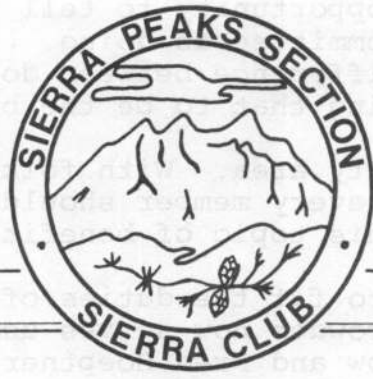


The Sierra

ECHO

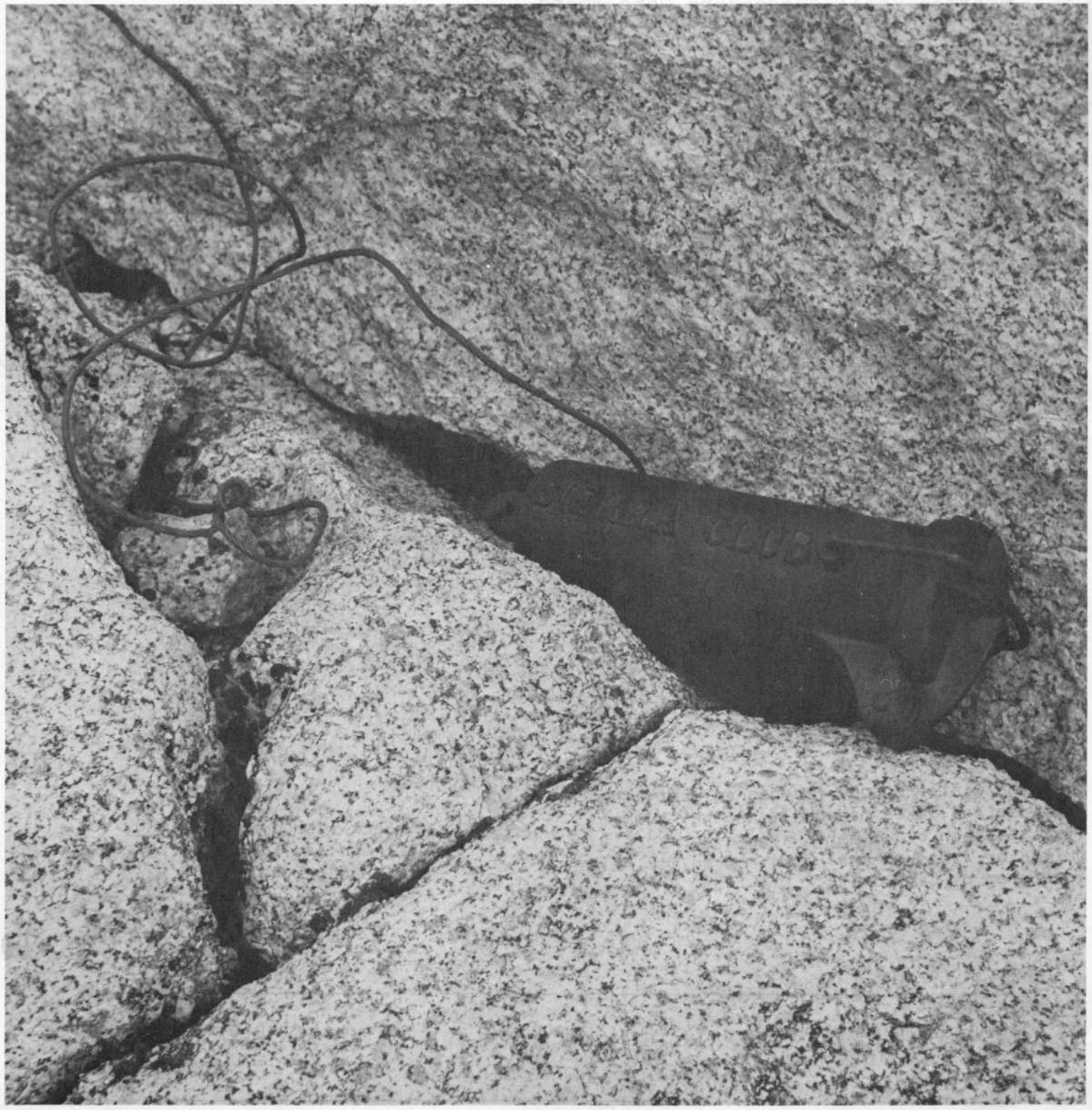


VOLUME 19

MAY

JUNE 1975

NO. 3



CHAIRMAN'S CORNER

I thought I'd take this opportunity to tell you what a tremendous job this year's management committee is doing. To really appreciate us, you must ascertain the difference between doing nothing and not acting after carefully determining that to be the best course of action.

We have acted in the safety area. With folks like Norm Rohn and Horace Ory to create the input, every member should find Echo articles and meeting discussions on this topic of benefit.

Jim Cervenka has agreed to fit the duties of program chairman into his busy schedule, and Hal Browder now serves us as head conservation buff. Many thanks to Paul Kellow and Fred Hoeptner for steering these committees until successors were found.

