

A Publication For Adventure Hikers of the San Diego Peaks Club

Vol 5, No.3 (Issue 27)

December-January 1996



Views from the Top

ATTENTION ALL CELLULAR PHONE USERS

have recently heard that all cellular phones can call 911 while inactivated. SO...here's what you can do. Phone companies are giving phones away at no cost to the user as long as you use their service. Most contracts enact penalties if you stop phone service within one year. After one year, then, it's a better deal to get a new phone plus 1000 minutes of free talking (an advertisement I've seen). So what do you do with your old deactivated cellular phone? Three guesses....That's right. You give it to SDPC so that we can use it in an emergency to call 911. Please help us. There must be some members who have had their phones for over one year.

A few people have called about another map order with the USGS. Sorry, folks, but there isn't a price break for ordering in large quantity anymore. Until recently maps cost \$2.50, and if you ordered 200 maps they charged only \$1.25. Currently they sell for \$4.00 per map with a \$3.50 handling charge per order—no bulk discounts any longer I have the ordering information for anyone who is interested, but I'll not order in bulk again unless the pricing changes.

Please welcome new club members Tim Downey, Steve Garvin, Sharlene Bauer, Jack Van Sambeek, Christina Wire, and James Trent.

What a trip!

ighty athletic hikers attempted the Outlaw trail, an 8,000 foot ascent from downtown Palm Springs to the tram, with 25 deciding to bag the peak, Mt San Jacinto, for a 10,400 foot dayhike. SDPC member Tim Downey sprinted past everyone and reached the top in 7 hours (i.e., 1500 feet per hour!).

I picked a heck of a day to do this trip. I purposely chose a joint venture with the DPS from LA, but didn't know the Coachella Valley Hiking Club (CVHC) was doing their 3rd annual hike with 38 people on that day, too. Combine this with 16 hikers from the DPS and 17 from SDPC, 3 all the way from San Jose, and 6 independents and you have an eventful day. For those of you who hate hiking in crowds, it wasn't bad. The CVHC started, as SDPC did, from the Ramon Road trailhead. Their "peak group" started at 5:00 AM and their "tram group" started at 5:45 AM.

SDPC started at 6:10 AM. Mean-while, the DPS was starting the shorter Desert Museum route at 5:30 AM. Tim passed many people, but we tortoises didn't meet too many. More information inside in John McCully's write-up.



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HIKER OF THE MONTH

The Hiker of the Month (HOTM) for November is **JERRY SCHAD.** Why, you say? Well, what hasn't he done? You pick an accomplishment. Do you want to choose one of his hiking books? one of his cycling books? his CD-ROM or his new physical science book? none of these please you? OK, there's still his <u>Reader</u> column.

On Indianhead recently, we noticed that new member **TIM DOWNEY** was one of the last people to have signed the register; he had labeled himself either a tortoise or snail compared to the friend he was hiking with. Yet he climbed from downtown Palm Springs (elev. 500 feet) to San Jacinto Peak (10,800 feet) in 7 hours. Therefore, the HOTM for December goes to Tim for his very unsnail-like ascent of the Outlaw Trail. Tim, we nickname you "Superslug"!

DONNA and EDWIN GOOKIN are the HOTM in January for their US Orienteering Championship wins.





My E-MAIL ADDRESS is hikerpaul@aol.com.

I have a report of a **BEAR TAKING FOOD** from an SDPC member at Mammoth this year. The only solace the unfortunate hiker had is that there were 5 pounds of prunes among the vittles. Could this be how the name Pooh Bear originated?

The SAN DIEGUITO RIVER

PARK, responding to the fears of private property owners, voted to take additional steps to protect private property within their focus area at the September meeting. Although the Park has never participated in hostile condemnation and even lacks primary land use authority, the private property owners in the Ramona-Santa Ysabel area still felt that mere inclusion in the Park's focused planning area was big government violating their God-given-rights. If you recall,

Supervisor Ron Roberts was the only person to side with the Park at the June meeting. The Park Board thus clarified the plan and made further guarantees that the Park will not recommend or participate in hostile takeover.

A word of thanks goes to SDPC members Jerry Schad and Richard Ulery for being members of the Park. If you wish a complete event schedule call 235-5440 x5. They have a San Pasqual hike Sunday, Nov 26, at 8:30 and a Lake Hodges hike on Sat, Dec 16th, at 9 AM.

The ANZA-BORREGO FOUN-DATION acquired 517 acres in 1994 for \$67,000. The goal for 1995 has been the valued Sentenac Canyon, a beautiful riparian area at the eastern terminus of Anza-Borrego near Scissors Crossing. If you wish to donate services or money, write to ABF, PO Box 2001, Borrego Springs 92004.

