



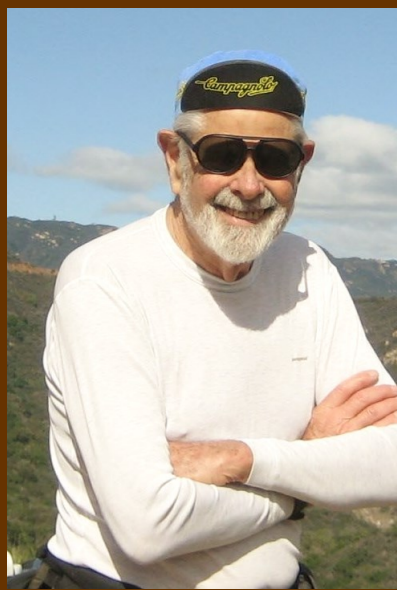
The Desert Sage

OUR 75th SEASON

JANUARY – FEBRUARY 2016

ISSUE NO. 361





Chair's Corner by Paul Cooley

Senator Dianne Feinstein introduced bills earlier this session of Congress and in past sessions to designate three new National Monuments in our desert. The Mojave Trails, Sand to Snow,

and Castle Mountains monuments are described in an article in the San Francisco Chronicle for Thursday, 26 November (Thanksgiving Day) by Carolyn Lochhead. The article reports that Senator Feinstein sent a letter to President Obama requesting that he establish the monuments under the Antiquities Act of 1906, perhaps as a prod to move the legislation forward. Senator Feinstein also hosted a public meeting at the Whitewater Preserve in October where a majority of comments favored designation of the monuments. Senator Feinstein's actions were also noted in the December 2015 edition of Words of the Wild, the newsletter of the Sierra Club's California / Nevada Wilderness Committee. These additional monuments would help wildlife by providing protected corridors and increasing buffer areas around existing national areas. Let's hope that one way or another these new monuments will be established. As always, letters in favor of the monuments to Senator Feinstein will help her establish support for the proposed new monuments.

Another Chronicle article on 6 October gave these links to maps of the proposed monuments:

[http://www.feinstein.senate.gov/public/index.cfm?
a=files.serve&File_id=97F2A7E4-2B85-4E94-A55D-
F4C8EA622494](http://www.feinstein.senate.gov/public/index.cfm?a=files.serve&File_id=97F2A7E4-2B85-4E94-A55D-F4C8EA622494)

[http://www.feinstein.senate.gov/public/index.cfm?
a=files.serve&File_id=DEA101F3-2994-439D-87A8-
8FD774C0CA08](http://www.feinstein.senate.gov/public/index.cfm?a=files.serve&File_id=DEA101F3-2994-439D-87A8-8FD774C0CA08)

[http://www.feinstein.senate.gov/public/index.cfm?
a=files.serve&File_id=482C348A-7858-43A0-89A0-
1EBE345D9D00](http://www.feinstein.senate.gov/public/index.cfm?a=files.serve&File_id=482C348A-7858-43A0-89A0-1EBE345D9D00)

In case you do not have it, here is the link to Words of the Wild for December:

[https://www.sierraclub.org/sites/www.sierraclub.org/
files/WOW-December-2015.pdf](https://www.sierraclub.org/sites/www.sierraclub.org/files/WOW-December-2015.pdf)

Another desert tale: Sheephole Mountain, north of Joshua Tree. Easy climb. A bunch of us, again from the UCLA Bruin Mountaineers, made it to the top with no problems. The trouble started on the way back down. Frede Jensen was a stalwart peakbagger who went on many DPS and SPS trips and climbs, and who was at the time (in the 1950s) in a doctoral program in Romance Linguistics at UCLA. Frede, who died several years ago, was the only person I've ever known who could make puns in multiple languages. On our return from the peak Frede had some kind of stomach distress. Rather than leave him there to rot, some of us stayed with him as he worked his way back. That return entailed inadvertent multiple bivouacs, as he couldn't move for more than about half an hour at a time. We finally reached our cars at the pass to the west at about 0600 the next day. Fortunately the weather was good, and we were young. After we got back, and Frede was feeling a little better, he looked at us and said: "That wasn't a nightmare; it was a night stallion."

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THE NEXT SAGE SUBMISSION DEADLINE

IS FEBRUARY 14, 2016

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The Desert Peaks Section maintains a website at:
<http://desertpeaks.org/>

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Program / Banquet Open

Please contact any Management Committee member if you're interested in becoming the Program/Banquet Chair

Cover Photo Credit...

goes to Tina Bowman. The photo was taken on September 25, 2015 on the way to Wheeler Peak, which is visible in the center of the photo and is located in Great Basin National Park in Nevada.

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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 January 2016 — May 2016

The desert in bloom in Joshua Tree National Park (photo taken by James Barlow in September 2012).

JAN 10	SUN	DPS	DPS Management Committee Meeting and Potluck
JAN 16-17	SAT-SUN	DPS, WTC	Tensor Peak, Spectre Peak and Dyadic Point
JAN 30	SAT	LTC, DPS, SPS, HPS	Local Baldy Snow Practice
FEB 7	SUN	DPS	DPS Management Committee Meeting and Potluck
MARCH 5	SAT	DPS	Panamint Butte
MARCH 6	SUN	DPS	DPS Management Committee Meeting and Potluck
MARCH 12	SAT	DPS	DPS Chili Cook-off
APRIL 2-3	SAT-SUN	DPS, HPS	Sandy Point and Last Chance Mountain
APRIL 9-10	SAT-SUN	DPS, SPS, LTC	Sierra Snow Checkoff and Practice
APRIL 10	SUN	DPS	DPS Management Committee Meeting and Potluck
APRIL 13	WED	LTC, DPS, WTC, SPS	Advanced Mountaineering (Basic Safety System)
APRIL 16	SAT	LTC, DPS, WTC, SPS	Advanced Mountaineering (Belaying)
APRIL 23	SAT	LTC, DPS, WTC, SPS	Advanced Mountaineering (Rappelling)
APRIL 30-1	SAT-SUN	LTC, DPS, WTC, SPS	Advanced Mountaineering (Techniques/Anchors)
MAY 15	SUN	DPS	Desert Peaks Section Annual Banquet

♦ **JANUARY 10** **SUN** **DPS**

O: DPS Management Committee Meeting and Potluck: The DPS needs a host for the January 10, 2016 DPS Management Committee meeting and potluck. Please contact any Management Committee member if you're interested in hosting this event for the DPS.

