Howdy there, my fellow desert rats and other rodents! The wonderful spring weather has made climbing in our fabulous desert ranges a great adventure! While the lower peaks are now getting a bit too warm for most climbers, the higher ones beckon. We will be looking forward to some great climbs and list finish parties in the months ahead (check out our outings page and the website in this issue). We have a new webmaster, Kathy Rich, who has graciously agreed to take over this very important job—thanks Kathy! She also is the Sierra Peaks Section webmaster and a leader for both SPS and DPS, so she’s quite busy. Also, I want to thank James Morehouse for stepping in to be the new DPS Road and Peak Guide Editor, an ambitious effort which will require all leaders and others to help with the input. The DPS Management Committee is discussing ways to make input to update the guides more efficient (using g-mail and other means); we also want to make them more “user friendly” and improve the maps that accompany them. So, all you techies out there can help in this effort!

Don’t forget to sign up for the upcoming DPS banquet, to be held Sunday, May 18th. We will be at Luminarias Restaurant in Monterey Park this year. Our speaker is Andy Zdon, author of “Desert Summits: A Climbing and Hiking Guide to California and Southern Nevada,” which not only covers our listed peaks, but also many other areas of the California and Nevada desert ranges. He will be speaking on climbing and studying the desert ecosystems. Order your tickets soon—the price goes up after April 30th!

One last note—we postponed the election of new officers for the Management Committee—but you should be receiving a ballot very shortly. We will have the results in time for the banquet, so that we can announce who our new Management Committee members are. Make sure to vote and send in the ballots soon!

Have a happy and adventurous climbing spring and summer!

UPDATES ARE NEEDED TO THE CURRENT DPS ROAD AND PEAK GUIDE!!

Please send road and climbing route updates to the DPS Road and Peak Guide Editor, Jim Morehouse, at desertpeakssection@gmail.com. Jim is working on a new Version 6 of the guide, so be sure and send him a quick email after climbing a peak with suggested updates to the Guide while the information is still fresh in your mind. The DPS and Jim also welcomes volunteers to join the DPS Road and Peak Guide Committee to assist with updating the current Guide. Please contact Jim via email for further information.

THE NEXT SAGE SUBMISSION DEADLINE IS JUNE 8, 2014

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/
DESSERT PEAKS SECTION LEADERSHIP, 2013 - 2014 SEASON

Elected Positions

Chair
Jim Fleming
538 Yarrow Drive
Simi Valley, CA, 93065-7352
(805) 405-1726
jimf333@att.net

Vice Chair / Outings / Safety
Brian Smith
2306 Walnut Avenue
Venice, CA, 90291
(818) 898-2844
brian.s.smith133@gmail.com

Program / Banquet
Francesca Marcus
556 Oakdale Drive
Sierra Madre, CA, 91024
(626) 825-9037
cesca.m8@gmail.com

Treasurer
Pat Arredondo
13409 Stanbridge Ave
Bellflower, CA, 90706-2341
(562) 867-6894
paarredo@verizon.net

Secretary
Greg Gerlach
23933 Via Astuto
Murrieta, CA, 92562
(626) 484-2897
gregrg@verizon.net

Appointed Positions

Archives
Barbara Reber
PO Box 1911
Newport Beach, CA 92659-0911
(949) 640-7821

Conservation Chair
Virgil Popescu
9751 Amanita Ave
Tujunga, CA, 91042-2914
(818) 951-3251
gillypope@ca.rr.com

Guidebook Editor
Jim Morehouse
3272 River Glorious Lane
Las Vegas, NV 89135-2123
(702) 528-3712
desertpeakssection@gmail.com

Mailer
Elaine Baldwin
3760 Ruthbar Drive
Hawthorne, CA, 90250-8473
(310) 675-4120
DWBaldwin@aol.com

Membership Records Chair
Ron Bartell
1556 21st Street
Manhattan Beach, CA, 90266
(310) 546-1977
ronbartell@yahoo.com

Merchandising
Gloria Miladin
11946 Downey Ave
Downey, CA, 90242
(562) 861-2550
miladingloria@yahoo.com

Mountain Records
(Directors)
Daryn Dodge
2618 Kline Ct
Davis, CA, 95618-7668
(530) 753-1095
daryn.dodge@oehha.ca.gov

Mountaineering Committee Chair
Brian Smith
2306 Walnut Avenue
Venice, CA, 90291
(818) 898-2844
brian.s.smith@aero.org

Mountaineering Committee
Ron Bartell
ronbartell@yahoo.com
Tina Bowman
tina@bowmandesigngroup.com

Newsletter Editor (SAGE)
Greg Gerlach
23933 Via Astuto
Murrieta, CA, 92562
(626) 484-2897
gregrg@verizon.net

Webmaster
Kathy Rich
2043 Berkshire Avenue
South Pasadena, CA 91030
Kathrynarich@gmail.com

Cover Photo Credit

The photo is of Boundary Peak, the highest mountain in Nevada and a listed DPS Peak, and was taken by Mumtaz Shamsee on August 10, 2013 from the north during a DPS outing.

The Desert Sage 3 May-June 2014

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
MAY 2014 — NOVEMBER 2014

Castle Dome Peak from the northwest (photo taken by Mat Kelliher on January 19, 2014)

MAY 3-4 SAT-SUN DPS, WTC, 20s & 30s Eagle Mountain
MAY 18 SUN DPS Desert Peaks Section Annual Banquet
JUNE 7-8 SAT-SUN DPS Glass Mountain, Cone Peak and Wilfred Peak
NOV 1-2 SAT-SUN DPS Chile Cook-off

MAY 2014

✦ MAY 3-4 SAT-SUN DPS, WTC, 20s & 30s SECTION
1: Eagle Mountain (5,350’): Join us for an enjoyable cross-country backpack trip into the Eagle Mountains of Joshua Tree National Park. 12-mile round-trip with 2,400’ of gain. The Eagle Mountains are an appealing destination that mark the transition between Colorado Desert and higher-elevation Mojave Desert ecological zones. Desert saltbush, creosote bush and cholla cactus of the low-elevation Colorado Desert give way to uniquely beautiful Joshua Trees as we hike to the peak of Eagle Mountain #1. Saturday we will hike 3.5 miles off-trail to dry camp area, set up camp and then hike 4.2 miles round-trip to summit. Return to camp for happy hour and good conversation. Sunday morning will begin at a leisurely hour to break camp. On the return hike we will visit historic Mastodon Mine and Cottonwood Spring. Bring 10 essentials, all water, and a pleasant demeanor. Wilderness Travel Course, or similar experience & training, is encouraged. Send experience, current conditioning and contact information to Leader: Benjamin Bowes (bowes.benjamin@gmail.com). Assistant: Dwain Roque.

✦ MAY 18 SUN DPS Desert Peaks Section Annual Banquet: Join your fellow desert explorers and friends for a wonderful evening at the Luminarias Restaurant in Monterey Park. This year’s speaker will be Andy Zdon, author of the classic book, “Desert Summits: A Hiking and Climbing Guide to California and Southern Nevada”, who will present “From Climbing Desert Peaks to Studying Desert Ecosystems”. Social Hour and No Host Bar starts at 5:30 pm, followed at 7:00 pm by dinner and the program. The evening will be capped off by awards. Please mark your calendars and come join the fun! For more information, or to sign up for the banquet, please see the banquet flyer in this issue of the Sage.

