

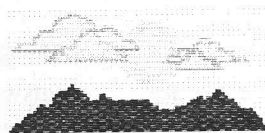
# Hiking Horizons

"Taking you to new heights"

A Publication For Adventure Hikers of the San Diego Peaks Club

Vol 4, No. 5

February - April 1995



## Views from the Top

I'm having such a good time. I love winter. I love the outdoors. I love adventure. I love hiking. As I started writing this newsletter, I reflected on how much I love desert hiking. Ten years ago I did my first desert hike. Five years ago I finished the DPS list. As Dennis Richards readies to finish the DPS list on Old Dad Mountain on his 50th birthday he says, "Finishing the list can cause a mixture of feelings; joy, pride, relief, and just a touch of depression." The depression occurs in response to an imagined ending. I felt it five years ago, but struck back by starting this club. What a good move! The camaraderie my clubmates bring me grows stronger each year. Dan Richter, the DPS chair, reports climbing recently with SDPC clubmember John McCully when he declared in a moment of reflection, "You know, Richter, I really love climbing." Yes, John, so do I.



Let's welcome new members Harley Haag, Suzanne and Tim Pletcher, Wanda Zack, John and Debra Alexander and returning members, Terri and Ed Sutor. The club stands strong with 113 members.

We have terrific hikes coming up. Don't miss out. Keep the outings calendar handy and come on some hikes, I'll bet you'll feel as I do. I love hiking.

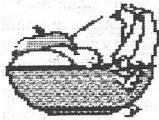
## THE NEW OAKZANITA TRAIL

Grand! Splendid! Magnificent!! Vistas extraordinaire and nature at your feet! On January 2nd, AL HOLDEN led 24 hikers up the new Oakzanita trail. You have to do this one! The trailhead is just past the Thousand Trails campground on the way to Cuyamaca. There's plenty of space immediately beyond the Cuyamaca State Park sign in the parking lot and at its north end the trail starts. It'll take you to the East Mesa Fire Road where you turn right and walk 100 yards to where the road bends. Then, after counting off 20 paces, you'll find the new and clearly distinguishable trail. It stops at the meadow southeast of the crest. If you want to bag the top, go west until you hit the jeep trail and follow the normal route to the top from there. (See Schad, "Afoot and Afield in San Diego County.") • After we'd all breathlessly admired the vista from the peak, exhaled, and then returned to leave, adventurer Jim Sugg decided to explore a little on his own. Battling the brush, he proceeded to drop down the east side instead of taking the southside trail. In the process he discovered two trails in the initial stages of development! • Al took us to a wonderful lunch spot where we sat next to moteros. While researching the trip on an earlier date he had seen a red fox and a full-rack stag enter the "lunch meadow" below our perch.



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## TRAIL TREATS (trailside chat)

### USGS MAP BUY for Members

• I will coordinate a **MAP BUY** from the USGS. The maps are usually \$2.50 per, but with orders of 200 maps we can get it down to \$1.25. The deadline for letting me know is **February 15th**. Please send your map requests in alphabetical order, separated by state.

• Last issue I failed to mention the artist of our new nameplate for Hiking Horizons. She is **LIANNE SIMMONS**, aunt to my daughter, **ALLEGRA LIANNE SIMMONS**. Lianne (aka Motorcycle Mama) is a graphic artist for the Honda company in LA. The name and design concept of the newsletter came during a brainstorming session at a Learning Annex desktop publishing class taught by **SHERYL ROUSH**.

• We had a delicious time at the **POTLUCK**. About thirty people, including spouses of the hiker, engaged in a lot of jawing, and not just talking, if you get my pre-holiday-festivities drift. Needless to say, the food was heavenly. The Cowen home, designed by Irving Gill and built in 1898, is distinctive and a part of San Diego history. It came with a complete photo history from inception to present and of all its inhabitants. And as gracious as the house, Steve and Gail were enthusiastic hosts.

• Two months ago, when Steve and I were in Cuyamaca, a couple passed while we stopped for a break. When we caught up to them later, they showed us a video they had just filmed of a cougar which was walking on the road (Fern Flat Fire Road) about 300 yards ahead. The area was less than a quarter-mile from where Iris was slain in December. Given the habits of these creatures, we believe we saw the **MOUNTAIN LION** that killed her. Yes, I reported the sighting to the rangers. Yes, I'm cautious when hiking in Cuyamaca..

• The following article is from the Anza-Borrego Desert Natural History Association newsletter, "The Sand Paper", December 1994. "In early October, a **bighorn** ewe on Coyote Mountain became the fourteenth collared sheep to be killed by a **mountain lion** since November 1993. After the kill was recorded by tracking equipment, remote cameras were set up at the site and the lion was captured on film as it returned to feed. These fourteen sheep represent twenty percent of all

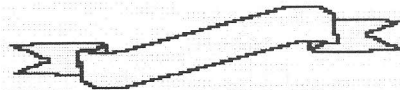
sheep that have received collars since the inception of the program." The kill total has increased by three since the article came out. This is a major problem.

• An interesting thing happened to **RHETA SCHOENEMAN** just before New Year's. (Well, since it's Rheta, I should say **ANOTHER** interesting thing happened.) The highway patrol didn't give her a speeding ticket. Nope, instead they gave her a ticket for "wasting precious resources," a \$28 fine, which doesn't go on your driving record—unless you don't pay the ticket.

• What's happened to **ROAM-O-RAMA** in the San Diego Reader? It isn't there some weeks! The answer is that **JERRY SCHAD**, that busy, busy author, asked for the column to be biweekly, not weekly, since Jerry's under the gun to finish his physical science textbook by March.

• Wanda Zack wants me tell all the members about HF Classic **WALKING HOLIDAYS**. HF, with over 80 years experience, hikes throughout Europe. They classify their walks into five grades from very easy to hard. Wanda and Jim Weinel have gone on their tours and say the highlights are sumptuous meals and very low costs. Call for a brochure 1-800-227-5550.

