



In Search of Eldorado

Link to the Eldorado Song: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VczD1olutQ8>



Hello to Family & Friends

Not bad for a free campsite with no neighbors except the frogs. The river was running quite fast and was pretty noisy. It sounded like a downpour on the roof, but I got used to it since I love the sound of running water, and slept like a baby.

I will admit I was a little apprehensive at first about getting to this spot in full dark, finding a pull-off with only headlights to guide me. I don't want to back onto some soft sand and get stuck. I didn't finish yesterday's newsletter until 10:00. From where I am to the ranger station there are no houses or roads, so the only traffic would be a police car or the ranger to open the station in the morning.

But I decided that I am out here for some adventure so why not give it a shot. It was great.

My main objective for today is the Palm Springs Aerial Tram to the top of Mount San Jacinto. It took a wild idea from Frank Crocker, a lot of legislature, and thirty years, but he made it happen.

Eight bucks to park and \$26.95 for the ticket. Lunch in the café cost me an additional \$23. Today's \$58 is my largest expenditure so far for sightseeing. Not bad for three weeks and 3000+ miles.

One last item, I scared a coyote across the road on my way to the campsite. He really did look a little startled.

Day 23
Saturday,
January 25th

Palm Springs,
California

Weather
50's to 70's and Sunny

In Search of Eldorado

By Edgar Allan Poe

Gaily bedight,
A gallant knight,
In sunshine and in shadow,
Had journeyed long,
Singing a song,
In search of Eldorado.

But he grew old—
This knight so bold—
And o'er his heart a shadow—
Fell as he found
No spot of ground
That looked like Eldorado.

And, as his strength
Failed him at length,
He met a pilgrim shadow—
'Shadow,' said he,
'Where can it be—
This land of Eldorado?'

'Over the Mountains
Of the Moon,
Down the Valley of the Shadow,
Ride, boldly ride,'
The shade replied,—
'If you seek for Eldorado!'



This is one of the original tram cars. The ones now rotate 1.5 times on the trip, which takes 10 minutes



The gates open at 8:00. I arrived at 8:00. But after the 2000 foot climb to the parking area and a quick shower I only caught the 9:00 tram. I sure am glad I arrived early. When I left, the line filled the interior queue, spilled out the upper door, and was halfway down the steps going up to the right. When I bought my ticket I was the only one in line.

PALM SPRINGS AERIAL TRAMWAY VALLEY STATION

Circa 1963

Designed by
Albert Frey, FAIA

This bridge-like structure straddles a gully, allowing water, and the occasional boulder, to pass underneath without damaging the building. The walls of glass offer a view of the mountain. The interior ceiling is of perforated and corrugated aluminum, a trademark of Frey's work.

Historic Site Preservation Board #33

Inside the station there was a video playing. Just footage from a security camera with a view of the gully below. A couple years ago they had a 9.5 inch rainfall which also melted snow on the mountain. The video showed the rushing water level almost to the bottom of the building, with tree trunks up to 40 feet long just being swept along like matchsticks. Suddenly the camera shook from the impacts and the power went off and on. It was pretty unbelievable.





