



SADDLEBROOKE

HIKING CLUB NEWSLETTER

<http://www.SaddleBrooke.org>

November/December, 2005

2005-6

GILA MONSTER

by Elisabeth Wheeler

Twelve members of the SaddleBrooke Hiking Club got a close-up and personal view of a Gila Monster on a hike to Hidden Canyon. Because it was discovered alongside the trail, everyone could enjoy a full view as it moved across the outcropping and then disappeared into nearby grasses.

The Gila Monster is a stout-bodied lizard that grows 18 to 24 inches in length. It has black, orange, pink or yellow broken blotches, bars and spots, with bands extending onto its blunt tail. Its face is black, and it has small, bead-like scales across its back. It is named for the Gila River Basin of the southwestern United States.

The Gila Monster is one of only two species of venomous lizards; this subspecies resides primarily in the Sonoran and Chihuahuan deserts while the other subspecies resides primarily in the Mojave Desert. It is primarily found in gravelly and sandy soils with shrubs, under rocks, in burrows of other animals and in holes it digs itself.

During warm weather the Gila Monster feeds at night on small mammals, birds and eggs. Fat stored in the tail and abdomen during this period is utilized during the winter months. Gila Monsters are sluggish in habit, but they have a strong, tenacious bite. Most of the Gila Monster's teeth have two grooves that

conduct the venom, a nerve toxin, from glands in the

lower jaw. The toxin is not injected like that of the snake, but flows into the wound as the lizard chews on its victim. While the bite can overpower predators and prey, it is rarely fatal to humans. In general, they avoid humans and will not bite unless provoked.



MEMBERSHIP DUES

This is just a reminder that it is time to renew your membership, as your 2005 Hiking Club membership will expire on December 31st. The yearly membership will remain at \$5.00. You may send your renewals to Bob Perez at 65187 E. Desert Sands Ct., SaddleBrooke, AZ 85739. Please note: If you are a new member, who joined the club in October, November, or December of 2005, the membership is good until the end of 2006.

NEWS YOU CAN USE

Hiking Club Social Hour	Nov.16th	4:00 p.m.
Board Meeting	Dec. 7th	3:00 p.m.
Hiking Guide Meeting	Dec. 7th	4:00 p.m.
Hiking Club Social Hour	Dec. 21th	4:00 p.m.

Note: Social Hours held at the MV Clubhouse in the bar area.

Hard copies of the Newsletter are available at both the SaddleBrooke and MountainView Clubhouses. Membership is \$5.00 a year and applications should be located with the newsletters.

Send your completed application or renewal to Bob Perez at 65187 E. Desert Sands Court. **Make checks payable to SaddleBrooke Hiking Club.**

NEWS WE CAN USE

New e-mail address: If you change your e-mail address please notify Bob Perez at azsun65@robsoncom.net so you can continue to receive the newsletter and other communications.

Becoming a hiking guide: If you have gained experience hiking and would be interested in becoming a hiking guide, contact the Chief Hiking Guide. It is a great way to help the Club and contribute to our great community.

Request a hike: If there is a special hike you would like to see included in our schedule of hikes, please feel free to send an e-mail to the Chief Hiking Guide. Provide a description of the hike and what time of year you would like to have it offered.

OFFICERS:

President: Jim Strickler 825-8735
sherabjim@robsoncom.net

Vice-President: Bob Wynne 825-2974
bwynne@robsoncom.net

Secretary: Kathy Gish 818-0918
robkathy@msn.com

Treasurer: Sherry Jacobson 825-4036
louis.jacobson@ey.com

Chief Hiking Guide: Susan Robertshaw 818-6727

Social: Volunteer needed

Publicity: John Robertshaw 818-6727
jsrobertshaw@att.net

Statistics & Awards: Melody Branstrom 825-5562

NON-OFFICER POSITIONS:

Editor: Carole Rossof 877-9262

Membership Roster: Bob Perez 818-2111
azsun65@robsoncom.net

Merchandise: Sally Sample 825-0985

Newsletter Copies: Sue Berman 818-1954

FALL PICNIC – NOVEMBER 10

This year our fall picnic will be an easy, “do-it-yourselfer” potluck-plus-chicken affair. We have the group picnic site reserved at the Catalina State Park (with some nice recent improvements you will like). We will provide the chicken (from KFC or Basha’s), plates, utensils, ice and cups. You will need to bring a side dish/salad, or a desert, to share, and your own beverages, plus \$2.00 per person if you plan to have the chicken. We will have several different hikes, at different levels, starting at **8:30 a.m.** for those interested, and will start eating at noon. Sign-ups for the hikes will be that morning at the group picnic site.

