



The Desert Sage

OUR 77th SEASON

MARCH-APRIL 2018

ISSUE NO. 374



<http://desertpeaks.org/>

Chair's Corner

by Tina Bowman



We NEED you! That is, we need at least two more people to run for two positions on the elected management committee (Laura Newman has already volunteered to run again — hooray!). Please contact someone on the nominating committee — Mary

McMannes, Mat Kelliher, or me — to throw your name in the hat or suggest someone else who might be willing. You need not have been a DPS member for a long time, just be someone with some time and energy to give to the DPS. Please consider running.

Although we realize it's quite a trek for some of you to come to this year's banquet in Newbury Park, holding it here has some advantages. One very important one is that we are able to keep the cost of the tickets down. It's a lovely venue with great views of the Santa Monica Mountains, and those who come early can enjoy bocce ball, miniature golf, and pool. Don't forget to tally the number of DPS peaks you've climbed and/or led since last year's banquet. Just think how far your drive to climb desert peaks; our annual banquet is well worth the drive also!

I hope you have fine spring climbs and enjoy the desert and our twenty-third annual Chili Cook-Off coming up on March 24th. See you there!

Happy Trails!

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THE NEXT SAGE SUBMISSION DEADLINE IS APRIL 08, 2018

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Desert Peaks Section Leadership for the 2017 - 2018 Season

Elected Positions

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Cover Photo Credit...

goes to Ben Uong. The photo is a group shot on the summit of Old Woman Mountain to celebrate Tina Bowman's third DPS list finish on February 3, 2018. Please see pages 21-24 of this issue of *The Desert Sage* for story. Congratulations Tina!!

Appointed Positions

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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.

♦ **MARCH 24** **SAT** **DPS**
I: Saddle Peak Hills High Point(s) (2,550+ft): Come join us for a morning hike near Tecopa Hot Springs before the DPS chili cook-off . The high point of the Saddle Peak Hills has two summits of about the same height (2,550+ feet), so we'll visit both! With over 1,000 feet of prominence, the Saddle Peak Hills HP dominates the area around Ibex Pass. From Ibex Pass on Highway 127, we'll drive a few miles south on both paved and dirt roads to the trailhead north of the peak. Anticipate 4-5 miles round trip and 1,600' gain on cross-country desert terrain. Contact Daryn Dodge at daryn.dodge@oehha.ca.gov for more details or to sign up for the hike. Co-leader Kathryn Rich (karich@usc.edu).

♦ **MARCH 24** **SAT** **DPS, HPS**
O: 23rd DPS Chili Cook-Off: Join us in the Mojave Desert near the Tecopa/Shoshone area for this DPS Classic (and it's so close to Death Valley)! Whether you like your chili Texas- style (no beans), traditional or vegetarian, bring your favorite recipe or just hearty taste buds. Cook for free or taste for \$10. Cooks prepare chili from scratch at the site, then all enjoy happy hour, chili tasting and judging, and campfire. Prizes will be awarded by category, with special recognition for the Spiciest Chili, Best Presentation, Most Original Recipe, and the coveted Best Overall Chili. Specific location to follow. Hot springs, wild flowering, date shakes at China Ranch (?) and other exploring opportunities abound for the weekend!! Send ESASE with your choice as Taster or Cook and Chili Type to receive directions, contest specs, carpool info and exploring/hiking activities. Hosts: Gloria Miladin, Linda McDermott, and Julie Rush. Emails: (julierush11@gmail.com) or (miladingloria@yahoo.com).

♦ **MARCH 24-25** **SAT-SUN** **DPS, HPS, WTC**
I: East Ord Mountain (6,168') and Brown Peak (4,947'): Come join us as we make our way out to the Shoshone Area for the 23rd DPS Chili Cook-Off with a stop along the way to climb a classic Desert Peak in the Ord Mountains northeast of Lucerne Valley, California. Saturday morning we'll start out nice and early at a moderate pace to ascend the DPS "Alternate Route" up the SE Ridge of East Ord Mountain to its summit. After enjoying the views up top we'll return to our cars the same way we came up for a day's total of 2.7 round trip miles with 2,000' of gain. We'll then drive from that trailhead to the site of the DPS Chili Cook-Off where we'll join in on that celebration with a most festive Happy Hour complete with roaring campfire, chili testing and judging, and all around good times!! We'll camp out Saturday night right there at the Cook-Off venue, but be sure to register with Julie Rush (julierush11@gmail.com) or Gloria Miladin (miladingloria@yahoo.com) for the Cook-Off as either a Cook or a Taster to completely maximize your enjoyment. Sunday morning we'll get up early and drive into Death Valley via Shoshone to the trailhead for the west side approach to Brown Peak in the Greenwater Range. A strenuous 3 miles with 2,100' of gain, that we'll do at a moderate pace, will get us up to the summit, where we'll eat a little lunch and enjoy the views before heading back down to our cars via the same way we came up. High Clearance, 4WD vehicles are required for each summit. Join us for one or both summits. This DPS Outing is co-sponsored by WTC and HPS. Email Mat Kelliher at mkelliher746@gmail.com with contact info, vehicle type and carpool info, recent conditioning, and experience for trip status and details. Leaders: Mat Kelliher and Bill Simpson.

♦ **APRIL 8** **SUN** **DPS**
O: DPS Management Committee Meeting and Potluck: Join us at the home of Barbee and Larry Tidball in Long Beach for the DPS Management Committee meeting at 4:30 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.

♦ **APRIL 18** **WED** **LTC**
E-R: Advanced Mountaineering Program: Knots and Basic Safety Systems: First of four climbing workshops aimed at developing skills for 3rd, 4th, and 5th class climbing both as a participant or a future Sierra Club M and E leader. This will be an indoor workshop held in the evening reviewing ropes, harnesses, helmets, basic climbing gear, and knots in preparation for later workshops. All participants must have prior roped climbing experience and commit to all four classes. To register, please see <http://www.advancedmountaineeringprogram.org>. Leaders: Dan Richter (dan@danrichter.com); Patrick McKusky (pamckusky@att.net); and, Matthew Hengst (matthew.hengst@gmail.com).

♦ **MAY 20** **SUN** **DPS**
O: DPS Annual Banquet: This year, the banquet will be held at the Vallecito Club House located in Newberry Park. Also, the DPS is honored to have as our speaker Wynne Benti, who will present “33 Years in the Desert West: An Illustrated Memoir of Adventure and Activism”. Games start at 4:00 p.m., Happy Hour starts at 5:00 p.m., and dinner starts at 6:00 p.m. followed by awards and our special guest speaker Wynne Benti. Please see page 9 of this issue of *The Desert Sage* for additional information, or to sign up for the banquet.

♦ **JUNE 16-17** **SAT-SUN** **LTC, WTC, HPS, DPS, SPS**
I: Navigation: Mount Pinos Navigation Noodle: Navigation Noodle in Los Padres National Forest for either checkout or practice to satisfy Basic (I/M) or Advanced (E) level navigation requirements. Saturday is for practice; Sunday is for checkoff or additional practice. To participate, send email with contact info, navigation experience/training, any WTC, leader rating, rideshare to Leader: Robert Myers (310-829-3177, rmmyers@ix.netcom.com). Assistant: Ann Pedreschi. Note: Early (at least two weeks prior to the event) sign-up for all navigation checkoffs and practices is recommended. These outings require substantial pre-outing preparation work, including completion of both a comprehensive written exam and a route planning assignment that will be mailed to you prior to the checkoff. See Chapter 6 of the Leaders Reference Book for more information. Send contact information (including mailing address) and your qualifications to the leader as soon as possible.

♦ **SEPTEMBER 23** **SUN** **LTC, WTC, HPS, DPS, SPS**
I: Navigation: Mount Pinos Navigation Noodle: Navigation Noodle at Los Padres National Forest for either checkoff or practice to satisfy the basic (I/M) level or Advanced (E) level navigation requirements. To participate, send email with contact info, navigation experience/training, any WTC, leader rating, rideshare to Leader: Robert Myers (310-829-3177, rmmyers@ix.netcom.com). Assistant: Ann Pedreschi. Note: Early (at least two weeks prior to the event) sign-up for all navigation checkoffs and practices is recommended. These outings require substantial pre-outing preparation work, including completion of both a comprehensive written exam and a route planning assignment that will be mailed to you prior to the checkoff. See Chapter 6 of the Leaders Reference Book for more information. Send contact information (including mailing address) and your qualifications to the leader as soon as possible.

