

Albuquerque Senior Centers' Hiking Groups

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Albuquerque Senior Centers Hiking Program: The First 40 Years

by Nancy Carr

Beginnings

When senior hikers today board a van for the day's hike in the desert, the mountains, or the bosque, they are continuing a tradition that began here 40 years ago. Today's hiking program was started by a gentleman named Bill Grohe, whom Steve Romero calls the Granddaddy of the Senior Hiking Program in Albuquerque. Unfortunately, we have no information about Bill's background, and Steve himself had no recollection of him personally. According to Steve, Bill started the hiking groups at each of the senior centers, perhaps as they opened, and led all of the hikes out of each senior center: PDSC, 1974; NVSC, 1976; HSC, early 1970s; and BCSC, 1986. The original group of hikers included Bill, Carl Collar, Chet Brooke, Jack Teta, Will Frank, Howard Thompson, Ed Levin, and Jack Loesch.

According to Steve, NVSC (North Valley) hiked on the first and third Tuesdays, PDSC (Palo Duro) hiked on the second and fourth Tuesdays, and HSC (Highland) and later BCSC (Bear Canyon) hiked on Thursdays. Initially, membership was center-specific, so members could participate only in the activities at their center. There was a supplemental membership fee of half the regular \$7 fee, so for \$10.50 one could participate in the activities of any center. Because this caused some confusion, a few years later the supplemental fee was dropped, and members could participate in the activities of any center.

In those early days, there was very little formal organization in the hiking program. Bill Grohe decided on the spur of the moment where the group would hike, where they would go on the next hike, and there would be a sign-up sheet. Bill continued leading all the hikes until his health began to fail, and he died in the winter of 1987. He was cremated, and his friends scattered his ashes in the Sandias.

Kim Purdue, a city employee in charge of all the senior centers, wanted to add senior hikes into the Activities Catalogue, and all the centers had to follow suit, so schedules were developed.

1980s to 1990s

In the summer of 1987, Bill Grohe transferred leadership of the hiking groups: BCSC to Chet Brooke, HSC to Jack Loesch, and NVSC to Carl Collar. Eric Schluter assumed leadership of PDSC hiking. Chet led the Bear Canyon hikes for three or four years. The first summer, however, he had some health problems, so his wife Wynn led the hikes until his health improved.



Chet Brooke, third from left (1997)

Photo by Roger Holloway

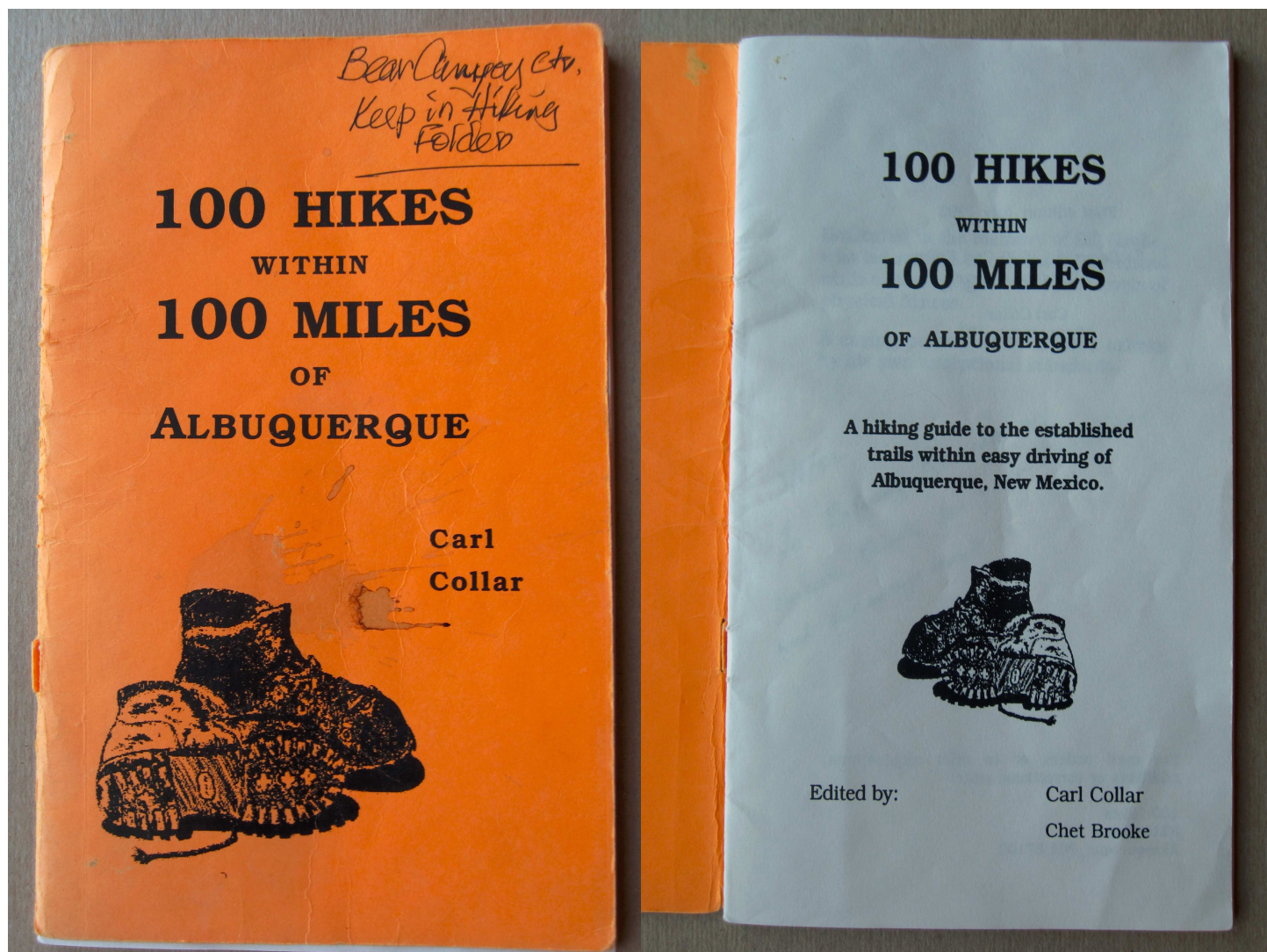


Wynn Brooke (2007)

Photo by Nancy Carr

Chet was meticulous about compiling data on the hikes, including the driving time and

distance to the trailhead, and length of the hike. Later Carl Collar regretted that there was no record of the hikes that Bill Grohe developed, so he worked with Chet, who contributed most of the data, and in 1992 Carl self-published a book called, "100 Hikes Within 100 Miles of Albuquerque," referred to by hikers as The Orange Book. The hikes are rated for level of difficulty from A to D, the basis of our current hike rating system, and the rating system is described in detail. The main part of the book contains hikes organized by region, and it features many of the hikes we do today.



The Orange Book, by Carl Collar and Chet Brooke

Photos by Nancy Carr

As hiking grew in popularity and attracted new hikers, the core group of hikers found it difficult to hike every week by going from one center to another. They started asking for a hike every week at their respective centers. At the time, the centers provided drivers, and they were reluctant to commit a driver every week. (Their insurance didn't permit volunteer drivers to take a van outside the city limits without a staff person present.) The Office of Senior Affairs responded by combining HSC with BCSC, and NVSC with PDSC. This combination was problematic for the Bear Canyon hikers, who were able to accommodate

the Highland hikers with their two vans, yet had difficulty getting on the Highland sign-up list. This problem led to Chet leaving the BCSC group, and many hikers left with him.

