The Arizona Mountaineer



The Arizona Mountaineering Club

Winter 2018

Our Quarterly Newsletter

I hope that everyone's 2018 is off to a glorious start. I would like to give a shout out to Stan Pak and others for getting the new website up and working. So THANK YOU it looks amazing! Both previous and current issues of the Mountaineer have been uploaded to the website. I would also like to give a thank you to all the people who have sent in articles and pictures over the last few months. This newsletter would not be possible without your submissions.

The spring is coming up which means the lead, basic and anchor schools will soon be starting. Please consider volunteering your time and knowledge to help fellow climbers out!

Stay safe and Climb on!



Photo Credit: David Anderson

Please pass your photos, stories, and adventures on to:

newsletter@arizonamountaineeringclub.net

for inclusion into the" The Mountaineer!

"Our **Mission** is to provide educational opportunities, climbing experiences, advocacy to protect our climbing resources, and stewardship of the Arizona Outdoors by promoting volunteerism and community engagement."

In This Issue:

- Guide to Valley Rock Gyms
- Women's Climbing Festival
- Weaver's Needle Review
- Lessons learned among Red Rocks
- ◆ The Homestead
- ◆ Canyon Corner
- And More!

Pulling plastic: a climber's guide to Valley rock gyms By Andrea Galyean

Yes, I know: the Platonic ideal of rock climbing involves rock. Real, geologic rock, with big views and blue skies served alongside.

But some days it's too hot, too cold, or too rainy to climb outside. Or you can only climb after work. Or you want to indoctrinate your kids/potential SO/skeptical buddy into the vertical life with minimal drama.

Enter the climbing gym. Here are the best local candidates for your (climate-controlled) adventures:

Ape Index Rock Climbing Gym in Peoria is the only dedicated climbing gym in the West Valley and is owned by local climbing guide Amos Cox, who built the facility in 2008.

Basics: 13,000 s.f. of climbing with 150+ top-rope routes on walls ranging from 30 to 38 feet high. Some top-rope routes also have clips for lead climbing and others have bouldering routes on the lower sections. A dedicated bouldering cave includes a two-story tunnel and a separate, members-only bouldering area has a 16foot high-ball wall.

What else: Weight room, slackline, and campus boards. Ape Index hosts indoor comps and organizes climbing outings around the state.

Photo Credit: http://apeindex.net/

For kids: Non-competitive climbing club and competitive climbing team for ages 6–14.

Prices: Adult day pass = \$19. Basic membership = \$77/month, with family and other discounts availa-

ble. 10% discount for AMC members.

Hours: Mon: 5pm-10pm; Tues-Fri: 3pm-10pm; Sat: 10am-7pm; Sun: 11am-5pm

Location: 9700 N. 91st Ave., Suite 118, Peoria AZ 85345

Info: apeindex.net or 623-242-9164

AZ on the Rocks in north Scottsdale is owned by brothers Kevin and Kent Berk, who opened it in 2004 after their own kids fell in love with indoor climbing.

Basics: 14,000 s.f. of terrain with 150+ top-rope routes on 28-foot walls, many of which also have clips for leading. Dedicated bouldering area includes cave and tunnel formations.

What else: 10 auto-belays for top-roping without a partner, yoga classes in dedicated studio, weight room with Ninja Warrior training rig, a tread-wall with adjustable overhang, and locker rooms with showers. AZR hosts youth and adult climbing comps as well as Ninja Warrior competitions and has a zip-line available for special events.



Photo Credit: http://www.azontherocks.com,

For kids: After-school classes for grades 1-8, summer camps for ages 6-12, and competitive team for ages 8-19.

Prices: Adult day pass = \$19. Basic membership = \$72/month or \$715/year, with family and other discounts available. 10% discount for AMC members.

Hours: Mon/Wed/Fri: 3pm-10pm; Tues/Thurs: 3pm-7pm; Sat-Sun: 9am-7pm (plus additional mem-

bers' only hours)

Location: 16447 N. 91st St., Suite 105, Scottsdale AZ 85260

Info: azontherocks.com or 480-502-9777

Black Rock Bouldering Gym in north-central Phoenix opened in 2016 in a converted ice rink. Owner Chris Dodge started bouldering while in the Army and started Black Rock after he returned to Phoenix.

