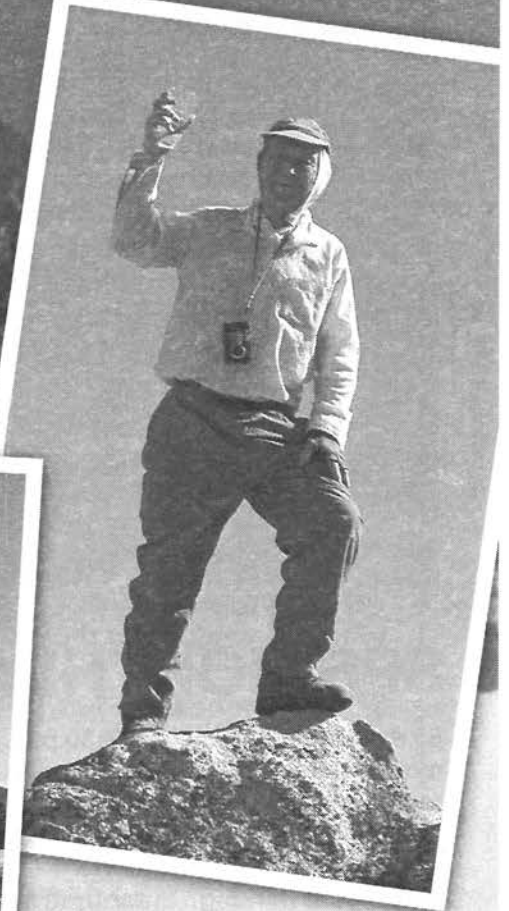
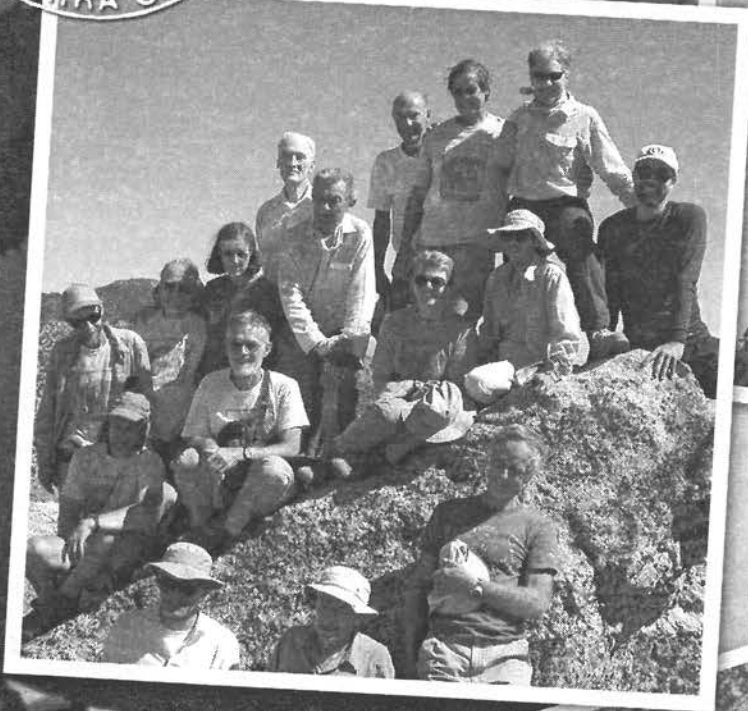
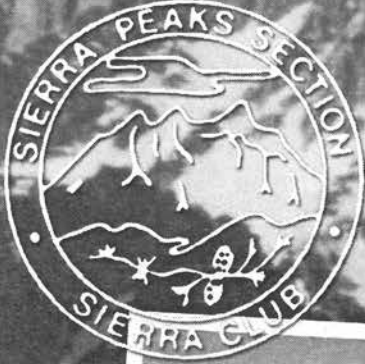


# The Sierra ECHO

VOLUME 47 NUMBER 6

DECEMBER 2003 - JANUARY 2004





## Iron Mtn.

See story  
by Ed Lubin  
on page 20

View of  
decent  
route from  
Iron, east of  
peak  
10,821'.

## SPS MONTHLY PROGRAMS

SPS meetings are held at 7:30 p.m. on the second Wednesday of the month - May through November & January. A joint climbing sections meeting will be held in February. *New meeting Location:* Meetings are held at 7:30pm, 3435 Wilshire Blvd., Los Angeles. Downstairs from the Angeles Chapter Headquarters - Lower Plaza Conference Room. Free and secure parking. Enter from Mariposa, just N of Wilshire. Mention Sierra Club at parking lot office and get white ticket. Newcomers welcome.

**February 5 Thur Hundred Peaks, Sierra Peaks, Desert Peaks, Ski Mountaineers, Lower Peaks Joint Meeting:** Join us for the annual joint climbing groups social meeting, hosted this year by HPS. See related article this edition of *The Echo*. Refreshments provided by host. 6:30 pm swap meet, 7:30 pm show at LA Zoo Grande Room.

**Next SPS Meeting - May 12 Wed Steve Smith** will give a slide show of his trip to Europe showing climbs of Mt. Blanc, the Matterhorn and Mt. Rosa.

## Front Cover



## Lamont Peak-List Finish

"After sixty four years of climbing in the Sierra Nevada Range, I finally achieved my goal of climbing all 247 peaks on the SPS list - WOW!" Including with Norman Clyde as shown on background cover photo. Story begins - page 9.

## Peak List

Lamont Peak  
Mt. Marsh  
Mt. Conness  
Mt Clark  
Gray Peak  
Pilot Knob (south)  
Iron Mtn.  
St Helena



## JANUARY

**M/E: Jan 31 Sat LTC, SPS, DPS Local Baldy Snow Practice.** Send SC#, climbing resume, 1 sase and email address to Ldr: Nile Sorenson Co-ldr: Doug Mantle

## FEBRUARY

**M/E Feb 7 Sat LTC, SPS, DPS Local Baldy Snow Practice.** Send SC#, climbing resume, 1 sase and email address, H&W phones to Ldr: Nile Sorenson. Co-ldr: Tina Bowman.

## MARCH

**TI: Mar 6-7 Sat-Sun SMS, SPS Olancha Peak.** Ski/snowshoe an SPS emblem peak. Backcountry skiing or snowshoeing and snowcamping exper. required. Skiers need metal edged skis with climbing skins, avy beacons & shovel. E-mail exper., address, and h/w phones to Ldr: Jan St Amand Asst: Reiner Stenzel

**E/M: Mar 14 Sun LTC, SPS, DPS Stony Point Rock Workshop/Checkoff.** Checkoffs for M & E rock must be pre-arranged. Restricted trip. Send \$15.00 deposit (refunded when you show) Ldr: Ron Hudson Asst: Patty Rambert

**M: Mar 14 Sun Sierra Peaks, WTC Mt Baldy (10,064') Snow Climb:** Strenuous 3900' gain, 8 miles. Restricted to Sierra Club members with ice axe & crampon proficiency. Group size limited. Call leaders for reservation & verification of qualifications. Ldr: Don Croley. Co-Ldr: Will McWhinney.

**Mar 20 Sat Deadline for Leadership Training Seminar.** Last day for enrollment in April 3 seminar. Next seminar: Fall 2004. Registrar: Steve Botan - [ltcregistrat@angeles.sierraclub.org](mailto:ltcregistrat@angeles.sierraclub.org)

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.

All participants on Sierra Club outings are required to sign a standard liability waiver. If you would like to read the Liability Waiver before you choose to participate on an outing, please go to: <http://www.sierraclub.org/outings/chapter/forms/>, or contact the Outings Department at [REDACTED] for a printed version.

## APRIL

**C: Apr 2-4 Fri - Sun LTC, Harwood Lodge, WTC Wilderness First Aid Short Course.** Runs from 7:30 pm Fri to 6:00 pm Sun. Fee includes lodging and meals. CPR within previous 2-yrs required. Fee TBD. For application e-mail LDR. Steve Schuster

**TI: Apr 2-4 Fri-Sun SMS, SPS Mt Mary Austin.** Ski/climb one of the few Sierra peaks named after a lady. Basecamp in Bighorn Sheep territory, Little Onion Valley. Exper. in backcountry skiing/snowshoeing and climbing required. Bring metal edged skis with climbing skins, ski crampons, or snowshoes and poles, avy beacon, shovel, and snow camping gear. E-mail exper., address and h/w phones to Ldr: Reiner Stenzel Assts: Jim Crouch

**M: Apr 3-4 Sat-Sun Sierra Peaks San Gorgonio Mtn (11,499'):** Backpack and snow climb to So. CA's highest peak. Sat backpack from South Fork Trailhead on snowshoes or skis to Dry Lake, 5.5 mi, 2100' gain. Sun climb San Gorgonio using ice ax and crampons, 4 mi rt, 2430' gain, pack out. Other possible objectives if time. Restricted SC members with ice ax and crampon exper. Send sase or email with exper. and conditioning, H&W phones, rideshare info to Ldr: Beth Epstein Co-Ldr: Asher Waxman

**Apr 3 Sat Leadership Training Seminar**



**I/M: Apr 17-18 Sat-Sun LTC, WTC Indian Cove Navigation.** Navigation Noodles to satisfy Basic (I/M) level nav.requirements. Sat for practice. Sun for checkout. To receive homework assignment, send navigation experience/training, any WTC, sase to Ldr: Harry Freimanis. Asst: Bob Bradshaw

**M/E: Apr 24-25 Sat - Sun , LTC, SPS, DPS Sierra Snow Checkoff** Demonstrate your skills to receive M or E snow checkoff or to sharpen skills. Restricted trip. Send SC#, climbing resume, E-mail leader Ldr: Tom McDonnell Co-Ldr. Randall Danta

**TI: Apr 28-May 2 Wed-Sun SMS, SPS Tioga Pass - Yosemite High Country-** First stay at Tioga Pass Resort (TPR) as basecamp and do a provisional lead tour to Mt Gibbs; followed by an optional backcountry tour to Lyell or Earhardt. Trip is pending availability of reservation and will require fee for TPR of approximately \$260 for two nites (accommodation and food) due by Jan 1, 2004. Trip will be rescheduled, moved or cancelled pending availability at TPR and avalanche conditions. Metal edged skis with climbing skins, avy beacon, and shovel required. Bring snow camping gear for backcountry tour, which is for experienced skiers/climbers. E-mail experience, address, and h/w phone to Ldr: Jonathan Meagher Asst. Ldrs: Randy Lamm, Reiner Stenzel, etc TBA.

