

# Vagmarken Club Sierra Crest List

*by Daryn Dodge and Greg Vernon; Echo Vol 56 #2, 2012*

In the interest of keeping alive some of the history behind climbing and mountaineering clubs that have left their mark in Sierra climbing lore, the Vagmarken Sierra Crest List is featured here. No recognition by the SPS is currently planned for those that complete the list, but is simply presented for the interest of peakbaggers everywhere.

The Vagmarken were the climbing club of Rockwell International. They were on the books as the Rockatomics Stamp club, as they didn't want Rockwell management to have a clue that they were doing something risky. Members worked for Rocketdyne or Atomics International in Canoga Park. The club was founded Feb. 4, 1964 originally as the Rocketdyne Mountaineering Club before changing their name to the Vagmarken.

At its height in the late-1960s and 1970s, the club numbered several dozen members. By 1975, the club had sponsored an estimated 700 trips, including many visits to major peaks on other continents. The Vagmarken undertook a program in 1965 to replace old register cans in the Sierras and elsewhere; by 1975 they had placed over 160 cans on mountain summits. Club members were also the primary movers in naming a peak in Yosemite National Park after Amelia Earhart in 1967. This 11,982-foot peak was named to honor the famous female flyer that disappeared over the Pacific on a 1937 around-the-world flight. The club also created their own Vagmarken handbook and published a newsletter called the "Yeti Yellis".

The Vagmarken Sierra Crest Award was the work of Danny Levack, an aerospace engineer. The Award consists of the 100 named peaks on the crest of the Sierra Nevada stretching from Olancha Pass in the south to Sonora Pass to the north. Although many of the peaks on this list will be familiar to those who know the Sierra Peaks Section List, over one-fourth (27 peaks) of the Vagmarken peaks are not on the SPS list. Other lists created by club members include the 100 Rock Route List, the Winter ascent list, plus several others. However, the Vagmarken Sierra Crest List is unique in that it lists the named peaks in the region of the Sierras many consider to be the High Sierra.

The name Vagmarken is a Swedish term for trail markers or cairns. The inspiration for the club's name came from the title of an autobiography, "Markings" (Vagmarken) by Dag Hammarskjold. The book was published in 1963, two years after Dag Hammarskjold's death in a plane crash in Northern Rhodesia. John F. Kennedy called Dag the greatest statesman of the 20th century.

Every Vagmarken had a "yeticlature", a name with yeti in it. Long-time SPS member Gerg Vernon was known as the Lone Yeti because of his solo adventures. The most notable member was Herb Laeger (Big Daddy Yeti). Herb had a Ph.D. from Rutgers and was a rather accomplished East Coast climber when he came to work for Rockwell. He established several routes at Joshua Tree (Solid Gold, Tumbling Rainbow, plus several other classics), Needles, Sequoia Park, Courtright, Shuteye Ridge, and more. He never got the credit he deserved for his contribution to California rockclimbing. Other notables included "Puffin" Bud Ford Yeti, who held an annual spaghetti dinner, and John Otter (Silent Yeti) who along with Greg Vernon published the newsletter for 3 years and put together an annual banquet.

After about 1980, the Vagmarken sort of evaporated. Boeing took over Rocketdyne, and several members found employment in diverse locations. However, the Vagmarken Club still lives on in some of the remaining old Sierra peak registers where entries by club members can be found. Many thanks to Greg Vernon for his assistance in relating the history of the Vagmarken.

## The Vagmarken Sierra Crest List

1. Leavitt Pk (11570)
2. Grizzly Pk (10320+)\*
3. Forsyth Pk (11180)\*
4. Tower Pk (11755)
5. Ehrnbeck Pk (11240)\*
6. Hawksbeak Pk (11120+)\*
7. Center Mtn (11273)\*
8. Cirque Mtn (10714)\*
9. Crown Point (11346)\*
10. Slide Mtn (11120+)\*
11. Kettle Pk (11010)\*
12. Matterhorn Pk (12264)
13. Twin Peaks (12314)
14. Camiaca Pk (11739)\*
15. Excelsior Mtn (12446)
16. Shepard Crest (12015)\*
17. North Pk (12242)
18. Mt Conness (12590)
19. White Mtn (12000+)\*
20. Gaylor Pk (11004)\*
21. Mt Dana (13053)
22. Mt Gibbs (12764)
23. Mt Lewis (12296)\*
24. Kuna Pk (12880+)\*
25. Koip Pk (12979)
26. Blacktop Pk (12710)\*
27. Donohue Pk (12023)\*
28. Mt Lyell (13114)
29. Rodgers Pk (12978)
30. Mt Davis (12311)
31. Carson Pk (10909)\*
32. San Joaquin Mtn (11600)
33. Two Teats (11387)\*
34. Mammoth Mtn (11053)\*
35. Red Slate Mtn (13163)
36. Red & White Mtn (12850)
37. Mt Crocker (12457)\*
38. Mt Stanford (12851)
39. Mt Huntington (12405)\*
40. Mt Starr (12870)\*
41. Mt Mills (13468)
42. Mt Abbott (13715)
43. Mt Dade (13600)
44. Bear Creek Spire (13713)
45. Mt Julius Caesar (13196)
46. Four Gables (12920)
47. Mt Humphreys (13986)
48. Mt Lamarck (13417)
49. Mt Darwin (13830)
50. Mt Haekel (13435)
51. Mt Wallace (13377)
52. Mt Powell (13400+)\**a*
53. Mt. Thompson (13480)
54. Mt Gilbert (13103)
55. Mt Johnson (12868)
56. Mt Goode (13092)
57. Mt Agassiz (13891)
58. Mt Winchell (13768)
59. Thunderbolt Pk (14040)
60. North Palisade (14242)
61. Mt Sill (14162)
62. Palisade Crest (13550)
63. Middle Palisade (14040)
64. Disappointment Pk (13917)
65. The Thumb (13388)
66. Mt Bolton-Brown (13538)
67. Mt Prater (13329)
68. Split Mtn (14058)
69. Cardinal Mtn (13397)
70. Striped Mtn (13189)
71. Mt Perkins (12591)
72. Colosseum Mtn (12473)
73. Mt Baxter (13125)
74. Diamond Pk (13126)
75. Black Mtn (13289)
76. Dragon Pk (12995)
77. Mt Gould (13005)
78. University Pk (13632)
79. Mt Bradley (13289)
80. Mt Keith (13977)
81. Junction Pk (13888)
82. Mt Tyndall (14018)
83. Mt Versteeg (13470)\*
84. Trojan Pk (13950)
85. Mt Barnard (13990)
86. Tunnabora Pk (13565)
87. Mt Carillon (13552)
88. Mt Russell (14086)
89. Mt Whitney (14495)
90. Mt Muir (14015)
91. Discovery Pinnacle (13680+)\*
92. Mt McAdie (13720)
93. Mt Irvine (13770)
94. Mt Mallory(13850)
95. Mt LeConte (13960)
96. Mt Corcoran (13760)
97. Mt Langley (14042)
98. Cirque Pk (12900)
99. Trail Pk (11623)\*
100. Olancha Pk (12123)

\* Not on the Sierra Peaks List

*a* In keeping with the intent of the Sierra Crest List, the named Mt. Powell is located just south of Echo Col, and is not the peak named Point Powell currently on the SPS List.