JUNE 2014

✦ JUNE 7-8 SAT-SUN DPS Glass Mountain (11,140’), Cone Peak (10,152’) and Wilfred Peak (10,030’): Join us for a triple list finish celebration for Kathy Rich, Gloria Miladin and Greg Gerlach (and possibly others) on Glass Mountain (located south of Mammoth), with celebratory party afterwards at nearby Sawmill Meadows Campground. Saturday: easy climb of Glass Mountain (3 miles round trip and 1,900’ gain), adding its slightly lower north or south summits if desired. Sunday: option to climb two bonus peaks on Peakbagger.com’s non-Sierra 10K list – Cone and Wilfred Peaks (5 miles round trip and 2,000’ gain), located further south along Glass Mountain ridge. Great view of the Sierras and White Mountains from these summits. 2 wheel drive vehicles ok for Glass, 4 wheel drive required for Cone and Wilfred Peaks. Send e-mail to leaders: Daryn Dodge (Daryn.Dodge@oehha.ca.gov) or Kathy Rich (kathrynarich@gmail.com). Co-leaders: Tina Bowman, Mat Kelliher, Gary Schenk and Barbee and Larry Tidball.

(Continued on page 5)
NOVEMBER 2014

♦ NOVEMBER 1-2 SAT-SUN DPS

Chili Cook-off: The Chili Cook-off is scheduled for November 1-2, so save the date. The venue will be in the Shoshone area near Death Valley. More information will be forthcoming in a future issue of the Sage and on the section’s website. Hosts: Julie Rush (julierush@roadrunner.com) and Jan Brahms (janbee@reneric.com).

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.

JIM MOREHOUSE IS THE NEW DPS ROAD AND PEAK GUIDEBOOK EDITOR

The DPS would like to extend a hearty welcome to Jim Morehouse, who has agreed to serve as the new DPS Road and Peak Guide Editor for Version 6 of the Guide. Jim hails from Las Vegas, and in addition to being an active member of the Las Vegas Mountaineers Club (LVMC), is actively working on the DPS list, having climbed 64 DPS peaks to date. Jim is a former bicycle racer who got into hiking in 2012 after being sidelined from cycling due to injuries. He plans to retire from his job running computer systems for the Clark County School District in June. Please send your road and peak route revisions to Jim at: desertpeakssection@gmail.com.

KATHY RICH IS THE NEW DPS WEBMASTER

The DPS would also like to extend a hearty welcome to Kathy Rich, who will be the Section’s new Webmaster, taking over from Larry Hoak. Kathy is a former Chair of the Sierra Peaks Section (SPS) and has been serving as SPS webmaster for the past couple of years. She has also been active in the DPS, and is just one peak shy from completing the DPS list. In fact, her list finish is schedule for June 7, 2014 on Glass Mountain - please see the Trip and Event schedule in this issue of the Sage for more information. Kathy has graciously agreed to add maintaining the DPS website to her already busy schedule. Kathy can be reached at: kathynarich@gmail.com.
Sunday May 18

Where: Luminarias Restaurant, 3500 Ramona Blvd. Monterey Park  
(near junction of 10 & 710)

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

Program: Andy Zdon presents:  
“From Climbing Desert Peaks to Studying Desert Ecosystems”

From discovering the wonders of desert peaks beginning in college, to discovering today the wonders of water in the desert and the ecosystems sustained by that water, the presentation will touch on desert peaking but will focus on the pressures our desert is facing ecologically, and the exciting water resources research in the region being conducted to better understand the desert environment and lead to smarter, long-term management and decision-making.

Andy Zdon is author of the guidebook, Desert Summits: A Climbing and Hiking Guide to California and Southern Nevada. He ascended his first desert peak, little-known Barber Point in the East Mojave in 1980 and followed up with a snowy ascent of Telescope Peak in 1981. Peaks, peaks and more weekends and years later, Andy is researching the water resources of the California and Nevada desert. With more than 25 years of experience in geology and hydrogeology, Andy is also a California Professional Geologist, Certified Hydrogeologist and Certified Engineering Geologist. In 2013 he was also appointed Watermaster of surface water system in the Eastern Sierra.

Silent Auction

We continue our silent auction of donated items. Please contact Francesca Marcus for more info.

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:  Prime Rib/ potatoes ________ Salmon/Rice ________ Pasta Primavera ________

Desert selection:  Chocolate Mousse Cake ________ Raspberry Sorbet ________  (Indicate number of each)

Number of reservations: _____ $40 until April 30 _____ $45 after April 30  Total enclosed $_______

Please reserve by May 12. Mail check payable to DPS and completed form to DPS Treasurer:  
Pat Arredondo, 13409 Stanbridge Ave., Bellflower, CA 90706-2341. Tickets will be held at the door.  
For Questions, e-mail Francesca Marcus at cesca.m8@gmail.com or Pat at paarredo@verizon.net
Membership Summary

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Activity Report

Achievements

Explorer

#9 Tina Bowman 3/29/14 Spectre Point

New Members

Ted Lubeshkoff Castle Dome

Sustaining Renewals

Mary Jo Dungfelder 1 year

Renewals

David & Elaine Baldwin 2 years
Gary Bowen 1 year
John Bregar 1 year
Ute Dietrich 2 years
Bill Hauser 1 year
Ron Hudson 1 year
Gary Hughes 1 year
Darryl Kuhns 1 year
Mike Manchester 1 year
Paul & Pat Nelson 1 year
Gary Schenk 2 years
Carleton Shay 1 year
Don Sparks 1 year
Tom Sumner 2 years
Bruce Trotter 1 year
Devra Wasserman 1 year
Sue Wyman & Vic Henney 3 years

Donations

$5 from Gary Bowen
$5 from Mary Jo Dungfelder

WILDERNESS UNDER SIEGE

While the Obama Administration sees the urgency of protecting our environment, our elected officials are being held hostage by the most anti-conservation group ever sent to Washington. Giving legislation titles that sound benign, anti-conservationist in the 113th Congress have proposed bills that would turn over our nation's wild lands to special interests who want to drill, mine, clear-cut and develop the unspoiled public land. Some of these bills passed the House of Representatives, and are now pending in the Senate.

For example:

- The Sportsmen's Heritage and Recreational Enhancement Act (HR 3590) would threaten millions of acres of wilderness by opening them up to motorized vehicles, road construction and other development.

- The Lands and Jobs Security Act of 2013 (HR 1965) would undermine years of reforms instituted by the Department of Interior that balanced oil and gas drilling and environmental protection of public lands.

- The Protecting States' Right to Promote American Energy Security Act (HR 2728) ensures that hydraulic fracturing (fracking) on public lands can never by regulated.

- The Natural Gas Pipeline Permitting Reform Act (HR 1900) rolls back critical protections required by the Clean Water Act and National Environmental Policy Act, and opens the door to pipelines cutting through neighborhoods and forests alike with little regard for the environment.

Despite its 2012 failures, the oil giant Shell has announced new plans to drill in Alaska in the Chukchi Sea. Scientists say a major oil spill in the Arctic Ocean could be an unprecedented environmental disaster considering harsh weather, heavy seas and massive ice flows. Additionally, more of the nation's polar bears could be pushed closer to extinction.

The EPA has just released its final report on large-scale mining in the wilderness area located above Alaska's Bristol Bay. The report concludes that a vast and toxic open pit mine could destroy the greatest wild sockeye salmon runs on the planet, along with other wildlife and Native communities.
**Outing Chair**

*by Brian Smith*

Spring is sprung, the grass is riz.

