FEATURED IN THIS ISSUE

Jefferson & Arc Dome

October Potluck

Virginia & Pah Rah

http://angeles.sierraclub.org/dps/
CHAIR’S CORNER
by Christine Mitchell

Let’s hear it for our leaders! We have seven leaders who were able to resurrect their records to find the required 50 leads with dates to qualify for the new Leader Award. This took some effort to review Sages, calendars and personal records but is a very worthy honor. (Check Bob Wyka’s article on page 9 for the list of the Magnificent Seven). This is a very deserving group and they have stood on the shoulders of giants. We have many leaders who are no longer with us who are legends for their efforts in the section. We all have our favorite experiences and I hesitate to try listing all these Desert Heroes but I have to mention one of my favorite stories. My first DPS trip was on Jacumba (after Ron checked me out on a couple of private trips to make sure I wouldn’t embarrass him by showing up for the hike in sandals with a six pack for lunch). Maris Valkass was the leader. So what’s the big deal? Maris had his leg in a cast from a recent break and led the hike on crutches. He had recently taken a leader fall at Tahquitz and hit a tree after his belayer Jim Farkas (a) dropped him (Maris’ version) or (b) heroically held the fall (Jim’s version). Maris, of course, got us all up Jacumba without incident or delays. This was my introduction to this organization and I continued to hike with them. Who’s crazier: me or Maris?

Do you have a favorite hero leader story? Write it up and send it to Bob Sumner for a future Sage.

One more huzzah for our leaders. We currently have 578 Emblem holders, 183 List Finishers (counting multiple finishes), and 8 Explorer Emblem holders. I’m sure a good number of those would have had a harder time reaching these goals without our leaders. Besides, a desert peak is a lot more fun when you share it with friends.

You leaders who have 50 minus epsilon leads, don’t forget about the option of re-leading a peak by a different route. This adds to your tally and helps people in pursuit of the Explorer Emblem but aren’t sure about venturing out on a more obscure route alone. It could be turned into a mini navigation exercise. Many of us could use the practice. Especially those of us who show up at the trip meeting point and then talk our way to the summit. Sometimes my tongue gets more miles than my boots. Right Mary?!!

The next management meeting/potluck will be on Sunday, November 6th, at Dave and Elaine Baldwin’s house. This is the traditional Oktoberfest party with yummy German treats prepared by Chefkoch Dave.

We have another double list finish coming up. Join Sue Holloway for her DPSx2 finish on Orocopia on December 11. This will be an easy climb followed by the usual potluck and the very unusual “Beers of the World” tasting. Sue, are you providing all these beers??!

The December management meeting/potluck will be the next day (December 12) at the home of Ann and Dave Perkins and all your friends will be there so don’t miss it. Come see Sue Holloway wearing her new DPS2 crown. (Note to self: order crown).

Be sure to RSVP to the hosts for these potlucks as they are both well attended (and fun!) events so they need to order the plates and forks.

Don’t forget to vote on November 2. To read up on the Angeles Chapter recommendations go to http://angeles.sierraclub.org/political/

NEXT SUBMISSION DEADLINE DECEMBER 11, 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 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.

THE DESERT SAGE 2

November/December 2010
### TRIPS / EVENTS

**NOVEMBER 2010 Through MAY 2011**

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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Day(s)</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tr>
<td>NOV 6</td>
<td>SAT</td>
<td>DPS Potluck and Management Meeting</td>
<td>DPS</td>
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<tr>
<td>NOV 12-13</td>
<td>FRI-SAT</td>
<td>DPS</td>
<td>Mt Ajo, Superstition Mtn</td>
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<td>NOV 13-14</td>
<td>SAT-SUN</td>
<td>DPS, LTC, WTC, SPS</td>
<td>Indian Cove Navigation</td>
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<td>NOV 20-21</td>
<td>SAT-SUN</td>
<td>DPS</td>
<td>Needle Peak, Manly Peak</td>
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<td>NOV 20-21</td>
<td>SAT-SUN</td>
<td>DPS, HPS</td>
<td>Villager Peak, Rabbit Peak</td>
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<td>SAT-SUN</td>
<td>DPS</td>
<td>Pahump Point, Stewart Point</td>
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<td>DEC 11-12</td>
<td>SAT-SUN</td>
<td>DPS</td>
<td>Orocopia Mtn List Finish #2</td>
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<tr>
<td>DEC 12</td>
<td>SUN</td>
<td>DPS</td>
<td>DPS Potluck and Holiday Party</td>
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<td>JAN 9</td>
<td>SAT</td>
<td>DPS</td>
<td>DPS Potluck and Management Meeting</td>
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<td>JAN 22</td>
<td>SAT</td>
<td>DPS, LTC, SPS, HPS</td>
<td>Local Baldy Snow Practice</td>
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<td>JAN 29-30</td>
<td>SAT-SUN</td>
<td>DPS</td>
<td>Whipple Mtn, Chemehuevi Peak</td>
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<td>FEB 5-6</td>
<td>SAT-SUN</td>
<td>DPS</td>
<td>Black Butte, Chuckwalla Mtn</td>
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<tr>
<td>FEB 12</td>
<td>SAT</td>
<td>DPS, LTC, SPS, HPS</td>
<td>Local Baldy Snow Practice</td>
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<tr>
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<td>DPS Potluck and Management Meeting</td>
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<td>APR 10</td>
<td>SAT</td>
<td>DPS</td>
<td>DPS Potluck and Management Meeting</td>
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<td>MAY 15</td>
<td>SUN</td>
<td>DPS</td>
<td>Annual Banquet</td>
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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://sierraclub.org/outings/chapter/forms](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.

**O: DPS Potluck and Management Meeting:** Come to the home of Elaine and Dave Baldwin for Oktoberfest. Meeting starts at 4:30; potluck at 6 pm. Bring a beverage of your choice and a potluck item to share. Contact Reserv: Elaine Baldwin (DWBaldwin@aol.com).

**I: Mt Ajo (4808’), Superstition Mtn (5057’):** Join us for one or both class 2 peaks. Fri hike up Ajo in Organ Pipe Natl Mon (7.5 mi, 2600’ gain); Sat climb Superstition and see petroglyphs, maybe bighorn sheep (6.5 mi, 3000’ gain). Send e-sase or sase with conditioning to Leader: Tina Bowman. Co-Leader: Mary McMannes.

**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/sase, contact info, navigation experience/training, any WTC, leader rating, rideshare, to Leader: Robert Myers (rmyers@ix.netcom.com). Assistant: Phil Wheeler.

