



Newsletter of the Sierra Peaks Section, Angeles Chapter, Sierra Club | [angeles.sierraclub.org/sps](http://angeles.sierraclub.org/sps)

Volume 50 | Number 3 | Winter 2006

# The Sierra Echo



$3 (list)^2 =$

**Tina does the math.**

On Independence Peak with Doug Mantle, Tina Bowman signals for the helicopter after finishing the SPS, DPS and HPS lists for the second time each — in a single 24 hour period. Page 8

# Eat, Drink, Be Merry

**Plan now to attend the Sierra Peaks Section Annual Banquet.** The event will be held Saturday, February 3 at Les Freres Taix Restaurant, 1911 Sunset Blvd, Los Angeles. Festivities kick off at 5:30 with a no-host bar, followed at 7 by dinner. Complimentary wine will be served at each table; dinner choices are Roast Top Sirloin, Salmon, and Vegetarian Pasta. Cost is \$32 per person.

The Speaker for the evening will be **Mike Gibbons**, who has climbed six of the Seven Summits. Mike will be sharing his wonderful video documenting his climb of Vinson Massif, the highest point of Antarctica.

To register, complete the form below, include payment (checks made payable to "SPS"), and mail to Henry at the address shown. Henry will have a list of attendees at the Restaurant; see him when you arrive to get your dinner ticket(s).



## Sierra Peaks Section Annual Banquet

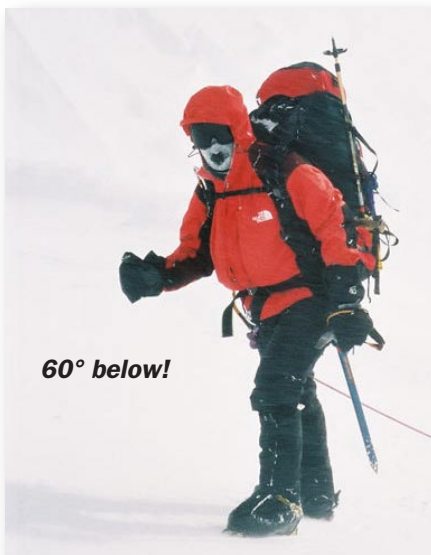
Name(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Number of Guests (\$32 each) \_\_\_\_\_ Amount Enclosed \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
(make check payable to SPS)

Dinner Choices (indicate number of each):

Beef \_\_\_\_\_ Fish \_\_\_\_\_ Pasta \_\_\_\_\_

Return completed form with payment, **no later than Friday, January 26** to: Henry Arnebold, 2459 Escalante, La Verne, CA 91750-1136



60° below!

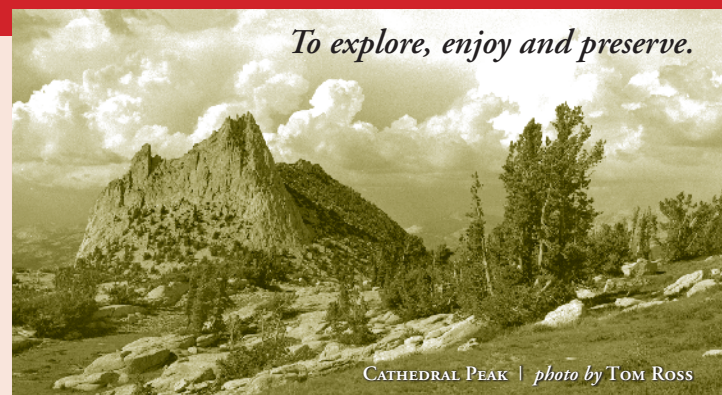
## Ascendent Behavior

**Alex Amies**  
Secretary, Sierra Peaks Section

Tina Stough Bowman completed her second SPS list finish October 7, 2006 on Independence Peak and her third Emblem Peak completion on Red Slate Mountain October 2, 2004. Her accomplishment October 7th included her second HPS list finish (Five Fingers) and second DPS list finish (Waucoba) as well.

John Cheslick's 175th peak and all Emblem peaks for Master Emblem status were achieved August 14, 2006 on Mt. Guyot, and his 25th Mountaineer's peak was achieved July 9, 2006 on Deerhorn.

Daryn Dodge reached both Senior and Master Emblem status August 26, 2006 climbing North Palisade. He has climbed 29 of the 35 Mountaineer's



peaks, all 15 Emblem Peaks and has a total count of 196 SPS-listed peaks under his belt.

Two SPS members have achieved active membership status: Kathy Rich on Mt. Goethe August, 2006 and Doug Owens also in August, 2006 on Florence Peak.

April 1, 1916

October 16, 2006

## In Memory of Sid "San Jac" Davis

I met Sid Davis back in 1980 when I led Spanish Needle – there were twelve of us, and we had had a long day due to climbing the wannabe summit and finally the real summit. Back at Indian Wells, we had a great dinner, and Sid generously ordered fine bottles of wine for all us SPSers, and a good time was had by all. My last encounter with Sid was in planning the SPS 50th Anniversary banquet where he and his friend Shirley looked forward to attending. Sadly, at the last minute, he was unable to come, but he insisted on buying the SPS Anniversary CD for all leaders and climbers featured on the CD. He was not only generous but one of our favorite companions and friends. Anyone climbing his peak, San Jacinto, will surely feel his spirit along the way.

Not only being a great climber in all three sections (SPS, DPS, HPS), he had a colorful Hollywood life. As a child, he was in Our Gang movies, and later in life became best friends and a stand-in for John Wayne. John Wayne became Sid's silent financial partner in Sid Davis Productions, a company that made "cautionary" films about social issues. Any of us who attended school in the fifties and sixties remember well these thirty minute b/w movies. His first movie, *The Dangerous Stranger*, was seen by a child who later saved herself from a predator, because she remembered the movie. Meeting this child was one of Sid's proudest moments.

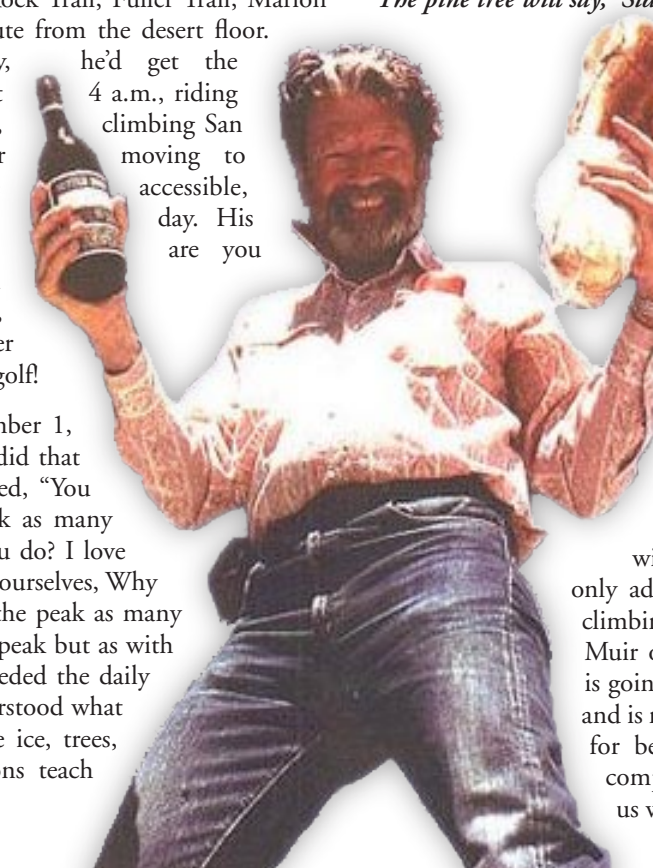
But back to the peaks – and THE PEAK. On July 11, 1964, Sid climbed San Jacinto (10,834') at the age of 47. From that time on, he ascended this fine desert peak 643 times — twelve times in his eighties. He went every route that could possibly be done: Devil's Slide, Suicide Rock Trail, Fuller Trail, Marion Mountain, and the arduous route from the desert floor. While still living in the S.F. Valley, he'd get the urge to climb his peak, rising at 4 a.m., riding his motorcycle to the tram, climbing San Jac, and returning home. After moving to Palm Desert, the peak was more accessible, day. His neighbors asked him, "When going to quit that hiking and take up golf?" His answer was, "I will when I get older." He never got older, and he never took up golf!

