



## **COVID-19 and BIGHORN**

Unfortunately, those are not the names of new hiking trails! As everyone is very much aware, Covid-19 is the most life changing event to ever affect each of us and the functioning of our everyday lives as well as how we may function in the future.

For all of us who love hiking, it meant we had to cancel all our hiking activities as GVR, out of an abundance of caution, shutdown every club in Green Valley recreation.

To compensate, groups have been hiking in Madera Canyon, or taking early walks in the neighborhood to get out for some time away from our self imposed quarantines. To top it off, Mother Nature added insult to injury as the saying goes, with the devastating Bighorn fire in the Catalinas, compounded by smaller but equally destructive fires in the Chiricahua's and Rincon mountain ranges.

Even with the shutdown from Covid, these fires have further impacted our future hiking as in the Catalinas alone, all hiking trails are expected to be shutdown until early November.

As this article was being prepared, GVR announced we could resume hiking. After more than five months of shutdown, this was fantastic news. We began implementation of our restart plans which are designed to allow hiking, but with a focus on safety for everyone concerned. We are now hiking, with strict adherence to our restart procedures while following all the recommendations of the CDC as well as those from Arizona state and county agencies.

Hiking groups are now limited to a maximum of eight, masks are to be worn during sign in, in the parking area before hiking and if there are more than two hikers in a vehicle. Hand sanitizing solutions are also in use during sign in. Social distancing must also be followed at all times when with a group.

As we now go thru our weekly hiking process, we will be concentrating on gaining insight in how to maintain safety for all, while working towards improving management of the hiking process for our members.

It will be a while before we can resume hiking as in the past, but as I've heard it said by so many, we ARE hiking again and will ultimately, get back to normal!

**Duane Dotson, Hikemaster.**

## **BIGHORN FIRE ASSESSMENT**

***(Taken from a hike leader's e-mail to the hikemaster to provide up-to-date data to help him set up workable hikes in the Catalinas. Over time, some of this data will become dated)***

Considering the roughly 186 square mile impact of the fire, our general feeling was that conditions were better than what we expected. As with many past forest fires we've experienced, the patterns of damage were patchwork, like a checkerboard. While there were some vast swaths of damage—particularly at higher elevations and to the north—many areas were largely untouched and remain green.

At the same time, all trail heads, parking areas, the Marshall Gulch picnic area, and restrooms were closed, roped off, and posted.

The Palisades Visitor Center and the Control Road were also closed. But Summerhaven's Cookie Cabin, Sawmill Run, General Store, and restrooms were open!

Two vistas, San Pedro (showing the fire damage to the north) and Windy Point, were open for cars to pull in and look at the damage.

The first 12 miles or so of the highway were surprisingly untouched. There were a few spots where there might have been low intensity fires, but we couldn't always tell if this was new burn or something older. And in any case the fire would have been on the ground (trees and saguaros were still green). This relative lack of damage at lower elevations suggests that, when we do resume hiking, the winter hikes might well be doable.

The higher we went, the more damage we saw. It was sobering to see how many places the fire came right up to the road. But then came a mile or so of road with little burn evidence. Closer to Summerhaven there was a lot of fire damage. It's remarkable that no structures were lost.

There are literally dozens of Catalina hikes affected by this fire. And it's impossible to know, without scouting, how badly some have been burned further away from the highway since we could only view conditions from the road. Even the lower elevation hikes mentioned, might have prohibitive damage that can't be seen without actually hiking them. But overall, we're reasonably optimistic that we won't lose as many of our hiking opportunities as a fire of this size first suggested.



BIGHORN FIRE



## **GVR HIKING CLUB: THE EARLY YEARS**

### **It's hard to believe that the Green Valley Recreation Hiking Club will turn 40 next year!**

So much has happened since an ad was run in the Green Valley News in August of 1981, asking interested hikers to meet on August 20 for a Nature Trail Hike in Madera Canyon.