Some of the Bear Canyon hikers became discouraged by the situation, and recruited Estevan "Steve" Romero, who transitioned to the hiking group from the BCSC cross-country skiing group, to lead carpool hikes. Steve had worked at the U. S. Forest Service, and was meticulous about his hiking. He was very knowledgeable about the trails and the local history, and knew most of the flowers and all of the trees. Steve continued to lead these unofficial hikes until the size of the group grew to allow for a center van, when he took over the leadership of the official BCSC hiking program in 1991.



Steve Romero, after he finished the Camino de Santiago in Spain (2003)

Photo by Jack Pitcher

Steve Romero reports some of the issues that led the centers to require that a staff person be present during the hike. Initially, the staff person was the driver, and had the option to hike with the group or stay with the van. Later, the staff person was required to hike with the group and act as a "sweep." Steve Romero illustrates why this requirement was added:

"On a hike to Sanchez Canyon, an older gentleman wandered off and spent the night up there. They never missed him, got in the van and went back to the center. Only when they went in to pay did they realize he didn't return with the group. Meanwhile, the poor hiker was

wandering up and down Sanchez Canyon. They went looking for him the next day, and the U.S. Forest Service got involved. He managed to climb out of there and they found him on the trail. On another hike, the same hiker wandered off the La Luz trail in the Sandias, when he got to looking at anthills, thinking he might find some gold. He wandered off and whoever was leading the hike hadn't noticed. The group got back to the van and the old man wasn't there, so they looked all over for him. Finally he got out to the highway and someone gave him a ride back to the trailhead. At that point, Kim Purdue insisted a center employee go along. The drivers took a copy of the sign-up sheet and checked the hikers off before returning to the center."

Steve headed the BCSC hiking program until the mid-90s. Steve would make up the schedule and leave it at Bear Canyon. (The Thursday between the scheduled hikes was a carpool hike which was not scheduled ahead of time.) The group had drivers from the center, including Armando, Jesus, and Andreas, who would hike with the group. As 50-year-olds began joining the hiking group, Steve felt that he could no longer do justice to the program, and he stepped down as group leader.

Harv Pommer revived the BCSC hiking program, where attendance had fallen off, by adding more variation to their hike schedules. He and Jack Pitcher, who began hiking with the group in 1995, implemented a coordinator system and worked together to make the six-month schedules, taking the hike leader role as their schedules allowed, or asking other hikers to lead. Interested hikers could request a copy of the typed schedules available at Bear Canyon's front desk. Later, Dennis Vick, who started hiking with the group in 1999, helped Harv and Jack develop schedules and put them on the computer. If a hike leader had to cancel or became ill, Harv or Jack would lead the hikes or ask someone else to lead. If no leader could be found, the hike was cancelled. Hikers who had signed up for the hike were notified of changes by phone. Sometimes the group just showed up at the center and decided on the spot whether to cancel or come up with another hike. The group was relatively small and people were flexible about last-minute changes. The group at that time included John Simmons, Charles Stillwell, and Edward "Pete" and Ann Haupt.

Eric Schluter took over the PDSC hiking program from Bill Grohe in 1987 and led the hikes until he left in 1991 or 1992. For a few years, there was no hiking out of Palo Duro, since the group disbanded after Eric's departure and the hikers went out with other centers. In 1994, Eddie Lucas, the PDSC director, wanted to start a beginner hiking group and asked Steve Romero if he would lead it. Steve agreed to be both leader and driver, since the staff person assigned to the group did not drive. Steve led weekly hikes with a center van one week and a carpool the next. A staff person was still required to go along on the center van, and that person was not able to keep up, even at a beginner pace. This was a real problem for the group. Ann Jensek, one of the hikers, had a city driver's license. She took over planning, leading, and driving for the group in the spring of 1995, continuing until 1999, when Dick

Brown took over. Ann was the first person to plan overnight trips for a senior center hiking group. She organized two overnight trips per year to White Sands, the Gila area, the Organ Mountains, Elephant Butte, Ruidoso, Capulin, Bisti/De-Na-Zin, and Alamogordo.

While PDSC was considered the beginner hiking group, HSC and NVSC were intermediate, and BCSC was advanced. Bear Canyon started a Wednesday group, described as a slow-paced group, and Wynn and Chet Brooke hiked with them. Chet stopped hiking some time later but Wynn stayed on until the group disbanded.

The transportation cost for the senior center hikes started at four cents per mile, then went to five cents. The centers tried to raise the rate to seven cents, but so many people complained that it went back to five cents.

Highland and North Valley Senior Centers

After Chet Brooke stepped down, Roger Holloway planned the schedules for the HSC and NVSC hiking groups, starting in 1999. His first hike as a participant with the groups was with HSC on October 10, 1995, when the group went to 4th of July Canyon in the Manzano Mountains. He kept a record of nearly every hike he went on in his photo albums, complete with descriptions and lists of participants. These early trips included Chet Brooke, Jack Loesch, Mary Ritter, Howard Thompson, Ann Toya, and many others.

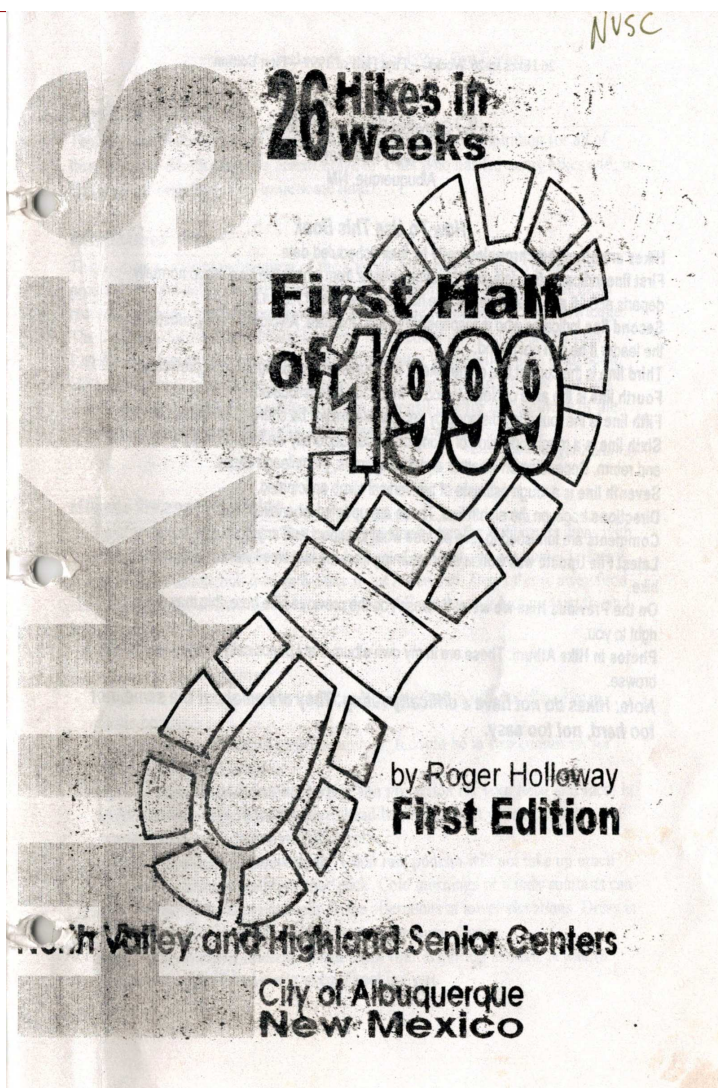


Roger Holloway, second from left (1999)