Basics: The Valley's only dedicated bouldering gym with 150 problems on walls ranging from 14 to 16 feet high, with a 16" thick crash pad and holds for safe down-climbing.

What else: Yoga and Ninja F.I.T.T. classes, weight and fitness equipment, and slackline. BRBG hosts occasional bouldering comps.

For kids: After-school and summer programs for ages 6-13.



Photo Credit: https://www.facebook.com/BlackRockBouldering/

Prices: Adult day pass = \$18. Basic membership = \$69/month or \$699/year, plus a one-time \$30 fee.

Family and other discounts available.

Hours: Mon-Fri: 3pm-10pm; Sat: 10am-6pm (offers additional members' only hours)

Location: 10436 N. 32nd St., Phoenix AZ 85028 **Info:** blackrockboulderinggym.com or 602-843-2724

Focus Climbing Gym in Mesa is the small-but-mighty gym opened in 2013 by Joe Czerwinski, who has both competed for and coached the U.S. National climbing team.

Basics: Almost 200 bouldering problems on walls up to 18 feet high, with 24" thick crash pads. 65 toprope routes, which all have auto belays as well as clips for leading.

What else: Free chalk and locker rooms. Focus hosts family fun night every Saturday and holds frequent bouldering comps, which often include prizes.

For kids: Classes for preschoolers, summer camps for ages 6-12, and both competitive and non-competitive climbing teams for ages 6-18.

Prices: Adult day pass = \$17. Basic membership = \$75/month or \$599/

year, with family and other discounts available.

Hours: Mon–Fri: 10am–10pm; Sat–Sun: 10am–7pm

Location: 2150 W. Broadway Rd., Suite 103, Mesa AZ 85202

Info: focusclimbingcenter.com or 480-718-5258



Photo Credit: https://focusclimbingcenter.com/

Phoenix Rock Gym in Tempe was the first climbing gym in the whole state of Arizona. Founded in 1992 by longtime climber (and former AMC president!) Paul Deifenderfer, PRG has introduced thousands of people to climbing — including most of the Valley's other climbing gym owners.

Basics: 17,000 s.f. of walls up to 30 feet high. 150 to 200 top-rope climbs, a separate lead cave with 50 routes, and two bouldering caves with several dozen problems.

What else: PRG hosts monthly climbing comps and also houses the Karabin Climbing Museum — a compact tour through the history of climbing gear curated by Marty Karabin himself.

For kids: After-school climbing and summer programs from beginner

to competition for ages 6-18.

Prices: Adult day pass = \$15. Basic membership = \$33/two weeks, \$60/month or \$450/year, with family and other discounts available. 10% discount for AMC members.

Hours: Mon–Fri: 3pm–10pm; Sat–Sun: 10am–7pm (plus additional

members' only hours)

Location: 1353 E. University Dr. Tempe, AZ 85281

Info: phoenixrockgym.com or 480-921-8322



Photo Credit: http://phoenixrockgym.com/

Around AZ

Flagstaff

Beta Bouldering Gym: betaboulderinggym.com or 928-266-0498

Flagstaff Climbing (formerly Vertical Relief): flagstaffclimbing.com or 928-556-9909

Sierra Vista

Ciba Climbing: cibaclimbing.com or 520-225-1806

Tempe

Climbmax: climbmaxclimbinggym.com or 480-626-7755

Tucson

Rocks & Ropes: rocksandropes.com/downtown or 520-882-5924

The Bloc: rocksandropes.com/thebloc or 520-209-2562

Everywhere

Every gym will require you to sign a liability waiver on your first visit, as well as demonstrate to the staff that you are capable of falling, belaying, and — if relevant — leading safely. Do not be offended. Even though you, personally, are a mega-experienced climber with a dozen FAs to your name, liability insurance is really, really expensive and the gyms have to vet everyone. It isn't personal.

All the gyms listed rent shoes and gear, and provide belay devices for top-roping. They also welcome birthday parties and special events, which seems way, way more fun than Chuck E. Cheese, even if it isn't quite The Promised Land.

