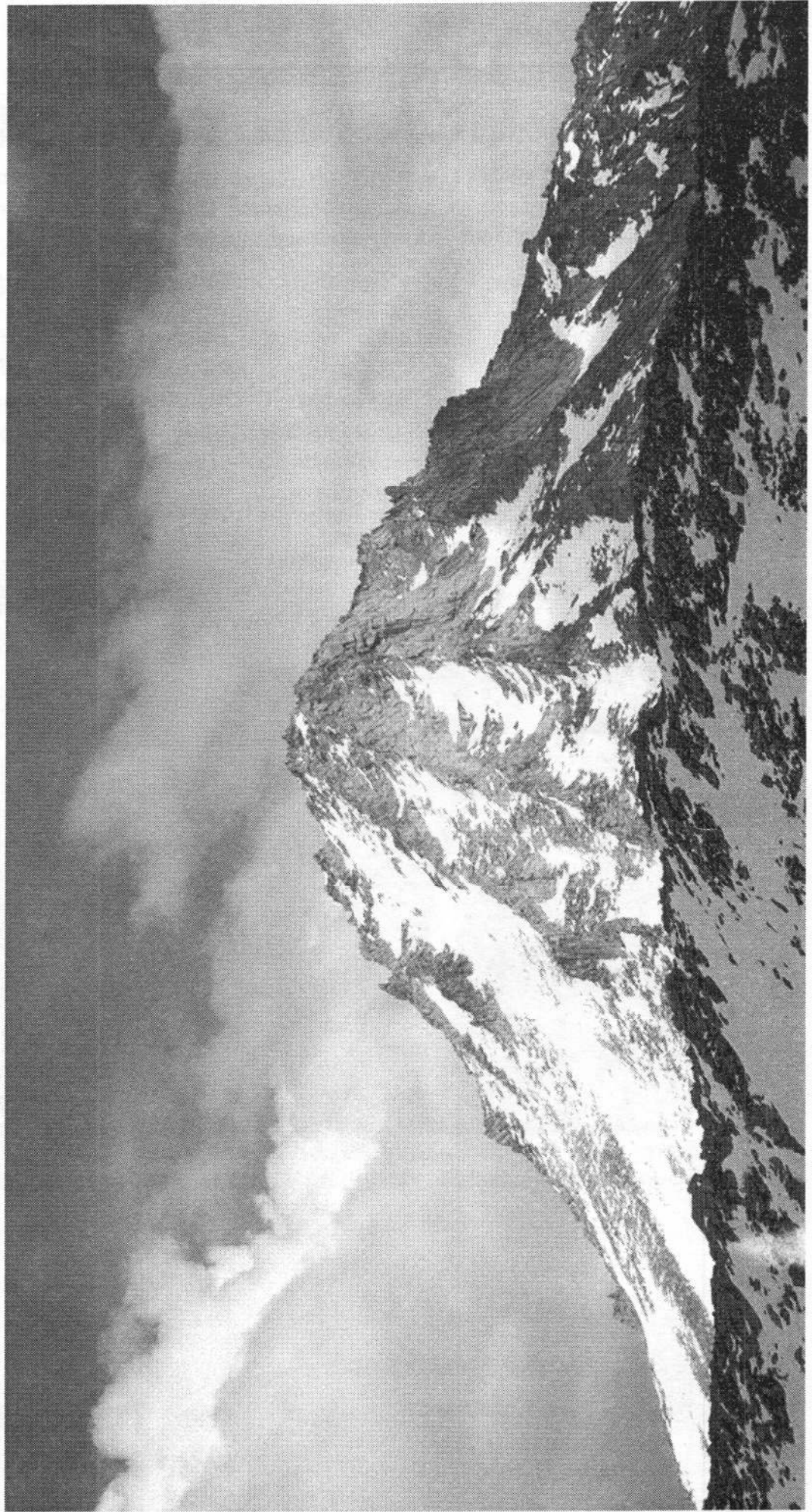




The Sierra Echo

VOLUME 46 NUMBER 3

JUNE - JULY 2002



SPS MONTHLY PROGRAMS

SPS meetings are held in the Los Angeles room behind the cafeteria at the DWP, 7:30 p.m. on the second Wednesday of the month. DWP, 111 North Hope Street, Los Angeles. Free parking (please inform parking attendants that you are attending a SC meeting).

July 10 - Wednesday - Larry Tidball will show his slides of his climb on the West Rib of Denali (See photo left of travel along the West Rib).

August 14 - Wednesday - Historic Ski Mountaineering Film, View a film of the SPS/SMS members skiing and climbing in the Sierra and local mtns. in the 1960's. See Barbara Lilley, Rich Gnagy and SMS founder Walter Mosauer.

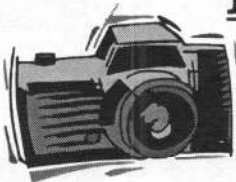
September 11 - Wednesday - Steve Smith will give his slide show of "Four of the Seven Summits". Don't miss his climbs of Denali, Elbrus, Aconcagua and Kilimanjaro.

October 9 - Wednesday - Wally & Sherry Ross, biologists, will give a program on birding in the Sierra.



Sierra Club Awards Banquet - February 23, 2002
Doug Mantle, Francis P. Farquhar award recipient Andy Smatko, Vicky Hoover.

Front Cover



**Northwest Face
Mt. Brewer**

Photo by Reiner
Stenzel May 26, 2002

Peak List

**Mt. Brewer
Lone Pine Peak
Denali**



JULY

MR: Provisional Jul 13-14 Sat-Sun SPS/WTC Mt Sill (14,153'): 3rd class rock and snow (ice axe and crampons) exper. Ascend Mt. Sill via the North Couloir. Ldr: Maria Roa. Asst: Beth Epstein.

I: Provisional Jul 13-14 Sat-Sun WTC, Lone Pine Peak (12,943): Backpack to Meysan Lakes. Ldr: Dan Bovee. Co-Ldr: Will McWhinney.

I: Jul 13-15 Sat-Mon SPS/WTC Four Gables (12,720'): Backpackover Piute Pass to Lower Desolation Lake. Ldr: Patty Kline. Co-Ldr: Joe Wankum.

I: July 19-21 Fri-Sun Mt Izaak Walton (12,077'): Intro. trip. Friday ride boat across Lake Thomas Edison to start mod. 5 mile, 1,900 ft. gain trail backpack to camp by Silver Pass Creek. Sat., mod.strenuous xc 7 mi, 2,450' climb to Mt. Izaak Walton. Sun easy hike back to lake for boat ride back home. Send \$21 for boat rides & permit fee, 2 SASE, to Prov. Ldr.: Mark Mitchell, Co-Ldr.: Keith Martin.

I: July 19-22 Fri-Mon Pettit (10,788'), Piute (10,541'), Volunteer Pk (10,481') Death marchers/ list baggers note. Send 2 SASE for particulars. Ldrs: Doug Mantle & Tina Bowman.

MR: July 19-23 Fri-Tue Taboose Pass Peaks: Ldr.: Larry Tidball, Co-Ldr: Barbee Tidball

I: July 20-22 Sat-Mon Julius Caesar (13,200') Backpack to above Honeymoon Lake. Ldr: Patty Kline Co-Ldr: Bob Michael.

See past editions of *The Sierra Echo* for detailed write-ups of trips without full write-ups. Trips previously described are listed without detailed write-ups in subsequent publications. Note all trips listed as MR or ER are restricted trips open to Sierra Club members only with the appropriate rock or snow skills. For all trips remember to send a SASE, Sierra Club #, experience and conditioning resume (if you are not known to the leaders), H & W phone #s, e-mail address optional, and rideshare information.

JULY continued

Sierra Club National Trip July 26 - August 4 Minarets Mountaineering Classic, Ansel Adams Wilderness, Trip #02154A Climbing Leaders Doug Mantle & Tina Bowman. To learn more: <http://www.sierraclub.org/outings/national/brochure/02154a.asp>

I: July 27-28 Sat-Sun SPS/WTC Vogelsang Pk (11,493'): Backpack from Tuolomne Meadows to Vogelsang High Sierra Camp. Ldr: Sarah Anderson. Co-Ldr: Patrick McKusky.

AUGUST

I: Aug 3-4 Sat-Sun SPS/WTC Basin Mountain (13,181'): Gourmet Peak Bag! Cost will be maximum of \$20 per person. Ldr: Ron Campbell. Co-Ldr: Georgette Rieck.

M: Aug 3-4 Sat-Sun Mt. Goethe (13,263') and Mt. Emerson (13,204'): Hike from North Lake Ldr.: Larry Tidball, Co-Ldr: Scot Jamison

I: Aug 3-5 Sat-Mon Mt. Stanford #2 (12,836'): SPS Intro. trip in eastern Sierra. Ldr.: Patty Kline Co-Ldr: Keith Martin

M: Aug 9-11 Fri-Sun SPS/WTC Mount LeConte (13,845+'), Mount Corcoran (13,714+'): Hike from Tuttle Creek trailhead. Restricted to experienced climbers. Helmet required and rope may be used. Ldr: John Paterson. Co-Ldr: Mike Adams.

Aug 10 or 11 Sat or Sun Memorial Hike to Mt. Baldy. Date to be finalized. contact Maria Roa

I: Aug 10 -11 Sat-Sun Kearsarge Pk (12,618') & Mt Gould (13,005') Class 2 day hikes from Onion Valley. Ldr: Larry Hoak Co-Ldr: George Wysup.

I: Aug 10-12 Sat-Mon Mt Morgan #2 (13,002') Bkpk. to Davis Lake. Ldr: Patty Kline Co-Ldr: Rick Jali.

AUGUST continued

SC National Trip August 18-25 Gnarly Adventuring Above Yosemite Valley Trip #02170A Ldrs: **Bill Oliver & Will McWhinney** For info. log on to - <http://www.sierraclub.org/outings/national/brochure/02170A.asp>

ER: Provisional Aug 23-25 Fri-Sun Palisade Crest (13,553'): One of the Sierra's majestic rock climbs. Ldr: Tom Bowman Co-Ldr: Larry Tidball.

I: Aug 23-25 Fri - Sat Joe Devel Pk (13,327'): Camp at Rock Creek. Ldr: Peggy Kinney, Co-Ldr: John Cheslick

I: Aug 24-25 Sat-Sun SPS/WTC Mount Goode (13,085'): Backpack to camp near Bishop Lake. Ldr: Helen Qian. Co-Ldr: Tracy Sulkin.

I: Aug 28-30 Wen- Fri Kennedy Mtn (11,433'), Mt Harrington (11,009'): Climb with time too, to explore in Monarch Divide area. Ldr: Ron Hudson Co-Ldr: Patty Rambert.

I: Aug 31 - Sept 2 Sat - Mon: Florence Pk (12,432'), Needham Mtn (12,520+'), Vandever Mtn (11,947'): Backpack over Franklin Pass. Ldr: Ron Hudson Co-Ldr: Patty Rambert.

I: Aug 31 - Sept 2 Sat - Mon Needham (12,467'), Sawtooth (12,343'): Backpack to Lower Monarch Lakes. Ldr: Georgette Rieck. Co-Ldr: Ron Campbell.

I: Aug 31 - Sept 2 Sat-Mon SPS/WTC Mt. Henry (12,196'): SPS intro. trip in western Sierra, Goddard Canyon. Ldr: Patty Kline. Co-Ldr: Joe Wankum.

SEPTEMBER

I: Sept 7-8 Sat - Sun Smith Mtn. (9515'), Blackrock Mtn (9635') Intro trip with car camp on Kern Plateau Ldr: Jerry Keating, Co-Ldrs: W. Whisman & Nancy Keating.