Photo from Roger Holloway's photo album

Roger was an extremely bright man, a retired architect with the Army Corps of Engineers. Before moving to Albuquerque, he lived in Saudi Arabia, Italy, and Portland, Oregon. He applied his skills and aptitude to his passion for hiking, building a collection of hikes and drawing detailed maps using a light table. Roger hand-picked hike leaders, who included Dick Brown, Chet Brooke, Jack Teta, Dick Purdy, and Roger himself. He maintained his own collection of hikes, and produced hiking booklets, called "26 Hikes in 26 Weeks" for each half-year period starting in January, 1999. They contain much the same format that we see today on our ASCHG.org website, although the hikes were not rated for difficulty. (The introduction includes this statement: "Hikes do not have a difficulty rating. They are all about the same, not too hard, not too easy.") Hiking distance and elevation gain are included, however. He drew the hiking tracks onto maps, using a tool called Corel Draw, adding drawings to represent rock formations and other landmarks. He used Microsoft Word to create the booklets, not the easiest tool for such a project. Roger continued to publish these hiking booklets until his death, concluding with the 14th edition covering the first half of 2006.

First hiking booklet created by Roger Holloway



Forward

This booklet is dedicated to Chet Brooke who has been my inspiration for all of this. Much of the information herein I owe to Chet who has led many hikes and, in fact was our *only* leader for quite some time.

Disclaimer

This is not an official publication of the City of Albuquerque. It is voluntarily produced by the author to aid others in enjoying our hikes. The purpose of these records is to keep information up to date and is done to the best of my knowledge. They are only for the hikes I have been on. Don't count on everything you read. Landmarks change. Signs change. Describing routes in the wilderness is difficult. Hikes are serious business and the best policy is to have the hike led by a person who has been there before. I will not accept responsibility for the accuracy of the information and persons using this information do so at their own risk.

-----Roger Holloway

Hikers Responsibilities

1. **Pack It In - Pack It Out.** This means you don't litter the wilderness areas with your trash. You put it in your pack and dispose of it when you get home. In fact if you see other's trash, pick it up and carry it out if you can. Don't throw away food items thinking it will biodegrade or something will eat them. It looks unsightly and attracts pests.

2. What you should bring:

- Lunch. Many find that sandwiches can get squashed thin if not placed in a plastic box.
- Plenty of water - at least a quart in summer. It could be in two containers for better balance.
- A wide-brimmed hat provides the best sun protection for your head and face. In colder weather, bring a warm cap or head band to protect your ears from exposure. A hooded jacket will also work.
- Adequate clothing for the weather. A thin rain poncho will not take up much room and should always be in your pack. Cold mornings or windy summits can turn into hot afternoons especially in the afternoons at lower elevations. Dress in layers that can be removed or added as temperatures change.
- Heavy socks will assure comfort and resist your acquiring blisters. A pair of wool socks can still feel warm even if soaking wet.

Photos by Howard Carr

Roger kept photo albums documenting almost every hike he did, starting in October, 1995. He often annotated the photos with arrows pointing out significant features, and wrote details about the day such as who participated in the hike. The albums are beautifully laid out with large type fonts for the name and date of the hike. There are also pictures of social events the hikers enjoyed.

An entry from Roger's album:

Mt. Taylor Adventure Aug. 22, 1996

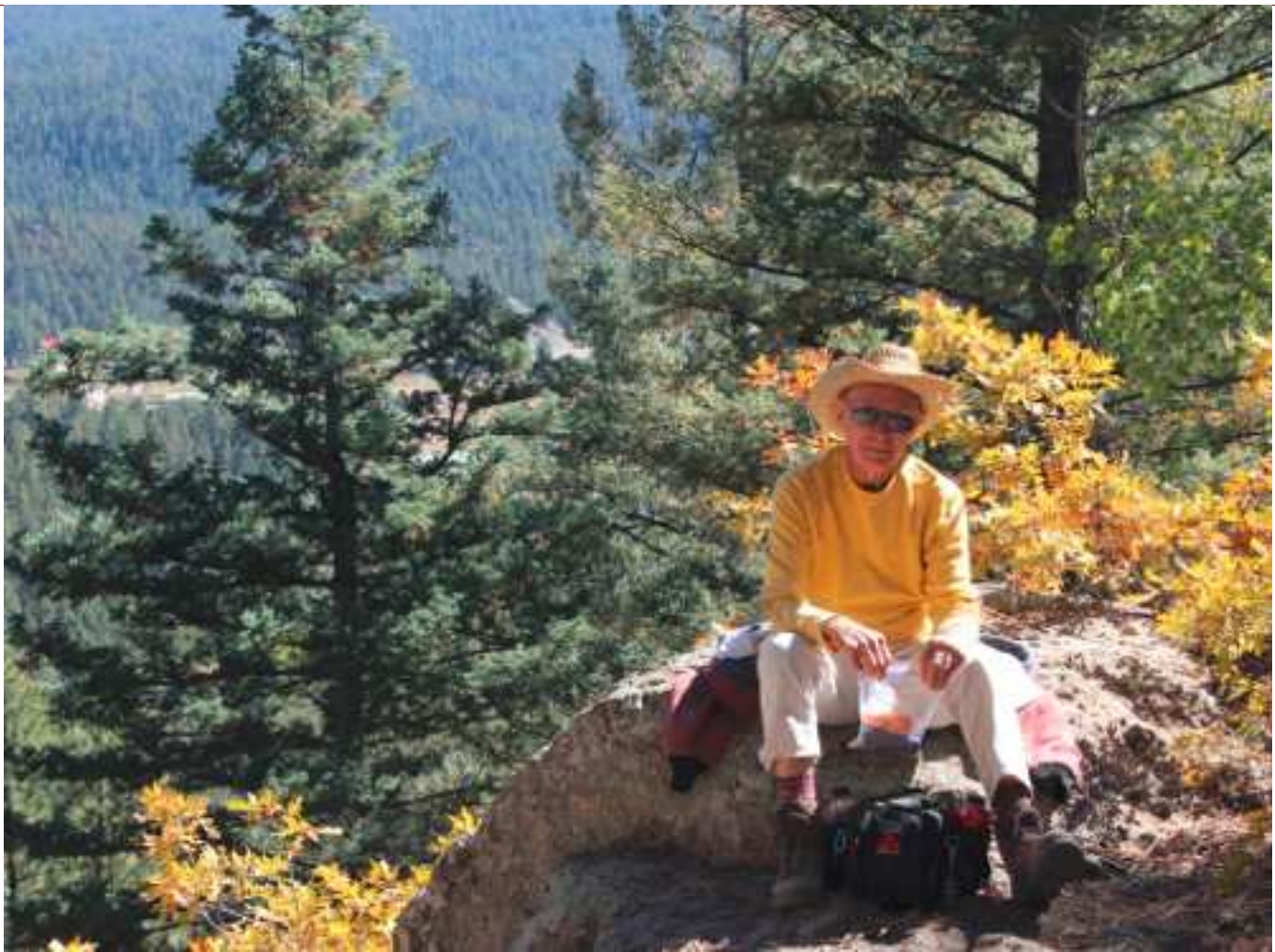
Also know(n) affectionately as **The Hike From Hell**. Not only did we get rained, sleeted and hailed upon, our trail ran with water. We were soaked to the bone by the time we got back to the van. There was a very rough road getting up there and we kept scraping the rear end on rocks. Tillie got dizzy, nauseous on the way up. She apparently lost consciousness for a moment.