An impending decision on the closure of **COYOTE CANYON** draws closer. As of 11-12-95, State Park authorities have com-

pleted gathering public opinion on the matter. The probable closure for cars involves only a 3.1 mile section between Middle and Upper Willows. It will not affect hikers and mountain bikers. Of course, the Coyote Canyon Clunker Classic mountain bike ride in which 300-400 cyclists ride through the canyon will end, but individual riders will not be affected.

GAIL HANNA has been elected to the Board of Directors for the San Diego County Trails Council. The Council aims to resurrect the California Riding and Hiking Trail.

Thank you, Gail, for volunteering.

RICHARD HUGHES' rock climbing group, Los Alpinistas, and the SD Sierra Club calendar are on-line at URLs http://www-alpinistas.ucsd.edu or http://132.239.105.50/ respectively.

In the Sept-Oct issue an article stated, "The State Fish and Game is due to release forty-eight wild turkeys in the Cleveland National Forest in February and March of '95. Sixteen of the turkeys will be released in Laguna Meadow...." Did you see the headlines in the Union-Tribune on Thanksgiving

HIKING HORIZONS

TRAIL TALK

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Day? "WILD TURKEYS EVICTED FROM PARK." Seems the turkeys, introduced in 1993 to Cuyamaca, may be eating sensitive plants and endangered animals. A couple of environmental groups have sued Fish and Game to do a lengthy environmental impact report saying, "This action is for the entertainment of a special interest group and it just has no relation to biology or protecting (the) environment whatsoever." (Union-Tribune, p. A-26, Thurs., 11-23-95).

DONNA AND EDWIN GOOKIN won the US Long-O Championships in their age and gender groups. Long-O is a type of orienteering in which the course stretches 1.5 times as long as usual. The San Jose meet ran 4.5 miles with over 1200 feet of climbing. The Long-O puts an emphasis on fitness and navigation.



Foot Notes

The Outlaw Trail -Palm Springs To The Top Of The
Tram

by John McCully

n his San Bernadino Mountain Trails John Robinson states that the 8,000 foot gain Outlaw trail from Palm Springs to Long Valley was originally an Indian trail. His more recent The San Jacintos notes that the trail was improved in 1933 by a labor gang using Riverside County and State funds. Sid Davis led some folks up this trail over the years but by 1977 it had been almost completely overgrown and forgotten. On Memorial Day that year HPSers Bobcat Thompson, Ray Riley and Ron Webster followed it up to the tram and went on to bag San Jacinto, thus creating a day hike of close to 10,400 feet. They documented this feat in the HPS newsletter that summer, and led the hike as an official HPS trip on Memorial Day the following year, attracting about 15 participants, about half of whom topped out on San Jac. In 1979 these three tigers led it a 2nd time as a scheduled HPS hike, and almost everyone managed the peak. Our three pathfinders decided not to continue this Memorial Day extravaganza,

however, perhaps because of the horrible manzanita at about 6,000 feet. It's difficult to describe how nasty this manzanita was, and how difficult it was to find a way through it. In the fall of 1980, however, a huge fire burned off most of the brush on the hillside and enough trail maintenance has occurred in the years since to keep the route in good shape. I've received only a few scratches in the many times I've done this hike in shorts.

An average DPSer can probably get to the tram in between 6 and 8 hours unless it's hot or the snow is bad. Tigers claim to do it in four hours, Erik Siering and Ron Hudson both recently got to the tram in 5 (and did the peak and got back to the tram in another 4). On November 12 Jim Brown pulled out the stops and got to the tram in 4 1/2 hours, the fastest time yet by anyone I personally know. I would say that this hike is harder than San Gorgonio via Vivien Creek but is easier than either Big Iron or Big Rabbit. Being able to take the tram down makes all the difference.

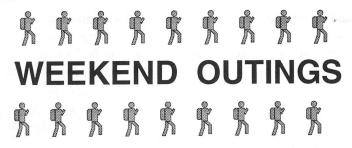
Trail Description, Palm Springs To Upper Tram Station

Disclaimer: This trail involves a great deal of altitude gain (8,000+ feet) and a considerable horizontal distance (9 or 10 miles) and should not be undertaken except by people with the conditioning and experience to handle such an undertaking. The map and this description may contain errors that could cause one to get into difficulty. Evelyn Reher, who does volunteer rangering in Long Valley, notes that the rangers try to discourage folks from doing this trail, and about once a year they have to rescue people who have gotten into trouble on it. The most common cause of difficulty is running out of water, but sometimes people just run out of strength or get off trail.

If you find yourself at any point off the trail you should go back to where you lost it and find it again. It can be dangerous to continue off trail for more than a minute or two as you may not be able to find the trail again. Trying to go cross county is extremely difficult and dangerous because of almost impassable brush and severe rock formations. There is always a trail. Make sure you keep on the trail. There are two starting points for the trail. I prefer the Museum Trail but most folks use the Carl Lykken Trail.