♦ **JANUARY 16-17** **SAT-SUN** **DPS, WTC**

MR: Tensor Peak (4,419'), Spectre Peak (4,482'), and Dyadic Point (4,360'): Join us on this very strenuous, wildly fun, rock scrambling adventure into the Coxcomb Mountains in Joshua Tree National Park where we'll summit the high point of the Range along with a couple of other nearby airy contenders. Saturday we'll pack in about 5.5 miles and gain about 1,300' to our dry camp. Sunday we'll set out at first light to begin our climb in earnest; first up the mostly Class 2 Tensor Peak, then over to the DPS Spectre Peak via a Class 2 – low Class 3 route, then on to Dyadic Point following solid, high Class 3 terrain. While making our way up each peak and over to next we'll be treated to spectacular and airy views out into that gorgeous and rocky desert all around us. We'll return to camp the way we came in, pack up, and head out for a day's total of about 11.5 miles and 3,150' of gain. This is a Restricted Mountaineering outing; participants must be current Sierra Club members, and must submit a Sierra Club "Medical Form". Absolute comfort on exposed terrain required. Helmet, harness, belay device, and experience with their use is required. Limited group size. This is a WTC Outing co-sponsored by DPS. Email Sierra Club number, contact and carpool info, climbing resume, recent experience and conditioning to mkelliher746@gmail.com for trip status and details. Leaders: Mat Kelliher and Neal Robbins.

♦ **JANUARY 30** **SAT** **LTC, DPS, SPS, HPS**

M/E: Local Baldy Snow Practice: Come review snow climbing, rope travel, ice axe, and snow anchors. Practice your skills or brush up on new techniques. This workshop is especially for aspiring M & E leader candidates, and is restricted to Sierra Club members with prior experience with the ice axe. Lack of snow may cancel. Email Sierra Club number, climbing resume, email address, and phone number to leader: Nile Sorenson (nsorenso@pacbell.net). Co-leaders: Neal Robbins and Tina Bowman.

(Continued on page 5)

(Continued from page 4)

♦ **FEBRUARY 7** **SUN** **DPS**

O: DPS Management Committee Meeting and Potluck: Join us at the home of Gloria Miladin in Downey for the DPS Management Committee meeting at 4:30 p.m. and potluck at 6:00 p.m. Please bring a beverage of your choice and a potluck item to share. RSVP to Gloria at miladingloria@yahoo.com.

♦ **MARCH 5** **SAT** **DPS**

I: Panamint Butte (6,584): A nice and steep cross country climb in Death Valley, which is 8 mile roundtrip and has 5,000' of gain. Send climbing resume, conditioning, and carpool information by SASE or email (preferred) to Leader: Gary Schenk (gary@hbfun.org). Co-leader: Tina Bowman.

♦ **MARCH 6** **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 p.m. and potluck at 6:00 p.m. Please bring a beverage of your choice and a potluck item to share. RSVP to Tom at locornnr@aol.com.

♦ **MARCH 12** **SAT** **DPS**

O: DPS Chili Cook-off : The Chili Cook-off is scheduled for March 12, so save the date. The venue and more information will be forthcoming in a future issue of the Sage and on the DPS website. Hosts: Julie Rush (julierush11@gmail.com), Linda McDermott (iwuvmts@live.com) and Gloria Miladin (miladingloria@yahoo.com).

♦ **APRIL 2-3** **SAT-SUN** **DPS, HPS**

I: Sandy Point (7,062') and Last Chance Mountain (8,456'): Join us for a spring weekend in the Last Chance Mountains way up in northern Death Valley National Park near Scotty's Castle, CA. Both peaks require a strenuous effort, which we'll exert at a moderate pace, and will require comfort on rocky, thorny, steep, and loose class 2 desert terrain. Saturday we'll head south up a long ridge and enjoy fantastic views down into Eureka Valley as well as of the seemingly numberless peaks and ranges that surround us as we make our way to Sandy Point. We'll return the way we came, with a brief diversion to the imaginatively named Peak 6,277, for a day's total of about 11.0 round trip miles with 2,700' of gain. Saturday night we'll camp out at the primitive and dry Eureka Dunes Campground and enjoy a festive Happy Hour and Potluck under star-packed, new moon night skies. Sunday we'll head up through the Pinyon Pine and Juniper filled slopes of Last Chance Mountain, upon whose summit we'll relish the superb views that can only be found atop P2K peaks. We'll return the way we came in for a day's total of about 5.0 round trip miles with 3,000' of gain. Feel free to join us for one or both days. High clearance vehicles recommended. This is a DPS Outing co-sponsored by HPS. Email Mat Kelliher at mkelliher746@gmail.com with contact and carpool info, recent conditioning, and experience for trip status and details. Leaders: Mat Kelliher and Bill Simpson.