I: Sept 7-8 Sat-Sun SPS/WTC Cirque Pk (12,900'): Backpack to Long Lake. Ldr: Tom McDonnell. Co-Ldr: Cheryl Gill.

I: Sept 7-8 Sat-Sun SPS/WTC/GLS Sawtooth Pk #2 (12,343') and Needham Mountain (12,520'): Pack up to Lower Monarch Lake. Ldr: Will McWhinney. Asst: Teresa Nick.

C: Sept 14-15 Sat-Sun Yosemite Volunteer Project: Palos-Verdes-South Bay/OCSS/SPS. Work under direction of Park rangers on conservation and restoration projects. Potluck Sat. night. Limited camping space available. Send 2 SASE, carpool info, SC#, H&W phones to Ldr.: Keith Martin, Asst. Joyce White, Lynn Heath, Leen Zwandenburg

SEPTEMBER continued

I: Sept 21 Sat Three Sisters (10,619') LIST FINISH: Join us for a 12 mi, 2500' gain hike to a class 1 peak in the western Sierra Nevada. Champagne on the summit; list finish party Sat night. Send email or SASE with party qualifications to Ldr: Reiner Stenzel. Co-Ldr: Gerry Holleman.

Sep 21 Sat LTC Deadline for Leadership Training Seminar: Last day for receipt of application and payment by LTC Registrar for enrollment in October 5 seminar. Next seminar: Spring 2003.

M: Sept 27 -29, Fri-Sun Tower Peak (11,755) w/ op. Ehrnbeck Peak (11,249) Buckeye Pass/Twin Lakes to Levitt Meadow loop. Ldr. Barbee Tidball, Co-Ldr. Scot Jamison.

I: Sept 28-29 Sat-Sun SPS/WTC Mt Bolton-Brown (13,491'), Mt Prater (13471'): Backpack to Red Lake above Big Pine. Ldr: Dave Endres. Co-Ldr: Mike Adams

I: Sept 28-29 Sat-Sun SPS/WTC Cloudripper (13,525'): Backpack from South Lake to camp at Green Lake. Ldr: Helen Qian. Co-Ldr: Maria Roa.

I: Sept 28-29 Sat-Sun Kern Peak (11,510): Moderate pace, backpack 9 mi, 1000' gain to Redrock Meadows. Climb class 2 peak, 7 mi 3000' gain rt and pack out 9 mi, 1000' gain. E-mail (preferabl) or send 2 SASE to Ldr.: Sara Wyrens Coldr.: David Beymer.

OCTOBER

Oct 5 Sat LTC, Leadership Training Seminar: Become a qualified Sierra Club leader! Deadline for receipt of application and payment is Sep 21. Next seminar: Spring 2003

I: Oct 5-6 Sat-Sun Mt Irvine (13,780'), Mt Mallory (13,845') Late season SE of Mt Whitney. Ldr: Ron Hudson Co-Ldr: Patty Rambert.

I: Provisional Oct. 5-6 Sat-Sun SPS/WTC Florence Pk. (12,432'), Vandever Mtn. (11,947'). Southern Sequoia fall backpack. Ldr: Dan Bovee. Co-Ldr: Beth Epstein.

I: Oct 12 Sat-Sun Kearsarge PK (12,618') DOUBLE LIST FINISH Join us for our double SPS finish. Day hike from Onion Valley, 5 mi, 3400' gain. Celebration on summit and potluck dinner Sat evening. Ldrs: Greg & Mirna Roach.

M: Provisional Oct 12-13 Sat-Sun SPS/WTC Dragon Peak (12,927') & Mt. Gould (13,005'): Backpack to unnamed lakes beyond Golden Trout. Ldr: Maria Roa. Asst: Nile Sorenson.

ECHOES FROM THE CHAIR

Steve Erskine, Matthew Richardson, Bill Stampfl.

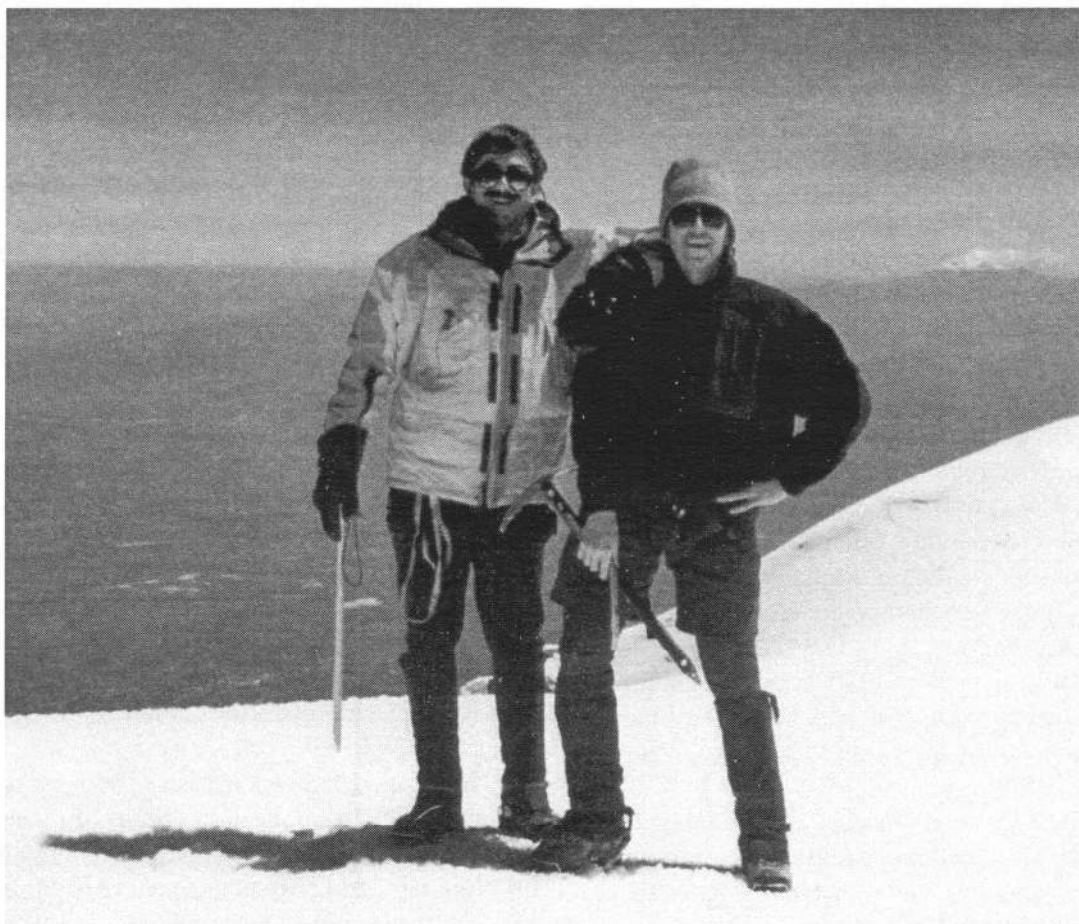
I am deeply saddened to report that three of our comrades died June 24th when struck by an avalanche on Huascarán, the highpoint of the Peruvian Andes. They were all able mountaineers and excellent companions. My heartfelt condolences go out to their families and loved ones.

I was pleased to meet Steve and Bill at our meetings, but hadn't the opportunity to climb with them. They were looking forward to many planned trips. Matthew was a dear friend. He was a dedicated leader, and served as SPS Secretary for the past several years. It was a pleasure to serve with him on the Management Committee. We shared memorable ascents in the Sierra, Mexico and Argentina. I will remember Matthew best on the summit of Aconcagua, as he proudly displayed the goodluck charm from his love, Anne Marie. Preparation and safe climbing was always the priority.

This tragedy is a jarring reminder of the perils we face. And of what is special and enduring in our life and climbing experiences.

Photo: Matthew (left) and Erik October 1999 on Iztaccihuatl, Mexico

Peace, Erik Siering/SPS Chair 2002



July 3, 2002

The Times Mirror Company; The Los Angeles Times

The Region; Peru Trek Claims 3 Southland Hikers; Mountaineering: The body of one man is recovered, the others are feared dead after an ice avalanche at 18,000 feet. The friends were veteran climbers.

by Anthony McCartney

It's the only way to get to highest peaks--you have to take small steps.

Steve Erskine, Bill Stampfl and Matthew Richardson knew this, which is why they spent so many hours trekking up and down Mt. Baldy in the San Gabriel Mountains, picturing higher mountains to scale.

Their latest excursion was supposed to be a 19-day round-trip from their Southland homes to Peru's tallest summit, Mt. Huascarán. They were supposed to be back Sunday, bearing stories, pictures and probably the name of the next mountain on their list.

But Huascarán kept them.

Erskine, Stampfl and Richardson were caught in an ice avalanche while scaling the mountain June 24. Only Erskine's body has been found.

On Tuesday, their families shared stories about the three experienced climbers, some still holding out hope that Stampfl and Richardson may have survived.

Erskine's children answered calls in their Chino home from well-wishers, planning a memorial service that they expect will attract hundreds who knew him and the other climbers.

Although each man took a different path to reach Huascarán, their trails all seemed to lead through Mt. Baldy. They had become friends through climbing. Stampfl was the oldest at 58. Richardson the youngest at 40. Erskine was 51.

One of Stampfl's first climbs--the one that got him hooked--was to Baldy's summit. Erskine routinely climbed Mt. Baldy, often twice in a day, as if it were a 7,500-foot staircase. Richardson, of Claremont, proposed there to his wife, Anne Marie, two-years ago on Valentine's Day.

Richardson, an elementary school teacher, taught at an appropriately named Montclair school, Monte Vista. He used his June vacation to plan climbing expeditions.

Erskine's children--Jeffrey, 24; Nicholas, 20; and Natalie, 18--recall hikes to Baldy's summit with their father, who they said remained in better shape than any of them. When Jeffrey was 13, his father

carried him on back to simulate the roughly 100-pound load he'd carry on another mountain expedition.

The Erskine children on Tuesday planned another trek to Baldy's summit, their first together in several years. They plan to take their father's ashes and scatter them at the summit.

Janet Stampfl recalled the soreness her husband had after his first trip up Mt. Baldy. He'd improved to the point where he and Erskine mused--jokingly, she said--about scaling Mt. Everest.

At Kemper Enterprises in Chino, reports of the disaster hit extra hard. Erskine worked there as the company's vice president and financial officer for nearly 10 years. Kemper's president, Herb Stampfl, is missing climber Bill Stampfl's older brother.

Erskine was famous in his family for making a journey from California's Sierra to Fairbanks, Alaska. On foot.

Anne Marie and Matthew Richardson celebrated their honeymoon atop Africa's Mt. Kilimanjaro. Erskine and Stampfl, who were close friends as well as climbing partners, spent last summer climbing mountains in Ecuador.

Stampfl, a self-employed civil engineer born in Austria, completed much of the itinerary for the Huascarán climb from his Chino home. As with all climbers, weight mattered. Each man would have carried more than 60 pounds on his back for the seven-day ascent to Huascarán's summit.

By June 24, the day of the avalanche, the climber's ounce-by-ounce planning and short steps to conserve energy would have had them at 18,000 feet, well over halfway to the top.

Family members speculated about what the men would have done had they reached Huascarán's 22,000-foot summit.

Erskine, a devout Christian who through relief organizations sponsored several children in other countries, would have left a Bible wrapped in a weatherproof bag.

Stampfl would have left probably the lightest items in his pack; a tiny bag of origami turtles, a gift from his wife. Janet "It was a running joke" she said, "Since I couldn't go, the turtles went instead."

Richardson probably wouldn't have left any thing.