Please call Sandra Sowell at: **818-0995** to indicate if you are coming, what you are planning to bring, and whether you would like the chicken, so we can get a count on how much to order.

JOHN RENDALL

We’re going to miss John Rendall! John and his wife, Gwen have moved to their new home in Oracle, after 6 years here in SaddleBrooke. During that time, John was extensively involved with the Hiking Club. He was Chief Hiking Guide and led many innovative and exciting hikes. Try hiking with him 17 miles through the Canada Del Oro Wash with water up to your shins at times - or squeaking through slot Canyons, and “bushwhacking” through waist-high brush in what you thought were trails, in our mountains.

In addition, as a member of the Arizona Trail Association, he helped the club become stewards on a 13-mile section of the AZ Trail north of Oracle State Park and has spent many hours organizing and working on our "Arizona Trail/Oracle State Park Work Sessions". John has always been a fun person to be with. We’ll miss you John, good luck to you!

GENERAL HIKING INFORMATION

Reservations: Call the guide to make a reservation for a hike. Let the guide know if you would be available to drive and whether or not you have a 'park entry pass' for the area. If you are unable to go on the hike after making a reservation, call the guide to cancel. The guide will call if hike canceled.

Arrival Time and Departure Area: The time listed for the hike is the departure time. It is important to arrive 10 to 15 minutes before departure time. All hikes leave from the left front parking lot of the MountainView Clubhouse (just east of the tennis courts) unless otherwise noted.

Medical Conditions: Prior to starting the hike, inform the guide of any special medical conditions or medications you may need.

Voluntary driver donations: Voluntary driver donations are shown at the end of the hike descriptions. Most include the entry and/or parking fees where required, however some hikes may require additional fees. Guides may also wish to split costs between drivers for drop-offs and/or unequal passenger loads. Small bills are appreciated. Due to automobile insurance coverage considerations, it is recommended that any payment to the driver be made upon return to MountainView.

Items to Bring: Every hiker should carry identification and any medical alerts in a waterproof container. Always bring ample water (this can vary from a pint on a winter fitness walk to 3 or 4 quarts on a summer hike). On strenuous hikes or in very hot weather you may need to replace electrolytes (eat salty snacks, add electrolyte mix to water, or use sport drinks). A wide brim hat, sunscreen, sunglasses, and hiking stick or trekking poles are recommended in Arizona. Other suggested items include comfortable hiking boots, whistle, map, compass, tweezers, first-aid kit, and moleskin. Layered clothing works well due to possible changes in weather conditions. In addition, you should bring a snack or lunch depending upon the hike. High complex carbohydrates (nuts, trail mix, and etc.) are good.

Choosing Hikes: Hikes are more difficult than a walk in SaddleBrooke due to elevation change and our Arizona terrain. It is not unusual to encounter rocks, unsteady ground, and steep inclines. It is your responsibility to choose an appropriate hike that matches your physical abilities. The hike description is a great tool. Look closely at the length, elevation change, and comments in the description to determine if a hike is within your physical ability. If you aren't feeling "up to snuff" on the day of the hike, don't hesitate to cancel until a better day.

Assumption of Risk: When you joined the club, you were asked to sign a 'Release of Liability'. **We want to reinforce the fact that by signing the release you acknowledge that participation in the club's activities involves an inherent risk of physical injury and that you assume all such risks. Accidents can happen. Learn about the risks and how to avoid them. Take an active part in protecting yourself and fellow hikers.** We are an organization of volunteers who share their skills and love for the wilderness with one another.

Guest Policy: A SaddleBrooke resident, whether year-round or part-time, must be a club member in order to join a hike. On hikes with limited participants, members have priority over guests. Members must accompany their guest(s), and all guests will be required to sign a Release Form prior to hiking (if under age 18, must be signed by parent or legal guardian). If the guest is younger than 16 years old, you must notify the guide who has

sole discretion whether or not to allow minors on the hike.