After a steamy trip back to Albuquerque, at the 4th St. Exit we pulled off to discover a flat tire. We abandoned (the) van there because there was no jack and walked back to Sr. Center where Tony's and DeLollis' cars were fenced in by festival tent setup crew and equipment. The day even started off on a sour note because there was a mix-up on drivers and there was no gas in the van.

2000-2010

When Dick Brown retired and moved to Albuquerque from Massachusetts in 1993, he soon discovered hiking and winter sports activities at BCSC, and later started hiking at PDSC. Dick has been an avid hiker since his youth, and took up skiing when he and his wife moved to Massachusetts. Dick earned a Bachelor of Engineering degree at Pennsylvania State University and a Master of Education degree with a specialty in psychology from Cambridge College. He began his career at IBM, where he worked in computer design for five years, then moved to Philco, managing the design of the world's fastest computer system at that time. He also worked as a systems engineer at RCA and a design manager at Honeywell, where he eventually headed the newly formed Systems Engineering organization.

Dick took over as leader of the PDSC hiking group in 1999. At that time, he was listed as "Hike Leader" in the catalogue of H1 2000. Dick changed his title to coordinator in the second half of 2000. Dick led and drove for almost all of the PDSC hikes, and also led and drove for HSC and NVSC, for which Roger thanked him in his hiking booklets.



Dick Brown (2013)

Photo by Rosalie D'Angelo

Dick collaborated with Roger Holloway to coordinate the schedules of their groups. They often did exploratory hikes together, sometimes getting ideas from John Boyd, who hiked with the OAFS (Outdoor Activities for Singles) group. (John was the one who discovered the Tohajillee area through OAFS for the senior hikers.) They also got ideas for hikes from Tom Petencin of OAFS and of the Sierra Club. Dick wrote up some of the hikes he did for BCSC, but that group did not seem to make use of the information. As a result, Dick began to develop a hike database using Microsoft Access.

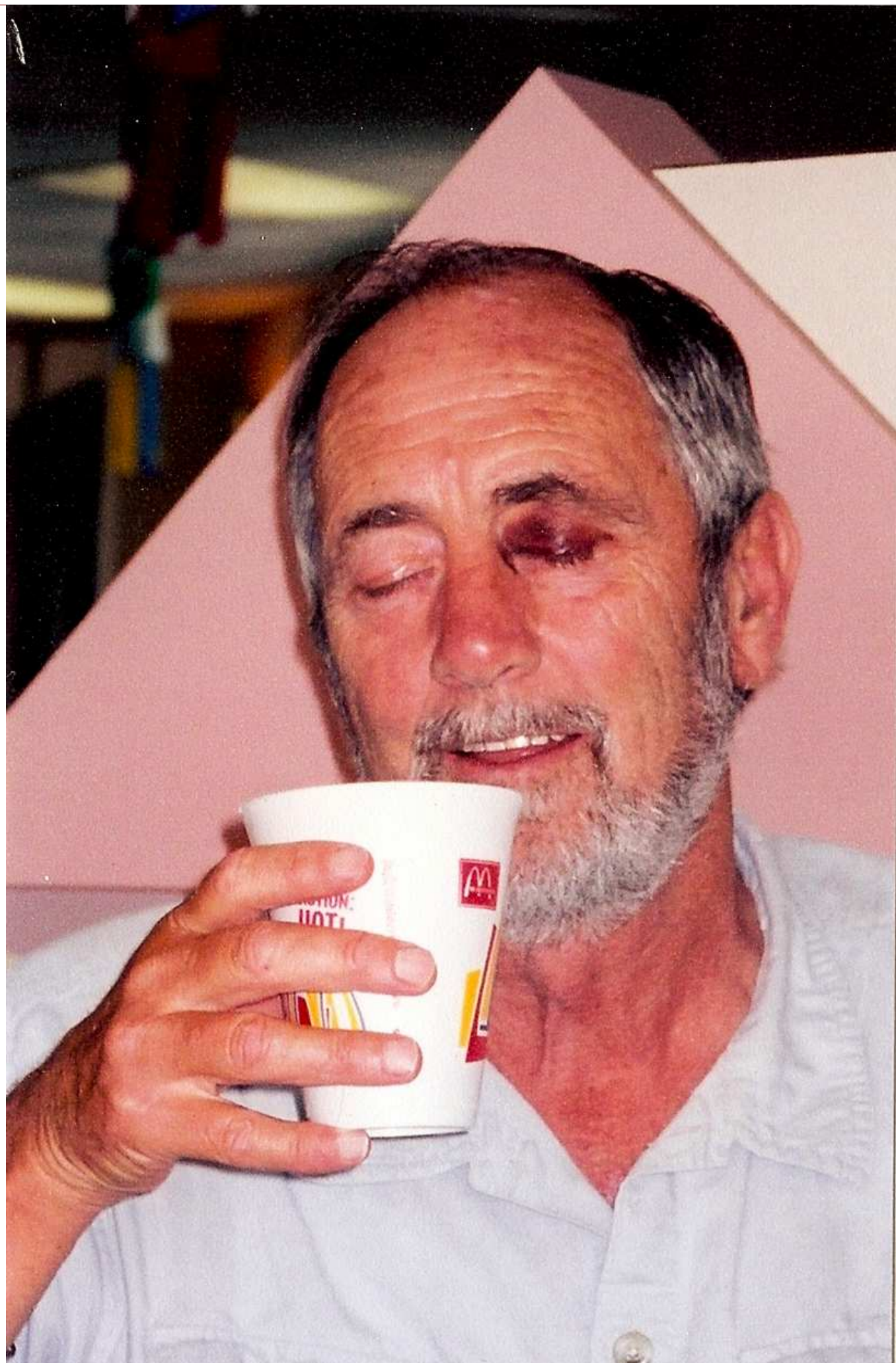
Roger created his hiking schedules with help from John Boyd, sometimes meeting in a bar to finalize them. John also led hikes for Roger. John and Roger each had a basic GPS and recorded many tracks of the hikes. Roger's unit was a Rube Goldberg wonder, complete with aluminum foil to keep the batteries functioning. The Holloways were outgoing people, and they socialized with the Boyds and the Browns.



John Boyd (2003)

Photo by Roger Holloway

Roger's photo album tells what happened on a hike in the Jemez Mountains in 2003. The group had hiked from Battleship Rock to McCauley Hot Springs. It was a short hike, but there were injuries involved. One hiker stumbled and hurt his head, but another injury wasn't discovered until a stop at the McDonald's in Bernalillo. Roger asked John how he got his black eye. He didn't know he had one!



John Boyd at Bernalillo McDonald's after hike (2003)

Photo by Roger Holloway

Dick Brown continued the twice a year overnight PDSC hiking trips that Ann Jansek originated. A volunteer made the actual travel/lodging arrangement and collected the money. Many of these were touring trips as well as hiking outings. Dick took four vans to Chaco/Bisti on one trip. Before that hike, the center stopped providing a staff person on both day hikes and overnights. This lack of a center employee put too much responsibility on the coordinator, especially with a group of 40 people on an overnight trip. PDSCS overnight trips continued for two more years before they were discontinued; they resumed in 2010 under coordinator Sue Pelletier with Palo Duro Senior Center Saturday (PDSCS).