But Anne Marie Richardson said he would repeat what he had done atop dozens of mountains before. He'd pull out a photograph, then ask one of his climbing buddies to take a picture of him, Anne Marie's picture in hand.

Matthew James Richardson

1961 - 2002

Written by his adoring and devastated wife,
Anne Marie Richardson

This is a short, biographical page about an extraordinary man. Matthew was the love of my life. He had a wonderful, generous spirit. He and I shared such great happiness in our short time together.

Matthew was born on October 9, 1961. Claremont was his home for his entire life. He is survived by me, his wife, Anne Marie Richardson, formerly of Pasadena; his father, Richard Richardson and his step mother, Beverly Richardson who live in Placentia and Twin Peaks; his brother, Daniel Richardson, and Daniel's wife, Karen of San Dimas; his step-sisters, Sarah Richardson, who lives in Colorado, Allison Cassidy and her son, Carl, of Long Beach and Michelle Valverde and her husband



Ray and two sons, Noah and Alec; and uncles, aunts, cousins and many, many friends. Matthew's mother, Joan Richardson, died in 1990.

EDUCATION

He attended Oakmont Elementary School, El Roble Junior High School and graduated from Claremont High School in 1979. He enjoyed playing the cello throughout school and I think he played for a local orchestra in Claremont. He also enjoyed

playing tennis in school. As a child, he had a passion for reading that stayed with him throughout his life.

Matthew attended Cal Poly Pomona and then transferred to UC Berkeley. He graduated in 1985 with a double major in political science and rhetoric and with Mortar Board honors, among other honors. He attended Claremont Graduate School and earned his Master's degree in Education in 1993. He was always intellectually curious and was very interested in journalism and international affairs. He spent a summer in Washington DC working as an intern for a news agency.

WORLD TRAVEL

Matthew spent a total of four years traveling around the world, especially through Europe and Asia and working to make enough money to keep traveling. His jobs included working as a teacher for many years at a summer camp at Le Rosey school in Rolle, Switzerland, on Lake Geneva. He also spent a year as an assistant English teacher in Paris, he worked in Bordeaux harvesting grapes and he worked as an assistant and interpreter at the Reagan-Gorbachev summit talks in Geneva. Throughout this time of his life, he spent much of his free time climbing in Chamonix-Mt. Blanc, France. He spoke French and Spanish.

LOVE

Matthew and I met through mutual climbing and Sierra Club friends in August 1998. On Valentine's Day in 2000, we hiked up Mt. Baldy in the snow and he asked me to marry him (I, of course, said "yes"). We were married at the Padua Hills Theater in Claremont on October 1, 2000 with family and many friends to share the day. We traveled to Africa for our honeymoon, which I thought was the vacation of a lifetime – we spent the first week climbing Mt. Kilimanjaro, the second week touring Ngorongoro Crater, the Serengeti, Olduvai Gorge and Lake Manyara; and the third week on the island of Zanzibar on the Indian Ocean.

It seemed like our honeymoon never ended. We just grew more in love and closer all the time. Our friends and acquaintances continue to tell me that they could see how much we were in love and what a special bond there was between us. They saw how affectionate we always were. Matthew and I did not yet have any children, but we were looking forward to raising a family in Claremont. He would have been a wonderful, patient, encouraging, fun father.

Matthew by Anne Marie continued from page 7

FRIENDS & INTERESTS

Matthew had many close friends and he kept and valued his friendships. He was a compassionate, sincere, warm-hearted person whose optimism was influential to whomever he met. He touched hundreds of people throughout his life, travels and work. His strong character is a model for me and so many people who came in contact with him.

He enjoyed music of all kinds. He and his friends traveled to New Orleans for the Jazz and Heritage Festival many times. He loved nature and the outdoors. He was active in politics, especially environmental, human rights and constitutional issues.

WORK

Matthew worked at Monte Vista Elementary School, part of the Ontario-Montclair School District, for the past ten years teaching most grade levels. His co-workers remember his easy laugh, friendliness and sincerity. He was held in very high esteem by peers, parents and students. Before starting at Monte Vista, he was a substitute for seven years throughout the Pomona valley area.



CLIMBING

Matthew loved climbing. He climbed dozens of Sierra Peaks and climbed Mt. Baldy nearly every weekend for conditioning. He was a strong, safe and experienced alpinist. He climbed in the US, Mexico, Argentina, Ecuador, Peru, Tanzania, France, Wales and other places. His major climbing accomplishments include:

Mt. Blanc (15,771'), Chamonix, France, August 1985, his first major climb

Aconcagua (22,841'), Argentina, February 1999, the highest mountain in the Americas

Denali (Mt. McKinley) (20,320'), Alaska, June 2001, highest mountain in N. America

Kilimanjaro (19,340'), Tanzania, October 2000, the highest mountain in Africa.

Matthew earned a "M" leadership rating to lead climbs for the Sierra Club and he led many exciting trips throughout the Sierra Nevada. He was an elected officer of the Sierra Club, Angeles Chapter's Sierra Peaks Section. He was an active member of the California Mountaineering Club. He had taken the Sierra Club's Wilderness Travel Course in the mid 1990's.

Spanish Mtn. 1999

Steve Erskine, Paul Graff,
Matthew Richardson, Bill Oliver

Statistics: Huscaran 22,210 Peru

Located in the Cordillera Blanca within the Huascarán National Park, Peru's highest peak is a popular destination for climbers. The South and higher summit

was first climbed in 1932 by an Austro-German team. The North summit had been climbed earlier in 1908 by Annie Peck with her Swiss guides, R. Taugwalder and G zum Taugwald. There are over 20 different route used by climbers to the two summits.

Huascarán is a beautiful mountain that can be reached by "a relatively non-technical route." *World Mountaineering* edited by Audrey Salkel. The region however is also known for avalanche and icefall hazards. Earlier this year on June 3, 4 climbers were killed. In May 1970 the mountain avalanched and buried the town of Yungay after a 7.8 earthquake that also killed a Czechoslovakian climbing team.

Are There Mountains In Heaven?

Three Angeles Chapter Climbers Perish On Huascarán

Written by Patrick McKusky

On Monday, June 24, 2002, Steve Erskine, Matthew Richardson, and Bill Stampfl were caught by an avalanche at around 18,500 feet on Nevado Huascarán in Peru and were swept into a crevasse. A Czech team, climbing just above them, witnessed a huge serac fall and avalanche down across their route. When the snow cloud settled, the Czech team was shaken but safe, as was a German team below, but the Americans were gone. It took hours for the Czechs to descend the avalanche debris and they were unable to search for our friends. Contrary to initial reports that they were descending the mountain when the avalanche struck, it is now believed that they were all moving up from Camp I to establish Camp II just below Garganta Col, a huge saddle that separates the north and south peaks of Huascarán. On Wednesday, June 26, 2002, a Peruvian search and rescue team recovered Steve's body from a crevasse, as well as his pack and his ice axe, but the climbing rope that tied the team together and would have guided the rescuers to Matthew and Bill, was found to have been severed during the slide. The search continues for Matthew and Bill.

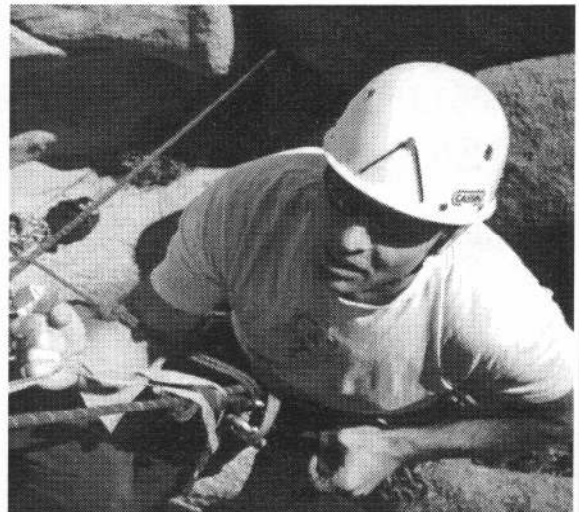
All three climbers were well known and much loved by the local climbing community and they were all active Sierra Club members in the Angeles Chapter. Matthew was currently serving on the management committee of the Sierra Peaks Section. Steve and Bill were instructors in the Wilderness Travel Course. They were all experienced mountaineers and had among them several high altitude climbs in Alaska, Mexico, Ecuador, and Africa, including a successful summit of Nevado Pisco (18,860') in Peru, just days before their attempt on Huascarán. At 22,200 feet, Huascarán Sur, their main expedition objective, is the highest peak in the Cordillera Blanca of the Peruvian Andes and it is one of the highest mountains in the Americas.

Steve (51), Matthew (40), and Bill (58) were often seen on Mt. Baldy, together and separately with others, training for their next climb. They hiked Mt. Baldy most every week and Steve sometimes hiked

to the summit twice in one day. One of Bill's first climbs was to the top of Baldy and it inspired him to pursue even higher summits and started him on his mountaineering career. Matthew and Anne Marie Turner had been introduced by mutual Sierra Club friends and on Valentine's Day, 2000, they hiked up Mt. Baldy just after it snowed and Matthew proposed to Anne Marie. They were married in October, 2000, and celebrated their honeymoon in Africa by climbing Mt. Kilimanjaro, together. Anne Marie Richardson is also an instructor in the Wilderness Travel Course.

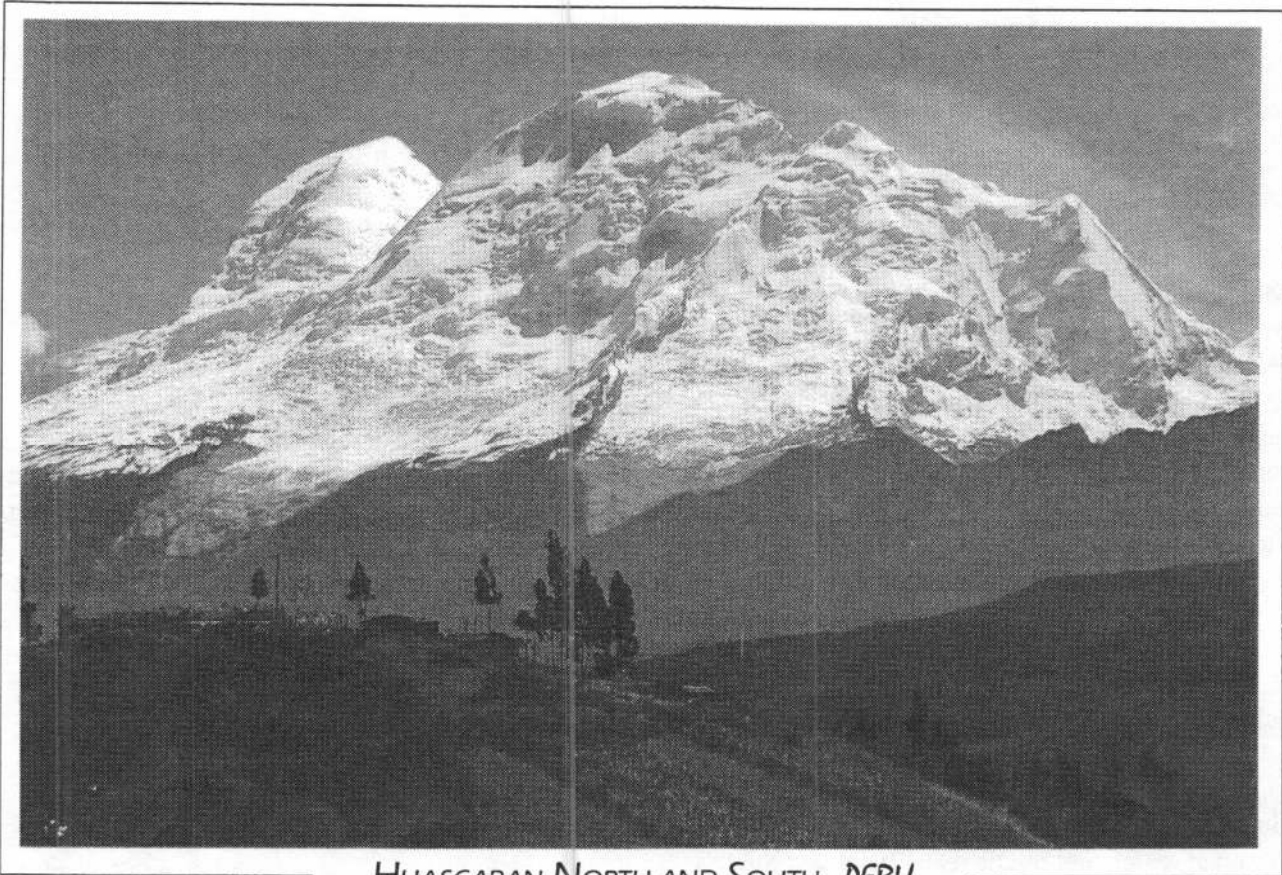
Bill Stampfl was born in Austria and his family emigrated to the U.S. in 1950. They have lived in Chino since 1960. Bill received an engineering degree from UCLA in 1966. He was a self-employed civil engineer, specializing in the design of retaining walls. Bill did most of the research and planning for the expedition to Peru from his home in Chino. He is survived by his wife Janet, his son Joseph, his daughter Jennifer Keaser, his mother Berta, his father William, and his brother Herbert.

