Hello, my fellow desert peak aficionados! Now we are in the prime season for climbing our wonderful peaks—try to get out and enjoy them! Check out the DPS website for the most up to date listings. Most are included in the outing listings in this issue of the Sage. However, with the OARS system now in full swing, it isn’t difficult to post a trip and get it approved by Outings and Safety for shorter turn-around. SO, I would like to encourage our newer leaders to put on their thinking caps and help to make this an even better climbing year! And, on the weekend of March 9th and 10th, we will be having another of our renowned "Chili Cook-off" weekends in the Ord Mountains. Leaders and organizers for this event are Barbee and Larry Tidball plus the hard-working overseers Elaine and David Baldwin. See details in this issue of the Sage.

Another thing that approaches is our elections for DPS members to help on our Management Committee—and we do need help here! You as members are eligible to participate in whatever capacity or roles that you are able. Consider giving something back to our marvelous organization. The work is not overwhelming, but is certainly enriching and gives one a chance to see how things function. So, contact our Nominating Committee (well, they will most likely be in touch with YOU as this goes to press!): Ann Perkins, Gloria Miladin, and Mary Motheral to let them know that you can run. We have three positions to fill in the election this year.

Another item that I need to address is our continuing search for an editor for the DPS Road & Peak Guide, Version 6. It is going to take a committee, with folks who are going to check the information contained in the write-ups and updating them. We need someone who is savvy with computer software to help in this process also. Please contact me to help in this very important effort (I’m going to put together a "job description" as best I can, soon).

Finally, make sure to purchase your tickets to the annual Desert Peaks Section Banquet, to be held on Sunday, May 19th at the Proud Bird in Los Angeles. Our speaker has been selected and it will be a festive, educational time. The program will be by the National Park Service ranger named Charlie Callagan, on the new Wilderness Plan for Death Valley. See the flyer in this issue of the Sage to sign up for the banquet.

Happy Trails, Y’all!

CHAIR’S CORNER
by Jim Fleming

NEXT SUBMISSION DEADLINE
April 14, 2013

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/
Cover Photo Credit...

...goes to Penelope Smrz. The photo is of Corkscrew Peak and was taken during a climb of the peak from the south on December 5, 2010.

The Desert Peaks Section
explores the desert mountain ranges of California and the Southwest, stimulates the interest of Sierra Club membership in climbing these ranges and aids in the conservation and preservation of desert wilderness areas.
### TRIPS & EVENTS

**MARCH 2013 — DECEMBER 2013**

A DPS group on the way to Panamint Butte, January 12, 2013—please see trip report on pages 15-16 (photo by Tina Bowman)

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<th>Date</th>
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<td>DPS Chile Cook-off</td>
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### MARCH 2013

- **MARCH 9-10** SAT-SUN DPS  
  **Chili Cook-Off**: Join us for a day of fun in the desert at the foot of the Ord Mountains in San Bernardino county. Whether you like your chili traditional, Texas-style (no beans), or vegetarian, bring your favorite recipe or just hearty taste buds to this DPS classic. Cooks prepare chili from scratch at the site, then all enjoy happy hour followed by chili tasting and judging. Prizes will be awarded by category, with special recognition for the Spiciest Chili, Best Presentation, Most Original Recipe, and the coveted Best Overall Chili. Cook for free or taste for $10. With luck we should be able to enjoy some great desert spring wildflowers. Optional Saturday climb of East Ord Mountain (2.8 miles, 2200’, 3-4 hours) before the Cook-off. Sunday climb Ord Mountain (5 miles, 1800’, 4-5 hours) or explore petroglyph sites with the leaders. Send SASE or email with choice of Cook or Taster to Hosts: Dave & Elaine Baldwin ([DWBaldwin@aol.com](mailto:DWBaldwin@aol.com)) and Leaders: Larry and Barbee Tidball ([lbtidball@verizon.net](mailto:lbtidball@verizon.net)).

(Continued on page 5)
MARCH 10  SUN  DPS
O: DPS Management Committee Meeting and Potluck: Join us at the home of Tom Sumner in Sylmar for
the DPS Management Committee meeting at 4:30 pm and potluck at 6:00 pm. Please bring a beverage of your
choice and a potluck item to share. RSVP to Tom Sumner at locornnr@aol.com

♦ MARCH 23  SAT  DPS
I: Porter Peak, Sentinel Peak: Join us for these two peaks in Death Valley on the crest of the Panamints.
Climb both peaks via cross-country route from Pleasant Canyon, round trip 12 miles, 4000’ gain. Send recent
experience and conditioning, carpool information and e-mail or SASE to Leader: Gary Schenk
(gary@hbfun.org). Co-leader: Tina Bowman.

APRIL 2013

♦ APRIL 6-7  SAT–SUN  WTC, DPS
I: Pinto Mountain (3,983’): Come join us on an early spring backpacking trip where we’ll enjoy panoramic
views out across the Mojave Desert as we hike among rocks and wildflowers in quest of this fine peak in
Joshua Tree NP near Twenty-nine Palms, CA. Saturday we’ll get a late morning start and backpack 3 miles to
our dry campsite and get settled in for a rousing Happy Hour under a nearly moonless night sky. Sunday
we’ll climb up a wash to the cone-shaped summit that towers above Pinto Basin and then descend via
ridgelines back to camp and then the cars. Our route will be all cross country with some steep, loose, and
rocky sections along the way. Totals for the weekend will be 13 miles with 2,400’ of gain, which we’ll do at a
relaxed, but steady pace. Email Mat Kelliher (mkelliher746@gmail.com) with recent conditioning and
experience for trip status and details. Leaders: Mat Kelliher, Dave Scobie.

♦ APRIL 6-7  SAT–SUN  WTC, DPS
MR: Clark Mountain (7,900’) and New York Mountain High Point (7,330’): Mountaineering outing for
Sierra Club members only. Climb two dominate desert peaks in the Mojave National Preserve in the Clark
Mountains and the New York Mountains. Saturday climb Clark Mountain, 2.5 miles round trip and 1,900’
gain, then have happy hour back at the car camp. Saturday night crazy hat contest with prize. Sunday climb to
New York Mountain High Point and adjacent New York Peak, 4 miles round trip and 1,900’ gain. Helmets,
harness and recent 3rd class rock climbing experience required. Send an email with completed medical form,
recent experience, conditioning, home and work phone to Leader: Philip Bates at philipabates@gmail.com;
Assistant Leader: Mike Adams.

♦ APRIL 14  SUN  DPS
O: DPS Management Committee Meeting and Potluck: Join us at the home of Barbee and Larry Tidball in
Long Beach for the DPS Management Committee meeting at 4:30 pm and potluck at 6:00 pm. Please bring a
beverage of your choice and a potluck item to share. RSVP to the Tidball’s at: lbtidball@verizon.net

♦ APRIL 20-21  SAT-SUN  LTC, WTC, DPS, HPS, SPS
I: Warren Point Navigation: Navigation noodle at Joshua Tree National Park to satisfy the Basic (I/M) level
navigation requirements. Saturday for practice, skills refresher, altimeter, homework, campfire. Sunday
checkout. Send email/sase, contact information, navigation experience/training, any WTC, leader rating,
rideshare, to Leader: Robert Myers. Assistant Leader: Phil Wheeler

♦ APRIL 20 – 21  SAT–SUN  DPS
I: Jacumba Mountain (4,512’), Sombrero Peak (4,229’): Join us on one or both days of this rugged, spring-
weekend mission into the southern Anza Borrego Desert to bag two steep, rocky, thorny, and brushy peaks
near Ocotillo, CA. Saturday we’ll hike 5 miles round trip with 2,500’ of gain to Jacumba Peak via Mortero
Palms, and then drive over to the mouth of Bow Willow Canyon where we’ll enjoy a festive DPS potluck/car
camp. Sunday we’ll drive up into the South Fork of Indian Valley, park, and then gain 2100’ over a 1.5 mile
(3 miles RT) hike up the northern ridge of Sombrero Peak. High clearance 4WD recommended. Email Mat
Kelliher at mkelliher746@gmail.com with recent conditioning and experience for trip status and details. Leaders: Mat Kelliher and Jim Fleming

**MAY 2013**

♦ **MAY 4**  
**SAT**  
HPS  
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 (refunded at trailhead) to Leader: Diane Dunbar. Co-leader: Richard Boardman

♦ **MAY 04-05**  
**SAT-SUN**  
LTC, DPS, SPS  
M/E R: **Sierra Snow Check Off/Practice**: For M & E candidates wanting to check off leadership ratings or others who wish to practice new techniques. Restricted to Sierra Club members with some prior basic training with the ice axe. Send Sierra Club number, climbing resume, email, H&W phones to Leader: Nile Sorenson (nsorenso@pacbell.net). Co-leader: Doug Mantle. E, C, Mountaineering