Sid's last ascent was September 1, 1998, and when asked why he did that peak so many times, he answered, "You gotta be a nut to hike the peak as many times as I did, but what can you do? I love it!" We pause to wonder and ask ourselves, Why would someone want to climb the peak as many times as he? He didn't need the peak but as with any passionate love affair, he needed the daily encounter. Or perhaps Sid understood what John Muir meant in letting the ice, trees, flowers, soil, storms, and seasons teach him who to be and how to live.

As an active member of the Desert Peaks Section, Sid climbed on many scheduled trips plus many private trips with notable climbers as Andy Smatko, Jerry Keating, Eric Shumacher, Doug Mantle. He emblemed on Navajo Mountain in 1964. In 1967, Sid and companions (Bob Mason, Marlin Clark) climbed the Mexican volcanoes. Later, he invited the Mexican Search and Rescue team, La Brigada de Rescate del Socorro Alpino to journey to L.A., where Sid housed them and accompanied them on a climb up Mt. Whitney. From 1968-1975, he was a vital member of his local Mountain Rescue Committee. His daughter Jill recalls he almost missed her wedding, because he was out rescuing a lost hiker. They found the missing fellow, Sid invited him to Jill's wedding, and they all remained friends from that point on.

The last six years of his life in Palm Desert, Sid watched the rising and the setting of the sun on his favorite peak along with his lovely new friend, Shirley Friesen. She said he regaled her with stories of the legend and lore of his climbing, and one particular trip up 395 seemed to take forever, because he had so many peak stories. He told Shirley she was the love of his later life, but Shirley says, "His real love was with San Jac." The rangers of San Jacinto are naming a trail, the Sid Davis Trail, in 2011 (the required time after his passing.) He was told this shortly before his death, and he was greatly pleased. Sid was preceded in death by wife Norma and is survived by daughter Jill and grandson Steven (the youngest climber of San Jac when he was barely three years old). Sid once wrote in a poem,

*My ashes will be cast atop San Jac,  
In the holes and in the crack.  
The pine tree will say, 'Sid, you are mine.'*



*As I climb through the roots into the limber pine.*

*Climbing, climbing ever higher.  
Reaching, reaching to my heart's desire.  
And the thrill that I seek,  
Is to stand atop my mountain peak.*

*And if you ask me how or why  
All of this happens beneath the sky,  
I don't know the reason why  
But as a mountaineer,  
I'll never die.*

Sid was a bold and courageous climber with a generous and kind heart. We can only admire one who became legendary in climbing a peak he loved so ardently. John Muir often said, "Going to the mountains is going home." Sid *San Jac* has gone home and is resting in the mountain heart. Thanks for being our great friend and climbing companion. Rest in peace and walk with us when we climb your peak.

— Mary McMannes

# Conservation Two-Liners

By Barbee Tidball

## What do Forest Fires and Hurricanes Have in Common?

Researchers are beginning to think the answer may be global warming.

On July 6th the Sacramento Bee published an article on a study that linked climate to the burning of Western forests. <http://www.sacbee.com/content/news/environment/story/14275191p-15084853c.html>

“American forests in the West have burned bigger and more frequently since 1987, and climate change is a big reason.” The research by Anthony Westerling, a climatologist at the Scripps Institution of Oceanography at the University of California, San Diego, found that “climate change creates longer, drier seasons and better conditions for catastrophic fires.” Over the past 16 years there has been a fourfold increase in large wildfires. At the same time there has been an average 1.5-degree Fahrenheit temperature rise in the west. “During the warmer period, fires burned 6 1/2 times more land, and the fire season grew by an average of 78 days. The average fire duration also increased, from 7.8 days to 37 days. Westerling studied data on over 1,100 Western wildfires and looked at climate and precipitation records for the same periods. “The increased fire activity is partly a result of reduced winter rains, earlier snowmelt and a resulting early start to the dry season. These are all linked to warmer temperatures, he said.

“I think it’s really clear that it’s climate,” said Westerling. “When you look at the timing of these larger fire years in the Sierra Nevada, they’re very strongly correlated with the timing of spring and temperature changes.”

Forests are increasingly being viewed as a way to solve global warming, because as trees grow, they take carbon dioxide out of the atmosphere. Fires can defeat this solution.

### Minor Planet Named for Pioneer California Conservationist

(from *Sierra Club Conservation Newsletter* July 2006)

The International Astronomical Union (IAU), through the Smithsonian Astrophysical Observatory’s (SAO) Minor Planet Center (MPC), has announced the naming of a newly discovered minor planet in honor of pioneer conservationist John Muir. The announcement was made in the June 2006 issue of the *Minor Planet Circular*, published by the SAO/MPC.

The tiny, 1-mile diameter celestial body, now named “Johnmuir”, was discovered in August 2004 by amateur astronomer R.E. Jones from his backyard observatory located in a Los Angeles suburb. Mr. Jones was making photographic measurements of the position of another small celestial body — a near-Earth asteroid discovered by a professional observatory just the night before — when he noticed a second, much slower moving object in his photographs. A check of catalogues and positions of known objects in the Solar System suggested that the second object was likely a new discovery.

Subsequent observations by the Francisquito Observatory (the name of Mr. Jones’ observatory in the Santa Clarita Valley) and by professional observatories including Mt. Palomar in California and Kitt Peak in Arizona confirmed the new find, and Francisquito Observatory was credited by the IAU/MPC with discovery of Solar System object number 2004PX42.

Once 2004PX42 had been observed a sufficient number of times to enable the calculation of a very precise orbit (which occurred in early 2006 following additional measurements by the Kitt Peak Observatory), Mr. Jones was given the opportunity to propose a name for his discovery. The name Johnmuir was submitted to the 15-member Committee on Small Body Nomenclature of the IAU and approved just prior to publication of the SAO/MPC’s June 2006 Minor Planet Circular.

In the official citation for the name proposal, John Muir is recognized for his scientific contributions to the fields of glaciology and botany in the late 19th century, and for his tireless promotion of the National Park concept in the early 20th century. John Muir joins a select group of individuals who have had small Solar System objects named in their honor, including composer Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, and physicist Albert Einstein.

### LEAVE NO TRACE and Cell Phones or Radios

Cell phone use is on the rise. In the US alone there are over 205 million wireless subscribers. So why should this be a Leave No Trace (LNT) concern? Phone and radio users need to be aware of how their cell phone or radio usage, in non-emergency situations, can affect another’s outdoor experience. Just as that noisy person talking on the cell phone in a restaurant can disrupt other diner’s meal enjoyment — cell phone or radio use can wreck havoc on the perception of solitude and peaceful escape into the wilderness.

LNT has developed 3 simple guidelines for cell phone and radio use:

- LNT recognizes that many outdoor recreationists carry cell phones for safety and emergencies. Be considerate of other visitors: carry and use cell phones out-of-sight and sound of other people. Keep them turned off until needed or left in a pocket on the “vibrate” or “silent ringer setting.”
- Be self reliant, whether carrying cell phones or not. Plan ahead — be prepared. Don’t leave ill-prepared or engage in risky actions just because you have a cell phone to call for rescue. Remember that in many remote areas cell phone coverage is limited or non-existent.
- Many people go to the out-of-doors to get away from technology. Please respect their desire for solitude and be considerate when using cell phone.