• "Thank you" to Wes Shelberg, Gail Hanna, Richard Hughes and Wanda Zack for sending me articles for this issue.



## HIKER OF THE MONTH

The Hiker of the Month for March is **MARY MITTS**. Loren is so lucky to have a wife like Mary. A few months ago I made Loren **HOTM** for his hiking skills and for his assisting in car shuttling. Mary is the other half of the shuttling crew. Several times in recent months we have asked her to be the non-hiker in the shuttle and she does a stellar job. She also always has homemade soup, brownies and ice cream for our bellies when we return. Bless her heart.

The **HOTM** for April is **MARY McLAIN**. Mary was laid off from her veterinarian position last July. Rather than worry, she took a weeklong hike in the Sierras, then rode her mountain bike to Shasta County and down the California coast. Dr. McLain is an excellent vet, by the way, and I hope she doesn't mind if I slip in a few pet questions while hiking.

(READERS: PLEASE TELL ME ABOUT ANYONE YOU DEEM WORTHY OF **HOTM** HONORS).

## TRIP NOTES



Dec 31 and Jan 1 — This was a great nonscheduled hike! Lorin Mitts, Mary McLain, Ranchita Ted, Jerry Higgins and I decided get together for a hike to explore some benchmarks north of the **CALCITE MINE AREA** between the Salton Sea and Borrego Springs. This was great. I had been wanting to bag these benchmarks and explore the area for the last five years and now was the time. We took off up the big wash west of Palm Peak (where the Calcite Mine is located) and cruised up as if it was a freeway, arriving at a saddle north of Palm. From there we located the Mountain of Our Desires and almost effortlessly bagged our first benchmark, High (Seventeen Palms 7.5° USGS topo). We said hallelujah! and had a bite to eat, then tried to spot where benchmark Cool should be. Bulls-eye again. More rejoicing! Then came the tough part: it was 2:30 and we had just three hours to navigate our way back across the many slot canyons of the area before dark. After seeing several rock ducks as we approached Cool BM, Lorin realized that Ol' Creosote had put them there to mark his Desert Trail. Bingo! We followed his ducks and used our knowledge of the area to successfully navigate our way back to the road and the car.

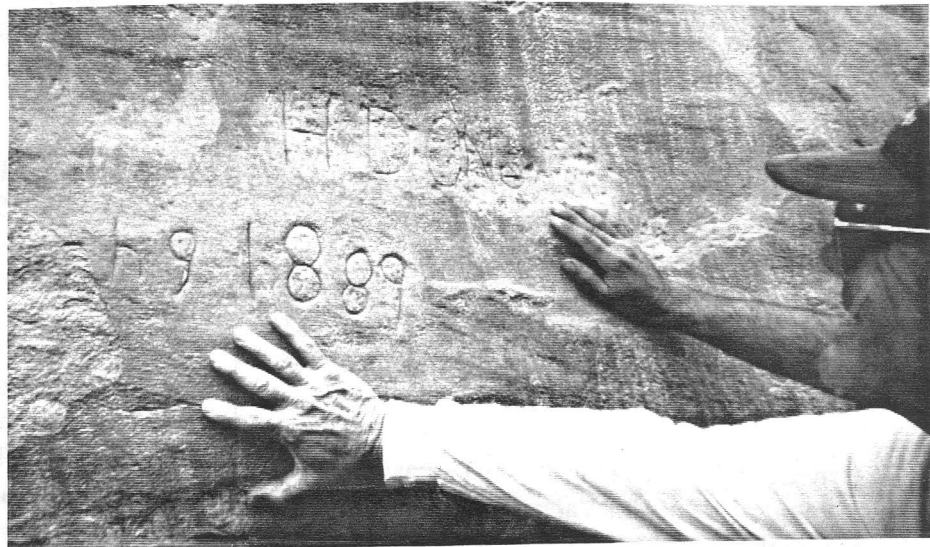
Later, at Clark Dry Lake, we arrived at the gathering for **TERRI AND ED SUTOR** who have moved to their retirement home in Minden, Nevada. We joined the party-in-progress of about 20 friends. Meanwhile, up on Villager ridgeline, we watched a helicopter rescue-in-progress of a 65-year old man who had been separated from his companions while hiking Villager. What a day!

Did you hear about the Villager res-

cue? Seems a 65-year old was back-packing with his son and a friend. The father fell behind and when the son noticed his dad wasn't with him, returned down the trail to look for him. Don't know how they did it on the Villager ridgeline, but they missed each other. So the father kept hiking and the son returned to the car. Everything would have been okay up on the

mountain, but the Dad dropped his pack, went scouting, and couldn't find his pack again. Result: a cold night without his food and water and sleeping bag!

**NEWS FLASH--Ranchita Ted has agreed to lead this outstanding hike Sunday, March 19th!**



Pictograph by North fork sheep tank at Calcite Mine on High and Cool hike.



The Sutor's retirement home in Minden, Nevada. Their backyard is BLM land.





## WEEKEND OUTINGS CALENDAR



People have been clamoring for more Steve Cowen Indian hikes. We have four weekend adventures for you. Steve will limit the trips to three, excluding himself. Preference will be given to SDPC members. You must promise not to pilfer or return to pilfer Native American sites. On some trips you must agree not to disclose the locations of sites or trails. You must travel light. Steve's number is 561-8990.

San Dieguito River Park also has special hikes every weekend in areas that are generally off-limits to the public. I have included four of their trips, but call them at 235-5440 x5 for a complete schedule.

**\*\*\*Feb 4-5 Borrego Palm Canyon traverse.** Paul 583-0266. See Schad, p. 195 for details on this strenuous 5-star hike.

**Feb 11 Orienteer.** Mission Trails Park, Tierrasanta. This one has a "couples" theme for Valentine's Day. Bill Gookin 578-9456.