♦ **MAY 11-12**  
**SAT-SUN**  
DPS  
I: **Virgin Mountain (8,071’+), Potosi Mountain (8,514’)**: Join us for one or both days on this strenuous late spring venture into Nevada to bag these two peaks known for their spectacular summit views. Saturday we’ll summit Virgin Peak, south of Mesquite, by ascending its steep, rocky and brushy southern ridge for a total of at least 6 round trip miles and 3,000’ of gain, followed by a traditional DPS potluck/car camp. Sunday we’ll head up into the Spring Mountains, west of Las Vegas, park near Potosi Spring, and ascend the steep, rocky, and sometimes brushy western ridge to the summit of Potosi Mountain for a day’s total of 6 miles round trip and 3,000’ of gain. High clearance 4WD advised. Email Mat Kelliher at mkelliher746@gmail.com with recent conditioning and experience for trip status and details. Leaders: Mat Kelliher and Jim Fleming

♦ **MAY 18-19**  
**SAT-SUN**  
LTC, DPS, SPS  
M/E R: **Sierra Snow Check Off/Practice**: For M & 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 Sierra Club number, climbing resume, email, home, work and cell phones to Leader: Tina Bowman (tina@bowmandesigngroup.com). Co-leader: Tom McDonnell. E, C, Mountaineering

♦ **MAY 19**  
**SUN**  
DPS  
Desert Peaks Section Annual DPS Banquet: Mark your calendars now for our annual soiree! Join your fellow desert explorers and friends for a wonderful evening. This year we will again enjoy the fine accommodations at The Proud Bird Restaurant in Los Angeles (near LAX). Social Hour and No Host Bar start at 5:30 pm, followed at 7:00 pm by dinner and program entitled “Death Valley Wilderness Management for the 21st Century” presented by National Park Service Ranger Charlie Callagan. The evening will be capped off by awards. Please come join the fun! For more information, see flyer inside this issue of the Sage or email Jim Fleming at jimf333@att.net

**JUNE 2013**

♦ **JUNE 1**  
**SAT**  
LTC, WTC, DPS, HPS, SPS  
I: **Heart Bear Peak (8332’)**: Practice navigation for Sunday’s check off on this 7 mile route, 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. Co-leaders: Jane Simpson, Adrienne Benedict, Ann Pedreschi Shields

(Continued on page 7)
JUNE 2  SUN  LTC, WTC, DPS, HPS, SPS
1: 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. Assistant Leader: Phil Wheeler.

JUNE 15-16  SAT-SUN  DPS
1: Charleston Peak (11,915’), Mummy Mountain (11,528’): Join us for these two fine peaks outside Las Vegas. Saturday ascend Charleston via the South Loop trail (18 miles, 4300’ gain). Sunday we’ll climb Mummy, approaching via the North Loop trail (10 miles, 3750’ gain). Send recent conditioning and altitude experience to Leader: Tina Bowman (tina@bowmandesigngroup.com). Co-leader: Gary Schenk.

AUGUST 2013

AUG 4  SUN  LTC, WTC, DPS, HPS, SPS
1: Mount Pinos 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 Leaders: Robert Myers. Assistant Leader: Phil Wheeler.

AUG 10  SAT  DPS
1: Boundary Peak (13,140’), Montgomery Peak (13,441’): Join us on this very strenuous hike to summit a couple of spectacular peaks high up in the White Mountains north of Bishop, CA. The first peak is the high point of Nevada; from there we’ll cross the state line into California along a steep and rocky ridge to a peak high above all other DPS Emblem Peaks. Expect 12 miles round trip and 5,500’ gain. Comfortable hiking up very steep, loose, and rocky terrain at high elevation is essential. Contact Mat Kelliher at mkelliher746@gmail.com with recent conditioning and experience, including high altitude experience and vehicle/rideshare information, for trip status and details. Leaders: Mat Kelliher, Jim Fleming.

SEPTEMBER 2013

SEPT 22  SUN  LTC, WTC, DPS, HPS, SPS
1: 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. Assistant Leader: Phil Wheeler.

FALL DATE TBD  SAT  LTC, WTC
1: 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. Co-leader: Richard Boardman.

NOVEMBER 2013

NOV 16  SAT  LTC, WTC
MR: Navigation Workshop on 3rd Class Terrain: 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. Co-Leader: Jack Kieffer

♦ NOV 16-17 SAT-SUN LTC, WTC, DPS, HPS, SPS
I: Indian Cove Navigation: Navigation noodle at Joshua Tree National Park to satisfy the Basic (I/M) level navigation requirements. Sat for practice, skills refresher, altimeter, homework, campfire. Sun checkout. Send email/sase, contact info, navigation experience/training, any WTC, leader rating, rideshare, to Leader: Robert Myers. Assistant Leader: Phil Wheeler

DECEMBER 2013

♦ DEC 8 SUN LTC, WTC, DPS, HPS, SPS
I: Warren Point Navigation: Navigation noodle at Joshua Tree National Park for either checkout or practice to satisfy the Basic (I/M) or Advanced (E) level navigation requirements. To participate, send email/sase, contact info, navigation experience/training, any WTC, leader rating, rideshare, to Leader: Robert Myers. Assistant Leader: Phil Wheeler

In order to participate on one of the Sierra Club's outings, you will need to sign a liability waiver. If you would like to read a copy of the waiver prior to the outing, please see http://sierraclub.org/outings/chapter/forms or call 415-977-5528.

In the interest of facilitating the logistics of some outings, it is customary that participants make carpooling arrangements. The Sierra Club does not have insurance for carpooling arrangements and assumes no liability for them. Carpooling, ride sharing or anything similar is strictly a private arrangement among the participants. Participants assume the risks associated with this travel. CST 2087766-40. Registration as a seller of travel does not constitute approval by the State of California.
ANNUAL BANQUET

Sunday May 19, 2013

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

Time:  5:30 pm Social Hour
       7:00 pm dinner
       (Includes complimentary wine at each table)

Program: Charlie Callagan presents:
“Death Valley Wilderness Management for the
21st Century”

Charlie Callagan, originally from Oregon, has worked and lived in at least a dozen different parks in the west since 1976. He first worked for park concessionaires and then for the Park Service beginning in 1984. He has worked in Death Valley for 22 years providing the public with interpretive talks, evening slide/power point programs and guided hikes. For the past 2 years Charlie has been the park's first full time Wilderness Coordinator. As a long time desert rat he enjoys hiking and backpacking cross-country to remote desert canyons and peaks in the park.

Silent Auction
This Year we will conduct a silent auction of donated items instead of the traditional raffle. Please contact Jim Fleming (Banquet Chair) for more information.

Classic Wilderness and Climbers Cheap Book Sale
(Be sure to bring books to donate to the Sale)

Name(s): ____________________________ phone or e-mail ____________________________

Dinner selection: Sirloin Steak _______ Salmon _________ Vegetarian Wellington _________
(Indicate number of each)

Number of reservations: ______ $37 before May 12 ______ $42 after May 12 Total enclosed $__________

Please reserve by May 12. Mail check payable to DPS and completed form to DPS treasurer: Pat Arredondo, 13409 Stanbridge Avenue, Bellflower, CA 90706-2341. Tickets will be held at the door. For questions, please e-mail Jim Fleming at Jimf333@att.net or Pat at paarredo@verizon.net
Thanks to all our leaders, old and new, for a good January and February climbing season. Special thanks to new leaders Matt Hengst and Mat Kelliher (your name doesn’t have to be Matt in order to lead a trip!) Remember, we can still add trips for March and April, which is a high season for the desert.

OUTINGS CHAIR  
by Ann Perkins

On the peaks front, Cerro Pinacate has recently been climbed successfully by Brian Smith and Gloria Miladin, so the difficulty in getting permission to enter the Park seems to be sporadic. Of course, that’s not much encouragement if you have driven over a thousand miles round trip for nothing! We will write a letter to the Park to see if we can get a more definite idea of their policies and regulations. In the meantime, if you are planning a climb of this peak, I suggest that you might combine it with other peaks in the area so the trip won’t be a complete waste if you are refused entrance to Cerro Pinacate.

Regarding Edgar Peak in the Mojave National Preserve, I would appreciate information about any private trips that have climbed this peak by an alternate route. The route described in the guide has added an additional 10 miles of hiking, due to the gate across the road leading to Mitchell Caverns State Park.

At the most recent Management Committee Meeting, we discussed the Road and Peaks Guide revisions, and the advisability of having a committee work on this together, rather than having one person responsible for all the revisions. If anyone is interested in joining the project, please let me know.