### TRIP REPORT

## Wonoga Peak & The Alabama Hills

SEPTEMBER 8–10, 2006

by JERRY KEATING

Seventeen persons interested in celebrating the SPS’s first 50 years appeared Friday afternoon at the Tuttle Creek Campground with two days of leisurely climbing to follow plus two nights of extended campfire camaraderie. Two of the participants were SPS founding members, and several others traced their Sierra Club climbing activities as far back as the 1940s.

Adding to the historical focus of the trip above Lone Pine were written well wishes from Founding SPS Secretary and 1957 Treasurer Pat (Meixner) Gentry, who resides in Bellevue, Wash., and from 1966 SPS Chair Rick Jali, who lives at Mammoth Lakes but who was en route to Tibet when the trip occurred.

“I have fond memories of my hiking and climbing adventures in California,” wrote Gentry. “I carried that love of the mountains with me to Washington and the Cascades. The poem I wrote, My World, says it all:

‘A line on the map and too much gain/  
The gathering clouds show signs of rain./  
My mind says NO, but my heart says GO/  
For that inward eye sees rock and snow/  
And trails that climb thru flowers--/A sparkling world of rainbowed showers.

‘A world I know I can’t resist./  
It comes with moss and ferns and mist--/  
Still hidden lakes, frost tinted leaves./  
Sunlit meadows and fragrant trees./  
I see the trail. I lift my pack./  
This is my world. I won’t turn back.’”

Among those enjoying Friday night’s campfire levity were founding member Frank Bressel and his “outlaw hiker” wife, Joanna; founding member/list finisher Barbara Lilley; and Fred Johnson, who started climbing with the Sierra Club in the early

1940s and joined the SPS in the 1960s. The “outlaw hikers” were active before the SPS’s formation in October 1955.

Others present who are or have been SPS active members included list finisher Ret Moore; list finisher Elton Fletcher and wife, Pat; former Angeles Chapter Chair Bob Kanne; Ben Preyer, who now lives in Rancho Santa Fe; list finisher Gordon MacLeod; and list finisher Jerry Keating and wife, Nancy.

On Saturday, one individual remained in camp while 16 persons headed up the paved road toward Horseshoe Meadow. Four persons spent time hiking or exploring in meadow area. The 12 others stopped just after Walt’s Point to begin an ascent of Wonoga Peak (10,371’). The route to unlisted Wonoga starts at 9240’ where Little Cottonwood Creek flows under the road. An unsigned, overgrown trail bypasses what looks like difficult terrain and then, after getting by the difficulty, drops to and crosses the creek. Less than 0.25 mile farther, a primitive fire pit marks where to leave the trail and begin following cross-country terrain. The route ascends a usually dry water course that eventually reaches sandy open flats, from which the summit is clearly visible. The group climbed slowly through a brushy area with scattered boulders to the top of the ridge to the left, then followed the ridge to the rocky summit (Class 2). The views directly down to the Owens Valley were striking, and there also were good views of the high country. The register contained a notebook left by MacLeod in 1981, but no sign was found of the 1964 SPS trip led by Frank Sanborn and Ron Jones. The 1964 ascent started at least 2000’ lower because today’s road was only partly finished.

After a second night of enjoyable campfire activities beside Tuttle Creek, eight persons drove down to Lone Pine and then northward on U.S. 395 for about 5 miles to the Moffat Ranch Road. It and other unpaved roads led to the starting point for the high point (5354’) of the Alabama Hills. The route wound through various gullies and up Class 2 terrain. From the summit, the views of the peaks along the Sierra crest were spectacular. The register revealed many familiar names, including those of Steve Roper, Jim Nichols, Mark Adrian and Bob Michael.

Leaders were MacLeod and J. Keating with Lilley filling in for Keating on Sunday.

# Outings

**January 14 | Sun** **LTC, WTC, Hundred Peaks**  
**I Warren Pt Navigation**

Navigation noodles at Joshua Tree National Park for either check out or practice to satisfy the Basic (I/M) or Advanced (E) level navigation requirements. To receive homework assignment, send navigation experience/training or WTC, rideshare info, phones, sase to Ldr: HARRY FREIMANIS. Co-Ldr: PHIL WHEELER

**January 27 | Sat** **LTC, Sierra Peaks, Desert Peaks**  
**M/E Baldy Snow Practice**

Review all aspects of snow climbing, practice skills, brush up on new techniques, including rope travel, ice axe, snow anchors. Especially for M/E leader candidates. Restricted to Sierra Club members with prior ice axe experience. Send SC#, climbing resume, email, phones to Ldr: NILE SORENSON. Co-Ldr: TOM MCDONNELL

**February 3 | Sat** **LTC, Sierra Peaks, Desert Peaks**  
**M/E Baldy Snow Practice**

Review all aspects of snow climbing, practice skills, brush up on new techniques, including rope travel, ice axe, snow anchors. Especially for M/E leader candidates. Restricted to Sierra Club members with prior ice axe experience. Send SC#, climbing resume, email, phones to Ldr: NILE SORENSON. Co-Ldr: TINA BOWMAN

**March 31 | Sat** **LTC**  
**Deadline for Leadership Training Seminar**

Last day for receipt of application and payment by LTC Registrar for enrollment in Apr 14 seminar. Next seminar: Fall 2007. Registrar: STEVE BOTAN

**April 1 | Sun** **Sierra Peaks and WTC**  
**MR Mt Baldy (10,064') Snow Climb**

Strenuous 3900 feet of gain, 8 miles starting on the Ski Hut trail. Restricted to Sierra Club members with ice axe & crampon proficiency. Helmets are required. Two copies of completed medical form required. Group size limited. Send sase/esase, mountaineering resume showing relevant experience, Sierra Club number and contact information to Leader: Tom McDonnell, Co-Leaders: Don Croley, Ed Cottone.

**April 14 | Sat** **LTC**  
**Leadership Training Seminar**

Become a qualified Sierra Club leader. For info, see LTC section in front of Schedule. Deadline for receipt of application and payment is Mar 31. No registration after this date or at door. Next seminar: Fall 2007. Registrar: STEVE BOTAN

**April 21-22 | Sat - Sun** **SPS, LTC, DPS and SMS**  
**M/ER Sierra Snow Checkoff/Practice**

Demonstrate your skills to receive an M or E snow checkoff or sharpen snow climbing skills. Restricted to Sierra Club members with prior ice axe, crampon, rope training/experience. Eastern Sierra site (Onion Valley) depending on snow conditions. Helmets, adze cover, and two completed medical forms are required. Email or send 2 sase, Sierra Club number, resume of snow climbing/training, H&W phones to Leader: Tom McDonnell. Co-Leader: Randall Danta.

**April 28-29 | Sat - Sun** **SPS, LTC and DPS**  
**M/E Sierra Snow Checkoff/Practice**

For M & E candidates wanting to check off leadership ratings or others who wish to practice new techniques. Restricted to SC members with prior basic training with the ice axe. Two copies of the completed medical form required. Send SC number, climbing resume, SASE or e-mail, to Leader: NILE SORENSON, Co-leader: DOUG MANTLE.

**May 12-13 | Sat - Sun** **Sierra Peaks**  
**MR Spanish Needle (7,841') and Sawtooth Peak (8,000')**

Climb these two peaks in the Southern Sierra. The trip will be two day hikes with a car camp and happy hour on Saturday night. Climb Spanish Needle on Saturday, which will involve class 3 rock. Climb Sawtooth on Sunday via a class 2 route. Participants should have experience on class 3 rock. Restricted to Sierra Club members who supply two copies of the completed medical form to Leader. Helmets are required. Send e-mail with experience and SC number to Leader. Leader: ALEX AMIES, Assistant: RON CAMPBELL.