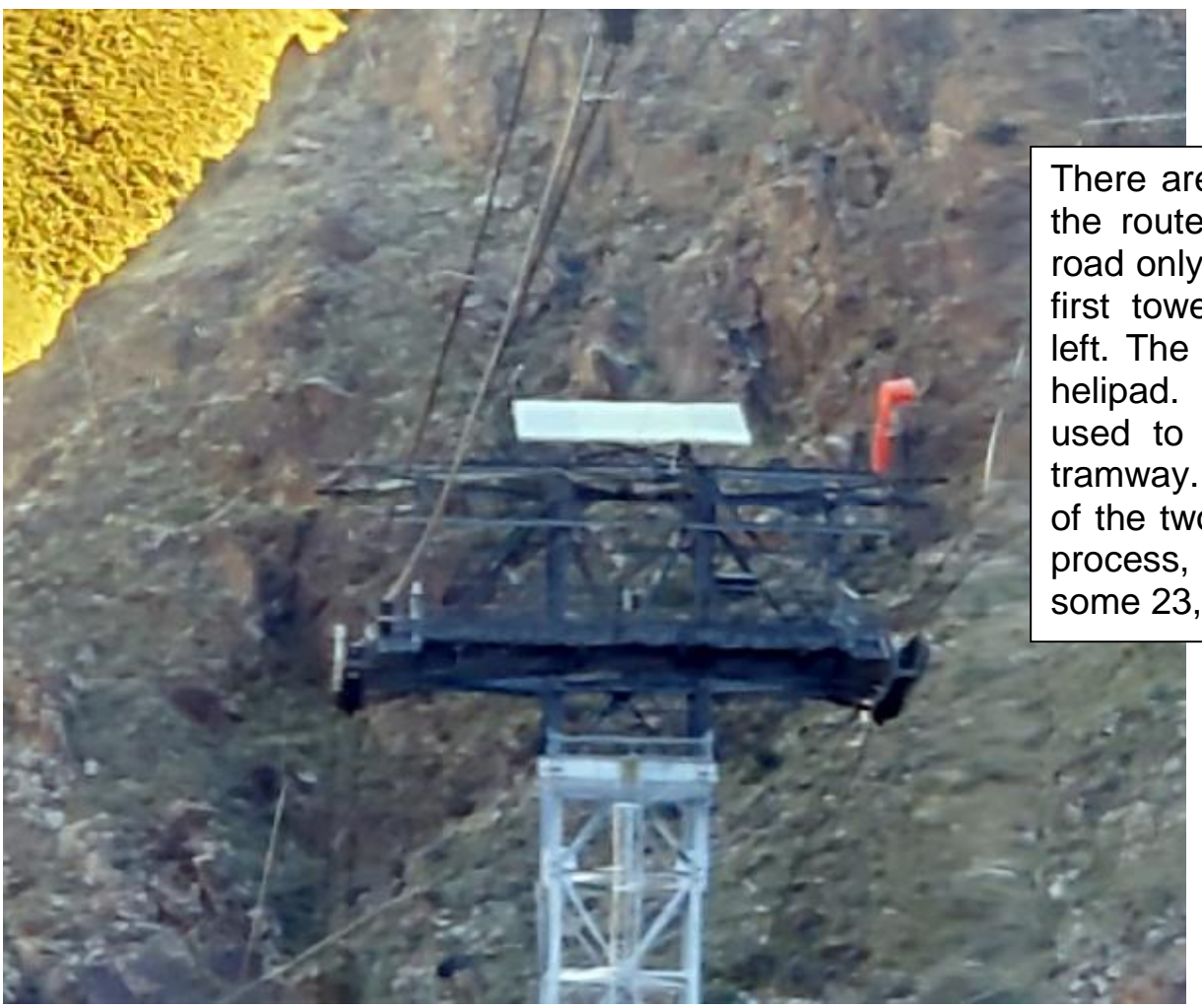
My ride to the top



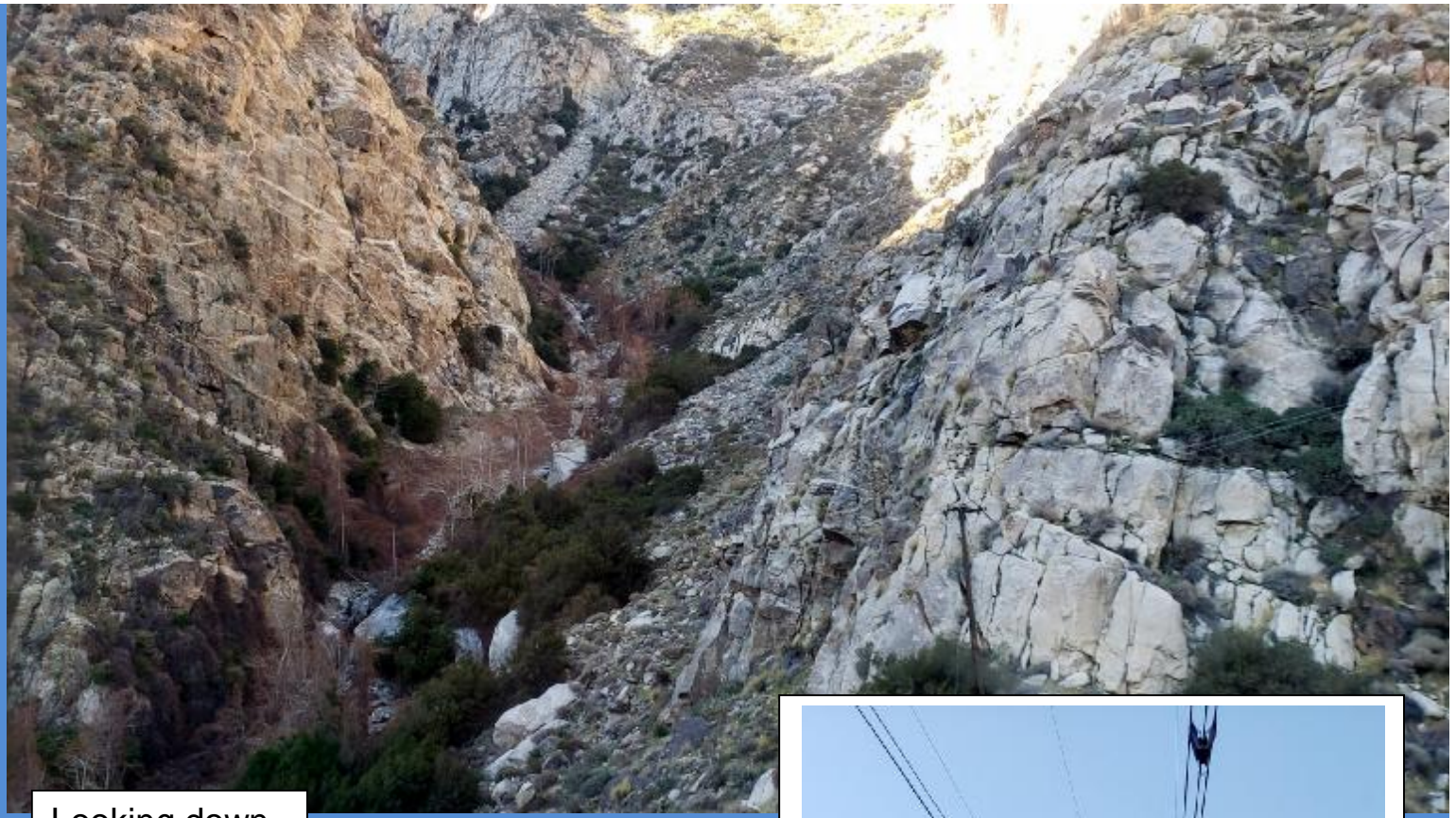
Looking back at Valley Station



Once again it's onward and upward



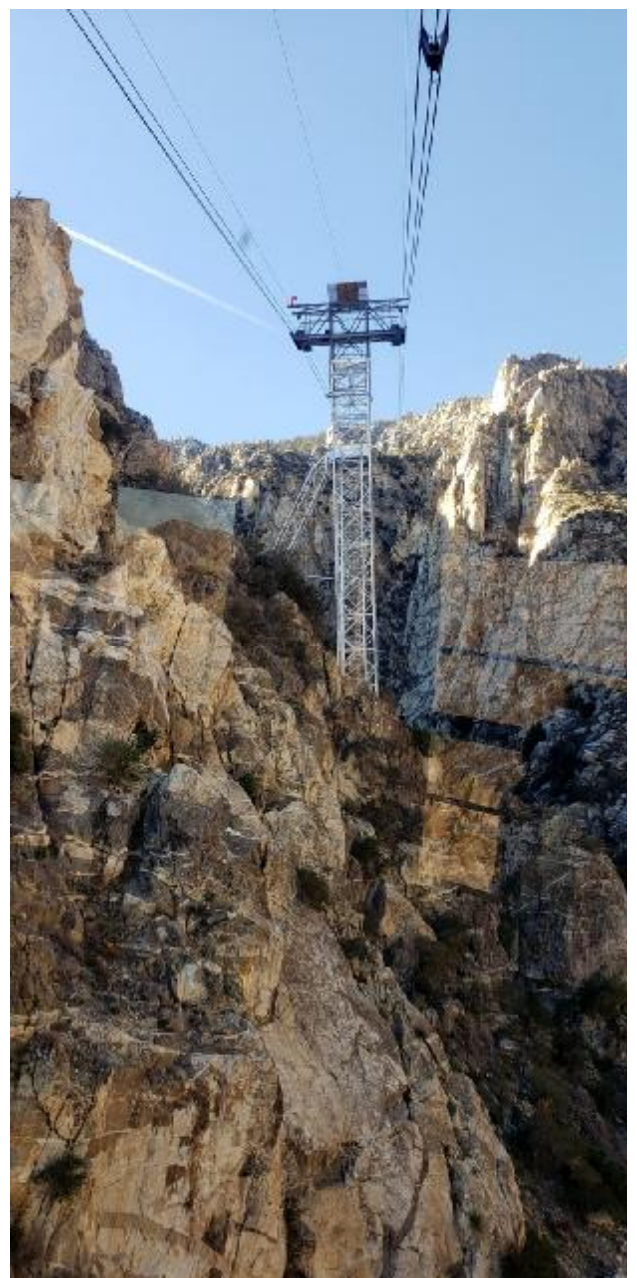
There are five towers along the route. The construction road only goes as far as the first tower, the one to the left. The yellow square is a helipad. Helicopters were used to build most of the tramway. During the course of the two year construction process, helicopters flew some 23,000 mission.

