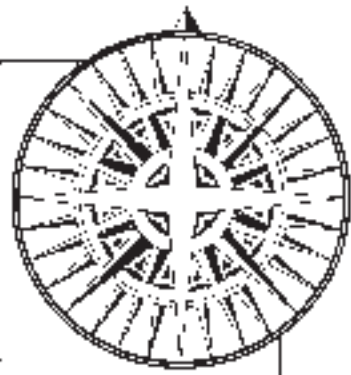




Compass

THE BOULDER GROUP NEWSLETTER



Volume XXVII Number 7

July 2011

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Editor's Note

This month we return to our theme on near-epics, with a compelling tale by Janine Fugere, an avid hiker and the current Boulder Group Chair. Her story chronicles an adventure in Moab, Utah.

The Boulder Group Outings survey has been extended, so there's still more time to win prizes from REI and Neptune Mountaineering, just by answering a few questions. The link for the survey appears on page 9.

Also, please keep in mind that we have many volunteer roles that still need to be filled at this time, including Conservation Chair; Marketing Director; Hiking School Director; and Treasurer. And last but not least, we could use some help getting our beautiful, new clubroom finished. See page 2 for details.

— Donna Marino
Compass Editor

Humbled by Hunter Mesa and Hunter Canyon

-- Contributed by Janine Fugere

An appropriate subtitle for this story would be, "How I got lucky and learned how much I still had to learn about hiking and backcountry safety." This humbling lesson was learned on my first trip to Moab, Utah in October 2001. Since I am a teacher, I'd been able to spend a good part of my first summer in Colorado, gaining hiking skills and I continued hiking and also backpacking into the fall of 2001. That October, a little over a year after I moved to Colorado, I was invited to go hiking in Moab for a long weekend with two other people. One of these was a friend, Bob, who regularly led hikes here in the Boulder area and I'd

hiked with him a few times. The other was a woman, Judy, who'd also been on some of Bob's hikes. Since I knew Bob and he had also previously been to the part of Moab we were planning on hiking, I felt comfortable going with him. I also felt confident about my own hiking skills since I'd been able to hike so much that season. With excitement, we set off for Moab the long weekend of October 11-14, 2001.

My initial impressions of Moab did not disappoint! Even as we first headed towards town on Thursday, I was overwhelmed by the beauty of the scenery. We arrived early enough for a short, late afternoon hike in Mary Jane Canyon and I was awestruck by the beauty, colors, and sights, such as the infamous "Priest and Nuns" rock formation.

continued on page 4



Hunter Mesa and Canyon

Chair's Report

Writing a reflection of a near-epic survival experience I had in Moab back in 2001 for this month's Compass has certainly given me pause to reflect. I am so grateful for Colorado Mountain Club, for although I'd learned a lot about survival since then, even before joining CMC, it is my CMC experiences which continuously help me to hone my skills. I urge others to take the Boulder Group's Hiking and Wilderness Survival School (formerly Hiking 1) if you haven't already. Many, like me, don't think they need this course because they already have hiking and backcountry experience. I can honestly say that after teaching it for the past four years, I still learn something new each time I instruct. If you haven't taken it, please sign up and if you have, please volunteer as an assistant. If there's anything my writing about my trip to Moab in 2001 taught me, it's that we all learn best by regularly refreshing our skills.

As I finished writing the story, my thoughts return to new clubroom news and other club business. We are excited about how far our new clubroom has come, but we seem to have hit a bit of inertia in terms of moving forward. Help is needed to finish painting the gear storage area and even more significantly, to help build our kitchenette area. We've already leased the space for half a year and it is not unthinkable that our current space could be leased at any time, so we need to be prepared to move as soon as possible. Please let's all rally together to finish the last of the renovations and then to accomplish the physical move.

One piece of great news is that we have a new GPS Editor-in-training! Blake Busse is learning to be the new editor of the GPS and we're very happy to welcome him on board.

In other club business, we have another position on Council which we are in immediate need of someone to fill. We're very grateful to Holly Freeman for all her service as the Boulder Group's Treasurer, but she's had to step down at the end of June. Thus, we urgently need a volunteer to fill this position. See the separate job description in this issue or in the GPS.

The next most pressing area of need is we need someone who'd be willing to be the Chair for the Annual Meeting & Dinner being held the first weekend of November. We're grateful to Deb Halstead and later, Don Walker, for filling that role last year and it is hard to believe, but it is urgent that we begin the organization of this year's event.

Another role which needs to be filled is that I am currently serving as both the Council Chair and the interim Hiking School Director for BMS. I am badly in need of someone else to take over Hiking School. I will work closely with anyone who takes on the position, but it is too much for me to do it myself, along with the Chair responsibilities and caring for ailing parents. I ask that everyone brainstorm possible replacements to direct the Hiking Schools.

We also have several other positions that need to be filled, including Conservation Chair and Marketing Director. Please seriously consider if you or anyone you know can help in any of these capacities.

Last, but not least, please enjoy the wonderful summer, with the long hours of daylight we're enjoying as we've just passed the summer solstice. Have fun, be safe, and enjoy the glory of Colorado in the summer. As you do, please think of ways you can help support the club in any of the volunteer needs mentioned.