HIKE RATINGS, PACE, AND SYMBOLS

Rating

A Hikes	>14 miles or >3000 foot climb
B Hikes	>8 to 14 miles or >1500 to 3000 foot climb
C Hikes	>4 to 8 miles or >500 to 1500 foot climb
D Hikes	4 miles or less and 500 foot climb or less

Pace can refer to the length of 2 steps, the speed you walk/hike, or to the average speed of a hike. When we denote the pace of a hike we are referring to the average speed. This means that from start to finish (excluding lunch) you can expect to be traveling at an average speed of () MPH. The average speed or pace of a hike is affected by speed and length of stride, number of rest stops, incline, type of terrain, and trail conditions. We use the following three categories to describe our hikes.

Slow Pace – Average speed of hike < 1.5 MPH

Moderate Pace – Average speed of hike 1.5 to 2.5 MPH

Fast Pace – Average speed of hike > 2.5 MPH

Symbols

"+" and "-" after a rating. The plus and minus signs are used to show that a hike is harder or easier than the average hike in that rating category. It may have a plus sign added due to a loose rocky area or perhaps due to an unusually steep area. A minus sign might be added to a hike due to it having a very easy, smooth trail surface.

"" by a hike.** Hikes marked by a double asterisk are new additions to our club database or a new 'one time' hike.

"++" by a hike. Hikes marked by a double plus are Orientation Hikes. Orientation hikes are encouraged for all "beginner" hikers and are intended for sharing information and for personal assessment of current physical fitness.

FITNESS WALKS - FIVE DAYS A WEEK

The SaddleBrooke Hiking Club offers morning fitness walks five days a week. These sessions last about one hour and are suitable for walkers of all ability levels. They are a great way to start the day and a great way to meet other SaddleBrooke residents as you enjoy the fantastic views.

In November, Bill Leightenheimer will be offering fitness walks five days per week: Mon. – Fri. starting at **7:00 a.m.** Monday, Wednesday & Friday, meet in the parking lot of the fitness center at **SaddleBrooke Clubhouse**. Tuesday & Thursday, meet at the **MountainView Clubhouse** parking lot. You may contact Bill at 818-1953 or whlaz@robsoncom.net.

Judy Barenkopf offers fitness walks every Tuesday and Thursday. Her group meets at the **MountainView Clubhouse** parking lot every Tuesday and at the SaddleBrooke Tennis Center parking lot on Thursdays. They also will be starting at



7:00 a.m. in November. You may contact Judy at 825-7077 or

NAMETAGS

A suggestion has been made that any person attending a hike might want to wear a nametag. We have so many new members; it would be a great way for the hiking leader and hikers to get to know the people in their group and to speak to them by name. Often we are introduced to people and quickly forget their names. If you choose to wear a nametag, you can pin it either to your shirt, hat or pack. Once again, this is not mandatory, only a suggestion.

Nov. 2 – Wed. Sutherland Wash Petroglyphs. Rating C.

This hike, in the 50-Year Trail vicinity, is through a mesquite bosque with 100+ saguaros on the way to an area of many petroglyphs. Some rock scrambling is necessary to search for petroglyphs. Hike 6 miles; elevation change 400 feet; starting elevation 3,200 feet; leave at **7:30 a.m.**; driver donation \$1.00. Dean & Cheryl Werstler, 825-9057.

Nov. 3 – Thurs. Tortolita Trail. Rating D. Come explore part of the 12-mile multipurpose Tortolita Trail. The trail is near the Tortolita Preserve below Dove Mountain. It took outdoorsman and amateur trail designer Chuck Boyer, age 66, more than two years to carve out this 12 mile recreational trail using only hand tools. Hike <4 miles; elevation change <500 feet; starting elevation 3600 feet; leave at **8:30a.m.**; driver donation \$2.00. Jan Wilson, 818-0299.

Nov. 3 – Thurs. Blackett's Ridge. Rating B. This hike takes you up to a ridge between Sabino and Bear Canyons. It has spectacular views of Tucson and the canyons. We hike through lower Sabino Canyon to the Phoneline Trail. After 0.4 miles we turn onto the Blackett's Ridge Trail where we begin the ascent. This trail has several series of steep switchbacks mixed in with some level areas. There are three false summits at the top. Hike 6 miles; elevation change 1700 feet; starting elevation 2700 feet; leave at **7:00 a.m.**; driver donation \$4.00. Bill Katz, 818-9412.

Nov. 4 – Fri. Hidden Canyon Loop. Rating C+. This is a beautiful hike, practically in our "back yard", to a secluded canyon in the upper reaches of the Sutherland Wash. There are many beautiful rock formations and saguaro cacti, along the way and a rock ledge with a great view down the valley, for lunch. The hike begins in the Fifty Year Trail area past Golder Ranch Road gate. After lunch we will continue on out of the canyon, and circle around Hidden Canyon Peak, back to the "North Gate" and return to our trailhead via the Fifty-Year Trail. Hike 8 miles; elevation change 975 feet; starting elevation 3200 feet; leave at **7:30 a.m.**; driver donation \$1.00. Jim Strickler, 825-8735.

