spectacular at this time of the year.

We could have returned to the car easily by retracing our steps, but what’s the adventure in doing that? So we headed SW from the summit, then turned NW to go down the wash. The descent down the wash started out being very easy. Then we went down some easy dry falls, no problem. We could see some rock bands below us on the sides of the canyon that might indicate dry falls. Yep. The descent got progressively trickier. But we had been sucked in and didn’t want to ascend 1000’ back to the summit and down the easy way, so we pressed onward. Soon we had managed our way down some falls that I knew I couldn’t climb back up. I’m sure a younger, more agile climber could do it. I was now concerned about finding a really bad waterfall that I couldn’t get down. Then what? You know what. Would we ever be found? Our bleached bones maybe.

Well, there were some interesting descents but, bottom line: we got down unhurt and hiked happily back to the car. The return trip distance was 4.5 miles. The total hiking time was over 7 hours, making us late for the Carey’s Castle group’s pot luck. The topo map shows our route and Furbush’s variation.
I will recommend that Lower Peaks Committee schedule an exploratory trip, NOT attempting the wash route option, and vote this summit onto the list. It’s a very nice cross country hike.

though you will usually find plenty of footprints in the sand. The route is up a desert wash all the way, so there are no serious navigation issues to solve. The wash is mostly a stroll in the park, but there are a few spots that might be deemed class 2 scrambling. The Natural Science and Desert Peaks Sections were kind enough to sponsor the trip.

Sandy Burnside signed up to help lead the trip and she quickly recruited hubby Keith and son-in-law “Super” Mario and daughter “Alpha” Keri. Mario and Keri would bring their hiking cat, Bleu. They decided that this should include a Saturday night car camp with pot luck. OK by me; I volunteered to bring one hungry person to the pot luck. I thought briefly about renaming the destination “Keri’s Castle”. I like leading with Burnside because her knees are not what they once were so she doesn’t push me to go faster. Besides that she is just a very pleasant person to hike with or pot luck with.

We actually got some participants to sign up for this trip. Anne Howell, Scott Gabbert, Laura Joseph, Roseanne Greenfield, and Steve Gillom arrived Saturday. Jim Davis, Patrick Vaughn, and Bruce Craig made the Sunday morning drive. Several asked if Carey’s Castle is a real castle (perhaps with visions of Scotty’s Castle). Of course, it’s nothing at all resembling a castle. Some desert rat miner used local stones to enclose a natural granite shelter to make a single large room, and added a wood door and a window. The site was probably used on occasion by local Indians, judging by a couple of nearby morteros (holes in the granite used for grinding acorns or grain for eating). There is some interesting information, including photos, on the internet (Google “Carey’s Castle”).

The trailhead and car camp area is about 3 miles from the I-10 interchange on a very good dirt road, and next to an earthen dike that probably consists of debris from the Colorado aqueduct tunnels and ditch. We started the hike in perfect hiking weather at 8:30 am, tiptoeing slowly through the stand of Teddy Bear Cholla as I pointed out the Ironwood, Palo Verde, and Smoke trees and the common vegetation Cheese bush, Desert Lavender, and Encelia (Brittle bush), and a few different species of Phacelia including Canterbury Bells. Many of the flowers had been cooked by the desert heat over the last month but there remained some remnants of Arizona Lupine, Brown-eyed Primrose, Golden Evening Primrose, and Small-flowered and Parry’s Poppies. We spied a few Mentzelia involucrata (Desert Blazing Stars), some Desert Stars, Sacred Datura, a bloomless Gravel Ghost, and a single Ghost flower. We were fortunate to find the Ocotillo in full bloom (vermilion), as were many of the Beavertails (hot pink), Hedgehog (red violet), and Barrel (yellow) cactus. We even found a few little Fishhook cacti (Mammillaria) with buds. Some Trixis was loaded with yellow flowers, the Mohave

CAREY’S CASTLE
April 5, 2009
By George Wysup

Let’s face it. My fast hiking days are over. I still try to mask this fact by stopping frequently to check my navigation and to make botanical observations. I’m hoping that most observers believe that I could move faster if I wanted. But I think that most folks know better.

So I scheduled a moderate hike in the far southeast corner of Joshua Tree National Park to Carey’s Castle, starting near the Hayfield exit from I-10. This is just east of Chiriaco Summit. I advertised that there would be a botanical emphasis. The hike is about 8 miles round trip with maybe 1300’ elevation gain and there is no trail,
Aster was quite showy, and Indigo bush was in various states of bloom and seed pods. There was a bounty of Apricot Mallow to contrast with all the purples and yellows. Then there were the usual shrubs Desert Willow, Creosote, and Desert Almond (which had a few tiny almonds from last year). Cat’s Claw Acacia was plentiful and as usual unavoidable. We found two kinds of vine, a wild cucumber, and Rambling Milkweed, both in bloom. When we reached Carey’s Castle, on a flat area at about 3000’, the ground was covered with a nice display of Wallace’s Wooly Daisy, which was unexpected.

There was a lot of Desert Mistletoe with ripe, delicious-looking red berries. One can expect to find Phainopepla that feeds on these berries. I heard the whistle, which guided my eyes to the bird. I think the bird feared that this crowd would eat all the berries, but we weren’t very hungry.

After signing the log book just outside the castle we explored the area a bit and took a short side excursion along the old jeep road to the mine (Carey’s?) shaft, which was covered with a steel mesh grate to prevent idiots from killing themselves. The hike took us about 7 hours.

**APRIL POTLUCK**

April 4, 2009

By Mary McMannes

April 4th was a busy day celebrating Vic and Sue’s Lower Peaks’ List Finisher in the a.m. and a noon potluck at Tom Summer’s. Then it was time to jump on the 405 Freeway and journey down to Long Beach visiting the spectacular and comfortable home of Larry and Barbee Tidball. Management meeting convened at 4:30ish, while Dave Baldwin and cohorts were counting DPS ballots. It was a great surprise to have Linda McDermott, Larry Hoak, and Barbara Reber show up at the meeting, too. Barbara knows where all the skeletons and bodies are hidden; so her advice and wisdom is always appreciated. The meeting was lengthy, but we managed to pop out of the den into the dining room, and gee whiz, the place was over-run with 30 people having the time of their lives. Barbee had huge black pots simmering on the stove with pulled pork, home-made baked beans, and some delectable vegetable dish. I learned after taking a tour of the house, Barbee is an interior designer and Larry is an architect. After all these years, there are things to be learned about our friends. My favorite quirky loo item was Larry’s model of his mom’s house in North Dakota...exactly as it looks, only miniature. That little white house was a representation of all the houses we Midwesterners grew up in, and seeing it brought a feeling of homesickness for front porches, Howdee Neighbor, and the bucolic life. (Oh yeah, and the blizzards, too!) Well, the poignant moment lasted a few seconds as I smelled slow cooking pulled pork; and then it was time to jump into foods, wines, and desserts. What a feast. I was thrilled to see people I hadn’t seen for a long time.