**Feb 18-20 Rockhouse Canyon Area.** Steve again. Hidden Spring across to Middle Willows, to Upper Willows, to Horse Canyon, to Whitewash Canyon, and down Dry Wash back to Hidden Spring. This trip will travel through four major Cahuilla villages and numerous gathering areas and camp spots. There are some very remarkable sections of trail on this trip, similar in some ways to those in Rockhouse Valley, better in other ways. The route loops through canyon washes, across serene pristine high mountain plateaus, major drainage channels, long forgotten washes and even into Pinyon-Juniper forest.

**Feb 18 Paddling Lake Murray.** REI is putting on a paddle—\$5. Call for reservations. 295-7700.

**Feb 18 Boden Canyon.** 9-3pm. 12 mile loop. San Dieguito River Park 235-5440 x 5. Space limited, call for reservations. 2500 feet of gain.

**\*\*\*Feb 26 Pinyon Ridge traverse.** Sunday. Paul 583-0266. Hike from Ranchita to Yaqui Pass, half trail and half cross-country. See map.

**\*\*\*Mar 4-5 Hellhole Canyon backpack.** Paul 583-

0266. I just have a sketch in mind of the goals of the trip, because the participants will help decide. We will start by bagging The Thimble, one of the SDPC emblem peaks, then head down an Indian trail to Hellhole Flat. Each hiker will be able to take it as easy or hard as they want. See map.

**March 4-5 Borrego Palm Canyon traverse.** Steve. Sheep Canyon to Indian Canyon and down Borrego Palm Canyon. Similar to Paul's trip on Feb 4-5. This trip will pass through one of the most archeologically rich areas in Southern California. At one site there are over 100 morteros and grinding areas with pottery shards so commonplace you might not even stop to look. At many sites the grinding rocks are still inside the grinding holes! See Schad, p. 195 (Also see Feb 4-5 hike).

**Mar 5 Volcan Mountain.** Julian. San Dieguito River Park 235-5440 x5. Call for reservations. 10-3pm. This is only a six mile hike, but it's in a very, very beautiful area. Enjoy listening to the docent explain the history of the mountain.

**Mar 11 Orienteer, Agua Dulce.** Wooded Hill area of Laguna. Jeff Jacobs 270-3275. One of the prettiest areas and Jeff sets excellent courses. All levels, beginning through advanced. Agua Dulce is 8 miles up the Sunrise highway. Call Paul if you are interested 583-0266.

**March 11-12 Harper Canyon area.** Steve. Harper Canyon to Harper Flat and explore the east side of Harper Flat, then across Harper Flat and down Pinyon Wash and back to the car. Fairly easy.

**\*\*\*Mar 18-19 Palm Peak, High and Cool benchmarks.** Calcite Mine area, Borrego. Ranchita Ted. Hike either day or both days. These are two of the finest hikes you can go on. The first day is full of "prehistoric" slot canyons with a few class 3 climbs (hands and feet needed). Sunday (see write-up in "Trip Notes") is just a fun day, not too hard or strenuous, as you venture into an area unknown. Since Ted doesn't have a phone, you can contact Paul 583-0266, but the sooner the better.

**Mar 18 Upper SD River.** Carl 448-8542. Three large waterfalls. Very strenuous. 11 miles, 11 hours. See Schad, page 119. Saturday. Sierra Club.

**\*\*\*Mar 25-26 Cactus Spring Trail to Valerie Jean.** Paul 583-0266. This is the hike people have been begging me to led. We will backpack to the shoulder of Martinez Mountain, run up and bag it, then spend the night at Agua Alta Spring. Sunday we'll head down-canyon to Indio.



**Mar 25 Lake Boden.** 10 miles. 9-2pm. San Dieguito River Park 235-5440 x5. Call for reservations.

**Mar 25 Baja hike with Carl and friends.** "A short hike to a beautiful, large waterfall-pool on private property, complete with a cave. In the mountains between Ensenada and Tecate. Montanismos de Baja California is a hiking/climbing club in Tijuana whose members are dedicated to outdoor activities and conservation."-- Carl 448-8542.

**Mar 26 Mt Israel.** 12-4pm. 8 miles. San Dieguito River Park 235-5440 x5. Call for reservations.

**Apr 1-2 DPS Chili Cookoff and Wildflower Mountain Bike Tour.** San Luis Obispo County. Call Paul for more info 583-0266.

**Apr 8-9 Cutca Valley Trailwork.** With these rains comes overgrown trails. Please help maintain the trails on the north side of Palomar. The HPS, under Alan Coles, is organizing this work party for the Forest Service. Hand tools will be provided and an overnight backpack will be necessary. Another attempt is scheduled for May 6-7. Please contact Gail Hanna at her work 524-1698 or home 272-5141 no less than ten days prior to the event and she will have Alan send you the info. No experience needed. Our 1st Regional Wilderness NEEDS YOU!

**Apr 8-9 Orienteer.** Los Vaqueros Group campsite north of Stonewall Peak. Come and camp the night or drive up Saturday or Sunday. If you haven't done any orienteering before come to this meet for special instruction. SDPC members Donna Gookin 286-7958 and Gail Hanna, two of the finest orienteers in the US, are setting the courses. Saturday will feature a training clinic by Bill Gookin 578-9456, and Sunday Gail will design the courses around the Stonewall Mine in the Cuyamacas.

**Apr 8-15 Cave Paintings with Carl.** "The purpose of this trip is to explore some of the northern part of the Baja California peninsula as far south as San Ignacio. We will drive (about 1100 miles RT) to San Quintin, Bahia de Los Angeles, Scammon's Lagoon, and San Ignacio, stopping at interesting old churches, mining towns, and see some of the easy to get to cave paintings in the Sierra San Francisco. We plan to spend most of the nights in motels-hotels. Very small group. Cost- your expenses only. Must have a reliable vehicle." -- Carl 448-8542.

