CHAIR’S CORNER
by Christine Mitchell

Jim Fleming, our most excellent Banquet Chair, has been working very hard on plans for the banquet this May. He’s nabbed John Robinson to give the program. Most of us know John from his popular guide books and books on the history of LA mountains. He was also an early member of DPS and has many stories to tell about climbing in the “good old days”. Jim also reserved the Proud Bird restaurant, which was a hit last year. Be sure to mark your calendar for the banquet on May 15 and bring your burning questions for John.

DPS members, please mark and return the ballot included in your Sage. There’s no proposal this time to add or delete any peaks, which really gets all of us cranked up, but it’s still important to get as many ballots returned as possible. Please feel free to include any suggestions or comments at the bottom of the ballot. We got quite a bit of feedback last year and it was very useful, not to mention entertaining.

We were glad to hear that the Tidballs have made it home just fine and with stories to tell us. They left on January 20 for a relaxing, two week vacation in Egypt. If you remember, January 25 is the day people in Cairo chose to start making their feelings about their government known to the whole world. Larry and Barbee had an interesting and safe adventure getting home which you’ll have to hear about at the next hike or potluck. (Did I outscoop Miss DYK?)

High desert season will be here soon. Time to start planning for those higher peaks that can be a little harder to get. If there’s one you would like do with a group, talk with your favorite leaders to get it on the schedule. Leaders like helping people meet their goals. We still have time left this season for low desert hiking and there are several good trips in the schedule. A milestone trip in the schedule is Daryn Dodge’s list finish on Sandy and Last Chance on March 26-27. Sign up with Daryn who will lead himself (and the rest of us) up these peaks. See you there!

NEXT SUBMISSION DEADLINE APRIL 9, 2011

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.
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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://sierracclub.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 Tom Sumner 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: Tom Sumner (Locornmn@aol.com).

**MAR 19**

**SAT**

**LTC**

**Deadline for Leadership Training Seminar:** Last day for receipt of application and payment by LTC. Register for Apr 2 seminar to be held at Eaton Canyon Nature Center, Pasadena. See LTC web site (www.angeles.sierraclub.org/ltc/) for registration information or ad in the March-July 4th Schedule of Activities. Next seminar: Fall 2011.

**MAR 19-20**

**SAT-SUN**

**DPS**

**I: Dry Mountain (8674’), Nelson Range (7696’):** Saturday climb Dry from the west (route B), 5200’ gain, 10 miles. High clearance, 4wd required. Saturday night enjoy a soak in the mineral waters of Warm Springs. Sunday climb Nelson, 1200’ gain, 2 miles. Leader: Dave Perkins. Assistant Leaders: Virgil Popescu and Ann Perkins. Send email or SASE with recent climbing experience to Ann (ann.perkins@csun.edu).
MAR 20
SUN
Great Basin Peaks Section

I: Kumiva Peak: Celebrate the first day of Spring by climbing Kumiva Peak (8237'), the highest in the Selenite Range, located 90 miles NE of Reno. The climb is all cross-country, on granitic and sandy terrane, 3000-ft elevation gain and 6 miles RT. Moderately strenuous due to steepness. Learn of Basin and Range geology and if we are lucky, we'll spot some antelope. Come prepared for sagebrush, and possible late snow. Contact Leader: Ed Corbett (775-853-8055; edc@unr.edu). Co-Leader: Sharon Marie Wilcox (775-852-5075).

MAR 26-27
SAT-SUN
DPS

MR: Sandy Point (7062'), List Finish on Last Chance Mtn (8456'): Assuming the Sandy Point ascent on Sat is a success (2000' gain, 11 mi), Last Chance Mtn (3000' gain, 5 mi) on Sun will be Daryn Dodge's DPS list finish. Join us for one or both peaks. We will have a short celebration on the summit of Last Chance Mtn, and perhaps back at the trailhead, so climbers can drive home at a reasonable hour on Sun. Send e-mail or sase with conditioning and experience to Leader: Daryn Dodge (ddodge@oecca.ca.gov). Co-Leaders: John Cheslick, Kathy Rich, Gary Schenk.

MAR 26-27
SAT-SUN
DPS, WTC

MR: Tensor Peak (4418'), Spectre Point (4400+'), Dyadic Peak (4362'): Visit three rarely climbed peaks in the remote Coxcomb Mountains. Sat backpack into camp (5 mi, 1300' gain). Sun climb peaks then back to camp and out to cars (9 mi, 2000' gain). Must be comfortable on third-class rock and must carry all water for two days. Trip restricted to Sierra Club members. Helmet, harness and medical forms required. Send email or sase, experience/conditioning to Leader: Regge Bulman (film185@fastmail.us). Assistant Leader: Eric Scheidemanile.

APR 2
SAT
LTC

Leadership Training Seminar: Become a qualified Sierra Club leader. Seminar at Eaton Canyon Nature Center, Pasadena. Deadline for receipt of application and payment is Mar 19 (see March 19th Sage listing for more info.). No registration after this date or at door. Next seminar: Fall 2011.

APR 2
SAT
DPS, WTC, Long Beach, Natural Science

APR 2-3
SAT-SUN
DPS, LTC, WTC, Desert Committee

I: Places We've Saved Navigation Noodle in Mojave National Preserve: Join us for our ninth annual journey through this jewel of the Mojave; preserved under the California Desert Protection Act, as a result of the efforts of Sierra Club activists and others. A basic to intermediate xc navigation day-hike workshop will be conducted out of the Mid Hills area in the pinyon and juniper forests at 5500' elevation. Potluck and social on Sat, and for those arriving early on Friday. Limited to 14 participants. Send email/sase to Leader: Robert Myers (rmmyers@ix.netcom.com). Co-Leaders: Virgil Shields, Ann Shields, Adrienne Benedict.

APR 3
SUN
DPS, LTC, WTC, SPS

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

APR 10
SUN
DPS

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 Resv: Barbee Tidball (lbitidball@verizon.net).

APR 15-17
FRI-SUN
LTC, WTC, Harwood Lodge

C: Wilderness First Aid Course: Runs from 8 am Fri to 5:30 pm Sun. Fee includes lodging, meals and practice first aid kit. Proof of CPR within previous 4 years required to enroll. Fee $210 (full refund through March 11). For application contact (e-mail preferred) to Leader: Steve Schuster (steve.n.wfac2@sbcglobal.net).
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<td><strong>Navigation Workshop on 3rd Class Terrain:</strong> This navigation workshop is limited to individuals participating in the Indian Cove Navigation Noodle and is intended to explore special navigation issues that arise on 3rd class terrain. Class 3 rock travel experience required. Restricted to Sierra Club members. Helmets and medical forms required/group size limited. Send email/sase, SC#, class 3 experience, conditioning, contact info to Leader: Robert Myers (<a href="mailto:rmyers@ix.netcom.com">rmyers@ix.netcom.com</a>). Co-Leader: Jack Kieffer.</td>
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<tr>
<td>APR 16-17</td>
<td><strong>I: Mount Palmer (7958’), Grapevine Peak (8738’):</strong> These two great Death Valley peaks, near Rhyolite, Nevada (ghost town) beckon to our Desert Rat souls! Sat Palmer, cl 2, 2200’ gain in 9 mi rt if we have enough 4WDs or 3100’ gain in 11 mi from our 2WD campsite. Sun we will hike class 1 Grapevine, 1600’ gain, 4 mi (w/4WD) or 2500’, 6 mi rt from camp. Send contact, rideshare info to Leader: Jim Fleming (<a href="mailto:jimf33@att.net">jimf33@att.net</a>). Co-Leader: Tina Bowman.</td>
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<td>APR 16-17</td>
<td><strong>I: Indian Cove Navigation:</strong> 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 (<a href="mailto:rmyers@ix.netcom.com">rmyers@ix.netcom.com</a>). Assistant Leader: Phil Wheeler.</td>
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<td>APR 20</td>
<td><strong>M/E R: Workshop: Advanced Mountaineering Program (AMP3) – Basic Safety System:</strong> First of 4 climbing workshops open to SC members with prior roped climbing experience. Today’s indoor: evening workshop of 4 hours reviewing ropes, knots, harnesses, helmets, and basic climbing gear will take place in Pasadena. As space is limited priority will be given to participants who commit to all four workshops. Send sase or e-mail with SC#, resume, phones to Leader: Dan Richter (<a href="mailto:dan@danrichter.com">dan@danrichter.com</a>). Assistant: Pat McKusky.</td>
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<td>APR 23-24</td>
<td><strong>M/E R: Advanced Mountaineering Program (AMP3) – Rappelling:</strong> 2nd of 4 climbing workshops open to SC members with prior roped climbing experience. Today at Stoney Point in Chatsworth, focus is on belaying and principles of anchor building. As space is limited priority will be given to participants who commit to all four workshops. Send sase or e-mail with SC#, resume, phones to Leader: Dan Richter (<a href="mailto:dan@danrichter.com">dan@danrichter.com</a>). Assistant Leader: Pat McKusky.</td>
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<tr>
<td>MAY 7</td>
<td><strong>M/E: Sierra Snow Checkoff/Practice:</strong> For M &amp; E candidates wanting to check off leadership ratings or others who wish to practice new techniques. Restricted to SC members with some prior basic training with the ice axe. Send SC#, climbing resume, email, H&amp;W phones to Ldr: Nile Sorenson (<a href="mailto:nsorenso@pacbell.net">nsorenso@pacbell.net</a>) Co-Ldr: Doug Mantle.</td>
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| MAY 7-8 | **M/E: Advanced Mountaineering Program (AMP3) – Rock Climbing Techniques and Anchors:** 4th of 4
climbing workshops open to SC members with prior roped climbing experience. This weekend completes the series of AMP workshops at Joshua Tree National Park and focuses on climbing and anchors. As space is limited priority will be given to participants who commit to all four workshops. Send sase or e-mail with SC#, resume, phones to Leader: Dan Richter (dan@danrichter.com). Assistant: Pat McKusky.