Mirna was seen preparing an outlandish dessert that had ice cream, mangoes, berries, and the liquor of one’s choice dolloped into crystal goblets. (Earlier in the day, she had been cooking wild mustard flowers in another delectable dish.) Mirna’s sample desserts were for Show and Tell so we could make our own in sensible plastic cups. Larry the host, however, got to eat one of the samples. And Mirna and Greg were smiling big-time, because this was also their 22nd wedding anniversary!

Around the large dining room and living room tables were: Greg and Mirna Roach, Ron Hudson, Kathy Rich, Karen Leonard, Christine Mitchell (Ron was home watching a game), Gloria Miladin, Neil Jenkins and Donna Elliot, Rebecca Owens with brother, Asher Waxman, Edna Erspamer, Pat and Gerry Holleman, Barbara Reber, Dave and Barbara Sholle, Tina and Tom Bowman, Jack Wickel, Mary Jo Dungfelder and Gary Schenk, Mary Motheral, John Cheslick, Linda McDermott, Dave and Elaine Baldwin, and the cats. (If I missed anyone, I apologize.) It was one of the best potlucks ever, and hopefully we’ll replay this one again as our Springtime Frolic.
Thank you, Larry and Barbee Tidball for a fabulous evening. In fact, a perfect evening. And double thanks for leading those harder DPS peaks and submitting multiple trips to our Schedule. It’s Midwestern fortitude, loyalty, and heartiness, for sure! Bon appetit and bon soire and looking forward to our next DPS meeting and party!

TABLE TOP (6178’),
TOROISE SHELL MTN (4601’)
April 18-19, 2009
By Terry Flood

Returning to the Hole-in-the-Wall Campground Friday evening, it was in the 40’s which actually boded well for our climbing aspirations as it was supposed to be getting warmer by the day. Meeting friends Henry Arnebold and Brian Smith in the morning for breakfast, we planned to climb early to beat the heat and that’s exactly what we did. Driving up Black Canyon Road towards the high flat mesa on Table Top, we picked an easy route using a road to what appeared to be an abandoned ranch, and picked our way up to the mesa cross-country and a register placed at the original survey site marked by the usual old wire and wood remnants. We circumnavigated the “soccer field” on top to enjoy the views in all directions, returned to the car, and then had a nice lunch at the campground before heading down the road to the Visitor Center which was being used as a base camp for the San Bernardino Search and Rescue Team having a field exercise at this location. We also checked out the Ring Trail which has some serious metal hardware pounded into the narrow and steep Banshee Canyon (which is a bit unusual) to assist in traversing through this area marked by lots of interesting erosion and caves. A casual dinner and campfire to head off the night time cold at this 4,000’+ campsite and we were off to bed.

Next morning after breakfast, we headed down a long seldom-used dirt road to the south of the Woods Mtms and headed up a long sandy wash, past a very large and unexpected area of Indian petroglyphs, and easily climbed Tortoise Shell Mtn from the south to take pictures and check out the summit register. Great views of the Providence Range to the west in the morning light and the previous Table Top to the north along with several other mesa-topped highpoints common in this area. Lots of lizards, raptors, jack-rabbits, and a few cows were the main wildlife observed while we hustled back down to the cars as it was getting hot quickly. The desert season is probably over for the year now but I do plan on returning to this area again next winter.

LELA PEAK (4747’)
JOSHUA MTN (3746’),
SHEEP HOLE MTN (4593’)
May 2-3, 2009
By Jorge Estrada & Diane Neff-Estrada

After coming together for a Lower Peaks list finish on Catalina Island, a group of hikers agreed on one last hike in the desert before the heat of the summer set in. Robert and Markey Neighbors, along with Sue and Vic Henney would meet the Estradas on the weekend of May 2nd in the Joshua Tree National Park area for the main event, Sheephole Mtn.

The Neighbors and the Henneys would drive to the area on Friday, and the Estradas would meet them on Saturday afternoon, for a group hike to Joshua Mtn. Early Saturday morning, the 4 of them embarked on a hike to Lela Peak (4747’), the high point of the Northern Hexie Mtms. They were able to summit, and returned to meet us at the Black Rock Campground. After a few greetings we headed for Joshua Mtn, but not before stopping at the Crossroads Café for an excellent lunch. We drove to Twenty-nine Palms and then south on the Utah Trail road where our hike would begin.

Joshua Mtn is a fine peak that is often overlooked. Most hikers bypass this peak on their way in or out of the National Park. After driving approximately 3 miles, we parked off the highway and headed west across the desert floor and up the south side of the gully. Arriving at a fork at the base of the peak, we headed north around the backside to a saddle, where we made our way up secure slabs to the summit block (3746’), 1.5 miles. We took a break to celebrate Robert’s Birthday with “Delicious” chocolate brownies from the Café. All were in agreement that Joshua Mtn would be a fine addition to the Lower Peaks List. In courtesy of DPS and HPS, we left a register on the summit. Arriving back at our cars, we parted ways for the evening to prepare for a very early arrival to the trail head of Sheephole Mtn.
By 6:41am, we were ready to go. We dropped into the wash to find the canyon that would lead us east up the mountain. Upon arriving at the canyon we were fortunate to see a group of about 6 bighorn sheep on the rocks looking down at us. Off they went, leaving us in awe of how easily they made their way up and over the rocks. If only we could do so....