Nov. 5 – Sat. Tubac to Tumacacori - Anza Trail. Rating C

The hike will commence at Tubac Presidio State Historical Park and terminate at Tumacacori National Monument. We will be making river crossings, but there are wooden bridges (no hand rails), so we shouldn't get wet feet. Sneakers are okay for this hike. We will lunch in Tumacacori at Wisdoms' Café. (Written up in April, 2003 Arizona Highway Magazine, page 4.)

Bring \$ for lunch, shopping, and \$3 or Golden Age Pass for entrance to Tumacacori Historic Park.. Shopping will be after lunch, if your driver is willing. Hike 4.5 miles; elevation change 100 to 200 feet; starting elevation 3200 feet; leave at **7:00 a.m.**; driver donation \$10.00. Jan Wilson. 818-0299.

Nov. 7 – Mon. Phoneline Trail - Round Trip. Rating B-

The hike will begin in the Sabino Canyon parking lot. After crossing Sabino Creek there is a moderate climb to the Phoneline Trail. The trail is above and generally parallels the tram road. It offers outstanding views of the canyon. We will choose between three routes back, the tram road, the same trail, or back part way on the same to trail to a connecting trail that takes us down to the creek and dam and back to the parking lot. Hike 10 miles; elevation change 900 feet; starting elevation 2700 feet; leave at **7:00 a.m.**; driver donation \$5.00. Susan Robertshaw, 818-6727.

Nov. 8 – Tues. Charouleau Gap Road to the Gap. Rating B.

Starting from below Unit 9, we will hike along the wash to the jeep road and then climb this road to the gap, which overlooks SaddleBrooke, Catalina, and the Tortolitas. The hike will be through desert area and then a steep climb with switchbacks to the gap. Return on the same road. Hike 10 miles; elevation change 2000 feet; altitude at the start 3200 feet; leave at **7:00 a.m.**; driver donation \$1.00. Jan Wilson. 818-0299.

Nov. 9 – Wed. Arizona Trail (AZT)-Oracle State Park (OSP) Work Session. Rating C.

This is our Hiking Club committed workday in helping to develop, maintain and report condition of the trails for which we have responsibility. Generally the work is light in nature and may involve brushing, hoeing, raking, trimming, pruning and usually requires some bending and lifting/carrying tools. On rare occasion we must rebuild water bars, design and develop new trails, build small bridges, erosion control devices and other special projects. All tools are supplied and kept at OSP. Gloves, hat and long pants are always recommended. For the most part it requires a 4-6 hour block of time, therefore you should bring snacks/lunch/water. We are responsible for all the trails in OSP and the 13.5 mile section of the AZT described as "Segment 14A - Black Hills/south". This segment is just north of OSP with the trailhead on Tiger Mine Road. Come join in the fun--it's nice to work side by side with other hiking members and it certainly gives you a feeling of pride and accomplishment along with a way of 'giving back' for all the trails we hike and take for granted so often. Leave at **7:30 a.m.**; driver donation \$ 3.00. Jim Strickler, 825-8735.

Nov. 10 - Thurs. Fall Picnic.

Picnic at the Catalina State Park group picnic area, potluck-plus chicken. Several different level hikes planned, starting at **8:30 a.m.** for those interested. Others come anytime, with lunch starting at noon. See description in the beginning of this newsletter. Bring your own side dish/salad, or desert, to share, your own beverages, and \$2.00 each for chicken, if you want it. Chicken, plates, utensils, and ice and cups will be provided. Call Sandra Sowell at **818-0955** to indicate if you are coming, what you plan to bring, and whether you would like the chicken. Sign-ups for the hikes will be that morning at the group picnic site.

Nov. 11 – Fri. Pima Canyon. Rating C. The trailhead is at the end of Magee Road. The first mile or so of trail is across open desert along the south side of Pusch Peak. We will pass the

first dam as we enter the beautiful rugged canyon. The rocky trail passes through a grove of large trees providing welcome shade before emerging again in the open. We will hike to a rocky open area in the canyon beyond a small dam near Indian grinding holes and then return to the trailhead. Hike 6 miles; elevation change 977 feet; starting elevation 2900 feet; leave at **8:00 a.m.**; driver donation \$3.00. Jan Wilson, 818-0299.