**May 19 | Sat** **Sierra Peaks, Hundred Peaks and WTC**  
**M Big Iron (8003') via North Ridge**

A seldom-led, adventurous route pioneered by Bill T. Russell, up East Fork and Fish Fork of the San Gabriel River, with 30+ significant stream crossings, followed by a bushwhack and a steep (including some class 3) climb up a north ridge to summit, down usual (steep) south ridge route, blessedly ending with 5 miles on trail, approximately 7000' total gain, 20 mile loop. Predawn start, possible after dark finish. Send sase or email to Leader with telephone and relevant experience. Leaders: Asher Waxman and Erik Siering.

**May 26-May 28 | Fri-Sun** **Sierra Peaks**  
**MR Mt Baxter (13,136')**

Sawmill Pass trail backpack to climb this classic snow climb peak. Day -1 approx. 5000' gain and 8 miles to camp near Sawmill Lake. Day- 2 climb Baxter cross country travel, snow climb with 3rd class chute to summit. Day - 3 home. Restricted trip with ice axe, crampons, helmets and snowshoes required.

Participants must have experience snow camping and be comfortable on class 3 rock and snow and experienced with ice-ax and crampons. Please send an email with recent experience and conditioning, SC#, and two completed medical forms to Leader: BARBEE TIDBALL. Co-Leader: LARRY TIDBALL.

**June 2-3 | Sat-Sun** **Sierra Peaks**  
**MR Mt. Dade (13,600'+)**

Saturday pack in to camp at Treasure Lake (4 miles, 1000' gain). Sunday climb Dade via Hourglass couloir (up to 40 degree slope) and pack out. Ice ax, crampons and helmet required. Restricted to Sierra Club members who supply two copies of completed medical form to Leader. E-mail with experience to Leader: Steve Curry, Assistant: Asher Waxman.

**June 9-10 | Sat-Sun** **Sierra Peaks**  
**ER Red Slate Mountain (13,163')**

Climb this peak situated in the Convict Lake area of the Eastern Sierras via the North Couloir Route. This will be a strenuous backpack and class 4 snow climb. On Saturday pack

in from the trailhead to camp. Attempt the summit Sunday and pack out. Experience with class 4 snow and strong fitness required. Helmets required. Restricted to Sierra Club members who supply two copies of the completed medical form to Leader. Send e-mail with conditioning, experience, Sierra Club number. Five dollar permit fee required at trailhead. Leader: ALEX AMIES, Assistant: NILE SORENSON.

**June 23-25 | Sat-Mon** **Sierra Peaks**  
**I Kern Peak: (11,510')**

SPS introductory trip in southern Sierra geared to prospective SPSers and WTC students. Moderate and enjoyable pace. Sat backpack 9 miles, 1500' of gain to camp at Redrock Meadows at 8600'. Sun climb class 2 Kern Pk in 8 miles, 3000' gain round trip, all x-country. Legendary community happy hours Sat and Sun evenings. Monday backpack out 9 miles, 800' gain (With ups and downs). Send sase, recent conditioning, H&W phones, ride share info to Leader: Patty Kline, Assistants: Joe Wankum and Gary Schenk.

## TRIP REPORT

# Mt. Harrington

JULY 7-8, 2006

by GREG GERLACH

I'd had my eye on this peak for quite some time, but was reluctant to give it a try on my own because of its third class rating. I studied the trip reports on Climber.Org and the SPS website. I zeroed in on Ron Hudson's write up dated August 28-30, 2002 wherein he indicated that the route contained only a few sections of third class. All the other write-ups as well as the guidebook vaguely described the summit ridge as third class. I decided to go for the peak and see for myself who was right.

I was up at 6:00 a.m. and on the road by 7:00 a.m. for the 300 or so mile drive to the trailhead. Although a wilderness permit is not required for the Deer Cove Trailhead, which is located just outside Kings Canyon National Park along the Cedar Grove road, I obtained the required fire permit for my stove from the Sequoia National Forest Service office located in Dunlap. I arrived at the trailhead at 2:00 p.m. and 5 minutes later was hiking up the trail. The trailhead starts off at 4,400' in elevation and the temperatures had to be in the low 90's. I hiked up the trail to Deer Cove Creek. The map shows that there are two trails that lead up to Deer Cove Saddle from the creek, but the trail that goes north disappears shortly after leaving the creek. The southern most trail is the correct route. I continued up the trail past the saddle, which was overgrown in many places, reaching Wildman Meadows around 5:00 p.m. I had originally planned to camp at the meadows, but there was no water so I kept going and did not

stop until I reached Grizzly Lakes. The 5400' of elevation gain and 9.5 miles to the lake took me about 6 hours. I found a nice spot within 100' of the stream, set up camp, ate dinner, then read and relaxed until bedtime.

The next morning I was up at 7:00 a.m. and hiking towards the peak by 7:30 a.m. The route leaves Grizzly Lakes and ascends northwestward up the valley along the stream. I followed the valley to where it gently meets Harrington Pass, then ascended southward over a 100' high bump to the base of the summit ridge of peak. The route to the summit is on the west side of the north ridge. I made an easy class 3 move to get onto the ridge, continued up some class 2, climbed up about 30' of easy class 3 slabs, than scrambled the rest of the way up class 2 rock to the summit. I was on top of the peak at exactly 9:00 a.m., just 1-1/2 hours after leaving Grizzly Lakes. Also, the register was placed on September 26, 1987 by an SPS group, is only about ¼ full and I was the first and only person to summit so far this year. After signing the register, I made my way down the ridge to the 100' high bump, then dropped down to the valley via some class 2-3 slabs. I arrived back at Grizzly lakes at 10:30 a.m., packed up my gear, then hit the trail. I arrived at the trailhead at 2:30 p.m. and was home at 8:30 p.m.

Statistics: 21.0 miles and about 6,600 feet of elevation gain.

In 1989, Tina Bowman purchased the Mary Austin House in Independence, California. As she told the seller, "I'll be having a Triple Double List finishing party on 10/07/06; my husband Tom, whom I haven't met yet, and I will need a nice place for the party."

# A Second Day in October

by Doug Mantle

Some peak-bagger history: As we read in his Echo article, "A Day In October" Cuno Ranschau Echo Editor and horrific punster birthed the idea of a "Triple Finish". In a single day, he recorded ascents of Mt. Corcoran, New York Butte, and Red Mountain, thereby completing the SPS, DPS, and HPS Lists. There followed universal celebrations, Cuno toured the capitals of Europe, and was feted by the Queen. Recognizing this as the apex, Cuno quit his job and cashed out the Lockheed stock, which shortly thereafter crashed, and Cuno himself shortly thereafter, well, retired from the peak-bagging game.

In 1989, Bob Emerick sought to emulate Cuno's feat, and then some. On his big day, he topped North Morgan, East Ord, and then Black No. 4 two times for an SPS, DPS, and two HPS finishes. There was a little hoopla, Bob Emerick seems thereafter to have vanished, and it seems that in the United States, only Ron Jones remembered this.

Only once had anyone finished all three Lists more than once, ahem, and certainly not in a single day. Tina, who had duly finished each of the three Lists once, decided to make history.

Not that she was obsessed with the task, or rather, shall we say, she had a number of obsessions to attend to. She has worn a

gaggle of hats in her work for the Angeles Chapter, usually a half-dozen or more at a time. We used to joke that she was coveting all available power within the Club, but we've come to recognize the truth: people dump all these jobs on her and, usually out of guilt, she picks up the batons. She is currently MOC Chair, LTC Chair, WTC Lecturer in two subjects, frequent E Leader, recently SPS Mountain Records, to name some. Coupled with her second and likewise demanding avocation, track, it amazes that she managed to complete the Peak Lists once, much less nearly twice.