The day began mild and breezy as we made our way up climbing steadily, when we encountered our first rattlesnake which left Sue stumbling around on the rocks trying to give the snake his much needed personal space. Needless to say, we were now very in-tune with our surroundings. The DPS guide estimates 5 hours for this 5 mile hike. But due to the terrain and route finding... well, we knew it might be longer as we approached the flats just below the summit area. Heading SE we were able to scramble and make our way to the top, with Vic and Sue being the first to summit. After signing the register, we all took a much needed lunch break before beginning our short (in miles) but rocky, 4 hour journey back to the cars.

While maneuvering around and sliding down the rocks, we encountered yet another (#3) very angry rattlesnake. We negotiated around the snake, with a sigh of relief. On the way down, 3 of us had worn holes in the back of our pants which we tried to repair with moleskin. Besides losing the backs of our pants, we also left behind a bandana, and a water bottle. After a fun-filled day of rock scrambling, we arrived back at our cars all of us tired, a little battered (Jorge with a sore ankle, Markey with bruised ribs, all with scratches and tears from Cat's Claw), hungry, and with plenty of day light to spare. We then proceeded back into town for another great lunch at the Crossroad Café.

Thank you to Vic and Sue for making the navigating easier! Thank you to Markey and Robert for inviting us along. It was “Great Fun”! For Vic and Sue, it was their 7th time up. For the Neighbors it was their 7th and 4th desert peak, and for the Estradas it was their 19th and 20th desert peaks. Look forward to our next adventure together!!

DEVIL’S TOWER
May 20, 2009
By Doug Mantle

In the late 1970's we watched the movie “Close Encounters of the Third Kind.” We were doing Whitney’s East Face in boots in those years; “Cuno, let’s go climb Devils Tower!” Thirty years later I can finally say “I did it.” Betwixt and between, many did go to climb DT and put up historic routes...Royal Robins, Layton Kor, Bob Kamps, Fred Beckey, Jim Bridwell, and a friend of Bridwell’s, Frank Sanders. Sanders has never left. He owns upwards of 2,000 ascents, along with the only private accommodations within spitting distance of the Tower, the Devils Tower Lodge/B&B, the place to stay.

This April I was pondering the summer calendar when the DT idea struck. Within a day, I had arranged it for early May, before summer vacations and the heat of summer, etc. I would fly LAX to Rapid City, South Dakota (UAL via Denver; they also fly to Gillette, Wyoming, same difference), stay at Sanders’ great B&B (hot tub, view of the Tower, all meals...mmm, good), and, as Frank was booked for guiding, he referred me over to Sylvan Rocks Guide Service for a 3-day package: 2 days training and if I passed, a summit day. My goal was of course DT, and to do it via the (50 Classic Climbs) Durance Route.

Unsung, Jack Durance was a Conrad Kain or Glen Dawson of his time. His best route (another 50 Classic) is the Complete Exum on Grand Teton with its
horrifying (my choice of words) Black Face pitches. He narrowly missed a third classic on its North Face; but his 1938 climb on DT via the route named for him is his best-known climb. He repeated it in drizzly conditions a couple years later in a famous rescue of a guy who parachuted to the top, but that’s another story.

The Durrance Route, despite the breakage of its giant leaning column (the Park Service opines it isn’t likely to fall) still gets 85% of the would-be ascensionist traffic. On the Saturday before I arrived, 60 climbers queued up for the try. The route had been closed, an annual thing, for falcon nesting until then, but the crowds do come, frequently. Fortunately, this was not a problem on my trip.

On day one, we climbed in the Needles area of the Black Hills near Harney Peak (for you high pointers) and the town of Custer. We met at lovely Sylvan Lake (there are no natural lakes in South Dakota!) in Custer State Park. Just before the appointed 8:00 a.m. meeting time, the massive Sylvan Lake Guide’s truck came lumbering into the empty (except for me) parking lot. Shortly thereafter, out bounded my enthusiastic young mountain guide, Chris Spellmeyer. Later on, Frank Sanders told me that in Chris, I had “the best” guide. I agree! After a thorough going-over regarding safety and experience, we did a couple of real nice climbs. We were the only people in the area for the whole day.

On day two, we hit the north side of DT, the aptly-named “Schoolhouse Area” where we did a bunch of top-roped pitches, up to a short 5.9 handcrack.

I passed.

So, summit day, Wednesday, May 20th. We arrived at the parking lot at 6:00 a.m. We are elated, it’s empty. As we stretch and grin, at 6:02 a.m., a van with a gaggle of aspirants from the evil rival guide service pulls up. Well, maybe not evil, but I did make a couple of friendly approaches to the guide who was unreservedly unfriendly.

Fine.

We set off on the one-half hour approach, easily ahead of them.

Oh my gosh. We forgot the second rope (used for the descent rappels).

Forget Carl Lewis, nobody ever ran so fast as Chris Spellmeyer as he roared past THEM, got to the car, retrieved the rope and sprinted past the usurpers again in time for us to start the first pitch before THEY dropped their packs to rope up.

The best guidebook (by Lynn; it’s funny, irreverent and good) calls our route to the top of the 5,117’ foot summit 5.8, 6 pitches. Chris says it’s 5.7. Don’t listen to him. It’s 5.11b. No? With our long (70m) rope, we plan on 4 pitches.

We begin! Pitch 1...the guidebook says “if you have trouble on the first pitch (5.5?), there is no reason to continue...” So, I bite my hand and tough it out.

Pitch 2 takes me atop the famous leaning column (5.6), to the 70 foot “Durrance Crack,” actually two parallel cracks. For that, you stem off the left, polished crack wall with the left foot while jamming (turn your foot and lock it in) in the right crack, using your hands to jam or grab. Or paw. Okay, maybe it is not technically tough, but it is strenuous. There are little nooks every 10-15 feet which allow you to stop and emote.

Once up this, the crux is now below! The “Crussin Crack” (well-named) and the Flake, then a lesser chimney follow, to complete Pitch 3.

Thence, “The Meadows” is the usual finish, an initial scary traverse followed by scrambling. We took the more sporting “Bailey Direct Finish,” 110 foot, 5.7+ per the Guide. I’ve bumped my knee by now and wonder if I could still tape up the hands, but I ain’t saying nothing!

The summit looks just like a field outside of Hulett, Wyoming, a nearby town, unless you skirt the edges, which we did. We are still very much alone (the other team is 4:1, client to guide) as we commence our three rappels to the bottom.