♦ MAY 14 SAT

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

♦ MAY 15 SUN

O: DPS Annual Banquet: Save the date for the banquet! We’ll return to the Proud Bird - see details elsewhere in this issue or contact DPS Banquet Chair: Jim Fleming (jimf333@att.net).

♦ MAY 28 SAT

O: Centennial Trails Restoration in Angeles National Forest: (Location dependent on hillside conditions) Commemorate Angeles Chapter Centennial by joining the Forest Committee’s San Gabriels Trail Crew to help restore and maintain parts of the 500+ mile trail system in the Angeles National Forest. Tools and instructions provided. Boots, gloves, long-sleeved shirts and pants mandatory. Hiking distances vary. Events typically run 9 am to 3 pm. Bring lots of water, lunch, safety glasses if you have them, and enthusiasm to work as little or as much as you want. Contact leader (email preferred) week before for destination, meeting time and location. Leader: Steve Anderson (steveanderson138@msn.com). Assistant Leader: Mary McMannes.
I: Heart Bar Peak (8332'): Practice navigation for Sunday’s checkoff on this 7 mi/e rt, 1400' gain hike. We will take a cross-country route to Heart Bar Peak and practice micro-navigation skills along the way. Send email (preferred) or sase, with contact info & recent conditioning to Leader: Robert Myers (rmyers@ix.netcom.com). Co-Leaders: Jane Simpson, Adrienne Benedict, Ann Pedreschi Shields.

I: Hayford Peak (9912'), Mount Stirling (8218'): Join us for these two Nevada peaks north of Las Vegas with chance to see great wildlife! Sat Hayford, class 1, 4100' gain in 15 mi rt. Camp in area Sat night. Sun we will caravan north and climb Stirling, class 1, 2200' gain, 4 mi rt. Send contact, rideshare info to Leader: Jim Fleming (jimf333@att.net). Co-Leader: Tina Bowman.

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

OUTINGS CHAIR

First, a reminder, dear leaders, that March 10th is the deadline for the July 4-October Schedule of Activities. I’d appreciate having your outings submissions several days before the deadline. Please consider leading several of our high peaks or starting the fall with a fine outing.

Let’s try a match-making scheme in this column for people who’d like to get together to climb the Mexican peaks privately. Please send me your name, peaks you’d like to climb, and e-mail or phone number. For a start we have Susan Cooper and Jim Long wanting to climb Pico Risco and Pescadores (ace-coop@msn.com) and Jim Prichard also wanting Pico Risco and Pescadores (jprichard@lewiscounty.com). Now it’s up to you to contact these DPSers if you’d like to join forces to climb these peaks. Let me know, please, whether you think this is useful or have other ideas to help climbers hitch up to go south of the border.

Want to put on your party hat? Daryn Dodge plans on finishing the list on Last Chance on March 27th. Virgil Popescu is closing in on his last few peaks as well and plans on finishing on Pleasant Point on May 7th. Who else is poised to be a list finisher? Happy Trails, Tina

CONSERVATION

In the December 2010 issue of Desert Report, an article by Scott Nicol entitled “Wallin or our Southern Deserts” presents an alarming view of the impact of the U.S./Mexico border walls on the environment. These walls fragment the habitat of a number of endangered species, impact the flow of water in desert ecosystems, and damage fragile ecosystems by the blasting and bulldozing used to make the walls. The impact on water flow was illustrated in 2008 in Organ Pipe National Monument when heavy rains flooded a number of washes that had been blocked by the border wall. Floodwaters travelled laterally along the wall and found an outlet at the Sonoya point of entry, causing millions of dollars of damage to businesses and government buildings. The California Coastal Commission had already found that the Border Patrol was in violation of Federal Environmental laws, but then Congress passed the Real ID Act. Section 102 of this act allows the Secretary of Homeland Security to waive any law that border wall construction might otherwise violate. This establishes the precedent that environmental laws, such as Endangered Species Act and Clean Water Act, can be swept aside when it would be inconvenient to obey them. For these reasons, the Sierra Club has opposed further border wall construction and calls upon Congress to repeal Section 102 of the Real ID Act.
- Ann Perkins

COVER PHOTO: Black Butte. Photo by Ron Bartell.
McCullough from the West

Buffalo Bill Casino has enlarged its parking area and has closed the road to McCullough Peak as described in the Road and Peak Guide. On January 21, 2011, Gloria Miladin, Virgil Popescu, Brian Smith and I found a route that goes over Beer Bottle Pass. Exit I-15 at Primm (Stateline) NV. Drive east to the traffic light. Turn left and follow the paved road, past Buffalo Bills Casino, approximately 0.5 miles to a dirt road beyond the Casino's boundary. Turn right and drive 0.2 mile to another dirt road and turn left. Follow this road approximately 1.2 miles crossing over a railroad track to a large sign “Jean-Roach Lake”. Take the right fork between the power lines and follow this road SE to Beer Bottle Pass. Drive over the pass on a good private road following the power lines to the east side of the Lady Gray Mountains. You can turn right on a good dirt road to the south and follow it to a dirt road and turn left driving past a water tank/corral to the sandy well-used dirt road that goes south through the valley. It is possible to get to the valley road from the Beer Bottle Pass road by driving past the previously mentioned dirt road. Drive south on the sandy dirt road avoiding all side roads that turn right into the mountains until you come to a large sign “South McCullough Wilderness Area”. Turn left here and follows this 4WD sandy road studded with many rocks, large and small, to the cabin at the trail head.

I think it is possible to find another good dirt power line road that goes around the Lady Gray Mountains to the north and avoid the Beer Bottle Pass road. - Edward Herrman

GREAT BASIN PEAKS SECTION NEWS

The Great Basin Peak Section has its Emblem patch complete and available to Emblem level members. Dennis, our webmaster, has posted a photo of the patch along with other updates on our website.

Upcoming trips: The GBPS plans to climb Kumiva Peak in March. The Desert Peak Section will climb GBPS peaks including Grapevine Peak in April plus Hayford Peak and Mount Stirling in June.

Join us! For details on membership, recognition categories, peak list, our new emblem patch, and trip reports check out the Great Basin Peak Section at: http://toiyabe.sierrclub.org/GBPeaksSection.html

Sad news: One of our members, John Sparks, passed away in January. We will miss his gentle nature and enthusiasm on the trail, but he'll always hike with us in spirit.

- Sharon Marie Wilcox

LEADERSHIP TRAINING

Interested in becoming an outings leader for the Club?

The Angeles Chapter is home to one of the largest outings programs on the planet – thousands of trips ranging from beach barbecues to mountaineering expeditions.

You can take the first step toward becoming a leader by attending a class offered by the chapter Leadership Training Committee on Saturday, April 2, at Eaton Canyon Nature Center in Pasadena. The class covers all the basics of leadership. Experienced leaders will tell you how to plan a trip, prevent problems on the trail, and make sure that everyone – including you – has a great time. They’ll also explain good conservation and safety practices. And they’ll give you tips for getting your “O” rating quickly and then, if you choose, pursuing more advanced ratings. The all-day class costs $25. The application is online at angeles.sierrclub.org/ltc.

Mail the application and check, payable to Sierra Club, to Steve Botan, LTC Registrar, 18816 Thornwood Circle, Huntington Beach, CA, 92646. You also can reach Steve Botan by phone (714-321-1296) or e-mail (ltcregistrar@hundredpeaks.org). Applications and checks are due March 19. Scholarships are available for those with financial need. Apply to LTC Chair Tina Bowman (tina@bowmandesigngroup.com).
DESSERT PEAKS SECTION 2011 ANNUAL BANQUET NEWS

When: Sunday, May 15, 2011

Where: The Proud Bird, 11022 Aviation Blvd., Los Angeles (near junction of 405 & 105)

Banquet tickets: $35 - Please reserve by May 5. $40 reserved after May 5.

Time: 5:30 pm - Social Hour/No Host Bar

7:00 pm - Dinner (Includes complimentary wine at each table)

Dinner Choices: Marinated Sirloin Steak  Baked Fresh Salmon  Vegetarian Wellington

Program:
John W. Robinson presents Desert Rats and Mega-Crowds on Mexico’s Big Picacho: DPS, the Early Years.

John is a native Californian born in Long Beach in 1929. He graduated from the University of Southern California in 1951 with a B.A. degree and CSULB in 1966 with an M.A. degree. He taught school for 35 years in Orange County. A physically active man, he climbed and explored throughout the West, Canada, Alaska, and Mexico. His personal experiences exploring mountains have given him a particularly insightful understanding of the trails and mountain passes used by early travelers. He is a noted author, having written extensively on the history of Southern California and the Sierra Nevada Mountains. His articles have appeared in many publications, including Westways, the Overland Journal, and others. John began hiking with us in 1953, and joined the DPS in 1955. He was Chair of the Section in 1962-63. He climbed the original 7 qualifying peaks on the list, and later the 36 total peaks.

The program will take us back to the early beginnings of the Section, with pioneers Chester Versteeg, Niles and Louise Werner, and others. We will then travel via muscle car (in an era that preceded four wheel drive vehicles) to Mexico, for early climbs of El Picacho Del Diabolo, affectionately and respectfully known as Big Picacho, an emblem peak considered the most beautiful climb by many.

Raffle: Our tradition of providing fabulous prizes for you to win continues. Tickets are available at five for $3 if purchased in advance before May 5 or $1 each on the day of the event. Tickets will be held at the door. Raffle prizes include: REI Certificate, copy of “Desert Summits” by Andy Zdon, framed watercolor print by Elaine Baldwin and much more.

Book Sale: Mary McMannes will offer a Classic Mountaineering and Climbers “Cheap” Book Sale.