Indeed, as 2006 dawned, Tina found herself ten months and about a 150 peaks shy of the big party. Tina's list of "orphans" didn't enhance her chances of companionship on these climbs, no more than did the time table. "Hello, want to do Electra and Forester with me? Sure, I know

April is a funny month for them, and it would be on a Tuesday, but...?" Some of the trips were plainly only for a



Tom & Tina setting out

superhero, like Villager to Rabbit, back and over to Rosa in a day (she passed the same HPS group three times, several reported neck injuries). This was a bad summer to be doing some HPS peaks like Cobblestone... she had to don fireman gear, shovel a fire line for several hours, before the opportunity to make a dash

to the summit presented, for example. Somehow, though, the deeds gone done, which brings us to the eve of the Big Day to be exact, October 6th, 1:00 p.m., in Independence.

Tina is as exacting of others as she is of herself. So, when husband Tom had only partly mastered medieval Latin in time for the Big Event, she forbade him to join the first two climbs, gave him a list of chores, and said, "I'll be by the house around 4:00 a.m., have these things done or you can't climb the last peak either."

We sped off in Tina's Toyota truck as Tom commenced to re-roofing the Mary Austin House for the party.

Our first objective was Route A for Waucoba, on the DPS List. We drove north and east for about 40 miles on good highway, then Tina careened over a dozen miles of 4-wheel drive road that she and Tom had scouted earlier. Thus, at 3:00 p.m. we donned backpacks including all our water, and set off.

Then turned back. Tina had forgotten to hoist the dutch oven with the evening casserole meal from the back of the truck. Now fully packed up, she locked the truck with the keys still inside.

Tina mentally calculated how long it would take for her to sprint the 40+ miles back to Independence while I yanked, squeezed and stomped on the impenetrable Hide-A-Key. Three bursts from the Colt-45 handgun Tina always takes for extra safety did the trick, and we were on our way again.

We managed the 3,000 feet of gain on Waucoba's western escarpment in the daylight, to just below the summit rocks. With a brisk wind, it was quite cold; in the five seconds it took us to dump packs and dive into our respective bivies, I estimated the temperature at minus 300F. There I waited, while Tina recorded the last three and a half months of entries in her journal.

At 11:35 p.m. we emerged. Thankfully, it was windless, cloudless, and (not by chance) fully moonlit as we clamored over to the summit register, signed in, and made about-face. DPS X 2!

I led a nearly perfect descent straight down to the car. I say nearly, as every few minutes, if I strayed a bit right or left, Tina would clear her throat extravagantly, perhaps, or even mutter "more to this way", and the like. Lower down, she had hitched herself to a 2000 lbs. downed bristlecone pine and had dragged it, or was it her poles, making a track which added to our certitude.

We stopped briefly in Independence where Tom was now painting the outside of the house. Tina inspected the roof, then we were off in the truck again, south for 75 miles to Pearsonville and beyond.

At 5:30 a.m., Tina went cellphone-to-cellphone to awaken Nile Sorenson, the gallant Viking who had rammed his four-masted Suburban up the east side of Five Fingers, creating a sandy swath

to facilitate our drive. As we soon discovered, he had thereafter manned his battle axe, carving foot holds in the soft sandstone directly up the northeast side of the summit. Thus, we were able to partake of sunrise on the summit. HPS X 2!

On our return to Independence, Tom had not only finished his assignments, but had wallpapered the house top-to-bottom as well, and was allowed to join our suddenly swelling band of



The celebration après milestone

climbers. We caravanned to Onion Valley, met still more partakers, and set off toward Robinson Lake around 11:00 a.m.

From the lake, Nile and I were invested with the lead up Independence Peak, a daunting challenge since we, between us, had only been up it ten times, and not in several months. Amidst a wintry wind and close cloud cover, we scrambled along the Class 3 ridge much farther and more tortuously than any of us remembered having done before. Still, we topped out at 1:00 p.m. Triple Double!

Eventually, the group and more convened at the Independence house for the celebration. At length, Tina took to the podium where after a pause, we heard Tom say, "let's all just admire her" and after another pause, someone recognized that she was standing asleep, having slept perhaps a couple of hours in the last 36.

It was a distinguished bunch of celebrants that graced the Independence house, or shall I say that lined up for Edna Erspamer's Uzbek stew (and I'm omitting a bunch) two-timers like Greg Vernon (SPS, DPS) and Linda McDermott (DPS), triple-finishers like Barbara Scholle, enough SPS finishers to make you think the deed is common (the Hollemans, Ron Hudson, Larry Tidball, Steve Eckert) No Cals (Steve and near-finisher Daryn Dodge), Mary McMannes, distinguished Ancients (Mark Goebel) a mountain guide from Canada looking for prospects to take up Mt. Laurel the next day and, well into the night, some of our most promising new leaders who witnessed Tina's final totters as she headed off for full-fledged sleep at last.

Plans for the next party are under way.

TRIP REPORT

# Mt. Brewer, South Guard & Mt. Jordan

JULY 21-26, 2006

by ALEX AMIES



On the summit of South Guard

Left to right: Sue Livingston, Alexander Smirnoff, Ed Noguera, Bill Livingston  
Photo by Alex Amies

**W**e began the trip on Friday July 21 from Onion Valley. It was a late start because we had to pick up the permit in person from the ranger's station in Lone Pine.

From Onion Valley we packed in up over Kearsarge Pass and west down to the Bubbs Creek Trail. We followed this to where it met the East Lake Creek Trail. Crossing Bubbs Creek was difficult because the water was very high. We found a place upstream of the junction between the creeks where the trail crossed. However, it involved quite a bit of cross country travel and hacking through vegetation before we found trail again. We arrived at our first camp at East Lake just before dark. It was a long day and set the fast pace for the rest of the trip.

On Saturday July 22 the plan was to climb North Guard and then do Brewer on the way back. However, the notch that needed to be followed up to the ridge between Brewer and North Guard was filled with snow and we did not have crampons. We decided to do Brewer via the class 2 East Ridge, which we managed successfully. After summiting Brewer we did not have the energy to go on to do North Guard. After a thunderstorm on the way down, we spent our second night camped at East Lake.

On Sunday July 23 we moved camp to Lake Reflection and dropped our packs to climb South Guard. Our only obstacle was snow on Longley Pass, which we bypassed on the north side. We climbed South Guard via the class 2 south slope.

On Monday July 24 we packed out to Lake South America via Harrison Pass. The trail shown on the USGS topographic map

was intermittent to non-existent on the ground. The hump up Harrison Pass was especially difficult and loose.

At the top of Harrison Pass we dropped our packs to attempt Stanford via the North Ridge. I was preparing a belay at Gregory's Monument for a class 3 section when a thunderstorm moved into nearby peaks. We did not have any lightning strikes on Stanford but the static was so strong that my and Alexander Smirnoff's ice axes were buzzing and Ed Noguera's long hair was standing on end. That ended our attempt on Mount Stanford. We pulled into our new camp at Lake South America in the rain.

On Tuesday July 25 we planned to do Mount Jordan. Sue and Bill Livingston had come down with colds and we going to sit this day out. However, when the time came to start out they couldn't resist coming along. We traveled west from our camp at Lake South America to the east side of Mount Jordan in only a couple of hours over easy ground. We climbed up the class 2 east slope to the crest where Ron Hudson took over as our E leader. Ron's strategy for the fourth class summit block reduced the problem to a top rope exercise using an adjacent pinnacle for an anchor for the lead.