Three hours up, the Guidebook calls for 6, ha! By 2:00 p.m. I have collapsed in a Fairfield Inn in Rapid City to rest up for a 6:00 a.m. flight home the next day.

INYO MOUNTAINS TRAVERSE
PLEASANT POINT, NEW YORK BUTTE,
POINT 10414, KEYNOT PEAK, MOUNT INYO
May 23-25, 2009
By Steve Eckert

This was an official DPS trip, led by Kathy Rich, with co-leaders Larry and Barbree Tidball. Someone said the Inyo Mountains Traverse hadn’t been done as an official DPS trip in over 20 years, so I hunted through the DPS archives. The only report I found was from 1987, and while they did it in only two days they also finished around midnight. This abbreviated report was shortened for publication in the DPS's Sage newsletter and web archives. The full report, with more words, climbing maps, and color pictures, is on the Climber.Org trip reports page.

The car shuttle dominated our first morning. We met at 630am, shuffled plans and people and gear before sending some trucks to the exit trailhead (Union Wash) while others waited at the meeting spot for a caravan to the entry trailhead (Cerro Gordo). One significant aspect of this trip was that we had to carry all our water for 3
days. From Cerro Gordo, we started around 9am with our very heavy packs (mostly around 50 lbs) and hiked uphill past the big steel gate. We left the road where it crosses the ridgeline and dropped north to the saddle, picking up a use trail that stayed on the west side of Pleasant Point. Bypassing several false summits, we left the use trail at 9600', scrambling 100' to the summit.

We arrived on Pleasant Point (9690') around noon, making barely over 1 mph while our schedule called for a 13 mile day. We enjoyed a nice lunch break and moved north. The use trail vanished, and we drifted down to the 4WD road.

The next landmark on our traverse was the Salt Tram, a huge cable car system designed to carry salt from the east over the Inyo Mts to Owens Lake. We took another long break lounging on the restored platform and snapping pictures of the huge beams and cables. We didn't leave until after 3pm.

Just north of the tram was the low point of the trip at 8500'. Then it's all pain and gain up to Burgess Mine and New York Butte. We had now been walking about 6 hours and were still just topping 1 mph. I had to wonder out loud if we'd really camp on top of New York Butte as planned... but the storm clouds were mostly over the Sierra Nevada and we were cruising along in nice weather, so why worry? On up the ridge! 11 miles and 8.5 hours into our day, our speed had picked up a bit but our energy was waning. We staggered the remaining third of a mile and camped at Burgess Mine, a nice saddle with an old shack and lots of room on old mine tailings to spread out. Fortunately the stiff breeze died out around dark and the threatening clouds dumped no rain.

The remaining 1.7 miles / 1000' to New York Butte was far easier in the morning! Before the nice campsite at the end of the road, there's a small parking area with wooden parking stops where you should leave the road, going west instead of north. The climb is easy if you find the use trail that follows the remnants of the road on the map. The summit block of New York Butte (10668') is only large enough for half a dozen people. We took turns on top for half an hour starting at 8am.

Hoisting packs, we dropped north to a saddle where the trail vanished and we ended up in brush again. Oops. The trail is definitely worth finding, and it's definitely along the whole ridge. The next saddle was above Goat Springs, where there might be water if you go down the east side of the saddle. Someone found the register on Point 10414, and those who were nearby signed in. We stayed on the ridgeline from here to Forgotten Pass, the start of the climb to Keynot.

From the pass we basically traversed level through several draws until we entered a band of trees before bumping into a well graded trail switchback. We couldn't really see where this trail went further down, but it wasn't just a random use trail and it's NOT on the map. The trail went up and north, suddenly ending (or becoming just a use trail) before we hit the ridge. We topped out on light rock in a flat notch (too small to see on the map) with some nice trees.

Magically there was a very attractive trail leading down the other side! Don't take that trail - it gradually leads you downhill and away from the ridge. Go up the ridge, over the false summit, and drop a few feet to a saddle before climbing the last 300' to the summit of Keynot Peak (11101'). The front of the group got to the summit around 5pm, and we ended up camping there rather than dropping to Bedspring Camp.

There was one last patch of snowbank near the final saddle, salvation for our water-starved person who filled a water bag and slept with it. There had been rain on 3 sides of us (but none ON us). More than one person had trouble with the altitude (sleeping over 11k isn't common
on DPS trips, and this was the high point of the traverse). Fortunately the lightning we saw after dark was somewhere far away, since we were camped on the range high point!

Our last day was all about downhill. We started before 630am, following a use trail about 100’ down on the northeast side of the ridge. After a while the use trail comes out on the ridge, and it’s a nice gravel jaunt down to the saddle above Bedspring Camp. We dropped our main packs and took water and snacks for the hike to Inyo Mtn. The map makes the ridgeline look easy, but it’s quite lumpy in real life and we stayed well west of the ridge. There is brush and boulders here, but it’s not hard unless you want to do a little class 3 scrambling. It took us about 1.5 hours to reach Bedspring Saddle and rest, and another 1.5 hours to reach the summit of Mt Inyo (10975’). Surprisingly, it took longer to return to the saddle than to climb Inyo!

We went straight down the wash until a clear use trail appeared, following it near the bottom of the drainage. There is a bedspring at Bedspring Camp (9400’). I’m not sure why anyone would camp there: it’s not that flat, there’s no water, it’s nowhere NEAR the place in Union Wash called Bed Spring. But there it is, rusting away. A quarter mile down-canyon from the rusty bedspring, the use trail angles over to the ridge above Point 9155. The REAL fun starts here! The trail tips steeply down on loose shale/talus. There are some switchbacks, but mostly it’s steep and loose. After a brief less-steep section, you’re plunging-stepping in hardball-size sharp rocks. A real boot shredder where you don’t want to fall but can descend at over 9000 feet/hour. Needless to say, the group got pretty spread out here. Barbee (trail sweep) pointed out to some people that there was a cool dry waterfall about 100’ up-canyon in Union Wash, and it turned out NOT to be dry! Those people got to wash up while the shuttle drivers dashed to the cars and the rest of us near the front hung out in the sun.

We walked down Union Wash on riverbed rocks, spotting cactus flowers and wishing the storm clouds over the valley would block our sun also. As soon as some old mining equipment was visible on the north bank of the wash, we took the use trail up onto the south bank of the wash (5500’). This leads to the 4WD trailhead, which in our case just meant easier walking down to the 2WD trailhead where the cars were. The head of the group got to the 4WD trailhead about 2pm, the back of the group got to the 2WD trailhead around 3:30pm.