For reservations: Please indicate number of banquet tickets: $35 before May 5th, $40 after May 5th. Include your dinner selection/s: Marinated Sirloin Steak, Baked Fresh Salmon or Vegetarian Wellington. Also, please specify number of raffle tickets: 5 for $3 if purchased in advance before May 5. Tickets will be held at the door. Mail check payable to DPS to Treasurer: Gloria Miladin, 11946 Downey Ave, Downey, CA, 90242. For questions e-mail: Jim Fleming at j IMF333@att.net or Gloria

Driving Instructions to the Proud Bird:

Northern Approach: 405-South and take Century LAX exit. Stay in right lane and exit (Century West exit 46). Turn left at the bottom of the ramp onto La Cienega Blvd South. From La Cienega take the 1st right onto Century Blvd heading west. Turn left on 2nd signal onto Aviation Blvd South. The Proud Bird is 0.7 miles on left.

Southern Approach: 405-North, exit Imperial Hwy, left onto Imperial Hwy, right on Aviation. Restaurant is 1 block on right.

Eastern Approach: 105-West to La Cienega/Aviation exit. Left at bottom of ramp onto Imperial Hwy. Right on Aviation. Restaurant is 1 block on right.

Free Parking in Proud Bird parking lot.

John Robinson. Photo courtesy of Jeff Lapides.

CANDIDATE STATEMENTS

Candidate Statements for DPS Management Committee, 2011-2012

Each year the DPS membership elects members of the Management Committee to serve two-year terms. The current committee includes three members with terms expiring this year. Members of the Management Committee are elected at-large then select among themselves who will hold the offices of chair, vice-chair, treasurer, secretary, and banquet chair. We have three excellent candidates this year. Please mark and return your ballots by April 30.

Ann Perkins

From my first climb with the DPS in 1970 (led by Ron Jones, campfire of burning tires), to the most recent (Sue Holloway’s 2x list finish), it’s been a pleasure to explore the desert with a group of fun and interesting people. They have inspired me to get my leadership rating, finish the list, and take an active part in the section. I’ve previously served on the Management Committee, first as Outings Chair, and then as Programs and Banquet Chair. If elected again, I will be happy to serve in whatever capacity is needed.

Ron Eckelmann

I am a retired electrical engineer and a long-time, though not-very-active climber of the Sierra, Desert and Hundred Peaks Sections. My first climb of any kind was Mt. Whitney, way back in 1958! My first desert peak was Telescope in 1965. Then came a long period with only sporadic desert ascents. In recent years I have become more active and, thanks to the DPS, have completed half of the list, enjoyed many campfires and potlucks, and made new friends. Now I am a candidate for the Management Committee to support the DPS and our trip leaders; they make it all possible.

Pat Arredondo

I earned my DPS emblem in 2004 on Signal Peak and have done almost 1/3 of the list. Not a great accomplishment, but I thoroughly enjoy DPS peaks, camping in the desert, and the fantastic potlucks! There are so many wonderful DPS members (and other participants) I’ve hiked, climbed, and camped with through the years, and I’d like to encourage new members to experience the beauty of the desert and to work on climbing the great DPS list. With this said, I will serve the management committee to the best of my ability.
Welcome back to the New Year, and now it’s almost spring, and we’re thinking of more List Finishers (Virgil Popescu, Daryn Dodge, Doug Mantle #8) plus ballots, banquets, and more. I tried to worm out of Did You Know this time, but Editor Bob pulled out the big whip and cracked it swiftly my way. Bob, of course, is riding high with his recent completion of the Death Valley National Park Peaks List, which meant ascents of some 105-112 peaks depending on whose list it is (there are several versions.)

Stars, starlets, and Olympian gods pursuing and finishing the various lists: A big congrats goes to best friends (recipients of the DPS Mountaineering Award, 2010, Vic Henney and Sue Wyman-Henney who finished the San Diego Peaks List (San Diego Chapter), 100 peaks to be exact. I told them they are like stealth bombers stealing away to bag peaks and not announcing steady progress until the deed is done. They sent an email, “Hey, how about coming to our List Finish, March 5 and 6?” “Huh, what List and what List Finish??” I know they’ve worked on the high points of Germany, and oh boy, would I love to schunklen on over for that List Finish. By the time this Sage goes to press, we will have climbed Ghost Mountain (led by Dan, Asher, and me) and howled at the moon in celebration of Vic and Sue being the first ones to complete lists, SPS, DPS, HPS, Lower Peaks, Nevada County High Points (minus Grant), and now the San Diego List. Not only did we party for list completions, but we toasted Vic on his January birthday and both Vic and Sue for their recent retirements. Even Bob Burd (part of the duo with Matthew Holliman, day-hikers of the SPS List) was impressed that Vic and Sue had beaten him out by 15 peaks. Bob is simultaneously working on so many lists that it makes one’s head swirl. He emails, “So many peaks, so little time…” I answered back, “Bob, for you—so many peaks in so little time.”

Did you know, we all send cheers to Henry “Two Buck Hank” Arnebold and beautiful and regal Kathy Rich for a great SPS banquet at Taix restaurant, January 29. Sixty-five climbers showed up, and we watched with intensity and non-stop gasping at a show put on by Aysel Gezik and Scott Haney (of their multiple climbs in Peru’s Cordillera Blanca.) It was fun looking around the room at fellow climbers on the edges of their chairs, almost holding their breaths, watching these two via slides, front-point up sheer icy 80 degree slopes on peaks over 19,000 and 20,000.’ Aysel and Scott crossed chasms on ice bridges, catapulted themselves over bergschrunds, dodged chunks of mountain raining down on them, and made it home in good time to dazzle us with the show of shows. Marlen Mertz, Doris Gilbert, and Ron Eckelmann had the $50 seats next to Barbara Lilley and Gordon MacLeod, and Erick (and Ellen) Schumacher, first-ascednners of magnificent peaks. Above the noise at Taix, Marlen was trying to hear Barbara’s account of climbing the six high points of North America, a feat that few have done and lived to tell about it. (The List includes the big Mexican volcanoes, Denali, Mt. St. Elias, and Mt. Logan. Many of Barbara’s peers lost their lives on one of the named peaks thus not achieving all six. Henry Arnebold was a superb host of the program, and we all had our usual fun in the Ceremony of Standing. I regret I didn’t bring Doug on a Stick (DOAS) to stand in Doug’s place for his seven finishes of the sacred and difficult listed Sierra peaks. Not willing to rest on his laurels, Henry is climbing Mt. Sill again this summer. As the old saying goes, “There are bold climbers, there are old climbers, and there are Arne-bold climbers.” Go Henry!
I was pleased to meet Matt Hengst, our rising star in SPS and DPS who has led many up various Sierra peaks plus our desert peaks: Mopah, Umpah, Turtle, Black Butte, Chuckwalla, Edgar and Mitchell, and private climbs of Weaver’s Needle and Superstition. Did you know that early in the year, Matt did Telescope from Shorty’s Well, Little Picacho, Eagle, Smith, and Corkscrew. An E-rating is soon to be bagged, and Matt plans on leading Babo and the Guardian Angels. (See photo of the youngsters at the banquet on the next page.) I reminded Matt that DPS honors leaders with an emblem for leading 50 official desert peaks. This 29 year old may be the fastest guy to bag that emblem, too.

And have you heard from DPS transplant to Denver, Mario Gonzales lately? My best memory of Mario is on Big Picacho, sweet-talking the rangers (in fluent Spanish) to allow our group to continue on the peak. Mario has been working on the Colorado Trail, and this past summer, he went solo carrying 50 pounds on his back. There was a meltdown, and Mario fell to his knees unable to continue. Gathering some remaining strength, he took rain gear, water, cheese, dried fruit, and off he went with nothing else other than a desire to stay alive. The next two nights were grim and cold. He fell a couple times losing consciousness and cutting his head. On the third day, Mario ran into a shepherd (the Good Shepherd, I’d deem) who shared water and carried Mario’s remaining gear to the rim of the mesa. When Mario thanked him, the kind shepherd explained, “I am nothing, God is all. We are called to be this way.” Mario made it to the highway and hitched a ride into Lake City where he was taken by kind strangers to the emergency room. He was told after many tests his condition was provoked by the heavy backpack, high altitude, and dehydration. Mario recuperated in this lovely little town where many of us have bagged several or all of the nearby 5 Colorado 14ers. Good going, Mario, and your story is similar to one from long ago that involves good shepherds and visiting angels.

A reminder: I hope some of our DPSers contact Susan Cooper and Jim Long (Boulder, Colorado) for climbs of Pico Risco and Cerro Pinacate (ace_coop@msn.com). These two are accomplished and talented mountaineers who’d like to gain these final two peaks for their own DPS List Finish. As Jim Fleming would say, “Come on, y’all!”

Sympathies were extended to the family of Michelle Wu after her fatal fall on the 9,000’ icy ridge of Mount Baldy plunging 1,000 feet to her death. Despite the fact that Baldy is in our back yard and one of our favorite conditioning peaks, it has claimed the lives (or nearly claimed the lives) of many of our friends. Michelle, who was training for a trip to Argentina, had climbed a peak or two with Greg Vernon and was there taking photos when Greg was airlifted from Mount Ritter in the summer of 2010.

Did you know some scalawags (insert stronger language) villainously cut down the Shoe Tree located on U.S. Highway 50 in Churchill County, NV near Middlegate? Most of us were shocked, distressed, and saddened as we’ve all seen the tree and taken photos. One nearby resident cried, adding, “I am absolutely furious and beside myself. You can’t replace that tree or the memories it carries. I have shoes on that tree, and so do my kids, and so do my kids’ kids.” It’s a pretty bad state for our society where nothing is sacred, and all has to be guarded from those who would pillage and destroy.

Bridge players unite, and that includes Gregie Boy Vernon, Michael Gosnell, and John Strauch. John was featured in the San Diego Examiner as having won top master points in the American Contract Bridge League (ACBL) at Oceanside, January 29th and 30th. Way to go for one of our newest DPS List Finishers (Black Butte, December 2010.)

Don’t forget to mark your calendars, May 15, for the time of your life, as you eat, drink, and cavort with fellow DPSers at the annual banquet, “Muscle Cars, Desert Rats, and a Cast of Thousands on Big Picacho in the Early Days of DPS.” Historian and SPS founding father and one great guy, John Robinson, is coming to give the program of what it was like in the early days of bagging desert peaks. There were no 4-wheel drives but plenty of drive and determina-
tion. And cheap gas! Classic mountaineering books (rare and out-of-print plus new ones) will be on sale for a song. Build your mountaineering library as old timers clear out their book cases.

