FEATURED IN THIS ISSUE

Chili Cookoff
Octoberfest Potluck
Pleasant List Finish

http://angeles.sierraclub.org/dps/
Dear DPS members, friends, dwellers of the tents and campoodies, and all who roam the wild and thorny places: It's the New Year, and 2009 has been a great experience for me in serving as DPS Chair. For one who kicked and balked at any further political activity, I am thankful to Edna Erspamer and Michael Gosnell who resurrected me from the mothballs and urged me to get re-involved in the DPS. I have had more fun than you'll ever know; thanks for the emails and snail mails giving me advice and new notions for the success of our great climbing group. Now, I'm looking for a few good men and women to run for Management, 2010; and I can truthfully say, you'll love working with the present group (Christine, Tina, Gloria, and Elaine.) Before the snows melt and the desert blooms, you'll receive an official DPS ballot plus some serious issues to be voted in or out: suspension and delisting of certain peaks, a Leader emblem for those who have led or co-led 50 desert peaks, and of course, our election. The banquet form (salmon or beef or languishing noodles) will be included in this mailing.

Elaine Baldwin, forever patient and generous with her time and efforts, is busy making final decisions for our banquet location. To be fair with those living south of the 405, we are looking for banquet facilities in your location. If the wilderness gods bless us, Jeff Dhungana will give an unusual program on his bicycling pilgrimage from L.A. to Patagonia. Jeff is both a talented and a spiritual young man who loves the wilderness, and you'll be amazed and gratified to hear his show as he passes through many desert and mountain ranges on his way to journey's end. There will be the usual high jinks, raffles, and more fun and laughter as the Desert Peaks Section is known for its abilities in serious partying. If we can lure Doug Mantle away from the peaks for a Sunday night, we may land our favorite emcee for the evening. We'll not only put ourselves on the backs for a job well done, but we want to give awards to the Brightest and the Best (stars) in DPS. Please send names for those deserving that special recognition.

On a serious note, I am formally apologizing to Ranger Naturalist Charlie Callagan of Death Valley National Park, when DPS individuals crossed protected desert land (Desert Protection Act of 1997) in the park to gain a short cut to Pyramid Peak. The trip report was published much to our embarrassment and shame. We (DPS climbers) love the sacredness and sanctity of our desert, and thank you, Ranger Callagan in accepting our deepest apologies and our promise that we climbers will not cross boundaries in order to gain our summits. We are team members in protecting the lands we love.

For all persons who made the DPS a great and energized section this year with all your contributions (outings, trip reports, pot lucks, reaching out to new members, raffle gifts, hours of management, Sage writing, and paperwork), I salute you. Our end of the year holiday party was attended by fifty or more revelers, and Dave and Ann Perkins wined and dined us in great luxury and style. Not only did we usher in the holidays as we walked beneath Dave and Ann's red pepper lights, we held a "love fest", saluting Charlie Knapke for the thousands (and ten of thousands) of hours he has given to all sections of the Sierra Club. It was our honor to pause in our merrymaking to simply say, "Thanks, Charlie, you're the man!" I am forever thankful to friends as our Charlie, "not only for all the innumerable mountain days and nights, our climbers have given each other; but the hours at the computer in promoting our programs and causes." In the New Year, be well, be strong, and come join us in DPS fellowship and fun. - Mary

El Pecacho Del Diablo
Chili Cookoff
Octoberfest Potluck
Palmer & Grapevine
Pleasant Point List Finish
Pilot Peak, NV
Two Buttes, CO
Book Review

NEXT SUBMISSION DEADLINE FEBRUARY 13, 2010

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 Sage explores the desert mountain ranges of California and the Southwest, stimulates the interest of Sierra Club membership in climbing these ranges and aids in the conservation and preservation of desert wilderness areas.
TRIPS / EVENTS
JANUARY Through MAY 2010

JAN 9  SAT  DPS  Stepladder Mountain
JAN 9  SAT  LTC, WTC, DPS, HPS  Warren Point
JAN 10  SUN  DPS  DPS Potluck and Management Meeting
JAN 10  SUN  LTC, WTC, DPS, HPS  Warren Point Navigation
JAN 16-17  SAT-SUN  DPS, WTC  Eagle Mountain #2, Smith Mountain, Corkscrew Peak
JAN 30  SAT  LTC, DPS, SPS, HPS  Local Baldy Snow Practice
JAN 30-31  SAT-SUN  DPS  Turtle Mountain, Mopah Point
FEB 7  SUN  DPS  DPS Potluck and Management Meeting
FEB 13  SAT  LTC, DPS, SPS, HPS  Local Baldy Snow Practice
FEB 13-14  SAT-SUN  DPS  Needle Peak, Manly Peak
FEB 20-21  SAT-SUN  DPS  Pahrump Point, Stewart Point
FEB 27-28  SAT-SUN  DPS  Granite Mountain, Kelso Peak
MAR 6-7  SAT-SUN  DPS  Nopah Range, Smith Mountain
MAR 7  SUN  DPS  DPS Potluck and Management Meeting
MAR 12-13  FRI-SAT  DPS  Mount Ajo, Superstition Mountain
MAR 13-14  SAT-SUN  DPS  Pahrump Point, Stewart Point
MAR 26-28  FRI-SUN  DPS, WTC, LTC, others  Desert Ecology Workshop
MAR 27  SAT  LTC  Deadline for Leadership Training Seminar
MAR 27-28  SAT-SUN  DPS  Dry Mountain, Tin Mountain
APR 10  SAT  LTC  Leadership Training Seminar
APR 11  SUN  DPS  DPS Potluck and Management Meeting
APR 17  SAT  DPS, WTC  Spectre Point, Dyadic Point
APR 17-18  SAT-SUN  DPS, HPS, WTC  Martinez Mountain
MAY 16  SUN  DPS  DPS Annual Banquet
MAY 29-30  SAT-SUN  DPS  Mount Dubois, Boundary Peak, Montgomery Peak

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://sierraclub.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 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.

\( \dagger \) JAN 9  SAT  DPS

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.

\( \dagger \) JAN 9  SAT  LTC, WTC, DPS, HPS

I: Warren Pt (5103'): Practice navigation for Sunday's checkoff on this 6 mile rt, 1300' gain hike in the pinyon pine and juniper region of western Joshua Tree National Park. We will take a cross-country route to Warren Pt and practice micro-navigation skills along the way. Send email (preferred) or sase, with contact info & recent conditioning to Leader: Robert Myers (rmmyers@ix.netcom.com). Co-Leaders: Adrienne Benedict, Ann Pedreschi, Jane Simpson.

\( \dagger \) JAN 10  SUN  DPS

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 (gm500@yahoo.com).

THE DESERT SAGE 4  January/February 2010
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 16-17**

**SAT-SUN**

**DPS, WTC**

MR: **Eagle Mtn #2 (3806’), Smith Mtn (5913’), Corkscrew Pk (5804’)**: Climb striking Eagle Mtn. #2 east of Death Valley via a non-standard route involving additional class 3 climbing fun, 3 mi rt, 1800’ gain. Afterward end the day on nearby Smith Mtn, 6 mi, 2500’ gain, and then we’ll car camp nearby in order to do Corkscrew, 7 mi rt, 3300’ gain, Sun morning. Helmets, experience with exposed class 3 rock, medical form required. Send climbing resume, Sierra Club number, and contact information to Leader: Matthew Hengst (mhengst@hotmail.com). Co-Ldr: Kathy Rich.

**JAN 30**

**SAT**

**LTC, DPS, HPS, SPS**

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

**JAN 30-31**

**SAT-SUN**

**DPS**

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 pot luck 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 (bstdidball@earthlink.net). Co-Leader: Larry Tidball.

**FEB 07**

**SUN**

**DPS**

O: **DPS Potluck and Management Meeting**: Come to the home of Audrey Goodman 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 13**

**SAT**

**LTC, DPS, SPS, HPS**

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

**FEB 13-14**

**SAT-SUN**

**DPS**

I: **Needle Peak (5803’), Manly Peak (7196’)**: Climb two interesting Death Valley Peaks – Needle is 2900 feet of gain and 7 miles, and Manly is 2800’ of gain and 6 miles. We plan to drive in using the Eastern approach; our previous experience is that this road is not as bad as the Western approach over Goler Wash. 4WD will be necessary in some spots, however. Contact Leader: Dave Perkins (david.perkins@csun.edu). Assistant: Ann Perkins (aperkins@csun.edu).

**FEB 27-28**

**SAT-SUN**

**DPS**

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.

**MAR 6-7**

**SAT-SUN**

**DPS**

I: **Nopah Range (6394’), Smith Mtn (5914’)**: Sat 4200’ gain, 10 mi, cl 2 on Nopah Range near Death Valley. Sun we’ll climb Smith Mtn (2300’gain, 5.5 mi rt). Long dirt road driving makes high-clearance 4WD vehicles useful. Send email (preferred) or sase to Leaders: Virgil Popescu (gillypope@ca.rr.com) and Patricia Arredondo.
**MAR 7** SUN DPS

O: DPS Potluck and Management Meeting: Come to the home of Christine Mitchell and Ron Bartell in Manhattan Beach. Meeting starts at 4:30; potluck at 6 pm. Bring a beverage of your choice and a potluck item to share. Contact Reservationist: Christine Mitchell (christinebartell@yahoo.com).