Jane and Bill Necker were the organizers of the initial hikes, and it was they who suggested that the activity should be characterized not as a walking group but a hiking organization. Thirty five hikers showed up! Evidently there was a latent interest for a healthy outdoors activity for retirees. Two weeks after that the hikers trekked to Josephine Saddle after having met at the West Center North parking lot, the gathering place for bi-weekly hikes. Carpooling to trail heads became the modus operandi for transportation. And, early on, patches became part of the club's repertoire.



However, it wasn't until spring, 1984, that the club became an official GVR Charter Club, complete with by-laws. By this time, eighty to ninety hikers were participating. Dues? Not really, just a quarter per hiker, collected in coffee cans, to defray expenses. And speaking of the genesis of Club volunteerism: the Club in cooperation with the Forest Service, agreed to sponsor the care of Madera Canyon's Nature Trail, a worthwhile activity which continues today. And a bonus: the Club led the way in planning and constructing the Handicapped Trail, which allows a significantly larger number of people to enjoy the beauty of the canyon, who wouldn't have been able to do so otherwise.

Lillian Monson remembers well the beginnings of the Club. In the early 1980s, she and her husband came to Green Valley from DeKalb, Illinois, after her brother-in-law suggested that they look it over as a retirement destination. They hiked often on their family vacations, but, once in Green Valley, only Lillian kept on hiking; her husband only too well remembered his military field experiences! She has shared some of her more memorable experiences, many of which served to shape the current make-up and characteristics of the club.

She mentioned that in later 1984, because of increasing interest (and numbers), the Club doubled the number of hikes per month to once a week. In 1985, the Club board established a two hike/per week schedule, making it a better fit for hikers of varying abilities. Specialty hikes were offered (and still are) to take advantage of the spring wildflowers and native American relics and petroglyphs.

At the same time, hikes were limited to forty participants apiece (!) with overflow hikes arranged. A year later, "thankfully," the limit was reduced to 35. Though she did say that one of her early hikes had ninety hikers aboard! (Many years later it's conceivable that its participants were still talking about the splits...) And today, for some, the 25 limit can at times be a little too full! And the numbers justified adding a third and fourth hikes to the schedule. And finally, "A" hikes were added, while at the same time monthly hike schedules appeared.

Lillian mentioned a number of the original leaders who helped to make the Club what it is today: Cameron Beckwith and Bob Lund, both hikemasters, through dint of their leadership, hard work, and foresight, served as focal points in guiding the Club from its early years to a robust growth period when the Club's current practices took their final form.

And it was Cameron who instituted the Club's Orientation program, which everyone today agrees is perhaps one of the most critical additions to helping make the Club's screening mechanism that much more effective. The Club owes much to them (and of course, Lillian!) In fact it was Lillian who served not only as an assistant hike master and hike leader but also started Trail Tales and designed the many patches the Club uses today. Incidentally, her art work is spectacular! And so were her hikes!

In fact, one Club member still remembers Lillian's February, 2000, Hell's Gate hike off of Ruby Road. This was his third hike with the Club, but he couldn't get over the fact that the hike leader was "a little old lady." At the beginning of the hike, he was right behind Lillian. The hike stopped for a brief water break just before the steep climb in the trail to get past the gigantic boulder in the stream. He got a little carried away with chit-chat with other hikers, and before he knew it, Lillian was (long) gone and had disappeared over the crest adjacent to the boulder. Gasping and groping, he somehow got to the high point only to notice that Lillian had already negotiated the steep trail down to the stream bed and, somewhat perturbed, was wondering where everyone was. For the rest of the hike, the sorry hiker stayed barely in front of the sweep.