Steve Erskine was born in Chicago but he grew up in La Habra. He received a degree in business from Cal State Fullerton in 1968. He was employed as vice president and chief financial officer at Kemper Enterprises in Chino (Kemper's president is



Safety Conscious-
Steve Erskine at Self-rescue seminar in the
Buttermilks April 2000

Herbert Stampfl). Steve is survived by his children, Jeffrey, Nicholas, and Natalie, his mother Dorothy, (continued on page 11 lower right)



HUASCARAN NORTH AND SOUTH - PERU

MEMORIES OF A FRIEND, BILL STAMPFL

by Patty Kline

I first met Bill on a trip to Joe Devel Peak out of the Cottonwoods, which I led August 14-17, 1998. Bill was the kind of guy you would have wanted on any trip. He always had a smile on his face and was right there to help for any task. Besides Jim Fleming, my assistant leader, we had 3 participants; Bill Stampfl who just finished WTC, Lynn Frick of the Ski Mountaineers and Spencer Berman.

At our camp at Lower Soldier Lake Bill volunteered to set up a community water bag in camp which made things very handy, since we were at a distance from the lake. We were camped there for 3 nights, hoping to get Joe Devel the second day and Pickering the third day. After encountering a thunder

storm starting at 11:00 am on the flanks of Joe Devel, we turned back. The third day we went back to get Joe Devel.

Before we left the road head at the end of the trip Bill offered to checkup on my truck, left 40 miles from home in Acton off of Hwy 14 at a garage with major engine trouble. I had rented a car to get to the Cottonwoods. That was really nice of him because otherwise I was completely at the mercy of the garage. Bill was a very generous person.

I had always hoped to rock climb with him some day, but he said he owed it to his family not to be away all the time.

I will really miss Bill.

Thoughts of "Polish Mustard Boy", June 27, 2002

I knew Steve, Bill, and Matthew, well. Steve was one of the best and well respected instructors in the San Gabriel Valley WTC program. I was the examiner for Bill's M level rock check off for the Leadership Training Program. But I knew Matthew, best of all. What follows are my personal thoughts about him, and I hope that some of these thoughts may speak for others about Steve and Bill, as well.

I can clearly see his face in my mind's eye. I can hear his voice and his laughter. I can feel his presence. But he is gone. It is only now that I realize how dear a friend he was. He was not a friend of our past, he was a friend of our future. We were making tentative plans to climb the Aiguille Verte in Chamonix, maybe next year. My wife, Sarah, and I were rethinking our plans to go to England, and instead, I was trying to convince her to come with us to Chamonix so she and Anne Marie could climb Mt. Blanc with us, as well. Matthew had asked me to join them on their climb of Huascarán but we both knew that I would not go. I do not have the high altitude experience necessary to succeed at 22,205 feet on Huascarán. Matthew had summited the Mexican volcanoes, Mt. McKinley, and Aconcagua, and he had even higher ambitions.



Bill Stampfl
Mt Winchell July 1999

Last Sunday, Sarah and I led a group of WTC students to the top of Mt. Langley. As I looked around at the spectacular view, and as I hugged each climber that came up to join me on the summit, and as I saw the awe struck look on their faces, I knew why we do this. At 14,042 feet on Mt. Langley, we were a mile lower than Matthew was when he and his partners died on Huascarán.

When Matthew, Steve, and Bill flew to South America, a few weeks ago, I never gave any thought that they might not return. We got an email from Matthew, last week, sent from an internet cafe in Peru, telling us about their preparations and their excitement for Huascarán. Last night, after work, I was mixing up a few martinis before dinner when the phone rang. We heard Ann Marie's voice on the answering machine and Sarah picked it up. I knew from the sound of Sarah's voice that this was the call. After the initial shock, we both tried to find some kind of personal perspective on how to deal with the sudden loss of our dear friend. About twenty minutes later, unexpectedly, I just lost it. Why do we do this? The answer that was once so clear was now obscured by tears. I promised Sarah that she would never get a call like that about me. Last night, all of the joy for climbing that I have shared with others seemed like childish, selfish indulgence in reckless thrill seeking. I was seriously thinking about not being able to do it anymore. So, I have spent this day thinking about my friend and looking at internet pictures of Huascarán and of the Aiguille Verte, and now, I want to go there. **by Patrick McKusky**

continued from page 9

and by his siblings, Curt, Linda Merrill, and Cindy.

Matthew Richardson was a life-long resident of Claremont. He earned a Master's degree in education from Claremont Graduate School in 1993, and for the past ten years, he was a teacher at Monte Vista Elementary School in Montclair. He is survived by his wife Anne Marie, his father Richard Richardson, his step mother Beverly, and his brother Daniel.

**Friends are planning for a remembrance
of them on Mt. Baldy.**

March 13, 2002

Location: Department of Water and Power building, downtown L.A. Minutes taken by Matthew Richardson.

Sierra Peaks Section Meeting Minutes

Management Committee Meeting

Attended By: Erik Siering, Asher Waxman, Maria Roa, Matthew Richardson, Joe Wankum, Gary Schenk, Patty Kline, and Barbee Tidball

The meeting began at 6:45 P.M.

The minutes of the December meeting were read and approved, and the writeups for the banquet and February's joint general meeting were reviewed.

The committee discussed the ongoing problem of yearly budget deficits. For several years the SPS has been operating in the red, and it was agreed that something must be done to correct this problem.

The main causes of the deficits have been fees paid to speakers for meetings and banquets, and the cost of using DWP facilities for our meetings.

Several possible ideas were considered. The SPS could change the location of our monthly meetings to the Los Angeles Zoo, which does not charge groups to use its facilities. Another possibility would be to raise the subscription rate for the Echo to help cover the other costs.

Membership issues were also discussed. Reminders will be sent to members who have not renewed. There will be a June deadline for renewals to be in the 2002 SPS membership roster, which will be published with the June/July issue of the Echo. (*Editors note now delayed to Aug/Sept*)

The committee talked about the importance of outreach to the students and staff of the Wilderness Travel Course. A motion was approved to offer current WTC students and staff a first-time subscription rate discount for a year of the Echo. Until June, they can subscribe for \$8, which is two-thirds of the regular rate.

The meeting adjourned at 7:35 P.M.

SPS General Meeting

The meeting was chaired by Erik Siering.

There was one new attendee, Chuck.

Asher gave a brief report on outings. The SPS has quite a few trips listed in the next schedule, many of them spon-

sored jointly with other sections. R.J. mentioned that an upcoming Ski Mountaineers trip had been rescheduled and

moved from San Geronio to the Sierra Nevada because of a lack of snow.

Erik introduced the evening's presenters, Jeff Moran and Jeff Pool of Altadena Mountain Rescue. They had originally planned on giving a talk about group dynamics and the importance of shared responsibility in mountain safety. After learning more about the SPS and our outings practices, however, they realized that this would be "preaching to the choir." Instead, they presented a very interesting talk on rescue equipment and techniques.

April 10, 2002

Location: Department of Water and Power building, downtown L.A. Minutes taken by Matthew Richardson.

Management Committee Meeting

Attended By: Erik Siering, Asher Waxman, Maria Roa, Matthew Richardson, Gary Schenk, Patty Kline, Duane McRuer, Tina Bowman, and Doug Mantle

The meeting began at 6:50 P.M.

The minutes of the March meeting were read and approved.

Recent and upcoming outings were discussed. Matthew told about Don Croley's Mt. Baldy climb on March 17 that he co-led. Asher mentioned the snow practice weekend scheduled for April 27 & 28.

Maria presented the treasurer's report. She prepared a quarter-end report and also a membership update. We currently have \$4760 in checking, and \$549 in savings. The SPS actually came out \$118 ahead after this year's banquet (not usually the case). We have received 5 new Echo subscriptions, two of which were from the WTC at the discounted "intro" rate, but there were no new members.

The committee discussed a suggestion that the SPS could change from holding monthly meetings to meeting every other month. We also talked about scheduling of the annual joint meeting with the other climbing sections.

The committee also considered issues related to next year's banquet. We thought about ideas to avoid losing money on the event. One alternative proposed was to line up a big-name speaker, but early enough to do lots of publicity and outreach so as to ensure a good turnout. Another possibility would be to go with a member or a local speaker who

would not charge a high fee. The location of the banquet will probably be The Castaways.

Duane brought up the fact that the 50th anniversary of the SPS is approaching, and we talked about ideas for marking that occasion. For example, we might publish a special edition of the Echo.

SPS General Meeting

The meeting adjourned at 7:24 P.M.

The meeting was chaired by Erik Siering.

There was one new attendee, Mara McRuer, Duane's daughter.

Matthew reported on the March 17 climb up Mt. Baldy, led by Don Croley. Snow was almost non-existent, but there was still a good turnout of participants.

Tina announced an upcoming LTC snow practice and check-off, possibly at Onion Valley.

The feature program was a very interesting Power Point slide presentation on adventure hikes and canyoneering in the San Gabriel Mountains by Christopher Brennen, professor of mechanical engineering at Caltech. Mr. Brennen described his adventures in these local canyons and the special, exciting places he has encountered. Check out his web site: www.dankat.com/advents/advents.htm.

May 8, 2002

Location: Department of Water and Power building, downtown L.A. Minutes taken by Matthew Richardson.

Management Committee Meeting

Attended By: Erik Siering, Matthew Richardson, Joe Wankum, Barbee Tidball, Gary Schenk, Patty Kline and Duane McRuer

The meeting began at 6:41 P.M.

The minutes of the April meeting were read and approved with changes.

Barbee showed a draft of the joint publicity flyer for the SPS, DPS, and HPS. The flyer is nearing completion.

Possible locations for the 2003 banquet were discussed. A southern location is favored. Gary presented some menu options. Patty reported that the banquet speaker will be Ellen Wilts.

Future meeting schedule and location options were

discussed. The consensus is to stay at the DWP building in Los Angeles. Two proposals for changing the meeting schedule are still being considered. The first is to have monthly meetings from May through November, covering the peak activity season. The second proposal is to have bimonthly meetings throughout the year. The banquet would still be held in January, regardless of the meeting schedule.