In response to some very sincere--and some less than earnest responses to my last chairman's corner, let me suggest that a recognition of more appropriate forums and the limitations of this sections objectives in no way need conflict with other compelling interests. I'm talking about conservation and I'm saying I can still perceive a personal moral obligation to further the loftier goals of the Sierra Club without the Sierra Peak Section taking a stand on urban renewal. And I will continue to deny that I have knowingly eaten pupfish.

'Nuff said. Let's do some climbing.

SIERRA CLUB ON T.V.

The Chapter now has it's own T.V. show, which will air monthly on Channel 68, KVST.

Letters and comments on topical issues are solicited.

Address your letters to:
SIERRA CLUB- EYE ON THE EARTH
KVST- Channel 68
1136 N. Highland Ave.
Hollywood, Calif. 90038

The winter's snow recedes at last; the springs and lakes renewed...another summit register--an old-timer! Maybe a Norman Clyde or Walter Starr? This gem on Mt. Mills captured by Carl Smith.

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WANTED....

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Back issues of the ECHO, Vol. 12, 1968 and earlier. Will purchase or copy and return.

Contact Tim Treacy
452 Dewey Blvd.
San Francisco, Calif. 94116

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THE SIERRA ECHO is published seven times a year by the Sierra Peaks Section of the Angeles Chapter of the Sierra Club. EDITOR - Paul Lipscomb, 9152 E. Olive St., Bellflower, CA 90706. MAILING - Ann Covalleri, 1515 Belleau Rd., Glendale, CA 91206. SUBSCRIPTIONS - \$3 per year. Subscribing to the ECHO is a requirement for active membership in the SPS. Send remittance before March 31 to: Duane McRuer, SPS Treasurer, 357 S. Meadows Ave., Manhattan Beach, CA 90266. COPY DEADLINE - Twentieth of every month.

SPRING STREAM CROSSINGS.....21 April 1975

As our skiers can all attest, this past winter will be noted for its snow fall, but the spring that followed it has more than made up for the winter's deficiency. As a result, when the melt begins and well into the summer, the Sierra streams will be full, cold and dangerous. Perhaps, the most underrated hazard to be encountered in Sierra mountaineering is its spring stream crossings.

The Park rangers will testify to the high fatality rate attributed to swollen spring streams, particularly among the inexperienced. The circumstances are often innocuous, but the streams are unforgiving of even minor mishaps. The swift current and icy cold deny recovery and even third party assistance is nearly impossible.

Those rushing torrents are spectacular and to the inexperienced nothing about the lovely warm day, the clear trails, and the log bridge appears forbidding. That snow-pack-fed stream, however, is very full of very cold and very fast-moving water. The log is apt to be slippery and the water conceals loose rocks and uncertain footing, made even more so by cold-numbered feet.

So much for the hazards, let's look to our countermeasures. Plan to cross swollen streams early in the day. Water flow tends to increase as a warm day proceeds to melt the snow fields.

A safety rope may be as important, and as confidence-building, in stream crossing as in rock climbing. A single fixed rope and a few carabiners can get a large party across a stream swiftly and safely. Since no significant dynamic loading is involved, the rope can be light. Five sixteenths or even quarter inch goldline is adequate. One hundred and twenty feet of 5/16" weighs less than 3 1/2 pounds.

Use a stout pole or staff. A six or eight foot pole, often found or cut on the spot, sturdy enough not to bend or break will provide three point stability on that slippery log or in that fast current. Place the pole firmly on the bottom three to six feet upstream of your stream-crossing path and move only one of your three points at a time.

When wading in a cold stream with a rocky bottom, wear your boots. Take your socks off and carry them across. On the other side, drain the boots, dry your feet and sock up. A second set of wool socks can be helpful here. I've also seen people stay dry when wading streams by tying plastic bags over their boots.

As in so much of our beloved mountaineering, the hazards are real, the consequences dire, but the precautions simple.

