

## July Trip Report – Davis Mountains – Point of Rocks – Rappelling – Richard G

To the best of my memory, 23 people attended the July 21<sup>st</sup> weekend trip to the Davis Mountains and Point of Rocks. Friends came from as far as the Metroplex and San Antonio for the fun and games. Most arrived on Friday night and found their way to the Davis Mountains State Park (though members were camped at several areas) and found the three campsites that we reserved at the park. We were encouraged to hope for cool weather by scattered clouds and sporadic light showers. It cooled things off a bit but wasn't much of an indication, as it turned out, of what the temp was going to be on Saturday on the mountain. The troops, faithful as always, started showing up at the appointed hour at the parking lot of Point of Rocks on Saturday morning. After some confusion as to when to come up and what to bring, everyone climbed, scrambled, and clawed their way up to the staging area for the rappel. Despite repeated attempts to find something totally vertical and within the limits of the climbing ropes that we carried, we settled for an approximate 120 foot pitch (a pitch is a length of climb or rappel) that wasn't vertical but still had some "white knuckle" appeal. It was a good area for teaching. Maybe if we can pony up for a 300 foot roll of rope, we can take on the big vertical wall at the top, which is every bit of 260 to 280 feet and where all of my Climb School folks had the opportunity to test their mettle. Anyway, not a sole that came to learn to rappel backed down.....well.....they backed down the mountain.....but they didn't back out! Olivia Gray, from San Antonio and her dad, Rick, took the north rope and, I'm here to tell you that 8 year old Olivia Jr., as she has become known, became the youngest member of the club to learn to rappel, much to the delight of all onlookers. She has also become a river ace after successfully negotiating the South Fork of the Llano River.....twice! I know from talking to her Friday night, that she really wanted to strut her stuff for her big sister, Olivia Sr., (no relation.....if you've been active in the club, you'll understand). Olivia Jr. is going to have her mom's theatrical talents and her dad's outdoor prowess. The weather turned out very well, if you like it hot, and everyone performed beautifully, except for me. I had a little too much fun visiting with my friends on Friday night, didn't hydrate very well, didn't eat anything at all, and just about broke every rule in the book that I so self-righteously preach to everyone new to the outdoors. I had a heck of a time getting off the mountain with fatigue and too much fun in the sun. I wouldn't have traded it for anything and in the end, no harm done.



After everyone got off the mountain and cooled off a bit, people peeled off in different directions to get cleaned up, eat, sleep, do whatever you do after a vigorous day in the mountains. Several of us decided that we'd end the day at the Marfa Ghost Lights, just east of Marfa, Texas. The lights were first recorded into history in 1883 and, to date, no one has successfully explained

their origin (and hopefully never will). To be honest, I've been there many, many times and only seen the lights, for sure, twice, though I've talked to people that swear that they've seen them every time they've gone. A lot of people



**just know** that they've seen the lights

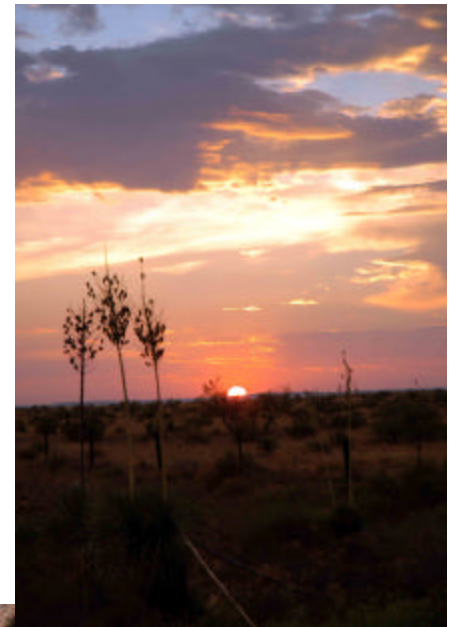
when they're actually seeing cars, at a great distance, coming over Chinati Pass on the road from Presidio to Marfa. The air is so clear over Mitchell Flats that they are seeing the headlights at a great, great distance and it is impossible to resolve the headlights into two distinct lights as you would a car at a

much closer distance. The unofficial rule is, if you see lights east of the distant radio tower, and those lights are moving, you've seen the Marfa Lights. If they clear the horizon, you've darn well seen the Marfa Lights. WE DID see three distinct white lights on ground level, well east of the radio tower. I put binoculars on them and couldn't distinguish them as car lights and there are no known "mapped" roads over there. Maybe I've seen the lights three times now. At any rate, we got to see some great lightning, experience torrential rains, and witness a typically beautiful sunset while we were there. Many yawns later, everyone started back to camp, home, etc. Overall the weekend was great. Made new friends, reunited with old friends, saw beautiful country and weather, and had a great time.



