

SEVEN PLUS SEVEN

Games People Play NOT

by Doug Mantle

The “Seven Summits”, thanks to Dick Bass and thirty years of hype is a rather well known mountaineers game. In the midst of finishing off that, fifteen years ago I was sent a blob of stuff about that, and appended were even stranger sounding games: “The Three Poles”, “The Nine Poles”, “The Second Highest Seven Summits”, and buried deep in there somewhere, confusingly, was something about “Seven + Seven”.

A German (naturally), Gerhard Schmatz, had conceived and executed this: the highest points of the seven continents, followed by the seven high points of the seven next biggest land masses...the seven islands. This would be: 1.) Mt. Kinabalu (Borneo) 4101 m; 2.) Carstensz/Puncak Jaya (New Guinea) 4884 m; 3.) Gunnbjorn Fjeld (Greenland) 3693 m; 4.) Mt. Odin (Baffin) 2147 m; 5.) Kerenji (Sumatra) 3801 m; 6.) Maromokotro (Madagascar) 2876 m; 7.) Mt. Fujisan (Honshu Island, Japan) 3776 m.

Through 2005 Schmatz remained alone in finishing this off, which he did in 1982. One source tells me that at his age (b. June 1929), he doesn't even much remember it.

This whole project sounded (and perhaps is), well, silly, I am no island bagger, I don't even like islands, hey, I (forgive me) don't even read Burton Falk's adventures.

So, I simply noted the information; of more interest was Junko Tabei's quest to climb in every country in the world...she was up to 45 countries (hear that, Edna?). Nevertheless, in doing Carstensz in 1994 for the Seven Summit game, I

had one down already, no, two – in 1993 although we failed that year on Carstensz, I had made a side trip to Sarawak (on - - - Borneo!) and followed a mass of pilgrims to the summit of Mt. Kinabalu. Hmmm. Two.

Right after Carstensz a friend, David Keaton, tried to interest me in an arctic adventure. It seems a guide we'd met in New Guinea, Skip Horner, was leading a ski trip to several of the highest mountains in Greenland. They'd spend a few days in Iceland, then fly over and on to the Greenland ice cap, a two week trip.

I swear the appeal, which grew over the next few months, was the remoteness, the fact of doing a very different type of expedition, the fact that these would be second and third ascents. The “island” factor didn't much occur to me.

Skip Horner, who is based in Deaf Smith, Montana, continues to run this trip along with an always eclectic mix of other climbs and river trips, annually.

We did that trip then, in May of 1995, including seven thoroughly sunny days with the three peaks on the Greenland ice. For the record, it included number three.

I then settled, convincingly, into Seven + Seven disinterest. There was this South America game... (perhaps more of that another time).

Arrives 2003. My guide/friend in Banff, Grant Statham, had done an exciting trip to Baffin Island which he related to me with enough enthusiasm to, well after a couple of years, have me plumping for a similar trip.

I was smart enough to insist that we do, besides the goals Mts. Asgard and Thor (we failed on both), the high point of the island, whatever it was. Baffin, of course, is one of THE islands.

Older references called Tete Blanche the high point, but the Canadian GS folks and several recent articles say that Mt. Odin wins, 7,044 ft. to 6903 ft. Should you hear anything to the contrary, never, NEVER mention it to me.

We were supposed to fly commercially to Iqualit then on to Pangnirtung (or was it Pangnirtung, then on to Iqualit?) then hire local Inuits to take us on their power skis, sliding us to the start of the trek. We then would drag our own sleds over the ice to each objective, camping next to (in, as it turned out) the several huts available for those preferring to avoid being polar bear fodder.

Unseasonable warmth had melted our ice, so we staggered along with eighty pound packs, not my forte.

The first objective was Odin itself, a 5,000 ft. crampon slope, which left our thighs burning for a full week, followed by several pitches of low 5th class, to the eerie, flat, snow covered summit. There is no more success to report on for that whole trip...but I now had done number four and, while not frothing at the mouth, I was definitely interested.

Sumatra, of course, was hammered by the big tsunami in December '04. I spent my last day there walking along the waterfront, this, late October 2004, in Padang, which was later to be wiped out.

For me, though, climbing Kerenji was a pretty smooth operation. There are several Indonesian guide companies on the Internet, most offering various volcano climbs. I picked one, flew to Singapore, then on to Sumatra to Padang where I was met and driven about, ultimately getting to the village next to the peak, amidst the tea plantations.

There we met the local expert. He led up one half day, 4,000 feet of gain, through the rain forest to an

open area where we pitched tents and hung tarps.

Hung tarps? Well, there was no water at camp, but on schedule, a torrential rain beat down, providing us our soup water.

Predictably, I was told, by the next morning at 3:00 a.m. when we rose, skies were clear. We squished up the muddy track, dragging ourselves over roots, and arrived above forest line by dawn near to the easy summit, arriving by 8:00 a.m. to view the smoke which bellows up from the impressive volcano crater.

I had five, I was fully invested. However, it looked like the jig was up.

I bought three Madagascar guide books, wrote to a "Madagascar Specialist" travel company, contacted a number of other sources.

All I found was one discouraging quote to the effect that "even scientific expeditions are not likely to get a permit to attempt the hot, trail-less approach".

I rather gave up, so much so that I did a consolation prize trip to South Africa and the Drackensbergs in 2005, with some hope somebody there would know an avenue, as South Africa isn't far, as the pelican flies, to Madagascar.

This turned out to be like going to Florida to find a Galapagos company. No luck.

Then came the unlikely breakthrough, November 2005.

I had used a super-luxury company to set up the South Africa trip to pamper my sorrows, Absolute Travel.

They know nothing about mountains. What they do have is a network of local operators, including some in various African countries who arrange very touristy "sampler" trips. I noticed they had such an arrangement in Madagascar, they offered trips to the capital and a few seaside lodges.

Without much hope, I e-mailed Absolute to check about a trip including Maromokotro.

To my astonishment, it seems (it's a convoluted story) the local company in Madagascar was recently made aware of a certain emigré Frenchman who had traversed the mountain a dozen years earlier, and it seems three young ex-patriot Frenchmen who had never climbed a peak but had taken up adventure travel, notably a trek through the Ruwenzori, had somehow decided their next adventure would be to Maromokotro; inconceivably this local emigré had been roused and, discouraging them all along ("it's very long, hard, trail-less, etc.") he finally agreed to recruit a local team to lead them (no, HE was not about to do this again) over Christmas/New Years.

It seems Absolute Travel talked to their people at just the right moment and, bingo, I was told, "Oh yes, a trip leaves in three weeks".

Little did I know that Jaime Vinals of Guatemala was inquiring directly to the Frenchman at the same time. He had tried to arrange this years earlier, the Frenchman had offered to organize it, but it was far too expensive for one. Jaime was in for the trip too.