♦ **APRIL 9-10** **SAT-SUN** **DPS, SPS, LTC**

M/E: Sierra Snow Checkoff and Practice: This workshop is for M and E candidates who want to check-off leadership rating, and others who want to practice new techniques. The workshop is restricted to Sierra Club members with some prior basic training with the ice axe. Send Sierra Club number, climbing resume, email address, and home and work phone numbers to leader: Nile Sorenson (nsorenso@pacbell.net). Co-leaders Doug Mantle and Neil Robbins. E, C, Mountaineering.

♦ **APRIL 10** **SUN** **DPS**

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

(Continued on page 6)

(Continued from page 5)

♦ APRIL 13

WED

LTC, DPS, WTC, SPS

M/E-R: Advanced Mountaineering Program (AMP12): Basic Safety System: First of four climbing workshops open to Sierra Club members with prior roped climbing experience. Today's indoor evening workshop of four hours reviewing ropes, harnesses, helmets and basic climbing gear will take place in Pasadena. As space is limited, priority will be given to participants who commit to all four workshops. Send email or sase, phones, Sierra Club number, resume to Leader: Dan Richter (818-970-6737, dan@danrichter.com). Assistant: Patrick McKusky (626-794-7321, pamckusky@att.net).

♦ APRIL 16

SAT

LTC, DPS, WTC, SPS

M/E-R: Advanced Mountaineering Program (AMP12): Belaying: Second of four climbing workshops open to Sierra Club members with prior roped climbing experience. Today, at Stoney Point in Chatsworth, focus is on belaying and principles of anchor building. As space is limited, priority will be given to participants who commit to all four workshops. Send email or sase, phones, Sierra Club number, resume to Leader: Dan Richter (818-970-6737, dan@danrichter.com). Assistant: Patrick McKusky (626-794-7321, pamckusky@att.net).

♦ APRIL 23

SAT

LTC, DPS, WTC, SPS

M/E-R: Advanced Mountaineering Program (AMP12): Rapelling: Third of four climbing workshops open to Sierra Club members with prior roped climbing experience. Today, at Stoney Point in Chatsworth, focus is on repelling. As space is limited, priority will be given to participants who commit to all four workshops. Send email or sase, phones, Sierra Club number, resume to Leader: Dan Richter (818-970-6737, dan@danrichter.com). Assistant: Patrick McKusky (626-794-7321, pamckusky@att.net).

♦ APRIL 30– MAY 1

SAT-SUN

LTC, DPS, WTC, SPS

M/E-R: Advanced Mountaineering Program (AMP12): Rock climbing techniques and anchors: Fourth of four climbing workshops open to Sierra Club members with prior roped climbing experience. This weekend completes the series of AMP workshops at Joshua Tree National Park and focuses on climbing and anchors. As space is limited, priority will be given to participants who commit to all four workshops. Send email or sase, phones, Sierra Club number, resume to Leader: Dan Richter (818-970-6737, dan@danrichter.com). Assistant: Patrick McKusky (626-794-7321, pamckusky@att.net).

♦ MAY 15

SUN

DPS

O: Desert Peaks Section Annual Banquet: Join your fellow DPS members and friends for a wonderful evening at the Luminarias Restaurant in Monterey Park. This year's speaker will be Doug Kasian, who will present "Climbing Remote Peaks in the Mountain Ranges of Arizona". The Social Hour and No Host Bar starts at 5:30 p.m., followed by dinner at 7:00 p.m. and awards. More information will be forthcoming on the DPS website and in a future issue of the Sage.

The DPS needs a host for the January 10, 2016 Management Committee meeting and potluck. Please contact any Management committee member if you're interested in hosting this event for the DPS.

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.

Outings Chair

by Leo Logacho



Greetings Everyone,

Leaders, please report any accidents or incidents promptly to the link below. There is a new website for leaders (live since December) that also incorporates the LTC, OMC and Safety websites, which can be found at:

http://angeles.sierraclub.org/leadership_and_outings

EXTRA, EXTRA, leaders and outings needed!!!!

Sir George Mallory wrote: "How to get the best of it all? One must conquer, achieve, get to the top; one must know the end to be convinced that one can win the end - to know there's no dream that mustn't be dared. . . Is this the summit, crowning the day? How cool and quiet! We're not exultant; but delighted, joyful; soberly astonished. . . Have we vanquished an enemy? None but ourselves. Have we gained success? That word means nothing here. Have we won a kingdom? No... and yes. We have achieved an ultimate satisfaction . . . fulfilled a destiny. . . To struggle and to understand - never this last without the other; such is the law. . ." *Climbing Everest: The Complete Writings of George Mallory.*

I am bringing up these elegant words to encourage our DPS and Sierra Club leaders to lead new outings to some of our wonderful desert peaks.

In the same vein of thought, I would like to encourage our readers and outings participants to work on becoming new leaders to help the DPS and other sections increase the number of outings to our beloved mountains.



DPS Membership Report

by Ron Bartell

Membership Summary

<u>Type</u>	<u>Regular</u>	<u>Sustaining</u>
Member	119	25
Household	28	
Subscriber	23	3
Totals:	170	28

Activity Report

New Member

Alvin Walter Indianhead

Sustaining Renewals

Henry A. Arnebold	1 year
Richard Carey	1 year
Paul Cooley	2 years
Gregory Frux	1 year
Greg Gerlach	1 year
Kelley Laxamana	1 year
Jan Brahms & David Reneric	1 year

Renewals

Mary Ann & Jeff Bonds	1 year
Ron Eckelmann	2 years
Larry Edmonds	1 year
Dave Halligan	1 year
Ron & Leora Jones	1 year
Jerry & Nancy Keating	2 years
Barbara Lilley	1 year
Rayne & Mary Motheral	1 year
Gary Murta	3 years
Bill Oliver	3 years
Jennifer & Gerry Roach	1 year
Le Roy Russ	1 year
Jim Scott	1 year
David & Barbara Sholle	1 year
Nile Sorenson	1 year
Asher Waxman	2 years
Jack Wickel	2 years

Donations

\$5 from Gregory Frux
\$5 from Rayne & Mary Motheral



Blue Lupine located near Mount Paterson (photo taken by Debbie Bulger on August 12, 2015).

