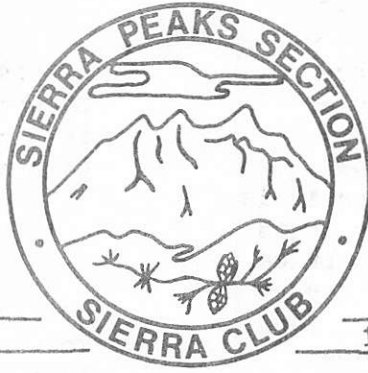


# The Sierra



# ECHO

VOLUME 15

AUGUST

1971

NO. 6



## A REMINDER

In spite of an incorrect announcement in this column earlier this year that the Charybdis - Black Giant climb had been rescheduled to September 25-26 (this is not true), Saturday, September 25 is a clear day on the SPS schedule so all of us can attend the Chapter's annual banquet. This year it is to be a barbeque at the Los Encinos State Historical Monument in Encino. The price per ticket is \$6. Get together with your friends for this once-a-year event. Send your reservations and check to Banquet Chairman Anne Amacker, 10558 Des Moines Ave., Northridge 91324. (Tel: 360-6720).

### COVER PHOTO

DICK MAY snapped this shot of CONNIE EATON traversing the east side of the northeast ridge of University Peak in March, 1970.

### CHANGE OF ADDRESS

WILLIAM HOOVER, PO Box 723, Livermore, CA. 94550

DICK JALI, c/o Peace Corps Jalan Broadrick, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

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### NEXT COPY DEADLINE:

August 16, 1971

# NEWS

## NEW MEMBER

Congratulations to our new member of the month ROBERT HICKS. His address is 3530 Spearing Ave., San Pedro 90732; telephone 832-2402.

## GUARD YOUR GEAR

A recent communication from the club Outing Committee mentions that a small knapsack group camped recently at Echo Lakes Campground (US 50) in El Dorado County had all their equipment, clothing, food and cameras stolen during the night; in fact, everything except the sleeping bags they were in had been stolen. Only the fact that I have heard that wartime hiking groups sometimes posted car-guards to insure that gasoline and tires would be left when the group returned keeps this editor from thinking that mankind has sunk to new depths; its only a return to the same old abyss.

## ECUADOR CLIMB PLANNED

TIM TREACY is planning a trip to Chimborazo (20,700') in Ecuador in mid-February 1972. The trip will take 9 or 10 days and requires full high-altitude gear (double boots, overboots, et al). Anyone interested should write to Tim at 165 Pfeiffer St., San Francisco 94133.

## DUTY CALLS

SPS'ers ALAN CARLIN, ROSEMARIE CARLIN and LIZ CUADRA have moved to Washington, D.C., where Alan and Liz will be working for the new Environmental Protection Agency. Rosemarie and Liz are two of the Section's 20 or so distaff emblem holders.

On August 23 member DICK JALI will have a new address in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, where he has accepted a position with the Peace Corps teaching high school science and math. Dick writes that there aren't many mountains but lots of wild jungle, beautiful beaches and a warm ocean.

## MEMBER WRITES

SPS'er JOHN ROBINSON is the author of Trails of the Angeles, 100 hikes and trips in the San Gabriel Mountains, recently published by Berkeley's wilderness Press. John is spending the summer working on a companion book, a guide to trails in the San Bernadinos.

# CHAIRMAN'S CORNER

## TRIP SIZE LIMIT

At the July Management Committee meeting it was decided not to oppose a resolution pending before the Executive Committee of the Angeles Chapter to restrict trip size. This decision was prompted primarily by the belief that restriction was inevitable and opposition useless, but also by the feeling that many trips had become excessively large for safety and pleasure. Meantime the Forest Service has imposed a limit on all trips into or through National Forests (practically all of our trips) of 25 persons, including leaders. This will be effective for us as of March 1 (next schedule not already too far along to change).

Obviously this will require a reservation system. There are a number of problems inherent in a reservation system, but I am confident that we can work them out successfully and have pleasanter trips. In this context it becomes necessary for us to reconsider for whom we are conducting trips, and the answer inevitably must emerge as "ourselves, plus prospective new members." This may be a major step back towards "the good old days," which, from what the oldtimers tell us, really were better.

## LATRINES

The pit latrine rule has been dropped. Seems the pits put the feces and paper well below the level at which bacteria were present in the soil to cause decomposition. Our basic sanitation practices are considered adequate, provided we get a bit farther from camp and water sources.

## OTHER EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE ACTIONS

Central Commissary is out, probably permanently. Trip fees are out, at least for the timebeing.

## MOUNTAINEERS' LIST

Copies of a revised form are attached. If you have an old form partially completed, keep it and just have the uncompleted sections signed off on the new form. Submit both together.