**Apr 21-23 Canoe the Lower Colorado River.** Carl 448-8542. Carl's traditional trip from Walter's Camp to Martinez Lake. Call for details. Sierra Club.

**May 6 Old SD Flume trail to Conejo Creek.** Carl 448-8542. Starts at El Capitan Reservoir. Call for details. Sierra Club.

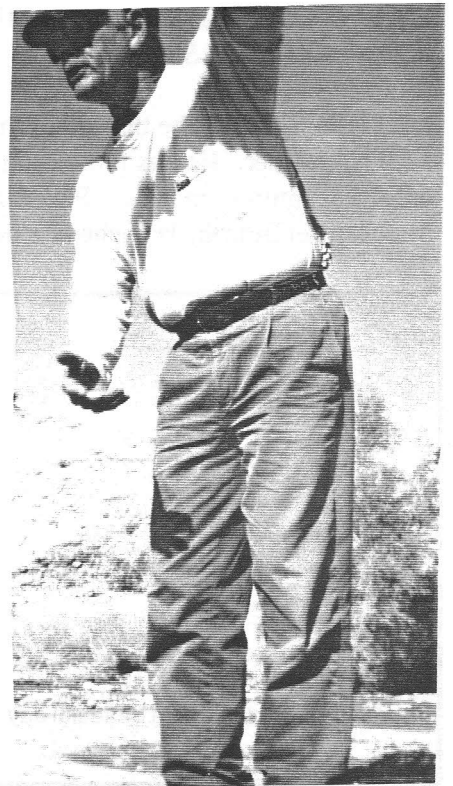
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**May 26-29 Picacho del Diablo.** Carl 448-8542. Join Carl for this very strenuous Memorial Day weekend hike to the premiere mountain in Baja.

**May 27-29 Three Glorious days of ORIENTEERING!** Lagunas. More on this next issue. Paul 583-0266.

**July 8-16 Copper Canyon with Carl.** 448-8542.

**Aug 12-20 Drive to Copper Canyon with Carl** 448-8542. Call Carl and Nancy for more info on the Copper Canyon trips.



Lorin Mitts giving a dance lesson during lunch.

## Al's Monday Escapades

Join Al Holden (273-2494) as he renews his Sierra Club Monday hike series. Al has a nice blend of mountain and desert adventures for you to enjoy.

JAN 30 McCain Valley - explore rocks and caves in area.

FEB 6 Manza Peak - Noble Canyon - Mine Canyon. Lagunas.  
13 Pine Mountain loop. Lagunas.  
20 San Ysidro and Thimble. Excellent hike.  
27 Sombrero Peak from McCain Valley.

MAR 6 Sheephead. Lagunas.  
13 West Mesa trails of Cuyamaca. Investigate Indian artifacts  
20 Cottonwood Creek loop. Lagunas.  
27 Whale Peak. 6 hour hike.

APR 3 6K Ridge. Lagunas.  
10 Morena Butte  
17 Granite Mountain loop. Anza-Borrego.  
24 Laguna Ravines. By Wooded Hill.

MAY 1 Cuyamaca Threesome- Middle Peak, Cuyamaca Peak and Stonewall.

**NOTICE:** This will be the end of the Monday hikes by Al until November. He has promised to lead some "SDPC only" adventures in June. Please note that the hikes for March differ from the last schedule due to rain cancellations.

WEDNESDAY

## WALKABOUT

HIKES with JIM "Raccoon"

SUGG



Jim leads hikes for Walkabout International every Wednesday. His hikes vary in length and time from 8-16 miles and from 5-8 hours hiking time. They cover all areas of the county within 1 1/2 hours driving time. Many of the hikes are unique to this group! Al Holden frequently leads the first and third Wednesdays. Jim's number is 224-7895.

FEB 1 PEAK 6299. Al. By Cuyapaipe in the Lagunas. This is my favorite spot to come to and just sit and watch the scenery. This is an easy hike that is on my top ten list.  
8 Kitchen Creek and Falls.  
15 Middle Peak and Sill Hill by "Al's route". Al.  
22 Cookie Crumb and Pine Ridge. Pine Ridge trail is the most beautiful trail in the Cuyamacas.

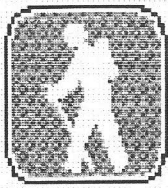
MAR 1 Pine Mountain and Indian Creek Falls. Al.  
8 Lower Noble Canyon loop.  
15 Upper Noble Canyon and Sunset Trail. Al.  
22 Cedar Creek Falls.  
29 Miner's Road and Pine Valley Creek loop.

APR 5 Harper Creek and Red Bud hike. Cuyamaca. Al.  
12 In-ko-pah--Smuggler's Cave, Valley of the Moon. Jim will investigate the Valley, rather than bag Blue Angels Peak.  
19 Cuyapaipe. Lagunas. Al.  
26 Poway and Ramona Lakes. 11 miles.

By Benchmark Cool on a beautiful day.



# SATURDAY WALKABOUT



## HIKES with Wanda and Jim

**W**ANDA ZACK, whom many know as a longtime Sierra Club leader, has joined Jim to lead Saturday hikes for Walkabout. These have the same 0745 start time, from the same place, but are slightly shorter than the Wednesday hikes. Wanda's number is 292-9136.