CARL LYKKEN TRAIL: This starting point is at the West end of Ramon Road (520 feet). Ramon Rd crosses Palm Canyon Drive (State 111) just before it makes a slight turn to the East after passing through downtown Palm Springs. In the fall of 1995, Calidad Road, which intersects Ramon one block from its West end, had no houses or signs restricting parking. A wide horse trail heads North from the

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DEC 9-10 HELLHOLE FLAT. Borrego. Lots of possible peakbagging (Thimble, Hob, Peak 5386, etc.) or just relaxing while walking on the flats. Participants decide the trip. Paul 583-0266. Enter at Ranchita and exit at information center in Borrego (car shuttle).

DEC 17 Sun. **ORIENTEERING.** North Park. Christmas Lights Night-0. Mary and John Barry 297-5895.

DEC 26-JAN 1 COPPER CANYON. Mexico. Carl Johnson 448-8542.

JAN 6 COWLES MOUNTAIN the Carl Johnson way. 448-8542. Sierra Club. 4 hours of hiking.

JAN 6-7 RECLUSE SPRINGS RELICS AND PINTO CANYON PETROGLYPHS. Jacumba Outstanding Natural Area Wilderness. Paul 583-0266. I'm toying with the idea of driving in Davies Valley (see Mark Adrian's article in Footnotes), hiking down to Pinto Canyon to the petroglyph site, then up Pinto to Recluse Springs and out the standard Schad route by the freeway.

JAN 11 Thurs. ORIENTEERING PROGRAM.

SDPC member Gail Hanna will give a demonstration of maps and orienteering equipment and will explain how the "thinking sport" can add a new perspective to your hiking activities. A short video will also be shown. Attendees receive a free pass to a future novice course at an SDO meet. Call Rob Langsdorf at 459-1726 for the meeting location. All welcome. This is a SC PCT Section meeting.

JAN 14 Sun. **ORIENTEERING**. Palm Desert. Dead Indian Wash. Madonna Bentz and Bill Gookin 578-9456.

JAN 27-28 RETURN TO RED TOP AND SAWTOOTH MOUNTAINS. This is going to be a great trip and not too hard. Start at McCain Valley and descend the Pepperwood Trail (see Schad, p. 275) to Canebrake Wash. Walk across the wash and climb the saddle betwixt Red Top and Sawtooth. Set up camp. Bag Red Top and Sawtooth peaks if you wish. Sunday hike goes along the creek to Inner Pasteur, over to Moonlight Wash, and out to Agua Caliente Hot Springs where we

can soak our cares away. Paul 583-0266.

FEB 3 EL CAJON MOUNTAIN. Carl Johnson's annual pilgrimage. 448-8542. SC.

FEB 10-11 ORIENTEERING. Mission Trails Park. Sat. Course Setters workshop. Sun. Variety-O meet. Bill Gookin 578-9456.

FEB 17-19 KOFA CAR CAMP with Carl Johnson. 448-8542. Climb Signal Peak and Castle Dome. If you haven't hiked in this area (by Yuma) you have missed some beautiful mountains only three hours drive from San Diego. Sierra Club. Sign up quickly!

MAR 2 SAN DIEGO RIVER with Carl Johnson 448-8542. Another annual pilgrimage. See Schad, p. 119. 11 hour dayhike. Strenuous.

MAR 2-3 HIKE OF THE YEAR. Rockhouse Canyon to Valerie Jean. Joint SDPC-DPS hike. We will enter Rockhouse, climb the Santa Rosa Ridge, and drop into Martinez Canyon to exit at Valerie Jean (Indio). <u>Very strenuous</u>. Paul 583-0266

MAR 17 Sun. ORIENTEERING. Point Loma Training Event. Ruth Simons. Call Paul 583-0266.

MAR 30-APR 6 COPPER CANYON with Carl Johnson. 448-8542.

SATURDAY WALKABOUT



HIKES with Wanda and Bill

Wanda Zack and Bill Babcock lead Saturday hikes for Walkabout. These have the same 0745 start time, from the sameplace, but are slightly shorter than the Wednesday hikes. Wanda's number is 292-9136. Bill's is 495-9141.

- DEC 2 Pine Valley loop. 9 miles.
 - 9 East Mesa Boundary Road—new trail.
 - 16 Oakzanita Peak.
 - 27 Weds hike. Pine Valley loop repeat.
- JAN 3 Weds hike. Dead Horse trail.
 - 6 Mt Woodson north side, Fry trail. Bill Babcock.
 - 13 San Pasqual Valley. 9 miles.
 - 20 El Capitan with Bill Babcock. 9 miles.
 - 27 Mission Trails—Padre Dam—hike to Fortuna...