**I: Needle Peak (5803’), Manly Peak (7196’):** We’ll try again for these two peaks – rain in February closed access roads to the eastern approach which we had planned, so we had to cancel the previously scheduled trip. Needle is 2900 feet of gain and 7 miles; Manly is 2800’ of gain and 6 miles. We still plan to take the eastern approach rather than going in over Goler Wash, but 4WD will still be necessary in some spots. Saturday night enjoy a DPS potluck. Leader: Dave Perkins. Send email or SASE to Assistant, Ann Perkins (ann.perkins@csun.edu).

**I: Villager Peak (5756’), Rabbit Peak #2 (6640’):** 21 miles, gain 7900’. Strenuous backpack in the Anza-Borrego desert. Climb from desert floor to Villager first day. 2nd day hike to Rabbit & camp; then out. Be advised of ever-
present cholla cactus. Take away the prize of bagging the Big Bunny. Strenuous hiking in the desert requires good conditioning. Please contact leader with recent conditioning history. Leader: Mark S. Allen (markallen4341@socal.rr.com). Assistant: Bob Myers.

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<th>DEC 4-5</th>
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<td><strong>I:</strong> Pahrump Point (5740′), Stewart Point (5265′): Join us for one or both of these fine DPS-listed limestone peaks just east of Death Valley NP. Saturday climb Pahrump Point (3400′ gain, 8 mi.). Happy hour Saturday night. Sunday climb Stewart Point (2600′ gain, 6.5 mi.). Send e-mail with conditioning and experience to Leader: Daryn Dodge (<a href="mailto:ddodge@eohha.ca.gov">ddodge@eohha.ca.gov</a>) or Co-Leader: Kathy Rich (<a href="mailto:kathrynarich@gmail.com">kathrynarich@gmail.com</a>).</td>
<td><strong>I:</strong> Orocopia Mtn. (3815′) (List Finish #2): Join the leaders for a leisurely climb of Orocopia on Saturday. The climb should be 1100′ gain, 4.5 mi rt, 4 hours or so plus time for a celebration on the summit for Sue Holloway's second finish of the DPS List. Saturday afternoon/evening activities in camp will include another (in)famous “beers of the world” tasting as well as a traditional DPS potluck and more celebrating. Leaders: Gary Craig and Sue Holloway (<a href="mailto:sueholloway@cox.net">sueholloway@cox.net</a>).</td>
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<th>DEC 11-12</th>
<th>SAT-SUN</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>O:</strong> DPS Potluck, Holiday Party, and Management Meeting: Come to the home of Ann and Dave Perkins for the holiday potluck and management committee meeting. Meeting starts at 4:30; potluck at 6 pm. Bring a beverage of your choice and a potluck item to share. Contact Reserv: Ann Perkins (<a href="mailto:ann.perkins@csun.edu">ann.perkins@csun.edu</a>).</td>
<td><strong>O:</strong> DPS Potluck and Management Meeting: Come to the home of Gloria Miladin for a DPS potluck and management committee meeting. Meeting starts at 4:30; potluck at 6 pm. Bring a beverage of your choice and a potluck item to share. Contact Reserv: Gloria Miladin (<a href="mailto:miladingloria@yahoo.com">miladingloria@yahoo.com</a>).</td>
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<th>JAN 9</th>
<th>SUN</th>
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<td><strong>I:</strong> Whipple Mtn (4130′), Chemehuevi Peak (3694′): Join us for a winter climb of these two low elevation peaks near the Colorado River. We will climb Whipple by route B, 2700′ gain, 9 miles. Chemehuevi is 2000′ of gain and 7.5 miles. Driving distance between the peaks is short; there is 1 mile of poor dirt road, but 2WD can probably make it or we can carpool the last mile. DPS happy hour and potluck Saturday night. Leader: Dave Perkins; send email/SASE to Assistant Leader Ann Perkins (<a href="mailto:ann.perkins@csun.edu">ann.perkins@csun.edu</a>).</td>
<td><strong>I:</strong> Black Butte (4504′), Chuckwalla Mtn (3446′): Join us for two class 2 hikes near the historic Bradshaw Trail. Sat Black Butte, 1600′ gain, 3 mi if we have enough 4WDs or 1830′ gain, 6.6 miles from the 2WD parking spot. Sun Chuckwalla, 1600′ gain, 3 mi. Be prepared for catclaw. Send contact, rideshare info to Leader: Tina Bowman (<a href="mailto:tina@bowmandesigngroup.com">tina@bowmandesigngroup.com</a>). Co-Leader: Tom Bowman.</td>
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<th>JAN 22</th>
<th>SAT</th>
<th>DPS, LTC, SPS, HPS</th>
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<tr>
<td>M/E: Local Baldy Snow Practice: Come review snow climbing, rope travel, ice axe, and snow anchors. Practice your skills or brush up on new techniques. Especially for aspiring M &amp; 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 (<a href="mailto:nsorenso@pacbell.net">nsorenso@pacbell.net</a>). Co-Leader: Tom McDonnell.</td>
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<th>JAN 29-30</th>
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<th>FEB 13</th>
<th>SUN</th>
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<tr>
<td>O: DPS Potluck and Management Meeting: Come to the home of Christine Mitchell and Ron Bartell for a DPS potluck and management committee meeting. Meeting starts at 4:30; potluck at 6 pm. Bring a beverage of your choice and a potluck item to share. Contact Reserv: Christine Mitchell (<a href="mailto:christinebartell@yahoo.com">christinebartell@yahoo.com</a>).</td>
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**THE DESERT SAGE**

November/December 2010
O: DPS Potluck and Management Meeting: Save the date for a DPS potluck and management committee meeting. Meeting starts at 4:30; potluck at 6 pm. Bring a beverage of your choice and a potluck item to share. Place and host TBD.

O: DPS Potluck and Management Meeting: Come to the home of Barbee and Larry Tidball for a DPS potluck and management committee meeting. 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).

O: Annual Banquet: Save the date!

OUTINGS CHAIR

Most noteworthy as we close out the year are Sue Holloway’s 2x list finish on Orocopia on December 11th and the DPS holiday party at the home of Ann and Dave Perkins all December 1st. In November and December we have four other outings to DPS peaks.

Leaders, we still need more outings for January and February 2011, which we can publish in the Sage and on the DPS web site. The deadline for the March through Fourth of July Schedule of Activities is upon us—November 10th! Please get your trip write-ups to me as soon as possible.

Thanks to all the leaders of our many DPS outings this year. Without your willingness to lead outings, we really wouldn’t have a DPS. We all very much appreciate the time and expertise you give to our fabulous section. At the next banquet in May 2011, we’ll be honoring leaders who have led fifty or more peaks for the DPS. Besides feeling good about leading outings for the DPS, our leaders can now be working toward the new leader emblem and the well-deserved recognition that goes along with that honor. Happy trails, Tina

CONSERVATION

While browsing through the internet to find a subject for this newsletter issue, I found a couple of organizations whose web sites may have a great deal of interest to lovers of the desert. The first is the Mojave Desert Land Trust, formed in 2005 by a group of Morongo Basin residents. Among their accomplishments are 344 land acquisition transactions, 3,235 acres conveyed to the National Park Service, and 16,900 acres protected in fee title. Check out their web site at www.mojavedesertlandtrust.org.

