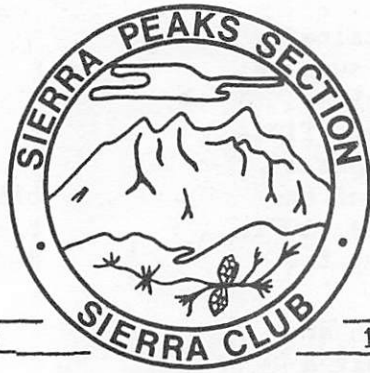


The Sierra



ECHO

VOLUME 15

OCTOBER

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NO. 8



REGISTERS NEED ATTENTION

New register books and/or containers are needed on a number of Sierra summits, including Vogelsang Peak in Yosemite National Park. George Toby reports finding part of a bleach bottle and mess of torn papers atop Vogelsang. One of the scraps contained a note dated June, 1971, saying that a marmot had chewed up the register.

Other summits needing attention are Mt. Wallace, now equipped with only a 35mm film can and scraps of paper; Giraud Peak, which needs a new book; Mt. Bago, which has a new book but no container; Rambaud Peak, which has nothing; and all the Devils Crags. Wally Henry reports that containers probably are needed on all of the Devils Crags except Nos. 1 and 5. Mt. Ruskin has no register; and Red and White Mountain needs a better container.

Climbers planning trips to any of these peaks may obtain books and containers from Jerry Keating, Mountaineering Records Chairman, 714/524/3862.

NEWS

CONGRATULATIONS!

What seems to be a record number of climbers have earned the coveted SPS emblem this summer. Our new emblem holders are: DAVE GLADSTONE

WILLIAM HAYES
VICKY HOCVER
DAVID KING
DENNIS LANTZ
PAUL LIPSOHN
DAN POPPER
CHET ROWLAND
GEORGE TOBY
MIKE ZEMETRA

In addition, on the last page of this issue, where it may be easily detached and added to your current SPS roster, is a list of many new Section members who have joined in 1971. Through an administrative oversight (everybody was out climbing), the names of new members have not been processed promptly for several months. If you have sent in your credentials and your name has never been published as a new member in the ECHO, please notify the secretary Horace Ory so that he may be sure your name is in the files. We offer a special welcome to all these new members and hope it was worth the wait!

SPS ANNUAL BANQUET
or This Is what I Look Like
with My Face Washed and a
Clean Suit

The ANNUAL BANQUET of the SPS will be held on Thursday, December 16, at the Smoke House Restaurant in Encino. Tickets for a fabulous steak dinner are priced at \$5.70, including tax and tip. Cocktails begin at 6:30 with dinner at 7:30. We are fortunate to have an outstanding program presented by Dick Beach and Barbara Lilley on their Mt. Logan expedition. Members and guests are welcome. Send checks, made payable to Sierra Club, SPS Section, to Carol Miller, 19261 Bernetta Pl., Tarzana 91356; telephone (213)345-1611. Please include a stamped, self-addressed envelope.

COVER PHOTO

Thanks to JOHN ARDEN for this wintery shot of Mt. Morgan taken from peak 12,866' (3/4 mile east of Bear Creek Spire) on May 30, 1971.

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NEXT COPY DEADLINE:

November 1, 1971

EDITOR'S NOTES

During the summer the editor has received more writeups of private trips than of scheduled trips, a disturbing situation. Having resolved to bug only her husband about writeups this year, this lonely editor hopes she is not watching her mailbox in vain.

"There's a time for all things," said Shakespeare, and the present ECHO publication committee's time of service will end with the final 1971 issue. These jobs are made easy by the pleasant people one deals with and the knowledge that the ECHO is a sturdy, well-received publication. If 1972 might be your time for service to the SPS, let the Management Committee or the present editor know that you would be willing to serve.

AFRICAN RESCUE

The September, 1971, Reader's Digest magazine features a story entitled "Ordeal on Mt. Kenya," which describes an amazing rescue on that African peak in which former SPS chairman DICK SYKES played a part.

IN MEMORIAM

Leo Bell, Jr., a former SPS member, died recently of a heart attack. Leo was a longtime Sierra climber and had returned from a Club highlight trip not long before his death.



