

Death Valley: heaven to geologist and ecologists

Students will probe 282 feet below sea level in this year's scientific excursion

by Jason Hunter
Sports Editor

John Snively, CCC geology instructor, has been leading the Death Valley tour for 20 years and has only missed the trip once, while on sabbatical.

This year he is taking a different route while Bob Misley, life science instructor, leads the tour this year.

Death Valley has more to offer than a lot of other places. It has all the geology you could imagine, with rocks from the present to rocks half the age of the Earth, one of the best fault-block mountain ranges and valley systems in the world. Death Valley is also one of the hottest places in the world, as it collects only an inch and a half of rain a year in its low point of 282 feet below sea level.

"The Death Valley trip is the best way to teach ecology that I know of," said Snively of why he taught the class.

Twenty-two students will leave on March 16 at 8 a.m. and spend the next nine days traveling to and camping in Death Valley. While they are there, they will study the natural history of Death Valley, the Native Americans that live

there, the plants that grow there, the geology and rocks that they find there, animals, birds, reptiles, mammals, fish and some history of the early settlers who went there.

Each student will become an expert on one topic. They are each given research material from scientific journals and they prepare a presentation. The students will give two presentations a day depending on where they are at and where they are going with the trip.

The student or group of students will take the group through the presentation with topics ranging from the Bristle Cone Pine (one of the oldest living organisms in the world) to sand dune ecology.

They will reach Death Valley and set up their tents after dark on the second day of their trip.

"You wake up the next morning and you walk out of the tent, you think you are on another planet, because you haven't seen what it looks like down there compared to what it looks like up here in the Willamette Valley," Misley said. "The only way I can describe the areas of it is... from another planet."

When they escape their shell shock in the morning, they will fix their meals and take off for the

day traveling 100 - 200 miles a day just to get to one spot. They will spend all day there and will get back to camp after dark, just in time to build a small camp fire and make dinner. Then they will sit around the fire singing songs and discussing what they saw that day and plan for the next day and then the next day, get up and do it again.

"It's interesting to stand down in the bottom of this big valley and look up on the side hill and see this white sign that says sea level and you figure out if these mountains just exploded and moved away could you swim that far to get up there?" Misley said of Bad Water, the lowest point in North America at 282 feet below sea level. The group will have their picture taken there as a tradition that they have.

There are some hazards on the trip as it can get very hot in Death Valley, but they are prepared for that. Sandstorms make it difficult to breathe, travel and see. It can also get very windy in Death Valley.

"It's not uncommon to come back to your site and see tents totally destroyed, tents that have blown away, or somebody else tent from a campground 100 yards away, come flying by yours," said Misley of the high wind condi-

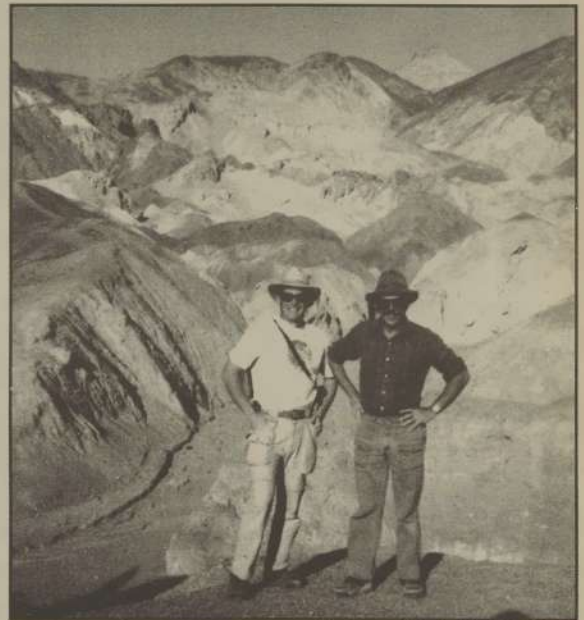


Photo contributed by Bob Misley
Bob Misley (left) and John Snively (right) pose for a memorable photo in the 1994 Death Valley trip.

tions in Death Valley. Misley is very excited with the recent flooding and rains in California.