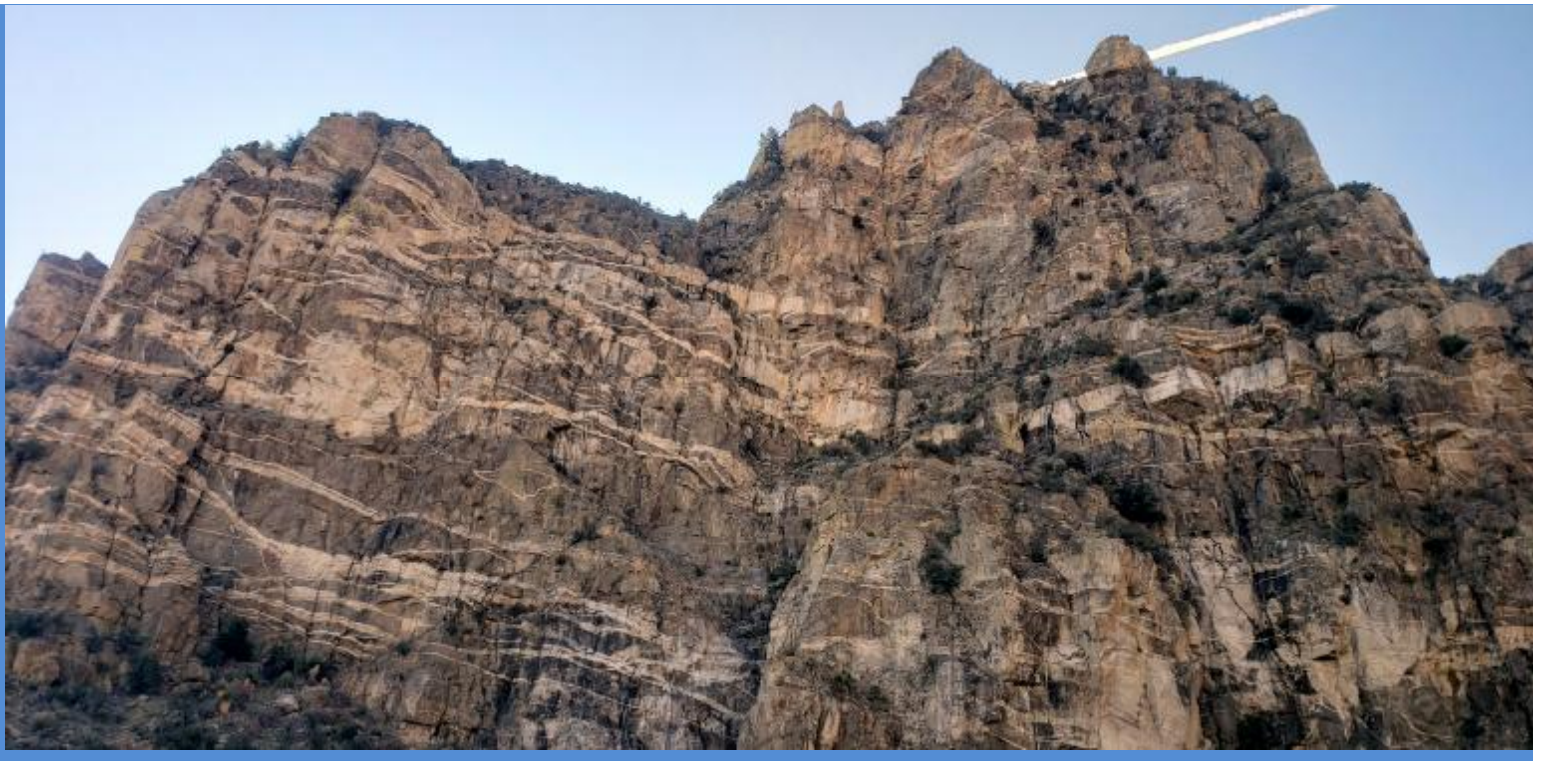


Looking down

The tram rises 6,000 feet over 2.5 miles. The tallest tower is 227 feet high. The cables between the stations are more than 13,500 feet long and weigh 60 tons each.

Remember yesterday I mentioned the windmill farm? There are more than 4,000 separate windmills. If you combine the power generated from these windmills with the Tehachapi Farm near LA and the Altamont farm near the Bay Area, the three wind farms account for 95% of all the commercially generated wind power in California, and a whopping 11% of the entire world's wind power. The tallest windmills are 150 feet high and the blades stretch half the length of a football field





The halfway point, we just passed the other car on its way down. It was interesting that they pull the upper car down to the Valley Station, which then pulls the other car up to Mountain Station.