Guidelines for Instructors were recently prepared by the Mountaineering Safety Chairman. However, they are of broad interest and are included in this issue for the edification of all applicants. Not included in the Instructors' Guidelines are the additional criteria used by the Mountaineering Safety Chairman in recommending and the Management Committee in approving (or rejecting) applicants. These are primarily the applicant's depth of experience in a variety of climbing situations and his general mountaineering judgment, as demonstrated by his being adequately equipped for the trips he attempts, his ability to find his way around in the mountains without getting separated from the group, his knowing when to quit before endangering himself or the group, his willingness to call for a belay when he feels insecure (and to avoid unnecessary roping), his ability to move at sustained high speed when the situation calls for it and to accept graciously a slower pace for the benefit of less experienced members of the party, his willingness to be helpful to beginners, his choice of, and nimbleness over stream crossings and all of the other situations and decisions that arise on trips.

\* \* \* \*

## MOUNTAINEERS' LIST TEST GUIDELINES

In order to establish a degree of uniformity in testing the Mountaineers' List applicants, the following guidelines are offered.

Whenever possible, the applicant should be observed throughout a weekend outing. It is the applicant's responsibility to identify himself to you before leaving the roadhead. His failure to do so could be reason not to pass him.

## MOUNTAINEERS LIST GUIDELINES, cont'd.

Portions of the test, such as judgment and balance on rock and ice, the ability to climb without dislodging rock, and proper use of crampons, are hard to test properly except in actual prolonged climbing situations.

The degree of competence of the applicant in rappeling should be considerably above that expected of a Basic Mountaineering Training Course student. He should be able to get into, down and off the rappel without a belay quickly. It should be remembered that on most led trips where a belay is required, time will also be a safety consideration. If each of 12 people wastes five minutes because of lack of familiarity with rappeling, an hour has been wasted -- an hour that may be needed for safe completion of the climb.

Ice-axe self-arrests should be made on hard snow similar to that found early in the day. Judgment should be made only after several arrests have been completed. Any major error in form should be reason for not passing the applicant.

The "death march" portion of the application should be signed only if the person has completed the requirements on a reasonably-paced hike, and he has been able to keep up with no trouble.

It will be noted that many applicants will have some items signed off on last year's application. We will accept the signatures on these forms with the understanding that the application will be processed under the new requirements. Upon completion, it should be sent to the Mountaineering Safety Chairman, who will comment and forward it to the Management Committee for its consideration; Mountaineers' List status is not obtained merely by getting all items on the application signed off.

-- Wally Henry,  
Mountaineering Safety Chairman --

\* \* \* \*

## SIERRA

### *Conservation*

## NEWS

Funds for the development of the road to Red's Meadow as a paved, two-lane roadway have been stopped by the U.S. Dept. of Transportation until a study can be made of its environmental impact. The road improvement, running from the paved portion of California 203 at Minaret Summit to Red's Meadow has been criticized as part of a proposed trans-Sierra highway.

Considerable traffic uses the existing dirt road, part of Forest Highway 200, but improvement would leave a gap of less than 14 miles of highway to be constructed before eastern California would be linked with the San Joaquin Valley. The decision to stop funds was made after several years of criticism by the Sierra Club and other environmental groups. More than \$1 million has been set aside for the road project, a federal spokesman said. (LATimes, July 25, 1971.)

Wilderness patrol needs your help: Every year there are thousands of instances of illegal and damaging use of motor vehicles on public lands. In the back country of national parks, in wilderness areas and in vehicle closure areas jeeps, motorcycles, trail bikes, snowmobiles, helicopters and a host of other machines defy the regulations and tear up the soil and vegetation, harass wildlife and destroy the solitude. Because of the vast areas affected and the lack of adequate staffing for patrol and enforcement work, responsible agencies are almost helpless to stop these violations.

As a citizen and conservationist, you can help. When you observe an instance of illegal use of machines in protected areas, report them immediately to (1) the responsible agency and to (2) the Sierra Club Wilderness Patrol. Include all known names and license numbers, as well as the place, date and time of the incident. If possible, include photographic evidence of the violator and the damage caused. Send your reports of motor vehicle violations to the Wilderness Patrol at 1100 10th Ave., Sacramento 95818. (Yodeler, 7/71)

Sierra Peaks Section  
Mountaineers' List

Applicant's Name (Print): \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Instructions

- A. Satisfactory completion of these requirements, favorable recommendation by the Mountaineering Safety Chairman, and approval by the Management Committee are required for the applicant to participate in restricted trips sponsored by the Section.
- B. Only Sierra Peaks Section qualified safety training instructors are authorized to certify that these tests have been satisfactorily completed (see list below).
- C. Completed forms must be mailed to the current Mountaineering Safety Committee Chairman for review and recommendation to the Management Committee. The applicant will be notified by mail whether he or she has been approved for participation in restricted climbs.
- D. The applicant must be an active member of the section.

I. Climbing on Rock

- A. Judgment
- B. Balance
- C. Not dislodging rocks
- D. Ability in the dynamics of movement on rock (smooth motion, climbing with eyes, etc.)
- E. Ability to tie bowline and bowline on a coil quickly and efficiently
- F. Demonstration of body rappel of at least 30 feet and at an angle near vertical
- G. Demonstration of proper use of voice commands and belaying techniques.

