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*The Newsletter of the
San Gorgonio Wilderness Association
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Training Day Thanks to Alpine Meadows Camp and Training Instructors

As most of you volunteers know, our annual training day was a great success. I would like to thank our instructors for the day – our Forest Service trail crew (**William Bertoldi, Odos Clanin, and Frank Kramer**), **Sylvia Anderson, Jack Kennedy, Ann Marie (Raven), and Larry Vincent**. Volunteers **Larry Stiles** and **Jarome Wilson** also helped with instruction. Board members **Teri Cappuccio, Mary Hart, Jaimie LaPointe,** and **Karen Saffle** helped with food supplies and with registration.

And finally, and foremost, our deep thanks again goes to Alpine Meadows Camp owners, **Peter Huber** and **Linda**

Crawford; camp director, **Steven Sanders;** assistant director, **Susan Sostman;** and their wonderful staff including **Susie, Jose, and Rocky**. As in previous years, they provided the use of their facilities and a hot lunch and dinner for all SGWA volunteers at no charge. They value the services of the SGWA throughout the forest and we value very much their continued support.

Message from the President

Dear Members and Volunteers,

At our March 26 SGWA Board of Directors meeting we bid a tearful farewell to **Roger Gossett** (our president for the past several years) and his lovely wife **Patti** who was also a volunteer. Roger has found an exciting new job in the beautiful rustic woods of New Hampshire. We are excited for Roger and Patti and the opportunities that await them, but I'm sure you all share my sadness to see them go.

In spite of some wishful thinking that we might have our Board meetings in New Hampshire, Roger tendered his resignation as your SGWA President. In accordance with the SGWA By-Laws, it is my honor and duty as Vice President to lace up Roger's boots and carry on in his stead as your new President. I look forward to serving you.

Roger's term brought much progress to our association. Most recently, his leadership served to move the SGWA toward removing our dependency on government funding to operate our

organization. While it is certainly harder work to obtain our own sources of funding, I strongly believe that this effort will serve to make our organization stronger in the long run.

While most SGWA service is provided by dedicated volunteers donating their time, it costs money to recruit, train, coordinate, administer, supervise, supply, and equip 130 hard-working volunteers. In fact, it takes roughly \$50,000 a year. We earn most of our funding through merchandise sales and public donations. However, for several years we've received a significant amount of matching grant funds annually from the Forest Service. Removing our dependency on Forest Service funding to continue the services we have provided means we must obtain many thousands of additional dollars each year from public sources.

The Board of Directors has tasked volunteer **Ted Schofield** with the arduous but vital task of chairing our Fundraising Committee. Ted has been instrumental in getting the SGWA accepted into Earth Share of California, a coalition of 90 environmental and conservation charities working to preserve and protect California's environment while improving the public's enjoyment of that environment.

In order to make our membership in Earth Share work, we need some of our members and volunteers to provide occasional brief (5 minute) presentations to southern California companies and organizations during their employee giving campaigns. These simple and

painless presentations explain the goals of Earth Share and highlight the scope of SGWA's work with the Forest Service. Even without the fundraising aspect of these presentations, this provides us with a great opportunity to Educate. Because most of these presentations are done during weekdays, we are struggling to find people to participate. If you have time available during weekdays, I urge you to call Ted at 909-751-1089.

With an organization of our size, I'm confident that we have members and volunteers with great ideas about how to secure funding to continue our priceless work. Some of you may have experience with fundraising. Perhaps you know of a friend, relative, or employer looking for a worthy cause to indulge their philanthropic desires. I urge you to share your ideas or experience. Your attendance is always welcome and appreciated at the Board of Directors meetings held the last Tuesday evening of each month.

I welcome your thoughts and ideas. Please feel free to call or email (909-279-1868 or jarome@mac.com).