The meeting adjourned at 7:34 P.M.

SPS General Meeting

The meeting was chaired by Erik Siering. He gave a brief report on outings.

Barbee introduced a new book, Born Free, about Japanese-Americans during World War II. The author, Wynne Bente, will have a book signing on May 19 at the Japanese-American Museum.

Erik introduced the evening's presenter, Sid "San Jac" Davis. Mr. Davis showed a short video about his climbs of San Jacinto Peak and recounted his many memorable experiences on the mountain that he has climbed 643 times between 1964 and 1998.

SPS Membership Report

Accomplishment's - Congratulations

Rob Langsdorf
Senior Emblem - May 2, 2000
Sawtooth Peak #1

SPS Address Changes

Ronald Bartell & Christine Mitchell
1556 21st Street
Manhattan Beach, CA 90266-4039

Linda McDermott
1521 N. Keystone St.
Burbank, CA 91506

Henry A. Arnebold
2459 Escalante
La Verne, CA 91750-1136

Eric Sieke
3413 Walnut Ave.
Manhattan Beach, CA 90266

Bob Sumner
PO Box 7337
Mammoth Lakes, CA 93546

Skiing Mt Brewer

May 24-27, 2002

by Reiner Stenzel

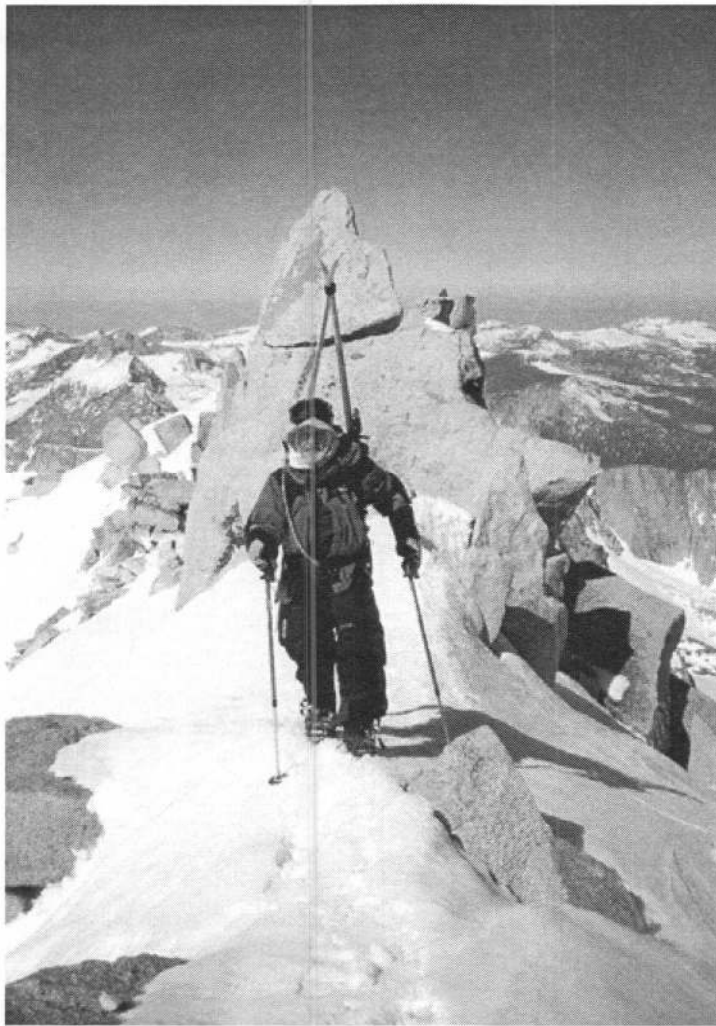
Mt Brewer is a prominent peak in the Great Western Divide. It is a desired SPS emblem peak and, according to Paul Richins, one of the 50 classic ski mountaineering peaks in California. Thus, the trip was scheduled as a joint SMS-SPS trip. It was co-lead with an expert ski mountaineer from the San Diego Chapter, Alvin Walter. Our participant was Chris Guelich. A small group was expected due to the technical nature of the trip and the high effort factor (30 mi rt, 9,000' gain). The trip went very well, we summited and skied the northwest face of Mt Brewer. Here are the details:

On Fri, 5/24, 6 am, we met at Roads End, Hwy 180, in Kings Canyon NP. Since it was the first day of the permit season we had to wait for the ranger to receive our wilderness permit and got off to a somewhat late start. It was a warm spring day, no snow in sight, and people were wondering about our heavy packs with skis poking out. At the peak of the snowmelt season the Kings River was a wild torrent and we were glad to have solid bridges at the junction with Bubbs Creek. From there the workout started with many switchbacks along Bubbs Creek. Coming out of the 5,000' Kings Canyon we had a fine view of The Sphinx and distant peaks with snow. We crossed gushing Bubbs Creek on another good bridge

and headed up the Sphinx Creek trail. It climbs steeply with many switchbacks blasted into a rock wall. Where the trail crosses Sphinx Creek and turns west toward Avalanche Pass we began our cross-country route toward the Sphinx Lakes. It involved bush whacking, stream crossings, struggling through avalanche debris, climbing through mixed rock and snow terrain, i.e., the usual XC fun. By 5 pm we had enough and made camp on dry ground in a forested area next to the creek below the lowest Sphinx Lke.

It was pleasantly warm, a full moon lit up the night, and no bears took our food.

On Sat, 5/25, at first sunlight, we continued our uphill battle which became easier as the snow patches grew and the forest thinned out. Above the lowest Sphinx Lke (9,700') the snow became continuous and we finally could ski. Ascending several snow covered slopes brought us to the main Sphinx Lakes which were still mostly frozen over (10,500'). Near the open inlets the trout were jumping. The Sphinx Lakes area is very scenic. It is surrounded to the west by the steep walls of the Sphinx Crest and to the east by the Great Western Divide. Vast



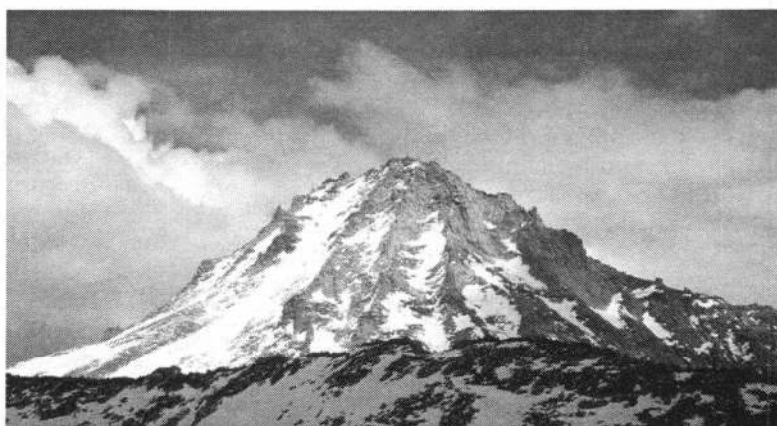
untouched snow fields offer endless skiing opportunities. We proceeded south to Lke 10,962' where Chris requested to camp since his feet were badly hurting from the long hike in tight ski boots. The campsite on dry rock next to the lake with trees

was perfect but still too far from our goal, Mt Brewer. Alvin and I continued while Chris agreed to wait for our return the next day. We ascended 0.5 mi southwest to corniced Pass 12,000' (UTM 11365850E, 4063700N). From there one has a full view of Mt Brewer, North Guard and many peaks in the Great Western Divide. The lakes below in the Brewer Creek drainage were still frozen and the north facing slopes had excellent snow coverage. We enjoyed a few nice turns down the pass but stayed high and contoured around a ridge into the cirque between North Guard and Brewer. At 5 pm we made camp in a flat spot at about 12,000' near rocks with running snow melt water (UTM 11366575E, 4063611N). It had become cloudy and windy and we were getting ready for a chilly night in my bivy and no tent for Alvin. Mt Brewer and North Guard were soon covered by descending clouds and it was not obvious whether we could make the peak next morning. A nature call by midnight still showed the summits in a whiteout illuminated by a diffuse full moon.

On Sunday, 5/26, 5 am, we got up to a clear sky, a nice surprise. The moisture in the air left everything rimed. After some hot food and drinks we packed our ski and climbing tools and cramponed up toward the saddle between Brewer and North Guard. There was an obvious chute on the northwest side of Brewer which was filled with snow. A major wet snow avalanche had run down the chute making it less than an ideal skiing terrain. We cramponed up the chute on mostly hard snow except near the top where I encountered hollow snow near rocks. Luckily I did not break through where the depth of the holes exceeded the length of the ski poles. After reaching the ridge it was a short traverse to the summit block. A cl 3 move got us to the peak register located in a crack of the summit boulder at 13,577'. It was a pleasure to sign in as the first party in 2002. We enjoyed the wonderful summit views in the morning sun. One could see from the White Mtns to the San Joaquin Valley, from Whitney to Goddard and identify many familiar peaks. Unexpectedly, Brewer's easier south face had still snow coverage than the steeper northwest face. After a snack and taking many pictures it was time to descend by 10 am. The upper north facing chute was still without sun. It was breakable crust on a soft base, not

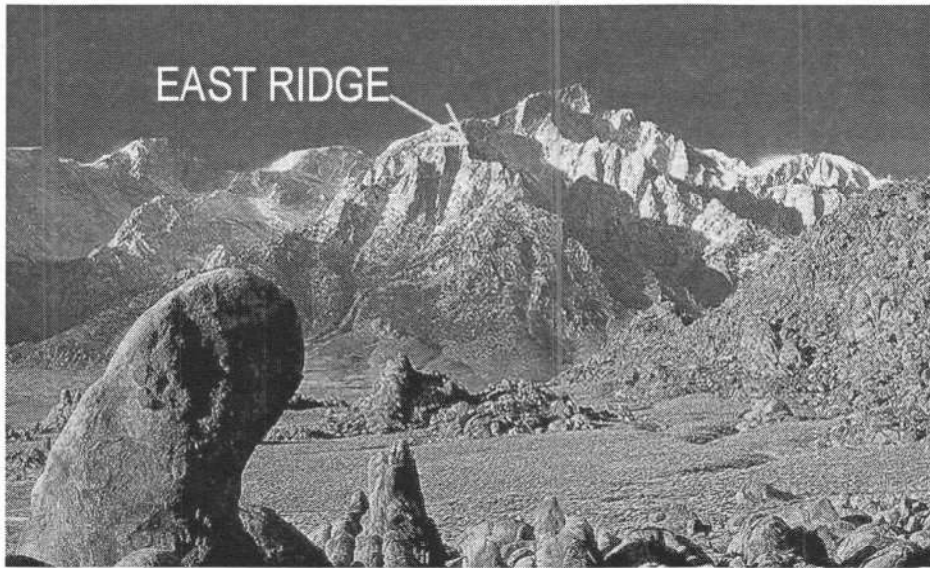
exactly ideal for telemarking. But it was handled with jump turns, a few at a time at the elevation of 13,000'. In the middle of the chute parallel turns worked best and further down where the sun had softened the snow it was telemarking at its best. We left many tracks on the north side of Brewer which were visible for a long distance. Back at camp we packed, snacked, and then skinned up to Pass 12,000' which we reached by noon. In the distance we spotted Chris and vice versa. Telemarking down the pass on soft spring snow was wonderful but still a workout with full packs. We regrouped with Chris, shared our adventures, and started our descent by 1:30 pm. Many fine turns were left on the slopes as we skied past the Sphinx Lakes to the snow line at 9,500'. Then we struggled carefully through rocks with breakable snow patches, through the forest where we got temporarily separated, crossed Sphinx Creek on slippery logs and finally reached the trail by 4 pm. Afternoon thunderstorms were brewing and we heard the rumble and had light rainfall. With the last energy we kept going down the steep Sphinx Creek trail to Bubbs Creek where there are fine campsites and a bear box. We washed up in the river, cooked, had a campfire, talked late into the night and slept under the stars and full moon.

