



“We bought a rope and a book, and we went out and started doing it,” he said. “We were young and stupid. We weren’t particularly afraid. We just started doing it, and learned as we went.”

It looked like a cool hobby, especially to a 17 or 18-year-old. “I was kind of a nerd,” he said. “We were nerds. We weren’t into organized sports. There were some cliffs around town. And we didn’t have girlfriends.”

However, unlike most of his friends, he stuck with the sport. “We’ve probably been through three different generations of people who get into it, grow through it, move on,” Sola said. “And we’re still there.”

He still loves it, and it’s kept him in shape. “What a workout,” he said. “I mean, it’s everything from your brain to your arms to your ankles. Everything gets worked out.”

Sola moved to Arizona five years ago and enjoys the fact that he can climb at any time of the year with locations that are “closer than the office,” such as the McDowell Mountains, Pinnacle Peak, South Mountain and Camelback.

“It’s like forced meditation,” he said. “I’m busy. I’ve got a stressful job. And when I’m up there, I don’t know what I do for a living. Absolutely nothing else matters for a few minutes, and it’s hard to get that kind of focus.”

Sola said rock-climbing has taught him about himself.

“You climb like you live,” he said. “If you’re indecisive and have trouble making decisions at work or at home, you’re going to climb the same way. When you’re climbing you have to deal with that immediately, so you get some insight into how you manage situations.”

Sola said he’s only been to Yosemite once, but he’d like to return because the first time he went, he was out of shape. He would also like to climb on the East Coast because most of his climbs have been in Wyoming, Colorado, California, Washington, Minnesota, Wisconsin, Utah and Arizona.

His other hobbies include horseback riding, camping, running and singing. He’s also learning how to play the ukulele.

“I really believe you’ve got to keep learning all the time, or you get stuck,” Sola said. ■■■

‘Climb like you live’

SCS Engineers’ Sola learns about himself on the rocks

By ALEXA BUECHLER

A geologist’s 40-year-long hobby started with some rope and a book in Minnesota.

Now, Daniel Sola climbs every weekend in Arizona, where he works as the SCS Engineers project director for Arizona and New Mexico.

SCS Engineers is an environmental consultant and contracting company, aiming to solve environmentally-

driven challenges and promote sustainability through innovation and technology. Sola is trusted with project management, client service, business development and technical leadership. His work helps clean up landfills and chemical powerplants.

Even though he mostly works with water, Sola said he bores his friends with details about the rocks they’re climbing on.

“I like rocks,” he said. “They tell a story. They’re billions of years old. I like all that stuff. It’s a little odd, I guess, to spend all day doing geology and all weekend climbing on geology.”

Sola said when he was growing up, the sport was uncommon. There were no climbing gyms nor classes to teach him how to do it.