This leads to the low point in my quest (which by now I was feeling confident about to the point that I figured I would be the second in the world to do this game), which came when I entered the Antananarivo airport the morning we were all to meet and fly to Diego Suarez to begin our trip. I noted three pale Europeans, perched in front of them was a fireplug of a mountain man, Jaime, announcing, "Yes, this will be number seven, I will be the second person in the world..."

Ten days later, as the three French bailed out amidst a daily routine of intense heat, many miles of hiking, rice and rice only for food, it was ONLY because Jaime decided to continue ("I have sponsors...how can I tell them I got tired and came back?") that, on second thought, I would go on too.

We swam rivers, ate mangos and bananas right off

of trees (apologies to Oscar Hammerstein), we saw villagers who had never seen Europeans....the frankly crummy peak was the least of it. Being served lemur soup was an experience we insisted we not repeat.

In short, we did it, it was the local villagers (the anthropologists tell us they are descended from Polynesians, not Africans) who had been sent a month before to start hacking out a route who brought us through.

I'll add that the worst beating my heart ever suffered was that last trekking day. Our pre-stored raft had been eaten by rats, we managed to finally get to a village where the broken down bus, well, broke down; an illegal car was uncovered, the owner bribed, only to bring us repeatedly to mud lakes which the car miraculously navigated, yes, there was a high-speed speedboat ride with a surprise diversion to the wrong island, finally the taxi that had no gas...we arrived less than one-half hour before the weekly flight back to the capital, meeting the three French who all wanted their money back.

Nobody ever hated a trip more than I was hating this one. In retrospect, it was my best adventure.

A Cesarean procession (okay, Mac, a Roman triumph) had nothing on me as I strode up Mt. Fuji. Throwing gobs of money at Absolute Travel in May 2006, I stayed at a Four Seasons Hotel in Tokyo, was driven to the mountains by my personal naturalist guide, where we added my own mountain guide "for safety". We proceeded to the halfway station/hut which was just opened for the season, we were thus the only guests. The next morning we thought we were the only ones climbing the mountain until we reached the summit where we joined three others...engineers from Montana who were in Tokyo working for the season.

So, "the game is done, I've won, I've won, quoth she and whistles thrice" to signify I'm only the third, I guess.

By the way, Ben Nevis (Great Britain) would be number eight and I already have it...

THE NEEDLES ET AL. In GIANT Sequoia National Park

Atop Dome Rock with The Needles in the background: Four of the SPSes 18 founding members: Roger Gaefcke, Barbara Lilley, Frank Bressel and John Robinson.



by Jerry Keating

Terrain in the southern part of Giant Sequoia National Monument is visited infrequently these days by SPSers, but it once was explored by the section on a scheduled backpack. The objective

Atop Dome Rock most of the group is shown. Gordon MacLeod is partially shown in the left background. Front row: Barbara Lilley (far left). Joanna Bressel (with dog Shadow) and Frank Bressel (far right). Back row: Rich Gnagy (second from left), Dave Jenkins, Roger Gaefcke and Fred Johnson. John Robinson (center in green) and Ret Moore (also wearing a hat). Mary Sue Miller (far right in green). She was the SPS Chair in 1986. 13 of the individuals on the trip (including Dave Jenkins) have been or are SPS members. SPSers not in the picture are Bruno Geiger, who was standing nearby, and me.



on that October 1959 backpack was The Needles (8254'), and this collection of granite spires was among the features climbed again in late summer 2007 on a trip tailored for "old-timers" and newcomers. Twenty-five persons took part in the 2007 trip, based at Quaking Aspen Campground, and three of them recalled being on the 1959 backpack, which culminated in a 3,000-foot

cross-country gain to reach the peak plus 14 miles round trip of backpacking.

Most impressive in 2007 was the participation of four founding members of the SPS: Frank Bressel, Roger Gaefcke, Barbara Lilley and John Robinson. The four shared their recollections of the section's early days

during the two nights of extended campfire time. Robinson was among those on the 1959 backpack mentioned above and was on an extremely strenuous climb of Angora Mtn. that occurred in April 1956 shortly before the section's first officially scheduled trip. Helpful peak writeups and maps were not common during the 1950s, making climbs in this area a challenge.

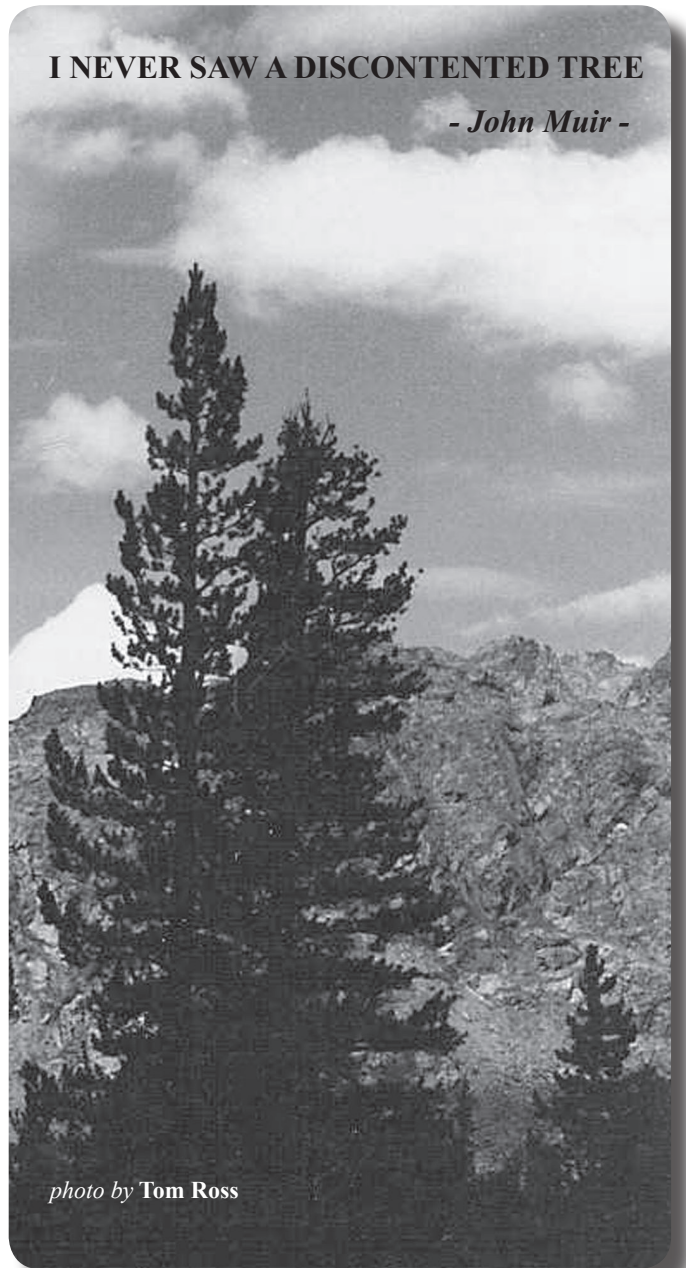
Today's approach to The Needles is simple: first, a three-mile forest road (21S05) off the Western Divide Highway; then, a two-mile trail with 1,200 feet of gain. The final part of the climb is on airy catwalks leading to a lookout perched on the highest pinnacle. That exercise took place Saturday morning with 20 persons involved. A hike up Jordan Peak was offered in the afternoon, and a somewhat different mix of 20 persons took part. To reach Jordan Peak, the group drove 7.3 miles on a forest road (21S50) that was surfaced for a ways but then graded. The drive concluded with 1.3 miles of a graded spur road (20S71). The hike to the summit was in a heavy forest of red firs and involved 1.6 miles round trip with 500 feet of gain.