The applicant satisfactorily meets the requirements of this Section:

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

II. Snow and Ice Climbing

- A. Judgment
- B. Balance
- C. Handling of ice axe - must demonstrate ability to traverse snow slopes while correctly using ice axe
- D. Self arrest - must demonstrate ability to recover from an on-back, headfirst fall at speeds that simulate actual falls
- E. Glissade - demonstrate ability to maintain satisfactory control during a sitting glissade
- F. Demonstration of proper use of crampons.

The applicant satisfactorily meets the requirements of this Section:

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

III. Endurance

- A. On the first day of a two-day trip, must complete a backpack of 3500 feet or more elevation gain, including some 2nd or higher class cross-country travel.
- B. On the second day, must demonstrate ability to climb a peak of approximately 3000 feet elevation gain, return to camp and backpack out.
- C. Parts A and B must be performed in the same weekend on a scheduled SPS trip. List trip with date.

Trip: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

The applicant satisfactorily meets the requirements of this Section:

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Mountaineering Safety Committee Chairman  
(Circle one recommendation)

- A. I have personal knowledge of the applicant's mountaineering abilities and recommend he be approved by the Management Committee.
- B. I have personal knowledge of the applicant's mountaineering abilities but recommend he not be approved by the Management Committee.
- C. I know the applicant only by reputation but recommend that he be approved by the Management Committee.
- D. I have too little knowledge of the applicant to make a recommendation.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Qualified Instructors as of July 23, 1971

Testing of applicants for Mountaineers' List may be performed on any scheduled Section climb, providing the tester is a qualified instructor. Those people qualified to test applicants and sign forms are listed below:

- |                    |                     |                      |
|--------------------|---------------------|----------------------|
| 1. Anderson, Don   | 11. Hoepfner, Fred  | 21. Robinson, John   |
| 2. Beach, Dick     | 12. Hunt, Bill      | 22. Rohn, Norm       |
| 3. Bradford, Jack  | 13. Jali, Dick      | 23. Ross, Tom        |
| 4. Davis, Sid      | 14. Jones, Ron      | 24. Schumacher, Eric |
| 5. DeGoede, Art    | 15. Keating, Jerry  | 25. Shinno, George   |
| 6. Eaton, Dan      | 16. Lilley, Barbara | 26. Smatko, Andy     |
| 7. Erb, Arkel      | 17. MacLeod, Gordon | 27. Sykes, Dick      |
| 8. Fletcher, Elton | 18. Maier, Ted      | 28. Thornton, John   |
| 9. Fowler, Al      | 19. Mason, Bob      | 29. Van Allen, Bob   |
| 10. Henry, Wally   | 20. Ory, Horace     |                      |

# ASCENTS

MT. BAXTER & ACRODECTES PEAK, May 22-23 . . . . . Tom Ross

Eighteen people showed up for the first SPS "high climb" of the 1971 season. We met at US 395 and the Mt. Whitney Fish Hatchery turnoff. We were all underway on the Baxter Pass trail at 7:45 a.m. Saturday morning. It was a very strong group and we all kept together. We enjoyed a lunch stop just below Summit Meadows along the creek. On the northwest side of Baxter Pass it was solid snow, helped from the three feet of new snow that fell in early May. The snow was generally in good condition all the way to camp at the big Baxter Lake at Timberline. All afternoon and evening it looked like it was going to storm but cleared as usual at sunset.

Sunday morning it was 18° F. at 6 a.m. and clear. We climbed a narrow draw just above camp and climbed the west face and ridge to the summit of Mt. Baxter. What a beautiful sight it was! It looked like winter in the Sierra again; wisps of low clouds draped across Mt. Williamson to the southeast. Deep drifts on Baxter's summit caused us not to be able to find the register!

All 18 made Mt. Baxter, and 13 climbers dropped to the saddle and climbed up to Acrodectes Peak summit. This was a dedication climb. We put a new aluminum register and book on the peak. The USGS in Washington, D.C., recently accepted the name Acrodectes Peak for Peak 13,183'. Andy Smatko and I have never seen so many Acrodectes on a peak. It's a rare alpine cricket and only found in the High Sierra above 11,000' the only place in the world! Acrodectes Peak is the only High Sierra peak named for an insect. All climbers were out to the cars by early evening after a most beautiful weekend.



WYNNE, PINCHOT, GOODALE, STRIPED, May 29-31 . . . . . DON ANDERSON

Seven people met at Taboose Pass roadhead for this Memorial Day climb. The high country was beautiful because of much snow that fell in several storms the proceeding week. The pass was attained in good time, and by early afternoon a group of four headed for Striped while the other three people moved on down toward Kings River to establish a camp. We attained the summit where we met Roy Magnuson, etc., who had traversed over from Goodale. Storm clouds were building rapidly and we got caught in a "whiteout" at the pass; however, by following tracks of others, we got down in timber and found camp. That night the weather was cold, windy and snowing.

