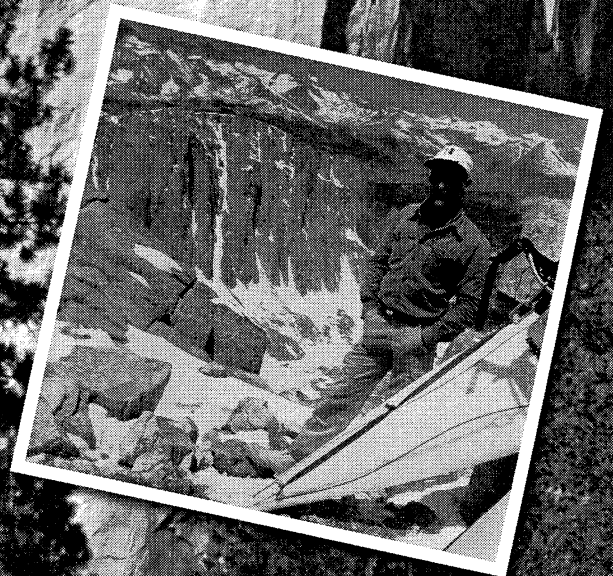
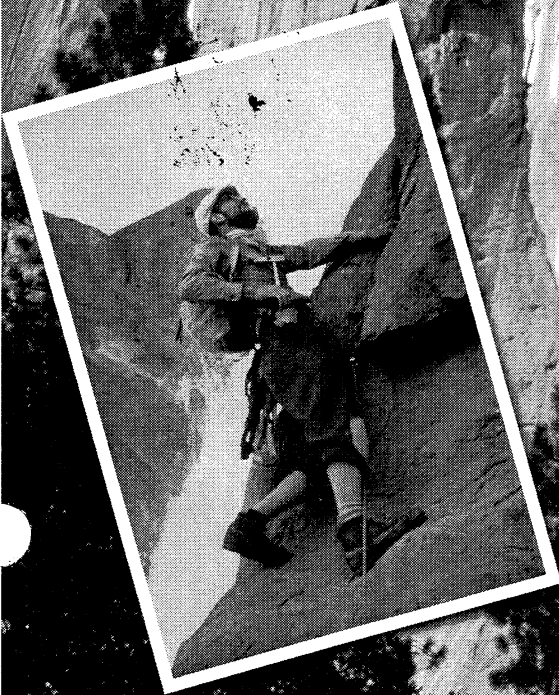
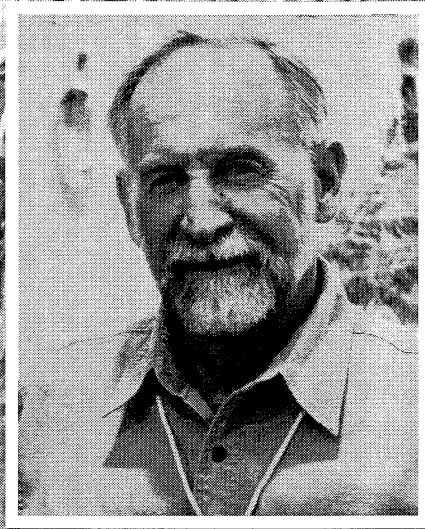
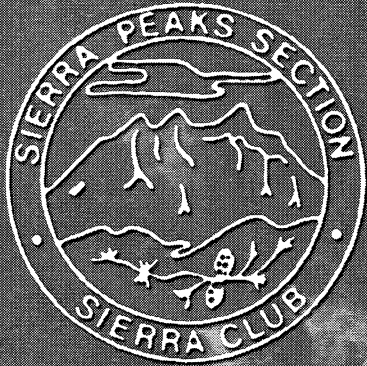


The Sierra ECHO

VOLUME 48 NUMBER 5

OCTOBER - NOVEMBER 2004



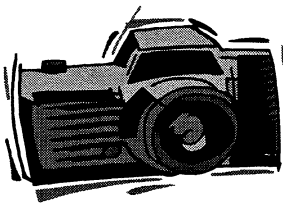


Peak List

See Stories inside
this issue

San Joaquin Pk
Picture Puzzel Pk
Mt Humphrey's
Silver Pk
Mt. Ansel Adams
Mt Mills
Mt Pickering
Joe Devel
Mt Guyot
Mt Hitchcock
Newcomb
Chamberlain
Mt Hale
Mt Young
Mt Whitney
Mt Muir

Front Cover



Royal Robbins SPS Banquet Speaker Saturday, January 8, 2005

Photos from Royal Robbins Spirit of the Age by Pat Ament
Background photo of El Capitan, 1976 by Dave Sholle

SPS PROGRAMS

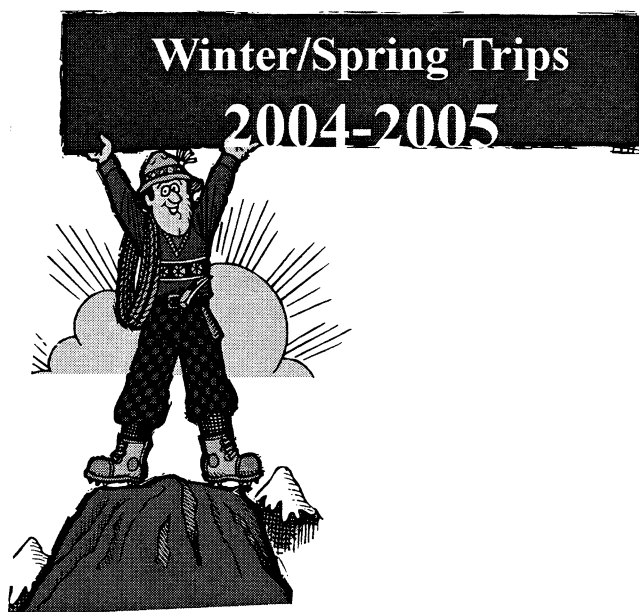
January 8, 2005 - Saturday Annual Banquet: Join your friends and make plans for a new year of climbing in the Sierra. This year it is on a Saturday night to solve the work get away drive.

ROYAL ROBBINS, one of the foremost rock climbers of all time, who got his start climbing with the Sierra Club, will be our guest. He will present "Sierra Adventures-First Ascents and First Descents," featuring climbs of El Captain and kayaking down the Tuolumne and San Joaquin Rivers. A chance to bring your Robbins books for signing.

5:30 pm no host bar. 7:00 pm dinner. Les Freres Taix Restaurant at 1911 Sunset Blvd, LA 90026. Choice of chicken, fish or pasta. Send \$28.00 (check to SPS) with dinner choice no later than Fri December 31 to Banquet Coordinator, HENRY ARNEBOLD.

February 15, 2005 - Tuesday Joint Sections Meeting Sponsored by Ski Mountaineers.

Annual Joint meeting of SMS, SPS, DPS, HPS & LPS will be hosted this year by Ski Mountaineers. Meet and make plans with your friends and learn about activities of these sections. Each section will give a presentation of their scope and upcoming plans. Meet Griffith Park Ranger Station Auditorium, 4730 Crystal Springs Road, in Griffith Park Los Angeles.



DECEMBER

I/M/E: Dec 5 Sun LTC, WTC Warren Point, Joshua Tree National Park Navigation. Navigation Noodles to satisfy Basic (I/M) level nav.requirements. Sat for practice. Sun for checkout. To receive homework assignment, send SASE to Ldr: Harry Freimanis. Asst: Bob Bradshaw

MARCH

MR: Mar 12 Sat Sierra Peaks, WTC Mt Baldy (10064) 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: TOM MCDONNELL.

APRIL

MER: Apr 16-17 Sat-Sun LTC/SPS/ DPS/SMS Sierra Snow Checkoff: Demonstrate your skills to receive an M or E snow checkoff or sharpen snow climbing skills. Restricted- prior ice axe, crampon, rope training /experience. Email or send 2 sase, SC#, resume of snow climbing/training, Ldr: TOM MCDONNELL, Co-Ldr: RANDALL DANTA

MER: Apr 30-May 1 Sat -Sun LTC, SPS/DPS/SMS Sierra Snow Checkoff: For M & E candidates wanting to check off leadership ratings. Practice available for those wanting to brush up on new techniques. Restricted to SC mbrs with some prior basic training with the ice axe. Send SC#, climbing resume, 2 SASE or email, Ldr: NILE SORENSON Co-ldrs: DOUG MANTLE & DUANE MCRUER

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 (415) 977-5528 for a printed version.

MAY

TI: May 2-8 Mon-Sun SMS/SPS Onion-Boose Trip: Join this Sierra Crest ski tour from Onion Valley to Taboose Pass. Ski and climb by day, followed by happy hour in camp. Hi route goes via Kearsarge Pass, Dragon/Rae Lks, Baxter Lks, Twin Lks, Pinchot Pass, Lke Marjorie and Taboose Pass for a short car shuttle back to Onion. On the way there are optional ski ascents of such class 2 peaks as Gould, Baxter, Acrodectes, Cedric Wright, Crater, Wynne, Pinchot, Striped. Need advanced backcountry skiing skills, proper ski and snow camping experience, bring good food and the right spirits. Must have skied/climbed with the SMS/Ldrs before the trip. Extended ski pack touring experience req. Trip subject to modifications depending on snow and weather. Send e-mail to Ldrs: TOM MARSH, REINER STENZEL

MR: May 7-8 Sat-Sun Colosseum Mtn (12,451), Mt Perkins (12,566): Snow climb and camp in Eastern Sierra's Armstrong Canyon restricted to Sierra Club members with ice ax and crampon experience. Saturday drive as far as possible up canyon on mining road, 4WD helpful, then hike to camp, 2-3 mi, 2000-3000' gain, depending on conditions. Melt snow and share happy hour. Alpine start for Perkins and Colosseum Sunday, 6 mi rt on steep snow and class 3 rock, 3700' gain, then pack out. LDR: BETH EPSTEIN. CO-LDR: ASHER WAXMAN

Spring Trips Continued 2005

MAY

MR: May 11-13 Wed-Fri Trojan Pk (13,947'), Mt Barnard (13,990'). Climb these two almost-14,000ers from the Owens Valley via George Creek. Snow climbs; ice ax & crampons required. Backpack from 6,200' in Owens Valley to camp around 11,000'; 5 mi first day. Climb the two peaks 2nd day, about 8 mi, 4000' gain. Pack out 3rd day. Restricted to SC members. Send 2 sase or 1 sase to Patty. Ldr: RON HUDSON Co-Ldr: PATTY RAMBERT

MR: May 14 Sat SPS/SMS Bloody Mtn. (3826m): A day climb & ski tour of this peak near Mammoth Lks. Hike up the Laurel Creek Rd to snow line and climb frozen snow in the am. Climbers will curse the soft snow in the pm and skiers will enjoy a wonderful ski run before returning to the cars. 12 mi rt, 5,196 ft of gain. Restricted trip, ice axe and crampon exp required for climbers and skiers must have advanced skiing skills, metal edged skis, climbing skins, avy beacon, and shovel. Can be combined w/ Mt. Morrison climb and ski tour on Sun. RJ SECOR. *Asst: Still needs a volunteer!*

MR: May 17-21 Tue-Sat Castle Pk (9,103'), Mt Rose (10,776'), Mt Lola (9,148'), English Mtn (8,373'), Sierra Buttes (8,591'), Mt Elwell (7,818'), Adams Pk (8,197'): Climb these peaks north of Lake Tahoe. They are class 1-2 without snow, but ice axe and crampons are needed in case there is snow. Castle has 3rd class summit block. Each is a dayhike or part of a day. Restricted to SC members. Send SASE or e-mail to Patty. Ldr: RON HUDSON Co-Ldr: PATTY RAMBERT

I: May 28-30 Sat-Mon Olancha Pk (12,123'): Moderate and enjoyable pace for climb of SPS Emblem Pk at the source of Crystal Geyser water in the S Sierra. SPS intro trip geared to new SPS climbers and strong WTC students. Sat backpack 8 mi, 3900' gain from Sage Flat to base camp off PCT at approx 9700'. Sun climb 2nd class Olancha, 7 mi rt and 2400' of gain. Mon backpack out 8 mi and 3900' of loss. Total gain for wkend 6300' in 23 mi rt. Sat and Sun eve legendary community happy hours. Ldr: ANITA McCARTHY. Asst: PATTY KLINE