Trip Reports

Kingston Peak (7,336')

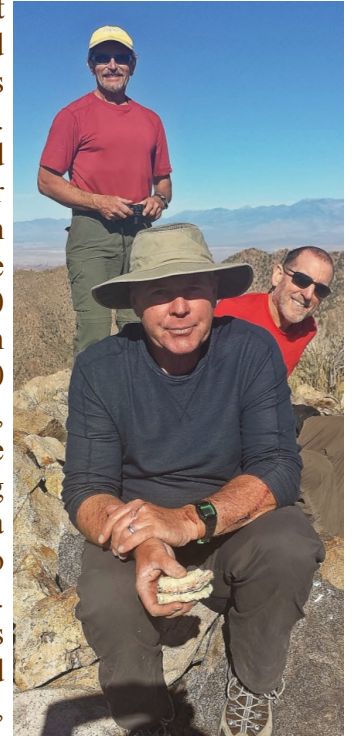
Leaders: Mat Kelliher and Bill Simpson

By: Greg Gerlach

November 21, 2015

Eleven trip participants assembled at the trailhead for Kingston Peak, and after self introductions, were on their way by 6:40 a.m. to the summit via the standard DPS route. Mat led the group past an old mine and up a brushy valley to a saddle. The leaders set a moderate pace to avoid coming down in the dark, and one participant signed out after the first hour of hiking. The route steepened significantly towards the saddle, which had a little snow mixed in to make the climbing interesting. Once at the saddle, the group took a nice break, then went up, down, and around the various bumps along the ridge to the top of Kingston Peak. We saw a few ducks along the way and

followed a faint use trail every so often, but otherwise the leaders took the path of least resistance to the peak. The group arrived on top of the peak about 12 noon, and the summit register was passed around to the trip participants as everybody ate lunch. Afterward, we backtracked to the saddle, took another break, then headed down towards the cars to the trailhead, arriving at 4:50 p.m. Bill badly cut his shin on a boulder about 30 minutes from the cars, which caused him to drive home shortly after arriving back at the trailhead. As a result, Sunday's hike to East Ord was cancelled. Later, Bill reported that his cut was successfully treated by trip participant Diana, and he did not require stitches.



Left to right, Dan Graef (standing), Mat Kelliher and Bill Simpson on the summit of Kingston Peak (photo by Shurovi Masud).

The hike and climb of the peak was class 2 and the round trip distance is about 9.0 miles. Also, the total elevation gain is about 3,800', which includes about 1,500' of extra elevation gain along the up and down ridge in both directions, as well as some extra elevation gain at the end near the trailhead. Trip participants included the following people: Bill Simpson, Mat Kelliher, Shurovi Masud, Dan Graef, Greg Gerlach, Jorge Estrada, Diana Neff Estrada, Leo Logacho, Miriam Khamis, Kevin Kingman and Robert Horvath.



Jorge Estrada making his way along the ridge to Kingston Peak (photo by Greg Gerlach).

Great Basin Peaks Section News



Humboldt Peak (11,020')
East Humboldt Range
By Sharon Marie Wilcox
July 5, 2015

The East Humboldt Range is a northern extension of the Ruby Mountains located in eastern Nevada. These mountains are heavily glaciated, creating notable alpine scenery and peaks. In July, Laura Newman assembled a group of Desert Peak and Great Basin Peaks Section members to climb some of these peaks.

On July 5, we drove up Pole Canyon to the Beaver Ponds at roads end to hike Humboldt Peak (11,020'), the southernmost high summit in the East Humboldt Range. Thanks to Laura and her Mom, we got permission to access private property and drive in to this location.

Our hike began through a lush green hillside loaded with wildflowers where we headed up to the ridgeline that was



The start of the hike to Humboldt Peak, from left to right, Larry Dwyer, Laura Newman, Daryn Dodge, Kathy Rich, Lisa Barboza, and John Ide (photo by Sharon Marie Wilcox).

hidden in clouds. We scrambled over Peak 10,601', then continued through the clouds to the top of Humboldt Peak. The clouds masked our entire route, hiding views of the glaciated peaks and spiny crest of the range. A brief spitting

of rain had us displaying our many colored rain jackets, but fortunately the rain didn't last long. On the summit our views were totally masked by clouds. It was disappointing to know we were surrounded by phenomenal views that we would not see. After lunch and photos, with no weather improvement, we decided to forego Black Top, our next planned peak. As we headed down the wildflower-lined canyon, the clouds lifted and we finally got a view of Humboldt Peak. It was nice to finally get a view of our peak. I'm always on the watch for bighorn sheep and mountain goats, but all day long I only saw their scat.

After returning from the hike, Laura's family treated us to a dinner at their home located near by. Their generous hospitality was much appreciated as we shared our tale of another day spent on a Great Basin peak.

Fox Mountain (8,182')
"Any Excuse for a Party!"
By Sharon Marie Wilcox
October 28, 2015

A few months ago, Vic Henney noticed that a couple of us had one Washoe County P2K left, so we decided to make it fun and do a "mini-list finish". Vic, along with Sue Wyman Henney, organized a small group of Great Basin Peaks Section members to head to Fox Mountain.

Fox Mountain has a road to the top with a radio facility on the summit. We had heard bad reports about the road condition and a Peakbagger.com report mentioned five stream crossings. Consequently, we wondered if we would encounter muddy, nasty road conditions to the peak.