ASCENTS

THE HERMIT, July 24-25 Paul Lipsohn & wally Henry

The North Lake roadhead, always wet, crowded and buggy to me, was even worse this weekend, thanks to several mid-night showers and the presence of our twelve climbers. At least our enthusiasm was undampened, and we soon were headed up trail to the Lamarck Lakes. At Upper Lamarck we dropped two of our party, due largely to their injudicious activities of the previous night. From Upper Lake we crossed to the appropriate chute and soon encountered what is now a prominent trail to Lamarck Col. Leaving half of the group at the small lake just below the col, seven climbers scrambled up Lamarck and spent an unsuccessful half-hour searching for a register which, for some reason, is not located on the apparent high point.

Returning to the lake, we enjoyed a leisurely lunch before passing through the col. Descending the cruddy southwest side of the col, we dropped to the fifth Darwin Lake and made camp at 11,600' at about 3 p.m. Since the hour was rather early, six climbers set out for Mt. Goethe. Passing between the two large lakes at the bottom of the cirque, we were confronted by three peaks, all appearing equal in height. After several minutes of spirited discussion, we decided to climb the ridge leading to the left-most peak. An hour of scrambling was well rewarded as we emerged on the true summit in time to enjoy the late afternoon calm and an endless view into Humphreys Basin and Evolution Valley. Reluctantly, we returned to camp, arriving about 6 p.m.

At 5 a.m. reveille put our group on the move down Darwin Canyon ahead of the sun, and we won the race to Evolution Lake. At this point the Muir Trail continues around the east side of the lake. The outlet stream, Evolution Creek, turns into a roaring cataract shortly after leaving the lake but can be crossed at the west edge of the lake, thanks to some naturally placed boulders. After crossing the creek the Climber's Guide says, "Contour to the base of the peak . . ." This, like several other statements in the Guide, somewhat understates the case. The contour contains numerous slabs and domes and is tedious at best. Our return trip followed a better route, as follows: After crossing Evolution Creek, ascend slanting friction slabs on the lake side to the first prominent notch. Descend through the notch about 300 feet, then southwest

T H E H E R M I T , cont'd.

to the small lake due east of the peak. From this small lake we ascended a grassy chute to a high plateau directly below the peak. A diagonal chute leads across the face, ending in the infamous cruddy chute that is the normal approach. Crossing the chute, we climbed to the face and followed easy ledges to the summit. With the help of a rope thrown over the top and a should stand, all nine of our party made the summit. The register, incidentally, is placed at the foot of the block.

Returning via the previously described route, we regained our camp at Darwin Lake about 2 p.m. and began the tedious climb over Lamarck Col. (why are west-east climbs always so much more strenuous?) We arrived at North Lake about 6 p.m.

* * * *

DEVIL'S CRAG & BLACK DIVIDE, August 14-22 Wally Henry

Objects of the trip:

1. Have as many people as possible climb qualifying peak, Devil's Crag. 90% accomplished.
2. Provide a base camp for rock climbing in a relatively unclimbed area. 95% accomplished -- three new climbing routes established.
 - a. The Citadel: Class 5 north face by Dave Gladstone and Marc Leon.
 - b. Rambrand Peak: Class 4 northwest buttress by Marc Leon and Ed Rose.
 - c. Crag #4; Class 4 via the east side of the notch between Crag 3 and 4 by Connie Eaton and Wally Henry.
3. Climb the other 11 crags. 50% accomplished. A second ascent of Crag 5 and 6 was made by R. J. Secor, Bill Mattinson, Jim Cervenka, and Wally Henry. A third ascent of Crag #4 was made by Connie Eaton and Wally Henry.
4. Climb other qualifying peaks in the area. 90% accomplished.
 - Wheel Mountain -- climbed by about 12 people
 - Mt. McDuffie -- climbed by eight people
 - Black Giant -- Climbed by four people and place new register without removing completed one
 - Giroud Peak -- Climbed by nine people
5. Provide a base camp for those who wish to relax in a secluded mountain area. 0% accomplished. None of the participants fit into this category. The area, however, was secluded. (We saw almost no people except our own group for the middle five days of the trip.) Our campsites were beautiful. The lower lake at the head of Rambrand Creek is warm enough for swimming, and good fishing was available at Ladder Lake.