I: May 28-30 Sat-Mon SPS/WTC Angora Mtn (10,202), Coyote Peak (10,892): Long backpack to remote peaks in Golden Trout Wilderness. Sat hike from Jerkey Meadows across Little Kern to camp, approx 12.5 mi, 3700' gain, dependent on water. Share communal happy hour. Sun climb Angora & Coyote, 13 mi, 3800' gain, some xc. Mon pack out, 1700' gain on return. Ldr: BETH EPSTEIN. Co-Ldr: KIM GIMENEZ

JUNE

MR: June 4-5 Sat-Sun MR: 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 & \$5 permit fee to Ldr. LARRY TIDBALL. Co-Ldr. BARBEE TIDBALL

June 11-13 Sat-Mon SPS/WTC Kern Peak (11,510): SPS introductory trip in southern Sierra geared to prospective SPSers and WTC students. Moderate and enjoyable pace. Sat backpack 9mi, 1500' of gain to camp at Redrock Meadows at 8600'. Sun climb class 2 Kern Pk in 8 mi, 3000' gain rt, all x country. Legendary community happy hours Sat and Sun evenings. Mon backpack out 9mi, 800' gain (With ups and downs). Ldr: PATTY KLINE. Asst.: GEORGE WYSUP

MR: June 16-19 Thu-Sun Mt Clark (11,522'), Gray Pk (11,573'), Red Pk (11,699'), Merced Pk (11,726'): Join us for strenuous 4 day backpack and climb of four cl 2-3 peaks in Yosemite. Ice axe & crampons will likely be needed. Sat. backpack to base of Mt. Clark (10 miles, 3500' gain) from Mono Meadows trailhead. Clark involves a Cl 3 roped traverse; must be comfortable on rock. Over the next 3-days, climb the other peaks and pack out. Send \$5 permit fee (check made to Ron Hudson) Ldr. RON HUDSON. Co-Ldr. PATTY RAMBERT

MR: Jun 23-26 Thur-Sun SPS/SMS Miter (12,770'), Major General (12,400') and McAdie (13,680'): Do the three M's out of Rock Creek. We explore a new routes and non-listed peaks. From Cottonwood Lks trailhead via New Army Pass to basecamp in Rock Creek. Must be comfortable on high cl 3 rock and proficient with ice axe and crampons. Ldr: REINER STENZEL Asst Ldr: ASHER WAXMAN

I: Jun 24-26 Fri-Sun HPS/SPS Sirretta Pk (9977'), Cannel Pt (8314'), Smith Mtn (9533'), Owens Pk (8453'), Mt Jenkins (7921'): Take a 3-day weekend in scenic So. Sierra & bag up to 3- SPS peaks and 3-HPS peaks. Fri. drive through Kernville and several miles up into the mountains to Sirretta (SPS). The hike itself is around 7 mls RT, 2200' gain. The Sirretta trailhead is a nice place to car camp. Saturday drive on to Cannel Point (HPS), do a brief hike (2 mls RT, 900' gain) then drive some more and do another brief hike (3 miles RT, 1000' gain) for Smith (SPS). Then either return to Kernville for Sat. night or proceed out through Kennedy Mdws. towards Ridgecrest. Sun. reconvene west of Ridgecrest for Owens (HPS and SPS) and Jenkins (HPS): 12 mls RT, 4500' gain. Expect some rock scrambling on all 5 of these peaks. Ldr. WOLF LEVERICH Co-Ldrs: KAREN ISAACSON LEVERICH, GREG DeHOUGH

Echoes from the Chair

The big snow storms in October pretty much ended the Sierra climbing season for us non-skiers. From my perspective, it was a great year for the SPS! There were lots of trips, new members and fun times with old friends. Now that things have slowed down consider writing those trip reports from your summer adventures.

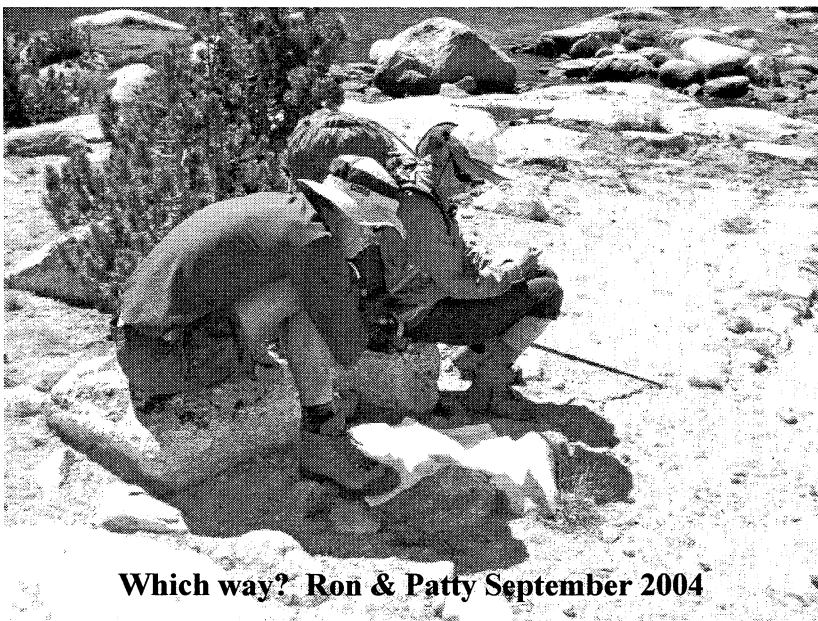
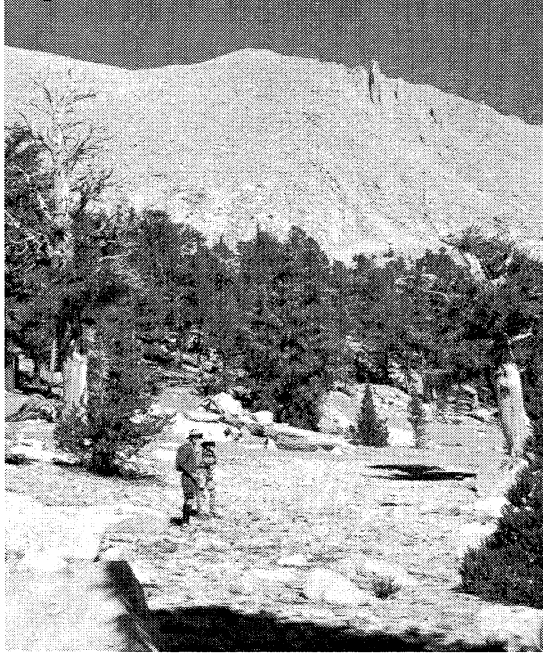
It is time to elect a new board for 2005. We have some new names and will look forward to another great group of individuals working together to increase the enthusiasm for climbing with the SPS.

Saturday, January 8 is our banquet. The board members have tickets to sell or you can contact Henry Arnebold the Treasurer directly. Do it today or before December 13, so we can make the final arrangements. Mail a check for \$28 made out to SPS to: Henry Arnebold, 2459 Escalante, La Verne CA 91750-1136. Also indicate whether you would like chicken, fish or pasta. Contact an old climbing friend and plan to attend the banquet together.

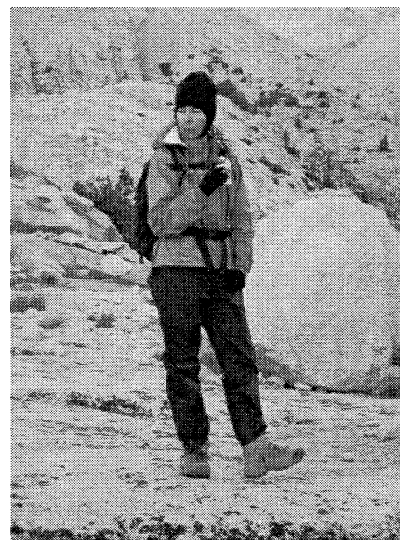
The yearly subscription fee of \$15 will be due by March 31, 2005. You might consider one check for \$43 and that would include the banquet and yearly fee and you would take care of everything at one time.

So go on out and enjoy the fall and winter season and I look forward to seeing you on the early spring climbs.

Ron & Patty heading for Hitchcock
September 2004



Which way? Ron & Patty September 2004



Patty Rambert

Sierra Peaks Section Meeting Minutes

Management Committee Meeting

June 19, 2004

Location: Conference room, Lower Plaza,
Angeles Chapter HQ

Attended by: Patty Rambert, Henry Arnebold,
Gary Schenk

The meeting began at 6:30 PM.

Chairman's Report:

Patty reminds the leaders that sign in sheets should be mailed to the Outings Chair after trips are concluded.

Secretary's Report:

Minutes of the May meeting were accepted with minor changes.

Treasurer's Report:

Henry reports \$4275 transferred to Annemarie Richardson from savings. This is the amount collected for the memorial fund for Matthew Richardson, William Stampfl, and Steve Erskine.

Banquet Committee Report:

The banquet will be held at Taix restaurant on January 8, 2005. Royal Robbins will be the speaker.

Nominating Committee:

This year's nominating committee is Patty Kline and Dan Richter.

The slate will be presented at the October meeting. The election will be held in November.

New Business:

The joint climbing sections meeting will be held February 15. Meeting locations and program ideas were discussed.

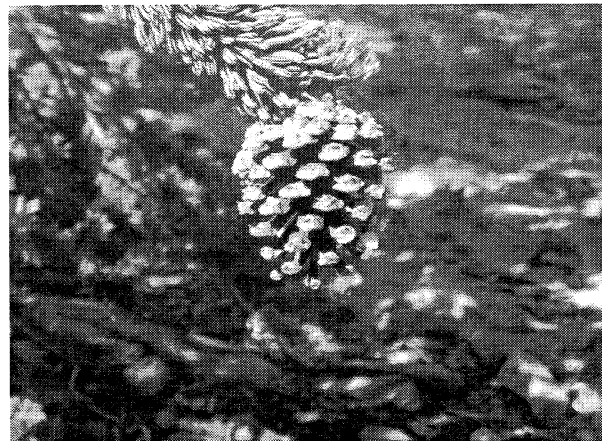
The problem with the Echo roster was discussed. A corrected roster addendum will be sent with the next issue of the Echo.

Email broadcasts were proposed as an efficient way of communicating with the membership. Any future email broadcasts will be sent as blind cc.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:30 PM

General membership Meeting:

Patty discussed the upcoming schedule. Kent Schwitkis presented a program on orienteering.



SPS Treasurer's Report 3rd Quarter 9/30/04

Checking Account

Income:

a. Echo-----\$ 238.00

Expenditures:

a. Echo Printing -----\$ 315.55

b. Echo Mailing -----\$ 90.13

c. Banquet deposit ----- \$ 500.00

\$ 905.68

Balance on 6/30/04 ----- \$2,544.86

Income ----- \$ 238.00

\$2,782.86

Expenditures ----- -\$ 905.68

\$1,877.18

Savings Account

Balance on 6/30/04 ----- \$4,847.38

July interest income ----- \$ 1.64

August interest income ----- \$ 1.64

September interest income ----- \$ 1.59

\$4,852.25

We Get Letters

From: Rick Jali

Subject: Sierra ECHO's

1) Great color photo on the Aug-Sep issue!

2) I have a collection of old Sierra Echo's, from Volume 6, #5, to the present, which I would be willing to see in a good home, where someone would cherish and appreciate them. \$5 plus postage (for about 24 lb, maybe \$10-12). Reply to: Rick Jali, P. O. Box 1717, Mammoth Lakes, CA 93546, (760) 934-8430, rikko@qnet.com

From: Geoff Godfrey godfreykitties@yahoo.com

Subject: Convert ECHO to electronic publication

Hi, Whew! What a task!