## MAY

**M: May 1-2 Sat-Sun SPS, WTC Diamond Pk (13,127')** Snow climb using ice ax and crampons. Sat backpack up Baxter Pass trail near Independence; 4000' gain, 6 mi to camp. Sun climb Diamond, 2000' gain, and pack out. Black Mtn (13,291') may also be ascended if time allows. Restricted to SC members. Send SC#, climbing resume with relevant exper. and current conditioning, 2 sase or 1 sase and email, home address, H&W phones to Ldr: Ron Hudson Co-Ldr: Patty Rambert

**M: May 8-9 Sat-Sun Bloody Mountain (12,552')** Sat backpack approx 2 miles, 1,000', depending on snow conditions to camp. Share happy hour. Sun climb peak via prominent north couloir. Restricted to SC members with ice ax and crampon exper. Send sase and email with H&W phones, experience and conditioning and to Ldr: Anne Marie Richardson Asst: Asher Waxman

**M/E: May 15-16 Sat - Sun , LTC, SPS, DPS Sierra Snow Checkoff** For M & E candidates. Send SC#, climbing resume, 2 SASE or 1 SASE and e-mail, H&W phones. Ldr: Nile Sorenson. Co-Ldrs. Doug Mantle, Duane McRuer

## MAY continued

**M: May 22-23 Sat-Sun SPS, WTC Dome Lands Ramble - Rockhouse Peak (8383'), Taylor Dome (8774')** Backpack loop from Big Meadow to climb two rocky peaks in the Dome Lands Wilderness north of Kernville. Sat set up car shuttle at Big Meadow, hike to camp at Little Manter Meadow, 5.5 mi, 500' gain. Set camp, climb Rockhouse, 6.5 mi and 1640' additional roundtrip, some brushy xc, some class 3. Celebratory happy hour on return. Sun pack out, 5 mi, 1200' gain, with optional xc climb of Taylor Dome adding 2.8 mi, 700'. Comfort scrambling on class 3 rock required. Send sase or email with details of experience and conditioning, H&W phones to Ldr: Beth Epstein Co-Ldr. Kim Gimene

**M: May 22-23 Sat-Sun Stanford #2 (12,838') and Morgan #2 (13,002')** Restricted to Sierra Club members with, ice axe and crampon experience. Easy backpack: 6 mi, 600' gain then snow climb to Morgan, 3200' gain. Sun. climb Standford 2800' gain and long glissade back to camp prior to packing out. . Send SASE with experience, conditioning, & \$3 permit fee to Leader: Larry Tidball. Co-Leader: Barbee Tidball

**I: May 23 Sun , LTC, WTC Grinnell Ridge Navigation** Navigation Noodle in San Bernardino National Forest for either checkout or practice to satisfy Basic (I/M) or Advanced (E) level navigation requirements. To receive homework assignment, send sase, navigation experience/training, any WTC. Ldr: Harry Freimanis Asst. Bob Bradshaw

**I: May 29-31 Sat-Mon SPS, WTC Kern Peak (11,510):** Join us Memorial Day weekend for a fun backpack in Golden Trout Wilderness. Sat hike 9 miles 1600 ft. gain to camp at Redrock Meadows. Sun. climb peak 8 miles 3000 ft. gain rt. Then move camp to Jordan Hot Springs another 4 miles mostly downhill. Mon enjoy hot springs and return to cars, 5 miles 2500 ft. gain. Send e-mail or sase to Ldrs: Mirna & Greg Roach

## JUNE

**I: Jun 5-6 Sat-Sun Olancha Peak (12,123')** Moderately strenuous climb of SPS Emblem peak at the source of Crystal Geysers water in the Southern Sierra. SPS intro trip geared to new SPS climbers and strong WTC students. Qualified K-9s welcome with permission. Sat hike 8 mi, 3900' gain from Sage Flat to base camp off PCT at approx 9700'. Sun climb class 2 Olancha, 7 mi rt and 2400' gain, then out. Total gain for weekend 6300' in 23 mi rt. Sat eve community happy hour. Send 2 sase, H&W phones, recent conditioning, altitude experience, rideshare info to Ldr: Patty Kline Asst: Hal Browder

**JUNE continued**

**C: Jun 11-13 Wilderness First Aid Course** Runs from 8 am Fri to 5:30 om Sun. Fee includes lodging and meals. CPR within previous 2 years required. Fee \$165 with SC#/\$175 non-member. (Full refund through May 7, 2004) For application send e-mail to Ldr: Steve Schuster

**I: Jun 19-21 Sat- Mon Kern Peak (11,510')**: SPS introductory trip in southern Sierra geared to prospective SPSers and WTC students. Moderate and enjoyable pace. Sat backpack 9 mi, 1500' gain to camp at Redrock Meadow at 8600'. Sun climb class 2 Kern Peak in 8 mi, 3000' gain rt, all x-country. Legendary community happy hours Sat and Sun evenings. Mon backpack out 9 mi, 800' gain with ups and downs. Send sase, recent conditioning, H&W phones, rideshare info to Ldr: Patty Kline Asst: Kent Schwitkis Naturalist: Sherry Ross.

**M: Jun 24-27 Thurs-Sun Eisen (12,160'), Lippincott (12,265') and perhaps more:** Join list seekers in grueling backpack from Mineral King. Class 3, ice ax, crampons. Send sase including qualifications and conditioning to Ldrs: Doug Mantle, Tom Bowman, Tina Bowman.

**M: Jun 25-27 Fri-Sun SPS, WTC Mt Ritter (13,157') Snow Climb:** Strenuous 5000' gain, 17 miles rt. Fri pack into Lake Ediza. Sat climb peak via the southwest glacier route. Sun pack out. Restricted to Sierra Club members with ice axe & crampon proficiency. Group size limited. Call leaders for reservation & verification of qualifications. Ldr: Don Croley Co-Ldr: Tom McDonnell

**M: Jun 26-27 Sat-Sun Mt Darwin (13,831')**: Climb the emblem of the Evolution region. Saturday backpack from North Lake above Bishop to camp over Lamarck Col, short, steep, possible snow in 5.5 miles, 3700' gain. Sun climb glacier and west ridge to exposed class 3 summit, 4 mi, 2800'rt, then pack out, 500' gain additional. Restricted - members with crampon, ice ax and roped climbing experience. Send exper. and cond., H&W phones, SC # to Ldr: Beth Epstein Co-Ldr: Kim Gimenez

**JULY**

**M: July 2-6 Fri-Tue Matterhorn Pk (12,279'), Whorl Mtn (12,033'), Twin Pks (12,323'), Virginia (12,001')**. Fri backpack 6mi, 4000' up Horse Creek to camp. Sat climb Matterhorn followed by happy hour for double emblem celebration. Sun class 3 Whorl, Mon Twin and Virginia, Tue out. Send sase or email with class 3 experience, rideshare info, H & W phones to Ldr: Barbara Sholle CoLdr: Don Sparks

**SPS Membership News****Re-cap 2003 accomplishments:****SPS Emblem**

#565 Gary Craig  
#566 Patty Rambert  
#567 Dennis Richards  
#568 Daryn Dodge  
#569 Rick Dolphus

**SPS Master Emblem**

#70 Larry Hoak (*note Larry has been awarded Emblem, Senior and Master from one application. Apparently Larry has been so busy exploring and climbing the Sierra that he fell behind on his paperwork. Nice to know he keeps his priorities straight!*)

**SPS List Finisher**

#62 Ret Moore

**Passings: Reported by Jerry Keating**

*Dec. 2003*

**Monroe S. Levy** died June 7, 2003, after a long battle with Parkinson's Disease. He was 84 and lived in Santa Monica. Monroe earned emblem status in the SPS and DPS in 1959 and the HPS in 1967. His obit characterized him as an "avid hiker/backpacker, joke teller and irrepressible punster."

**John R. Peckham** died April 10, 2003, after the persistent progression of multiple myeloma. He was 73 and lived in Mill Valley. The former peak climbing chairman of the Mother Lode Chapter Outings Committee, John earned his SPS and DPS emblems in 1964 and 1967, respectively, while living in Sacramento. He also climbed a number of HPS summits. In that era, SPS and Mother Lode Chapter jointly sponsored numerous outings.

**Welcome Back - Reinstated Members**

Ron Jones  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

*continued next page*

**SPS Membership News -  
continued**

**Keep Climbing - New Active Members**  
Ed Morento

[Redacted]

George Wysup

[Redacted]

Lilly Fukui

[Redacted]

Jim Throgmorton

[Redacted]

Mary Jo Dungfelder

[Redacted]

Robert Neighbors

[Redacted]

Markey Neighbors

[Redacted]

Dane Hartman

[Redacted]

**Happy Reading New Subscribers**  
Silas Zinkle

[Redacted]

Susan McCreary

[Redacted]

Paul Garry

[Redacted]

**Address Changes**  
Mary & Rayne Motheral

[Redacted]

J. Paul Morash

[Redacted]

Winnette Butler

[Redacted]

Stephanie Murdock

[Redacted]

Shannon Scott

[Redacted]

Gary Schenk

[Redacted]



## ECHOES FROM THE CHAIR

Congratulations to Henry Arnebold, Mike Dillenback, Patty Rambert, Gary Schenk, and Reiner Stenzel on their election to the SPS Management Committee for 2004. I ask the membership to support their activities as they have supported the M/C this past year. Working with the dedicated membership has been a rewarding experience.

In addition to this year's officers, I'd especially like to thank our Echo co-editors (Barbee and Barabara) for their fine work and Patty Kline for her many contributions, including arranging for our meeting facilities.

The SPS monthly meeting are now conducted monthly from May thru November in the Chapter Hq building. Some of our members have indicated that the location is not the most convenient. Others have found the meetings are easy to get to by riding the light rail (Blue/Red) lines. For 2004, the meetings will continue at the same location. For the future, the M/C may consider alternating meeting between west and east locations. Let the M/C know if you would be more likely to attend meetings with such an arrangement.

Our climbing season is now over for the year, and planning for the coming year is underway. Thanks to Beth Epstein's efforts, this past year included two dozen climbs co-sponsored by WTC. Leaders, let's either repeat or expand on that for 2004. Such co-sponsored trips are a good way to introduce others to the SPS and expand our membership. In planning such trips, remember that non-members can assist on SPS trips but that our safety policy requires that leaders or co-leaders must be SPS members.

The 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the SPS is approaching in the near future and I expect the Management Committee will begin planning for this event during the coming year. The SPS was formed in 1955. In 1956, the emblem was adopted and early climbs included Deer and Maggie in May, Gilbert, Trail Peak, and Matterhorn in June, Alta, Whitney, Ritter, and Goat in July, University, Darwin, Lamarck, and Irvine in August, Williamson, Barnard, Trojan, Silliman, Cardinal, Morrison, and Tunabora in September, and Rixford in October. I recommend that our leaders start planning to repeat some of these early climbs during our 2006 anniversary year.

I'd like to end this final Chair's Column with some recent (mid-December) welcome news on the conservation front: (1) A federal judge ordered Yellowstone National Park to scrap a plan to expand snowmobile use in the park. (2) EPA administrator announced that the administration would drop its effort to revise the 1972 Clean Water Act. (3) The DWP has tentatively agreed to restore steady water flow to the long depleted Owens River within two years. (4) A federal judge ruled that the National Marine Fisheries Service broke the law and ignored science when it declined to grant a dwindling number of killer whales in Puget Sound protection as an endangered species. Although these actions are not final, they are at least a step in the right direction. However, we must stay vigilant to protect for future generations the wild places we enjoy.

