

Reflections - Leaders/List Finishers/Contributors

To put together a Who's Who of the Sierra Peaks Section over the past 50 years would take many pages. The leaders and climbers who have made the SPS the great climbing section it has been for the last 50 years are the spirit and soul of the section. Each member brings his/her individual energy and spirit to the trips they lead and participate in.

In an attempt to demonstrate the spirit of the section, while not beginning to try to document every person and event, I have solicited articles on a number of past and present SPS members of the section. The following articles were compiled by Barbara Sholle, Duane McRuer, Jerry Keating, Doug Mantle, RJ Secor, Tom Ross, Reiner Stenzel, and myself.

I hope these stories will represent the Sierra Peaks Section for the last 50 years. Let these stories be a symbol of the spirit of the section that will continue to support and encourage climbers for another 50 years. As Duane McRuer wrote to me when submitting his bios - "Indeed a primary reason I wanted to prepare these two was to highlight their impact on the SPS culture", so they are both cited as Cultural Exemplars" I believe all the persons highlighted herein have significantly impacted the SPS. - Barbee Tidball

Remembrance of Andy Smatko

I first met Andy on a climb of Mt. Brewer with the Sierra Club in 1956. We went on a few club outings and then he started a small group of hikers, which over the years would take Andy on 1500 climbs, many first ascents, climbing all the named peaks of the Sierra and most of the unnamed ones, many weekends and many 9-day trips. Andy and Bill Schuler and I completed the SPS List. In 1959 Andy and I and John Robinson spent the month of July in the Northwest, climbing all the major Cascades peaks. Over the years other folks joined us, including, Bill Schuler, John Robinson, Frank Yates, Sid Davis, Dr. Jaime Paris, Ray Nelson, Ellen Siegal, Dee Weaver, Dr. Dave Wallace, and Neko Colevins. Andy also led many trips in the desert areas.

Andy edited The Climber's Guide to the High Sierra in 1972. For his efforts in this endeavor and for his dedication to the Sierra and mountaineering and conservation, the Sierra Club awarded him the Francis P. Farquhar Award in 2002.

Dr. Andrew J. Smatko was born June 14, 1917. He graduated from New York University June 19, 1941. He served as obstetrician-gynecologist for over forty years at St. John's Hospital in Santa Monica. He was diagnosed with pancreatic cancer two years ago. His great courage in the face of this disease was an inspiration to all who knew him. He died August 21, 2005. He was buried at Holy Cross Cemetery on September 1, 2005. His wife, Shirley, and his son, Andrew J. Smatko, Jr., survive him.

As a climbing companion, there was no equal. He revered the Sierra, loved the works of John Muir, and like him, resolved to get as close to the wild heart of nature as he could. He was a peak bagger, but more than that, he enjoyed the flowers, the great beauty and was a student of the stars also. Most of my 1200 ascents were with Andy and I will never forget him. He was larger than life, his strength and determination led us to many a summit. He was a loyal friend and doctor to my family. I can only say with Thoreau that "My friend shall always be my friend and reflect a ray of God to me."

by Tom Ross 9-6-05



Reflections - Andy Smatko

Dr. Andrew J. Smatko is the Dean of Peak Baggers. His sheer numbers are daunting. In over 40 years, Smatko made over 1800 Sierra ascents, including over 300 first ascents, by far a record. He left no Sierra peak above 11,000 feet unscaled. He topped 102 summits in 1975, his best season, but also had 70, 80 and even 90 peak years as well, beginning in 1953.

He was a participant in the original discussions leading to the formation of the SPS. He was the fourth Echo editor, and Section Secretary in 1965. Through the mid 1970s he supplied loads of material for the newsletter, with such diverse items as "The Physiology of Muscle Exercise" to some ideas about a "Golden List" in 1966.

He was one of our first speedsters, leading numerous trips with John Robinson, and later holding his own with the likes of Tom Ross and Arkel Erb. He did hundreds and hundreds of peaks with buddy Bill Schuler, engaging in witty if occasionally risqué banter.

In October of 1964, he became our first List finisher, on Mt. Muah.

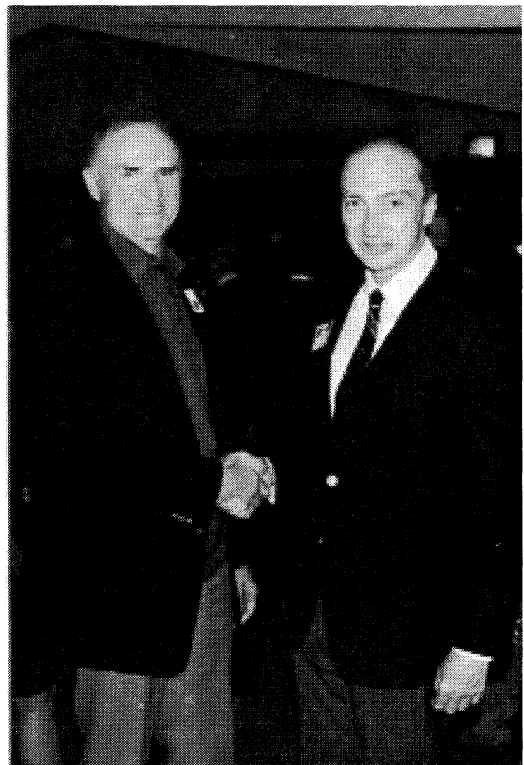
His efforts were not limited to the Sierra. He was the first to explore many of the desert ranges of California, adding more "firsts" to his totals. He became the first "Triple List Finisher" in the Angeles chapter as well.

Dr. Smatko managed all this while raising a family and maintaining a successful medical practice as an OB/GYN in Santa Monica. Despite some occasional jokes about Monday morning surgeries after a tough trip, Dr. Smatko rose to the occasion in his professional life, delivering more than 5,000 babies. He continued that practice well into his 80's, up until his recent death, with an occasional climb with buddies like Sid Davis and Nikko Colevins.

When a new addition of the Sierra Club classic "A Climbers Guide to the High Sierra" was needed, the Club turned to Andy to further its Tote Book series with a revised guide. Editing and expanding earlier works, Smatko prepared the "Mountaineers Guide to the High Sierra" published by the Club in 1972. By taking his own systematic explorations into account, this work includes descriptions of many previously overlooked peaks and passes, and forms the bedrock for the later Sierra guides that have come out.

In 2001 he was presented with the Francis P. Farquhar Mountaineering Award by the Sierra Club, this "Indomitable Explorer and Chronicler of the Sierra Nevada".

Doug Mantle, Duane McRuer



May 15, 1995 - Letter from Andrew Smatko to Ron Jones on the occasion of the 30th anniversary.

"I actually was not one of the 'founders' of the SPS. My earliest climb with the SPS was on a 3-day outing led by Tony Gamero to climb Lone Pine Peak and Mt. Mallory from Meysan Lakes. I recall there were at least 35 people on this climb and was in some trepidation in anticipating the trip. I had never slept out before"

Reflections - R.J. Secor

Everyone who climbs peaks in the Sierra Nevada has heard of R.J. Secor. If you need to know a route to a mountain you look into his guidebook *The High Sierra: Peaks, Passes and Trails*. If you hike in the Sierra you are likely to run into him. If you read peak registers you'll find his name, which he signed more than 750 times on Sierra peaks. How did he start his fame?

R.J. made his first Sierra trips at age 8. He fell in love with climbing mountains. He grew into an articulate young man who appreciated literature, studied the fine arts and became a writer. His favorite outdoors activity became the topic of his writings and he published four guidebooks on Sierra Peaks, Mexican Volcanoes, Aconcagua and Denali. And he did climb what he wrote about: R.J. climbed the highest points of North and South America, many peaks in the western states of the US, peaks in Alaska, Canada, Mexico, the Karakoram in Pakistan and the Himalayas in Tibet and Nepal. He has been on expeditions with the American Alpine Club.

R.J. has a long association with the Sierra Club: He joined the Sierra Peaks Section in 1971 at age 14, later the Ski Mountaineers Section, Desert Peak Section, and offsprings like the CMC and SCMA. At age 16 he became an E-rated leader when this rating system was introduced. He climbed up to 60 peaks a year, and completed the SPS List twice (1986, 1997). He served as SPS Chair in 1998 and conscientiously observed its bylaws. He received many honors and awards for his services, for example organizing the Shepherd Pass trail maintenance program. R.J. is also an experienced ski mountaineer who traversed the Sierra Nevada four times on skis. He has served and chaired the SMS and helped to establish the SMS "List".



Locally, R.J. is famous as the "Henninger-Flats hiker". He has done this hike on the Mt Wilson Toll Road some 2340 times! At 1300' gain this exceeds all his peak climbs. He started to greet everyone on the trail and now everyone greets him and others. He planted trees and watered them carrying the loads in his pack; now others followed his good example. He said that he got his best ideas on these hikes; maybe we all should go.

Trips with R.J. are never dull and there are always nice stories to tell afterwards. His "classic" equipment is a topic of much conversation. He goes as light as possible and endures the resulting inconveniences, such as Dulfur-sitting down Devils Crags or living off M&Ms on winter trips and losing 15lbs on long trips. He likes to be with people but also goes on his own to "Vision Quest" for many weeks. Sometimes his climbing schedule gets derailed when he meets some rangerettes or llama ladies. But on the next summit he usually reports home by cell phone. Sometimes he is reported late but the rangers know him well and wait for a while before starting a search.

In his long climbing career R.J. never had serious troubles, maybe close calls on river crossings. But this spring he tumbled down icy Baldy Bowl resulting in a serious head injury. He recovered miraculously and is back with us. We are happy and hope he will be safely with us for a long time to come. The SPS needs him for another 50 years.

written by Reiner Stenzel

Reflections - Norm Rohn

All too often, we find out just how “notable” some of our notable members are only on their passing. That was the case for many of us after Norm Rohn’s passing in 1989.

He had started up the Taboose Pass Trail for a week of fishing and peak bagging, when a longtime heart ailment took his life.

Norm was nearing 70 then; he was always a steadying influence, whether on so many SPS trips or at meetings. He was our Safety Chairman for five years in the 1970s, he became our oldest List Finisher in 1986. Yes, there was that “billy can” as well.

Norm was born in Milwaukee and graduated from Exeter Academy, Cornell University, and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology where he received two Master’s degrees. He was a mechanical engineer for the U.S. Navy at the Pacific Missile Test Center at Point Mugu, rising to the post of Chief Engineer of the Fleet Weapons Engineering Program. He was never confined to a desk during his career, and his duties saw him leaping out of helicopters with frogmen and breaking the sound barrier on a routine basis with naval aviators. One of his regrets was that he never made it to Mach 2. But he did reach Mach 1.97 in an F-16 from 50,000 to 10,000 in vertical flight shortly before his retirement in 1981.

It was during retirement, however, that the breadth of Norm’s interests were revealed.

On the conservation front, he was a member of the National Audubon Society, Desert Bighorn Society, and was an active volunteer for the Nature Conservancy in the Anza Borrago Desert and on Santa Cruz Island.

He worked as a volunteer for Food Share, gleaning surplus crops from the fields of Ventura County and delivering them to the needy. Norm was an expert gardener and was a member of the Ventura County Orchid Society, Theodosia Burr Fuchsia Society, and Begonia Society. He was an accomplished artist, making silver jewelry. He visited almost every hot spring in the West. He was also a blue water sailor, delivering yachts to California after their owners had vacationed in Mexico.

He was an avid hunter, regularly attending to deer, elk and pheasant season. Fishing was a pastime as well, Norm never tired of exploring the fishing potential of lakes throughout the Sierra.

He teamed up with Ron Jones to provide the DPS with a decade of “Burro Roasts” in which prior to an annual hike up Argus Peak, he would hunt, dress, cook, and serve a “donkey” to a grateful bunch.

He climbed all of the peaks on the Hundred Peaks, Desert Peaks, and Sierra Peaks lists in addition to climbing the crags of Joshua Tree and many routes at Tahquitz Rock. He also climbed the Tetons, and bagged Devil’s Tower. He joined expeditions to Huascaran and climbed Mexico’s volcanoes. He served as a mountaineering instructor in the Sierra Club, and everyone benefited from his experiences in the outdoors and in life, whether they were a beginner or expert in either field.

No wonder RJ Secor noted that Norm went everywhere, knew everything, could do anything, and fix anything at any place and any time.

A “Giant of a Mountaineer” as Ron Jones has said. Indeed. summited by Doug Mantle, R. J. Secor



Norm Rohn during independent trip to Emerson, June 7, 1969.
Photographer: Jerry Keating

Reflections - Vi Grasso



Vi Grasso on the summit of Palisade Crest.
September 6, 1992
photo by Tina Bowman

“So, you are the famous Vi Grasso?” With these words began 23 rewarding years of friendship with this remarkable woman. That came on a Dennis Lantz trip to Split Mountain in 1971.

Vi graced the SPS on trips from 1971 until her death in 1994, finishing the List in 1991.

She had been chairperson and secretary of both the SPS and DPS (she finished that List too!) and had also served as Secretary of the Chapter Council and was the SPS Mountain Records Chair at the time of her death.

The lady defied easy definition: the engaging Latina with the perfectly-timed, zany outbursts, the sophisticate who with a withering snicker could destroy a mediocre opera performance, or who would sit enraptured through any performance by Placido Domingo.

She was the no-nonsense professional, the paralegal, drawing up complex pleadings or fixing the foibles of inexperienced attorneys. She was the gritty endeavorer who soloed a host of tough climbs, bivouacs and all, did Whitney only one way— the East Face, Telescope from the bottom, along with first Sierra winter ascents.

She ran numerous marathons and downhill skied over two continents. She topped other summits all over the West, in Africa, Europe, Australia and Asia. Vi was an E-rated leader who relished good rock with some exposure; Star King was her favorite climb.

She was a gourmet cook, dog show presenter, belly dancer on numerous SPS occasions, and occasionally a Tina Turner impersonator, and Snow Angel.

For a lucky few of us, she was the nurturing friend. Once Vi took you under her wing, she stuck by you (we once joked) like a faithful dog. Just ask Barb Sholle, George Hubbard, Tina, Mac, or me, among others.

She was a perfectionist who saved the highest standards for herself, and showed little tolerance for those who settled for less.

For years, she expressed the opinion that she had had such a wonderful life that anything else would be gravy.

Vi used to joke that when she got old, she would just walk around the lakes. But that wasn't her style, nor was it to be.

She died on 10/15/94, and we are certain she would squawk that it was on a climb of Ken Point, “too bad it was on a crud heap” she would say.

She left us, still vigorous, content with her accomplishments, and much loved. Doug Mantle

Reflections - Jerry Keating

One of the names I have for my climber/husband is the "Ever-Ready Battery" and I thought for years that the nick-name was Larry's alone.....that is until I began to look at Jerry Keating's contributions to the Sierra Peaks Section. I first encountered Jerry's energy and commitment to the Section while I worked on the 40th Anniversary Banquet program and I have observed and benefited from his efforts for the Section ever since.

In May of 1957 Jerry & Nancy Keating joined the SPS for their first climb with the Section on John Robinson's trip to Olancha (see group photo page 53) and in July of 1957 they officially joined the Sierra Peaks Section. The Olancha climb must have been a great trip, because now, years later Jerry has photos and can provide interested climbers information on the trip. Jerry has maintained, since that trip, a friendship with and co-led many trips with his first SPS leader.

Jerry Keating has enthusiastically supported the Section since joining the SPS. As early as 1958, Jerry assisted trip leaders by writing the trip report for *The Sierra Echo* memorializing trips he was a participant on. From his position with the UPI, Jerry also supplied Echo readers with information on State and national events from the American climb of Mt.

Gasherbrum to criminals in the Sierra. From 1958 to 1959 Jerry served as the second Echo editor for the Section. The December 1958 issue of *The Sierra Echo* was just 7-pages long, but this issue was not produced with the aid of a computer and high-speed copiers. In 1958 *The Sierra Echo* was produced using the typing and the Ditto process. This involved creating the master copy and then transferring the image to drum for the 100 plus SPS members' copies.

In 1959, soon after joining the Section, Jerry

was leading SPS trips for new and seasoned climbers. On March 7-8, 1959, Jerry led a successful climb to Lamont and Sawtooth and in July he led a knapsack trip to Koip and Gibbs.

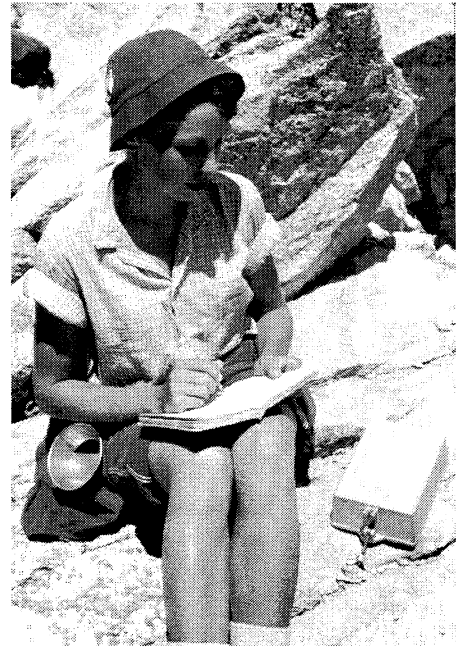
Jerry & Nancy continue, after 46 years to lead trips for the SPS. As an "E" rated leader Jerry has also led trips to the tougher and more challenging peaks on the list. Only a few SPS climber's names can be found year

after year for the last, almost, 50 years in the Section's newsletter as an active member of the SPS. Jerry is there, leading, participating and writing about the adventures of the SPS.