Sunday's first objective was Dome Rock (7221'), which was accessed by a 0.6-mile graded forest road (21S69) off the Western Divide Highway. Twenty-two persons joined in the short stroll to the top of this massive dome to savor a fine view of The Needles and the Kern Plateau. Topping off the official trip, 16 participants drove farther south on the Western Divide Highway and followed a graded forest road (22S03) 4.4 miles to the start of a 1.5-mile round climb of Mule Peak (8142') with 550 feet of gain. The lookout atop the peak was staffed, but the normally exceptional panorama was compromised by wildfire smoke originating far to the north.

Besides the founding members, participants with long-time connections with the SPS included Rich Gnagy of Sacramento, Joanna Bressel of Shaver Lake, Frederick Johnson of Berkeley, Mary Sue Miller of Tulsa, Okla., and Ret Moore of Fullerton. Joanna Bressel dates her climbing history back to the "outlaw" days preceding the SPS's formation in 1955. Moore got serious about climbing even earlier

and accompanied Norman Clyde on a June 1943 climb of North Palisade. Johnson started even before that. As a boy, he climbed with Chester Versteeg and Niles Werner on an April 1942 Sierra Club trip to Waucoba. And in a show of ongoing enthusiasm for hiking, Johnson and Dave Jenkins of Sonora arrived a day early for the 2007 trip and climbed Slate Mtn. (9302') via the Summit Trail from Quaking Aspen, a 10+-mile round trip with some 2,300 feet of gain.

Trip leaders were Gordon MacLeod, B. Lilley and Jerry Keating.



TRIP REPORT
June 2-3, 2007

Mt. Dade (13,600)

Community on the Hourglass

Two Climbers on the Couloir

by Steve Curry

Saturday June 2, 2007 10 participants gathered at Mosquito Flats Trailhead to climb the Hourglass Couloir on an ascent of Mt. Dade 13,600'. Danielle Carlin, Dave Chapman, Steve Curry (leader and scribe), Roberto DeCandia, Catherine Dunn, Greg Johnson, Louis Kwan, Doug Owens, Doan Trang and Asher Waxman (assistant leader) met at 9 a.m. and after introductions and sign-in we departed for the Treasure Lakes area below Mt. Dade.

The weather was sunny and mild with temperature in the 70's. The trail was snow free and the snow covered mountains and valleys above the lakes were beautiful and inviting to the photographers in the group.

At Long Lake (10,600') we departed the trail and began the x-country portion of our approach to Treasure Lakes. Ascending a talus filled gully with full backpacks isn't everyone's idea of fun but after a break for lunch we topped out at Treasure Lakes and found campsites.



Louis Kwan and Roberto De Candia.

Treasure Lakes has minimal good campsites. I counted 5 flat tent-sized areas. We established 2 camps within 150 feet of each other with the party split equally between the two sites. There was only one other campsite occupied at the lakes while we were there.

After settling into our campsites we were up again and onto the snow slopes above Treasure Lakes to practice our ice ax and crampon technique and to scout the approach to the Hourglass Couloir for the following morning. This filled the afternoon and returning to camp found everyone ready for happy hour.



Summit photo: Roberto De Candia, Gregory Johnson, Danielle Carlin, Dave Chapman, Steve Curry, Asher Waxman, Doug Owens, Catherine Dunn and Doan-Trang Tran. Photographer: Louis Kwan.

Happy hour was a garbage salad with everyone contributing something to the mix—apples, sunflower seeds, cucumbers, tomatoes, croutons, cheeses and for dessert chocolate covered figs and cookies. Some cooked up meals and Trang shared a delicious Oolong tea. Everyone retired to their camps and a good night's rest after agreeing upon a 5:30 a.m. start for the following morning. Temperature was moderately in the 40's and a full moon made the early morning call of nature illuminating.

6 a.m. found us moving around the upper lake to access the approach to the Hourglass couloir. The sun greeted us as we began our ascent. Interestingly, we had one incident of rockfall while in the couloir. It passed the leader within 20 feet and was called out by the second in line. There's nothing like a melon sized boulder whizzing past you at tremendous speed to make you appreciate an alert party. We exited the hourglass onto talus about 100 feet below the actual saddle at the top of the couloir and scrambled to the saddle and left our extraneous equipment for the climb of Mt Dade. The climb of the couloir took us about 2 hours. By 10:00 a.m. we were all celebrating being

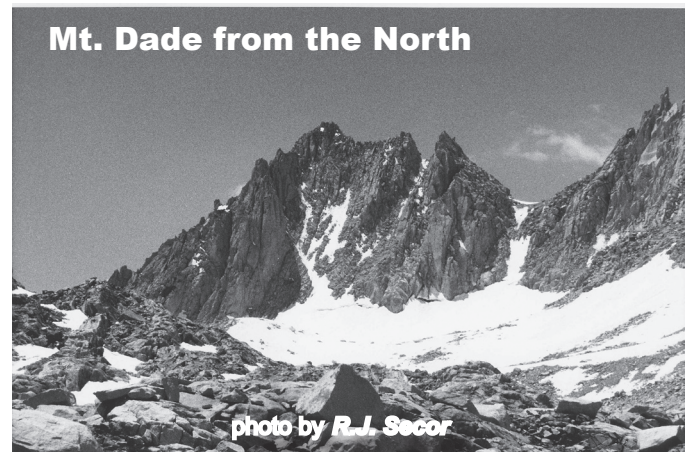
on the summit of Mt. Dade, 13,600'. The day was warm with blue sky and a light breeze. Many photos ensued, sharing treats and signing the register. Ours was approximately the fourth party on the summit for 2007.

We departed the summit about 11:00 a.m. and after boulder hopping and scree skiing our way to the saddle, we regrouped and began the descent of the couloir. Plunge steps and glissades brought us back to the base of the couloir and a small elevation gain placed us on the arete north of Treasure Lakes and just above our camps. A scree descent put us into camp

around 12:30 p.m. We de-camped and hiked out arriving at the trailhead around 4:30 p.m. Mosquito Flats is aptly named. The mozzies were out in force. After a celebratory dinner at Tom's Place it was time to depart for our respective destinations.

Memories of a great weekend outing are a wonderful reward for the efforts expended. Thanks everyone for a great trip!