Roger Holloway died on May 13, 2006, just short of his 70th birthday, following an injury suffered while working on a home renovation project. A group of hikers scattered his ashes at the top of the Sandias.



Hikers gather at the Sandia Crest to scatter Roger Holloway's ashes. John Boyd, front row,

third from left
Photo by Rodger Carlson



John scatters the ashes into the wind. Ted Cooley, to his right, gave an invocation.

Photo by Rodger Carlson



Some of the group gathered at a local bar for a drink afterward. John Holmes is seated, front left.

Photo by Rodger Carlson

John Boyd was born near Glasgow, Scotland and served in the British Parachute Regiment, then in the police force in what is now called Zimbabwe. He switched to the computer field to work for the Anglo-American Mining Company in South Africa. He continued to work with computers while living in California, Montana, and finally New Mexico. John's widow tells us that he was the tenth recipient of a heart transplant at Presbyterian Hospital in 1987. He earned an MBA from UNM in 1995.

Although John hiked regularly with OAFS, his name doesn't appear as a senior hike participant in Roger's photo albums until March 2001. He led his first hike for Roger in 2002. John developed pulmonary fibrosis and was unable to do hikes at our local altitude. Six months after Roger's death, John and his wife moved to Phoenix, Arizona, giving Marilyn Warrant his hiking tracks before he left town. He proudly announced to Marilyn that he had done all of the hikes in the Sandias.

Roger and John were greatly missed as friends by the hiking community, and many hikers have shared their memories. Hiker Ted Cooley shares this reminiscence about John, who

passed away in February, 2012: "The first several years of my hiking with the seniors included a lot of time with John. I loved his accent from the Firth of Clyde, as my wife's ancestry comes from Loch Fyne, just to the North in Argyll. John's sense of direction was outstanding, enabling him to understand and lead hikes in many areas around Albuquerque. It was my privilege to share in his knowledge of the land, the history, and the joy of the out of doors here in New Mexico."

Rodger Carlson recalls: "I considered John a good friend and always looked forward to hiking and visiting with him on the hikes. I respected him for his quiet, humble strength and personality. John had a lot of knowledge but never flaunted it to others."

"I will never forget the last hike I did with John on February 2, 2007 to San Pedro Creek. John was having trouble breathing during the hike. He and I left the rest of the hiking group and took a shortcut back to the senior van. We sat on a hill overlooking a large valley and passed the time in the sun while we waited for the rest of the group. John expressed how he was having breathing problems and was probably going to have to move to a lower altitude. After knowing John for five years, this was the first time that I ever heard him talk about his heart replacement and he was the only survivor of the first group of heart transplant patients in New Mexico. I would attribute that longevity to the hiking that he loved."

John Holmes remembers: "I knew John as my favorite hike leader. He had a way of selecting the toughest route. If there was an easy trail he would leave it and take a tougher one. He was just what we old fogies need: a person who challenges us to try the difficult and not accept the easy way."

Bob and Judie Schwartz remember Roger Holloway and John Boyd as a sort of "fun Mutt and Jeff team," with Roger "rather short and stocky" and John "tall and hearty-looking with a bit of a pot belly." While Roger was politically conservative, John was much farther left on the political spectrum. Roger was very much in charge when he led a hike, with no one permitted to get ahead of him, but John was more relaxed in his leadership style. Such differences made Bob and Judie wonder how they managed to get along so well.

The Schwartzes recall, "As he aged Roger became a bit forgetful, but that only added to the charm. He'd arrive at the senior center without his lunch (which his wife Marge always made for him). Not to worry, Roger delighted in selecting donated delicacies from his troops." After one hike, the van left the trail head and the hikers soon heard honking from the vehicle behind them. They stopped and the driver handed them Roger's pack, which he had left on a picnic table. Roger himself never drove the van, which was fortunate for several reasons. He wasn't the best driver, according to some, and he always fell asleep in the passenger seat, where he rode to direct the driver, five minutes after beginning the return trip.



Roger Holloway

This photo is featured on a commemorative plaque at NVSC.

Roger's sudden death, along with John's departure six months later, were huge blows to the HSC and NVSC groups, as they had lost their two planners and principal hike leaders. The loss of Roger and John changed the structure of the hiking programs at HSC and NVSC, and it also led to the discovery of lots of new talent in terms of technology, coordination, and hike leaders. The schedule for the second half of 2006 was developed at a hikers' potluck at John Holmes's house, with hikers filling in a schedule started at the potluck. John volunteered to run meetings for subsequent semi-annual planning with hike leaders to develop the hike schedules for the two groups. (John developed the poster for entering the hikes, leaders, and dates that is used today.) As a result of these meetings, the hike leader method of planning used by HSC, NVSC, and PDSCT evolved, with semi-annual meetings (currently led by Nancy Carr), at which hike leaders suggest hikes they would like to lead. Frances Arnold took over as NVSC coordinator, and Beth Quack assumed that role at HSC. The current coordinators are Bill Gloyd for NVSC, and Pat Newman for HSC.



Bill Gloyd (2013)
Photo by Marilyn Warrant



PatNewman (2013)

Photo by Dan Newman

Roger's family was not able to transfer his collection of hikes to the hikers, so that data seemed to be lost to the senior hikers. Marilyn Warrant, a recent retiree from Sandia Labs, had begun hiking with the groups. In spring of 2007, she bought a scanner and scanned the hiking booklets Roger had created from a full set donated by John Boyd before he moved away. Using optical character recognition (OCR) software, she extracted the text and maps from the scanned images into MS-Word, a time-consuming and tedious process. She realized the difficulty of producing booklets using MS Word, and chose MS Publisher as a more appropriate tool. Marilyn created the first edition of this new generation of hiking booklets for HSC and NVSC for 2H 2007. Dick indicated he would like one for PDSC, so she created an MS Publisher file from his data for the PDSC booklet.



Marilyn Warrant (2013)

Photo by Pat Newman

First hiking booklet created by Marilyn Warrant

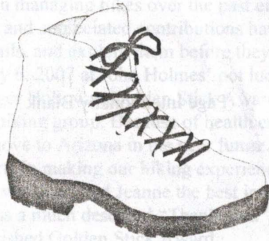
Photos by Howard Carr

Dick took over the PDSC booklets from that point on. Marilyn started inputting data into Dick's Access database, which he tailored for the needs of the hiking booklets, in spring of

Introduction and Dedication

Hikes

Second Half of 2007



North Valley and Highland Senior Centers
City of Albuquerque

Introduction and Dedication

This issue of the Highland and North Valley Senior Citizens hiking booklet is dedicated to the memory of Roger Holloway, June 29, 1936-May 13, 2006. Roger started and issued fourteen editions (booklets) of the semi-annual schedule. All the hikers who had the good fortune of knowing Roger considered him as a friend, a great hike leader, and a much appreciated publisher of our hiking booklets. Thanks Roger as you look down upon us as we are hiking.

Marilyn Warrant has volunteered to continue with the issuance of our hiking schedule booklet for the next several years. We all express our thanks and gratitude, and look forward to receiving the booklets prepared and edited by Marilyn. She would appreciate any assistance we can offer her in this endeavor.