**Joe Wankum/2003 Chair**



# Treasurer's Report

## Sierra Peaks Section Treasurer's 3rd Quarter Report 9/30/03

Checking Account		Savings Account	
Income:		Balance 6/30/03	\$553.74
Echo Subscriptions	\$385.00	Deposit	\$4,275.00
Merchandise	\$ 91.00	Interest	\$4.13
FIRP*	\$ 12.00		
Donation	\$300.00		
	Sub-total	Total	\$4,832.87
	\$788.00		

Expenditures:	
Banquet Deposit	\$500.00
Merchandise	\$225.00
Echo printing	\$212.98
	Sub-total
	\$937.98

Balance on 6/30/03	\$9,965.18
Income	\$788.00
	Sub-total
	\$10,753.18
Expenditures	\$937.98
	Sub-total
	\$9,815.20

Memorial Funds	
Trans to Saving Acct.	\$4,275.00
TOTAL	\$5,540.20

## Sierra Peaks Section Treasurer's 4th Quarter Report 01/07/04

Checking Account		Savings Account	
Income:		Balance 9/30/03	\$4,832.87
Echo Subscriptions	\$390.00	Deposit	\$0.00
Merchandise	\$57.50	Interest 10/31	\$1.64
Peaks List	\$1.00	Interest 10/31	\$1.64
Donation	\$0.00	Interest 10/31	\$1.64
	Sub-total	Total	\$4,837.75
	\$448.50		

Expenditures:	
Echo Postage	\$826.04
Checks and deposit slips	\$22.95
Echo printing	\$627.41
Office supplies	\$21.64
	Sub-total
	\$1,498.04

Balance on 9/30/03	\$5,540.20
Income	\$448.50
	Sub-total
	\$5,988.70
Expenditures	\$1,498.04
TOTAL	\$4,490.66

\* Field Recruitment Incentive Program



# Lamont Peak

## September 27, 2003

### A List Finish For Ret Moore

After sixty four years of climbing in the Sierra Nevada Range, I finally achieved my goal of climbing all 247 peaks on the SPS list - WOW! Well wow anyway. That statement is literally true, but somewhat misleading on several points. First, although two peaks (Whitney and North Palisade) were climbed prior to active service in World War II, it was not until after the war, marriage, starting a family and a business that I began climbing again in the 1970's. Second, it was more than twenty years later than this, that I even thought seriously of completing the list. But, I suppose the inevitable happens if you keep going long enough. I have to thank Norm Rohn more than any other individual for getting me to zero in on the list completion. He pointed out that if you climb all the peaks on the list you will have visited every major area in the Sierra Nevada Range. You get not just peaks, but roads, trails, canyons and vistas. This made sense and weaned me away from my parochial view of just climbing what I thought were the "best" peaks in the range, even

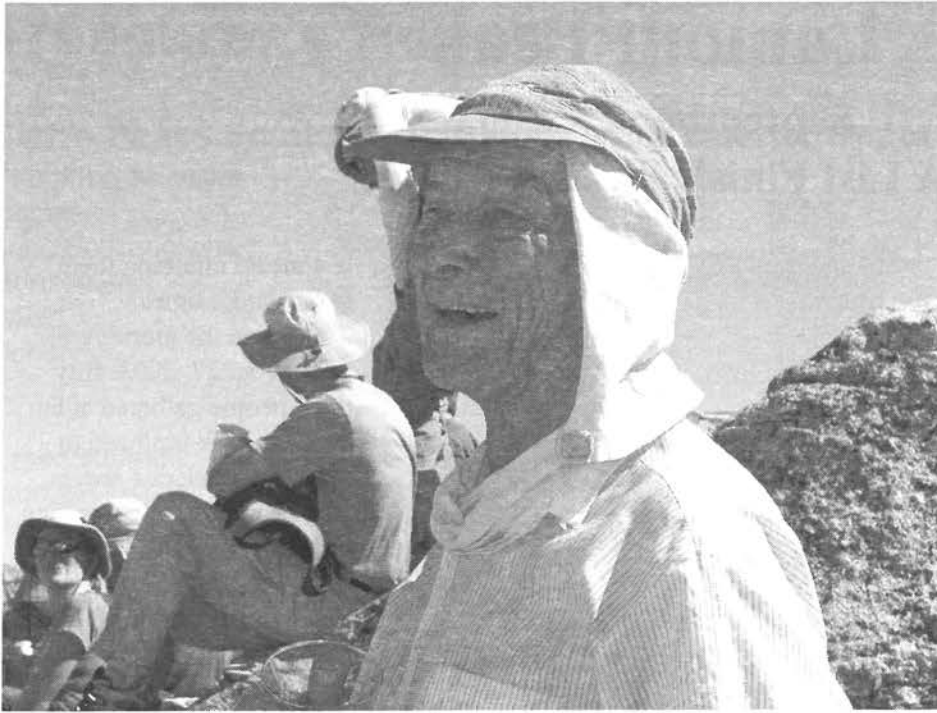


if it meant climbing them two or more times.

So on the morning of September 27, 2003, fifty three people gathered at the Lamont Peak trailhead to make the moderate ascent. After an unusually long sign in and quick introductions, we started up the trail a little after our planned 8:30 AM departure time. Although only a use trail, it is well marked but rather steep up the nose of the ridge. Once on the ridge it becomes indistinct as it crosses the gently sloped ground south



Leaders Duane and Ret begin the final ascent.

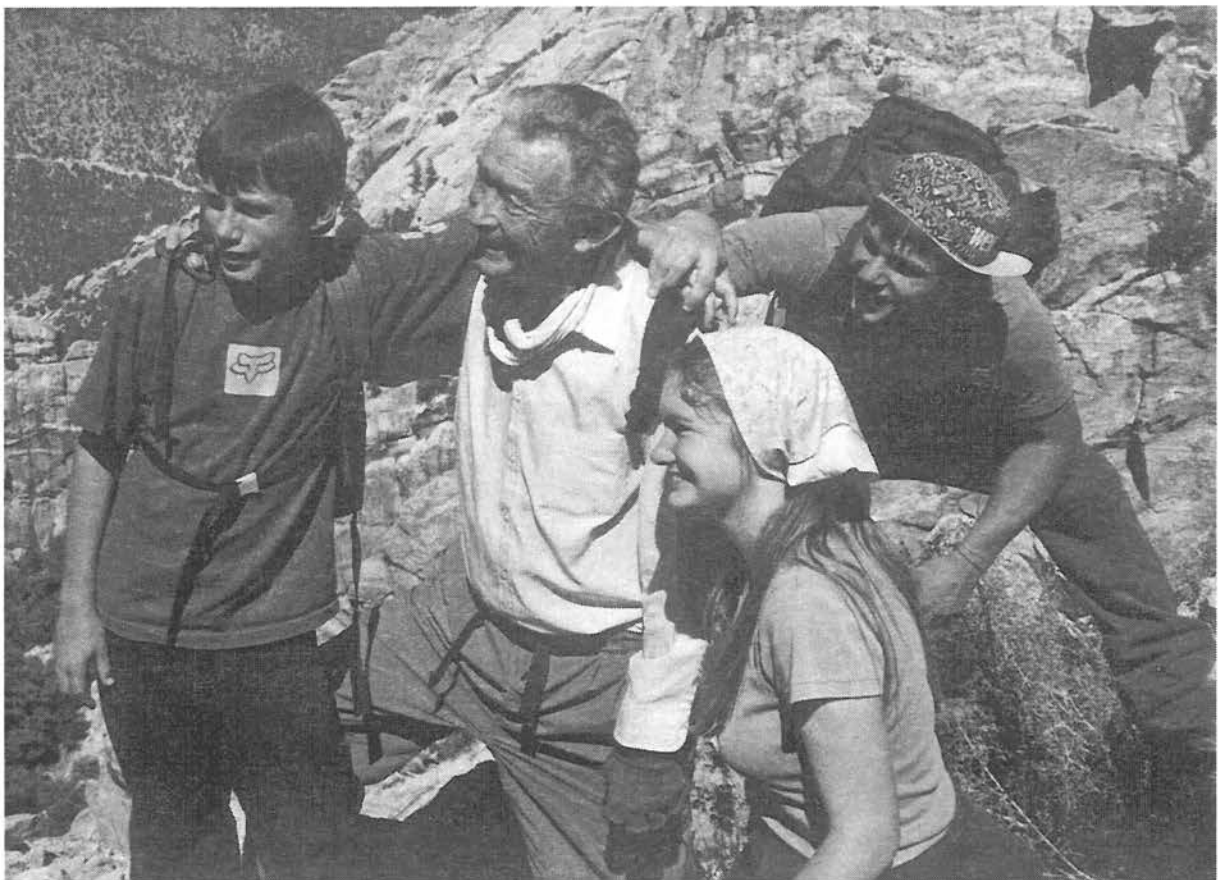


before making the final climb up to the summit.

Though we started with 53 climbers, one turned back due to the heat and 2 more late comers joined us on the summit. So we had 54 celebrants on the peak toasting with champagne and sparkling cider, taking photographs and snacking. To my sorrow, it wasn't possible to get the entire group in one photograph. Steve Eckert sent me the next best thing - a panorama he had put together. But, even this did not include everyone. It was fine to see so many old friends,

of the irregular ridge crest. However all paths converge on the narrow saddle that must be crossed

especially Jay Titus for he is the person with whom I have co-lead the most SPS trips. Also I could not



The climbing generations - grandsons and grand niece: Cody Cunningham, Ret Moore, Christie Stoner and Dane Hartman

help thinking of the many good friends who I have co-lead and climbed with in the past, who are now no longer with us.

There were fifteen prior list finishers present and of course we had the obligatory pose of all the "old hand" finishers together with the neophyte. Another pose which particularly pleased me was one which included my two grandsons and my grand-niece. All this busyness ate up the time and we spent more than an hour and a half on the peak. So much so that some got restless and started down before the main group. Eventually every one arrived safely back at the trailhead and were checked off. This still gave us plenty of time to drive the 6 or 7 miles back to Chimney Creek Camp-



First time climbers: Cody Cunningham, Christie Stoner, Ret, Katy Freese (bottom), Brenda DeRamus and Shari Shepard



List finishers celebrating a new member to thier "club"!

Top Row: Greg Roach, Victor Henney, Sue Wyman, Duane McRuer, Ret Moore, Rich Gnagy, Reiner Stenzel, Barbara Sholle. Middle Row: Larry Tidball, Gerald Holleman, Pat Holleman, Mirna Roach, Steve Eckert. Bottom Row: Don Sparks, Gene Mauk, Ron Hudson.

ground, where another six people were waiting for us to begin preparations for the big celebration.

The BIG CELEBRATION was not only a continuation of the one on the peak, but an 80th birthday party for Ret. It was slightly early, but we would not have gotten near as many climbers out if we had waited 3 days until the following Tuesday. Everyone brought hors d'oeuvres or salad





List Finishing women with Ret: Sue Wyman, Barbara Sholle, Mirna Roach and Pat Holleman

and we had barbecued chicken cooked by the celebrated Chef Barbee, baked ham, black beans, wine and soft drinks. The "piece d' resistance" was two large birthday cakes provided by the McRuers which were decorated with a mountain theme and outfitted by Duane with candles in some occult arrangement which he claimed represented the number 80.

After the dinner dishes were cleared away, they seated me in the center of the large group, obviously intent on some mischief. My puzzlement soon cleared as Duane conducted a "Roast of Ret". A few touched some of my many foibles and fallacies - such as our party attempting to set a new record for upstream travel on the Colorado River, but which traveled in the wrong direction, downstream. Or, the geologic field trip and climb of Mt. Morrison that I led, which set a record for longevity. The leader and some of the group arriving back at Convict Lake long after dark. In general though,

the speakers seemed a little too complementary. Obviously not well practiced in the art of roasting.

When the roast was over, most of the group gathered around the campfire to discuss climbs or experiences, but some retired to their campsites or motels. Those who stayed were entertained by Sue and Suzanne who played their guitars and sang country and blue grass songs on into the night. In all, the day and evening was a very moving experience for me and one I will never forget.

Thanks to all of those listed below whose participation made this event possible and to Reiner Stenzel, Steve Eckert and Barbee Tidball who sent me copies of their pictures, some of which are included in this article.