So begins a poem of Brooklyn doggerel. Unfortunately, spring, or at least spring rains, came too late for Anza-Borrego where the annual flower show failed to materialize. However, those of you that went on the Ibex Wilderness trip near Death Valley in late March were treated to a spectacular, colorful wildflower extravaganza, including 5-spot desert primroses (thanks for the photo, Terry). Meanwhile, I was enjoying vivid cactus blooms in the Superstition Mountains of Arizona in early April.

The lower desert is getting hot now and it's time to gravitate to higher peaks in northern Death Valley, the Mojave Recreation Area, the Inyo and Nevada Mountains. I am encouraging our leaders to keep submitting trip proposals for this time period. There's a lot of high desert to be enjoyed in May and June and our schedule is looking a little sparse currently.

I was sorry to hear that Michael Gosnell's list finish on Virgin Peak was foiled due to road closures in the area. Something to do with the Federal Government trying to remove roaming cows, to the disgruntlement of local ranchers. The Management Committee understands that the road to Virgin is now open; we'll keep you posted should there be further developments.

Don't forget to support the DPS Banquet in May, when Andy Zdon will be the guest speaker.

All for now. See you out there!

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**TREASURER’S REPORT**

*by Pat Arredondo*

**DPS Account Summary from January 1, 2014 to April 1, 2014**

**INCOME**

- Banquet Ticket Sales $240.00
- Merchandise $126.00
- Subscriptions $730.00
- **TOTAL INCOME** $1,096.00

**EXPENSES**

- Sage Mailing $616.44
- Sage Printing $151.34
- Sales Tax $13.55
- **TOTAL EXPENSES** $781.33

**CHECK BALANCE (04/01/14)** $3,363.17

**SAVINGS BALANCE (04/01/14)** $501.09

**TOTAL BALANCE (04/01/14)** $3,864.26

**DESERT SAGE - ELECTRONIC VERSION**

You now have the option of receiving your Desert Sage via email. DPS members who have an email address on record have received or are receiving this Sage edition electronically via a link. For all other members/subscribers who do not have an email address, we will continue to send a hard copy Sage as usual. Any member/subscriber who is/has received this edition via a link and desires to continue to receive the Desert Sage in hardcopy format through the US Mail, should send an e-mail to the DPS Membership Chair ronbartell@yahoo.com, or leave a message for Ron at (310) 546-1977 requesting continued mailing of a hard copy. If you take no action, the Desert Sage will only be sent electronically to members/subscribers with an email address on file.
After 3 abortive attempts to drive the 4WD road through Buffington Pockets to Muddy Peak trailhead in 3 different vehicles, Gloria Miladin and I decided we should backpack the peak by driving as far as possible, then hiking in 6 miles to the trailhead with sleeping bags and water. That would make for a rugged 21 mile backpack, but at least we would have the peak. Our first attempt was in a RAV4, which failed on loose gravel with the wheels slipping. Then an AWD Subaru Outback handled the loose gravel, but did not have enough clearance to get over embedded, vertical boulders. Finally, we thought renting a Jeep Wrangler was the answer. Unfortunately it was a 2WD Jeep and it dug a hole in the gravel. We eventually pulled it out after an hour of digging and adding rocks to the hole, destroying an air mattress in the process. All this in the middle of the night. So backpacking seemed the only way. However, I was not looking forward to a 21 mile epic.

Fortunately, our Explorer-in-Chief, Ron Bartell came up with an alternate option – Lovell Wash from Lake Mead. If you Google Lovell Wash, you get a lot of information on how to get there and even a topo, which proved invaluable. The topo suggested following Lovell Wash to the Muddy Mountains – perhaps a distance of 7 miles to the saddle mentioned in the regular route description. We chose to leave for Las Vegas Saturday morning and without Friday night gridlock, we found ourselves in Henderson in well under 5 hours. After lunch in Henderson, it was only 7 miles down Lake Mead Parkway to the Lake Mead Recreation Area Entrance. We had a good omen for our peak climb when we passed 2 bighorn by the side of the road within 2 miles of the entrance. The turn off for Lovell Wash is at Mile Post 16. It is signed Callville Wash and there is parking for several cars. Continue on the dirt road, turn left for Lovell Wash, rather than right for Bowl of Fire. It is about 2 miles to another parking area past some mine workings. The road then descends to Lovell Wash, though there are no signs letting you know. Do not continue on the road, which climbs about 1,000’ to private land. If you want an afternoon hike through the spectacular Narrows, park in the Wash. If, like us, you want to minimize the hike to Muddy Peak, drive another mile to the Wilderness Boundary at the beginning of the Narrows. The elevation here is 2,100’. I cannot fully describe how spectacular the Narrows are. They are only 0.3 miles in length, but it is a perfect slot canyon with walls that seem to go up for 1,000’. You can hike with a hand on each wall. The terrain is easy with the odd 3 feet scramble over boulders, followed by sand and gravel. All too soon, it is over, but Lovell Wash continues as a broad wash bounded by 50 – 100’ cliffs.

Soon after the Narrows, the wash swings right and then to a broad left arc. Here is a major junction of washes. Lovell Wash is the right turn, not the broader wash going straight on. The topo is very useful here. Many people continue straight and have trouble

(Continued on page 10)
regaining the route. From here, just follow the main wash as it passes impressive cliffs and hoodoos. It continues to be bounded by low cliffs until just under 3,000’, the wash widens into open desert meadows.

The wash remains obvious and continues generally north until you enter the Muddy Mountains through a steep-walled canyon. We had left the car at 2:45pm and it was getting too dark to hike by 5:45 pm, so we found a good camp spot in a canyon bend at 3500ft, had a light dinner of soup and crackers and got into our bags to enjoy the beautiful starry night. The lights of Vegas were blocked by the canyon walls, so stars were plentiful. We estimated we had gone 4.5 miles in 3 hours. We had packs and it was mostly like walking on a sandy beach.

Sunday morning, we had a substantial breakfast and continued up the wash, leaving most of our gear at the campsite. We left at 7 am and continued up the wash to 4,100ft, where there were 5 large boulders and some cairns. More about this later. This was not the route to the saddle, so we continued on to 4,200’ and then left the main wash to hike the remaining, easy 300’ to the saddle, where we arrived before 8:30 am. According to most trail descriptions, the saddle is a half mile and 800’ from Muddy Peak summit. It had been over 10 years since I was there last and I had forgotten how rugged this last half mile is and how difficult the route finding. We climbed 500’ straight up to the ridge and traversed toward the peak. In retrospect, we should have kept about 100’ below the ridge top as we were continually descending to avoid gendarmes and pinnacles. The area had many cairns, but some were descent routes, so route-finding was problematic. After rounding a final fin and climbing 150’ back up to the ridge, we found the crux gully. Near the top of the gully was a steep slab with small footholds and a stretch to the handholds. I would call it exposed class 3, but it was certainly nerve-racking for me. After that, a very exposed ridge with plenty of hand and footholds that was much easier. We hit the summit and had a long lunch. It is with some embarrassment that I say that the last half mile took us 2.5 hours, but it is the truth.

After lunch, we reversed our route past the last fin, but then chose to descend immediately. There was a gully below us full of boulders, but it appeared to go all the way back to Lovell Wash, thus saving us a mile via the saddle. We descended steep slopes with some vegetation, then entered the gully. There was one steep section, but it went well on loose talus and boulders until we emerged at 4,100’ by the 5 boulders. If any of you choose to do the Lovell Wash route, ascend from the 5 boulders and head straight for the peak. It avoids a lot of rough terrain from the saddle and saves a mile. Descending Lovell Wash to the car went very quickly – perhaps 2.5 hours for the last 6 miles. We were treated once more to the hike through the Narrows and got to the car at 4pm. Total time 12 hours. However, a fit DPS group taking the gully from the 5 boulders could probably do it in 10 hours and therefore day hike it in February. I estimate 13 miles and 3,250’.