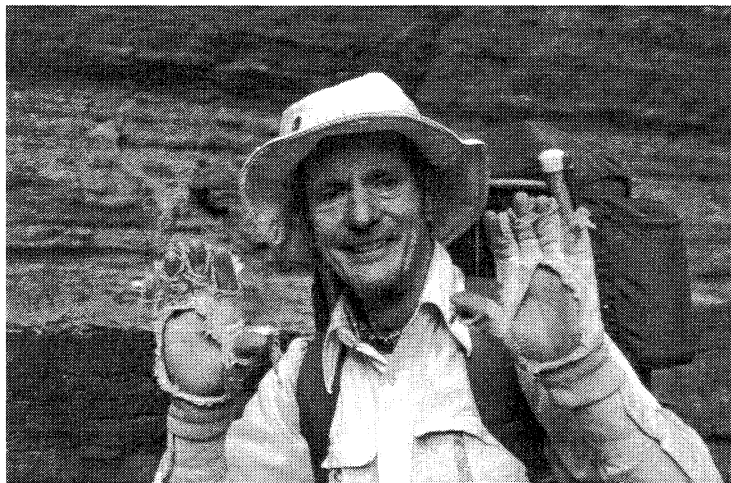
In the 1976, 20th Anniversary Commemorative issue, Jerry wrote as the 1960 SPS Chair, "A survey taken near the start of my term

members strongly preferred moderate trips over those of either a strenuous or easy nature, while being equally divided on the question of technical vs. non-technical trips. At the same time, the membership overwhelmingly voted for more exploratory trips and for more beginners' trips. As a result, a concerted effort was made to develop and maintain a balanced outings schedule. This informal policy has continued, in the main, ever since."

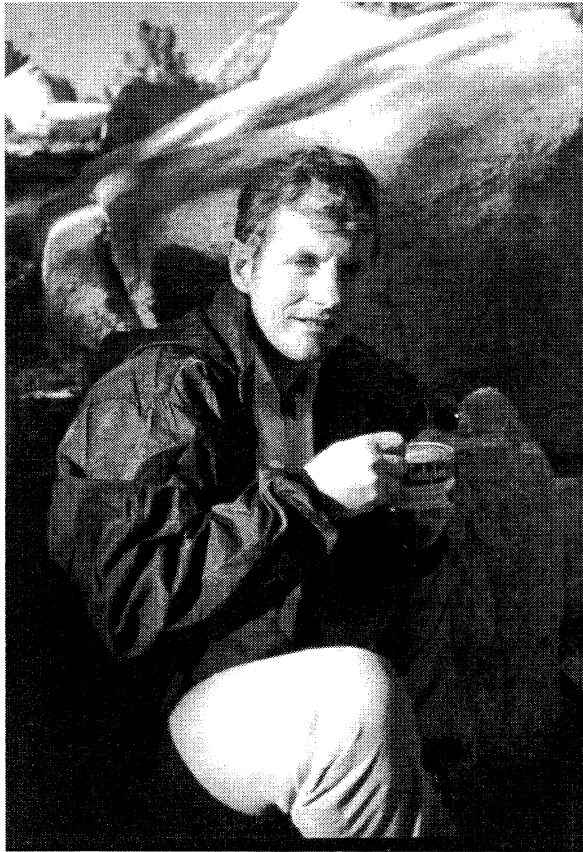
Jerry Keating was the Sierra Peaks Section



Nancy on Matterhorn Pk. 1959



April 1982 Grand Canyon trip



Lunch break - Buckeye Pass 1975

chairman in 1960. In 1961 before moving to Sacramento, Jerry was the SPS secretary, and in 1962 Jerry and Chuck Miller (also living in the Sacramento area) began supporting the Section as

the Northern Chapter. The same year Jerry's son, James Keating, joined the Section as the 3rd Mascot (SPS members under 12 years of age) member.

Jerry is active climbing the SPS peak's list. In 1958 he became the 24th SPS member to achieve his Emblem. In 1971 Jerry achieved his Senior Emblem and in 1972 he completed climbing The List. Jerry was List Finisher #4, on Table Mountain.

Jerry was also active climbing non-listed peaks. In 1976 he reported in the Echo on Indian Rock "Owen's Valley, Indian Rock (12,160') is an infrequently climbed promontory on a ridge mid-way between the Baxter and Sawmill Pass trails." In 2005 Jerry reported on a trip, he helped to lead to Trail Peak (11,605') and Wonoga Peak (10,371'), see pages 64-65.

For the 30th, 40th and now 50th anniversary of the Sierra Peaks Section, Jerry has dug into his climbing archives for photos and historical notes on events that were part of the SPS folk lore and history. For the banquets in 1976 and 1986 Jerry's photos were assembled on a display board featuring SPS memorabilia. Now in 2005 the newsletter is assembled on the computer with publishing software and PhotoShop for the pictures. Jerry Keating's photos and notes are there too - augmenting many articles reported in *The Sierra Echo*. Jerry has also supported the creation of the Sierra Peaks Section history video, by tirelessly researching where original members were located; assisting with arranging the video interviews; researching facts and locating photos. Jerry



40th Anniversary Banquet - Rich Gnagy, Jerry Keating, Chuck Miller, Tom Amneus, Nancy Keating, Bob Marshall, Rick Jali, Mary Ann Miller

commemorated the SPS 50th anniversary by researching and developing a list of early hikes...and then encouraging current SPS leaders to lead commemorative climbs.

Jerry Keating is one of the enduring spirits in the Sierra Peaks Section. He is a climber (list finisher), leader and inspiration to others in the SPS. —Barbee Tidball

Reflections - Dave Dykeman

In the mid-1970s, Roy Magnuson, a strong climber and leader in his own right, brought a work buddy out on some DPS trips.

The new guy was a big man; he let his abilities do the talking, but he didn't seem too excited about those desert peaks.

He soon veered over to the SPS, where he became a giant, dominating the Section for more than a dozen years. Prolific peak bagger, one of the finest of mountaineers, above all, mentor: DAVE DYKEMAN.

Barbara Sholle recalls her first meeting with Dave on the Whitney Trail in 1989: "I stopped to ask him why he was hiking up so late and he explained that it was his 57th birthday which he was celebrating by day hiking Irvine, Mallory, LeConte, Muir, and Whitney. I told him that I was interested in climbing Sierra Peaks but that I needed someone who could lead me. He said that he loved to lead people up peaks."

Indeed!

Dave led more scheduled trips to Sierra Peaks than anyone. He enjoyed seeing people obtain their climbing goals. He was always very encouraging and would gear trips to the pace of the slowest person, without berating them.

He not only finished the List, but he led, on scheduled trips *every single peak* on the SPS List. He was poised to become the next two time List finisher.

Besides leading Barbara up 48 peaks, Dave nurtured a fledgling Bill Oliver into the fold, and managed to save R.J. Secor's life at Crown Creek in 1983.

We often ribbed Dave for his late night exploits, aka getting the group back in the dark so often, episodes where he had patiently coaxed the slowpokes.

At the 40th SPS Anniversary Banquet, he brought down the house by donning a headlamp as he approached the podium for his remarks.



As one of the SPS' most respected leaders, Dave was elected to several management positions and served as Section Chair in 1985. When the Sierra Club abandoned mountaineering in the late 1980s, he was instrumental in the creation of the California Mountaineering Club, and served as its third president.

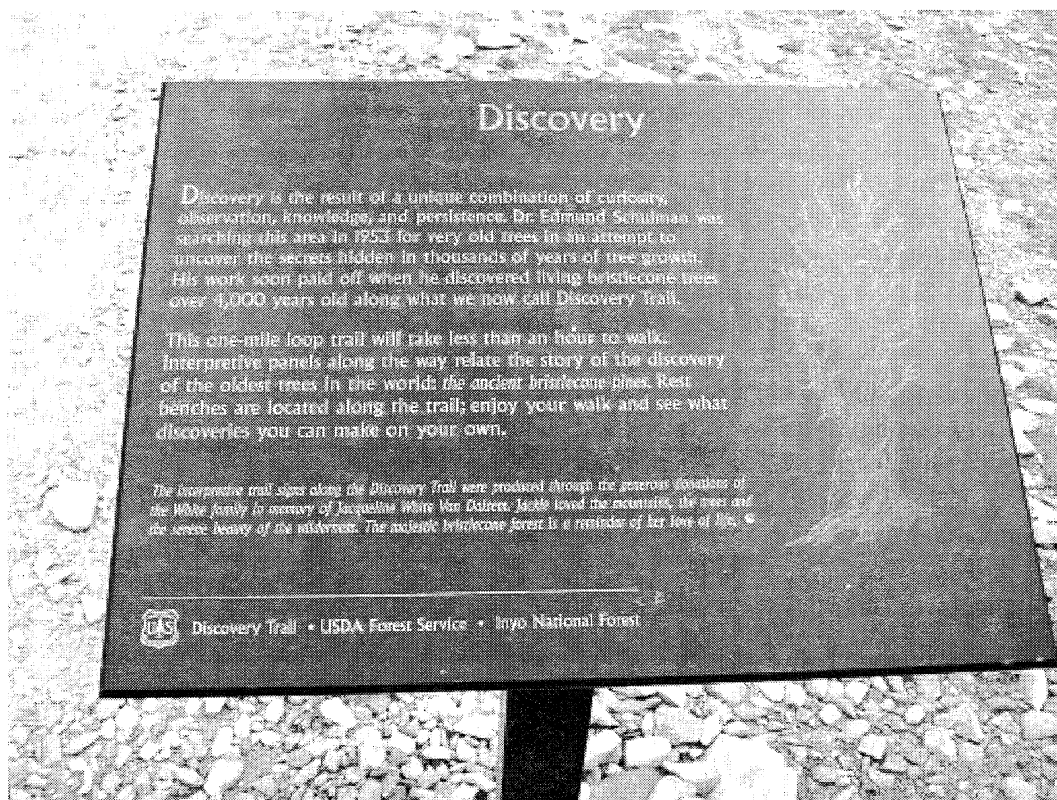
Dave was born in Tacoma, Washington, studied electrical engineering at the University level, yet he never graduated. Dave was a "mustang" who climbed very high in the electronics industry without a formal college degree. He spent most of his career at Litton Industries designing electronic guidance systems for ships and aircraft. Too, Dave earned NASA recognition for his professionalism, dedication, and outstanding support that greatly enhanced space flight safety and mission success to the manned space program.

Dave had children and grandchildren from his first marriage, and many of us remember his happiness on marrying Lenora Wills.

In 1996, after leading perhaps the Sierra's most dangerous peak, Devil's Crag, Dave perished amidst rock fall near the summit.

Doug Mantle, R.J. Secor

RAY DAVID DYKEMAN Dave Dykeman went to Aconcagua, climbed Mexico's volcanoes, summited Mera in Nepal, climbed all 247 peaks on the SPS List, and climbed almost 224 of these peaks at least twice. He not only finished The List but he led, on a scheduled trip, every single peak on The List. List Completion is noteworthy but to have led climbers of all abilities to the summit of every peak on The List is a tremendous achievement. from RJ Secor



Discovery Trail sign, Inyo National Forest.

The sign was dedicated in memory of Jacqueline White Van Dalsen

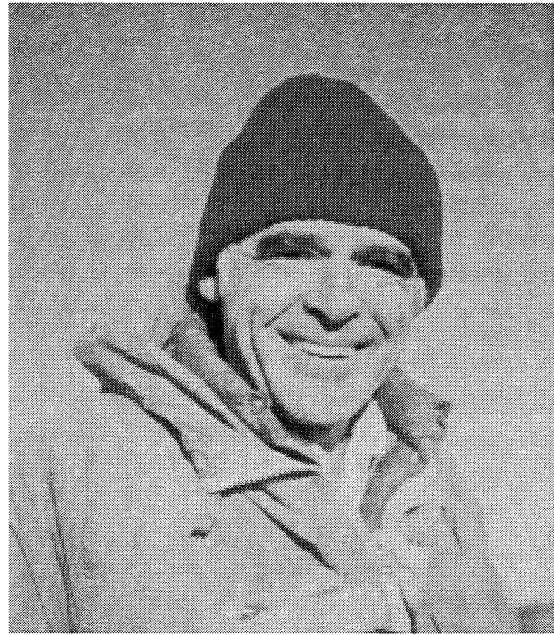
Reflections - Bill T. Russell

Among the most vivid memories I have of Bill T. Russell are his great warmth for his friends and family and his delight in mountaineering activities. For the SPS and the Angeles Chapter's climbing and training activities his defining attribute was as a "Cultural Exemplar," a role he played for over two decades. He fostered an outings and leadership culture in which the individual is extremely competent, sensitive to others, steadfast in the pursuit of safety and excellence and, most of all, full of a desire to improve matters and endowed with the initiative and follow through to fulfill that desire. He recognized needs; set goals, was full of imaginative approaches to meet them; possessed a self-starter; and had a bulldog-like tenacity to carry projects to successful completion. To paraphrase one of the shorter battle reports of World War II about an engagement with a U Boat – "Sighted Sub, Sank Same" – in Bill T's case this became "Set Goals, Achieved Same" — and many were motivated to follow his example.

His career of leadership in the Angeles Chapter had a profound and continuing impact on the style and cultural norms of the Chapter's outings activities. A short summary of his individual, leadership, training, and management accomplishments would include:

- Individual accomplishments – finisher of all three lists + a 2nd SPS Senior Emblem [Incidentally, a 2 time list finisher in the DPS and 3 times for the HPS].
- Chapter Activities – Only person ever to Chair the LTC, DPS, HPS, and SPS! Secretary of the Chapter Ex-Comm.
- LTC Chair and Navigation Guru – author of major revisions for the Chapter's Leadership Reference Book (LRB), including the Navigation Chapter, founder of the famous "Navigation Noodles," etc.
- His SPS-specific roles included
 1. Management Committee: Chair (1977), Secretary (1974), Alternate Officer (1975); Conservation Chair (1985-87); Mtn Records (1990-92);
 2. Historian, Archivist, and "Keeper of the List." Editor of the List from the 12th to 16th Editions and author of a definitive list history (40th Anniversary Echo, Vol 39, No. 6, Dec 1995) describing how the 200 peaks in the 1st Edition (c. Nov 1955) evolved to the 247 peaks in the 16th Edition (Oct 1992).
 3. Originator, emblem designer, and promoter of the Senior and Master Emblem concepts.
 4. Trip Leadership – led all of the most difficult, and many other peaks on the SPS list.

The great talents this remarkable man devoted to the SPS has left an enduring impact, especially his heritage of goals and, by example, his standards for leader performance. His interactions with others exhibited an exceptional understanding of group dynamics while being sensitive to the needs of individual participants. Bill T. was noted for his preparation and execution — his incredible knowledge of routes, surroundings, and his capacity to safely and effectively meet the group's desires. He radiated a genuine desire to help, to mentor, and to motivate. He was a very effective "missionary" and a veritable SPS patriarch, gently leading people to do things right.



Photographer: Jerry Keating



October 30, 1977.

Photographer: Jerry Keating

For these contributions and accomplishments Bill T. was recognized by the SPS with its first Leadership Award (shared with Dave Dykeman) and by the Chapter with its Versteeg and Lifelong Service Awards. He also received essentially all the HPS Awards except their very latest one — the Bill T. Russell Award for Young Leaders.

In his life outside the Sierra Club, Dr. William T. Russell graduated from the University of Washington on the eve of World War II with an Army commission via the ROTC. During the war he served with distinction in North Africa and Italy, receiving several decorations. As a postwar Regular Army officer he was sent to Caltech to get his PhD, which he received in 1950. Upon leaving the Army in 1957 he joined TRW where he progressed through several engineering and management positions, ultimately retiring as a Vice President. After contending with leukemia and a succession of strokes he died on 8 January 1997, just a few days after he and his wife, Pat, celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary. (See also the Jan-Feb 1997 Echo for 6 pages of reminiscences that describe how Bill T. so positively touched peoples lives in many different ways.)

written by Duane McRuer

Reflections - Bob Hicks

Bob Hicks, one of the Sierra Club's great stalwarts for over half a century, began his club career in 1961. He was already a seasoned wilderness traveler from trips in the Sierra with his wife Katie, so they immediately took on various roles with the Basic Mountaineering Training Course where he ultimately served as the South Bay area chairman. In 1972 he was in the initial class of the reconstituted Leadership Training Program, achieving his "E" rating, and started a long term association with the Leadership Training Committee. During his many years with the LTC he was an instructor and examiner in snow and rock, course lecturer, and LTC chairman. While continuing his position as LTC administrative chairman and treasurer, he was asked in 1979 to become the Angeles Chapter Safety Committee chair. In this position he initiated and refined processes and procedures that have stood the test of time and handled sometimes very awkward affairs in a gentle and evenhanded fashion. His superb performance in these many tasks was recognized by the Chapter with a Special Service Award in 1977, and then with the Phil Bernays Service Award in 1982. The Chapter later recognized his continuing efforts with Outings Service Awards in 1990 and 1995. These were capped in 1996 by the Lifelong Service Award, the first year that award was given. It was also given (posthumously) to Bill T. Russell at the same time. This timing was especially appropriate as Bob and Bill T. shared many Chapter administrative chores and SPS, DPS, and HPS leads, as well as private trips for many years. I was fortunate to have both of these sterling individuals as boon companions in these activities and our "Older Boys Trips" for well over two decades.

He joined the SPS early on, achieving Emblem status in 1975, Senior Emblem in 1981, and became a list finisher in 1990. Bob also served terms on the SPS Management Committee as Alternate Officer and as Chairman in 1979. The HPS and DPS lists were later added to this repertory to make him a triple-list finisher.