Respectfully submitted,
— Janine Fugere, Boulder Chair

Volunteer Opportunities

Treasurer Needed

The Boulder Group Council is in search of a new Treasurer. Responsibilities include collecting revenue, paying bills, record keeping with Quickbooks, making periodic financial reports and working with the state CMC accounting manager. Holly Freeman, who is resigning as Treasurer at the end of June, assures us that you do not need to be a CPA to take on this position and that she will also help train you! (This could also be an opportunity for someone looking to become more familiar with Quickbooks, used by

85% of small businesses in America.) Contact Holly at treasurer@cmcboulder.org or Janine Fugere at chair@cmcboulder.org for more information.

Clubroom Hosts Urgently Needed

The clubroom is hosted by volunteers three evenings per week from 5 to 7 pm.

We need two new hosts to complete our roster. This involves one evening every four weeks. This is a great and easy way to help support the Group.

To find out more contact Sheila at 303-447-2780.

Wanted: Your Stories!

The Compass newsletter wants to hear from you! Please consider sharing your personal stories or consider writing an article of interest for a future issue. Email compass@cmcboulder.org.

compass

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Website: cmcboulder.org

All Boulder members automatically receive the Compass via email.

We welcome announcements, articles, letters, artwork, and photos, especially from recent CMC trips and events.

DISCLAIMER

Events published in the Compass are for informational purposes only. They are not endorsed by the Boulder Group of the CMC except for the events that are explicitly led, taught or instructed by the Boulder Group. The Boulder Group of the CMC makes no assessment as to their merits. Participants are advised to make their own assessment as to whether to participate in these events.

July 2011 Trips & Activities

Editor's note: The following is a list of BCMC trips and events for the month. It is possible that trips may change or be posted after this issue goes to press. Please check online for current trip status, to see club trip policies, or to learn about becoming a trip leader: cmcboulder.org/Trips.

To view trips online and register:

- ▶ Browse to www.cmc.org
- ▶ Login with your CMC member number and password. For first time users, the default password is your ZIP code.
- ▶ Click on 'Trip Signup' in left margin
- ▶ Enter trip selection parameters (CMC group, date range, etc) & click Search
- ▶ To register, click Register
- ▶ For Boulder trips, you must contact the leader by phone (preferred) or email; for Denver trips, you may register online.
- ▶ Schools require previous signup. Info at www.cmcboulder.org

Friday, July 1

Fandango Variation, First Flatiron, Level II Rock Climb (5.6)

This variation to Fandango follows a left-facing dihedral and then rejoins the standard Fandango route. The variation is 5-6 pitches long. Priority given to recent BRS grads. Leader: Brenda Leach brenda_leach@yahoo.com

Saturday, July 2

Tip-Toe Slab, Dinosaur Mountain Level I, Rock Climb (5.3)

Enjoy 3 pitches of "Flatiron climbing at its best." We'll rappel off the west side of the Front Porch. BRS or equivalent required. Leader: Eileen Monyok eileen_m50@hotmail.com or 303-530-4321.

Monday, July 4

The Snow Lion, Moderate C-E

Fast pace, Difficulty: Scrambling

Let's climb the classic Snow Lion on Jasper Peak! Steep snow, maybe a little scrambling near the top. Participants must be in good shape and comfortable on steep snow in crampons. Prerequisite: BMS-B

Leader: Kent M. Crites

kentcrites@aol.com or 303-284-3059

Monday, July 4

Leader's Choice Ski Trip

Adv. I Ski Tour, Ski Mountaineering Moderate Pace

Let's celebrate the 4th by skiing one last time! A classic "spring" ski destination

will be selected based on available snow and vehicle access. Avalanche beacon and ice axe required. Prerequisite: Avalanche School. Leader: Christopher Marotta. 303-579-1180

Wednesday, July 6

After Work Social Hike

A relaxing, slow-to-moderate paced, 2 to 3 hour hike close to Boulder. Don't call -- just show up before 6 pm at the Boulder Group Club Room. Be prepared for any weather with good footwear, water and a light. Optional after-hike food and drink. Leader: Steven Haymes

Friday, July 8

Chianti - West Ridge (Eldorado Canyon) Level III Rock Climb (5.8)

Chianti is a classic 2-pitch climb on the West Ridge. It follows a thin crack straight up to roof, turns the roof around the left side and cruises to a tree. The 2nd pitch follows a steep crack/corner system with juggy holds. Rap to descend. Two participants only. Leader: Brenda Leach. brenda_leach@yahoo.com

Saturday, July 9

Stairway to Heaven

Level I Rock Climb

This classic Flatiron route is rated by Gerry Roach as "...one of his Top Ten Flatiron routes." This long, moderate route should be accessible to anyone who has completed BRS. Space limited to two participants. Leader: Rick Casey. caseyrick@gmail.com

Tuesday, July 12

Arapaho Pass & Lake Dorothy (IPW)

Moderate B, Casual Pace, On Trail

From the 4th of July Trailhead beyond Eldora, follow a good trail northwest along the south-facing slope of the valley to the Continental Divide at Arapaho Pass and then on to the lake at 12061 feet. Great views and flowers as the snow melts. Trail mileage: 7 miles
Elevation gain: 1960 feet
Driving distance: 50 miles