#### Climbers

Gary Bowen, Jan Brahms, David Busdeicker, Brian Constant, Brent Crookham, Cody Cunningham, Darrick Danta, Randall & Alice Danta, Brenda DeRamus, Ron Eckelemann, Steve Eckert, Katy Freese, Rich Gnagy, Dane Hartman, Vic Henney, Jim Hinkley, Leslie Hofherr, Pat & Gerry Holleman, Don Holmes, Ron Hudson, Adrienne

Knute, Susan & Dan Livingston, Dave & Patti MacCormack, Igor & Suzanne Mamedalian, Gene Mauk, Linda McDermott, Mary McMannes, Duane McRuer [co-leader], Ret Moore [leader], Gary Raub, David Reneric, Greg & Mirna Roach, Greg Rzonca, Shari Shepard, Dave & Barbara Sholle, Don Sparks, Reiner Stenzel, Christie Stoner, Larry & Barbee Tidball, Jay Titus, David Underwood, Charlie Wagener, John & Liz Wagner, Joe Wankum, Sue Wyman, Ron Young.

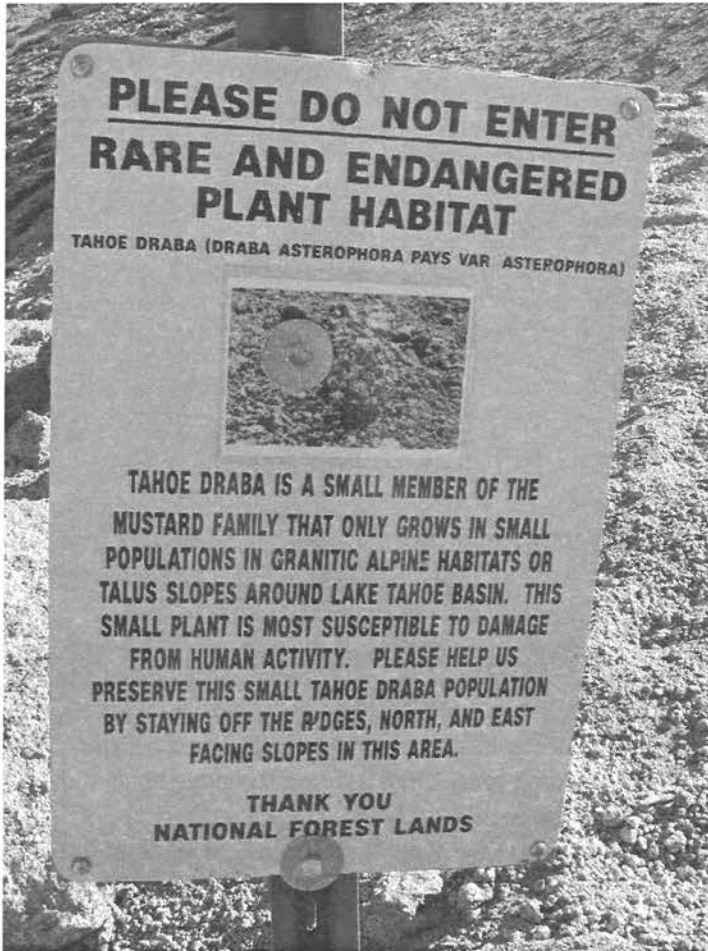
#### Party Goes Who Did Not Climb

Chris Constant, Don Clark, Cathi Hartman, Betty McRuer, Maggie Moore, Richard Whitcomb.



A big BBQ feast wrapped up the day.





## WE GET LETTERS

Pete Yamagata send this note after climbing Freel Peak:

"Some new signs are posted on my Route A, from the Tahoe Rim Trail . They are thinking of building a summit trail, so they seem to be laying groundwork to do that. There's a new sign right on the use trail, far from the Tahoe Rim Trail."

Please check with the local ranger station before heading up Freel Peak - it appears they are closing routes on the north and east facing slopes.

## Meeting Minutes Sierra Peaks Section

Management Committee Meeting- Sept. 10, 2003

## SPS T-SHIRTS

**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.**



Location: Conference Room, Lower Plaza, Angeles Chapter HQ

Attended by: Joe Wankum, Gary Schenk, Mike Dillenback

As there was not a quorum, no Management committee meeting was held.

### General Meeting

New attendees were introduced. Joe Wankum gave an overview of the section and its activities to the newcomers.

Outings were reported on and a few upcoming trips were discussed. The schedule is quite busy at this time.

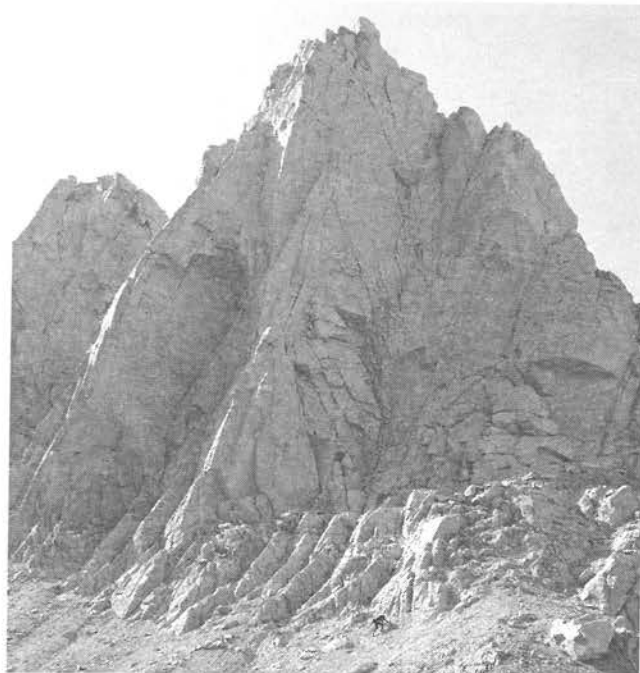
Rich Henke gave a particularly interesting show on some first ascents of glaciated peaks in Patagonia, as well as a backpack to Fitz Roy and Cerro Torre.

# MOUNT MARSH

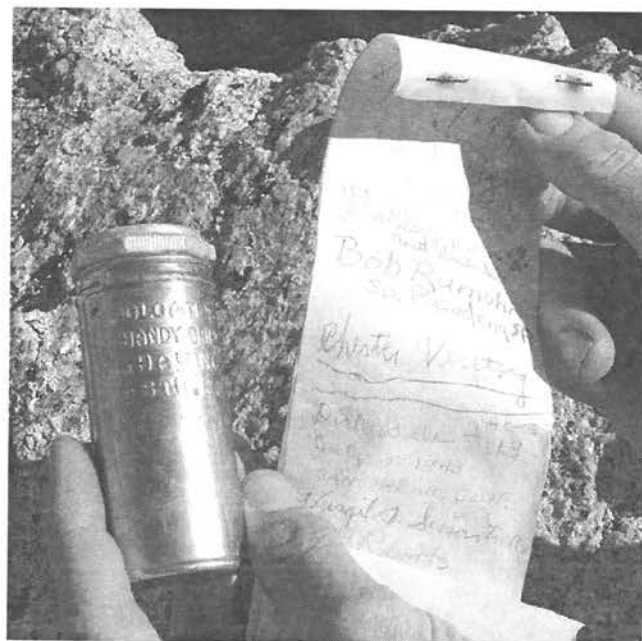
Sep 28, 2003 by Reiner Stenzel

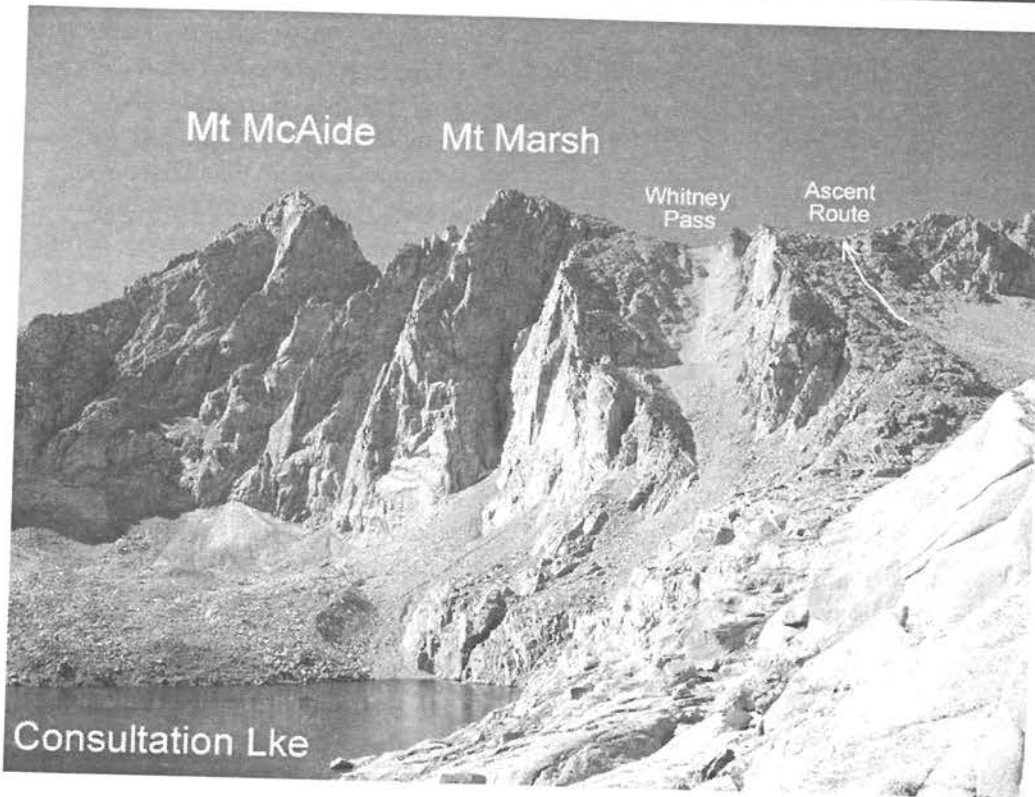


There are a few unknown peaks in the Sierra Nevada that are real treasures of terms of climbing history. One of them is Mount Woodworth with a 100-year old register, another one is Mt Marsh. Few peak climbers have even heard of Mt Marsh. No word about it in Browning's "Name Places..." It is not spelled out on the Mt Whitney topo map since only last year the USBGN has officially accepted the name. It is located 0.3mi NNW of Mt McAdie at UTM 11 385679E, 4046037N, elev. 13,550', NAD27. Bob Rockwell wrote a fine article about it in the Southern Sierran (Feb 2003, p.8). Inspired by the history and the name I called my friend Tom Marsh to find out whether he wants to climb "his" mountain. He happily agreed although there were no family ties. We scheduled it as an I-rated Sierra Club trip through the SMS, which now conducts summer peak climbs. Due to the scarcity of permits we decided to do it as a long day hike from Whitney Portal (8,360'). Our participants were Rudy Fleck and Mike Rector. On a fine summer-like fall day we started at 7am and hiked up the main Whitney Trail, our expensive day hike permits dangling from the packs. By 10:30am we were near Consultation Lake where we consulted the write-up and terrain about our XC route options. Bob Rockwell describes an ascent via the obvious chute from Consultation Lake to Whitney Pass. It is a 1500' climb on sand at the angle of repose, not my favorite uphill choice. Besides it is difficult to enter the chute from either the lake or the steep rib to the right (north) of the chute. So we chose to climb to the right of the rib on



rock and talus blocks. After a long ascent we reached the ridge west and above Whitney Pass (13,280'). According to the map running the ridge appeared easy, but in reality there were a few short cl 3-4 surprises on the way. By 1 pm we were all on the summit of Mt Marsh (13,550' or 4130m). Under a pile of rocks was a peak register. Two stacked soup cans contained a plastic bag with another metal cylinder inside, a Colgate shaving stick container. It contained two long sheets of paper with all the original entries, starting with the first ascent by Chester Versteeg and his party in Aug 1940. The first page has three other entries up to the year 1968,





the sand gave away to hard clay and the footing became insecure as the angle steepened to >35 deg and the chute funneled down into a narrow gully. We had to get out of the chute. We traversed just below the rockwall to a second broader gully, which also lead down to the lake. Unfortunately at the lake we found out that vertical rock walls obstructed the way around the west side of Consulta-

tion Lake. Even on the south side vertical rock walls dropped into the lake, preventing an escape around the east side. So we had to climb back up through a cl 3-4 chute to the plateau west of the lake. From there on it was a short hike back to the trail below Trail Camp. Obviously, the chute is not the best way to Whitney Pass. Another 3-hour march on the Mt Whitney highway got us down to Whitney Portal by 6pm. We felt the 11-hour day of doing about 18mi rt. and 5200' up and down. More than enough to burn all the good food from Ret Moore's SPS List Finish Party the day before. Thanks to Tom for his help to lead this trip for a small, strong and fun group.

the second page has five entries from 1971-76, the third page lists three climbs in 1979, 1998 and 2002 and the fourth and last page has now our signatures from 2003. No familiar SPS names were found in this register. Ours must have been the first scheduled Sierra Club trip to this summit. Two further Xerox copies were included in the plastic envelope that described the background history of this peak: Chester Versteeg (1887-1963) unofficially named the mountain in honor of Gustave F. Marsh from Lone Pine who designed and built the Mt Whitney trail in 1904 and the summit hut in 1909. The latter was used for scientific purposes. Through the persistence of George Marsh, the grandson of Gustave Marsh, the US Board on Geographic Names officially named the mountain Mt Marsh on January 10, 2002.