Most of the above is basically documentation of decades of an outstanding SPS and Sierra Club odyssey. I can't, however, leave this memoir without one or two personal comments as he and I were almost inseparable companions for over 35 years. Although known to only a very few people, Bob was a decorated and wounded infantryman in World War II. In spite of officially being discharged with some disability he became an extraordinarily well-conditioned and effective climber and athlete, among other things running sixteen marathons and innumerable 10K's in addition to his mountaineering exploits. It was an occasional source of frustration to some (e.g., me!) that this "poor disabled veteran" with flat feet, etc. was invariably waiting (patiently) for me to catch up in spite of my very best fitness-building efforts! Also, he is one tough cookie. For example, after a rappel on our climb of Devils Crags he dodged rockfall from a following climber, but inadvertently smashed into the wall, injuring his lower leg. He then insisted on hiking all the way out and driving home. When I called him at the office the next day they responded that he was in the hospital with a broken leg! Remarkable pain threshold! More recently he has undergone a knee replacement with no complaints of pain and is now gradually returning to good form — although there are no more marathons in the future. written by Duane McRuer

Reflections - Duane McRuer

By the 1970s, the SPS was sailing along, a well-organized bunch of “devil may care” peak baggers, one critic accused. Then came an ill-fated DPS trip to Big Picacho, and the demand from the Angeles Chapter for leadership standards, certifications, and training.

Almost overnight, the SPS was transformed from jovial adolescent to responsible middle age: the working corps of the Angeles system.

Henceforth, it would be the SPS who provided the standards, instructors, practices, and exams for third and fourth class climbs on rock and snow and the concomitant navigation. This process, diluted here and there in small ways, remains intact.

The folks who created and implemented all this tended to work in aerospace companies, had graduated from Cal Tech University, and took this task as seriously as they took building airplanes (and at times, spent as much time on the one as on the other).

The Godfather of this transformation, Don Corleone himself, was Duane McRuer.

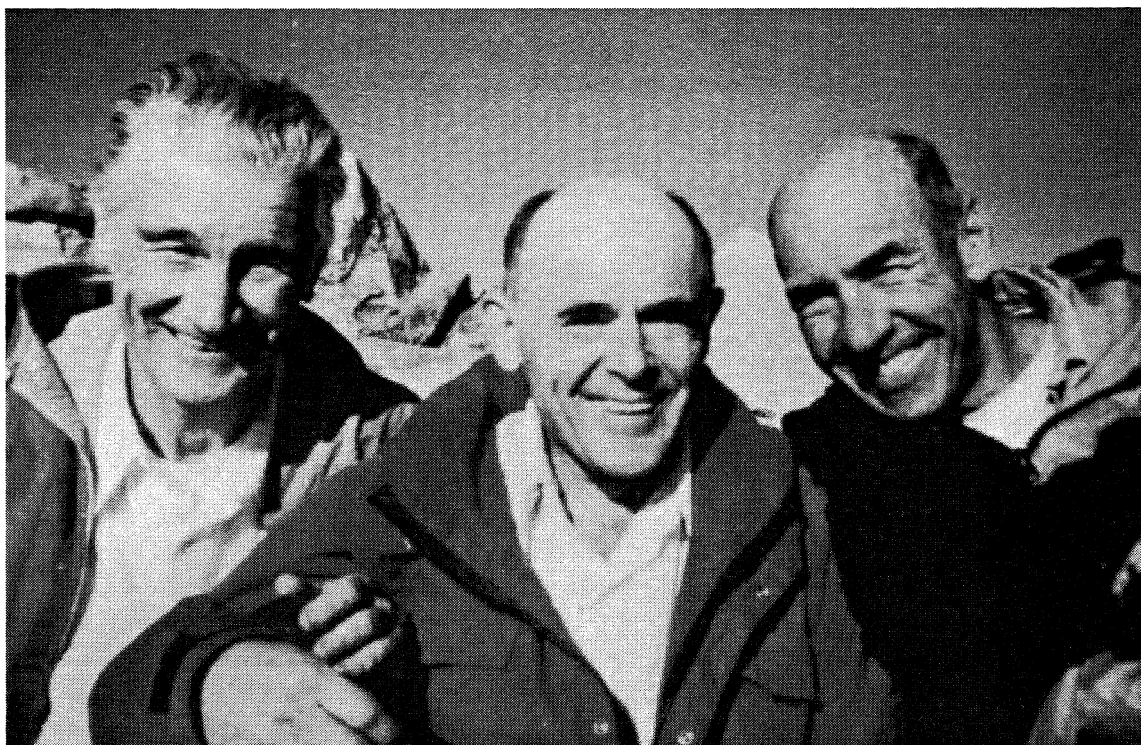
Duane conceived the LTC system, wrote much of the LRB, organized and ran many of the snow, rock, and navigation practices and checkouts and, importantly, set the whole structure off on its own power, tapping various people on the shoulder, urging their involvement, encouraging their efforts.

A decade later, the club lost insurance for all but the most undemanding climbs. When the possibility to again do mountaineering arose, it was Mac who retooled the operation and sent it on its way yet again.

To the present, he has kept greasing the wheel; he wrote for the most recent LRB, he was an examiner at the most recent snow checkoff this May.

Mac does this as he does most things, quietly, “behind the scenes”. I have jokingly called him “El Manipulato”.

In the same way, Mac for more than thirty years has quietly been suggesting recognition for our best leaders, hardest workers, and most conspicuous achievers. A short word from Mac at a committee meeting has led to more than one Versteeg Award winner, for example.



Three friends - Duane McRuer, Bill T. Russell, Bob Hicks

A better example: perhaps the two SPSers most worthy of recognition, Andy Smatko and Barbara Lilley, were of late little honored, at least officially. To correct that, Mac had to literally make up the existence of a subcommittee, invest it with the relevant powers, use it to lobby a bunch of important people in and out of the San Francisco Sierra Club structure to reconstitute a dormant mountaineering award, then set various people to work on nominations, bios, and approvals. The resultant two Farquhar Awards do us all proud.

Mac has always read extensively from the mountaineering and training literature, and took seminars at Mt. Rainier in the 60s, when he began climbing various listed peaks.

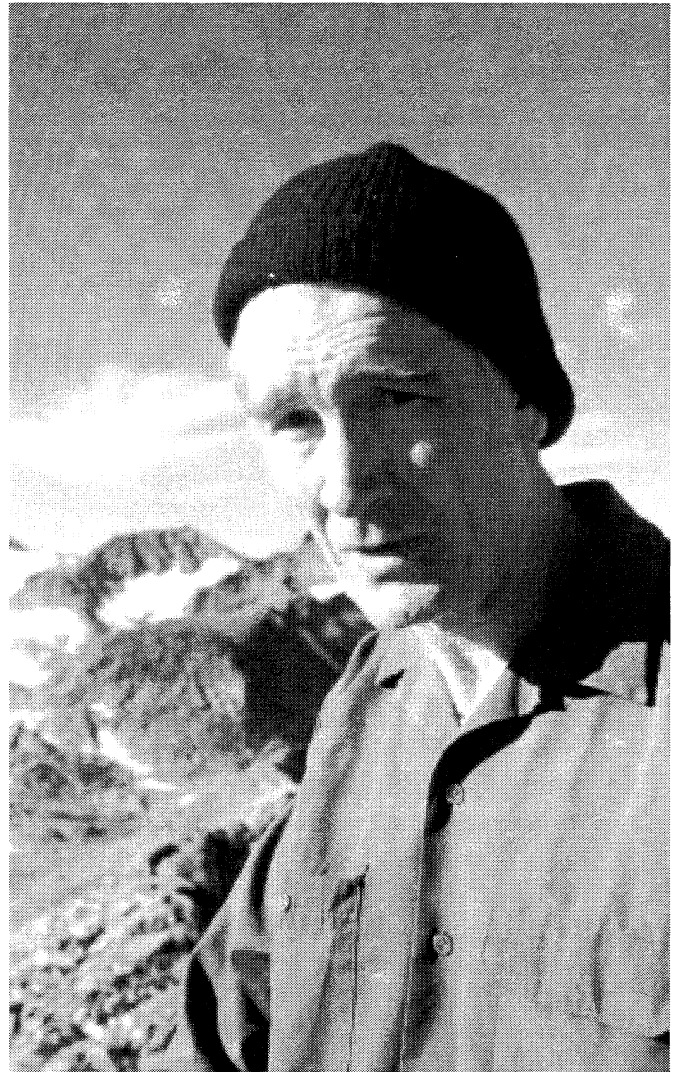
He led almost the entire HPS List with John Backus, and by the 1970s was fully committed to tackling the SPS peaks. He completed the List in 1986, but continued climbing with his buddies as Bob Hicks finished the List in 1990, then Vi Grasso in 1991, and he has gone far afield to attend some of my climbing obsessions, including our 1993 ascent of the high point of Australia. Mac has continued on the HPS and DPS Lists, a multiple List finisher in both sections, more lately working on California county high points. He has chaired both the SPS and the DPS.

He is no stranger to Awards. In his professional life there are not enough walls in the house to fill honors from such as the National Academy. The Club awarded Duane the Chester Versteeg Outing Award in 1981, the Oliver Kehrlein Award (for outstanding work in the Chapter's outings

programs) in 1997, the Phil Bernays Award (outstanding service to the Chapter in fields *other* than conservation and outings), the Sierra Peaks Leadership Award, and almost uniquely, in 1998, Duane was given the Lifelong Service Award "given to a senior member who has provided consistent long term service to the Angeles Chapter". No, Duane didn't suggest himself, behind the scenes or otherwise, for any of those.

I met Mac in 1971 when Mac was still in his 40s and he likes to recall he still had some red hair, but some of us referred to him even then as "that old guy". He was anything but a braggart, but it did seem like he knew everything, like nothing ever flustered him, and like he was some kind of Chairman of the Board, carrying himself with an inherent dignity.

Within a few years, I realized that Mac does know everything, from geology to avionics, to all the kings of England and Scotland, to any science man has ventured into and, if prodded, he will talk for hours fluently on any of it. He claims he had a temper in his past, which was of some danger, given he was a boxer in his youth. He never is flustered (and some of us have given him good reason to have been); moreover, he is the Chairman of the Board, or was at least, going from a boy wonder engineer, creating the first flying wing for Jack Northrup, to founding his own aeronautics companies, the last of which for whom he still writes government proposals on projects ranging from a parachute simulator, to national highway projects, to futuristic hypersonic flight.



Duane McRuer - SPS trip to Parsons, Amelia Earhart and Simmons, Aug. 17-18, 1974
Photo by Jerry Keating



Duane & Betty's 45th wedding anniversary

Mac is very giving, kind, and gentle, and respectful of all. In Harry Potter terms, Mac is our Dumbledore. Mac is one of the greatest people I know.

Randall Danta

15 year tradition of "Older Boy Trips" where they got the various peaks they needed in the Sierra Nevada. Throughout the 1980s, Mac, Bob Hicks and I, frequently with Vi Grasso, formed a group, often private, often leading for the section, always reveling in each other's company, gourmet goodies, and adult beverages. There was uniformly good humor involved, and an openness to others, especially newcomers, on Mac's part.

Mac will be 80 years old and happily married for 50 years by the time we read this. Mac has always drawn strength from the real power behind his throne, Betty McRuer who, among other things, prepared a thousand backpack meals and twenty thousand backpack lunches, kept things in line at the office, and won lots of stuff at the thousand Sierra Club banquets that she has dutifully attended. Of their two children, daughter Laura has more readily taken to the mountains and covets the ongoing opportunity to hike with her dad in the mountains around Prescott where the McRuers have a summer home.

Many years ago there was an anonymous Echo article in which a select few were called "patriarchs". Well, I looked it up. Basically, patriarch just means an old guy, Mac, so I would substitute, for you and Betty, "doyen" and "doyenne": "Senior members of a group; persons considered to be knowledgeable or uniquely skilled as a result of long experience...."

Mac remains our number one doyen to my mind who, along with a treasured few others, have made fifty years of SPS possible.

Doug Mantle

Reflections - Duane McRuer

In a different vein, Mac has consumed more foie gras, pickled herring, raw oysters, and sea urchins than I can fathom. He has suffered roughly a quarter-million headaches, some of them the true cluster type, and the majority of which required ice-to-head or S.U.V.-to-head treatment, without vocal complaint.

If you meet Mac on a hike, he will unobtrusively be asking you about yourself; his real interests are people and their interests; I have seen him often suffer lightly some insufferable folk who have at times crossed his path.

Mac did a lot of early trips with John Backus, gradually Bob Hicks became a close hiking buddy, and along with Bill Russell, they forged an almost



Reflections - Doug Mantle

As everyone in the SPS knows Doug Mantle has an unparalleled record for climbing mountains in almost any earthly venue. He has ascended the legendary post-flood landing spots in both the Eastern and Western Hemispheres, these being Noah's landing place, Mt. Ararat in Eastern Turkey near the Iranian border, and the Tohono O'odham equivalent, Cerro Pinacate, on the DPS list which was the touch down spot of Little Brother and Coyote in their barrel. At high latitudes he has hit the tops of the polar regions, both the Northern (a set of peaks in Greenland) and Southern (Vinson Massif) Hemispheres within the Arctic and Antarctic Circles. Then there are the Mexican volcanoes and high (17,000 ft +) volcanoes bordering the Atacama Desert and Chimborazo, Huascaran and other major peaks in South America, and the Mountains of the Moon, Mt Kenya, etc. in Africa. He has surmounted the 7 highpoints of the Continents, the 7 highpoints of the Continental Plates, and 4 of the world's 8,000 meter peaks (Everest, Gasherbrum II, Xixabangma, and Cho Oyu). He is currently seeking the high points of the world's 7 largest islands. His multiple attacks on the SPS and DPS lists (in each case 1 peak to go for 6 completions), coupled with 6 HPS finishes stand as nearly incomprehensible achievements.



His first love and long time focus has been the Sierra Nevada, where he has visited over 1,500 of his 4,000+ total worldwide summits. For the record, among his nearly 6 SPS list completions one was done solo (he doesn't recommend this). In his most productive Sierra year (2003) he did 100 SPS peaks. His early record of 33 straight weekends in the Sierra probably still stands, and he is, no doubt, competitive for en-route encounters with the Highway Patrol.

Surely this is a picture of an over-achiever, and the sheer magnitude of these achievements would indicate to many a zealous, single-dimensional drive! There is some truth to this conclusion, for the man is extraordinarily well-organized and self-disciplined. But he's the antithesis of single-dimensional. While establishing this absolutely superlative mountaineering record, he finished college and law school, entered practice and rapidly became a partner, and then branched out and built a successful law firm of his own. Cultural pursuits aplenty also take a good deal of his time. Among these a particular delight for some of us has been his capacity to recite Eliot's "Wasteland" and "Quartets," or Coleridge's "Rime of the Ancient Mariner," while we chug along a trail near the end of a hard day. Then, in camp, he is a key participant in his attempt to bring a degree of civilized culinary and oenological sophistication, along with good conversation, to further the mountaineering experience.

To top this off, Doug has also been a "Cultural Exemplar" for the SPS in matters of leadership, safety, and performance and as a mentor to individuals for achieving their own goals. Early on (1974-75) he served as the SPS Vice Chair and Chair, and has for many years been Co-Chair of the SPS Safety and Training operations. In this domain he has played a paramount role in training, checkouts, and co-leads to aid provisional leaders at the M and E levels. He has also almost literally adopted some SPS members to help, mentor, and motivate them to pursue their own mountaineering goals. So, besides creating an incredible personal record he has positively touched many people's lives in many different ways.

For these outstanding accomplishments he has received recognition from the SPS (its Leadership Award), the Chapter (the Versteeg Award), and the National Club (The Francis Farquhar Mountaineering Award).

Doug started all this by joining the Sierra Club at the age of 15 in the days when one still needed to be sponsored. He was introduced to the high Sierra while assisting on a National Backpack Trip. This became a lifetime passion in parallel with his UCLA and USC law school studies and his successful and rewarding legal career. He's still at it, beginning to add more severe alpine rock and snow climbing to his beloved Sierra and desert venues and continuing his push for island highpoints. And there will, no doubt, be even further list finishes in the future.

submitted by Duane McRuer

Reflections - Barbara Lilley & John Robinson

SPS FOUNDING PAIR'S INVOLVEMENT SPANS HALF-CENTURY



Barbara J. Lilley taken during a Sept. 30-Oct. 1, 1972 Sierra Peaks Section outing to Mount Corcoran. Sadly, a storm disrupted this particular outing and the group was not able to climb the peak. According to photographer - Jerry Keating

Of the 18 persons who a half-century ago founded the SPS, Barbara J. Lilley and John W. Robinson stand out as clear examples of unflagging mountain devotees, although each in a different manner.

Lilley continues to seek out new summits with a legendary tenacity, while Robinson savors authoring history-oriented books that add new dimensions to readers' understandings of the Sierra Nevada and other high places.

And both individuals continue to serve the Sierra Club as volunteers, Lilley as secretary of the Alpine Ski Mountaineering Committee, and Robinson as a member of the Angeles Chapter History Committee. The two also are on the SPS's 50th Anniversary Committee.

Lilley, whose trip leads in the Sierra go back as far as Olancho Peak for the San Diego Chapter in May 1954, was coleader of the SPS-scheduled trip to Trail and Wonoga Peaks in early September 2005, and Robinson provided the historical background for the outing.

Trail coincidentally was to be Robinson first Sierra

trip after Army service following the Korean War, but the group—led by fellow founding SPSers Frank Sanborn and Owen Blackburn—opted instead to climb Cirque Peak. Because the Horseshoe Meadow Road we know today did not yet exist, that trip required an eight-mile backpack into Cottonwood Basin. The dates were Oct. 1-2, 1955, and Lilley also was on the trip.

A weekend later, Sanborn organized a trip out of Mineral King, and Robinson and Lilley both reached Needham Mtn. and Sawtooth Peak on the first day (Oct. 8, 1955). For Robinson, that was a memorable climb inasmuch as he had forgotten his boots and was forced to hike in leather-soled loafers. And at the time Needham was enjoying a brief stay on the SPS emblem peak list.

The SPS received its formal approval from the Angeles Chapter Executive Committee that same month, and the action allowed the section to schedule official trips starting May 5-6, 1956. The first trip, to Deer Mtn., was led by Sanborn and Robinson.