On Wednesday July 26 we did a marathon hike out: 18 miles, 4300' gain, and 7100' loss. From Lake South America we traveled east to meet the John Muir Trail (JMT). We followed the JMT north over Forester Pass to Vidette Meadow. From Vidette Meadow we climbed up over Kearsarge Pass completing a loop and retracing our steps from five days previous. We arrived at Onion Valley beat.

TRIP REPORT

*Near sunset at Sixth Lake, Ed Cottone poured a few glubs of Captain Morgan's Spiced Rum into the sauté pan, swirled it and lit the rum with a match.*

*The flame danced for a few moments, keeping well below a pine branch. A ranger had pretended not to hear when we'd described the intended high point of our dinner plans.*

## Reclaiming the Good Life

By Ron Campbell

**Decadent Wilderness Weekend IV** drew eight people to a campsite beneath Clouddripper's southeast face in August. We took time to smell the wildflowers, to say nothing of the wine and artichoke hearts. We admired the peaks but didn't quite get around to summiting any because we wanted to return to the trailhead in time to buy ice cream.

All in all, it was an antidote to the traditional peak-bagger's weekend. And that was the whole point.

Every weekend from late April to late October, Angeles Chapter members rush to the Sierra to prove themselves by conquering peaks -- a curious phrase since the mountains neither surrender nor even acknowledge our brief presence.

One weekend every summer, a handful of nonconformists visit the mountains with an unapologetically sensuous agenda: to eat, drink and be merry in beautiful surroundings. And maybe, if time allows, climb a mountain.

We left the Glacier Lodge trailhead at a reasonably luxurious 8:30 a.m., visited the Lon Chaney cabin and slowly eased our ways past Lakes 1, 2, 3 and 4, reaching our campsite overlooking the south shore of Sixth Lake in mid-afternoon.

After Ed and I vainly tried to persuade the group to pick up camp and move across the outlet to an even better site, we settled down for serious business.

Out came a red-and-white checkered tablecloth, two brass candlesticks (heavy buggers) and two candles, only one of which stayed lit.

Pat Arredondo dug out appetizers: whole-wheat Tanoodri nan with two pesto dips -- artichoke-lemon and sun-dried tomatoes. Sal Palaez contributed smoked Gruyere. From my pack I produced Crimini mushrooms, marinating for the previous 36 hours in a 2-to-1 mix of olive oil and balsamic vinegar with a large garlic clove. Karla Reinhardt cooked couscous with cranberries.

Kay and Gary Novotny meanwhile fired up their oven and prepared their famed back-country pizza: a Boboli crust slathered with basil pesto, topped with artichoke hearts, Feta cheese, Portobello mushrooms and a two-cheese topping. It went quickly.

Ed and Priscilla Cottone volleyed with their own entrée: chicken fajitas with peppers and onions in toasted tortillas.

Our wine offerings were small but good, a boxed Sangria provided by Pat and a BV Coastal Merlot, tastefully served in a Platypus with a vintage label.

Last year's Gourmet Backpack dinner ended with Godiva ice cream and Kahlua. Ed and Priscilla were determined to top that this year. Ed lugged vanilla ice cream up the hill in a bag of melting ice; it was soft-serve consistency by dinner. Priscilla made a small but potentially important culinary discovery: If life or the grocery store gives you green bananas, put them in a bear canister for a day and they'll be perfectly ripe by dinner. They halved the bananas end-to-end and sautéed them in a mixture of brown sugar and margarine. After several minutes, when the bananas had softened, Ed added the rum, flambéed the sauce and cooked for perhaps a minute longer. They served the bananas and sauce over the ice cream.

At 6:30 the next morning, five of us set out for Clouddripper. Gary, who had spent three rain-drenched days the previous summer contemplating this climb, predicted it would take an hour to get from camp to the base of the peak. He was right. Not liking the look of the steep, 1,000-ft. scree slope ahead, I led the group to the right, toward talus. This brought us to the saddle at 9 a.m.

Ed and I had decided the previous day on an early turnaround time to ensure we made it back to the Glacier Lodge Store and its ice cream cooler before closing time at 6 p.m. We gamely set up the ridge toward the summit. But 9:45 a.m., our agreed turnaround time, found us 800 feet below the summit.

Which would it be: Ice cream or the peak?

With this group, the answer was obvious. At 5 p.m. I was licking a strawberry fruit bar.





IN HIGH PLACES

# MT. ETNA

SICILY, ITALY

by Burton “The Breath of Hades” Falk

So what do you really know about Mt. Etna, Sicily’s 10,991’ high point? If you’re like me – before I recently climbed it, that is – I knew it mostly from crossword puzzles, where it was usually described as a *European Erupter* or a *Sicilian Spouter*. I also recall seeing occasional CNN Headline News footage showing the volcano in action, usually at night, usually in the process of destroying some sort of mountain resort.

And as for Sicily, oh, sure, I’d seen “The Godfather,” and knew that the Mafia was entrenched on the island. I was also aware that many Europeans, northern Italians included, considered Sicilians to be backward and lacking in sophistication. Indeed, the island had never had much of a priority on my list of places I wanted to visit.

But isn’t it funny how grandchildren can change your perspective on just about anything?

The point is that during the summer of 2004, my wife Jo and I took our two oldest grandkids, Hayley and Nathan (14 and 12 at the time), to Japan, where, while making the grand tour, we also bagged Mt. Fuji. Having enjoyed that trip so much we hoped to do something similar during the summer of 2005, however we wanted to find a trip on which our youngest grandchild, Angela, who would be almost 10, could be included.

What we finally settled on was the Stanford Alumni Association’s “Aegean Family Adventure,” a two-week tour spent mostly on the 100-passenger Corinthian II, which, after making calls at several Aegean and Italian ports, ended up in Anzio, our base for a final day-long tour of Rome.

The following morning, August 2nd, Hayley, Nathan, Angela, Jo and I met our son, Steve, and our daughters-in-law, Nancy and Elisa, at Rome’s Leonardo da Vinci Airport, and, after renting a nine-passenger diesel Ford van, we departed for points south. Because it is my firm religious belief that no trip is worthwhile unless a mountain or two can be climbed, we were heading first for Mt. Vesuvius and then for Mt. Etna, both easily accessible, both perfect for three-generational family adventure.

And so—to finally get to the point—it turns out that the main reason that we were planning to visit low-priority Sicily was because of our grandkids.

Sicily is the largest island (9,985 sq. mi.) in the Mediterranean Sea, triangular in shape, and usually described as hilly and mountainous (83% of its total surface area is considered as such). Located just two miles off the coast of mainland Italy in a position sometimes depicted as a football being kicked by the Italian boot, the northern and eastern half of the island is thought to be an extension of the Calabrian Apennines, while the southern and western section is topographically similar to the Atlas Mountains of North Africa. Indeed, Sicily is situated at the juncture of two continental plates (the African and the Eurasian), and, similar to many such geological convergences, the island experiences a good deal of seismic activity, most of which is centered around Mt. Etna, located some twelve miles inland, about 1/3 of the way down the island’s eastern seacoast.

As for climate—no big surprise—Sicily’s is considered Mediterranean, i.e., it experiences hot, dry summers and mild winters with little rainfall. In spite of this benign depiction however, the island is subject to sirocco winds in the summer—dreary, unpleasant occurrences, when dust from the Sahara is carried far onto the island. During the short winters, December to February, the weather can turn bitterly cold, and skiers can be found hurtling down the slopes of Mt. Etna. Smog, too, has become an unwelcome presence on the island, especially in and around the large cities of Palermo and Catania.

Sicily’s first inhabitants probably arrived as early as 12,000

BC, although it wasn’t until 4,000-3,000 BC that organized settlements, in which basic skills such as the cultivation of crops and animal husbandry were employed, became evident.