After taking pictures of this historic register, enjoying the views of nearby McAdie, Muir, Whitney, Russell, etc., it was time to descend. At 1:30pm we were back at Whitney Pass. The sandy chute leads straight down to Consultation Lake (11,680'). Usually scree slopes are fun to descend. So we decided to jump into it, two in parallel since the rocks were tumbling down the chute. After a while we would duck for shelter and radio the other pair to come down. It was fun until





# MT. CONNESS

Sept. 20-21, 2003

Joe Wankum/Barry Holchin

Conness needs to be led more often. While my other trip did not start getting signups until a month before the trip, this one had a wait list a week after it was published in the Echo. Although I only had perhaps 10 people on the actual wait list, I also had 20 more on an "interested" list. And this did not include another dozen or two who inquired but lost interest when they heard the length of the wait list. With a reservation for 12, after 4 cancellations near the end and only one replacement, I ended up getting a permit for 9 people. Most had never been on an SPS trip before. Several completed their WTC graduation requirements on this trip.

A planned 8 am start turned into a 9:30 departure after the permit station opened at 8 instead of 7:30, and after the leader was able to obtain a permit for a loop trip (in via Dog Lake, out via Glen Aulin trail) - which then required a car shuttle. After 5-1/2 hours, the group arrived at the middle of the Young Lakes at 3 pm. Sunday, we left camp at 6:41, summited at 11:30, started down at 11:58, were back in camp at 2:44, and were packed up and out of camp at 3:32 pm. After a 25 minute break for filtering water, the group arrived at the cars at 8 pm, exactly as WTC student Erik had predicted. After unshuttling the cars, Leo left for his 2-1/2 hr drive home while the rest of the group headed for the Tuolumne Meadows campground for a quick meal and some much deserved rest.

In the past, I have either led or assisted trips. This was the first time that I co-led a trip - and was wondering how well this would work out. I did the initial planning early this year, got the reservation for the permit, and handled signups. At the trailhead, Barry did what he excels at (i.e., working with the people). And being the faster hiker, Barry led most of the way but gave me the opportunity to lead the best part at the top (the last 300'). After being taught a quarter century ago of the need to have one person in charge of a mountaineering outing, I have seen more and more trips in recent years with co-leaders. Having now tried it, I am ready to agree that this can be a successful arrangement with the right combination of co-leaders.

The backpack in was uneventful. Arriving at the

lower lake, the leaders split up to scout out campsites at the two lower lakes. Barry picked an ideal campsite a little over 100' from the middle lake (YNP rules) with somewhat-shaded flat spots for all. Rather than following the use trail that exists over much of the route, Barry led the climb via a high route past a small lake that shows on the map, before descending to the vegetation below the boggy ponds that appear on the map as a lake south of Conness. We passed the ponds, then climbed the scree on the left to an upper valley where several of the group (who had no reason to climb the peak) decided they would wait and watch the climb from below. Arriving at the saddle SE of the peak, another participant decided that knee problems might interfere and also decided not to proceed. That left five climbers interested in getting the peak, which worked out well.

After a brief break, I started out. The summit appears almost separated from the mountain, yet connected by a sometimes 10-foot wide, curving ridge. Flattened rocks most of the way provide a walkway that might best be described as an airy class 1 walk. Before starting, I ask the group: Are you sure you want to do this? Seeing the look of anticipation on the faces of the climbers provided me the answer. I was committed. Traversing a 10-foot long, 8-inch wide ledge (good handholds), then switching back up sloping rock for several feet brought us to the walkway. The perfect weather we were experiencing made the rest of the climb (walk) to the summit rather trivial. (A strong wind would make for interesting times.)

After seeing them on this climb, I think that Leo, Silvana, and Paul would really enjoy a trip up Russell. Other participants who helped make this a very enjoyable outing were Jean, Erik, Deana, and Darlene. And I'd really like to thank Barry for joining in leading this delightful trip.

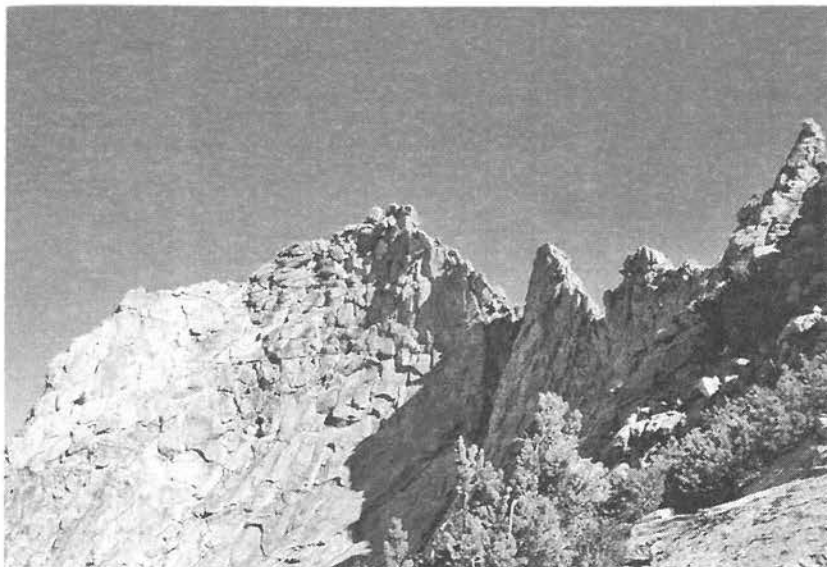
While this peak is commonly led as a day hike from the east, I recommend this as a backpack to the Young Lakes. A 3-day trip would be more comfortable than a weekend trip - and would provide an opportunity for a hike to Roosevelt Lake after the peak climb the second day. Judging by the number of people who have signed in to the register during the last several years, this area is probably crowded to capacity during the summer. The typically good weather this area has in September makes this an ideal time for the climb - after the summer crowds have left.



# Mt. Clark & Gray Peak

Aug 21-24, 2003

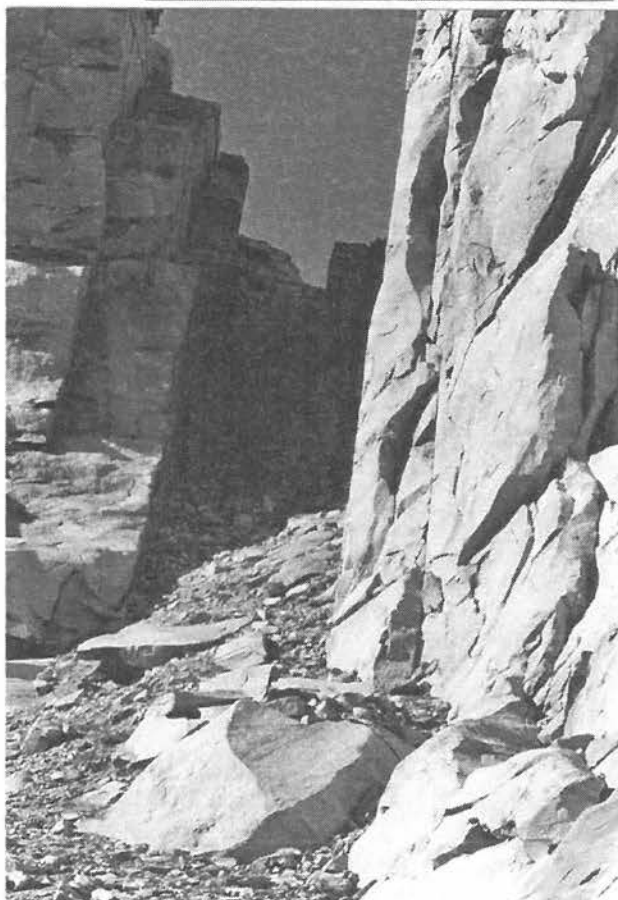
Henry A. Arnebold (co-  
leader)  
John T. Dodds



The group met Thursday morning at the Mono Meadow Trailhead and after introductions and getting organized we started out at 7:30AM. The day started out overcast and then rained part of the morning just to make it miserable for awhile. By late morning it stopped raining so we could enjoy the rest of the 10 miles and 3,500ft of gain hike. The last half was cross country to reach base camp at a tarn (9910ft) between Clark & Gray. After an overcast and wet first day we lucked out and had great weather, it was fun in the sun for the rest of the trip.

On Friday seven of us started for Clark. We ascended a broad ridge next to our camp and followed it toward the ridge between Clark and Gray. As we approached the southeast arête a decision was made to drop down a chute several hundred feet and go around to the East side of Clark. I'll just call it the Steve Thaw variation and leave it at that. Slightly below the summit block we crossed over to the south side where we found the exposed move that leads to the top. I was first across and belayed the rest of the group up and back again. Steve then belayed me and we started down. Our return trip was much shorter as we now used the gap in the arête to get back to camp. We arrived earlier than expected and had time to enjoy a dip in the tarn and relax in the sunshine. A fitting end to a great day.