The other is a group called Campaign for the California Desert, which highlights current articles and legislation regarding desert conservation issues. Currently on this site are references to the controversy around the planned solar power plant in the Mojave Desert (outlined in the July/August Sage). Their website (www.californiadesert.org) also includes some great desert photos. — Ann Perkins

ROAD & PEAK GUIDE UPDATES

Mount Jefferson

On September 19, 2010, Tina Bowman led a group of DPS members to climb Mount Jefferson. Using 4WD vehicles we were able to drive in about 300 meters past the usual 4WD parking spot. Beyond this point the road is so bad that further travel is not worth it. It was observed that a truck was able to drive along the right side of the fence for a distance of 1350 meters past the usual 4WD parking spot. There is an opening through the fence on the drive in.

This writer tried to drive to the Jefferson trailhead from the west by way of Round Mountain, NV. I was able to drive to the old mining town of Jefferson. Beyond that the dirt road became so bad that only the most determined 4WD
Membership Summary

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Activity Report

Achievements

Drivers would want to attempt it. It was much easier and faster to drive south to Manhattan NV and follow that road around to Belmont NV. There are numerous places to camp on the Manhattan Road.

Virgin Peak

The road past the 2WD parking spot is now impassable, where the canyon narrows, due to a severe washout. This is just beyond a corral. It is still possible to walk the road to the usual 4WD parking spot and follow the guide route to the summit. On a climb of Virgin Peak in 2008, coming down from the summit, Ron Hudson suggested following the south ridge south toward where the cars were parked. This proved to be a superior route that avoided the steep brushy climb on the usual route. The ridge is open and does not have a lot of brush although there is some brush when one leaves the ridge and heads down to the road. A little map study will show how to reach this ridge after one passes the washout and goes north along the road to a northwest running ridge. Turn left and climb up this lateral ridge to the south summit ridge. - Ed Herrman

FRANCIS FARQUHAR AWARD TO GREG VERNON

It was with great excitement and anticipation that Doug Mantle, Tina and Tom Bowman, and I, Mary Mac, flew, drove, and landed in San Francisco’s Chinatown to honor long-time friend, Greg Vernon, as he received the coveted Francis Farquhar Award for excellence in mountaineering. It was exactly September 25, and there we were bob-knobbing with national Sierra Club members and staff (ironically, their headquarters is located on Bush Avenue in San Francisco), waiting for Greg’s moment in the spotlight. Greg (known as Gregie Boy) was sporting a full leg brace, as he recuperated from the disintegration of knee cap ligaments on Mt. Ritter, earlier in the summer.

After eating fine Chinese food (hey, we WERE in Chinatown), we waited eagerly for Greg to be called to the podium. Doug Mantle, the star-maker, was instrumental in submitting Greg’s name for the award including Greg’s impressive resume. Now, if one looks at past recipients of the Francis Farquhar Award beginning in 1970 with Norman Clyde and Allen Steck, one will behold some mighty names. Greg is in good company with Norman, Jules Eichorn, Glen Dawson, Galen Rowell, John and Ruth Mendenhall, Sam Fink, Arlene Blum, Steve Roper, Doug Mantle and Randy Danta. The last few years, we saw Andy Smatko, Barbara Lilley, and Gerry Roach as the latest awardees. Quite the climbing club, I’d say.

So, how does Gregie fit in with the likes of Norman Clyde and the others? I tried interviewing him as his eyeballs were glued to the TV screen (Triton Hotel) watching football. He admits playing second string football on the Nittany Lions, Penn State. He asked me if I wanted to know the formula for making a hydrogen bomb or more scoops about the mysterious disappearance of the Soviet submarine, “Red Star Rogue.” (Now, it’s all de-classified, so he says.) Greg has a doctorate in Physical...
Chemistry which ultimately led him to China Lake and High Explosives, but I steered him back into his mountaineering career. Sure, he’s finished the DPS List 2x and ten peaks away from 3x. He’s a two time Sierra Peaks’ List Finisher and closing in on number three. And he once held the record for climbing 82 Sierra peaks in one season. He may also be a record holder for getting all his Sierra peaks within four climbing seasons.

Truly impressive, but there has to be more. Oh yes, he has over 250 first ascents on Sierra rock climbing routes (he calls these “plums”) and he’s published three rock climbing books on Sequoia/King’s Canyon, The Needles, and Domelands. These sought after books have forwards by climbing legends Fred Beckey and Allen Steck, and feature rock climbing in the Southern and Western Sierra, an area 300 miles long and 40 miles wide. I’m sure the Sierra Club was looking for Sierra Club service: Greg taught BMTC with Cuno Ranschau, rock climbing classes for RCS when RCS was the primo rock climbing organization, five years with China Lake Search and Rescue, and had time to lead several outings for DPS and SPS over the past three decades. I think this list more than qualifies the old boy.

I’ve had the privilege of being a good friend with Gregie since 1979, and I won’t forget his first SPS List Finish on the Hermit, appropriate for the Lone Yeti. He and Don Sparks stuffed me into the crack on the Hermit urging me on to remove the stuck register box. I stood on Greg’s broad shoulders for the summit block not knowing what an illustrious career was ahead of our friend. He carried 80 pound backpacks as did Norman Clyde with lots of goodies such as cocky leeky soup and other exotic fare. Greg has done most of his peaks solo, and fortunately when the ligaments blew on Ritter leaving him knee-capless, there were friends with a cell phone who got him down the interminable snow cups. One who disappears solo into the far reaches of remote Nevada peaks, Gregie had timing working for him. We would have hated attending a banquet for a posthumous award, for sure.

Besides rock climbing and peak bagging, Gregie plays bridge and is a Gold Life Master which means he’s in the top 3% of bridge players in the world.

Thanks to Doug Mantle who did all the paperwork and pursued the bureaucracy in giving recognition to Greg. Like E.F. Hutton, when Dougie speaks, everyone listens. After a great gala (and a long banquet with many awards), we returned to the Triton Hotel where two mini bottles of champagne were chilling for our new Francis Farquhar Awardee. Greg rested on his laurels and continued to watch football well into the wee hours. Now this newest recipient sits in the throne room of Valhalla with the very best and most heroic of Sierra Club mountaineers. Congratulations to one well deserving friend. Gregie Boy, you’ve made us proud! - Mary McMannes
NEW DPS LEADER AWARDS ANNOUNCED

Congratulations to those who have responded to what has been a very popular response to the new DPS Leader Award voted into the Bylaws with the last election in May. As of the deadline on September 30th seven qualified and very deserving leaders have submitted their qualification list.