**MAR 12-13** FRI-SAT DPS

I: Mt Ajo (4808'), Superstition Mtn (5057'): Join us for one or both of these peaks. Fri hike up Ajo in Organ Pipe Natl Mon (7.5 mi, 2600’ gain); Sat climb Superstition and see petroglyphs, maybe big horn sheep (6.5 mi, 3000’ gain). Send e-sase or sase with conditioning to Leader: Tina Bowman (tina@bowmandesigngroup.com). Co-Leader: Mary McMannes.

**MAR 13-14** SAT-SUN DPS

I: Pahrump Pt (5740'), 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 (gillypopesc@yahoo.com) or Co-Leader: Patricia Arredondo (paarredo@verizon.net).

**MAR 17** SUN DPS

O: Desert Ecology Workshop: Explore important waterways on the borders of Mojave and Colorado Desert during spring wildflower season. Observe birds and other wildlife, flora, and human impact on the desert. Car camp at Whitewater Preserve near Palm Springs, Ridge hike Fri, canyon hikes Sat/Sun, potluck Sat, LTC credit available. $30 to SC Natural Sciences Section w/ SC#, $35 w/o. Details via E-mail or SASE. Send payment, conditioning, contact, and carpool information to Leader: Sharon Moore (justslm@earthlink.net). Assistant Leader: Naturalists Sherry Ross and Ginny Heringer, Assistant Leaders Mei Kwan and Margot Lowe.

**APR 11** SUN DPS

O: DPS Potluck and Management Meeting: Come to the home of Barbee and Larry Tidball in Long Beach. Meeting starts at 4:30; potluck at 6 pm. Bring a beverage of your choice and a potluck item to share. Contact Reserv: Barbee Tidball (lbtidball@verizon.net).

**APR 17** SAT DPS

MR: Spectre Pt (4400’), Dyadic Pt (4360’): Climb these rugged peaks in the beautiful Coxcomb Mtns in Joshua Tree NP. From hwy 62 we’ll hike cross country up washes and class 2 rock to Spectre and then class 3 rock to unlisted Dyadic Point, 16 mi rt, 2300’ gain. Expect a long day due to rugged terrain, though we should be rewarded with wildflowers. Send email or sase with experience, conditioning, climbing resume, medical form, phone, and carpool information to Leader: Joe Speigl (jspeigl1@yahoo.com). Co-Leader: Kathy Rich.
Membership Summary

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<tr>
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<td>Totals:</td>
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Activity Report

List Finish

Corrected Emblem Sequence Numbers

In the last two membership reports, the emblem sequence numbers for the new emblem holders were wrong. These are the correct sequence numbers:

- #576 Daryn Dodge 7/26/09 Telescope Pk
- #577 Gloria Miladin 8/22/09 Charleston Pk

New Members

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<th>New Members</th>
<th>Boundary Pk</th>
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<th>Clark Mtn</th>
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<td>Mary Ann Bonds</td>
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<td>Wayne Martin</td>
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<td>Tracey Thomsonson</td>
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Renewed Lapsed Members

- Tom Ersparmer
- Jeffrey Koenpke

New Subscriber

- Richard Bullock
- Henry A. Arnebold
- Sara Danta
- Steven Gabel
- Mary McMannes

Sustaining Renewals

- 1 year
- 1.25 years
- 0.5 year

Membership Renewals

- 2 years
- 1 year
- 1 year

Activity Report

1: Martinez Mtn (6,560+'): Enjoy desert scenery on this challenging point-to-point backpack featuring a peak in the Santa Rosa Wilderness near Palm Springs. Water will be scarce so be prepared to carry extra. Saturday: 11 mi, w/ approx 3000' gain climbing Martinez Mtn. (3+ miles will be x-c). Sunday: 14 mi hike out with car shuttle return. Send email, phone #s, conditioning, and recent backpacking experience, including comfort w/x-c travel to Leader: Dave Scobie (davescobie@gmail.com), Assistant: Beth Epstein.

- APR 17-18 SAT-SUN DPS, HPS, WTC
- SAT: Martinez Mtn (6,560+'): Enjoy desert scenery on this challenging point-to-point backpack featuring a peak in the Santa Rosa Wilderness near Palm Springs. Water will be scarce so be prepared to carry extra. Saturday: 11 mi, w/ approx 3000' gain climbing Martinez Mtn. (3+ miles will be x-c). Sunday: 14 mi hike out with car shuttle return. Send email, phone #s, conditioning, and recent backpacking experience, including comfort w/x-c travel to Leader: Dave Scobie (davescobie@gmail.com), Assistant: Beth Epstein.

- MAY 29-30 SAT-SUN DPS
- MR: Mt Dubois (13,559'), Boundary Pk (13,140'), Montgomery Pk (13,441'): Sat climb Dubois x-c 9 mi, 5300' gain. Car camp Sat night. Sun climb Boundary, high point of Nevada, and Montgomery (8 mi, 4200' gain rt). We might see wild horses and will climb on snow. Some poor dirt road driving. Open to Sierra Club members only with appropriate snow experience. Send e-mail or sase with SC#, snow exp, conditioning, rideshare info to Leader: Tina Bowman (tina@bowmandesigngroup.com). Co-Leader: Kathy Rich.

PYRAMID PEAK CORRECTION

The Pyramid Peak article appeared in the July/August 2009 Desert Sage. According to Charlie Callagan, Ranger Naturalist Wilderness Coordinator, Death Valley National Park, the faint road that we drove for 1.5 miles toward Pyramid Peak was illegal. I apologize for my ignorance not knowing the Wilderness boundaries. Please, do not attempt to drive off-road anywhere in Death Valley National Park and especially along Highway 190 in the vicinity of Pyramid Peak, due to wilderness. If the road is not shown on the park's free Backcountry Road map or on National Geographic/Trails illustrated map, then it most likely no longer exists as a legal route. For driving and climbing directions for Pyramid Peak, refer to the DPS Guide which is correct. With deepest apologies, Gloria Miladin.

Covers Photo: Porter Peak from the ridge above Johnson Canyon. Photo by Bob Sumner.
ANNUAL DPS TREASURY REPORT 2009

INCOME:
- Banquet/Raffle: $2772.00
- Subscription Dues: $2256.00
- Donations: $115.00
- Merchandise Sales: $483.24
- Interest: $1.64
- Bank Fees Refund: $7.00

Total Income: $5634.88

EXPENSES:
- Banquet Cost: $2195.72
- Newsletter Printing: $1861.43
- Newsletter Mailing: $811.95
- Website Maintenance: $165.48
- Postage: $129.43
- Sales Tax: $52.45
- Party Reimbursement: $150.00
- List Finishing Pins Order: $229.76
- Bank Fees: $49.00
- Merchandise Return: $28.00
- Returned Check: $85.95

Total Expenses: $5759.17

OVERALL TOTAL: - $124.29

Submitted by Gloria Miladin

OUTINGS CHAIR

At the November 7, 2009, meeting the Management Committee accepted the recommendations of the Mountaineering Committee to place McFarland Peak on the ballot for addition and both Argus Peak and Maturango Peak for deletion. Dan Richter led an exploratory outing to McFarland on September 26th, 2009 and proposed adding the peak to the list (see the November-December 2009 issue of the Sage). The Mountaineering Committee maintains that Argus and Maturango should be dropped from the list because we cannot legally lead trips to these peaks. Having them on the DPS list implies that the DPS and the Sierra Club condone trespassing on a military reservation. Until such a time, if ever, that we can legally lead these peaks, they should be off the list. Please submit your pro and con arguments for the March-April Sage to Bob Sumner, editor, by Saturday, February 13th, at bobsumner@att.net.

I learned from Harlan Stockman that the DPS guide access for Granite Mt #1 involves trespassing in a research area run by the Sweeney Granite Mountains Desert Research Center. It looks like access from the Willow Springs Basin to the south, Budweiser Canyon to the southwest, or Bull canyon from the northwest might be legal. I’m looking into it and whether we need to secure permission before entering via one of these other routes. Find out more at http://granites.ucnrs.org/index.html

Ed Herman had a mighty fine list finish on Pleasant Point and party following at the Tuttle Creek campground near Lone Pine. Who will be next? - Tina

PEAK GUIDE UPDATES

I have received information from Tina Bowman about the route for Granite #1, 3.8 access and Potosi Route C, 6.9.

There is a trespass required to climb the Granite Peak #1 using the Cottonwood route listed in the Peak Guide. Granite Peak is just inside the Reserve. Tina was in communication with the management of the Reserve. They do not mind people climbing the Peak if they access it from outside the Reserve. The Cottonwood route should not be used. Tina suggests using Willow Springs Basin, Budweiser Canyon or Bull Canyon. She reports that these are all beautiful areas and the Willow Springs is a better route than the Cottonwood Route. See: http://granites.ucnrs.org/User%20Information/Rules%20and%20Regs.htm

In November, Tina climbed Potosi Peak going up the C Route. She reports these updates for the Guide. "At Potosi Springs, bear right at the road fork and drive 0.9 miles on a good dirt road to a fork. Take the left fork, Road 582 and drive 1.2 miles on a good dirt road to a steep rocky uphill portion. A high clearance vehicle or better is recommended for this uphill climb. Just beyond this hill is a fork, bear left on road 584. Drive 0.25 miles to another fork and bear left on 584A. Drive 1.2 miles (ignoring the road forking to the right at 0.9 miles) to where the road is washed out.