Nov. 11 – Fri. Arizona Trail – Oracle State Park. Rating B. Starting at American Flag Trailhead, this section of the Arizona Trail crosses Oracle State Park. We will pause at a windmill and climb slightly for stunning views on the ridge. The route is fairly level with little elevation change. Hike 9-10 miles; elevation change minimal; starting elevation 4,500 feet; leave at **7:00 a.m.**; driver donation \$3.00. Dean & Cheryl Werstler, 825-9057.

Nov. 14 - Mon. Rogers Canyon Cliff Dwellings. Rating B. This hike is deep in a wilderness area of the Superstition Mountains. The trailhead is reached via Florence to Highway #60 east and then NE on 19 miles of scenic, rough, unimproved Forest Service Roads that require vehicles with high clearance. This is a reverse hike since we go downhill into the canyon area that was home to some Salado Indians. The cliff dwellings can be explored, but some require rock scrambling to enter. Care should be taken not to damage 700 years of history. The hike out is uphill via the same route. The number of hikers that can be accommodated will depend on the number of high clearance vehicles that can be secured. Hike 8.4 miles; elevation change 1,200 feet; leave at **6:00 a.m.**; driver donation \$15.00. Dean & Cheryl Werstler, 825-9057.

Nov. 15 – Tues. Madera Canyon Nature Trail. Rating C. This non-desert hike is in the Santa Rita Mountains. We start at 4500 foot elevation from the lower area and ascend 3.2 miles up the canyon to the 5400 foot Roundup Picnic Area. Along the way, we enjoy the shade of Apache Pines, Douglas Firs, Emory Oaks, Mexican Blue Oaks, Willows, Cottonwoods, and Sycamores. Our return is by the same route. There are panoramic views from a ridge on a trail breakout. Hike 7.5 miles; elevation change 900 feet; starting elevation 4500 feet; leave at **7:00 a.m.**; driver donation \$10.00. Mary Richling, 825-5238.

Nov. 16 – Wed. Hiking Club Social Hour

++Nov. 16 – Wed. Fifty Year Trail Area. Rating D. We will follow a jeep road to Sutherland Wash then loop back on a ridge that has great views, beautiful saguaros, and interesting rock formations. Hike 3+ miles; elevation change 200 feet; starting elevation 3200 feet; leave at **7:30 a.m.**; driver donation \$1.00. Susan Robertshaw, 818-6727.

Nov. 17 – Thurs. Pusch Peak. Rating A. The first mile of the trail is mostly level then a steep, difficult climb begins. In a few places you may want to use your hands to climb the trail. Bring gloves. Hiking stick desirable. One and one-half miles more and we reach the top. The views of Oro Valley and Tucson are fantastic. This is a very strenuous hike. Hike 5 miles; elevation change 2700 feet; starting elevation 2650 feet; leave at **8:00 a.m.**; driver donation \$2.00. Dean Wilson, 818-0299.

Nov. 18 – Fri. Soldier Trail. Rating B. Start at mile 1.3 pullout on Catalina Highway to Prison Camp and return. The first ½ mile is very steep. The gorge in Soldier Basin may have water flowing below some rugged cliffs. Views of the Tucson area. This trail was used in the 1800s as a cavalry passage into the mountains. Hike 6 miles; elevation change 1600 feet; starting elevation 3200 feet; leave at **7:30 a.m.**; driver donation \$5.00.

Jim Strickler, 825-8735.

Nov. 19 – Sat. Picacho Peak - Sunset Vista Trail (short). Rating D. From the Sunset Vista Trailhead we follow the trail to the area that starts the steep climb to Picacho Peak. We will return by the same route. Hike <4 miles; elevation change minimal; starting elevation 1500 feet; leave at **8:00 a.m.**; driver donation \$7.00. Jan Wilson, 818-0299.

Nov. 21 - Mon Romero Pools. Rating C+. The hike begins in Catalina State Park and follows Romero Canyon Trail into the foothills. Trail crosses open desert then climbs steeply until it reaches a saddle and then down the canyon area where several pools are located. An option is a ¾ mile round-trip hike to the upper pools. We will have lunch there. Park entrance pass required. Hike 6 miles; elevation change 1200 feet; starting elevation 2700 feet; leave at **7:30 a.m.**; driver donation \$3.00. Susan Robertshaw, 818-6727.

