

The

Sierra



ECHO

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Tom Ross took this month's striking cover photo of Middle Palisade, Norman Clyde Peak and glaciers from John Wedberg's Cessna on March 15, 1969.

For an interesting account of Dick Beach and Steve Rogero's recent non-scheduled traverse from Disappointment to Middle Palisade, see page 8.

TIOGA PASS COSTS AGAIN

After permitting free travel through Yosemite National Park on the Tioga Pass road for part of the summer, fees are again being collected at the entrance stations. A charge of \$2 is made upon entering and again upon leaving if the time elapsed exceeds a certain number of hours (that is, if one enters the park Friday night and does not leave before noon on Sunday, the additional fee will probably be required).

HIGHWAY 395 SECTION OPENED

The new four-lane stretch of U.S. 395 between Tom's Place and McGee Creek maintenance station has now been opened.

ECHO STAFF

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Sep. 21, 1970

NEW MEMBERS

WELCOME to five new members this month:

John Beckman, 2822 Kempton, Los Alamitos 90720
Suzanne Duval, 527 Catalpa Rd., Arcadia 91006
Marilyn Judson, 22943 Dolorosa St., Woodland Hills 91364
Ronald Lake, 4754 La Canada Blvd., La Canada 91011; 790-2279
Milt McAuley, 8561 Eatough Ave., Canoga Park 91304

--and a special CONGRATULATIONS this month to new emblem holder NATHAN WHITE who recently reinstated his membership in the SPS:

*Nathan White, 20554 Queda Dr., Woodland Hills 91364

NEW PHONE NUMBER

Jay Wiley, Keck House, Cal Tech, Pasadena 91109; 213/793-6945

SAWTOOTH SLIDES REQUESTED

Barbara Lilley would appreciate anyone who has slides of the Sawtooth Primitive Area in Idaho to contact her before the October 14 meeting, in order that as complete a coverage of the area as possible may be presented.

Get in touch with Barbara at 8421 Lindley Ave., Northridge, 91324; home 886-4154, or at work, 883-2400, ext. 1746.

HUNTING SEASON OPENS

Sierra Nevada deer hunting season opens on September 26 this year.

CLIMBER REMOVED FROM MT. CLYDE

Bruce Kinnison, 23, of Mountain View, was taken from Mt. Clyde late July 8 and flown to Mono General Hospital in Bridgeport where he was treated for a broken leg suffered in a fall.

Kinnison, an instructor at the Wayne Merry Mountain Climbing School in Yosemite Park, fell down a chimney while nearing the top of the 12,833 foot peak -- tallest in the Minarets. The rescue was one of the most difficult conducted by local authorities in recent years. It involved a 2,000-foot vertical climb and removal of the victim two miles to Cecil Lake where a helicopter made the pick up.

CHAIRMAN'S CORNER

Once again I would like to talk about safety and especially accident prevention. One of the joys of chairmanship is some of the phone calls you get. They start about the same . . . "I think you should know about" So far this summer, I have had three or four such calls, all of which reported close calls on SPS climbs. Last week, on a trip I led, we had a close call involving poor judgement on the part of some members of the climb. The possible results could have caused serious injury.

Reflecting on the phone calls and my own experiences, I think I can state the problem as follows: "Mountaineers are individualistic types who prefer few rules and constraints; yet safe climbing demands a minimum of rules which must be obeyed." I am afraid that we have recently been too lax on statements of the few necessary rules and enforcements of these rules. The primary cause of this season's near tragedies is not keeping the group together. The SPS is leading about 30 climbs this schedule; the chances for tragedy are real.

Those of you who lead and those of you who follow, stay together. This is essential for responsible, safe climbing.

-- Dick Sykes --

SIERRA

Conservation

NEWS

FOREST MAY RESTRICT HUMANS TO PROTECT CALIFORNIA BIGHORNS

The Inyo National Forest is considering restricting human use on the ranges of the Mt. Williamson and Mt. Baxter herds of California Bighorn Sheep, writes USFS Wildlife Biologist David Dunaway in the Inyo Register.

Several years ago the Forest initiated studies on important bighorn ranges to determine what factors are responsible for the continued low numbers of these sheep. One of the major factors that appear to have adverse effects on the sheep is the large increase in human use on bighorn ranges.

As a first step, the main trails passing through these two areas will be maintained at a minimum level. Other possible means to accomplish the objectives are:

Require permits to enter the bighorn management areas.

Limit the size of parties entering the areas.

Restrict travel to designated trails.

No overnight camping allowed within the areas.