So if you are tired of getting your vehicle past Buffington Pockets, try Lovell Wash. You won’t be disappointed.

Smith Mountain (5,913’) and Brown Peak (4,947’)
By Tina Bowman
March 1-2, 2014

Rain on Friday and a 30% chance of rain Saturday for Smith reduced our group to eight: Barbee and Larry Tidball co-leading with me, Kelley Laxamana and Greg Gerlach, Rana Parker and Ban Uong, and Wasim Khan. Gary Schenk was the original leader but realized he wouldn’t be home in time from Indiana to lead the outing. We missed him and Mary Jo Dungfelder.

I drove out mid-day on Friday and encountered some flooding on highway 127 a few miles north of Baker.
TRIP REPORTS - continued...

The Furnace Creek Wash Road was in excellent shape as I drove in, arriving at our meeting place at the junction with the Deadman Pass road at 4:30. Around 5:00 rain began again and later became rather heavy for forty-five minutes or so. The main road was a stream for a while, gurgling along the width of the roadway. With that the rain was mostly done. Kelley and Greg arrived about 8:00; Rana, Ban and Wasim after 12:30. The Tidballs camped several miles in on the dirt road and met us in the morning.

We consolidated into two Toyota Tacomas and the Tidballs’ 4Runner for the drive to the Smith Mountain parking spot. I believe we went a little beyond the 1.5 the guide indicates, but we found a good spot to park in the unlikely event someone else wanted to drive the road. I took a bearing (away from the trucks) to make sure we went up the right canyon—and we went up the one south of the one described in the guide. I blamed it on being parked farther along, but my declination setting is probably off anyway. When we returned, my bearing looked more like it pointed to the ridge between the two canyons but on the side of the one we took. Sigh. We did see footprints in the wash (from Jim Morehouse, who explored a different way down a week or so before we were there). No wonder it didn’t look familiar, but then I didn’t have much memory of the upper canyon until we descended the right one. It had been fifteen years since I was last there.

The benefit: an explorer route. It actually went well, though it was steep to reach a saddle at the head of the canyon. The guide indicated bearing left (I still believed we were following the guide at this point), but we bore to the right because the terrain looked friendlier for a group. Upon reaching the saddle I was dismayed not to see anything matching the guide’s description or map. We took a nice break here and enjoyed watching a Eurasian collared dove walking around near us (I looked it up later). An animal or use trail went to the south, contouring around a bump, so we took that to where the left branch topped out—still didn’t look right. The error of my ways was dawning on me. Back we went to the saddle, some going over the bump, and continued north. Some of us followed the contouring trail; others went over the bumps and collected a benchmark pointing to Smith.

After various breaks to regroup and have snacks, we were on the summit at 11:45, enjoying good views. Unfortunately, Telescope was mostly hidden in clouds. After lunch and enjoying the summit, we started down just before 12:30 with Larry leading the way. We took the guide’s route, which was quite nice on the way down with fast, sandy sections and several short rocky sections. We were all back to the trucks by 2:15, though Greg, Kelley, Barbee, and I stopped not far from the road to look at a rabbit in the bushes. He moved to another bush but didn’t run away.

As we drove back to the Deadman Pass road, we had a little rain—perfect timing! The earlier part of the day had been sunny and sometimes windy with clouds building as the day wore on. At the junction we picked up Ban’s Subaru and met Keith Christensen, who joined us for Brown, having climbed Funeral...
Peak that day. We drove on to the signed pass, where there’s an excellent area to camp. The rain was virtually done at that point.

We set up camp and had happy hour under a tarp rigged between Greg’s truck, Ban’s Subaru and the Tidballs’ 4Runner, though we didn’t really need it at that point. It was a clear night with many stars (new moon), a lovely time to be in the desert.

Sunday morning we drove to the parking spot for route A on Brown Mountain and started hiking at 7:45, following the route well, enjoying the climb. The sunny morning turned cloudy eventually, and the wind came up. For a while we could see snow-covered Telescope, but by the time we were on the top, it was hidden in clouds. The front of the group reached the summit at 10:45 and promptly moved just below the summit to get out of the wind by a rock outcropping.

Rather than drop down and then go up to the saddle before beelining to the cars, we went down the wash a bit and then aimed for the cars. We were back before 2:00. Soon we were on our way back to Shoshone, where we rendezvoused for an early dinner at the Crowbar Café and Saloon. We were lucky with the rain and had a fine group. Thanks to the Tidballs for being willing to co-lead!

Sidewinder Mountain (5,273’) and Granite Mountains Highpoint (5,134’)

By Terry Flood
March 7-8, 2014

Having been to this general area previously and climbed Stoddard Mountain, Bell Mountain, and Catholic Hill, I was anxious to return to climb Sidewinder Mountain and other prominences. Meeting at Henry’s house on Friday morning, Jim Murphy and I joined him to drive out I-15 just past Victorville. Exiting Stoddard Wells Road and heading east towards Black Mountain with the nearby cement plant, we continued northeast on Johnson Road which became high-clearance dirt, and then left at a junction which finally dead-ended at a 2nd animal guzzler. We then started our climb of Sidewinder and going up a gentle gully to a saddle, we turned right on the ridgeline and started going up and over several false summits until we finally reached the final highpoint where we found all three Sidewinder benchmarks still intact. There was a register with not very many entries since 1994, and we enjoyed the view of snowbound San Gorgonio and several other

On the summit of Brown Peak: left to right, Tina Bowman, Larry Tidball, Rana Parker, Wasim Khan, Ban Uong, Keith Christensen, Kelley Laxaman and Greg Gerlach.

Larry led on the way back. Partway down we could see people walking up the large wash—the group led by Ann and Dave Perkins. They had shifted their outing to Sunday-Monday since only retired folks were on it, hoping the road to Canyon Point would be drivable on Sunday. It wasn’t. So they drove around and got a late start for Brown instead. Several in our group eventually saw and talked to several in their group. Some of us were a bit farther down and missed seeing the others, though I’d just said to Larry that we ought to be seeing the others soon. He’d been thinking the same thing.

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Returning to the vehicle we drove down the road a short ways to a flatter area where we set up camp and retired for the evening. Saturday morning we arose and drove back towards Apple Valley and headed out Loma Yucca Road to what appeared to be a landfill area where the pavement ended and continued a short distance to the end of the dirt road which left us just over a mile away from the summit of the Granite Mountains. Heading up another gully we climbed steeply up onto a ridgeline and headed east towards the highpoint. After about 1,700 feet of steady climbing we arrived at the rocky summit area and wound our way up the rocks to find all three benchmarks still there but no register this time. We did have a great view of Mount Baldy with lots of snow, took some pictures, had lunch, and then headed back down the same way. The weather had been perfect this time in the desert, but we called it a successful trip, got some lunch in town, and made it back home before dark. I do have other peak objectives in this part of the Mojave and shall return again in the future!

Winters Peak (5,033’), Schwaub Peak (6,440’) and Ibex Peak (4,752’)
By Debbie Bulger
Photos by Richard Stover
February 27- March 5, 2014

After arriving in Death Valley, Richard Stover and I drove up Echo Canyon Road to camp at the trailhead for Winters Peak. The summit of this easy peak is not visible from the trailhead, but there is a good view from Highway 190 near Salt Creek.