Norm Rohn

CALENDAR

JULY	12-14	WHORL, VIRGINIA.....	ROHN, DEE
	12-13	MATTERHORN, TWIN, VIRGINIA.....	MUELL, AYERS, BYINGTON
	12-13	MUAH, TRAIL.....	SCHUMACHER, HACK
	19-20	GODDARD.....	RAMIREZ, JENKINS
	19-20	CLARK, GRAY.....	MURPHEY, KLUTH
	19-20	MITRE, MAJOR GENERAL.....	MAC LEOD, HICKMAN
	26-27	LANGLEY.....	TED and ANNA PINSON
	26-27	SPANISH MOUNTAIN, OBELISK.....	MEYERS, BAILEY
	26-27	DARWIN.....	BRANDSMA, CROLEY
	26-27	OTHER MINARETS.....	SCHFRIN, DEE
	26-27	MT. TOM.....	SCHULTZ, NILSSON
AUG.	2-3	VACATION.....	MAC LEOD, HICKMAN
	8-10	NORTH PALISADE.....	MAUK, HOEPTNER
	8-11	GODDARD, CHARYBDIS, BLACK GIANT.....	RUSSELL, MC RUER
	9-10	LYELL, MACLURE.....	BRUCE, MC COSKER
	15-17	FLORENCE, VOGELSANG, FOERSTER.....	LIPSOHN, HARDT
	16-17	LYELL, MACLURE.....	KELLOW, ORY
	16-17	MINARETS.....	LAURIA, SYKES
	16-24	BLACK DIVIDE, WHEEL, DEVIL'S CRAG, GIRAUD, MC DUFFIE.....	SECOR, JONES
	22-25	WILLIAMSON, TYNDALL.....	WILKINSON, HOAK
	23-24	PEAKS N W OF GOETHE.....	SMATKO, LILLEY
	23-24	PILOT KNOB, FOUR GABLES.....	PETITJEANS
AUG	29-SEP 1	NORTHEAST YOSEMITE CREST.....	MAC LEOD, KEATING
AUG	29- SEP1	WHALEBACK, GLACIER RIDGE.....	MANTLE, GOEBEL
AUG	30- SEP 1	MORRISON, BALDWIN, RED SLATE.....	RANSCHAU, WARD
AUG	30- SEP 1	GODDARD.....	BRANDSNA, CROLEY
SEP	6-7	HUMPHREYS.....	KELLOW, DEE
	6-7	PACIFIC CREST TRAIL, CARTAGO, OLANCHA, MUAH.....	JENKINS, BAILEY
	6-7	IRON MOUNTAIN.....	AKAWIE, KABLER
	13-14	BALCKCAP.....	MAC LEOD, STEPHENSON
	13-14	ANSEL LAKE.....	AMNEUS, ROBINSON
	19-21	ANGORA, COYOTE.....	DEE, MUELL
	20-21	SPLIT.....	CERVENKA, SCHULTZ, HARDT
	20-21	ABBOT, DADE.....	KELLOW, MURPHEY
	27-28	DENNISON RIDGE, GARFIELD GROVE.....	KEATING, FLETCHER
	27-28	THIRD ANNUAL GOURMET BACKPACK.....	BARNES, LANTZ
OCT	4-5	SIRRETTA, CANNEL POINT, TAYLOR DOME.....	KELLOW, WILKINSON
	18-19	ROYCE, MERRIAM.....	BEYER, CERVENKA
	18-19	BALL DOME, SUGARLOAF.....	LIPSOHN, LILLEY
	25-26	KENNEDY, HARRINGTON.....	JONES, WARD
NOV	1-2	TAYLOR DOME, SIRRETTA, ROCKHOUSE.....	RANSCHAU, WARD

ADDED TRIPS

Aug. 16-17 Sat-Sun SPS

E:Minarets: Old favorite 5th class climbs and maybe some new routes. For great climbing and scenery combined send SASE with recent rock resume to Dennis Lantz by Aug. 5. Limited to first 10 smooth talkers or those whose prowess is already known. Leader: Don Lauria. Assistant: Dick Sykes.

Sep. 27-28 Sat-Sun SPS/PCS

M:Third Annual Gourmet Backpack: With the Peak Climb Section of Loma Prieta Chapter, display your high altitude culinary skills, climb a listed peak and maybe join the Sierra Ponds Section. Send SASE and proposed wine list by Sep. 10 to North Leader: George Barnes or South Leader: Dennis Lantz.

NEW MEMBERS

BOSSSEN, Michael D.
1934 Malcolm
Los Angeles, 90025
474-6602

JOHNSON, Melvin T.
4439 Hackett Ave.
Lakewood, 90713
425-1380

KING, Tom
809 S. Bundy Dr. #204
Los Angeles, 90049

RICHARDSON, Gary
3232 Quartz Lane, #20
Fullerton, 92631

Zaleski, Anthony
17264 Euclid
Fountain Valley, 92708

ADDRESS CHANGES

CATES, Bob
Box 2861
Seal Beach, 90740

COLLIER, Bruce
4548 Fir Ave.
Seal Beach, 90740
436-9211

GRINSTEINER, Ron and Vi
2558 Marseille
Stockton, 95207
(209) 951-3477

Holladay, Delores
3645 La Entrada
Santa Barbara, 93105
(805) 682-1752

Morfin, Charles Jr.
11554 Elkhurst St.
Santa Fe Springs, 90670
868-2408

TREACY, Tim
452 Dewey Blvd.
San Francisco, 94116
(415) 681-2658

Climbers taken short on the Matterhorn can look forward to a fully functional lavatory, 13,100 feet up the mountain. This contribution to Alpine endeavour is the brainchild of the Zermatt Tourist Office, using a gadget developed by the International Environment Protection Corps. It will be installed at the back of the Solvay hut, where human waste will be converted into dust. The device burns its contents, once the cover of the seat is pulled down, thanks to an electric battery, a cylinder of compressed gas and a chimney. The lavatory is needed because, on a fine day in summer, there may be 150 climbers trying to ascend the 14,688 foot-high pyramid, with queues waiting to use the seven one-hundred-foot-long fixed ropes above the shoulder.

The Solvay hut is being further improved by the installation of an SOS radio. Until now, climbers had to scramble down 2,400 feet to phone from the Hoernli hut. Instructions on how to use the radio are printed in seven languages. A similar number will explain use of the lavatory for those in need.