This issue also recognizes one of our well known and liked hike leaders who assisted Roger in managing hikes over the past eight/nine years. John Boyd's much valued and appreciated contributions have been to schedule hikes, review new trails, and explore them before they were scheduled for a group hike. On May 6, 2007 at John Holmes' pot luck dinner, John was awarded the first Roger Holloway Golden Stick Award, recognizing his contributions to our hiking group. Because of health considerations, John and Jeanne plan to move to Arizona in the near future. We all thank John for his time and efforts in making our hiking experiences more interesting and pleasurable, and wish him and Jeanne the best in Arizona. From all of us to John, we express a much deserved "Thank You", and congratulations on receiving the cherished Golden Stick Award.

— Jim Giachino

As different people lead the hikes, the descriptions and maps will change and new hikes will be added, but we'll always be grateful to Roger for starting the booklets and continuing them for so many years.

— Marilyn Warrant, editor

2nd Half 2007

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2008. The booklets included several new features based on GPS data. Dick, an active geo-cacher, was familiar with waypoints and knew that maps could be created using the recorded tracks. Dick used Windows Live Mail to send .gpx files to groups who requested them, and to send hike notices to leaders, drivers, or hikers in general. Eventually, Dick's Access database was used to generate most of the booklet files automatically when presented with a list of dates, hike leaders, and hike names. The technology age had arrived!

PDSC asked Dick to start a Saturday hiking group, as the city's reduction to 50 of the minimum age of senior center members meant that potential hikers who were still working could not hike during the week. The Saturday program, called PT50 in the beginning, started in the second half of 2006, with hikes once every four weeks. It took quite a while for attendance to build to a viable number, but in two years there were around 10 participants on most hikes.

After four or five years as PDSC coordinator, Dick sent out an email to the group members, announcing he was finished with running the program. He asked for someone to take over,

but no one volunteered to replace him. After four or five more years, he again tried to step down. In 1H 2010, Marilyn Warrant took over as coordinator for PDSCT (Tuesday), while Sue Pelletier assumed the position for PDSCS (Saturday).



Sue Pelletier (2012)

Photo by Larry Wright

Marilyn liked the HSC and NVSC planning process, so PDSCT became part of the semi-annual hike planning meetings with those two centers. Sue worked with Dick, her secondary coordinator, to create the PDSCS schedules and to hand-pick the hike leaders for that group. This group, which had been hiking every other week, went to weekly hikes

starting in 1H 2011. Sue planned two very successful overnight trips to the Bisti/De-Na-Zin Badlands in 2010 and 2011.

Bear Canyon Senior Center

Harv Pommer decided after a few years that he was tired of the extra responsibility of planning the hike schedule and leading the hikes, so in 2004 or 2005, he asked Dennis and Barb Vick if they would serve as coordinators, and they agreed. Barb began hiking with the group, where she met Dennis, in 2003. By then, the Vicks could send e-mails to hikers who had a computer (some did not). They started asking the regular hikers what hikes they wanted to do, or if they had an idea for a new hike, so informal group planning for the upcoming six-month period started, usually at the center after a hike. Dennis worked up the schedule on his computer and submitted it to Bear Canyon's front desk where copies of the hiking schedule were kept, along with general information on the class of hikes and recommended clothing and gear. According to Barb, Bear Canyon seemed to have the reputation at that time of doing advanced hiking. "'We had two hiking groups until just a few years ago. The moderate hiking group went out on Wednesdays; our advanced group went out on Thursdays. We actually met in the center's parking lot on the 'off-Thursday' to do a Sandia hike agreed upon that morning!'"

Steve Romero continued to lead hikes occasionally for Bear Canyon. The last one was memorable. It illustrates what can happen when there are no well-defined lines of responsibility. Steve and Jack relate the story of the hike to Sanchez Canyon as they remember it.

The day, September 7, 2006, started out cloudy and mild, as eight hikers left Bear Canyon with Dan Morgan driving the van. Steve was the leader, and Harv was along as well.

Steve remembers that there had been a lot of rain recently, and water was coming down Cochiti Canyon. "You know," he said, "you have to cross that stream there, and my gut feeling was to turn around and go to Tent Rocks or someplace like that. But I had no say, because Harv, the coordinator, said to go on. Before, the leader had the final say. So we went."

Jack says that they started hiking at 9:50 a.m.

"We crossed the creek in Sanchez Canyon just above the waterfall and climbed along the trail as it rounded the brow of a ridge and descended into another canyon. Here, about 2½ miles out, we took our lunch break around noon and just as we were finishing eating, lightning flashed and thunder sounded. Everyone quickly packed up and we put on our rain

gear as we headed back to the trailhead and the van. We plodded along the trail as the lightning flashed around us. Thunder was almost continuous at times and made conversation difficult. Rain began to fall in torrents as we moved closer to the trailhead and hail pelted us as we moved along. Water ran in the trails and we sloshed along through it in our haste to get to the safety of the van. We arrived back at the van around 2:25 p.m. Everyone piled in and breathed a sigh of relief for by now the storm had intensified. Rain was pounding down in sheets and the road bed was a river in places."

Steve says, "When we got back to that stream, it had grown from 20 yards wide to 50 yards wide. I was concerned, but the driver said we could make it. About half way, the water picked up that van and we just floated. And we got hung up in a tree, and water was coming into the van. We sat there and waited until the water receded, and we crawled out the window."

Jack remembers it this way:

"We pulled out and made our way along as best we could down the hill and along the canyon road. Water was rushing across the road in places and hail covered the road making a contrasting white surface to the brown muddy water pouring across the road in low spots. For much of the way out we had made reasonably good progress without any serious problems. But as we moved into the last drainage before we reached pavement and security, water was flowing fast and it took the van and dragged the rear end around. We lost traction and became stuck midstream. Here we could not move. Flood waters had us trapped. It was 2:40 p.m. but we were not in any real danger as the rains had ceased. After we assessed our situation we decided to stay put until the water receded.







Photos by Jack Pitcher

"By 3:50 p.m. we felt it was safe to move out so we abandoned the van and trudged out to the highway. Cynthia had a cell phone and once out of the canyon, she found a strong signal and contacted BCSC. Dan explained our predicament and requested a tow truck. Some communications moved back and forth as we hiked down the highway towards Cochiti and it was confirmed that a tow truck had been dispatched from Albuquerque and should arrive within 60 to 90 minutes or sometime between 5:45 and 6:15 p.m."

"Meanwhile the hikers had made their way to the golf course road entrance and sought refuge from the rains in the buildings there. Too late, as the shops were closing, but some golfers driven off the course by the heavy rains were willing to take us to the Lake Plaza gas station a short distance down the road where we might find coffee, drinks and food. We took shelter there and began to recover from the trauma of the flood. Within moments everyone was feeling better."



Hikers take shelter at gas station. Left to right: Jackie Bryant, Steve Romero, Dan Morgan, Jack Pitcher, Rita Botkin, Maria Zuschlag, and Harv Pommer.

Photo courtesy of Jack Pitcher

"Cynthia called her husband Jimmy and he drove out from Albuquerque to take some of the hikers back as we did not know how long it might be before the van was freed. It was about 6:50 p.m. when the tow truck arrived and Dan went with him to retrieve the van. Cynthia's husband arrived about the same time and the four ladies plus Harv made the trip back, leaving Cochiti shortly after 7 p.m. Steve and I stayed at the plaza. Since the van was stuck less than 3 miles up the road, we expected a reasonably quick turnaround of 20-30 minutes. But that was not to be this evening. The tow truck (the rescuer) got stuck and it took another hour and a half to get it unstuck and turned around so that the van could be pulled out."