THE DESERT SAGE
This is about 0.1 miles from the cabin site. Park.

For the climb she suggests taking the smaller wash just behind and slightly to the right of the cabin ruins and not confusing this with the larger wash to the right listed in the Guide. Thank You, Tina, for sending in this material.

I recently climbed Cerro Pescadores with Anne and Bob Hoeven. We found new construction closing the driving route listed in the Peak Guide at the 25K highway post. The 25K highway post was missing. I originally climbed this route in 2006 on a trip led by Beth Epstein and Asher Waxman. We pioneered a different route back to the highway on that trip. Since then this route has been used by other people and now offers a good road in to the parking spots for the climb. The new route leaves the highway just past the 21K highway marker at UTM 11 S 0653652 3587913. Turn right here and drive this road for 1.2 miles and turn left on a good road at UTM 11 S 0652220 3586963. This road can be followed to the start of the climb.

If you have any new information on the peaks we climb, send them to me at edherrman@embarqmail.com. - Ed

ASCENT GAPS

SOME INTERESTING LONG SEPARATION PERIODS BETWEEN 1st and 2nd ASCENTS

By Gordon MacLeod

Bob Sumner [your Sage editor] noted that 33 YEARS separated the date of his second ascent of “Little” Mount Inyo on 3 October 2009 and the first ascent I made with Barbara Lilley and Dick Agnos on 20 November 1976 and that was the “longest gap I’ve seen so far”. [“Little” Mount Inyo was the name I gave a summit labeled “Mt Inyo”] on my 15” topo [1951], and being aware of a nearby and much more significant “Mount Inyo” [DPS-listed], I prefaced the label “Little” in front of Mt Inyo. Got that? Nowadays, “Little” Mt Inyo has been upgraded to Pk 8706’ on the 7.5’ topo.]

My immediate thought, invoked by Sumner’s observation, was that 33 YEARS seemed a rather short interval; however, when I worked my memory and my spreadsheet climbing files, it seems that 33 years is indeed a long “gap”, as the following research indicates.

In this regard, however, it is interesting that on 4 October 1964 Arkel Erb [subsequently, killed in an accident when descending an icy chute in the Himalayas], Mike McNicholas [now deceased] and I found a register placed in 1873 by a pre-USGS survey party conducting a survey of the “Fortieth Meridian” on their way to “Fisherman Peak” [now known as Mount Whitney]. Note those 91 YEARS of “separation”!!! We found that register in a nickel tube placed on a small pinnacle near Angora Mountain [an SPS-listed peak] on a “death march” to that mountain and Coyote Peaks [also an SPS-listed peak] on a two-day weekend!!! There were no subsequent visitations.

On Christmas Day of 1965, Erick Schumacher, Graham Stevenson [also killed in that same icy chute in the Himalayas -- but independent of Arky’s mishap] and I found a register placed by a German “explorer” in 1908 on Cabeza Prieta Peak [which incidentally lent its name to the whole Cabeza Prieta National Wildlife Refuge in Arizona.] The “explorer” bragged that he had killed eight bighorn sheep on his way there. There was only one other visitation before ours and that was by the USGS survey party that had placed the original BM on the summit the year before our ascent, and that represents a 46-YEAR separation. When I climbed the peak again on Christmas Day of 1984 -- this time with Barbara Lilley -- we found many signatures in the new register -- the old one had disappeared.

[That 1965 trip was really an adventure in those days. The BLM supervisor and his assistant greeted us in Yuma on a Saturday during the Christmas holidays to personally issue us a permit to enter the Cabeza Prieta National Wildlife Refuge. The supervisor was appalled that we were planning to go there in a non-4wd...
vehicle, and insisted we rent one. So we rented a jeep and subsequently, indeed, spent much time in pulling Graham’s small station wagon out of the sand, but also in pulling the jeep out of the sand!!! The supervisor had loaned us a preliminary "grey-colored" USGS 7.5′ topo of the Caboza Prieta Peak area [just off the presses, so to speak], but that didn’t help much with the sand. Also, in general, it didn’t help that we had no other suitable maps of the area either.

In another instance, on 4 September 1964, Tom Ross and I found an old Sierra Club-type aluminum register placed on Mt Woodworth [just west of the Devils Crags in the Sierra] in 1906 by the Sierra Club on one of their famous “national” summer outings. It contained the names of many early club members. There were no subsequent visits. So, that is 42 Years of separation between the original register placement and the second ascent.

Finally, the next “old register” I remembering finding was placed by Norman Clyde in 1935 on a minor summit [Peak 3652m as it shows on the current Mount Ritter 7.5′ topo, but as 12,037′ on my 1953 15′ topo] in the Ritter Range between Rogers Peak and Mt. Davis. On that 28 of August 1965 occasion, only two young damsels from a party of 30 (or so) SPSers [for their ilk] joined me for the ascent. There were no subsequent visitations. [Perhaps, the substitution of Peak 12,307 for Mt Davis had something to do with the lack of interest. After all, the “schedule” had called for climbs of both Rogers Peak and Mt Davis.] However, it is it to be noted that Norman Clyde was also accompanied by two ladies [young or old I can’t say]. Now, don’t get the impression that I am comparing myself with Clyde – mind you. Anyway, the separation of the first ascent and second was just 32 years – just short of that found by Bob for “Little” Mount Inyo. That’s about all – but that’s a lot to expect of memory and spreadsheet files...

DID YOU KNOW?

DID YOU KNOW about two snowmen looking at the snow women sharing scoops, “I can’t stand them. They’re always poking their carrots into everyone’s business.” With that being said, let’s see what’s astir in the Land of Little Rain.

DID YOU KNOW, we’re all still soaring high following the fabulous and marvelous event hosted by Dave and Ann Perkins, at our annual Holiday Party, Dec. 6th? Thanks to Devra Wasserman who called me, and we began cooking up a Charlie Knapke get together to honor Charlie. Despite many awards that Charlie has received (R.S. Fink, John Backus, Chester Versteeg), Charlie was over due in being feted by the DPS. Charlie arrived looking great, and Charlie is great. I asked him for a print out of all his Sierra Club jobs and endeavors he’s pursued since 1988, and my printing out his list almost dried up my ink jet. The count is 91! Most of us are lucky if we’ve worn 5 or 6 hats in our Sierra Club ventures. On Charlie’s cake, we wrote, “Charlie, You’re the Man!” And yeah and verily, Charlie IS the man. When not sitting at his computer and managing websites, Charlie was out climbing peaks. He finished the HPS List 3x, DPS List 1x, and logged in 332 peaks within one year from all our Lists. Oh, and he’s climbed 42 state high points.

The food contributions at the holiday party were incredible as fifty plus people stood in line and filled their plates with the best of everything. Mirra Roach always brings a surprise, and this time it was a beautiful cake adorned with real flowers (and, yes, the flowers were edible.) Jan Brahms-Reneric baked an apple crisp from 100 year old apples. (edible.) Stewart. "To travel, Jan and Dave, for apples. But it was a definite plus having Darrick Danta helping with sweeping duties, too.

DID YOU KNOW, there have been quite a few DPS members in the news lately? Daryn Dodge was written up in the Sacramento Bee (Sept. 27, 2009), “Peak Feet, Peak Feat.” Daryn, a toxicologist from Davis, finished the SPS List, and he’s presently working on bagging desert peaks too (his count is in the mid-fifties.) Check it out, it’s a great article. Dave Jurasevich was featured in the L.A. Times, (11/12/09), for staying at the helm when Mt. Wilson Observatory nearly went up flames during the Station fire; the worst wild fire in California’s history consuming 160,000

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acres. Former DPS Guidebook gatherer and editor, Dave was up there for 19 days with the firemen defending 40 structures on 40 acres. He said he was never in imminent danger, because the Hooker telescope is housed and protected in a steel dome. However, the days were long and hard in fighting the fire. In the evening, Dave took the firemen up to the big telescope and treated them to nightly shows of planets and constellations. I know the entire Angeles Chapter breathed easier when we knew our beloved Mt. Wilson was saved.

Bob Cates sends me updates on Trail Restoration and the folks (Rudy Fleck, for one) who volunteer on designated weekends to restore our favorite local hiking areas. Last year, Frank Dobos and I had the privilege of running into the Tuesday Hikers, a Korean group of 30, who not only hike together but work on trail preservation. These very hikers have collected over $2,000, to be donated to this worthy cause. Bob Cates recently accepted a check for $1,000 from these kindly people.

DYK Tom Bowman was also featured in the Sacramento Bee (11/27/09), “Small Steps Can Shrink Carbon Footprints.” Tom’s company, Bowman Design Group, has slashed its carbon footprint by 65% with a few simple steps, and he is saving his company $5,000 annually. This young CEO and his company were also honored in San Diego as an Outstanding California Small Business, 2009. Way to go, Tom. And we are grateful he has time to lead us up our desert peaks with wife, Tina.

Legends who dwell among us: Congrats to our eternally young 97 year old, Glen Dawson, who received an honorary doctorate from Azusa Pacific University. To quote a presenter, “History is too important to be left to the PhDs. The right to be called historian should be earned by one’s works rather than by one’s certification.” We, who know the Dawson family, can curl pages and pages of Glen’s works, his historical first ascents, and the wealth of experience he contributed to California mountaineering history. It’s always our joy when we cross paths with Dr. Glen Dawson.