The very first DPS Leader Award goes to Ron Jones who most of us remember as a very prolific climber who tirelessly volunteered a lot of his time to the Section through climbs and his leadership as a Desert Peak Section Chair. And don't forget the many Chili Cook-offs that he and Leora hosted. Ron writes that one season he and Maris Valkass led a scheduled DPS climb every month for 12 straight months. Death Valley in August was nearly impossible. They did not get the peak. Instead they spent their time lying next to the crows in the irrigation canals amongst the palm groves!

Thank you and congratulations to our first Leader Award recipient Ron Jones!

The first seven Leader Award recipients are:

1. Ron Jones who led his 50th DPS peak on Arc Dome on August 18, 1990.
2. Larry Tidball who led Porter Peak as his 50th lead on October 24, 1993.
4. Doug Mantle who led Old Dad with Duane McRuer as his 50th lead peak in 2002.

Congratulations and many thanks from all DPS members to Ron, Larry, Steve, Doug, Barbbee, Sue, and Gary. The DPS membership all benefited from the efforts you all have put into achieving this most prestigious accomplishment.

For those of you that haven't yet gotten around to documenting your 50 led DPS Peaks (and I know there are a bunch of you still out there), please send your qualifying list to the DPS Secretary, Bob Wyka. Note that the same rules apply as are used for List Finishes, Emblems, and Explorer Awards. The date you submit your 50 peak list to the Secretary is the date you qualify and get the next number.

The 8th Leader Award is waiting to be filled! - Bob Wyka

GEORGE TOBY

The Angeles Chapter lost an enthusiastic mountaineer with George Toby's passing on August 2, 2010. George was born in Detroit, Michigan, on September 18, 1921. George, his wife Evie, and young son, Tom, eventually moved to Southern California. Early on, Tom, George's son, convinced George to join the Sierra Club and take up hiking. Tom was George's sponsor in getting him into easy hiking and ultimately serious climbing. An accomplished climber and E rated leader, George received an Outings Award in 1981. He led for the SPS and DPS, finishing the peaks list for both sections. George's SPS List Finish on Alta Peak in 1992 was made memorable when his good friend, Wayne Wurzburger, presented him with a vanity license frame reading, "71 (George's age) + 247 (# of peaks on the list) = amazing feet (feat)."

Besides climbing, George was passionate about airplanes. He graduated top of his class from Cass Tech High School in 1940, specializing in high school aeronautics. A year later, he and his brothers bought their first airplane, and George got his pilot's license. After a stint in the Navy, George worked in aerospace at North American Aviation and then Litton until his retirement. He designed smaller models that were exact replicas of the large airplanes. When visiting the Smithsonian Institute, George exclaimed, "There's one of the model planes I designed and built." Sure enough, it was not a copy, but the actual airplane model.

Travel, another passion, followed retirement. Friends remember George's annual...
Christmas parties where he presented slide shows of the year’s destinations.

A devoutly religious man, George was a lector at St. Mel’s Catholic Church, a volunteer position of which he was very proud.

George is survived by his son, Tom, and relatives in both Michigan and California. The family is grateful to his caretaker, Deli, who enriched George’s life during the past three years as he returned to his Reseda condo enjoying dinner parties with old friends.

Friends remember George “Toby”, for his optimism and profound appreciation of life. He left no stones unturned in a great climbing career, traveling to the four corners of the world, and touching the lives of many friends and acquaintances. - Mary Motheral

DID YOU KNOW?

It looks like everyone has returned from a summer of gaining peaks, both DPS and SPS, traveling to far off places, and now it’s time for our members to meet again at the fall and winter activities continuing to plan for the best season of pot-lucking and peak bagging. Thanks to those members who continue to explore unlisted peaks, and who knows if some will be added in 2011. Before you know it, we will have had too much fun at the Chili Cook-Off, the Octoberfest, and finally, it’s the big family gathering in December at Dave and Ann Perkins’ place.

I bring sad tidings of the passing of dear and old time friends, Harry Freimanis and my BMTC instructor, Chuck Kopeneck. Chuck was my mentor and guide as I started learning the ropes in Basic Mountaineering Training Course. His friend, Velma Mitchell, taught school with me and I’d watch her from afar as she returned weekend after weekend from many Sierra Club outings. She looked a tad like a harried housewife who’d been canning preserves all weekend, but this short little lady with the flying red hair was having big adventures here and abroad. She even boasted of surviving an appendectomy while traveling in the Veil of the Kashmir, another Sierra Club trip. Yes, Velma, you were my role model teaching me there is life after divorce and turbulent transitions, and I credit Chuck and Velma for throwing me the Sierra Club life preserver. Nothing was ever the same after knowing those two. Chuck encouraged me to go beyond BMTC and even get a leadership rating. Yes, I’m sad that Chuck is gone, and even more sad that I never took the time to call him and thank him for changing my life.

Did You Know there’s plenty to celebrate around here? First congratulations to Wynne Benti and Scot who tied the marital knot after some pretty fantastic motorcycle adventures around the West. DPS wishes them the very best and happy days forever and ever. Maybe we can lure Wynne and Scot down to the Valley during the December holidays? And Did You Know, Ed Herrman (Eddie 2Ms) and Ednita Erspamer appeared on our Jefferson and Arc Dome trip? Eddie has now bagged all of the Nevada County High Points. Vic Henney and Sue Wyman-Henney made an appearance too, and they’d been climbing right ahead or right behind Ed. This bunch is basically finished with the Nevada County High Points with the exception of Mount Grant (see article on page 16.)

Bob Burd has blown all of us normal people out of the water with his announcement he has indeed dayhiked the entire Sierra Peaks List, finishing on Table Mountain, Sept. 23, 2010. He’s the second person to have accomplished this seemingly impossible task. Someone reported seeing Bob Burd in action, and she said, “He literally floated over the boulders as if running on a track.” Doug Mantle has done some fine climbing this summer with Marcelo (when M. is in town from Chile) in tackling more of the “Fifty Classic Climbs in North America.” His latest classic is Pingora in the Wind Rivers, and he’s eyeing a 5.8 route on Colorado’s Kit Carson Peak called The Prow.

DYK our own Sue Holloway is soon to be a List Finisher, 2x, and there are some others who
aren’t far behind such as Virgil Popescu, John Strauch, and probably John Hooper. Speaking of past DPS List Finishers (and chairpersons), John McCully was lurking around L.A. and people needing a boost from John’s inimitable humor met him in Santa Monica to see how the old boy is doing. We’ve heard there was a contest to see how much weight John has lost? No reports thus far.