Our group, who included Sharon Marie Wilcox, Larry Dwyer, Mary Brooks, Bam and Carol-Lynn, and Bob Ralston in addition to Vic and Sue, left Reno on a grey, cloudy day under a slight drizzle and headed to Gerlach, Nevada for gas. From Gerlach, we continued up Nevada Highway 447 to a dirt road just past highway marker 106. As we drove out of Gerlach the rain and wind increased. We were concerned about how far we would need to hike in this cold, wet, windy weather. Amazingly the stream crossings were dry, rocky depressions and the road was drivable by a passenger car. We drove to the top (so much for exercise) and then found shelter from wind and snow behind one of the summit buildings for our Halloween themed mini-list finish partly. Another fun adventure on a Great Basin peak.

Desert Peaks Section December 13, 2015 Potluck, Hosted by Tom and Tina Bowman

(Photos taken by Tina Bowman)



From left to right, Pat Holleman, Doris Duval, and Ron Eckelmann.



From left to right, Laura Newman, Ken Snyder, Keith Christensen, and Kathy Rich.



From left to right, Tom Bowman, Dave Sholle, Barbara Sholle, and Christine Mitchell.



From left to right, Gerry Holleman, Pat Holleman, and Christine Mitchell.

The Rocks We Climb

by *Bob Michael*

PROVIDENCE MOUNTAINS – EDGAR and MITCHELL PEAKS

Before we get into the mountains, I'd like to say that I'm wrapping up this series of what lies beneath our boot soles as we work on THE LIST. I'm not closing it because I'm tired of it; it's been a lot of work every two months, but a labor of love. (I never intended to "do" every single peak.) Rather, I'm getting to the point where I've pretty well covered the basics of the varied geologic history of our part of the Desert Southwest, and my write-ups are going to be more and more repetitive. I think I've established the basic picture; starting from the bottom up:

- 1) The ancient Precambrian crystalline – granite and metamorphic - "basement";
- 2) The long period of more-or less peaceful mostly marine sedimentation on a passive continental shelf margin throughout most all of the Paleozoic period, (extending down to the late Precambrian in places), giving us the great mostly limestone cliffs we see in southern Nevada and adjacent parts of California (interrupted by some excitement in northern Nevada when "exotic terranes" drifting out of the Pacific's precursor banged into the continent up there);
- 3) The momentous time just after the beginning of the Mesozoic Era when EVERYTHING CHANGED, Pangaea self-destructed, the Old and New Worlds started to split up, and the Mid-Atlantic spreading zone began to force the New World continents into an ongoing titanic global conflict with the Pacific seafloor, creating the American Cordillera -- crumpling, thrusting, volcanism, and generation of massive amounts of granites – and deserts and basin east of these new mountains where debris from them piled up --- essentially the "first cause" of the scenery we know and love, from Denali to Mount Rushmore to Shasta to Yosemite to Capitol Reef to Mount Baldy to Big Picacho to Torres del Paine....
- 4) More recently in our corner of the Cordillera, extensive volcanism, block-faulting, and opening of the Sea of Cortez, sculpting our ranges into more or less their current forms;

- 5) Ongoing erosion and Pleistocene glaciation, putting the "final touch" on the Western landscape. (Were you surprised by how often I mentioned glaciation?)

And there you have a (?) masterpiece of arm-waving, condensing the geologic history of a good part of North America into twenty-one lines! My fondest hope, and the reason why I undertook this project, is when you see a typical Death Valley region scene of a block of tilted gray limestone capped with a black flow of lava, or a pile of granite boulders, you will have a feeling for WHY it looks that way. However, if I've left a peak out that is your favorite and you'd like its story, I'd be happy to come out of "retirement" and write it up. Call me at 970.482.3615, write me at 1212 Raintree Drive, A5, Fort Collins, Colorado 80526 or email me, robertmchl@aol.com.

For my final "regular" article, I'd like to have a look at the Providence Mountains, as they neatly combine almost all of my themes except, of course, glaciation. This magnificent range is the furthest west in the Mojave where the great Paleozoic mostly-limestone section is preserved largely intact and not too obliterated by metamorphism, granite intrusion and erosion. On the upfaulted western side of the range, there is preserved an almost complete sedimentary section from the Precambrian basement overlain by a bit of the Precambrian sedimentary rocks which are so prominent in the Death Valley region to the north, up through the sequence to the Permian Bird Spring limestone of Permian age. These rocks correlate quite well with those in the Spring Mountains of Nevada and even to some extent with the Grand Canyon section, although the Canyon rocks are generally much more terrestrial as they were more in the core of the ancient continent. One paper even described a shale and sandstone unit atop the Bird Spring which it called the Moenkopi formation of lower Triassic age, a formation which you think of as occurring in the Utah canyonlands... amazing to find it so far west. That's the end of the stratigraphic column, as soon after Moenkopi time

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The Rocks We Climb—continued...

(Continued from page 11)

the subduction fireworks began on the Left Coast.

These rocks are intruded by several different igneous units of Mesozoic age, part of the “great granite factory” of that time. Both Jurassic and younger Cretaceous intrusive rocks are present. The pinkish igneous rock that comprises Edgar Peak is rather unusual in that it is not really a granite at all but more resembles volcanic rhyolite. Yet it has clearly intruded the limestone. This is an example of what geologists call a “hypabyssal” rock – an igneous rock that intruded its surroundings at a very shallow depth, so shallow and close to the surface that it cooled quickly enough that it has more the fine-grained texture of a lava than the granular consistency of a granite. (Some of it may indeed have blown “out the top” as a volcanic eruption – any evidence for that is, of course, long gone.) It’s also what we would call a “dry” intrusive – it wasn’t accompanied by metal-rich chemically-active “juices” to react with the wall rock and create ore deposits. Although it was obviously extremely hot and forceful, it had comparatively little effect on the host rock; the limestone of Mitchell’s Caverns seems little affected. Other igneous rocks which intruded the Providence country rock to the north and south of the central caverns area were “juicier” and did indeed create ore deposits which were mined in the olden days. In the Fountain Peak area south of the Caverns iron was mined for a time from a limestone-granite contact-metamorphic deposit. Extensive younger lava flows are found in the northern part of the range.