New trails will not be constructed.

Joseph Radel, Inyo National Forest supervisor, is consulting with interested groups and individuals to help formulate a course of action which will give maximum protection to these rare animals, but not unnecessarily infringe upon outdoor recreational use of the high country.

FREE SHUTTLE BUSES TO SERVE YOSEMITE VALLEY VISITORS

The National Park Service July 9 took an unprecedented step toward the eventual elimination of the automobile from Yosemite Valley.

A four-part program was implemented which includes a scenic and circulatory road pattern for part of the Valley; the closing of certain roads to shuttle buses and others to private cars; free shuttle transportation; and the closing of a mile of paved Valley road to all vehicles.

The scenic and circulatory roadway -- marked with a yellow stripe -- is in the west and central areas of the valley. Roads will be closed to all private cars in the eastern end of the Valley, from Curry Village and the Ahwahnee to Happy Isles and Mirror Lake. The free shuttle bus will operate 24 hours a day, passing any given point about every ten minutes from 7 a.m. to 10 p.m. and about every half hour at night.

ASCENTS

MT. SHASTA BUS TRIP, May 28-31 Barbara Lilley

The following trip report is taken from the June 17, 1970, issue of MUGELNOOS.

On a joint SPS - Ski Mountaineers trip, 30 climbers and seven skiers left L.A. Thursday night, May 28, by chartered bus for Mt. Shasta, arriving at the roadhead at 9 a.m. Friday. The skiers packed from Bunny Flats (6700') in to the Sierra Club Hut at 7900', while the climbers chose to camp at 10,400' Lake Helen, which they reached by crossing the ridge after starting from the ski lift parking lot (and where they spent a very windy night!).

Leaving the hut at 6 a.m. Saturday, the skiers successfully reached the summit of Mt. Shasta (14,162') as did numerous other hikers and all but one of the SPS climbers. A strong wind was encountered on much of the ascent, but skies were cloudless. Skis were left at various points en route; only the leader felt obliged to follow the schedule, carrying her skis to the saddle at Red Banks (12,500') and found the ski descent to be well worth the effort, with good spring snow and a minimum of suncups.

All were enjoying the skiing below Lake Helen when Bill Feldman's ski binding failed to release in a fall, about 1200' above the hut, and his left leg was broken. As most of the SPS climbers were already camped in the vicinity of the hut, the rescue litter was brought up in short order while ski patrolman Rich Gnagy splinted the leg. Bill's skis were lashed to the bottom of the litter to make a toboggan, and as there was continuous snow to the road, a rapid trip out was made to the Gnagy station wagon "ambulance." From the emergency hospital in Mt. Shasta, Bill was taken to a hospital in Redding where the leg was set with no complications. (Several days later he was flown by air ambulance to a hospital in L.A.) Meanwhile, most of the rescuers returned to the hut for the night and packed out early Sunday morning for the long busride home.

The Ski Mountaineers Section certainly wishes to thank the SPS for arranging and supplying most of the people for the bus trip; without their help the Ski Mountaineers would not have had the opportunity to climb and ski on this unique peak. And of course the SPS'ers speedy and willing response to the request for aid when the accident occurred was invaluable in the rapid transportation of Bill to the hospital. It is hoped that joint trips such as this otherwise successful one can be arranged in the future between these two mountain-oriented groups.

* * * *

DRAGON AND KEARSARGE PEAKS, July 18-19 Horace Ory

We were greeted by early morning clouds that grew in size as we hiked from Onion Valley to the lower of the lakes east of Dragon Peak. After a leisurely brunch, we headed toward the peak, with some reassuring remarks that the clouds had too little thermal activity to threaten more than showers. From the upper lake a snowfield, and then easy ledges led to the ridge south of Dragon. After following the ridge to the south slope, we crossed westward toward a group of three pinnacles, of which the farthest was the summit. A cairn marked a white band on the left which led into a blocky corner that was easily climbed to within 20 feet of the summit. We then crossed the exposed but comfortably inclined face along a horizontal crack and scrambled over boulders to the top. Here a few of the 21 climbers chose roped discretion but said later that they actually found the crack to be more secure than it looked. After a short time on the summit, a few drops of rain chased us back to camp where we sat and watched the clouds dissipate.