DYK, Jerry Keating is a prince for organizing the yearly Old Timers trip where founders of DPS and SPS get together, and hikers range from age 40 to age 80 plus? There’s plenty of history to be heard from this gathering, and we were pleased with 42 hikers and climbers in attendance. Four SPS founders were regaling us of early days: Barbara Lilley, John Robinson, Roger Gaefcke, and Frank and Joanna Bressel. Eternally young Ret Moore showed up and enjoyed the three day gathering. Walking down from China Peak with Ret, I heard the old timer story of Ret almost losing his toes after a wrong canyon turn when he and George Toby ascended Williamson. George refused to bivouac with a cozy little fire, so the mantra of the night was find the camp, toes or no toes. It was touch and go for weeks whether or not Ret would keep his toes (and he did), but as Willi Unsoeld once said after viewing his 9 toes in a jar, “Losing my toes will get my feet closer to the rock.” Other sightings of important old-timers or now-timers: Mark Adrian, Gail Hanna, Terry Flood, Richard Carey, Rich Gnagy, Elton and Patricia Fletcher plus past DPS chairs Mary Sue Miller and Jerry Keating. I’m sure my greatest joy and delight of the weekend was scrambling over some class 2 boulders behind Barbara Lilley and Gordon MacLeod and seeing them glide across the rocks with such little effort - as smooth as two twenty-five year old.

I heard from Judy Ware who is still living near Prescott, and she tells us that Neal Scott broke his ankle in climbing a peak near Blythe. Even with a swell helicopter ride to Yuma, Neal’s ankle was never properly set and complications set in. Finally, Neal’s daughter showed up and whisked him off to Klamath Falls where the doctors took good care of Neal, and he’s up and walking again. And hopefully, he’s peak bagging, too.

Do You Remember, Bill Hauser, the poster guy who sends some of his remarkable and harrowing mountain experiences in poster form with great photos accompanied with big lettered script and newspaper reprints? We last heard about him barely escaping with his life after a bivouac on Mt. Rainier. This time around, it all happened on Byron Peak in Alaska, where four accomplished climbers were resting near a cornice when it broke off sending two fellows flying over a 4,000’ cliff down to the Skookum Glacier below. Bill and a friend, roped, were still on top and managed to gain their footing, while the other roped team of two dangled over the precipice and surprisingly were still coherent. It’s quite the poster display and story as one learns how Bill and his climbing partner were able to bring those fallen climbers back up to terra firma. For those who missed seeing the poster at the DPS banquet, you’ll have another chance at our pending potlucks. Did You Know, Bill was a former teacher in Anchorage and is definitely the cat with nine lives? Thanks, Bill for sending me these great Show and Tell stories which are always appreciated by old timers and the new kids. And furthermore, Bill adds it was he who made the first ascent of Desatoya Peak in Nevada, April 1983, on snowshoes with a 4,000’ gain.

THE DESERT SAGE 11 November/December 2010

Bob Burd

Tom Bowman (left) on Fox News. Photo by Tina Bowman.
Sad to report that a Griffith Park hiker died on Monday Sept. 27 while hiking in the park during torrid noon temperatures, near or over 113 degrees. The ranger met with hikers on the next evening’s hike to share details and admonish people against hiking alone in less than favorable conditions. Sally Mezke was the tragic victim, and the irony is she had a workable (in range) cell phone, had just given her last water to her black Lab, and was 300 yards from a residence in the Hollywood Hills. Cause of death was heat exhaustion, loss of orientation, and bewilderment. Hikers were solemn as our park ranger choked up in emotion while telling the story.

And Did You Know, our own Tom Bowman was on Fox News the evening of Sept. 30th, as he proclaimed his argument and a firm NO on Proposition #23. In Tom’s own words, “This is a deceptive ballot measure bankrolled by two Texas oil companies. Passage of #23 will give them a license to pollute our air and repeal California’s clean energy standards. For more info, visit the website: www.stopdirtyenergyprop.com.

And for the Nit-Pickers and Ooops column, I congratulate Geoff Godfrey who is keeping me on the straight and narrow as he caught me in spelling Gardiner Peak as Gardener. Whut wuz I thinking? It must have been the leaf blower outside who diverted my attention. Geoff says, “So, toss a hunk of serpentine at me for my nitpicking ways.”

Hey, Geoff, I’m glad people ARE reading the column and not just using these pages for birdcage liners. And oops, I correct another observation that Ron Eckelmann brought Beanies and Franks to the Patterson List Finisher not the redundant Weenies and Franks.

Obviously, now you know (NYK) about Gregie Vernon’s Night on the Town (San Francisco) when he won his Francis Fahquhar Award. If you are curious about the many awards that the National Sierra Club gives to worthy recipients, go online and see the 45 pages of past and present awards. Phew, what a List. I liked seeing some of my friends such as Dick Akawie, Ron Jones, Duane McRuer, and Vicky Hoover being awarded the Oliver Kehrlein Award. Probably one of the most coveted awards is named after our founder, John Muir. I noted with interest that past recipients were: Ansel Adams, Francis Fahquhar, Elden Hughes, Judy Anderson, and again (wow), Vicky Hoover. Oh, and even Al Gore, 2007! I wonder if it was a dilemma for Al to show up at Stockholm, Sweden, or Chinatown, San Francisco. It’s very exciting stuff to be recognized at the national level.

That’s the news from the Land of Little Rain, and hopefully there will be more gleanings and scoop-gatherings as autumn 2010 merges into winter and spring 2011. Potlucks will convene and caravans will follow those interminable dusty roads to our desert road heads. Be strong, be well, and be involved in exploring and loving our desert lands.

Your Roving Girl Reporter, Mary McMannes 

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SUBSCRIPTION REMINDER

If you haven’t already done so, please consider renewing your Sage subscription. Dues are $10 per year and multiple year subscriptions are encouraged. If you feel even more compelled, the DPS offers a “sustaining” dues option ($20) which delivers your Sage via first class mail. Send your check made payable to “Desert Peaks Section” to:

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

Include accurate address information. For your convenience, you may use the order form at the bottom of page 22.
Saturday, July 24th, we drove up the rather good dirt road to Virginia Peak. The road is much improved over the last time I was there, so a brave passenger car could have made it to the top. But we parked at a road junction at the 7600' level so we could justify calling it a peak bag.

We climbed the 700' up the road to the summit of Virginia Peak to claim it. And then we headed north along the ridge to Pah Rah Mountain. It was rolling volcanic terrain, down 200 feet, up 200, down 200, and up 200 again, to reach the peak, about 3 miles north of Virginia Peak. Although all cross-country, the route was easy going.