Happy climbing! Ann Perkins

Conservation  
by Virgil Popescu

CHANGING CLIMATE

Despite the fact that the climate change issue was ignored during the presidential election, 2012 may be considered as the year that Americans began taking it seriously. 2012 was one of the hottest years on record with extreme drought all over the country and wildfires burning throughout the West. Up North, Arctic ice melted at a historic rate while super storm Sandy devastated the East Coast. All these catastrophic weather events makes the case for action, and demand Obama’s leadership on climate change. And yes, the re-elected President has re-embraced climate change as an urgent issue but he continues his agenda in building a strong economy based on the same fossil fuels that are causing climate change. The only way to achieve both goals is by rebuilding an economy that end our reliance on coal, oil and gas, supports methods that help the environment adapt to climate change, and promote clean energy alternatives such as wind and solar. The President and Congress heard loud and clear that the public understands the importance of the climate change issue and demand action.
DPS MEMBERSHIP REPORT

By Ron Bartell

Membership Summary

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Activity Report

New Members

Stacy Goss          Tucki Mtn
James Morehouse     Potosi Mtn
Kelley Laxamana     Nopah Range

Sustaining Renewals

Jan Brahms & David Reneric  1 year
David Comerzan         1 year
Paul Cooley            3 years
Gary Craig             1 year
Darrick & Sara Danta   3 years
Burton A. Falk         1 year
Steven Gabel           2 years
Gregory Gerlach        1 year
Edward Herrman         1 year
Vicky Hoover           1 year
Karen & Brian (Wolf) Leverich 1 year
Jim Prichard           1 year

Renewals

Henry A. Arnebold      1 year
Diane Baker            1 year
Ron Bartell & Christine Mitchell  2 years
Doug Bear              1 year
Eric & Lori Beck       1 year
Stephan Bork           1 year
Harry Brumer           1 year
Ron Campbell           2 years
Fred & Marianna Camphausen 1 year
Keith Christensen      5 years
Dan Clark              2 years
Jim Conley             1 year
Guy Dahms              1 year

Donations

$10 from David Comerzan
$15 from Rayne & Mary Motheral
$10 from Jim Prichard
TRIP REPORTS

Bridge Mountain, North Peak and McCullough Mountain
November 10-11, 2012, by James Barlow

Cast: Keith Christensen, Jen Blackie, Mat Kelliher and James Barlow

Veteran’s Day fell on a Monday this year. And what does one do with a 3 day weekend in November? Head to the desert and bag peaks of course! Keith Christensen, Jen Blackie, and I hiked Kingston with Daryn Dodge & crew on Saturday, but made advance plans to continue east in the legendary van to meet Mat Kelliher and climb Bridge on Sunday before moving on to McCullough on Monday.

Sunday morning saw us waking up freezing below Bridge at our campsite on Lovell Canyon Rd. Mat arrived shortly and we were off in the Jeep, headed for the Bridge trailhead via the southern approach. The road is washed out about 1 mile before the 4WD trailhead. It’s pretty much impassable to anything but a rock crawler vehicle. Even Mat’s mighty Jeep stopped and parked. We were able to follow the road to the trail, following the standard DPS route down to the beginning of the climb. A recent snow storm had blanketed Charleston peak in snow, but Kingston and Potosi were untouched, so we figured we would be good on the lower elevation Bridge Mtn. Things were not looking good as we began to ascend the standard route. By the time we hit the famous bridge, the rock became too icy to proceed. Sadly, we made the smart choice and bailed. On the way out Jen led us up North Peak, straight out of the Zdon book. It was a peak, but not nearly the challenge we were looking for. North Peak has a Class 1 use trail to the top. Despite being turned back from our objective, the area is incredibly beautiful, and the hike to the bridge and our consolation prize of North Peak made for a decent day, though a successful DPS peak would have been nicer. There is a sign that says “North Peak 0.3 miles, difficult” as you head towards that peak. We all got a good laugh out of that one. 0.3 miles of class 1 on a use trail is about the furthest thing from “difficult” a real DPS peakbagger could imagine…

We parted ways with Mat, who was working Monday, and headed towards McCullough Mtn. via dinner in Vegas to make camp and prepare for the next day’s hike. The road into the McCullough was right at the threshold of what the van could handle in the sand, but we made it to the bottom of the eastern route up the peak (DPS route A). There was a sign warning of a hunter in a “blind” in the area, so we wisely stopped just short of this sign so we wouldn’t be confused for quail or deer in our sleep. DPS route A advertises difficult navigation, though we found it quite easy. I loaded some points into my GPS to assist in navigation, but we ended up not needing them. We managed to hit every turn and climb out of washes at nearly the right spot. Three brains worked quite well for this one.

When we were about 20 minutes into the hike, tragedy struck. I went to turn on my camera for a picture and nothing happened. Somehow the camera had drained its battery overnight. I had a handful of spare AA batteries for my GPS and headlamp, but you know how those camera companies make oddball batteries for cameras… Anybody who has hiked with me can attest to my pleasure in taking pictures, especially on the summit. I currently have pictures of myself on 48/49 of the DPS peaks I have completed, in the hope of making a collage of myself on the summit of every peak. Quite a vain pursuit to some, but it’s my thing. Take only pictures and leave only footprints. At this point, I was a bit upset with my electronic device, and may have even unleashed a few naughty words, possibly cursing like a Sailor. Well, the hike continued on since my legs still worked and the combined brains of Keith and Jen kept us on route. My brain was crying like a baby since my toy didn’t work. After a bit, Keith, the electrician, came up with an idea. I had a handful of AA batteries on me and the summit of most desert peaks are littered with old wire and wood. Maybe we could figure out a way to charge the camera battery using my AA batteries and wire. I was skeptical and consulted my science teacher friend, Jen. She said it may work, and Keith was even more confident, but I remained wary. The hike continued on with a successful summit where we dutifully signed the register and ate (Continued on page 13)
some lunch. As expected, there was some old wire on the summit. While I ate my food, Keith began to prepare the wire for our little electrical engineering experiment. As I finished eating, Keith had the wire ready and plans for all 6 hands we had available. I would hold the three AA batteries together in a line, Jen would hold the positive wire and the camera battery, and Keith would hold the negative wire. The ends of the wire went from the AA batteries to their respective receiving ends of the camera battery. We huddled together in this interesting closed circuit system for about 5 minutes and figured it was time to give it a test. We popped the camera battery into the camera and “bing” it turned on! I quickly handed the camera to Jen so she could get a summit shot of Keith and I. She then tossed me the camera and I got a summit shot of her and our master electrician, Keith. The camera was still working! We even managed a few of those timer shots with all 3 of us holding our batteries and wire and I snapped about a dozen more pictures on the descent.

We arrived back at the van to find our hunter friend gone, though he left behind the usual hunter-related trash which we grabbed to pack out. We were in the van and off. We barely made it up one steep section of road before hitting the good condition power line road, which can be driven by any standard car. Was our adventure over? How could it be? The sun was still up and we were looking at arriving home at a decent hour. No way was our adventure over. The plan for the drive out to pavement was to stop and grab the Wee Thump Joshua Tree BLM Wilderness High Point on the way before we hit pavement. It’s on the Random Bonus Bumps List, and looked like it would take a good solid 20 minutes for a round trip stroll from the road. When we stopped the van to begin our hike, I jumped out and heard a hissing sound. Not the good rattlesnake hissing, but the bad air releasing from rubber hissing. I informed Keith of the noise and we weren’t worried. He had a spare. Then Jen brought to our attention the other flat tire. Uh oh. Two flats, one spare. Not good. We hobbled to pavement and began to think through our options. In the end, I got a ride to Searchlight, picked up a tire plug kit and some fix-a-flat, and got a ride back to the van. We plugged one tire, used the spare for the other one, limped into Searchlight for air, filled up, and headed to Vegas (opposite direction from home) for 2 new tires. One dinner and a few dollars later, Keith was the proud owner of 2 brand new tires.