It took a long time for the group to regroup, but eventually we headed down to Lone Pine. The drivers retrieving cars from Cerro Gordo were a few minutes behind the rest of the group, but since they were generally faster they got a head start and it all worked out pretty well. A bit of washing and gear packing in the park, an hour at the pizza place, and we were all on our way home. As we drove away after dinner, it seemed clear that the storm was finally raining where we HAD been, but it never rained ON us. Thanks to the leaders/co-leaders for an excellent adventure!

The participants were: Anne Anglim, Ron Bartell, Tom Bowman, Nick Brogna, Keith Christensen, Steve Eckert, Michael Gosnell, Ron Hudson, Wayne Martin, Christine Mitchell, Kathy Rich, Barbee and Larry Tidball.

Stats: According to the line I carefully drew in Topo after the trip, our first day (Cerro Gordo to Burgess Mine) was 11.4 miles with 3300’ gain and 1900’ loss. Our second day (Burgess Mine to Keynot Peak) was 7.1 miles with 3800’ gain and 2400’ loss. The last day was 7.1 miles with 1100 gain and 7500’ loss.

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INYO RIDGE TRAVERSE
NEW YORK BUTTE, KEYNOT PK, MT INYO
May 30-31, 2009
By Dave Perkins

Now I don’t work myself, but I did manage to organize a weekend climb of these three peaks for my working friends. On Friday night May 29th, Virgil Popescu, Gloria Miladin, Brian Smith, and I slept at the 2 wheel drive roadhead in the great Union Wash. Saturday morning we left a couple of cars there and took my car and our packs into Lone Pine where we had breakfast. Bob Hoeven met us there and drove us up the amazing Swansea grade to just below New York Butte - it was Bob’s love of driving scary 4WD roads that made this trip possible. Four of us shouldered our packs and began walking at about 9:30 AM. Bob showed us the trail that goes north, and led us to a spot on the northwest flank of New York Butte where we left our packs and climbed the peak with him. He left us at the summit, and we
picked up a pretty good use trail from New York Butte to Forgotten Pass, which lies at the southern base of Keynot Peak. Thanks to a tip from Christine Bartell, we traversed the almost trailless western side of the peak and after about a mile I was able to find a switchback trail that led to the summit plateau. We camped a few hundred feet below the summit where we were rained and hailed on (fortunately very lightly) during the evening. Sunday morning we left camp at 6:30 and were sitting on Keynot by 7. We then worked our way down the challenging north ridge of Keynot to the saddle between Keynot and Inyo by 10:30, where we left our packs and climbed Inyo, returning to our packs by 2 and out to the cars by about 6 PM.

All of us carried at least 6 liters of water, which was just the right amount. Fortunately the weather was mostly cool with occasional light rain. The views of the Sierra and of Saline Valley were truly marvelous.

Our Desert Tortoises
By Douglas Bear

My involvement with desert tortoises (DTs) began in early 2002. My wife and I adopted three DTs from Linda Moore of The Kern County Chapter of California Turtle & Tortoise Club in Bakersfield. I originally wanted just one, but Linda had a lot of them, and my wife suggested that if we just got one it might get lonely. Seven years later I now know better, DTs are solitary creatures and do not get lonely! I highly recommend to anyone thinking about getting a tortoise, just get one!

Anyway, after visiting Linda, we drove home with three DTs and no idea what to do with them. Two of the tortoises were tiny hatchlings (silver dollar size) less than six months old, and one was an adult male approx. 40 years old and weighed about 10 pounds. The large tortoise we named "Turbo" and the smaller ones "Pokey" and "Peppy." We also obtained three permits from the Department of Fish and Game. It is illegal to buy, sell or remove DTs from the wild as they are a federally protected species (it is also illegal to release a captive tortoise back to the wild).

Then our learning experience began. We kept the two little ones "awake" that winter and Turbo hibernated in a cold corner in our house. When Turbo awoke in May, it was very confusing for all of us. We did our best with them the first year, but they were unhappy, as we lived near the mountains in a cold climate and they were genetically programmed to live in the desert. The only thing that was good about where we lived was the abundance of annual lupine, a favorite DT food. To make a long story short, we moved to the desert and ever since the tortoises have been very healthy.

Now Turbo is approaching a half century and weighs about 11 lbs, Pokey and Peppy are about 7.5 years old and weigh about 4 lbs. They are also males, because their plastrons are concave, something that began developing around the fifth year. Female DTs have a flat plastron. So I have three DTs, all males, and well, they don't exactly get along! Thus, they must be housed separately.

The two small ones began "fighting" around age 4, it surprised me as I thought they were buds, and the one that kept losing these battles (Peppy) was becoming very stressed, I could tell. Pokey would breach the barrier in their shared enclosure, and repeatedly "plow" into Peppy until he was overturned. I decided to separate them and it was the right decision. Turbo, Pokey and Peppy each have their own "area" that cannot be invaded by the others. Turbo's area has an apple tree (he gets them when they fall off!), some cacti, a native bush and a very deep burrow where he spends most of his time. Pokey's area has some small bushes and native cacti, and a burrow. It is a large chain link dog kennel with chicken wire to protect from predators such as rats, roadrunners.

Turbo in the "hood". Photos by Douglas Bear.
and crows which frequent my yard.

Peppy lost the fight for the dog kennel, but I made him an area out of cinder blocks and chicken wire. He also has a burrow, and it's under a mulberry tree; the fruitless mulberry leaves are another DT favorite. It is very important for the tortoise to have a burrow; wild tortoises spend 95% of their lives underground. Because I have limited space, I select the burrow site for them, start it with a shovel, then let them finish it. I occasionally take Turbo for a Spring "field trip" to the open desert and let him walk around and eat flowers. The annual cycle of the DT is one of hibernation, emergence and feasting, summer malaise (although mine still eat every day), autumn slow down, and back to winter hibernation.