It quickly became apparent that if we hugged the west flank of the ridgeline, there is almost no vegetation, and the rock is mostly broken, and even sandy along this route. I guess because this is where the weather is most severe, and probably snow-bound half the year. We also found a few wild horse trails to follow in places. So not surprisingly, we saw about fifty mustangs in two herds, bounding across the high plateaus.

But what made our day was when we spooked a herd of 24 pronghorn antelope as we crested a knob. They were fifty yards away when we first saw them, but they increased that to a half mile faster than most people could get their cameras out. But co-leader Sharon Marie managed to get a couple of good shots. The herd seemed to have one "guard buck" with horns who kept himself between us and all the rest who were either females or too young to have horns. They stayed on the ridge line, and kept a mile between us, and kept us in their sight the whole time; then circled around behind us so we saw "buck" again on the way back.

The other interesting sight of the day was when we passed a couple of weather towers that had been erected by the company that is planning a wind farm in the Pah Rah's. I say "had" because both of them had been collapsed by high winds; we were guessing in that big storm we had last spring. We examined and took pictures of the wreckage, and wondered about the wisdom of building wind turbines on this windiest of ridges.

We reached Pah Rah Mountain easily in two hours, and were a little quicker on the way back. And the weather
couldn't have been nicer, temps in the high seventies, and a cool easterly breeze, compared to the 101 degree temps in Reno that day. And did I mention the wildflowers? The place was just lousy with wildflowers.

This was the first scheduled trip of the Great Basin Peaks Section.

When Mary McMannes and I planned this trip, we didn’t have a theme in mind, but one emerged as the outing developed—wildlife. It began with the mustangs Mary and I saw as we drove into Nevada on Friday, September 17th. They were close to highway 6 north of Montgomery Pass.

Friday evening we met most of our group at the old stone cabin and corral area on the dirt road approach to Mount Jefferson. There is parking for a number of cars here and level spots for camping (but watch out for the multitude of cow pies). Saturday morning several others joined us, including Ed Herrman and Edna Erspamer, who had tried to drive in over Jefferson Summit from the west side. That part of the road was impassable for Ed’s intrepid 4Runner, so they had to drive around the southern end of the range via Manhattan, arriving just before we were ready to depart. We consolidated into fewer cars and drove easily to Jefferson Summit. Here we left Jim Fleming’s 2WD Tacoma and drove more than another mile to a high spot in the deteriorating dirt road where we could park beside the road.

From here we hoofed it up the road track and then onto use trail, starting about 7:55. Someone had driven in farther than we had on the other side of the fence, where there also is a road track, but we never saw this person. As we headed up beyond the fence, we saw one bighorn sheep, who soon headed down and out of sight. We took one snack break on the way up. The first part of the group was on the summit at 10:40. The view was marred by smoke to the north and west, but we still enjoyed fine...
summit weather and what we could see. Our group for Jefferson included James Barlow, Gary Bowen, Jim Fleming, Ed Herrman (from Las Vegas), John Kurnick, Gloria Milanin, Carol Petrelli (from Salt Lake City), Virgil Popescu, Bruce Trotter, and Sharon Marie Wilcox (from Reno), besides the leaders.

After more than an hour on the summit, we headed down and saw an immature golden eagle soaring above us, identified as such by Bruce, and then three more bighorn. We were back to our 4WD parking spot about 1:30. Back where we'd left the other cars, Sue and Vic Henney, who had been climbing other peaks in Nevada, joined us. They had climbed Jefferson the day before by a different route and left a note for us in the register.

Off we headed to Tonopah to buy gas and sandwiches for some. We regrouped at the sign that reads “Gabbs Pole Line Road.” I’d driven this road a number of years previously and remembered it as excellent dirt. It cuts off many miles of highway, being shown as pretty much a straight line form a point just west of Tonopah to one just south of Gabbs. The road was in excellent shape, and we could drive 50-60 mph safely—when we could see. As we went up and down the dips in the road, the breeze patterns shifted, sometimes blowing the dust off the side of the road, other times letting it hang over the road like a dense fog. As a result, we had to space ourselves quite widely apart.

We made our way to Columbine Campground at the trailhead for Arc Dome, arriving about 7:15. Some people were lucky enough to see pronghorn antelope off to the side of the road. All of us were lucky that campsites were open at Columbine or just back down the road in a flat area.

Mary Mac’s plantar fasciitis kept her from hiking up Arc Dome on Sunday, but Jim Fleming was happy to sweep. We gathered in the campground by a new trailhead sign and information about the Toiyabe Crest Trail, the TCT. I had studied the sign and noted trail numbers and was pleased to see that the TCT leads to the trail to the summit of Arc Dome. The trouble is that at every junction aside from the first just a short ways from the campground, EVERY trail or former dirt road is marked the TCT, and none has the trail number posted. Starting before 7:00, we followed the standard DPS guide book route A, which went very well. As mentioned, just up from the campground there’s a fork in the trail, one going more to the left and marked for Stewart Creek, the other continuing straight (on what was once a jeep trail) and unnamed—but this unnamed trail is the one to take (as in the past). Aside from this puzzling (for me) intersection, the route was very clear. We took several breaks on the way and regrouped at junctions, making the summit before 11:10. As we gained the plateau, we had a chilly wind to contend with. Along the way we saw a coyote running on the plateau.

On top we met a hiker from Missoula, Montana. He asked about our group, and eventually we learned that he had once met Doug Mantle on a summit. The views were better this day with some haze but not bands of smoke in the distance. About noon we started down, reaching the
cars before 3:30. The guide says that route A is twelve miles, but we thought it was a bit longer. My Avocet showed 4165' gain, pleasantly less than the 4600' listed in the guide; both numbers include the gain on the return.

Some members of the group camped at Columbine Sunday night, while others headed home or off to more peaks. Ed Herman rested a day and then climbed Bunker Hill, the last of the Nevada county high points he had to tick off his list. Congratulations to Ed! I enjoyed meeting new climbing friends and hiking with long-time DPS buddies. Thanks to all for another fine outing.

**HIGHPOINTER VISIT NORTHERN NEVADA**

**MT GRANT ACCESS UPDATE**

September 17-19, 2010

by Bob Sumner

During the weekend of September 17-19, members from the Highpointers club (highpointers.org) visited northern Nevada to ascend several county high points. Included in the gathering were visitors from Arizona, Arkansas, California, Colorado, New Jersey, North Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, and Washington.

On Friday I led Rick Hartman and Bill Jacobs, both of Prescott, Arizona, up the northeast ridge of Middle Sister in neighboring Lyon County. The weather was superb and the far reaching views extended from Boundary Peak in the White Mountains north to the Tahoe Sierra. Bill is a cancer survivor and armed forces veteran and it was really great to see him back in the mountains.