On one hand, conversion substantially reduces costs for paper and postage, plus - a really big plus - it fits perfectly the conservation ethic of the Sierra Club, i.e. it saves trees. Saving trees is significant because the ECHO is not printed on recycled paper. Thus, if we are truly a conservation minded people, then conversion should occur as rapidly as possible. Alternatively, among the many fine attributes of the Echo, what really stands out, at least for me, are the excellent B/W photographs which front each issue. Each one is a keeper and my SPS folder bulges with them. For those of us who limp along with late 20th Century computer technology, i.e. the inability to print fine copy from our computers, conversion would be an unbearable loss. Ah me! I'm damned if I know who said, "There are no easy choices, only informed compromises," but the phrase certainly fits this situation.

My suggestion: Convert but have available for purchase the photos. Geoff Godfrey

From: Barbara Lilley

Re: An Echo Website

To put the *Sierra Echo* on a website and then require those who want a paper copy to pay extra would be unfair since the annual amount paid to the SPS by its members is supposed to be for the subscription to the Echo, however it may be sent!

Boots: For those who prefer traditional leather climbing boots (those with a Norwegian welt that can be resoled and accomodate crampons), the Sierra Trading Post usually carries three models by Alico of Italy. Call 1-800-713-4534 to receive a free catalog or go to their website at sierratradingpost.com

Mountain Records

We had a lot of people helping in placing registers this year: Darrick Danta, books on Cirque and English; Randall and Darrick Danta, a cylinder and book on Perkins; Daryn Dodge, books on Tunnabora and Whorl; Melissa Kane, book on Silliman; Harry Langenbacher, book on Matterhorn; Tom McDonnell, book on Middle Palisade; Erik Siering, canister and book on Marsh; Bob Suzuki, book on Deerhorn; Barbee and Larry Tidball, cylinder and book on North Palisade, book on Chamberlin; Joe Wankum, book on Lamarck; George Wysup, book on Morrison; and I put books on Lippincott, Sawtooth, and Seven Gables. Thanks to all who helped out with reports and placing books and containers. Keep those reports coming—thanks!

In 2003 I received a fair number of reports of missing books or missing containers and books. This year that trend continued and increased. With one exception, Silver, all of the peaks with reported register deficiencies are in Sequoia-Kings Canyon National Park. The worst lost was the Barnard register, which went back to 1939. Tom Knudson of the *Sacramento Bee* ran an article this fall about the missing registers. If you have any idea who is removing registers and why, please let me know. (see story in this edition of The Echo)

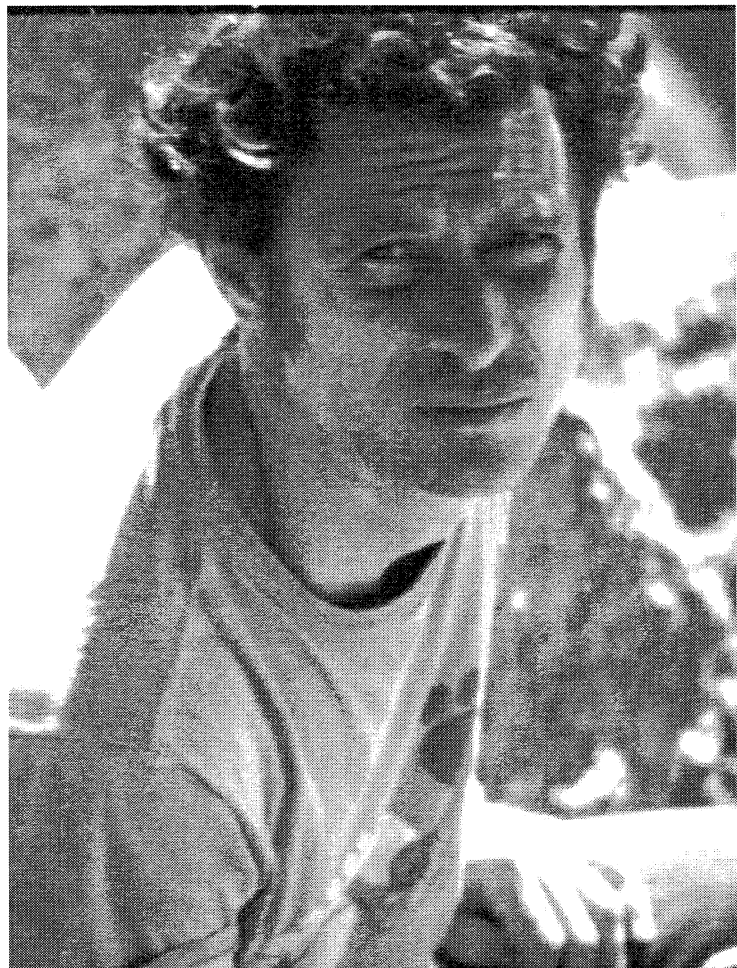
November 7, 2004

Tina Bowman, Mountain Records Chair

**SAN JOAQUIN PEAK
LIST FINISH
SEPTEMBER 25, 2004
SPS List Finisher #63
Ron Jones**

It began when I climbed Half Dome, my first SPS peak, two days after graduating from high school in 1950. During the 10 days a friend and I spent hiking in Yosemite Valley and Tuolumne Meadows I imagined I was following in the foot steps of John Muir. Years later I wanted to join the Sierra Club. I obtained the endorsements of Frank Sanborn and John Robinson (two members to vouch for you was required in those days) and I qualified for membership. Jim Gorin, a well known climber, was Chapter Chair when I joined, and the outings and social programs were what the Sierra Club was all about at that time. During the fall of 1963 I went on my first SPS backpack led by Tom Amneus and Barbara Lilley who led Smith Mountain and the unlisted Jackass Peak. I was hooked and I began climbing with friends (more later) and on Section trips and shortly I was leading for the Section.

During the 1970s Elton Fletcher finished climbing all the peaks on the SPS list, and became the oldest member to finish The List at about 54 years of age (the year and the age are only guesses). I was only in my 40s then and I thought that would be my goal - - to become the oldest list finisher. Well, Rich Gnagy was next to hold the record, followed by Norm Rohn. My goal was not getting any closer. Then George Toby finished the list in 1992 on Alta Peak at 71 years and one day. In the meantime I was kind of standing by ...marking time ...waiting for my turn. I climbed peak #244 (Tunemah) in



**Ron on Inconsolable Peek, 1974
photo by Bob Cates**

1992 with Igor and Tanya Mamedalin. I climbed Triple Divide Peak twice (#245) 8 years later in September of 2000 with Jeff Solomon and again with Doug Mantle, followed by a solo climb of Junction Peak (#246) in the same month. That left me with only San Joaquin Peak remaining.

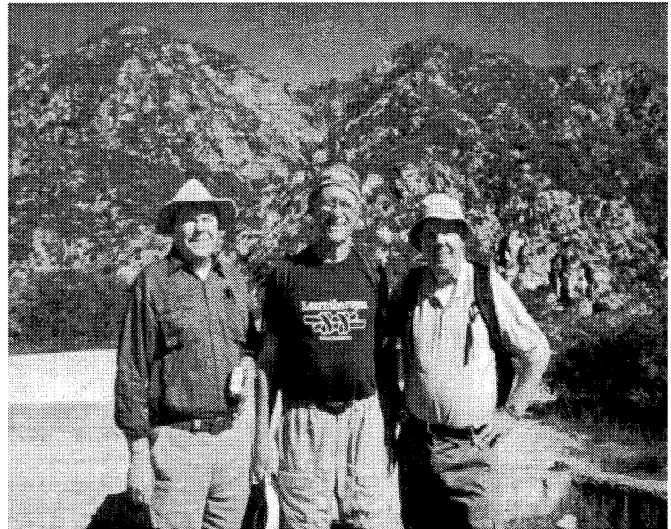
But I was only 67 years old in 2000 and had four years to wait in order to surpass George Toby. I hoped that no class 4 peaks, or long back packs would be added to the list. In the mean time I had an operation for stomach cancer, followed by a hip replacement, then an operation for an abdominal cancer and finally the second hip was replaced. I kept active, training in the San Gabriels (102 ascents of Mt. Baldy), with a few Sierra and Desert repeats. I was diagnosed with spinal stenosis and hiking became more difficult. I was slower but I had chosen an easy, non-technical peak, San Joaquin, on which to finish.

Then, in September of 2003, Ret Moore shattered the old-timer record by finishing at 79 years and 362 days. I am happy for Ret and I can't wait another 8 years. I was 71 years and 269 days on September 25, 2004 when I was joined by 9 friends and we made a routine hike along the ridgeline use trail from the end of the 4 WD road near Minaret Viewpoint to reach my final SPS summit. Perhaps I qualify as the oldest to finish on two titanium hip replacements. Participants were my youngest son, Keith Jones, Igor and Suzanne Mamedalin, Bruce and Terry Turner, Sylvia Sur Kinney, Steve Smith, Jeff Solomon and Burt Falk. Burt is working on the SPS list himself and he is another AARP candidate. He finished the DPS list earlier this year in grand style. Burt was generous and let us use his condo in Mammoth for our celebration party, organized by my wife Leora. Thanks to these long-time supportive friends.

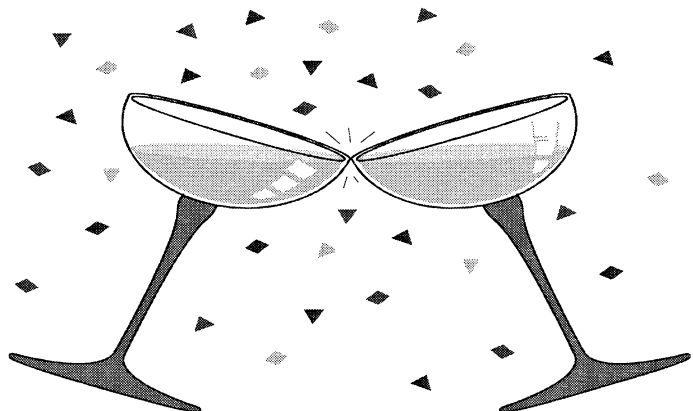
While hiking along the ridge to San Joaquin I was thinking about some of the people I've hiked with over the years, friends who have supported my efforts, who have taught me and those who have inspired me. These include John Robinson and Frank Sanborn who lived near me in Orange County in the '60s, Arky Erb and Gordon Macleod, Andy Smatko and Neko Colevins, Tom Amneus and Barbara Lilley. A little later there was Dick Sykes, Ken McNutt, Bill Hunt, Art Wester, Roy Ward, Norm Rohn, Maris Valkass, "Campy" Camphausen, Dick Beach, Igor Mamedalin and Jeff Solomon. These friends, and many others, are very special folks to me.

HAPPY TRAILS - - Ron Jones

Congratulations



**Bob Cates, Ron Jones and John W. Robinson
Echo Mtn. 2003**



Into thin air

Climbers' notes left on Sierra summits are vanishing - and no one knows why

By Tom Knudson—Bee Staff Writer

Published 2:15 am PDT Sunday, October 24, 2004

Ever since 19th century explorers first scrambled to the top of Sierra Nevada summits, climbers have felt compelled to mark their peak accomplishments in writing ...

In notebooks, on loose sheets of paper and scraps of Kodak film cartons, they have recorded moments of pure exhilaration, marveled at the knife-like ridges and wind-polished domes, jotted down climbing routes or simply signed their names.

But today, those informal archives of achievement, tucked away inside sardine cans, glass jars, baking powder tins or even custom-made Sierra Club metal boxes, are vanishing.

For those who hike and climb in the Sierra Nevada and revel in its history, the disappearance of the summit registers comes as a jolt.

"Some of the real neat ones are missing," said Jason

Lakey, a 29-year-old

climber from Bishop whose passion for bagging peaks has led him to 72 Sierra summits over the past five years.

Three years ago, on top of a rugged spire in the eastern Sierra called Petite Griffon, Lakey found something special: worn scraps of paper in a film canister that held fewer than 20 names, including those of the first two climbers known to have reached the summit in 1964.

"It's pretty neat," he said. "It's history without having to go to a museum. You just climb the mountain and there it is."

This summer Lakey returned to the 13,040-foot peak with his girlfriend. The climb was so steep and arduous it required ropes. On top, Lakey searched for the register. But it was gone.