Some great folks are running for election, so mail in those ballots. True, our election is not as controversial or steamy as last year’s, but vote and let us know you’re alive. It was great fun counting ballots with Barbara Reber last April, and I liked reading your comments, seeing funny stickers, and surprise photos taped inside the ballots (Randy Bernard.) One comment: “I’ll be damned if I’m going to let the illegal immigration fiasco mess with the Holy DPS List.” Ballots arrived from such faraway places as Newcastle, WA, Colorado’s Boulder and Durango, Bowling Green, KY, and Albuquerque, NM. Some people sealed up their ballots as if they were guarding the secrets to the atomic bomb. Many offered advice, suggestions, gripes and compliments. Ballot counting had joys and amusements which I never realized.

Not only will people clamber to the DPS banquet tables (complete with two bottles of wine), but we’re hoping to see your bright faces adding to the party atmosphere at the Angeles Chapter Banquet in early May. Did You Know, Nile Sorenson is our honored recipient of the Chester Versteeg Award, and Mister Nav Guy, Bob Myers is receiving an Outings Award? Come and join us at Brookside Country Club next to the Rose Bowl.

That’s the news from the Land of Little Rain. I’ll close with one of Charlie Knapke’s and W.C. Fields’ favorite sayings, “You can say anything about me as long as it’s not true.” Thanks, Charlie, and I was glad to see your email to HPS noting your milestone of having bagged 1,000 peaks. Hope to see you, soon. And to all my friends and fellow climbers, potluck imbibers, pie-makers, and peak-sharers: be strong, be well, and be involved in exploring and loving our desert lands.

Your Roving Girl Reporter,
Mary McMannes
“an equal opportunity gatherer of scoops and doggerel”

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LETTER

What a great week-end!! I also enjoyed sitting around on my weak end! (They finally got me out to a Desert Peaks chili cook-off, last week-end). Thanks to all of you for the hard work putting it all together, I was surprised and happy to see so many OLD friends. I’m glad to see for myself that the “Spirit of the DPS” is still alive and well!

Signed by: Randy Bernard, “Has old passport, will travel!”

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NEEDLE PEAK, MANLY PEAK
November 21-22, 2010
By Ann Perkins

Twenty-two people had originally signed up for this climb of Needle and Manly, but due to changes in plans and concerns about the weather, we had 17 on the trip, still a really good turnout. We had been keeping a close eye on the weather, and knew there was a possibility of rain or even snow at higher elevations, but decided go for it and see what happened. Edna Ersramer, Ed Herrman, Bob Hoeven and Anne Rolls drove into Butte Valley on Friday afternoon and stayed near the Geologist’s Cabin, reserving it for us by putting up the flag. The rest of us met and camped Friday night about 3 miles in along the Butte Valley Road (from the east - we rejected the possibility of Mengel Pass and the Goler Wash!) We headed out at 6:30 Saturday morning - everyone was quite prompt about getting started even though a few people had to leave their 2WD vehicles and carpool to the trailhead with their camping gear. The road is definitely 4WD high clearance in places. Edna stayed in the cabin, and the other 16 headed out for Needle about 8:45.

We were rewarded on the way up with the sight of about 12 burros on a hillside close by, and a few people were able to take pictures. We took the a variation of the A route, heading up a wash to a pass, then dropping down slightly and up to a ridge where we turned left and followed some ups and downs to the summit. The main challenge was extremely gusty wind, almost blowing us over at times. At the summit, we found a spot out of the wind and had just settled down to enjoy our lunch when we could see the rain approaching, and sleet-like drops began to fall within a few minutes. Everyone scrambled to put their packs back together and we hastened down, chased by wind and sporadic icy rain. Finally back in the wash, the weather was mild enough that we felt like stopping and taking an “off the summit” picture.

Climbers were John Strauch (only two more to go!), Virgil Popescu, Brian Smith, Gloria Miladin, Bob Hoeven, Anne Rolls, Ed Herrman, Daryn Dodge, Paul Garry, Richard Carey, Gary Bowen, Jim Fleming, Ines Glanzig and her friend Ty (new to desert peaks, hope to see them again), and Ann and Dave Perkins. We got back to our cars about 2:30 and headed over to the cabin. The wind was still blowing quite hard, so everyone crowded into the cabin, and by 3:30 everyone had begun to get out their food and drink for happy hour. We built a fire in the fireplace and soon were relatively cozy and enjoying dips, chips, vegetables, and Edna’s shrimp cocktail. Later we had chicken chili and a variety of salads, followed by pie. By this time it was only about 7:30, but by good conversation and wine, we managed to prolong bedtime until about 8:30, a more respectable hour!

The next morning we gathered in the cabin about 7:30 for the climb of Manly. The summit had been covered in clouds the entire previous day and was still not visible, a little snow had fallen at the cabin around 5 a.m., and the wind was still blowing, so spirits were not high. John Strauch had left the night before since he had already climbed Manly, Bob and Anne left because they had a tire that was leaking air, and Ines and Ty had not slept much because of the wind blowing their tent so they decided to leave too. I had realized yesterday when I saw my name in the Needle register that I had already climbed both peaks twice before, so Ed Herrman and I decided to climb Striped Butte. But nine climbers set out, Dave ably assisted by Virgil and Paul, and they...
PAHRUMP POINT, STEWART POINT
December 4-5, 2010
By Daryn Dodge

Pahrump Point is the highpoint at the northern end of the Nopah Range, conveniently located a few miles north of State Route 178 near Shoshone. We started hiking up the abandoned dirt road that marks the start of this route a little after the advertised start time of 8 am. We took a clothing break at the mouth of the canyon 2 miles in where the road ended. I always enjoy desert hiking in and around Death Valley partly because bush-whacking is seldom a problem. It was no different in this canyon and we made pretty good time hiking up the wash that defines the bottom of this canyon.

One of our participants found a use trail on the left bank of the wash. The use trail wasn’t always obvious but at one point it crossed to the right side of the wash at an elevation of about 1150 meters and disappeared at the first major junction in the wash. The trail suggested going up the right fork, but John Bregar, a Sierra club leader visiting from Colorado, pointed out to me that we needed to go left to stay on the DPS route. Sure enough, my compass indicated to go left to stay on the DPS route. And ducks began to show up soon after starting up the left branch.

Route finding from here to the summit was easy following an occasional use trail, watching for ducks, and sticking to the DPS route description. The best part of the route was climbing onto the airy, but easy, summit ridge and following it to the top for about 100 feet. Congrats goes to Mark Petersen for now having climbed enough DPS peaks to join the section, and to James Barlow for climbing his first peak with the DPS. Ron Bartell and Christine Mitchell, who had been climbing a nearby unlisted peak, greeted us back down at the cars, and then joined us at our camp spot. Even with our relatively large group, the round trip hike took just under 7 hours to complete.

Participants for Pahrump Point were James Barlow, John Bregar, Keith Christensen, Jim Conley, Greg Gerlach, Ron Hudson, Corrine Livingston, Mark Petersen, Jim Scott, Brian Smith, Bob Wyka, Kathy Rich (Co-leader), and Daryn Dodge (Leader).

We headed several miles south back down SR 178 to camp. There’s a nice open flat area 0.4 miles down Chicago Valley Road, and then 0.2 north on a unsigned dirt road. Ron gathered some people to go hunting for firewood. Subsequently, we had a nice little campfire for the evening. Part of Happy Hour consisted of a Wines-of-the-World theme, a blatant rip-off of the Beers-of-the-World theme that other DPSers have enjoyed during Happy Hour. Many contributed resulting in a wide selection of wines from all over the world. Top honors goes to Bob Wyka who brought a wonderful red wine from Uruguay.
Sunday morning we drove back up SR 178 for the trailhead to Stewart Point, only a few miles north of the Pahump Point trailhead. We hiked 1.5 across the open floor of the desert to a saddle where we took a much-needed clothing break. From here, a black rock dike that marks the entrance to the main wash (noted in the DPS instructions) can be spotted. Soon after entering the wash it narrowed considerably and our group negotiated around a few vertical walls following ducks. One of our participants (new to DPS trips) decided the high-class 2 scrambling in and out of the gully was a little too much and decided to wait for us in the gully. After making sure he would promise to wait for us in a nice shaded spot, we continued on. About a tenth of a mile after the wash turned west, we followed ducks out of the wash high on the left bank. Another set of ducks then led us back down into the wash after going around an obstacle.

In hindsight, we should not have dropped back down into the wash because this took us into an elbow turn in the gully with a massive waterfall pitch we could not overcome. The ducks that we followed into the wash were probably meant to direct climbers out of the wash if they had managed to follow it this far up. Not realizing this at the time, Ron found a good spot out of the wash on the right side about 100 feet back from the waterfall pitch. John Bregar and I could look back after climbing up 200 feet and see where we strayed from the DPS route. But the wide ridge we were now on appeared to lead to the high point. It became clear as we kept ascending that the actual highpoint was a little further to the west and what we were actually climbing to was Peak 1550+ meters.

Nevertheless, a previous trip report I read noted that the ridgeline is easy scrambling if one gets off route. This proved true and we were soon on the actual summit. Our ascent route added 0.2 mi. and 80 feet of gain to the standard DPS route. But an advantage was that the rock was not as loose.

After a short stay, we dropped down the standard DPS route and gathered up our waiting participant in the wash where we left him. The rest of the hike out went well. The climb took us a little over 6 hours round trip. Participants for the Stewart climb were James Barlow, John Bregar, Keith Christensen, Jim Conley, Greg Gerlach, Ron Hudson, Corrine Livingston, Johnnie Martinez, Mark Petersen, Bob Wyka, Kathy Rich (Co-leader), and Daryn Dodge (Leader). Thanks to all for a wonderful weekend in the desert!