Lessons learned: I now own a tire plug kit and one of those tire inflation pumps that you can pump up a flat with and carry it in the back of the Yaris at all times with my spare tire. We were incredibly lucky that we made it to a state highway before the tire went completely flat and were able to find a person good enough to help us. I also know how to charge my camera battery MacGyver-style, though that camera (Sony) met its fate in Kelso Dunes less than a month later (sand and moving parts don’t mix well). Thanks to the warranty I wisely invested in after destroying 5 cameras in the last 3 years, I now have a better camera that shuts itself off if you don’t push any buttons for 3 minutes. That should prevent further battery issues. I also have a spare battery for this camera (Fuji) since the camera I dropped off a cliff in Joshua Tree earlier in the summer is the same model and I kept the battery, figuring I would own one again someday. In the end, we got 2 of our 3 peaks (Kingston & McCullough), learned a lot about electricity and tire repair, and generally had another great weekend in the desert, even if it was a bit colder than we had hoped for. Two weeks later I found myself on the summit of Clark with my son looking over at Charleston and noticing that the snow had all melted away. If it was gone from Charleston, it was certainly gone from Bridge. I guess timing is everything…

Ashford Peak (3,546’), Tecopa Peak (2,688’) and Sheephead Mountain (4,274’)
December 2012, by Debbie Bulger

I’d been contemplating the Ashford Canyon Road in southeastern Death Valley for several years. We camped at the end of this high clearance road for four days. It’s a beautiful place with a commanding view of Shoreline Butte which bears evidence of ancient Lake Manley at the...
southern tip of Death Valley. From our viewpoint a thousand feet above the Valley, Richard Stover and I had a breathtaking view of the Panamint Mountains and at night, could see the headlights but not hear the sound, of vehicles on the Badwater Road.

Ashford Canyon is beautiful—partially comprised of mosaics—colored green and grey and tan—embedded in a milky white matrix. From our snug but cold camp we hiked up canyon several times, one day on the remnants of the mining road and another day up the wash itself. We explored the remains of the Ashford Mine, looked down an unprotected mine shaft more than 300 feet deep, saw the abandoned towers of the 70-year-old aerial tramway, and of course, climbed Ashford Peak, a cold and windy experience. Few people climb this remote peak. In 2011 there was only one recorded ascent. Counting us, only two parties signed the Ashford register in 2012.

Visiting abandoned mining camps transports one into the lives of people who lived and worked there 60 to 150 years ago. To our delight, we made a historical discovery, new to us. In examining old rusted cans strewn about (they are always interesting especially when they have lead plugs or readable labels) we noted that several were full of dirt or rocks and had loops of wire inserted in them. We guessed that they were used as weights on tent guy lines in this windy area, much like the weights suspended from telephone lines today. If you know for sure, let us know.

Climbing Tecopa Peak the next day provided hours of fun. To get to the base of the peak, one must first cross about two miles of desert from the road. The peak, complete with (broken) homemade ceramic plaque on top, has three benchmarks on the summit.

Sheephead Mountain, our next objective, is exquisitely beautiful—all colorful and stripy. From the distance this small peak looks difficult, even technical, but in actuality turns out to be a short, easy scramble. There are yellows and greens and blacks in the surrounding vibrant desert. We spotted the remains of a tortoise shell, a skeletal raven wing, a wood rat nest, and lots of kangaroo rat colonies.
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Panamint Butte and Tucki Mountain
January 12-13, 2013, by Tina Bowman

Photos by Elena Sherman and Tina Bowman

When Paul Garry and I were planning this trip, my brain was turned off. I reluctantly agreed to route B on Panamint Butte—reluctantly because I’d been there, done that, and didn’t really want to repeat it—so that he could bag Towne Point, the high point of the Cottonwood Mountains, along the way. But the guide says eleven hours, so the margin of daylight would be slim. I wasn’t thinking about that when I sent in the trip announcement.

Eventually the dim bulb brightened, and Paul and I did some negotiating. The bulb brightened considerably when I realized that Rudy Fleck was signed up for the trip. He was happy to be pressed into service to assist me on route A, while Paul and four others could do route B as a private trip and meet up with us on Saturday night. Win-win!

About the time Paul, James Barlow, Keith Christensen, Amin Farraday, and Ban Uong were starting route B at 6:30 from Towne Pass (where it was 18 degrees!), Rudy and I were talking with our group at the 2WD parking spot for route A. Joining us were Stacy Goss (her first DPS trip, though she’s hiked and climbed a lot in the desert) from Santa Clara), Kevin Kingma from the Berkeley area, Elena Sherman, and Scott Sullivan. Off we went up the road, which, as it turns out, we could have driven for a good mile. The road marked on the map does have washed out parts; however, another road starts on it and then roughly parallels, eventually turning left a bit to rejoin the marked road till where it is washed out at about 2200’. The branch road that the route follows on the DPS guide map actually is invisible from the road, though quite visible from above. That’s ok, it’s not the road to take anyway. Instead, where the road ends at the wash, there’s a very short branch road to the left that soon turns into a trail up to the adits. From there on, the guide and map are fine.

Perhaps halfway to the peak Kevin found a spectacular arrowhead. We admired and photographed it; Kevin did the right thing and left it there. On we went, grinding up the 5000’ of gain. Rudy led us to the summit from the flattish area at 5,250’ while I stayed behind with one participant who was lagging. When we last two joined the others on the top about noon, Amin was already there and the other three and Paul were a hundred yards from the summit. Cool! Well, actually cold—it was quite a cold day, fortunately without much breeze.

We said goodbye and went our separate ways. A different participant eventually started having some trouble with the mostly relentless downhill, so we took some regrouping breaks as we retraced our steps. By the time we were all back at the cars, we had taken about nine hours and forty minutes, a pretty far cry from the guide’s eight hours.

As agreed, we all met at the Emigrant campground near the junction of the Wildrose road and 190. Paul’s gang was just leaving Towne Pass when I got there after about ten and a half hours. Fortunately, there were enough spaces available at this nice, free campground (picnic tables, flush toilets, tent camping only). We had some goodies to share and toasted Elena for her milestone birthday the next day. She certainly looks far younger than her years. I suspect some sort of Dorian Gray thing is going on, but instead of a portrait aging in her place, I think she somehow worked it so that her wrinkles ended up on others such as me. We also talked with James about his move to Seattle (his Yaris was packed with belongings and crowned with bikes and skis, so this was the first leg on his drive north). His first DPS trip was one in fall 2010 that Mary McMannes and I led to Jefferson and Arc Dome; with luck he’ll be back in several years and going on DPS outings again.

Sunday morning we were down to a group of nine, Elena and Scott having decided to head home. We parked the 2WDs outside the campground and set off for route B on Tucki (Tuck-eye!), squeezed into Paul’s 4Runner and my Tacoma. Most of the worst part of that road is at the very beginning where high clearance is a must. Quite a ways in there was one definite 4WD spot, and then the climb up to the parking spot for route B is steep and needs 4WD as well. The drive took about an hour. The temperature was as low as 14 as we drove in Telephone Canyon.

Soon we were hiking down the road beyond a barrier sign and on to Old Martin’s Crossing. We could see the Martin cabin in the distance but didn’t go over to explore. When I’d stopped before, it was clearly rodent haven. No Hanta virus for us! Paul did a great job of leading us to Tucki and back. There was more breeze on this day, and it certainly wasn’t any warmer. I had to keep the bite valve of my Platypus inside my shirt to thaw it and work the tube to...
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break up the ice. A few traces of snow lingered on the north-facing slope before the final slope to the summit. With the cold we were happy to minimize breaks and keep on the move.

On both peaks we enjoyed views of the snow-covered Sierra, the valleys, and desert peaks in the distance. On neither summit did we linger. So back we went. I found it hard to believe that the first time I climbed Tucki we had driven down and up that incredibly steep road; this was before the Old Martin’s Crossing area was in designated wilderness. The silty sand we almost bogged down in on the flats is now well packed since it has received only foot traffic for years now.

Hooray! We were back to the trust Toyotas in under five hours. Soon we were down and back on the Telephone Canyon road, heading a short distance east to the Journigan cabin and mine, worth the short detour. We signed the cabin register, and some hiked up to look into the mine before our trek back to pavement and home.

Thanks to Paul and Rudy in joining me to lead this outing. What a great group of people we had!

Cerro Pescadores and “Little” Picacho Peak, December 1 and 2, 2012, by James Barlow

Group: Keith Christensen, Gloria Miladin, Kathy Rich, Greg Gerlach and James Barlow

Our weekend started with an early meet up at the El Centro Wal-Mart for this private desert outing. Why Wal-Mart? None of us regularly shop at Wal-Mart. Well, they have 24 hr. roving security and they encourage overnight parking in their lot (so that you run in to buy cheap crap from China). Keith and I loaded our gear from the van and Yaris into Gloria’s SUV and we headed south to Mexicali. After an easy border crossing, we were on our way, armed with info and trip reports from numerous DPS sources. We found the turn-off indicated in Daryn Dodge’s trip report ok, and headed up this road, making a nearly straight bee-line for the mountains. Unfortunately, this road turned to sand quite quickly. We found a set of tire tracks to the north and followed that for a bit before giving up and beginning our hike from a random point in the desert. The good news is that the car would be quite safe as we were pretty far off the beaten path. We would recommend that future DPS groups just bring 4WD vehicles to get through the sand or prepare themselves for a few extra miles of road walking. I would guess that it is a maximum of 2 miles from the beginning of the sandy part of the road to the 4WD parking spot at around the 220 meter elevation contour.