On Mon, 5/27, we got up leisurely and hiked out by 8 am. It was sunny, beautiful spring weather, and a pleasant 4 mi hike down along the rivers. When returning from the high country of snow and rocks one appreciates the scent of the trees, the fresh green leaves, flowers and singing birds in the valleys. At Roads End we dropped our heavy gear, refreshed, chatted with visitors, and finally started our long drive home. We left with the feeling that it was a great end-of-the-season ski trip with good friends. My special thanks to Alvin for co-leading this trip.



Mt Brewer (13,577')

The East Ridge of Lone Pine Peak (12,944') 6,200 Feet from the Desert Floor



Private trip report by Penelope May

It was the hyena that Alois blamed for getting us on the wrong ridge. We had planned to try the north-east ridge of Lone Pine Peak: it would be my first time rock-climbing with a full backpack and I worried that Alois had been a bit ambitious about my capabilities. But there we were in the middle of the desert one morning packing up from our luxurious sleeping spot in the dirt and loading up our "light" packs. As he added a liter of fuel and a stove into my already bulging pack, I felt my anxiety level ratchet up: how on earth was I going to rock-climb with all this stuff swaying and dragging on my back? As we moved off uphill, I felt the load pulling on my back and at least two million sand flies and mosquitoes attacking my face and clogging up my nostrils: lovely. I was not happy; I said nothing; I sulked a bit; I kept going, grimly; I was, according to my dear one, a "hyena" this morning.

Some time later, we reached the top of the first hill. There, Alois, my climbing hero who knew Lone Pine Peak like the back of his hand, having several first ascents there, including in the winter, surveyed the ridge to our right with some unexpected interest: oops, we were not on the right ridge, we must apparently be on the East Ridge. By this time, my spirits had returned to normal and in an effort to be consolatory, I commented with a smile that I had always wanted to climb the East Ridge. "So have I" he responded dryly: in other words, he had never been here before and had not a clue. Well then, we would both be challenged.

We continued on upwards mostly scrambling 3rd Class rock to about 9,400'. It was hard work and the terrain was very overgrown and cluttered. "This doesn't get done often" (for obvious reasons) opined Alois. Perhaps we had a first ascent? No,

Dave Krueger did it in the early 1980s; too bad. Even more too bad was that his route was never disclosed. Well, as 4 pm approached, we looked for a level and sandy spot. Since we were in the middle of the ridge, this was a thankless task and we eventually settled for a nice sandy spot that sloped downhill a bit. Alois put large rocks at our feet which worked really well: during the night when you slipped that far, your feet touched the rock and subconsciously pushed upwards. As night fell, we cooked up our ramens and

enjoyed a little luxury: a slurp or two of Glenfiddich single malt.

Next morning we fiddled around with tea and breakfast enjoying the view and the day and got a late start at about 8 am. We pressed on upwards over rocks and boulders, staying on the north side of the top of the ridge. Finally, about 2 pm we reached the beginning of the huge face/bowl that leads up to the summit plateau. Alois selected a gully and we climbed that with rock shoes but no rope: 4th Class. At the top, the real decision had to be made. We could not see the summit plateau but were faced with numerous choices of gullies which led up to, or around, an enormous tower. At 10,000 feet, we knew there was 1,000 feet to go and only about 500 feet visible. Alois reconnoitered carefully as by now we were encountering snow and ice. We did not want to be stuck at the top of a gully facing a 5.10 climb (just a bit of a stretch for me, even on a good day) and not be able to retreat due to ice (crampons were in the car). Eventually, Alois selected the right gully and we roped up for it. As I approached him, he exhorted me with the following blood-curdling direction: "Honey, you won't like this, but you have to do it, and go first; it's our only chance; and, no whining, OK!" Great, I love these ones.

And so I completed my first lead: edging slowly across a traverse of about 60 feet of friction rock (my least favourite idea at the best of times) exposed over the entire bowl, thousands of feet down. Fortunately I made it safely across because, as Alois was quick to point out, should I have slipped, I would have fallen 60 feet and pendulumed and been really beat up. Well, having earned my keep, I followed the rest of the way up some low 5th Class terrain until we reached the last 500 feet, when we steered to the left and traversed the ridge, staying just on the north side of it. Finally, about 4 pm we found ourselves on the summit plateau, about

11,000 feet. Lots of sand and flat ground and snow to melt for much needed water. In addition, we were graced with fabulous views of Mt. Langley with Alois and Miguel Carmona's first ascent of the North Arete glowing in the setting sun. More Glenfiddich and ramens was called for and consumed. Temperatures fell into the 20s during the night but we were cozy.

The next morning we were up at first light and headed off to the summit, with just minimal gear. We hiked and scrambled the last few boulders to the summit to enjoy the most magnificent panoramic view of snow-capped Sierra peaks that I have ever seen: from Langley (14,042') on the south, the Corcoran group in the middle, with Mallory and Irvine and the Whitney group further to the north, extending to the splendid profiles of Williamson (14,375') and Tyndall (14,018'). We signed the register and found no one alluding to the East Ridge route, ever.

We retrieved our packs and saddled up for the descent, down the South Descent Route. How to describe this little section of our trip?...hmmm...the word miserable comes to mind. It was steep, slippery, rocky, full of dead brush which collapsed quickly underfoot, overhanging trees which snagged packs regularly and those sweet rollerballs that camouflage granite, creating an unexpected and sudden slide. After three, or was it four, falls, I began to feel a teeny weeny bit tired and frustrated; but, being determined not to rip my pants, I carried

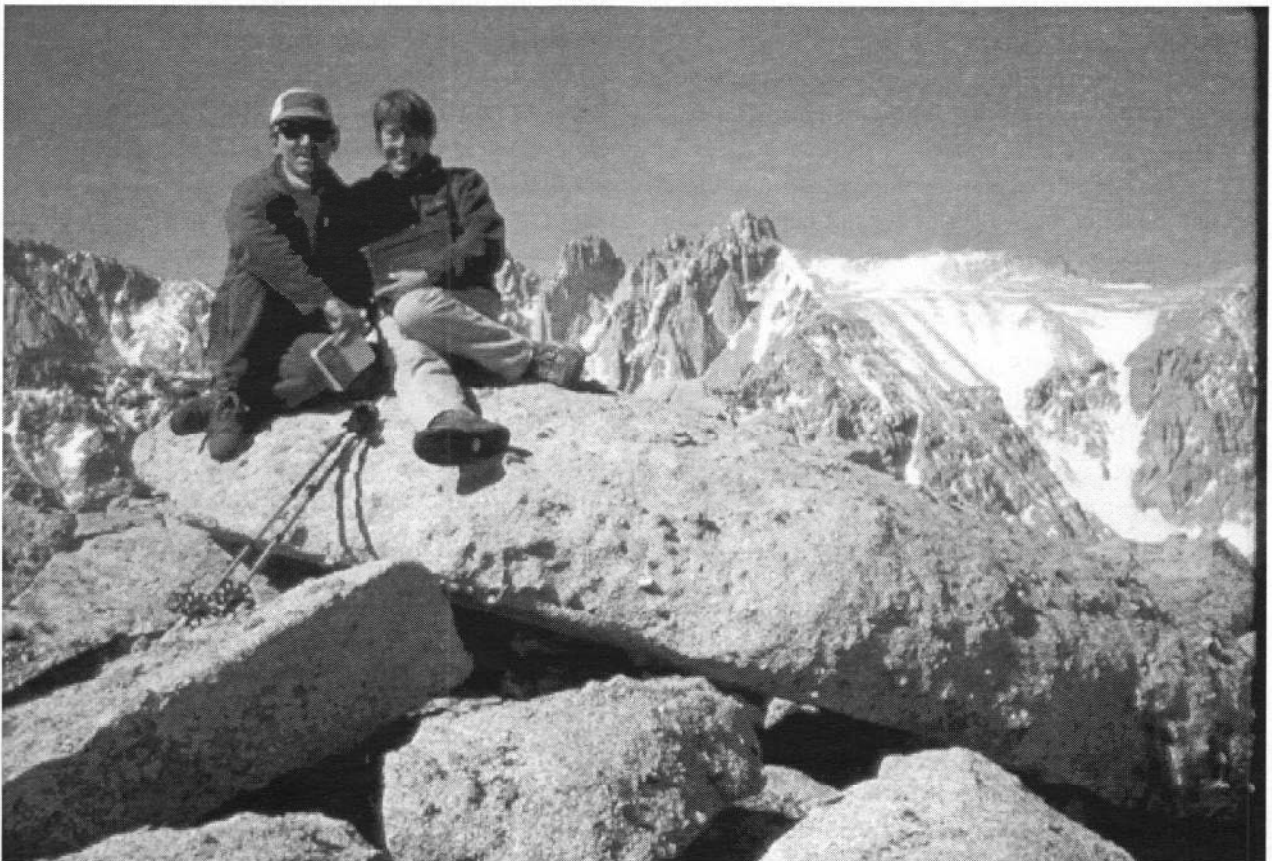
on with tenacious vigilance. Alois twisted himself falling down the side of a boulder but fortunately did not break anything. I did remark that the terrain was rather nasty; Alois complimented me on not complaining.

We reached the Tuttle Creek dirt road about 2:30 pm and were down to a drivable dirt road about 3:00 pm. Since it was boiling hot and we had 3 miles across the desert floor to face, with no shade or water, to reach the car, we dumped the packs and walked to the car unburdened. There we pulled out the chairs, the beer, the hot showers, the clean clothes and sandals and enjoyed the whole lot of them immensely. Eventually we drove over to pick up our packs and then home to Slick City. It was a strenuous and wonderful three days spent getting high, tired and dirty with a rare (and patient) fellow spirit. Few "normal" people understand the thrill!

PS Here is Alois' comprehensive Route Description:

"Park at the end of Olivas Ranch Road. Follow the ridge. When encountering difficulties, stay on the right, north side of the ridge. In the upper section of the ridge, 4th and easy 5th class gullies on the right (north) side, generally lead to easier climbing. We avoided the summit bowl by continuing on the ridgeline all the way to the plateau."

below: Alois & Penelope - Summit of Lone Pine Pk.



IN HIGH PLACES: THE LAST DAY ON DENALI

GROUP SCATOLOGY & TEAM DYNAMICS

By Burton "I'm NOT coming back" Falk

It's 5:30 a.m., June 1, the fourth morning of the blizzard. I awake dreaming I'm being pressed down by some heavy, unseen force. Stirring a bit, I discover I'm not dreaming at all, and that I actually am immobile. My feet are clamped firmly at the north end of the tent; my head, encased in a balaclava and mummy bag, at the south. I feel like a wrestler pinned for the count. I feel like Gulliver tied down by the Lilliputians.

I begin to struggle, and in doing so I nudge Bill Serantoni, in the middle of the tent, who, stirring, awakes Jim Scott, sleeping by the door, who finds himself also buried under collapsed nylon.

Soon the three of us are sitting up in our sleeping bags attempting to assess the situation. To our dismay, we discover that our dome tent is almost completely covered with snow. The tent profile, normally a 5 foot high parabola, is squashed down on all sides; the hexagonal floor, originally 8 feet long and 7 feet wide is now an oval about 6 feet by four feet and shrinking. Our fiberglass poles, bent to the extreme, cause us no little concern. The E. A. Poe story in which a man is trapped in a room whose walls are gradually moving in to crush him comes to mind.