On November 11, 2010, Virgil Popescu and I planned to climb Muddy Mountain. I had previously climbed this peak in 1994. We met on the Valley of Fire Road at 8 AM at a road going south. The route to the trail head is a very poor 4WD dirt road that goes past Buffington’s Pocket. Our hike started at 9 AM. Reaching the saddle going out of Hidden Valley, we angled left up toward the summit ridge. It was slow going along this route, past rock outcrops and a large bumpy to the base of the summit block. We were on the top around 1 PM. It was cold and windy on the summit so we started down after signing the register.

We started down a wrong gully looking for the route. I found the correct route to the left of that gulley. Moving slowly, we reached the saddle to Hidden Valley after 4 PM. I realized that we were going to be hiking in the dark. I took a bearing on a prominent sandstone outcropping with the trail visible beyond. We passed the land mark at dark and continued toward the trail. After walking a while, I decided to have a map study and try to use my GPS. Fortunately, Virgil brought along the map from the DPS Road & Peak Guide. It was poorly printed. The contour lines and UTM coordinates were very blurred. It was possible for me to estimate where we were in relation to the trail and the car and get waypoints. We seemed to be 200 to 300 meters east and south of the trail. Walking west in the dark, we missed the trail. We did find a large sandy wash and followed it for a period of time through snow showers on a cold and windy night. After another GPS/map study, I estimated that the car was 2.5 miles to the northeast. Hiking east on a bearing of 90 degrees we crossed over the saddle between the car and Hidden Valley, avoiding large outcroppings of rocks and deep gullies as best we could. Around 6 PM, we stopped for another GPS/map study.
We had walked about 1.5 miles. I had entered the easterly coordinate 1000 meters east of the car. After correcting the easterly coordinate, I estimated that the car was 300 meters on a bearing of 186 degrees. We found the road about 200 meters east of the car, turned right and arrived at the car around 8 PM. It had taken us 11 hours for the hike that the Guide suggested as 8 hours.

Virgil was thinking we would have to stay out if we had not found the car. It would have been a miserable cold night to have to bivouac out there with no fire wood to be found and light day packs.

On the drive out, it was very difficult to stay on the correct road. We made a number of turns that ended in dead ends. Virgil was able to back out and turn the car around each time. At one point, we were driving east when I noticed the lights of Las Vegas on our right not left where they should have been. Occasionally, I walked ahead of the truck to scout out the road. As we drove closer to Buffington’s Pocket the road became easier to follow to where my car was parked. We reached my car around 11 PM.

This climb was far more difficult than what I remembered from 1994, when I went out there and got the peak easily. On that trip, I crossed the Hidden Valley saddle and angled up to the summit block and avoided the rocky summit ridge. Our hike was similar to what the movie Deliverance pointed out in that things can suddenly go wrong. A good map of the route would have helped us. As far as I am concerned a functioning GPS should be one of the essential items. Without a GPS, even with a good map and compass there was a good chance we would have had to bivouac out there that night or wonder around for some hours and maybe find a landmark we could identify.

OROCOPIA PEAK LIST FINISH
December 11, 2010
By Ann Perkins

On Saturday morning about 30 climbers gathered for the 2x list finish of Sue Holloway and the 1x list finish of John Strauch. Actually, John had finished the day before on Black Butte, but he was saving the celebration for today with Sue. Tom Summer stayed back with his dog, who was not quite up to the climb, but the rest set off about 9 a.m., and with such a large group we were soon spread out. We made the mistake of leaving the wash too soon and ascended a rather steep hill. Jim Hinkley’s dog, who was making a game effort, was defeated by the hill so they turned back. We ended up on a ridge which was then followed easily, and eventually dropped down a few hundred feet and climbed back up to the main ridge. I was staying back with a slower climber, but was able to keep the party in view until we reached the summit. The earlier arrivals spent about an hour on top, enjoying the views, taking pictures, and celebrating with champagne. This was quite a group - on the summit were fifteen 1x list finishers, six 2x list finishers, and three 3x list finishers! We also enjoyed meeting several San Diego climbers who were friends of Sue and John.

As we descended the peak, a fast party took off down the ridge with the leader hurrying behind. Ron Bartell led a smaller party into the wash and I joined them to stay with some of the slower climbers. As we eventually came out of the wash, Ron stepped up to a small ridge and said “We’re lost.” I was foolish enough to believe him - I think what he meant was that he wasn’t quite sure where on the route we were at that moment. Ron is never truly lost! We almost immediately found the road that led back to the campground, and were there about 20 minutes behind the rest of the group. Then the
The Last Finish brigade before starting the hike.

celebration began! There was plenty of champagne to go with the appetizers - shrimp, sushi, hummus, vegetables, many dips, and chips. If anyone was still hungry, there were many salads, and two kinds of chili, with cookies and cake to follow. We were joined by Mary Mac and others who couldn’t make the climb but wanted to join the celebration. What good friends! We enjoyed the campfire, food, and conversation long into the evening. Some left early the next morning to get back to town for the potluck, or to prepare for the potluck, and others enjoyed a leisurely morning in the desert.

DPS HOLIDAY POTLUCK
December 12, 2010
By Ann Perkins

On December 12th, about 37 DPS’ers gathered at the home of Ann and Dave Perkins for the annual holiday potluck. Many intrepid souls had left that morning from Sue Holloway’s 2x list finish (and John Strauch’s 1x list finish) on Oro copia Peak, so it was a real DPS weekend! We enjoyed the usual array of appetizers, wines, casseroles and salads - there is never a lack of good food at these potlucks. There were several people who had come quite a distance for the list finish and potluck: Anne Rolls and Bob Hoeven from Tom’s Place, Ed Herrman from Las Vegas, and Rich Gragy from Sacramento. We were pleased again this year to have with us Walton Kabler (former DPS leader) and his friend. There were many old timers: Mary and Rayne Motheral, Bob Wyka, Virgil Popescu, Ron Ecklemann, Doris Gilbert, Sue and Vic Henney, Elaine Baldwin, Jim Fleming, Winnette Butler, David Reneric, Julie Rush, Christine and Ron Bartell, Tina Bowman, Gloria Miladin, Mary Mac, Greg and Mirna Roach, Edna Erspamer, Ellen and Eric Schumacher, Barbara and Dave Sholle, Sherry Harsh, and Gerry and Pat Holleman. Forget me if I’ve left anyone out or added someone who was not there - in a fit of cleaning I threw away the response list and am relying on memory, and we all know what memory is getting to be! And of course there was the guest of honor Sue Holloway. She is leaving us for something new and entirely different - the seaside delights of Cape Cod. (And we wonder right now how she feels about this change, given the weather there)! Don’t you long for Southern California, Sue?

Note: Two muffin tins and a lined wicker basket were left at our house after the potluck. If they are yours, please let Ann know and we’ll figure out how to get them back to you. (ann.perkins@csun.edu)

Ann and Dave Perkins, hosts of the holiday party. Photo by Mary McMannes.
There is no easy route up Salsberry Peak. Even when looking down from the summit, the route is deceptive. What appear to be continuous ridges, are in fact a maze of gullies and washes when you get there. Every route is full of ups and downs. The big surprise and wonder was the water.

It had rained for four days before Richard Stover and I arrived in Death Valley with an inch (!) of accumulation. That’s half their normal yearly rainfall. The night before the climb, when we were camped off the Greenwater Valley road, Richard had to get up in the middle of the night to cover our boxes of firewood to protect them from the rain and wind.

I have never seen so much water in Death Valley NP. There was standing water on the Greenwater Valley Road, the Furnace Creek Campground had been evacuated, Titus Canyon was closed, and the 20 Mule Team Canyon was closed to motor vehicles; there seemed to be water everywhere.

On our climb of Salsberry Peak we saw water flowing in two canyons, one with a 15-foot waterfall. As we lunged by a flowing creek, we marveled that we were indeed in the desert. For the climb we generally followed Andy Zdon’s directions, however summited and descended more to the south on a safer, less loose route than from the saddle as he describes.

That afternoon, we drove to the Texas Spring Campground to meet up with Debbie Benham and David Kossack. Prior to our climb of Salsberry, Richard and I had warmed up with a climb of Ophir Mountain near Darwin and a hike to Virgin Spring, appropriately on Christmas Day.

For the next three days, the four of us explored areas of the park new to us. We took advantage of the closure of the 20 Mule Team Canyon to hike it in peace and quiet. We explored the borate deposits, saw old miners’ tent sites, and squeezed up the canyon past Monte Blanco. That afternoon we visited the assay office that used to be in the 20 Mule Team Canyon, now reincarnated as the Borax Museum at Furnace Creek Ranch.

We returned to peak climbing the next day as we summited both “Dante’s View Peak” and Coffin Peak for some of the most spectacular views ever. From Dante’s View we could see both the top of Telescope at over 11,000 feet and Badwater, way below sea level.

On December 29 we hiked the Golden Canyon / Gower Gulch loop with side trips to Red Cathedral and an
overlook below Zabriskie Point. The Manly Beacon towered over us and marked our route. In Gower Gulch we found old mines and abandoned piles of borax bricks.

After Debbie and David left the morning of December 30, Richard and I backpacked in to the base of Nevares Peak, just north of Furnace Creek. A fast hiker (which I am not) could do Nevares as a day hike, but at 13 miles and 3,600' of elevation gain, there might not be time to visit Nevares (hot) Springs or explore Dolph Nevares’ cabin. On the hike in we spotted ripple marks from an ancient lake preserved in the rock.

After finding a nice hidden spot to set up our tent, Richard and I followed the game trails to the springs. I located the cabin, hidden by trees, by noticing the pile of rusty cans thrown over the side of a wash. How sad that trash piles are an indicator of human presence.

The next morning dawned very cold and windy, making me a tad grumpy. But we persevered and climbed by a slight variation of the route described by Andy Zdon. Because of the cold, we did not linger on the summit and returned quickly to camp, packed up and hiked out.

This was one of our best Death Valley trips ever.

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DPS JANUARY MEETING & POTLUCK
January 9, 2011
by Gloria Miladin

The meeting-potluck at my house was after holidays so the crowd was a bit smaller.