Another scheduled first-year trip was to Mt. Rixford on Oct. 6-7 with Robinson leading and Sanborn listed as assistant leader. The trip started but was aborted at Kearsarge Pass in the face of snowstorm.

That first year of trips also included a joint SPS-DPS climb. It was scheduled for Oct. 20-21 to Peak 11,107, which we now know as Mt. Inyo. Robinson was the leader, and Lilley was among three other SPS



founders who reached the summit that day. She, however, came up from the opposite side of the mountain along with Bud Bingham and Don Clarke. They started from the 1,400-foot elevation in the Saline Valley.

Prior to the SPS's formation, the DPS scheduled a few summer trips into the Sierra each year. One of these was on August 13-14, 1955, to Mt. Tyndall. Lilley and John Delmonte were the announced leaders, but Bob Bear substituted for Lilley so she could go on an expedition to the Selkirks in British Columbia.

These were times when climbing was quite different than today. Much of the climbers' gear came from war surplus stores. The wood-frame Trapper Nelson pack was still used by some, and others endured rucksacks left over from World War II. Climbing hardware was much heavier than today, and maps were relatively primitive. Velcro fasteners weren't yet in use, and the Global Positioning System wasn't a reality.

A reader might wonder about the backgrounds of Lilley and Robinson, and the following capsules address that interest.

Lilley grew up in Gonzales, a town that now bills itself as the wine capital of Monterey County. She attended the high school where her father was principal and where she excelled in her studies. But her interests extended well beyond academics. While still in high school, she climbed Mt. Lassen and Alta Peak.

She enrolled at San Diego State in 1948 and discovered the Sierra Club, found climbing very enriching and soon developed strong alliances with expert skiers, rock climbers and general mountaineers which extended to those based in the Los Angeles area. During her time at San Diego State, she went on two national Sierra Club outings that included climbs of Mts. Whitney, Muir, Langley, Guyot and Lyell as well as Banner and Blacktop Peaks.

Remaining in San Diego after graduation, she began climbing ever more frequently and on more difficult peaks, such as Cathedral Peak, Milestone Mtn., North Palisade, Clyde Minaret, Mt. Clarence King, Lost Arrow and several other Yosemite rock climbs. Her climb of Lost Arrow, made in 1952 with Royal Robbins and Don Wilson, marked the first time a woman had stood atop that sheer spire.

Not surprisingly, San Diego proved too distant from the peaks she desired, so she moved to Los Angeles at year's end 1955. That move saved her hours of driving time and resulted in her being able to lead more trips for the SPS and the Ski Mountaineers.

Now residing in Simi Valley (Ventura County) and retired from Hughes Aircraft since July 1986, she still is an Angeles Chapter member. Her achievements include climbing more than 4,400 different summits since 1947, including two dozen first ascents in Alaska and Canada plus Kino Peak (1952) in Arizona. Among those 4,400 different summits are the five highest peaks in North America (Denali, Logan, Orizaba, St. Elias and Popocateptl) and the highest points in South America (Aconcagua) and Africa (Kilimanjaro). They also include a first ascent of Mt. McArthur and two other summits in Alaska; plus 26 first ascents in Canada's St. Elias, Purcell, Monashee and Rocky Mountains.

She completed the SPS peaks list in 1969 and finished both the DPS and HPS lists in 1977, thereby becoming the first female triple-list finisher. She has been chair and secretary of the Ski Mountaineers Section and also vice chair, secretary and treasurer of the SPS. In addition, she has served as secretary-treasurer of the Rock Climbing Section.

Among her recognitions are the Sierra Club's Francis P. Farquhar Mountaineering Award (2003), the Desert Peaks Section's Bill T. Russell Desert Mountaineering Award (shared in 2001 with Gordon MacLeod) and the Angeles Chapter's Outings Service Award (1987).



John Robinson
April 1971, Photo by Jerry Keating

Reflections - Barbara Lilley & John Robinson



Gordon MacLeod
SPS Trip to Mt. Foerster, Aug. 25, 1973
Photo by Jerry Keating

In contrast to Lilley's Central California's background, Robinson grew up in Long Beach and other communities in the Los Angeles Basin. He earned his undergraduate degree from University of Southern California in 1951 and teaching credential and master's degree from Cal State Long Beach in 1952 and 1966, respectively. In November 1953, he was drafted for Army duty just after the end of the Korean War. Most of that duty occurred in Korea.

The son of a Methodist minister, his earliest ascents included Mt. Rubidoux on an Easter Sunday. As a youth he often hiked with the Long Beach YMCA, but then he started hiking with the core group that wanted more trips to the High Sierra. During those pre-Army days his climbs included Mt. Kaweah, Florence Peak, Vandever Mtn. and Lone Pine Peak, several with Sanborn.

Upon his release from the Army after Labor Day 1955, he quickly re-connected with Sanborn and other "outlaw" hikers who soon were to form the SPS. He joined the Sierra Club, climbed almost weekly and in 1956 was among the first group of SPSers to achieve emblem status. Despite a passion for peak climbing, he also was forming an interest in editing, writing and publishing.

Still, he climbed dozens of the major peaks in the Sierra and the U.S. Northwest, including Mts. Hood and Rainier. He also twice hiked the Chilkoot Trail in Alaska and the Yukon. Golden Hinde, the imposing high point of Vancouver Island in British Columbia, was among his other ascents.

He became the first editor of *The Sierra Echo* in February 1957 and served through 1958. In February 1961, he took over similar duties with the *DPS Newsletter*, as it was then known, and held that post until June 1964. Even later, he became SPS chair (1964). He also served twice as SPS vice chair and once as alternate officer. In addition, he also has been chair, vice chair and member at large of the DPS.

But the duties that accompanied these posts apparently weren't compelling enough to diminish his interest in becoming an author, so Robinson moved up the publishing ladder by scouting the terrain and writing a series of soft-cover hiking guides. Published in 1967 by La Siesta Press, the first was titled *Camping and Climbing in Baja California*.

Next, starting in May 1971, emerged his larger and more complicated guidebook, *Trails of the Angeles: 100 Hikes in the San Gabriels* followed a year later by *San Bernardino Mountain Trails: 100 Hikes in Southern California*. Both were published by Wilderness Press and required regular scouting trips for subsequent editions.

Then, after Robinson's extensive scouting in the Sierra, there appeared in 1973 and 1974 the first editions of three booklets in the Wilderness Press *High Sierra Hiking Guide* series. One of these covered the Mt. Goddard area, while another covered Mt. Pinchot and vicinity. The third, written with Jim Jenkins, focused on Kern and Olancho Peaks.

In August 1989 there emerged the first fruits of Robinson's extensive research at UCLA and the Huntington Library, namely the first edition of the hard-cover history titled *The San Bernadinos: The Mountain Country from Cajon Pass to Oak Glen; Two Centuries of Changing Use*. This book was followed in August 1991 by *The San Gabriels: The Mountain Country from Soledad Canyon to Lytle Creek*. In 1993, with Bruce D. Risher as co-author, there appeared another hard-cover history, *The San*

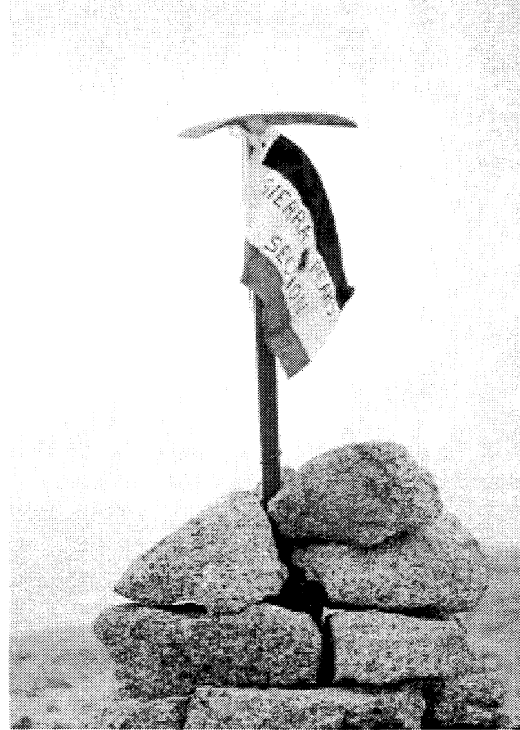
Jacintos: The Mountain Country from Banning to Borrego Valley. All three books were published by the Big Santa Anita Historical Society and are viewed as definitive works.

Various journal articles and several soft-cover publications also are part of his history-focused effort. These include three booklets on mountain mines and a 2001 booklet titled *Sierra Madre's Old Mount Wilson Trail.*

Robinson's work on foot and at his typewriter has been recognized over the years. From the Angeles Chapter, he received the Media Award (1976), the Outings Service Award (1990) and the Elna Bakker Nature Interpretation Award (2001). His honors from external bodies include the Donald H. Pflueger Award for local history, presented in 1992 by the Historical Society of Southern California, and the Westerners International Coke Wood Award, once in 1990 and again in 1994. And most recently (October 2005), fellow status was bestowed upon him by the HSSC.

Much of this product occurred while Robinson was teaching full time in the Newport-Mesa Unified School District of Orange County. But he retired in 1988 and now lives in Fullerton where he is wrapping up work on yet another book, this one focusing on mountain passes and to be titled *Gateways to Southern California.*

—Jerry Keating



SPS flag on Lone Pine summit
SPS snow climb May 24, 1959
From J. Robinson photo collection



John Robinson lead to Olancho, May 5, 1957

J. Keating photo



SPS TRIPS 1955 - 2005

High Sierra Trip 1920 Muir Pass

Photo: H.C. Stinchfield



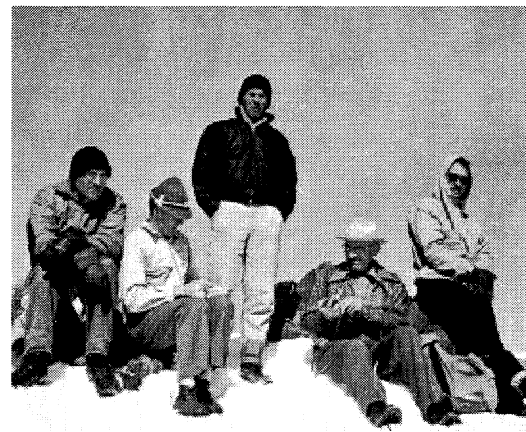
50 YEARS CLIMBING SPS LEADERS ADVENTURES COMPARED

“To those who have struggled with them, the mountains reveal beauties that they will not disclose to those who make no effort. That is the reward the mountains give to effort. And it is because they have so much to give and give it so lavishly to those who will wrestle with them that men love the mountains and go back to them again and again. The mountains reserve their choice gifts for those who stand upon their summits.” - Sir Francis Younghusband



**The Classic List Finish
Greg & Mirna Roach #60 & 61
October 2002**

Photo: B. Tidball



**Owens Peak
F. Jensen, B. Bear, J. Robinson & others
February 1958**

Photo: John Robinson collection

As Published in the 20th Anniversary Issue (1976, Vol. 20, No. 8) of *The Sierra Echo*

THE FIRST SIERRA PEAKS LIST

When the Sierra Peaks Section was formed in the fall of 1955, Section Chairman Frank Sanborn appointed me chairman of a Mountaineering Committee which included Owen Blackburn and Roger Gaefcke as members. The Mountaineering Committee was to make up the list of qualifying and emblem peaks for the Section.

One problem in making a peaks list was that we did not have complete USGS topographic maps of the Sierra. The 15-minute series hadn't yet been published, and the USGS maps we did have dated back to the surveys of 1901. So, we used maps from the Automobile Club of Southern California. Next we developed criteria by which peaks should be judged for inclusion on the list. We thought peaks should be chosen for elevation, dominance and inaccessibility.

Frank Sanborn gave me a list of 100 peaks in the Sierra, which he had prepared as a first draft. Nearly all the present emblem peaks were on that first list. Needham Mountain was one of the first emblem peaks, largely because Frank, Pat Meixner (Gentry), Chuck Miller, Lee Owings and perhaps some other charter members had climbed it. However, it was obvious to the Mountaineering Committee

that Needham was not in the same class as the other emblem peaks. So Needham was struck from emblem status, to the tune of much screaming and hollering from Sanborn, Meixner et al.

There was a big gap in the emblem peaks between Mt. Humphreys and Mt. Ritter. After scrutinizing our trusty Auto Club maps, we chose Mt. Abbot to fill this gap, strictly on the basis of its location and elevation. None of the original SPSers had ever seen Mt. Abbot, much less climbed it. When we did climb it we found that it is a good 3rd class challenge.

After a few years, Split Mtn. was added and North Palisade was substituted for nearby Mt. Sill, as emblem peaks. The rock climbers prefer North Palisade as its easiest eastern approach route is 4th class. Perhaps the fact that Sanborn is not a rock climber favored his choice of Sill. Also, Mt. Sill presents a more spectacular silhouette to the east. The only other change to the emblem peaks list has been the addition of Mt. Clarence King in recent years.

Another fact that became obvious to the Mountaineering Committee in 1955 was that the Sierra Nevada could not be adequately covered with a list of only 100 peaks. So, the first list ended up with over 200 peaks, almost as many as the present 246. There have been quite a few changes in the lesser peaks as the various "Peak Baggers" over 20 years have promoted their favorites, but the great majority of peaks on the original list remained unchanged.

—Miles Brubacher

continued from page 66, Mt. Williamson article

to be back to camp within five or six hours.

The downclimb of the chimney was easier than expected, however I cannot recommend chimneying with crampons strapped onto your back. The snow in the top of the chute was still hard enough for us to use crampons on the descent. After dropping a few hundred feet, we took the crampons off and plunged stepped to the stain.

We reached the sun cups in the bowl, and things really slowed down. They had softened dramatically, and the ridges collapsed under our feet. It was more tiring than the climb itself. We moved incredibly slowly through the bowl. We finally reached the tents in fading light, 15 hours after our departure. Ron was happy to see us. After failing to find the missing crampon, he returned to camp and climbed a 13,000' "bump" near the pass. No register, but he found a cairn on the summit.

Ron woke us the next morning for a try at Mt.

Tyndall. Mary Jo was enthusiastic, I was not. Half an hour from camp I quit, happy to sit on a rock and watch them climb the Northwest Ridge. Mary Jo soon turned around, and we watched Ron until he dissolved into the talus.

We returned to camp and drank, ate and napped away the rest of the morning. Early in the afternoon Ron returned from "West" Tyndall. The only route he could find to the summit involved descending an ugly 500' debris chute, which he did not find so appealing. He's now convinced that the North Rib is the way to go.

We packed up and headed for Anvil Camp. It was good to breathe the thick air at 10,000 feet. The next morning found us humping back to the car.

It was a fine trip to a big mountain in perfect Sierra weather, with great companions.

Mt. Agassiz & Mt. Goode 1957 & 2005 trips



From *The Sierra Echo* (Vol. 49, No. 4), August 27-28 2005

Mt Agassiz (13,893') and Mt Goode (13,085')—Ron Campbell

Seven of us met at the South Lake parking lot shortly after 8 a.m. Saturday. The weather was sunny but not hot – ideal hiking weather. We arrived at Bishop lakes by 11 a.m....Georgette Riek and I decided to climb Goode immediately,...From Bishop Lakes, Goode looks about a football field away. That turns out to be a wrong?: It's more like Rhode Island away...All seven participants summited Goode after a four-hour climb; we easily could have shaved 30 or even 60 minutes from the time by staying low longer."

....At 5:30 a.m. (Sunday) a few of us were awoken by rockslide on Picture Puzzle Peak. At 6 a.m., I tried to arouse those who weren't disturbed by hundreds of tons of moving granite. Just three of us were awake fed and ready to hike when we set out for Agassiz at 7:20 a.m.

....We summited Agassiz shortly after 11 a.m. The views were among the most spectacular I have ever seen in the Sierra.

From the *Sierra Peaks Column in Southern Sierran*, September-October 1957

Mt. Agassiz (13,891')—John W. Robinson

Twenty-five Sierra Clubbers and guests started out from South Lake Saturday morning, August 3, (1957) bent on climbing Mount Agassiz, northernmost of the Palisade summits. Reaching their lakeside camp four miles later, most of the party decided to relax and soak up the sun the rest of the day. Eight peak-baggers decided to add Mount Goode, towering majestically above them (so they thought), to their list. Two hours later they scrambled onto the summit only to find they'd missed their mark – it wasn't Mount Goode. The disgusted climbers promptly named it "Mount No Goode."

The warm sunshine and beautiful surroundings of Saturday afternoon apparently dulled the "climbing bug" in many of the knapsackers, for only eleven of them made up the assault party on Agassiz Sunday morning. The peak was ascended without difficulty and a rugged panorama of the Palisades et al was enjoyed. The descent and return to South Lake was accomplished by mid-afternoon. Another Sierra weekend "away from it all" had ended with pleasant memories.

Leader – Chuck Miller



Mt. Agassiz, photo by Rob Campbell

From *The Sierra Echo* (Vol. I, No. 4), August 1957

Mt. Agassiz (13,891'): Aug. 3-4 (1957)—Leader: Chuck Miller

Twenty-five people showed up for this relatively easy one from South L. Saturday they knapsacked up to a small lake near timberline below Bishop Pass. That afternoon some of them attempted Mt. Goode but climbed the wrong peak – which they promptly named Mt. No Goode. Many of the group wanted to relax on Sunday, so only 11 climbed Agassiz. An excellent panorama of the major Palisade peaks was enjoyed by those reaching the summit.

Notes: This was the first time Agassiz was officially scheduled by the SPS. Graham Stephenson was listed in the Schedule as the assistant leader, but neither article indicates whether or not he was on the trip. The *Echo* article is unsigned, but John Robinson was editor at the time.