Sunday morning we rose early and followed a scree-filled gully to the saddle of the ridge east of the lake. There were several sheep bedsites in the saddle, a reminder why Kearsarge Peak was our goal rather than Black Mountain, as scheduled. We followed the ridge eastward, enjoying excellent views through gaps in the ridge, and shortly 18 peak-baggers were perched on the summit. It was still early when we returned to the saddle, so six restless spirits scrambled up the nameless, even numberless, peak northwest of Kearsarge and filed signatures in a rusty can. Clouds began building, but we packed out early and stayed dry. As we drove away, we looked back and watched a thunderstorm drench the area we had left.



BEAR CREEK SPIRE, July 25 - 26 Dick Sykes

About 15 of us eased into base camp at the Treasure Lakes. We divided into two groups, basic and advanced, and played on nearby rocks until the rains came. Rain, hail and lightning lasted three hours.

Sunday started as a beautiful day. We left at 6:30, got 17 on the summit and were back to base camp just in time for Sunday's light rain. The summit block was climbed using fixed rope or belays, for most of the group. We experienced a traffic jam with two small groups on the summit block. This was co-leader Bob Strommer's farewell to the Sierra. For 18 months he will be on one of the Marshall Islands.

* * * *

SILVER PEAK, August 1-2 John Robinson

Near the west end of the long Silver Divide looms Silver Peak (11,883') -- one of the most isolated of SPS qualifying summits.

Silver was the objective of our small group of seven climbers who met Saturday morning at the new Vermillion Campground along the shore of Lake Thomas Edison. A five-mile backpack -- marred by the frequent roar of jeeps and motor bikes -- got us to our campsite at the beautiful Devil's Bathtub. Unfortunately, all but the last mile of trail has been opened up to vehicular travel.

The Devil's Bathtub is a large, mile-long gem set amid rocky ramparts on three sides. We set up camp at the north end of the lake, where the best campsites are located. No one seemed particularly enthused about climbing nearby Graveyard Peak (11,423'), so Saturday afternoon was one of leisure. One brave soul -- Dick Jali -- swam in the cold lake not once but twice.

Early Sunday morning we started up the canyon above the Bathtub, passing over a series of granite-walled cascades and grassy benches, to an 11,000-foot notch in the divide. Here we were obliged to descend 700 feet to a small tarn, then climb 1400 feet up the southeast slopes of Silver Peak to the summit -- a total gain of about 3400 feet. Silver may not be very high, but it is indeed a good workout getting to it. Six of our seven made it.

SILVER PEAK, cont'd.

Then came the long up-and-down return to camp and the pack out to the cars, which we reached by 6 p.m. A long drive and a tiring hike, but well worth it.

* * * *

MT. WINCHELL, August 1-2 Bill Hunt

A strong SPS group of 17 left at 8 a.m from the Big Pine Lakes roadhead on Saturday, August 1. Our campsite at Sam Mack Meadow was reached by 11:15, giving time for a rest in the bright sunshine before lunch. Two groups formed shortly after noon, one to climb Mt. Gayley and one to attempt 4th class Thunderbolt. Nine climbers reached the summit of Gayley and were back in camp by 6:30. The Thunderbolt group, including the trip leader, were not so fortunate. The spectacular summit block was reached at about 6 p.m. after sustained roped climbing from the glacier (Climber's Guide route 1) and the descent was slowed by impending darkness. It was pitch dark with no moon when the four regained the steep upper portion of the glacier which required slow belayed movements.

When reached at midnight, the large boulders of the moraine also necessitated movement as slow or slower than the glacier, even with the aid of the now-dimming flashlights. After an additional hour of slowly picking their way, the group decided to bivouac until dawn brought better visibility. Fortunately it was a relatively warm night for the Sierra with no wind.

The leader arrived back in camp at 6 a.m. to announce that the four were safe and not to change plans to climb the scheduled peak. Mt. Winchell was led by assistant leader John Castel and Elton Fletcher while the Thunderbolt climbers spent the morning in their sleeping bags. The climbers discovered that at this time of year a route can be found from Sam Mack Meadow to Winchell that does not require crampons and, with careful route finding, not even an ice ax. The summit was reached in about three-and-a-half hours from camp via route 1 of the Climber's Guide. The entire group completed the backpack out to the roadhead by late afternoon. Conclusion for the weekend -- except for a strong, fast-moving party, it is not feasible to backpack in and climb Thunderbolt in the same day.



P R I V A T E C L I M B S

OLANCHA PEAK -- in a day -- June 28 David Hammond

Working in the aerospace industry, one sometimes has to work on a Saturday at short notice, which can certainly mess up carefully laid plans for mountaineering over the weekend.

In our case we decided not to let this happen; we would try for this emblem peak in the one day. After work Saturday the two of us drove up to the roadhead at Jordan Pack Station.