Leader: Caryl Shields

buchloe111@aol.com

Wednesday, July 13

After Work Social Hike, Moderate A

A relaxing, slow-to-moderate paced, 2-3 hour hike close to Boulder. Meet at the Boulder Group Club Room before 6 pm. Be prepared for any weather with good

footwear, water and a light. Optional after-hike food and drink. Leader: Marilyn Fellows

Sunday, July 17

Iceberg Lakes Hike

Easy C, Moderate Pace

Difficulty: Off Trail, Prerequisite: Hiking School -B

From East Portal hike on-trail to Crater Lakes, continue off-trail to Clayton Lake, then continue above tree line to Iceberg Lakes beneath the Continental Divide. Leader: Steven Haymes. Register BY PHONE between 9 AM and 9 PM only at 303-444-4765

Wednesday July 20, 7-8pm

Boulder CMC Open House

Boulder Clubroom

Inviting new and prospective CMC members to learn more about the club and its many classes, trips, and activities. Experienced members will be on hand to share their enthusiasm and knowledge about hiking, camping, peak bagging, rock climbing, snow shoeing, cross-country skiing, and more. Bring a friend!

Wednesday, July 20

After Work Social Hike, Easy A

Don't call; just show up. Meet at Boulder clubroom 5:45-6pm and carpool by 6:15pm for a social hike along one of the local Boulder foothills trails. This outing is for casual hikers who enjoy each others' company, talking along the trail, and sharing snacks along the way. Destination to be selected by leader. Leader: Gary Johnston

Sunday, July 24

Butler Gulch Wildflower Hike

Difficult B, Fast Pace

Hike swiftly up the trail to the cirque at the head of Butler gulch, looking for the elusive "Dusty Maiden" (*Chaenactis alpina*) and identify plants on the way down. This area is known for wildflowers. Leader: Patricia Butler
303-440-0586 or butler@csd.net

Wednesday, July 27

After Work Social Hike, Easy A

See description for Wednesday, July 20 hike. Leader: Karen L. Baldwin

That night, we car camped and I can't even say for sure where it was, because we set up camp in total darkness, down some dirt road which Bob knew from previous visits. My sense of wonder grew the next morning when I woke up to view early morning light on these amazing rock formations. They reminded me of the drip sandcastle towers I used to make as a kid at the beach. Bob referred to these as "Twin Cones" though I don't know if that is their formal name or just his nickname for them. To me, they will always be "Drip Sandcastles."



"Drip Sandcastles"

There is nothing like camp coffee in the early hours of daylight, sharing scenery like this with friends while browsing at a map to plan the day's hike. My sense of euphoria grew during Friday's hike, which took us up onto Courthouse Mesa. If I hadn't known already, I certainly knew after Friday's hike that I was in another part of the world! Never in my life had I seen such bizarre and amazing rock formations, nor had I witnessed how many distinctly different geosystems could exist in one given area. I marveled that there was more than one variety of sandstone; one was the reddish rock I had come to expect, the other a whitish-gray tone. As if that wasn't enough

variety, amidst these painted layers of sandstone, I could also see vegetated areas with desert scrub brush and beyond that, snow-covered mountains. It was the most geological diversity I'd ever seen in one location.

Aside from the beauty of the scenery, my confidence was boosted by Friday's hike because I had no trouble at all scrambling on any of the terrain that we covered. I agilely handled all the ascents and descents, feeling very comfortable with my hiking. While on top of Courthouse Mesa, with no fear, I nimbly headed out to the point of the mesa and stood with my face in the wind. A bit like

Dorothy in *The Wizard of Oz*, all I could think was, "I don't think we're in Kansas anymore!"

I also became more grateful for my skills because the other woman, Judy, who accompanied Bob and me that weekend, struggled far more than I did with the terrain on Friday's hike. I realized that I took my hiking skills for granted as I watched her struggle to get up and down some of the slopes, even needing to "bear crawl" at several points. What I had yet to learn was that it is not just hiking agility you need to keep yourself safe in the backcountry.

In the long run, Judy ended up at less risk than I did, but I'll get to that in due time...

We wound down Friday with setting up a car camp and eating dinner in Mill Canyon. While I don't remember what I ate, I do remember sleeping like a baby that night. That is, until I woke to the first time in my life I ever heard coyotes howling. What a marvelous sound! I know some people are afraid of that sound, but it filled me with nothing but joy and a sense that I was really in a place where I belonged and those coyote songs lulled me back to sleep.

I woke early enough Saturday morning to catch the last glimpse of the crescent moon setting over Mill Canyon. During breakfast, the three of us discussed our hiking plans for Saturday. I was excited to learn that Bob wanted to hike south of Moab in Hunter Canyon and explore Hunter Mesa.