I was happy to see some long time members like Ron Jones, Bruce Trotter, and Edna Ersparer.

Other participants were: Tina and Tom Bowman (just back from New Zealand), Dave and Elaine Baldwin, Jim Fleming, Bob Wyka, Pat Arredondo, Virgil Popescu, Kathy Rich, Ron Hudson, Brian Smith, Julie Rush and like always Dan Richter dropped in for a few good morsels.
Jack Kieffer and I had been on a roll with Desert Peaks lately and after successful jaunts out to grab Little Picacho and the New Years climb of the B route on Weaver’s Needle, we had one more weekend free to lead an official trip before the WTC / SCMA season stole away the majority of our weekends.

Being free of permit limitations we decided to throw the doors wide open and see how many people we could interest in an M Restricted trip to Mopah, Umpah, and the Turtle Mountains High Point.

Friday I again flew back from Boise Idaho where the unending “two month” project is now on its 2nd year of nearly weekly travel and met Jen Blackie, Lisa Miyake, and Jason Stone for the long drive out to the Turtle Mountains near the AZ border.

Our vehicle arrived sometime after midnight and we quickly threw out tents and bivvies to steal a few hours of sleep.

Waking up the next morning we found everyone had successfully made the trailhead though one participant in a low clearance car had needed to arrange to hop in another vehicle.

We had a fairly diverse group with Jim Scott from Reno, Kevin Kingma from the Bay Area, Amin Faraday from San Diego, and the usual pile of LA / Orange County folks including Rod Kieffer, Peter & Sandy Laura, Jason Stone, Jen Blackie, Lisa Miyake, Stephanie Smith, and Sandy Trautwein giving us a respectable 13 folks for Saturday.

Mopah was clearly visible in the distance as we set out up a wash before leaving the trail to the south and crossing the desert floor to the very clear gully on the east side of Mopah. From here the terrain grew much more interesting as it was a mix of light scrambling punctuated with brief 3rd class sections with some very photogenic exposure in the background.

The climb went smoothly and we were soon sitting up top eating and looking over at our second goal for the day, Mopah’s unlisted yet striking neighbor Umpah.

We had found two slings on the route up Mopah that had been in place long enough to lose all coloring. The first was helpful in identifying the route while the second covered the most exposed section. On the way down we took the opportunity to reinforce the second anchor and set up a very brief rappel.

Once down we set off to the south and approached the very prominent gully on the north side of Umpah mentioned in the peak guide. After a short attempt to follow what was written I led us up the right side of the gully soon joining the ridge and enjoying slightly more 3rd class scrambling than was truly necessary.

We made the summit and rested only briefly before descending as we had our eye on the sun. We made it all the way down before sunset and returned across the desert floor in the dark.

The moon was bright enough we didn’t really need headlamps and several hours later we arrived at our vehicles and set about starting a fire in the conveniently located fire ring and had our happy hour.

Having gotten both of our 3rd class peaks out of the way the day before now we just had the nearby Turtle Mountains Highpoint to bag. Jack and I kicked everyone out of their tents pre-dawn and we made the drive over to the second trailhead that was again down a dirt road in better than advertised condition.

The road ends at a rather arbitrary point where we parked and continued NW along the former dirt road before curving west into a wash.
We had excellent views of Castle Rock which really made Jack and I wish we’d scheduled time for a 4 peak trip. Ah well, maybe next time.

Several miles later we had the peak in sight though most agreed a bump further to the north looked much more like a turtle. We climbed a prominent ridge, leaving the looser terrain of the ridge near the top to cut across some convenient slabs and soon arrived at the somewhat nondescript summit where we enjoyed a relaxed lunch before retracing our steps.

We came back to the cars just as the sun set which made for some beautiful views especially back towards Mopah and Umpah. Most of our party joined us in Joshua Tree for a post trip dinner where I did my best to recruit for my summer SPS trips.

I walked alone, high on a desert plain, early in the morning. The sun hung low behind wispy orange clouds. Frost clung to the short scruffy plants scattered about and my breath emerged in steamy bursts. I scanned the desert floor for a likely candidate and spotted one. Minutes later I arrived at the target. It had taken several hikes in remote locales like this, but I’d finally found what I was looking for.

In March 1987, the rock group U2 released their 5th album, *The Joshua Tree*. It contained the hits “With or Without You”, “Where The Streets Have No Name”, and “I Still Haven’t Found What I’m Looking For.” The album garnered rave reviews, won two Grammy awards, and became U2’s best selling worldwide album with 25 million sold. Longtime music critic Robert Hilburn of the *Los Angeles Times* went so far as to label them “the greatest rock and roll band in the world.”

With a name like *The Joshua Tree*, most would assume the group shot the album photos in [then] Joshua Tree National Monument. But the band never went there. In December 1986, U2 travelled by bus with their photographer and art designer to several locations. One of their stops was the frigid and snowy ghost town of Bodie. They shot several of the classic black and white stills there, with the band mates posed in front of the decaying buildings. Days later they stopped at Zabriskie Point in [then] Death Valley National Monument, where they shot what would become the album cover.

But one of the most pivotal moments was a spontaneous stop while en route to Death Valley. Spotting a large lone Joshua tree from the highway, the group stopped the bus and spent about twenty minutes shooting photos. One of these became the well-known photo that appeared on the rear sleeve of the album – the Joshua tree framed by the sky, desert, and distant mountains. The image became their symbol and photos of it (with the group) were used extensively in the concert tour booklets and later works.

So where did U2 stop to take the famous photograph? Many sought for the tree’s location and placed data about it on the Internet. Unfortunately, not all of the online information is accurate, and some of it is downright misleading. This is why only a few weeks earlier, I’d perused a Joshua tree grove near the old mining town of Darwin, witnessing many lovely trees but not finding “the one”.

I renewed my Internet searches and discovered new tidbits, which led me to the correct location. My arrival at U2’s Joshua tree fomented a spectrum of emotion –
satisfaction and excitement, relief and sadness. For starters, the rugged iconic tree is no more. Weighted by its huge arms and repeatedly pummeled by forceful winds ripping across the flats, the tree succumbed and collapsed. Its death is believed to have occurred sometime in 2000. Its remains now lie in repose in the sand, an enormous gray husk that is slowly deteriorating.

But there is more here to explore. A bronze monument, cast in concrete, sits beside the tree. It silently asks, "Have You Found What You're Looking For?" In the nearby dirt, visitors have created rock art that reads "U2 Rocks", "Pride", and "RIP". The register notebooks contain signatures from around the world, song lyrics, and tributes. Copies of the album photographs allow you to match up the terrain to the distant mountains, confirming the correct location.

The Joshua tree lived and died in an amazing place. The sky here is a deep blue, punctuated by fluffy clouds. Cars pass by infrequently on the nearby highway while military jets buzz overhead. Young Joshuas dot the landscape and sunning lizards dart to and fro. Coyote and bird tracks indent the soil. It’s a contemplative place that makes one ponder the impermanence of all things, large and small.

This is a place to sit for a spell and soak it all in. Have a picnic here. Listen to The Joshua Tree and other tunes from U2. Take many photos and pen your own memories in the guest log. Enjoy your time here, and breathe deeply of the crisp fresh air.

Directions: From the junction of US Highway 395 and State Highway 136 in Lone Pine, California, drive southeast on 136. At the junction of CA 136 and CA 190, reset your odometer and continue southeast on 190. At 7.9 miles from the junction, as you come out of a left-trending turn to head east, pull off onto the highway shoulder. (There should be a dirt road here heading west.) Walk southeast, aiming for a group of small Joshua trees. In about 1/3 of a mile, look around for a large dead tree lying on the desert floor.

Views: This is Lower Centennial Flat. To the south is the Coso Range, most of which is located in the China Lake Naval Weapons Center. These are the mountains you see in the background of the infamous Joshua tree picture. To the west is the Sierra Nevada. Many SPS peaks are visible, from Olancha Peak north to Split Mountain. To the north are the Inyo Mountains, with DPS New York Butte being the most prominent. Most DPSers have driven along here at least once, as Highway 190 is the standard driving route for Nelson Range and the Saline Valley (south pass).

LITTLE PICACHO PEAK
January 17, 2011
By Gloria Miladin

On January 17, 2011, Dave Perkins, Bob Hoeven, John Bregar (all the way from Colorado), Brian Smith and I decided to climb Little Picacho by route B. Since Dave and I have birthdays in January, we just wanted to have some fun, DPS style.

The weather was perfect, the road was good, and our spirits were high. Dave carried his homemade rope ladder, which he made many years ago. We used it at the false summit block to climb up on the way back.

With four guys as climbing experts we had no trouble reaching the top. As for me it was my first challenging climb, but with my recent rock climbing lesson I made it without a fear.
At the end of our trip we celebrated with cake and some refreshments. John went on to climb some more peaks, Dave and Bob drove all the way back to Mammoth, and Brian and I stopped at the Colorado River for a great view of the Chocolate Mountains against the blue-green waters.

Admiring the sights on the way to Little Picacho. Photos by Gloria Miladin.

Rappelling the false summit of Little Picacho.

**TO VISIT MT. EVEREST - IS IT WORTH IT?**

by Rich Henke

In October 2010, Rena and I returned to Nepal after an absence of 16 years. Our goal was to do a 20 night "teahouse trek" or lodge trek in the Khumbu region where people go to see Mt. Everest. On our previous trips to Nepal, we traveled with people on "full service treks", where you stay in tents, have a kitchen crew, eat in a dining tent, and are entirely self-sufficient. By opting for a lodge trip, Rena and I had the flexibility to go at our own pace and stay in the numerous lodges along the way. Lodge trips don't require much gear so you can carry your own pack or you can hire a porter to carry your gear. Many people also hire a guide but getting lost in the Khumbu is practically impossible. Seeing Mt. Everest was not as important to us as it was for many of the trekkers we met, since we had seen it previously on other treks from different directions and also from Tibet.