MAGGIE MTN., MOSES & MT. INYO

For the Record

Two commemorative issues of *The Sierra Echo* (Vol. 20, No. 8 in 1976 and Vol 30, No. 7 in 1986) correctly listed Deer Mtn. as the first officially scheduled SPS outing. Deer was successfully led by Frank Sanborn and John Robinson during the weekend of May 5-6, 1956, as reported in the July 1956 issue of *Southern Sierran*. For reasons unknown, the entries in the "First SPS Schedule, 1956" carried in the 20th anniversary commemorative issue in 1976 and repeated in the 30th anniversary commemorative issue in 1986 overlooked Maggie Mtn., the second officially scheduled SPS trip, and Mt. Inyo, a joint trip with the DPS.

Thanks to records preserved by John Robinson, we now have both trip announcements and trip reports, and they are offered here as part of the SPS' 50th anniversary observance. History-minded SPSers need to remember that the SPS gained final approval for its founding from the Angeles Chapter Executive Committee in October 1955, and *The Sierra Echo* didn't begin its life until February 1957. Consequently, much of the early SPS information appeared in *Schedule*, *Southern Sierran* or *Sierra Club Bulletin*.

To see these early trip reports, first access <http://angeles.sierraclub.org/sps/> on your computer. Then click on the underscored words "Archives" on the left side of the screen. Next either goto Maggie or to Inyo in the alpha groupings.

—Jerry Keating

Notes: This is one of the legendary early trips of the SPS, and it led the Section to be more cautious in scheduling fall backpacks into the high country. This trailhead was particularly troublesome because the road out gained elevation before descending to a lower level. The Moses climb does not appear in any *Echo* index because of a lack of route description.

From The Sierra Echo (Vol. 1, No. 6), December 1957

SUMMIT LAKE (& MOSES), Nov. 2-3, 1957

By Frank Sanborn

On Saturday, Nov 2d, thirty hikers gathered at Shake Public Camp, near Balch Park, in Sequoia National Forest, to participate in the Sierra Peaks Section hike to Summit Lake. The gloom was thick among the giant Sequoia trees and some sleet was falling as Frank Sanborn led the group up the trail at 8 a.m. Chuck Miller, the assistant leader, stayed with a rear guard of eight fellows who climbed Mt. Moses. The

Merten and Austin families were with us, with their mountain-wise children. Dennis Austin, age 7, carried his own full-size knapsack. Most of the group had covered the seven miles to camp and were eating lunch around a roaring fire at Summit Lake by 2 p.m. It was bitterly cold there at 9600 ft. when a sudden blizzard struck, accompanied by thunder and lightning. It was obvious that we had to get out at once before the trail was too deeply buried by the heavily falling snow. Therefore, after hurriedly repacking, Frank led the group back out to the cars. The trail was very difficult to follow and darkness didn't help any, but we all reached our cars by 8 p.m.

Bud Bingham and Graham Stephenson got out first, using chains, and notified the Sheriff's Office in Porterville that most of us were stuck. The Austin children were taken out to the ranger station at Springville. The rest of us who had chains attached them and tried to get out, but three cars skidded into a ditch, forcing their ten occupants to sleep in them Saturday night. Sunday morning three deputy sheriffs arrived in a four-wheel drive vehicle and towed the stranded cars out of two feet of snow. The sheriff's men then proceeded to Shake Camp and helped the remaining cars which were stuck because of dead batteries, lack of chains or deep snow.

No one was hurt in this incident, for which we all are thankful. We did come perilously close to being snowed in the back country, however, which highlights the fact that hiking into the Sierra in November is rather risky. It is my opinion that in the future, no knapsack trips should be scheduled into the Sierra later than October, regardless of favorable weather forecasts. We were all lucky this time.



2005 climber at creek crossing.

Notes:

Maggie '56. This was the SPS's second officially scheduled trip. Maggie was on the qualifying list at the time. There was no Sierra Echo at the time, so the information is from the Angeles Chapter Schedule and the Southern Sierran.

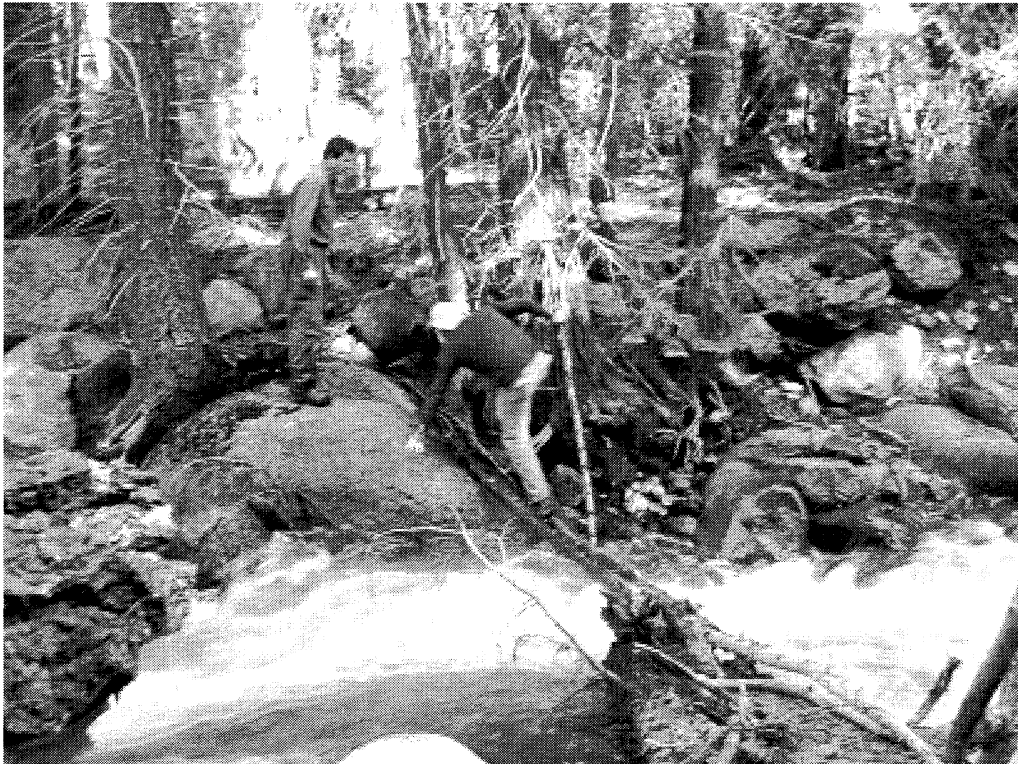
Summit Lake '57. The legendary debacle that prompted the SPS to be more careful in scheduling late fall backpacks into the high country. (see story pg. 57)

N Maggie '61. A successful private trip organized by Andy Smatko that reached both North Maggie and Moses.

N Maggie '62. A scheduled spring 1962 trip that was aborted at the roadhead because of a surprise snow storm.

N Maggie '63. Finally, a successful scheduled trip in mid-June 1963 that placed new registers on both North Maggie and Moses.

**SPS 50
Years**



The June 2005 trip had challenges at creek crossings

Moses and North Maggie,

How Not to Climb Them

June 20-22, 2005

by George Wysup

Michael Gosnell is a strong hiker and climber, and is serious about the SPS List. Despite that, he suggested that I accompany him for a June weekday trek to bag Moses and North Maggie. Perhaps that is because I have all this time on my hands and I like to plan trips. In fact, I often try to think too much and over-plan trips. This turned out to be one of those times.

We invited some others along and succeeded only in inducing Rudy Fleck, another strong one, to go. I was hoping for another elderly and semi-disabled slug with whom I might be able to keep up. Not to be.

I began the planning by reading some archives and studying the topo map. The reports were typical in that most of the detail involved who went and how much fun was had by all. What I really wanted was more detail on the routes that go. A friend who climbed these last year offered that their direct

assault of the north ridge to Moses was a bit hairy. George Toby's report had the best Moses information, saying to go from the north, then go back south about 300' below the ridge until directly below the summit, then go up. He also implied the existence of a better and more direct route that they took on the return.

A report told of backpacking into a nice campsite about a quarter mile before Long Meadow. I reviewed the route on the map and

concluded that this was about a 5 mile backpack with maybe 800' gain, round trip. From this I figured that day hiking both peaks and sleeping in the campground was more reasonable than backpacking. One minor advantage of this is that a permit is not needed to hike in Golden Trout Wilderness. Well, here's what happened.

Monday about noon we departed the LA-LA land and, after a so-so Mex dinner in Springville, arrived at Shake Campground at 6500' elevation in Mountain Home State Park. This is a very nice campground with all amenities except showers, and the price is most reasonable (gratis). The area is beautiful, abounding with large sequoias, and the wildflowers were a welcome bonus to us amateur botanists. I did notice that the campground was located in a slightly different spot than shown on the map. And that the trailhead was not quite in the right place.

We set out early the next morning for (hopefully) the summit of Moses Mountain (9331'). The trail undulated much more than the map had indicated. After hiking about 2.6 miles we came to Redwood Crossing, the trail's first crossing at 6600' elevation of the north fork of the middle fork of the



Kaweah Lakes - Fawn Lilly

Tule River. The swollen waters rushed mightily and were far too dangerous to wade. We pondered this situation and looked about for a reasonable ford. There is a sequoia log crossing the river, which we were able to use for the crossing. The log sits at an inclination of about 18 degrees, but its 4 feet or so diameter is large enough that even the roaring river about 20 feet below did not scare us unduly. Had the log been wet, as with an afternoon rain on our return, crossing on it would have been disastrous. But the weather was perfectly dry with no clouds. No problem. We marched onward, expecting to find Long Meadow. We finally found the meadow about 3/4 mile past the location shown on the map. The meadow is at about 7100 ft elevation and, disturbingly, there were patches of snow there.

Just past the meadow, the trail crossed the Tule again. This time there was no convenient Sequoia log to scamper across. I did not like what I saw one bit. Michael and Rudy saw this as some sort of challenge. They saw a narrow spot in the channel and collected saplings with which they created a sort of bridge, not a very solid one, but a bridge. The both danced across this to the other side, using other saplings for balance. They beckoned for me to follow. Easy, they said. My brain thought otherwise and I invented excuses not to cross. I was already tired, I said, and I'll slow you guys down, and this isn't even an emblem peak, and I have my camera here and I'll just do some nature photography on the way back to camp. Come on, you can do it, they said. Maybe, I said, but I think I have a pulled groin muscle. And my bad back is hurting.

So they went on and I moseyed back. There were indeed some flowers that deserved recording in digital memory. I found what I think is the campsite mentioned by Mr. Toby. It looks like a fine spot and is located at waypoint (NAD27 grid 11S) E0350455 N4016115 at elev 7040'. As I neared Redwood Crossing I noticed the signed "Hidden Falls" trail heading south. I explored it and found that it followed the east side of the river for 0.8 miles, with minimal undulations, and ended at a parking spot (6000' elevation). Normally, this would be a far superior starting point to Shake campground, but at this time there was much water crossing the road, which was slippery with a coating of algae. This spot is reached by a drive of about 2 miles from the Shake campground road.

I relaxed with a couple of brews and a good book in my camp chair and Michael and Rudy returned at about 4:30 p.m., with smiles on their

faces, signaling success. Here is what they reported:

They followed the recommended route, which went quite well until they neared the summit ridge. They contoured below the ridge but were probably too high and had to do considerable detouring to avoid some class 4 stuff near some chutes. Reaching the summit was not so difficult. There was some snow, but it was not a factor. On the return they found a chute that was not choked with snow or brush. Though steep, it went nicely class 2 and they would recommend it for the ascent. The following waypoint marks the approximate top of the chute. This is NOT a measured point and I can't guarantee the accuracy (NAD27 grid 11S) E0349350 N4016310. When they reached the river they miraculously found a safe jump-across point. This crossing turned out to be about 20 yards north of the presumed campsite.

Just after first light the next day we again started up the trail, intent on climbing North Maggie. They had observed that summit from Moses the previous day and seen considerable snow, not too surprising after this wet winter since N. Maggie

reaches 10,234'. Again we crossed the river via the sequoia log to the east side and continued to the second crossing, but turned away from the river instead of having to cross. The going wasn't difficult as long as we kept to the north slope of the mountain to avoid the heavier brush. There is a gully, shown as dry on the map, starting just north of the word "Fork" on the map and curving to the ESE toward North Maggie. This gully was now a raging torrent and, in any case, is loaded with deadfall and brush, at least in its lower reaches. We climbed easily on the slope using the gully as the left handrail and following the best openings through the trees. At about 8300' we hit patchy snow. This concerned us and we decided to depart from the recommended route and take the knife ridge up to bump 10,113 and go over its top, hoping that the sunnier side would be relatively snow free. The ridge began to get, for me, disturbingly rocky and, at this point, I did my escape act again and headed back to the campground. Hey, I'll never finish this list anyway.

The boys returned at about 5 p.m., again with smiley faces, to find me relaxing with a good book. They got the peak! To do so, they had to drop back down about 800' and go via the more normal route. This took them easterly to the saddle between bump 10,023' and North Maggie, then south to the summit. There was deep snow, but it was soft enough yet firm enough to be manageable.

The highlight of the trip for me was finding some unusual flora such as Fawn Lilies, Shorthorn Steers head, and Dudleya cymosa. You won't find these in September. Of course, getting the peaks would have been nice, but it was still fun seeing the other guys succeed.

On the way home we stopped at the Springville Inn for dinner. We all recommend this place highly.



"Dammit all....Barbara Lilley and her bargain ropes!"

SPS 50
Years



Summit of Deer Mtn., on 15th Anniversary Climb. The trip occurred May 8-9, 1971 and the peak was climbed on the first afternoon after a successful crossing of the South Fork of the Kern River. Shown are Dick May, Norm Rohn, Webb Brush and Wally Henry. Not shown are Beth Henry and Jerry Keating, the latter of whom took the photo. Note: The June 1971 issue of *The Sierra Echo* included a black & white photo (on pg.5) taken by the same photographer, but also showing Beth Henry. Other participants on the trip opted not to attempt the peak during the first afternoon, and they could not do it the next morning because the South Fork had risen too much. (See Echo, Vol. 15, No. 4. June 1971)

April 19-20, 1986 - a 30th Anniversary Climb of Deer Mountain was led by Ron Jones. Norm Rohn was again a participant on the trip. (See Echo, Vol. 30, No. 5. August 1986)

Deer Mountain

by Frank Sanborn

The following ten persons turned out for the first Sierra Peaks Section scheduled trip: Marge Gall, 324 Bingham, Roger Gaefcke, Virgil Lewis, Roger McIntyre, Eaton Atwood, Vie Metealfe, Mary Pistang, Frank Sanborn (leader), and John Robinson (Asst.). Starting from Sam Lewis' pack station on Haiwee Creek at 7:00 am Sat., May 5, we followed a fine trail up over the Sierra Crest at Haiwee Pass at 8,500 ft., gaining 5,000 ft. in five miles. Dropping 1,500 ft. in two more miles, we reached the South Fork of the Kern River at 1:00 pm. It was a raging torrent, impossible to ford, so we made camp on its east bank and spent a very leisurely afternoon sunbathing and fishing. Bud and Vic, the fishermen, had no luck, however.

Sunday morning, Bud, Roger Gaefcke, John, Virgil, and I set out looking for a way to cross the river. The others stayed in camp. We five finally crossed on a partially wet, vibrating, narrow log; a slip would have meant a plunge into a thundering rapids below.....not recommended for weak knees or hearts! It was a short climb from there to the tree-covered 9,530 ft. summit of Deer Mt., overshadowed by the southernmost S.P.S. Emblem Peak, Olancha. Finding no cairn or register, we left our names in a glass jar. Re-crossing the river on that log (whew!), we ate lunch at camp, then got back to the cars at 4:30 as darkening skies and a cold wind heralded the advance of a late season snowstorm across the Sierra.

from Southern Sierran July 1956

Tower Peak – 11,755'

September 23 – 25th, 2005



By John Cheslick

This peak has been on my “to-do” list for at least the last three years. There always seems to be a trip scheduled near the end of September but for one reason or another I can never make the trip. I figured I would lead it this year and solve the problem.

We had a strong group of 12 people including the leaders at Leavitt Meadows trailhead at 8 am ready to go. The trail actually starts in the campground next to the trailhead parking so you need to walk through the campsites to get to the trailhead. I was concerned with the weather forecast for this trip. Weather.com had a 40% chance of showers for both the second and third day of the trip but the weather only got better once the trip started. The first day was very windy, especially at Leavitt Meadows but the wind calmed down by the time we made it to camp.

We hiked for 8 ½ hours and made camp in a sheltered area below Tower Lake. The group was ready to stop. It was a bit difficult to find a site for

12 people especially when most of the group was going solo. After a short while, we started happy hour. I was amazed with the amount of food packed in. It was a world class happy hour with cheese, wine, crackers, some unusual organic food and lots of chocolate to name a few of the items. Alex Sapozhnikov after reading Patty’s write-up in the Echo about her fondness for chocolate brought 4 large chocolate bars. Even after three days of trying, we could not finish all the chocolate. We were also able to have a campfire since there was an old fire ring close by and we were below 10,000 feet. A rare treat in the Sierra.

The next morning we got started at 7:30 for the peak. I wasn’t sure with such a large group how long it would take. We followed the use trail up to Tower Lake, then went along the south side of the lake and then up to Tower Pass. There was snow below the pass but it was easily avoided. Then we climbed up to the North Ridge and once we were stopped by the rock towers, we traversed to the

Tower Peak articles

Thanks to indexing of *The Sierra Echo* started by Graham Stephenson and faithfully continued by Ron Jones, it was possible to identify the following early articles dealing with Tower Peak.

Vol. 6, No. 5: Rich Gnagy tells of a solo exploratory climb he made on August 25-26, 1962. He says the peak, which was then and is now on the qualifying list, doesn’t warrant being elevated to emblem status. In the same issue, John W. Robinson describes a scouting trip made over the Labor Day holiday by “10 weekend Sierra Peakers and friends.” John writes that the group felt the peak warranted emblem status. In yet another item in the same issue, Frank Sanborn, who also was on the scouting trip, advocates emblem status for Tower. These three items are quite detailed and would help anyone understand how vigorous debate can be about changing the emblem list. Tower, of course, never made the emblem list.