We headed out at 10 AM and began the hike along Kane Springs Road, at the high point in between Hunter Canyon and Pritchett Canyon. We began by crossing the road toward Hunter Mesa. We reached a point where, in order to proceed, we'd need to make a narrow steep climb about 10 feet wide and 30 feet high, according to Bob's recollection. I was not really surprised, and honestly was a bit relieved, when Judy decided she didn't feel up for the hike and wanted to turn back and wait for us by the car. I only say relieved because I was eager to do some even more serious scrambling and it had become clear the day before that Judy's skills would not be up to the challenge. On the other hand, neither Bob nor I wanted to exclude her either, so we discussed going on an easier hike instead so that she could join us.

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Compass Ad Rates

| | |
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| \$245 | full page |
| \$150 | half page |
| \$90 | quarter page |
| \$55 | eighth page |
| \$45 | business card 2x3" |
| - ads must be prepaid | |
| - can be black and white or color in PDF or JPG format. | |
| - contact: compass@cmcboulder.org | |

But Judy insisted that she would sincerely enjoy a few hours to herself to read and relax. Having been reassured that she truly wanted to rest, Bob and I showed her on the map where we intended to hike, and let her know that we planned to return to her at the car by early afternoon.

Bob and I then proceeded to explore Hunter Mesa. We climbed up the steep slope, arrived at easier terrain and headed left through an opening with a view beyond of the canyon below. We continued along some easy slickrock, with the majority of the mesa still above us at this point.

Looking back, I don't recall if Bob and I ever formally planned to actually climb fully up onto Hunter Mesa. In retrospect, the ambiguity of our plan was the beginning of an extremely important life learning experience for both of us. I remember our first views of the mesa and thinking how cool it would be if we could get up there, but not knowing if there were any way. Initially, we proceeded with the intention of just exploring what might be possible. Since neither of us were rock climbers nor did we have any climbing gear with us, we weren't sure if we'd find an accessible way up. Bob knew from a previous trip that there was a beautiful trail down in Hunter Canyon we could explore if not. Still, we were both excited at the idea of finding a way up onto that spectacular mesa.

As we proceeded exploring along the slickrock, we reached an intermediate terrace with beautiful Funnel Arch to the left. This is a huge rock arch leading to the top, which Bob actually attempted to scramble up, but it was just too steep; there was not a chance! He also noticed the fin route up behind the arch, but determined that it was also difficult, dangerous, and he did not recommend it. So, we continued exploring.

Shortly thereafter, we came across what, at the time, seemed like a lucky break. In retrospect, it could easily have ended up being the cause of our demise but, at the time, that thought never even entered my mind. What we'd encountered was the cable route up. This was at another huge

arch, about 50 feet high, from what I recall, which was a pretty easy scramble for about the first 25 feet and then had a permanent steel cable installed up the last very steep 25 or so feet. Having just witnessed Bob attempt to climb the previous steep arch, it never occurred to me not to try to climb this cable. In a heartbeat and without even thinking twice, I scrambled up the first part of the arch and then climbed up the cable the rest of the way onto Hunter Mesa.

It didn't fully hit me how scary it was until after I made it to the top. Did you ever have an experience where you gave a speech, and you were fine through the entire speech, but afterwards, your adrenaline was pumping so much that you trembled for quite some time after you finished speaking? Well that's what scrambling up the cable onto Hunter Mesa was like for me. I looked down at Bob, beaming and almost boastful, and only then did I notice the look of anxiety on his face. He said, "Well, now I guess I've gotta come up there too." I took this photo (*below*) as Bob made the scramble himself, appearing to do it almost as easily as I had.



Bob ascending cable on Hunter Mesa

However, once Bob made it up the cable and onto Hunter Mesa, trembling just like I had after my ascent, he looked at me and stated, "There is no chance I'm going back down that way!" Honestly, my first thought was, "You're kidding me right?" but the look on his face made it really clear he wasn't kidding. Bob felt that trying to climb back down without gloves or any harnesses would be way too risky and in retrospect, he was probably right.

Here is where our saga really began because, as the saying goes, "What goes up must come down." I was initially a bit panicked about Bob not wanting to go back down the cable because I worried about not going back the way we'd come. However, he said he knew of an access point at the far end of the mesa, which led down into the canyon and then we could hike out on from there on a trail he'd hiked through the canyon in the past. That sounded great to me, so off we set.

At this point, everything still felt like a grand adventure and it really hadn't become apparent to me that we may have bitten off more than we could chew. We began to meander our way along Hunter Mesa and I saw sights the likes of which I had never seen before in my entire 40 years; even more spectacular than the day before on Courthouse Mesa. As we wandered along, Bob pointed out to me that the views we were seeing were referred to as the Navajo Sandstone Fins called "Behind the Rocks" with the Sierra La Sal Mountains in the background. As I looked at this view, all I could think was that it was worth every bit of trembling it took to get up that cable!

After awhile though, things were not all just splendor and euphoria. There's something about the way a mesa is formed that I hadn't taken into consideration when I agreed to try to make it all the way to the other end. It's not as though a mesa proceeds in a straight line above a canyon; rather, the edge of a mesa is a long series of cracks and crags that meander their way along the canyon.