Jarome G Wilson, SGWA President

Terrific Two Thousand And Two John Flippin, Volunteer Coordinator

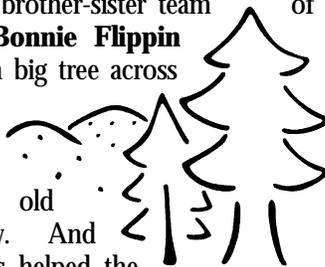
Our 2002 summer season of volunteer activities on the mountain is off to a great start. I thank you all for your time and effort in getting all the necessary training so that you can effectively serve, protect, and educate the public in a safe manner. As the world changes and becomes more complex, additional training and education will always be necessary to be successful. I'm sure most of you find this to be true in your everyday jobs and careers. It is certainly true for our volunteer program where all of you can take pride in being "professional volunteers."

We have a wonderful group of new volunteers and you veterans are doing a great job of teaching them the fine details of serving the public out on the trail, at Barton Flats, at Horse Meadows, and at the Big Falls Station. As usual, our volunteers are doing so many different things at so many different places it is hard to summarize briefly. Forgive me for not mentioning everything and please

send in articles to our editors about experiences you or other volunteers are having on the mountain.

Our trail patrols, both foot and equestrian, have provided excellent coverage every week so far. They have given valuable trail condition information to the Forest Service trail crew and the public.

Many volunteers have participated in several trail maintenance projects. **Mary Hart** led a great group in getting the Whispering Pines and Ponderosa Nature Trails ready for the summer (see other article). The brother-sister team of **John and Bonnie Flippin** cleared out a big tree across the San Bernardino Peak Trail with the old crosscut saw. And **Bill Tibbitts** helped the Forest Service trail crew get an even bigger tree off the Lost Creek trail.



Horse Meadows is seeing a lot of visitors this year. And those visitors are being well served by many volunteers staffing the interpretive site there, including **David and Kim Van Horsen** (with twins **Peter and Faith**) and **John Wegner**.

Our newest operating location, the Big Falls Information Station above Forest Falls, is off to a great start in its second season. We have two excellent additions to our rotating staff there – **Susan Scott** and **Susan Fantazia**. Our first near injury in a long time occurred there over Memorial Day weekend when Susan Scott was suddenly struck in the shoulder by something. Seems that from very high in a tree above came a plummeting hot dog dropped by a jay. What more beautiful spot can you go to where the animals try to feed you rather than begging for your food?

And speaking of outstanding service, I really appreciate **Phoebe Baty**, **Ardis Beckner**, and **Pam Bierce** for helping out so much at the Mill Creek Ranger Station. They help the wonderful front desk ladies serve several hundreds of visitors there on any given Friday, Saturday, or Sunday.

Do you like the running water and showers at our Tulake Work Camp?

Thank **Danny Silva** who, with help from a great team of volunteers, got the camp opened up again this year. It is so nice there - the bears are visiting already.

There are the always reliable veterans who come up often like **Larry Stiles** (a great trainer of new folks and one of our assistant volunteer coordinators) who will be leading some trail maintenance projects for us this year, **Val Silva** (our equestrian coordinator) who leads our equestrians in packing heavy supplies for our foot troops on many special projects, **Jan Gudge** and **Pat Peters** (patrolling the Heart Bar/Coon Creek area), and **Karen Saffle** who is already getting things in order for our August Forest Festival. I'm afraid there are so many volunteers I have not mentioned who are doing many wonderful things throughout the forest. Thank you all for getting another summer off to a great start. You are all helping thousands of people make many wonderful memories that will last them a lifetime. Take care out there and I'll see you on the mountain.

Thank You For Your Support!!