(Ah..the Wilderness Experience!) Ed.

LAWSUIT AGAINST NATIONAL PARK ENTRY RESTRICTIONS

Mountain Safety Research, Inc. (MSR) tests climbing equipment and also manufactures and sells mountaineering gear which is constantly tested and modified to make it safer and better. Now MSR is going to court for the benefit of climbers and backpackers, with an impending lawsuit against the Park Service and the Supt. of Mt. Rainier National Park who through use of the permit system have imposed absurd and excessive restrictions on the number of climbers and hikers in the Park. (A permit was even denied for crevasse rescue practice!)

The law says that Rainier National Park is for the benefit and enjoyment of the people. It also states that the Park Service "shall promote the use of the park." Therefore, MSR believes that their restriction attitude is illegal and is challenging them under a statute of the Administrative Procedures Act, which states: "A person adversely affected or aggrieved by agency action within the meaning of a relevant statute is entitled to judicial review thereof." More than 2500 backpackers were denied their requests for camping permits in Rainier National Park in 1973.

Financial assistance is needed. Send contributions to MSR-Mt. Rainier Defense Fund, Mountain Safety Research, 8th South at South 96th St., Seattle, Wash. 98108. (Donations of \$10 or more will be acknowledged by a 5 x 8 infrared photo print of Mt. Rainier.) If MSR wins this legal battle, it could affect entry restrictions in all National Parks.

MSR Newsletters are well worth reading. (The March 1975 issue describes the reasons for the lawsuit.) Send \$1 (to above address) for yearly newsletter and catalog; \$1.75 more for reprint of back issues. For \$10 you become a member and receive a MSR shoulder patch.

AMERICAN ALPINE CLUB SEEKS NEW MEMBERS

The AAC is the only nationally organized club devoted exclusively to the sport of climbing and mountaineering. Among its purposes is to act as a liaison between climbers and land owner agencies (USFS, NPS, etc.) of this country, between the many regional outdoor climbing and mountaineering organizations of this country, and between American climbers and governments of other mountainous countries of the world; to aid in the exploration and study of the high mountains of the world through the sponsoring of expeditions and research; to record and disseminate information about all mountains of the world through its library, publications and meetings.

The AAC's accomplishments include the Teton Climbing Ranch (open to all climbers), sponsorship of the 1974 expedition to the Pamirs (Russia), the American Alpine Journal, and the report on Accidents in North American Mountaineering.

New members are actively being recruited. An applicant's climbing record should demonstrate a sustained interest and proficiency in mountaineering--generally 3-years of active climbing including ascents requiring technical climbing skills; other factors considered are evidence of leadership, variety in regions climbed in and types of climbing done, polar exploration, contributions to mountain art, continued service to the mountaineering community.

Application forms can be obtained from Mike Sherrick, 6256 Belmar, Reseda, California 91335. Phone: 344-0964.



ASCENTS



JOSHUA TREE CLIMB, January 25-26

....Dennis Lantz

No, actually we climbed the rocks, not the forbidden joshua trees -- at least when the leaders were looking. On the other hand, the car pool list contained 100+ names, and we weren't watching them every minute, so who knows?

Saturday at Sheep Pass featured lots of technical practice sessions, from beginners through advanced, capped by convivial campfires and dinners such as only the gourmet backpack will allow. On Sunday, the focus shifted to Hidden Valley, where we were joined at various times by Don Cornell and Dave Swickard of the Park Service. They are responsible for climbing/rescue work and for the Sheep Pass/Hidden Valley area, respectively. Of particular interest to them was the ALTC rock checkout done by Jay Titus and the MTC rock instructor checkout handled by Dick Sale.

As for climbs on Sunday, Kyle Brown led Mike's Books and West Chimney, Paul Cooley handled several fierce practice routes as well as Beginners One and Two, and Diana Dee led both Zig Zag and Outhouse Chimney. Meanwhile, Tom Sarazen led Circe and The Eye of the Cyclops, Chuck Youngberg watched over Bat Crack, Checkerboard and Pinnacle Stand, and Ray Lantz got a rope up on The Blob on The Bong. (That assured him a chance to do the long overhanging rappel, a favorite of most who've done it.) If all those sound a little exciting to you, watch your schedule for the next SPS rock practice and join the fun.

NORTH PALISADE AND THUNDERBOLT PEAK....June 14-16 1974...Hubbard/Mantle

Now that I've set the record for the most delinquent writeup, I yield to our illustrious chairman's hounding and submit this chronicle.

The schedule said heroes could climb No. Pal. Saturday afternoon. We found that we had few heroes, but lots of emblem peak aspirants; so we started the trip a day earlier on Friday morning. Leaving the roadhead at Glacier Lodge, ten of us hiked up the trail on the North Fork of Big Pine Creek to a point between Fourth and Fifth Lakes, where we stopped for lunch. Slogging cross country from here through snow, all were at camp at the SW end of San Mack Lake (which was still frozen over) by midafternoon.