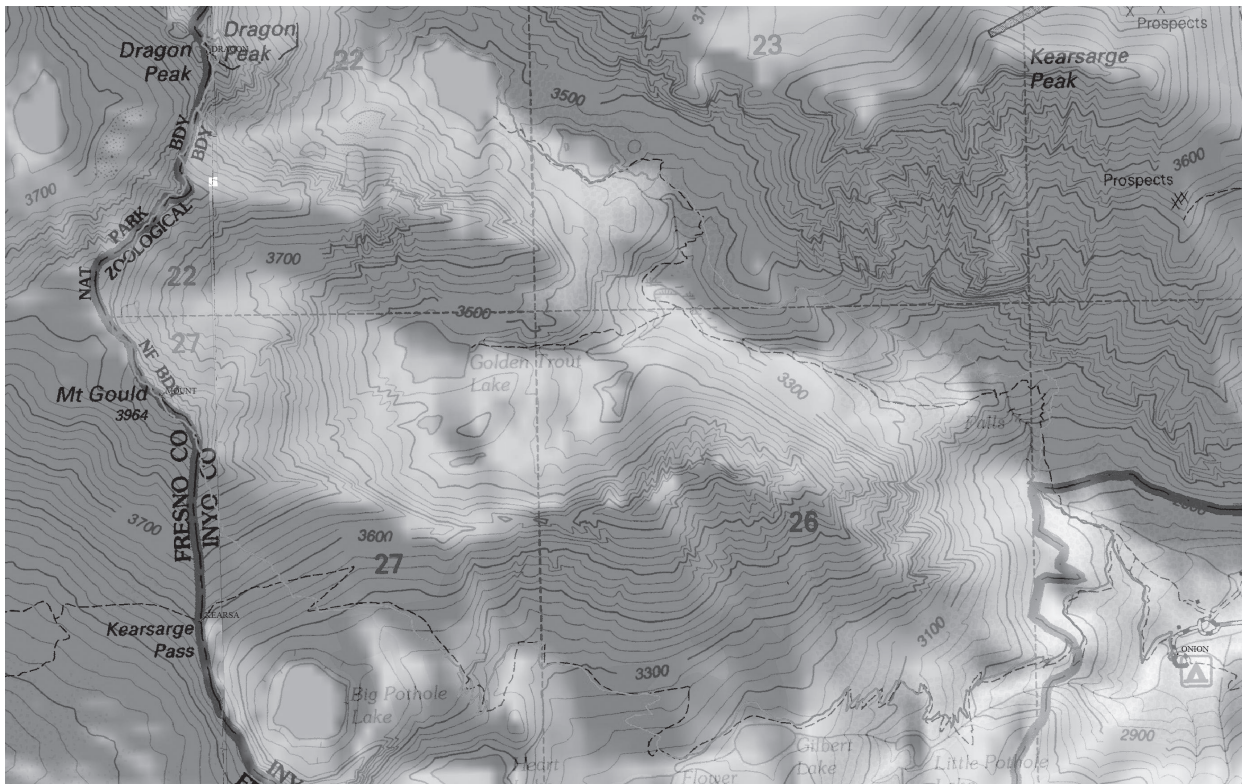
Stats: 10.6 miles rt
3300' gain



Mt. Dade from the North

photo by R. J. Secor

Dragon Peak to Mount Gould Traverse



Dragon Peak - Elevation 12,995 ft
Mount Gould - Elevation 13,005 ft

Date Climbed/Hiked: Jun 16, 2007

Round Trip Mileage: 9.8 miles
Round Trip Gross Elevation Gain: 4700 ft

Approach

Saturday, June 16th at 7:00 AM I start out solo for Dragon Peak from Onion Valley Trailhead. My plans are not set in stone. I may hike only Dragon Peak, or possibly Dragon and Kearsarge Peak. This is my first solo hike of mountain via a route classified harder than class 1 and I am not even sure that I will make it to the top of Dragon Peak, especially if I run into snow. I start off on the main trail leading to Kearsarge

pass from Onion Valley. After a short distance, I take the marked trail to the north heading towards Golden Trout Lake. One of the beautiful waterfalls in the area comes into view and soon I am hiking up a very steep, sandy trail along its north side. The top of the waterfall consists

TRIP REPORT by *Travis Lind*



Lake below Dragon Peak

of a large boulder field and I absentmindedly loose the trail. I figure I will hook up with it

by angling to the west and am not concerned. After a while I still have not found the trail so I consult my map and determine that the trail actually crossed the creek at the top of the waterfall and now I am on the wrong side. The hiking is easy without the trail so I continue along my cross country route rather than trying to find a way to cross the creek and find the trail. Now I find myself having to climb a talus slope and gaining elevation above the creek. I am stubborn, and am not willing to give up any of my elevation gain so I continue on my cross country route. I end up having to lose some elevation and rejoin the trail as it climbs next to the second waterfall. I figure my cross country route added some elevation but cut some mileage. Once on the trail I make a mental note that when hiking alone I should stay on the trail. The talus slopes were not difficult, but shifting rocks could trap my leg and break a bone and no one would know where to find me (I told my campmates simply that I was hiking Dragon and probably Gould).

Ascending to Ridge

On top of the second waterfall is a pristine meadow with some of the clearest water meandering through it. The high alpine meadows really appeal to me and my mood starts to elevate. I am getting into the groove of the hike and nature is flowing through me. Clearing out all the crap and replacing it with sim-

ple, natural beauty. I go around the first no name lake on the south side and the second on the north. As I start climbing the scree/talus slope towards Dragon Peak I realize that the route to the north of the peak that I assumed was the way to get to the summit is definitely not the right one. There is a large vertical face of rock between the ridge and the summit. This makes me realize that I did not do enough research, but it is now clear that the only possible route is from the south gully. I have to lose some elevation again to get on the correct route, which is in a southwest direction. The slog up the slope is tough, mainly scree and talus and I had to avoid some snow patches. I start to feel the elevation's effect on me just over 12,000 ft and slow a little. As I get closer to the crux of the route near the summit I find an easier looking narrow chute heading north west towards the summit. After one short section that I figure might be class 4 I am up on the ridge and have an amazing view over to the west of Rae lakes still covered with ice.