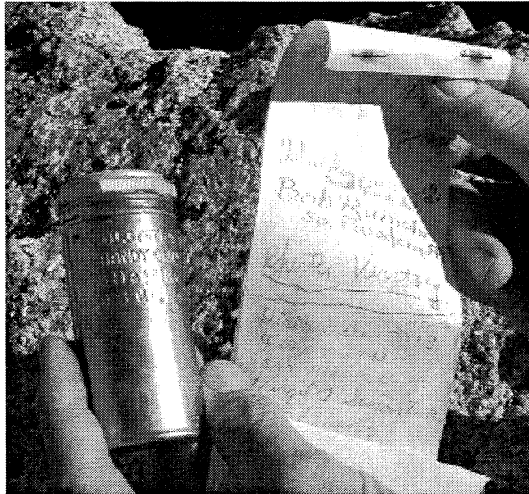
Why summit registers are disappearing is a mystery.

In trailside conversations and e-mails, climbers toss out theories. Is it the work of a souvenir hunter? Might the National Park Service have adopted a register removal policy? Should climbers be checking eBay?

Like tributaries of a stream, those discussions lead in many directions - from the serrated peaks that tower over the John Muir Trail to the garage of a former climber from Merced to the campus of the University of California, Berkeley.

They reach back across a century of mountaineering to reveal periods of conflict, concern and confusion over the fate of summit registers.

But inevitably, they end up where they began: on the top of a mountain where a chapter of Sierra history is missing.



**Chester Versteg signature-
Photo by Reiner Stenzel**

Storing records on summits is inherently risky. They can, and have, been struck by lightning and accidentally dropped into cracks. But today climbers say registers are disappearing more rapidly than ever - far faster than mere mishaps could explain. "On some peaks, the container is empty. On others, the container is gone as well as the book," said Tina Bowman, mountain records chair of the Sierra Peak Section of the Angeles chapter of the Sierra Club.

Bowman is in charge of maintaining registers across more than 200 Sierra peaks. In a normal year, her biggest concern is getting new ledger books into register containers where old ones have filled up.

Recently that concern has been eclipsed by another: 19 books have been reporting missing this year alone, along with 10 containers. The oldest, lost from Mount Barnard, dated to 1936.

"The increase in missing ones is dramatic," said Steve Eckert, who runs the Web site www.climber.org. "But there is no pattern. It's not like they are disappearing from the seldom-climbed peaks. Or the most climbed peaks."

The first known summit register was placed on a Sierra summit in 1864 by geologist William Brewer. But it wasn't until the early 20th century, when the Sierra Club lured throngs to the mountains with its annual outings, called High Trips, that large numbers

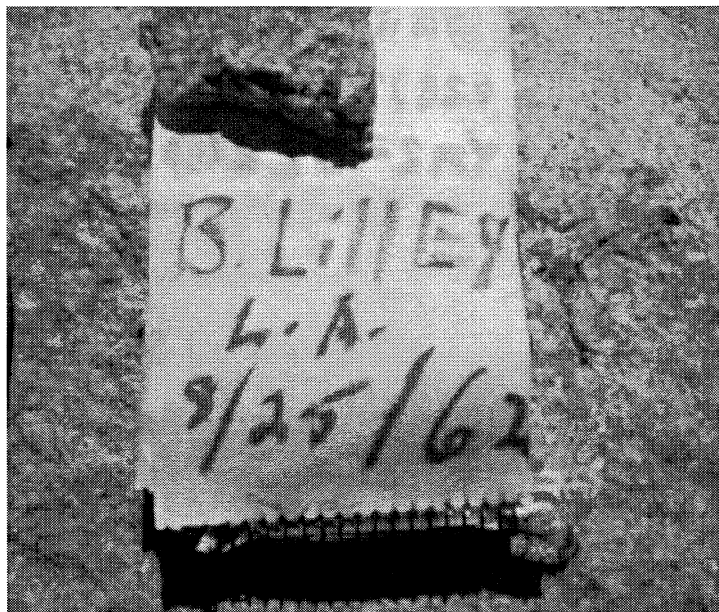


Photo provided by Barbee Tidball

of signatures showed up on summits.

Part of the thrill of the six-week excursions was climbing peaks and signing registers. On popular peaks, they filled up fast, as club leader Richard Leonard discovered in 1930.

“When I ascended Mt. Conness, I found the register left by Ansel Adams in 1920 had been completely filled,” Leonard wrote to a club secretary. On Mount Dana, “the register was going to pieces due to the efforts of people to find a place to write.”

Leonard’s solution represents one of the first clues for a summit register sleuth: send full and damaged register books to the club’s San Francisco headquarters for safekeeping and replace them with new ones. Those records, pulled from a constellation of peaks, are lost from the mountains, but not from history. They now are housed at UC Berkeley’s Bancroft Library.

Like journal entries, they not only reflect the nature of those who wrote them - they say something about the period in which they were recorded.

During the 1890s, for example, severe weather lashed the Sierra. Rivers thundered. Glaciers growled.

“Thunderstorms in progress - and hail falling,” says a register entry signed by Walter Starr Sr. and Allen Chickering on Mount Goddard in 1896. “We are on our way from Yosemite to Kings River, keeping as near the crest as possible.”

In the 1930s, registers, like the economy, were lean. When legendary mountaineers David Brower, Norman Clyde and Hervey Voge reached the top of Devils Crag #5 in 1934, they left just seven to-the-point words. “Apparent first ascent, climbed from

northwest notch.”

Four decades later, concern for the environment swept the country and showed up in registers.

“Climb the mountains and get their good tidings,” wrote one hiker on Mount Conness in 1974, quoting John Muir, and adding: “What would he think of the smog in the valleys to the east and west?”

The ‘70s also were a time when the thrill of climbing mingled with illicit recreational activities. “It’s good to be high again,” one Mount Conness entry reads. “Can you dig it?” “Almost as intense as being busted at the Canadian border for LSD five days ago,” another hiker wrote. “Almost as intense as LSD itself, for that matter.”

Summit registers “are virtual Sierra history lessons,” said climber Bob Burd, who this

year discovered registers missing from four prominent peaks. “Coming across signatures dating back 50 years is far more interesting to me than the views.”

Seventeen years ago, the discovery of a missing register in Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Park by two young climbers, Robin Ingraham Jr. and his friend Mark Hoffman, led to more registers being removed from the Sierra - and to tragedy.

Looking for a summit register on Midway Mountain, they instead found a note saying it had been stolen. The note was signed.

“I remember the names: Mark Farkel and Otis Jasper Russell. Whether those are aliases or not, I don’t know,” Ingraham said. “They called themselves the Purple Mountain Gang.”

Angered, Ingraham took a picture of the note, which he keeps in his closet. He stores copies of other summit records in his garage.

“When we got back, we contacted the Sierra Club and they said, ‘That’s beyond our scope now. We’re just an environmental organization.’”

“We contacted the National Park Service and they said, ‘Gee that’s a bad thing but we’re really stretched on funds. There’s nothing we can do about it.’”

Undeterred, the two sought advice from early Sierra Club climbers who, Ingraham said, encouraged them to retrieve full or damaged registers. They formed a group - the Sierra Register Committee - to do just that.

Like old Sierra Club records, the committee’s fresher finds can be viewed in the Bancroft Library’s

reading room, along with a set of strict rules. No pens allowed. Copies - 50 cents a page. Fragile records can only be scanned, for \$30 a page. Visitors are searched as they leave.

One of the committee's discoveries - for "Peak 12,560+" - which rises above the Lyell Fork of the Merced River, is just a few scraps of worn, burned paper.

The first signature is famous: photographer Ansel Adams - July 10, 1924.

Ingraham recalled the thrill of rescuing that register. "It was in this little can," he said. "It had been hit by lightning. The thing was in terrible condition."

R.J. Secor, however, is not thrilled. The author of "The High Sierra: Peaks, Passes and Trails," Secor signed the same summit register in 1972.

"These two fellows came out of nowhere and took it upon themselves to remove these registers, for history, when the general view of most climbers is: 'Leave them up there forever,'" Secor said.

Although controversial, the activities of the Sierra Register Committee were short-lived.

In 1988, while Ingraham and Hoffman were looking for registers, a rockslide broke loose. Hoffman was killed. "I was with him; I saw the whole thing happen,"

Ingraham said. "I almost quit climbing at the time."

The committee officially disbanded in 1994, after sending at least 10 registers to the Bancroft. Registers have not stopped vanishing from the

mountains, however, and that's where the trail goes cold.

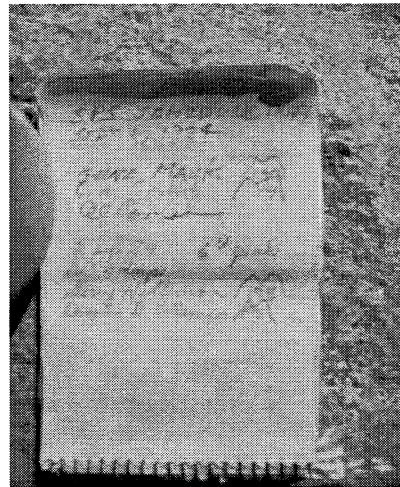
"People drop them," Eckert offered. "They are walking around on the peak and down the crack they go. I've personally fished out three from deep in cracks."

Many registers have disappeared from Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Park and some climbers speculate that backcountry rangers there - perhaps viewing registers as incompatible with wilderness - might be removing them.

But park public affairs specialist Alexandra Picavet said that's not the case. Rangers "are surprised they are going missing," she said. "And there is no answer as to why."

Secor believes some are simply stolen. "It's a

shame," he said. "Reading and signing summit registers is part of the history and ambiance of climbing peaks in the high Sierra." Among the talus pile of theories, though, there is one solid, though slender,



handhold. Of registers that have turned up missing in recent years, one - from Mount Langley, a popular 14,042-foot peak near Mount Whitney - has been found.

It resides at the Bancroft Library where someone donated it in 2002. Who was that someone?

Librarians can't say. "I'm not supposed to disclose donors," said Tanya Hollis, environmental collections archivist at the Bancroft. "We just don't do that as a matter of course."

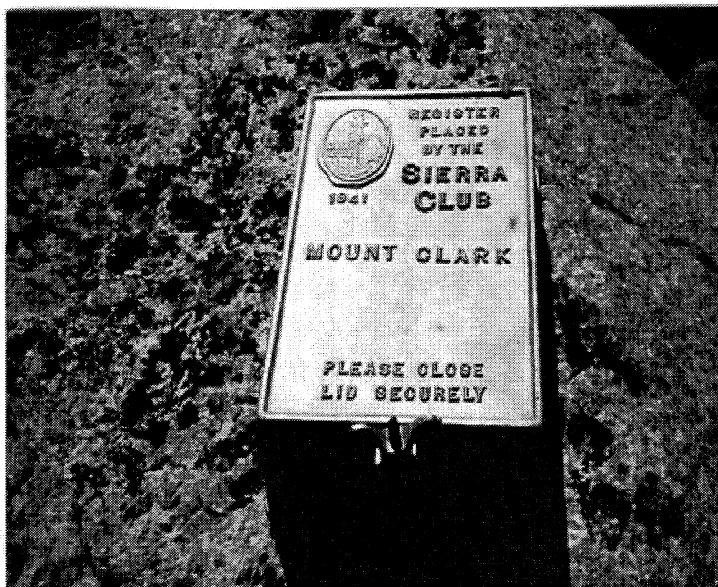


Photo provided by Henry Arnebold

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Photos from *The Sierra Echo* collection

Tuolumne Pk., Mt. Hoffmann

September 8-10, 2004

By Jerry Keating

What was billed as a leisurely late summer trip to two unlisted peaks in Yosemite National Park proved more strenuous than envisioned. This trip report is organized to help readers who are interested in making the climbs on their own. The leaders were Gordon MacLeod and Barbara Lilley with the writer serving as assistant. The other participants were Kyle & Margaret Atkins, Bruno & Ingeborg Geiger, Rich Gnagy, Fred Johnson, and Nancy Keating.

Camping: Porcupine Flat Campground (8100') is the closest National Park facility to the starting point for the two peaks. Located 16 miles west of Tuolumne Meadows on the north side of the Tioga Pass Road, the campground is a first-come, first-served facility with 52 sites. The fee is \$8 per night for each site, and only currency is accepted. Only one car is allowed per site, and the maximum number of persons per site is six. All food items must be stored in the provided bear locker and not left in one's vehicle. Don't depend upon water being available from the seasonal creek adjoining the campground—bring your own.