My torts hibernate from about Thanksgiving to Easter. Basically I put them each in a separate box, and place the boxes in a spare bathroom with the window cracked. The temp in the room ranges from 50-60 degrees all winter, I keep a large thermometer in the room. Around Easter, I get them out when the weather forecast is above 70-75 degrees. They are somewhat sluggish for a few days, but as long as the weather doesn't cool too much, they become active quickly. In Spring I have tons of stuff growing for them in my yard, so they eat a lot every day. By June it's very hot, but they still come out every morning for food! If I don't feed them by 8 AM, they retreat to their burrows and hit me up again around 5 PM.

By July I'm getting stressed because I feel bad for them since they are "captive" and I try to make their lives better by feeding them daily. But it's been 100+ degrees every day for a long time, and I'm working overtime to keep my plants from dying (daily watering) and the plants stop producing food by mid July. I sometimes buy dandelion greens at the grocery store as my yard is bone dry in midsummer, also carrots, broccoli, and kale, but VERY sparingly. In August my Roses of Sharon begin blooming, and all is well again as I have tons of organic food for them again as DTs LOVE Rose of Sharon (hibiscus flowers). They never say "no" to hibiscus flowers. During September I feed them native desert grass and Rose of Sharon mainly, and occasional prickly pear apples.

In the first week of October I stop feeding them. This may sound cruel, but in the desert there's nothing to eat in October. Besides, it's important for them to clear their system before hibernation. I offer them water several times in October to make sure they are hydrated before hibernation. Then the cycle repeats as I box 'em up again for hibernation in November. It gives them a break from me and me a break from them! A desert tortoise can live for a century. If properly cared for, a "pet" DT can easily outlive its caretaker. I use the word "caretaker" because we never really own them, rather we adopt them. If anything, they own us because they become part of the family and are cared for like family members. Once a tortoise has become a captive, it is illegal to release it to the wild. Thus they are technically "adopted 'endangered species' pets." They have special needs and at a minimum the DT caretaker must do the following: provide a healthy diet; provide a safe escape-proof enclosure or yard that has a burrow and provides sunlight and shade because they need both; protection from predators (crows, rats, canines, opossums, skunks, etc.), and provisions for safe hibernation.

Most of all you gotta love your tortoise as they are really neat creatures, especially once you get to know them. Anything that can live in the desert for a century with only the shell on its back is pretty incredible in my opinion. Whenever my tortoises see me, they always come to me, and I think on some level they know I mean them well. Unless you have a large piece of land in the desert with a six foot brick wall around it, it is difficult to replicate how they live in the wild. Even in the wild less than 5% of hatchlings become adults. Thus, as a caretaker you do your best with what you have. Probably the best thing I do for the tortoises is provide the correct climate and a healthy diet. DTs are vegetarians, and about 90% of what I feed them I grow organically in my yard.

If the winter brings rain, by March the annual wildflowers begin to grow. They enjoy desert dandelions, filaree, popcorn flowers, desert lupine, fiddleneck, and little grasses, to name a few. In May the desert willow trees bloom (I have three), and they enjoy eating the flowers. Another spring favorite is the beavertail fruit. It has a bright purple flower and succulent fruit that if left alone become the seeds. They love those things, and now I have them growing all over the yard as they are easy to propagate from pads. The diamond cholla aka "pencil cactus" flowers in May-June and they love the small flower/fruit. I have lots of the pencil cacti, so that becomes a staple for about a month. I also spend much time with tweezers that month (I handle
cactus often and never wear gloves). It's ironic, I'm
tweezing my fingers while they eat them! I observed a
wild tortoise once eating pencil cacti and said "I got
those" and a little extra water on them makes them
flower nicely. I also feed them roses, mulberry leaves,
day lilies, rose of Sharon, even occasional strawberries,
all of which I grow. I grow the "tuna" cactus - they eat
the new pads (so do I), and another treat is the hedgehog
cactus fruit (which I despise for them).

They have an amazing tolerance for the small cactus
spines (like the "hairy" ones on beavertail fruit for
example), but anything with larger spines I either
despise or do not feed them. I do not feed them cholla
balls for example as that would be cruel.

Usually by July the intense desert heat has made finding
food for them difficult, so I reluctantly resort to the
produce section at the grocery store. A wild tortoise
spends the summer underground, but mine are "pets" and
come out (of their burrows) for food every day, even in
July. Thus I feel obligated to feed them since that is
probably all they have to look forward to in their lives.
Even though I live in and like a lot in the desert, I rarely
see them in the wild, maybe once per year, and I know
their numbers are dwindling, and with that knowledge,
plus a lot of other stuff I see that I won't mention, I
actually have a feeling of sadness about their plight. In
the wild they have freedom, but face many hazards (that
are increasing) and a dwindling mating population. In
my yard they are protected and well-fed, but captive.
Probably the "luckiest" DTs are the few that live in
Joshua Tree National Park. Thus I have two choices,
continue to care for them (which I do my best at) or
return them to the tortoise club for adoption. I am
certainly hoping my child likes tortoises when she grows
up, because I will eventually need someone else to take
my place. So that's a summary of my experience with the
gopherus agassizii, the desert tortoise. And yes Mary,
they do have distinct personalities!

(DID YOU KNOW - continued from page 10)

that the man next to me asked what I was reading. Edna, still the resident sexpot and bon vivant of DPS, SPS, and
HPS, proves her mettle in telling our stories. A book signing is scheduled at our September potluck.

Thanks to Barbara Lilley who mails me great clippings from the Inyo newspaper. There are things astir along Highway
395 which hold great interest for all of us who’ve logged a few thousand miles (and speeding tickets) along our
favorite bi-way. The latest was about John Thomas Cristiana who took it upon himself to vandalize several cars at
trailheads, plus burning down the Ancient Bristlecone Pine Forest Visitor’s Center (Sept. 2008), plus more malicious
damage at the White Mountain Summit Research Lab which sits atop our beloved 14,250’ White Mountain (the
fourth highest altitude research facility on the planet.) Ironic that felon Cristiana was an accomplished mountaineer,
having climbed the highest summits of the seven continents! His reason for the extensive damages was something
snapped inside of him, and he wanted to make a statement lashing out against the U.S. government for intruding in
his life. The article is intriguing, and if you want to read more, Google the Inyo Register, April 18 and 19, 2009, vol.
139, issue 47. Barbara also included a welcomed article on the newest exhibit in the Eastern California Museum,
“Norman Clyde of the High Sierra.” Photos, writings, and Clyde’s personal belongings are on display till the end of
the year (www.inyoconunty.us/ecumuseum). Long time friend, Gnarly Bill Oliver journeyed from Colorado to Pas-
daena giving his own Clyde show with the help of legendary climber, Glen Dawson, this past July. All in attendance
enjoyed it tremendously.