Over the years, the number of hikes increased... to 250 hikes in 1997. And the critically important Assistant Leader (sweep) position was established in 1992. Most hike leaders would say that the irreplaceable role on any hike is that of the sweep. And the computerization of Club records, bulletins, and announcements not only made it possible to more tightly organize the multitude of tasks and responsibilities but also help the Club membership keep up to date with sometimes daily changes in the calendar as well as the promotion of special events involving the Club. Of course, no description of the Club's hikes would be complete without mentioning the unwritten prohibition against discussion of the threesome: politics and religion, though sex occurred.

The future of the Club? Lillian thinks the key to attracting membership is simply word of mouth. If a member likes hiking with the club and really enjoys the experience, word will certainly get out... and appearing out of Madera Canyon, they will come....

It's been almost forty years. What does Lillian say about the Club's longevity?

"It's the Club's leadership in finding fun places to hike, a spectacular way to see the country. And its members are so congenial, and she still can't believe the sky-high percentage of Club volunteers! Over the years so many of her closest friends have come from the Club. One doesn't need an explanation for that."

Incidentally, she's 97, and still shows the interest and energy that she did when she led the Hell's Gate hike at the turn of the century.



## **Volunteers in the GVR Hiking Club**

As Lillian said, the numbers of those who've voluntarily stepped forth are astounding:

Board members: **(11)** President, Vice-President, Secretary, Treasurer, Membership, Awards, Social Committee, Volunteer Services, Orientation, Hikemaster, Assistant Hikemaster

Committee chairs: **(7)** Library, Trail Tales, Webmaster, Records, Name tags, Trail Maintenance, Historian (18 total in committees)

Hike Leaders:(45), Assistant Hike Leaders:36, Potluck volunteers:25, Hike Selection Committee:6, Creators of new hikes:20+

Thus, approximately 1/3 of the club membership has stepped forth to make this all work. Some volunteers have served for over 25+ years! It is true that many volunteers hold down two or more positions. As an example, our hikemaster also serves as a co-editor of Trail Tales, is a hike leader, a presenter for orientation and chairs the Hike Selection Committee.

Let's face it: it's our volunteers who make the organization work. Many new hikers have commented on how well-organized the club's activities are. And that's due to the many who have stepped forth.

### **Thank you!!**

#### **MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT**

Hiking Club members-

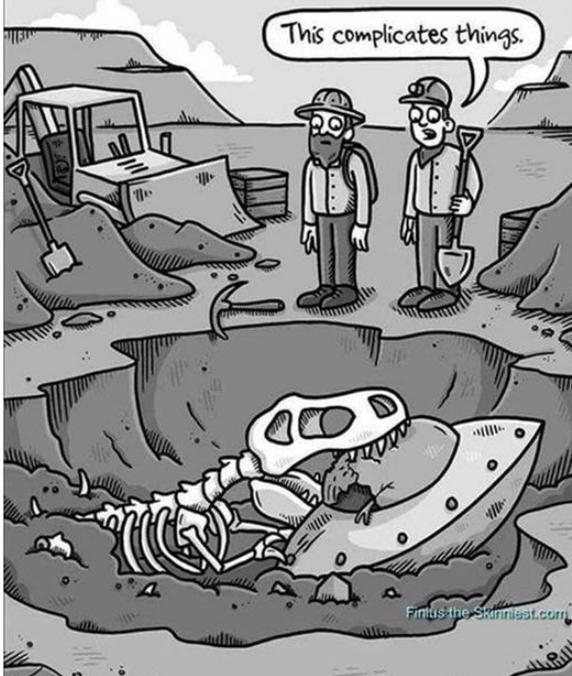
There has been plenty of recent uncertainty for you and the Hiking Club. Since the end of March and the cessation of formal club hiking, we have been hoping every month that the pandemic numbers would be looking better and GVR would allow us to resume club activities. Although many of us have been hiking informally, mostly in the Santa Ritas, we have missed looking at the hike schedules and planning our Thursday mornings.

But that is going to change very soon. GVR has endorsed club hiking starting September. Our hikemaster, Duane Dotson, and AHM Bill White have been working tirelessly to put final touches on the restart plan rolled-out several months ago.