Conclusion: I think the nine-day Sierra trip should be encouraged for the interior part of the range. No problems arose due to private groups splitting and rejoining the main group. If enough days are provided where a variety of activities are offered, this length of trip should be acceptable to hikers of varying abilities.

TECHNICAL DETAILS REGARDING CLIMBING ROUTES ON DEVILS CRAG

Wally Henry

ROUTE 1 (Modified from Climber's Guide)

From Rambaud Creek climb toward the prominent saddle (11,553') one-half mile southeast of Wheel Mountain. At a point 500 feet below the saddle, turn left and climb a Class 3 couloir to a notch in the horseshoe-shaped ridge that connects Mt. Woodworth with the

Crags. Descent 650 feet down a scree slope into the basin west of the crags. From this basin ascend a well-defined diagonal chute that crosses the southwest face of Devils Crag. Ascend this Class 2-3 chute to the main ridge. Rope up and follow the ridge six pitches of Class 4 to the summit. Note that this ridge is basically horizontal, so that rappelling off the summit is not feasible; the six pitches of Class 4 must be downclimbed. Allow six hours for the 12 pitches.

ROUTE 3 in the Climber's Guide is as follows:

"From the upper end of the lake at 10,450' on Rambaud Creek, proceed southeast half a mile to the notch just under and northeast of the face; this is the roping up point. Traverse to the right (northwest) and up over somewhat loose rocks of a delicate pitch to the chute marking the middle of the face, planning the traverse so as to end well above the overhanging lower portion of the chute. Ascend this chute toward the summit over rock that is fairly sound. Belay positions are good for the most part. When 35 feet below the summit, cross to the north wall of the chute, ascend a high-angle pitch to the summit ridge, and scramble to the top."

It may be added that this route involves four Class 4 pitches at the bottom, then about two pitches of Class 3 and finishes with three more pitches of Class 4. This route provides a good rapell route off the summit, but note that a minimum of nine anchors are required.

This route is over good rock, is classis Class 4, but a total exposure of 1,500 feet may bother those not familiar with it. This climb will require six hours round trip.



MT. RITTER & BANNER PK, August 20-21 Dennis Lantz

The impending climb became a game of musical chairs in the final week as some 13 participants dropped out, and the leaders' phones rang late as the rides reshuffled. Despite the near epidemics and business pressures, eleven climbers headed for Lake Ediza and a pre-arranged meeting with three others who were lucky enough to enjoy the Sierras a day early. Somebody besides the SPS has heard of this area; the traffic was like Whitney Portal and Kearsarge Pass, but younger.

After setting camp and enjoying lunch in the sun, 14 set out for Banner Peak by way of the saddle between Ritter and Banner. Three abandoned the pace at a good vantage point and watched the climb through binoculars; then two others fell far behind and were finally stashed at the saddle during the summit climb. Nine reached the register, including all five of the SPS members on the trip. The steep snow descent from the saddle provided the only excitement, as crampons and ice axe were mandatory and the slow two lacked confidence in their technique. Crampon practice would be a valuable addition to springtime SPS ice axe sessions.

The following morning saw eight survivors start for Mt. Ritter, with everyone comfortably on top in a little over three-and-a-half hours. The classic southeast glacier route was uneventful except that the glacier was hard ice, not snow, and ice axe and crampons were again a must for safe travel. The down-climb and pack out were as uneventful as a trip can be with beautiful weather, incredible scenery and fine climbing.

A S C E N T S . cont'd.

MT. RUSKIN, September 11-12 Norm Rohn

A small, strong group of five gained the 6,000 feet to Taaboose Pass in six-and-a-half hours on a beautiful, even if slightly too warm day. Two of the party climbed Cardinal while the other three basked in the warm sun in the pass and watched the two-hour struggle up the sandy chute and across the skyline to the summit.

