



# NEWSLETTER

Issue # 4 October, 2001



## A letter from George & Pam Morey ThankyouThankyouThankyou

To everyone at Dispatch for the grand tour they gave us in August. We all learned so much and have a better idea of how it all works.

And to Margie Behm and Robert Brady for a great talk and making our September supersession a success.

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This year a lot of us got to work the John Stone Peak Lookout at the L.A. County Fair. Some of us were asked to do other things. The first Saturday we were there Pam and I worked inside the Lookout and I have never explained the Osborne as many times as I did that afternoon. We got to meet the gentleman who brought up supplies to Sandy Delapp (who was the last paid lookout at So. Mt. Hawkins). Then we met a C.H.P. officer from the Arrowhead and Crestline area. He was very interested and will stop by Strawberry Peak lookout now. The second Saturday we worked Pam got to oversee the Smokey Bear Museum Trailer. (I want to know who oversaw her?) Thanks Chuck McFate for getting us involved. I think everyone enjoyed themselves. Hope to see everyone at the Year End Party.

### DID SOMEBODY SAY "PARTY"?

This year we are going to have the BBQ @ Charlton Flats Picnic area. For those of you who have not seen Vetter Mtn. Lookout, now is the chance. Anyone who calls Vetter home would be proud to give you a tour. (*So. Mt. Hawkins don't feel left out. Next year we will have the year end party at Deer Flats Camp Ground so we can show you off.*)

It will be on Sunday, November 4<sup>th</sup>, at 12 noon. It will be BBQ. We will furnish the hamburgers, hot dogs, and veggie burgers. We will also be supplying the buns for the above, napkins, plates, silverware, and drinks. This will be a potluck and we will need someone to bring the condiments for the hamburgers and hot dogs. You will also need to bring a chair to sit in. **RSVP to Pam Morey by Monday October 23<sup>rd</sup> with how many you will have in your party so that she can purchase enough meat. Remember, your family is invited.**

**Directions:** From La Canada & the 210 Fwy. Exit Hwy 2 and go north. It is about 22 miles (around 1 hour drive), before you get to the Charlton Flats Picnic area. There will be a road sign for Charlton and Vetter for you to turn left. We will have signs in the area to guide you to us. Hope to see you there.

## Things to Lookout for in October

by Jane Strong

**The Full Harvest Moon** arrives on October 2 and with it, the feel of fall...the chilly mornings, the early darkness.

"**Harvest Moon**" is the name given to the first full moon after the autumnal equinox.

**Congregations of ravens** frolic over the ridges.

**Spiderlings** ride the wind on warm, hazy days, filling the air with shining strands of gossamer.

**Monarchs** and painted ladies migrate. Ooo,la,la!

**Feathery seeds** of mountain mahogany gleam, translucent in the sunlight.

**Rabbitbrush**, rabbitbrush, rabbitbrush everywhere...some in full blown seed, some in youthful bud, but most in full, glorious, golden-yellow bloom along the roadsides.

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## 9/11. VIEWS FROM THE MOUNTAINTOPS.

### VETTER. *photo by Don Rogers*



**Woody McCauley.** I am a member of the Civil Air Patrol, the US Air Force Auxiliary. We do a lot of air search & rescue activities as well as support other governmental agencies. We also help with disaster relief

actions. Our organization went on a national alert. Locally, we staffed our base and became the communications center for the southern section of Calif. We maintained our base for 9/11 and were on call for 1 hour or less launch of aircraft to provide transportation of personnel and/or disaster assessment flights for 4 days. Fortunately, these activities were not needed, but we were ready. Later, the Red Cross asked our organization to transport blood and blood products throughout the state since the airlines were not taking packages.



**Ric Opalka.** There are so many images I will never be able to forget. This is the one I will always want to remember

### SOUTH MT. HAWKINS



**Paul and Hope Passero** One of our common bonds is the desire to be of service to our community and our state. Another bond is we love the beauty of nature and sharing it with those who visit the towers.

**Harry Heflin.** This is another of these monumental events that we will always remember in the context of where we were and what we were doing at the moment you first heard. It is maybe a little strange to talk about this as a Firewatch group, but this whole tragedy is more than a little strange itself. It strikes to the heart of everything we believe in as Americans.

#### **George Moreno**

I was sitting at the South Mount Hawkins lookout, five days after the incidents on the East Coast. During some of the quiet time, I decided to cut pictures out of three day's worth of Los Angeles Times newspapers so I could share with my second graders at school. We still hadn't had any visitors that day but our American flag was out at half mast, sure to greet anyone before we could. That morning six people came up: two guys from Czechoslovakia, a couple from Glendale, and a couple from Seal Beach. Somehow, after all the welcoming was out of the way, the conversations we had inevitably turned to the senseless events of Tuesday, September 11. It was a shared experience for everybody. So, strangers talking and venting about the terrorist strikes was therapeutic to us all. Nothing could have summed things up better than the comment made by one of our visitors that morning: "Thank you for flying the flag half mast. It was such a sight to see our flag flying high from such a far distance away!"