And as travel on the Mediterranean became more commonplace, the history of the island, situated at the crossroads of major trade and invasion routes, grew increasingly complex. Indeed, not only did settlers begin arriving from Iberia, Anatolia, mainland Italy (e.g., the Sicilians from Calabria, for whom the island was named), and Phoenicia, but also, in 700-600 BC, from various city-states in Greece, the latter of whom established the important Hellenic cities of Syracuse and Agrigento.

The Romans gained control of the island circa 200 BC, but because the Sicilians had sided with Carthage against Rome in the first (264 BC -241 BC) and the second (213-211 BC) Punic Wars, the invaders treated the island badly. In 410 AD, the Vandals displaced the Romans; in 535 AD, the Byzantines pushed out the Vandals; in the mid 800s, the Saracens (a combined army of Arabs, Berbers and Spanish Muslims, who, although Islamic, practiced religious tolerance) arrived on the scene, and in 1040 the Normans invaded Sicily. If all that seems complicated, the island’s history gets even murkier beginning in the Middle Ages, when a seemingly endless line of European kingdoms lay claim to the title of Sicily.

Today, after more than two thousand years of control by others, the Sicilian psyche seems to have been permanently affected. Indeed, there are those who believe that the islanders, though now citizens of a unified Italy, consider themselves to be living through yet another occupation. This feeling of subjugation may also explain, at least in part, why the home grown Mafia has become such an integral part of Sicilian life.

On a positive note, thanks to the various invaders, Sicily’s cuisine has become a melting pot of fascinating foods and flavors. For instance, there’s a definite Arab influence in the Sicilians’ use of spices and couscous; a Greek bent in their regards toward olive oil and wine; the Romans contributed wheat thus pasta; and the Spanish can take credit for the wide variety of tasty fish preparations that the islanders now employ.

On the afternoon of August 5th, following three busy days spent visiting Pompeii, the Amalfi Coast and climbing Mt. Vesuvius, we nosed our big van into the ferry staging area in Villa San Giovanni, at the toe of Italy’s boot, and thirty-five minutes later, having crossed the Straits of Messina, we drove onto Sicilian soil, and continued 45 minutes south on the multi-tunneled (thirty-five, according to the grandkids, who were keeping count) coastal Highway A18, until we arrived at Taormina, considered by many to be Sicily’s most beautiful town.

Because this is a climbing journal, I’ll forego a full-blown description of Taormina, only to comment that the town, clinging spectacularly to a mountain side, is exceedingly picturesque, has many upscale restaurants and boutiques, and, on pleasant summer evenings, large crowds—including many strikingly beautiful women—can be found promenading up and down its main

street (which is closed to traffic). Taormina also possesses a fine Greek amphitheater, still in use today, which was thoughtfully positioned so that attendees can enjoy the play (or concert, or opera), while gaping at—behind the performers, across the bay—the view of Mt. Etna, breath-taking in its towering majesty.

In addition to being blessed with a spectacular profile, Mt. Etna is also one of the world’s most active volcanoes. Indeed, the area surrounding the peak is littered with volcanic debris that has been spewed forth during hundreds of eruptions, including major events in 475 BC, 1169 AD, 1329 AD and 1381 AD, during which lava flowed all the way down to the sea. In 1669 AD, a 122-day event destroyed a good part of the nearby city of Catania, while more recent eruptions have destroyed a summit observatory (1971), razed a cable car facility and a tourist center (1983), killed two and injured ten (1987), and in 1992 would have engulfed the town of Zafferana had it not been for the Italian Air Force, which dropped concrete blocks in the lava’s path. In 2001 and 2002, additional eruptions damaged the topmost stations of the cable car installation.

The Greeks believed Etna was the forge of the god Vulcan—perhaps the reason why Plato, in 387 BC, sailed in to get a glimpse of the fabled mountain. In 433 BC, Empedocles, an Agrigento-born scientist, decided to test his theory that the gases emanating from Etna’s craters were semi-solid, thus strong enough to support the weight of a human. To prove his hypothesis he threw himself into the crater, and, as you can imagine, that was the end of poor old Empedocles. Undoubtedly though, the mountain’s most significant historical event occurred in the 9th century, when the world’s earliest known gelato was shaved off Etna’s summit.

On the morning of August 6th, our family piled into our commodious van and we set off to bag the legendary erupter. Driving a few clicks south of Taormina on highway A 18, we then turned inland and began to climb the southern slope of Mt. Etna via the town of Zafferana. While ascending the winding road, my daughter-in-law, Nancy, our self-appointed family safety officer, read aloud from an article she had pulled off the internet entitled “Is it Safe to Climb Etna?” The answer, in spite of recent fatalities due to asphyxiation, was inconclusive. Hmm.

Arriving at the 6,270’ Sapienza Refuge well before 10 a.m., we

(continued next page)



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discovered that the guided tour for that hour had already been sold out, and so, to kill time until the 11 o'clock tour—the last of the day—we browsed through the half dozen or so cafes and souvenir shops at the popular tourist destination (indeed, several sight-seeing buses pulled into the adjoining parking lot while we were waiting).

At 11 a.m., after paying 60 Euros each (50 for kids) for the tour, our group, which had grown to twenty in number, boarded cable cars on which we were whisked up to the 8,200' Funivia Terminal. From there we climbed into small 4WD buses which carried us up a dusty road, snaking through stark volcanic terrain, to a newly constructed guide hut on the south side of the mountain at 9,580' in elevation.

Stepping off the bus, I immediately began to cough, or, more precisely, to hack. In fact, everyone did. Something in the air was irritating our throats, but whatever it was wasn't obvious as there was no visible smoke and only the faintest of odors. Very curious, indeed.

Our guide assembled the group, explained a few safety rules in both Italian and English, and then we started off cross-country, circling clock-wise up the western slope, heading toward the highest crater. Trudging through loose pumice for the first few minutes, we then arrived at a use trail which, even though the incline increased, made the hiking easier.

As we gained altitude the wind increased, the temperature dropped and soon we were digging in our packs for warmer clothing. Gazing to the west, the island's sere, undulating landscape stretched off until it finally disappeared into the mid-summer haze.

About 45 minutes into the climb, we spotted a plume of steam arising on the ridge toward which we were heading.

Gaining the ridge a few minutes later, we discovered that the steam was being emitted from a large fumarole, and that, in fact, it was those very vapors which were making us hack. The smell was sulfurous—not the rotten egg scent of hydrogen sulfide, but rather the sharp, acrid odor of burning sulfur.

Pausing a few moments while our guide surveyed the scene, we then began climbing again until we reached the very edge of the highest crater. Our guide explained we were fortunate to get so close, as even earlier that same morning it had been deemed too dangerous to go so far. Across the smoke-filled crater, a quarter of a mile away, we could make out the outline of Etna's very highest summit, a tooth-shaped mound, which, because of its steep sides and the fact it was bathed in toxic fumes, was not even remotely climbable.

After taking the requisite photos, we began circling clockwise around the central crater – and it was while doing so that we were struck with a full blast of the noxious gases pouring out of the crater.

I've climbed several active volcanoes before – Chimborazo, Tungurahua, Popocatepetl, Manua Loa – but this was a whole different ballgame. The acrid white and yellow fumes etched

into our sinuses, caused our eyes to water so torrentially that we couldn't see where we were stepping, made our throats burn so harshly that our windpipes seized up.

Some took tiny gulps of air, trying hard not to breathe in too deeply. Others held clothing over their mouths and noses as filters. Noticing that the vapor-shrouded trail continued for several hundred yards, Nancy (you remember—our family safety officer?) asked—no, make that demanded—that the guide take us back down the way we had come. The guide refused, however, claiming that the winds had shifted and that the route up was no longer safe. Instead, he told us to head quickly for a spot on the edge of the crater about 50 yards away, where the breeze would blow the fumes away.