Camp was made a mile farther west and 500 feet lower where the trail runs along the stream and enters the first trees -- about 11,000'. The ominous-looking black clouds melted away before dark. The night was cool, brilliant with stars and a waning moon.

The descent from camp to the South Fork of the Kings and across was most pleasant in the early morning cool, the only reluctance being to give up that elevation. In another hour we were up in the cirque south of Ruskin choosing a route to the ridge. There were many possible through the rocky outcrops, talus and sand, so we each chose one. The group rejoined at the false summit and then traversed the narrow, 200-yard ridge to the high point and register-less cairn. Brewer, Whitney, the Palisades and Goddard were all in view. It's a challenge to identify many of those in between. Split is spectacular immediately to the northeast. During this whole trip from Taaboose Pass on, Arrow is perhaps the most outstanding mountain. It has that solid, substantial, pyramidal appearance as it stands guard over Bench Lake.

After some lunch and pictures, back along the ridge, down through the talus and sand, across the Muir Trail and South Fork and up to camp. We were in the pass at 2:30 and headed for the cars. Jack Bradford boomed it and was out in less than two-and-a-half hours, while the rest of the part took up to 45 minutes longer.

We were all again reminded of why September is a great Sierra month -- no more crowds, cool days and cold nights, no mosquitoes, and if you've climbed all those mountains nearby, the fishing's great.

* * * *

RUSSELL & CARILLON, September 18-19 Jerry Snyder

Seventeen Sierra Club members met at Whitney Portal at 8 a.m. for a leisurely backpack to Upper Boy Scout Lake via the Ebersbacher Ledges. The objective of all was Mt. Russell. Once in camp, seven climbers tuned up by doing Thor almost "directissima." Three others elected to spread the damages and crossed the Russell-Carillon ridge to get Tunabora and Carillon. The balance of the group used the time wisely to practice rappelling on the nearby rocks.

Sunday began at 5 a.m. and shortly after 6 all but one set out for Russell. From the lake the route went almost directly toward the Russell-Carillon ridge. At the ridge the route began on the south side but soon shifted to the north side of the ridge. However, it always stayed near the top. A register was found on the east horn, but since the leader believes the printed word, and the Climber's Guide claims the west horn is higher, we continued the traverse. Efforts to use a water bottle for a spirit level were unsuccessful in determining if one of the horns is higher than the other. In any event, both horns were scaled, and the group returned to the saddle where those who had already done Tunabora and Carillon signed out under the drafted deputy leader, Fred Hoeptner. The remaining eleven climbers constituted a sufficiently strong party that it was not felt necessary to ask them to wait.

Tunabora, then Carillon, were scaled, and everyone was to the cars by 5 p.m. For reference, the north face of the Russell-Carillon ridge went as a steep scramble somewhat short of Class 3, while the balance was just a grind.

A S C E N T S , cont'd.

CHARYBDIS & BLACK GIANT, September 18-19. Frank Meyers

Four participants met George Hubbard and me at Blue Lake at 7 a.m. Saturday, having walked in Friday evening. At Echo Lake (the last point for safe solo return) one dropped out. Because of some misleading information, we initially selected the center notch to cross the divide. Although I was able to climb down, it seemed Class 4. After viewing the area from the south, I directed the rest of the party to the correct (Class 3) pass. We reached Helen Lake at 4 p.m., but the planned afternoon climb of Black Giant was not popular. Also, because of the cold weather, the planned camp near Black Giant Pass was passed up in favor of the Muir Hut.

Sunday morning three of us set out for Charybdis. Unfortunately the assistant leader caused the group to stretch out very badly when he began the strange ritual of walking up and down and back and forth on a talus area below Black Giant Pass. Apparently the magic circles did not immediately work, as he reported he could not locate his wristwatch! Because of the gourmet breakfast enjoyed by the assistant leader (he puts ice in his instant breakfast!) and the lost watch, the time was a bit late. We diverted the climb to Black Giant (which George had already climbed and which fit our schedule much better anyway). Rich Quackenbush and I made the top and returned to find George still performing his gyrations. Shortly after we joined his dance (called the ritual Talus Hop, done with deliberation and anguish) he found the watch. In spite of a Sybaritic luncheon, the party was over the pass by 3 p.m. and out to the cars by 7:30. We picked up our dropout at Blue Lake. He had spent Saturday night at a motel in Bishop and came back up with beer and cigars.