From our parking spot, we headed southwest towards the big split in the hills that take you into the main canyon. We followed the main route in the DPS guide, taking the steep ridge to the left of the main canyon. This route was quite pleasant despite the steeper sections towards the bottom. The large rock referenced in the DPS guide is right along the route, so we checked it out and looked to see if it could be climbed.

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Maybe with a rope, some rock shoes, and a bolt drill. It’s pretty blank, so trad gear would be useless... We encountered interesting rock formations about three quarters of the way up the route, just past the large rock. The navigation in this area can be a bit tricky, but we made our way up with the help of 4 or 5 well placed cairns. Please don’t add any more; too many cairns take the fun out of the hike! We topped out and did the usual (eat lunch and read the register). The older register had been taken by a Mexican hiking club to scan and return to the mountain at a later date, so we were bummed to miss out on that.

With a desire to reach the car by dark, we headed back down after a shorter than usual rest on top. We retraced our route to a point where we had noticed a side canyon that joins the main canyon. We decided to take this down. It turned out to be a bad idea, as we cliffed out a few times, but always managed to get out of it by going left and into less sketchy terrain. We eventually hit the bottom and rejoined the main canyon not too far above where we had taken the ridge up. As we headed back between the prominent hills on the 4WD road, we heard a vehicle approaching from the north. We decided to stop and stay behind the bushes that concealed us from their view for a minute to let them leave the area. This close to the border it could be the Army looking for drug smugglers and we didn’t need any drama this day. It turned out to be a generic off road enthusiast from what we could tell as they headed towards the main highway. We reached Gloria’s car not too long after dark and we were pretty close by dead reckoning. Good thing I marked it on the GPS.

After another adventurous drive on some seldom-driven dirt, we were back on the highway and headed north to Mexicali for some fine dining! Gloria and I were pretty pumped about finding a roadside taco stand to grab dinner, so we took it easy driving through town to see what we could find. When in Mexico, my absolute favorite food comes from these types of establishments. We were in luck, as we pulled up to a taco stand that was just setting up shop for the evening. The weather was warm this whole weekend (we hiked in t-shirts), so we sat at his taco stand while the meat finished cooking. After a fantastic meal, we hopped back into the car and headed north to the border to wait in the line to get back across. As luck would have it, it was a slow night in Mexicali. We were able to drive straight up to the border and pulled up as the third car in line to get to the border patrol guy. Unbelievable! I barely had time to procure my breakfast empanadas from the street vendor before we pulled up to the border checkpoint. After a quick explanation of

peakbagging to the border patrol, we were in Calexico and on to Wal-Mart in El Centro. We arrived at Wal-Mart about 25 minutes after leaving the taco stand that we ate dinner at, which was probably 5 miles south of the border. We were pretty happy about this turn of events, which gave us more time to sleep before Little Picacho the next day. Gloria bid us farewell and headed back to LA, while Keith and I piled into the van and headed east towards Yuma for our goal of Little Picacho the next day.

We awoke to the sound of Greg and Kathy talking just outside the van. As it turns out, they had arrived later and spent the night right near us with the intent of joining us for Little Picacho. Happy to have two more DPS friends along, we headed to the trailhead. The route is just as I remembered it from December 2011 when Jen Blackie, John Ide, and I climbed this peak. We made good time on the approach and the first bit of the climb as we didn’t need to refer to the maps or directions. Not long after

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down with the normal double rope and I then reset it to a single strand for the re-ascent later and rapped down. The summit was nice, as to be expected, and we signed into the register with only 2 parties signed in since my last ascent in December 2011. After the usual photos, we were off to re-ascent the rope to the false summit. Keith, fresh off a Denali ascent with fixed lines, was up first and made the re-ascent look like cake. I was next, and a little freaked out by the exposure, thinking I would be less scared the second time around. All I could think about was that I was using a thinner rope than last time… Greg was up next, with a little coaching from all of us, as he had not done this before. Kathy finished it out nicely for the group, and we all breathed a sigh of relief as we reset the rope for the easy rappel down the other side of the false summit. Once we stowed the rope and climbing gear in our packs, we made our way down the mountain, hoping to run into Matt Hengst and his group who had climbed Stud Mountain earlier that morning before Little Picacho. Alas, we did not run into them for a hello, and reached our cars with plenty of daylight to spare. Since it had been so hot, Keith and I suggested heading down to the nearby Colorado River for a swim. Greg wasn’t interested, so just the two of us headed down there and enjoyed a refreshing dip in the river to cool off. After relaxing on the “beach,” Keith and I made our way back to the El Centro Wal-Mart to part ways. Overall, a successful desert weekend on both sides of the border. Though Cerro Pescadores is commonly paired with Pico Risco, I would contend that it pairs well with Little Picacho if you base the carpool out of El Centro and want to finish early on Sunday for the drive home, as Little Picacho is a short peak if the group is small.

Bridge Mountain, Nevada
November 4, 2012, by Sandy Lara

At 6,955 feet, Bridge Mountain is the highest peak in the Red Rock National Conservation Area. It is a fun climb with sweeping views including the beautiful Red Rock to the north and Las Vegas to the east.

There are only 16 National Conservation Areas in the US. These are all in western states. The designation provides certain protections for the land that vary between Areas, but generally allows the Bureau of Land Management the authority to prohibit mining, leasing, and sale of the land, and to restrict the use of motor vehicles.

There are two approaches to the trailhead at Red Rock Summit (aka Rocky Gap Road Summit). One is from Red Rock Canyon (fee, limited hours) that comes in from the north and is longer (4.5mi dirt) and a difficult drive. I chose the Lovell Canyon approach from the west. We were able to drive a couple of miles on Rocky Gap Road (dirt) to a nice established campsite (no fee, no permit). Red Rock Summit was an additional 1.5mi, 500’ beyond. Our 4WD vehicles easily made it to the campsite, but would not make it to the trailhead. Motorcycles and bolder drivers with bigger tires were able to pass through.

After walking up the road to get to the trailhead, we followed the nice, maintained trail for about a mile, 700’, to gain a north/south ridge upon which we got our first view of the peak. It is a formidable-looking monolith, difficult to see where there could possibly be a class 3 route. From this vantage point, the “bridge” feature of the peak can be spotted by looking for a large fallen ponderosa pine tree about 600’ below the summit. There are natural catch basins in the sandstone, called tinajas, which

James Barlow belaying Kathy Rich up to the false summit

From left to right, Kathy Rich, Greg Gerlach, Keith Christenson and James Barlow on the summit of Little Picacho

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gradually wear down. Over time, this one opened through the side wall, leaving a bridge over the hole. We noted that another one of equal size is forming just to the north of the current one. Will they change the name to Bridges Mountain when it breaks through?

We continued about a half mile south on the ridge, then began an 800’ descent eastward to a neck of rock that connects the ridge to the peak, with Icebox Canyon dropping on the northeast and Pine Creek Canyon on the southeast. There was a change from brown dirt to red dirt and then to wonderful, solid, non-slippery sandstone. At one point there is a fabulous, breath-taking view from the head of Pine Creek Canyon where it drops 2000’ a few feet from the trail.

After crossing the neck, we began our ascent to the Bridge formation. There are cairns and some black paint marks on the rock (which can’t be seen from a distance and don’t mar photos or the view) that help to mark the class 3 route.

The best part of the climb is from the neck to the summit and back. There are several segments, all pretty much exposed. The view is always there! The rock is fantastic. There are great hand and foot holds. Climbers can follow each other without being concerned about rock fall. The rock is solid. Virtually nothing is loose. Any grit that arises is quickly blown or washed away. As the route is on west-facing rock (in the shade unless climbing late in the day), it is cool and comfortable to the touch, but might be too cold for bare hands in very cold or inclement weather. It would certainly be slippery in rain or snow.

It was easy going with our group, chosen for their enjoyment of exposure and proven climbing ability. There were lots of happy sounds behind me. We stopped for some photos at the Bridge before proceeding under the formation and up to the back side of the tinaja. Behind is a hidden forest of ponderosa pine, delightful to see in this otherwise dry desert. This forest survives because it is in its own tinaja that collects enough water and snowmelt to sustain it.

After passing by the hidden forest, we ascended a series of ledges that were angled like steep sidewalks, airy on one side and a wall on the other. We came out on top and it was a simple walk to the summit.

This was my M-rock provisional. Jack Kieffer was evaluating and noted that we were one minute later than predicted when we reached the summit. Must have been from that extra photo we took at the Bridge.