Saturday morning we awoke to a windy, cool, but clear day and set out due south to the Palisade Glacier. Here Bob Carlson headed up for Mt. Sill while the rest of us donned our crampons for the climb up to the U Notch. After negotiating an unstable looking, yet substantial snowbridge across the bergschrund, we slogged our way up to the top of the U Notch. Clyde's Variation Route from here to the summit was iced up so that we had to climb directly up out of the U Notch. While waiting for one-by-one belays, we were met by four others, three of whom joined us for the climb. After a 200' vertical climb to the summit ridge, the rest of the climb is routine class 3. The superb views of the glacier 2000' below and the surrounding peaks were enhanced by John McKinley's sharing of his champagne as he celebrated his attainment of the SPS emblem. Fortunately we had all regained our sobriety by the time we got back to the point where you rapel down into the U Notch. Doug went down first and joined Ray Magnuson for a climb of Polemonium Peak, which is the first peak on the other side of the U Notch. After what seemed to be an unending process, we finally were all back to the U Notch by late afternoon. The descent back to camp routine, tho caution is required to descend the 45 degree slope back to the glacier.

Early Sunday morning we awoke to another fine day. Four who had already climbed T-Bolt went off to do Mt. Winchell, while the remaining 11 started for our main objective. We took a route similar to Route 5 in the Climber's Guide. An excellent expanded description of the route is given by Dick May in the August, 1971 issue of the Echo. We essentially climbed a relatively low angle snow slope to the crest where we traversed 1/4 mile to the summit block. (The fixed rope was installed and two belayed pitches were required for the traverse. We discovered on the return that it would have been easier to stay low for the first part of the traverse.)

After throwing the rope over the summit block, about half the group watched (in various stages of bemusement), the other half either climb or get hauled up the block. The excitement over, we settled down for a leisurely lunch followed by some more rock scrambling back to the snow slope where most enjoyed a long glissade most of the way back to camp.

We then packed up and straggled back to the cars to end a thoroughly enjoyable climbing weekend.

The SPS scored another safety training first this weekend, and, according to the participants, it was a rousing success. Hundreds of climbers have been introduced to technical climbing at SPS practice sessions, and have developed more advanced skills there, as well. As any rock leader will confirm, however, it's a completely different game out on the "pointy" end of the rope -- and how do you make that giant step from follower to leader?

Dick Sykes, former SPS Chairman, Westridge manager, and cofounder of Molehill Mountain Guides, donated a weekend to the Section as director/instructor of the rock leadership seminar. His first lesson was in domestic relations, as he managed in a chill wind to keep his wife, mother-in-law and two babies both warm and happy. How much of this was due to "An Adequate White Wine", how much to gifts of certain Washington State beverages (Green Death), and how much to his own animal magnetism, we shall leave to the gossip of the participants. Anyway, thanks to his four young ladies for their patience.

A general discussion introduced everyone to some of the dynamics of anchor location, rope handing and falls. Continuing seminars covered equipment, psychology, route selection, climbing techniques, and numerous other topics. Some hands-on demonstration and practice covered anchors and protection, and then came the great lead. Every participant got to try his first 5th-class lead. It's a completely different trip, and it can be exhilarating.

Congratulations to all who led their first 5th-class pitch that weekend: Chris Anderson, Eileen Baumann, Dan Hershman, Rich Mitchell, Meridee Muell, Gordon Ruser, and Chuck Youngberg.

ALTA PEAK.....April 26-27.....Jim Murphy

Seven climbers, including leaders, were anticipated at the trailhead but only four showed up. Too bad for the no shows. The forest ranger predicted snow by noon and maximum avalanche conditions, because of alternating warmer days followed by more snow. Our start was late on Saturday due to icy road conditions. We decided to base camp at Mehrten Meadow instead of Emerald Lake just to be cautious of the avalanche condition. The route began at Wolverton Meadow and followed the ski trail (the trail on the topo map) to 8,000 feet where the trail splits. The ski trail was packed enough so that snow shoes were not needed. It started to snow about noon and snow shoes were needed shortly after the split in the trail. The snow was falling heavier by the time we arrived at Panther Gap and about 1/2 mile later we decided to set up camp on the ridge as too much white out was making navigation difficult.

Sunday morning was clear and beautiful, the outline of our tracks could be seen below, so we decided to try for the peak. Our start was again late, but three of us were on the summit, 11,204, at noon. We followed the gully west of Tharps Rock to reach the summit area. The views of the Sierra's to the east and north were spectacular. The summit was difficult to find because it was buried in snow. A couple of azimuths confirmed our position. A white out came shortly but we followed our tracks all the way back. The white out provided an eerie, wintery feel to the trip. We were at the car by 5:30 with plenty of light to drive off the mountain and dinner in Three Rivers.

My thanks to Don Croley for a fine job of assisting. This is a good trip for the early season and there was plenty of soft snow.

MT. GOODE.....March 15-16.....R. Keenan, R. Boyles

The leaders were met at the end of the plowed road by four winter climbers, clear skies, cold wind, and deep fresh powder snow -- but not the expected snow mobiles. So the four-mile trip up the road to South Lake had to be added to the try on Mt. Goode.