Al's Monday Madness

Al Holden has restarted his Monday hikes for the San Diego Sierra Club and has terrific hikes planned. In fact, I plan to take a few Mondays off work. Al's phone: 273-2494.

- DEC 4 INDIANHEAD
 - 11 THREE LAGUNA PEAKS. Pine Mountain, Garnet Peak and Garnet Mountain.
 - 18 JACUMBA MOUNTAIN VIA DOS CABEZAS. Excellent hike.
- JAN 8 PINYON MOUNTAIN, North approach. See Schad, p.241. 14 miles, 3100-ft. gain/loss and 10 hours of hiking according to Jerry. Another excellent hike.
 - 22 PYRAMID. See Schad, p.224. This is an offshoot of Jerry's book hike. I estimate 8 hours RT, 2500-ft. gain/loss, 12 miles depend ing on the route Al takes. It takes about 2.5 hours to drive to the trailhead. Use the Thimble trailhead, described on page 214 of Afoot and Afield, not Verde Wash.
 - 29 TBA (probably Hellhole Flat area)
- FEB 5 SUNSET MOUNTAIN
 - 12 WHALE PEAK
- MAR 4 GRANITE MOUNTAIN. See Schad, p.245. I hope Al intends to use Wes Shelberg's loop route. It's a great one.

The Happy Wanderers

Run or Speedwalk

Call for info-- Donna and Edwin Gookin 286-7958 Gail and John Hanna 272-5141

The *Happy Wanderers* run and speedwalk each

Tuesday or Wednesday from 6-7 pm. Meet at 5:45.

Tues. DEC 12 Harbor Lights. Wesr end Spanish Landing near restroom. Located off Harbor Dr.

Weds **DEC 20** Christmas on El Prado. Balboa Park Federal Bldg. Located on Presidents Way off Park Blvd.

Tues. **DEC 26** Holidays in Del Cerro. Meet at 5946 | Wenrich Dr. for run and potluck. Located north of College | Ave. and I-8.

Mon. JAN 1 8:30 AM Adieu 1995. Mt Soledad in parking lot nearest the intersection of Via Capri and La Jolla Scenic South.

Wed. JAN 3 Clairemont Caper. Cadman Park and Rec. Center, 4280 Avati Dr. Located north on Avati from Morena Blvd., north of Balboa.

WEDNESDAY

WALKABOUT

HIKES with JIM 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. Call 224-7895. Currently, every hike divides into two groups, average pace and faster pace.

- **DEC 6 SHEEPHEAD MOUNTAIN.** Lagunas. Al Holden leads.
 - 13 CUYAMACA PEAK from Sweetwater bridge. Evan Bacas leads.
 - 20 MORENA BUTTE. Al leads.
 - 27 PIONEER MAIL-GARNET PEAK. Evan leads.
- JAN 3 CUYAPAIPE. Lagunas. Al leads.
 - 10 EAGLE PEAK AND THREE SISTERS WA TERFALL. Pine Hills.
 - 17 WEST MESA LOOP. Al leads.
 - 24 LONG VALLEY PEAK. Pine Valley.
 - 31 MONUMENT PEAK LOOP. Lagunas.

Tues. **JAN 9** Lake Murray Meander. Coco's Restaurant, 5550 Lake Murray Blvd.

Wed. JAN 17 Paths along East Mission Bay. Meet in parking area just south MB Information Center near restroom.

Tues. JAN 23 Tierrasanta by Evening. Tierrasanta Park and Rec Center, 11220 Clairemont Mesa Blvd., first parking lot.

Wed. JAN 31 Bay Park Runaround. Tecolote Rec. Center (go east from Morena on Tecolote).

Tues. **FEB 6** Loma Portal Exploration. Dusty Rhodes Park parking area, located on Nimitz between Sunset Cliffs Blvd. and W Pt. Loma. Blvd.

Weds **FEB 14** Valentine's Heartbeat Run. Eucalyptus County Park on Bancroft Dr. at Edgewood for a Mt Helix tour.