Flash Foxy: The Women's Climbing Festival

By Rebeca Rodriguez

Shelma Jun had a simple vision: Women climbing with women. As founder of the wildly successful Instagram account @flashfoxy, she began showcasing photos of her all-girl crew climbing in gyms and the outdoors. She quickly gained a large following and women from around the world asked how they could form their own women climbing groups. This brought about the idea of the Women's Climbing Festival and features clinics in sport, trad, bouldering, route setting, and photography. The instructors for the educational sessions are female pro athletes and guides.





I had the opportunity to attend the Chattanooga edition in November and experience climbing the sweet southeastern sandstone surrounded and supported by lady crushers. I signed up for a pad placement bouldering clinic and my instructors were none other than Lisa Rand and Chelsea Rude. In addition to the clinics, the festival featured gear booths, panels, and a screening of women adventure films.

The most encouraging part was seeing climbers with more experience send their projects. It served as motivation to push myself in climbing and await the progress that is to come. This March, the third installment of the Women's Climbing Festival will take place in Bishop, California. It sold out in one minute!



Out and About Photos



Filsinger;

Middle, Middle Right and Right Lower: Lisa Ruggiero

Why not spend the night?

By David Anderson

It's that pinnacle you can see from a hundred miles away, used for navigation by the ancients; Weaver's Needle, in the Superstition Mtns. You gotta climb that, right? And why not spend the night on top?

So, Scott P. and I headed down the Peralta Trail on a clear, crisp weekday with climbing and overnight gear, scrambled up a loose, scree trail to a notch between the two peaks that make up the needle. Not sure





with the backpacks where we were going to look back and wish we had geared up for the technical part of the climb, we geared up. I took the first lead and dragged most of a rope length up without placing any pro. Better to gear up early than late.

Negotiating a big chockstone with our backpacks became the crux of the climb (very doable), and up we went; wondering if we were on route. It appeared that if we got off

route, the rock became crumbly right away; a testament to the many people that had pulled off rock before us.

Winding up and around, those big spires (hoodoos) that we passed coming in, seemed small below us. We climbed up into the silence, where the loudest sounds were the crunching of gravel, our breathing, and a crow's wings, sawing through the air as he passed, eyeing us for opportunity.



The top was a 360 degree view that you don't get on just any pinnacle. A vast display of classic moun-



tainous desert. Tent pitched (staked out with pro in the rock), steaming pot of stew as the temps headed below freezing and darkness settled in under a clear sky.

When the morning sun made its big entrance, it cast the shadow of Weaver's Needle clear to the horizon, a very long way. And down we went, top-heavy with packs. This is not a technically difficult climb, and that may be its greatest danger. It would be easy to be lulled into com-

placency, where one careless moment, one loose rock, can send you plunging. But if it was a sidewalk, everyone would be up there. I loved it, and I'd do it again.

Photo Credits: David Anderson

Lessons Learned among the Red Rocks

By Chris Adams

Route Name: Sedona Scenic Cruise

YDS: 5.9

Pitches: five

Length: 700 feet

Location: Between The village of Oak Creek and Sedona

Approach: 60-90 minutes, equal parts, well established trail and bushwhacking. Cairns are present but sometimes hard to follow. Fortunately, the climb looms directly above you during the approach and it's hard to get lost.

Quick Description: SSC route is a combination of traditional climbing and fully bolted sport. All pitches have great two bolt anchors and excellent belay ledges that can easily accommodate a party of 2-4 climbers. After summiting, climbers descend through a series of double rope rappels. 70 meter ropes are imperative if you want a safety margin (60m's just barely make at least one rappel....just barely). All pitches, save the second, are listed at 5.9. Also note that getting a rope caught on the pull is a very real possibility.

Time of year: We climbed this route December 17, 2017. The weather was mid to high 50's and sunny. The route faces southwest and gets pretty good sun exposure late morning to evening. We couldn't have asked for better climbing weather. This route would be very hot in the summer.

My impressions: This was my first time climbing the SSC and it is easily makes the list of my top three multi-pitch climbs. Each pitch is engaging, challenging, and offers the climber unparalleled scenic views along with fantastic exposure. The 5.9 rating is certainly not soft. The route challenged a range of climbing skills including straight up crack climbing, off width technique (dust off those chicken wings!), face climbing, crimping, chimneying, and good ol' grunting inch by inch. The cruxes were well protected. That being said, this climb is not for the faint of heart. There are some "easy" sections where protection is scarce, and the ground is a long way down (hint: try not to look down). Bring your big boy/girl pants for this one.