**FEB 11** San Pasqual Valley River Park. 8:15 @ Rancho Penasquitos Park and Ride off Poway Road.

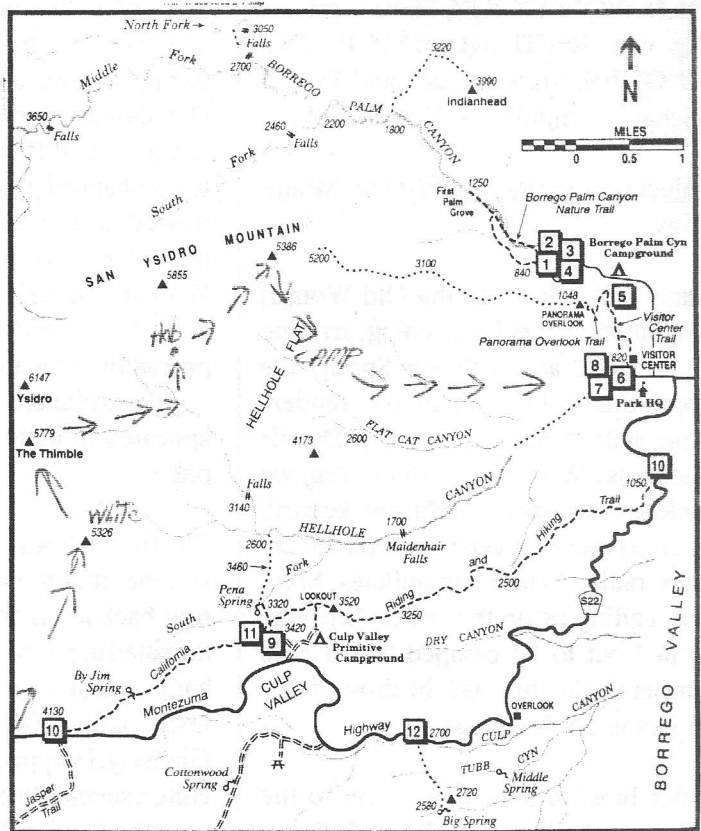
**MAR 4** Pine Ridge trail. Cuyamaca. A corridor of manzanita's pink and white flowers will line the trail of this 9 mile hike.

11 Corte Madera. im.

18 Stelzer Park. Lakeside. Bill Babcock and Jim.

25 Springtime at the Santa Rosa Plateau. This is a "must go" 9 mile hike through the Nature Conservancy land of carpets of shooting stars and other vegetation.

Coming in April... Dead Horse trail by Descanso, Cibbitts Flat, and the Santa Rosa Plateau again. Call Wanda for details.



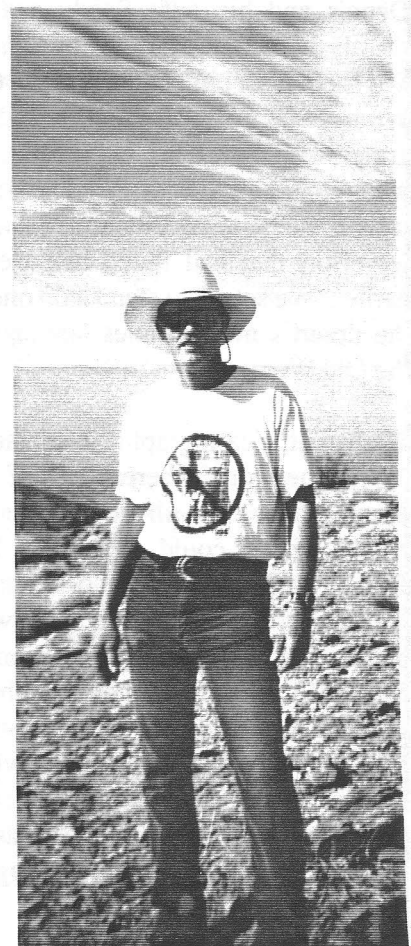
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Above: The route we will take on Mar. 4-5 Hellhole Canyon backpack.

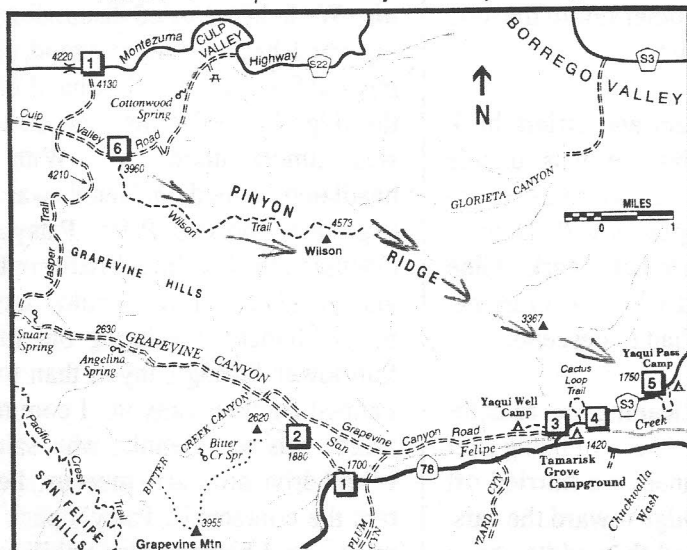
Right: Carl sporting his modified Grand Canyon shirt.

Left: On Feb. 26 hike from Ranchita to Yaqo Pass.

From "Afoot and Afield in San Diego County"-  
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### Area D-6: Grapevine Canyon / Pinyon Ridge





**OLD WOMAN STATUE**, a private trip with **RICHARD AND PATSY HUGHES**, Mark Adrian, and Dennis Richards around New Year's Day....

#### Adventure in the Old Woman Mountains

Patsy and I drove to the Old Woman Mountains Thursday evening, arriving at midnight at Sunflower Spring, the approximate location of our rendezvous with Mark Adrian and Dennis Richards. With no-one to be seen, we bedded down for the night, awoke early the next morning and turned on the 2m Ham radio. Within ten minutes, Mark was calling us on the radio. Since he turned out to be camped half a mile further up the dirt road, he drove down to join us for breakfast.

After breakfast we drove over to the alternate trailhead at Painted Rock. Dennis and his wife Sandy arrived shortly thereafter. Mark, Dennis, Patsy and I set off for our conquest of the Old Woman Statue. Fleet of foot and lightly armed with rock climbing regalia, we were confident that we would outmaneuver the more heavily armed Angeles effort that had failed two weeks earlier. We set off to stand atop one of the desert's most famous landmarks, the Old Woman Statue.