There is so much snow piled up around the tent that pushing the walls out doesn't help; as soon

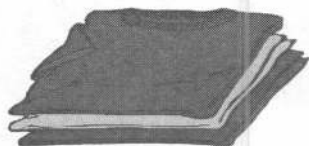
as the pressure is removed, the snow pushes them back in again. The interior of the tent, normally well lighted at this time of the morning, is in a deep gloom due to the encasing snowdrift.

This whole situation is ironic. Here we are stuck at 7,800', in the middle of the Kahiltna Glacier, when three and a half days ago, on the evening of May 28, we could have made it all the way down to base camp. Here we are, still, where our guide, Joe Horisky, of Rainier Mountaineering, considered the weather (clear overhead, but with the unseen storm front lurking behind the mountains to the west), the time (5:30 p.m.), the fact that we had another four hours to go before reaching base camp, and, even though there was enough light to hike around the clock in Alaska in late May, decided we should call it a day.

Oh, it's not that we weren't all anxious to get down to base camp that evening, but who was going to argue with Joe? He is, after all, the most successful guide on Denali, having put clients on the top of the 20,320' peak on all thirteen climbs he has led (including ours), and his decisions had always seemed prudent. Ironic also is the fact that while we gave all our extra food away at the 14,200' camp, and that there's plenty more cached down at base camp, now, after being marooned here going on four days, we are reduced to snacking on the salami casings we've salvaged from our trash bags.

When it was decided to camp here, my two tentmates and I erected our tent next to that of Abel, Baker and Charlie's—we'll call them that for reasons to be disclosed later, inside a twenty-foot diameter, four-foot high snow block wall, left by previous climbers. There is an entryway on the west side of our "compound," and outside the wall, to the east, lee side, we built a small shelter for our kitchen. Joe, Jim Hamilton, our assistant guide, and Chris set their tent up a few feet outside the enclosure, where, although more exposed to the blizzard, little snow has accumulated. The aerodynamics of this particular storm, however, have taken great delight in filling our walled sanctuary with the white stuff, causing us leave the warmth of our tents every few hours to excavate our circle of "protection."

Own Your Own SPS T-Shirt. They come with a picture of North Palisade on the front and the entire SPS list by geographic area, with Mountaineer and Emblem Peak easily identified on the back. T-Shirts come in Medium, Large and Extra Large. Colors are sand, ash and yellow. Cost is \$12.00 plus \$3.50 shipping for 1 and \$4.00 for 2 or more T-shirts. Buy them from Patty at the SPS meetings and save the shipping charge. Make check payable to the SPS. Send your order to: Patty Kline, 20362 Callon Drive, Topanga Canyon, CA 90290.



Now, at 6 a.m., my tentmates and I are as gloomy as the inside of the tent. Will this #*@% storm never end? On our ascent, at the 11,200' level, we waited out a five-day blizzard. As of today we've been on the mountain twenty-one days!

We are glum about the food situation as well. Last night, Jim Hamilton divided the remaining group supplies into thirds so that each tent could decide their own menus. In my journal I noted, "Our portion consists of 1/3 a box of stone ground wheat crackers, a good-sized chunk of cheese, a handful of gorp, a bit of peanut butter, one English muffin, several tea bags, and a plastic bag containing maybe 6 portions of freeze-dried vegetable soup." In order to make this cornucopia last as long as possible my tentmates and I elect to feast tonight on two crackers, a bit of cheese and one spoonful of gorp each. My empathy for the Donner Party grows hourly.

Shortly after 7 a.m., we hear Abel and Baker, using our two snow shovels, as they take their turn to once again dig out our tents. At 7:30 a.m., Jim and Bill take over, and a half an hour later, tired and chilled, but with the job finished, they return. Now it's my turn to leave the womb. I dress from skin out as follows: polypro expedition weight underwear (which, having been worn for almost two weeks is reeking), wool pants, wool shirt, wool sweater, polypro jacket, light inner socks, heavy polypro outer socks (even smellier), insulated inner boots, plastic boot shells, Gortex gaiters, inner gloves, pile mittens, Gortex over mittens, balaclava, wind mask, wool stocking hat, Gortex jacket with hood, Gortex wind pants, and, finally, goggles.

At 8:30 a.m., literally stumbling out of the tent, I face the new day lying nose down in the snow. Arising and brushing myself off, I discover the visibility is limited to about fifteen feet—I can barely make out the guide tent just outside our enclosure. The wind is howling across the glacier at 40 to 50 miles an hour, and the temperature, according to the small thermometer on the zipper of my jacket is a relatively warm +10 F. Even so, the wind-chill factor makes it a miserable day.

I plod around to the kitchen, fire up the primus stove, and start melting snow to make hot water for breakfast. After what seems an eternity—a little over an hour, in fact, for the contents of the large coffee pot to come to a boil—I then make my rounds of the tents; the occupants of which unzip their tent flaps minimally, take the pot inside to fill their various vessels, and then pass it back out again. While engaged in this period of vassalage, I look up at the

sky, and see a couple of patches of blue. I mention this fact to the wall of the guide tent, and I'm answered by an unimpressed grunt

At 10:30 a.m., returning to the tent and downing my meager breakfast (soup and tea), I remove my outer garments, crawl back into my sleeping bag and begin to read. While other climbers fret and stew about the equipment and food they'll take on a big climb, I spend an inordinate amount of time planning what I'll take to read. This trip, for instance, I brought Michner's 900+ page work, *Iberia*, Fowle's complex novel, *The Magus*, and, all too appropriately, Woodham-Smith's history of the 1846-49 Irish Potato famine, *The Great Hunger*—all in paperback, of course. Fortunately, my old pal, Jim Scott, brought along Adam's, *A Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy* and *The Restaurant at the End of the Universe* both of which I've already finished, and Thomas Thompson's, *The Celebrity*, which I'm halfway through. By the way, I remain profoundly impressed by Norman Clyde, that iconoclastic climber who made so many first ascents in Sierra Nevada during the 1930s and 40s. In order to make his reading material last, he reportedly took along books in Greek. For me they would have lasted forever.

About noon, Joe Horisky takes a look at the weather and likes what he sees. "It may be a Chinese fire alarm," he shouts into our enclosure, "but it looks like it's clearing up. Better start getting your gear packed up."

And so we begin the last leg of our successful ascent of Denali.

But before leaving this snowy wasteland forever (and believe me, I'm **NOT** coming back), let me touch briefly on two subjects of interest to climbers, the first of which is seldom if ever mentioned in mountaineering literature, the second of which is yammered about endlessly, i.e., group scatology and team dynamics.

GROUP SCATOLOGY On June 1, our last day on Denali, I knew for a fact that most of my teammates hadn't taken a "dump"—the climber's third most popular term to describe the process of elimination, since May 28, a long four day period. On that morning, prior to leaving our 14,200' campsite, many of us used the NPS-provided toilet there; a facility made imperative by the large number of climbers camped in the area.

"The Throne," as we called it, was a plywood

box, a hole in the top, open at the bottom, of an appropriate height, a device to which foam plastic had been thoughtfully stapled in order to prevent a user from freezing in place. This affair was positioned over a narrow crevasse so that the resulting waste material would drop deep into the glacier, where, hopefully, it would remain frozen for decades.

“Well, what sort of enclosure surrounded this apparatus?” you might ask. The answer would be, “None, nothing, nil, nada.” “The Throne,” in fact, was located directly in the middle of the bustling campground, and in a sense it was the very heart and soul of the area. Because I had to use this facility on a few occasions, both ascending and descending, I devised the following plan to help me overcome my natural reticence to such a public display. The first step in my scheme was to casually loiter around our tent until the toilet was no longer in use, and with no one heading in its direction. When the coast was clear, I would stride purposefully toward it, toilet paper in hand, head held high, as if I were on the way to an important business meeting. Once on the seat, I assumed the position of a well-padded Rodin’s, *The Thinker*.

The second part to my plan was to wear a balaclava, wind mask, goggles, and a borrowed jacket so nobody could guess my identity.

If you’re even more modest, I suggest climbing Denali by a different route.

Using “The Throne,” however, was nothing compared to taking a dump during a blizzard—a truly nasty experience. I know, because I survived such an incident during the five-day blizzard on our ascent.

It was then, on the storm’s third day, after moodily denying increasingly strong indicators, I decided I could no longer put things off. At 3 p.m.—the warmest point of the day, I figured—dressed in virtually everything I owned, I began my big excursion.

The agony began immediately upon exiting the tent, when the wind, blasting across the glacier, almost knocked me over. Leaning into tempest for balance, I spent a couple of excruciatingly cold minutes locating a shovel, after which I trudged off, guide rope in hand, toward the latrine that we had dug on our arrival, about a 100 feet away. At the approximate site of the facility (and who could tell in all that blowing snow?), I began to dig a hole to provide both shelter and hand holds.

Ten minutes later, freezing, but with hole dug and lined with a plastic bag, I exposed myself to the

storm, and did what I came out to do.

Next, reaching down for my pants and underwear gathered around my boots, I was appalled to find they were covered with two inches of newly drifted snow. I attempted to brush the white fluff out, but it was fruitless; new snow blew in faster than I could sweep the old stuff out. The snow that had glued to my bare legs, warm when I first pulled down my thermal underwear, had turned to ice. Frostbite of the family jewels seemed mere seconds away.

In desperation, I pulled up the whole mess, snow and all, fastened it in place and stomped back to the shelter of the tent as fast as possible. Once inside, removing my outer garments, I crawled into my sleeping bag, and waited, shaking and shivering, for my body warmth to dry the wet underclothing.

During my four-hour fluff and fold cycle, one of my tentmates, mentioned that I smelled like a wet sheep. The other, slightly more sympathetic, reminded me that things could be worse—he’d heard of a climber who unknowingly took a dump in the hood of his parka. You can imagine his surprise when he pulled the hood back over his head.

One more point before leaving this tacitly tabooed subject concerns the conversations that take place during the twelve hours spent in the tent each night (8:30 p.m. to 8:30 a.m.), and on storm days, when climbers are confined to quarters around the clock. Since there is not much else to talk about, taking a dump becomes a rather big deal—almost a social event itself, and it is thoroughly discussed before any action is taken, to wit: “I think I’ll read for an hour, take a dump, and then nap ‘til dinner,” or, “I’m not using the john until after the sun goes down—too many women in camp.”

Well, you get the idea. I won’t go into piss bottles at all.

TEAM DYNAMICS Good relationships are crucial to the success of long climbs. Jim Scott, my lifelong friend and climbing partner for the past sixteen years, and I have been on several extended climbs and, although he’s a physicist into hard science and I’m strictly low-tech, we’ve always hit it off just fine. When we arrived in Alaska late the evening of May 9th with a host of other concerns on our mind, Jim and I hadn’t given much thought to the personalities of our as yet to be met Denali teammates.

The next morning, May 10, at breakfast in the Anchorage Holiday Inn, we discovered there was

potential trouble brewing. Hey, I'm no prude—I grew up working summers in a foundry, but I was dismayed by the breakfast conversation, which ran the full gamut of bad taste.

Knowing we would need a third man in our tent, Jim and I, both age 50 at the time, scanned the potential candidates, and conspired to select Bill Serantoni as our tent mate. It was an excellent choice for Bill, 28 years old, a mechanic for American Airlines in Dallas, was a quiet, neat and dedicated climber. Better yet, he seemed to never tire of Jim and I telling and retelling tales from our past climbs—but then who could? Of the other team members—and I'm calling them Abel, Baker and Charlie to protect myself from lawsuits—I can only say that they got on one's nerves.