Access road/trailhead: From the campground entrance, drive eastward on the Tioga Road for 3.2 miles and look for a side road on the left. The 1.8-mile side road to the trailhead (8847') used to be part of the Tioga Road. The side road is paved but badly potholed. Parking at the trailhead is limited, and an early arrival is recommended. Many day hikers, backpackers and patrons of the May Lake High Sierra Camp start here. Bear lockers are available.

Route to Tuolumne Pk. (10,845'): Follow the good trail for 1.2 miles to May Lake. Continue another 0.2 mile beyond the northern end of the lake to where the trail turns sharply right around a small meadow. Look for a use trail on the left, just past a badly rusted trail sign. Follow the use trail, and you'll shortly come upon a real trail, constructed long ago. After a small drop into a basin, the trail goes up a series of switchbacks to a saddle at the Tuolumne-Mariposa County line. From there, proceed northwestward cross-country up the eastern slopes of the ridge between Mt. Hoffmann and Tuolumne Pk. toward a prominent point on the main ridge. Then, continue steeply up along the east side of the ridge. The route is Class 2. Fortunately, according to Fred Johnson's notes on the climb, the

summit is not the formidable appearing ridge that dominates the route much of the way but a slightly higher, more approachable, independent point near the northern end of the crest. "I can't emphasize what a truly memorable summit experience this was for me," recalled Fred. "Not in recent memory have I so enjoyed being on top of a mountain. Tuolumne Pk. is not an important one, but the incredibly fine view it provided in the solitude of its relatively small summit left a lasting impression.... The extensive panorama included such well-known landmarks as Blackhawk Pk., Matterhorn Pk., Mt. Conness, Mt. Dana, Mt. Gibbs, Tuolumne Meadows, Cathedral Pk., Mt. Lyell, Mt. Clark and the Clark Range, Clouds Rest, Half Dome and nearby Mt. Hoffmann."

Route to Mt. Hoffmann (10,850'): From the same trailhead used for Tuolumne Pk., follow the good trail for 1.2 miles to May Lake. Turn sharply left and follow the southside lakeshore to the backpackers' campground. There is a bridge across the outlet stream (Snow Creek), after which an unmarked but good use trail goes left toward Mt. Hoffmann. The route becomes more indistinct as it ascends, but there are many ducks along the way. The trail circles around a ridge and then proceeds up through scrubby pines to the final 200-foot face. Traverse upward and left below the face to find the easiest route (Class 2-3). The views from the summit are impressive. One participant (i.e., Kyle Atkins) even located where his house was on the Sonora Pass highway.

Best driving map: Guide to Yosemite National Park, Automobile Club of Southern California, which includes helpful driving mileages and shows the campground, the access road and both peaks.

The 2004 Trip: The 10 persons in the party were on hand by Friday afternoon. There were five vehicles, and all were parked in adjoining sites before the campground became full for the weekend. An extended happy hour was enhanced after dark by a campfire, but group members had to keep a constant eye on their respective campsites to ensure that other less fortunate individuals didn't try to invade them. Rangers occasionally drove by our sites, but no ranger or host stays in the campground.

Two persons remained in camp Saturday, while the eight others drove or rode in three cars to the trailhead. We departed at 8:35 a.m. and hiked past May Lake (9280') and beyond where the above-

Continued on page 23

Picture Puzzle Peak

Aug 22- 24, 2004

By Reiner Stenzel



Climbing the ridge to Picture Puzzle Peak

Picture Puzzle Peak is located in the Inconsolable Range north of the Palisade Range. It is infrequently climbed and no trip reports are found on climber.org or the SPS Archives. This trip report may supplement the brief route descriptions given in Secor's guidebook.

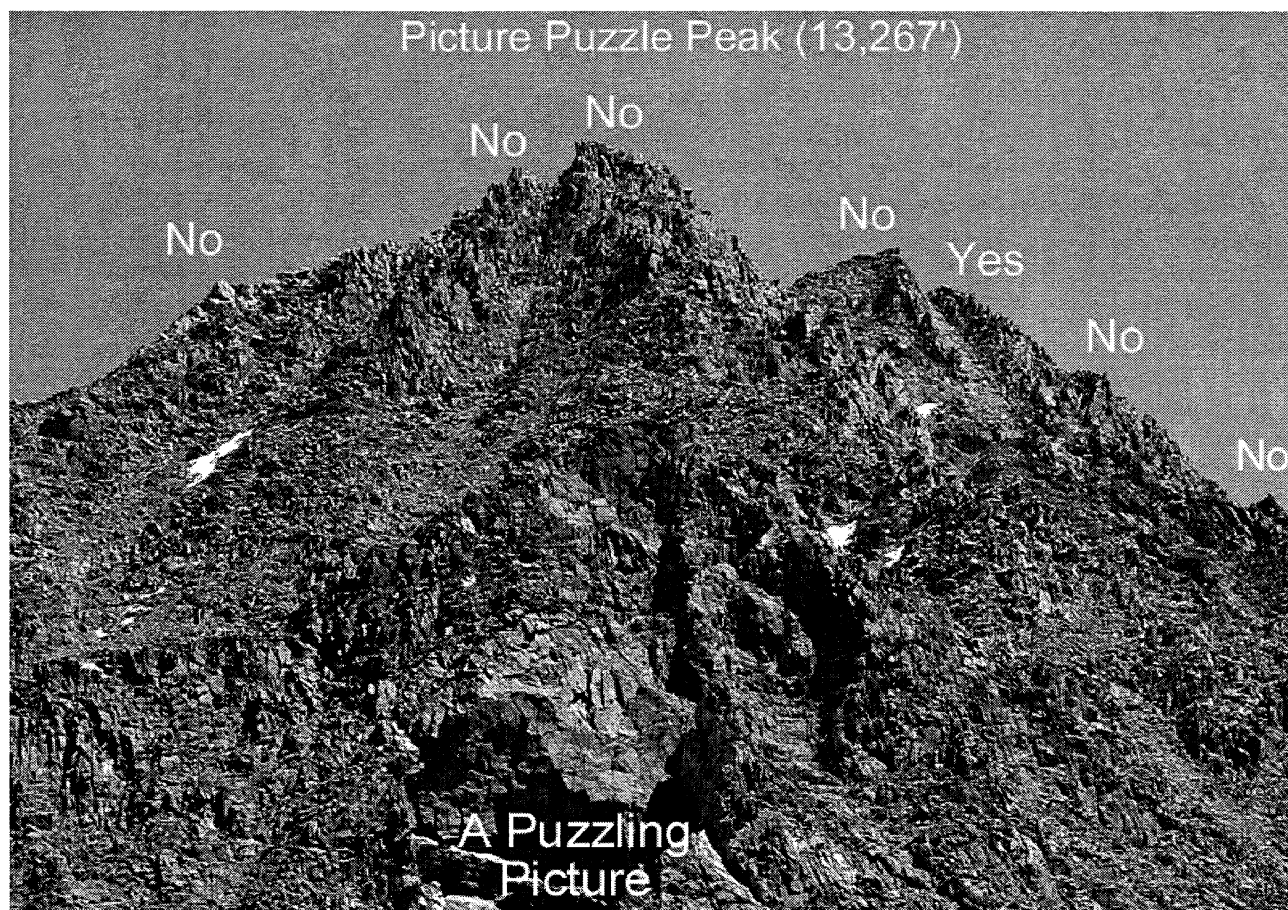
On short notice we drove on Sun, 8/22, from Southern CA and the Bay Area to Bishop, got a wilderness permit for the Bishop Pass trailhead and hiked from South Lake to Ruwau Lake. On Mon, 8am, we ascended from Ruwau Lake east along its inlet stream for about 1/2mi, then turned south to climb straight up the north face of Picture Puzzle Peak on loose talus. There were multiple high points on the ridge and the highest one appeared to be on the right (west) side of the ridge; thus we chose a prominent chute leading straight toward it. Since the upper part of the chute was filled with hard snow at >40 deg we proceeded on adjacent cl 3 rock to the top. There the puzzle started: there were multiple peaks along a N-S facing jagged

ridge and the true summit appeared 1/4mi to the south. Running the top of the ridge looked like a cl 4 exercise. The west side was definitely cl 4 territory. Thus, we explored the east side of the ridge. It required traversing the ice-filled chute. We down climbed part of it, then squeezed into the gap between ice and rock and

chimneyed up to the east side. Now one could clearly see the main summit of Picture Puzzle Pk (13,267'). There were at least three major chutes to traverse. One possibility was to down climb one of them for a few hundred feet into a large cirque above Seventh Lake and then to

reclimb the east couloir to the summit. The better choice was to find a mentioned cl 3 route just below the ridge and above the chutes, which is exactly what we did. It was an exciting adventure to work around pillars and up and down over many big blocks some of which were precariously loose. Finally we crossed the last chute and started the cl 3 ascent to the summit area. The brown rock was covered by lichen, which would be no pleasure to climb when wet.

By 12noon we were on the summit and found a glass jar with the peak register (UTM 11 363 392E, 41 09 973N, NAD 27, elev. 13,276'). It had been placed in 1978 on an SPS trip, the only Sierra Club trip mentioned in 30 years. There were also transcriptions of the first recorded entries from 1967 and two others in 1973. The booklet was only half full. Our entry was the first one in 2004. We ate lunch, took pictures and enjoyed the fine views. To the south was the Palisade Range with North Pal, Thunderbolt, Winchell, Agassiz



and a bit closer closer we spotted Aperture Peak, which we visited a year ago (see <http://angeles.sierraclub.org/skimt/trips/columbine03/columbine03.htm>). To the east we could see the rugged ridge of Gendarme Pk above the Big Pine Lakes. To the northeast was Cloudripper, which we skied a few years ago (see <http://angeles.sierraclub.org/skimt/trips/cldrpr99/cldrpr99.htm>). To the northwest one could see the Thompson Ridge, Humphreys, Emerson, Basin and Tom. To the southwest was Bishop Pass across which we skied four months earlier (see <http://angeles.sierraclub.org/skimt/trips/sierracrest04/sierracrest04.htm>). Beyond Dusy Basin we saw Columbine, Isosceles, Gireaud, etc and the Black Divide in the distance. We could have enjoyed the views longer if it were not for thick, low clouds rolling in from the west.

Originally, I had planned to continue to nearby Gendarme Pk (13,252') and to return via Jigsaw Pass. However, there are no cl 3 routes down from Picture Puzzle to the south or west to reach the SW ridge of Gendarme. The only option is to descend the east couloir and to reascend the moraine and snowfields NW of Gendarme. Luckily, the 40-deg east couloir on Picture

Puzzle was only partially filled with snow. We descended it carefully because of lots of loose rock. When we were ready to traverse toward Gendarme the clouds had moved in and covered the crest of the Palisade peaks. Although prepared with a GPS, I did not want to gamble climbing in this terrain in a whiteout. So we reascended the ridge between Picture Puzzle and Cloudripper and then dropped down into the cirque east of Ruwau Lke.

The weather held up and we felt only a few raindrops. Since there was time left, we headed for Chocolate Peak (11,682'), which is north of Ruwau Lke and encircled by Long Lke, Bull Lke and the Chocolate Lkes. This peak is not known for any climbing challenges but for its colorful rock, which exhibits all shades from white to green to red brown. It even has a peak register, filled with almost daily entries from local hikers. After having some pieces of chocolate on the summit we headed back to basecamp at Ruwau Lke. This is a very pretty area. At sunset time we had a spectacularly red evening sky. The fishing was great and we feasted on four big trout. Too bad, the next day we had to return to work.