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As such, it wasn't long before it became clear that getting to the end of the mesa was going to take far longer than we anticipated. Each time we came to another crag we had to go around, we looked down into the canyon and saw the tiny dot which was my car getting not closer, but further away from us; this was very disconcerting. Still, the scenery was beautiful and we kept on going, in good spirits for the most part. However, as time went on, I grew more and more uncomfortable. The mesa kept leading us further south and east, while my car was back at the head of the canyon to the northwest. I suggested that we needed to find a way to try climb down into the canyon, but Bob vetoed several spots I suggested, which he didn't consider safe options, given our lack of technical gear. Thus, we continued along the mesa, with me becoming more and more uncomfortable.

As we persevered with our hike, mostly in silence at this point, I wrestled internally with the dilemma I felt I faced. I had to choose between honoring Bob as my leader, continuing to follow him, or honoring my own gut intuition, which said there was no chance we could continue going the way we were and make it out before nightfall. My anxiety grew as I went through a mental checklist of what I had with me in my daypack and I contemplated what I knew about how cold nights can get in desert canyons. This was before I'd ever even heard the phrase "The Ten Essentials" let alone carried all of them. On this hike, I had brought 100 ounces of water in a Camelbak (about half of which I had already drank), rain gear, a small lunch, a digital camera, and a very small flashlight that didn't even have fresh batteries. That's it.

As I watched my car getting further and further away from us, it became certain to me that we couldn't continue hiking in the direction we were going. If we did, I felt convinced there was no way we would get out before nightfall, and I knew that we were not prepared to spend the night in the canyon. I struggled with these thoughts for quite some distance, because I was hiking with someone whom I respected as having far more hiking experience than I had, so to a

degree, I felt obligated to follow the advice of my leader. But eventually my instinct to survive superseded the need to be socially correct.

I finally spoke up and told Bob that I felt strongly that we couldn't continue going in the direction we were, and that we had to find a way to scramble down into the canyon and work our way out. He didn't agree because he thought he saw more accessible ways down up ahead. To me, nothing ahead looked any better and I felt like the longer we waited to climb down the canyon, the greater the risk we'd run out of light before we found our way out. We could not find a meeting of the minds and we reached an impasse between us.



View from Hunter Mesa of "Behind the Rocks" and the La Sal Mountains

This was the first time I'd ever been in a situation where I had to process group dynamics in order to make a survival decision; in fact, I'd never even heard the phrase group dynamics. While we were only a group of two, we were diametrically opposed on what we thought we should do at that point. Bob felt we should continue along the mesa as we'd been going, but every ounce of my instinct told me that if I kept going that way, I wasn't going to make it. Both figuratively and literally we had a standoff, with me making it clear to Bob that, with or without him, I intended to scramble down into the canyon and work my way out. He was extremely troubled by this and pointed out that it was very important for the group to stay together.

I told Bob that I agreed and I truly wanted us to stay together, but that I couldn't do so if he was going to insist on staying up on the mesa heading away from my car. I explained the reasoning behind my conviction, which was that we didn't have proper provisions with us to survive the night in the canyon. He kept emphasizing the danger of trying to scramble down without any ropes or climbing gear. While I knew there would be some risk on the scramble down, in my heart I believed the risk to us was greater if we continued the way we'd been going. I urged Bob to come over to the edge of the mesa with me and pointed out the most recent area I'd been scoping out as the best possible route down. He was very skeptical, as he still felt better routes lay ahead, but I remained steadfast that I believed this spot was our best chance of getting out before nightfall.

The moment of truth came when I made it very clear that, with or without him, this was the way I was going, but that I hoped it would be with him. As I started to descend over the edge, Bob realized how determined I was. He called out to me, "You go first and then I'll decide if I'm coming with you."

I don't remember a lot about the climb down, save for thinking that it was easier than I'd anticipated and that, if I'd realized that, I'd have gone down a lot sooner. It had only taken me a few minutes to scramble down, with no loss of footing or slipping. The next thing I recollect is the horrible feeling in the pit of my stomach as I realized I may well be on my own; Bob may choose not to come down with me, and I may have to find my way out of the canyon by myself. Still, I believed I'd done the right thing and the next thought to enter my mind was trying to ensure that Bob made the right choice, too. I called up to him, encouraging him, and assuring him it really wasn't that difficult. It only took him a minute to make the decision to follow me down and, just a few minutes later, he was there beside me. The photo on page 7 shows the view looking back at the area we'd scrambled down the mesa, somewhere around the point just below the two highest snow-dusted peaks.

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Our scramble down Hunter Mesa, roughly below the snow peaks

We'd gotten beyond the impasse over which way to go, but things were still really uncomfortable between us. It was clear we needed some time to just unwind a bit, calm down, and mend our relationship before we tried to continue. We mutually decided that this was a good time for lunch. Yes, while it seemed like we'd been on the trail forever, at this point, it was only perhaps early to mid-afternoon. As we sat and ate our lunch, just getting some nutrition in us alone helped to improve our morale and the tension between us eased enough for us to talk about what had happened so far.

I'll never forget the look on Bob's face when he looked at me and said, "You're just a rebel child!" To this I could only reply something to the extent of, "No, you're just old and stuck in your ways!" We both laughed a bit and lightened up enough to reestablish feelings of well-being and mutual respect. We talked through the reasons why it was best that we had come down the way we did and the more we spoke, the more camaraderie grew between us. This was really important to achieve before attempting to go on, so while it had been tempting to push on immediately, we were both glad for having taken that bonding time.

