

Death Valley experience only a memory

Student remembers last year's rewarding spring break

by Daphne Hartt
Staff Writer

This year's spring break somehow didn't seem as enjoyable as last year's, when I traveled to one of the most beautiful sites in America, Death Valley, California. Sure, my spring break was fun, but it didn't even touch the experience I had in the great desert.

Last March, John Snively, CCC geology, biology and bird identification instructor, took about 23 students from some of the CCC science classes to Death Valley to study geology, botany, history and zoology.

So all of us piled into two CCC vans and headed out for an adventure we would always remember.

Snively, who was also a biology teacher's assistant at Portland State University for four years, has been going to Death Valley for 20 years now. While teaching at PSU, he joined students on his first trip to the valley in 1973.

Unfortunately though, this spring break was Snively's first, in which he was unable to offer his "Natural History of the Sonoran Desert" (held at Death Valley) three-credit course.

Instead, he and many of his friends and past students organized a trip.

Snively was disappointed that he could not run his trip, but some obstacles stood in the way of making the roadtrip a pleasant experience.

Since CCC only possesses one new van, it would be risky to drive down south with an old van

(accompanying the new one) that could possibly break down at the halfway mark or on the way home.

Another hindering factor was the noisy, steel handicap chairs in the vans. CCC recently installed these chairs. This is very beneficial for the disabled students, but simultaneously causes a problem for field trips.

While driving the vans down to Death Valley last year, Snively

learn about their surroundings.

Regardless of the situation, Snively was bound to have a good time in the valley. Although he missed teaching the class, he was able to explore new areas.

"When you have 20 students in a class, you aren't able to go to some of the best areas, because you have too many people. I was able to check out areas for the future," said Snively.

Instead, I found myself surrounded by various species of plants and animals.

Along with learning a great deal about myself and others, I learned more than I could ever imagine absorbing from any textbook, and I found myself becoming curious to know more and more.

Of course I had to read two books entitled "Death Valley" and

have a capillary fringe root system) differ from xerophytes (plants that mostly grow at the bottom of alluvial fans and have a shallow root system).

Snively also expected each student to give an oral report on a specific topic related to Death Valley. Students spoke about reptiles such as the iguana or chuckwalla or something botanical like Desert Holly or Cattle Spinach.

I'd have to say that out of all of the oral reports I have given in my life, this one was the least terrifying. Actually, it was fun. My partner and I chose to speak about the Joshua tree.

The trip lasted nine days. Each morning the group and I woke up at 6:30 a.m. and went out to experience a new landscape or geological formation.

We hiked through canyons and over enormous sand dunes, but my highlight of the trip was trekking to the top of Marble Canyon. The canyon was carved by flood waters and geologic devices. Its walls were like a gallery of magnificent sculptures of marble. The colors formed swirls of brown and tan with a touch of white here and there.

The long hike was one of the best experiences of nature I've ever had. Four students and I decided to go all the way. We climbed to the top in about an hour. After reaching the highest peak, we all felt a sense of accomplishment that we had never felt before.

As I looked across the valley, I knew I would return someday.



photo by Daphne Hartt

CCC Geology, Biology and Bird Identification Instructor John Snively, takes time to speak to some of the 23 students he took to Death Valley during last year's spring break.

vely had a lot to lecture about. He used some sort of CB radio system in which both vans could hear, whether he was pointing out an inactive volcano or a rough-legged hawk.

With the newly steel-chair equipped vans, it would be very difficult for students to take notes in their Death Valley journal and

He was also very happy because the valley had a good rainy season.

"There were exceptional rains this year. It was definitely a great floral display," added Snively.

Before I had journeyed to Death Valley, I remember picturing images of pure desert-dry, hot and barren land.

"Desert Solitaire," but overall, the work was worth it. When the group of students and I returned, we took a final exam over the two books.

Also, I had to keep a daily journal with notes ranging from how many red-tailed hawks I saw in one day, to how phreatophytes (mostly salt-tolerant plants that

The question that inevitably comes to mind:

"I wonder if campus 5-O could give me a speeding ticket?"

by Jeff Kemp
Staff Writer

Imagine, if you will, that you're cruising down I-205 at about 74 miles per hour. You have your windows rolled down just enough to let the clean, crisp, spring air ravish the masterpiece you call your hair. You reach down and tune your cheap factory stereo to your favorite driving melodies, and upon returning your vision to the road you notice what appears to be a Clackamas Community College Campus Security patrol car in your rear-view mirror.

If you're like most, one question will inevitably come to mind: "I wonder if campus 5-O could give me a speeding ticket?"

I've asked myself that question more than once, and it has led me to do a little investigating. Being a reporter I feel that it is my job to find out as much as I can about such unsettling dilemmas and to inform the general public of my findings. What I found out surprised me.

My first step was to schedule an interview with Public Safety

Supervisor Jim Wiseman, a man that I feel I have become good friends with this year because of several stories I've covered regarding security on the campuses. The next step was easy; ask the ever important question, "Can you give people tickets for speeding and other unlawful acts off campus?"

"If we have probable cause, you bet," Wiseman informed me.

know was, if he believed that the people he stopped took him seriously, because of the fact that he drives around in a CCC squad car and flashes a campus security badge. "Do they respect you? I mean do you think they feel the same about you as any other police officer," I questioned.

"If you are a professional, people understand that," Wiseman answered. "We're not out

college degrees, which he noted as being unique.

My last question came out of a vision I had during my interview. I pictured Wiseman, a man that at first glance seems like the perfect next-door neighbor that is still waiting for you to return his Binford model 1380 leaf blower with assorted attachments, being confronted by someone who is considered armed and danger-

active duty belt which consisted of the gun itself, some spare cartridges, handcuffs and a pair of latex gloves (an essential part of any job these days that could involve blood).

The next time I am flying up the highway trying to make my 9 a.m. basketball class, I'll be a little more aware of the cars around me. And if my radar detector fails me by chance and I do get a

"We are more concerned with cutting down the number of person-to-person crimes; but at the same time, if we see someone who is obviously exceeding the speed limit, we are all sworn Clackamas County deputy sheriffs who are authorized to cite anyone breaking the law."

—Jim Wiseman
Public Safety Supervisor

"We don't want to focus on speeding," he continued. "We are more concerned with cutting down the number of person-to-person crimes; but at the same time if we see someone who is obviously exceeding the speed limit, we are all sworn Clackamas County deputy sheriffs who are authorized to cite anyone breaking the law."

The next thing I wanted to

here to lecture anyone, that isn't our job. We try to do what is necessary and send people on their way. Yes, I think we are (respected)."

Wiseman went into further detail about the amount of professionalism that is involved in his line of work. He said that all of the officers that work for Campus Security are board certified with the state and all have

ous.

"Do you guys (police officers) carry guns and handcuffs and everything," I asked much like an awed third grader would.

Wiseman answered my naive question with a simple "yes," and pointed out that all the officers did, in fact, carry loaded .9mm and, in some cases, .38 caliber hand guns. He showed me his

ticket from one of our hard-working Public Safety officers, at least I'll know that he was just doing his job and I will give him the respect that he deserves. That probably will not make swallowing the fact that I got a ticket any easier, but at least I know that they're out there and now I have a fighting chance at avoiding the campus 5-O.