Many who know the great value of our forest and wilderness areas may not have the time but have the monetary resources to help the SGWA continue to "Serve, Protect, and Educate." Recent contributing members to whom we and forest visitors owe many thanks are:

Individual (\$25) Family/Dual (\$35) and Student/Senior (\$20) Members

*Henry F. Hall
Bob & Bev Kreider
Jaimie LaPointe*

Trail Blazers (\$50 or more annually)

*Michael Gordon
Russell Kennedy
Ed Kenny
Sean Smith*

President's Summit Team (\$100 or more annually)

*Harry Krueper
Sheila McMahon
Richard Nyerges
Ron & Jeanette Stuard*

Tulake News

Val Silva, Equestrian Coordinator

Summer started May 11 when we had our Tulake opening ceremonies. Lots of folks came for the safety training, donuts, and coffee. Many stayed to help open the camp; we had plenty of pine needles flying. The cabins have their own unique style. For those of you who haven't been there in awhile you must come take a look. I'm sure cabin #1 will appear in Home and Garden soon. There are three cabins now that are enclosed with two beds in each. Everyone is welcome to come use them and so far we have had vacancies most weekends.

Danny Silva, Earl and Carrie Rider, Mickey Kacherwski, and Dell Hawkins managed to get the water working despite numerous breaks. **Danny, Ross Stark and Joe McGregor** fixed some leaks the day before so it made it a little easier on Saturday. The water line is always a good source of conversation/speculation around the evening fire. This year I understand they used a lot of old fire hose and duct tape for the repairs. Last year the fix of choice was plastic liter bottles and duct tape. What would the world do without duct tape?

We were all happy when the water started flowing and we could use the facilities. Can't tell you how many times people turned the water on in the kitchen even when we knew there wasn't any water. We take it for granted - you see a faucet and think water must come out.

Cindy McGregor made an excellent chili. We had it for lunch and dinner. As usual no one went hungry. **Dell Hawkins** brought enough donuts to feed us through Sunday when we went home. He said they have no calories and I believe him.

Thanks to everyone who stayed to help open. **Joe and Cindy McGregor, Dell Hawkins, Ross Stark, George Annas, Joyce McIntire, Peggy Manning, Teri Cappuccio, Mary Hart, Mickey Kacherwski, Earl and Carrie Rider, Gail Seymour, Cassidy Silva, Vernon and Linda Underwood, Bill Carr, Steve and Barbara Ohse, and Ann Robinson.** If I forgot anyone's name I

am sorry but you all were running around working so hard it was hard to remember.

Second Annual Horseshoe Tournament – June 29, 2002

Val Silva, Equestrian Coordinator

Jan Gudgell and Pat Peters are planning the Second Annual Horseshoe Tournament. I'm not sure what they are planning--it's very secret, but they have been seen having quiet talks with the horses. They are professionals you know. Last year they organized the tournament, which was no small feat, and we had over 10 teams. Jan and Pat had us compete and done in time to eat dinner.

Amazingly,  they even knew the rules, how to score, and how far from the little pole you had to stand (I suspect they adjusted the game to fit our limited abilities). They had prizes for many astonishing feats of horseshoemanship in addition to the Championship prize.

Peggy Manning and Janelle Kotzin were the winning team. I hear they are covertly practicing to maintain their championship (they are extremely competitive--especially Janelle). Everyone is welcome to practice at Tulake on our "horseshoe field."

The best part of the tournament is that it is held in conjunction with the annual June Birthday Bash at Tulake. This means it's a potluck with lots of good food and fun - last year we had about 30 people attend. The festivities start at 4:00 p.m. so we hope everyone can join us.

The June Birthday people are inviting all people (and their friends/families) with birthdays to join in the fun. So if you have a birthday this is a party for you too. People without birthdays must bring really expensive presents

If you have any questions, want to know what to bring, what I want for my birthday (for you people without birthdays), or any general information call me -Tulake (909) 389-9650; Home (760) 868-2133. See you there Val.



Fremont Investment and Loan Helping Build a Better Community

If you currently have accounts at Fremont or open any new accounts, just mention you want SGWA #361 to receive credit and Fremont will do the rest. Fremont will make an annual donation through their Deposit Incentive Donation Program and it costs you, an SGWA supporter, nothing. SGWA will get a cash donation (\$200 received since September 2001) and you'll get the best interest rates on FDIC insured accounts.