During this lunch break, we also faced the reality that we weren't entirely down into Hunter Canyon yet; the scramble had actually only brought us about half of the way down to the point of a jeep road. The depths of Hunter Canyon still lay below us to our right. As we finished our lunches, we looked at the map together and Bob pointed out what he thought was the best way to make it the rest of the way down into the canyon. We finished eating and then headed towards the southeast end of the canyon where Bob had spotted a good access point to climb the remainder of the way down. From there, the plan was to follow the trail, which Bob had hiked in the past, along the river and out of the canyon.

Our saga was far from over though. Despite the relief I felt after having convinced Bob to make the scramble partially down into the canyon, little had I known how much still lay ahead. This became clear once we resumed hiking after lunch. Although we'd now hiked halfway down off the mesa, after the first mile or so, which was along the jeep road, we then encountered very similar cracks and crags as we'd struggled with on top of the mesa. In some ways it was even more confusing, because we didn't have as much of a bird-eye overview as we'd had when we were on top. We

knew we were going the right way, yet it was still very spooky, feeling much like being in a labyrinth. We had to really keep our wits about us in order not to get disoriented. Complicating matters was the fact that many people don't understand the true use of cairns; on more than one occasion, we found a series of cairns which led to nothing but a dead end at the edge of the mesa. It seemed possible that people often make cairns just because they think they're pretty rather than understanding their proper use as directional aids.

The good news was that one of these sets of cairns did point us to a spot where there were a few tiny waterpockets in the indentations on top of a rock. It really didn't look too appealing, so I was grateful that I had originally had 100 ounces of water and still had a fair amount left, especially since it was pretty algae-laden water. Since Bob was nearly out, he used the waterpockets to refill his water bottle. I cringed as I watched him treat the scungy water with iodine tablets, but I was in admiration that at least he had water treatment along with him, since I did not. I crossed my fingers that my water didn't run out, but was relieved to know that Bob he had iodine tablets if it did.

After we hydrated and cooled down, we continued towards the southeast. We were very relieved when we spotted the special entry route down the Hunter Midway Box into lower Hunter Canyon. Excitedly we made our way there and hiked down into the canyon. As Bob's journal of this adventure notes, "We were relieved, but the 'adventure' wasn't over here."

Our hike out through the canyon was exceptionally difficult, because flash floods had passed through the canyon. Much of what had at one time been a trail was overgrown and we had to do a lot of bushwhacking through what my later research told me is called "common cane." What my experience at the time told me was that it was difficult and exhausting. I'd have given anything to have had a machete!

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We eventually made our way through to spend time on an actual trail and crossed the drainage near the bottom of the canyon. We continued hiking as evening approached. It was not until 7 PM that we arrived at the slickrock that lined canyon floor. It got dark and we used my flashlight to continue, with me praying that my batteries didn't die, as I had no spares. At times the trail was easier, but again and again we came to more difficult bushwhacking and scrambling. It seemed, at some points, as if the canyon would never end.

I remember getting a very uplifting feeling in my chest as we came to a trail register, for I knew this meant we were at the north entrance to the trail. We signed the register and continued, shortly thereafter coming across two campers at the end of the canyon at 8:10 PM. Our hike had lasted 10 hours, but we still had to make our way the 1.4 miles to our car, where Judy had been waiting, surely frantic, all day. One of the campers, Shawn, kindly gave us a ride up to the car. When we arrived, Judy had indeed been concerned enough that she'd sought help. She'd anticipated our being gone only a few hours, but by the time we made it to the car, it was 10-1/2 hours after we'd left her. The sheriffs were there and had been just about to send out a search and rescue party. We told them we were okay and they called off the search. We were thankful that nobody had to end up heading out into the canyon at night, putting themselves at risk to look for us.

Bob, Judy, and I went out to dinner that night and a steak never tasted so good to me! Despite the experience having been harrowing, it proved to be a bonding experience for Bob and me. Some ten years later, we still email or speak occasionally about what an epic day it was and about what we learned. Indeed, our saga on Hunter Mesa & Hunter Canyon was one of the best learning experiences in my life.

Here is a reflection of things I believe we handled well and things we could have handled better:

1. Someone knew where we'd gone and about when we were expected back. There would have been a rescue party sent if we'd not made it out.
2. Never again after this hike did I head out without learning more about the Ten Essentials and I began carrying far more survival provisions with me, even on short hikes.
3. We should have had a much clearer plan before deciding whether to climb up onto the mesa.
4. Before I scrambled up the cable onto the mesa, I should have ensured Bob was comfortable going that way and we should have also considered whether we'd both be comfortable coming down the same way.
5. My eagerness to get up was an example of when one person in a group charges forward without evaluating the best thing for the entire group.
6. Bob's following me despite his discomfort with doing so was an example of "herd mentality" where one feels obligated to follow others even if not the best idea.
7. I was proud of myself for honoring my own intuition rather than only "following the leader" when my instincts were not comfortable with Bob's intention to keep going along the mesa top, which I felt would risk not getting out before nightfall.
8. Bob was proud of honoring his intuition about vetoing the first few places I'd suggested we scramble down. He was right that there were few, if any, handholds in those spots and they would have likely been too dangerous.
9. I should have been more familiar with the topography of the region myself prior to the hike. I should have studied the map more myself and known more details about the overall terrain. Then, I'd have been able to make more informed choices about the best place to hike down once we were up on the Mesa, alleviating my anxiety about whether or not to go the way Bob suggested.
10. We ended up with a compromise on both of our parts, which is what is often needed to safely work through any group dynamics impasse in the backcountry.
11. We wisely chose to work our way through our impasse and remained together for the duration of the hike, which was safer than it would have been for either of us alone.