And there’s more DYK about another legendary climber and writer, John Robinson. It was my delight to receive in the mail, a Collector’s Edition of California Territorial Quarterly (Spring 2009, Number 77), where John’s article on Norman Clyde (p. 4) is one of the best pieces on Clyde you’ll ever read. John had his own experiences with Clyde, and I can’t urge you enough to get your own copy. I for one am mailing $18 to Bill and Penny Anderson, 6848 U Skyway, Paradise, CA 95969 for a year’s subscription. I’d like to share more about the Clyde story, but that’ll come later in another issue. Thanks, John, for a remarkable gift and for including your funny story about groping your way down a trail-less King Canyon’s gorge and bashing around in the manzanita with Joe McCosker and Tom Amicus. Those are the kind of mountain days we thought would never end, and now they’re our best and funniest memories. Anyway, John, you made my day for sure!

DYK Barbara Reber was honored by the Southwestern Association of Indian Arts with the Povika Award which is given to two outstanding Anglos who had contributed to the advancement of this organization. Barbara was this year’s recipient, and she has volunteered at the Santa Fe Indian Market for twenty-three years. We are proud of our Barbara, and right now, she is off seeking rare albatrosses on some South Sea island.

There’s more astir in the Land of Little Rain, and I’ll save those juicy tidbits for next time. Thanks to Barbara Lilly and Gordon MacLeod who come off of trips long enough to contribute to the Sage and send me write-ups of their Unlisted Peak climbs. They never go anywhere without Bob Martin’s book (grab one before they go out of print) and Andy Zdon’s Desert Summits. Soon, we will have copies of Bob Sumner’s Nevada County High Points. Wynne Benti promises she’ll donate some copies plus Andy’s book for our DPS banquet raffle, May 16.

DPS always welcomes contributions and memorials. Elda Pilj sent $25 in memory of Ronald Young; and Peter Rosmarin generously sent us $50 donation in exchange for Erick Schumacher’s past decades of Sages and Echoes. It was a pleasure to talk to Peter who is also a friend of long-time DPSer Fred Johnson. Thanks to both of you.

DYK, there are pending List Finishers on the horizon? It looks like Sue Holloway’s ankle is mending nicely, and I know she has two peaks left for List Finish #2. Jim Strauch is working away, but I don’t know his latest count; and Daryn Dodge reports that he and John and Tammy Hooper bagged Pescadores and Pico Risco in November. John got snowed off of Ruby Dome (November), so he’s down to the last three: Ruby Dome, Nopah, and Edgar. And furthermore, John has less than twenty to go on the Sierra Peaks List, too.

And in closing, I read in the Daily News that Ms. Fitness U.S.A., Taryn Bagrosky, advises when you walk down the street, pretend you are wearing a skimpy swimsuit (a bikini or a Speedo), and you’ll instinctively tighten your abdomen muscles and improve your posture. For me, I went out and tried this and the image was so strong, I hid in the bushes. And that’s what’s astir in the Land of Little Rain. I wish you the best and happiest of climbs in 2010; and I’ll see you on the peaks and at the potluck tables.

- Mary McMannes, Roving Girl Reporter, “Looking for scoops in all the right places.”
I met my hiking companions, Doug Owens and Steve Curry, two members of the Sierra Peaks Section, in Encinitas, CA around 9 AM, on September 25, 2009. We parked a car there and drove down the freeway to Mexico. I had previously purchased insurance at bajabound.com. Consequently, we only had to stop near the border to exchange money before crossing in to Mexico.

We did not stop at the border for the required Mexican Travel Permit because of the hectic traffic. To obtain a permit from Immigration a driver can use turnouts on the right, just after crossing the border.

There is a highway route that avoids driving through Tijuana that I had not used before. It follows the border west to Baja Mexico Route One and the Scenic Toll Road. We used the Scenic Toll Road to Ensenada to avoid Mexican traffic. We decided to get a travel permit in Ensenada at the Immigration Office next to the Port Captains office. We each had to pay a $5.00 fine because we did not get our travel permit at the border, even though they said we were not illegal.

We drove on to Colonet and purchased our gasoline at the Pemex station just before the turn off to the Park. We made the turn on a road that is paved all the way to the Parque National San Pedro Martin. We arrived at the park office just before dark and had to wait for the chief forester. He was out checking on a forest fire burning in the Park. When he returned, we purchased entrance tickets for four days at a cost of approximately $3.00 a day for each of us. We drove on a paved road to the turn off to the campground at the trailhead for Big Picacho, arriving there well after dark.

We started our hike to Campo Noche the next morning around 8 AM. The trail is well marked with stone ducks so that finding the route to Blue Bottle saddle was not difficult for most of the way. I used Richard Carey’s map and GPS waypoints on the hike and found them to be very useful. They marked a very good route up the mountain and confirmed our location along the way. The elevation gain is 1300 feet. It is 4.5 miles to Blue Bottle Saddle.

The scenery was outstanding: golden aspens, lodgepole pines, and white firs, blue sky, scattered white clouds and the mountain. There was a breeze that gently shook the aspen leaves. It was warm in the sunlight; this caused me a problem later in the climb. We reached Blue Bottle saddle around noon where I left a liter of water for the return trip. We followed a traverse east along the ridge to the steep trail that descends to the north down the canyon wall into Canyon Diablo. We found water just after reaching the canyon floor where some of us slaked our thirst. There is a lovely waterfall along the way to Cedar Camp. The walk down the canyon is not a walk in the park because of numerous rocks and trees, both large and small, waterfalls, tree roots and nettles along the steeply descending route.

We reached Campo Noche around 4 PM and found a NOLS group of young people and guides camped there. All of the camping spots were taken. One of the Mexican guides showed us a spot a little higher where 3 or 4 people could camp. A ducked trail starts up the mountain in a gully at that point.

Sunday, September 27 was summit day. We were up and moving before 5 AM. After a little breakfast, we started up the gully (called Night Wash) when it was just light enough to see. We each carried 2 or 3 liters of water. The trail to the summit is steep and with lots of rocks and slopes that required friction climbing. There are stone ducks all over the mountain marking various routes to the summit. We found a large pool of water at the bottom of the Slot Wash, a hanging canyon. This water was well used on our descent. We met a part of the NOLS group about one hour before reaching the summit. They had spent the night on the summit. The most important turn on the route to the summit is at a bifurcation in the canyon at 9000 feet. A climber needs to enter the canyon that leads to Wall Street. Richard Carey’s GPS waypoint was on the money in marking the correct route. We reached the north summit around noon having gained 3850 feet in 3 miles.

We signed the peak register, had a little lunch and quickly started our descent. Some sections of the route down were different than the one we used on the ascent.
When we reached the water at the bottom of Slot Wash, I refilled my water bottles and drank as much water as possible. Even after drinking a lot of this spring water, I became dehydrated on the descent to Campo Noche. One of the younger men reached Campo Noche ahead of me. I arrived there around 5:15 PM. After a light supper and lots of canyon water, I got into my sleeping bag and had a very restless night.

The next morning, around 6:30 AM we started our ascent to Blue Bottle Saddle. This is a 3080-foot climb in 1.75 miles. The hike up the steep canyon and steeper canyon wall was very difficult for me. The younger men could have easily walked away from me; instead they would walk ahead, and waited for me at critical points on the trail. I arrived at the Saddle around noon. I quickly drank the liter of water I left there. We continued our descent from Blue Bottle Saddle in much the same fashion as before. I reached the trailhead at around 5:30 PM, dehydrated and exhausted. Since it was so late in the day we decided to camp by the truck for the night. I feel that it is very risky to drive anywhere in Mexico at night.

Even with the trails and numerous ducks a hiker should continue to use their navigational aids on the descent from Blue Bottle Saddle to the trailhead. We had packed our navigational gear away, and as a result we lost the trail a number of times during the descent, once as much a 0.2 miles off course. Once we discovered the error it was easy to get back on the proper trail. One of the hikers separated from us to look for another way back to the trailhead. The remaining hiker and I found the correct route to the trailhead. I was relieved to find our wondering hiker had arrived at the trailhead after Doug, and just ahead of me. The total distance hiked was 15.5 miles for the round trip.

We started for the border the next morning. I drove just above the speed limit and was overtaken by almost every vehicle going north. The Mexicans will pass a slow vehicle regardless of single or double yellow lines anywhere they see that the way is clear. To make progress I had to do the same thing, but always following a Mexican automobile to pass a slow vehicle. We reached the border crossing using the same route as before and crossed the border around 4 PM. For the first time in four days I had a good feeling about a successful peak climb. I had marched to the summit of the Devil’s glorious peak and returned safely to the USA.