Saturday we climbed Gray Peak. It was easy class 2 up to about 100 feet below the summit, then easy class 3, hand over hand stuff—a very nice climb. We found the class 2 route on the way down. An early start—around 6:30ish, and summited around 9:30. View from the top was great—all of

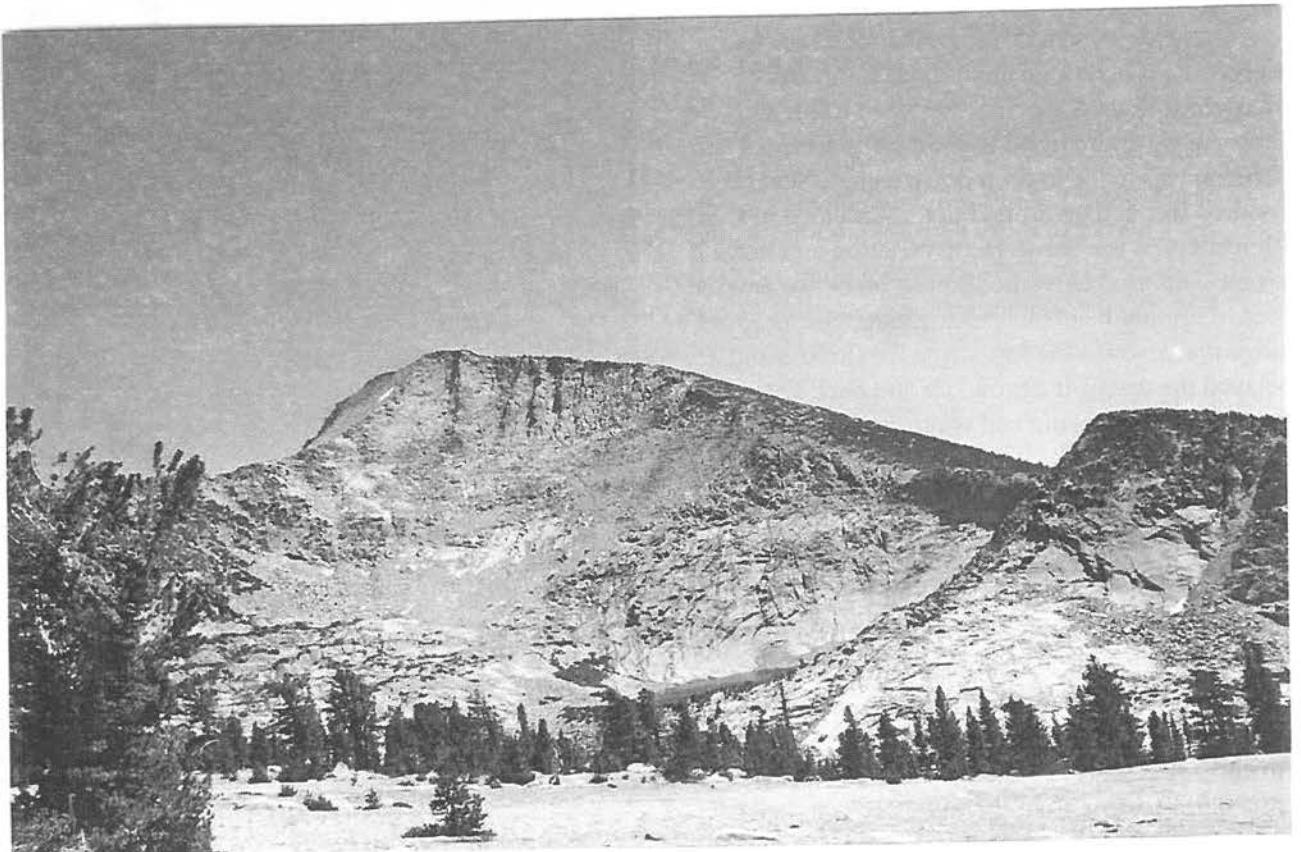




Yosemite. We could see Yosemite Falls, Glacier Point, Half Dome, and all the peaks on the northern boundary. The view continued around to Mts. Lyell and Maclure, Banner and Ritter, and the Minarets.

Saturday afternoon we packed up and hiked about five miles or so to the Merced Pass Trail and camped. That left about 5 miles to walk out on trail Sunday morning which we accomplished in about 3 hours.

We would like to thank our climbing partners Steve Thaw (co-leader), Joy Goebel, Susan Livingston, Terry Flood, Gary Bowen, and Eric Wilson for making this a wonderful trip.



## Pilot Knob (South)

May 10-11, 2003

by Pete Yamagata

Lest this fine trip go unreported, this account is provided for the Echo.

A joint SPS/PCS trip, led by Michael McDermitt and Ron Hudson had been rescheduled to the next week due to a major storm the original weekend. I needed a new SPS peak for numbers, so eagerly signed up.

Meeting Mike and another PCS'er on Interstate 5 Friday, we came to Lake Isabella a bit before dinner, so shopped at a supermarket and ate our meals at the Walker Pass Campground. The night was pretty cool.

We had checked out the private residence at the bridge across the South Fork of the Kern River. No one was home, but a dog.

Saturday morning, we gathered the group and carpoled to a

California Department of Fish and Game reserve. Starting up a dirt road by about 8:25 a.m., we entered the private land and crossed the rickety bridge, with posted warnings. Mike found a use trail leading to the left, so we took that. Following ducks, we ascended cross-country through the steep hillside, with

plenty of brush, oaks, and pinyons. Two hikers saw this would not be an easy climb, so signed off.

I was falling behind the group, with the leader setting a good pace. I had thought there was a use trail all or most of the way, but we never saw it. After some time, we reached the ridge at a slight saddle, and rested. It was only some 400 or 500 feet to the top. A use trail became more prevalent at this point, but I had misjudged the amount of water I'd need. With the cool morning, I had brought only two liters.

The route enters a shrubby section, and then a class 2 rock move delayed me a bit. Ordered to "take off (my) pack," I did so promptly, and clambered

behind the rest of the group to the rocky summit. It was about 1:20 p.m. I was able to bring up my digital camera with a film camera back-up.

We started down at a good time, and the temperatures grew warmer. Pretty much, our same route was followed down, and I anticipated the green, flat meadows below. Back to our cars by about 5:35 p.m., we hurried back to Walker Pass Campground and had a pleasant feast.

Sunday, we took off for Owens Peak. I had already done this, and knew our carload had a long drive home. We carpoled into the 4WD vehicles about a couple miles from the Owens Peak trailhead, and would you know it, encountered Sarah Wyrens checking out the area for some forthcoming outing.

The trail climbs nicely up, but I was slow. I

offered to sign out, since I estimated, with this fast group, there would be an hour's delay in our total round trip time if I continued. I hiked back to enjoy sights of tiny hummingbirds, and a fair display of wildflowers.

Back to the trucks, I spoke with some ATV'ers, then gamely ventured a short distance to explore some rocks



and one potential car camping spot, with a distant view of Five Fingers.

The group returned in good time, by 3:25 p.m., and we motored back to the parking for the lesser vehicles, said our goodbyes, then our truck began the long drive home.

Other participants included Patty Rambert, Christopher Franchuk, Rod McNalley, and Chris Artale. I haven't any better records from the register, so my apologies to those whom I am unable to name.

Photo - Climbers on Pilot Knob (south) summit.



# Iron Mountain From Anona Lake

Private Climb by Ed Lubin

On Saturday 9/6/03, Jeff Harper, Ken Pezeshk and I, backpacked the Fern Lake trail from Devils Postpile National Monument, elevation 7559', en-route to climb Iron Mountain elevation 11,149', from Anona Lake. See map.

The trail from Fern to Anona Lake, elevation 9100±', was indistinct in places; and the latter portion is routed below the outlet instead of toward the peak. Our campsite about 150' above the east shore, near the route for climb, was reachable directly from the vertex of trail.

Jacques Bernier rendezvoused with us at 7:00 a.m. on Sunday, to day-climb Iron! Hiking at a moderate pace, it had taken him three hours, fifteen minutes to reach our campsite from the trailhead.

With backpacks stowed about 100' above where we had camped, the four of us contoured toward the ridge point exactly at the base of the north slope of Peak 10,821', 3288 meters on Cattle Mtn. Quad.

We dropped into and crossed the chute located due south of the lake. There was a scree ramp down the cliff face, which happened to be situated on our intended route, estimated elevation 9500'.

From the opposite side of the chute the ramp and one beside it, appeared to be the only ways down the whole cliff; otherwise it may have been necessary to go up the chute. Snow would be encountered earlier in year; snow—line happened to be right above us.

We crossed at an ideal point where the cliff gradient on the west side of the chute became more



View west side of peak 10,821' (top right), from near the summit of Iron Mtn. East ridge of Ashley Cirque, foreground. Chute located due south of Anona Lake, near center of background.

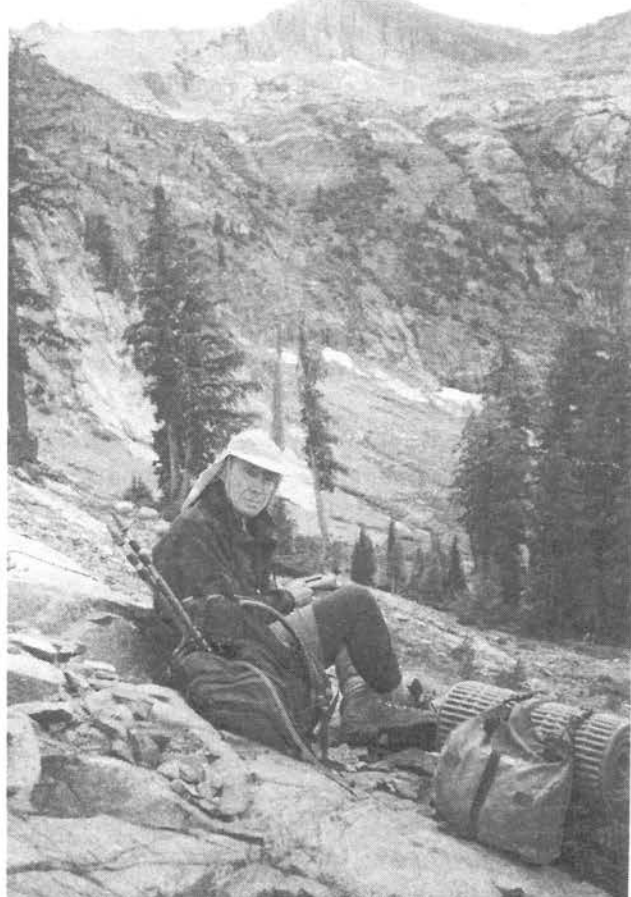
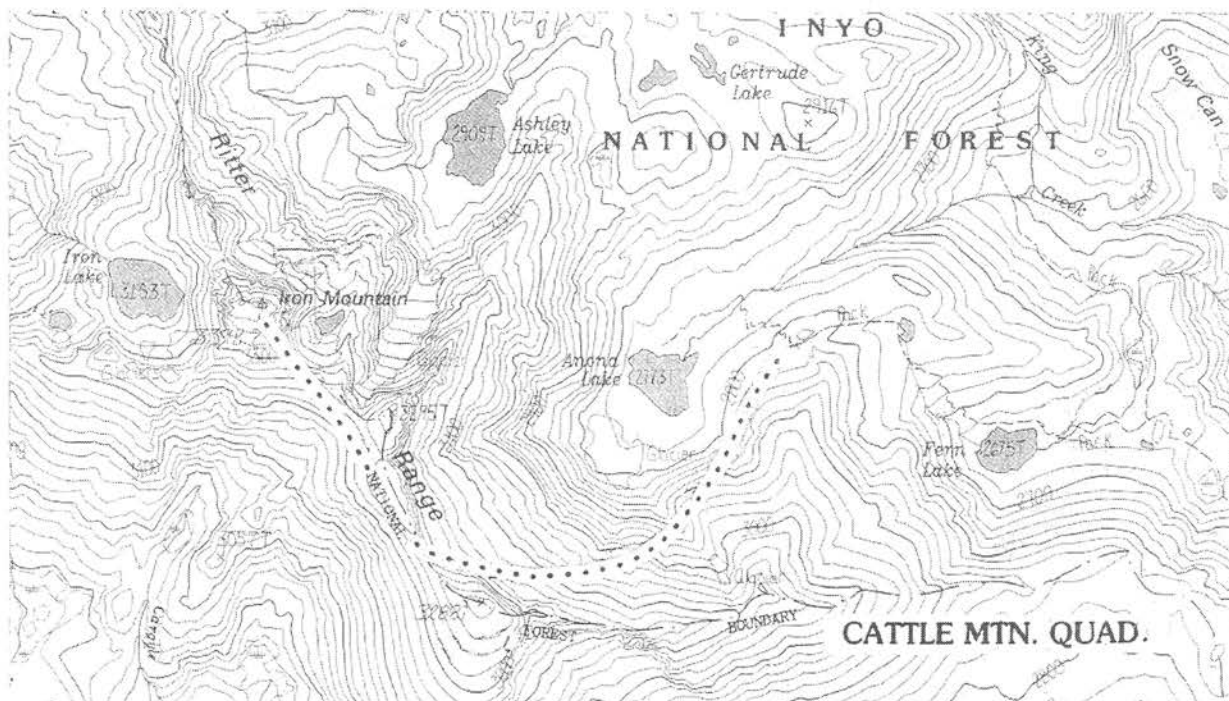
gradual and was broken by small ledges which merged with the vast talus field east of Peak 10,821'.