Although the eastern (caverns) side of the range is upfaulted, the major block-fault uplift is on the western side facing Kelso – a mighty and formidable escarpment indeed. I do not recall talking with anyone who has done the peaks from that side, nor do I recall ever seeing a write-up to that effect in the SAGE. This is part of what seems to be a rift valley of sorts on the northern sides of the New Yorks, the Mid Hills, Providence, and Granites which was early on utilized by the Union Pacific route.

Mitchell’s Caverns, when you think about it, shouldn’t even be there. Imagine...to make a limestone cave, you need a LOT of groundwater flowing

over a LOT of time to dissolve a lot of stone, and then to decorate it with dripstone. Obviously, there’s no way that’s going to form in the extreme aridity of the Mojave today. The Providences are high at over 7,000 feet, making for enough precipitation to cloak the peaks in a dense growth of aggressive, sticking, stabbing, bloodthirsty desert vegetation, the worst on the List I can remember except for Indianhead. But that’s a far cry from the amount of water needed to make a limestone cave – perhaps an illustration of prehistoric “climate change” every bit as dramatic as the empty glacial cirques on most of our highest Desert Peaks. (As a footnote, the latest news from the State Park is that the rebuilt Visitor Center and water supply is just about finished, but no word yet on when they will re-open to visitors after a closure of some years.)



Summit Registers Books and Containers

Mark Butski is the new DPS Mountain Records chair. Please email Mark at hbmark58@yahoo.com with the condition of summit register books and containers after climbing a DPS listed peak. Mark can also send you replacement DPS register books to carry up to DPS peaks.

THE DPS NEEDS ONE MEMBER TO SERVE AS PROGRAM/BANQUET CHAIR ASAP!!

Please contact any DPS Management Committee member if you’re interested in the position.



DESERT BOOKS

By Burton Falk

JOSEPH WALKER AND THE CALIFORNIA TRAIL, PART II

WESTERING MAN: THE LIFE OF JOSEPH WALKER (1983), Bil Gilbert

In the last issue of *Desert Sage* we left 35 year-old Joseph Walker and his brigade of fur trappers on Bear River, Utah, in July 1834, following their return from a year-long exploratory trip to California.

Outward bound the previous fall, the mountain men had spent twenty-nine bitterly cold days crossing the Sierra Nevada. On their return that spring, thanks to guidance of friendly Indians, they discovered 5,250' Walker Pass in the southern Sierra, which offered a usually snow-free route across the long range. Now the site of California Highway 158, the same pass was to become Walker's route as he piloted the first wagon train into California nine years later.

During the time between that summer of 1834 and the summer of 1843, Walker remained in the mountains, burnishing his reputation as a savvy fur trapper and trader. Even as the demand for beaver pelts ebbed, Walker found little reason to return to civilization. In either 1836 or 1837 he married an Indian woman, a Snake, who was known for her beauty, but is otherwise little remembered.

Gilbert describes Walker at the time as "a burly, poker-faced man, with hair flowing to his shoulders and cavalier mustaches sweeping down into his beard," He further speculates that "(t)he years between 1835 and 1845 may have been the best of Walker's life in terms of personal pleasure and satisfaction...It was the only time he had the regular companionship of a woman. Toward the

end of the period there were children, though their number or sex was never identified...Everything about the man suggests he would have been a proud and good father."

Coincidentally, while writing this review, I reread A. B. Guthrie's, *The Big Sky*, in which there is little doubt that Guthrie's flawed hero, Boone Caudill--a young Kentuckian driven by a hunger for freedom and a longing for the Wyoming/Montana area, where, as Wallace Stegner wrote, "(the sky fits) down close and tight to the horizons and the great bell of heaven (is) alive with light, clouds, heat, stars, winds, and incomparable weathers"--is based in part on the life of Joe Walker. It's a compelling read. Having worked in Yellowstone for two memorable summers while in college, I savored Guthrie's evocative descriptions of that beautiful country.

To keep our focus on desert history, however, we need to fast-forward to Fort Laramie, Wyoming, in July, 1843, at which time Walker hired on to pilot a wagon train from Wyoming to California.

One reason Walker may have decided to leave the mountains and take the job was because three years earlier, in the spring of 1840, his older brother Joel and family became the first of an estimated 300,000 emigrants to travel by wagon to the Pacific Coast--the first few drops in what would become a flood. Indeed, on January 14, 1841, Joel and Mary Walker's fifth child, Louisa, was born in what is now Salem, becoming "the first American baby to come into the world in Oregon." The fever to move ever westward continued unabated in the mobile Walker family.

For whatever the reason, while in Laramie that

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Desert Books - continued...

(Continued from page 13)

summer, either by pre-arrangement or chance, Walker met with Joe Chiles, a friend of the Walker family from Jackson County, Missouri, and, for a fee of \$300, agreed to pilot Chiles' wagon train the rest of the way to California.

But before we set off on the seminal crossing of the yet-to-be named California Trail, it should be noted that most wagon trains of the time, virtually all of which were heading for Oregon, were organized with two principal officers, a captain and a pilot. The captain--in this case, Chiles--was in charge of administrative and judicial issues, i.e., the order of march, drawing up rosters for guard duty and settling quarrels.