DYK, this is your last chance to adopt a burro: the BLM announced over 100 wild burros will be rounded up in the
Mojave Desert next month and put up for adoption. I guess the Fort Irwin Army base has had its fill of these pesky
creatures. The BLM adds that burros are popular, so finding homes for them should be no problem. Uh...attention
Ron and Leora Jones, Sherry Harsh, Betty and Joe
McCosker — is it time to re-visit our famous burro cele-
brations from yesteryear?

And that’s the news from the Land of Little Rain, and I
hope to gather more scoops and stories in the fall as we
climb together on the higher peaks, and later sit in camara-
derie at our inimitable cheery DPS campfires and partak-
ing of delectable potlucks. Perhaps Doug Mantle will pass
the Petit Grepion mustard and tell us of his Classic Climbs
further accumulated in Summer 2009.

- Mary Mac
DEAD IN THEIR TRACKS: CROSING AMERICA’S DESERT BORDERTERLANDS (1999, revised 2003), John Annerino

“Dust devils whirl around us as the raw sun torches the bleak landscape. The hot sand blisters our feet. The vast desert swallows our footsteps. And the distant mirages consume our dreams.

We plod on, breathing in the scorched air of the morning sun. The wet bandanas covering our mouths do little to soothe our parched throats. And the hot water steaming in our plastic jugs does little to slake our incurable thirst.”

Dead in Their Tracks—from which the opening paragraphs above are excerpted—is John Annerino’s effort to inform readers of the risks that hundreds of migrant workers run each summer while attempting to cross the 4,100-square-mile “empty quarter” straddling the Arizona/Sonora border.

To familiarize himself with the hazards faced by the illegal immigrants, Annerino and two companions made a 6-day mid-summer hike, starting in Ajo, AZ, passing through Organ Pipe Cactus National Monument, Cabeza Prieta National Wildlife Refuge, the Barry M. Goldwater Air Force Range, finally ending in Yuma, AZ.

During the night prior to reaching their destination, Annerino notes: “Our sheets and bedrolls provide little respite from the burning sand, and as weary as I am, I cannot sleep.”

Under the starry sky, the author wonders how many are out there at that very moment attempting to cross the “blistering no-man’s land?... How many will make it out of the desert alive so they can work in the underbelly of the American dream?... How many more will leave little trace of their passing, but the flimsy plastic grocery bags that once held their worldly possessions: tortillas, chilis, salt, limes, canned sardines, beans, and goat cheese; an old flashlight, a wad of ancient pesos, and a matchbook etched with a ranch foreman’s phone number; and finally, a black corpse.”

On a succeeding summer, Annerino traveled to El Sahuarco, a truck stop on Mexico’s Highway 2, 60 miles east of San Luis Rio Colorado, 80 miles west of Sonoyta, where he somehow convinced four Mexican nationals, Rosario, Armando, Guillermo and Marcellino, to let him join them on their 60 mile crossing to U.S. Interstate 8.

Barely surviving the experience, Annerino later traveled to the impoverished village of Las Gallinas, Sinaloa, where he visited the families of his four companions. What he found there was sadly typical, i.e., poor indigenous folks “forcefully displaced from their homeland by land fraud, drug cultivation, environmental devastation, and an exploding mestizo population.”

Dead in Their Tracks also provides a history of the desolate area, starting with the native Sand Papago, who barely eked out an existence in the wilderness, followed by the Spanish conquistadors, including Melchior Diaz, who in 1540, starting from the Gulf of California, crossed the burning desert to rendezvous with Francisco Vasquez de Coronado. Next came a succession of Spanish missionaries, including Padre Eusebio Francisco Kino (for whom Kino Peak was named), followed by Argonauts seeking an alternate, snow-free route to the California gold fields. “Historians believe that between the 1850s and the turn of the century, four hundred to two thousand gold seekers—many of them Mexican nationals—died of thirst” in the area.

Dead in Their Tracks also offers a selection of Annerino’s photos—including grisly shots of corpses and skeletons he found on the desert floor—and a section, “In Memoriam,” listing the known deaths recorded in the area between January 18, 1541, when Melchior Diaz died of a wound near Sonoyta, and September 2002.

SALT DREAMS: LAND & WATER IN LOW-DOWN CALIFORNIA (1999), William deBuys, Photographs by Joan Myers

Salt Dreams is both an ambitious, illuminating work and an excellent read. If you have any interest in the history of the lower Colorado River, the formation of the Salton
Sea, the complexities of water usage in what is now the Imperial Valley, the sad demise of the wilderness that once could be found at the mouth of the river, the dynamics of immigration—legal & otherwise—along the border, or what can be done to solve the problem of California’s polluted inland sea, this is the book for you.

Beginning with an early history of the Colorado Desert, including that of the native Quechans and the subsequent arrival of the Spanish and Americans, deBuys reminds us that the land south of Yuma is a virtual teeter-totter with the Colorado River sometimes flowing north, forming a fresh water lake in the Salton Basin, or, more likely, running south to the Gulf of California. Unpredictable before being tamed by Hoover Dam, the river at Yuma could sometimes be swum across with ease, while at other times, especially during a melt off in the Rockies, it would become a rampaging flow several hundreds yards in width.

In 1877 the Southern Pacific Railroad completed laying their below sea level tracks between San Gorgonio Pass and Yuma, establishing siding with names such as: Glamis, Aculita, Mammoth, Flowing Well, Volcano, and Salton, “the last of which acknowledged the salt beds of remarkable purity that lay at the bottom of the sink.” Soon thereafter, the New Liverpool Salt Company began harvesting the 95% pure salt from beds that lay up to 285 feet below sea level.

In 1900, several years after being first being conceived, the woefully under-capitalized California Development Company, under the direction of George Chaffey, began a project to build “without doubt, one of the most meritorious irrigation projects in the country.” And on April 1, 1901, when “a tongue of red, silty liquid shot through and flowed down the canal…,” water diverted from the Colorado River at last began to bring new life to the Imperial Valley.