♦ **OCTOBER 10** **WED** **LTC**
E-R: Advanced Mountaineering Program: Knots and Basic Safety Systems: First of four climbing workshops aimed at developing skills for 3rd, 4th, and 5th class climbing both as a participant or a future Sierra Club M and E leader. This will be an indoor workshop held in the evening reviewing ropes, harnesses, helmets, basic climbing gear, and knots in preparation for later workshops. All participants must have prior roped climbing experience and commit to all four classes. Registration opens at 8:00 a.m. the Monday two weeks after the final previous class outing, and the cost is \$75.00. To register, please see <http://www.advancedmountaineeringprogram.org>. Leaders: Dan Richter (dan@danrichter.com); Patrick McKusky (pamckusky@att.net); and, Matthew Hengst (matthew.hengst@gmail.com).

♦ **OCTOBER 13** **SAT** **LTC**
E-R: Advanced Mountaineering Program: Belay Skills: Second of four climbing workshops aimed at developing skills for 3rd, 4th, and 5th class climbing both as a participant or a future Sierra Club M and E leader. This workshop will focus on belaying and related principles starting with standard sport climbing all the way up to advanced techniques to move large groups across dangerous terrain. All participants must have prior roped climbing experience and commit to all four classes. Registration opens at 8:00 a.m. the Monday two weeks after the final previous class outing, and the cost is \$75.00. To register, please see: <http://www.advancedmountainingprogram.org>. Leaders: Dan Richter (dan@danrichter.com); Patrick McKusky (pamckusky@att.net); and, Matthew Hengst (matthew.hengst@gmail.com).

◆ **OCTOBER 20** **SAT** **LTC**

E-R: Advanced Mountaineering Program: Rappelling: Third of four climbing workshops aimed at developing skills for 3rd, 4th, and 5th class climbing both as a participant or a future Sierra Club M and E leader. This workshop will focus on rappelling using a variety of techniques with a heavy emphasis on redundancy, safety, and efficiency. All participants must have prior roped climbing experience and commit to all four classes. Registration opens at 8:00 a.m. the Monday two weeks after the final previous class outing, and the cost is \$75.00. To register, please see: <http://www.advancedmountainprogram.org>. Leaders: Dan Richter (dan@danrichter.com); Patrick McKusky (pamckusky@att.net); and, Matthew Hengst (matthew.hengst@gmail.com).

◆ **OCTOBER 27** **SAT-SUN** **LTC**

E-R: Advanced Mountaineering Program: Anchors and Real World Application: Fourth of four climbing workshops aimed at developing skills for 3rd, 4th, and 5th class climbing, both as a participant or a future Sierra Club M and E leader. This weekend completes the series of AMP workshops at Joshua Tree National Park and focuses on building anchors and applying previously learned skills in real world climbing situations and multiple participants. All participants must have prior roped climbing experience and commit to all four classes. Registration opens at 8:00 a.m. the Monday two weeks after the final previous class outing, and the cost is \$75.00. To register, please see: <http://www.advancedmountainprogram.org>. Leaders: Dan Richter (dan@danrichter.com); Patrick McKusky (pamckusky@att.net); and, Matthew Hengst (matthew.hengst@gmail.com).

◆ **NOVEMBER 17-18** **SAT-SUN** **LTC, WTC, HPS, DPS, SPS**

I: Navigation: Warren Point Navigation Noodle: Navigation Noodle at Warren Point to satisfy the basic (I/M) level navigation requirements. Saturday for practice, skills, refresher, altimeter, homework and campfire. Sunday checkout. To participate, send email with contact info, navigation experience/training, any WTC, leader rating, rideshare to Leader: Robert Myers (310-829-3177, rmmyers@ix.netcom.com). Assistant: Ann Pedreschi. Note: Early (at least two weeks prior to the event) sign-up for all navigation checkoffs and practices is recommended. These outings require substantial pre-outing preparation work, including completion of both a comprehensive written exam and a route planning assignment that will be mailed to you prior to the checkoff. See Chapter 6 of the Leaders Reference Book for more information. Send contact information (including mailing address) and your qualifications to the leader as soon as possible.

◆ **DECEMBER 9** **SUN** **LTC, WTC, HPS, DPS, SPS**

I: Navigation: Warren Point Navigation Noodle: Navigation Noodle at Joshua Tree National Park for either checkoff or practice to satisfy the basic (I/M) level or Advanced (E) level navigation requirements. To participate, send email with contact info, navigation experience/training, any WTC, leader rating, rideshare to Leader: Robert Myers (310-829-3177, rmmyers@ix.netcom.com). Assistant: Ann Pedreschi. Note: Early (at least two weeks prior to the event) sign-up for all navigation checkoffs and practices is recommended. These outings require substantial pre-outing preparation work, including completion of both a comprehensive written exam and a route planning assignment that will be mailed to you prior to the checkoff. See Chapter 6 of the Leaders Reference Book for more information. Send contact information (including mailing address) and your qualifications to the leader as soon as possible.

In order to participate in 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. In addition, 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.

DPS ANNUAL BANQUET

Sunday May 20

Where: Vallecito Club House
1251 Old Conejo Rd.
Newbury Park, CA

Time: 4:00 pm Games
5:00 pm Happy Hour
6:00 pm Dinner

Includes coffee and tap water. You are welcome to bring your favorite beverage. Wine will be available for a donation.



Wynne with dogs, Rosy and Watson. Malpais Mesa, west of Conglomerate Mesa, Sierra Nevada and Owens Lake in background.



*Summit of El Picacho del Diablo, October 1994. Wynne Benti with Roy Magnuson, Ron Young, George Toby, Scot Jamison.
(Photo: Bobcat Thompson)*

Wynne Benti presents:

33 Years in the Desert West

An Illustrated Memoir of Adventure and Activism

In 1985, Wynne Benti hiked to the summit of her first desert peak, Tin Mountain, following two aficionados, Ron Jones and Maris Valkass. It was the end of June, 95 degrees at 6am. After twelve hours, she stumbled into camp, Vibram soles softened by hot talus, the blue dye of her tee shirt leached white by sweat, someone handed her a 7UP® and she passed out, only to wake up later, thinking, "Wow." Trail hiking turned to peak-bagging and river canoeing, then working with the Kelso Depot volunteers, on the Nature Conservancy's Kern River, and the Desert Protection Act, flow releases on the Grand Canyon River. She finished the DPS and HPS lists. Past Chair of the Angeles Chapters Rivers Conservation Subcommittee and L.A. Rivers Task Force, she'll talk about the recent military expansions into almost 1 million acres of Nevada's public lands and Yucca Mountain.

Visit wynnebenti.com for more info.



Desert Bill hearings, November 1989, Barstow CA. Almost 2,000 in attendance. (Photo: Wynne Benti)

Name(s): _____ Phone or Email _____

Number of reservations _____

\$30 until May 1 _____ \$35 after May 1 _____ Total enclosed _____

Stonefire Grill Buffet includes: Tri-tip, Salmon, 4 Sides/Salads, rolls, dessert, tap water and coffee.

Wine will be available for a donation and you are welcome to bring your favorite beverage.

Please reserve by May 1. Mail check, payable to DPS, and completed form to DPS Banquet Chair:

Tracey Thomerson, 6808 Falconview Lane, Oak Park, CA 91377. Tickets will be held at the door.

For questions email Tracey Thomerson at tthomerson@roadrunner.com

Outings Chair by Sandy Lara



Hey there, Fellow Climbers! I hope you've been taking part in some of the trips we've had this season. So far, we have had 21 different leaders lead trips to 30 different peaks, plus private outings to Mexico. And there are more to come! There were two notable DPS List Finishes: Jim Morehouse's 2X on Sombrero and Tina Bowman's 3X on

Old Woman. Congratulations to Jim and Tina! We have also had both M- and I-provisional outings to DPS peaks. Don't miss out on the fun!

We have some new members who are working to progress in their ratings. I encourage you to use DPS peaks for I-provisionals and M-rock provisionals. They are challenging and fun, and this year the weather is cooperating with sunny skies and light breezes. Feel free to email me if you would like help in setting up an outing: ssperling1@verizon.net.

The new Campfire Events system has replaced OARS for outing schedules. While there have been a few glitches along the way (aren't there always?), Campfire will prove to be a superior system as it allows for many extra features, including RSVPs on-line, signing the waiver on-line, providing information the leader has requested (4WD, conditioning, etc.), and so forth.

Leaders, please be advised that the First Aid requirements will be changing in June 2018. Up until the end of this May, the Sierra Club has been giving a 4-year expiration date after taking First Aid (regardless of the expiration date on your card). Starting in June, you will have only until the expiration date on your First Aid card (usually 2 years). Every other time you are allowed to take a First Aid course on-line, but then you must take one in person. If your card expires prior to June 2018 but you were extended 4 years, you will need to take a course prior to leading any more trips once June rolls around. This came from National Sierra Club.