Our Thanks To Fremont Investment And Loan For Helping The SGWA To Serve, Protect, And Educate.

Hello to All from Roger & Patti Gossett in New Hampshire

For those who have not heard, Grantham, New Hampshire is our new home. As many of you know, the company I worked for had moved and I found myself having to commute almost two hours both to and from work. I was hardly getting any time on the mountain with SGWA and had taken a leave of absence from Search and Rescue. In general, I was pretty unhappy with the fact that my life seemed to consist mostly of commuting and working.

For almost two years I had been looking for an exciting career change and at the end of February was invited back here to New Hampshire for a job interview. It all happened so fast. Patti and I flew back and I interviewed on March 1st. The next week I received the job offer I had been hoping for and I accepted. I gave two weeks' notice at work, got the house ready and put it on the market, sold the house - not once but twice, and by March 27th the moving truck was loading up our stuff and we were heading east.

What a change in lifestyle. We are presently renting a house on wooded land about ¼ mile from a nice quiet lake. We will move into another we are buying a quarter mile away around the end of July. The town we live in is Grantham, population 1200. I now commute 12.5

miles to work in the big city of Lebanon. I say big city because its population is 12,000 and the next nearest town of that size is 60 or 70 miles away. Oh, and there is a Wal-Mart **and** a Kmart in Lebanon. We no longer have cell phones, got rid of our pagers, and one day a week make a trip to "Mount Trashmore" the name affectionately given to the town dump. You see, not only isn't there mail delivery (we go get our mail in a post office box) but there is no trash pickup. Instead we pay \$15.00 for an annual pass to Mt. Trashmore and the people make a social thing out of visiting while dropping off their trash and recycling.

When we first got here, the ground was covered with snow and ice. There were still buckets hanging on the maple trees collecting sugar. The next week they had a heat wave. I was given credit for bringing 85-degree temperatures with me because at the same time last year there was still 3 feet of snow on the ground. The next week they had a 5.1 earthquake wake them up and I got the blame for that also. I think they had an earthquake last in 1985. Today was beautiful and sunny about 60 degrees, so Patti and I took the dogs and went on a hike for about 3 hours. Never saw another person on the trail. All the trees are starting to turn really green again and the apple trees are starting to blossom. Tomorrow it's supposed to rain and by Monday or Tuesday we could see a bit more snow. They have a saying here, "If you don't like the weather, just wait a couple hours, it will change." We have seen moose only a couple minutes from the house and on more than one occasion had a beautiful red fox snooping around the house. They call this an Alpine Rainforest ecosystem.

The people can't understand why we lock the house or cars, they don't and aren't afraid to tell you they don't. They say that often in the winter they will leave their cars running in the supermarket parking lot so that it is still warm when they come back out. Today, I realized that what I was hearing was an airplane and that was unusual. Last week, while at work, I heard a helicopter but figured that would be normal for only being ¼ mile from the largest trauma center between Boston and Montreal. In the time we have been here, I have not heard the bass from

another person's car stereo or seen anyone wearing trousers that were 10 waist sizes too large. I sure have seen a lot of blue sky and star filled nights though.

I do not miss California with its freeways and crowds of people, but I sure do miss all of the people I have worked with over the years and built such great friendships and camaraderie with. I know that **Jarome Wilson** will take great pride in leading SGWA over the coming season. He has nothing but the best in mind for the organization and with the guidance and leadership of the entire Board of Directors; I think our organization is in for another very exciting season and many years to come. **Ted Schofield** has been working very hard with the fund raising committee and our working relationship with Earth Share is going to be very important to our further growth opportunities.

Believe me when I say, my heart is with you all the way. I have enjoyed and will always remember my years with the San Gorgonio Wilderness Association, all of the times in the Forest, the other Volunteers, the interaction with the public, and of course – the food.