The following morning was clear overhead, but ominous gray clouds were beginning to build. We followed up a basin on the John Muir Trail past Lake Marjorie to near Pinchot Pass where we climbed the steep south face of Mt. Pinchot on snow in hard, driving cold wind. We traversed the summit ridge at 13,000+' for a quarter mile in 50/60 m.p.h. winds to the true summit. Storm clouds formed rapidly. We remained on the summit just long enough to sign the register. The view was beautiful even through the hard, windblown snow. No attempt was made to traverse the third class ridge over to Wynne because of the weather. A rapid descent off Pinchot was made, and we arrived back at camp just as another "whiteout" set in. It started snowing again with more wind.

Our plans for the following day called for a climb of Goodale. Only two people were interested. As we left camp and headed towards Taboose Pass, the weather became very bad again with extremely cold, icy winds, snow and a near "whiteout." Instead of peak-bagging, we all headed down the trail and back to the cars by early afternoon.

I feel we were probably fortunate to salvage two peaks out of four. Had the weather been more reasonable, we would have climbed all four peaks. Anyway, now we have an excuse to go back to Taboose Pass and get the other two peaks.

THUNDERBOLT MOUNTAIN, June 19-20 . . . . . Dick May

The two leaders were ready to go at 7 a.m. sharp, but the group didn't start showing until 7:30. Obviously the group was late. This was only logical for us to assume, since we wrote the write-up. But then again, who read it? Not having a copy, we now began to wonder what we had said. Casually asking if anyone else had one, we soon discovered that it said, "Meet at 7:30 a.m. Saturday morning at Big Pine road head." This was a shocking blow. Our self confidence was lost. We began to doubt our leadership ability. We soon wondered if we would be able to lead the trip at all. Then the reality of the situation hit us. We wouldn't. But what could we do? We started making plans.

The 12 of us started hiking up the trail, Wally in front, I at the rear. Then Wally started accelerating and I slowing down. Soon they complained that he was trying to set a record to camp, unaware that he hoped to lose them. I began to crawl, picking flowers, watching birds. Seventeen minutes later Wally arrived at Sam Mack Meadow; I in three-and-one-half hours. Unfortunately, the group trailed in sometime in between. At camp we met our final member who had hiked up the day before.

Most of the people wanted to climb Mt. Winchell that afternoon, so ten of us started off at about noon. At the base of the mountain the two who had already climbed the peak went off to explore the glacier, while the others made the ascent. Before returning to camp we studied Thunderbolt and decided that it would be best to go up a route similar to Route 5 in the Climber's Guide. Also Wally and I considered new plans for ditching the group. Perhaps we could jump into the bergschrund and hide.

Back at camp some got out their tinned beer, brought along for its high nutritive value, while others had Nutra AArp (sic). A jolly campfire ensued, and we were all in bed by 9.

At 5 a.m., after a mild night, we started stirring, and the 12 climbers (the 13th only came for the hike) left camp a little after 6. Putting on crampons and using part of the previous day's trail in the snow, we gained the glacier by 7:30 and the bergschrund by 8. Looking at the 'schrund, we decided maybe we wouldn't jump in after all.

As you stand at the base of the Palisades Glacier, in the vicinity of where the canyon up from Sam Mack meadow delivers you, you will be looking head on at the Great Northeast Buttress of Thunderbolt Peak -- where this buttress intersects the main crest, you see a pinnacle which could be mistaken for the summit. (The summit pinnacle is hidden behind it, 100 yards to the south.) Ascending the end of the buttress is a narrow couloir, and at the western base of the buttress is a larger couloir, spreading out in its upper reaches, forming a huge Y, until it meets the main crest. We took this larger one, crossing the bergschrund on old avalanch snow and kicking steps up its right side until we gained the crest of the Sierra.

Leaving ice ax and crampons here, a third class traverse took us to the western base of that lower summit pinnacle. Traversing around the back (south) side of this, using a belay at one point, we arrived at the notch between the two pinnacles. Crossing through the notch and traversing 20 feet further but on the north side of the crest, we crossed the top of a couloir on a fixed rope and scrambled up easier rocks to the summit ridge and thence to the base of the summit pinnacle. Jerry Keating, seeing the register bolted on top of the pinnacle, started soliciting the group for dynamite. Everyone being fresh out, and our first aid kit lacking it, we looped a rope over the top, and one by one belayed each other up. Most of the group climbed it free, a few prussucked, and one, vowing to climb it free or bust, only had scraped knuckles to show for her efforts.

It being 12 by now, we were all nibbling lunch and getting ready to leave. Then a marmot came out to join us. It's not unusual to see a marmot in the high Sierra, but at 14,000 feet? We all threw it some nuts and crumbs and speculated on how he existed here -- certainly not on the tourist trade.

Not having all day, we abandoned this creature whose ancestors may have made the first ascent and headed down. Back down to the notch and across the ridge we picked up our ice axes and crampons, dressed for a glissade, and started sliding down. Wally,



THUNDERBOLT, cont'd.

still clinging to the idea of losing everyone, shot down ahead in one swoop, glissading right across the bergschrund. However, as usual, everyone followed and soon we were all together again.

Arriving in camp by 3 and leaving shortly thereafter, we all reached the cars by 6. Yes, all of us; every blasted last one.