This year the usually spectacular, great slabs of ice left along the shore of South Lake as the reservoir is drawn down during the winter were all smoothly covered by the recent snows. We had crossed most of the lake and had just climbed up the shore, when a distant cry of help from the single trailing member of the party brought us hurriedly back around the rise that hid him from view. He had fallen into a South Lake crevasse!...Well, almost. Our hiker, who strayed slightly off the broken trail, had jammed his foot four feet deep into the ice crack formed when the outer edge of the ice slab he was climbing over broke and tilted away under his weight. Urged on by not infrequent cries of pain, it took 20 minutes of careful ice chipping to free his foot. Fortunately it was only sore, but since strenuous uphill climbing was ahead, he decided to return to the cars.

After a late lunch rest, we attacked the steep slopes southeast of the lake which lead toward Long Lake and our day's objective -- Saddlerock Lake, just below Mt. Goode. It was extremely tough going -- usually 18 inches deep in the soft snow. By 4:30 p.m. we were less than a mile from South Lake and decided to make camp well short of our goal in a clump of trees just off the slopes of Mt. Hurd. An evening's speculation on how we might still make the peak and return to the cars on Sunday was decided by a full night of howling wind and snow.

It was still snowing in the morning so a retreat to the cars seemed appropriate. The leaders' route selection had seemed too far to the west the previous day, so we reconnoitred to the east for a better valley to ascend next time before heading back down to South Lake. We had to break trail through heavy snow all over again but it was down hill and we made the cars by early afternoon.

It's very discouraging to have to give up the climb; but on a two-day trip, we have learned that everything, particularly the weather, has to go near perfect for success. The deep snow made the extra four miles up to South Lake a bit too much this time. However, the freshly snow-clad Sierra Crest -- even from below -- presented a beautiful scene. We had a strong group of climbers -- Don Hudson, Mike McQuarter, Ray Sheppard, and particularly, Ambrose Soo, a high school junior who demonstrated endless endurance breaking trail.

SMITH/CRAG.....May 10-11.....Bradley/Klinepeter

Inasmuch as the road to Fish Creek Campground was closed due to the late dry-out this year, 27 participants met Saturday morning at the Kennedy Meadows pack station. Because of the road closure, the original itinerary had to be scrapped and the leader decided to go up the Kennedy Meadows/Beck Meadows Trail and try to find a suitable place to cross the stream.

The South Fork of the Kern was swollen with spring run-off and several tries were made along the way before successfully securing a fixed line from bank to bank, thus allowing 21 people to cross. Up to this point, seven people had signed out for various reasons, leaving 20 participants for the peak climb.

The stream crossing had taken 2-1/2 hours and due to the late hour, the leader decided to find a campsite for the night and climb Crag on Sunday and forego Smith completely. There was water in Crag Creek so we made camp at Clover Meadow. Some excitement was stirred up by a visit from a friendly rattler (who wouldn't rattle) and who insisted in nosing around our campsite until he was placed in a plastic bag and carried to the far end of the meadow.

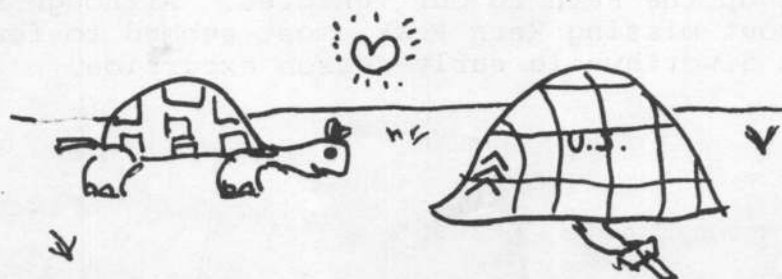
Sunday's peak climb was rather uneventful with all twenty participants making the summit in 3-1/2 hours. It was decided not to recross the South Fork on the way out which made the return trip considerably longer. Everyone was out by 4:00 p.m. however.

The leader would like to thank his assistant, John Klinepeter, who missed out on the peak because he returned with some of those who signed out. Thanks also to Jon Fredland who capably acted as assistant leader for the remainder of the trip after the stream crossing. And finally to Norm Rohn and Don McLean for their assistance and advice.

SAFETY NOTE: (Leader's assessment)

An incident occurred during the stream crossing which should be expanded on so that the lesson learned might be of possible benefit on future spring trips.

On this trip, which as originally planned did not include a stream traverse, only two ropes were available and these had to be tied together in order to reach across the stream (about 100 ft. wide) and function as a fixed line. Each person affixed a self-belay to the fixed line in the event that they might be swept off their feet by the strong current. They had been told to keep the belly bands of their packs unbuckled which was, to a degree, a disadvantage in that the shifting weight of the pack was cumbersome. It is still felt, however, that the advantage of being able to discard the pack when in trouble far outweighs the above disadvantage.