12. We also were smart enough to take some decompress and bonding time while eating lunch before continuing. This relieved stress and tension between us which would only have made the rest of the still very challenging hike out less safe, had we not worked through the tension.

13. Bob had water treatment with him, allowing him to replenish his supply from the waterpockets. I did not have water treatment, so had I run out of water, I'd have needed to use his iodine also.

14. We wisely asked the campers at the end of the canyon for a ride to Judy and our car. The time this saved us at the very end was probably just enough time to save a full-blown search and rescue team having been needlessly sent out at night.

15. We both spent the nearly 10 years since this hike reflecting on the experience. Bob kept a journal about it and I similarly wrote notes in my photo album from the hike. Even recently, in preparation for this article, we spoke about it again, furthering our learning from this experience.

16. The experience led me to further my backcountry training, taking classes through REI, Outward Bound, and Wilderness Medicine Institute. Eventually I joined Colorado Mountain Club, where I went on to become the Hiking School Director. Since that time, I've been proud of teaching Wilderness Survival Skills to others, hoping to save them some mistakes I was lucky enough to survive!

Bob and I both recall this hike as one of the peak experiences of our lifetimes! While we were humbled by Hunter Mesa and Hunter Canyon, the experience formed a bond between us. What we learned from this near-epic saga about backcountry safety will be with us forever.

Boulder Group Outings Survey

Do the Boulder Group's trip offerings match your interests? Would you like to see more of certain types of trips in the Trip Schedule? Do you want to become a trip leader but aren't sure how to proceed? Complete this brief survey at <http://svy.mk/iTn4wx> and tell the Outings Committee what you would like to see. Everyone who completes this survey is eligible for entry in a drawing to win attractive first, second, and third place prizes from Neptune Mountaineering and REI. Thanks in advance for your valuable feedback!

Fall Boulder Mountaineering Schools (BMS) Orientation Night

An orientation for the Fall BMS Schools is Monday, August 15, 7pm. Sign ups start on Tuesday, August 16.

This year's fall schools will include Hiking and Survival Essentials (starts 8/23), Hiking Navigation (starts 9/22), Basic Rock School (starts 9/6) and GPS Navigation (starts 10/11). See <http://www.cmcboulder.org/bms/fallSchedule.html> for all lecture and field trip dates. Join us in the clubroom for an optional Orientation Night where school directors will provide an overview and answer questions. SIGN-UPS START ON TUESDAY, AUGUST 16. For instructions on how to sign up, go to <http://bit.ly/IXUxva>. Contact bms@cmcboulder.org if you have questions.

Looking for a Hiking School Director

We are in need of a new Hiking School Director for the Boulder Mountaineering Schools. The Hiking School covers Hiking & Survival Essentials, Hiking Navigation, Backpacking School, & GPS Navigation. The Hiking School Director works with the BMS Director to set dates for the schools, coordinates instructors & assistants for the lectures, and coordinates Trip Leaders & assistants for the Field Trips. An extensive support system of regular volunteers for all of these positions is in place.

For the 2011 spring & summer schools, all of the field trips and lectures have been scheduled and all of the instructors and trip leaders have been chosen as well. You will receive guidance and training from past Hiking School Directors and other people who are long-standing volunteers in the schools.

If you, or anyone you know is interested, please contact Janine Fugere at chair@cmcboulder.org or Brenda Leach at bms@cmcboulder.org

Conservation Grant Awards

The Boulder Group recently gave several Conservation Grant Awards to nonprofit groups, including:

- Boulder Climbing Community (BCC) received a \$1500 award to perform various projects, including a crag inventory of Boulder Canyon with access route GPS coordinates, as well as complete projects at Castle Rock and Bowling Alley, and design an access route proposal for Cob Rock (USFS). They also plan to do some restoration work there, pending Forest Service approval. See <http://boulderclimbingcommunity.net>

- Friends of the Dillon Ranger District received \$200 from the CMC Boulder group in support of its Ranger Patrol program. Since the National Forest lands managed by the Dillon Ranger District see over 4.5 million visitors each year, public education and outreach activities are critical. FDRD has over 40 volunteers who patrol Summit County trails

and educate the public about sustainable use of public lands. Last year, Friends of the Dillon Ranger District volunteers patrolled almost 900 miles of trail and contacted over 3,000 visitors. CMC members interested in Ranger Patrol program for 2012 should contact Sarah Slaton at sslaton@fdrd.org.