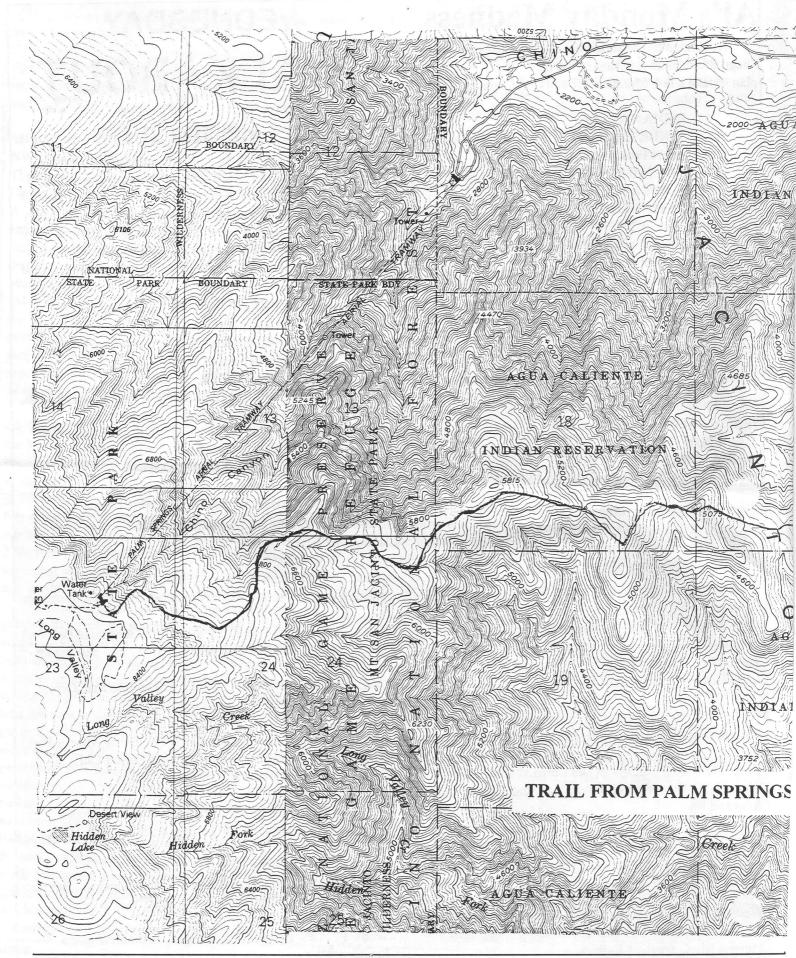
Tues. **FEB 20** Crown Point Runaround. Fanuel St., Bayside Park. Located in PB, south off Grand St.

Weds **FEB 28** Balboa Park Bridges. Federal Bldg. on Presidents Way.

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HIKING HORIZONS

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OUTLAW TRAIL continued from page 3

West end of Ramon road. About fifty yards up this horse trail a brown sign saying "trail" points to the left and about 20 yards up this trail is a sign saying "Carl Lykken" trail. Follow it up to a saddle at 1400 feet. There is a trail junction about 1 minute before this saddle, take the left fork. The Carl Lykken trail is well maintained.

MUSEUM TRAIL: The second starting point is at the NW corner of the parking lot North of the Desert Museum. There are signs on Palm Canyon Drive directing one to the Desert Museum, it is about 1/2 mile North of Ramon Rd. A sign at the beginning of the trail notes that you are entering private property belonging to the museum, but in the fall of 1995 the security people at the museum stated that it was OK to use this trail. Maps sold at the Desert Museum clearly show this trail and even give it a name, the "Museum Trail". The Museum Trail is a bit rougher than the Carl Lykken trail but saves about 10 minutes in getting to the saddle at 1400 feet. At one point the Museum Trail drops about 75 feet. This Museum trail is very popular, especially in the winter season, and leads to some picnic tables at about 1,300 feet.

OUTLAW TRAIL: From the saddle at 1400 feet where the Museum Trail and the Carl Lykken trail join, the trail becomes somewhat rougher but is still good all the way up to the tram.

A difficult place to keep on the trail occurs at about 4700 feet where it goes around to the right of the bump at 4718. Another difficult place to keep on the trail occurs at about 5700 feet where it traverses over to a creek (dry except in spring) at about 5800 feet. Keep to the left of the manzanita on this traverse.

After crossing the creek at about 5800 feet the trail goes up the creek (or just to the South of the creek) for a couple of hundred yards. It then leaves the creek on the right and goes up the ridge to the right of the creek. It wanders up this ridge until about 7400 feet at which point it turns right (NE) to cross several gullies. Make sure you find this turn to the NE (which initially drops a few feet), the gullies can be quite steep and the rocks higher up on the ridge are formidable. You will be aiming for a huge prominent rock buttress to the Northeast. This rock outcropping is very near the tram station, and both the buildings of the tram station and this rock outcropping will have been visible off and on for the last two or three hours. Follow the trail until you are within a hundred feet or so of the rock outcropping, where the trail takes a left turn and heads Northwest up a steep ridge between the last two gullies prior to the rock outcropping. In other words you turn left when there is only one very deep gully between you and the rock outcropping. Make sure you stay on the

trail at this point. Many people turn left a gully too soon or lose the trail after taking the left turn. In the winter it can be difficult to stay on the trail between the right turn at 7400 feet and the rock buttress because it is likely to be covered by snow. The gullies prior to the one just before the buttress can be quite steep and should be avoided although they lead to Long Valley.

The trail tops out in Long Valley (8400 feet). Head NE a few hundred yards to the tram.