The 23rd Chili Cook-off will be held on March 24 near Tecopa. You MUST RESERVE your spot (contact Julie Rush: julierush11@gmail.com). We need cooks!



Treasurer's Report

By Laura Newman

DPS Account Summary from
January 1, 2018 to
January 31, 2018

INCOME

Advertising	\$0
Banquet Silent Auction	\$0
Banquet Ticket Sales	\$0
Donations	\$130.00
Membership/Subscriptions	\$885.00
Merchandise	<u>\$0</u>

TOTAL INCOME **\$1,015.00**

EXPENSES

Administrative and Office Expenses	\$0
Banquet Expenses	\$0
Merchandise Expenses	\$0
Sage Expenses	\$144.93
Sales Tax	<u>\$0</u>

TOTAL EXPENSES **\$144.93**

PAY PAL BALANCE **\$9.41**

**CHECKING ACCOUNT
BALANCE**

\$3,634.19

Also, we have hikes being held in conjunction with the cook-off. I hope to see many of you there!

DPS Peak Register Report by Mark Butski

As the Desert Peaks Section's Mountain Records Chair, I'm responsible for keeping track of the condition of summit register books and containers. Please email me after climbing a DPS listed peak and advise me of their condition. My email address is: hbmark58@yahoo.com.

DPS Membership Report

by Ron Bartell

Membership Summary

<u>Type</u>	<u>Regular</u>	<u>Sustaining</u>
Member	104	28
Household	30	
Subscriber	26	4
Totals:	160	32

Ron Eckelmann	1 year
Bruno Geiger	1 year
Jerry & Nancy Keating	1 year
Patty Kline	1 year
Robert Michael	1 year
Rayne & Mary Motheral	1 year
Ken D Olson	1 year
Shelley Rogers	1 year
Michael Scuderi	3 years
Joan & Ed Steiner	1 year

Activity Report

Achievements

List Finish #3

#5 Tina Bowman 2/3/18 Old Woman Mtn

List Finish #2

#22 James Morehouse 12/30/17 Sombrero Pk

Emblem

#595 Peter Lara 12/1/17 Telescope Pk

New Members

Lisa Barboza	Ruby Dome
Kirk Barrett	Canyon Pt
Peter Doggett	Humphreys Pk
Ignacia Doggett	Humphreys Pk
Jason Seieroe	Corkscrew Pk
Lorraine Wadja	Moapa Pk

New Subscribers

Elizabeth Alm
Bernie Yoo
Megan Birdsill
Tommy Porter
Melissa Wetkowski

Sustaining Renewals

Henry A Arnebold	1 year
Tina & Tom Bowman	2 years
Jan Brahms & David Reneric	1 year
Richard L Carey	1 year
David Comerzan	1 year
Mark Conover	1 year
Paul Cooley	2 years
Rick Craycraft	1 year

Renewals

Lisa Barboza	2 years
Doug Bear	1 year
Debbie Bulger	1 year
Fred & Marianna Camphausen	1 year
Keith Christensen	5 years
Gary Craig	1 year
Guy Dahms	1 year
John Fisanotti	1 year
Jim Fleming	2 years
Terry Flood	1 year
Ron & Ellen Grau	1 year
Dave Halligan	2 years
Bob Hoeven	2 years
Carl Johnson	1 year
Wasim Khan	1.5 years
Patty Kline	1 year
Mary McMannes	1 year
Robert Michael	1 year
Gloria Miladin	4 years
James Morehouse	2 years
Wayne Norman	1 year
George Quinn	1 year
Gregory & Mirna Roach	2 years
Barbara & David Sholle	1 year
Eric Sieke	2 years
Joseph Wankum	2 years

Donations

\$10 from Paul Cooley
\$10 from Gloria Miladin
\$100 from Pete Yamagata

Members Report - continued



Congratulations to James Morehouse on completing the DPS for the 2nd Time!



Congratulations to Peter Lara on obtaining his DPS Emblem!



Congratulations to Tina Bowman on completing the DPS list for the 3rd time!



Welcome to new member Jason Seieroe! Jason is a WTC staff instructor with LBSB Group 2 and likes to do DPS peaks in the winter when there's too much snow in the Sierras (but he also likes snow trips too). He really loves the Sierras, and started doing a few more DPS trips and the desert has really started growing on him, especially the more technical climbs. The photo to the right is Jason on Corkscrew Peak.



Welcome to new member Kirt Barrett!

Kirt has been a trail worker and trail manager since graduating from high school in 1999. He has worked in numerous parks seasonally across the West and now works "permanently" at Lassen Volcanic National Park. Kirt has a passion for climbing volcanoes, and has a goal of climbing every major volcano in the Ring of Fire. He also enjoys white water river trips, canyoneering, traditional rock climbing, botany, activism and long distance hiking. The photo above is from the start of the trail to Martinez Mountains. Kirt recently climbed Indian Head, Martinez, East Ord and Eagle Mountain all in row over four days. Kirt says "what a great list".

We also welcome new members Lisa Barboza, Peter Doggett, Ignacia Doggett, & Lorraine Wadja and new subscribers Elizabeth Alm, Bernie Yoo, Megan Birdsill, Tommy Porter, & Melissa Wetkowski!

Letter to the Editor

Thoughts on List Reform Submitted by: Bob Michael

I read with interest the proposed changes to the Peak List in the last *SAGE*. Of the three proposed deletions, I would most favor Navajo; there's a jeep road to the top, where, as I recall, there's some electronic junk; and the view is rather impeded by trees. If I had my druthers, I'd leave Argus and Maturango on, particularly the latter; it's a commanding presence as a major range summit, with a long, tough challenging route. I've never heard of anyone getting into trouble approaching from the east; and the Hayduke in me says we've let the military gobble up too much of our desert!

However, if in fact these three peaks pass into DPS history, I propose FOUR, not three, replacements to bring our List to a nice even hundred! Let's have TWO "Hundred Peaks Sections" in the Angeles Chapter! Why not? So, let me suggest six possibilities I've climbed. These are just a sampling of the many off-the-List peaks I've enjoyed, and, of course, other members have their own favorites.

Just a note on location: the California desert is fairly well covered on the List, so these peaks are further afield. (I do have a fondness for Cave Mountain, just off I-15 but still memorable on the Winter Solstice day George Quinn and I climbed it from the Afton Canyon road.) It can well be argued that, as good Sierra Clubbers, we're being a bit hypocritical in burning beaucoup gallons of gas to climb distant peaks. I acknowledge this disconnect, even as I quote a line from the book "On the Loose": "The car has made our cities unlivable. It has also made them escapable". But because of the distance factor, I'm excluding most of Utah, and many glorious peaks in southern New Mexico and far west Texas' Guadalupe Mountains and the desert paradise of Big Bend; just too darn far.

So let's get the conversation going!

Two in Nevada:

Troy Peak (11,298') This magnificent, high, com-

manding peak, king of the Grant Range southwest of Wheeler, should have been on the List for decades. "Nuff said".

Mount Irish (8,741') A very pleasant high point of a small range north of the "Extraterrestrial Highway", now in its eponymous BLM Wilderness Area.

One in Utah:

Notch Mountain (9,654') Not that far from Wheeler; in fact, just east across a very broad valley. Visually striking from a distance, its awesome North Face is surely one of the great Big Walls of North America. Seriously.

Three in Arizona:

Miller Peak (9,466') High point of the Huachuca Mountains just west of Sierra Vista. The approach trail goes up a surprisingly verdant and lovely canyon. I climbed it in October, and the golden aspen and blood-red maples were unforgettable.

Mount Wrightson (9,453') Dominant peak south of Tucson, with a distinctive sharp summit. The approach trail also goes up a beautiful forested canyon. Terrific, unhindered views from the summit.

Mount Wilson (5,445') This pointed summit is the highest peak in the immediate vicinity of Hoover Dam, and is easily visible from Las Vegas. The peak has a rough and demanding route which is somewhat of a navigation noodle!

SAGE PHOTOS AND REPORTS NEEDED !

The SAGE needs articles and photographs, including cover photos, that pertain to outdoor activities of interest to Desert Peak Sections members and subscribers. Please note that 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 gregrg1955@verizon.net no later than the second Sunday of even numbered months.