There is no need to follow what is left of the closed road described in Zdon's Desert Summits guide book. That route only adds several miles in the wrong
direction. Richard and I ascended point 4,630’, then followed the ridge to Winter's summit. From the top we could look down 2,000 feet on Nevares Peak (2,859’) which we had climbed in 2010. On the climb we startled many sagebrush lizards and a Desert Horned Lizard. We took an even more direct route down following the main drainage from the saddle just below the summit.

After a rainy night, a layover day spent hiking, and a very rainy day spent reading in the cab of the truck, we headed for Schwaub Peak. Schwaub is a really fun, worthwhile peak. There are two main ridges leading to the summit. The northernmost looks the easiest and goes first to point 6,395’, then to a saddle before reaching the top; the next ridge to the south leads directly to the summit but looks harder and is steeper. We chose what we mistakenly thought was the easier route. Whatever route you chose, you will earn your granola bars. As we ascended, the mountain revealed its secrets to us. We saw the defensible depressions high on the peak where the deer spend the night. Further on we saw fossils in a dark layer. Rain threatened all day. The snow-covered Panamints came in and out of view behind dark clouds. At times, it felt like we were climbing in Scotland instead of Death Valley. When the clouds parted, we could see the Amargosa River bed including green crop circles in Nevada to the east and Death Valley to the west. We took the direct ridge back for variety and discovered it was the easier route. Including our time on the summit, the climb took 10 and a half hours.

Next on tap was Ibex Peak, another ridge ramble. We camped at the trailhead the night before the climb listening to coyotes singing. Pure yellow Desert Poppies dotted the trailhead. We were the first to climb this peak in 2014. The green-staked road is obliterated long before the saddle, but no mind. Just get on the ridge and go for the summit.

In addition to our three climbs, Richard and I enjoyed the other delights of the desert. Most amazing was a flowing Amargosa River near Saratoga Spring and Horned Larks and Sage Thrashers also near Saratoga Spring. One day we came across the skull of a Bighorn Sheep in a remote area. We serendipitously met a ranger we knew soon after and informed her of the find. Other highlights include exploring the townsites of Schwab, seeing a pair of Costa's hummingbirds at the end of Echo Canyon, and a bright red bird with black on a creosote bush near the Winter's trailhead. Could it be a Vermillion flycatcher? Unfortunately, I don't have a photo. This is an unusual bird in Death Valley.
Haunted by Spectre
By Tina Bowman
March 29, 2014

Frankly, I wasn’t looking forward to climbing Spectre again because I remembered it as a long road walk and then a bouldery mess, but it was a peak Paul Garry needed as did I. Jim thought he needed it, but it turns out he had climbed it in 1989. So we three leaders settled on Spectre.

March 29th our group met at 6:00 per Jim’s instructions. Diana Estrada, hobbling on a severely sprained ankle, left husband Jorge with the group and went off to explore Joshua Tree. After introductions and the usual trailhead talk delivered by Jim, ten set off up the sandy road at 6:10: Dan Baxter, Tom Beckett, Jorge Estrada, Greg Gerlach, Sandy and Peter Lara, Kelley Laxamana, and the three leaders.

It was a lovely morning in the desert, though I didn’t remember the road as being that sandy for so much of its length (grumble, grumble). Long-legged Jim led us, and soon we were a bit strung out. Throughout the day we took a number of breaks, often short, which helped keep the group together and in good spirits. Once heading up the more serious terrain, the group was fairly well bunched together.

We opted for route B, which pleased me since I’d followed A in the past. It went well. By the time we were a quarter of the way up the steep gully, we were down to a group of eight. Farther along, suddenly Jim was on his back after his foot slipped on a long step; fortunately, he was ok. Occasionally we saw ducks, which would have been helpful at points had we gone back route B.

We were basking on the summit at 11:30, enjoying rather hazy views and a pleasant forty-five minutes. Spectre was Greg’s penultimate peak, so he was set to finish the list on Glass Mountain in June. It was Paul’s antepenultimate peak; he was left with only South Guardian Angel to check off before a list finish on Corkscrew in October. Paul led the charge when we started down. Because we were doing well for time and some people “collect” (i.e., climb) benchmarks, we headed up to benchmark Agua, aka Tensor Peak, a short class 2 climb. More grumbling from me.

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mostly a joke). Round trip, including fifteen minutes on top, took under an hour.

Then off we plunged down the wash on route A for the return. Definitely grumbling from me. Though it was just as bouldery as I remembered, Paul often found some bits of use trail just above the wash that made the going quicker and easier. Route A, contrary to the screwy statistics in the guide, is definitely longer than route B, and of course we had to ascend a little to the saddle between the two drainages on our way back to the road.

We broke into two groups as we trudged back down the sandy road—interminable. Perhaps a mile from the highway, Dan hung back to meet the second group to show us a tan snake he’d spied. About half a mile later, Sandy spotted a tortoise, which really made our day. We kept well back from him as we took pictures. Unfortu-

A California Desert Tortoise, which was spotted on the return from Spectre Point.

nately, the front group missed that excitement. We were all back to the cars by 6:00. The Estradas soon headed off, but the rest of us eventually reconvened at Ed Chada’s for dinner, a rather long one.

Thanks to Jim for doing all the paperwork and leading us up and to Paul for leading us back. Thanks to the weather gods for some breeze and then cloud cover as we hiked out the road and for keeping the temperature mostly pleasant. It all went far better than I had feared, so maybe Spectre will haunt me no longer.

Canyon Point (rained out) and Brown Peak
By Ann Perkins
March 2nd, 2014

A couple of cancellations left us with a group of six: Anne Rolls, Bob Hoeven, Ron Ecklemann, Doris Gilbert, and the leaders Ann and Dave Perkins. Due to reports of rain on Friday, all of us retirees elected to delay the trip a day and meet on Saturday afternoon at Stovepipe Wells Campground. When we arrived, we discovered that the road in to Canyon Point was impassible due to mud and water. A party of campers had taken their gear in a couple of days earlier and were now having trouble getting out. So we revised our plans and drove over to Death Valley Junction and down the 127, intending to try the eastern driving approach for the A route on Brown. It was dark by the time we arrived, so we camped in a wide area off the paved road, and the next morning at 7 started to look for the dirt road from the east. All went well for the first couple of miles, but then the road began veering off in the wrong direction and soon disappeared. We turned around, looking for where we had gone wrong, but could not see any other road. Perhaps this approach is no longer viable.

We then drove around to the Greenwater Valley road (which in retrospect we should have tried in the first place), and drove in on the western approach road, finally starting the climb about 9:30. We went up by alternate route A, seeing and greeting Tina’s group a bit below us at one point on their way down. Ron and Doris decided to turn back about half way, since we had gotten a late start and were maintaining a fast pace. The route went well, and we were on the summit by 2:00. It was a bit windy, so we quickly ate lunch and started down the regular A route. This is a bit more direct, but we did encounter some steep drop-offs that we had to make our way around. We were back to the cars before dark, and camped at a wide spot along the Greenwater Valley Road. This ended the official part of the trip, but Dave, Bob, Ron, and Anne had not had enough fun, so they decided on Monday to climb Eagle Peak since it was so close by. Ann and Doris drove over to Dante’s View and took a walk along the ridge from the parking lot, enjoying views of all the snow on Telescope Peak.
On September 3, 1964 President Lyndon B. Johnson signed into law the Wilderness Act. This historic bill established the National Wilderness Preservation System (NWPS) and set aside an initial 9.1 million acres of wild lands for the use and benefit of the American people.