Visiting Mt. Everest has become extremely popular in recent years. Hundreds of commercial companies all over the world offer trips there. You begin by flying to Kathmandu, the capital of Nepal. It is a densely populated country with about 2.5 million of the 30 million people residing in the Kathmandu Valley. In contrast, the nearby country of Bhutan, about equal in area to Nepal, contains less than one million people.

Most Everest visitors start by taking a 40-minute flight to the small Lukla airport (on a cliff surrounded by mountains) using 16-passenger Twin Otter aircraft. The runway slopes up about 15 degrees and the planes have to apply the brakes quickly to avoid a wall at the end. We saw a plane over to the side with a damaged nose waiting to be repaired. It is one of the most exciting landings in the world! After arrival, everything is done on foot as there are no roads or vehicles in the Khumbu. Not even a wheel!! The major destination of people wanting to see Everest close up is Kala Patar, an 18,300 foot high, non-technical hill, with a great vantage point. Although not far in distance, it is prudent to take 8-10 days to walk there to avoid altitude sickness. Many also hike to Everest Base Camp. People with more time often visit nearby Gokyo with another great viewpoint, by crossing the high Cho La Pass. This is not difficult when the weather is good. Rena and I were visiting in the prime season of October when the monsoon rains have stopped, the weather is usually stable, and good views are common place.

This was the plan. But as the trip progressed, we learned that a relaxing lodge trip in the Khumbu was a thing of the past. Most people who visit Everest come in large groups. People who arrange trips with international companies will pay as much as $300 a day. (Independent
trekkers pay about $25 per day). There are some advantages to going with such a group. The lodges in the Khumbu do not take reservations. However, the groups have the clout to take over entire lodges, leaving little space for independent travelers. The overflow is often relegated to sleeping on benches in the dining room and when that fills, the floor. We talked to people who shared the floor with 30 people and to others who were sent away because even the floor space was full. There are only a few locations where space is limited, but they are places at high elevations where it is very cold at night and there are few other options. Then what do you do?

The concept of fighting for a place to sleep was not very appealing to us. While we were considering our options, the decision was made for us. On around the 8th day after we had done a day hike up Chukhung Ri at 17,700 feet, I developed a painful sore throat and cold. More important, I had very little energy making it very difficult to walk uphill at elevations above 16,000 feet. Rather than continue to climb higher to Kala Patar and Everest Base Camp, we opted to descend a bit and take a rest day. Our revised plan was to take an alternate route toward Gokyo that would avoid the more crowded lodges. But my energy didn't return and Rena developed the same malady. So we changed plans again and descended back to Lukla, arriving 6 days ahead of our flight reservation.

In good weather, flying in and out of Lukla works okay. There are a lot of planes available, and when they fly all day, everyone will get on a flight. If weather causes you to miss your flight, the next day you have to wait until all the people who have reservations on that day are accommodated. With the large number of people flying in and out of Lukla, this can take all morning and part of the afternoon. When the weather is unsettled, low clouds often stop the flight in the afternoon. So you are stuck! We had weather like this for several days. Shortly before we came back to Lukla, some travelers waited in Kathmandu for 4 days and failed to get on a flight. In Lukla, we met stressed out travelers who had already been waiting for several days. Some of them missed their international flights out of Kathmandu. Again, being part of a big group seems to work miracles. Commercial groups are usually scheduled early in the morning and somehow are the first to leave even after being delayed. But they can also get stuck if no planes are flying which is always a possibility even in the best season. We were lucky. We got on a 2:30 PM flight to Kathmandu after spending two nights in Lukla. We just made it through a break in the clouds. We had almost given up for the day when we heard the sound of planes approaching.

Think carefully about going on an Everest trek in prime season. Next year, 2011, is being promoted as the "Year of the Tourist" in Nepal. It doesn't take a genius to predict that even more people will opt to view Mt. Everest.

On our trip, there were usually hundreds of other trekkers in sight as we walked along the trails. One answer is to go in the off season. This will solve the problem of lack of space at the lodges, but perhaps increase the probability of a problem with weather conditions and flying in and out of Lukla. In the future, expensive trips organized by large international companies will also have problems finding space and flights unless Nepal starts to limit the number of groups coming to the Khumbu. Not likely. In my opinion, the Everest Trek (as well as the Annapurna Trek) has gone the way of the Inca Trail in Peru. They are so crowded that the original allure is gone. Better to opt for a quieter, less hectic experience in other areas before they also become spoiled.

Kathmandu has also changed over the years. There are now more automobiles and motorcycles on the small, narrow streets that were not designed for vehicles. There are more people and increased pollution. But Rena and I found that when you leave the tourist area in Thamel and walk down the narrow streets frequented mostly by locals, not much has changed for centuries. At every corner or square you find small temples with people making offerings. The wonderful World Heritage Sites such as Durbar Square, Pashupatinath, Swayambhunath, Bodhnath, Braktapur, and Patan now have a small entry fee but they retain their charm. Nepal is primarily Hindu but Buddhists predominate in the mountains where most visitors spend their time. In Kathmandu, you find Hindus and Buddhists often sharing the same holy sites. I still vote for Kathmandu as the most exotic city in the world.

This was my 8th Nepal trek. The earlier ones were to less traveled areas and resulted in wonderful cultural interactions with local people who did not see westerners every day. Although most of the treks in Nepal are becoming more crowded, it is still possible to visit areas infrequently visited. It may cost a little more and take more time but it is worth it. Seeing the tip of Mt. Everest poking out over a ridge will probably not cause your life to change. There are hundreds of breathtaking views of 20,000 foot high snow capped peaks in the Nepal Himalaya and it is hard to find an area that doesn't have great scenery. My experience has been that the most picturesque areas of Nepal are the villages you pass through between 6 and 8 thousand feet in the less traveled areas which provide a wonderful foreground to the big peaks beyond.

So my advice is to avoid the lodge treks and go on a full service trek to more remote places with a group of friends. Book the trek directly with an outfitter in Kathmandu. The cost for such a trip starts at about $50-60 per day, depending upon how many people you have. It is more expensive than a lodge trip, but more relaxing, and you won't have to move people aside on the trail to take a photo. I can recommend outfitters in Nepal, if you want more information. (rich@adventureplus.org)
BOOK REVIEWS

OF PEAKS, PERSERVERANCE & POTS
THE COUNTY HIGHPUNTS OF ARIZONA (2010), Scott Surgent
TWO SHADOWS (2010), Charlie Winger
FINDERS KEEPERs (2010), Craig Childs

THE COUNTY HIGHPUNTS OF ARIZONA (2010), Scott Surgent

So, you’ve completed the DPS list and now you’re looking for new peaks to conquer. Well, good news! Scott Surgent, a Senior Lecturer in Mathematics at Arizona State University, has just published a truly fine volume presenting several additional climbs here in the magnificent desert Southwest.

And, better news yet. While the State of Arizona is made up of fifteen counties, only two of those county highpoints are on our current DPS list, i.e., Coconino County’s Humphreys Peak and Yuma County’s Signal Peak. The remaining thirteen counties offer an interesting cross-section of climbs, including alpine and sub-alpine summits, mid-elevation peaks and a host of stark desert ranges.

In addition to offering excellent climbing guides, The County Highpoints of Arizona is also an interesting read. I got cozy with the volume during a recent stormy weekend and found it to be a real page-turner. Surgent is a skilled author, with several books under his belt, including The Complete...World Hockey Association, the Los Angeles Dodgers Home Run Compendium, and texts on mathematics, including Introductory Formal Logic and Mathematics for Business Analysis, the last two of which, I’m certain, will eternally fail to make my must read list.

In reply to an inquiry regarding his background, the author replied in part: “I grew up in Southern California...and went to school at the University of California, Riverside, graduating with my Masters in Mathematics in 1992. I moved to AZ in 1992 and started teaching at ASU in 1994. I started hiking during my last year in CA, but really didn’t get going until I moved to AZ. It was only after I moved here that I got the hiking/peak-bagging bug, and I have been able to go back to SoCal and hike many more of the biggest peaks. I joined the DPS two years ago (maybe three...I forgot). The DPS list features many peaks of interest to me, and I enjoy reading about the peaks and the trip reports in The Desert Sage.”

The history included in The County Highpoints of Arizona is one of the book’s most interesting features. For instance, did you know that when the Territory of Arizona came into existence in February 1863 there were only four counties—Mohave, Yuma, Yavapai & Pima—and that the territory then included the southern tip of present-day Nevada? In succeeding years, the state-to-be was gradually split into smaller units; Maricopa County formed in 1871, Pinal County in 1875, etc., until by 1912—when statehood did take place—there were fourteen counties. The only change since then occurred on January 1, 1983, when the northern half of Yuma County was split off into La Paz County.

The history of various peaks is compelling as well. The story behind 11,403’ Mt. Baldy in the White Mountains of Apache County, Arizona's most northeasterly county, includes the area’s exploration during Coronado’s entrada of 1540-42, its sporadic settlement by the Spanish in the 17th and 18th centuries and, finally, its permanent settlement by the Mormons in the 1870s.

And speaking of Mt. Baldy, did you know that the mountain has two highpoints with just a few feet of elevation difference between them? The southern summit, however, lies within the Fort Apache Indian Reservation and access is not permitted. “Trespassers can be fined and their belongings confiscated...” The northerly summit, which is surmised to be slightly higher, can be reached by either of two trails, or can be combined into a loop hike.

Detailed trailhead and hiking directions, options for camping and lodging, information regarding necessary permits, and suggestions for side trips for all fifteen county highpoints are included. Surgent also explains the concept of prominence, a factor which turns some of the lower highpoints into more appealing climbs, and he includes guides for three notably prominent but non-county highpoints.

If I have one small criticism of The County Highpoints of Arizona, it’s in regard to the maps. Although Surgent does include maps for all of the highpoints, they only...
cover the immediate area surrounding the summit. When queried as to why he didn’t illustrate the entire climb from trailhead to summit, he replied: “This was a choice I made based on a long-held personal opinion of mine, in which the map in a guide book should not be one’s sole guide to the highpoint. I wanted to give just a thumbnail of the (highpoint) area only, and I prompt the reader (to) strongly consider procuring full and complete maps of their own.”