Mt Humphrey's

August 14, 2004

by Gary Schenk

We met Saturday morning, Aug. 14, 2004, at the hiker parking lot at North Lake. Judy Rittenhouse, Patty Rambert, Mary Jo Dungfelder and I were going to give Mt. Humphreys the old college try. All we needed was a little help from the weatherman. A series of afternoon thunderstorms

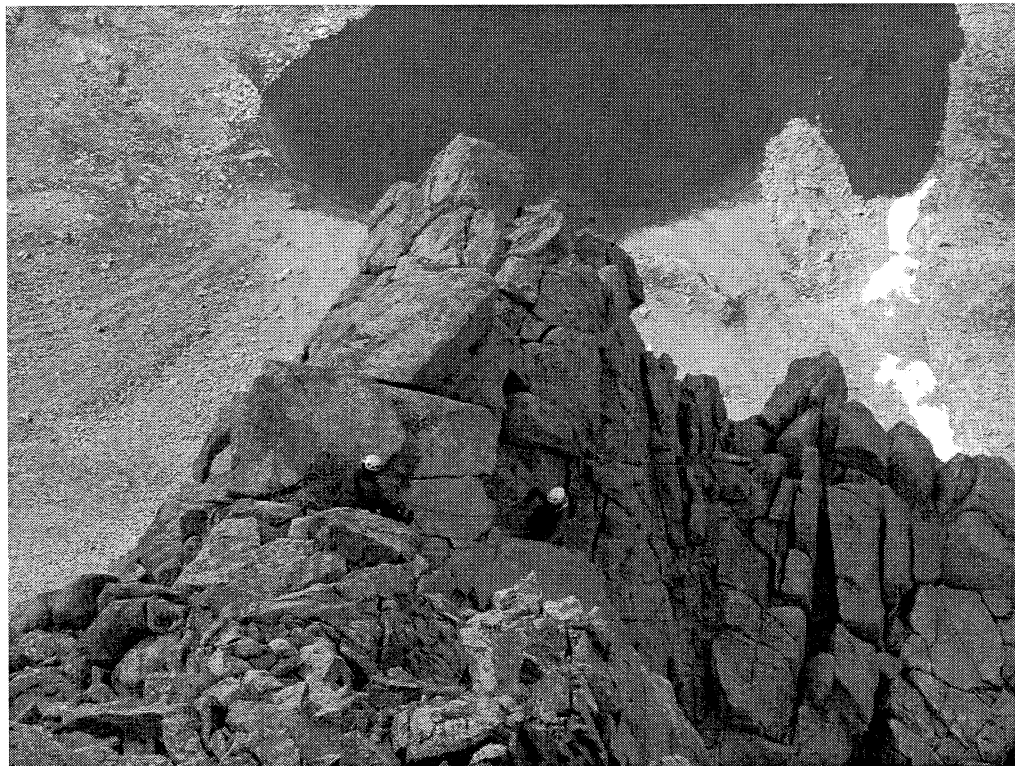
We'd leave at 6 AM, which would give us plenty of time to reach the peak and return before the afternoon storm.

The next morning, we left just slightly behind schedule. Taking Judy's suggestion, we headed for a conspicuous triangular boulder on the scree slope.

From this boulder, we went up and left. Following obvious scree ramps, we soon reached the main ramp to the notch. This ramp soon had us at the notch.

We considered the clouds on the westerly horizon, but decided that we had plenty of time, yet. After all, we were almost there. We ignored the cloud coming from Owens Valley that rose all the way to the notch. We changed into climbing shoes and took off.

Humphreys has some beautiful



Judy belays Patty near the summit of Humphrey's

had been plaguing the High Sierra, but were scheduled to clear out Sunday, our summit day. However, the last forecast had the system hanging around for one more day. We decided to hike in, even if just to lounge in the tents.

After the usual pack shuttle to the trailhead, we set off for Humphreys Basin. Our destination was the highest lake in the basin, a small tarn at the base of Mt. Humphreys at an elevation of just over 12,000 feet. 1:30 PM found us diving into a rocky lean-to, avoiding some rain. It soon passed, and we pressed on to camp. It took us five hours at a moderate pace. When the next rain hit, we were ensconced in our tents, listening to the thunder.

While making dinner, we decided on a plan.

golden rock. The cool weather made for great friction, and the third class climbing was marvelous. We soon reached the wall where the fourth class climbing began. Mary Jo soloed onward, while the rest of us broke out the ropes. Just as they say, when you break out the ropes, progress slows to a crawl. Judy led efficiently to the next belay, and we followed. Still, it took a lot of time. One more roped pitch to go. With two ropes and four climbers, Mary Jo and I simul-climbed on one rope, while Patty followed and cleaned on the other.

From the last belay station Mary Jo and I quickly scrambled to the small summit, while Judy belayed Patty. At 10:40, we had just signed in when I felt the first drop. "We've got to go now!" It was

starting to hail. We passed Judy and Patty on the way down. By the time they returned from the summit, I had Mary Jo on belay and she was downclimbing to the first rap station. The hail was already filling the cracks and coating the slabs. There was to be no easy downclimbing of third class rock today. Mary Jo soon reached the slings, yet an impressive amount of hail had already fallen, along with the temperature.

At Judy's urging, we rigged for rapell, and soon, but not soon enough, joined Mary Jo.

And so began our long retreat off Humphreys. Judy was quite the trooper, and was the first on rapell at each station. While waiting to rap, I received an undue amount of squeezing and hugging from Mary Jo and Patty, however under the circumstances it wasn't quite as much fun as it

should have been. Maybe because of the thunder? One bolt in particular seemed a little close.

It seemed like six inches of hail had fallen by the time it let up. However, the wind kept howling, making our last rap station particularly miserable. As cold as it was, the accumulated hail was already starting to melt, creating small water falls on the rock.

After what seemed an eternity, we reached the notch and the end of our ordeal. We started down the ramp into the lee of the storm. A slight rest and some food, and we wondered what all the bother had been about!

Our tents were a welcome sight. We waited out the afternoon storm in our bags, much nicer than being perched on exposed rock.

Silver Peak

September 11-12, 2004

Tina Bowman

We had a group of six ready to go from the Devil's Bathtub trailhead parking and camping area at 6:30 Saturday morning: Jim Adler, Daryn Dodge, Yim Lincoln, Susan and Bill Livingston, and me. We were lucky that Jim was willing to be the assistant leader since Tom, my husband, had been having back trouble and didn't think he should go on the trip. Thanks, Jim! With gorgeous weather we had a good hike up to the Devil's Bathtub where we set up camp. We saw some cattle and certainly heard them in the Twin Meadows area; one small calf kept looking behind at us as he followed his mother up the trail. We got to the lake by 8:45, set up camp, and headed for Silver Peak at 9:30. There are many fine campsites at the south end of the lake—nice open forest, flat areas, well back from the water. Some others were camped on the west side of the outlet; we went to the east side.

The trail on the east side of the lake gave way to use trail and animal trails and then easy cross-country in the meadows above. I took us a bit far left and maybe about fifty feet too high as we climbed in the cirque because I wasn't paying enough attention to the map, but it was at least pretty easy going. After lunch at one of the two tarns not too far below Pass 11,240+ (as described by R. J.), we went to the pass, dropped down, and traversed to the southeast ridge of

Silver. Whereas the going was mostly pretty easy on the south side of the pass, on the north it was a different story: a loose, steep north face of the pass to go down; talus to traverse; talus and stunted trees on the ridge to the summit to Silver. Jim was feeling his two hours' sleep, and Yim was feeling some of the altitude and roughness of the terrain. They returned to the pass to await the other four of us who summited but suffered the disappointment of not finding a summit register, no container, no book. From the top we also watched the growing mushroom of smoke from a forest fire to the west. Back we went and regrouped at the pass at 5:00 and tumbled into camp a few minutes after 7:00 after a day of over 5900' gain per my Avocet altimeter. We gathered for dinner but elected not to have a campfire, which would have been legal at that elevation. It had been a long day.

Sunday morning we were on our way back to the cars before 7:30 and there just before 9:00. Since the drive out to Fresno from Lake Edison takes about three hours, we were glad to be out early and have time for swimming (Susan and Bill in Lake Edison), visiting old haunts (Yim in Fresno, where she lived for eight years), or just head on home. And so another trip with great people ended.

Happy trails!

Mt. Mills

(13,451') 8-14-04

Dan Richter

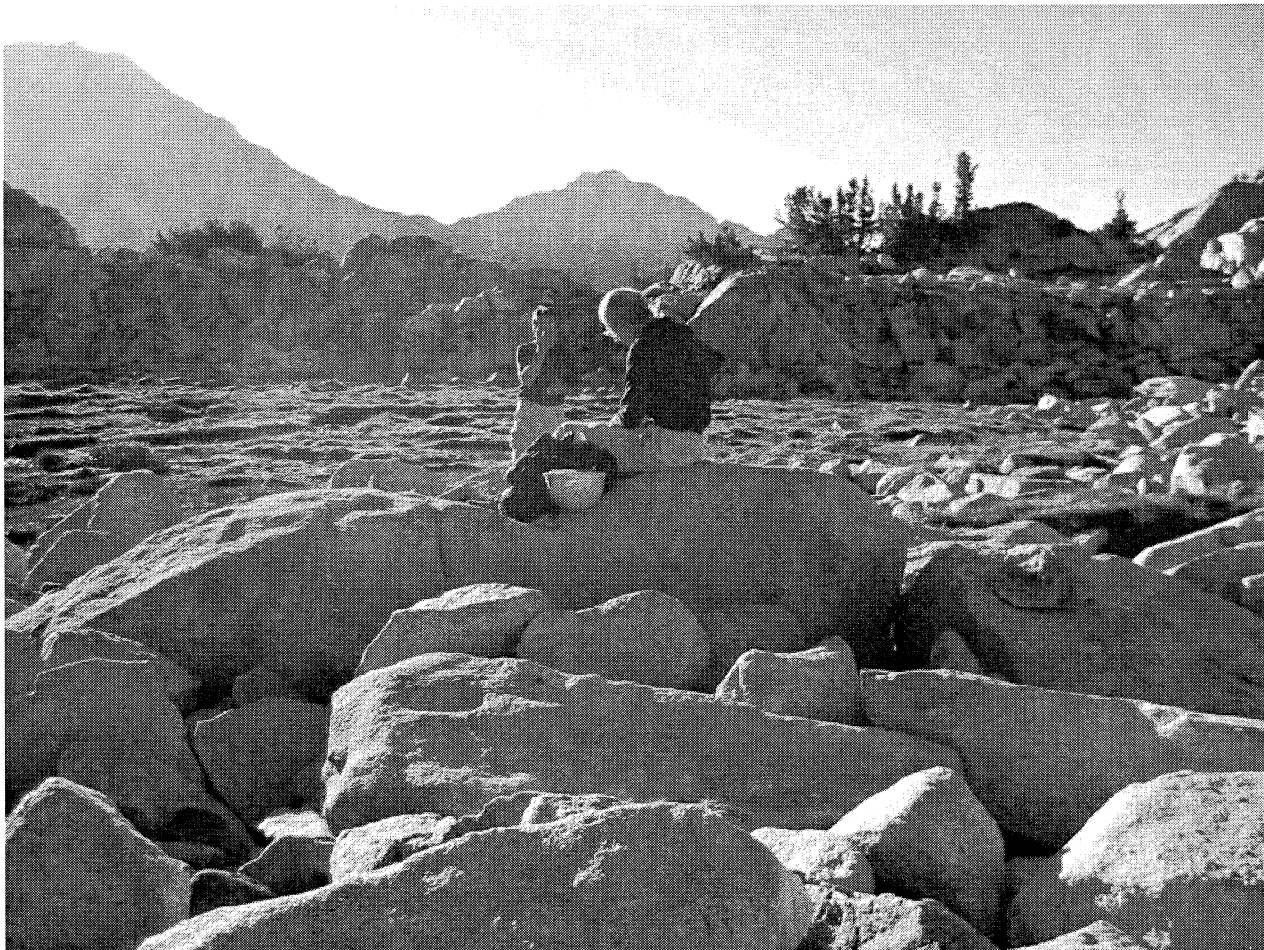
Asher Waxman and John Fischer joined me for a day hike of Mt. Mills to mark my return to the Sierras after a five year lapse. I had chosen Mills as it would get me up to altitude in a relatively easy manner and had some 3rd class climbing.

entrance to the couloir full of sand and rubble. There were occasional piles of chick-pea sized hail left from a storm the day before.

At the base of the couloir a large chockstone about ten feet high presents itself. It was easily climbed on its left side as it offers a fist-sized jam crack as well as creating a dihedral with the left wall of the couloir

Right above the chock stone another 8-10 foot flake must be passed, which is easily climbed with some high holds and stemming.

