

# LEITNER, DAVID

**DAVID LEITNER** Chemistry Professor, University of Nevada

**HOMETOWN** Syracuse, NY

**TSRC** Since 1991. Past Board Member, Organizer and Participant, Pinhead Punk Science Presenter

**“I was traveling from Germany on a tight budget, flew into Durango, hitchhiked to Telluride, and camped two weeks at the edge of Bear Creek.”**

**I KNEW I WANTED TO BE A SCIENTIST WHEN** I was interested in science in high school but started college at Cornell as an engineering student. In my sophomore year I decided I was more interested in science than engineering, and ended up majoring in both chemistry and chemical engineering.

**HIS STORY** A number of us climbed Mt. Sneffels in 1991 during the ‘Clusters Workshop’ organized by Rob Whetten,” wrote David, “but the highlight for me was camping above Bear Creek for two weeks, taking in the sounds of the water below and fabulous vistas while running on the trail early in the morning

before the meetings started. One particularly beautiful morning, however, I was startled awake by an enormous explosion, followed shortly afterwards by

another. I had forgotten that it was the 4th of July, and found out later from Steve Berry that there was more than a parade in Telluride to celebrate Independence Day.” Detonating dynamite in Bear Creek at daybreak on the Fourth of July is a longstanding Telluride tradition, although today no

one claims responsibility. “Tommy Knockers” (spirits of departed miners) are said to set off the blasts as they have always done. In the boom years of Telluride’s mining days, around the turn of the last century, operations shut down only two days



David Leitner

## Useful Facts for the Camper



AN “A” TENT PITCHED WITH “SCISSORS”

a year – July 4th and Christmas – and needless to say these holidays were cause for huge celebration and deserving of a day that starts with a bang.

**FAVORITE HIKE** Sneffels Highline Trail