The Wilderness Act will turn 50 on September 3, 2014, and Sierra Club, other wilderness groups, and the four federal wilderness managing agencies are organizing for a whole year’s worth of celebrations around the country to mark this major American cultural and environmental achievement—and to educate a broader public about the concept and benefits of wilderness. Because Sierra Club outings are such an integral part of our overall activities, we’re eager to involve all Sierra Club outings in highlighting the wilderness anniversary year. On Sierra Club outings during 2014, let’s promote a wilderness theme, and let’s ask everyone: “What’s YOUR idea of wilderness? What does wilderness mean to YOU? What’s YOUR favorite wilderness experience?”

The 1964 Wilderness Act defines Wilderness as areas where “the earth and its community of life are untrammeled by man,” with untrammeled meaning left wild and free from human control or manipulation. Wilderness designation provides the strongest and most permanent protection that our laws offer for Wilderness values such as adventure, solitude, clean air and water, scenery, wildlife, and scientific understanding of how the natural world works when left alone. Wilderness areas include wild places in national parks, national forests, wildlife refuges, and western lands of the Bureau of Land Management.

The Wilderness Act declared it to be the policy of our nation to “to secure for the American people of present and future generations the benefits of an enduring resource of wilderness” and established our National Wilderness Preservation System. The initial 9.1 million acres set aside in 1964 – in 54 national forest areas in 13 states – have now grown to more than 100 million acres nationwide with 757 areas totaling about 109 million acres in 44 states. Only Congress can designate wilderness – by law – and it was the voices of Americans that convinced Congress over the past 50 years to pass laws preserving many more lands as wilderness – with more
to come. Sierra Club volunteers, and staff have been prominent in virtually all wilderness campaign over the years, and our outings program has helped acquaint many people with the values of wild lands deserving preservation.

While Sierra Club began long before the Wilderness Act was signed, the basic principles underlying the Act are also the founding principles of the Sierra Club. From the beginning, Club leaders and members organized to preserve special natural places from the impacts of human development. And Sierra Club has played a big role in the national wilderness effort from the start. From 1949 through 1975 the Sierra Club hosted a series of 14 biennial wilderness conferences to discuss and determine how best to respond to the urgently felt need for permanent, legislated preservation of wild places. The need became clear after World War II. As Americans enjoyed new affluence and leisure, the agencies often bowed to the pressures of more demands for lumber and more places to recreate; administrative set asides for wild lands failed, and wilderness advocates realized that permanent, preservation by law was needed. The Club worked hard on getting the original 1964 bill passed and has been promoting preservation of wild places ever since.

The Sierra Club’s outings program has long been in the forefront of drawing attention to protected places and places that need to be saved from development. We take people out to the places that need advocates. From John Muir on, we have known that people will speak up for the places they care about – and taking them there is a powerful way to get them to care. Sierra Club outings leaders and participants are among the most passionate supporters of keeping wild places reserved for nature. During 2014 all Sierra Club outings – whether national, international, Chapter or Group, will be part of our celebrations of the 50th anniversary of the Wilderness Act by featuring a wilderness celebration theme.

Chapter and Group outings during 2014 can really get the word out about wilderness values! Our local outings around the country have the best potential to reach out to the public beyond our own members – especially by seeking to include young people and diverse communities.

Uniquely American, wilderness is a great social and environmental achievement in which our nation agrees to restrain in special wild places the normal trend toward development – so that nature can dominate here – forever.

More information?

Go to:

http://www.wilderness50th.org/toolbox

Or:


Contact Vicky Hoover, Chair, Sierra Club 50th Anniversary of the Wilderness Act Team
vicky.hoover@sierraclub.org
(415)977-5527
California’s Wilderness Areas - 2013

Agua Tibia Wilderness
Ansel Adams Wilderness
Argus Range Wilderness
Beauty Range Wilderness
Big Maria Mountains Wilderness
Bigelow Cholla Garden Wilderness
Bighorn Mountain Wilderness
Black Mountain Wilderness
Bright Star Wilderness
Bristol Mountains Wilderness
Bucks Lake Wilderness
Cache Creek Wilderness
Cadiz Dunes Wilderness
Cahuilla Mountain Wilderness
Caribou Wilderness
Carrizo Gorge Wilderness
Carson-Iceberg Wilderness
Castle Crags Wilderness
Cedar Roughs Wilderness
Chancheulla Wilderness
Chernow Mountains Wilderness
Chimney Peak Wilderness
Chuckwalla Mountains Wilderness
Chumash Wilderness
Cléghorn Lakes Wilderness
Clipper Mountain Wilderness
Coso Range Wilderness
Coyote Mountains Wilderness
Cucamonga Wilderness
Darwin Falls Wilderness
Dead Mountains Wilderness
Death Valley Wilderness
Desolation Wilderness
Dick Smith Wilderness
Dinkey Lakes Wilderness
Domeland Wilderness
El Paso Mountains Wilderness
Elkhorn Ridge Wilderness
Emigrant Wilderness
Farallon Wilderness
Fish Creek Mountains Wilderness
Funeral Mountains Wilderness
Garcia Wilderness
Golden Trout Wilderness
Golden Valley Wilderness
Granite Chief Wilderness
Granite Mountain Wilderness
Grass Valley Wilderness
Hain Wilderness
Hauser Wilderness
Havasu Wilderness
Hollow Hills Wilderness
Hoover Wilderness
Ibex Wilderness
Imperial Refuge Wilderness
Indian Pass Wilderness
Inyo Mountains Wilderness
Ishi Wilderness
Jacumia Lakes Wilderness
Jennie Lakes Wilderness
John Krebs Wilderness
John Muir Wilderness
Joshua Tree Wilderness
Kaiser Wilderness
Kelso Dunes Wilderness
Kiavah Wilderness
King Range Wilderness
Kingston Range Wilderness
Lassen Volcanic Wilderness
Lava Beds Wilderness
Little Chuckwalla Mountains Wilderness
Little Picacho Wilderness
Machesna Mountain Wilderness
Magic Mountain Wilderness
Malpais Mesa Wilderness
Manly Peak Wilderness
Marble Mountain Wilderness
Matilija Wilderness
Mecca Hills Wilderness
Mesquite Wilderness
Mojave Wilderness
Mokelumne Wilderness
Monarch Wilderness
Mount Lassen Wilderness
Mount Shasta Wilderness
Newberry Mountains Wilderness
Nopah Range Wilderness
North Algodones Dunes Wilderness
North Fork Wilderness
North Mesquite Mountains Wilderness
Old Woman Mountains Wilderness
Orocopia Mountains Wilderness
Otay Mountain Wilderness
Owens Peak Wilderness
Owens River Headwaters Wilderness
Pahranap Valley Wilderness
Palen/McCoy Wilderness
Palo Verde Mountains Wilderness
Phillip Burton Wilderness
Picacho Peak Wilderness
Pine Creek Wilderness
Pinto Mountains Wilderness
Piper Mountain Wilderness
Piute Mountain Wilderness
Pleasant Point Ridge Wilderness
Pleasant View Ridge Wilderness
Rocks and Islands Wilderness
Rodman Mountains Wilderness
Russian Wilderness
Sacatar Trail Wilderness
Saddle Peak Hills Wilderness
San Gabriel Wilderness
San Gorgonio Wilderness
San Jacinto Wilderness
San Mateo Canyon Wilderness
San Rafael Wilderness
Sanhedrin Wilderness
Santa Lucia Wilderness
Santa Rosa Wilderness
Sawtooth Mountains Wilderness
Sequoia-Kings Canyon Wilderness
Sespe Wilderness
Sheep Mountain Wilderness
Sheep Hole Valley Wilderness
Silver Peak Wilderness
Siskiyou Wilderness
Snow Mountain Wilderness
South Fork Eel River Wilderness
South Fork San Jacinto Wilderness
South Nopah Range Wilderness
South Sierra Wilderness
South Warner Wilderness
Stateline Wilderness
Stepladder Mountains Wilderness
Surprise Canyon Wilderness
Sylamaria Mountains Wilderness
Thousand Lakes Wilderness
Trilobite Wilderness
Trinity Alps Wilderness
Turtle Mountains Wilderness
Ventana Wilderness
Whipple Mountains Wilderness
White Mountains Wilderness
Yolla Bolly-Middle Eel Wilderness
Yosemite Wilderness
Yuki Wilderness