++Nov. 23 - Wed. Oracle State Park Exploration. Rating D. We will explore some of the trails at Oracle State Park. Enjoy the interesting boulder groups, oak woodlands, manzanita stands, and desert grasslands found in this new state park. Hike 4 miles; elevation change 200 to 400 feet; altitude 4350 feet; leave at **7:30 a.m.**; driver donation \$4.00. Susan Robertshaw, 818-6727.

Nov. 25 – Fri Pontatoc Canyon to the Amphitheater.

Rating C. Hike in 2.5 miles from the trailhead at the end of Alvernon Way. Good views of the city and Finger Rock. Hike 5 miles; elevation change 1200 feet; starting elevation 3100 feet; leave at **8:30 a.m.**; driver donation \$3.00. Jan Wilson. 818-0299.

Nov. 26 – Sat. Picacho Peak for "C" Hikers. Rating B. THIS IS A SPECIAL HIKE FOR "C" HIKERS WANTING TO CONQUER THE PEAK. Pace will be modified to accommodate the group. From the Barret Loop trailhead we hike up to a saddle, down to Sunset Vista Trail, then to the top of Picacho Peak using permanently installed guide cables to reach the summit. BRING COTTON OR LEATHER GLOVES for holding onto the cables. Return requires a climb down Sunset Vista Trail then up the Hunter Trail again to the saddle. This is a short strenuous hike and a favorite among hikers. Park entrance pass required. Hike 4.2 miles; elevation change 2100 feet; starting elevation 1500 feet leave at **8:00 a.m.**; driver donation \$7.00. Dean Wilson, 818-0299.

Nov. 28 – Mon. Tohono Chul Park and Tea Room, "birders walk" and breakfast. Rating D. Join a Tohono Chul docent for a guided bird observation walk in beautiful Tohono Chul Park. We can continue strolling through the park at our leisure and end with breakfast at the Tohono Chul Tea Room. Bring binoculars. There is an admission fee of \$5.00. Hike 1.5 miles; elevation change 50 feet; starting elevation 2700 feet; leave at

7:45 a.m.; driver donation \$2.00. Mary Richling, 825-5238.

Nov. 30 – Tues. Elephant Head. Rating B+. This hike climbs the massive craggy rock on the west side of the Santa Ritas. The rock is mentioned in Apache legend of the area. The hike starts out along a gentle mountain road, but after about 2 miles, there is some tough bushwhacking across Chino Canyon and then rock scrambling to get to the top. On the way back we must cross Chino Canyon again. Dress defensively and bring gloves. Hike 8 miles; elevation change 2,000 feet; starting elevation 4,600 feet; leave at **6:30 a.m.**; driver donation \$9.00. Dean & Cheryl Werstler, 825-9057.

Nov. 30 – Wed. Saguaro Park East & Tanque Verde Guest Ranch for Lunch. Rating C-. Start from the eastern end of Speedway at Douglas Spring Trailhead. Follow along the foot of the Rincon Mountains with a 1.5 mile loop into the foothills then back to the desert floor. After hike we will go for superb gourmet luncheon buffet at Tanque Verde Guest Ranch. Hike 4.2 miles; elevation change 400 feet; starting elevation 3000 feet; leave at **7:00 a.m.**; driver donation \$5.00. **Luncheon - \$14.50.** Susan Robertshaw, 818-6727.

Dec. 1 – Thurs. Charouleau Gap Road to the Gap. Rating B. Starting from below Unit 9, we will hike along the wash to the jeep road and then climb this road to the gap, which overlooks SaddleBrooke, Catalina, and the Tortolitas. The hike will be through desert area and then a steep climb with switchbacks to the gap. Return on the same road. Hike 10 miles; elevation change 2000 feet; altitude at the start 3200 feet; leave at **8:00 a.m.**; driver donation \$1.00. Dean Wilson, 818-0299.

Dec. 3 – Sat. First Water/ Second Water Trail Loop. Rating B-. We start on the Dutchman Trail from the First Water Creek Trailhead, north of Apache Junction, in the Superstition Wilderness. After 4.2 miles, we turn onto the Black Mesa Trail. After another 1.5 miles, up a hill, we'll have lunch on a bluff, overlooking the heart of the Superstitions. Then on to the Second Water Trail and back to our trailhead. Numerous water crossings and boulders all along these trails, wonderful scenery. Hike 9.2 miles; elevation change 800 feet; starting elevation 2300 feet; leave at **7:30 a.m.**; driver donation \$12.00. Jim Strickler, 825-8735.