The weather was perfect. It was sunny with a light breeze and temps in the low 60s. We spent extra time on top enjoying the view. Though hazy, it was still spectacular. There are many contrasts with red rock, white rock, forested ridges, deep canyons and the sprawling metropolis of Las Vegas.

We began our descent from the summit, passed the hidden forest, and explored the tinaja just north of the Bridge tinaja. We also spent time looking back on our route from the hidden forest to the top of the block. It was very difficult to distinguish even though we had just done it and knew where it had to be.

We went over the Bridge instead of under on our return. This allowed for some additional photo opportunities, viewpoints, and experience. After getting to the base of the Bridge, we descended to the neck the way we came. Of course, it looks different on the way down. The exposure is more apparent, but the happy sounds continued. We found a place to have lunch and amused ourselves by watching a couple of climbers ascend the route. It was still difficult to distinguish, but an interesting exercise for our eyes.

Heading from the neck back to the ridge, Jack ran me through a test belaying a climber since this was my provisional. It's always good to practice. For the record, though, there are virtually no natural anchors to set up a belay on the class 3 route.

We returned to camp the way we had come. There was surprise amongst the group that there was so much gain to the ridge on the way back. We had been so focused on the peak ahead of us that we hadn’t paid much attention to the length of our descent to the neck that morning.

A fun time was had by all. The happy climbers were Jack Kieffer, Phil Bates, Amin Faraday, Rod Kieffer, Peter Lara, KC Reid, and Sandy Lara. A big thank you to Jack for assisting and evaluating!
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Kingston Peak and Avawatz Mountain
November 10-11, 2012, by Daryn Dodge

Participants: Kathy Rich, Daryn Dodge, Jen Blackie, Karl Fieberling, Gary Shenk, Mary Jo Dungfelder, Tracey Thomerson, Peter Kudlinski, James Barlow, Keith Christensen, Greg Gerlach

Kingston Peak

Most participants filtered in during Friday evening and parked on the north side of the road at the pass described in the DPS Guidebook. There was plenty of room for cars to camp at this turn-out. It was a bit difficult to get going in the morning though due to the bitter cold temps. Once moving, rather than look for the dirt road below the pass and using that to start the hike, I started the group from the pass to save a little elevation loss and side-hilled through brush towards the main wash. This seemed to work well the first time I climbed this peak 3 years earlier. However, after more bush-whacking and a brief wrong turn up a side canyon, it was decided the best thing to do would have been to follow the DPS Guidebook and use the old mining road.

Once in the huge wash heading due south, we made pretty good time. The brush was not quite as bad as I remembered. It pays to side-hill in some spots to avoid occasional dense brushy sections in the bottom of the wash. After a snack break at the saddle at 6660 ft. (2030 m), we then climbed on the left side of the ridge to the saddle at 6920 ft. (2110 m) where we had our first view of Kingston Peak. Numerous ducks mark the route along the ridge from here out to Kingston Peak, which turns out to be easier than it looks. We took an almost direct approach from the last saddle up the final 200 feet to the summit, which had a little easy class 3. However, on the descent we found that circling farther left around to the SE side before starting the final ascent would have been easier and kept the climbing at class 2.

We reached the summit around 1 pm with the temps rather pleasant now. In honor of Movember (a portmanteau of the slang word "mo" for moustache and "November") - an annual, month-long event involving the growing of moustaches during the month of November to raise awareness of prostate cancer and men’s health (see Movember.com for more info) - we put on fake moustaches (some already had the real thing!) and posed for pictures on the summit. Peter received special praise for growing a mustache for the week leading up to the climb.

On the return to camp it started to get dark as we reached the main wash, still 1-2 miles from the cars. Kathy and Karl sped ahead to locate the old mining road before it became completely dark, while Gary took over sweep duties with the main group. After locating the dirt road and signaling with their headlamps, the rest of the group joined Kathy and Karl on the road. It took another 20 minutes or so to get back to the cars. The climb took us 10 1/2 hrs. round trip.

We were all too tired, cold and hungry by this point to consider driving to the start for Avawatz Mtn. That decision made, Happy Hour quickly got under way to prepare some hot food to eat. Gary and Mary Jo pulled out a folding table they had brought and all sorts of treats (and some wine) quickly appeared. Gary and Mary Jo prepared an amazing chili dish, while Kathy made a delicious tortilla soup. Not to be outdone, Tracey and Peter made a

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stunning Hoppin John dish with sausage and black eyed peas.

**Avawatz Mountain**

After a long day climbing Kingston and a particularly cold night, only four participants (Kathy, Daryn, Greg and Karl) remained to give Avawatz Mountain a try. Driving back through Baker, we followed the DPS guidebook instructions to 0.1 mile past the 19 mile marker on Hwy 127 to where the unsigned dirt track was located on the left (west) side. There is a shallow ditch to cross, but was not quite deep enough to prevent passenger cars from driving in.

All 4 of us piled into my Jeep Cherokee after leaving the other vehicles just off the highway. I zeroed my odometer and we headed towards Avawatz. Almost immediately it became clear to me that the dirt road was not in as good a shape as it was when I was last here in 2009. I was in 4WD within the first mile. There appears to have been a recent flash flood that roughed up significant segments of the dirt road. In places the road looked more like the bed of a rocky wash. The road got better as we neared the Old Mormon Springs fork at 4.6 miles in. Here we stayed left heading up the canyon. At 5.7 miles we came to a narrow rocky section where Greg and Karl got out of the car to move some big rocks out of the way. It took me three tries to get over a little rock ledge. We came to a road fork at 6.5 miles and stayed right. The road then deteriorated again, probably from the same flash flood that had wrecked the road further back.

At 7.5 miles the road begins to climb steeply out of the canyon and towards a ridge. This stretch of road is cut into a cliff side. When I was here previously, there was a short narrow section of road on the cliffy side that was washing away. Now there are two sections like this. We had to get out and shovel some dirt into the washed out sections. I hugged the wall as I drove my Jeep over these parts, hoping I would not slide off. I made it through and onto the ridge just above. Everyone got back into the Jeep and we continued on up and around an old solar powered communication station. The road began to drop a little after the station. This part of the road had many loose rocks lying around, some of which were rather sharp. Greg, Karl and Kathy got out several times to clear the road of these hazards. Finally at 8.6 miles in we parked at the sharp right turn in the road where there was room to turn around. This spot also had an old campfire ring off to the side.

The dirt road drive section took 1 hr. 45 min, and after that we were good and ready to do some hiking. We started by climbing up a few hundred feet over the ridge to the SW, then contoured NW over to a saddle below some white cliffs. We were treated to a brief glimpse of a male bighorn on the saddle before he ran away. From the saddle, we ascended the cliffs going up and right keeping the climbing to loose class 2. At the top of the cliff we walked NW along the main crest and picked up a use trail. There was a cold wind blowing but the sky was clear. Open views all around and the terrain was blissfully free of brush! This part of the climb was quite enjoyable and we reached the summit in about 2 hrs.

On the drive back down, I nearly slid off the nasty narrow section of road that is just below the solar station. I gunned the engine when the slide started and made it out without getting the Jeep stuck (or falling over the cliff!). Greg and Kathy watched anxiously and breathed a sigh of relief when I made it through.

For future climbers, I would recommend parking at the road fork 6.5 miles in from Hwy 127 where there is relatively flat area and room for several cars to park because it’s not worth the chance of getting a 4WD vehicle stuck on the washed out section a mile further up the road. This makes the Avawatz hike about 10 miles round trip rather than 6 miles round trip. Andy Zdon's guidebook mentions that the road is occasionally graded for access to a repeater on a nearby ridge, but it seems it’s been many years since this has been done.
DPS HOLIDAY POTLUCK
DECEMBER 9, 2012, PHOTOS BY TINA BOWMAN
Treasurer’s Report

By Pat Arredondo

DPS Account Summary from January 1, 2013 to February 8, 2013

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There was a fatality on the scheduled DPS climb of Picacho del Diablo 46 years ago in November of 1967. Joe Darrow from Los Angeles suffered a fatal heart attack in Wall Street about 4-600 feet below the summit. Joe worked at Systems Development Corp. Shortly after his death, Chris Darrow, a son of Joe’s, attempted to locate his father’s grave on an unsuccessful trip led by Paul Cooley. They got the summit but did not find the grave. Soon afterwards an HH-43 helicopter was sent in an attempt to remove the body, but it is uncertain as to whether the body was found. We don’t know if there were any DPS climbers as members of this attempt, but it is presumed that there were. Probably as a result of this helicopter visit, the U.S. State Department issued a “Report of the Presumptive Death of an American Citizen”.