Conservation Chair

by Dave Perkins



California Desert Bighorn

The Desert Bighorn Sheep is a subspecies of bighorn sheep, native to the deserts of the Southwestern United States and Northwestern Mexico. Their habitat is the rugged, rocky slopes typically between 1,000-3,000 feet, in areas remote from people. Desert bighorn are short-legged and stocky, but thinner

than the more northern subspecies. Coats are a dull sandy-brown color, which makes them difficult to see, but sometimes their white rump patch stands out. The males have massive curved horns, while females have thinner, shorter horns without the large curl. They are herbivores, foraging for plants such as mesquite, catclaw acacia, jojoba, buckwheat, grasses, cactus and agave. They need water every 3-4 days in summer and can lose up to 20% of body weight, replacing it at one drinking. Usually only sick, weak or young are taken by mountain lions or coyotes. The sexes roam in separate bands, but come together in late summer, and by fall, the rutting season begins. The dominant ram will mate with most of the ewes that, after a 6 month gestation period, will give birth to one lamb. Ewes generally return to the same lambing area each year. Their milk is extremely rich, which helps prepare lambs for a summer of high heat, low water and sparse food. Lambs are weaned at about 2 months. Bighorn sheep were once one of the most widespread wildlife species in the West, with populations estimated to be as high as two million or more, but by the turn of the 20th century, settlers swept into the region, and over-harvesting, habitat loss, and disease transmission caused the sheep population to plummet to just thousands. The sheep population in the southern California mountain ranges has been declared endangered. Conservation efforts, including the reduction in bighorn hunting licenses, trans-



plant programs, the establishment of national parks and wildlife refuges and reintroduction programs, have helped curb the bighorn's rapid decline and even enabled the population to slightly rebound, but bighorns today still only occupy a fraction of their former range and their population stands at less than 10% of historic numbers. (Much of the information in this article was taken from the California Department of Fish and Wildlife websites).

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Great Basin Peaks Section News

By Sharon Marie Wilcox

The Kamma Mountains

December 15, 2017

A hiking trip lead by Rich Wilson always provides a fun adventure. When he organized a trip in the Kamma Mountains, I eagerly got out the map to locate this range. Nevada has 314 mountain ranges and I'm always game to explore a new one.

The Kamma Mountains (also called the Rabbit-hole Range) are a group of 3 crescent-shaped hills east of the Black Rock Desert. For history buffs, the Applegate Trail, blazed by the Applegate Brothers in 1846, crosses the center of these mountains. Rabbit-hole Springs was a resting point for already exhausted and thirsty emigrants before crossing the Black Rock Desert.

To reach the Kamma Mountains, our group met up in Fernley, Nevada at 7:30 a.m. and then drove about 2.5 hours to the start of the hike. Depending on how far you plan to explore, topping off gas in Lovelock is wise.

The main dirt roads out of Lovelock were good until we turned up the canyon towards Peak 6099 (also called Rabbit-hole Mountain). Enroute, we passed two of the metal Applegate trail markers prior to our turn off near Rabbit-hole Springs.

The road up canyon was mostly invisible. It was overgrown with endless washes cutting through it requiring us to park before Rich's planned starting point. Our hike followed an old road until we reached the saddle and veered towards the summit. Small patches of snow dotted the route.

On the summit we sat between junipers out of the wind, to take a leisurely break. After ample time to eat lunch, take photos, and soak in the Great Basin views, we headed back down to explore other parts of these mountains.

Another fine day spent exploring the Great Basin.

DPS Bill T. Russell Mountaineering Award for 2016 and 2017

DPS Bill T. Russell Mountaineering Award for 2016

The Bill T. Russell Mountaineering Award was to be presented to Brian Smith at the 2016 banquet; however, he wasn't in attendance. We are now sending the plaque to him with a certificate with this information.

Brian, we are very pleased to present you with the Bill T. Russell Mountaineering Award for 2016. Given for outstanding mountaineering achievements, the award is a prestigious honor that recognizes the best of the best in our section. Your passion for mountaineering and peak bagging and your completion of the following lists qualify you for this award:

- DPS two times
- DPS Explorer Emblem
- SPS
- Colorado Fourteeners
- USA state high points, including Denali
- (and all but four of the U.S. national parks)

We also thank you for your service as DPS outings chair.

DPS Bill T. Russell Mountaineering Award for 2017

This award was presented to Greg Gerlach around the campfire on February 3, 2018. Below is the text of the certificate that accompanied the plaque.

It gives us great pleasure to present you with the Bill T. Russell Mountaineering Award. This award is given for outstanding mountaineering achievements. It is a prestigious honor that serves to recognize the best of the best within our section.

Greg, your great passion for mountaineering and peak bagging and your successful completion of the following lists qualify you for this award:

- DPS
- SPS
- HPS
- LPC
- Vagmarken Sierra Crest
- San Diego 100 Peaks
- Nevada county highpoints

In choosing the recipient, several things are considered, including support of DPS List improvement. What set you apart from other candidates was your participation in exploratory trips and review of the status and conditions of existing peaks as well as your long-standing support of the section by editing *The Desert Sage*.

Congratulations to Brian and Greg!

The DPS Management Committee



Spectre Point from Dyadic Point (photo credit: John Bregar).

Trip Reports

Anza Borrego Desert State Park Sunset Mountain (3,657') and Carrizo Canyon

By Debbie Bulger
December 14-27, 2017

After a two-day drive Richard Stover and I scored a campsite at Borrego Palm Canyon in Anza Borrego Desert State Park. Since we had previously climbed most of the high peaks in this desert park, we chose to visit new areas. We had deliberately chosen the weeks before Christmas since fewer people would be visiting the park. During the week between Christmas and New Year's, the park is swarming with visitors.

Our first stop was on the Pinyon Mountain Road where we set up camp about a mile below the saddle. This easy hike was a good warm up. We found our first balloon (errant balloons are a continuing threat to wildlife and a wilderness problem). The windless night came early (5:30 p.m.) lighted by our first campfire.

After a leisurely breakfast the next morning we drove to Pinyon Wash. Nature has thankfully reclaimed much of the Pinyon Wash "road," so we parked in the adjoining Nolina Wash to prepare for the next day's climb of Sunset Mountain. Our scouting hike resulted in flushing 3 or 4 Black-tailed jack rabbits and a second lost balloon.

The next day we climbed Sunset Mountain the hard way. We decided that it would be an easy ridge walk to first climb point 2,582' and then climb southeast to the summit of Sunset. WRONG. The northwest ridge of Sunset Mountain is what I would call "lumpy" — full of large weathered boulders that made travel quite slow.

This route decision resulted in our experiencing sunset on Sunset Mountain. It also resulted in our



Debbie Bulger climbing up the boulder and sharp foliage filled ridge of Sunset Mountain.

discovering our third balloon. Come on people. Stop releasing those balloons!

Because of our route choice, we did not encounter the two other people who climbed Sunset that day, although we did see their tracks on the way down and their names in the register. By twilight we had descended the west slope and had reached a wash full of polished white boulders, easy to see in the dark. We slid down a few 6' or 7' dry waterfalls on the smooth rocks, a bit tricky without a moon.

The hike had taken 11 hours. Back at camp we had an easy-open supper of popcorn and Italian soda while watching several shooting stars race across the sky. A cute wee mouse dashed out of the bushes to snatch up some dropped kernels.

The next day had a geology theme as we first leisurely explored The Narrows trail, a self-guided, half-mile loop past earthquake faults and contact zones between sedimentary and granitic rocks with some metamorphic rock thrown in for good measure. It is well worth the time.

Trip Reports - continued

Then we drove to Shell Reef in the Ocotillo Wells State Vehicular Recreation Area. This area is a sacrifice zone for Off Highway Vehicles. The last time we wanted to visit Shell Reef, we changed our minds because of the enormous cloud of dust that could be seen from 25 miles away generated by OHVs tearing up what is left of the landscape. But since this was a weekday just before Christmas, hardly anyone else was there.

Shell Reef is a four-million-year-old fossil reef that used to be on the bottom of a sea. Happily it is fenced to protect the fossils from tear-em-up riders.

Also at the OHV Recreation Center, the new Discovery Center is fabulous with microscopes set up and replica woolly mammoth and saber-toothed tiger skulls among other exhibits.

We spotted a roadrunner in the demonstration garden, and Richard got a good photo. When a butterfly landed on the flowering milkweed, I signaled to Richard to snap a picture of it. Chomp! too late. The roadrunner had also spotted the dainty beauty. But to the bird, the butterfly looked like lunch.

That afternoon we set up camp 100 yards from “The Slot” and the trailhead for West Butte. Another campfire. The short hike to the castellated summit of



Richard Stover squeezing through The Slot.

West Butte provided expansive views of the badlands and to the east, the Salton Sea. On our way back we dropped into “The Slot” for a skinny adventure. This slot canyon is very beautiful with towering walls and mud formations similar to those in a cave.

There are multiple places where the walls are almost touching.

We hiked down canyon for perhaps half a mile with the canyon walls getting higher and the squeezes getting squeezier. No exit was marked. We finally found a way out. On the rim we found ourselves about a mile from our truck via a dirt road.