- Wildlands Restoration Volunteers received a \$1500 award, which will be used for training programs, tools maintenance, native seed collection, and more. See <http://www.wlrv.org> for more information.

- Adopt-A-Crag Climbing Stewardship was awarded \$1,500 to create an ongoing youth stewardship program for Golden Cliffs. Projects will address recreation management issues, enhance the climbing experience for users year-round, develop a cadre of trained volunteer climbing stewardship leaders, and strengthen the CMC's partnerships with the Access Fund and Front Range stewardship groups.

Scotland: A Cure for the Common Cubicle, Monthly Program for August

Wednesday, August 10, 7-8:30 pm
A quirky and methodical review of Edinburgh and the Scottish Highlands by analyst adventurista and Boulder Group member, Clare Reda. Included features: pictures and videos; topo maps & elevation profiles; scotch and rocks (but not scotch on the rocks!); castles & food; a long island run with local savages; mountain and road biking; wildflowers and munro bagging; and rock climbing.



Scotland Monthly Program

Friends of Dillon Ranger District Events

The nonprofit group Friends of the Dillon Ranger District would like to extend an invitation for CMC Boulder members to join one of its 60 volunteer service projects up in Summit County this summer. Projects are held during the week and on the weekend, and work ranges from trail maintenance to tree plantings. Many of the projects are family-friendly, and volunteering with FDRD is a good way to meet members of the Summit County community, while helping maintain the National Forest lands that draw over 4.5 million visitors to the area every year. Some upcoming volunteer projects include:

Fri, July 8th, 9am - 3pm
Summit Mountain Bikers Adopt-A-Trail Project at Soda Creek Trail

Sat, July 9th, 8am - 1pm
Pulling for Colorado: Weed Pull

Mon-Wed, July 11th-13th, 9am - 3p.
Christy Sports Adopt-a-Trail Project at Baker's Tank Trail. Come for one, two, or all three days!

Tue, July 12th, 5:30pm - 8pm
Twilight Trail Project at Baker's Tank Trail

Thu, July 14th, 9am - 3pm
Summit County Seniors Adopt-a-Trail

Death Valley Hiking Trip

Castles, abandoned mines, unique wildlife, sand dunes, snow-capped mountains, canyons, layers of multi-colored rocks, and the world's lowest golf course! Trip runs from March 11- March 16, 2012. Temperatures will be a moderate 65 to 75 degrees. Enjoy the beauties of Death Valley next spring. Spring time is Death Valley's most colorful time of the year. Here you will experience a wide variety of wildlife, one that is unique to this desert land.

Not only will you hike the one of a kind terrain that only Death Valley can offer, but you will also visit the Scotty's famous castle and explore the remains of abandoned mines. Massage therapy, horseback riding, tennis, golf, and horse-drawn carriage rides are only a few of the many enjoyable options that can be enjoyed during your spare time. During the week we will visit the park Visitor Center and Museum, conduct several A or moderate B hikes as well as visit Scotty's Castle. Price includes transportation to and from Las Vegas airport to the National Park, hike transportation, lodging, meals, and entrance to Scotty's Castle. An optional last night gourmet dinner can also be scheduled.

Lodging will be at the renovated Furnace Creek Ranch which offers a complete resort complex in the heart of Death Valley National Park. Your air conditioned room is complemented by several restaurants, saloon, general store, Museum, and spring-fed swimming pool in addition to other resort amenities.

Not included in the trip is airfare, single supplement of \$568, alcoholic beverages, dinner on the last night and any outside activities. The cost is \$1262.00, Single \$1830. A nonrefundable deposit of \$100 is due by December 31, 2011 with the balance due by January 15, 2012. Visit www.cmc.org/AT for cancellation policy and payment schedule.

Contact Terry Hardie at tjhardie@msn.com or Sharon Silva at ssilva@q.com for more information.

Eldorado Canyon Fixed Hardware Update

Facilitated by the Action Committee for Eldorado (ACE), the public review process for two fixed hardware applications in Eldorado Canyon State Park was completed at the public meeting on June 22nd. The application for a new route on Redgarden Wall received widespread public support by climbers both online and at the public meeting. The application was approved unanimously by ACE's Fixed Hardware Review Committee based on this public opinion.

The application to relocate the bolt on the last pitch of Super Slab was more controversial. Many climbers supported the relocation, and online voting was very close; but in the end, a narrow majority of climbers opposed it. ACE's Fixed Hardware Review Committee denied the application unanimously due to this lack of sufficient public support. These decisions were forwarded to Eldorado Canyon State Park, which makes the final decision on all fixed hardware proposals in the Park.

Hidden Gems Hikes for 2011

The Hidden Gems Campaign is again offering its popular summer hike series into wilderness proposal areas. This is a good opportunity to visit some areas you may have heard about. This year the schedule offers several new outings (not all of them hikes) in partnership with other local groups: a bird-watching walk with the Roaring Fork Audubon Society, a horse ride with the Roaring Fork Valley Horse Council, a wildflower walk with ACES and a bike ride with BikeWild and the Roaring Fork Mountain Bike Association. All trips are free, but you must register in advance. All outings are limited to 15 participants. Visit <http://www.whiteriverwild.org/p-74.html> for more information.