Vol. 7, No. 5: Al Dageforde reports on the independent trip he and Bud Hansen made over the Labor Day holiday in 1963. He writes that the peak isn’t worth emblem status.

Vol. 10, No. 5 (erroneously typed as Vol. 9, No. 5 but correctly dated in 1966): Dick (now Rick) Jali reports on the SPS scheduled trip to tower of September 3-5, 1955. The late Ed Lane was among those on the trip. This may well have been the first officially scheduled trip to Tower.

Vol. 12, No. 6: Barbara Lilley describes taking a commercial bus to Lodi and accompanying Elton Fletcher by car to the mountains for an independent climb by the two on June 22-23, 1968.

Vol. 17, No. 7: Doug Mantle reports on the September 15-16, 1973, scheduled trip he led. Dave Gladstone was listed as the second leader in the advance notice of the trip.

Vol. 20, No. 56: Ron Jones reports on the September 18-19, 1976, scheduled trip he led. Barbara Reber was the other leader.

northwest face, then up the chute to the summit. As most write-ups indicate, it is a class 2/ easy class 3 scramble to the summit. It took us three hours to get to the peak.

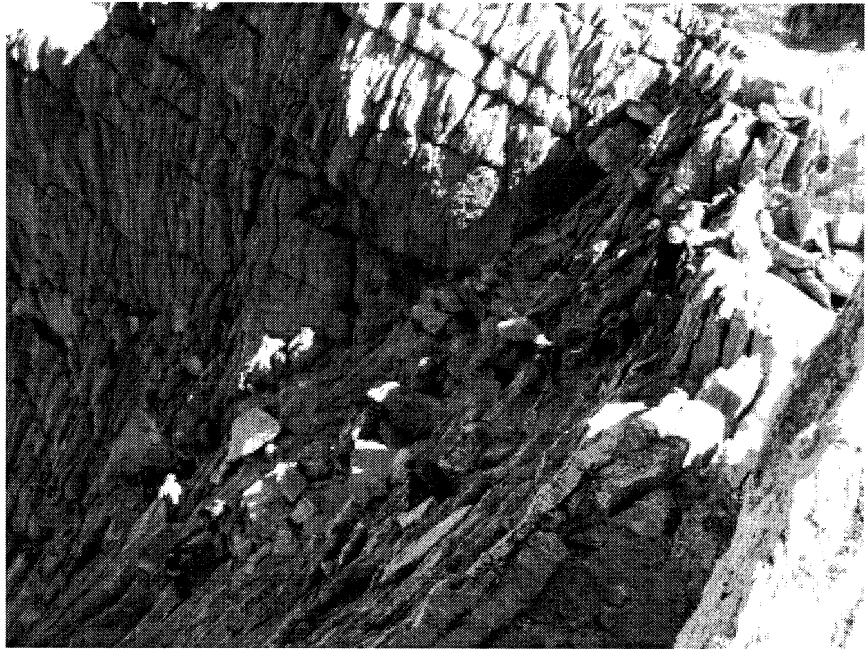
We had a number of firsts on the summit. For Wendy Miller and Mike Andrews, this was their first peak climbed with the SPS. For Wendy, Mike, Stephanie Gylden, and Eric LaFleur, this was their first Mountaineer's Peak.

We enjoyed the views and the chocolate for about 30 minutes and then headed down. Susan Livingston couldn't resist a quick swim in the brisk water of Tower Lake on the way down. It took us a leisurely 2 ½ hours to get back to camp but that included the swim and a lunch break.

We packed up and then hiked about a third of the way out and camped in Little Puite Meadows. It took us about 2 hours from our first night's camp to reach the meadow. About half the group took a dip in the stream with varying degrees of grace. Ted Tassop took the prize by actually swimming a couple of strokes in waist deep water. Ted also displayed some serious blisters on his feet. Both of his feet were bloody but he was a real trooper and was able to walk out the next day and didn't even complain even though it looked like it would be painful walking.

The last day we also left camp at 7:30 and was back to the cars before 11:30. Most of the group stopped at the Mobil station on the Tioga Pass road for a gourmet lunch.

The area around Tower Peak is spectacular. The meadows must be amazing when the wildflowers are out. We saw more wildlife than I usually see including sightings of deer, coyotes,

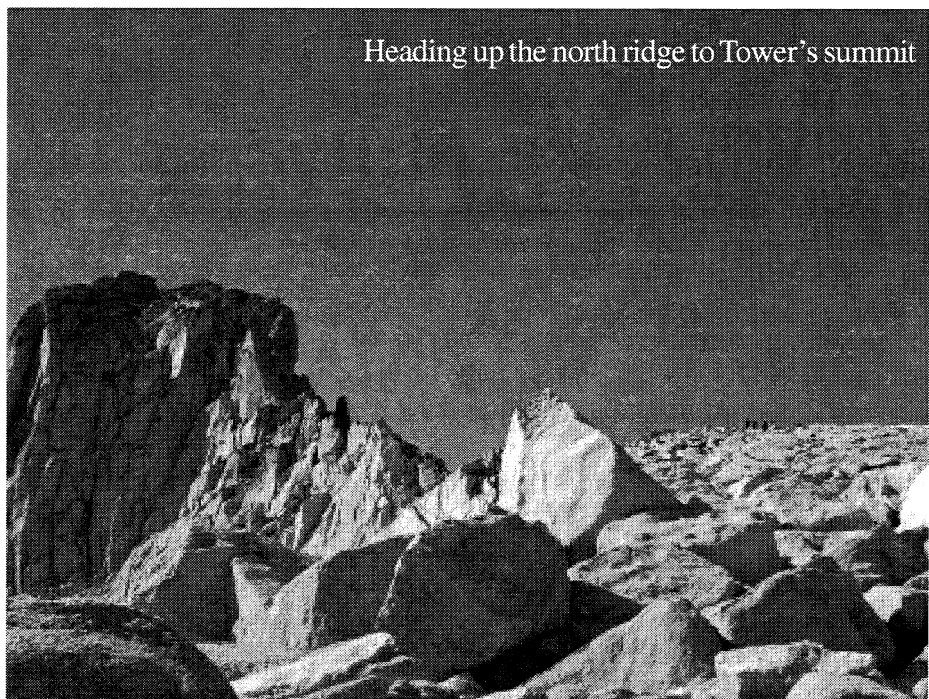


Tower Peak down climb

snakes, frogs by Tower Lake and river otters near Roosevelt Lake.

I want to thank all the participants for a great trip and for Patty Rambert for assisting. The participants excluding the people already mentioned above included Gary Schenk, Mary Jo Dungfelder and Alex Amies.

photos by Gary Schenk



Heading up the north ridge to Tower's summit

Trail Peak (11,605') Wonoga Peak (10,371')

September 9-11, 2005

By Jerry Keating

Thirty-nine persons, including five of the SPS's 18 founding members, participated in this specially planned trip to celebrate the SPS's 50th anniversary. The five founders were present Friday evening at the BLM Tuttle Creek Campground above Lone Pine, while four of them were on hand Saturday at Horseshoe Meadow to climb or hike. Both nights featured extended happy hours and tales of the section's evolution.

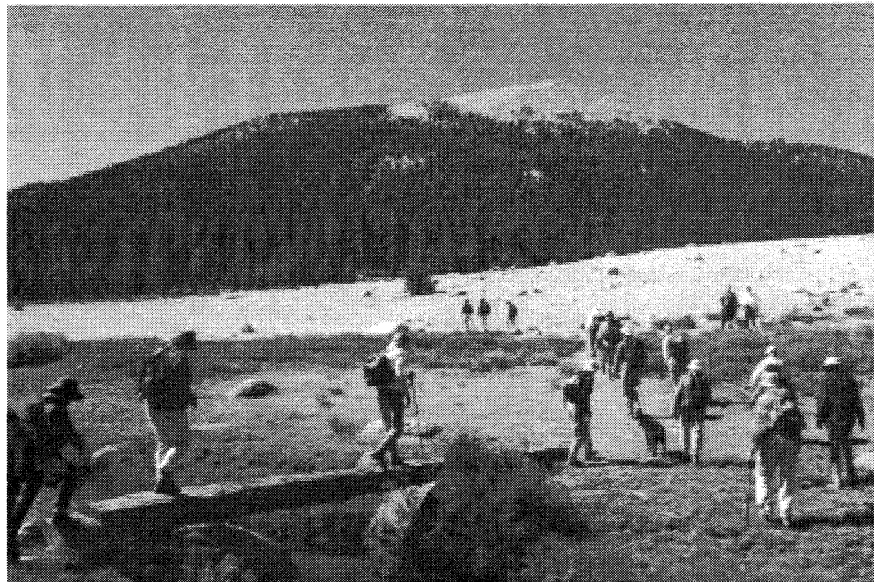
Miles and Maureen Brubacher made the longest drive, having come all the way from their summer residence in Canmore, Alberta, Canada. A founding member, Miles chaired the first Mountaineering Committee and served as SPS chairman in 1962. He and Maureen winter in Shell Beach on the California coast and, therefore, didn't have to drive all of the way back to Alberta after the trip.

Others with long drives included Mary Sue Miller of Tucson, Ariz., SPS chair in 1986; Frank and Joanna Bressel of Shaver Lake; Rich Gnagy of Sacramento; and June Hakala of Reno, Nev. Frank Bressel is a founding member, and both he and Joanna hiked in the early 1950s with the "outlaws" who soon would form the SPS. Gnagy and Hakala both joined the SPS in 1956, and her name (then June Kilbourne) appears frequently in trip reports of the pre-days of the SPS.

Founding member John Wedberg of Bishop was present for Friday night's campfire at Tuttle Creek. Founding members Izzy Lieberman of Los Angeles and Barbara Lilley of Simi Valley also were on hand Friday night and climbed Saturday. Lilley served as Gordon MacLeod's coleader, and the two continued their leader responsibilities through Sunday.

Dave and Barbara Sholle also joined in Friday night's festivities, Dave's having completed several video interviews while in Mammoth Lakes and Lone Pine earlier in the day. Barbara served as SPS chair in 1994 and is the current coeditor of *The Sierra Echo*.

Besides hiking and camping, the weekend focused on the history of the Horseshoe Meadow area. Founding member John W. Robinson had retrieved vintage trip reports showing how different this year's outing was in contrast to those of the 1950s. In 1956, for example, Frank Sanborn and Ted Maier led a scheduled SPS trip to Trail Peak that started nearly nine miles below Horseshoe Meadow, which now is reached by a two-lane paved highway. In those days, the peak was on the SPS qualifying list.



Horseshoe Meadow stream crossing - Trail Peak is on the skyline.

The group also learned that the Horseshoe Meadow Road once was conceived as a trans-Sierra highway with a ski development on the slopes of Trail Peak. From where Sanborn and Maier's 1956 trip started at el. 7280 feet, the road gradually was built higher on the terrain leading down from Wonoga Peak. One extension was finished in 1967, but then the Forest Service had second thoughts about the impact of a ski resort. In the 1980s, the road was built farther upward and completely paved. New backpacker camping facilities and equestrian grounds eventually were added, the pack station was moved

to a more suitable location and the trails were rerouted to start from the walk-in campgrounds.

While all of this was occurring, Horseshoe Meadow became part of the Golden Trout Wilderness, putting an end to further road extensions and a commercial ski area.

After the Friday night festivities at Tuttle Creek, 36 persons drove up to the walk-in campground (el. 10,000') overlooking Horseshoe Meadow. From there, Erik Siering, SPS chair in 2001 & 2002, and Larry Hoak set off for Cottonwood Pass, while the main party followed MacLeod and Lilley to Trail Pass on the Sierra crest. Eighteen climbers—the oldest being 84 years of age—signed in at Trail Peak, while 11 others—including an 85-year-old—settled for the views from Trail Pass (10,500') or slightly higher. By 4:30 p.m., everyone was back in camp, where seven others had enjoyed a leisurely day.

Saturday night's campfire burned until nearly 10 p.m., and more tales of personal experiences in the Sierra were exchanged. Then, the campers settled in for a subfreezing night made comfortable by an absence of wind.

After arising somewhat late Sunday, the group began disbursing with some heading for Lone Pine cafes. List finishers Gnagy and Ret Moore, plus Dick Agnos and Delores Holladay, joined MacLeod and Lilley for a shot at Wonoga Peak, but an unfavorable starting point consumed too much time and they, too, headed homeward.

Besides those mentioned, participants included Pat & Frank Arredondo, Ken Chotiner, Edna Erspamer, Bruno & Ingeborg Geiger, Bill Gray & Keats Hayden, Joanne Griego, Eugenia Hathaway, Laura Joseph, Jerry & Nancy Keating, Ann Kramer, Maria Marvosh, Dick Miller, William Meyer & Nancy Meyer-Thurnall, Nancy Parker, Ping Pfeffer and Lucy Woodward, the latter of whom recalls hiking with Sanborn and other "outlaws" before the SPS's formation.

All in all, the weekend was viewed as a pleasant start to the 50th anniversary celebration, especially in light of the rare chance to meet so many folks who've been "doing it" in the Sierra for a half-century or more. And the leaders were thankful that the trip occurred when it did. Had the trip started a day earlier, the group would have endured a snowstorm at Horseshoe Meadow. Instead, the snow had melted and skies were sunny.

FROM THE SIERRA ECHO (Vol. 8, No. 5), November-December 1964

MT. MUAH (11,016') WONOGA PEAK
(10,371') OCTOBER 24-25 (1964)

by Frank Sanborn

This next-to-last SPS trip of 1964 was blessed with beautiful, clear, sunny weather, just cool enough to be comfortable. On Saturday, 24 persons met in Lone Pine and caravanned to the Carroll Creek roadhead. Leader Frank Sanborn and assistant Ron Jones conducted the group about a mile up the Little Cottonwood Creek trail, which is the route of a road to be constructed into the Cottonwood Basin. The road is now under construction. Leaving the trail, the hikers followed the crest of the Wonoga Ridge for approximately another mile to Wonoga Peak. A 1½-hour lunch break was enjoyed on top while some of the tigers went on up the ridge toward Mt. Langley. They were attempting to reach Owens View, an 11,000+' promontory on the ridge, but didn't make it. After the 3300-foot gain in elevation, most of us luxuriated in the leisurely lunch. The view of the Owens Valley, the Inyos and the Sierra crest north and south was inspiring in the clear autumn air. Saturday P.M., we car-camped at Cottonwood Camp beside Cottonwood Creek; some ate steak dinners in Lone Pine. We were joined by Jerry and Nancy Keating and their two boys from Sacramento.

The leader's car horn awakened everyone at 5:00 A.M. (Sunday) as the Sierra was bathed in moonlight and soft, warm breezes blew down Cottonwood Canyon. Promptly at 6:00 A.M., 16 hardy climbers assaulted the great, trailless ridge which leads directly from camp 4800 feet in about six miles up to the Sierra crest to the south, between Diaz and Wormhole Canyons. By 9:30 A.M. we were on the Sierra crest escarpment and by 10:30 atop Mt. Muah, enjoying the view of the southern Sierra, the desert ranges to the east, and the nearby bulk of 14,000-foot Mt. Langley. Although strenuous, the 5800-foot climb was easier than anticipated. A leisurely one-hour lunch near the summit of Muah was followed by a swift descent to the escarpment. Then we exulted in what is surely the most exhilarating soft-sand "glissades" in the Sierra, losing 2000 feet in about ten minutes on the steep north slope!

We were back at the cars by 2 p.m.

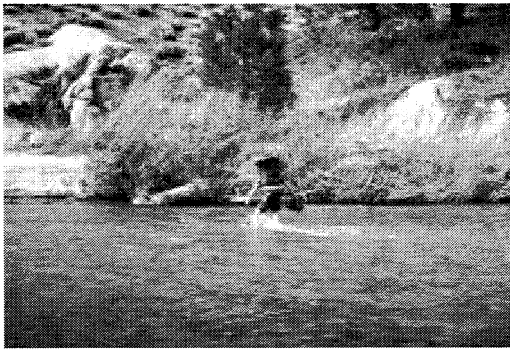
Angora Mt. – “Outlaw” trip April 1956

Summit shot on Angora with five of the SPS founders in full view. (Founding member Bud Bingham must have taken the picture since he's not shown, and only six persons were in the party.) Keep in mind that maps were primitive in 1956, the river crossing was a challenge, and the forest made route finding difficult. Also keep in mind that the first SPS scheduled trip took place May 5-6, 1956 - just after this “conditioning” exercise.

Jerry Keating

Here's the story - a two day backpack that turned into three days because of snow!

The six of us on one of our outlaw trips arrived in two cars (Frank Sandborn, John Robinson, Chuck Miller, Owen Blackburn, Bud Bingham, and Pat Meixner). We intended to do a loop. On Saturday we hiked through dry meadows and forest and had to ford the Kern River. That night we camped in an open area in the forest.



On Sunday as we climbed the ridge to Angora Mt., we got into snow. We had no problems and finally reached the summit. When we returned down the ridge we were again in snow-free terrain. The rest of the loop out was now much shorter than the way in. But as we hiked out, the trail swung north and we got into snow again. The snow got deeper and we were postholing. It slowed us to a crawl and it got dark! Conditions were impossible. Everybody except Frank Sanborn decided that it would be best to stop for the night. Frank said he had to be at work on Monday. We gave him our work phone numbers to call the next day. We all had some food left but not enough. We built a fire and tried to do some drying out. We got through the night okay.