**Sr. and Jr.**





## **July Trip Report from “Cub” Reporter Olivia Gray....(Jr.) 8 yrs. old**

Trip Report by Olivia (Jr) Gray  
Ft. Davis – Rappelling

It was 8 hours from San Antonio to the campsite in Ft. Davis. After we were there for a while, we looked at the sky with Uncle Richard (Richard Galle). It's true, “ the stars at night are big and bright, deep in the heart of Texas”. I saw the dippers and the scorpion. The sky was really beautiful we even saw a **bolide**. The next day we got in the Jeep and went to the rappelling (location). It was fun but I did not want to go on the big one with the drop. (The longer rappel, there were several ropes set up) The view was pretty from the top and I took some pictures. We went down to the Jeep for lunch and to pull spines out of mom. (An unfortunate encounter with a cactus) The others were still at the top. My dad went back up and my mom and I went into town. We went into several shops and I got a Rocky Road shake. We drove around and saw Prude Ranch, the Fort and the gas station. Then we picked up dad and stayed to talk to uncle Richard and had a snack. It started raining & we hopped into the cars. We went to the Marfa lights & saw a few. After the lights we stayed in a hotel (so mom could soak spines out in the

tub), in the morning we hit the road for San Antonio. (Hours of 20 questions later we arrived safely in S.A.)

I look forward to the next trip we can go on with the club.

### **Website?**

Just when you think it's safe to go out, now we're working on a website for the Permian Basin Outing Club. The old club, the 1984 to 2001 club, we never thought about doing a website. We've actually got a start at [www.pboc.info](http://www.pboc.info) that Bill Bentley has set up for us. It will be linked to the Sibley Nature Center website (since we are sponsored by Sibley) and vice versa. We will be able to post newsletters, comments, registration forms, etc. on the site once it is developed. Bill was more than willing to get this ball rolling but he has been too busy to volunteer to be the webmaster. We're working on that one unless one of you have the expertise and a little time on your hands. Spencer Bennett has already placed us on the KODM website ([www.kodm.com](http://www.kodm.com)) along with the latest newsletter and we hope that he'll continue.

### **Camping Equipment**

The very generous grant from the Permian Basin Area Foundation came in on July 18<sup>th</sup> just in time for us to purchase the camping equipment for 20 people and we put it to work on the July trip. North Face bags, Eureka tents, Jansport backpacks, and Therm-a-lite back pads are really good equipment and will serve the Sibley Nature Center and the outing club for years. We'd certainly like to thank Ski Skeller for providing us with a great deal in that they made it affordable for us to buy that much equipment with the money that we had. When you decide to buy your own equipment or replace old equipment, give Ski Skeller a shot. Remember, when you get your Sibley Membership Card, you get a discount at Ski Skeller!

### **August Trip**

As you probably know, we had to switch the July and August destinations (but not the dates) due to fire danger closing the Lincoln National Forest. Well, it has re-opened. Sammy Hunnicut, who was going to lead this trip had a conflict so Patrick Dearen has taken over that chore. Pat has done extensive backpacking in the area and is planning a route that should be agreeable to everyone, both in scenery and in "ease of travel" (Pat and I have backpacked so many years together that he knows I get whiny if I have to work too hard on a trail). The trip is planned for the weekend of August 18<sup>th</sup>. Remember, don't let lack of equipment or experience stop you

from going on this trip; we've got that covered. Be sure to come to the next meeting whether your planning to attend the August trip or not. Speaking of the next meeting.....

### **August Meeting**

The August meeting will be held at the Sibley Nature Center at 1307 E. Wadley in Midland at 7:00 p.m. on Tuesday, August 15<sup>th</sup>. At some point, we're going to meet at local restaurants. We discovered years ago that half of the answer to get acquainted in the club was over a meal. This takes nothing from the fact that Sibley is our sponsoring agency and there will be an ample number of meetings where we will need more space and audio-visual capabilities and bring us right back home to Sibley. It's great to have that option.

### **Contribute to the Newsletter**

One of the really neat things about the old PBOC was that the newsletter really developed over the years and as members got to know the opportunities to contribute we would receive trail recipes for trail snacks, camping tips, trip descriptions of members vacations and weekend treks that they thought PBOC members would enjoy, photographic techniques and opportunities, etc. Please dig deep and think of ways that you might make the newsletter more entertaining and informative. We can download maps, pictures, etc. Use your imagination (it's a sure bet my imagination is limited). We're always open to new ideas about new destinations, day trips, and even afternoon outings.