MORE

One of the participants stumbled and fell in the area of greatest depth (slightly over the waist) and strongest current. He struggled to regain his footing but was unsuccessful, partly due to the fact that he still had his pack on. He was able to finally struggle free of the pack but shortly thereafter his belay failed and he was swept downstream at a rapid rate. Fortunately, he either managed to grasp a bush or was swept into it which arrested his forward movement. He was unable to help himself any further at this point due probably to a combination of six to seven minutes immersion in the cold (42°F) water and his struggles to regain his footing and/or get rid of his pack. We were able to reach him however and drag him to shore. He suffered no lasting ill effects and was able to return to the cars that afternoon.

The immediate cause for the failure of the self-belay was the fact that the participant had used a nylon sleeping bag strap, the fabric portion of which probably would have been strong enough to resist considerable tension. The buckle however was the weakest link. The teeth were bent by the pressure exerted by the fallen participant, thus allowing the two ends of the strap to part. It is felt that the belay would have held if the strap had been tied in a knot rather than relying on the strength of the buckle.

ROCKHOUSE PEAK and DOMELAND WILDERNESS....May 3-4.....John Robinson

A locked gate about two miles up the road from Kennedy Meadows thwarted our early-season attempt on Kern Peak. A heavy blanket of snow on the higher regions of the Sierra would have made the climb difficult anyway, so we were probably fortunate to change our plans. From the Kennedy Meadows bridge, our party of 20 drove south along the west bank of the swollen South Fork of the Kern about two miles, then backpacked down river to the edge of the Domeland Wilderness. Getting across Fish and Trout Creeks proved somewhat of a problem, but by shortly afternoon we were snugly in camp along Tibbetts Creek. That afternoon, 14 of us climbed the long, up-and-down north ridge to the summit of 8383-foot Rockhouse Peak, sometimes through soft snow, with some easy third class near the top. We descended northward into Domeland's central basin, a delightful wilderness sanctuary seldom visited, and followed the Tibbetts Creek trail down to camp.

Sunday morning we explored the tumbling rapids and granite-bound cascades of Tibbetts Creek as it roars out of Domeland, then made an early backpack up the Kern to our vehicles. Although some showed disappointment about missing Kern Peak, most seemed to feel that the Domeland trip was a worthwhile early-season excursion.

PRIVATE CLIMBS

RETURN TO CHIMBORAZO

by Barbara Lilley

Since Barbara Lilley had been stormed off Mt. Chimborazo, highest peak in Ecuador (20,700'+) in Sept. 1973, (climbing Mt. Cotopaxi instead), she and eight others--Tom Cardina, Diana Dee, Horace Ory, John Otter, Cuno Ranschau, Bill Sanders, Graham Stephenson and Bill Stauffer--arrived in Quito, Ecuador (9200') on Friday, Feb. 14, 1975, to attempt the peak at a time of year when the weather is supposed to be better. (Even Ecuadorian climbers disagree on this matter!) Through Bill Sanders and his very efficient travel agent (Janis Rusk of Riviera Village Travel in Redondo Beach), surface arrangements such as hotel and transportation in Ecuador were completed in advance, thus permitting a lower group inclusive tour air fare. Included also was a worthwhile tour of Quito on Friday afternoon by Metropolitan Travel in Quito.

Saturday, two 4-wheel drive vehicles transported the group to about 12,000' for a conditioning climb of Rucu-Pichincha (15,500'+) just outside Quito -- a non-technical hike up a trail and over easy cl. 3 volcanic rocks to the summit. Sunday, the climbers rode a chartered van to Pogyos (13,000'), start of the climb of Chimborazo, where they spent the night, and Monday hiked to the refugio at approximately 16,000', with their gear being carried by mules. Tuesday, the group made a conditioning/scouting climb up to the "Red Walls" (18,000'). This time snowline was just 100' above the refugio -- in Sept. 1973 continuous snow was encountered above the Red Walls.

Starting out from the refugio with crampons on at 1:30 a.m., Wednesday, and ascending through alternate fog and sunshine, all but two were still making a bid for the summit 12 hours later when at about 19,200' they were chased off by an electrical storm, complete with buzzing ice axes and painful discharges from the tops of their heads! It snowed heavily all the way down. Before the next summit attempt (Thursday was of necessity a recuperation day) an Ecuadorian cold virus felled five members of the expedition. Another (who hadn't taken Diamox) was bothered by the altitude, so only three - Graham Stephenson and Barbara Lilley (who were apparently immune from prior trips) and John Otter (who had slept in a tent by himself) headed for the summit again on February 21. It snowed continuously but with no lightning or wind, and fortunately an Ecuadorian guide and his client were in front showing the route and making the foot-steps. (The guide was later rewarded with all the gear the climbers were leaving behind in Ecuador). Graham turned back only 500' from the top (the others were aided by his downtrail on the descent); the remaining four came directly up to the higher (south) summit, thus avoiding the notorious deep powdery snow between it and the western peak. As days are only 12 hours long, darkness overtook the climbers on the descent. Fortunately, the guide led the way to the refugio as all tracks and markers were buried by the newly fallen snow, and return was completed by midnight - a nearly 24-hour day! The next day they returned to the highway and caught the local bus to Quito in time for dinner Saturday night. (Buses now pass by Pogyos every two hours and most go directly on to Quito without requiring a change). Due to the time change on Sunday, flight connections were missed in Miami (the airlines bought their dinner) and return to L.A. was after 2:20 a.m. Monday morning.