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**17TH ANNUAL DPS CHILI COOKOFF**

**ORD MOUNTAINS**

**October 31, 2009**

**By Dave Baldwin**

A witch ... a hippie ... a clown. All these characters were seen at the 2009 DPS Chili Cookoff held on Halloween at the base of the Ord Mountains in western San Bernardino County. Saturday dawned clear and cool for the gathering of some for a tour of local petroglyphs. Most cooks stayed behind to get set up for the big competition. Registration opened at 8 am and by early afternoon 12 cooks had registered as follows; one of the biggest groups in recent memory:

A. Yvonne Jamison Secret Smoke
B. Tom Sumner Turkey Supremo
C. Jim Hinkley BBQ Bonanza
D. Dave Baldwin Red Hog
E. Tracey Thomerson Tracey’s Really Good Stuff
F. Mima Roach Boler Ojos Negros
G. Laura Webb Ghost White Chili
H. Janet Damen Hearty and Wholesome
I. Gloria Miladin Chile con Carne y Agua-Cate
J. Julie Rush Little Dog Chili - Red
K. Barbee Tidball Eastern Chili
L. Sandy Houston Chili Lime Chicken Chili

As afternoon shadows grew, the campsite was filled with wonderful chili aromas. Jim Hinkley fired up the barbecue to grill tri-tip; Laura Webb simmered a whole chicken; and six talented artisans hauled out pumpkins for the 3rd DPS Pumpkin Carving Challenge. By 4 pm the chili creations were nearing completion and happy hour fare magically appeared on the community tables. Margaritas flowed freely. Following tradition, each cook gave a pitch to the crowd. Barbee Tidball was a match for her chili in kimono, Asian palm hat, and fan. Julie
Rush entreated all to vote for chili "J". With so many cooks, the 38 judges were faced with a dilemma: How does one taste 12 chilis without getting full and is it really possible to assign top to bottom ranks when all taste great? So pacing and portion control were the order of the evening as the sun slipped away and the campsite was illuminated by the light of the waxing gibbous moon. Ballots completed, the full-bellied tasters settled around the campfire while Christine and Ron Bartell set to work with laptop computer to tabulate the results. The following winners were awarded custom embroidered and environmentally friendly bamboo fabric chefs head wraps and certificates hand lettered by Elaine Baldwin:

Best Texan and Best Overall – Dave Baldwin
1st Runner-Up – Texan – Laura Webb
Best Traditional – Barbee Tidball
1st Runner-Up – Traditional – Jim Hinkley
Best Vegetarian – Mima Roach
1st Runner-Up – Vegetarian – Julie Rush
Spiciest Chili – Gloria Miladin
Best Presentation – Yvonne Jamison
Most Original Recipe – Barbee Tidball
Best Pumpkin – Christine Mitchell

Sunday, All Saints Day, those without too much heartburn from the spicy food set off for the summit of the Ord Mountains, the higher neighbor of DPS East Ord. We were happy to be joined by Jim Fleming who, with Winnette Butler, spent Saturday stranded some miles from the cookoff campsite by a flat tire and a spare wheel that wouldn’t fit the truck! Strangely that was the 3rd flat of the weekend after Dave and Jim both had to break out the jack and lug wrench. Bad luck, or Halloween spooks? You decide.

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**RED HOG CHILI**

Toast in a heavy skillet until fragrant

2 Tbsp cumin seed
4 tsp coriander seed
1 tsp black peppercorns
Grind the toasted spices in a mortar and add
2 Tbsp ancho chili powder
Mix spices with
4-5 lb pork butt, cut in 1 cm cubes
Set meat aside for 1 hour
Pan roast and set aside the cloves from
2 heads garlic
Chop and fry until crisp
1 lb. Hickory smoked bacon
Remove bacon and reserve fat. Using some of the reserved fat, brown meat in batches in the chili pot and skillet, eventually transferring all the browned meat to the chili pot with
1 smoked ham hock
2 - 22 oz. bottles Alaskan Vintage Smoked Porter
2 Tbsp Pasilla chili powder
2 Tbsp Pimiento del la Vera (dulce)
Stew the meat in beer 1-1/2 hour or until tender.
Peel, and dice the garlic and add to the chili pot. Saute in the reserved bacon fat
2 medium onions, chopped
Add the onion to the chili pot together with
4 – 15 oz. cans diced fire roasted tomatoes
Browned bacon
Brown and add to the chili pot
12 oz pork sausage
Season the chili with
  3 Tbsp dried oregano, ground fine
  2 Tbsp Ancho chili powder
  4 Tbsp Pasilla chili powder
  4 Tbsp Pimienta del la Vera (dulce)
  1 Tbsp ground cumin
  1 tsp salt
  2 Tbsp Worcestershire sauce
  4 Tbsp tomato paste
  Dash Chipotle chile powder
Finish just before serving with the fresh juice of
  3 limes

Barbee and Larry Tidball
serving their award winning
Shanghai Chili.
Photo by Audrey Goodman.

Gloria Miladin dressed out
for Halloween.
Photo by Elaine Baldwin.

Once again, we heard the oompah music from the
German brass instruments of Johann Sebastian Baldwin
and his dear Frau (casually known as Dave and Elaine),
down there in Hawthorne, a small German village
outside of Munich. The DPSers, still recovering from
too much fun at the Chili Cook-Off, made their way
down to the Baldwin’s festive haus for our annual
German Oktoberfest, a weekend later in November.

There we found Dave running around in his Chili Cook­
Off official winner bandana, and he was making a mean
pork tenderloin and cooking Janet Damen’s brats on the
BBQ while Kevin Gray and Josephine Lam looked at his
perfect grilling. Inside, Elaine was stirring the big black
pot of red cabbage, and Gloria Miladin was heating up
her sauerkraut. People, engrossed in many
conversations, sipped fine German and Austrian brews.
Management meeting had convened at 4:30 p.m., and
happily we were out in time to greet the guests at 6 p.m.
on the dot (or was it on the umlaut?)

Thanks for all participants who brought what is deemed
as comfort foods and desserts that rival European bakers.
Kev and Jo brought key lime pie; Larry and Barbee
Tidball’s berry dessert; Pat and Gerry Holleman’s most
welcomed sweet potato casserole; Janet Damen’s
(bratwursts) and apple cobbler; Mary Mac’s cheesy
potatoes; Jan and Dave Reneric’s homemade pumpkin
pie with newly whipped real cream; Julie Rush’s Thai
broccoli; Christine Mitchell’s and Ron’s deviled eggs;
Dave and Ann Perkins with hors d’oeuvre of 7 layer

Mary Motheral, Pat & Gerry Holleman, Christine Mitchell, Julie Rush.
Photos by Mary McMannes.

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Elaine and Dave Baldwin (wearing his Chili Cookoff champion bandanna).

bean dip and crackers; Tina Bowman’s Waldorf salad, Jack Wickel’s cheese and crackers. Everyone enjoyed the unusually delicious green salad, but no one knows who brought it? Other food and wine offerings came from: Rich Gnagy, Rich Henke and Rena Tishman, Mary Matheral, and Yasu Kojima. Sorry if I left anyone out.

Quip of the evening came from Dave Perkins who upon hearing Rich Gnagy brag that he could eat tons and tons of food and never gain an ounce, remarked, “But Rich, look at you! You lost all your hair!” There were many tales being told, but the one I liked the most was about shy Ron Bartell and how he courted Christine Mitchell down yonder on an Australian business trip.

The evening was simply grand, and as always, we are grateful to Dave and Elaine for hosting such a fine party. We were eyeing those terrific Elaine paintings on the wall, and all wished we owned one. Maybe we’ll get lucky at the next banquet (May 16.)

There’s something about brisk weather in October and November, falling leaves, hearty German food, heavy brews, and Liebfraumilch wines from the German highlands. Many pot lucks are coming up monthly in the Neue Jahr. Come and join us and see what we’re all about. We not only eat food, but we also climb peaks now and then.

Dave and I arrived on Friday after dark at the camping area for Palmer/Grapevine, about 3.8 miles after dropping into the wash as described in the Road and Peaks guide. (Note: the turnoff from highway 95 is 11.7 miles north of Beatty rather than 13.7 as described in the guide). Christine Mitchell and Gary Bowen were waiting there, and John Strauch and Ron Ecklemann arrived soon after. It was quite cold and the wind was howling, so the six of us crowded into our camper to eat dinner, where body heat soon made us comfortable. We enjoyed talking for a couple of hours until we could decently think of going to bed, and shortly afterward Virgil Popescu arrived, with Brian Smith coming in about 3:30 a.m. when the rest of us were asleep.

The morning dawned quite cold, and Dave roused everyone for a 6:30 a.m. start. Gary and John decided to try driving the 0.8 mile 4WD road to the saddle, and as I lay in bed (my ankle was not ready for Palmer), I heard the trucks roaring off up the road. Later, as I took a walk up to the saddle, I was amazed that they made it – there was one section alternating between huge holes and huge rocks. Other than a couple of bad sections, however, the rest of the road was almost 2WD. At the saddle, there sat John’s Jeep and Gary’s Toyota, looking none the worse for wear. The report from the climb is that all went smoothly – Dave had put in a number of waypoints from a large-scale topo. The only glitch was that for the first half-hour or so his GPS would not come on – the theory was that it was too cold. This is a good reminder

to also have map and compass and know how to use them (as they did). To get to Palmer one climbs from the 4wd saddle south up a ridge that is higher than Palmer itself. Then you follow a series of up and down ridges going south and west, crossing the Nevada-California border and eventually ascending Palmer. There is a steep loose 2nd class gully near the summit. The party arrived at the summit just after 11 a.m. where they found Ron Bartell. He had ascended from the desert floor, and had bivouacked Friday night somewhere below Palmer (where it was fortunately less windy than in our campground) in his pursuit of climbing the desert peaks by alternate routes. He joined the group for the return part of the up and down climb. We left the summit at 11:30 and were back at the saddle at about 4:00, arriving in camp about 4:30, and since the wind had died down we were able to enjoy the potluck outside. Anne Rolls arrived about 7:30 from Ed Herrman’s list finish climb of Pleasant – what a trooper to drive all that way and join two climbing trips in one weekend! In spite of the wind dying down it was still cold, so we turned in early, having extracted a promise from Dave that we would start for Grapevine at 8:00 — a more civilized hour.