The final hundred feet to the ridge line at the northern base of that peak and key part of climb, was up steep talus and scree to the north of a tiny chute; both set close together in the otherwise impenetrable cliff on eastern side of the north-south tending ridge.

We then crossed to the western side, and contoured on talus down to the head of the Ashley Lake cirque, another route up Iron. Its snowfield had receded about 200' below the ridge, which sometimes is corniced earlier in year. There was a path switch-backing up the extremely steep and muddy terrain to where we stood. Here, we also found a path leading to the summit.

Climbing at a slow to moderate pace, it took four hours, fifteen minutes up, and three hours, thirty minutes down. Our class 2 climb went well. Someone adding the true elevation of the aforemen-





tioned pair of ramps to this report, using Anona Lake as a benchmark, and a large cairn placed atop, would aid climbers in taking this route.

Accompanied by Jacques and backpacking out at a slow pace, we returned to the trailhead in about five hours.

Although an estimated one mile round-trip further than our Anona Lake approach, a possible contender for the simplest and fastest way up Iron Mtn., could be climbing it from the headwater of the East Fork of Cargyle Creek, south of the peak; reaching there by going due west from the Granite Stairway, then gradually contouring. We seriously considered doing Iron Mtn as a day climb from Devils Postpile; summiting by our Anona Lake approach and returning by way of Cargyle Creek.

Ed Lubin where backpacks were stowed. Peak 10,821, background. Ridge was crossed at the base of north slope (right side of photo)

## Flying Ain't Just for Birds

Sunday, 9/7/03

[Don't ever let my mom read this!]

by Bill Oliver

Ya know, birthdays can be unsettling events. I mean, besides the trauma of getting older, some of us seem impelled to suspend reason and engage in ridiculous and death-defying behaviors.

Like the time in California two years ago when Brett somehow conned me into going bungee jumping. The justification for this insane behavior was to celebrate a friend's birthday. Like sheep being led to the slaughter, we all calmly hiked five miles up the East Fk of the San Gabriel River to arrive at The Bridge to Nowhere. This impressive concrete arch bridge spans a gorge 150 ft or so above the river. The "road" to the bridge is now only slightly evident, however, as the great flood of 1938 washed it out and construction was abandoned – thus the hiking trail.

At a cost of \$127 each we got three jumps. You recklessly climb over the bridge railing and stand on a little square platform – something like the trap door at a hanging! Then the crowd loudly counts down: five, four, three, two, one – bungee! Were it not for the embarrassment of still standing there after the countdown, I'm sure we'd all have remained frozen in place. Oh, and don't forget: launch forward rather than just drop – lest you somehow smash your head on the first rebound! Talk about a rush. I don't think we quite reached terminal velocity before the cord (blessedly) brought one momentarily to zero velocity, then reversed the vector. Trust me – gravity accelerates!

The two dudes running this operation had a great website. However, they later went out of business. I don't think they had proper permission to use the bridge, although now they appear to be back in operation: [www.bungeeamerica.com](http://www.bungeeamerica.com)

Oh, and then there was the birthday we celebrated Saturday, 9/6/03. Brett had called me midweek and, in the course of planning another trip, he slipped in the bombshell. To celebrate his dad's birthday they were all going skydiving on Saturday – and I was expected.

I got the website address: <http://mile-hi-skydiving.com>

Right off, it lists "Top Ten Reasons" to jump with Mile-Hi, out of the Longmont city airport, about twelve miles NE of Boulder. For example, the landing zone is free of cactus.



For the cost \$184 it would be a "tandem jump." That means about 5-7 minutes of personal instruction before you board the small plane with your tandem buddy. This dude (most of whom have thousands of jumps under their belts) then pretty tightly straps himself behind you. Although sorta uncool, this is actually a pretty good idea, seeing as how the parachute is strapped to his back!

I only had one question: if the tandem buddy, for whatever reason, fails to function, how do I deploy the chute? No. 1 – don't jettison this guy; he's got the chute! OK, calm down. There's this golf ball with a cord on it by his right hip. Pull the cord and out pops the chute. Actually, if you ask politely in advance, you can pull the cord yourself anyway when he gives the signal. We also went over how to handle a failed deployment if your tandem dude still isn't functioning. You have to release the first chute and then undo a couple of his shoulder buckles and, hmmm – I can't remember the rest. I figured the "secondary chute" is probably just a placebo anyway.

The weather was acceptable but far from ideal – high threatening cloud cover. This would definitely obscure our "bird's eye" view of Longs Peak and the Rocky Mtns. It also meant lower atm pressure and thus a reduced free-fall time – say, from a minute down to about forty seconds. The airport is already at 5050 feet. In the current conditions, the plane could get between 10 and 11,000 feet above the deck. At five thousand feet, as noted on a big wrist altimeter, one of us would need to remember to deploy the chute. Why isn't this automatic?

OK, Aaron somehow became my tandem buddy. I got suited up in a "jumpsuit" and he started the preliminary harnessing process. A flatbed took us out to the runway, and we boarded the plane – everyone quiet in their deep thoughts.

We were lined up in two benches, facing back to

the door. At somewhere around 10,500' above ground the single jumpers deplaned. Then came the tandems. Aaron handed me a pair of goggles and reminded me to scrunch down at the hatch, chest forward. As we leaned out into the windy blue void (as he pushed me in front of him), I was supposed to bend my legs back between his legs. I guess it did so – more or less. Damn – I forgot to say Geronimo. We did at least one complete summersault before settling into the standard face-down, spread-eagled position. I was expecting it might be rather cold, but it was only slightly chilly. The wind blast in my face, however, did make it rather noisy. There was no pronounced acceleration, as previously from the Bridge. We were already moving at about 100 mph in the plane, and we quickly achieved our terminal speed of about 120 mph.

This was like way cool, dude. However, I was soon eager to end the free fall. The wind blast in my face didn't prevent breathing, but I found it noticeably uncomfortable. Eventually, Aaron started functioning and he tapped me on the shoulder – time to pull the golf ball. All right! The rectangular chute dutifully deployed, and it quickly brought us back from the brink of disaster. There is a God!

I could now breathe easily, remove the goggles and pull out my camera. Aaron delighted in showing me how he could steer our craft all about, and we

went into a brief death spiral. I was surprised and disappointed when way too soon he said it was time to put the camera away.

Lesson two was at hand: how to land. They purposely don't teach this before the jump, lest you somehow get confused between tucking your legs back vs. arching them forward. It seemed like we were coming in too fast, but just in time he put on the brake - and we skidded on our butts a couple of feet. Aaron had just earned a \$10 tip!

Ya know, everyone in their life deserves to have at least one wild and crazy bud. I have been blessed with several. Brett is one of the best.



Flying soaring

---

**Part 2 - Tracy Sulkin's observations will be presented to SPS participants over the next few Echoes.**

### “Outing Etiquette”

What kind of reputation do you have on Sierra Club outings? If you're not sure in which direction you're headed, keep reading.

#### Packing Up

- Bring everything that the leader requires of you. If you question the necessity of an item, bring it to the trailhead anyway and then discuss it with the leader.
- Plan ahead to share gear or plan to [really] be self-sufficient.
- Remember to bring a happy-hour food item to share. Even the simplest contribution will be enjoyed by all.
- If ridesharing, pack efficiently. Be considerate of space constraints in the driver's car. Consolidate loose gear or various small bags. Con-

versely, many folks are in the habit of bringing a large duffel containing gear intended to be packed at the trailhead, along with other unnecessary gear. These duffels take up the space of a backpack.

#### Driving Up

- Arrange all ridesharing matters in advance (gas purchases, scheduled stops, driving rotations).
- Be on time or communicate to the driver any schedule change, ASAP.

#### Showing Up

- Don't be a “no show.” It's the fastest way to wind up on the “permanent wait” list. Most outings in the Sierra require permits and fees that the leader must pay in advance. Many outings have participant wait lists. If you sign up for an outing and don't show up to participate, you have denied someone else the opportunity, and may have forced the leader to shoulder your fee.

## In High Places:

# St. Helena

by Burton "Snail Circuit" Falk

So, other than the fact that St. Helena (rhymes with Galena) is the site of Napoleon Bonaparte's final exile and death, what else do you know about that small island located way out in the middle of the South Atlantic Ocean?

"Not much," you say. "But I'd like to know more."

Well, are you in luck! Here are a few additional notes regarding that idyllic spot, the home of approximately 5,000—as the islanders refer to themselves—"Saints."

1. St. Helena, along with a line of seamounts extending northeastward from the Mid-Atlantic Ridge to Cameroon/Nigeria, was formed as a result of a tectonic plate moving over a hot spot (or plume) in the earth's mantle. The island is what remains of a huge shield volcano. It is believed that the last volcanic activity took place there 8 million years ago.

2. Ascension Island, 703 miles to the northwest, is the nearest land to St. Helena. The mainland closest to the island is the west coast of Angola, in Africa, some 1,200 miles away. St. Helena is approximately 47 square miles in area, and is just over 10 miles wide at its maximum.
3. Although situated in the tropics (15 degrees south), St. Helena's climate is kept "mild, equable and healthy" by southeast tradewinds. Summers are warm and sunny, while winters are cool and mild, with moderate rains. In coastal Jamestown, the island's only city, temperatures average between 68 and 86 F. Rainfall averages 10" per year along the coast, but about 40" in the island's lush central mountains.
4. The Portuguese admiral Joao da Nova Castella discovered the island on May 21, 1502, named it St. Helena in honor of the mother of Constantine, and claimed it in the name of the king of Portugal.
5. As Portugal's interest in the South Atlantic waned, first the Dutch (1633), then the East India Company (1659)—a British concern, claimed the island. In 1834, possession of St. Helena was transferred to the British Crown, and it has remained there ever since.



Jamestown, situated in a long, steep-sided valley



It took Napoleon Bonaparte, however, to bring St. Helena to the world's attention. Indeed, the remote island was just a watering stop on the route to India until October 15, 1815, when the *Northumberland*, carrying perhaps history's most famous prisoner, arrived off the island's northwestern coast.

"But, refresh my memory," you say. "Just why was Napoleon exiled to St. Helena?"

Well, briefly, Napoleon Bonaparte was born in Corsica in 1769, educated in mainland France, and received his commission in the French Army in 1785. In 1793, shortly after the French Revolution, the young Bonaparte became instrumental in driving the British out of the seaport of Toulon, and in October 1795, he helped rescue the teetering government by giving an angry Parisian mob "a whiff of grapeshot," killing some 100 insurgents while doing so.