(149 areas)
If you’ll pardon me a little detour, I’d like to take a break with something totally different in my column-inches this issue. Don’t worry; we’ll be back “on the rocks” next issue. (I won’t be writing up every peak; some would be repetitious. For instance, the story of Potosi would be largely a repeat of my Charleston/Mummy limestone/thrust fault article, with some minor different details. I’ve pretty much covered all the Mesozoic [Indianhead, Martinez, etc.] granite peaks – so a separate article on, say, Sombrero wouldn’t have much new to say.) And, while all have a story, some aren’t all that interesting…East Ord (the Rodney Dangerfield of The List) comes to mind. But I’ll be going on for a while. In this vein, does any reader have a favorite peak they would like examined? I welcome suggestions at robertmchl@aol.com.

It’s hard to find many desert references in the popular music of the last half-century. Sure U2 had a celebrated album “The Joshua Tree”, but...
THE MOJAVE: A MANHUNT AND MEMORIES

DESERT RECKONING (2012), Deanne Stillman

THE SILENCE AND THE SUN (2012), Joe de Kehoe

DESERT RECKONING, A Town Sheriff, a Mojave Hermit, and the Biggest Manhunt in Modern California History (2012), Deanne Stillman

Saturday, August 2, 2003, dawned another blazingly hot summer day in the Antelope Valley. At noon, for reasons known only to himself, Deputy Sheriff Steve Sorensen, on his day off, drove onto Donald Kueck’s desert property, located in the Lake Los Angeles area, east of Palmdale.

What happened next, as witnessed through a scope by neighbors who heard the first shots, was that Kueck fired several .223 high velocity bullets into Sorensen. Then he dragged the body to the back of his yellow Dodge Dart and tied it to the bumper.

That afternoon, "(a)s sirens wailed across the Mojave, Donald Charles Kueck vanished." A manhunt was begun, eventually expanding beyond the Antelope Valley, throughout Southern California and beyond. It would take seven days to track down the murderer.

The author, Deanne Stillman, is no stranger to murder and mayhem on the Mojave. In a July/August 2004 Desert Sage review of her 2001 volume Twenty-Nine Palms, I wrote: "(Stillman) describes the chain of events leading up the murders of the two young women—one, a teen-age white girl, looking for love in all the wrong places; the other; a personable but ditzy Filipina, and the subsequent trial of a black Marine who raped and stabbed them both. Along the way, the author, a former columnist for Buzz Magazine, whose works have appeared in the New York Times, Los Angeles Times, Rolling Stone, GQ, and Village Voice, delves into the family life of three of the principals—the two victims and the murderer—and in addition offers up perceptive visions of the desert, some of them soulful, most of them sordid."

Employing the same format in her latest book, Stillman again describes the backgrounds of her main characters, and along the way, offers up descriptions, both sleazy and sensitive, of the Antelope Valley.

Donald Charles Kueck was born in August 1950 in Mobile, Alabama, the son of a pilot at Elgin Air Force Base. A childhood friend would later say that he was "'too smart for his own good,' one step ahead of everybody and everything, rolling out theories of physics and mechanics and the ways of the universe to the degree that he had trouble shutting down all the chatter."

Moving to the West Coast in 1970, Kueck found a job at a Long Beach company specializing in restaurant upholstery, and soon married the owner's daughter. In 1974, the Kuecks were blessed with a son, Charles, or Chuck, and shortly thereafter Don adopted Rebecca, his wife's daughter from an earlier marriage. It looked as if he had settled down into a conventional life style.

Kueck, however, sustained a back injury, lost his job, and began a descent into pain-killing

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drugs. "(T)ry as he might to fit in, such a thing was just not possible. 'I don't love you,' he said to his wife at dinner one night. 'I'm going out for milk and cigarettes.' He never came back..."

Kueck spent the following thirteen years, first living in an apartment--until he could no longer pay the rent--then in a trailer outside a friend's house in North Hollywood. A series of odd jobs, including delivering phone books, kept him supplied with the daily needs of life. "He longed to live in the desert," however. "(T)he lizards were calling and it was time to go."

Eventually moving to the Antelope Valley, Kueck's new home was a tent on a piece of empty desert acreage, an area Stillman describes as a place "for all manner of pilgrims, outcasts, ne'er-do-wells, eccentrics, ex-felons, lost and tweaked-out kids, stray animals--a large off-the-grid population that either is stranded or want to be left alone." Kueck's utopia was "a place where a man (would) not have to submit to the fetters of the world, to get through the day and night in whatever way that might happen, to smoke pot or get high whenever he wanted to in the manner of his own choosing..." Living primarily on a monthly disability check, but also trading or selling things he found on the desert, Kueck settled into his lonely life style.

Steve Sorensen grew up almost an exact opposite of Don Kueck. Born in Pasadena, CA in 1957, he and his family moved to Manhattan Beach when he was ten or eleven. Developing into an excellent surfer as a teenager, Steve signed on as a L.A. County lifeguard after high school, and in 1986, at the age of twenty-nine, he joined the Army, where he became a military police officer--an MP--in Germany. In January 1991, he entered the L.A. County Sheriff's Academy, and in September of the same year he married Christine, a British-born divorcee, a few years his senior and the mother of a grown son. In 1999, Steve applied for and got a first-of-its-kind job as a resident L.A. County Sheriff's Department deputy, working out of the Lancaster station. "He and his wife adopted a baby and the ex-surfer from Manhattan Beach sank roots deep in the Mojave, becoming the ultimate citizen..."

The principle players in the tragedy-to-be were now in their places on the unpaved checkerboard grid of the Antelope Valley.

Stillman devotes the last portion of her volume to the manhunt which lasted seven frightful days, interspersing the ordeal with insights into the relationships Kueck had with his son, Chuck--nicknamed Jello, who died of a drug overdose in July 2001, and his adopted daughter, Rebecca, who never stopped caring for him.

The fiery end came on a little after 6 p.m. on Friday, August 8. Tracked by his use of a cell phone to a vacated friend's property and unwilling to surrender, Kueck began firing his automatic weapon at an approaching armored vehicle, which, returning the fire, presumably shot him dead. It was hard to tell, however, because the shed in which Kueck had been hiding was burned to the ground leaving only his incinerated bones.
Desert Reckoning is based on Stillman's previously published Rolling Stone article, "The Great Mojave Manhunt," a finalist for a PEN journalism award. To stretch the story to book-length, the author adds a variety of extraneous material, including a brief history of the utopian community of Llano, a 2,000 acre parcel of land located "90 miles northeast of Los Angeles, between Mescal and Big Rock Creek, yards away from the parcel of land where Donald Kueck would eke out his own dream in the twenty-first century." Founded circa 1910, Llano eventually reached a population of 800 or so. By 1917, however, plagued with financial problems and dissent, Llano, similar to most utopian communities of the era, failed.