*The County Highpoints of Arizona*, nevertheless, is an important volume for all DPSers. Purchase your copy now at Amazon.com for $15.95.

**TWO SHADOWS (2010), Charlie Winger**

How well do you really know your good friends? Wouldn’t you think that if you’ve climbed with someone for over thirty years, bagged a couple of hundred peaks around the world together, played gin for long days in rain soaked tents and relived on one another in several dicey climbing situations, that you’d be pretty well acquainted?

Well, you might be surprised.

I first met Charlie Winger in the Miami airport late one evening in early January 1981. My son, Steve, my old friend, Jim Scott, and I were on our way to Ecuador, where we were to spend 10 days climbing volcanoes on a trip organized by Mountain Travel. Charlie, from Colorado, was by himself. Striking up an immediate camaraderie, we continued to hang out together as we climbed Cotopaxi, Chimborazo and Tungurahua. Charlie was a terrific climber, had a keen sense of humor and we became fast friends.

In subsequent years, Charlie and I have bagged many a peak, both nationally and internationally, and, in fact, we finished the DPS list together on Sentinel Peak in May 2004. More recently, Charlie has completed climbing all 112 named peaks & benchmarks in Death Valley N.P.

Prior to his retirement, Charlie and his wife, Diane – ace programmers both – established and ran a successful software business. They also co-authored three excellent books: *Highpoint Adventures, Great Sand Dunes National Park & Preserve* and *The Trad Guide to Joshua Tree*.

Charlie is organized, responsible, energetic and—okay—driven. He is always the first one out of the tent in the morning, and there is always boiling water ready when at last you stumble cut. I swear you can hear his motor revving as he paces, waiting for his climbing partners to get ready for the day of peak-bagging. I’m sure that if it weren’t for his determination and enthusiasm, I’d never have made several tough summits.

In January 2010, Charlie, seventy-two at the time, took a bad fall while ice-climbing in Ouray, CO. Suffering a fractured sacroiliac, a fractured L5 vertebra, two broken ribs and a damaged ego, he realized that he would be laid up for some time, and so, in order to make good use of his enforced leisure, he decided to write and self-publish his autobiography, *Two Shadows: The Inspirational Story of One Man’s Triumph Over Adversity*, available from Amazon.com for $18.95.

Well, I knew that Charlie, who grew up in Chicago, had suffered a hardscrabble childhood. His mother deserted the family while Charlie was a youngster. His father, who served in WWII, returned to remarry and start a second family, and Charlie, unsupervised, began to get into more than average boyhood mischief. What I didn’t know was that he managed to get into far more serious trouble as a teenager.

Alone and fending for themselves after their mother’s desertion, Charlie, age 11, and his sister, age 6, were shipped off to Wichita, KS, to be raised by his father’s aunt and uncle, a childless couple in their sixties. Charlie’s aunt, unfortunately, felt martyred with the arrangement and took it out on Charlie at every opportunity.

Soon Charlie became involved with the wrong crowd and began skipping school. He and his friends stole cars, burglarized stores and were on their way to becoming career criminals. When he was 16, he was arrested for transporting a stolen car across a state line and sentenced to federal correctional prison, where he served eighteen months. When he was 18, he was arrested once more for car theft and burglary, at which time he was sentenced to 12 years in a state prison.

Charlie served five years, and his description of prison life alone is worth the read—a look into what really goes
on within those stark walls by a very bright observer.

But Charlie was not your typical inmate. Somehow, he possessed a built-in GPS directing him toward turning his life around. Fortunately, a fellow prisoner who had previously been the manager of a data processing department, started a systems and programming class in which Charlie enrolled and excelled. Charlie also took accounting classes where he also did well, even without the use of an adding machine. At age 23, five long years after entering prison, he was granted a commutation of his sentence.

*Two Shadows* explains Charlie's continuing post-prison redemption, and goes on to present a history of his climbing adventures (many with moi) and his health issues (he's undergone both spinal and prostate surgery). Once you finish the book I think you, too, will be heartened to realize that it is possible for a person to triumph over extreme adversity. Indeed, Charlie ends *Two Shadows* thusly: "I hope that (this) gives you the inspiration to overcome any obstacles which life might throw your way, or the motivation to find a better path so that you can go out and climb your own mountains, whatever they may be."

So, you may wonder, how do I feel about having a friend whom I now know to be a convicted felon?"

Well, let me tell you, I’ll take any opportunity I can to bag peaks with Charlie. He’s simply the best climbing partner I’ve ever had! I will, however, check my pack for rocks or other heavy objects the first thing each morning. If there’s one carry-over from Charlie’s misbegotten youth, it’s his delight in adding weight to someone else’s pack.

**FINDERS KEEPERS: A Tale of Archaeological Plunder and Obsession (2010), Craig Childs**


Childs’ most recent volume, *Finders Keepers*, focuses on relics found in the desert Southwest. The ethics regarding what to do with such discoveries, however, can also be applied to antiquities from any long-gone civilization.

In essence, Childs ponders what sort of action one should take in a situation similar to the following: Say you are exploring in a remote desert canyon and you come across an Anasazi pot in perfect condition. Now what do you do?

The author maintains you have at least three choices:

1.) Take the pot home as a keepsake or take it and sell it. The problem here is that in the U.S. it is unlawful to do so, and, further, that in all probability the historical actuality of the pot will be lost forever.

2.) Record your pot’s exact position and inform an archaeologist of your find. In this solution the chances are good that the antiquity will end up in a museum, and that the history and authenticity of the object will be properly recorded. The downside is that because so many museums are already relic-filled, your pot may remain unseen in storage indefinitely.

3.) Leave the pot exactly as you found it so as to preserve its provenance. Tell no one of its location. This is the option favored by Childs. The problem here is that the next “finder” who comes across it will probably remove it or have it removed (see options 1 & 2), or that it will remain undiscovered and eventually molder away on its own.

Many of Childs’s personal relic experiences are recounted, including a youthful transgression when he removed a pot labeled simply “from Arizona” from a museum and replaced it in a former Anasazi area where he thought it most probably originated.

The ethical conundrum of what to do with relics currently in museums, but now coveted by the surviving members of the tribe or descendents of the civilization from which they originated, is also pondered.

Plunderers and obsessed collectors come under close scrutiny as well, most of whom are skillfully filleted and charbroiled by Childs.
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:

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### QUANTITY | ITEM | PRICE |
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>DPS Peaks List</td>
<td>$1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Road and Peaks Guide (5th Edition) CD ROM version (price includes shipping)</td>
<td>$15</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1 Year SAGE subscription</td>
<td>$10 regular / $20 sustaining</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>DPS Complete History and Lore CD ROM</td>
<td>$15</td>
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**Mail order form for above and payment to:**
(Make check payable to the Desert Peaks Section)

Gloria Miladin, DPS Treasurer
11946 Downey Ave
Downey, CA, 90242

**Grand Total:**

### QUANTITY | ITEM | PRICE |
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>DPS Patch</td>
<td>$3</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Emblem Pin</td>
<td>$12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>List Finisher Pin</td>
<td>$20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Desert Explorer Award Pin</td>
<td>$12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>DPS T-shirt (see item below) (Tan w/black and gray print (S, M, XL only))</td>
<td>$3.50 / $4</td>
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</tbody>
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For T-shirt orders, add $3.50/1, $4/2 or more, per order for handling

**Mail (T-shirt / patch / pin) order from and payment to:**
(Make check payable to the Desert Peaks Section)
(Questions? (562) 963-12550 (H))

Gloria Miladin, DPS Treasurer
11946 Downey Ave
Downey, CA, 90242

**Grand Total:**
DESSERT PEAKS SECTION

DPS NEWSLETTER - The DESERT SAGE - Published six times a year by the Desert Peaks Section of the Los Angeles Chapter of the Sierra Club. SUBMISSION DEADLINE FOR THE NEXT SAGE IS APRIL 9, 2011.

SUBSCRIPTION/MEMBERSHIP - It costs ten dollars a year to subscribe to the SAGE. Anyone can subscribe to the SAGE, even if not a member of the DPS or the Sierra Club, by sending $10 to Membership Records. Sustaining Membership ($20) is available and includes first class postage for the SAGE. To become a member of the DPS you must (1) belong to the Sierra Club (2) have climbed 6 of the 99 peaks on the DPS peaks list and (3) send $10 Membership Records for a SAGE subscription (or $20 for Sustaining). Non-members who subscribe to the SAGE are not allowed to vote in our elections. Renewals, subscriptions, and address changes should be sent to Membership Records Chair Ron Bartell, 1556 21st Street, Manhattan Beach, CA, 90266. The subscription/membership year for six issues, regardless of when payment is received.

EMBLEM STATUS AND GUIDES - To receive DPS emblem status you must climb 15 peaks on the list, five which must be from the list of seven emblem peaks, and have belonged to the section for one year. To work on the list you will probably want to buy from the Treasurer (Gloria Miladin, 11946 Downey Ave, Downey, CA, 90241) the Desert Peaks Road and Peak Guide 5th Edition CDROM - $15. If you like to explore without much direction, just purchase the DPS PEAKS LIST - $1 (enclose a self-addressed stamped envelope). Send completed peak and emblem lists to Membership Records Chair Ron Bartell, 1556 21st Street, Manhattan Beach, CA, 90266.

EMAIL CORRESPONDENCE - We welcome all articles and letters pertaining to outdoor activities of interest to DPS members. Some submittals may be too long and space limitations and other considerations are factors in the decision to publish a submission. The editor may modify submittals in an attempt to increase clarity, decrease length, or correct typos 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 one. 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. Only one web link (url) is permitted within each article submitted. Email material to the Editor by the published deadline (above). When submitting digital photos, please indicate when and where it was taken, what it is of, who is in it, and who took it. Email works best for submitting content and minimizes editing complexity. Email the Editor for more details on submitting attachments and/or digital photos.

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The cost is $3 per line with a maximum of 5 lines per ad.

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