Ridge Traverse to Dragon Peak

Now starts my ridge traverse and the



Chute leading to Summit Ridge

testing of my resolve. The ridge is intimidating. There is significant exposure and many obstacles that I must traverse around as I make my way to what I figure is the summit. I look at my map and read the note that I wrote stating that the east peak is a false peak (beta from Becht). Well, I cross many false peaks and see what I figure must be the summit proper. After some tricky ridge work I am on top of this peak only to realize that the one to the west is taller – duh, this is the one Becht warned me about. Now my courage is tested to its limit. The route to the true summit looks very intimidating. Extreme exposure and some subpeaks that look very difficult to traverse around. For a moment I thought I could call this

Dragon Peak



Traverse to Mount Gould

I have not decided if I am going to go back the way I came or traverse the ridge south to Mount Gould. I make my way back to the point I joined the ridge to weigh my options. The route down what I ascended does not look fun, I remember some more beta from Becht that the slope down from Mount Gould is easy scree, so I decide to go on to Mount Gould. The traverse to Mount Gould is fairly straightforward. I was able to keep most of the way at class 2 by carefully choosing my route while trying to avoid extra elevation gain. In a short distance (approx. 1 mile) I am on Mount Gould. This time I summit the correct peak and find the register. Someone else had been on the summit earlier that morning. They wrote a note saying, “Jen, I wish you were here”. I had been thinking a lot about my wife (Jenn) and daughter throughout this trip and also entered “Jenn, I wish you were here” in the logbook. I always miss my family most while in the mountains alone, and I decide at this point that I am going to try to cut my hike tomorrow short to get home in time for Father’s Day dinner.

false summit the actual summit and say I summited. But there is no way I could not at least try the true summit, I didn’t come all this way to give up right at the end. So I carefully make my way over to the summit. I make my way along the knife edge ridge and get to a position right near the summit and a very narrow ridge. Becht also told me about this ridge, stating that it is typically the most memorable part of the climb. The ridge is angled at near 70 degrees and drops off the edge far below. One slip and that would be the end. There are basically no hand holds and you have to rely on foot placement only on a ridge about 1” wide. I make it across without problems and am soon on the top. I sign the register and head back. On my way back across the ridge I film a little video.

Mount Gould



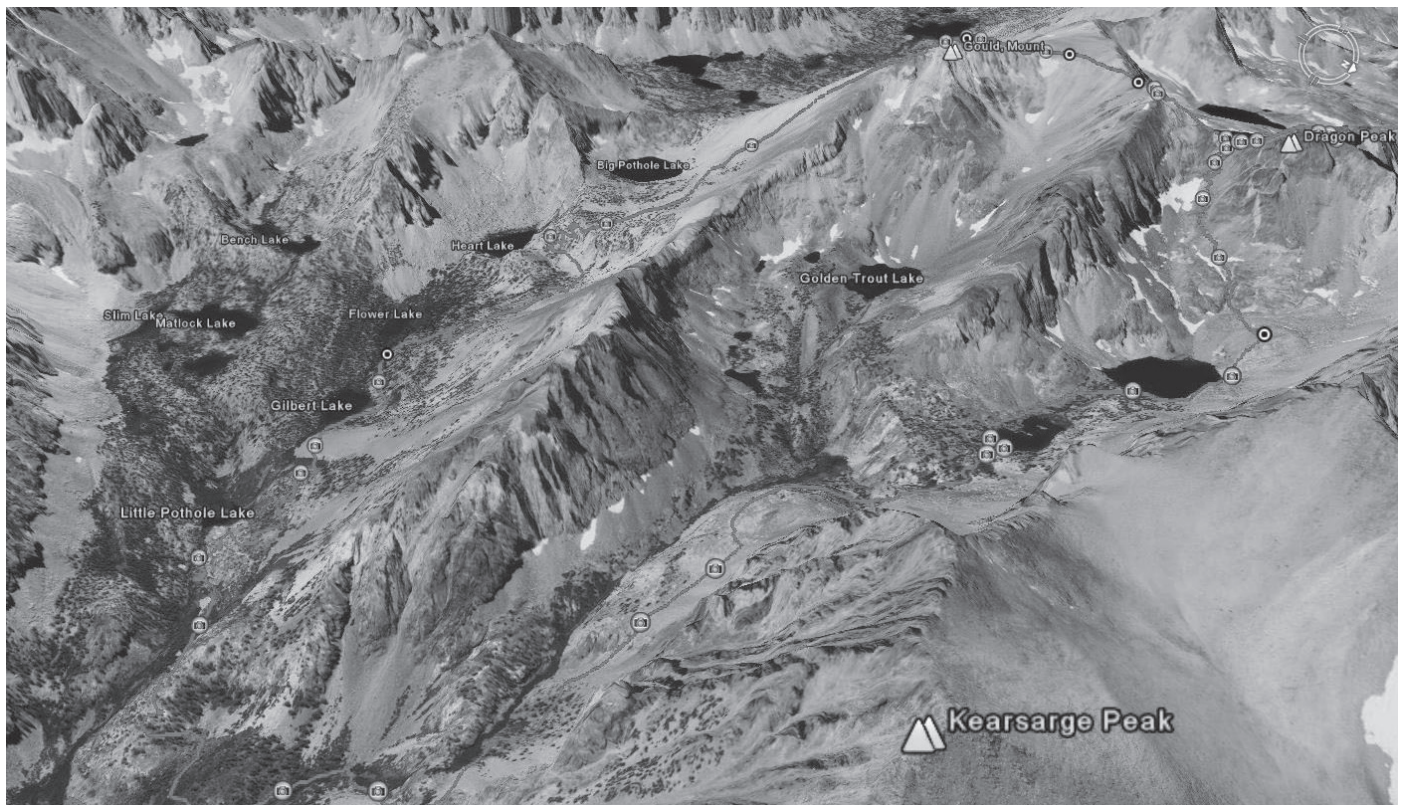
Descent to Onion Valley

The descent from Mount Gould is easy, and running down the scree slope to the Kearsarge Pass trail just above Big Pothole lake is fun. I make quick work on the descent and am soon on the Kearsarge pass trail towards Onion Valley. The descent to Onion Valley is very beautiful. The lakes along the way are among the most beautiful I have ever seen. Most have waterfalls draining either into them or out of them, grassy shores, clear, aquamarine water and wildflowers everywhere. I hiked up to Flower Lake 2 years ago with my family but could not make it any further due to snow. It is quite different this year with very little snow at all. I forgot how beautiful this trail was. The ancient looking foxtail pine forests and the huge waterfalls from multiple directions (at one point I could



see 5 distinct waterfalls). After 6 hours and 40 minutes, 9.8 miles and 4700 gross elevation gain I am back at my campsite at Onion Valley. I feel very content sitting in a camp chair in the shade after a great hike. I have stored enough positive energy to help ward off

all the negative energy in LA for a while. I also end up hiking University Peak Sunday (Google Earth KMZ Track of University Peak). Overall a superb weekend. Life is good, especially when in the Sierras.



Mt. Clarence King (12,861) Mt. Cotter (12,713)

TRIP REPORT

Sept. 8-11, 2007



Don Porter and Mary Jo Dungfelder checking out the jam crack

Photo by Paul Garry

by Gary Schenk

This trip was organized as a scheduled SCMA trip. Sierra Club 'O' provisional leader Don Porter graciously filled in at the last moment as assistant leader.

On Saturday Sept. 11, the leaders along with Mary Jo Dungfelder and Paul Garry met at Onion Valley. We split the community climbing gear, which consisted of a set of Metolius wired stoppers, the three smallest tricams, and a few slings and 'biners. We also brought along an 8mm x 30m rope, which we rotated carrying every hour.