Stillman also includes rifts on the Los Angeles County Sheriffs Dept., the Los Angeles Police Dept., the Mount Carmel Retreat Center in Palmdale, and a brief review of Louis L'Amour's The Lonesome Gods, the story of "good and evil in the drylands."

Regrettably, Stillman can’t explain how Kueck was able to avoid being tracked down during the seven-day manhunt conducted by hundreds of law enforcement personnel. It is also seems strange that the author did not interview Sorensen’s wife, Christine.

THE SILENCE AND THE SUN, An historical account of people, places, and events on old Route 66 and railroad communities in the Eastern Mojave Desert, California (2012), Joe de Kehoe

While driving through the desert, have you ever wondered why that lone tamarisk tree was planted there? What the story is behind that forsaken concrete pad and tumbling stone wall? When that deserted mine scarring the far hillside was last worked?

Well, if you were possessed with the same sense of curiosity and follow-through as Joe de Kehoe, you may well have researched similar questions and written a volume comparable to his The Silence and the Sun.

First appearing in 2007, and, including newly discovered material and corrections--republished in 2012, de Kehoe examines the history of the Mojave Desert in an area extending along old Route 66, from Barstow in the west to Essex in the east, and along the Cadiz Road, from Route 66 southeast to Rice on State Route 62.

In a forward to The Silence and the Sun, Mojave historian, Dennis Casebier, writes, "Joe has tracked down 'old-timers' that lived and flourished along old '66' and others who worked on the Santa Fe Railway that paralleled 66. These interesting people shared their memories and photo albums. And from those sources, plus what little does exist in the published literature, he has rescued this rich history from oblivion."

Dividing his material into thirteen chapters, de Kehoe leads off with "The Old Woman Meteorite," a story, beginning in 1975, of two young prospectors who found a meteorite about three feet in diameter, weighing 6,070 lbs., in the Mojave’s Old Woman Mountains.

More interesting than its discovery, perhaps, was the manner in which the specimen was removed from its resting place, i.e., lifted by sling suspended from a Marine Corps Sea Stallion helicopter, and the ensuing legal tug-of-war regarding the legal ownership of the meteorite.

Indeed, nullifying the miners' claim, the US Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals ruled that the Department of Interior acted properly, under the Antiquities Act of 1906, in transferring title of the meteorite to the Smithsonian Institute.

In the succeeding chapters de Kehoe reflects on Chambless Junction, Cadiz Summit, Amboy, and several other small settlements which once thrived along Route 66, all of which faded into  

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obscurity when Interstate 40 was completed in the spring of 1973.

For example, consider the history of the roadside business located at Cadiz Summit on old Highway 66 which was operated by a succession of owners between 1928 and 1972. Originally built by Thomas R. Morgan, the site was "just a wide spot in the road when the Morgan family first arrived--nothing more than a desolate patch of ground with scattered Creosote bushes sprouting from bare pink granite on either side of the road."

Morgan's first building was built of railroad ties, its walls covered with tarpaper and plaster. The gasoline pump, manually operated, lifted the fuel into a graduated glass container at the top. Later, Morgan built three overnight guest cabins and an outhouse, the latter of which "served as a bathroom for overnight motel guests and the Morgan family."

In 1936, George Tienken took over the business, moving to Cadiz Summit with his wife, Minnie, and their daughter, Winifred (Win), the latter of whom provided a de Kehoe with a wealth of interesting material.

In fact, growing up on the Mojave Desert in the middle of the Great Depression with few, if any, friends her age, didn't seem to bother young Win at all. She remembers, "Dad always said we had hot and cold running water; hot in the summer and cold in the winter! .(W)hen we

(Continued from page 23)

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finished with a bath, Mom poured the bath water (from a large wash tub) on a tomato vine that had come up in the yard from seeds from a tomato she had thrown away. She called it her Sweetheart tomato because we used Sweetheart soap to bathe!

Win also recalls that whenever she skinned her knee, her Dad "poured turpentine on the wound and bound a piece of bacon on it. I limped around with this bacon flapping every time I took a step. Crazy, but no scars and I smelled nice too!"

Today Cadiz Summit stands empty and deserted. "The walls of the old garage are emblazoned with graffiti, and the place is littered with trash and discarded tires."

Next, de Kehoe provides brief histories of Archer, Chubbuck, and Milligan, three erstwhile settlements sited along the unpaved Cadiz Road (and parallel to the tracks of the Arizona & California Railroad), leading southeast through the Cadiz Valley from Cadiz Summit to Rice.

Archer's existence was "entirely dependent on the need for water for steam engines; once the railroad switched to diesel locomotives in the 1950s, (the settlement, which never included more that 20 people, including children) was abandoned."

The existence of Chubbuck was reliant on a deposit of white limestone located in the small hills on the north end of the Iron Mountains. Built in the mid-twenties, the operation eventually consisted of the mine and a plant to crush and roast the material into cement. The nearby employee settlement included "(b)etween twenty-five and thirty families, and eight or ten bachelors who were mainly short-term contract laborers."

Those who worked at Chubbuck "got a job and a paycheck, but that was about all. Their living quarters, transportation, and other amenities were their responsibility. Families were left to themselves to find the time and materials to build their homes and to acquire furniture."

One former resident, Richard Sommers, remembers his days at the small Chubbuck schoolhouse, stating "When the wind blew the sand would come through the cracks and crevices. The company had run electricity to all of the houses that year. We thought we had died and gone to heaven! We were there four years. I look back on it as some of the happiest days of my childhood."

The Silence and the Sun contains a cornucopia of maps, photographs, and miscellaneous material from the old days. De Kehoe's considerable efforts in tracking down and interviewing former residents of the now abandoned towns and settlements are nothing short of remarkable.

The Silence and the Sun is available from Amazon.com for $32.65. Not a book for everyone, perhaps, but for those of us who love the desert and wonder about its fascinating past, this volume should not be missed.
SUBSCRIPTION REMINDER

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

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THE DESERT SAGE
SIERRA CLUB, ANGELES CHAPTER
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DESSERT PEAKS SECTION

DPS NEWSLETTER - The Desert Sage is published six times a year by the Desert Peaks Section of the Angeles Chapter of the Sierra Club. Please note that the next submission deadline for the next SAGE is June 8, 2014.

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 Chair. Please note that a Sustaining membership/subscriptions is also available for $20. To become a member of the DPS, you must (1) belong to the Sierra Club, (2) have climbed 6 of the 96 peaks on the DPS peaks list, and (3) send $10 to Membership Records Chair for a SAGE subscription ($20 for Sustaining). Non-members who subscribe to the SAGE are not allowed to vote in the DPS elections. Renewals, subscriptions, and address changes should be sent to Membership Records Chair Ron Bartell, 1556 21st Street, Manhattan Beach, CA, 90266, or ronbartell@yahoo.com. The subscription/membership year is 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 of 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 Merchandiser (Gloria Miladin, 11946 Downey Ave, Downey, CA, 90242) 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, or ronbartell@yahoo.com.

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 identify trip participants 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.

ADVERTISEMENTS: You can advertise private trips that are of interest to DPS members in the SAGE for free. Also, you can advertise in the SAGE to sell items; the cost is $3.00 per line.

EDITOR: Greg Gerlach, 23933 Via Astuto, Murrieta, CA 92562
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