#### **United We Stand. Pam Morey.**

September 11<sup>th</sup> has changed the United States forever. I have so many emotions and questions that need to be answered that I hope some day I find the answers. Right now I hope as a whole we can stand united and not lose track of what we are all about. The lives that were lost will never be forgotten.

It hurts too much to think of all those people who have died. Why? It is hard to understand why another life can be taken so easily.

### On the Road to Rincon with Bob Gregg

As one heads north on Highway 39 from Azusa and drives past the second reservoir we turn west briefly along the West Fork of the San Gabriel River. Just past the ORV entrance is Rincon Ranger Station. Rincon means ‘nook’, ‘secluded place’ or ‘a bend in the river’.



*a site not far from Rincon.  
can you guess where?*

Back in the 1860s Cornelius Potter filed a 160 acre claim on this spot. He pastured cattle and brought in honey bees. In 1897 a Charlie Smith leased the property from Potter and converted it to a popular resort called Camp Rincon, complete with a store, hotel, cabins, tents, swimming pool, dance floor and tennis court. By 1905 the general store supplied the vacationer and miner with everything from food and spirits to clothing and fishing gear. A 4 horse stage brought visitors from Azusa and it's Santa Fe train station daily in spring and summer.

Rates at the resort were \$2 a day or \$10 a week. The resort changed ownership several times but after the 1920s the camp lost some of it's back country luster with the arrival of the automobile. On the night of March 1, 1938 a disastrous flood wiped out all but a few buildings.

### Life on the Rocks by Jane Strong

Last time I rode the tram up to Mount San Jacinto, as we neared the 8000 foot level, a woman exclaimed, “Look , they’ve painted the rocks!” Indeed, there were brilliant splashes of yellow-green and red-orange on the steep cliffs. Another time, while walking along the banks of the San Gabriel River, I scuffed my boots against some furry black circular deposits on the ground, trying to erase them, thinking they were patches of oil. On yet another hike, in the canyons of the foothills in the springtime, I found rocks totally covered with small lime-green, lettuce-like leaves. All of these diverse examples turned out to be different forms of **LICHENS!**

Lichens grow in places that are too harsh or too limited for most other organisms. They live on bare rock and dead wood, desert sand and cold tundra, animal bones and rusty metal, salt-sprayed coastal cliffs and thick, furrowed tree bark. They can withstand extremes of heat and cold, drought and sunlight. We most often see lichens in the San Gabriel Mountains as colorful, decorative crusts on barren rocks or as the “moss” on the north sides of large tree trunks.

**The key** to lichens’ success in such harsh conditions is that they are two separate organisms working together: a combination of fungus and alga which, by helping each other, can live where neither could survive alone.

**The fungus** provides the shelter and protection from the harsh environment, takes in moisture from the air and minerals from the surface while the alga, with its photosynthetic cells, manufactures the food by using sunlight.

**With some** of this food, different lichens make more than 500 biochemicals that control light exposure, repel herbivores, kill attacking microbes, or discourage competition from plants.

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LIFE ON THE ROCKS *by Jane Strong*  
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That patch of ashy gray lichen on the granite boulder you sat on while eating lunch could be thousands of years old. Most lichens grow exceedingly slowly, sometimes only a few millimeters per century. Some lichens are thought to be among the oldest living things on earth. Lichens with known growth rates are used to estimate the dates of geological events such as the retreat of glaciers and huge rockslides caused by earthquakes.

Lichens are important parts of the forest ecosystem. They are the pioneers, often the first living things to colonize barren rock. They break down the rocks by excreting weak acids or by breaking up the rock mechanically. Forests don't come ready made; they evolve over centuries through a long process that changes plants and soils. This development that results in a forest arising from barren rock is called xerarch succession. It could be started by something as simple as exposure of rock surfaces by a landslide.

A rock is tough place to live. It can be very hot in the scorching summer sun or very cold in the icy winter shade. Even in a single day, it can be blistering at noon and freezing at midnight. It can be suddenly awash in too much water from an afternoon thunderstorm or desiccated by week long Santa Ana winds.

However, as lichens live and grow on the rocks, living conditions improve. Mosses move in, in turn changing the environment. Less heat, more moisture. These are followed by larger and larger plants. We've all seen huge twisted trees roots growing out of cracks in the rocks, a process started by lichens.

Through an alliance of two different kingdoms, lichens exist where other forms of life cannot, and change barren rock into hospitable forest soil. They can do this because they work together. The environment for living is ameliorated, much improved, because of their presence.



Vetter Flag.

Picture by visitor Paul Shikony of USC.



Wreck On The Highway

Angeles Crest Photos by Don Rogers

It's your other home away from home:  
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**SUPER  
SESSION**