We had little cartographic information as to the exact whereabouts of the Statue, and we had already gleaned as much as we could from our San Bernadino County and De Lorme maps. Nevertheless, upon cresting the rise west of the cars, we spied the Old Woman Statue. Shawl held tight over her back against the cold, the Old Woman hunched forward against the icy wind, her head held high above those ancient shoulders. She might have been cast in stone, a monument to man's struggle against Nature.

To reach the Statue we circumnavigated the contour of the ridge line at the

head of a canyon. We were soon standing at the base of the Statue itself, gazing in awe at the mighty profile. Dennis led the first pitch, a free climb of some 5.7 in difficulty (a difficulty that was enhanced by the chill). His hands were almost completely numb as he led this pitch. We ate lunch on the Old Woman's shoulder, gazing thoughtfully at the line of rusty old bolts that disappeared over the top of her head. With no other volunteers stepping forward, it appeared to be my lot to lead this aid pitch.

The first bolt was missing its hanger. I slid the nut on one of my booty wired nuts back along the wire and carefully threaded the exposed loop onto the bolt hanger (just like they do in the movies!). Clip. The first etrier was on. Gingerly, I stepped into one of the loops. Huh, it seemed to be holding my weight. I climbed higher and was able to reach the next bolt. Clip. A quickdraw was snapped into the bolt and I clipped the rope through the draw. Phew. I reached down, unclipped an etrier from the first bolt and clipped it into the biner on the second bolt. Cautiously I stepped into one of the loops on that etrier. Everything seemed to be holding together. As I gained confidence, so I gained speed. In a short while, I was standing atop the Old Woman's head, where I tied off to the two belay bolts and belayed Dennis up on one side of the rope as he ascended the other side of the rope on Jumars and etriers.

We sent the Jumars and etriers back down to Mark but he was unable to ascend the rope. Patsy came up instead and traded places with Dennis. Dennis descended to help Mark. Time and the cold wind were too pressing, however, and we had to descend.

I rapped off last, cleaning the remaining gear as I went. The hour being later than we had planned, we hurried off back around the ridge toward the cars. Mark and I reached the saddle above

the cars and stopped to wait for Patsy and Dennis, both of whom we had left some distance behind. As we scanned the horizon, we were able to locate Dennis but not Patsy. "Patsy!" I yelled. "Cat claw, cat claw," came a plaintive reply. Cat claw? There wasn't much cat claw around. I called to Dennis. Dennis shouted back, "She's saying, 'CAN'T WALK.'"

I have never bivvied. Even though I often return late at night, I have developed sufficiently good nocturnal navigation skills that I always return to camp. I immediately realised, however, that my number had been drawn. With the veil of darkness rapidly descending, no moon, and the boulder strewn terrain that lay between Patsy and the cars, I knew that Patsy wouldn't be able to make it to the cars. I desperately tried to recall my wedding vows, hoping to find an easy way back to the promised warmth by the cars. Uh uh, I just couldn't remember what I had promised back then, seven years ago on the patio of the Laguna Sierra Club Lodge overlooking the vastness of the desert. All I could remember was Patsy standing there with tears welling up in her eyes. Damn!

I gave Mark much of the climbing gear from my pack and asked him to go down to the cars and let Sandy know what was going on. I ran over to Dennis. We held a hurried discussion during which he gave me extra food, clothing and fire starter. I continued across the ridge line. By this time darkness was almost upon us. With our headlamps turned on, Dennis was able to guide me down to Patsy. Patsy and I discussed further the available options and decided that we would have a better chance of walking out to the Sunflower Spring canyon than to the Painted Boulder canyon. I communicated this to Dennis, who said he would drive around to meet us. I emptied the contents of Patsy's pack into mine. As I helped Patsy uphill to the

ridgeline, it was clear that we wouldn't be able to hike out that night.

We located a semi-sheltered spot amongst some pinyon trees and hunkered down for the long night. Although this night was no longer than the previous one, it sure seemed a lot longer to us. I hunted around for wood and collected a sizable pile. After some difficulty, I finally managed to get a fire going. It's hard to describe twelve hours of this misery. The temperature was below freezing, we were unable to sleep and ate pistachio nuts and Lifesavers as a diversion. In the distance we could see the light of Dennis' lantern and sometimes his truck's headlamps. Every now and again I would check the time and be consistently distraught to discover that what I had thought was an hour was actually the passage of a mere fifteen minutes.

Although I was beginning to entertain the possibility that the sun might never rise again, dawn finally broke. We were able to begin our descent. I extinguished the fire and we began slowly working our way downhill. With the aid of binoculars I could make out the trucks and two figures walking along the road.

I had to help Patsy almost every step of the way. We soon made voice contact with Dennis and Mark who found us shortly thereafter. Dennis had brought sandwiches and a Thermos of coffee. Things were definitely beginning to look up. Soon we were down on the canyon floor walking along

a relatively level wash. Now we were cruising. Mark and I strode on ahead so we could drive around and collect our car from the other canyon.

Finally we were all together again, eating breakfast in the middle of the dirt road, debriefing. We drove onto Twentynine Palms and I took Patsy to the High Desert Hospital for an X-ray. A confirmed sprain, albeit a bad one. Patsy still wanted to go to Joshua Tree so we headed to Sheep Cove #3 where we met up with Dennis, Mark and Sandy, in addition to Eric, Lori, Terry and many more. Quite a story to tell.

For the next two days, Patsy kicked back whilst everyone else peak bagged, mountain biked or rock climbed.