"The plaza closed at 8:30 p.m. and Steve and I moved outside to wait. At 8:50 p.m. Dan drove up in the van. We loaded our gear inside and headed down the highway to I-25 and back to the BCSC parking lot at 10 p.m., wet, tired and thankful to be home. This is one hike that will not soon be forgotten."

Steve ends his recollection by saying, "I think that van was never the same after that. That was my last hike with Bear Canyon."

(Note: Steve Romero died on October 14, 2012, at his sister's home in Colorado Springs, just over a month after he shared his stories with us.)

BCSC had various hike leaders after Steve Romero stopped leading regularly. Dennis tried to get hike leaders to take responsibility for finding another leader if they were sick, out of town, or had to cancel, or wanted to trade with another leader. Barb says it worked out quite well, as they were a small group and adapted easily to change. One change that came about as a result of input from new hikers at Bear Canyon was that the group moved from hiking on the first, third, and fifth Thursdays, to every other Thursday, alternating with NVSC. This change enabled hikers to participate in all the Thursday hikes available from both centers.

Dennis and Barb tired of the responsibility of running the group after a few years. About this time, the senior hiking website and new procedures came into play and Sandy McAvoy and Linda Sversek agreed to take on the coordinator role. Linda moved to California, and Sandy remains in the coordinator position there.



Dennis and Barb Vick at right, Ken Butler and Sue Pelletier, left (2013)

Photo by Barbara Regan



Sandy McAvoy (2011)

Photo by Ken Smith

Los Volcanes Senior Center

Eddie Lucas transferred from PDSC to LVSC as center manager, and Stewart Doty started that hiking group, which went out every week. Stewart worked with Dick Brown for two years to create a schedule for LVSC. After that, Stewart repeated the same schedule. Stewart's health failed, and Rose Chavez took over from Stewart with the same schedule repeating every two years. Alternately, Rose would decide on the hike when she saw who showed up at the center that day, basing her choice on their fitness and hiking ability.

The leadership of the center and the hiking group eventually changed, with Ron Harris as the primary coordinator and Dick Brown as the secondary coordinator. The group functioned well, but tragedy struck. Ron died suddenly as the result of a heart condition, and his loss hit the group hard. Dick took over as coordinator, and is working to rebuild the group.

Palo Duro Fitness Center

Vivian Heyward is a former Regents' Professor Emerita in Exercise Science at the University

of New Mexico. Vivian started the hiking program at Palo Duro Fitness Center (PD-FIT). She writes:

"I joined the winter sports programs at PD-FIT in January 2007. Our x-country ski group which met on Tuesdays had such a good time that we all decided we wanted to keep doing 'something' together throughout the year. I proposed leading a hiking group and they were excited about this prospect. I brought the idea to Karen Baker and she approved it as long as I would consent to being there every time, lead the hikes, and get my van driver's permit. I did and that was the beginning of our hiking program at the fitness center. The first year 2007, we hiked every other Tuesday; but in 2008 it was increased to every Tuesday from mid-April through the end of October. In late 2008, Cindy McConnell joined our group. In 2009, Karen assigned her as a contractor employee to start leading and organizing and taking charge of the PD-FIT hiking program (PD-FITH). I now serve as her volunteer hike organizer co-coordinator and leader and van driver since 2009 to the present. In 2012, we changed the hiking day for PD-FITH to Mondays and for LV-FIT to every other Wednesday alternating with NDB-FIT."

"Like the winter sports program, in November we have a PD-FIT hiking potluck and award the "Golden Compass Trophy" to someone who is highly involved in our program. In 2009, I was the recipient, in 2010 it was Larry Mounger, and in 2011 it was Ron Harris."

(Note: In 2012 the award went to Dick Brown, an award that meant very much to him.)

"I also initiated the hike report and picture gallery. From the start of the program, I took pictures and wrote hike reports that were sent to hikers on our own distribution list for PD-FIT. I found that this form of communication brought cohesion to our hiking group and kept everyone in touch and informed. Also in 2010, we (Cindy and I) organized our first overnight hiking trip for PD-FIT hikers to Glenwood Springs in the Gila. In 2011 we went to the Red Rock area near Gallup and this year (2012) we are hiking Red River area."



Los Volcanos Fitness and North Domingo Baca Fitness Hiking Groups

In the second half of 2009 Cindy McConnell expanded the senior fitness center hiking program to include a hiking group at Los Volcanos Fitness Center (LV-FIT). Hikes took place once a month, but the group did not use the hiking website until 2010, when Dick Brown became a secondary hike coordinator for the group.

In August, 2011, with the completion of the new North Domingo Baca Multigenerational and Fitness Centers, Cindy began a hiking program at NDB-FIT, featuring joint hikes with LV-FIT on the same Thursdays once per month. Starting in April of 2012, LV-FIT and NDB-FIT began hiking on alternate Wednesdays.



Cindy McConnell (2012)

Photo by Vivian Heyward

North Domingo Baca Multigenerational Center

North Domingo Baca Multigenerational Center opened in June, 2011. Dick Brown worked with center manager James Mader to initiate the hiking program for NDBMC in 2H 2012, and Cindy McConnell formed the hiking and winter sports programs at NDB-FIT. Since North Domingo Baca is a multigenerational center, members age 18 and older are able to participate in these groups. Dick and Cindy are working hard to promote their programs and make sure that the surrounding community is aware of the outdoor opportunities available to them.

Local Half-Day Hikes


John Holmes and Jack Peel saw a need for short hikes within an hour's drive from Albuquerque, so in 2011 they started an informal hiking group that met at the designated trailhead every other Friday. Hikers were informed of the schedule via email or telephone and attendance was good. Attendance dropped significantly in spring of 2013, even though 69 hikers requested and received email notices for every hike and another half dozen received phone notification about the hikes. John and Jack decided to end the local half-day hike experiment in June of 2013, and they hope their participants discover new, local places to hike.

The Digital Age

Chet Brooke and Carl Collar were the first senior hikers to create documentation of hikes the groups enjoyed with "100 Hikes Within 100 Miles of Albuquerque," referred to by hikers as The Orange Book. Roger Holloway produced his own books, "26 Hikes in 26 Weeks," which served as semi-annual hike schedules with detailed hike descriptions. Starting in 2H 2007, Marilyn Warrant and Dick Brown produced similar books for PDSC, HSC, and NVSC, complete with GPS tracks and waypoints, based on the information they entered into Dick's Access database. The evolution of hiking documentation continued with the creation of ASCHG.org, a website designed by and for Albuquerque senior hikers.

Albuquerque Senior Centers' Hiking Groups

Home | Log in | Hike schedules | Hikes | Regions | Snow Info | Hikers | Responsibilities | Contact us | Help



News

19 Aug 13 - Fall Pot Luck Our annual Fall Pot Luck is scheduled for Sep. 29, from 3:30 to 5:30 pm at Elena Gallegos Picnic Grounds. See Pat Newman's email announcement sent 08/14 or 08/19 for more information.

12 Jul 13 - Some Areas Reopened To Hiking Most of the Santa Fe National Forest will reopen today, along with the Mount Taylor and Magdalena ranger districts. Areas of the upper Pecos Canyon remain closed indefinitely.