After a stop at Borrego Springs for gas and Mexican food, we drove to Agua Caliente for some well earned R&R. If you go to this San Diego County park inside the State Park, bring quarters for the showers. Aaah, showers, hot pools.

Clean and happy we left the next day to find the Dos Cabezas siding of the historic San Diego and Arizona Eastern Railroad. Much has changed at the turn off to the lonely dirt road only eight miles or so north of Mexico since I had passed this way. Now there is an extensive windmill farm generating electricity.

The siding was fascinating, complete with water tower to refill steam engines.



The Dos Cabezas railroad siding with its water tower for the steam engines.

The ruins of old buildings near the tracks revealed interesting construction features, including three-chambered bricks filled with concrete. The orange

Trip Reports - continued

bricks were manufactured by the Los Angeles Pressed Brick Company after 1903.

After this archeological observation we continued past some rough spots to make camp near the end of the road. Tomorrow we would search for more railroad history, Indian sites, and secluded palms.

The next day turned out to be one of the best days of my life. Indian evidence, navigation challenges, an old railroad camp, train tunnels, and 6 palm groves — ending with a spectacular finale. Amazing.

We started out hiking to Indian Hill and were not disappointed. We found ancient morteros as well as other artifacts. Then we headed for the camp used by railroad workers from 1912 to 1919. My directions stated, “The ruins are located 0.1 mile south of the center of section 20. I love navigating! The highlight of the camp was the remains of a wall constructed with empty blasting powder cans and concrete. Lots of other interesting historic objects.



This old camp for railroad construction workers was established in 1912. Empty blasting powder cans were used in building this wall .

After lunch we headed northeast to the tracks and then descended into Carrizo Canyon for a palm adventure. In all we trekked about 2 miles down canyon seeing 6 native palm groves. They were another world. There was shade, fallen fronds several

feet deep which made walking difficult, and even standing water.

Animal trails were plentiful, and we spotted mountain lion scat. After we saw deer jawbones, we came across an almost complete bobcat skeleton. Finally we ascended an east/south tributary and climbed two easy dry waterfalls 10'-12' high.



The sky is reflected in the standing water next to Richard Stover located at this Palm Grove.

We could see the railroad grade above and hiked up the steep hillside to the tracks.

Since it was nearing sunset (4:30 p.m.), we returned to camp via the tracks instead of taking the shortcut across the desert. It was a good decision, enabling us to pass through several tunnels that the workers had blasted out with the powder from those empty cans. The massive timbers shoring up the tunnels must have been shipped a long way.

The climax of the day came at 5:30 p.m. shortly after we had returned to camp. As I was getting out food for supper, I saw two bright objects in the western sky. One was moving south leaving a wide trail of light behind it. The smaller object was in the tail of the other and was falling to earth.

We had never seen anything like it. Was it space debris? A meteor? Was it an asteroid headed for Mexico as one had millions of years before to wipe out the dinosaurs?

Our truck radio was working, so we tuned in and discovered the “meteor” was a rocket launch that caused quite a stir along much of the California coast. Quite a finale to a wonderful day and an outstanding camping trip.

Trip Reports - continued

The Golden Fruit Cup By Randy Bernard Circa 1984

Glen Bernard, my son, says that the date of this story is not important, but it happened somewhere around 1984 (this makes him 13 years old). This story is just too good not to be told, and he remembers the good (or bad) parts very well! The object of this outing was to hike the high points of the Inyo Mountain range. The Inyo's form the eastern side of the Owens Valley called the "deepest valley" because on the west are the Sierra Nevada Mountains and Mount Whitney at 14,495 feet and on the east are the Inyo Mountains and Mount Inyo at 10,975 feet and in the middle is the city of Lone Pine at 3,727 feet. The Sierra is a high use wilderness area, and to reduce crowds a "hiking permit" is required. On the other hand, the Inyo range lets all people enter who want in and is also the site of mining operations of the past. In addition, the Inyo range sits in the rain shadow of the higher Sierra Nevada range located to the west; therefore, not much drinking water is found there. Hence, the Inyo Range sees very few hikers, and in fact we saw none on this trip.

There were just three of us on this hike: John Gibba, Glen and myself (Randy). The first thing we had to do is figure out where to park John's car due to some paranoia about leaving a car alone in the middle of the desert. We finally parked his car on the street next to the Independence Sheriff station. We all piled into my Isuzu Trooper and drove through Lone Pine, then drove southeast about 15 miles on route 136 to Keeler. From here, we took the steep, old, dirt miner's road about 10 miles, passing the ghost town of Cerro Gordo where \$13,000,000 worth of silver was mined from 1866 to 1957. I parked the Trooper at a saddle located at 8,794 feet in elevation, then the three of us put on our mountaineering frame pack weighing about 40 pounds and loaded with all our food and sleeping stuff for a three day hike. We walked north following an old water pipe trail under Pleasant Point for about 10 miles to an aerial tramway and summit station. Built in 1911, this 14 mile long tramway was used to

transport salt up from Saline Valley and over the Inyo Mountain at the 8,500 feet high summit station and then down to Owens Lake. Once at Owens Lake, the salt was shipped to Los Angeles to be used as a food preservative, and thus was very valuable.

We spent the night at the summit station, and in the morning continued along the ridge to the summit of 10,668 foot high New York Butte. After quickly signing the register on the cold and windy summit, the three of us continued north down to the unforgettably named "Forgotten Pass". The trail going over this pass was the main route from Lone Pine to the Saline Valley mining sites in Beveridge Canyon in the late 1800's. A hundred years later most people forgot that there was a trail there. It was very cold and windy at the pass, so we walked east down from the 9,600 foot summit. In only 10 or 20 feet down from the pass, we were out of the wind and found a nice, warm place to camp for the night.

The next morning we headed to our next goal, Keynot Peak. We dropped our backpacks at the saddle between Keynot and Mount Inyo, then climbed Keynot. Upon returning to the saddle we set up camp next to some large boulders to keep us out of the wind. By now our water supply was empty. We looked all over the place, but couldn't find the spring shown on the map. Luckily, there was some snow in the shade of the rocks.

We had used up the last of the stove fuel at dinner last night. We found a few small stones to hold our cooking pot and started a small wood fire. As the water warmed up we added more snow until we had enough water to fill our canteens. John and I enjoy a good barbecue and we thought the smoke from the fire added a mountain flavor to the water. Glen, on the other hand, thought the "smoked water" tasted dreadful.

The next morning we ate breakfast, then headed to our final summit, Mount Inyo. After climbing two false summits covered with snow banks left over from last winter, we finally found the 10,975 foot high true summit. Later, we returned to the saddle for

Trip Reports - continued

a short rest break and lunch, picked-up our packs and hoped to get off the mountain before dark.

Our group found a trail that headed west down canyon; the trail crew were some burros and few big horn sheep, who were under paid and didn't do a very good job because sometimes we lost the trail completely. The three of us started down climbing a dry creek bed, which turned into a series of dry waterfalls. We sent Glen down first, and if he didn't make it we could try a different route! John Gibba had about 50 feet of package twine that he tied between two trees to hold up his tube tent. I think it had test strength of 39 pounds. When we got to a steep waterfall we lowered our packs down with this twine. This made the down climb a lot easier without having our 40 pound packs pulling on our backs. However, about every third or fourth time the twine would break.

As we watched the beautiful sunset over the "Range of Lights" (the Sierra) on the other side of the "deepest valley", we realized that a bivouac would be necessary. We found a few flat spots to throw our sleeping bags down along the use trail that we were trying to follow and spent the night under the stars.

Emergency food is the food that works its way down to the bottom of your pack because you don't like it. Glen didn't like the little fruit cups that you give to the kids for a snack at school. Somehow he found one in a bottom pocket of his pack. He ate the fruit and drank the juice from his "golden fruit cup". This suddenly became a wonderful dinner!

Dawn was amazing; we could see the sun shining on Mount Whitney and the snow capped Sierra Mountains in the distance as the sun rose above the Inyo Mountains behind us. We looked down into the deepest valley and saw small airplanes flying below us.

After a nice breakfast of a granola bar and "smoked water" we continued our down climb. By mid-morning we reached an abandoned mine operation at the bottom of a gully. Fortunately, a small water

pipe coming from the side of the hill was putting out **cold, clear, fresh, and tasty WATER!!**

After re-hydrating John and Glen grabbed a couple of water filled canteens and jogged into Independence to retrieve John's car while I guarded the packs. Later, when they returned we retrieved my Trooper and drove home.

John Gibba was member of Druid religion. On November 10, 2017, he passed-on to be with his ancient Celtic ancestors. Now that Glen has almost forgotten the bad tasting smoke water, we fondly remember the four days exploring the desert in a true wilderness with our great friend John. Many times John would walk around the camp-fire and say, "A day without oysters is like a day without sunshine." Now we say a day without John is like a day without sunshine".