On Sunday morning, John decided not to put his vehicle through the torture of the 0.8 miles to the saddle, so we piled in with Ron Bartell and Gary. At the bad stretch, Gary’s car seemed to give up its 4WD function, so he parked and all of us except for Anne and Brian (the walkers) managed to get into Ron’s vehicle (with 4 hanging on to the running boards). With the addition of Anne Rolls and Ann Perkins there were 10 climbers for Grapevine, and we set off from the saddle at about 8:45. The route is straightforward with several ups and downs, but not as many as on Palmer. After going over several bumps, we hiked up through a rocky area, a bare slope, and then through a grove of pine trees before reaching the summit. We had great views of the Sierra and the surrounding desert summits, and the day was warm and pleasant, so we lingered and enjoyed our lunch. On the way back, some of us stayed off the ridge top in places and saved a bit of gain — it’s a choice of saving some up and down vs. having to do sidehill walking. Even though the climb is listed as only 4 miles and 1600’ of gain from the saddle, it takes longer than one might expect, especially after a tough peak the day before, and we got back to the cars at 2:30. Again, we fully occupied Ron’s car and everyone except Brian (still the walker) was transported back to camp. Thanks to everyone for a good trip, and especially to Virgil for stepping in as assistant leader. To quote him, “I am a foot soldier who comes when called by the DPS.” John and Virgil are near their list finishes, and Christine is near the 2x finish so look for announcements in the Sage!

Ed Hermann conquered Big Pica at the end of September, his list finish was virtually a done deal. In contrast, climbing Big P was a big deal, since few people, very few, were willing to venture into Mexico and then tackle that daunting backpack. I hear that Ed had to bribe his climbing companions into joining him — oh, just kidding. Still, kudos to Steve Curry and Doug Owens in helping Ed conquer his penultimate peak on The List.

Ed climbed his first DPS peak, Black Butte, at the urging of Ed Herrman in 2002 and never looked back. He soloed many of the peaks on the list, and Edna schmoozed leaders a bit to help Ed get on trips to harder peaks since the leaders often didn’t know Ed. Once they climbed with him, he was very welcome on all outings — a great climber, interesting, fit, and fun.

What with Ed and Edna traveling to Iraq, of all places, Mary McMannes and I couldn’t schedule the grand
finale till November 21st, unfortunately conflicting with the outing to Grapevine and Palmer. Oh well, what's a list finisher to do? Certainly not have a poor turnout during the holiday season or wait till spring. So we were on for the Saturday before Thanksgiving.

As the day approached, we watched the forecast anxiously—a chance of snow! Oh no! Friday as I traveled north, I figured I should have just strapped on some skates because the winds would have rolled me along at 70 mph, no problem. The dust was billowing off the Owens Lake bed, despite a fair amount of water on the surface there. It was grit-a-minute for sure!

Ah, but Saturday dawned fair and calm—no snow had materialized, despite all of the lenticular clouds over the Owens Valley Friday afternoon and snowy-looking clouds over the Sierra and Inyos. The weather gods must have known it was THE day and smiled their blessing on Ed. Happy hikers gathered—almost all of us—early at the meeting spot where the Cerro Gordo Road meets highway 136 from Lone Pine just outside of Keeler. We had planned a very civilized meeting time of 9:00 a.m., but most were there at 8:30. Just after 9:00, consolidated into fewer vehicles, we headed up to the saddle just beyond Cerro Gordo, about eight miles from the highway.

Edna Erspamer stayed at the saddle to guard the cars as twelve of us began the pilgrimage to the summit of Pleasant Point at 9:45, blithely walking past the "Keep Out" sign by the locked gate on the upper road towards the radio towers (route A, though you can't drive this 1.5 miles no matter what the Guide says). Mary McMannes (the "real" Mary) was gracious enough to sweep. The others included Sara Danta, Delores Holladay, Josephine Lam, Gloria Miladin, Mary Motheral (the "other" Mary), Annie Rolls, Darrick Danta, Rich Gnagy, Kevin Gray, and of course, Ed. We stopped for a brief clothing break and then another break where we left the road to continue our journey along the ridge, mostly on use trail, though it was faint at times. Stopping fairly frequently to let the slower hikers catch up—you can bet Ed wasn’t one of those folks!—we still made steady progress toward the goal.

Then suddenly we were confronted by a chasm, or so some thought. Actually, it was a bit of class 2 down climbing with some loose rock on top of stable steps, a bit nerve wracking for some at the start. One hiker balked at this, and Delores Holladay was kind enough to wait with her till we returned. (Thanks for not moving!) The steps were better as we went down, and we resumed our progress toward the goal on the use trail. Having regrouped about a hundred feet below the summit, Ed led the charge for the top. Eureka! The register! We made the top about 12:30.

What a fine celebration we had on top. After Darrick spread a tablecloth aka the lining for a poncho from the Viet Nam war, we heaped goodies upon it. The champagne was flowing and overflowing tiny cups; the register, dating back to 1974, made the rounds; the breeze wasn’t too bad though the air was nippy; and we posed for many, many photographs once Mary, as proxy for Edna, pinned the List Completion pin on Ed. Could anyone smile more broadly than Ed especially when Mary Mac kissed him (for Edna)? I don’t think so. We unfurled the DPS flag for some of the photos. Annie joined in on the summit fun briefly, but then signed out so that she could join Dave Perkins and Virgil Popsecu as they led Grapevine on Sunday.

After an hour or so on the chilly summit, we began wending our way back, having an easy return to the cars with time outs to regroup again. Rat, Kevin’s rat terrier, was glad to get out of the car for a few minutes to greet everyone—what a little cutie. Down we went back to Keeler and on to the Tuttle Creek Campground for a potluck party, celebrating not only Ed’s list finish but...
also Mary Mac's and Rich's birthdays. It was too bad Gary Craig didn't join us since it was his birthday as well. We had a fine fire, excellent food, many desserts, and a campground fee that's hard to beat at $5/site in the winter season. Mary Mac brought a cake to honor the new DPS star and birthday kids. Food included meatballs (Edna), sauerkraut and hot dogs (Ed), Thai peanut salad (Dantas), fruit salad (Mary Mac), pizza (Delores), Waldorf salad (me), home-grown persimmons (Rich), pumpkin pie (Josephine and Kevin), bread pudding (Mary Motheral), blueberry cake and Amaretto (Gloria), and more that I'm not remembering. The table was overflowing. After the desserts, I headed back to Long Beach, but Mary reports that Ed warmed everyone with coffee in the morning and warmed their hearts with apple strudel.

Way to go, Ed! Thanks for providing the occasion for a fine outing and rousing celebrations! We had an excellent group. We had a great group, a fine mixture of relative newbies-Josephine and Kevin—and long-time DPS members, as well as those in-between. List finishers made up half of our group. I hope the newbies get hooked, just as Ed did. - Tina

Saturday, November 21st: Twelve stalwart DPSer's gathered at the junction of Hwy 136 and Cerro Gordo Road to support their hero, Ed Herrman, in his quest for the Holy Grail of DPS list completion on Pleasant Point. This pursuit was special in that, introduced to the section by Edna Erspamer, Ed started this goal in his 70's. Earlier this year, he successfully knocked off the last challenging peak, Big Picacho, allowing for an easy last hurrah this crisp fall Saturday. The group caravanned to the locked gate above the Cerro Gordo mine and marched up the well graded road to the cross country starting point. The trek to the summit went well, with Tina Bowman leading and Mary McMannes sweeping. On the summit the fun began in earnest. Darrick and Sara Danta provided elegance with a vintage Viet Nam camouflage sleeping bag liner in lieu of a table cloth (really, it was warm and cozy), while witnesses to Ed's success piled it with goodies and champagne. Finally, with the short day waning, the group trooped back to the cars en route to the Tuttle Creek Campground out of Lone Pine. There the group enjoyed the celebratory potluck with several hot dishes (meatballs and sauerkraut with sausage), numerous salads, and several cakes. The piece de resistance of desserts, however, was Mary Mac's luscious cake which marked not only Ed's list finish, but Rich Gnagy's and her own birthdays. The next morning, the planned restaurant breakfast in Lone Pine gave way to a relaxed coffee and apple strudel repast, as it was too cold to arise early enough for the drive into town. Finally, the group dispersed with carpoolers off to their respective destinations. Participants were Ed Herrman, Tina Bowman, The Real Mary McMannes, Edna Erspamer, Rich Gnagy, Gloria Miladin, Kevin Gray, Josephine Lam, Annie Rolls, Delores Holladay, Darrick Danta, Sara Danta, and The Other Mary Motheral. One final participant who was present but did not climb was Josephine and Kevin's rescue dog, Rat, an appealing Rat Terrier. - Mary Motheral

Ed proudly displaying the DPS flag.  
Sara and Darrick Danta.
Having done the DPS peaks and the County highpoints in Nevada there was one famous peak that I had not climbed and it was Pilot Peak (10,720’). This peak is about 20 miles north of Wendover and by its height and symmetrical pyramid-shape it dominates the skyline. The peak was named by John C. Fremont in October, 1845 during his third expedition. The peak was a landmark for emigrants crossing the long, dry salt flats of the Salt Lake Desert. The water of Pilot Creek on the east side saved the Donner Party after their terrible crossing in 1846. The route passing by the southern flanks of the mountain was the Hastings Cutoff and its length and difficulties caused the Donner Party to arrive late to the Sierra Nevada.