Our shadow on the canyon wall



Coachella Valley and Palm Springs, laid out below

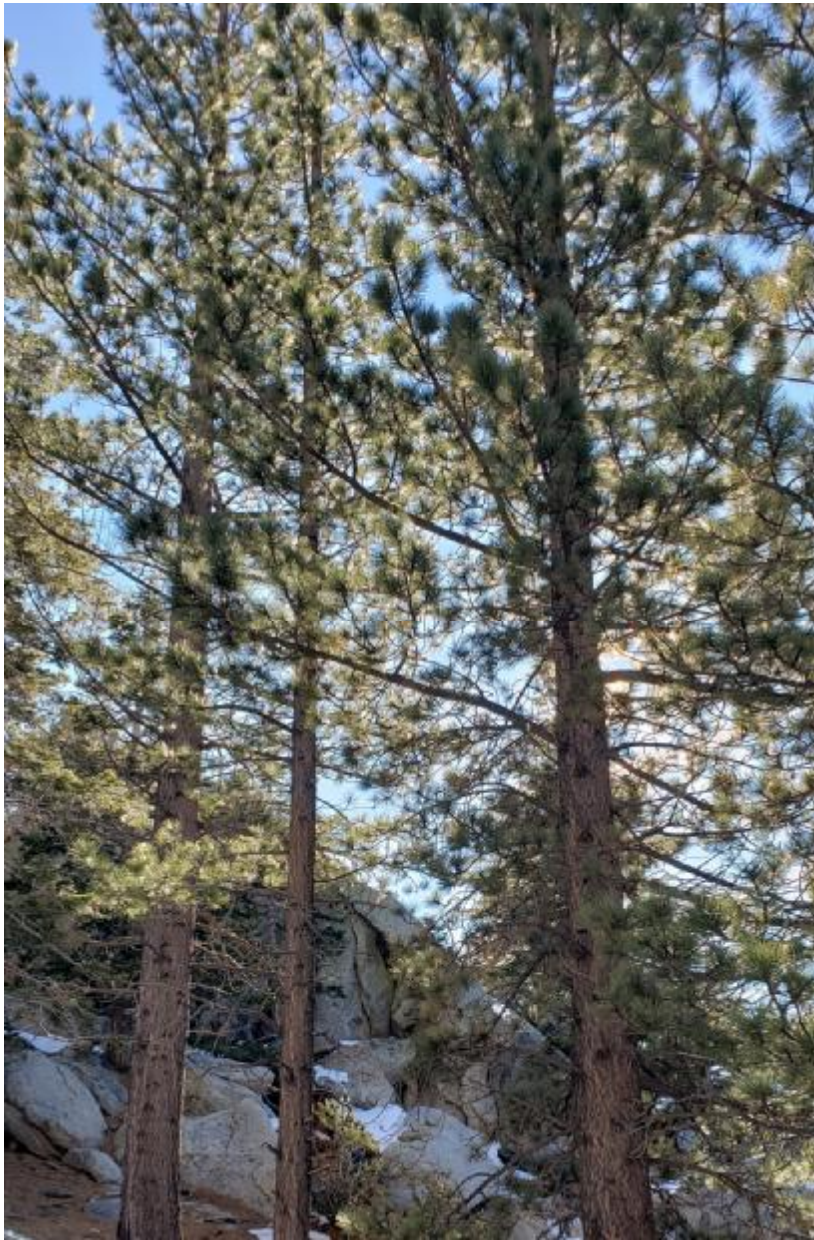


Beautiful scenery up here. This is the San Jacinto Wilderness along with Mount San Jacinto State Park and the Santa Rosa and San Jacinto Mountains National Monument. There are no roads. You either take the tram up, or hike in from the other side.

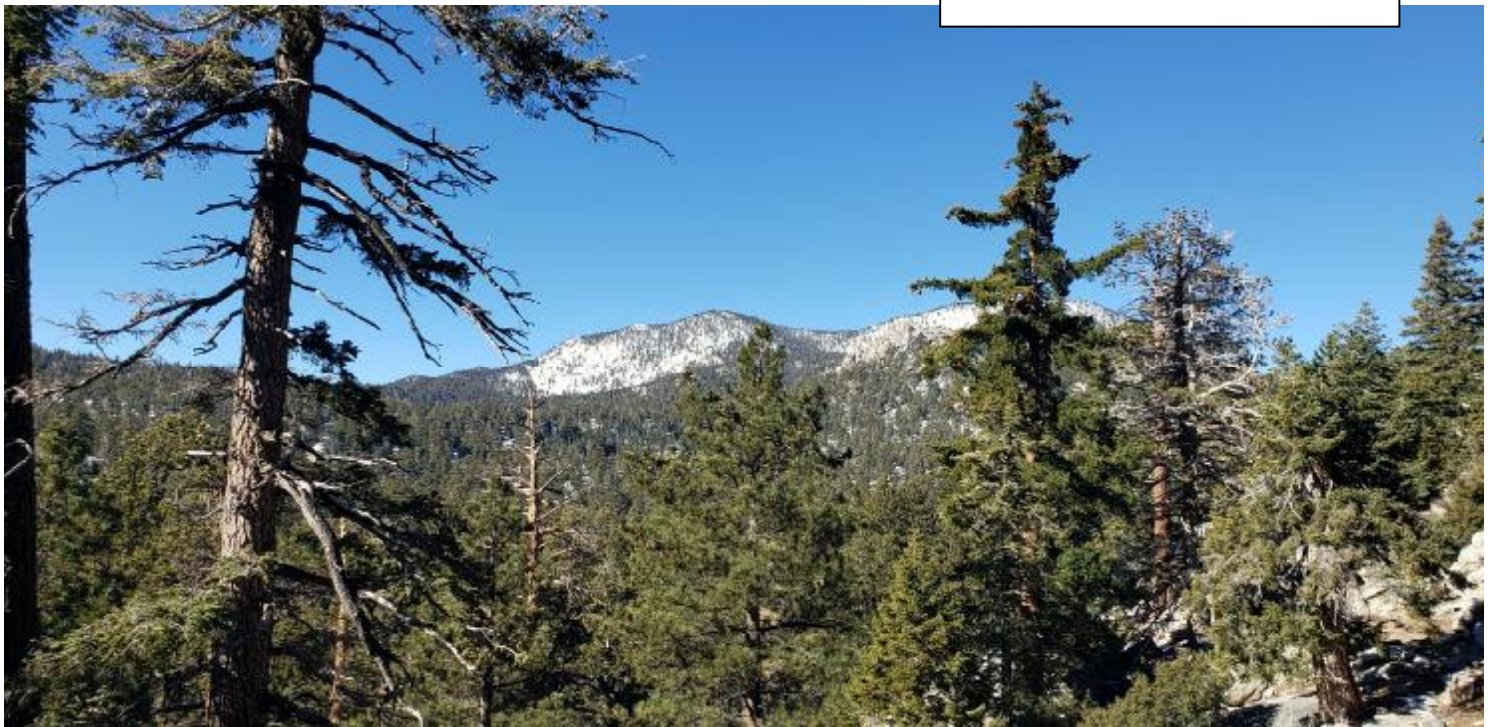


Good size pine cones from the trees up here. I think they were called Jackson or Jefferson Pines.