"It's too early to predict, but I'm very excited about the possibility that we might see one of the incredible blooms. Death Valley is usually is desolate, dry, hot and not showing a lot of life, but once every 10-20 years, the rains come in just the right way where all the

little desert flowers and all the seeds that have been lying dormant for five to ten years, all germinate and then 'boom,' there's color everywhere," said Misley.

The trip is offered as three transferable credit hours for the Natural History of Death Valley. For more information contact Bob Misley at ext. 2376.

Registration becomes just a telephone call away

by Christi Snively
Opinion Editor

The telephone, we can't imagine life without it. We take it for granted until the day we pick it up and can't find a dial tone.

We use the phone for so many things in our lives; you can now do virtually all your banking over the phone, make reservations, purchase airline and concert tickets, pay bills and order pizzas.

Many of you are aware that part-time students have had the option to register by phone. The biggest stipulations on that service at the present include, regis-

tering for only seven hours or less and paying by Visa or Master Card. Even with this service option limited to a certain group of students, its popularity is evident.

Approximately 700 students register at CCC by telephone. The biggest reason is convenience! No driving to campus, waiting in line, having forms signed, waiting in line again, (you get the picture).

The popularity of telephone registration speaks for itself on other campuses that have the option and have been successful.

The Administrative office is

always thinking of ways to make attending CCC a comfortable experience. They are gearing up for telephone registration for full-time students being available by summer of '96.

"Our plan is to have telephone registration right out where we used to have the information center. We're going to make it a student resource center and have a Kiosk where the students can get their schedule. It will have two computers where students can access scholarship and program information," said Mary Dykes, director of admissions.

Some things have to come together first. Right now the college has four lines being used for the part-time registration. Those four lines alone cost the school around \$40,000. In terms of figures like that, Dykes wants to explore lots of options. She believes we could keep the amount of lines down by having registration open all term.

This would give students the ability to register in advance as soon as they know the courses they want. For now, we can expect to see a service for full-time students in place by the summer

of '96. "We will be doing testing between January and May of '96 with the idea that we will be ready by the summer," said Dykes.

Dykes sees a future where students are able to have many options such as registering for three terms in advance, being able to add and drop and having the option of payment by credit card.

"We would like to make it available as a choice. We would not want to force students to use it, but I know that they will want to after they've tried it the first time," said Dykes.

Guns and books: A question of philosophy

Faculty Senate President Joe Uris confronts controversial issue head-on

When guns and community colleges intersect on a large scale like the proposed CCC Regional Law Enforcement Center, one might expect considerable controversy and public input.

But slightly over a dozen people turned up last Wednesday at an open college senate meeting to discuss one of the biggest CCC projects since the Environmental Learning Center. CCC President John Keyser said he was surprised the gathering wasn't larger.

President of the Faculty Senate Joe Uris pointed out that all CCC faculty and students should have a forum to comment on the training center. However, no students or representatives from the

ASG were present for the hour-long discussion.

The director of the Criminal Justice associate degree program, James Brouillette, was unable to attend the meeting, but no one denied the center would benefit CCC's law enforcement students and enhance its already respected reputation in criminal justice training. Clearly, that wasn't the issue under debate. Neither were the many concerns about the training facility which involve financial or administrative aspects.

Most of the questions asked ran in a deeper, more philosophical vein and addressed fundamental concerns about CCC's image. "Many people are opposed to firearms," Uris stated. "Could the

CCC philosophy be perceived as being pro-gun?"

"Will the center create controversy?" he asked. "Could it divide the way the college is perceived by the community?"

There were no pat answers to Uris' questions, perhaps because there aren't any. But as he pointed out, the college has three weeks left to debate the pros and cons of the training center and decide if and how it should share space under the CCC community service umbrella.

Uris himself expressed ambivalent feelings. Before the meeting adjourned, he said, "In good conscience, I can't find a reason not to go forward with the project although I hate it."

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