With my friend Gail Hanna we drove north from Elko along the California Trail Byway which took us after many muddy miles into far northwestern Utah. It had been raining every day and the back roads were not in the best condition. We hiked to the NV-ID-UT tri-point monument on the advice of a rancher who said we would never make it in our trucks on the slippery jeep roads shown on the topo. Then we hiked Bull Mountain, the highpoint of Box Elder County Utah, and from there Pilot Peak was plainly visible at a distance of about 72 miles.

We camped at an RV Resort in Snowville, Utah then made our way down to Wendover through some scattered rain storms. The approach to Pilot starts east of Wendover at exit 4 on Interstate 80. We followed a recent trip report from my friend Adam Helman to get to the peak and his hiking route worked well too. We also had a BLM Fact Sheet on the peak we had obtained at the BLM office in Elko. This also had good drive-in directions, but the hiking route was different from Adam Helman’s.

We got to a small camp area by an abandoned mine as one might expect in Miner’s Canyon on the southeast side of the mountain (see map). The road goes another half mile but there is little room at the end for camping. It was warm and pleasant as we set up our camp in the early afternoon looking up, actually way up, at the route to the summit. By 3:00 PM clouds rolled over the ridge from the west and the wind picked up blowing our tarps and scattered camping gear. We hurriedly put things in the trucks or under cover as it started to rain. That was the end of our “happy hour” and we hunkered down in the camper shells while it poured hard. But after half an hour it was over as quickly as it started and we resumed our snacks and discussion of the route. Gail decided she wasn’t up to the expected 4500 plus foot climb and said she would wait for me the next day while I did the peak.

I got off at 5:30 AM with a heavy daypack. Not knowing what the weather might bring I had plenty of clothing for possible rain and water in case it got hot. I followed Adam’s route shown on the map and it worked well. There is no way to escape a fair amount of talus travel on this mountain. I think the BLM route which I have marked would work about as well too. I didn’t pause much and reached the summit after 5 ½ hours. The skies were mostly clear but there was some threat off to the west so I had a quick snack and signed in to the register which was in a large steel mailbox. There was a full notebook dating to 1963 with many interesting entries. People had done the peak by the east and west ridges too. The peak was first surveyed in 1889 and there is mention of an old Einbeck Trail which was still usable in 1940, but I didn’t see any sign of it. The trail was good enough that they were able to get a pack horse to the top!

I talked to Gail on our Ham radios and said I made it and would be down by 3:00. I could see the trucks from the top, but didn’t make it until at least 4:00 PM. It took four hours descending and I veered too much to the west and had to go down the brushy canyon to the end of the road. On the ridge a small squall passed by on the south missing the mountain and sparing me any rain. I was definitely tired after the 4800 foot day. The route was about 7 miles round-trip. It is a great peak and I recommend it highly, just watch for storms and possible lightning otherwise the route is straight-forward class 2 hiking.

I have some more photos and a GPS waypoint file on my website: http://www.peakbagging.com/NVPhotos/PilotPeak.html. I also scanned the BLM Fact Sheet and have it posted as a pdf file. The survey data sheet also makes
Driving directions: on I-80 take Exit 4 east of Wendover. Go north and reset your odometer at the Sinclair station. At 1.2 miles go left on Leppy Pass Road. At 4.4 miles cross the pass and stay on the paved road. At 7.5 miles the pavement ends just after a cattle guard. Stay on the good dirt road until a second cattle guard at about 17.0 miles (PP00). Turn left onto a jeep road. A high-clearance or 4WD is needed on this road. After 3.0 miles on this road go right at a junction in a wash (PP01). Both roads later join in the canyon, but the right one is better. At 4.0 miles reach a mine area where we camped. The road goes about another half mile until it ends in a narrow canyon with no flat camping space.

Hiking directions: The camp is waypoint PP02 at about 5940 ft. From here walk to the road end and leave the canyon at PP03 heading to the right up steep slopes in the trees. Stay on the slope passing by points PP04 and PP05 to a rock outcrop on the left at PP06. Go to PP07 and over a rock bump shown as P915 ft. on the topo. PP08 is just beyond this bump. The ridge is easier for a while then more talus is encountered. Stay generally to the right side of the ridge, but one can go over P10182 ft. to a final saddle at PP11. Then contour to the right of a cliff facing west just below the final upper slopes. The route is 7 miles round-trip with a 4800 ft gain. Allow about 5 to 6 hours up and about 4 hours to get down.
In far southeast Colorado just 27 miles from the Kansas line stands a perfect little peak where no peak should be, well out of sight of the Rocky Mountains, utterly alone in the middle of thousands of square miles of Great Plains flatness.

Seen from a distance, it's almost a pebble in your visual shoe; it doesn't belong there. I'm writing it up not because it's a worthy mountaineering objective (it isn't), although it is the high point of Prowers County (Lamar). Rather, this micro-desert peak is worthy of note not merely because of its strangeness but because it is the absolute easternmost manifestation in the United States (east of the Black Hills) of what geologists call the "North American Cordillera". This Spanish word for "mountain range" is a catch-all term for the magnificent wreckage on the western side of our continent caused by the titanic collision of westward-drifting North America with the Eastern Pacific Plate, beginning in the Triassic and continuing as you read this. This planetary-scale train wreck has given us Rainier and Big Picacho, Yosemite and Banff, San Gorgonio, Capitol Reef and Pikes Peak...without it, needless to say, the SPS, DPS and HPS wouldn't have much to do. You might say the Cordillera starts at about this latitude with the tortured Big Sur cliffs so beloved of Robinson Jeffers, and, a third of a continent and much glory later, gently dies out in this final little gesture in the heartland plains.

Geologically, the peak is like a miniature Navajo Mountain; a hypabyssal, or shallow, igneous intrusive which didn't break the surface as a volcano but rather heaved up the country rock into a peak. Near the summit, the intrusive is exposed and you can actually see the contact between it and the Permian sandstone which forms the summit rocks. The intrusive has been dated as Tertiary in age, or younger than the Rocky Mountains, and is no doubt related to the Capulin volcanic field to the southwest, which has built anomalous volcanic mountains on the Great Plains of far northeast New Mexico as well as lava-capped Black Mesa, the Oklahoma high point (SAGE #299, Sept-Oct 2005).

The "climb" -- all 300-some feet of it -- is on private property, although, according to the authors of "Hiking Colorado's Summits" (Covill and Mitchler, 2002; a Falcon Guide) the owner welcomes hikers on foot. 26 miles south of Lamar, take County Road "C" four miles east from US 287; an obvious road to Two Buttes Reservoir takes off to the south. From the SW side of the butte, find a place to squozench under the barbed wire fence and pick a route. Watch for rattlesnakes! When I did it in May, there were plenty of wildflowers and the temperature was perfect. The summit view must be unlike that from any other peak in the country; in all directions, perfect flatness stretches to the far horizon. The only vertical element to the landscape is a wind turbine farm to the northwest.

Should you ever find yourself in this country, take time to hike beautiful Picture Canyon down by the Oklahoma line -- a mini-Utah slickrock canyon on the High Plains complete with rock art.
William T. Vollmann (1959- ) won the 2005 National Book Award for Fiction for Europe Central, a sad, scathing 750-page novel set in the Soviet Union and Nazi Germany prior to and during WWII, including a large cast of historic characters, and focusing mainly on the life and loves of composer Dimitri Shostakovich.

Europe Central was small, however, compared to Vollmann’s 2004, seven-volume, non-fiction work, Rising Up and Rising Down: Some Thoughts on Violence, Freedom and Urgent Means, which came in at a whopping 3,300 pages. And then there is always another seven-volume series, fiction this time, Seven Dreams: A Book of North American Landscapes.

In 2009, Vollmann’s 1,300-page, non-fiction, 208 chapter, heavily footnoted, indexless Imperial, the subject of this review, hit the bookstores, a drop in the bucket effort on his part, weighing in at a mere 5 pounds, and priced at $55 ($34.65 at Amazon.com).

So one thing we can be sure of about Vollmann is that he’s wordy—or as others might say, prodigiously prolific. My theory is that he has a deal with his publisher to be paid by the word and that no editing is allowed. It appears that none of his research material, no matter how inconsequential it may be to his subject matter, is ever discarded.

In spite of Vollmann’s everything-including-the-kitchen-sink style he has been published by several national magazines, including Harper’s, Playboy, The New York Times Book Review and Outside, has been named as “one of the twenty best writers in America under forty” by The New Yorker, and has been awarded a five-year grant from the Straus Living Award, which gives writers of note $50,000 a year, tax free.