We left the extremely full parking lot and headed out. Our plan was to cross Kearsarge and Glenn Passes and then over Rae Col and down to Sixty Lakes Ba-

sin. There we hoped to meet up with Greg Vernon, Mike Baca and John Thau who had hiked in on Friday.

We all felt good at the top of Glenn Pass. We dropped down to the lakes just below the pass and then started cross country for Rae Col. This was tiring and seemed to take a lot out of everyone.

We made camp near Lake 3304. It was late and we did not locate our compatriots who were camped one lake to the north.

We decided on a rest day for Sunday and took the opportunity to climb the southeast slope of Mt. Cotter. We found some interesting moves by staying high on the ridge. The summit block was easy third and had some great views.

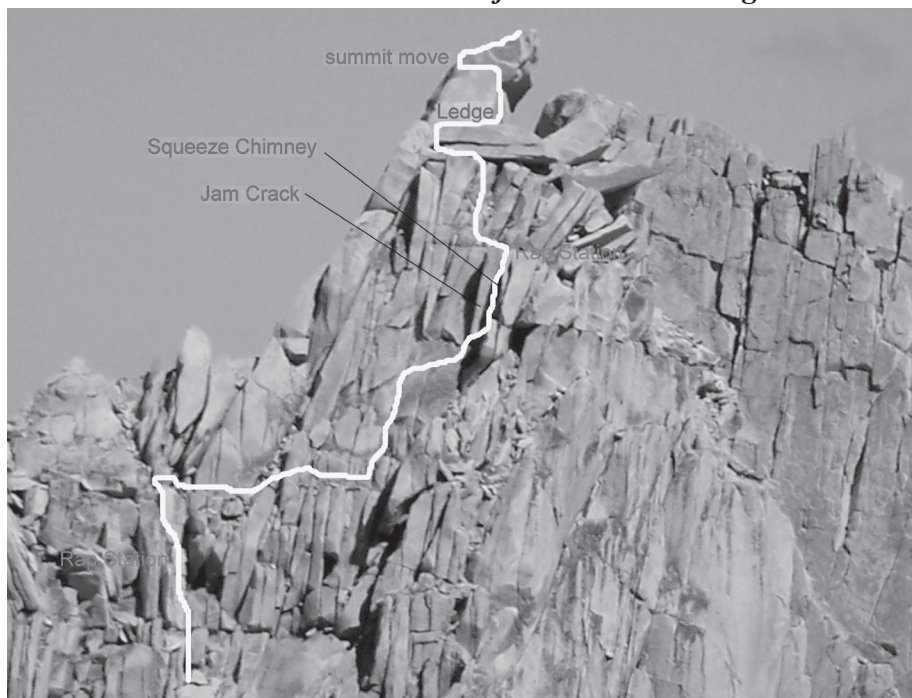
Later that day we located Greg and Mike who had just done Clarence King in an eight hour roundtrip.

We left camp at 7:00 am the next morning for Clarence King. The ramp to the saddle is easy enough to spot and we were soon slogging up the scree. All the while we were anxiously examining the rocks above us for the guillotine flake, jam crack and squeeze chimney from R.J.'s description.

We got to an area of third class and started scouting. Mary Jo found the west side of the summit, but that didn't look like it would go with the gear we had. We traversed right to a small low angle slab, looked up and there was the flake, crack and chimney!

With a gleam in his eye Don volunteered to lead this pitch. None of the pro that we had hauled in would work on the crack, so the chimney would have to

The South Face Route of Mt. Clarence King

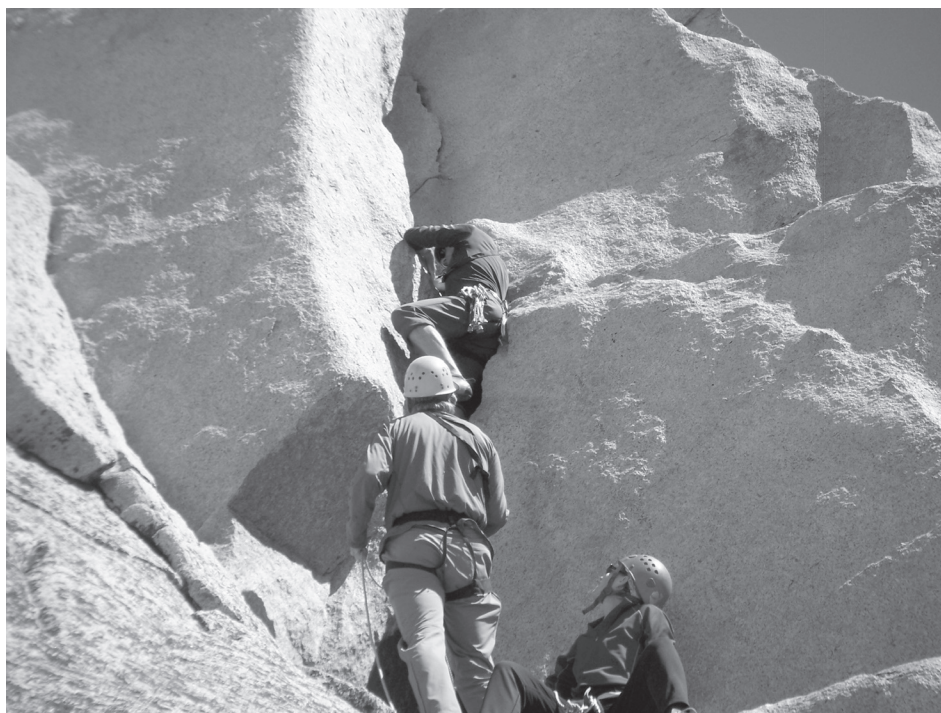


do. Don lead it easily enough, using a sling at one point for pro. The three of us followed and not exactly gracefully either!

Mary Jo had already made it to the ledge below the summit blocks. I followed behind with the rope, took a look around and realized we had made it! We were at the famous summit blocks. But now what?

I found a good sitting stance in the narrow passage below the summit. Don took the sharp end of the rope to the lower summit block, clipping a piece of fixed cord along the way. Mary Jo soloed up behind him. Then standing on Don's shoulders she clambered up onto the summit. Success!

We then flipped the rope over the summit and took turns making the move to the top. Paul was soon on top earning his SPS Emblem. Don relieved me



Don Porter leads the squeeze chimney

at the belay and soon I was staring at the abyss below the summit. Even on belay it took me quite a bit to work up the nerve to make that move.