Lessons learned: We climbed this route in a team of three and everything went well. No one was hurt, everyone had fun. Sunset was at 5:14 that afternoon and we knew we had a good chance of descending the route in the dark. That possibility came to fruition as night fell while we had only completed two out of the four rappels. It was a moonless night and the darkness added a high degree of seriousness to our day. We managed the difficulty safely with some lessons learned along the way. Here's what I took away from our climb.

Look for "specialized" equipment when doing your ground safety checks.

Climbers should always, always, ALWAYS practice a thorough safety check on the ground before beginning the climb, regardless of experience level. We did that. We checked each oth-

er's harnesses, knots, protection and rappel devices. However, we didn't check for headlamps and one of our team left his in his bag at the base of the climb. This added complication when we ended up descending in the dark. Fortunately, two of the three climbers still had lights and we were able to make it work.

Lesson learned: Check for all the gear you anticipate needing. If you think you might need headlamps, check for them. Possibility of getting benighted? Check for that emergency blanket! As they say, "the most important piece of equipment you need is the one you don't have when you need it."

Send the climber who knows the route to set up the rappel.

When rappelling the route, we had no particular order of who should go first, second, etc. In our case this was a mistake. We could have saved precious daylight if we had sent down the climber who knew where the next rappel station was located. Instead we sent down the guy who was closest to the rappel. We ended up shouting back and forth at each other trying to give directions on where to find the next rap station.

Lesson learned: Send down the individual who knows where the rap stations are located (f you have one on your team). This will save time and frustration. When you're multi pitch climbing every little bit of time taken adds up.

Spot your descent and directions early.

One thing that we did do right was spot the trail back to the car while we still had daylight. We knew that all gully's leading downhill from our climb would eventually intersect the trail we started on. If lost, we just had to keep walking "down" and we'd either get to the trail or highway. Doing this in the daytime was essential.

Lesson learned: before or during your climb, try to take note of the landscape and your descent so that you have better bearings if you're attempting to make your way back in the dark. Talk with each other about your descent plan while you can still see it.

GPS is a life saver

Speaking of returning in the dark, it's good to keep in mind that darkness tends to cause disorientation (this seems like a "duh" idea until you experience it first hand). Everything looks the same, your mind begins to recognize landmarks and features that you haven't visited. Sheer drop off's may not become visible until your moments away from stepping from solid ground into thin air. In other words: It's much easier to get lost in the dark. Fortunately, I had tracked our route in with a GPS app on my phone. As we descended we were able to compare our current route to the one that I had recorded. This kept us more or less on track and we eventually found the main trail. With GPS I remained confident that we could find our way. Without GPS, getting back would have involved choosing a path/direction and going that way hoping that we eventually found the trail.

Lesson learned: Track your approach with GPS so that you can use that to get yourself back to the car. The technology is cheap and easy to use.

Check your batteries.

Of course my headlamp would give me the low battery signal as soon as we began our rappels. As we descended my light weakened until it was almost useless. Luckily, another member in

our party had the foresight to pack extra batteries in his bag and I was able to give my light a much needed boost when we returned to the base of the climb.

Lesson learned: If you think you might need your headlamp. Make sure it has fresh batteries or better yet, is a rechargeable model with a full charge. Rechargeable headlamps are great because they give you a gauge on how charged your battery is. With battery powered headlamps you don't often know how much juice you have until your warning light comes on.



A broad beam flashlight is useful.

As I stated earlier everything in the

dark begins to look the same. Several times all of our team uttered the phrases "I think I remember seeing that tree/cactus/rock/cliff." And I think most of the time we were wrong. Headlights are lifesavers! If we hadn't had any in our possession our descent would have been far too dangerous to attempt in the dark. However, I think that the headlamps have limitations in that they tend to create a focused spotlight. In the dark I think this tends to narrow your vision. During our descent I pulled out my iPhone and used the flashlight to find my way. Side-note: the iPhone has a surprisingly good flashlight. The advantage to using the iPhone was that it cast a broader light and didn't seem to narrow my vision as much as the headlamp did. I felt like I could better pick up features such as rock cairns, which I would have missed using the focused spotlight of the headlamp.