Chris Darrow, the eldest son, died recently and a second son, Phillip Darrow, now living in Massachusetts, has contacted me asking if the DPS had any further information on the long-ago death of his father. Greg Roach wrote me saying that his group found a small metal plaque or marker near Wall Street on a climb of Big Picacho that he had led in April of 2002. With this information, I located a member of Greg’s trip, David Boyle, who had taken a photo of this plaque. David Boyle’s photo is attached a part of this article.

The surviving son, Phillip Darrow, has asked if the DPS could get the answers to two questions: 1) Does anyone know when and who placed the plaque on a boulder just off the usual route to Big Picacho in Wall Street, and 2) does anyone know the family name and whereabouts of “Linda”, the climbing friend of Joe Darrow who was with him at the time of his death?

Could you please pass any information on to Ron Jones at alohajones@earthlink.net.
North and South Guardian Angels (also Bridge Mountain)

This month, let’s visit two of the most spectacular and challenging peaks on our List. In some ways, these are just about the geologically simplest List summits; they’re just huge chunks of one enormous sedimentary formation that stretches, with different names, from southern Nevada to western Wyoming. We’re talking about the basal Jurassic (possibly uppermost Triassic in its lower part) Navajo sandstone (Aztec in Nevada, the (much thinner) Nugget in Wyoming) that is responsible for some of the grandest and most iconic scenery of the Plateau (Glen Canyon; Capitol Reef; Escalante country), along with the Valley of Fire and Red Rocks (Bridge Mtn) in the Basin and Range of southern Nevada. Specifically, it is responsible for the glories of Zion Park in a “perfect storm” of conditions that has formed this unique place.

The Navajo is a fossilized sand-dune desert of vast proportions such as the Namib I saw in Namibia last fall, the “empty quarter” of southern Saudi Arabia, or the “erds” (sand seas) of the Sahara. However, in sheer cubic miles of sand, the Navajo paleodesert is even bigger. Where did all this sand come from? This question long bedeviled Plateau geologists. What was wearing away to generate all this ground-up quartz, and what process dumped it over such a big stretch of western North America? In a fairly recent (2003) paper, two Yale geologists claimed to have the answer. They picked out zircons – rare but tough trace mineral grains found in the almost-pure matrix of quartz of the Navajo – and, using trace element concentrations and uranium-lead radiometric dating, came up with one of the most astonishing conclusions I have ever heard in my geological career…most of the sand came from…the APPALACHIANS. (I distinctly remember my jaw-dropped disbelief when I first heard this.) But consider – there has to be something high eroding to be a source of all this quartz. (A whole lot of other minerals too, of course, but with eons of prolonged weathering most of them are largely destroyed – but inert, tough quartz is forever.) And in the West, there wasn’t much high ground; in a complete reversal of the modern scene, you’d go East for serious peakbagging, for there were the grand and glorious ancestral Appalachians, wracked by storms, eroding great blankets of sediment to the east and west. The sediment that went east was dumped into the nascent Atlantic, which had begun to open in the early Triassic. But the stuff that went west was carried by huge rivers to the mid-continent and beyond; it’s quite possible that some of the rivers reached the Pacific. It’s important to realize here that the high ground that comprises today’s West (Rockies, Plateau, Cascades, Sierra) did not exist then. We were just beginning to smash up the western edge and get a volcanic arc cranking as seafloor spreading along the Mid-Atlantic Ridge began to drive North America west and start a war with the Pacific oceanic plates that continues as you read this. In Colorado and northernmost New Mexico, the Ancestral Rockies, crumpled up along with the Appalachians at the closing of the Pangaea supercontinent, did exist, and they certainly contributed some sand. However, they were smaller mountains than the Appalachians, and were well eroded by this time; by the late Jurassic, they were mostly destroyed by erosion, for their granite roots are pretty well covered by the sediments of the Morrison Formation. Also, unlike the Appalachians, their north-south extent was quite limited, so rivers could have easy gone around them, especially to the north.

Now, all you need is wind blowing for eons – obviously in different directions than the prevailing westerly's of today – to pick up this sand and pile it into the dunes we see today in cross-section in the buttes of Zion. Obviously, a desert climate had to prevail, perhaps in part created by the first mountains forced up to the west by the new subduction zone at the continent-oceanic plate collision. As the Atlantic was much smaller then, completely different climatic conditions probably prevailed.

(Continued on page 25)
The beautiful red coloration of some of Zion’s rock is caused by an extremely thin film of hematite (iron oxide) on the individual quartz grains. There is actually very little hematite, but it doesn’t take much. As with desert varnish, the actual mechanism of this color coating is somewhat mysterious, but it is known to take a very long time. The source of the iron is eroded iron-bearing mineral sand grains, which, in comparison to quartz, are rapidly destroyed and dissolved by erosion. It also requires burial and some intergranular water to transport the hematite. I saw the world’s grandest red sand dunes in the ancient Namib desert of Namibia last fall; apparently the wind has had time to rework these dunes from the inside out, bringing red grains to the surface. (Consider our geologically young California desert dunes; nary a trace of red.) After the sand grains have cemented together and hardened to stone, chemically reducing groundwater can seep through the rock, destroying the hematite and washing away the iron; again, many of the details of this bleaching process are poorly understood.

Although it would seem that shifting waterless dunes would be a terrible environment to preserve something so delicate as traces of life, some amazing discoveries have been made in the past couple years at Red Rock Canyon west of Las Vegas, beneath the cliffs of Bridge Mountain not too far from the visitor center. Last November, I was taken to see some of these documents of life – tracks in the sand left by relatively small three-toed dinosaurs (the really big bruisers hadn’t evolved yet) by Dr. Marvin Saines, geologist-naturalist for the BLM’s Red Rock Canyon Scenic Area. It was a pretty demanding climb to the track discovery site, atop an unnamed peak in the “Calico Hills”. One of the tracks clearly showed where the critter had stepped into wet sand – the bulge from its weight could clearly be seen. This “wet cement” held together and preserved the track long enough for more sand to gently cover it and save it for eternity. What are the chances that the rock would split open along just that bedding plane in the same fleeting second of geologic time just when an adventurous human would see it – and know what it was?

Just as Michelangelo’s “David” was there all along in the block of marble he chose, so North and South Guardian were there in the Navajo, waiting for erosion to bring them into being. Here’s where the “perfect storm” of conditions comes into play. You have the greatest thickness of the Navajo, right on the western edge of the Plateau. Now you have to lift this up or erosion can’t go to work. Voila! We have the Hurricane Fault which borders the Zion country immediately to the west, a major north-south crack in the Earth which is also the eastern edge of the Basin and Range here. Thank you, Hurricane Fault, for uplifting your eastern side, giving the Virgin River and its tributaries a healthy vertical gradient so they can excavate the glorious canyons of Zion! (Maximum uplift on the Hurricane is about 3600 vertical feet.) This tectonic activity cracked the Navajo, forming a “blueprint” pattern of weakened lineations for the erosion of future canyons. And, thanks for enough uplift so that there are mountains to the north and northeast of Zion 10-11,000 feet high, so there’s plenty of rain and snow to give the Virgin River enough muscle to do its heroic work.) The rest, (to quote one of the first Sierra Club large format books on the Grand Canyon) is “time and the river flowing”.

(Continued from page 24)
Francisco Garcés was born on April 12, 1738 in Aragon, the northernmost province of Spain. Ordained as a Franciscan priest at the age of twenty-five, at twenty-eight Garcés entered a seminary for missionaries at Querétaro, Mexico, and at thirty he was sent to the frontier mission of San Xavier del Bac in what is now southern Arizona.

John Galvin, who translated and published Garcés’ journals, A Record of Travels in Arizona and California, 1775-1776, describes the frontier thusly: “Tucson, the nearest present-day place of importance, was then a deserted Indian ranchería, and the mission building at Bac—as San Xavier de Bac was often called—was a modest adobe structure not at all comparable with the splendid edifice, built a generation later, that still startles the gaze of the traveler. Beyond Bac there were as yet no white men...Bac was on the very edge of hostile Indian country.”

“In the 1770s, the Spanish had serious concerns regarding their new outposts in Alta California. Indeed, supplying the settlements in San Diego and Monterey, which had been established by Gaspar de Portola and Father Junipero Serra in 1769 and 1770, posed a considerable problem. Due to prevailing headwinds and strong currents, it often took months for supply ships, sailing from ports on Mexico's west coast, to reach California. Furthermore, Russia, which had established trading posts in present-day Alaska, was a threat to the Spanish hegemony along the Pacific Coast. Something had to be done to strengthen the California outposts, and Juan Bautista de Anza was the man to do it.