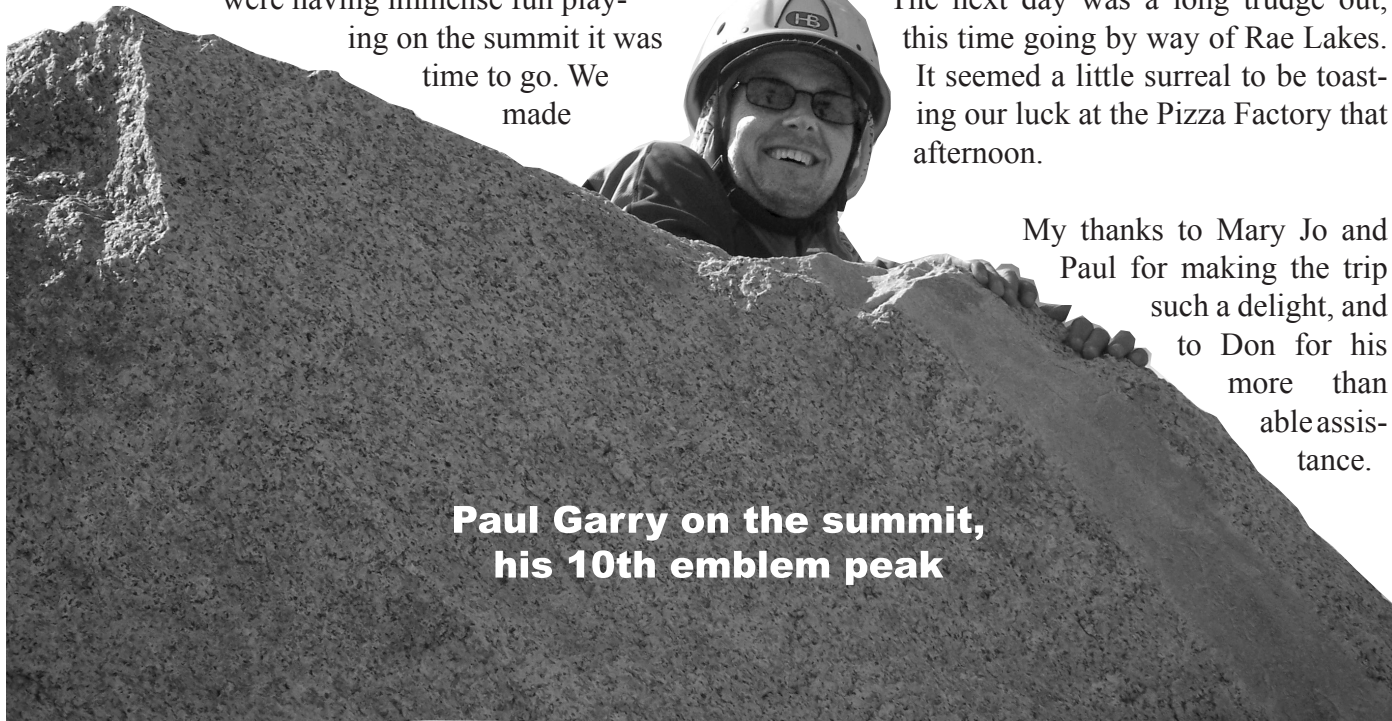
two raps on the way down, the 30m rope proving to be the perfect length.

What a great day in the Sierras.

All good things must come to an end, and while we were having immense fun playing on the summit it was time to go. We made

The next day was a long trudge out, this time going by way of Rae Lakes. It seemed a little surreal to be toasting our luck at the Pizza Factory that afternoon.

My thanks to Mary Jo and Paul for making the trip such a delight, and to Don for his more than able assistance.



Paul Garry on the summit, his 10th emblem peak

Mt. Clarence King



photo by Tom Ross

Dining high at the Pink Flamingo Café



Another year brought another night of fine dining in the Sierra wilderness.

by Ron Campbell

Decadent Wilderness Weekend V got off to a good start on Saturday, Aug. 11, in Horseshoe Meadow above Lone Pine. Seven of us set out, carrying all the usual backpacking gear plus the little extras that make life worth living: fine wine and gourmet foods. And also, because this was such a dry summer, we each brought at least one gallon of water.

We took the Trail Pass trailhead, reaching Trail Pass in mid-morning. One long glance at the brown meadow below was enough to tell us that we didn't want to trudge the extra three miles to Diaz Meadow, our original objective.

Instead we found a wide, sheltered spot on the north side of the pass and set up camp.

After a leisurely lunch we left camp for Trail Peak. This is, or should be a straightforward climb. Unfortunately the real trail is about 200 vertical feet below the position shown on the topo map. We left the trail after about a mile, zig-zagging up the steep, boulder-

strewn hillside to the ridge. Trail not on the Sierra Peaks Section it's well worth a side trip for any hiker in the area.

Peak is list, but hiker in

From the top, Langley commands the view to the north; Whitney peeks out to one side. To the south there are Olancho and, in clear weather Kern Peak.

And spread directly beneath on the north side is Horseshoe Meadow, which looks from here like, well, a horseshoe. A low, forested rise splits the meadow's arms; scarcely noticeable on the ground, the rise is strikingly obvious from above.

All told, a nice hike. But the real goal of Decadent Wilderness Weekend V was just beginning.



L-R Georgette Rieck, Ron Campbell and Ed Cottone.

Georgette spread the traditional tablecloth, to which I added brass candlesticks. Then, to give our dining establishment the dignified air associated with Michelin 3-star restaurants, we inflated and posted four pink flamingos at the corners of the tablecloth. (Unhappily, the wind chose this moment to act up, blowing out the candles and knocking down two of the flamingos.)

Lisa Buckley and her field-made Caesar salad



together a mango salsa, made from two mangos, red onion, a little cilantro and jalapeno, and some lime juice. After letting it sit for 20 minutes or so I prepared salmon tacos, using vacuum-packed salmon and Dubliner cheese, topping the concoction with the Mango salsa.

After dinner, Georgette broke out Godiva ice cream, serving it with hot raspberry sauce.

In the fading light of sunset, we toasted each other, a great meal and the lovely flamingos with red wine.

So what do gourmet backpackers eat for breakfast? Leftovers naturally.

Ed Cottone put on a white chef's toque and, with wife Priscilla, began assembling pizzas. They built them upside down in the pan: pepperoni and a tomato sauce, followed by a home-made garlicky crust, then added home-grown basil and mozzarella.

Georgette Rieck countered with crab cakes, special-ordered from the Santa Monica Seafood Company and topped with a Remoulade sauce.

Lisa Buckley borrowed my miniature cheese grater to grate some fresh garlic. With this foundation she quickly made a delightful Caesar salad.

Jim Montross served wild rice with Pacific scallops, sautéed in butter and garlic. (Let's see, that's three garlic-heavy menu items; no danger of vampires on this trip.)

Debbie Tracy whipped up a fruit compote and dumplings.

While everyone else was serving their dishes, I put



Around noon we reached the cars where Lisa greeted us with a final surprise: cold beer from the Mammoth micro-brewery.

My thanks to Ed and Georgette for a great co-lead. I'm already drooling in anticipation of Decadent Wilderness Weekend VI.