So, even though we were almost at 11,000' in elevation, we sprinted in what seemed as a race for our lives. In family lore, this anoxic dash has become known as the Fifty-Yard Gasp.

Thankfully, our guide was correct, because when we did reach the spot he had indicated we could breathe easier. It had, however, been a daunting experience, quite more than enough to make me reconsider my belief that there's no such thing as Satan, hell or fire and brimstone. Indeed, what we had been subjected to was the very breath of Hades.

After regaining our collective composure and taking a few final summit photos, we started to descend the steep southern side of the crater. Because the slope consisted of loose cinders, those of us who had experience with that sort of stuff were soon post-holing down in an easy, slow trot. About half way down, however, hearing someone approaching rapidly from behind, I turned around just in time to see a woman from our group come somersaulting past me. As I watched her tumble on down, she somehow managed to stop rolling head over heels, however, unable to halt, she continued to roll on down like a log. Fortunately, there were no large, hard objects in her path, and so, although she was covered from head to toe in volcanic dust when she finally did come to the bottom of the slope, she sustained only minor cuts and contusions. It occurred to me that an excursion of this nature would be impossible were Etna located in the U.S. In our litigious culture, the guides' sox, plus everything else they owned, would have been sued off long ago.

We eventually got back to the guide shack, took a short break, and then continued down once more, partially circumambulating a crater formed in a 2002-2003 eruption, an occurrence during which an earlier guide shack was almost completely buried beneath

ash and cinders. We reached the top cable car station at little after 4 p.m., rode it down, and, about 4:30 p.m., got back to our van—the end of an exciting Mt. Etna adventure.

Two days later, in Palermo, Sicily's capital, Jo and I bid farewell to our family, all of whom had to return to California for jobs, summer camps, etc., the sort of activities with which we retirees are no longer concerned. Jo and I, however, planned to stay on in Italy for two more weeks, visiting two more islands and climbing two more peaks. Stay tuned for our adventures on Stromboli and Sardinia.

## ODDS & ENDS

1. Guides are mandatory for hikes to the top of Etna.
2. Bring your own dust masks; they should be considered essential.
3. Get an early start; the excursion takes longer than you may expect.

## TRIP REPORT

# Spanish Mountain & Tehipite Dome

## A Cross Country Approach

OCTOBER 27–28, 2006

by NILE SORENSON

**M**y friend Doug Mantle and I knew the end of the climbing year in the Sierra was closing but we figured we could squeeze in a couple more peaks. We started hiking at the Crown Valley Trailhead. Our objective was to climb Spanish Mountain the first day, then camp somewhere near Crown creek. On day 2 we would climb Tehipite dome and come out--A lot of mileage (35?) with lots of up and down for this late in the year with the shortened days.

As the trail goes east from the trailhead, we stayed to the right toward Statem Meadow. The trail continues toward Spanish Meadow and passes just to the north of Spanish Lake. A trail junction is reached between two lakes at 8632 ft. These lakes are located about three quarters of a mile east of Spanish Lake. The easternmost of these two lakes is no longer a lake, but a grassy marsh.

At the junction we dropped our packs to climb Spanish Mountain and followed a use trail that starts heading east. It soon turns south and heads up the gully to a saddle just north of Geraldine lakes. From the saddle, it is class one to the summit of Spanish Mountain. We returned to the packs at the twin lakes.

Our intention was to camp somewhere east of crown creek, so we needed to go to Crown Valley. The map shows a trail heading northeast from Lake 8632 toward the crown valley trail just west of crown valley station. This trail is not maintained and is very difficult to follow due to the downed timber. We had to use a compass to stay on a heading to meet up with the crown valley trail.

Back on the Crown Valley trail, we headed east. This is a good trail all the way to Crown Creek which was easy to cross this time of year. After crossing Crown Creek, the trail (now called

the Blue Canyon Trail) is not maintained and has a lot of downed timber and becomes very faint in places. We found several areas to camp on the slopes east of crown creek near the park boundary at 7200 ft. Two of the streams east of crown creek still had a little bit of water even in the end of October. Make sure and set your altimeter to this known elevation. You will need it later.

The next day we were up early and headed for Tehipite dome along the trail going east toward Blue Canyon. Recheck your altimeter before you leave camp. Some write ups suggest climbing to 8600 ft. before leaving the Blue Canyon trail for cross country travel south along the ridge down toward Tehipite dome at 7700 ft. We found an easier method. Here is where your compass and altimeter come in.

Leave the trail at 7850 ft. (approximately UTM 410890) and head south going through the saddle just east of peak 7877. Note—you leave the trail before it crests the ridge. Traverse at 7850 feet as you cross the ridge, and then start a gradual, traversing, descent toward the creek that divides peak 7877 and peak 8401. Time your descent so you will reach the creek at 7650 feet. Never go below 7650 feet. Once you have reached the creek at 7650 ft., gradually ascend as you continue to traverse toward a tiny knoll at UTM 417885 and 7760ft. From near the knoll, stay at 7700 feet until you reach the ridge which heads south-southwest toward the dome. Once on the ridge, follow it south to the dome. Make sure and keep track of the route so you can go back the same way. This is a rather easy traverse, never losing more than 200 feet in elevation. It saves climbing clear up to 8600 on the way in and then back up to 8600 feet on the way out. We even found some game trails with no bush whacking.

By the way, the climb up the dome is listed as class 3. Yes, it is a class 3 move on a slab, but there is major exposure at this spot. A slip will mean almost certain death, so if you are a little uneasy with exposure take a small rope.

Tehipite dome offers a spectacular view of the Middle fork of the Kings River and the Gorge of Despair (aptly named by its appearance). Tehipite dome is a huge dome that you never notice until you are on it or beside it. We followed the same route back to the trail traversing through the same creek and back up to 7850 ft. and rejoined the Blue Canyon trail.

The next 7 hours took us to the cars just before dark. A great fall trip.

## Up For a Dayhike to a Northern Sierra Peak?

from Daryn Dodge, SPS Northern California Representative

Because I am within a few hours of most of the northern Sierra peaks on the SPS list (2 most northern sections), I would enjoy dayhiking any of these peaks as a private trip with SPS members that would like a hiking partner for the day. Weekends work best for me and I can possibly make arrangements on fairly short notice. Just call me up (530-753-1095) to set a day for the climb. Since it may be too late this year to do much peak climbing in the northern Sierras, keep me in mind for next year.

I would also enjoy dayhiking other nearby northern Sierra peaks including, Matterhorn, Whorl, Twin Peaks, and Virginia and perhaps a few others. However, these peaks will require a faster pace to reach in a day.

I have dayhiked all these northern peaks, so I am familiar with at least one route (usually the easiest) on each of them.





# The Sierra Echo

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*Deadline for all submissions is three (3) weeks prior to the publication date.*

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**ADDRESS CHANGES** Send address changes to the Secretary Alex Amies, 192 Woodbury, Irvine, CA 92620-0296; email [alexamies@yahoo.com](mailto:alexamies@yahoo.com). The Echo is mailed via 3rd class mail to all regular subscribers and will not be forwarded by the post office.

**PEAKS LIST** Copies of the SPS Peaks List can be obtained by sending \$1 and a SASE to the section Treasurer Henry Arnebold, 2459 Escalante, La Verne, CA 91750.

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**AWARDS** Send notification of accomplishments to the Secretary Alex Amies, 192 Woodbury, Irvine, CA 92620-0296; email [alexamies@yahoo.com](mailto:alexamies@yahoo.com). Awards merchandise is available through Patty Kline, 20362 Callon Drive, Topanga Canyon, CA 90290 and include Emblem pins (\$15), Senior Emblem pins (\$15), Master Emblem pins (\$15), List Finisher pins (\$15) and SPS section patches (\$2). **Make all checks payable to SPS.** All prices include sales tax,



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