Route description (now we know): From the trail between Blue Lake and Dingleberry Lake, take a side trail (no sign) to the Emerald Lakes. Somewhat southwest of the second lake a verdant passage leads through a notch to the small lake north of Topsy Turvy Lake. Pass this small lake, Topsy Turvy Lake and Moonlight Lake on the west sides. At Echo Lake climb up above the east shore when you must and contour onto the bench above Echo Lake, following ducks. The correct pass is at the right, in the area of black rock. It is not the easiest on the north and looks a bit like a chimney climb, but it is easy Class 3 even with packs. A short chute leads down to the south. On the bench below descend toward the east and drop to the large lake below the pass via a grassy slope. Pass the lake on the west (excellent lunch stop) and go south. After passing the low ridge, turn sharply west and go over to a talus-filled chute to bypass another cliff. Meet the Muir Trail as it crosses a tributary stream coming from the northwest. I propose that the pass be called the "Black Notch."

Doris Golden showed us a convenient spring about 200 yards west of the Muir Hut. It rushes out and immediately disappears, all under the base of a cliff on the east side of a low ridge.

I first contemplated crossing the crest here in 1949, so this trip fulfilled a long-standing ambition. Sunday morning before sunrise I saw the zodiacal light clearly for the first time in my life. For an amateur astronomer that is quite a thrill. I enjoyed the trip and would like to lead it again next year and get Charybdis. The assistant leader says, "I never worked so hard for no peaks in my life!" But, George, you found your watch!

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

MT. WARREN (12,237'), August 21-22 Ron Jones

During my vacation this year spent in the Yosemite area, I climbed one peak on "The List" which I don't think has been written up before in the ECHO, and I thought an outline of the rather enjoyable route along the Warren Fork of Leevining Creek should be given.

There is a parking turnout located at 8,995' on the Tioga Pass Road where the Warren Fork intersects the highway. From this point an old wagon road, used by woodcutters for the May Lundy mine follows the stream up canyon. En route a person will find several old log cabins and also the sites of kilns used to supply the mines with charcoal. The wagon road, now a faint trail, leads over the divide between Warren Creek and Onieda Lake. There is an interesting view from the pass down to the May Lundy mine as well as other mines. A steep trail descends to the area which can also be reached by jeep road from the north.

One can see the reddish-brown talus slopes of Mt. Warren from low on the trail. There are several Class 1 routes to the peak obvious from above the 10,000' contour. Plan on three to four hours to the summit. A nice view from the Minarets to Tower Peak and a complete panorama of Mono Lake can be seen from the top.

* * * *

DISAPPOINTMENT & NORMAN CLYDE Ed Treacy

Magnificent weather permitted Don Anderson, Dave King and Ed Treacy to fill out a worthwhile double-header in the Palisades area over this August weekend. Norman Clyde had been the only objective, but the combination of a pleasant, invigorating hike to Finger Lake (gently-rising, nicely-timbered cross country from the trail's end at Brainard Lake) and a splendid, cloud-free day triggered us off to an afternoon climb of Disappointment Peak. We traversed the Middle Pal Glacier (using crampons) looking for an approach that would get us across the bergschrund and above the cliffs that border the main Palisades ridge in that area. This combination was found at a point about a quarter-mile south of the prominent moraine that intrudes into the glacier. The bergschrund was crossed easily.

Then the route was Class 4 for the first 50 to 75 feet, easing to Class 3 as we entered a shallow, wide crack. (This did not seem to be Route 3 described in the Guide.) Thereafter it was two hours of picking and choosing our way over moderate to high Class 3 as we worked west and north to the summit. The entire route was characterized by more than enough loose rock to keep us climbing very carefully. The descent was just as time-consuming and just as demanding; also, we got into one wrong chute that cost us half an hour for which we later paid. Darkness caught up with us en route back to camp and converted an hour of routine boulderhopping into two hours plus of enervating rock-floundering.