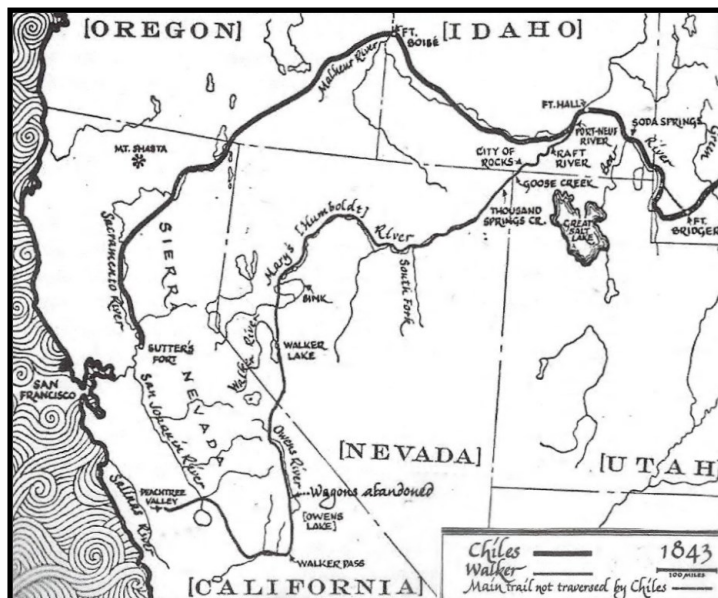
The pilot (or guide)--Walker in this instance--"actually led the train once they started westward and made the day-to-day tactical decisions. In many respects their duties were similar to those of a senior counselor taking children on a wilderness outing."

Gilbert explains that because most of the emigrants were greenhorns, often getting lost, setting themselves and their wagons on fire, getting sick or dying from eating bad food or drinking poisonous water, pilots became "responsible for showing their (clients) not only where to travel but how to do so; how to make camps, guard livestock, ford rivers, hunt, make and mend equipment, deal with the Indians, and generally survive in the west."

It's worth noting also that in 1843, when trans-continental wagon train travel was still in its infancy, plans agreed upon prior to a trek usually eroded away during the long passage across the prairie and through the Rocky Mountains.

For example, by the time the Chiles party, which left Missouri in the spring of 1843 as a party of only fifteen or sixteen, reached Fort Hall on the Snake River in Idaho in August, the group, due to

the addition of stragglers and defectors from other caravans, had grown to approximately fifty members. Because the Chiles party had trouble finding game along their route, and because few supplies were available at Fort Hall, it was decided to split the group in two, one group consisting of thirteen able-bodied men on horses, led by Chiles, proceeding down Snake River to Fort Boise, where



The Routes of the Chiles/Walker Wagon Train of 1843

they hoped to buy supplies at the British-owned Hudson's Bay trading post. If they were not successful--and they weren't--they would continue on to Sutter's Fort in California, buy the necessary supplies, and would then cross the Sierra west to east to rescue Walker's group awaiting them at the Humboldt Sink.

Walker's group, consisting of the remaining twenty-three emigrants--including all the women, children, their livestock, and six mule-drawn wagons--left Fort Hall on September 16, slowly making their way fifty miles down the Snake River Valley. Turning southwest up the Raft River, the assemblage then followed Goose Creek, several smaller streams, and the Humboldt River to Humboldt Sink, which they reached on or about

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Desert Books - continued...

(Continued from page 14)

October 22. There, with an adequate supply of forage for their livestock, and plenty of water, they stopped to await Chiles and his relief party.

But, as noted, Chiles and his men were unable to obtain supplies at Fort Boise, and so, as agreed, they continued on to California, guided by, unfortunately, a flawed map. "Following it, Chiles...made a long looping swing through southern Oregon and eventually reached Sutter's on November 11, having ridden nearly 800 miles in forty days while living off the land." Upon his arrival at Sutter's, Chiles immediately organized a small pack train to carry supplies east to Walker and his group. The effort was futile, however. By that time the Sierra passes had filled with snow and the pack train had to turn back.

Exactly what happened next is somewhat vague as Gilbert's description of the remainder of the Walker group's journey into California is covered in a mere page and a half. Because additional source material is scarce, the best I can offer is the following anemic description of the groups' last two months on the trail.

On or about November 1, after waiting as long as possible for the promised supplies to arrive, Walker began leading his caravan south out of the Humboldt Sink. The emigrants rations were in short supply, but they still had their wagons, some of their livestock, and, "(m)ost important, because of Walker, they knew where they were going and something about the nature of the country ahead. These certainties were a source of psychic strength."

Passing the yet-to-be named Carson Lake, the wagon train continued south to another yet-to-be named lake--the Walker--where local Indians traded the wagon trainers fish for horseshoe nails. A few days later, descending into the Owens Valley, the group "became the first to bring wagons into California..." But forage for the draft

animals was scarce in the valley, so somewhere near Owens Lake the wagons were unloaded and abandoned, and the group, now mounted, headed west, into the maw of the southern Sierra. On December 3, just a few days before an "exceptional blizzard closed the route..." they crossed Walker Pass.

By Christmas Day, 1843, all 29 members of Walker's group were in Peachtree Valley, east of present day King City, safe and sound, and "resting, rejoicing and feasting on 'finest haunches of venison.'" Shortly thereafter the company separated, its members going to various places and fates in California."

And that's it. Gilbert concludes his description of the successful journey thusly: "So far as Walker was concerned, getting the wagon train into California was in some respects a more difficult expedition than that of 1833, when he made the first passage of the Sierra with his fur brigade. The overland caravan had done no true exploring but had laid down 500 miles of what was to become the California Trail. To a far greater degree than was the case with his veterans of '33, Walker had been personally responsible for the lives of everyone in the wagon party."

Joseph Walker lived on to add several more chapters to the history of the frontier west, only a few involving the areas in which the DPS climbs. In February, 1844, he met and became associated with Captain John Charles "The Pathfinder," Frémont, of the U.S. Topographical Engineers, and with Frémont's famous guide, Kit Carson. Their exploits, highly exaggerated in Frémont's, *Memoirs of My Life and Times*, will be considered in a future issue of Desert Books.