I think this one turned out pretty nice.



The Valley's Faults

Earthquake faults crisscross this land and shape its restless landscape.

The San Andreas fault cuts along the eastern side of the Coachella Valley. From where you are standing it runs parallel to Interstate 10 toward the base of the Little San Bernardino Mountains.

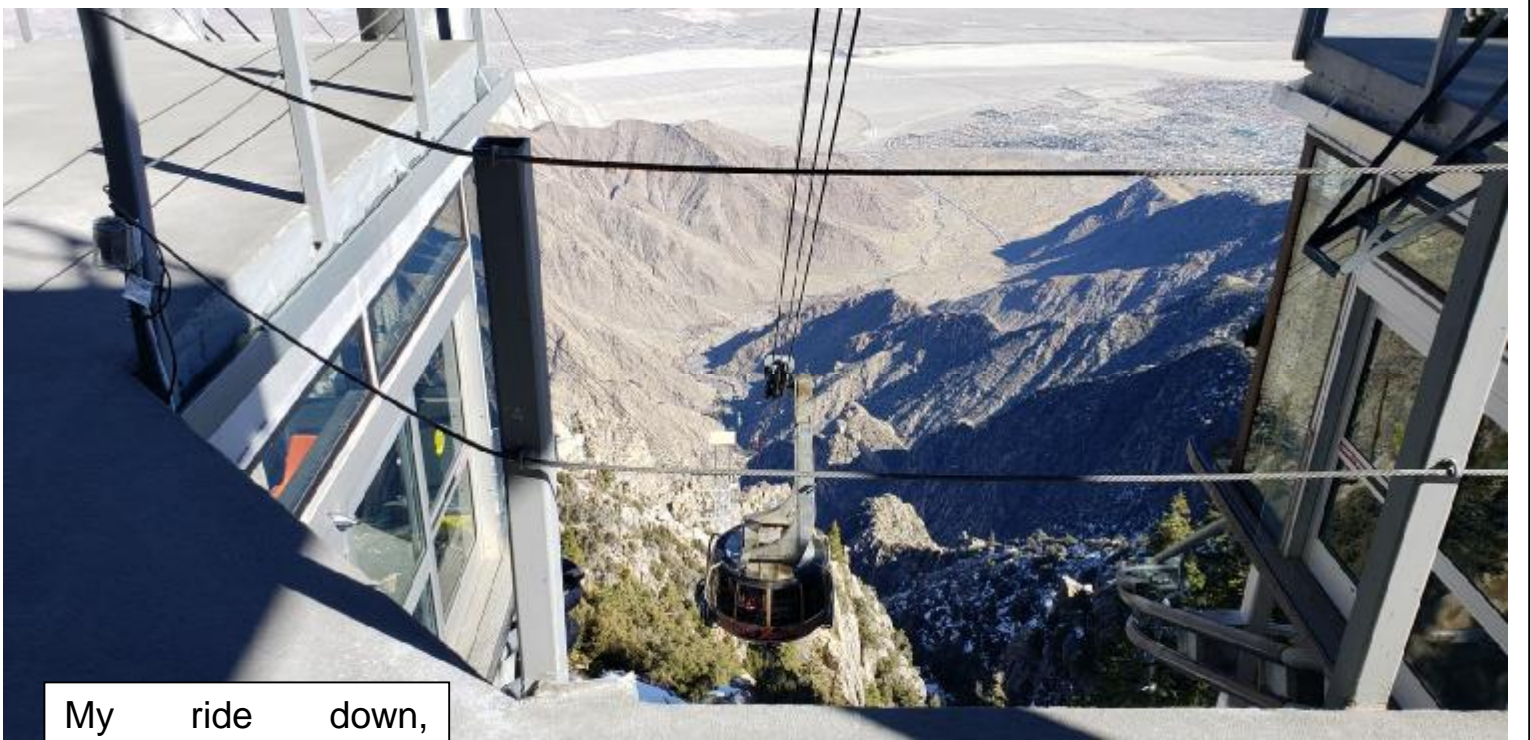
This fault forms the boundary between two massive pieces of Earth's crust, the Pacific Plate and the North American Plate. Land on the west side of the San Andreas fault is slowly moving northward past land on the east side at a rate of almost two inches a year. In a few million years Los Angeles will be San Francisco's neighbor!

Pulling, straining, lifting, and dipping, the forces of the San Andreas fault system have etched this landscape for millions of years. These forces have created Mount San Jacinto's steep escarpment, valleys, and mountains.



One of my goals out here is to hike along the San Andreas Fault. Should be next week some time.