Sunday's climb of Norman Clyde was straightforward-up via the north face, constantly searching for and never quite finding a Class 3 route. We were on and off quite a bit of 4 before we reached the summit arete. Perhaps of greatest interest is the route used to gain the crest of the long ridge running north from Clyde. Approached

to gain the crest of the long ridge running north from Clyde. We approached this ridge from the east and were able to use a readily distinguishable ledge-chute combination just south of the ridge high point. This provided an easy Class 3 route to the top of the ridge. Round trip from Finger Lake to the Clyde summit required eight hours plus our down time on top.

* * * *

MT. CLARK Jerry Keating

Barbara Lilley and I climbed Mt. Clark (11,522') in a two-day, late September weekend that would have been somewhat shorter had a key landmark been shown correctly on the map.

After descending from the Mono Meadow roadhead on the Glacier Point highway, we crossed Illilouette Creek, then continued on trail to the Clark Fork crossing shown on the Merced Peak quad (15-minute series, 1953). From this location, our plan was to back-pack crosscountry to a camp (wood adequate, water flowing) .5 mile north of an unnamed lake between Gray Peak and Mt. Clark.

The map shows several side streams, and we wasted enough time bushwhacking and re-checking the map to preclude a summit attempt that afternoon. Contrary to the map, Red Creek apparently does not flow into the Clark Fork at the point shown, so all one needs to do to find the unnamed lake is keep to the right (south) side of the stream flowing from it. By staying far enough from the stream, downed trees and other obstructions are avoided.

From camp we crossed the ridge the next morning at a notch high on the peak's south shoulder, then contoured on sandy ledges to a point northeast of the summit. More sandy ledges brought us to a single but somewhat exposed Class 3 pitch to the register. Our climb and camp were made more congenial by Tim Treacy and a group of Bay Chapter climbers who also bagged Clark.

Barbara and I reached the car Sunday by 3 p.m., indicating that Gray Peak also could be climbed on a two-day weekend if it or Clark is done on Saturday. The climbs are expensive, however, as even backpackers are now being charged \$3 per day to enjoy the park!



THE SIERRA CLUB'S OUTINGS IMPACT STUDY PROJECT REVIEWED
by Fred Hoeptner

The current regulations formulated by the Angeles Chapter Advisory Council to minimize the impact of outings are largely arbitrary because of the lack of pertinent factual information. The Sierra Club's Outings Committee, faced with the same situation, has taken remedial action by committing, thus far, \$27,000 and contracting with a group of biologists from San Jose State College to produce a study to obtain "factual knowledge on the ecological effects of Sierra Club outings on the wilderness environment." Graduate students under the direction of eminent ecologists Drs. H. Thomas Harvey and Richard J. Hartesveldt started the study in the summer of 1970 and are continuing this year. The researchers recently issued their first annual report, from which the material in this article was drawn.

The first year's effort served mainly to define the specific problem areas where comprehensive study is warranted. During 1970, 12 outings were attended by various of the researchers. Extensive field notes and photographs were taken. The routes of all outings were plotted on topo maps. Detailed questionnaires were sent to all outings leaders and returns were analyzed. National Park Service and U.S. Forest Service personnel were consulted. Campsite areas were inspected. Schedules of chapter outings were perused. An intensive literature search was undertaken, with negative results thus far.

Specific areas to be studied in depth were determined. The following problems are considered serious enough to require immediate attention: (1) Impact of hiking and camping on alpine flora. Study plots will be established, some to be impacted and some to serve as controls. Studies are designed to answer such questions as how much trampling various species can withstand, recovery rates, results of soil compaction, and the effect of cross-country travel.

(2) Effects of pack animals on meadows, camps and trails. All aspects of this impact, e.g., trampling, feeding, urination and erosion, will receive intensive study.

(3) Firewood use versus forest productivity. Determination of the rate of downed wood production and the amount burned will be determined. Also studied will be the effect on the forest of conversion of downed wood to charcoal and ashes.

OUTINGS IMPACT STUDY, cont'd.

(4) Disposal of human wastes. Investigations will include evaluation of individual versus group latrines and optimum depth for disposal of feces to minimize leaching into waters and maximize bacterial decomposition.