\* \* \* \*

KEITH & JUNCTION, June 26-27 . . . . . Roy Magnuson

Six climbers with a touch of masochism managed to find the new roadhead of the Shepherd Pass trail. It was already hot at 6:30 when the hike to base camp started. Base camp, just above the Pothole on the Shepherd Pass trail, was reached at 1 p.m. At 2 p.m. five climbers started out to do Keith via the prominent chute that leads to the summit from a bench above and to the north of the Pothole. At the base of the chute, two climbers came to their sense and turned back. This left three to continue to the summit, which was reached at 5 p.m. By now a strong wind was blowing, making it quite cold, so only about 15 minutes were spent on the summit. The descent was quite rapid as the result of good scree much of the way.

After a night of howling winds and light rain, the morning was clear and quite calm. Since one person went only for the climb of Keith, five climbers started for Junction Peak over Shepherd Pass at 6:30 a.m. From the pass we took a snow chute up the east face of Diamond Mesa which leads to a knife-edge ridge to the summit. The ridge with its several gendarmes entailed considerable Class 3 climbing, but this was very enjoyable. The summit was reached about 10:30 where we ate lunch and enjoyed spectacular views in all directions. Especially outstanding was the view to the west of the Great Western Divide. We were joined on our way out by Diana Heiman, who had spent the week solo climbing (a no-no) the peaks from Kearsarge Pass to Shepherd Pass. Everyone reached the cars by 6 p.m. to complete a quite strenuous trip.

\* \* \* \*

DISAPPOINTMENT, July 17-18 . . . . . Norm Rohn

The expected 12 mountaineers arrived at the East Fork trail roadhead in a warm rain and weren't surprised to find all surrounding peaks obscured by clouds. Previous weather reports of an extensive marine air mass moving north and a high probability of continuing rain were confirmed by the Forest Service and Weather Bureau in Bishop. The trip was cancelled.

\* \* \* \*

TABLELAND, COPPERMINE & PEAK 12,340'. . . . . Fred Hoeptner

Starr's Guide reports ". . . it is possible to proceed eastward across the high plateau known as the Tableland and, after crossing a divide, to contour around the head of the canyon above River Valley to meet the Elizabeth Pass trail a short distance below the pass."

Only two participants joined the leaders at Wolverton roadhead in Sequoia National Park in spite of the fact that 94% of those responding to a previous questionnaire in the ECHO indicated they wanted more exploratory trips. In proving the truth of Starr's assertion, we found that the Tableland is not so flat after all, that it is not so difficult to navigate with only map and compass even without prominent landmarks, that traversing three miles of suncups can be tiring, that the route is practical for entering upper Cloud Canyon but is not a good approach to any list peaks, and that this portion of the Sierra is unexcelled in scenery. Return was made via River Valley, High Sierra Trail and Alta Trail after a very enjoyable and scenic outing.

MT. TOMCAN (12,620'), June 19-20 . . . . . Tom Ross

I left the Onion Valley roadhead at 4:30 a.m. and went over Kearsarge Pass and dropped into Vidette Creek, which was flood stage. I then took the trail to Junction Meadows and climbed up East Creek to East Lake and backpacked up Ouzel Creek a short ways. Beautiful afternoon cumulus formed around Mt. Brewer and its guards, and cloud shadows crept across the Brewer glacier and snowfields-- a most beautiful sight! All the streams were completely full and noisy.

Sunday morning I left camp at 5:30 a.m. and by forenoon I was on the summit of Mt. Tomcan, which I named. It was Class 2 with easy Class 3 on the three summit blocks. I was amazed to find that this peak had not been climbed since May 26, 1934 -- a 37 year lack of visitation! The original first ascent was by Dave Brower and Hervey Voge, so mine was a second ascent. I dropped off the peak and picked up my Kelty and was out to Onion Valley early Monday morning.

\* \* \* \*

MT. REFLECTION, June 26-27 . . . . . Tom Ross

I left Onion Valley again at 5 a.m. and backpacked over Kearsarge Pass and down to Vidette Creek and down to Junction Meadows where I saw a very tame doe deer. I could approach it within 15 feet; I watched it feed and then crossed the log across raging East and Vidette Creeks -- still flood stage. These hardly could be called creeks now! As I climbed East Creek, the clouds grew thicker and ragged fingers of clouds crept down the peaks. I set up camp just below East Lake. It was windy all day, and just at sundown it began to sprinkle. It stopped by midnight and was overcast.

Sunday morning a low fog filled the canyon. It was beautiful as trees and ridges went in and out of the clouds. I left camp at 5:30 a.m. and by 8 a.m. the storm broke up. What gorgeous views I had with holes in the clouds and bright sunshine. Just at the upper end of East Lake a large mountain coyote was seen. I watched him about five minutes before he saw me and raced up the mountainside. Above Lake Reflection I followed the ducked route part way to Longley Pass. I went up the southwest side of Peak 12,805' to a pass which was a first ascent! No cairn! I called this pass Ouzel Creek and East Creek Pass. I then climbed Peak 12,805'; it had a small cairn but no records. It was a first recorded ascent! A beautiful view is obtained from its summit. I called this peak Mt. Reflection, as it's just above Lake Reflection. I descended the steep snow couloir 45 to 50° in places to the glacier and went down Ouzel Creek and back to camp. Again the clouds grew thicker. By nightfall it was eerie. I got back to Onion Valley again early Monday morning. It's a long way in there but well worth all the effort!