06 Jun 13 (UD 06 Jun 13) - AOL Refuses Email At 5:01 MDT This morning at 5:01 MDT, AOL refused *all* the hike notices for the PD-FIT 6/10/13 San Gregorio Reservoir Long - San Pedro Parks hikes with a 521 error. All the other email providers accepted them. Seventeen hikers were affected. A Google search reveals "AOL's misconfigured SMTP servers bouncing emails with 521 error."

30 May 13 - New Responsibilities Responsibilities for all hikers have been updated! Please use the menu item *Responsibilities* to visit and see new guidelines for Hikers, Hike Leaders, Hike Coordinators, and Van Drivers. Thanks to Bill Gloyd for coordinating this effort.

Welcome

Hiking is such a wonderful activity! You see plants, rock formations, wildlife, and a variety of landscapes. Plus all of it is in the great outdoors and with interesting fellow hikers. If you are an Albuquerque senior, we want you to come hike with us! We do day hikes four to six times a week and our hikes vary in length and difficulty. There's something for everybody so come on out.

This web site is provided for hikers from the [City of Albuquerque's Senior Centers](#) and is a consolidation of information from the various hiking groups.

Participation (Want To Join?)

You must to be in good general physical health and able to hike three or four miles.

You must be a member of a Senior Center and can join at one of [several locations](#). To be a member, you must be 50+ years old and pay the \$13 annual membership fee.

Van transportation is provided to/from the trailhead. You can drive yourself but see [Transportation](#) in General Hike Information. If you take the van, your cost is five cents per mile round trip. Cost range from \$1 to \$10 or more depending on the location of the hike. Van driver and hike leader are not charged.

You must be a [responsible hiker](#).

Already a Senior Center member? Mouse over the *Hikers* menu item then click the *Join ASCHG* submenu item

Not a Senior Center member? Go join one of the [Senior Centers](#) and then join ASCHG as a member. Be sure to check the *Hike schedules* and come on a hike with us.

Disclaimers

Website is not an official City of Albuquerque website.

No responsibility is accepted for the accuracy of information on this website.

Use the information on this website at your own risk.

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ASCHG.org home page

Atlanta transplants Howard and Nancy Carr retired to Albuquerque in 2006 and began hiking with the senior hiking groups in 2H 2007. Howard, a career software developer with experience in developing major corporate websites, saw a need for a senior hiking website. He envisioned a site where hikers could view hike schedules and hike descriptions, sign up for hike notices and hike changes, and download .gpx files directly to their GPS devices. In 2008, he worked on the basic design he envisioned and approached Dick Brown and Marilyn Warrant, the custodians of the hiking database, for their input and advice. They formed the hiking website committee and met regularly to define and develop the design. Howard wrote vast amounts of code, Marilyn and Dick prepared the hike data, and Dick and Howard imported the data from the hiking database to the website. The goal was to make the website useful to all of the hikers and hiking groups. The website design also supported the hike reports begun by PD-FITH. This process continued through 2H 2010, with Marilyn writing extensive Help files for users. In 1H 2011, production of the hiking booklets ceased and PDSCT, PDSCS, HSC, NVSC, BCSC, and PD-FITH began using the website. Today there are 10 senior hiking groups on the site.

Howard and Nancy Carr



Photos by Larry Wright

Howard identified a host for the site, incurring a cost of over \$100 per year. He initially paid for hosting himself, but many hikers expressed a desire to contribute. A fundraising effort resulted in over \$500 in donations, ensuring the website's support for the next several years.

A recent project for the hiking group and the ASCHG website is the documentation of wildflowers seen on hikes. Many of our hikers expressed an interest in wildflowers, trying to identify them, and recall when and where they were spotted. As a result of this burgeoning interest, Judie Schwartz, Marilyn Warrant, Ken Smith and others began working on plans to capture this information. Randy Simons, a retired computer professional who had recently joined the website committee, took on the project as an introduction to the website's technical aspects. Dozens of hikers have contributed sightings, knowledge, and photographs. Today we have a flower section on the website with 355 wildflower species that hikers have identified and documented.

The website committee continues to meet regularly to discuss enhancements and additions

to the site. Members welcome suggestions and critiques. Current members are Howard Carr, Marilyn Warrant, Bill Gloyd, Randy Simons, and Barbara Regan. The committee welcomes new members, especially those with web-based technical skills.

Conclusion

It is hard to believe that the senior hiking program we have today in Albuquerque grew from the initiative of one man, Bill Grohe. There have been many different methods of hike planning and organization, from completely spontaneous to carefully planned in advance, by one person or by a group. After Bill laid the groundwork, Carl Collar and Chet Brooke published their hiking collection in The Orange Book. Roger Holloway issued semi-annual booklets describing the hikes that Highland and North Valley Senior Centers would do. Dick Brown and Marilyn Warrant maintained an Access database of the hiking collection as it grew, complete with GPS files. From there, Marilyn and Dick created semi-annual hiking booklets similar to Roger's for Palo Duro as well as Highland and North Valley. Today, this valuable collection of hikes, schedules, and even wildflower information is available on the Internet at ASCHG.org. Members also can have hike information sent straight to their inboxes. What progress has been made since the 1970s!

A look through Roger Holloway's photo albums shows hikers on familiar trails who are no longer with us. This prompts us to consider all who have hiked these trails before us, looking at the same grand vistas, catching their breath on the same steep uphill treks. We owe a debt of gratitude to the City of Albuquerque for the opportunity to hop on their vans and use their facilities. We also are grateful to all of our volunteer hike coordinators, hike leaders, drivers and committee members, past and present, for all they have done for us and continue to do.

Acknowledgements

This history would not be possible without the assistance, support, and contributions of many, many people. Thanks to all of you!

Dick Brown Dick inspired me to do this project with his stories from the many years he has been involved with Albuquerque senior hiking. Once I committed to the project, he kept prodding me to get it done, and suggested Steve Romero as a resource. He hosted interviews at his home, recording the interviews on tape for later reference, helped with interview questions, shared his own intimate knowledge of the program, and assisted with editing. Anyone reading this history can see how much Dick has contributed to the hiking groups over the years. Thank you, Dick!

Steve Romero Thankfully, we were able to talk to Steve before his passing a month later. He gave us information, especially regarding Bill Grohe's important role, that no one else had.

Marilyn Warrant Marilyn made many key contributions to the history, shared Roger Holloway's photo albums and hiking booklets, and rendered invaluable and thorough editing and proofreading. She is one of the hardest-working volunteers we have, and has taken on countless projects for the program. Thank you, Marilyn!

Jack Pitcher Jack shared his historic photos and reports of the Sanchez Canyon saga as well as great shots of Steve Romero. He spent time sharing his recollections of BCSC's early years, greatly enriching the history.

Dennis and Barbara Vick The Vicks sent detailed emails regarding their time with BCSC and helped fill in the gaps in that group's history.

Vivian Heyward Vivian sent a detailed email of the history of the Palo Duro Fitness Center's hiking group, which she began. She also provided information about the formation of the Los Volcanos Fitness Center hiking program.

Rodger Carlson Rodger shared recollections and some excellent photos of the scattering of Roger's ashes.

Ted Cooley, John Holmes, Bob and Judie Schwartz These hikers emailed their memories of Roger Holloway and John Boyd for inclusion in the history.

Judie Schwartz Judie did the final edits of the document, providing valuable input on the form and content.

Barbara Regan Barbara took on the history project as her first assignment with the website committee, and did an outstanding job coding the text, placing the pictures, and making the document attractive and easy to read.