(5) Camp group size and distribution. It is proposed to determine relative impact per person for different size outings and to resolve the question of compact versus dispersed camping.

(6) The location of campsites.

Preliminary work indicates that Sierra Clubbers generally select campsites on the basis of convenience of water supply, access to firewood, shelter from wind and rain, levelness of sleeping areas, availability of early morning sun and diversity of scenery. Apparently current practice is split on use of existing versus pristine campsites. The regulation of the Forest and Park Services that campsites be more than an arbitrarily selected 100 feet from streams and lakes is normally violated. Investigation is required to determine rational criteria for campsite selection.

(7) Water quality of wilderness lakes and streams. The effect of large camping groups on water quality will be studied.

While considered of lower priority, the problem of social impact will be included by surveying the attitudes of others who encounter Club groups. This seems especially important to this writer, since the Forest Service, at least, seems to be basing its wilderness use restrictions, at least at present, on social, rather than physical impact considerations.

Other matters of less immediate concern are also scheduled for attention.

The researchers stress the need to develop quantitative methods of measuring and evaluating impact to replace the present subjective and qualitative approaches. They note that they hope to have conclusions at the end of the second or third year of study. It will then be the responsibility of the Chapter and the Sections and Committees to make decisions on outings policies and procedures based on those findings.

Review of the recent progress report indicates that the main thrust of the study is to develop a relative, per person, impact for various types of club outings. While I hesitate to anticipate results, it seems evident that backpacking by relatively small groups should register lower on the impact scale than any other type of group activity. In fact, can't backpackers avoid with little effort all categories of physical impact except vegetative and ground trampling and human waste disposal? It will be interesting to see if these speculations are borne out.

LETTERS

Dear Editor:

A sober footnote to the Ritter-Banner trip report elsewhere in this issue, one of our party was advised by a local ranger that nine persons had died on Mt. Ritter this year -- so far. On Banner Peak we met two climbers without day packs, ice axes or goggles who had come up the glacier. We offered belays, but they chose to go down to Lake Catherine and circle the mountain, avoiding the steeper return down their climbing route. On Mt. Ritter, we found two others, with full packs and without maps or ice axes, who asked whether they could get over the western ridge of the big south face talus slope and down to the Ritter Lakes. They admitted they did not have crampons, but as they left, one asked the other, "What are crampons?" "Aw, it's those things you stick in holes in the rocks," was the answer.

In light of such skill and planning, it is a wonder there have not been more fatalities. A heavy toll led the Navajo to ban climbing on Shiprock; Smokey the Bear may tire of carrying bodies out of the Sierras and install some "consumer protection mea-

tures" to limit the freedom of climbing. Positive safety action by the SPS may be our best early defense against such chafing restrictions. Promoting one-day SPS-led practice sessions for non-SPS climbers could be such a step, perhaps coordinated with the Mountaineering Training Committee.

--Dennis Lantz--

FRANCE MAY LIMIT MOUNTAIN CLIMBERS
(LOS ANGELES TIMES, September 9, 1971)

PARIS -- Mountainclimbing not only can be dangerous, but it can also put a lot of other lives in danger if things go wrong.

Pierre Mazeaud, a deputy in the French National Assembly whose favorite sport is mountainclimbing, wants future climbers in France to prove their proficiency, take out a special license to climb and insure themselves against risk.

Mazeaud's bill, which will be presented when the assembly returns for its winter session, results from a sudden enormous increase in mountainclimbing fatalities in France this year. So far in 1971 there have been 68 climbing fatalities, compared with only 33 in 1970 and 26 in 1969. In all, 47 have died this year in assaults on the famous Mont Blanc massif in the French Alps and more than 100 climbers have had to be rescued after falls or injuries.

It has been a bad season in the Alps, with abrupt changes in the weather and alternate spells of heat, cold and rain which have produced unusual rockfalls and bad climbing conditions.

But the fact remains that too many inexperienced climbers are relying on luck rather than knowledge and judgment. Mazeaud's bill would require climbers to pass a test just like an airplane pilot or an automobile driver and would penalize those who attempt difficult heights without a license.