Four years later, in early 1905, a series of floods washed away the head gate of the water distribution system, causing the entire flow of the river to divert into the Salton Basin. Rising several inches each day, the resulting body of water flooded the salt works and threatened to drown every new farm and town in the area.

By June 1906, the flow still unchecked, 80% of Mexicali had been washed away, and construction of a six-foot levee was necessary to save the adjoining town of Calexico.

In November that same year, after cabling together masses of arrowweed and willow mattresses to form a base, then dumping 400,000 cubic yards of rock and earth into the breach, the flow was finally stopped. Alas, a month later, “a sudden flood surged down the Gila (River) and lifted the flow of the Colorado at Yuma from 9,000 to 45,000 cubic feet/second.”

Convinced that Herculean measures were necessary, the Southern Pacific, who had taken control of the project, built a trestle across the 1,100 foot wide, 40 foot deep crevasse, and, at a rate of almost 225 cubic yards per hour, dumped rock into the breech. “For two weeks all rail traffic in and out of Los Angeles ceased, as every available engine and every car capable of hauling boulders or ballast was thrown into the fight against the river.”

The Imperial Valley was thus saved, becoming one of the most productive farming areas in world. Indeed, today the area supplies between one-third and one-half of all the winter vegetables consumed in the United States. Unfortunately, however, the Salton Sea did not, as predicted early on, evaporate and go away.

DeBuys explains that fertilizer-rich run off from the Imperial and Coachella Valley fields, the flush water used to prevent build up of salt in the root zones in those fields, and the flow of sewage down the New River from Mexicali, combined with evaporation, have caused the Salton Sea to become an increasingly evil stew of pollution.

When the water now used to irrigate the Imperial Valley is, as it eventually must be, diverted to sustain future residential growth in Southern California, and after Mexicali cleans up its sewage system, recycling its waste water for other uses, the Salton Sea will surely shrink. A host of problems will then occur, including fish and bird die offs—both of which are already common, air borne pollution from the dried residue, and the loss of a vital link in the migration route of several species of birds.

Salt Dreams discusses various plans to save the sea—all expensive and long term in nature, explains how the once lush wildlife of the Colorado Delta has diminished, describes the Salton City real estate debacle of the late 1950s and early 1960s, portrays the inhabitants of Slab City, and touches on the illegal immigration problem. Several maps, a top-notch bibliography, and a gallery of excellent black and white photographs by Joan Myers complete this exceptional and highly recommended volume.

SEARCHLIGHT: THE CAMP THAT DIDN'T FAIL (1998), Unite States Senator, Harry Reid

As the majority leader of the U.S. Senate, Senator Harry Reid (D, Nev), holds one of the most powerful positions in the U.S. government. Improbable though it may seem, the senator was born in a wood shack in the small mining town of Searchlight, NV. His father, John, was a heavy-drinking hard-rock miner, subject to bouts of depression, who eventually committed suicide, while his mother, Inez, had little formal education. Reid’s early schooling took place in a two-room school house in Searchlight, and he had to leave home to attend high
school in Henderson. Although Reid makes few references to his personal history in this affectionate history of his home town, his book makes it clear that a cultured, polished background is not always a requirement for success in life.

At 3,450' in altitude, Searchlight is located on Highway 95, 50 miles north of Needles and 80 miles south of Las Vegas. Because it is surrounded by several DPS peaks, including Clark Mt. to the west, New York Mt. to the southwest, McCullough Mt. to the northwest and Mt. Tipton to the east, the little town is no doubt familiar territory to most DPS members.

One popular story has it that the name Searchlight, which was first mentioned in a mining journal in 1899, was born when one wag quipped, "There may be ore there alright, but it would take a searchlight to find it." Later that same year, because of an almost accidental decision to sink a so-far unproductive shaft a few feet further, the rich payload that fueled the boom town's growth was discovered. After that, thanks to the Quartette and the Duplex, the biggest and richest of the subsequent mines, along with several smaller operations, the little settlement grew rapidly, reaching the apex of its population of 6,000 in late 1907/early 1908.

In March of 1907, after long consideration, the Acheson, Topeka & Santa Fe completed and commenced service on a spur line between Barnwell, near Needles, and Searchlight. Unfortunately, just as the railroad arrived the ore production began to diminish.

Searchlight, however, did not become a ghost town like so many Nevada mining camps. It survived at first because small amounts of ore remained for those who, like Reid's father, "toiled the earth for little return." After that, the town, although diminished to few more than 1,000 residents, lived on for several reasons, including the fact that it lay on a major route into Las Vegas, the construction activity at nearby Hoover Dam and the development of Lake Mead National Recreational Area in the 1930s, the several houses of prostitution that operated in town from the end of World War II until 1956, the formation of Lake Mojave after Davis Dam was completed in 1952, the growth of nearby Laughlin, and, more recently, the fact that it has become a popular retirement area.

Searchlight contains a wealth of information on the town's beginnings, its short-lived newspapers, its one bank, its schools, the history of raising cattle in the area (movie stars Rex Bell and his wife Clara Bow once owned the largest ranch in the area), and the story of how one Searchlight resident, William "Bill" Nellis, for whom Nellis Air Force Base is named, died a hero in WWII.

Reid's ends this homage to his hometown thusly: "Searchlight survived...and lives on, a unique camp, a unique town, in a unique place—it didn't fail."

"THE LAND THAT GOD FORGOT..." (1989, Revised 1992), Brigadier General David C. Henley

This 54-page booklet recounts the brief 25-month history of the Desert Training Center, which was hurriedly organized in the spring of 1942 to train U.S. troops in desert warfare in the event they might be sent to North Africa to aid the British in fighting the Germans. Organized under the command of the legendary General George S. Patton, Jr., and headquartered at Camp Young at what is now Chiriaco Summit, 30 miles east of Indio on I-10, the training area included 16,200 square miles of the Mojave and Colorado Deserts.

By the time the Center was shut down and deactivated on April 30, 1944, more than 1 million soldiers from at least 400 different units of every type and description had trained there. Unfortunately, the associated troop and equipment movements left scars on the desert's fragile surface which can still be seen today.

Including 27 pages of photographs, General Henley's work is a succinct history of the area involved, of the 10 divisional training camps that were built, and of General Patton—who died on December 25, 1945 as the result of an automobile accident in Mannheim, Germany.
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