Patsy and I would like to thank Dennis, Mark and Sandy for staying with us through the course of these events. Especially Mark. While we knew that Dennis and Sandy would stay with us, Mark had a peak bagging date the next day with Terry Flood. Knowing how devoted he is to peak bagging, we would not have been surprised had Mark gone off peak bagging secure in the knowledge that we were in good hands with Dennis and Sandy. Mark put our safety above his personal gain. This, I feel, is one of the most important attributes of a friend, a leader and a human being. These are the people I like to go into the mountains with. Thanks, guys.

Richard J. Hughes



DPS list finishers gather for photo at Terry Flood's list finish. 36 well-wishers gave a toast of champagne to Terry on Orocopia Mountain. (7 of 12 list finishers are SDPC members. Terry and Mark Adrian are hiking the SDPC list now).

# Organ Pipe Puts a Song In Your Heart

FROM CALIFORNIA  
Explorer, Feb 1988



by Beth and Ralph Davis

Outdoor enthusiasts are already aware of the outstanding hiking possibilities in the Grand Canyon State—Arizona. Besides the "Grandest Canyon of them all", there is Oak Creek Canyon, the Petrified Forest, the Painted Desert, Monument Valley, and Canyon de Chelly National Monument, just to name a few. But for those wanting to escape the three million plus visitors a year at the South Rim, there is a place of pristine desert beauty that lies within a half day's journey from the metropolitan areas of southern California. It is the 516-square-mile Organ Pipe Cactus National Monument in southwestern Arizona.

This is part of the Sonoran Desert which embraces a surprisingly lush landscape since it has two distinct rainy seasons instead of one—summer and winter. The variety of cacti—29 species in all—is unsurpassed by any other area north of Mexico. In fact, the monument was established in 1937 to preserve the Organ Pipe cacti which reach the northern limit of their range here.

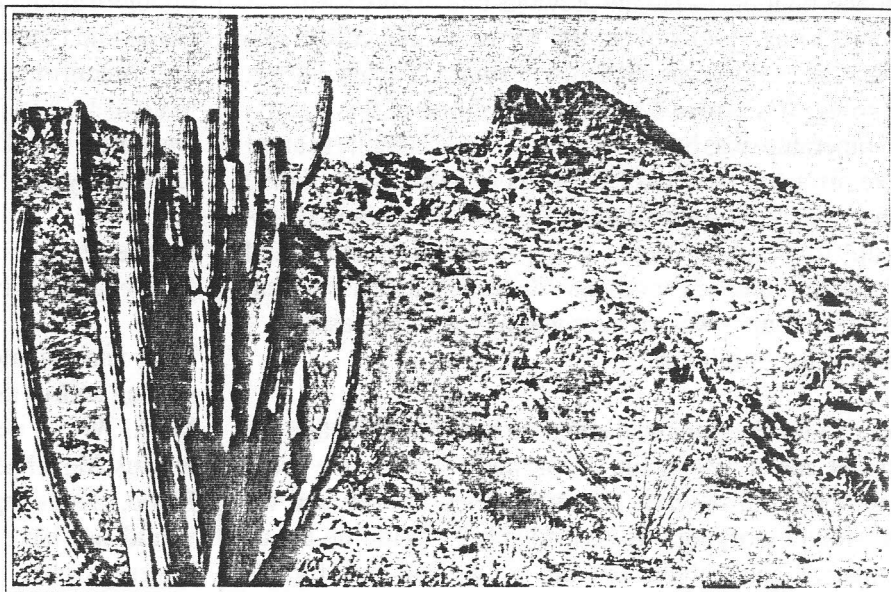
The other cactus synonymous with the Sonoran Desert is the stately, columnar saguaro (su-WHAR-oh) with "arms" extended in greeting or salute to all who pass by. A saguaro 40 feet tall could be almost 200 years old.

Spring is the prettiest season because of all the wildflowers in bloom, but naturally that's when you will find the most people. On a recent three-day hiking trip in winter, however, we saw only a handful of people. And depending how far you go in the backcountry, you might not see anyone else at all. Organ Pipe attracts just 1,500 backpackers a year. About the only limit to where you can hike is the need to carry all your water. Backpacking simply requires a free backcountry permit available at the visitor's center. Although the winter days are mild, be aware that nights can get close to freezing.

The following are three dayhikes to get you started in this fascinating, picturesque desert area.

## Victoria and Martinez Mines

There was extensive mining activity for gold and silver here before the establishment of the monument. The most productive mine yielded \$125,000 in its 40 years of operation and was named Victoria Mine. You can see remnants of the old store built with native materials around 1900 and other artifacts from its heyday in



Organ Pipe Cactus Under Pinkley Peak

by Beth Davis

the late 1800s at the abandoned site.

This easy 7-mile dayhike starts at the south end of the main campground at the dump station. Sign the trail register and hike southwest on the well-marked pathway as it traverses over the low-lying hills towards the Sonoyota Mountains. The double summit of aptly name Twin Peaks rises to your right and stays in sight for the entire hike. If you find yourself losing the trail at times as it crosses sandy washes, look for the short white pegs with a brown arrow that hug the trail on either side.

In a short while you will see several examples of "nursery trees", mostly the lime-green Palo Verde (in Spanish it means "green stick"). It is the state tree of Arizona. Nursery plants are those that protect a saguaro or organ pipe from the hot sun when it's young. The cactus may be five years old and only be one inch high, so its chances of survival are much greater if the seed falls under the shade of a much larger plant. Further along the trail, the saguaros are older and, having outgrown their adoptive parents, are now towering above them.

Other plants along the trail are the creosote bush, with small, green, waxy leaves to reduce evaporation, and the ocotillo (ah-ka-TEE-oh), with their long spiny stems that grow green with leaves after every rain. The leaves then dry up and fall off during dry periods. In the spring, each stem has a beautiful red flower spike that gives the ocotillo the nickname of "coachwhip."

In less than two miles, the trail ends abruptly at a jeep road and a sign points to Victoria Mine

to the left. Turn right (north) to go first to Martinez Mine which is on the left just over a mile, tucked up against the Sonoyota Mountains. The abandoned jeep road is very overgrown so remember that it parallels the hills. There are many shafts and prospect holes but little evidence of structures.