Two problems limit the times of year this route can be easily done. In the winter and early spring there can be a lot of snow and ice on the top section of the trail. Above about 7,200 feet the trail winds through tree covered northeast facing slopes and snow can sometimes be found right through May. In the summer, of course, it can be extremely hot up to six or seven thousand feet. There may be water at about 5,800 feet up until April or May, but it's not dependable. With a pre-dawn start it's possible to try and outrun the heat, limiting the high temperature to 10 degrees or so above the low in Palm Springs. Thus, if one starts at 4:30 in the morning on Memorial Day and the temperature is 75 degrees it's possible that the temperature might top out at 85 about 2/3 of the way through the hike. In a low snow year one can probably do it all winter without too much difficulty, even without an ice ax or crampons. In deep winter it's best to have both crampons and ice ax, as the last thousand feet of gain are in the shade all day.

The best time to do this hike is probably the fall from the middle of October until the snow starts to stick. I've never done it in July in August because of the extreme heat in the lower sections, but all of the other months are quite doable with proper equipment. The winter months can be quite fun with ice ax and crampons.

The tram is usually shut down for a few weeks in the late summer for maintenance. Current taped information about the tram can be had by calling 619-325-1391. A real live person can be talked to by calling 619-325-1449.

I always call from the top of the tram and arrange for a cab to meet me at the bottom when I get there, a procedure that the dispatcher usually seems familiar with. The cab company number is 325-2868. A taxi costs between 20 and 25 dollars. One can also arrange a shuttle, but there is a gate about a mile from the bottom of the tram that is closed from late in the evening until 6:15 the next morning, making setting up a shuttle somewhat difficult for an early morning start. Be sure and bring enough money to cover a one way tram fare. It's feasible to start about 1 1/2 hours before official sunrise as the first 45 minutes or so from either starting point finds well maintained trail that is lit by the city lights. Sunlight starts to come over the horizon about 45 minutes before it actually comes above the horizon. Thus if the sun rises at 7:00 AM many people would be comfortable to start walking without flashlight at 5:30.

An Incredible Sierra Summer

by Betty Hobert

hose of us fortunate enough to get up to the Sierras this summer will agree that it will long be remembered. The excess snow pack (200% above normal) of the past winter and spring produced a plethora of flowing water, wildflowers, mosquitoes...and snow on the trails in late August. Summer visitors felt the impact in many ways.

Water, water, everywhere...falls that you never knew existed! Visitors to Yosemite experienced flooding of the Merced River into the Valley in June. Tioga Pass finally opened in July.

Yosemite National Park closed its five high Sierra camps for the entire summer season to protect them from thousands of marching feet. The world-renowned camps have been trampled by so many hikers that the soil is compacted and plant roots are suffering. After such a wet winter, biologists begin to worry that one more season's worth of damage could take a decade to undo. Roughly 13,000 campers who won a lottery for permits to camp there this year were disappointed.

The Eastern Sierra High Country was no exception. Leaders Terri Sutor and Terri Astle led a nine day carcamp out of Bishop Park group campground in August. There were seven dayhikes out of nearby Lake Sabrina, North Lake and South Lake trailheads. Each day we had to trudge through snow, cross streams, and fight off the killer mosquitoes. On several occasions we could go no further due to potentially dangerous snow conditions. Wildflowers were abundant...fields of shooting stars, tiger lilies, penstemons, paintbrush, wild iris, and every other Sierra variety imaginable greeted us.

Another noteworthy Sierra trip in August was the Fourth Annual All Gals

Mule Trip, organized and led by Terri Sutor. The 15 lucky gals hiked 8.5 miles from the Rock Creek Packers to our camp at Fourth Recess Lake. The trip through Mono Pass was heavy with snow that seemed to go on forever. That week we dayhiked around Pioneer Basin Lakes, Third Recess Lake and Lower Hopkins Lake, again through snow and rushing streams. We battled the mosquitoes. Lynn Nebus was heard cussing and hurling threats out to the little devils, to no avail. At week's end we hiked out and gathered at the Sizzler's in Bishop to enjoy some "real" food. Our overnight stay at the Winnedumah Country Inn in Independence provided us with the luxury of clean sheets and hot showers.

Betty Sterrett, Betty Rose, Karen



O'Conner and I spent the next night in Lone Pine with plans to go up Mount Whitney. We plotted our strategy, packed and repacked our backpacks, and hoped to get a permit the next morning. We got the last four spots. Weather in the area had been perfect for weeks prior to our starting up. Then, the dark clouds, and the rain. On the second day, we started our ascent from Trail Camp. We encountered snow along a section of trail on the 97 switchbacks. Our ski poles were an essential for this trip. The

weather went from bad to worse. We finally made the summit through the hail, rain and wind. Through the mist, we proudly displayed our banner made out of adding machine tape that declared "We Made It! 14,496 feet... 3 Betties and Karen." We then became the self-declared "Whitney Women "95."