Lesson learned: From now on I'll carry a handheld flashlight, in addition to my headlamp, that can cast a broad floodlight. For me, it's worth the extra weight. My current favorite handheld flashlight is the Setatek Touch 1k because it has a rechargeable battery with a good run time, a touch screen dimmer switch, and a battery gauge. And at 1000 lumens; it's hella bright!

In conclusion Sedona Scenic Cruise is a fantastic, moderate adventure in beautiful scenery. It's also a serious undertaking. The approach is challenging and dangerous in the dark. Make sure you have the proper equipment and a plan for worst case scenarios. If you're prepared, you'll be able to face your adventure with a calm, confident mind.

The Homestead: A Stewardship Project with the Access Fund

By Rebeca Rodriguez



The Access Fund held a stewardship project the first weekend of December at The Homestead that brought in 40 volunteers from Phoenix and Tucson. Just outside of Winkelman, Arizona (2 hours from Phoenix and Tucson) there is a limestone paradise with 250 sport routes ranging from 5.7 to 5.13b. The road to reach the closest trailhead requires a high clearance vehicle with four-wheel drive. If this is not an option, it is possible to park off of the main road and hike in (40 minutes).

The setting for the climbing is spectacular and features a landscape dotted with saguaros and exposed limestone. The stewardship project engaged the volunteers to reroute trails, cut brush, transfer plants, build steps, construct retaining walls, and create campsites. The most impressive part is the Access Fund not only takes care of the land, but they have purchased it to keep it open to climbers and not risk the possibility of having the land being developed for other purposes. The Access Fund is currently raising funds to pay off the bank loan for the land. To donate: https://www.accessfund.org/take-action/campaigns/homestead









Photo Credits: Top left: Chris Adams, Top Middle: David Anderson, Top Right John Warren, Middle Left: David Anderson, Middle middle and Middle Right John Warren, Bottom Left: David Anderson Bottom middle and Right: Anna Dircks

Canyon Corner

By Tom Seely, Arizona Rock & Canyon Adventures

IMMACULATE CANYON, AZ

Location: Arizona, Secret Mountain Wilderness

Rating: 3B-III

Longest Rappel: 180'

Immaculate Canyon is a great trip through the Secret Mountain Wilderness area just outside of Sedona that drops you into the West Fork of Oak Creek and ends at the Call of the Canyon parking lot (we parked down the road a bit because no one was at the lot booth. I have been told they would prefer if you let them know your intentions and that a vehicle will be there overnight). Our trip consisted of a group of five with (3) 200' ropes, (1) 100' rope and (1) 200' pull cord (we only used (2) 200' and the 100' ropes, but it was nice assurance to have extra on hand).

Driving up the night before we camped near our planned entrance where we could easily wake up rested, eat breakfast, and hit the canyon. We ended up walking out of camp fully loaded at 6:30am to begin our adventure only knowing the longest rappel, some of the pulls in the canyon had been notoriously difficult, and on occasion a few stuck ropes had been left on prior trips. Once we veered into the canyon, we found the growth to be fairly thick, wet from dew, but easy going. Reaching the first rappel it was game on, a good number of drops came fairly quickly and a couple required some attention be paid to particulars to avoid any rope mishaps. Our trip consisted of a couple pools that were easily walked across on the floating log jams encountered, but I can imagine some knee to waist deep situations occurring depending on season. If memory serves me correctly we encountered 3 bolts during our trip that seemed to aid in the efficient decent of this canyon.

The first placement allowed a short rappel to be easily completed, while the second placement of two bolts immediately followed, allowing one to save some webbing by not having to tie an extended anchor off some of the logs in the nearby pool. Once the technical section was over we soon we found ourselves in thick overgrowth battling our way down to the west fork. Once we arrived in Oak Creek it was smooth sailing and we quickly found a place to sit in the shade for an hour while eating lunch. With our meals complete we began walking down Oak Creek only to encounter more and more people as we got near the established trail. With a good pace going, just under 7 hours after leaving camp we found ourselves back at the lower truck just down the road from Call of the Canyon gearing down and strapping sandals on our feet.