O L A N C H A P E A K , cont'd.

At 7 a.m. next morning we started the hike up to the top of Olancha Pass, using the new trail which did save some time. After the pass we kept on the trail to the end of Summit Meadows, where it turns west towards Monache Meadows. Here we found a trail going on north, not marked on the Monache Mountain topo, which we took until it appeared to swing away and down from our objective. At this point, we struck east up a boulder-filled valley to an upper meadow, which brought us straight to the notch between Olancha and Peak 11,295'. All that remained then was the climb of the peak, which was reached by 2:30 p.m.

The return was straight down the mountain to Brush Meadow, by my reckoning, joining the trail by Monache Creek and hiking out. The drawback to this route is the climb back up to the point where we took to the bouldered valley, so our route in was really the best. It was then a brisk trail hike back to the car. We were diverted to the old graded trail on the descent from the pass by some cowboys, who said they had a herd coming up the new, wider trail! We could hear a few "moo's" as we descended. The total time for the 25-mile round trip with 6,100 feet gain at least, and I am certainly no tiger. I am usually near or at the rear of most club hikes!

* * * *

MT. SANFORD, WRANGELL MOUNTAINS, ALASKA, 1970 Barbara Lilley

Three members of the ill-fated 1969 Mt. Logan Expedition, plus three others, were again unsuccessful in an attempt to reach the summit of Mt. Logan in 1970, fortunately for a less tragic reason -- the weather was so bad they were unable to be flown into their starting point on the Quintino Sella glacier! From Glennallen, Alaska, they were flown by Wilson's Air Service of Gulkana to May Creek, the intermediate airstrip, and waited there nearly two weeks, occupying their time by reading, sleeping, hiking on old roads and attempting to communicate with Italian climbers who waited for over two weeks before their entire party was able to be flown in to Mt. Hubbard.

With time running out, one member returned home and the remaining five (Rich Gnagy, John Ohrenschall, Barbara Lilley, Toby Wheeler and Alex McDermott) chose Mt. Sanford via the Sheep Glacier as an alternate climb, where access is not nearly as dependent on the weather. Therefore, on July 9, 1970, they were landed on a tiny airstrip on the tundra at 3800', with an airdrop the same day on the glacier at 6500'. They next day, carrying their fuel and three days' food, they completed the ten miles across tundra, moraine and glacier to the site of the airdrop (approximately two days' food were lost when one box was dropped into a pond -- fortunately, remaining supplies were more than adequate.)

On July 22, they carried loads of food, fuel and wands to 10,300' and the following day moved their camp to that spot. After waiting out a day of white-out and continuous snowfall (it snowed some every day), they moved camp to 13,000' and on Wednesday, July 15, all five reached the summit of Mt. Sanford (16,237'), in a whiteout and a temperature of -4°F. Although slopes were quite steep in places, the entire route was non-technical, and snowshoes were used all the way to the summit.

The next day they descended to the "airdrop" camp in a whiteout, barely seeing the wands they had left. They reached the airstrip the afternoon of the following day, a few hours before a major storm broke. Fortunately, there was a shelter hut there. On the way they encountered three Japanese climbers who were headed for Mt. Sanford by the same route. Pickup from the airstrip was made on Sunday, and they reached Fairbanks in time to catch the midnight flight for Seattle and California. Some food and equipment was left in Fairbanks, in hopes for better luck in 1971.

PRIVATE CLIMBS, cont'd.

MOKELUMNE PEAK, MOKELUMNE WILDERNESS AREA, Aug. 1-2 Barbara Lilley

On Saturday, August 1, Barbara Lilley and Rich Gnagy backpacked from Plasse Resort at Silver Lake on Highway 88 (Carson Pass) into Long Lake. Four miles of motorized trail and jeep road were followed to the Wilderness boundary; Long Lake was three miles further. As the lake is below 8000', good swimming was enjoyed there in the afternoon. And even though it was early August of a below-normal snow year and streams were dry, the trail passed through spectacular "flower gardens" of daisies, skunk cabbage, lupins three feet high and assorted colorful flowers every few hundred feet, and meadows were still green and lush.

Next day, they left packs at the Long Lake trail junction, continued one mile to Munson Meadows, then turned right for one mile on a trail and two miles cross country up to the summit of Mokelumne Peak (9332'), via the easy Class 2 northwest ridge. Returning to the packs, they hiked on out to Silver Lake in time to wash off the trail dust with a refreshing swim. Total mileage for the weekend was approximately 20 miles. Trail signs give good directions but inaccurate mileages, and trails exist which do not show up on the topo map (Silver Lake quad).