We started out Monday morning following Frank's tracks which were wandering at times. We were starving when we came upon a Ranger's cabin. As we walked around it we found a window that was broken by snow which covered the floor a few feet. The snow was covered with animal tracks. But what got our attention was the supply of canned food! We decided we were desperate enough to use it and entered the cabin through the broken window. We carried out a load of cans, built a fire and had a feast. However, before we left the area, we left a note inside the cabin explaining what had happened along with an apology and a pile of cash to pay for the food we had taken. We decided to remain anonymous.

It was slow going out. At one point we found a spot where Frank had obviously fallen into a deep well around a tree and then his footprints went on. We were getting tired of the snow. Someone climbed a tree to possibly see how far we still had to go, but to no avail. We decided then to work our way out to the road that we came in on instead of following Frank's tracks. Eventually we reached the road. It was clear, of course, and we followed it back to our car. It was late afternoon and the sun was going down.

When I got into work on Tuesday, I discovered that Frank had never called my boss. I reached Frank that evening and found out that when he went into that tree well, he hit his head and was knocked out for a while. At that point he had decided to spend the rest of the night there!

What a trip.

Submitted by Pat Meixner

Mt. Williamson

July 5, 2005
by Gary Schenk

Despite having over 100 SPS peaks to his credit, Ron Zappen still did not have emblem status. To correct this situation he proposed a climb of Mt. Williamson. His plan was to get his emblem on the mountain that was actually on the emblem badge. Sounded like a plan to me. Mary Jo Dungfelder is after all of the 14ers in California, so she was in favor of this. As the word got out, two more jumped on the bandwagon, but due to various reasons only we three carpoled to the Shepherd Pass Trailhead.

We left the car at 2:30 pm on a hot Sunday in July. Our plan was to hike just a short distance to get a jump on the tough trail to the pass. With the wet winter previous, the crossings were cold and deep in spots. Refreshing actually! After the fourth crossing we began the 56 switchbacks to Symmes Creek Saddle. We weren't sure whether we should curse or praise them. With the heavy packs it was better than going straight up, but maddening to walk so far with such little upward progress being made.

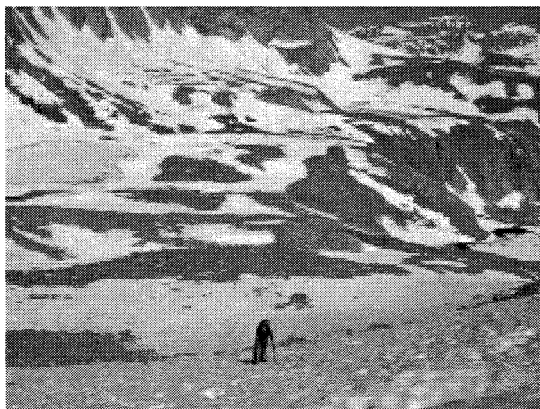
We made the saddle, but with no water available it was out of the question to camp there. So we started the infamous drop to Shepherd Creek. Several hot miles later we pulled into Mahogany Flats just as the last rays of daylight flickered out. We hastily pitched camp, had a cold supper and collapsed in our bags.

The next morning saw us sleeping in late and heading for the pass at 8:30. Over the course of our approach hike we saw many parties coming out and heading in. They all seem to share our goal of climbing the West Face, and we wondered just how crowded that route might be. After passing Anvil Camp and The Pothole we found ourselves at the base of snow covered Shepherd Pass. A group of four from Houston started up. Ron soon joined them. Mary Jo and I had a snack while contemplating the possibility of getting our packs up that slope. We

soon headed upward.

At the pass, Ron asked us about the bear. "What bear?" Ron and the Houston boys had watched a bear approach us at the base of the pass. He seemed interested in our snack. We were completely oblivious! As we were talking, sure enough, this enterprising bruin loped over the pass and down into Sequoia N.P.

We set camp and decided on a start time of 5:30 next morning.



Mary Jo Dungfelder
in the bowl - Mt. Williamson

Off we went then, headed for the West Face route. Following the description in R.J.'s book, we kept to the ridge in the center of Williamson Bowl. Soon we had to move right to avoid cliffs. Here the snow was still hard, and with a small precipice near, we decided on crampons for this traverse. Here misfortune struck. Ron was short one crampon. He thought he knew where it must be, so off he went in search of it.

Mary Jo and I continued on to the northern most lake in the bowl. We fully expected Ron, with his speed, to catch up quickly.

We topped off our water at the lake. This was the spot to look for the famous black stain. It was quite obvious, and we climbed loose scree and talus to the right of the stain. The chute to the top was even more obvious. It was only a matter of hard work. The snow was very firm and we again used crampons.

The snow stopped just short of the headwall at the top of the chute. The chimney to the right was easy to spot. It was dry and clear, to our relief. Some easy third class moves had us on the summit ridge. Some class 2 scrambling placed us at the top soon enough. Eight hours after leaving camp we stood on top of Mt. Williamson. We admired the views and munched for half an hour, then headed down, hoping

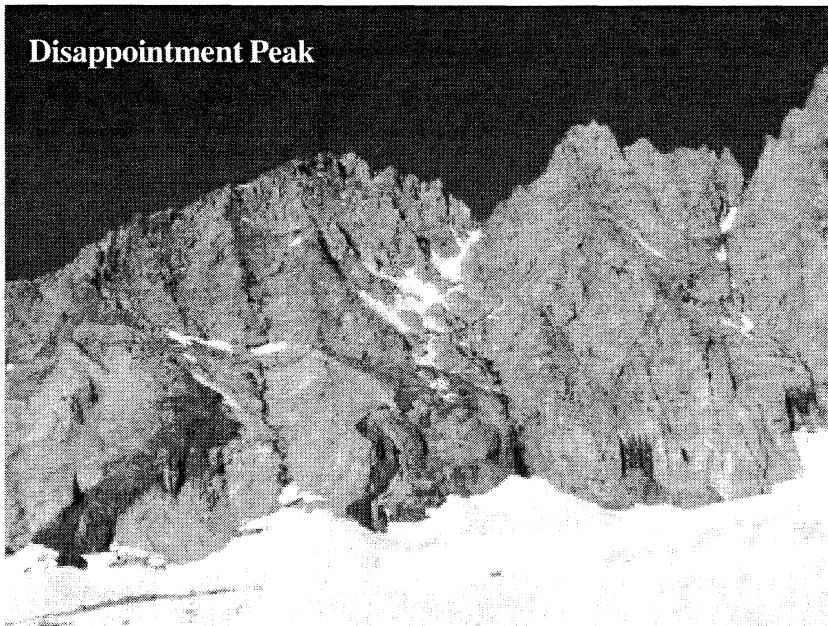
continued page 55

Disappointment Peak

July 15-17, 2005

by Tina Bowman

With various last-minute problems, we were down to a group of three with the hope that one more, Ed Cottone, could join us Friday night. He couldn't. So at 6:00 a.m. Friday morning, I ferried my co-leader, Nile Sorenson, the lone participant, Scott Sullivan, and our packs to the end of the road and went back to the hiker parking lot. I met up with them again at a break just beyond the fine log bridge crossing of the South Fork of Big Pine Creek.



What wonderful wildflowers we had! So many mariposa lilies, white lupine, various paintbrushes, gentians, pride of the mountain, pennyroyal, columbines, larkspur, rain orchids, and more.

We did pretty well beating the heat, but as we finished the switchbacks below Willow Lake, we hit the mosquitoes. Nile led us on to Finger Lake, which still had some icebergs in it at the outlet end by our camp. We arrived before 11:00, taking three generous breaks on our leisurely walk in. Two other people were camped at finger Lake; we saw them that afternoon after their climb of Middle Palisade and before they headed out to their steak reward.

I practically felt guilty just lying around camp most of the day, but I did revise some quizzes. I wasn't pleased to see snow in the gully up to the

south notch of Disappointment, fearing it would not be safe for climbing. On the other hand, the snow to the east ridge of Balcony looked good from camp.

Saturday morning we left camp just before 5:00 a.m., Scott and Nile still having their headlamps on for a short time. We put on crampons because that was easier than kicking steps, though the snow wasn't hard. We steadily worked up and easily onto the Middle Palisade Glacier, then over the filled-in

bergschrand to the right-hand tongue of snow up to the ridge. The angle was moderately steep, but the snow still good, except for the ice along the rock margins.

After a nice break where we topped out on the ridge, we traversed toward Balcony. I remembered a large cairn at the start of the traverse across the face of Balcony, but we found a normal size duck. Of course, my memory was probably shot since it had been thirteen years since I was there. To us it also seemed more than three hundred feet below the summit of Balcony. We went up snow and rock to the summit of Balcony and looked for the chute down to the southwest chute, thinking we might

find something better than we'd seen already. I worked down several ledges but had the feeling that that route was just going to disappear. Back we went to that duck on the east ridge. After a break, we were ready to start the traverse, probably having lost two hours since we were there before.

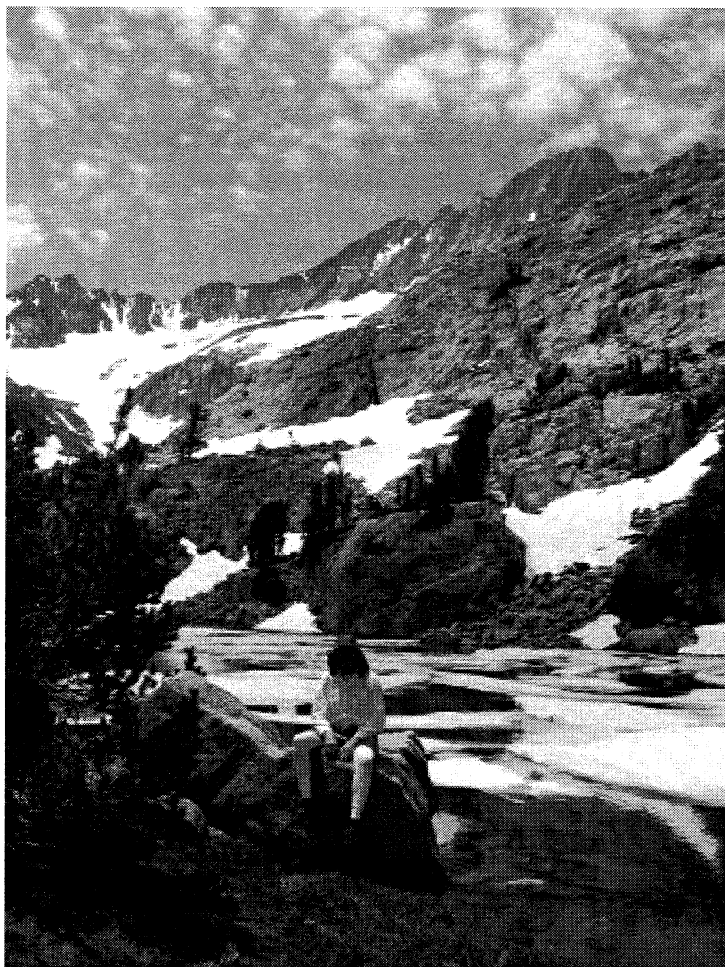
Most of the traverse went well. We were able to go below some snow patches between the second and third ribs. Just beyond the third rib, when we got to the broad chute up to the notch between Balcony and Disappointment, we had snow to cross, about a dozen steps wide. Since Nile is the LTC snow chair, I turned over the lead to him for this. The snow, fortunately, was in good shape, and Nile made great steps for us. It was a bit awkward to get back on the rock, but not bad. We had a smaller but icier bit to cross a short distance later. Again, Nile helped

us with this spot. The best luck was that we were able to stay right of the snow I didn't like the looks of from camp, getting all the way to the notch on rock. We ended up spending a fairly long time trying to find the best way to the summit. Coincidentally this was #225 for Scott and 2 x 225 for me. Nile didn't know what number it was for him—amazing! We came down along the ridge leading to the notch at first, which had one rather awkward open book spot for down climbing that Scott and I rappelled, the only time we used the rope I carried all day.

Nile led the way for the descent, going lower at times on the traverse than we went on the way up. Having decided to return via South Fork Pass to avoid the steep snow we climbed in the morning, Nile gave us excellent steps yet again going down the steep part of the pass. Then we started glissading. We had a number of fine glissades and made great time getting back to camp, which we reached late, just at dark at 9:00. Scott headed straight for his tent, leaving Nile and me to fend off the mosquitoes while we had dinner.

The luxury of getting up without an alarm to prompt us! How unusual on an SPS trip. Still, we were packed and on our way out just after 7:30, fleeing the mosquitoes. We met a group coming in with enormous packs, planning to fish. With several long breaks we were still back to the cars before 11:00 and soon on our way after a successful trip. We all very much "needed" Disappointment and were so thankful not to have been disappointed. We all claimed we would never go back. We'll see.

Nile Sorenson, and Scott Sullivan climbing east ridge of Balcony. Photo by Tina Bowman



Nile at Finger Lake with Balcony, Disappointment and Middle Palisade in the background.



Castle Peak, Adams Peak, Mt Elwell, Sierra Buttes, Mt Lola

by Ron Hudson and submitted by Patty Rambert

May 17-22, 2005

This was an Angeles Chapter Sierra Peaks Section trip led by myself and assisted by Patty Rambert. Five of us met Tuesday to climb Castle. The weather forecast was not good, but we had driven a long way and were driven to get these faraway peaks. And I wanted to get onto the Sierra landscape to start the season. We walked on snow all the way from the I-80 offramp parking, but we were able to walk on rock along the W ridge, then to the summit rocks, then crampons. Kept the crampons on for the snow-and-ice-encrusted 3rd class (about 40 feet) just below the summit. All in drizzle and considerable wind. Cold! White-out at times. Most of us were belayed down. Back to the cars in softer snow, using snowshoes and in more pleasant conditions. Then off to Reno for a motel (cheap prices!) and good buffet dinner.

Next intention was Mt Elwell; it seemed it should be a short climb. But rain turned to snow, and the Gold Lake Road was getting snow-covered as we drove near the pass; we didn't want to take the chance sliding without chains or getting snowbound. So we retreated to a cafe in Sierra City to discuss. Then we figured to give Adams Peak a chance— farther east; maybe some rain shadow effect. Got to within a mile of the trailhead N of the peak; snow not too bad. Proceeded (still Wednesday) with our snowshoes to the brush 200' below the summit. Regrouped a bit for the windstorm raging in the tree tops and summit area. Found our way up there, signed the register in the 30-50 mph winds, and carefully proceeded down on the wet rocks.

After the summit we were just hiking back on the inclined forest floor among sticks and fallen branches, and the next thing Susan L. was on the ground in pain. She said she heard something crack in her ankle. The injury was not very discolored or swollen; I wrapped it with the surgical tape I always carry, and then she slowly limped out the remaining mile mostly on her own. We all retreated to a motel in Reno again. Susan and her husband Bill went on home, to find out she had a cracked bone requiring weeks in a cast. What a bummer for Susan, a very enthusiastic and strong SPSer who we will miss in the mountains for a while.

Thursday we three remaining (myself, Patty, and Tom S). then went to Mt Rose, figuring that it was a straightforward snow hike that could be done in the clouds visible from Reno. Wrong! Whiteouts on the highway, driving rain, and 30+ mph winds again at the trailhead even though it was fair weather in Reno. No point in suffering, so we turned around at the parking lot and then spent the day shopping in Reno and watching kayakers on the racing Truckee River at the new water park downtown.

Friday was supposed to be good weather for a change. The three of us drove to Mt. Elwell via Gold Lake

again and the road was clear. Still clouds at the trailhead, though, but things got nice (finally!) as the day went on. Climbed pretty much up the face on snow, enjoying scenery and sun for a change. Still used snowshoes and axes. Then, that night we bathed, ate, and camped at the hot springs near Sierraville. At \$22 a person for camping and bathing it isn't cheap, but they keep the place orderly and quiet. Yoga, Zen, and peace are the atmosphere there worthwhile for a night.

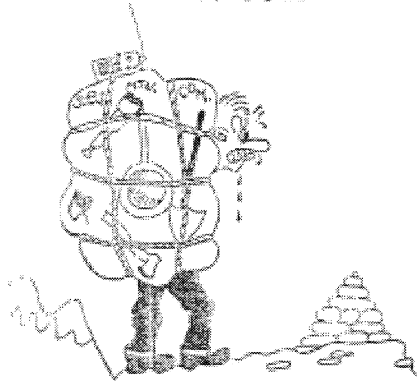
Saturday — Sierra Buttes. We drove (with 4WD) to about the 5500' level on the road from Sierra City. Hiked the road and the deep snow, then on to the summit rocks and the metal steps and lookout tower. Axes and snowshoes were used but no snow or ice on the staircases. A beautiful sunny day with great views. And then we drove on to car camp comfortably near Mt. Lola, our next objective.

Sunday we walked across the bridge over the raging Little Truckee River and proceed on toward the slopes SW of Lola's summit. Raging Perazzo Creek was a problem for us, but we kept hiking upstream until we found a solid snow bridge to cross. The west summit slopes had little or no snow; apparently the storms blew the snow off during the winter. Coming down we then went all the way along the north ridge and down to the Perazzo Meadow area. Swimming was our only option to get across there, so we followed the creek and then the Little Truckee down to the other bridge, the one we had camped at. Then one mile back along the road to the car.

Glad to have the bridges there. We next checked the access to English Mtn, but the road was closed by deep snow eight miles from the trailhead. We felt we had enough, said goodbye and proceeded home. All in all, happy to have five SPS peaks on this early season trip (with some severe conditions) in a heavy snow year to make it an adventure.

Difficulty: class 3, ice axe, crampons, M Rated, snowshoes, rope used, snow travel

APOGEE



April 1957
Echo -
cartoon

IN HIGH PLACES: THE BENELUX COUNTRIES

Luxembourg's **Burrigplatz**, Belgium's **Botrange**, and The Netherlands' **Drielandenpunt**. Plus, if you're one of the first twenty-five to order, Denmark's **Yding Skovhøj** included free of charge.

By Burton "Three in One Day" Falk

In June of 1993, my wife Jo and I set off on one of our best trips ever. This is a belated reminiscence of that memorable summer.