Abel, for instance, a fire fighter from Bridgeport, Connecticut, was wont to organize work parties for unnecessary tasks. Latrines needed to be the size of the Panama Canal, snow caves had to be more cavernous than Carlsbad, the Pyramids of Egypt paled in comparison to his tent platforms. Abel also had a penchant for melting huge quantities of snow for water, and I'm sure we would have been taking tub baths if there weren't the need to conserve fuel.

In addition, Abel had the disgusting habit of being the first out the tent each morning, usually with yet another colossal project in mind. "Yo, I need volunteers to build the Tower of Babel!" Later I learned that prior to the climb he had gone through an ego-shattering divorce, and that, in order to restore his self-confidence and gain a measure of serenity, he had taken up karate, earning a black belt, and had engaged a guru, who was mentoring him in the eastern religions. The climb of Denali was to be yet another block in the rebuilding of his self-image—a block that unfortunately fell on his head. Clearly psyching himself out on our summit day, he was the only member of our team not to make it to the top. Too late, I began to feel sorry for him.

Baker, an ex-Marine Corps officer out of Bend, Oregon, had the annoying habit of asking others to perform small tasks for him: "As long as you're out, would you mind emptying my piss bottle?" "Since you're already shoveling, how about digging my pack out of the drift?" Since I, independent and/or mule stubborn, rarely ask anyone to do anything for me, I soon began to seethe when he asked for favors he could have easily done himself. Baker, by the way, always volunteered to carry the lightest, bulkiest items of the group gear.

"Here, let me take those snow wands." "Give me that aluminum pot; I'll stuff it somewhere in my pack." Somehow, he always ended up carrying the lightest load.

Charlie, the manager of a fast food outlet in Albuquerque, wasn't such a bad egg after all—if you overlooked his crummy jokes. In retrospect, I admire him for putting up with Abel and Baker as his tentmates for three long weeks.

There, my spleen is clean. So much for group scatology and team dynamics. Let's return to the present tense and continue the epic story of our last day on Denali.

Poking our heads out of the tent door to observe what Joe considers to be better weather, we find that, indeed, the wind has dropped and that large patches of blue are blossoming across the Alaskan sky. Scanning up and down the gigantic glacier, we discover that we're all alone in a vast, white world, where, except for an occasional avalanche tumbling off one of the surrounding mountains, absolute silence prevails.

We dig out and make use of the latrine, the very first priority for most of us, after which we start excavating equipment—sleds, ski poles, snowshoes, etc., buried under three days worth of snow pack. As the sky continues to clear, we stuff our mummy bags, roll up our sleeping pads, strike the tents, and by 2:15 p.m., we're ready to begin our trek back to base camp, six miles to the southeast.

When we do start moving, we discover that, even though we're heading downhill, carrying light packs and pulling virtually empty sleds, the going isn't as easy as we expected. Because of the deep snow, we are using snowshoes, a cumbersome mode of travel at best, and because this section of the glacier is notorious for crevasses, we are roped up into two groups, both measures slowing us down somewhat.

Acting as trail sweep, my favorite position, I can see my rope team stretched out immediately in front of me, and, way down the glacier now, the tiny figures of those on the first rope. The sky has cleared completely, and here in the middle of the Kahiltna Glacier the panorama is breathtaking—the frosted 17,000' Mt. Forraker to the right, 14,000' Mt. Hunter to the left, the deep blue firmament above. The only sounds I can hear are my own breath and the muffled tread of snowshoes. I'm in an extremely good mood.

About 4 p.m., halfway to the now visible base camp, we hear the faint sound of an approaching

aircraft, and soon afterward, we make out a small, dark object turning and descending toward the landing strip on the glacier next to the camp. This is encouraging as we weren't sure if the Talkeetna air taxis would be flying this late in the day after such a big storm. Hope begins to build that we'll be able to fly out tonight.

We hike on, resting only once, our destination growing closer and closer. About 6 p.m., we actually drop below the level of the camp, highlighting one of the few disadvantages of the West Buttress route, i.e., after descending the Kahiltina Glacier to the 7,000' camp level, one must then continue down another 300' before turning left and hiking up a tributary glacier, upon which the camp and airstrip are located. This final 300 feet of make up is sheer agony as one's mind and body, this late in the trip, totally rebel against any gain whatsoever. The sight of an occasional plane landing and taking off, however, gives us incentive to plod wearily up the slope.

At 6:30 p.m. we finally arrive at base camp, where we find perhaps twenty or thirty prospective climbers standing outside their tents, watching us slog in. These poor novices, rested, full of hope and still smelling good, are waiting to start up the mountain tomorrow morning. What can they be thinking of? We quickly assume the "grizzled returning veteran" look, and condescend to give them an occasional thumbs up in answer to their question, "Did you make the summit?" It's probably the closest thing to a victory parade I'll ever see.

Pulling up to a stop at last, Joe and Jim Hamilton head for the radio operator's tent (funded by the various air taxi services), where they call Talkeetna to inform Cliff Hudson of Hudson's Air Service that we're ready to be picked up. To their delight, Cliff replies, "No problem, I'll get started right away." Joe and Jim then retrieve the case of Budweiser we stored in the radio tent (to keep it from freezing) on our arrival here three weeks ago, and bring it back to the snowy plot where our group is assembled. Surprisingly, now that we're adding layers of clothing to ward off the evening chill, few of us are interested in the beer.

We pack up our personal equipment, and then cache the group gear in a previously dug snow cave. Joe will be using this equipment again when he leads another climb up the mountain on June 10. How he can do this again so soon (or ever) staggers my imagination. I'd rather be forced to listen to Barry Manilow records.

Flying out in the order as determined by flipping a coin, Jim Scott, Baker and I arrive back in Talkeetna on the second planeload about 10:30 p.m. When we left this small town in early May there were six inches of snow on the ground. Now in the mild Alaskan gloaming, the earth is bare, the birches have sprouted leaves and there's a sensual spring-like redolence in the air.

Jim and I retrieve our wallets, plane tickets and street clothes at the air service office, rent a room at the Teepee Motel, shed some excess clothing, then walk to a nearby delicatessen, the only establishment in town still serving, where we find our first flight teammates, scrubbed, shaved and virtually shining in the first artificial light we've seen in three and a half weeks.

And then we begin to eat. Putting it away as if we haven't had a good meal in days—which, of course, we haven't—we, including the last planeload of climbers, wolf down six giant pizzas, quaff a dozen pitchers of soft drinks (no alcoholic beverages are served here, probably a fortuitous circumstance), and in the interval between the baking of each pizza, decimate a small freezer filled with Haagan Daz ice cream. My share of this incredible repast includes ten "Supreme Combination" slices, several mugs of root beer, and a pint of rum raisin ice cream, surely setting a lifetime "personal best" for the most calories consumed in the shortest length of time.

Even while this gastronomic orgy is in progress, I cross the street to a pay phone, where, calling my wife and daughter in Lakewood, California, I find them to be much relieved—they had expected to hear from me days earlier. I explain the two long storm delays, and pretty soon we're sharing some of the funny experiences we've encountered during my absence. I love hearing their voices and laughter. Absence does make the heart grow fonder. I can't wait to see them tomorrow.

After dinner, back in the motel, Jim and I shower, pack our gear for an early morning bus ride into Anchorage, and consume an additional pint of vanilla ice cream apiece. At 1:30 a.m., in bed at last, I begin to drift off into a deep sleep. But wait! Before I zonk out completely, I experience this last dream-like notion that, in the midst of an enormous snowstorm, the walls of the motel are bulging in and about ready to collapse.

CONSERVATION 2 LINERS

BARBEE TIDBALL

□ Chimney Peak Road Closure

Just west of the Chimney Peak area, the road heading west into Rockhouse Basin has a closed sign. The rangers indicated that the road is washed out a mile and a half from the intersection, that the washout is on private property and the owner does not want the road reopened. The forest service is looking for a possible alternate location for a road.

The southern approach, from near Lamont Peak should be open.

□ Believe it or Not

Backpacker magazine recently reported the following: "Washington resident Martha Hall was recently ordered to stay away from horsepackers in the Pasayten Wilderness. Complaints were filed after the former school teacher was found documenting destruction caused by commercial horsepackers in the designated wilderness."

□ Inyo County Support RS 2477

Inyo County recently adopted a resolution supporting the use of RS 2477 in the County. Apparently the first test will be at Surprise Canyon. A portion of the resolution follows:

WHEREAS, The County of Inyo, when established in 1866, included considerable areas for ranching, farming, and mining, with intensive prospecting and exploration for valuable minerals, forest and agricultural products; and

WHEREAS, much of the mountains, desert and valley area of the County became laced with networks of wagon roads, trails, horse and foot paths, as well as water pipelines, which were constructed, maintained and used to facilitate such activities; and

WHEREAS, many of these roads, trails, paths and pipelines have been in general use by the general public since that time for recreational, domestic, agricultural, mining, grazing and packing use; and

WHEREAS, public access to and upon these rights-of-way is essential to the economic, social and political well being of the communities within Inyo County.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the County of Inyo and the public may have acquired rights-of-way pursuant to R.S. 2477.

□ Checkermallow gets protection.

In keeping with a legal settlement negotiated by the Center for Biological Diversity and the California Native Plant Society, the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service proposed to designate 1,085 acres of critical habitat for the Keck's checkermallow (*Sidalcea keckii*) on 6-19-02.

Keck's checkermallow is endemic to open grassland areas in the Sierra Nevada foothills in Fresno and Tulare counties. It was presumed extinct after not been seen for 50 years, but was rediscovered in 1992. A little over 1,000 plants are presently thought to exist. It is threatened by urban sprawl, agricultural expansion, cattle grazing, and competition from non-native grasses.

The Smithsonian Institute petitioned the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service to list the checkermallow as an endangered species in 1975, but it was not added to the endangered species list until 2000, and only in response to two lawsuits by the Center and one by the California Native Plant Society.

□ Fish slough milk-vetch also gets protection.

July 8, 2002 JUDGE ORDERS CRITICAL HABITAT PROTECTION
FOR EIGHT IMPERILED PLANTS OF THE CALIFORNIA FLORISTIC PROVINCE

Fish slough milk-vetch - *Astragalus lentiginosus* var. *piscinensis* (Threatened)

Location: Great Basin Desert northwest of Bishop CA, Inyo and Mono Counties.

Threats: Trampling and grazing by cattle, roads and off-road vehicle use, modification of wetlands, alteration of slough hydrology, the Red Willow Dam and related expansion of Fish Slough Lake.

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EDITORS: Barbee Tidball & Barbara Sholle. Mailing Address 3826 N. Weston Place, Long Beach CA, 90807. Phone (562) 424-1556. E-Mail: bsholle@aol.com. Echo cover layout by David Sholle. ECHO copy deadlines are the third Saturday of even numbered months. Please send trip reports, photos, slides, articles, jokes or any other item of interest for publication. E-mail, Computer Disks IBM format/MSWORD-WIN or Word Perfect are appreciated. If you would like your submission returned to you, please enclose a SASE.

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AWARDS: Notification of accomplishments send to section Secretary: Matthew Richardson, 333 Sycamore Ave., Claremont, CA 91711. To purchase awards merchandise - Emblem pins (\$15.00), senior emblem pins (\$15.00), master emblem pins (\$15.00), list finisher pins (\$15.00), and section patches (\$2.00) are available from Patty Kline, 20362 Callon Dr, Topanga Cyn, CA, 90290. Make all Checks Payable to the SPS. all prices include sales tax.

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283 Argonne Ave
Long Beach, CA 90803-1743