\* \* \* \*

MOUNTAINEERING IN COLORADO, July 3-5 . . . . . Dick Jali

Topo maps: Montezuma and Mt. Lincoln quads, USGS 15-minute series

What may have been the largest gathering ever of ex-SPS Chairmen in Colorado took place when John Thornton and I got together at his (temporary?) home near Denver for some peakbagging. He told me that the Colorado Mountain Club (CMC) was big on one-day trips, which were not only convenient but positively sybaritic, as I was to see later.

The first morning I slept late, then sat in the sun sipping beer while it was decided which of Colorado's 53 peaks over 14,000' should be climbed that day. By 11 a.m. we had decided, and two hours later we had driven out I-70 past Georgetown and Silver Plume, up Stevens Gulch, and were ready to climb Grays (14,270') and Torreys (14,267'). The CMC has an absurd cabal that all peaks should be climbed with a 3000-foot gain, even if this means walking up drivable roads. We ignored this stupidity and drove as far as we could. With a 4-wheel drive or trail bike one could get much higher -- even to summits in many cases.

COLORADO CLIMBING, cont'd.

We climbed up past the ubiquitous jeeps and by 4 p.m. were on Grays and about an hour later on Torreys. Fantastic views -- mountains in all directions. Then down and back to Denver, where hot showers, cold beer and a good Mexican dinner awaited us.

Next day I joined a CMC trip (they charge \$1 for guests) with Fredde Jensen to Pettingell Peak (13,553'), just across the valley from Grays and Torreys. All Denver CMC trips leave from a parking lot in downtown where people meet to share rides -- so if you see a group with a better selection of girls, you can change your mind and go with them. We again drove out I-70 and hiked up Herman Gulch to Herman Lake. The Coloradans listened with horror and pity as Fredde and I told them how we had to drive until late Friday night, backpack on Saturday to camp, then come out and drive back until late Sunday -- just to get one or two peaks on Sunday morning.

From the lake we scrambled to the ridge and then to the summit. There were a few clouds and a breeze, so I felt a bit chilly, but by Colorado standards this was a perfect day, as more normal conditions include winds approaching raging hurricanes and a wild dash to, and off, the summit before the storm and lightning hit. Our idyllic Sierra weather is somewhat rare for this area -- though I had it most of the time.

On the last day, again after showers, dinner and a comfortable night, I joined my old friend Dick Painter and a group for a super-bash of FOUR Fourteens in one day -- Democrat (14,148'), Cameron (14,238'), Lincoln (14,286') and Bross (14,169'). From Denver we drove to Fairplay, then to Alma and on to the picnic area at Kite Lake. At 9:15 a.m. we set out and were on Democrat two hours later. We then walked across a saddle and over Cameron to Lincoln, passing on the way several of the mineshafts and miners' shacks that these mountains are full of. After lunch, we walked to, and over, Bross (a formless blob noteworthy only for its height) and down scree to our starting point, arriving about 3:30 p.m.

Some of the group had climbed only Democrat, and they had gone down and selected a picnic site by a beautiful stream by the time we arrived. So we joined them and relaxed while eating and drinking in the afternoon sunlight, knowing that there was no reason to hurry, as Denver was only two hours away, and there was plenty of time. Here we could really enjoy -- without the hassles of long drives, traffic and crowds. Yes, this is the Real way to Do It!

\* \* \* \*

GAYLEY, STARLIGHT & NORTH PALISADE, July 10-11 . . . . . Steve Rogero

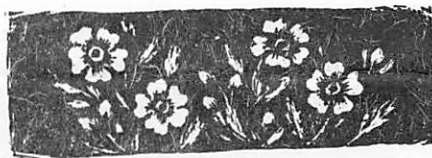
An early start in what was to be a weekend of perfect weather brought Jon Inskip, Wally Henry and I to Third Lake and the Palisades School of Mountaineering at 8:30 Saturday morning. There we visited with Don Jensen and other members of the climbing school staff before continuing with the school's Stokes litter. (The litter had been used by a Sierra Club group the week before and needed to be returned to the bivouac hut near the glacier.) Later, after a snack and assembling of climbing gear at our camp in Sam Mack Meadow, Wally and I left to climb Mt. Gayley. We returned the litter to the hut about noon and made use of its wind protection for a leisurely lunch inside. From there it was a short hike to the start of a delightful climb over Class 3-to-4 rock up the northwest ridge of Gayley. The route was sound though exposed most all the way, and we were able to stay fairly well up on the ridge, dropping occasionally onto the north face. We passed the final summit arete on the east to reach the topmost blocks. Out of the wind on a warm afternoon we alternately ate, dozed, read the log and enjoyed an unequalled view of the Palisades for more than an hour before descending via Glacier Notch to camp for supper and an early bedtime.