Good luck always in the coming years.
Sincerely, Roger Gossett

PS: If any of you ever get back here to New Hampshire, give a call. We'll leave a light on for you.

Volunteer's Service Eams Donation from Verizon

Volunteer **Evan Wilkinson** joined the SGWA in 1999 and has been contributing steady service to the public ever since.

In July of 1999, a severe rain storm struck the Wilderness while Evan was on patrol on the Vivian Creek Trail. This was one of his first patrols and he helped guide several drenched and frightened hikers off the mountain and back to safety.

The Big Falls Information Center opened in the summer of 2001 and Evan, along with his wife Cyndi, has been a regular staffer at the station ever since. Evan's good nature helps him deal with hundreds of visitors each weekend. The bears seem to know which weekends Evan will be volunteering, as they seem to

go out of their way to tip over the dumpsters just to give him a workout.

During the May 18 Training Day, Evan presented a check for \$500 on behalf of his employer *Verizon Communications Inc.* Like many corporations, Verizon recognizes the value in volunteerism and encourages its employees to give back to their communities through volunteer service. When an employee contributes over 50 hours of service to a qualified non-profit organization, Verizon will further recognize that service by making a donation to that group.

The SGWA is grateful that corporations like Verizon recognize the value their employees provide through volunteer efforts. This donation will help the SGWA to continue our mission to Serve, Protect, and Educate and is a wonderful bonus to the great service provided by Evan.

Does the company you work for place a value on volunteering? Check with your HR department to see if they offer a company match to your valuable volunteer service.

New Faces in SGWA Board of Directors

The Board of Directors recently held elections to fill openings on the Board. I'm pleased to welcome **Jaime LaPointe, Ann Robinson, Linda Roddick, James Schofer, and Wiley Wohlf** as our newest Directors.

Our new Directors join existing Directors **Ardis Beckner, Pam Bierce, Teri Cappuccio, Mary Hart, Dave Jones, Richard Nyerges, Ted Schofield, Val Silva, Larry Stiles, and Jarome Wilson.**

In addition to the Directors, the Board's Officers are **Jarome Wilson** (President), **Sandy Messner** (Secretary), and **Karen Saffle** (Treasurer).

The Board of Directors meets on the last Tuesday of every month (except December) at the Supervisor's Office in San Bernardino to plan, direct, and oversee the SGWA. If you have ideas or suggestions on how the SGWA can better meet our charter to Serve, Protect, and Educate, you are encouraged to attend the Board of Directors meetings. Of course,

any Director will be more than happy to hear your comments and suggestions if you are unable to attend.

If you would like more information about attending a Board meeting, please feel free to contact me at 909-279-1868 or email me at jarome@mac.com.

Thanks to the San Bernardino National Forest Association (SBNFA)

Among a dozen volunteer organizations serving on the San Bernardino National Forest, the SBNFA is the largest. The SBNFA has several individual volunteer programs including the Children's Forest Volunteers, Discovery Center Volunteers, Fire Lookout Hosts, Off-Highway Vehicle Volunteers, and Winter Sports Volunteers. Many of our SGWA volunteers also participate in one or more of the SBNFA programs. For more information about SBNFA programs, see the back of the San Bernardino National Forest Visitor Guide or call 866-3437, ext. 3201.

We thank the SBNFA for making a snowshoe adventure and several interpretive training sessions available to all our volunteers this past winter and spring. Many of our volunteers enjoyed them very much.

One of the greatest strengths of the San Bernardino National Forest is all of the volunteer organizations (over 2000 volunteers) that compliment each other while serving, protecting, and educating for the public.