--Don Cook

Times Staff Writer--



(As a follow-up to the lengthy analysis of the recent Mt. Ritter tragedy reproduced in the August ECHO from the July issue of the Bay Chapter YODELER, these two letters to the editor are copied from the August issue of that publication.)

Editor:

As producer of the film "By Nature's Rules" and the brochure "Four Lines of Defense against Hypothermia," I have necessarily done considerable research on the subject of death from cold.

The analysis of the four deaths on Mt. Ritter in the July YODELER failed to mention a vital point: what kind of trousers were the people wearing.

Poor leg protection is a recurring factor in hypothermia deaths. The statement that the party was adequately clothed is in error. Two members became so cold before the storm broke, that the climb was abandoned.

Reading between the lines, it appears that this was a slow party, possibly because of a mismatch in strength and experience. The duration of exposure was increased, and the rate of heat production from exercise was considerably reduced.

In the high Sierras, altitude is a serious factor in reducing resistance to exhaustion and cold. All the victims resided at or near sea level. The precipitating causes were probably a combination of hypoxia, exhaustion and cold, leading to death by hypothermia.

If there is a lesson in this tragedy, it is this: preparations should be made on the assumption that a storm will occur. The party should make plans and provide equipment accordingly.

--Jim Lawless--

Editor:

I have read with great interest and concern Gordon Peterson's account of his investigation of the Memorial Day quadruple tragedy on Mt. Ritter. I believe that Peterson was far less critical of this party than he should have been. Two points lead me to the conclusion that the climbing party was not "strong" but weak.

(1) They were unable to move fast when necessary. I have descended Ritter on the very route which defeated this party. It is very easy Class 3 (cf. Route 4 up Clyde Minaret, also rated 3 but far harder). I am surprised that this party needed a rope. But, since they had the rope, why did they not rappel?

(2) They were deficient in route-finding ability. In descending, the party wandered far left (or west) of the all-important Ritter-Banner notch. Even the guide's blindness should not have led to this error, had the rest of the party paid attention as they ascended. It is astonishing that, after the tragedy, the survivor tramped westward rather than to Ediza Lake.

I do not say these harsh things to tarnish the image of these five men. There is a more serious matter at stake. The Ritter tragedy and also the more recent triple tragedy on Grand Teton) reveal a dangerous consequence of the current backpacking and mountaineering craze triggered by the ecology movement.

Far too many people are dashing euphorically into the wilderness with no sense of what it may demand of them. I'm sure I'm not the only backpacker who has in recent years given out food, first aid, and even maps to unhappy stranded hikers. Such incidents are simply less serious versions of the Ritter and Grand Teton tragedies. I believe the Sierra Club should publicize these tragedies with the explicit aim of sobering up the backpacking craze. All backpackers need to be reminded that an enthusiasm for the wilderness is not at all the same as the necessary knowledge and skill to survive there. It would not be too much to urge that a dramatic warning poster be nailed to the front of every store selling backpacking equipment. "The wilderness is not always gentle."

--Bruce C. Johnson --

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Dear Mr. Ory,

This is my application for emblem status in the Sierra Peaks Section. I'm sure I can safely claim the record -- booby prize -- for longest interval, 40+ years, between times of ascent of first and tenth emblem peaks. As partial compensation, my first additional 15 were completed before the SPS was well started.

Emblem Peaks

Mt. Whitney 1931
Mt. Kaweah 1933
Mt. Darwin 1935
Mt. Brewer 1938
Mt. Williamson 1954
Split Mountain 1956
Mt. Ritter 1961
Olancho Peak 1968
Matterhorn Peak 1971
Mt. Lyell 1971

First 15 others

Alta Peak 1931
Florence Peak 1931
Arrow Peak 1933
Mt. Guyot 1933
Mt. Stanford (Kings-Kern) 1933
Triple Divide 1933
Mt. Silliman 1933
Black Giant 1935
Mt. Sill 1948
Clouds Rest 1949
San Joaquin Mountain 1949
Mt. Muir 1952
Mt. Tyndall 1952
Milestone Mountain 1952
Mt. Hooper 1954

Yours truly,

DAN POPPER

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