Coyote Mountain (3,192')

By Jorge Estrada

(photos credits: Herman Hagen)

December 31, 2017

On Saturday, December 30th, after a successful, private outing to climb Sombrero Peak to celebrate Jim Morehouse's 2nd DPS list finish, we all said good-bye and headed different ways.

Diana and I went back to the nearby Bow Willow Campground where we were to meet our friend, Herman Hagen, who was driving up from the Marina Del Rey area to join us for a hike on Sunday to Coyote Mountain. After arriving, we helped Herman set up camp, and had a nice campfire dinner under a perfectly still desert evening with a very bright, almost full moon. We had not realized how much cooler it had gotten until we extinguished the campfire.

Sunday morning we awoke very early to a beautiful, red sunrise with clouds highlighting the panorama. After eating and breaking camp, we headed north to Borrego Springs where we would turn east on Highway S-22, then north on the Rockhouse Truck

Trip Reports - continued

Trail and drive in about 3.5 miles and park. We identified the very steep, east ridge that would lead us up to the top of Coyote Mountain. We found a couple of ducks and a very faint path up the ridge. Sometimes we would lose it, but always ran into it as we went up.

Coyote Mountain sits isolated and runs north to south between the Borrego and Clark Valleys. The San Ysidro Mountains are located to the west and the Santa Rosa Mountains are located to the east. Also, the east ridge is made of granitic and metamorphic rock slabs.

We climbed to the 1,500 foot level and met the peak's main north-south ridge. From here on, the trail was very obvious to the north-northwest. After a



Jorge and Diana Estrada hiking up the main north-south ridge of Coyote Mountain.

short break we continued on, and Diana left Herman and me in the dust! Halfway up we met a couple of lady hikers on the way down. We reached Coyote Mountain and Diana was there cheering us on. The summit area is very broad and flat. This desert peak is

on the San Diego 100 Peak list and had been on our radar for a long time. We took our time heading down the east ridge and safely made it back to our vehicle. We registered 5 miles round trip and a bit over 2,600' of elevation gain. We all headed back home to celebrate the New Year. What a way to close the year!



Jorge and Diana Estrada on the summit of Coyote Mountain.

Old Woman Mountain DPS 3x List Finish

By Tina Bowman

(photos credits: Tina Bowman and Greg Gerlach)

February 3, 2018

Having been on hold for two years, I was wondering whether I'd ever finish the DPS list again. Ah, that Big Picacho became a very big grudge peak, but in the end, I did reach the summit with John Cheslick. Unfortunately, Mary Jo Dungfelder and Gary Schenk, great hiking and climbing companions who had been on three previous trips with me to try to climb Big P, went back to camp on summit day for various reasons. Once I had checked Big P off the list, I was ready for a party on Old Woman, and a wonderful group of people were up for it too.

I had driven out in January to look for a place to meet and camp for routes C and D that all cars could reach and was very dismayed to find signs indicating that Route 66 was closed east of the Cadiz Road (the one we needed) and even more dismayed when I reached the junction with the Kelbaker Road to see a sign that the old highway was closed west of the Cadiz Road. Oh, no! More thoughts about never finishing the list

Trip Reports - continued

roamed in my head. But it turned out that the first sign was correct, that the road to Chambless and Cadiz Road was perfectly fine.



Road closure sign located at the junction of Route 66 and Kelbaker Road.

Friday, February 2nd, I arrived about 3:15 p.m. at our camping spot, where I met Ellen and Ron Grau. Ron reminded me that he had been on a trip I led April 22nd, 1989, to Old Woman via route A, the fifth DPS peak I had led since becoming a rated leader in 1988. We had also visited the trilobite fossil beds north of Chambless before camping closer to Granite #1, which we climbed the next day. This trip up Old Woman marked the seventy-fifth peak I've led for the DPS, many of them repeats like Old Woman.

I drove to the parking spot for routes C and D and thought we'd need 4WD, high-clearance vehicles to get all the way in there. Back to the camping spot about 5:30, I found that people had arrived in the meantime. Although the area offered good car camping, it also had lots of trains passing nearby. I hauled the old washing machine tub out of the back of the truck, and we soon had a fire going for a pleasant evening. I went around with the sign-in sheet to get a jump on the morning's activities.

The plan was to consolidate into 4WD vehicles and

be on our way to the hike at 8:00 a.m., and we were rolling at 8:02, quite a feat with lots of people. I'd been worried about getting everyone into 4WDs. For the first seven miles or so we brought a Subaru and Lexus SUV so that people weren't crammed for the whole drive. We picked up Greg and Mirna Roach at the airstrip/road and then met Christine and Ron Bartell and Sue and Vic Henney at the turn for the road into Carbonate Gulch. Here we left the Subaru and Lexus and managed to get everyone into a 4WD. My Tacoma drove differently in the sandy spots with a load of six people, Jim Scott and including Andy Knapp in the back on my sleeping pads and leaning on my bag with the sleeping bag. They were probably more comfortable than Rana Parker and Jim Fleming in the jump seats.

At the crack of 9:45, we headed up the wash for half a mile, then broke into two groups. My group had a total of ten people with Jim Fleming sweeping as we followed, more or less, route D. Gary Schenk and Sandy and Peter Lara were in charge of the much larger group going up the shorter route C. (Tom, my husband, was listed as a leader but was home with a bad cold.) The group D folks were making such good time that I overshot our turn up another wash, thinking it must be just beyond the next rib coming down. Well, no, it was where I consulted with Jim, but we had gone on and then turned left up to a ridge, then contoured around and down a short drop to rejoin route D. Ron Bartell had a map on his phone with the helpful dot showing where we were. On we went to the saddle and soon after that, the summit, arriving at 12:40.

Out came the funny hats I'd asked people to wear and various summit treats that we got into while waiting for the other group to join us. We didn't open the champagne or Martinelli's until everyone reached the summit. In my group besides Jim were Christine (DPS 2x) and Ron Bartell (DPS 3x), Jim Morehouse (new DPS 2x), Nile Sorenson, Laura Newman, Rana Parker, Ben Uong, and Andrew Manalo. Joining us awhile later were the Laras, Ellen Grau (DPS 1x), Sue and Vic Henney (both DPS 3x), Greg and Mirna Roach (both DPS 2x), Jim Scott (DPS 1x), Greg

Trip Reports - continued



Tina Bowman celebrating her DPS 3x list finish on the summit of Old Woman Mountain.



DPS 2x list finishers: front row, Mirna Roach; standing, from left to right, Ron Bartell, Greg Roach, Vic Henney, Sue Henney, Tina Bowman, Christine Bartell, and Jim Morehouse.



DPS 1x list finishers, from left to right: front row, Mirna Roach, Greg Gerlach, and Ron Bartell; standing, Greg Roach, Jim Scott, Vic Henney, Ellen Grau, Sue Henney, Tina Bowman, Christine Bartell, and Jim Morehouse.



DPS 3x list finishers, left to right, Ron Bartell, Vic Henney, Sue Henney, and Tina Bowman.

Gerlach (DPS 1x), Kelley Laxamana, and Andy Knapp for a total group of twenty-one on the top of Old Woman. Gary had accompanied those who turned around earlier back to the trucks: Don Sparks (DPS 1x, delaminating boots), Barbara (DPS 1x) and

Dave Sholle (too hot), Mary Jo (Gary had the lunch), and Gene Mauk (DPS 1x) with Ron Eckelmann and Burt Falk (DPS 1x) (just because). Ron Grau had stayed with the trucks to guard them and give himself some time to feel better.

We celebrated with the champagne and Martinelli's; treats; lots of photos of the whole group, the list finishers, the 2x list finishers, four of the now five 3x list finishers (only Doug Mantle or Doug-on-a-Stick was missing because he was on a flight to Nicaragua

Trip Reports - continued



DPS current and past chairs, from left to right, Christine Bartell, Ellen Grau, Tina Bowman, and Jim Fleming.

to climb some volcanoes on this day), and past and current DPS chairs.

Enough of that, we started down at 1:50 with Jim Fleming in the lead. All made it to the trucks and started wending their way to the camping spot, arriving about 6:45. Soon the fire was going, and potluck items appeared. Andy started making margaritas, and another bottle of champagne and two bottles of sparkling non-alcoholic drinks were opened. On behalf of last year's DPS management committee, I presented Greg Gerlach with his DPS Bill T. Russell Mountaineering Award that was to be awarded at the last banquet, but he hadn't been there to receive it. Tracey Thomerson, banquet chair, had made a very nice certificate to accompany the plaque that cited the many reasons Greg was very deserving of the award. I thanked everyone for coming and honoring me with their presence for the list finish. What a great group of people!