Above the flake the chute rises all the way to the arête full of sand and loose rock.

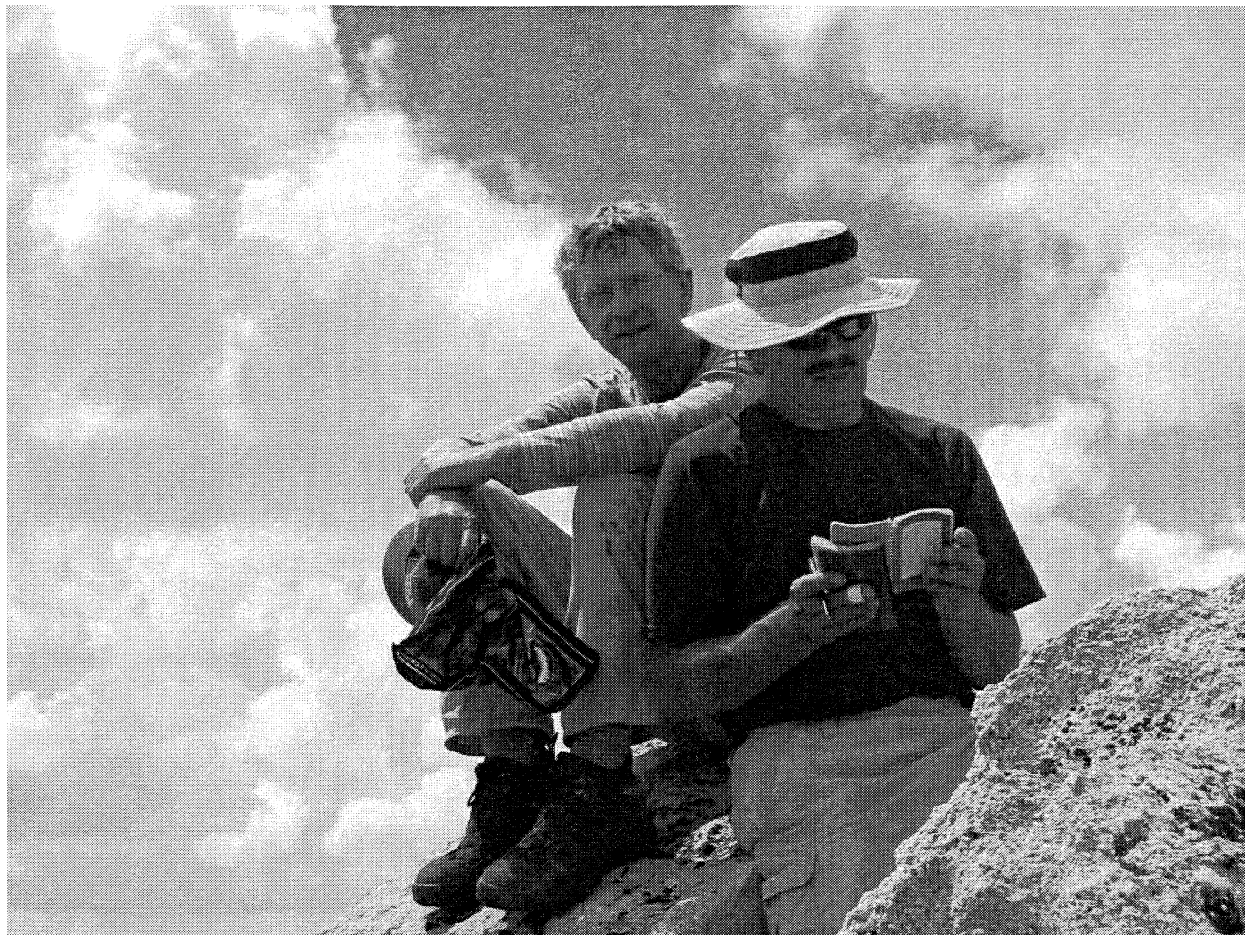


John and Asher above Ruby Lake
(Photo: Dan Richter)

The approach was quite straightforward. We left Mosquito Flats about 5 a.m. and followed the Mono Pass trail to the side trail that leads to Ruby Lake. We passed the lake on the left, rising to Mills Lake and then angled up over slabs and talus to the East Couloir of Mills.

Since it was a low snow year we found the

In order to avoid the couloir we took the Jackie Van Dalsem and Dave Heany variation. Directly above the flake on the right side of the couloir is an alcove from which John pulled up onto clean 3rd class ledges that led us up to the top of the arête following above the right wall of the couloir. We crossed over the arête and followed a short section of 2nd class rock to a 3rd class pull up on to the summit plateau. From there it was a short beautiful top-of-the-world



Dan and John on the summit
(Photo: Asher Waxman)

walk over to the summit.

After a break for a snack and to enjoy the view, we left to get down the chute before a developing August afternoon storm moved in. On the descent we avoided the back of the arête by crossing the top of the sandy East Couloir over to the 3rd class ledges which took us quickly down to the flake and chock stone at the bottom of the couloir.

Approaching Mills Lake, I mentioned that the Norman Clyde had climbed the East Couloir also in August on his first ascent of Mills in 1921. John, who had climbed with Norman, observed that it was a typical Clyde route.

As we stopped for water at the inlet to the lake, the storm hit and we were regaled with hale and rain as the summits of Mills and Abbott behind us were pounded with thunder and lightning. Magnificent!

As a variation, we hung a left just below Mills

Lake and dropped down the bowl to Long Lake enjoying the hail, rain, thunder, and lightning.

Asher encouraged me to write this up for the route description of the East Couloir.

I want to thank John and Asher for accompanying me on my return to the Sierras.

Whitney Zone Peak Bagging

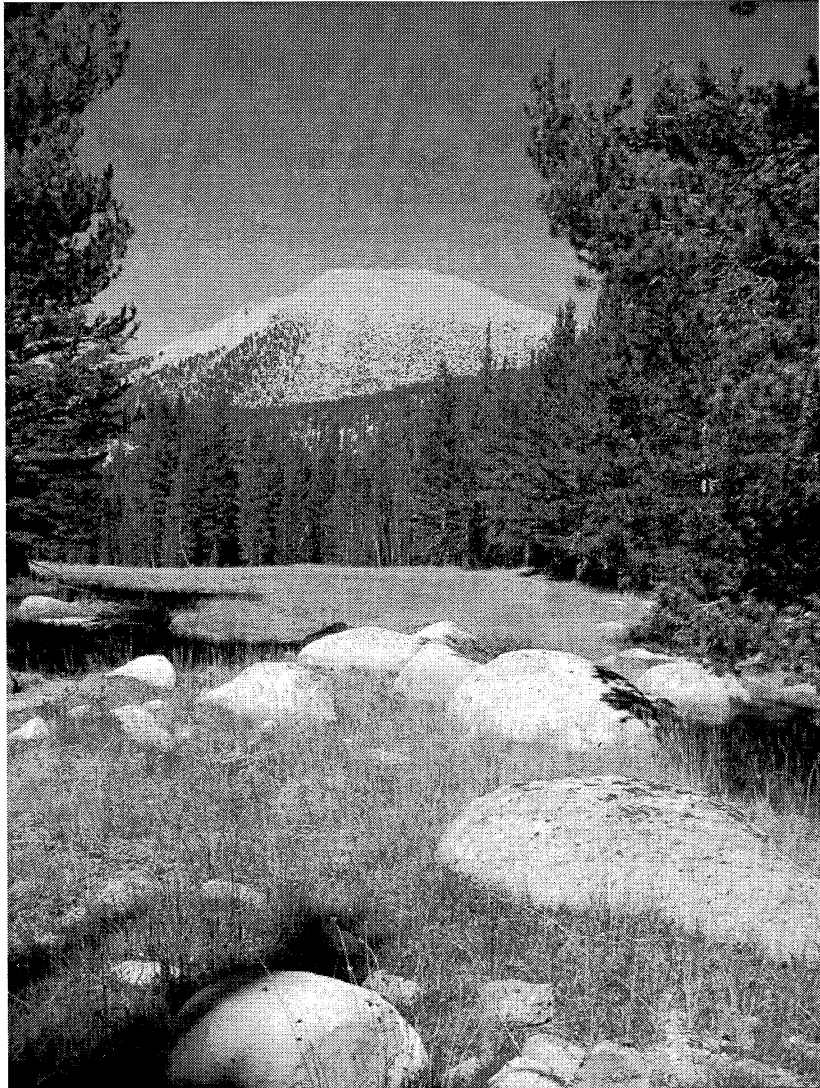
September 18 - 25, 2005

Barbee Tidball

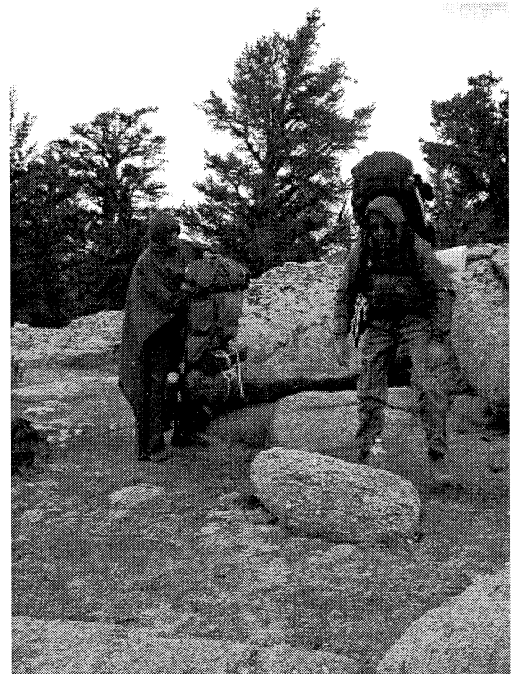
Our long awaited summer vacation – backpacking in the Sierra began Saturday September 18th. We were joined on our peak bagging adventure by Patty Rambert, Ron Hudson, Bob Hoven, and Ron Eckleman at Horseshoe Meadow. A car pool was set-up so that the participants could hike out the Whitney trail to Whitney Portal. This is a classic Sierra trip and one Larry had completed 18 years earlier for the first time. In the “old days” Larry did the loop as a 5-day trip with little time for fishing or book reading in camp. We planned an 8-9 day trip this time. Larry’s speed in earlier times was evidenced in the peak registers as his signature was often only accompanied by one or two of his companions on any given day, and this observation would be followed by a comment from Larry of “oh, Scot (or another person) must have been fishing that day”.

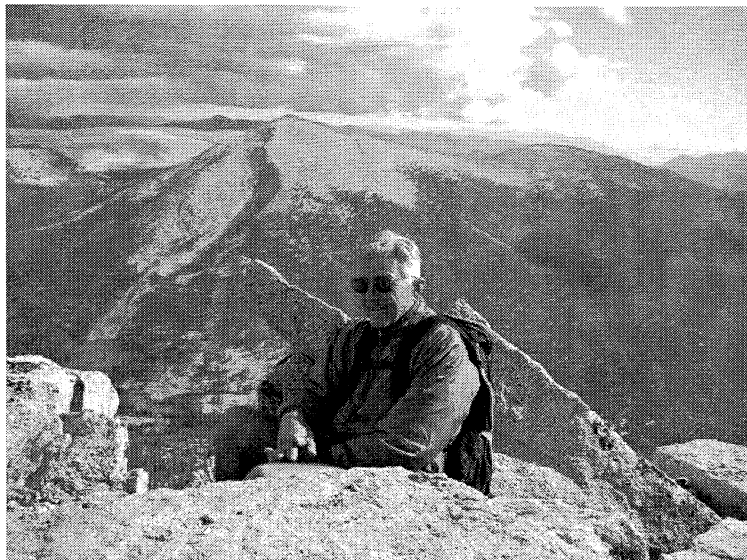
The weather in September was already hinting of the early winter we are now experiencing. It was COLD at 8:45 am in Horseshoe meadow when we set off for Lower Soldier Lake, our first 2-nights camp. Packs were heavy, and I became a bit envious of Patty’s lighter weight gear. In the end Larry rescued me by taking a bit of my load to ease my problem back.