The plan stresses hiker safety and is compliant with CDC, Pima County, and GVR requirements. Yes, things will be different Thursday mornings with different protocols and procedures. But we can live with it as we have learned to live recently with many changes. And, besides, we'll be hiking.

So, start looking for your packs and hiking sticks. The mountains will be filled again with hikers from the GVR Hiking Club, enjoying the views and wildflowers, and trash talking to our friends.

**David Linn, President**



### VIRTUAL HIKING AT ITS BEST

It takes over five months to hike the Pacific Crest Trail but thanks to this cool video you can do it in the comfort of your own home in three minutes. The trail is 2,660 miles long and connects Canada to Mexico by crossing through Washington, Oregon, and California. The hiker filmed one-second video clips of his journey to give the viewer a good appreciation of what the various trail sections are like. Check it out!

<https://biggeekdad.com/2017/05/hiking-pacific-crest-trail/>



A hungry hiker caught 'borrowing' some eggs for a trail-side omelet.

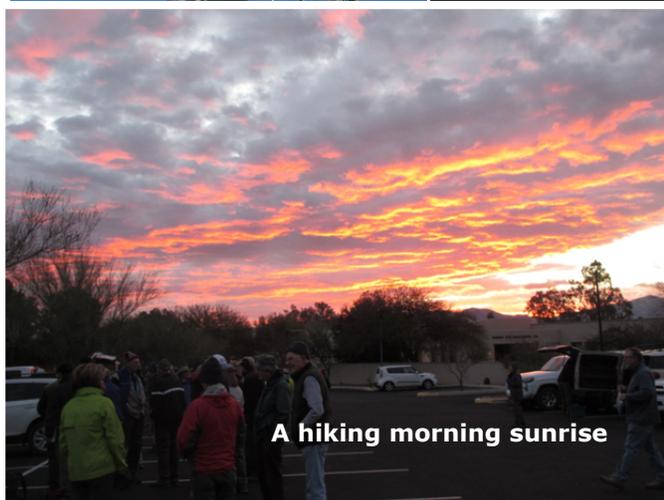
### Avenue of Flags Display

On memorial day, May 25th. sixteen masked Hiking Club volunteers carried out the Avenue of Flags display tradition along LaCanada Drive. They installed and then removed all the flags along the road way. Another community support project provided by the Green Valley hiking club.



Pictured (left to right) are: Steve Toeniskoetter, Zoe Brennagh, Bill Hill, Dave Colicchio, and Jim Easter.

Additional volunteers were: Keith Blair, Barb Fleshman, Dave Kean, Dave Hinkel, Joanie Rugucki, Ken Sink, Jane Toeniskoetter, Bill White, Anita and Jim Woodward.



A hiking morning sunrise



Our trail maintenance crew is looking for replacement volunteers ...

### Treasurer's Report

At the beginning of 2020, the Club had a cash balance of \$8,077.46. Through August 31, income has been \$1,115.63 and expenses have been \$3,863.45 leaving a balance of \$5,329.64. Most of our annual income is expected in the next months when members pay dues for the coming year. Speaking of dues... Dues will increase to \$20/year beginning November 1, 2020, for membership in 2021. Why?

**Dues last increased a decade ago.** Since then, Club expenses have risen. *Everything* costs more, including PO Box and storage rental fees, printing & copying charges and the use of LCD projectors at potlucks. Plus, a Member Services page has been added to the Club website. It is an invaluable tool for members to pay dues online, to sign-up for orientation, potlucks and classes and to purchase name tags.

Additionally, the Member Services page has streamlined and simplified the jobs for several of our members in volunteer service positions. So, more time for hiking, for us all!

For more information about Club finances, contact Janet BeMiller at: [janet\\_bemiller@yahoo.com](mailto:janet_bemiller@yahoo.com) or at 206-200-3600.

In Memoriam: Richard Shimanek, Christi Heintz