When you are finished exploring this area, head south back to the sign and continue approximately 1/3 mile to Victoria Mine. Hours could be spent here among the old general store, the antique mining equipment, shafts that go down 400 feet, and the mine tailings. Always be careful of exploring around old mines and remember: removal or defacing of anything is strictly prohibited.

## Estes Canyon/Bull Pasture Loop

Below the Ajo Mountains, the highest mountain range in southwestern Arizona, is a beautiful valley by the name of Bull Pasture. Named after the cattle that were wintered here in the 1920s, this broad basin hugs the distinctive, rugged range on the west side.

This 4-mile loop starts just over midpoint on the 21-mile Ajo Mountain drive at Post 15 in the eastern section of the monument. It is easier to hike up the more gradual, maintained Estes Canyon Trail and come down the steeper, unmaintained Bull Pasture Trail, which drops 800 feet in 2.25 miles.



Some saguaros in the Estes Canyon area have been damaged by freezing temperatures. As a result, their "arms" have been twisted and shriveled into interesting shapes. Also abundant here are the chain-fruit cholla, so-named because the flowers are borne on the fruit of the previous years' and hang down in long chains. The numerous bird nests found in the cholla branches are built by the cactus wren, Arizona's state bird, and the curve-billed thrasher.

After 1.5 miles in the canyon bottom, the trail climbs up to a ridge and meets the trail going to Bull Pasture to the left. At the overlook is a trail register and expansive views in nearly every direction. Across the basin rises the highest point in the monument, Ajo Mountain, 4,808 feet above sea level. Notice the varied terrain including the rock cones to your center right.

This area takes on a mystical quality as the mountains turn a fiery crimson in the desert sunset. On the way back, some of the finest displays of organ pipe cactus in the monument are on the southwestern slopes near the trail.

### **Pinkley Peak Is "Tuff"**

If you like cross-country boulder scrambling, Pinkley Peak is for you. Named after Frank "Boss" Pinkley, the superintendent for all the national park service monuments in the southwest in the 20's and 30's, it rises 3,145 feet above sea level, the highest point in the Puerto Blanco Mountains. There is a 53-mile road that encircles these mountains, and although Pinkley can be climbed from most any side, a standard route leaves from Post 4 on the drive.

Walk west toward the colorful yellow patches of rock below the peak. This is one of the best exposures of tuff, or compressed volcanic ash, anywhere in the monument. As you hike up the canyon, or above it to the right where there is less vegetation, you are walking on geologic history dating back to volcanic activity 14 to 22 million years ago during Tertiary time.

### **Splendid Views But Watch For Teddybear Cactus Spines**

Hike up to the saddle ahead of you. Be careful not to use the teddybear cholla cacti for handholds. Wear sturdy boots and carry a comb and tweezers to get the spines out of your flesh should you get stuck. The cactus is not poisonous, but it sure is painful.

Head toward the peak, carefully picking your way over the boulders. The last 50 feet are challenging but can be negotiated by

careful route selection up through the sturdy cliffs. The summit register is at the benchmark at the highest point.

A different way to go down is to descend the large ridge south of the peak. The views are splendid and you can see your car back at Post 4. Allow at least five hours to complete this dayhike.

Superintendent  
Organ Pipe Cactus Nat'l Monument  
Rt. 1, Box 100  
Ajo, AZ 85321  
(602) 387-6849

From San Diego, take I-8 east to Gila Bend, then south on Hwy. 85. Approx. 360 miles total.

Here is an account of Carl Johnson's misfortune in his own words:

### **GRAND CANYON RUN, OCTOBER 8-10, 1994**

For the past five years Charles Leix has helped coordinate transportation and lodging for this wonderful, beautiful, unbelievable, non-competitive, expenses only, run-walk-hike from the North Rim to the South Rim (about 23 miles, some people do a double crossing in two days). After I "ran" the canyon last year, I volunteered to coordinate it this year. "Unfortunately" in my zeal to be sure everything went safely and smoothly I informed those going with numerous informational mailings, and "unfortunately" in an effort to share the run with other possibly interested persons who would want the safety of a group, I put an announcement of the run in the San Diego Sierra Club publication. (I later canceled any Sierra Club involvement.) These two "unfortunate" actions on my part set into motion a very elaborate sting operation by the National Park Service, involving among other things: video taping, deceit, set-up, inside operatives, and surveillance.

To make a long, involved story shorter—100 yards down the trail on the North rim, two rangers stepped out from behind the bushes, put me under arrest, handcuffed me for two hours, held me for two more hours, arranged transportation by helicopter to jail in Flagstaff (ultimately canceled), fined me \$2500, confiscated T-shirts some persons had purchased, required me to post a \$500 cash bond, and then released me to somehow make my way (safely???) to the South Rim where Nancy was expecting me. To make matters worse, in an effort to gather more evidence, Nancy was interrogated and eventually informed that I was being detained on kidnapping charges.

The Park Service charged me with organizing a sporting event without a special use permit (which they do not issue) even though in a telephone conversation with a ranger prior to the trip, I was given permission to do the "run" and even though Chuck had written confirmation from the superintendent that what we were doing did not require a special use permit.

The Grand Canyon Run this year was not an enjoyable trip for Nancy or me, and gave a whole different perspective of the National Parks Service. Many of those people on the trip as well as myself have expressed our outrage over the tactics used by the National Parks Service and have informed them of that fact, as well as various congresspersons, and outdoor publications.

In addition, this situation has made it very clear to me that despite my efforts to release myself of any legal liabilities, to keep people well informed, and to have safe trips, oddly enough, a person increases the possibility of liability and exposes themselves to overzealous law enforcement persons. For being a "nice guy" and organizing a trip, it's enough to make me real nervous. —Carl