The arrows below indicate I-10



My ride down, arriving at Mountain Station. Just a minute, this might be a good time for a selfie.



Better an "Oops"... than a "What If"

PALM SPRINGS AERIAL Tramway



FILMS AND TELEVISION SHOWS FILMED AT THE TRAMWAY

- | | |
|--|---|
| "The Cool Ones" – 1966 | "Dismissed" MTV – 2003 |
| "I Spy" – So Coldly Sweet – 1966 | "Average Joe" ABC – 2003 |
| "Mannix" – The Name is Mannix – 1967 | "Bikini Destinations" – 2004 |
| "Matt Helm" – The Wrecking Crew – 1968 | "While You Were Out" TLC – 2004 |
| "Mission Impossible" – The Tram – 1971 | "Extreme Home Makeovers" ABC – 2004 |
| "Kotch" – 1971 | "Into the Wild" – 2007 |
| "Columbo" – Short Fuse – 1972 | "Dirty Jobs" – Tram Greaser – 2008 |
| "Skyway to Death" – 1974 | "The Bachelorette" – 2008 |
| "Death Journey" – 1975 | "Life after People" History Channel – 2009 |
| "6 Million Dollar Man" – Killer Wind – 1977 | "Chuck" – Chuck vs The Fear of Death – 2010 |
| "The Kill Factor" – 1978 | "Hell's Kitchen" – Season 9 – 2011 |
| "Hanging by a Thread" – 1979 | "Off Limits" Travel Channel – 2012 |
| "She's Dressed to Kill" – 1979 | "Real Housewives of Beverly Hills" Bravo – 2013 |
| "General Hospital" – 1985 | "Hidden Away" – 2013 |
| "P.S. I Love You" – 1991 | "Match Made in Heaven" WE TV – 2014 |
| "Beverly Hills 90210" – PS I Love You – 1994 | "How to Build Anything" Science Channel – 2016 |
| "Fugitive Nights" – 1997 | "Desert Flippers" HGTV – 2016 |
| "Best of..." Food Channel – 2001 | "Antiques Roadshow" PBS – 2017 |
| "Wild on ..." E! Television – 2001 | "Total Divas" E! Television – 2018 |
| "\$40 a Day" Food Channel – 2003 | "Uncovered in the Archives" PBS – 2019 |
| "Boy Meets Boy" Bravo – 2003 | "Great Food Truck Race" Food Network – 2019 |
| "Miss Teen USA" – 2003 | "Aaron Needs a Job" Discovery – 2019 |



Now that I've been on the tram, I just might have to watch/re-watch some of these shows.

COUNTERWEIGHT PIT

THE 60.83 TON, STEEL & CONCRETE COUNTERWEIGHT KEEPS CONSTANT TENSION ON THE HAUL ROPE. THE HAUL ROPE IS FASTENED TO EACH TRAM CAR.

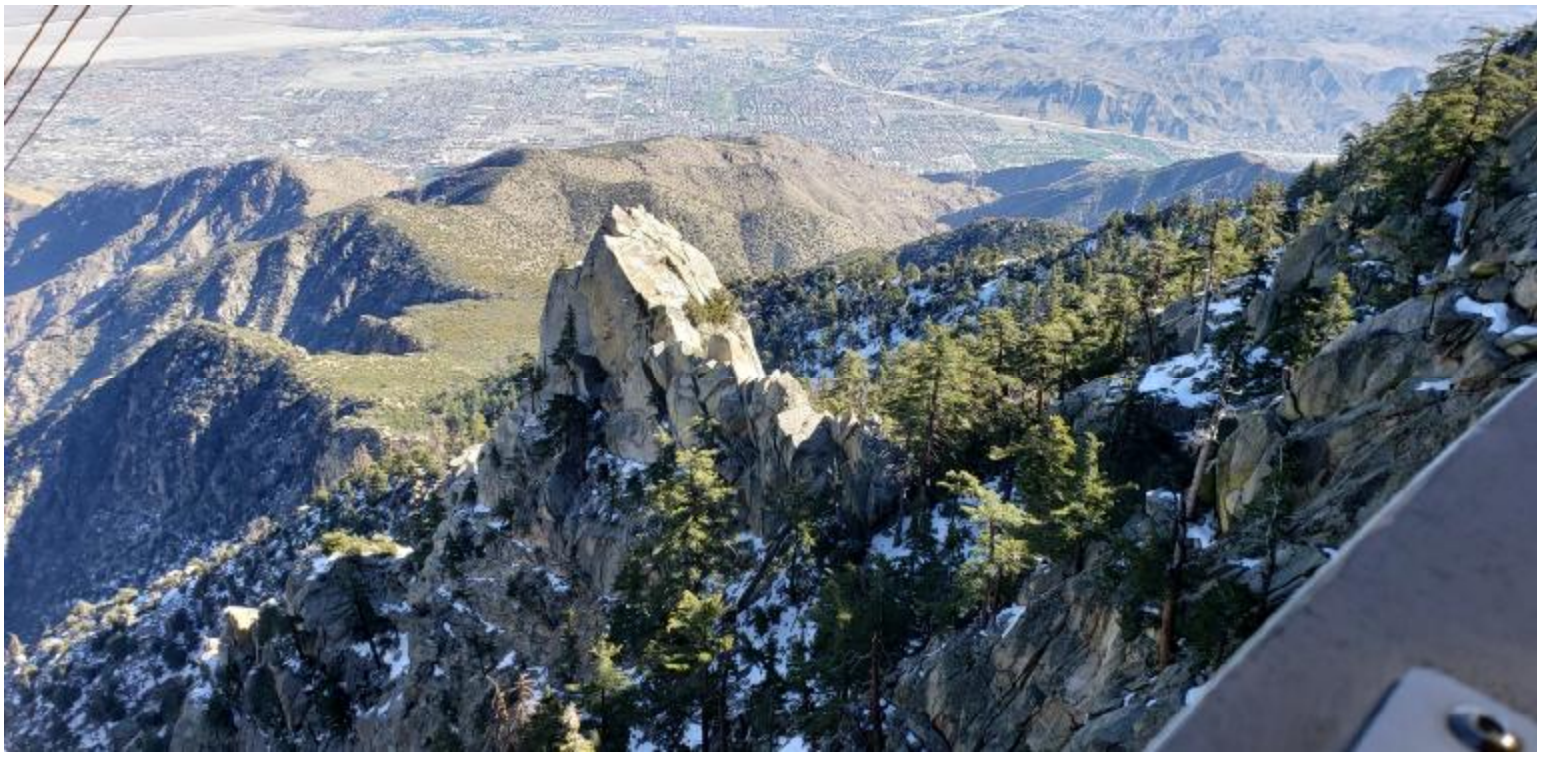
THE MOTOR AT THE VALLEY STATION ALWAYS PULLS A CAR DOWN, WHICH, IN TURN, PULLS THE OTHER CAR UP. THE UP & DOWN MOVEMENT MEANS A CAR IS ROLLING OVER A TOWER.