Sunday morning 9/19 Bob, Larry & I were on the trail by 7:45 AM past Rock Creek to the slopes above Erin Lake. The weather was cold with light snow flurries. Our route was up the scree and rock on the south slope of Mt. Pickering to the summit plateau- like ridge. We hiked east along the plateau to the summit on easy terrain that included about 400-500’ of loose sandy scree. By 12:30 we were on the summit, huddled from the wind trying to enjoy the view while watching clouds gathering on



Mt Guyot





Bob Hoven on Joe Devel

adjacent peaks.

Joe Devel was our next destination and we headed down 685' to a saddle, then up the talus ridge staying to the west side of the peak. The clouds surrounded us for a time, creating almost whiteout conditions. The weather was moving quickly and when we summited at 4 pm there were great views over the ridge to the lakes below. Our route back to camp was down the mainly scree slope on the south face until we got to Rock Creek and then headed east to camp, arriving around 8:15 after a delay and small mix-up when our group was separated.

Returning to camp, we found Ron, Ron & Patty already hunkered down in their sleeping bags and keeping out of the cold. They had spent the day exploring Upper Rock Creek to Sky Blue Lake and they came back with lots of fresh trout for everyone's dinner. My small fry pan couldn't hold the 12-13" trout that Ron Hudson caught.

Monday morning promised a sunny day but it was still very cold. Our water bottles were frozen and our fingers were stiff and cold while trying to pack-up for the 10.2 mile hike on trail to Crabtree Meadow. The trail leads down to Rock Creek and then up to Guyot Creek where we found some warm sunny spots for lunch. Our afternoon intermediate destination was Mt. Guyot. The route to the summit is a short hike from the saddle above Guyot Creek. Ron H., Patty, Bob, Larry and I were on the summit by 2 pm enjoying a fantastic 360 degree view. Mt. Guyot may not be a technical peak, but it is well-placed for viewing the Sierra. The distant peaks in the west were dramatized with storm clouds building

rapidly and as the clouds blew over the western peaks we headed back to our packs at the saddle. Snow flurries caught us two-thirds of the way down. It snowed heavily for just over 30 min, just enough time for us to get to our packs and scramble into rain gear.

Bundled up we left the saddle by 5 pm heading down to Guyot Flat. Drought conditions were evident all the way from the saddle to Crabtree Meadow. We had hoped to find water and an early campsite, but were out of luck. At least the weather was clearing and there wasn't a cold wind. As we headed down the final ridge into Crabtree Meadow we were treated to a spectacular display of alpenglow and clouds over Hale, Young and Whitney. The cold and weary group arrived at a good

campsite by 7:15 pm.

Tuesday, just as Bob said the weather prediction indicated, the weather began to warm-up. We had lazy morning, rolling out of our sleeping bags and putting our books away around 8ish the next morning when the sunshine was in our campsite. Our plan for the day, was an easy cross-country hike to Lower Crabtree Lake. We left camp late morning and arrived at the lake around 1 pm in time for lunch, washing up, and relaxing with books, fishing, maps or just enjoying the scenery.

Peak-driven, Patty talked Ron H. into climbing Mt Hitchcock in the afternoon (see photos with Echoes from the Chair). They made great time. Ron and Patty left camp around 2:30 pm and back at the lake we heard Patty's triumphant shout from the summit at 4:16 pm. They were back in camp by 5:24 pm.

Wednesday was a tougher day, our goal was to climb Newcomb and Chamberlain. All 6 climbers left camp at 7:30 am and were on the saddle between the peaks around 11:20 am. I was dragging a bit so I decided to hang back and wander slowly over to Newcomb while the other 5 climbers tackled Chamberlain. My leisure route along the ridge included shorter high points along the way till I reached Newcomb's summit at 1 pm. Meanwhile Larry, Ron, Ron, Bob and Patty were on the summit of Chamberlain by 1:20 pm.

The summit of Newcomb was a wonderful place to relax for a few hours – the views are breath taking. I don't think I have ever before been able to just hangout on a Sierra summit for hours enjoying the

solitude, scenery, watching the birds and perusing the summit register. I did have one visitor briefly, a fisherman from British Columbia who hiked over from Mt. Pickering. He was camping at Sky Blue Lake where he'd also heard the fishing was good. Ron H. joined me by 3:45 pm followed by the last of the others by 4:15 pm.

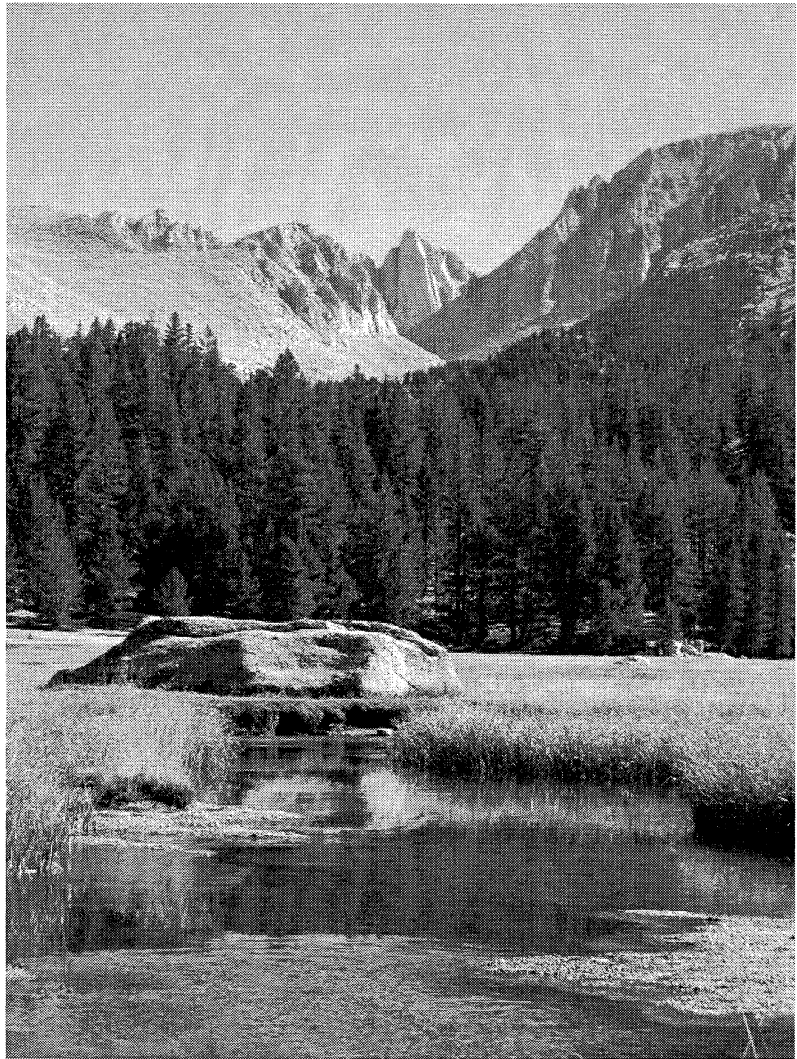
When the group was all on Newcomb we almost immediately headed back across the ridge to a loose gully and down to the lakes. The first of the group arrived at upper Crabtree Lake in time for a swim and fishing. Everyone was back in camp for supper by 7 pm and with warmer weather we stayed up past 9 pm talking.

Thursday and another lazy morning, it was after 7 am before the group was up and cooking breakfast. The weather was sunny, but hazy with mares tails and light clouds in the southeast. Ron H., the "reel" fisherman, caught and released 2 golden trout, Ron E.'s lucky spinning reel and lure was successful and he caught 4 trout but Larry, Bob and I were not successful fly fishing. We practiced casting and spent lots of time working on various problems with my line.

By late morning it was time for Ron H. and Patty to pack-up and head back to Crabtree Meadow. They planned to climb Hale and Young and then head home over Cottonwood Pass on Friday. The rest of our group also packed up and hiked over to Guitar Lake arriving by 4:45 pm after a long lunch break watching deer in Crabtree Meadow.

Friday morning we were up and hiking towards Mt. Hale by 7:34 am, arriving at the summit by 10:40 am. Ron and Patty had signed in the day before, Ron was on Young by 3 pm and Hale by 4:30 pm on Thursday. Friday was sunny and warm. The hike across to Mt. Hale is on very sandy ground between large boulders. We summited Mt. Hale by 12:15 pm. The trip back to camp is a fast sandy run down to the trail and over a small ridge to Guitar Lake.

Saturday became our last day in the Sierra. Our goal was to climb Mt. Whitney and Mt. Muir, then time-permitting head on down to Whitney Portal. We all had food for one more day but the thought of showers and a soft bed was beginning to tempt



Crabtree Meadow

everyone. We packed up and hit the long steep trail by 7:50 towards Trailcrest. It was cold again in the morning and the trail was in shadow almost all the way. The cold helped us make good time to Trailcrest, where we dropped our packs in a rock shelter by 10:30 am.

This was my first trip to Mt. Whitney. I was amazed, but not surprised at how crowded the summit of the peak was. Whitney is truly a sacrificed wilderness area. The crowds of hikers on the summit ranged in age and ability from those who scampered to the summit to the hikers I wondered if they'd make it. Everyone seemed excited to get to the top, although I'm afraid the crowds gave us reason to get off the summit quickly. Being on Mt. Whitney really made me appreciate our days of relative solitude leading up to this famous climb.

On the way down from Mt. Whitney, we

detoured and climbed Mt. Muir. Muir is quickly climbed (30-45 min to summit from trail) but included all the climbing challenges and lack of crowds that Whitney by the trail route misses.

We were back to our packs at Trailcrest by 4 pm and back to the cars by 8:30 pm. The camps for the masses along Whitney trail were just too crowded and impacted to stay at. After a wonderful week in the backcountry these almost urban camps seemed dirty and noisy. Unfortunately however, my dream of a good dinner and shower were almost completely dashed – every hotel and motel from Bishop to Lone Pine was filled. Bob Hoven came to our rescue – with a hot shower and a soft bed on his fold-out sofa in Independence. So pizza and drinks followed by that hot shower competed another great Sierra vacation.

Thanks to all the participants for their support, enthusiasm, energy, companionship and friendship. Barbee Tidball

And from Larry Tidball – An interesting Note: All week we did not see one Marmot. We did see numerous Pica. The pesky Marmots must have gone into hibernation early. Also from Sunday AM on the way to Mt. Pickering when we saw a group hiking out, we did not see any other party until we hit the John Muir Trail on Thursday.



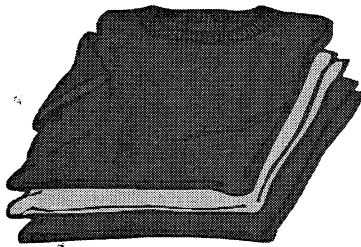
Ron Eckelman near Crabtree Lake

Continued - Jerry Keating trip report from pg. 13

described side trail begins. Relying on the map, Gordon opted for a certain route to Tuolumne, and that meant dropping hundreds of feet with additional mileage to reach the peak's northern approach. Having mentally prepared for a shorter day, Fred, Rich and the writer opted out at this point and leisurely headed back upward to May Lake and then down to the cars. That left Gordon, Barabara, Bruno, Kyle and Margaret for the climb. By the time they left the trail (at about 9760'), they had gained, lost and regained hundreds of feet, but the cross-country terrain to the summit went well. From the summit, they could see it was reasonable to make their descent by the more direct route described above, especially since Kyle had climbed the peak by this route some years before. This saved the group hundreds of feet of gain and several miles of distance, but still it was 7 p.m. by the time everyone was back at the campground. The happy hour and campfire were especially enjoyed.

Sunday was an easier day. Fred, who had signed out, independently returned to May Lake and climbed the peak by the preferred route. Gordon, Barbara, Rich, Kyle and Margaret climbed Hoffmann by using part of the trail to May Lake, a short cross-country route and then the use trail described above.

The Keatings had experienced car trouble on Friday and opted to return home first thing Sunday morning. The Geigers graciously tailed them and helped get the car restarted at Bishop after the engine failed to refire in a parking lot.



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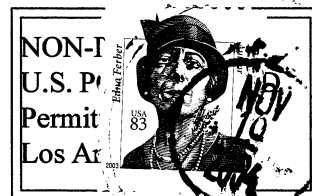
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