New Faces At Barton Flats

Please stop in at the Barton Flat Visitor Center to see all of our wonderful volunteers working there including a couple new faces. **John Dombrowski**, a volunteer since 1996, has recently retired from one career to be hired by the SGWA as our Interpretive Sites Manager. Although spending most of his time managing the Barton Flats operations and lending his support to the volunteers working there, John will also be looking after our Horse Meadows Interpretive Site and our Big Falls Information Station.

Joining John at Barton Flats is **Everett Smith** from Houston, Texas. Everett will be volunteering with us for the summer and as beginner luck would have it has already seen several coyotes around Barton Flats and a black bear on Jenks Lake Road – East. Everett has been serving the public very well beginning with an extremely busy Memorial Day weekend and he is a pleasure for the public and us to be around.

We are also very happy that **Glen and Marcia Riddle** are back with us until the end of July. As Glen and Marcia pull out, **Larry and Reta Shoup** will pull back in to finish out the summer with us – lucky for us. Overall, we again have a great team to serve the public at Barton Flats.

SGWA Wish List

To enable us to better serve the public we wish we had the following items. If you know of someone who would like to donate these items, new or used, please let us know. Tax deductions are applicable.

- Self-focusing slide projector with timer for nature talks
- Copy machine for the Barton Flats Visitor Center
- Small copier for SGWA Mill Creek office
- Small propane tank for Forest Festival activities
- Metal cabinet for the Big Falls Visitor Center
- Used trailer with shower
- Folding utility tables
- Folding chairs
- Propane stove for Barton Flats Visitor Center

Wishes Come True

We thank very much the following individuals who have donated the following items listed in previous SGWA wish lists. Their generosity will benefit the public greatly.

Ann Robinson – Computer desk and surge protector for Barton Flats Visitor Center

Karen Saffle – Computer, printer, scanner

Thomas & Betts Corporation (through volunteer **Mark Voykovic**)

Small refrigerator for Barton Flats Visitor Center
Fax machine for Barton Flats Visitor Center and merchandising operations

From Whispering Pines to the Ponderosa

Our annual Spring cleanup and repair of the Whispering Pines Nature Trail was a great success again this year. Because there were so many volunteers led by **Mary Hart**, they were able to not only get Whispering Pines back in shape for the summer crowds but also take care of all the litter, brush abatement, and fallen tree removal on the nearby Ponderous Nature Trail.

Volunteers **Teri Cappuccio, John Dombrowski, John Flippin, Jan Gudge, Jeff and Nancy Haggard, Mary Hart, Mickey Kacherwski, Janelle Kotzin, Jaimie LaPointe, Kim Maes, Joe and Cindy McGregor, Pat Peters, Ann Robinson, Ted Schofield, and Floyd Williams** stormed the hills of each trail. Forest Service personnel **Audrey Scranton** and **Larry Vincent** helped the volunteers make the trails safe and clean for thousands of visitors including a lot of families with small children trying out the forest for the first time.

The greatest difficulty came afterwards in trying to get our mouths around unbelievably gigantic delicious hamburgers and other savory dishes at the 7-Oaks Resort restaurant. But no challenge is too large for this group of hard-working, fun-loving volunteers.

Henry Comes Back With a Bang John Flippin, Volunteer Coordinator

We are happy to have **Henry Hsu** back patrolling with us again after his being gone for several years--I had been saying three or four years ago until looking at past records and realizing Henry last patrolled in 1995. Time is not catching up with me; it has left me in its dust. Henry went back east to law school and then got established practicing law in the Irvine area. We like to make lawyers work for their money so I sent Henry up

the Vivian Creek Trail on his first return patrol. And then we had a group get lost on his trail and sent a bear to visit him at Halfway Camp.

So Henry spent most of Saturday evening well past midnight comforting the friends of a lost man and woman and three young girls. While getting a crash refresher course in working a lost persons incident with dispatch



on the radio, Henry also taught the worried friends how to hang their food. Then he had a bear walk past his head as he tried to get a couple hours of sleep early Sunday morning. Fortunately, the lost folks showed up coming out on another trail well after midnight – tired, cold, and a little banged up, but safe. Henry was able to give the good news to the friends with him at Halfway Camp. In appreciation of his assistance, they let Henry help carry out the gear of the lost people, which included half a 30-gallon plastic bag of assorted cookies, chips, candies, cheeses, and a variety of junk food – oh yes, also one bottle of Tums, I wonder why.