THE LIGHTED CONTROL PANEL TRANSMITS RADIO SIGNALS TO THE CONTROL ROOM IN THE VALLEY STATION WHEN A TRIP IS INITIATED.



I had to do a panoramic to get the entire thing in, so it's not really curved, but a rectangle.





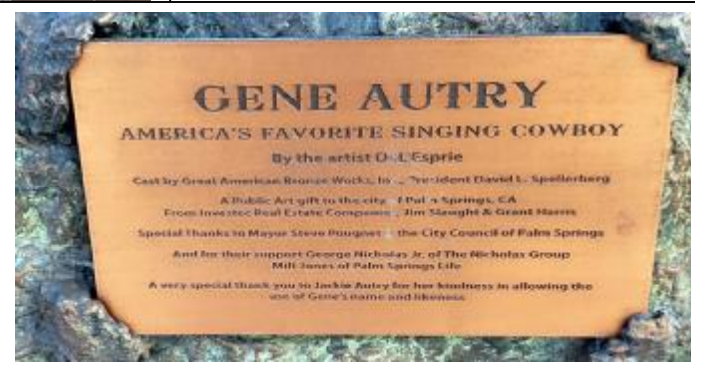
Our shadow again. That must mean it's time to say goodbye to the Palm Springs Aerial Tramway, what they call 'The Eighth Wonder of the World'



This is the Lee R. Baxandall Bridge. Why is it significant? Named after a prominent leader of the naturist movement, the bridge spans North Indian Canyon Drive and connects the two sides of the Desert Shadows Inn Resort and Villas, a Palm Springs, clothing-optional resort. The pedestrian bridge protects the modesty of those crossing it, and by doing so, prevents gawking-induced fender-benders amongst the traffic below. Also known as "The Naked Bridge" and "The Bridge of Thighs", the 140-foot overpass was designed by Palm Springs architect Chris Mills and was completed in 2003 at a reported cost of \$500,000. Five-foot canvas panels ensure that only the heads of crossing naturists are seen, though a second layer of canvas was later added to further conceal overly-suggestive silhouettes.



The original singing cowboy, Gene Autry. Just off the street named for him, Gene Autry Trail.



GENE AUTRY
 AMERICA'S FAVORITE SINGING COWBOY
 By the artist D-L'Esprie



Not the best sunset photo, but I had just walked out of WalMart and put my groceries away, then stepped into the parking lot to get the pic.

I asked at WalMart, Lowes and Home Depot about RV parking overnight. All said no. So I pulled into the back of Home Depot just to eat dinner and write this newsletter. I'm glad I'm not staying here, it is extremely noisy. I am near the airport and hear the jets landing and taking off. Then I started hearing some really loud music. I thought it was a passing car, but when it continued on I realized, oh yeah, it's Saturday night, there's a live band playing somewhere nearby.

It must be a Mexican brass band because a tuba or oboe is very prevalent, and I can't understand any of the lyrics.

Shortly I will head back to my 'sound of running water' campsite and listen to the frogs. Maybe scare another coyote.

Tomorrow will be a tour of the rich and famous past of Palm Springs.

Until next time.....