This peak could be considered for SPS qualifying status (especially if some other peaks are going to be removed). It dominates the Wilderness Area with no other qualifying peaks nearby, and its location in a wilderness area will keep it from becoming more accessible by road or ski lift, as has happened to some of the other Northern California qualifying peaks. An interesting way to schedule this peak would be to traverse (with bus transportation) from Highway 88 to Highway 4, passing through this Wilderness Area and climbing Mokelumne Peak en route (next summer, anyone?).

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DISAPPOINTMENT TO MIDDLE PALISADE TRAVERSE, July 25-26. Steve Rogero

The sky was clear when Dick Beach and I started up the southfork trail just above the Glacier Lodge camping area, and the flowers along the way seemed at their high point of the season. We passed quickly by mosquito-inhabited Willow Lake and on up to lunch at Brainard. From there a short haul brought us to a really scenic campsite at the north end of Finger Lake. With the Middle Palisade crest towering above and the cliff-lined waters of the lake sparkling nearby, it would have been a great place for "flat-rocking." Instead we spent most of the afternoon huddled under a plastic tarp while rain and hail made puddles in nearby low spots and the peaks slipped in and out of dark, heavy clouds.

After a night of alternately starry, then cloudy, skies, we arose at 3:15, assembled our equipment and started around the lake by the light of a crescent moon. We had no problem following the route over snow and up the glacier to the main crest southeast of Disappointment. Crampons were helpful on the steeper snow as was the morning light, unfortunately filtered by an already thick cover of clouds. By the time we reached the summit of Balcony at 8 a.m., it had been snowing off and on for an hour. The Thumb nearby and Split across the way were practically obscured by snow and clouds. It was with considerably less than maximum enthusiasm that we watched the sky for a while and then dropped down a chute and across the north face of Balcony towards Disappointment. We regained the main ridge at the notch just southeast of Disappointment and climbed directly to the summit.

Snacks and discussions about the route and the weather consumed the better part of an hour until at 10:30 we started down the north face of Disappointment on our way to Middle Palisade. The storm clouds which had come in from Owens Valley earlier had

T R A V E R S E , cont'd.

broken somewhat, and the Sierra clouds were just beginning to get organized, so we had a fairly clear sky overhead -- for the moment. In an effort to avoid a steep section on the west side of the notch northwest of Disappointment, we chose a route that led us down a couloir on the north face. We descended the couloir trying to find a place to turn the corner so that we could proceed more directly across the face. Several hundred feet below the crest we were able to do this, and we then worked our way horizontally across a couple of ribs and chutes until high angle rock ahead and below forced us upward again. From this point, more or less below the first peak southeast of Middle Palisade we climbed up and slightly to the right to the main summit ridge, which we followed a short distance northwest to the high point. The route across had been generally exposed Class 3 interspersed with a few minimum Class 4 spots. Although there are a great number of loose rocks and questionable holds in this area, the traverse does not seem overly unstable so long as those involved are cautious and few in number. There were several small patches of snow where our ice axes were helpful.

Now on the summit of Middle Palisade it was 12:30, and although we felt we had time to continue our planned traverse to Clyde Peak, the weather was not cooperating. While we searched the ridge for a possible route, snow flakes swirled around us again and in almost every direction long streamers trailed from not so far away thick, black clouds. Possibly intimidated by the storm the day before and certainly by current conditions, we decided to head for flatter and, hopefully, drier ground.

Our route down followed the large couloir on the east face past occasional ducks to the glacier below. Back in camp we sat for awhile recounting the experiences of the day, then packed up and headed down a rainy trail for milkshakes at Austins.

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A L L - F E M A L E T E A M T O P S M c K I N L E Y

A team of six women, including two members of the Loma Prieta Chapter -- Mrs. Margaret Young and Mrs. Dana Smith -- reached the summit of Mt. McKinley on July 6. This was the first all-woman ascent of this famed peak.

The ascent was marred only by the collapse of Dr. Grace Hoeman, trip leader and widow of Vin Hoeman, one of seven climbers killed last year on Dhaulagiri in Nepal. She collapsed from severe altitude sickness while on the summit. Fellow team members carried her off the peak on a makeshift litter and eventually recruited the aid of several male climbers from a Seattle group. This was the only time the women were forced to seek help from another team.

Although McKinley has been climbed before by women, they always were part of predominantly male teams. "The Denali Damsels" were the first to try an all-women's attempt on the massive peak.

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