On Saturday night, the group of 30 Highpointers converged at Rojo’s Restaurant in South Lake Tahoe for dinner. Most had ascended Snow Valley Peak (highest in Carson City) and East Peak (highest in Douglas County) earlier that day. A tally was taken and we discovered that we had over 7000 county high point ascents among us.

Sunday morning, most of the Highpointers headed for Mount Rose (Washoe County’s highest) while some visited the Placer County, CA high point. Located just off the Tahoe Rim Trail above King’s Beach, this is one of the “newest” county high points. For years, people thought Granite Chief (9,006’) above Squaw Valley was Placer’s high point, until one astute map reader noticed a 9040’ contour line on the west rim of Mount Baldy. And thus a new county high point was born.

There was much enthusiasm and excitement within the group over the possibility of coming to Hawthorne next year to ascend Mount Grant (11,239’). It is currently the only Nevada county high point with restricted access. Rick has been spearheading the effort to gain hiker access on behalf of the County Highpointers (cohp.org), and achieved a victory earlier in the week when the Hawthorne Army Depot granted a tentative access day.

Here is what we know so far. The access day will be on a weekend in mid to late September 2011. There will be mandatory carpooling up the Cottonwood Canyon Road to the summit parking area, and an escort will be provided. It is a short hike to the top from there. All participants will be required to submit an application well in advance of the event, so they can be screened by the Army. No pets will be allowed onto the Army base, and all participants will be required to use porta-potties (which will be located along the driving route and at the summit parking area).

It was explained to us in the meeting that Mount Grant is an extremely sensitive environmental area and the watershed for Hawthorne and the Army base’s drinking water. Hunting is prohibited, and several species such as bighorn sheep, mountain lion, black bear, and sage grouse live here. There are instances of 100 year old...
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sages growing near the road, and all vehicles will be confined to the designated route.

If the hiker access day goes well, we hope to make this into an annual event. Be sure to check the County Highpointers website periodically for updates, and to download an application once it becomes available.

DPS OCTOBER MEETING & POTLUCK
October 3, 2010
by Tina Bowman

The new year of DPS meetings and potlucks started off with a good crowd of twenty-one gathering in Long Beach and enjoying camaraderie and great food. Joining in on the fun were Elaine and Dave Baldwin, Ron Bartell, Randy Bernard, Tina and Tom Bowman (the hosts), Jim Fleming, Kevin Gray, Josephine Lam, newcomer Johnny Martinez, Gloria Miladin, Christine Mitchell, Virgil Popescu, Barbara Reber, Dan Richter, Barbara and Dave Sholle, Barbee and Larry Tidball, Jack Wickel, and Bob Wyka, who had to leave after the meeting.
DESERT PHOTOS

Petroglyphs. Photo by Bob Cates.

Prickly poppies. Photo by Penelope May.
BOOK REVIEWS

LET’S GO TO THE MOVIES, DPS STYLE, Part I

The Book: The Movie

McTeague (1899): Greed (1925)

The Heritage of the Desert (1910): The Heritage of the Desert (1939)

The Winning of Barbara Worth (1911): The Winning of Barbara Worth (1926)


A handful of the books previously reviewed in Desert Books have been adapted into movies. I thought it would be interesting to consider just how well those adaptations turned out in the cases where DVDs are available from Netflix, and/or the film can be viewed on the Turner Classic Movie (TCM) channel.

McTeague (1899): Greed (1925)

Considering the books—not the resulting movies—in chronological order, the first source for a movie based on a previously reviewed volume is McTeague (1899), Frank Norris’ shining example of American naturalism.

One of the first major works of literature to be set in California, McTeague begins in San Francisco, where the novel’s namesake makes his living as an unlicensed dentist. Due to an argument over money won in a lottery, however, the “immensely strong, stupid, docile (and) obedient” man strangles his wife, flees the city, and heads for the Panamint Mountains, where, as George Palmer Putnam states in his book, Death Valley and its Country, “many characters found it healthy, for reasons often associated with homicide, to retire temporarily from the legal entanglements of society.” Still later, obeying some innate sixth sense regarding his imminent capture, McTeague strikes out across Death Valley with his burro, $5,000 in gold coins, and a pet canary in cage.

In 1924, the German filmmaker, Erich von Stroheim, faithfully—perhaps too faithfully—adapted the book into a marathon film, 42 reels and ten hours in length. Jean Hersholt, who played Marcus, to whose dead body McTeague found himself fatally handcuffed at the movie’s end, recalled that it was the most grueling role of his Hollywood career, as von Stroheim, insisting on realism, kept the cast in Death Valley for several days in August with temperatures hovering around 120, shooting and reshooting the final scene.

MGM, however, considered the film much too long and would not distribute it. Von Stroheim then cut it in half, but still the studio refused. Lawrence Clark Powell, western bibliophile extraordinary, notes that “finally a studio editor cut it even more, and it was finally released as Greed. It was a failure, the life and the continuity gone, so that audiences were confused because of what it didn’t show. Von Stroheim would never view his mutilated masterpiece.”

Although a good portion of the original footage has been lost forever, Turner Entertainment, which acquired the rights to many of the old MGM movies, has restored and amended a version of Greed, which, while not available on DVD, can be viewed on rare occasions on Turner Classic Movies (TCM). For the next showing go to http://www.tcm.com/tcmdb/title.jsp?stid=892

The Heritage of the Desert (1910): The Heritage of the Desert (1939)

Zane Grey (1872-1939) was a prolific writer, turning out almost 90 books, and selling in excess of 100 million copies worldwide during his lifetime. Almost single-handedly Grey created the “The Code of the West,” glorifying the character and values of the men and women of the American frontier.

Most critics agree, however, that of Grey’s sixty-eight western novels, only three of his earliest efforts—The Heritage of the Desert (1910), The Riders of the Purple Sage (1912) and The Rainbow Trail (1915)—possess much in the way of literary merit.

And, although these three novels were each made into movies more than once, none of them are currently scheduled on TCM, and only one, a 1939 production of The Heritage of the Desert, is available from Netflix.

The setting for Grey’s Heritage is the Utah/Arizona
border, where, during the period 1860-1890, the Mormons who settled there practiced polygamy.

The plot involves a young man from Connecticut, John Hare, who has come west in an attempt to recover from tuberculosis. Overcome and near death while passing through a stretch of the desert country, John is discovered by August Naab, a Mormon rancher who has spent years establishing a large cattle and sheep operation in the area.

A compassionate man, August takes John under his wing, cares for him at his isolated homestead, introduces him to his two wives, his three sons, and to a half-breed (Spanish/Navajo) young woman, Mescal, whom August has raised since she was orphaned as a girl.

Trouble begins almost immediately when a cattle rustler and an unethical rancher combine forces first to drive Naab from his vital springs and then to rustle and rebrand his cattle.