Some people left Saturday evening; others in the morning. On my drive back to Independence to leave the truck at our house there, I saw two wild horses a little south of Death Valley Junction—what a nice finishing touch to a wonderful weekend.

Panamint Butte (6,584') & Canyon Point (5,890')

Leaders: Tina Bowman and Jim Fleming

By Jim Fleming

(photos credits: Andrew Manalo)

January 20-21, 2018

It has been several years since I've co-lead a trip to our wonderful peaks, and thankfully, I was able to do so with my good friend and excellent mentor, Tina Bowman. Great to be 'back in the saddle' again! Our plan was to climb Panamint Butte and Porter Peak; however, the storm that arrived the week before the trip made the drive approach and climb to Porter likely impassable and unsafe. Tina and I opted for Canyon Point in lieu of Porter, as the roads were at a lower elevation and reportedly passable to 4WD vehicles. During the night and early Saturday, there was a bit of rain (and dusting of snow on the peaks), but not significant enough to thwart our climbs.

Early Saturday morning three of our group (leaders and one participant) met at the 2WD parking area and camp site for the Route A on Panamint Butte. Tina's 4WD Toyota Tacoma provided a nice albeit bumpy ride to the starting point for the climb, just below the adits of the Big Four mine. Here we met the Laras, and our group of five gathered and began the hike shortly before 07:00 a.m. A distinct use trail leads past the mine and up onto the ridge, and easy slopes up until the very steep, loose scree slopes. Hard



On the summit of Panamint Butte, from left to right, Peter Lara, Sandy Lara, Andrew Manalo, Jim Fleming, and Tina Bowman.

Trip Reports - continued

climbing up this “character building” slope, into a chilly wind and patches of snow, but we persevered and continued on up to the very broad summit plateau. Views to the west and southwest of the snow clad Sierra Nevada — Mount Whitney, Olancho Peak, Inyos, south to the Panamint range were spectacular. A gorgeous day in Death Valley! After a leisurely break with lunch and photos, the group began the descent, retracing the route and slowly working down the very loose scree slope (some, like myself, had to sit down at times to make it down). This really tired out the quad muscles, which were sore for days thereafter! The group arrived at the vehicles after an 8-1/2 hour day, tired but happy to have made the journey. Tina has also done the climb via DPS Route B (starting at Towne Pass) and although it is more of a roller-coaster with uphill on the return, Route A is more strenuous.

Back at the camp site for happy hour and relaxing, we noticed three other vehicles parked that had not been there in the morning. A couple came by after a time; they had hiked up the valley to the Panamint Dunes. We never saw the occupants of the two other vehicles.

Due to the very long, slow drive to the trailhead for Canyon Point, another early start was deemed necessary. So, before the first light, our group was off to drive and meet the Laras (who left on Saturday night to get into a meeting spot along the dirt road from Stovepipe Wells). The driving approach is through the access to Marble Canyon, and we saw numerous vehicles and hikers along the often narrow, scenic drive in, continuing up into Cottonwood Canyon. The end of the road in is marked with a concrete barrier. From there, we hiked into the

canyon and along a sandy wash, which was much easier going than the day before, and then up a steep but thankfully stable slope to the ridge. Our group continued up the final ridge to the summit and we were on another peak with a fantastic, beautiful view in every direction. Lunch, photos, and then down the steep but sandy east slope, plunge stepping over



On the summit of Canyon Point, from left to right: front row, Tina Bowman and Andrew Manalo; rear row, Sandy Lara, Jim Fleming, and Peter Lara.

1,400 vertical feet to the narrow canyon bottom. Whew! Tina bombed down, and I swept, then led the group out the easy canyon hike to the vehicles. A slow drive out, then to Stovepipe Wells village store for Dr. Pepper refreshment, yumm! Thanks to Tina Bowman, my Liege, and participants Andrew Manalo, Sandy Lara and Peter Lara for a great weekend!

Special Offer to New 2018 DPS Members and Subscribers

Beginning in 2018 the DPS would like to welcome new members and subscribers (who don't yet meet the criteria for membership) with a year's free subscription to *The Desert Sage*. New members as well as new subscribers should send the membership application form to the Membership Chair, Ron Bartell, by email (desertpeakssection@gmail.com) or USPS (the form with the address may be downloaded in Word or Adobe Acrobat format at <http://desertpeaks.org/aboutus.htm>), or may be found in this issue of the *Sage*. Although the *Sage* is available to all on the web site, members and subscribers receive an email with a link as soon as a new issue is published.



DESERT BOOKS

By Burton Falk

THE HISTORIC DESERT: THE EARLY 1830S

The Historic Desert has recently considered several pre-1830, non-native, non-Spanish crossings of the western deserts, including those of Jedediah Smith and his trappers during 1826 & 1827; Peter Ogden and his Hudson Bay Company group in 1828 & 1829; James O. Pattie and his father, Sylvester, also in 1828; and Ewing Young and his band of Taos trappers in 1829 & 1830. In fact, in the last installment (*Desert Sage*, May/June 2017) we left Young and his men, including the young Kit Carson, in Mission San Gabriel following their early 1830 crossing of the Mojave.

So what became of Young and his group? Well, moving northwest, via Mission San Fernando and following the approximate route of the today's Ridge Route, the trappers continued to the San Joaquin Valley, where they spent the spring working the streams flowing off the western slopes of the Sierra Nevada. Continuing down the valley--which Kenneth L. Holmes describes in his excellent 1967 volume, *Ewing Young*, as a place where "grass grew knee high, supporting herds of countless grazing wildlife, much of which was a swamp, with thousands of acres of tules"--their results were disappointing as they soon discovered they were following in the wake of Peter Ogden and his large group of Hudson Bay Company men, who had pretty well trapped the area out. Eventually the two parties met near the Sacramento River, then traveled together for ten days before the Ogden group headed back for their home base in Fort Vancouver, (now Vancouver, Washington), Oregon Territory.

Young and his trappers spent the summer of 1830 in the Bay Area, where, near Mission San Jose, they met with ship captain, J.B.R. Cooper. As Kit Carson, in his *Autobiography*, recalls the

meeting, "We traded our furs with him, and with the money we obtained purchased at the mission all the horses we required..." Young was especially pleased that the California bred mules they acquired were larger than most, and would be of high value in New Mexico.

In the fall and winter of 1830-31, Young's group made an adventurous return to New Mexico, trapping along the lower Colorado and engaging in several skirmishes with Indians on the Mojave and in Arizona. Upon arriving in Santa Fe, Young sold his pelts and his California bred horses and mules, thus becoming one of the richest Americans in that Mexican province. No doubt he was already planning a repeat performance.

But Young wasn't the only one thinking about the profits that could be made by trade between New Mexico and California.

Indeed, in the fall of 1829 a large pack train accompanied by thirty men left New Mexico, also heading for California. That group, starting off from the village of Abiquiu, was led by a native New Mexican, Antonio Armijo (1804-1850), whose intent had nothing to do with beaver pelts or trapping. His idea, instead, was to trade leather and woolen goods produced in New Mexico for livestock, horses and mules, raised in California.

Armijo's group struck out across northern New Mexico, passed close to current-day Four Corners, forded the Colorado River at the Crossing of the Fathers--where the Friars Atanasio Domínguez and Silvestre Vélez de Escalante crossed in November, 1776--continued across the present northwest corner of Arizona, followed the Virgin River downstream, and on Christmas day camped near the present site of Littlefield, Arizona. Rather than proceeding eighty miles due south along the Colorado, then, at the Mojave Villages, turning at a

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right angle and heading west across the Mojave Desert, Armijo instead sent men out to seek a shorter, hypotenuse-like route leading to an intermittently dependable water source, the Mojave River.

On January 7, one of the advance explorers, Rafael Rivera, returned to the camp with the news that he had made it all the way to the Mojave on such a shorter route. Accordingly, following Rivera's lead, the group set out southwest, spent the first night camping at a salty arroyo, the second night at a dry lake, and then on the third day reaching what Armijo called The Little Spring of Turtle, probably the current Cottonwood Spring, located seventeen miles or so south west of current day Las Vegas. Next came a three-day trek, including one waterless camp and one night spent at 'Little Salty Spring,'--probably today's Stump Spring--until they reached the Amargosa River. From there it took another seven days, two of them waterless, stopping at what Armijo called The Lake of the Miracle, 'El Milagro,' (probably Silver Lake), then to 'Ojito del Malpias,' (little spring of the badlands) on Soda Lake, then another waterless day beyond Soda Lake, until they reached the Mojave River.