From 1851 to 1858, Walker raised cattle in Monterey County, and in 1862-63, he led a gold-hunting expedition into the mountains of central Arizona near what is now the city of Prescott. The

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(Continued from page 15)

company struck gold along the Hassayampa River and Lynx Creek, the beginning of settlement in the area. The village of Walker, Arizona is named for him.

In the 1850s, Walker's nephew, James T. Walker, acquired ranch land in Contra Costa County, between Walnut Creek and Mount Diablo State Park, on which Joe Walker built a home in 1868. Walker died at the age of 78 in Walnut Creek on October 27, 1876, and is buried in the Pioneer Cemetery in Martinez, California.

BEYOND THE WIDE MISSOURI (1947), Bernard DeVoto--A Partial Review

In 1935, due to a bit of detective work on the part of Mrs. Mae Reed Porter of Kansas City, Missouri, a treasure trove of sketches by the American artist, Alfred Jacob Miller, illustrating the Rocky Mountain Fur Trade in 1838, was discovered languishing in a pasteboard box at the Peale Museum in Baltimore, Maryland.

Realizing the importance of the material, Mrs. Porter bought the collection after which she sought a publisher willing to make it available to the public. The onset of World War II, however, quashed her dream. Sales of expensive books plummeted, and the dyes necessary for making the reproductions were scarce.

In 1947, at last, Houghton Mifflin provided a happy ending for Mrs. Porter's quest. *Beyond the Wide Missouri*, a detailed history of the American fur trade between 1833 and 1838, researched and authored by the American historian, Bernard DeVoto, included not only Miller's lost work, but also works by two additional frontier artists, Charles Bodmer and George Catlin.

Joseph Walker plays an important role in DeVoto's history, but because the trapper's desert experiences account for only a few pages of the

work, I have limited my comments regarding *Beyond the Wide Missouri* to the following only:

To Miller's sketch captioned, "Bourgeois Walker and His Wife," DeVoto appended the following: "Bonneville's great partisan, the exterminator of Diggers, the entrepreneur in California horses, and the discoverer of Yosemite."



Both Miller's title for the sketch and DeVoto's added comments require further explanation.

Because many French-Canadians were involved in the fur trade during its heyday, several French words were in common usage. The French title "Bourgeois," in this case, indicates that Joseph Walker was a leader in his trade.

Identifying Walker as a "partisan," yet another French term, of Bonneville is at odds with Gilbert's contention that Walker and Bonneville were never close, certainly not partisans.

Regarding, "...exterminator of Digger Indians," DeVoto provides a justification for the trappers' massacre of thirty-nine Digger Indians during their stay at the Humboldt Sink in the summer of 1833 thusly: "Walker was parading before (the Diggers) the wealth of Ophir and Cathay: dogs and

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Desert Books - continued...

(Continued from page 16)

two hundred-odd horses and mules that could be eaten, besides the incredible, the intoxicating equipment of the white man. They swarmed by the hundred and if he had let them come near his camp, he and his party would have been massacred. Also, if the Diggers had got their horses they would have starved. He had to keep them away. He had his men kill ducks and riddle targets before their eyes, to show what his armament could do. No use; in hundreds they kept insisting on coming in. So Walker loosed his men on them and had thirty or forty of them killed. It is hard to see what else he could have done."

And, finally, "...entrepreneur in California horses." Upon reaching California in 1843, Walker began assembling a herd of horses and mules to transport and sell in the east. As Gilbert writes, " (Walker) left the Los Angeles area in mid-April (1844) with the livestock and an eight-man trail crew. They followed the Old Spanish Trail--a pack train route between Santa Fe and Southern California."



Treasurer's Report

by *Laura Newman*

*DPS Account Summary from
January 1, 2015 to
December 15, 2015*

INCOME

Banquet Book Sales	\$79.30
Banquet Silent Auction	\$112.00
Banquet Ticket Sales	\$2,510.00
Merchandise	\$277.00
Subscriptions	\$2,190.00
Donations	\$5.00
TOTAL INCOME	\$5,173.30

EXPENSES

Banquet Awards	\$49.05
Banquet Expenses	\$200.00
Banquet Payment	\$3,020.00
Postage for Merchandise Mailing	\$37.00
Sage Mailing	\$535.57
Sage Printing	\$914.19
Sales Tax	\$32.47
Web Page Expenses	\$129.73
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$4,918.01

CHECKING BALANCE	<u>\$3,814.93</u>
TOTAL BALANCE	<u>\$3,814.93</u>

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

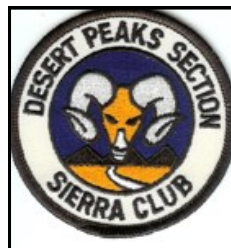
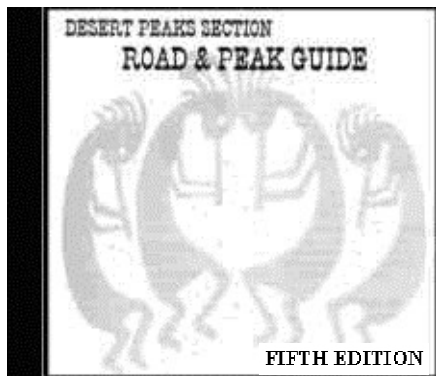
Please send road and climbing route updates to the DPS Road and Peak Guide Editor, Jim Morehouse, at desertpeakssection@gmail.com. Jim is working on a new Version 6 of the guide, so be sure and send him a quick email after climbing a peak with suggested updates to the Guide while the information is still 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.

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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 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; the next submission deadline for the Sage is **February 14, 2016**.

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