During his leisure time, Henry also cleaned up three fire rings, picked up trash, did a little trail maintenance, and assisted three hikers with first aid for blisters. Guess I'll have to find more to keep Henry busy and out of trouble on his next patrol. Welcome back Henry!

The Common Willow adapted from Forestland Steward Winter 2002 issue CA Dept. of Forestry & Fire Protection

Willows, in the genus *Salix*, are common plants, generally found in riparian, or wet, environments. There are about 170 species worldwide, with about 100 in North America, and six species commonly found in the Southern California mountains. They all have long, narrow, lance-shaped leaves and can be found from 2,000 to 10,000 foot elevations. Most are shrubs (some up to 30 feet high), but two in southern California – the Red Willow and the Golden Willow – are trees growing to 45 feet high.

Willows provide food and cover for many different animals including shade

for fish, habitat for birds, and browse for deer. They are the preferred food of beaver and often used for building beaver dens.

Native Americans used preparations from willows to treat toothache, stomach ache, diarrhea, dysentery, and dandruff. The medicinal properties come from the salicin found in willows. Salicin is closely related to acetylsalicylic acid (aspirin). Native Americans also used the stems for basketry and bow making and the bark for tea and fabric making.

Willow is a pioneer species, able to establish in disturbed soils. It is shade intolerant but able to survive flooding. These characteristics make willow a good choice for stream bank stabilization. The fast spreading root systems are effective in erosion control.

Willow is also being explored as a renewable energy resource to combat global warming. Willow biomass plantations have been established in New York and Europe for its potential as a fuel for electricity generation.

Propane Bottle Safety

On a recent fishing trip, a local acquaintance had the unnerving experience of being engulfed in a fireball. Although the weather was cool, this was more heat than he desired at the moment. As the evening sky darkened, Dave (fictitious name) lit up his lantern on one propane bottle. Then, using the light from the lantern, he screwed a second propane bottle to his stove and immediately heard a leak as he tightened the bottle. At the same time, the flame of the lantern ignited the leaking gas and Dave was toasting. Luckily, he had on glasses, hat, and long sleeve shirt, none of which caught fire. Dave rushed to his van for a fire extinguisher and put the fire out.

With his beard and arm hair singed, Dave and his fishing buddy decided to drive to the nearest town for dinner. Dave later discovered that the threads on the second propane bottle had been damaged during manufacture or delivery. Dave recommends that we all check the threads on our propane bottles for damage. It is also a very good idea to be at least 15 feet away from any flames or live embers (lanterns, stoves, campfires, cigarettes,

etc.) when hooking up and lighting any kind of gas bottle.

Don't Sip the Cactus This Summer (Adapted from *The Trail Head*, Number 133, LAAC High Adventure Team)

Those classic western scenes in which movie cowboys slash open saguaros or barrel cacti and slurp fresh water are pure Hollywood. Out of some 1800 known brands of cactus, only the seven foot tall Echinocactus and Ferocactus barrel cacti found in Mexico and the desert southwest are equipped with



reservoirs large enough to stave off dehydration. Sipping from them, however, would be an unpleasant experience. Beneath their waxy skin is a spongy tissue laced with bitter, slimy alkaloids that have the toxicity of bug spray – all part of the cactus' cunning defense against desert scavengers.

While a large swig of this juice could kill a field mouse, humans would likely suffer vomiting and diarrhea – both of which increase dehydration. In a life or death situation you would be better off drinking your own urine.

So on treks in the great outdoors, don't plan on using cacti to prevent dehydration – take plenty of water and drink often.

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