Next they followed the river upstream for six days (110 miles from its mouth to its head), finding it necessary to kill a mule or horse each day to keep themselves from starving. After crossing Cajon Pass, the men, on February 1, 1830, eighty-six days after leaving Abiquiu, finally arrived at the Mission San Gabriel. As LeRoy R. and Ann B. Hafen note in their well-researched volume, *The Old Spanish Trail*, the journey "had been accomplished with fair success". Delays and disappointments they had suffered; but no disasters. The hospitable Californians were amazed to see the New Mexican traders emerge from the hollow desert. Moreover, they were delighted to learn that the visitors could trade their handsome woolen goods for horses and mules that were so abundant and little prized in the coast provinces."

Armijo and his men lost no time exchanging their goods for livestock, and less than a month later, on February 24, they were on their way back to New Mexico. It was a historic event. Armijo had inaugurated the first solely commercial trade journey between New Mexico and California. No longer would trappers be the only ones crossing the deserts of North America.

That's not to say, however, that trappers were finished plying the desert. In fact, yet another historic crossing, this one led by William Wolfskill and George C. Yount, consisting of a party of about twenty men, left Taos in late September, 1830, following the 1,200 mile Old Spanish Trail, a route originally blazed by Fathers Dominguez and Escalante (1776), and Jedediah Smith (1828). Note: It was Captain John C. Fremont who, in his Report for the U.S. Topographical Corps describing his 1844 expedition through the American West, first named the route The Old Spanish Trail.

Wolfskill, who was a partner of Ewing Young at the time, and Yount, a trapper from North Carolina, intended a combination trip, that is to both trap and to trade the goods they were carrying, which included tobacco, gun powder, flints for guns, lead for bullets, awls, combs, soap, shirts, and Jews-harps.

Due to their late start, however, and because they wanted to avoid the territory of the Navajo who had become hostile after Armijo's trip, they opted to take a more northerly route. And that meant they were forced to break a path through snow two to three feet deep, taking them nine-days to cross the mountain ranges of Colorado and Utah. In a later interview, Ziba Branch, one of Wolfskill-Yount's men, said that "they found but few beaver and no game and soon ran out of provisions, that by the time they reached Little Salt Lake they had killed and eaten four of their oxen, and were subsisting on the flesh of their horses and mules." Thankfully, upon arriving at the Colorado River, the Mojave Indians, who had gained a reputation for treachery, treated them kindly, trading them their dried

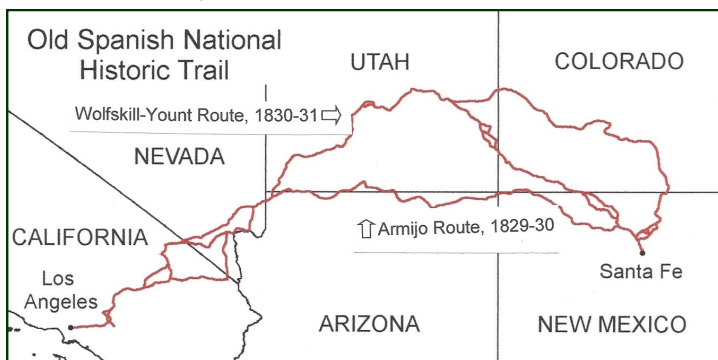
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pumpkin, white beans, and bread made of pounded corn and baked in ashes for the trader's red cloth and knives.

As for their arrival in Los Angeles, J. J. Warner, a later-day Southern California historian, wrote, "With Mr. Wolfskill's party there were a number of New Mexican, some of whom had taken serapes and fresadas (woolen blankets) with them for the purpose of trading them to the Indians in exchange for beaver skins. On their arrival in California they advantageously disposed of their blankets to the rancheros in exchange for mules."

Warner continues, "Coming by the northern, or Green and Virgin Rivers routes (i.e. the yet to be named Old Spanish Trail), the caravans came through the Cajon Pass and reached Los Angeles. From thence they scattered themselves over the country from San Diego to San Jose, and across the Bay to Sonoma and San Rafael. Having bartered and disposed of the goods brought and procured such and they wished to carry back, and what mules they could drive, they concentrated at Los Angeles for their yearly return."

And thus the first trip over The Old Spanish Trail became history.



The second trip on the Old Spanish Trail was led by Antonio Santi-Estevan, who left Santa Fe on January 16, 1831. Consisting of 30 men, most of whom were wool merchants, their trip was also successful, leading the Hafens to aver that, "The New Mexico to California pack train commerce, that was to be for some two decades the distinctive feature of the Old Spanish Trail, was now well

established."

Trans-desert pack trains between the Mexican provinces soon began taking place on other routes as well. On September 1, 1831, for instance, David E. Jackson, a former partner of Jedediah Smith and, at the time, yet another partner of Ewing Young, set out from Santa Fe with a California-bound procession. His pack train, however, passed through Albuquerque, the Santa Rita Copper mine, Tubec, the Pima Villages, crossed the Colorado a few miles below the mouth of the Gila, continued on to San Diego, San Luis Rey, and finally reached Los Angeles on December 5. Jackson returned to New Mexico in early 1831 with a band of six hundred mules and one hundred horses, all obtained in the valleys of California, from San Francisco southward.

Cross-desert travel increased at a faster pace in the early 1830s due to a new but nefarious activity beginning to take place. As the Hafens explain: "Among the New Mexican traders there were doubtless many who found it easier to obtain their mules and horses by theft or through dealing with renegade Indians who had stolen stock, than it was to purchase the animals from the legitimate owners and pay for them with woolen goods or cash." One name in particular, *El Cojo Smit*, became synonymous with horse thievery. That appellation belonged to William "Pegleg" Smith (1801-1866), famous trapper and mountain man, who was reported to have made his first trip to California in 1829. An obituary published after Smith's death read in part, "He was ordered out of (California), and departed, he and his companions, taking with them, however, a band of three or four hundred horses, in spite of efforts of the Californians to prevent the act.

By 1832 raids on the herds of missions and ranches had become so frequent and devastating that the Californians became alarmed. Father Cabot of Mission San Miguel complained to Governor Figueroa on February 4, 1833, that his mission had lost many horses and 108 mules since

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the New Mexican traders had come into the territory.

Alcalde José Antonio Carrillo of Los Angeles wrote to Governor Figueroa two weeks later complaining that men from New Mexico, posing as traders, had stolen during the preceding three months at least 1,000 animals, mostly mules. Carrillo added, "If the matter is not checked soon everything in the country will be taken away by robbers."

The problem became so acute that Los Angeles authorities passed a measure authorizing a place for traders to assemble prior to their departure for New Mexico. At such places herds were inspected and stolen animals were recovered and returned to the rightful owners. Traders found guilty of rustling were refused passports and sometimes detained and held for trial. The practice of horse and mule thievery, however, continued through the decade of the 1830s, and will be further considered in the next chapter of *The Historic Desert*.

Pack trains plying the Old Spanish Trail during the 1830s, crossed the sometime snow-covered mountains in Colorado and Utah, traveled through dry sections of Nevada where forage and water were often limited, and then faced the Mojave Desert which could be lethal in the summer.

As might be expected, depending on factors such as weather, the mood of the local Indians, and/or maybe just to try something new, variations to the trail were attempted. At least one pack train, for instance, rather than follow the Armijo Route, turned south near present-day Las Vegas and proceeded to join the established Mojave River Trail west of the Mojave villages. Several other variations were blazed in the area between present day Yermo and Cajon Pass.

No matter what route was selected, however, a single round trip per year was about all that was feasible.

As the 1830s progressed, yet another type of traveler began to make an appearance on the Old Spanish Trail, i.e., those the Hafens labeled "Home Seekers." Among the earliest of this ilk were three men who made the seminal 1830-31 crossing, i.e., William Wolfskill (1798-1866), who after trying his hand at hunting for sea otter pelts along the California coast, acquired land in Los Angeles and became a pioneer California citrus grower; George C. Yount (1794-1865), who, similar to Wolfskill, first tried hunting sea otter, after which he obtained a land grant and settled in at the Caymus Rancho in the Napa Valley. Note: The Northern California town of Yountville was posthumously named for George in 1867; and Ziba Branch (1802-74), who, after marrying a Santa Barbara woman, applied for Mexican citizenship, obtained a land grant for the Santa Manuela Rancho near San Luis Obispo, and lived there until his death.

The stories of subsequent trappers, traders, and early settlers; the Indian tribes through whose territory they passed; and the horse thieves whose raids were becoming more and more daring, will be considered in the next chapter of *The Historic Desert*, "The Late 1830s and early 1840s."

Questions, comments? burtfalk@aol.com

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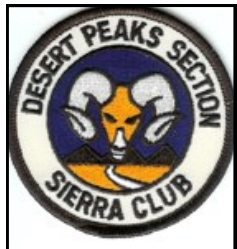
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