The three of us were on the trail at 5:30 a.m. and crossed the snow bridge over the schrund in Clyde Couloir a couple of hours later. We climbed on good snow for 200-to-300 vertical feet (a little past where we should have) before moving onto the rock and the arete to the right. From there we followed the arete more or less away from, rather than toward, the couloir when difficulty was encountered. The climb went very smoothly over easy-to-moderate, exposed Class 4 ledges, slabs and blocks, and we were below the final spire at 9:30. With some protection from a lower belay, Wally climbed the

summit block (about 5.5) and then rappelled down from a bolt-held sling on top. Don Jensen had described the summit of Starlight as the most beautiful in the Sierras, and from a photogenic or esthetic viewpoint, it just may be. After an hour of scrambling up the block for fun and pictures and filling out a new register (we couldn't find one anywhere), we began what we thought would be a routine traverse to North Palisade less than a quarter mile away. What followed was almost three hours of route-finding over exposed, less-than-stable, Class 4 blocks and slabs. There was enough snow remaining in the blocks for an additional dimension of difficulty, and it was necessary at two points to rope for short pitches. About 1 we reached the summit of North Palisade, having come more or less up the face from the notch between the two peaks. We spent three-quarters of an hour lunching and resting.

Our descent from North Palisade was made without incident into the U Notch and then down the loose rock on the upper slopes of the north side. About 300 feet down we encountered 45° ice that spanned the width of the couloir and went down the chute about 200 vertical feet. With crampons and ice axes we uncomfortably continued the descent. About half way down the ice, Wally and I were startled by a scraping sound and turned to watch helplessly as Jon went skating down the icy slope. He slid for what seemed an endless time toward either eventual disaster or softer snow below. Perfect arrest form and endurance derived from knowledge of the consequences kept his speed under control as he dropped 100 or more vertical feet and came to rest minus considerable skin but otherwise uninjured on the steep snow below.

The balance of our return was normal. A good bridge over the schrund and solid snow to the moraine allowed us to complete the trip and the day almost simultaneously.



### TRAGEDY ON MT. RITTER (continued from p. 13)

one of the lakes west of Mt. Ritter where he found a snow-free pocket around some rocks. There he spent the late afternoon sleeping. That evening the fog cleared and by the light of the moon he was able to make his way down into the trees where he used his ice axe to cut boughs for a bed.

Tuesday morning, after a reasonably comfortable night, he continued on and found the Hemlock Crossing Trail, but because of snow on the ground and the lack of sufficient tree blazes, he found he could make better progress by heading cross-country. Tuesday evening he again cut boughs for a bed and spent the night high on the west side of the canyon wall overlooking the North Fork of the San Joaquin River.

Wednesday he continued cross-country until he stumbled upon the Strawberry Tungsten Mine road. This road took him to the Clover Meadow Ranger Station where, after breaking in, he had his first real food since lunch Sunday. Thursday was spent recovering at the station until a camper came by about 4:30 in the afternoon and gave him a lift to the Minarets Ranger Station.

### EPILOGUE

Bill's frost bitten fingers and toe will probably recover without too much permanent damage. That he is alive is attributable to his superb physical condition, his clear thinking during times of stress when many would panic, and the few hours of sunshine Monday morning.

### LESSONS WE SHOULD ALL REMEMBER

(1) The weather in the Sierra can be unpredictable and severe at any time of the year!

The climbers were caught by surprise by a storm that had been building up on the west side of the Sierra. Because of the sunshine in the morning, and the fog that developed when they were between Banner and Ritter they did not see the weather front build up. Thus, in ignorance, they proceeded climbing beyond the point where a quick descent was possible.

(2) Hypothermia is the one serious danger under conditions of exposure.

Its effects can be very quick. A person can be cold and tired, but still able to make

progress, and then he can suddenly collapse. I know. I saw it happen. A friend and I once spent a night on a rock in the middle of a snow field when the person we were escorting off a mountain suddenly could go no further. He collapsed and could no longer help himself. Prompt action with dry warm socks, sleeping bag, and hot lemonade averted disaster that time.

This year, the effects of hypothermia took its toll near the top of Mt. Ritter when neither adequate shelter or a quick descent was possible.

Our thanks to Sheriff Ed Bates and those in the rescue party for their efforts to aid those on the mountain.

Gordon Peterson

# The Yodeler

JULY  
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SIERRA CLUB, BAY CHAPTER

## FOUR CLIMBERS DIE ON MT. RITTER

*Many members have speculated on the causes of the Memorial Day tragedy on Mt. Ritter and have wanted more detailed information than has been given in the newspapers. On the first of June the papers reported that five men were lost on the mountain, and in subsequent stories told of the discovery of one survivor and the bodies of the other four men. Speculations that lack of equipment or poor leadership were at fault have been common. In order to get a fuller account made available I asked Gordon Peterson to investigate the accident and report on it for the Yodeler, as he did so thoroughly last year on another occasion. His story follows. J.M.*

I have found after interviewing Madera County Sheriff Ed Bates, who was in charge of the search, and survivor Bill Alves, that most of my assumptions on why the party got into trouble were wrong! And that perhaps those of us who hike and climb in the Sierra can learn from the events of the climb — or be reminded if we already know — that the mountains can be unforgiving of even the smallest mistake or the bad luck of being at the wrong place at the wrong time at any time of the year.