AMC Upcoming Events

AMC Member meetings are the 4th Monday, 7-9 p.m. of every month. Check out the AMC website or the AMC Meetup calendar for details. Here is a recap from the May guest speaker, as well as a glimpse at the speaker for August.

JANUARY- The January member meeting features the Annual Election and AMC Member Climbing Presentations featuring climbs in the McDowells by Erik Filsinger and Prescott by John Sasso.

FEBRUARY- Laura Sabourin, shares her experience learning and growing up in the climbing community-starting at a gym in the Midwest, cutting her teeth at well-travelled sport crags as a weekend warrior, dirtbagging across the country, and now working full time in the climbing industry as a guide and educator. Throughout the years, she has found that mentorship is a two- way street- we always have something to learn and we always have something to give. She explores the future of mentorship in climbing.

LEAD CLIMBING SCHOOL— Starts February 13th. To register, please contact Scott Kuchman at amcleadschool@gmail.com as soon as possible or simply go to the website at http://arizonamountaineeringclub.net/schools/lead-climbing-school/ and register for the class.

MARCH- Ilan Berko and Ben Watson present- On the north face of Mount Rainier in Washington, Liberty Ridge splits the infamous Willis and Liberty walls. This ridge route provides the safest passage up the dramatic face and has earned the reputation as a premiere alpine climb and is featured in Roper and Steck's "Fifty Classic Climbs of North America".

BASIC OUTDOOR ROCK CLIMBING SCHOOL—Starts March 13th. Contact AMCBasicSchool@gmail.com for further information or questions.

APRIL- Heidi Wirtz is a yogi, philanthropist and one of the country's few prominent female adventure climbers. She has been climbing for over 25 years, and has pioneered new routes up unclimbed big walls and mountains and pushed the limits of female exploration. She is known in the United States as Heidi Almighty for her bold and technical climbing as well as speed ascents in Yosemite Valley.

AMC Club Members – Please feel free to suggest potential member meeting topics and presenters to Deborah Roether, Program Chair. She can be contacted at deborahlreother@gmail.com

The Arizona Mountaineering Club

Schools: The AMC conducts several rock climbing, mountaineering and other outdoor skills schools each year. Browse the AMC website for information on schedules and classes.

For More Information: Website: www.arizonamountaineeringclub.net

Mail: Arizona Mountaineering Club, 4340 E. Indian School Rd., Phoenix, AZ 85018.

Email: contact@arizonamountaineeringclub.net

<u>AMC Land Advocacy Committee:</u> The Committee works to maintain public access to climbing areas. If you know of areas that are threatened with closures or climbing restrictions, please notify the Land Advocacy representative Erik Filsinger at *smorefil@aol.com*.

<u>Newsletter:</u> The Arizona Mountaineer is published quarterly by the AMC. The newsletter depends on contributions from its members so PLEASE send us your articles, gear reviews and/ or photos. Submit to newsletter@arizonamountaineeringclub.net Digital photos should preferably be in JPG format with a 300 dpi (or greater). Articles can be in any standard word processing format.

Advertising in the newsletter: is accepted, subject to approval, at the following rates. Personal ads are free to members. Business ads are \$5.00 for a business card, \$10.00 for half page, \$20.00 for full page, and \$25.00 for inserts. Contact Dave McClintic at 602-885-5194 about billing. All ads are to be submitted to: newsletter@arizonamountaineeringclub.net

<u>AMC Rental Equipment:</u> rentals available for the following items: MSR alpine snowshoes, ice crampons, ice axes (70 and 90cms), snow shovel, avalanche kit (probe and shovel), curved ice tool (pair). For now, please contact Erik Filsinger at *smorefil@aol.com*.

Highlighted Scheduled Events

Outings listed in this section are not AMC sanctioned outings. Any AMC member can list an event he or she is planning and which is open to other AMC members. The member does not have to be an approved AMC Outing Leader.

Tuesdays North Mountain Hikes Rogil Schroeter (623) 512-8465

Wednesdays Ape Index Gym Climbing - Rogil Schroeter (623) 512-8465

Want to get outdoors?

Go to the AMC Meetup for a complete list of outings and activities.

Up-to-date information and registration will be available. http://www.meetup.com/Arizona-Mountaineering-Club/