In 1772, Captain Anza, the commander of the Presidio at Fronteras, Sonora, proposed to find an overland supply route between what is now northern Mexico and Spain’s Alta California settlements. And Friar Garcés, because of his fluency in Indian dialects and his proficiency in different ones because tomorrow’s Indians might not be friendly with today’s. The scheme of interpretation also was progressive, the Indians of one place knowing something of the language of their neighbors but not necessarily of any language spoken further away.” And because one of Garcés’ duties was to determine which tribes were ready “to receive religious instruction, and to teach them the rudiments of the Faith,” and because he couldn’t always converse with the locals, “he used a canvas painted on both sides, one side showing the Virgin Mary and the other a damned man (presumably in the torments of hellfire).”
sign language, was asked by Anza to accompany him on his 1774 exploratory expedition (which was to include the first crossing of a California desert—the Colorado—by a non-native).

Garcés also accompanied the recently promoted Lieutenant-Colonel Anza on his second, 1775/1776 “settling,” crossing, during which a large number of colonists, soldiers and livestock made the passage to Alta California. This second entrada, which began for Garcés in Bac on October 21, 1775, is described in his A Record of Travels in Arizona and California, 1775-1776.

Friar Pedro Font, who knew Garcés from their days together at Bac and who was with him at the start of Anza’s second crossing, described his fellow friar as “so well fitted to get along with the Indians and to go among them that he appears to be but an Indian himself...He sits with them in the circle, or at night around the fire, with his legs crossed, and there he will sit musing two or three hours or more, oblivious to everything else, talking with them with much serenity and deliberation. And although the foods of the Indians are as nasty and dirty as those outlandish people themselves, the father eats them with great gusto and says that they are good for the stomach and very fine. In short, God has created him, as I see it, solely for the purpose of seeking out these unhappy, ignorant, and rustic people.”

Leaving Anza, Font and the settlers near the junction of the Gila and Colorado Rivers, Garcés,

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Leaving Anza, Font and the settlers near the junction of the Gila and Colorado Rivers, Garcés, on December 9, 1775, started up the Colorado, heading for the tribal area of the Jamajab Indians located near present day Needles, CA. Of the Jamajabs—Garcés’s spelling for Mojaves, pronounced...
ham-a-habs—the friar wrote, “These people are very healthy and robust. The women are the most attractive of any along the river. They wear skirts of the same material and design as those of the Yuma women. The men go stark naked: in so cold a land it excites pity. They say they are very hardy, especially in bearing hunger and thirst, and I found this to be so. It is evident that this nation is on the increase, for it abounds in young people and children while the contrary is to be noticed in the other nations of the river.”

Leaving the Jamajab settlements on March 4, the friar with a few guides, horses and mules, set off across the Mojave Desert on an established Indian trade route now known as the Mojave Road. Dennis G. Casebier, in his well-researched book, Mojave Road Guide (1999), explains, “The Mojaves crossed the East Mojave Desert on foot carrying small quantities of foodstuffs to trade for sea shells. The volume of their commerce was small by our standards; but the adventure was great. The Mojaves were a strong race, much respected and even feared by contemporary tribes.”

Proceeding west, the friar probably stopped at Piute Creek, Marl Springs, and Soda Springs (Zzyzx). In his outstanding volume, The California Deserts, Bruce M. Pavlik notes that the party “arrived at Cedar Spring in the Providence Mountains, where they met four naked Jamajabs returning from the west with highly prized seashells. From these mountains Garcés was the first European to view the interior of this vast desert and its great sea of sand (near present-day Kelso). Descending into the dry lowlands, perhaps through Macedonia Canyon, was a pure act of faith. After two more days the party reached the flowing waters of a ‘saltish’ river, (at which point) they were somewhere between the south shore of the Soda Lake (the terminus of the modern Mojave River) and the gaping mouth of Afton Canyon.”

Following the Mojave River upstream, the small group then “turned south near present-day Barstow, and began to ascend the San Bernardino Mountains. Reaching the summit on March 21, 1776.” From there, Garcés could see the Santa Ana River and the shimmering blue Pacific beyond. Upon reaching the Mission San Gabriel, where he stayed only briefly, the indefatigable Garcés set off once again, this time traveling north through, as Pavlik suggests, “Tejon Pass, Tulare Lake, and back to the Mojave River, probably by way of Tehachapi Pass and the Antelope Valley. His route established the California section of the Old Spanish Trail that thousands of immigrants would subsequently follow.”

Recrossing the Mojave Desert and again visiting the Jamajab settlements on May 30, his 103rd day on the trail, the tireless Garcés, the very next day, kept moving east, crossing the Colorado, and with Juguallapai (Hualapai) guides, began a trip across northern Arizona, visiting both Hualapai and the Jabesua (Havasupai) settlements. Regarding the steep descent into the canyon home of the latter, Galvin writes, “For once Garcés was jarred out of his usual plodding style and common vocabulary,” by describing the trail as “a narrow way some three handbreadths wide, with a very high cliff on one side and on the other a hideous abyss.” His climb out of the canyon was described by Garcés as “horrifying.”

Garcés then continued east, crossing the Little Colorado River, to visit the Hopi at Oraibi. The Hopi, however, preferring their own religion, would have nothing to do with the friar and his Christianity. From Oraibi Garcés left for his mission of San Xavier del Bac, arriving there on September 17, 1776, after 170 days on the trail.

In 1779, the Friars Garcés and Juan Diaz established two mission churches at Yuma Crossing on the Colorado River, a new settlement in the homeland of the Quechan (Yuman) people. The pueblo was intended to include three elements all in one, a mission for the Indians, a presidio to hold and to push out the frontier, and a pueblo of colonists to take possession of the land. The military was in charge of the military operations, the settlers in charge of the farming and the work of the pueblo, and the missionaries in charge of all things spiritual.

Unfortunately, the soldiers and colonists abused the Yumas, turning horses into their fields of...
The Desert Sage 29 March-April 2013

maize and appropriating their rich land along the riverbanks. In spite of Garcés’ attempts to keep the peace, an uprising occurred.

Helen C. White’s Dust on the King’s Highway, published in 1947, is a “factionalized” account of Garcés’ later life as a missionary. White describes the scene at Yuma Crossing on the fateful day of July 19, 1781, as follows: “(The early morning coolness was wearing thin, and the sun was beating down on the river bottom. Already most of the settlers and laborers were scattered through the fields.

“Some of them raised their hoes and spades as (Garcés and a fellow friar walked up to the church). But for the heat that was settling like a blanket on the world, it was a beautiful day.”

During the morning services, Garcés “heard a yell outside, followed by a thud and a scream that soon choked off in a gurgle.” Commander Yslas, one of the churchgoers that morning, rushed to the door, where “a whirlwind of flailing arms and legs seized on Yslas, even as he was shouting, ‘To arms, to arms.’... (The astounded friar saw the flash of the red and black war clubs. He heard, too, a muffled gasp, and then he forgot everything but the effort to make his voice heard above the yelling of the Indians and the smashing thuds of the war clubs.”

Palma, the chief of the Yumans and an old friend of Garcés’, urged in vain that the friars be spared, but even so all the males of the settlement—131 settlers, priests and soldiers—were massacred. Western bibliographer Lawrence Clark Powell, in his Southwest Classics, writes, “On Garcés’ word that no vengeance would be exacted for the massacre, the women and children were not killed. None was. They were eventually ransomed. When the priests’ bodies were exhumed for reburial at Tubutama and later at Queretaro, the were found to be miraculously preserved, while over their common grave was growing a clump of fragrant camomile.”

Galvin finishes his forward to Garcés’ journals thusly: “Father Garcés was a devoted priest; at the end of his life, a martyr. He was a pathfinder worthy of remembrance, an indefatigable traveler, uncomplaining under stress of hardship, bold under challenge. In sum, he is one of the most attractive and respectable figures in all the early history of the Southwest.”

Sources:
A Record of Travels in Arizona and California, 1775-1776, Fr. Francisco Garcés, Translated and edited by John Galvin (1965)
Mojave Road Guide (1999), Dennis G. Casebier
The California Deserts (2008), Bruce M. Pavlik
Dust on the King’s Highway (1947), Helen C. White
Southwest Classics (1974), Lawrence Clark Powell

Arizona Peak Information
By Barbara Lilley

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**Desert Peaks Section**

Road & Peak Guide
Fifth Edition

The Desert Sage 31 March-April 2013
DESERt PEAKS SECTION

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SAGE SUBMISSIONS: We welcome all articles, photographs and letters pertaining to outdoor activities of interest to Desert Peak Sections members. If you are a participant and know that the leaders are not going to submit a trip report, then feel free to submit one. 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. Please note that digital documents and photographs are required for submissions to the Sage. Trip reports should include trip dates and photos should indicate when and where the photo was taken, what it is of, who is in it, and who took it. Please email SAGE submissions to the editor no later than the second Sunday of even numbered months.

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