Our first stop was Iceland, which—if you don't mind high prices—is a truly wondrous place. The reason for stopping there was because I had visited the country the summer before during an unsuccessful effort to climb its highest peak, **Hvannadalshnukur**, and I was so taken with the country that I wanted Jo to see it as well.

We arrived in Reykjavik at 7:30 a.m., June 21, and even prior to checking into our hotel, Jo and I enthusiastically signed up for morning tour of the capital city. By noon, however, we had morphed into jelly-legged, jet-lagged zombies, and it took all we had to stagger back to the Holt Hotel, where we collapsed in utter stupor. The next day, somewhat revived, we took "The Golden Circle Tour," including stops at Hveragerdi, a city filled with geothermally-heated greenhouses that supply the country with fresh fruits and vegetables year round; Keird, a lake set in a volcanic crater; Skalholt, site of an ancient bishopric; and Geysir, location of a natural phenomenon for which spouting hot springs the world over are named. After lunch, we continued on to Gullfoss (Gold Falls), arguably the finest waterfall in a country teeming with fine waterfalls, and, finally, to Thingvellir, located directly on the Mid-Atlantic Rift, a unique natural amphitheater in which the island nation's first National Assembly was convened way back in 930 AD.

The following morning we headed southwest out

of Reykjavik along the Reykjanes Peninsula, bound for the Blue Lagoon, which, before it was "discovered" by the locals, was nothing more than a settling pond for the scalding hot waters brought up from a mile and a quarter below the surface by the adjacent geothermal electric plant. Today, sporting a modern bathhouse, the Blue Lagoon has become quite famous. Folks fly in from all over the world to soak in its mineral-rich, milky-blue waters, plastering themselves with the fine mineral sludge that deposits on the bottom of the pond.

Depending on where you stand, the water temperature can range from tepid to hot. A layer of hot water may lie on the surface, for instance, while your feet are merely warm. Jo and I paddled around for about an hour, conversing with both Icelanders (most of whom spoke English) and mainland Europeans, enjoying ourselves immensely. After the swim, we lunched at the modern fishing village of Grurdavik, then visited the lava fields and bird cliffs at the tip of the peninsula, both of which were impressive.

On June 24, we were off on a small plane tour, first flying over Thingvellir, Geysir and Gullfoss, and then around glacier-covered Mt. Hekla, the infamous active volcano, whose

ice cap melts during eruptions, thus causing deadly floods. We then landed at Heimaey, an island just off the south coast, home of Vestmannaeyjar, the most important fishing harbor in the country, a port that accounts for a full 15% of the country's gross national product. It was here that in February 1973 that an "inactive" volcano suddenly erupted, covering



Botrange, Belgium.
Located in a peat bog this "high-point" tower is at 2,274'.

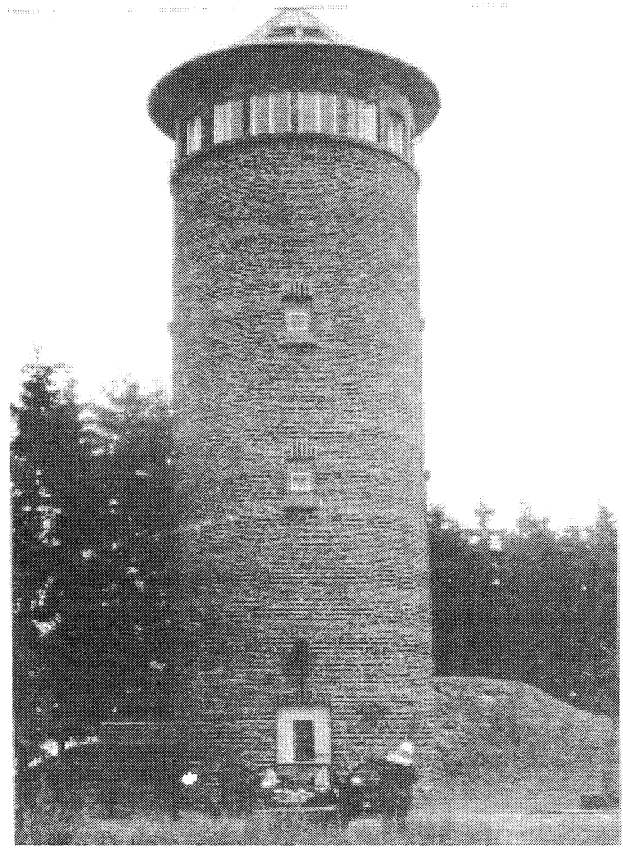
much of the island's only village with ash, and sending a massive, slow moving wall of lava toward the entrance to the harbor. Requisitioning several high-pressure pumps from the NATO base at Keflavik, the ingenious Icelanders began round-the-clock spraying of millions of gallons of ice cold seawater on the advancing wall—and in a happy ending, the molten mass solidified, and the harbor was spared from certain destruction.

Before leaving Iceland, however, which we did the following morning, it should be noted that in good weather the country's 6,950' high point, **Hvannadalshnukur**, would make a nice climb. On our attempt the prior year, we had successfully conquered its rocky southern slope, crossed the crevasse field along the crater's rim, and were making our way across its ice-filled crater itself, a mere two miles from and only five or six hundred feet below the summit, when we were hit by a sudden storm. Although we waited three hours for the weather to break, we finally had to give it up and turn back. Since I plan to return to bag the peak, I'll write up the details of the climb at another time.

As compared to most major European gateway cities, arrival in Luxembourg is a quiet, laid-back affair. We zipped through immigration and customs, picked up our rental car with ease, and then drove 37 miles north to the town of Clervaux, set in a heavily-forested bend in a river, where we holed up for the night in a hotel room equipped with a Jacuzzi.

The next morning, June 26, we continued on about as far north as possible in Luxembourg, making our first stop at **Burriplatz**, where next to a brick tower with a conical roof, we found a wooden sign proclaiming, "Point Culminant Du Grand-Duche—558.35 M" (1,831'). And thus little Luxembourg—a mere nine-hundred and ninety-nine square miles in area, a third of which is forested, with a population of slightly less than four hundred thousand, most of whom speak Letzeburgesch, a dialect closely related to German—became the first of our three high points for the day. Although it had begun to rain, we were in exceedingly good spirits as we sallied forth north into Belgium.

Botrange, the 694 M (2,274') high point of Belgium, is located in that country's eastern extremes, very close to the German border. While it's possible to park off the main highway N68 (across the street from the Barque Michael café), about halfway between the towns of Malmedy and Eupen, and take a 4-kilometer hike through the countryside to the high point, Jo and I, because of the



Burriplatz, Luxembourg
Point Culminant Du Grand-Duche
1,831 feet

inclement weather, decided to drive there instead. Turning off N68 toward Robertville, we arrived at **Botrange** about 1 p.m., where we treated ourselves to coffee at the on-site café. Later, just outside the café, we discovered what we presumed to be the high point monument (others claim that the high point is under the tower adjoining the café). Wherever it is, we were, in our opinion, close enough. Highpoint #2 for the day! By the way, **Botrange** is situated at the edge of a 10,500-acre preserve, which, consisting primarily of a wet peat bog, is one of the few wilderness areas left in that part of Europe.

Heading north once more, we stopped about 2 p.m. at a small hotel outside of Eupen, where for a huge price in those days, Jo had a dish of celery soup, while I scarfed down the lunch special consisting of soup, fish, and a suitably rich Belgian dessert. Entering the Netherlands after lunch, we opted for a series of back roads to avoid the traffic created by the nearby industrial German city of Aachen. Coming at last to a sign reading "**Drielandenpunt**" just north of Vaals, we turned up a road leading to a large garden restaurant set amid a pine forest, where

I pulled into a pay parking lot. We then strolled over to three small monuments indicating we were, indeed, at the Netherlands's 322 M (1,057') highpoint, **Drielandenpunt**. Three in one day, oh yeah! As a note of interest, this area is in the foothills of the Ardenne Mountains, where the Battle of the Bulge, one of the most important and vicious conflicts of WWII, occurred. Next to the highpoint is a tower which purportedly offers a fine view of the entire area, including the nearby point where the borders of Netherlands, Belgium and Germany meet. Jo and I attempted to climb the tower, but were turned back at the admission gate because we had only American currency (we'd used the last of our European currency earlier at a pay restroom). That was not the worst part, however. The worst part came when I tried to get out of the parking lot. It turns out that there was no attendant, only a coin payment box, and there I was with no change. I reparked the car and went into a nearby souvenir shop with the intent of changing a few dollars. "Sorry, but we are not a cambio," one of the clerks curtly explained. Gnashing my teeth, tearing my shirt and beating my breast, I carefully explained that if we were damned to spend eternity in the parking lot I would hold her personally responsible. Another clerk, noticing my stylishly urbane demeanor, offered me a proper coin from her own purse, refusing my dollar bill in exchange. I could almost hear her thinking, "Dumb American."

With slightly bruised egos, we continued on to Maastricht, where we were unable to find a hotel with a decent bed (the one hotel with a vacancy had beds that were way too soft). Fortunately, a friendly front desk clerk advised us that we might consider traveling on to the small town of Thorn, where he thought good accommodations might still be available. And that was the best tip of the trip. Thorn, it turns out, is a quaint village in which all the 18th Century buildings have been painted white—something to do with the fact that it was once run by

a governing body of women. Upon arriving there, we discovered that the only room available was the honeymoon suite at the La Ville Blanche Hotel, however the accommodating manager let us have for the standard price of a double. After freshening up, we repaired to hotel's dining room, where we enjoyed an excellent meal consisting of fresh salmon and just-picked white asparagus, both of which were covered in a marvelous home-made hollandaise sauce. And after dinner, we strolled way out into the surrounding countryside, where, even though it was past 10 p.m., the fields were still bathed in the golden glow of a northern European twilight.

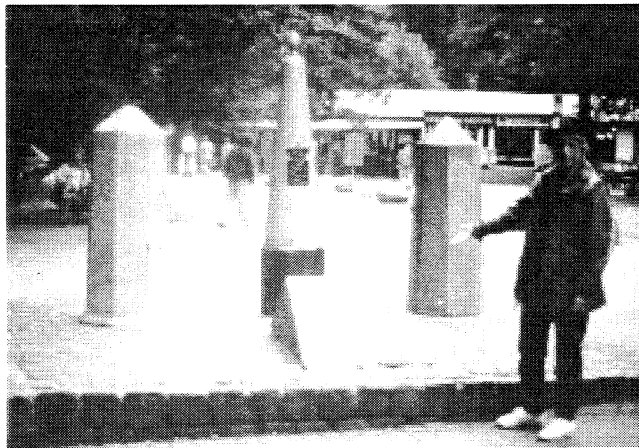
The next day, we drove northeast through the summer-lush countryside of Holland's Lowlands into Germany, where we stopped for the night on outskirts of Hamburg.

The following morning, we continued north into the Jutland Peninsula, where in the early afternoon, near the town of Skanderborg, amid rolling fields and farms, we found **Yding Skovhøj**, an undeveloped site,

continental Denmark's 173 m (568') high point (maybe). In a situation akin to that of Delaware, however, where a trailer park near **Ebright Azimuth**, the State's recognized high point, is actually higher but apparently man-made, there seems to be an argument regarding this claim. Indeed, a hill about a half mile away from **Yding Skovhøj**, the 170.95 M (560') **Ejer Bavnehøj**, on which a red-brick building sporting a large Danish flag stands, claims to be the legitimate *natural* highpoint. I don't know—visit them both. Another consideration is that Denmark also possesses Greenland, where, of course, there are real mountains. So where is the true country highpoint?

Since it's unlikely that I'll ever get to Greenland, I'm claiming **Yding Skovhøj** is the real thing, and I proudly display the country's handsome flag, a white cross on a red field, among my collection of high point banners.

Jo and I continued on the Copenhagen that afternoon, and the next day we embarked on a 10-day cruise on the Baltic Sea.



Drielandenpunt
The Netherland's high point at 1,057 feet

Conservation 2- Liners

by Barbee Tidball

Development threatens base of Mt. Whitney

On Monday Sept. 12th construction work began but by Thursday the work was halted when the developer, Jim Walters, agreed to suspend work outside of Lone Pine, California. The developer's plan is to build luxury homes along Whitney Portal. Sierra Fund, Save Round Valley and Sierra Watch filed suit to stop the proposed development from moving forward. An agreement between the developer and the attorneys for the conservation groups was reached just days after the work began. Walters has now agreed to pull equipment off the land and halt all development, pending a court decision on the project, due in early 2006.

The Sierra Fund, which organized a fund raising drive as the bulldozers rolled, continues to seek an additional \$12,000 to fully fund the litigation necessary to permanently halt the development project. Contact the Sierra Fund at 409 Spring Street, Nevada City, CA 95959, Shawn Garvey 530.265.8454 extension 12. Contact Save Round Valley Alliance, Jennifer Fenton at 559.658.8189.

National Parks; Proposal is No Laughing Matter

(Alert from National Parks & Conservation Assoc.)

As part of a backdoor attempt to drill in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge (ANWR), among other things, House Resources Committee Chairman Richard Pombo (R-CA) recently drafted a proposal that would sell 15 of our national parks for energy exploration and commercial development, including hard rock mining. What's more, an additional component to the proposal would require the National Park Service to sell commercial sponsorship in the national parks' visitor centers, trails, transportation systems, museums and more. .

It is critical that we stop the assault on our national parks. Contact your Members of Congress and urge them to stand up against this, and other reckless policy proposals that threaten our national parks and historic sites!

Fifteen national parks from Alaska to California to Massachusetts, would be sold under Pombo's legislation. The western parks up for grabs are (NP - National Park, NM- National Monument):
Alaska - Aniakchak NM & Preserve, Bering Land

Bridge N Preserve, Cape Krusenstern NM, Kobuk Valley NP, Lake Clark NP & Preserve, Noatak N Preserve, Yukon-Charley Rivers N Preserve
California: Eugene O'Neill National Historical Site
Arizona: Fort Bowie National Historic Site

Sequoia National Forest - Prescribed Burning

October 10 until the snow closes access to the area, the first phase of a 5-year project that will encompass up to 4600 acres at completion. Approximately 500-1000 acres are scheduled for prescribed burning this year. The prescribed burning will take place between the Long Meadow and Cannell Meadow area located on the Kern Plateau.

Fire managers will work closely with the San Joaquin Air Pollution Control District to manage smoke production. Temporary road and trail closures may occur in and near the vicinity of the prescribed burn operations.

The objective of the burn is to make the conifer forest and other associated wildlife habitat more resilient to wildfire through the reintroduction of managed fire into the ecosystem and start the process of reestablishing a more normal fire regime. The project area at an elevation of approximately 8,000 feet, consists of relatively uniform vegetation cover that is highly susceptible to a large scale fire occurrence. There is no large fire history for the area.

The Inyo National Forest Wilderness planning efforts updates

Trail and Commercial Pack Stock Management

Ansel Adams and John Muir Wildernesses EIS - See *The Sierra Echo*, Vol 49, No. 2, Apr.-May 2005
This planning effort is to amend the 2001 Wilderness Plan for the subject areas. Commercial pack stock use has remained the subject of debate in the Ansel Adams and John Muir Wildernesses. The final EIS and decision on the project is expected in December 2005.

Commercial Pack Station and Pack Stock Outfitter/ Guide Permit Issuance EIS

This project analyzes commercial pack station operations and activities in the Golden Trout and South Sierra Wildernesses and non-wilderness portions of the Inyo National Forest. The Draft EIS should be released for public review and comment in February 2006.

Wanted Sierra Echo Editor

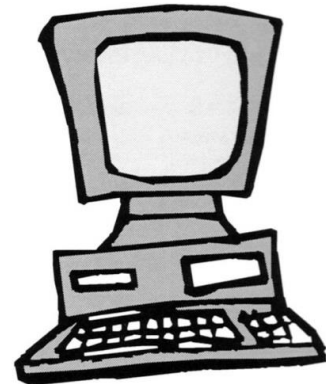
Volume 49.6 the up-coming November/December 2005 edition of the Echo will also mark our 9th year as Echo editors. It is time for a new Echo editor(s) to take over publication of the SPS newsletter.

The Echo is published 6 times a year, every two-months.

The Echo editor(s) should have basic computer skills. And ideally knowledge, or the desire to learn how to use of the use page layout software. The Echo is published by Universal Reprographics. This is an ideal job for anyone with internet access. The days of having to drive to the printer are gone. For More details see *The Sierra Echo*, Vol 49, No. 4, August-September 2005.

Wanted Web-master SPS - Sierra Club web page

Charlie Knapke has volunteered and supported the SPS as web-master for ten years. Charlie set up the SPS web page and has kept up the data base by adding new trip reports, preparing our 50th annivesery link and updating by-laws and contacts as required each year. Charlie also supports the DPS, LPC and HPS sections.



Please contact Barbee Tidball if you would like to learn more about being the Echo editor or Charlie Knapke if you would like to learn more about being our web-master.

Please contact Patty Rambert if you are interested in taking over the job of Echo editor or the job of SPS web-master.

Anniversary Issues - The Sierra Echo

40th - Volumn 39 1995: Editor - Wayne Norman. Contributing Reporters - Mitch Miller, Greg Roach, Bob Sumner, Ron Jones, RJ Secor, Bill T. Russell, Vi Grasso,

30th - Volumn 30 1986: Editor - Pat Holleman. Contributing Reporters - Vieve Weldon, Mary Sue Miller, Jerry Keating, Bill T. Russell, Mary Gygax, Nancy Gordon, Ron Jones, RJ Secor, Mary McMannes, Harvey Mudfoote, George Toby, Bob Kanne.

20th - Volumn 20 1976: Editors - Ron Jones, Walton Kabler, Duane McRuer and Mary Omberg. Typing, layout and splicing by Kay Wade and Charles Reaber.

October VOL. 49 NO. 5

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