Lower Willows to Indianhead Ridge hike

by Paul

Participants: Paul Freiman, Jerry Higgins, Lorin Mitts, Beth Davis, John Strauch, Tim and Suzanne Pletcher.

This was a first. I can find no one who has attempted this hike before.

The hike starts at the gate where they shut the canyon off during summer, by Lower Willows. Park here, hop the creek, and walk the broad wash southwest to the middle of section 26 of the Borrego Palm Canyon 7.5 minute map. Starting at 1000' at 8:40, we had lunch on Peak 3713'. It didn't surprise me that Gordon MacLeod had a register there. What hasn't he climbed! We were slower after lunch, even though we had done 2/3 of the elevation and over half the distance. We topped Peak 4155' to find another register by Gordon, then Peak 4480' to find yet another register, put there on a separate hike by Barbara Lilley and Gordon. (In an aside, Barbara and Gordon have climbed all the legal high points in Arizona and are currently working on all the high points in Nevada). We got to our campsite of soft, fluffy sand on Palm Mesa (elev. 4660) close to dark. After eating we ended the night with a tough game of Hearts by the light of Jerry's lantern. (It's tough when you have the National Champion at bridge, John Strauch, and cardsharp Jerry Higgins.) Sunday we were hiking at 7:00

with the intent to go all the way to

Indianhead. Mary McLain and I

had bagged Palm Mesa two years before and it took us 5 hours from Borrego campground. I figured we could make it in 8 hours with our agenda. The water seemed to be tight. I had drunk 5 liters on Saturday and had 2.5 liters left. Jerry, who had a gallon container puncture in the car on the way out, was short on supply, but everyone felt it would be OK. The route to Indianhead is hard with backpacks since the ground is crumbly rock. We were on Indianhead at noon the plan was to descend the "Schad" route. This took careful walking because of the steepness and loose rock. Lorin fell heavily and ripped open his elbow. Suzanne made a hasty retreat down the mountain to tell the rangers and get the car to the trailhead. Tim did a careful bandage job, and we gave Lorin the rest of our water. After a rest we led Lorin carefully down the rest of the route. It took over an hour to get to the creek of Borrego Palm Canyon. We each had at least a liter of water and soaked our heads. It took us 1.25 hours from here, a standard time. We were 20 minutes from the campground when a helicopter came up the canyon to greet us. We waved him off as Lorin was feeling fine. Lorin went to the hospital that night where they spent two hours cleaning out the wound. He's been sore for a few days now, but he's a tough old guy. I would like to thank everyone on the trip. They are a great bunch to hike with.

At last, Mark Adrian misses a near-death experience!

his past weekend (10/7-8/95) I had a very satisfying outdoor experi ence. Saturday, I dayhiked Pike (5640'+) and Cody (5586') BMs just east of Los Coyotes Indian Reservation. It was a little warm, the brush was thick, but Santa Ana breezes kept me mostly cool. The views into the remote northern folds of San Diego County were awesome and intriguing. Green ribbons of trees and palms adorned many of the mountain-todesert drainage channels. This crosscountry hike took about six hours, requiring moderate navigational skills especially through the thick and brittle brush. Saturday afternoon, I drove up Hot Springs Mountain (4WD helpful the last mile) and enjoyed a spectacular sunset from the rickety lookout tower. I spent the night up top viewing many clusters of lights from the surrounding towns and villages. Sunday morning at 5:30 I brewed a hot cup of coffee and then marveled at the sunrise from the lookout tower. Gold and orange cloud ribbons over the Salton Sea and views of dozens of peaks of Southern CA became a synergism of emotions and recollections of been-there-done-that memories. I watched in awe as the sun

Seasons Greetings

(When I first started hiking with Mark in 1991 he was easily lost. I would ask him which way was north, and he would point due east. That was the old Mark. The new Mark is able to make excellent route choices and navigate tough terrain, as this article shows.— Paul).

Jacumba Outstanding Area Wilderness (Myers Valley, Valley of the Moon)

by Mark Adrian

hew. I just returned from an intense weekend hiking and bagging benchmarks in and around the Jacumba Mountains Wilderness area. For those unfamiliar, this new DPA Wilderness area is situated in the extreme southwestern corner of Imperial County, bounded by I-8 on the northwest, 98 on the north and east (somewhat) and the Mexican border on the south. It encompasses some of The Valley of the Moon (see J. Schad) while extending over 33,760 acres of low desert terrain ranging in elevations from 1000' to 4000'.