### PRELUDE TO THE CLIMB

This Loma Prieta Singles trip had been planned as a three day knapsack hike to Lake Edisa with an optional climb of Mt. Ritter on the second day. Saturday, on the way in from Minaret Summit, the weather was clear and warm and everyone enjoyed the late spring conditions of a particularly scenic area.

Sunday morning dawned clear except for some low fog around the lake. The five climbers started out equipped as well as most climbing parties, considering their objective and the time of the year. Their clothing consisted of down sweaters or vests, mountaineering parkas, mittens or gloves, head protection, and good boots. They had a rope, and all were equipped with ice axes. Except for Bob Smith, they also carried crampons.

Their experience was also typical of a well led climbing party. Gordon Howe had been up the route before. Glen Walsh, the leader, and Bill Alves both had considerable summer and winter mountaineering experience. All were very strong hikers. Dick Schroeder was the only one who had never used an ice axe. Their route was to be the standard East Cliff and North Face Class 3 climb.

### THE SEARCH

The first word that five climbers were missing was reported to the Mono County Sheriff Monday by the remaining eight members of the knapsack party. Poor visibility precluded any search that day.

Tuesday morning the weather cleared but the search plane failed to find any sign of the men before clouds again concealed the area. Wednesday the weather cleared and the search plane was able to direct the fifteen man rescue party on the mountain to the North West Glacier just above Lake Catherine at about the 11,500 foot mark where Richard

Schroeder and Bob Smith were found at the bottom of a chute. High up, in a snow cave next to the rock wall, they found Glen Walsh and Gordon Howe.

Sheriff Ed Bates reported that the climbers were well equipped with both clothing and gear, and that the autopsy had revealed all four had frozen to death.

### BILL'S ACCOUNT OF THE CLIMB

As they made their way along to the saddle between Banner and Ritter they took time to give ice axe arrest lessons to Dick. Near the top of the saddle they were slowed down by the steepness of the snowfield, but after some delay, they made it up in good shape where they stopped for lunch. By this time the weather had closed in. It was cold, about 20 degrees, foggy, and a light breeze had developed.

After lunch, they proceeded up the chute on the North wall. By the time they made the summit ridge, the wind had picked up a bit and the visibility was poor, but not alarming. Because of the exposure on the ridge, they roped up at 20 foot intervals and started for the summit. The rope made for slow progress and they were passed by another party of two. Before long, at about the 12,900 foot mark, one member complained he was getting cold. He was joined by another and the decision was made to turn back short of the summit. A short distance down they were again passed by the other climbers who were hurrying off the

mountain because of the poor weather. At this point all was well. It was breezy, cold, and visibility was poor, but they were making their way down and expected to be off the mountain in a few hours.

Then — suddenly — they were hit by the full intensity of the storm that they had not been aware of building up on the West side of the Sierra. High winds and snow made progress very slow. In the almost zero visibility they could not find the normal route down. They were further slowed by the need to delay some members of the party over exposed portions of their descent.

The first indication of real trouble was when Gordon's eyes froze shut and the others had to talk him along. (Gordon Howe was the only one of the party who knew the route.) This, and the necessity of being roped together, made downward progress so slow that the decision was made to dig snow caves on the slope. The digging did not go well as the wind and snow kept filling up the holes.

A break in the weather occurred before they had made much progress and they could see a frozen lake below them, but the way down looked very poor. One member of the party thought it was Iceberg Lake. (In retrospect, they were looking at Lake Catherine.) Because of the improvement in the weather and the poorness of their position, they decided to climb out of the chute and find a better route to the lake; however, before long the full intensity of the storm hit again.

Above them, Bill noticed a natural pocket between snow and rock that would enable them to get out of the snow and wind, but by now it was too late for Dick Schroeder and Bob Smith. The numbingly cold wind had taken its toll. They had become incoherent and could not be forced to stand or make the attempt to climb up to the only protection available to the party. It was decided that it was not possible to carry them up the chute, and that the survival of the rest of the party depended on cutting them out of the rope.

Gordon was also getting very weak, but he was just able to make the climb to the cave. Once there, they got him inside and Glen part way in and went to work to enlarge the cave so there would be room for three. When the work was finished, they ate some more of their lunch and prepared to wait out a long cold night. However, the cold continued to affect them. Shortly, both Glen and Gordon became lethargic and could not be induced to activity. In time, Glen became incoherent. To preserve body heat, Bill spent most of the night on his arms and knees and forced himself to stay awake as much as possible. By morning, both Gordon and Glen were dead.

As soon as the sun was up, Bill got out of the cave and promptly collapsed. He managed to get back into the cave and spent some time sleeping. After the sun had warmed the air, he made his way to a rock and again went to sleep in the sun. Regaining some strength in the warmth, he then was able to pick up his gear and climb back to the summit ridge. The weather again socked in, but he made his way down.

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