Georgette, a flamingo and ice cream

August 11 – 15th, 2007



Scoping out the route on Black Kaweah

PRIVATE TRIP REPORT Big Arroyo

Mt Lippincott, Eagle Scout Peak, Mt Kaweah and Black Kaweah

by **John Cheslick
and Gary Schenk**

Black Kaweah looked very ominous the last time I was in the Big Arroyo back in 1990. I thought to myself, I will never climb that! However, two years ago, Patty Lambert and Susan Livingston climbed Black Kaweah with Greg Vernon. They both told me that it was a challenging and fun 3rd class climb. So I reconsidered the peak and scheduled it for August with Gary Schenk and Mary Jo Dungfelder. I had read Bob Burd's adventure about day hiking it but I thought for us mortals, a backpack sounded more reasonable.

We drove up Friday afternoon and camped at one of the campsites in Mineral King. We drove to the Ranger Station to get our permit and bumped into Doug Owens who was going to scout his provisional trip to Eisen and Lippincott. We decided to join forces but warned Doug that we would probably be a bit slower since our packs were significantly heavier since he was only planning a weekend outing while we had food for six days.

Doug had a great suggestion on how to get to Glacier Pass via the old trail to Glacier Pass versus taking the Sawtooth Pass trail. It was indeed faster but it was steep and the trail doesn't go all the way to the pass so you have to hike cross country with a pack but still preferable to the sandy mess of the upper reaches of the Sawtooth Pass trail.

We made it to Glacier Pass in a little less than 4 hours. Doug was faster and we could see him descending down to Spring Lake. The rest of the day was spent hiking down to Spring Lake, up to Black Rock Pass and then down to Five Little Lakes. The day was long and we reached the second lake at 6:15 pm or 9 and half hours after we started. There is a nice campsite along with a bear box at the trail junction near the second lake.

The next day Doug and I decided to get up early and climb Lippincott while Mary Jo and Gary were going to move camp to the Big Arroyo near the old cabin. Their account of climbing Big Kaweah follows:

Mt Kaweah

While John and Doug prepared for their climbs, Mary Jo and I slept like babies. We arose at 6:00 and were on the trail at 7:30. We still hadn't decided on our course of action: rest day or try for Big Kaweah. We reached the patrol cabin in the Big Arroyo at 9:00. We decided on going on to Big Kaweah, hung our packs on the cabin, and scampered off up the High Sierra Trail.

We crossed a creek after about one mile. The water was copious and delicious. After a couple of miles we came to the tarn shown on the map at approximately 10,000'.

Here we decided on a more or less direct line to the summit, rather than heading over to the wooded plateau which marked the bottom of the main ridge. There was a bowl of large white talus which we bee lined across, and then proceeded up the south slope scree. Slowly.



John Cheslick on the traversing ramp



John high up the SW Face



Mary Jo Dungfelder on the Kaweah ridge

continued from previous page

In hind sight, crossing the talus bowl was a mistake; we should have skirted it, and made for the ridge.

We made excruciating progress up the shallow chute which is the south slope, making maybe 600' per hour. Yesterday's hike in had taken a lot out of us.

Soon we were breaking every half hour. Once we made the main ridge things improved and we made the final 1000' in just an hour. It took us 6 hours to the summit from the cabin, compared to the 4 hours it took Reiner Stenzel and his party in 1991.

The day was crystal clear and the views were spectacular. Being confirmed Southern Sierra aficionados, we really enjoyed the view of Olancho. We spent a good hour on the summit, resting, seeing and reading the register.

The hateful scree was much beloved on the descent, and we returned to camp in a total state of exhaustion.

Lippencott & Eagle Scout

While Mary Jo and Gary were still sleeping, Doug and I headed for Lippencott, Doug's plan was to climb Lippencott, hike out and drive home. He had a very long day ahead of him.

Lippencott was a very pleasant climb. We climbed the southeast slope route. We followed the trail for awhile and then veered off and headed for a small lake at 10,295'. From the small lake, we followed the stream flowing into the lake, up to a small lake at 11,000', then up the southeast slope and onto the south ridge and up to the summit. The climb took us 3 ½ hours up and 2 hours on the return.

We had fine views of the Kaweahs and the surrounding mountains. Doug and I then headed down, Doug back to the trailhead and myself down to our planned campsite at the Big Arroyo. I still had plenty of daylight left and after lunch, I decided to climb Eagle Scout via the standard route described by RJ. The

summit rock is the size of a large pickup and sticks out over a cliff. The view from the summit looking down on Hamilton Lakes is one of the best in the Sierra. Eagle Scout took 2 ¾ hours up and 1 ½ hours down.

Black Kaweah

Camp at the Big Arroyo was quiet the first night we were there. The next day I made an attempt on Lion Rock while Mary Jo and Gary relaxed and rested up for Black Kaweah. The second night at the campsite was standing room only. Two big groups came in to camp and about an hour after we went to sleep another party of two decided to make camp literally 4 feet from our tents. We were not too happy about it especially since we were trying to get a good night's sleep. I think they weren't too happy either about us getting up before daylight to start up towards Black Kaweah.

Much has been written about Black Kaweah. The rock is loose and it is best to take a small climbing party but the climb still is very enjoyable. As Norman Clyde wrote in the register in 1927 while climbing with three women, it is a "dandy climb". We were a bit concerned about finding the right route (southwest face) to the summit but it was mostly straight forward. The view from the summit was incredible.

It is said that the peak isn't climbed much but we were the 13th climbing party in 2007. Before us 15 people, 12 different parties climbed Black, many of them solo. I also knew that Tina Bowman was going to be leading a party up the following week. We also meet a gentleman while we were hiking out who was going to attempt it along with 2 people that

we met at the tarn at the base of the climb on our descent. This year was probably going to be a record for the number of ascents of Black Kaweah.

The way down took us just as long as the way up – 6 ½ hours. Our mantra was it was okay to be slow, just be safe. We got back in the early evening and had a well deserved fine dinner of freeze-dried lasagna or at least it seemed like a fine meal after climbing all day.

The next day we decided to hike out and made it out in eight hours. We then drove out the Mineral King road and had a great dinner at the Orange Blossom Junction Restaurant in Exeter. Both the food and beer selection are great and it beats any of the food in Three Rivers. (Ask Mary Jo or Gary about their last meal in Three Rivers.) We got home late but it was a great trip with great company and we got to climb some distant peaks in the Sierra. Now, I just need to go back again to get Red Kaweah and Lion Rock....



Mary Jo and John on the summit of "sinister" Black Kaweah

IS YOUR SUNSCREEN EFFECTIVE?

A recent scientific review by the Environmental Working Group indicates that nearly 85 percent of sunscreens offer inadequate protection or contain ingredients with safety concerns. Only 16 percent of the products on the market block both UVA and UVB radiation, remain stable in sunlight, and contain few or no ingredients with known or suspected health hazards. See the ranking of nearly 800 sunscreens at www.cosmeticsdatabase.com.