Dec. 5 – Mon. Blackett's Ridge. Rating B. This hike takes you up to a ridge between Sabino and Bear Canyons. It has spectacular views of Tucson and the canyons. We hike through lower Sabino Canyon to the Phoneline Trail. After 0.4 miles we turn onto the Blackett's Ridge Trail where we begin the ascent. This trail has several series of steep switchbacks mixed in with some level areas. There are three false summits at the top. Hike 6 miles; elevation change 1700 feet; starting elevation 2700 feet; leave at **7:30 a.m.**; driver donation \$4.00. Susan Robertshaw, 818-6727.

Dec. 6 – Tues. Pusch Peak. Rating A. The first mile of the trail is mostly level then a steep, difficult climb begins. In a few places you may want to use your hands to climb the trail. Bring gloves. Hiking stick desirable. One and one-half miles more and we reach the top. The views of Oro Valley and Tucson are fantastic. This is a very strenuous hike. Hike 5 miles; elevation

change 2700 feet; starting elevation 2650 feet; leave at **8:00 a.m.**; driver donation \$2.00. Elisabeth Wheeler, 818-1547.

Dec. 7 – Wed. Board Meeting/Guide Meeting

++Dec. 7 – Wed. Fifty Year Trail (South End). Rating D. We will start near the Golder Ranch Gate and hike south to a stream terrace that gives a fantastic view of the Sutherland Wash area and the Santa Catalina Mountains. In addition, there will be good views of Sun City and the Tortolitas. Hike 4 miles; elevation change 400 feet; starting elevation 3200 feet; leave at **7:30 a.m.**; driver donation \$1.00. Susan Robertshaw, 818-6727.

Dec. 8 – Thurs. Phoneline Trail - Round Trip. Rating B-. The hike will begin in the Sabino Canyon parking lot. After crossing Sabino Creek there is a moderate climb to the Phoneline Trail. The trail is above and generally parallels the tram road. It offers outstanding views of the canyon. We will choose between three routes back, the tram road, the same trail, or back part way on the same to trail to a connecting trail that takes us down to the creek and dam and back to the parking lot. Hike 10 miles; elevation change 900 feet; starting elevation 2700 feet; leave at **7:30 a.m.**; driver donation \$5.00. Bill Katz, 818-9412.

Dec. 8 – Fri. Tortolita Mountains/Wild Burro Canyon. Rating C. We will take the Rail-X Marble Mine road off Oracle Highway for 5 miles to the county line, then hike on a jeep road to the windmill and into Wild Burro Canyon. The jeep road will take us to a meadow and corral in the mountains. Weather and hikers' agreeing, we may go further along a wash to a canyon lookout. We may get lucky and see some wild horses. Hike 7 miles; elevation change 600 feet; starting elevation 3000 feet; leave at **8:30 a.m.**; driver donation \$2.00. Jan & Dean Wilson, 818-0299.

Dec. 9 - Fri. Canyon Loop Trail and the Birding Trail. Rating D. We will start up the Romero Trail in Catalina State Park; follow the Canyon Loop Trail and come back on the Sutherland Trail. This area is a great example of the Sonoran Desert and its riparian areas. Following this we will hike the Birding Trail. Hike 3.5 miles; elevation change 450 feet; starting elevation 2700 feet; leave at **7:30 a.m.**; driver donation \$3.00. Mary Richling, 825-5238

Dec. 14 – Wed. Arizona Trail (AZT)-Oracle State Park (OSP) Work Session. Rating C. This is our Hiking Club committed work day in helping to develop, maintain and report condition of the trails for which we have responsibility. Generally the work is light in nature and may involve brushing, hoeing, raking, trimming, pruning and usually requires some bending and lifting/carrying tools. On rare occasion we must rebuild water bars, design and develop new trails, build small bridges, erosion control devices and other special projects. All tools are supplied and kept at OSP. Gloves, hat and long pants are always recommended. For the most part it requires a 4-6 hour block of time, therefore you should bring snacks/lunch/water. We are responsible for all the trails in OSP and the 13.5 mile section of the AZT described as "Segment 14A - Black Hills/south". This segment is just north of OSP with the trailhead on Tiger Mine Road. Come join in the fun--it's nice to work side by side with other hiking members and it certainly gives you a feeling of pride and accomplishment along with a

way of 'giving back' for all the trails we hike and take for granted so often. Leave at **7:30 a.m.** ; driver donation \$ 3.00. Jim Strickler, 825-8735

****Dec. 15 – Thurs. Catalina State Park - Exploring the Trails - Rating B.** We will explore various trails within the park. This state park is a great example of the Sonoran Desert with its native plants and wildlife. Come enjoy the beautiful views of the Santa Catalina Mountains as we hike different trails through the park. Hike 8 to 10 miles; elevation change 500 to 1000 feet; starting elevation 2700 feet; leave at **7:30 a.m.**; driver donation \$3.00. Bill Katz, 818-9412.