In appreciation for his efforts, Bonaparte was appointed commander of a collection of rag tag troops, a group he rapidly transformed into a first-class fighting machine. Tasting his first victories in Italy (1796) and Egypt (1799), Bonaparte returned in triumph to Paris, where he was appointed the First Consul—in essence becoming the political leader of France. Continuing his ambitious plans, he defeated the Austrians at the battle of Marengo in 1800, smashed the combined Russian and Austrian forces at Austerlitz in 1805, routed the Prussians at Jena in 1806, and subdued Sweden in 1808. While all these victories were piling up, Bonaparte, in 1804, literally taking the crown out of the hands of the Pope and placing it upon his own head, proclaimed himself Emperor of France, thus restoring the system of court and nobility that the revolution had brought to an end to fourteen years earlier.

In 1812, Bonaparte's fortunes took a decided turn for the worse when he opted to invade Russia.

Following a victorious but costly battle just outside Moscow, then entering the city to find it flames, the Emperor came to the realization that his army was overextended, that it lacked in supplies, and that the dreadful Russian winter was fast approaching. He was forced to pull back.

As a consequence of this misbegotten Russian offensive and disastrous retreat, up to a million troops—French, Russian, Prussian and mercenaries from many other nations—perished. Returning to Paris with his tail between his legs, the Emperor abdicated the throne, and in 1814 retired to become ruler of Elba, a small island lying between Corsica and mainland Italy.

Unfortunately for Europe, Elba wasn't big enough to hold Napoleon. Early in 1815, he returned to France, raised yet another army, and headed north, toward the Low Countries. Confronting British and Prussian forces at Waterloo in what is now Belgium (June 12-18, 1815), Napoleon and his army were soundly and roundly defeated.

Following Waterloo, the allies, especially the British, decided the scourge of Europe must be exiled to a place from which he could never return—and thus St. Helena became a familiar place name in world history.

So when my wife Jo and I, passengers on board the *Explorer*, visited St. Helena last October 20, did I visit Longwood House, where Napoleon spent the last six miserable years of his life and/or the Sane Valley, where he was originally buried, the two most visited tourist attractions on the island? No, indeed, I did not. Rather, compelled by the knowledge that ECHO readers would expect me, nay, demand me to explore St. Helena's mountains, I, while Jo and the other passengers were soaking up Napoleonic history, sacrificed myself by spending my one and only day on St. Helena climbing **Diana's Peak**, the 2,685' highpoint of the island.

Okay, okay—I confess—it was no sacrifice at all. In fact, my climb of **Diana's Peak** ranked as one of the top two best things I did during our thirty-five



On the Snail Circuit

day cruise from the Canary Islands to the Falklands (mixing it up with 25,000 magnificently attired King Penguins on South Georgia Island was the other).

And the main reason I had such a terrific time was due to my guide, whom I had prearranged by internet—the bright, dedicated and delightful, Dr. Rebecca Cairns-Wicks.

Cairns-Wicks—“a thirty something female, with fair hair,” as she described herself in one e-mail message—was born and raised in the north of England, and first became interested in the flora of St Helena while working as an undergraduate student at Kew Gardens in London. Later, while studying for her doctor’s degree at Oxford, specializing in St. Helena’s endemic plants, she made two trips to the island, and there she met her husband to be, a “Saint.” And the rest, as they say, is history.

Until recently Rebecca was the island’s Environmental Coordinator, but, due to the loss of her babysitter, she had to quit and become a full-time mom to her two small children. Her passion for the native island plants remains undiminished, however, and, indeed, she and her husband are currently nurturing a crop of seedling endemic plants that will someday be transplanted on the island’s mountains.

Which poses the question, “Why would indigenous plants need to be returned to St. Helena’s lush and fertile mountains?” Well, the primary reason involves flax, a plant that resembles a clump of grass, only magnified until its blades are up to 9 feet long and 5 inches wide, a native of New Zealand, which is used for making cordage and sacking. It seems that years ago some genius discovered that St. Helena’s climate was just perfect for profitably growing the plant, and soon after acre upon acre of the island’s indigenous plants were

being cleared and replanted with the non-native flora. And as the flax grew and prospered it began to aggressively encroach upon what remained of the island’s rare plants.

Which poses another question, “Just what’s so special about St. Helena’s native flora?” Well, to quote from the **Diana’s Peak** National Park official brochure: “...St. Helena has harbored forty-five special plant species and hundreds of animal species for millions of years. Their ancestors colonized St. Helena from prehistoric forests which have long disappeared from the world’s continents, so casting

(the island’s) plants and animals as fragments from the wreck of an ancient world...”

“Tangled endemic tree ferns form the thickets covering St. Helena’s highest peaks...Endemic trees living amongst the tree ferns are descended from trees of the humid forests of Africa from the Miocene age, more than 10 million years ago. They are of exceptional interest to scientists trying to understand the evolution of species.”

And that brings us up to the climb itself. Although low clouds covered the mountaintops on the morning that Rebecca, Phil Claud, a retired U.S. Forest Ranger, and I began our ascent of **Diana’s Peak**, it was obvious that the hillsides upon which these prehistoric plants grow were stunningly beautiful.

Starting off on the Snail Circuit (named for the endemic Blushing snail, not because it’s a slow hike), one of the National Park’s three loop trails, we wound our way first through an area where the invasive flax is still abundant. Even these areas, covered with the long-leaved plants, glossily verdant in the morning dew, were attractive. Climbing ever higher on the island’s backbone ridge, which runs northwest to southeast, we gradually entered an area that has been restored to an almost pre-flax condition, and there we found the landscape even more appealing. Indeed, surrounded by plants from the Miocene—tree ferns, black cabbage trees, he and



Rebecca stopped every few feet to point out some new flora.

she cabbage trees, large jellicos, etc.—it seemed as if we had been sent spinning back to the age of the dinosaurs. If a fern-munching brontosaurus had suddenly poked his head over a nearby hill, I wouldn't have been in the least bit surprised. Okay, maybe a little!

Although the Snail Circuit can normally be hiked in two hours, Rebecca stopped every few feet to point out some interesting new flora or fauna—an endangered plant, an endemic weevil, a special moss—all the while discoursing on the manner in which conservation efforts are proceeding in the Park (four men are now working full time to tear out the flax—not an easy job as many of the clumps grow on steep hillsides). She also mentioned that flax isn't the only plant causing a problem, and that others too, including fuchsias, which have escaped from island gardens, are now spreading throughout the Park. All in all, it took us about 3-1/2 hours to complete the Snail Circuit, which traverses the island's three highest summits, the mythologically named **Mt. Actaeon, Diana's Peak** and **Cuckold's Point**.

While visiting **Diana's Peak** N. P. was a fascinating experience, getting to know Cairns-Wicks was even better. I can't recall when I've ever met anyone with such a focused passion for conservation. What a treat it was to get to know her. Should she remain on the island, as I presume she will, I'm sure that one day she'll be recognized as the doyenne of St. Helena's conservation efforts.

About 1 p.m., Rebecca delivered Phil and me back to Jamestown, situated in the bottom of a long, steep-sided volcanic valley (think Iao Valley in Maui, only much drier), where we joined the rest of the *Explorer's* passengers at a luncheon at a local hotel. Following the meal, we were royally entertained by a choir of young "Saints" performing a medley of St. Helena folk songs.

That afternoon, Jo and I poked around Jamestown, bought a few souvenirs, and then climbed up and down Jacobs Ladder, a steep 699-step stairway, leading from the middle of the town to an overlooking hill.

Since there is no pier in Jamestown, and because the landing area is often dangerous due to large swells, we left the island that afternoon in same manner by which we arrived that morning, i.e., carefully, via Zodiacs.

Still later, after an on-board cocktail party and dinner in honor of several prominent "Saints," including the island's UK appointed governor, the

*Explorer* began its 4-day, 1,317 nautical mile voyage south to perhaps the world's most isolated island, Tristan da Cunha.

#### ODDS & ENDS

Although Napoleon's 6-year exile on St. Helena was for the most part a melancholy affair, early on, while he and his entourage were waiting for Longwood House to be restored and remodeled for their use, he did enjoy a few lighter moments. It was then, while living with the Balcombe family, that he became friendly with Betsy Balcombe, a thirteen-year old lass proficient enough in French to be able to translate for him.

Betsy is described by author Julia Blackburn, author of *The Emperor's Last Island*, as a girl who "clings on to the amphibious state between childhood and womanhood which allows her to be bad-mannered and rough, while keeping an edge of flirtatiousness."

Forming an immediate bond with the erstwhile Emperor, Betsy teased him, pestered him at will, and on one occasion informed him bluntly that he couldn't sing. When he cheated while playing cards, she threatened to run him through with his own sword. Amazingly, Napoleon, once the most feared man in Europe, seemed charmed by young Betsy's audacity.

Napoleon was first buried in a crypt in the Sane Valley, below Longwood House, but later his remains were removed and interred in a tomb in Les Invalides in Paris. At some point after his death, according to Blackburn, the Emperor and his testicles became separated, the latter now stored in a jar of pure alcohol in a small museum in the South of France. Ouch!

Except for a modicum of island-grown food, St. Helena is dependent on imports for all its supplies. Roughly 60% of these imported goods come from the UK, while the balance is shipped in from South Africa. For the most part, island income is earned through fishing, the sales of fishing licenses and postage stamps, a bit of tourism, and from the export of island-grown coffee. These activities, however, generate only enough revenue to cover about half of the island's operating expenses. The government of the UK underwrites the balance of the funds necessary.

St. Helena has no airport, and thus the only way to visit the island is by ship. Refer to my recent article on Ascension for details.



December/January VOL. 47 NO. 6

Published six times a year by the Sierra Peaks Section (SPS) of the Sierra Club Angeles Chapter.

**EDITORS:** Barbee Tidball & Barbara Sholle. Mailing Address [redacted]  
E-Mail: b [redacted] 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.

The Sierra Echo is the property of the Sierra Peaks Section of the Angeles Chapter of the Sierra Club. All rights reserved. The Sierra Peaks Section maintains a Website at: <http://angeleschapter.org/sps/>.

**SUBSCRIPTIONS: \$15.00 per year, due by March 31st.** Subscribing to the ECHO is a requirement for active membership in the SPS. Sustaining membership is \$25.00 per year, and includes first class postage. Submit new subscription applications and renewals to the Section Treasurer: Henry Arnebold [redacted] and include your Sierra Club membership number. New applications received after October 1 are credited for the subsequent year. Only one ECHO subscription is necessary for multiple members of a family residing at one address. Contributions or gifts to the Sierra Club or the SPS are not tax-deductible.

**ADVERTISEMENT:** Private activity announcements and advertisements are accepted at the following rates. Private trip announcements: \$1.00 for the first 4 lines and \$1.00 for each additional line. Other announcements and product/service advertisements: \$1.00 per line or \$25.00 for a half page space. Reach out to our climbing constituency and place an ad today! Send copy and check made out to the SPS, to the Editor.

**ADDRESS CHANGES:** Send address changes to Secretary: Gary Schenk, [redacted] The ECHO is mailed via 3rd class mail to all regular subscribers and will not be forwarded by the post office.

**PEAKS LIST:** Copies of the SPS peaks list can be obtained by sending \$1.00 and a SASE to the section Treasurer: Henry Arnebold [redacted]

**MISSING ISSUES:** Inquiries regarding missing issues should be directed to the section Mailer: Michael Dillenback [redacted]

**AWARDS:** Notification of accomplishments send to section Secretary: Gary Schenk, [redacted] [redacted] 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, [redacted] Make all Checks Payable to the SPS, all prices include sales tax.

SIERRA CLUB, ANGELES CHAPTER  
SIERRA PEAKS SECTION  
3435 Wilshire Blvd., Suite 320  
Los Angeles, CA 90010-1904  
"To explore, enjoy, and preserve"



ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

Greg Gerlach  
[redacted]