From my experience, the topography is a maze of granitic hills and mountains laced with numerous washes all carpeted in sometimes



dense aggregations of cholla, agave and bayonet cactus. USGS 7.5 quads In-Ko-Pah Gorge and Coyote Wells will keep you busy for much more time than you probably have. You might also reference Jerry Schad's book on The Valley of the Moon.

Saturday, I started by climbing VABM Jade (3587) then proceeding south to VABM Puto (3503), San

Diego County's most south and easterly VABM. The area there is rife with

plinkers' trash. From Puto I headed east to VABM Whip (4318), then over to Blue Angels Peak (4548) AKA Smugglers VABM. Nearby is boundary marker #231, an easy walk from the peak.* Unfortunately, about this time of day the plinkers had really started shooting and The Valley of the Moon was about as serene as a heavy metal concert. Nevertheless, the views scanned northern Baja, eastern SD County and southwestern Imperial County. It's too bad the wilderness boundary didn't shut this road off as it did on the east side. Currently, the road is the western boundary. From here, I went north to VABM Quirk (4031) which offered great views east to VABM Gold and a plethora of rock climbing opportunities. Finally, I turned back west to VABM Nopal (4274) and dropped back to my truck being careful NOT to get in the line of fire from the nearby and relentless plinkers—they just don't give it a rest, except maybe to make a new target and drink a beer. This circuit

is scenic and not too strenuous. It might be best to do it when there are not so many guns going off. It took me



about 6.75 hours, but I took my time, savoring these rarely visited VABMs. Saturday afternoon, I drove down to Ocotillo and followed the BLM's driving instruction for access to the newly established Jacumba Mountains Wilderness. I parked, as usual, at the sole remaining red stake, which looked like it had been run over by numerous vehicles. There were also three other carsonite

"roots" that other, less tolerant offroaders had clearly vandalized. I saw moderately fresh tire tracks on ALL the roads I hiked on. This was a bit discouraging since I must have put in 10+ miles of annoying (yes, I'm whining) dirt road walking on Sunday. A few well-placed boulders across the road would solve this problem.

Sunday morning, I left at 6:45 for VABM Joe (2140). Due to the DPA, I had to walk about four or five miles of good dirt road south into Davies Valley before turning west and climbing the escarpment. After about 1000' of gain and careful navigation, I hit the benchmark exactly. Fortunately, a breeze was blowing as the temp climbed into the mid-70s. From here, I took "aim" at VABM Jack, which, I thought I had accurately in my sights. En route to what I thought was Jack, I encountered a "friendly" tarantula which I petted and gave a friendly "good morning". (He offered coffee but I had to refuse as I was in a hurry to find the near-death experience which had alluded me on the last hike. -Ed.)

On down the main wash, I discovered a prime grove of California fan palms in a side wash. As it turned out, this was the turnoff into Upper Pinto Canyon, where I SHOULD have gone to get to Jack. Unfortunately, I had overestimated the distance. So, what I thought was Jack looming on the horizon was about twice as far away as (true) Jack was, and probably in Mexico! But, still unaware, I headed there anyway, becoming suspicious when my altimeter registered a few hundred feet too high. On the alleged summit, after being stabbed in the finger by a vicious agave and moments later startled by a rattler, there was a small cairn, but I knew I was off route. The landscape of these mountains is a snarl of identical bumps and washes. About that time I wish I'd had a Garmin GPS 40. (I'm not a techno-freak, but this

would have saved several hours of effort and water use as well). No matter how I triangulated, I kept coming up "near" Jack. So, at 1:00 PM, out of water and miles back to the truck, I abandoned the attempt and headed back down Pinto Canyon to where it intersects the old road near the international border. Interesting to note that the BLM has a carsonite fence here at the border, as if any Mexicans would understand, let alone obey the stakes. Then, it was a 2.5 hour walk back to the truck in breezeless dry air. I was only moderately dehydrated (been there, done that, will be back again) and just slightly dizzy (or more than normal, anyway) when I returned at 4:00 PM. The first liter of water went down in about two minutes, the next two liters I drank while driving home, enjoying the cold mountain air and actually having to turn the heater on! Only in Southern California.

The Jacumba Outstanding Area is clearly worthy of Wilderness status, but the road through Davies Valley should have been partially cherrystemmed. The range of hills to the east of Davies Valley seem, well, boring, to me anyway. And, with private inholdings in that area anyway, the BLM/DPA could have just as well trimmed this area out of the Wilderness designation. Nonetheless, I'll return there sometime to get Jack, but, I may take a bike to tame that long, long approach walk, and, yes, even a Garmin GPS 40. But for now, I've GOT to finish this ice cold Blatz (AKA Mountain Bum beer).

*Directions: To access the area, take I-8 east to S-2 (Ocotillo), to US 98. Drive 0.7 miles south to a BLM sign marking the dirt access road, and follow the road

to the wilderness boundary. 4WD recommended due to sandy sections.