Dec. 15 – Thurs. Rams Creek Basin. Rating C. We hike up the wash on a new trail through nice vegetation and then climb 560 feet to a watering tank. There are some great views of Rancho Vistoso, Tortolitas, SaddleBrooke, and the Biosphere. We then continue on to a water fall where we will have lunch. Return via same route. Hike 5 miles; elevation change 1000 feet; starting elevation 2600 feet; leave at **8:30 a.m.**; driver donation \$2.00. Jan & Dean Wilson, 818-0299.

Dec. 16 – Fri. David Yetman Trail. Rating C. This hike is an easy walk through typical vegetation of the Sonoran Desert. This trail has two trailheads—one at Camino de Oeste and one near the bottom of the west side of Gates Pass. We will leave cars at one end and drive to the other trailhead. From the Gates Pass side, the trail is easy for the first mile, then down a wash with a short but steep climb back up to the ridge. Later we have a mile of walking in a creek bed; then the trail leaves the creek and emerges into open area following an old jeep road. Then the trail narrows, has some loose rocks, and again climbs to a ridge. We pass the Central Arizona Project, an old stone house built in the early 1930's by Sherry Bown, and a well that is a wildlife watering tank. Hike 5.4 miles; elevation change 600 feet; starting elevation 2,800 feet; leave at **7:00 a.m.**; driver donation \$5.00. Dean & Cheryl Werstler, 825-9057.

Dec. 17 – Sat. Deer Camp/Baby Jesus Loop. Rating C. We will start in the 50-Year Trail area. We hike up toward Deer Camp then take the Middle Tank Connecting Trail to the Baby Jesus Trail and hike back to our cars. This area has little traffic and is a delight to the senses. Hike 7.5 miles; elevation change 975 feet; starting elevation 3200; leave at **8:00 a.m.**; driver donation \$1.00. Jim Strickler, 825-8735.

Dec. 19 – Mon. Wasson Peak/Hugh Norris Trail. Rating B. We will take the Hugh Norris Trail in both directions. This is the longest trail to Wasson Peak (incredible views at the top) but the climb is gradual and the trail is primarily a ridge trail with spectacular views. Hike 10 miles elevation change 2100 feet; starting elevation 2800 feet; leave at **7:30 a.m.**; driver donation \$5.00. Susan Robertshaw, 818-6727.

Dec. 20 – Tues. Hidden Canyon. Rating C. This is a beautiful hike to a secluded hidden canyon in the upper reaches of the Sutherland Wash. There are many beautiful rock formations and saguaro cacti. Hike begins past the Golder Ranch Gate in the Fifty Year Trail area. Hike 7.5 miles; elevation change 800 feet; starting elevation 3200 feet; leave at **8:00 a.m.**; driver donation \$1.00. Elisabeth Wheeler, 818-1547.

Dec. 21 – Wed. Hiking Club Social Hour

Dec. 21 - Wed. Linda Vista Loop. Rating D+. Drive to trailhead, 15 minutes from the MountainView parking lot. Trail skirts the base of Pusch Ridge and has great views out onto Oracle Road and environs. Hiking stick recommended as trail is rocky in places. Hike 3 miles; elevation change 300 feet; starting elevation 2680 feet; leave at **8:00 a.m.**; driver donation \$2.00. Susan Robertshaw, 818-6727.

Dec. 28 – Wed. Brown Mountain. Rating C. Brown Mountain Trail is a trek along a ridge in the heart of the Tucson Mountains. It starts in a picnic area near the Arizona Sonora Desert Museum. Along this "ridge ramble" are excellent views of the mountains, valleys and desert vegetation. The route has many up and downs. Hike 5 miles; elevation change 1100 feet; starting elevation 2700 feet; leave at **8:00 a.m.**; driver donation \$5.00. Jim Strickler, 825-8735.

**Happy Holidays to
all!!!**