As for the review at hand, Vollmann’s Imperial is an exposition on Imperial County, CA, broadened to include most of the Coachella Valley (northside), and the agricultural portion of Baja California below the U.S. Border (southside). It’s an area for which Vollmann, who lives in Sacramento, has developed a curious fascination, and which he has visited numerous times over a ten year period. With a plethora of detours, Imperial sets out to explain the century-long transformation of the Colorado Desert into the ever-morphing area it is today.

Pouring over county records, delving into newspaper files, and conducting a myriad of interviews with current residents of Imperial—often switching between past and present—Vollmann immerses us, indeed, almost drowns us, in his attempt to understand the area. To add emphasis, he frequently adds repetitive phrases printed in larger, different fonts, for example, WATER IS HERE and THE DESERT DISAPPEARS.

Throughout the volume, but not necessarily in chronological order, a history of Imperial is recounted—the Indians native to the area; the visionaries who in the late 1800s promoted the idea of diverting Colorado River water into the Salton Basin; the early days of development after the irrigation system opened in 1901; the unfortunate events between 1905 and 1907 when, after the headgate of the canal system was breached, many farms were flooded and the Salton Sea was formed; the succeeding years, when, billed as the “Largest Irrigated Area in the World,” many small farms were consolidated into larger acreage—He sold out for a fancy price—and up to the present, as the owners of water rights can make more profit by selling their allotments to thirsty San Diego than by raising crops, a development foreshadowing a future in which IMPERIAL DISAPPEARS.

Several sections of Imperial are drawn from material that was previously published elsewhere. For instance, reprising an article in the February 2002 issue of Outside Magazine, Vollmann describes his and a friend’s trip in an inflatable dinghy down the polluted New River, a major source of water for the Salton Sea, starting at the Mexican border. His take on the voyage is classic Vollmann, reason why, in spite of his wordiness, he is a National Book Award winner.

“Sheep-shaped clots of foam, white and wooly, floated down the New River... I stood on the trash-covered bank, inhaling the reek of excrement and of something bitter, too, which I guessed to be pesticides...” The Border Patrolman on the other side of the river sat motionless in...
his throat got sore and I went back to the motel."

"At seven-o'-clock the next morning, with Imperial already laying its hands on my thighs, my shoulders and the back of my neck... we dragged the dinghy out of the back of the truck..."

"What a deep, deep green river it was! Shaded on either side by mesquite trees, palo verdes, tamarisks, bamboo and grass, it sped us down its canyon, whose banks were stratified with what appeared to be crusted salt."

Later that day, "Even after a shower, my hands kept burning, and the next day Jose and I still couldn't get the taste out of our mouths. We used up all his breath-mints lickety-split; then I went to Mexicali for tequilas and spicy tacos. A week later, my arms were inflamed up to elbow and my abdomen was red and burning."

While conducting research for the article, Vollmann drew several water samples from both the New River and the Salton Sea, the results of which were surprising: "Neither (source) was, on my sampling day, at least, as toxified as claimed—the relative absence of heavy metals appearing especially telling. Moreover, Mexico could not be the primary culprit for what little pollution of the Salton Sea my samples did detect. The New River's beryllium and zinc had nothing to do with the Salton Sea's barium and selenium."

Wherever the selenium originates, however, a shrunken Salton Sea could someday be cause for a huge Owens Lake-like environmental disaster. On that subject, Vollmann quotes another writer, Bill Karl: "A vast salt and selenium bed of dust of over 400 square miles would be driven throughout Southern California with any wind; tourism in Palm Springs, Palm Desert and the entire counties of Riverside, Imperial and Coachella would disappear... Certainly agriculture would disappear under the dust, and health problems would escalate to insurmountable proportions."

Another of Vollmann's articles, published in the October 2004 issue of Harper's Magazine, was titled, "They came out like ants! Searching for the Chinese tunnels in Mexicali."

Drawing upon that material, Vollmann cites a third-generation Chinese from Mexicali: "When American people brought in Chinese to build the (transcontinental) railroad, there was a big buildup in the Chinese population. After the project finished, there started being a concentration in San Francisco." And because the Chinese did "a lot of agriculture... (and because) there was nobody here, especially on the Mexican side... they started moving in and they started growing cotton. This was eighteen something... (at which time) the whole Mexicali Valley was about ninety percent Chinese."

When the Mexican government finally reacted to the situation, the Chinese withdrew from agriculture and began to establish services such as grocery stores and laundries. "Then the Mexican people started taking over the grocery stores, so they pulled back to the restaurants. Mexican people have not been able to take that over, since Chinese work longer hours. They don't fight with the local people; they let them come in, they just pull back."

In a September 2009 interview a San Francisco Chronicle writer asked Vollmann what he discovered in his search for the alleged tunnels? "In the center of Mexicali," he replied, "there are a few restaurants and stores, which have basements and these basements sometimes connect to others. I think one of the first authentic-sounding stories that I heard was from a Mexican guy whose friend delivered produce to some Chinese restaurants in Mexicali, and he would see the owner go downstairs to get some money, and he'd ask, 'What's down there?' and the owner would say, 'Nothing you need to know.' And in those tunnels there are occasionally vestiges of parquet ceiling and other signs that these might have been cantinas or brothels or who knows what? There were places where illegal Chinese immigrants slept, and this labyrinth of tunnels is quite extensive."

Vollmann's exposition on maquiladoras—foreign-owned factories in Mexico, usually located somewhere near the border—also first appeared elsewhere, i.e., the January 2005 issue of Playboy.

Piqued by a tale from a Mexican woman who had worked in a Mexicali maquiladora, Vollmann set out to determine if the story that her employer required a monthly proof she was not pregnant was, in fact, true. Additionally, Vollmann suspected that maquiladora workers, mostly young women, were being subjected to environmental dangers and sexual exploitation.

Broadening his definition of Imperial to include Tijuana, Vollmann hired a good-natured woman, Perla, equipped her with a button camera, and had her break one of the factories well-protected walls. What evil he found, after spending most of his Playboy advance, was, surprisingly, very little.

"The plain truth is that most of the workers I met... expressed satisfaction with the factories in which they were employed. Isn't so much of the interest which other people's lives hold for us based on the divergence
between their and our expectations?

Still, due to low or no benefits and the lack of job protection, maquiladoras are ripe for a Cesar Chavez-type of unionization. Should this occur, however, the factories would probably move to China or some other low cost Asian country.

As you can imagine, Vollmann covers a lot of ground in this huge book. For example, he gains a personal view of illegal immigration by crossing into Mexicali, where, with the aid of a translator, he interviews several men waiting to covertly cross the border and work the fields of Imperial.

With a soft spot in his heart for these hard-working folks, the author wonders why the U.S. doesn't return to the bracero system of legal entry for part-time workers that it fostered between 1942 and 1962, when 4,600,000 legal braceros “stooped and sweated” in the U.S.; a time when Mexicali was swollen with braceros and their families, waiting a call for work across the border. Unfortunately, that system was ended, unwillingly, by President Kennedy on January 1, 1965.

In Vollmann’s opinion, Operation Gatekeeper, the effort begun in 1994 to reduce illegal entry into the U.S.—although successful in specific targeted areas—has increased the price charged by the coyotes, those who help pollos cross the border, and has caused an increase in the deaths of illegal entrants in other less-patrolled desert areas.

Other objects of Vollmann’s scorn include the plan to line the All-American Canal, a project which would reduce the southside aquifer, thus causing the Mexican farmers, already water-short, even more grief. And then there is the concept of water farming in the Imperial Valley. Stella Mendoza, formerly president of the Imperial Irrigation District, told Vollmann, “When they talk about conserving water through fallowing, that really hit me through what I understood. That would hurt the agricultural workers and the agricultural businesses. Who’s going to help those poor people?”

As for mountains, Vollmann considers only two, i.e., Salvation Mountain and Signal Mountain, the latter of which lies just south of the border, west of Mexicali and north of Laguna Salada. “The reddish-grey rocks, probably basalt in my opinion, were middling warmish to the touch. The canyon twisted and climbed fairly gently past the occasional abandoned jug, sock or jacket. I wondered how many of those (illegal immigrants) had successfully reached the gardens of Paradise... (My companion, a) woman was with me today. She was already losing her desire for me. She did not hold my hand even on the wide path, and when it narrowed I let her go ahead to grip those rock-tussocks that were the color of dried blood.”

Oh, did I mention that Vollmann has issues with women?

Salvation Mountain, located near Niland, is the sole creation of one retiree, Leonard Knight, who, since 1982, has kept himself busy painting a mound of dirt with “navy-blue-striped waterfalls flowing over reddish cookie-cutter-like trees and crude flowers of all colors.”

Knight claims his mountain was inspired by God. “It’s happening more and more. People looking at the mountain, people want me to come to church and listen, and I say no, just come and listen to the mountain.”

In conclusion, think back to 1911, when Harold Bell Wright, in his best-selling novel, The Winning of Barbara Worth, described the heady first years of Imperial’s development thusly: “The pioneers in Barbara’s Desert were, in fact, leaders in a far greater work that would add inmeasurably to the nation’s life.”

Now, almost 100 years later, Vollmann does a U-turn on Wright: “Imperial is failed dreams; Imperial is castles in the air transformed at best into grimy bunkers; Imperial is the Niland Tomato Festival, whose sad carnival rides hang almost empty, and whose tomatoes are nonexistent.”

IMPERIAL DISAPPEARS.

William T. Vollmann
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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. 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 (.doc or .txt) 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/pictures) 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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