MORE



Although the cold epidemic was unpredictable and regrettable (all or most would have probably reached the summit otherwise), the trip did permit some members to acquire knowledge of high altitude mountaineering equipment and techniques (and of the value of Diamox) and an immunity to the Ecuadorian cold" for the next climbing trip to Ecuador! Anyone wishing to contact an Ecuadorian climbing club for information and assistance in climbing the peaks may write (preferably in Spanish) to: Agrupacion Excursionsita, Nuevo Horizontes, Apartado 2369, Quito, Ecuador. It was learned that white gas is still not available in Quito (although it could be purchased in Guayaquil and brought to Quito). Kerosene is sold as "Kerox" and alcohol is sold by drugstores. Gasoline for cars costs about 16 cents per gallon.

Mt. Chimborazo is the highest peak in the world as measured from the center of the earth due to flattening of the poles as the earth spins. However, barometric pressure is also higher as the earth's atmosphere is flattened even more at the poles and bulges even more at the equator than the surface of the earth. Also there is the additional effect of temperature whereby the great heat of the tropics expands the atmosphere upward over equatorial latitudes. (ref. AAC Journal 1968). Altimeters were reading 200' low in Quito and 500'-600' low at altitudes above 15,000'.

PRIVATE CLIMB - SOUTHWEST RIDGE OF MT. EMERSON VIA PIUTE CRAGS
October 12, 1974Dick Beach

From the Bishop basin, Mt. Emerson is one of the fewer climbed peaks, mainly due to its impressive neighbors. Even less climbed are the almost forgotten Piute Crags. The Southwest ridge is made up of 8 of these pinnacles and finally connects to the summit of Emerson. I had read that the first ascents were made on the crags in the 50's by Chuck Wilts and party. To our surprise, we had made 3rd ascents on practically all of them since they hadn't been climbed in 20 years. Dave King and I found out why as we traversed from one crag to the next. The rock is extremely fractured and very loose, much like that of the Kaweahs. At 7 a.m. we found ourselves wiping sweat from our foreheads as we approached the base of the first crag. The day was undoubtedly going to be a beautiful one. It seemed that summer was still in the valley. We had brought one rope, a few pins, and several chocks. To our surprise we didn't have to use them, it probably would have been nice....The ridge is deeply serrated making each of the crags a pinnacle in itself.

By noon we were about 1/3 of the way up, with still the major portion ahead of us. But a nice "time out" while contemplating, our route was opening the original's first ascent registers that had not been opened for many years. Also along the ridge, one could notice several changes in rock formations from shale to limestone and Emerson's summit proper was granite. By 5:00 p.m. Dave and I found the view from the summit an impressive one. After a quick talus run from the summit, we hit the Piute trail. By 7:00 p.m. we were back to our car. Dave and I were left with the good feeling that possibly this ridge and route had never been completed from our direction. Check this one out Andy Smatko wherever you are. We then celebrated with a big steak dinner - a great way to end a wonderful day.

Dear Editor,

On April 26, I sent in an application for a wilderness permit for my trip to the Black Divide, entering the wilderness via South Lake/Bishop Pass. On May 2 I received a reply from the White Mountain Ranger District saying that Bishop Pass was full for that day, the limit being at sixty people per day. Not quite believing this, I asked for a confirmation of this fact, as well as permission to enter Kings Canyon National Park by way of a pass north of Mt. Johnson. On May 8 I received another reply on the same form letter, with the following information, "All the weekends in August are already filled. There is room for entry during most of the weekdays, however."

This means that our mountains are booked up five months in advance! I, being an environmental conscientious climber can see both sides of the story. For example, I know that eventually those lovely, grassy meadows above Mirror Lake will be trampled to death by too many boot prints, tent stakes, fires and split breaks. Yes, I know that it is illegal to pitch tents or have fires on the Whitney Trail, but people do it anyway, right or wrong, permit or no permit.

On the other hand, what ever happened to the Freedom of the Hills? All animals have an instinctive ideal to be free and wild and to do what they want. I don't know what the answer to this problem is. Maybe backpacking and mountaineering will be superseded by needlepoint as the 'in' thing to do.

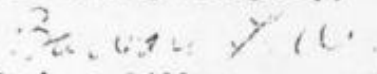
R. J. Secor

P.S. One way or another, I'll figure out how to get to Grouse Meadows on August 16.

Dear Editor,

I don't believe in using SPS meeting time for arguments. However, to accuse Mountain Safety Research of being anti-conservationist just because they have initiated a lawsuit against the National Park Service for its practice of restricting entry to the back country is unjustified. This suit is the result of unreasonable Park Service use restrictions at Mt. Rainier National Park. The Park Service does not always reach an appropriate balance between use and preservation.

A person has just as much right to challenge the legality of restricting entry to a Park as he has to challenge the legality of permitting a road to be built through a Park for non-Park use. If the Park Service is acting illegally, it should be stopped.


Barbara Lilley

(To learn more about MSR's lawsuit, send for their latest catalog/newsletter. The address is given elsewhere in this issue of the Echo.)