While all this is going on, Naab sends John, for reasons of health, along with Mescal and two trusty Indians, into the nearby mountain meadows to tend his large flock of sheep. In this beautiful setting, predictably, John falls in love with Mescal.

The primary dramatic situations in The Heritage of the Desert involve Naab’s promise to his son Snap that Mescal will become his second wife—a marriage that, when imminent, causes Mescal to hightail it into the Painted Desert—and the increasing pressure on Naab’s ranching operation—a crunch that eventually leads to bloodshed.

The 1939 movie version of Heritage was made with several changes, including the elimination of any mention of polygamy or Mormonism. The film hero is renamed John Abbott, a man who comes west seeking his fortune; the half-breeds, Mescal, is now August Naab’s daughter, Marian; and the man to whom August has promised Marian’s hand in marriage is not his son Snap, but rather one of Naab’s ranch hands, also named Snap.

With the characters reset and Grey’s curiosity toward multiple marriages downplayed, the movie version then ends up in much the same fashion as the novel. The movie Heritage possesses a significantly more interesting plot than most oaters, and I must admit that both my wife and I enjoyed viewing the 1939 black & white flick.

The Winning of Barbara Worth (1911): The Winning of Barbara Worth (1926)

Harold Bell Wright (1872-1944) was the first American author to earn over a million dollars in royalties—big money in the early twentieth century. At his peak he was as well known as Jack London, Zane Grey, Sinclair Lewis or Edgar Rice Burroughs, and it was estimated that one out of ten Americans had read a Wright novel.

In spite of his immense popularity literary, critics scorned his works as being overly sentimental and unrealistic, while the intelligentsia berated him for his lack of a formal education. In addition to the plentiful royalties, however, Wright tasted retribution when the city of El Centro, where he wrote TWOBW, named a street Barbara Worth in his honor.

Briefly, TWOBW’s plot begins several years prior to the onset of the massive irrigation project that turned the arid King’s Basin (think Imperial Valley) into the fertile agricultural area it is today. It was then that Barbara, a two-year old waif, whose mother had just died of thirst, was found wandering in the (Algodones) sand dunes, later to be adopted by Jefferson Worth, a banker from Rubio City (Yuma).

Fifteen years later, young Barbara is described thusly: “Every movement and gesture expressed perfect health. The firm flesh of her rounded cheeks and full throat was warmly browned and glowing with the abundance of red blood in her veins. Her face was framed in a mass of waving brown hair under a wide sombrero.”

As the story continues, we find Jefferson Worth
becoming unbearable—124 degrees recorded in the
blew down as the cameras of another crew rolled, as did
(camp) commissary tent one afternoon... (thus) King
a.m. to meet that schedule, so King... issued al1 order
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The Barbara Hotel, largest of the false-front structures,
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However, King was delighted with the footage and was
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similar to Von Stroheim, TWOBW’s director, Henry
King—who, among several other films, directed Twelve
O’Clock High (1949), The Sun Also Rises (1957) and
Tender is the Night (1962)—was intent on realism.
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TwoBw is available from Netflix and can be viewed on rare occasions on TCM.


On the evening of September 26, 1909, in a fruit orchard near
Banning, CA, 28-year-old Willie Boy confronted William
"Old Mike" Boniface, a Chemehuevi shaman, with a gun, during an attempt to
either kidnap or elope with Boniface’s 16-year-old
daughter, Carlota, Willie Boy’s distant cousin. A shot
was fired, either deliberately or in a struggle, and Old
Mike lay dead. Mike’s wife, Maria, either because she
was sympathetic to the young lovers (they had run off
together previously, but had been brought back by relatives), or because she was fearful, did not inform
authorities of the death until the following morning.

A posse was formed shortly thereafter, consisting of
several Banning area locals and two Indian trackers,
which set out to track the couple down.

In the meantime, Willie Boy and Carlota were fleeing
on foot to the Pipes Canyon area, some 4 miles north of
Yucca Valley, presumably by way of Whitewater, Big
Morongo Canyon, and Jernberg Pass (the saddle on
Route 62 between the Morongo and Yucca Valleys),
probably attempting to make their way to either Twenty
Nine Palms or to the Colorado River, where relatives
could help them. On September 30, the posse found
Carlota’s body at The Pipes, shot through the back.

After returning to Banning with Carlota’s body, a new
posse was formed to continue the hunt for Willie Boy,
now considered a double murderer. It was during this
period that Willie Boy made his miraculous figure eight-
shaped flight, first heading northeast to the Bullion Mt s.,
then a part of the Marine Corps Air Command Combat
Center, then south to Twenty nine Palms, then northwest
to Surprise Springs and Rock Corral, all in all, some say,
covering 500 miles.

On October 7, a splinter posse consisting of three
Banning locals, plus two Indian trackers, at last cornered
Willie Boy on the slopes of 4,357’ Ruby Mountain, 4
miles WNW of Landers, CA. There, behind a rock fort
he had constructed, Willie Boy, an excellent shot, pinned
his pursuers down, shot three of their horses, and
seriously wounded one of the posse, leaving him
bleeding and exposed to further gunfire. That night,
under the cover of darkness, the other posse members
rescued their companion, hoisted him onto a remaining
horse, and started back to Banning to seek medical
treatment. Before they got far they heard another shot
ring out.

Eight days later, on October 15, yet another posse
reached Ruby Mountain, where they found the bloated
body of Willie Boy. The lawmen ascertained that the
fugitive had committed suicide by removing his shoe,
placing the rifle to his chest, and using his toe to press
the trigger. The posse burned his body where it lay.
Some believe that Willie Boy’s motivation for killing
himself was because he learned from his pursuers, while
he had them pinned down, that Carlota was dead.

The 1969 movie version, Tell Them Willie Boy Is Here,
follows the actual events as recorded in Lawton’s book
with fair accuracy. Robert Blake was cast as Willie Boy,
Robert Redford played Deputy Sheriff "Coop" Cooper, and Katherine Ross—whose blue eyes and European features belie her role as an Indian—played Lola (Carlota). The film is not currently scheduled on TCM, and the only way you can view it on Netflix is by streaming. A DVD, however, can be purchased for $19.98 at Amazon.

"TTWBH" was adapted and directed by Abraham Polonsky, who was making his first film after having been blacklisted in the 1950s. Happily, the flick appears to have been filmed at or near the same geographical locations where the actual events took place.

FYI, Willie Boy's grave monument can be found outside of Landers, CA at 34°17'30"N 34°17'30"N 116°32'15"W. The monument itself bears the inscription "The West’s Last Famous Manhunt," alluding to the notion that this was the last effort of its type before the use of a posse was generally replaced by modern, "fully" staffed and empowered law enforcement agencies.
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THE DESERT SAGE 23 November/December 2010
DESERT PEAKS SECTION

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