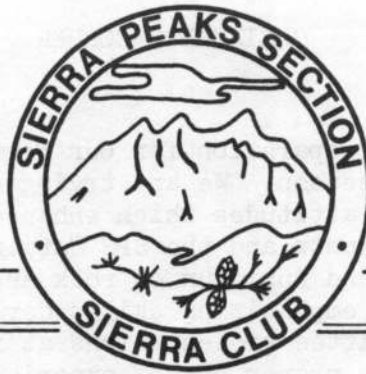


The

Sierra



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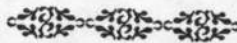
CHAIRMAN'S CORNER

This is the time of preparation for our forthcoming late spring, summer, and early fall climbing season. We are trying now to learn or improve and perfect those skills and attitudes which enhance safe climbing and improve our capability. Dennis Lantz and the SPS "stalwarts" have been active in training at Joshua Tree and Rubidoux on rock and at least once in Baldy Bowl on snow. They have been emphasizing skills development replenishment. Norm Rohn, in his Safety Committee presentations at regular meetings and elsewhere, has focused on the proper use of experience, even suggesting thievery as a policy — steal the bad experiences of others — your own are the worst possible teacher because they are much too expensive! This is a sound approach, but I'm often brought back to reality by recalling the aphorism that "only some of us can learn from other people's mistakes; the rest of us have to be the other people."

Along the same lines, let me make a point about climbing safety. Aside from those accidents which seem almost literally to be acts of God, two kinds of climbers seem to get hurt: clever ones and poor ones. The clever climbers gradually acquire confidence which may mislead them, and tempt them to cross the safety margin once too often. The poor ones are merely incapable. But there is one common attribute which both types possess — they lack imagination. Their thinking is narrow. They fail to consider the possible consequences of an overextension of their abilities. They assume that conditions will at all times be normal. In particular, they take things for granted. This is the exact opposite of the cardinal rule for safety — never take anything for granted and always maintain a reserve for the unexpected!

So much for the sermon. Take a moment now and think through your own safety attitudes and program for improvement. We'll all be better off for it later.

Duane McRuer



ONE National Park ranger to another: "What do we do if we see an endangered animal eating an endangered plant?"

—Swan in *The Progressive Farmer*

MAN to man: "A few years ago, a mad scientist needed an atomic bomb to destroy the earth. Now, all he needs is an aerosol can."

—Contributed by Jeffrey Floyd

MODERN man's idea of roughing it is surviving through the night after the thermostat on his electric blanket conks out.

—Harry Laremore, quoted by Don Wolfe in *Toledo Blade*

Carl Smith's photo of the apron below the face of Half Dome graces our front page of the Echo's March - April issue.

SUGGESTION BOX

This section needs another emblem - THE YELLOW CHICKEN EMBLEM.

Requirements:

- Must climb all 182 peaks on list of class 2 or lower (excluding the 7 with higher summit blocks).
- Must climb all 9 emblem peaks class 2 or lower.
- Must climb all 9 mountaineer's peaks class 2 or lower.

(How did those rock climbing committee members let 18 mountaineer's peaks be class 2 or lower?)

- Luella Martin

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Below is a letter that Abe Siemens published in the November, 1975, Southern Sierran which has stimulated controversy. Individual responses follow. Barbara Lilley urges those in agreement with Mr. Siemens to write to the Angeles Chapter Executive Committee.

Editors:

Carl Lundquist's letter regarding an incident involving 50 to 100 BMTC members at the San Antonio Ski Hut has prompted me to write. The solution to Carl's problem is simple—abolish BMTC. I say this not with tongue in cheek, but because BMTC is a program which has long since outlived its usefulness.

At a time when the National Park Service and the U.S. Forest Service are restricting the use of wilderness areas, BMTC is encouraging additional use by training new users. If the supply of wilderness is already inadequate, why increase the demand? The concept of encouraging wilderness use makes as much sense as conserving petroleum by encouraging the use of automobiles.

Some say that if BMTC members would be wilderness users irrespective of BMTC training, training such people in intelligent use reduces their adverse environmental impact. I think the premise is invalid; hence, the conclusion does not follow.

In the Sierra, a wilderness experience today is a far cry, qualitatively, from what it was twenty years ago. The quality of the wilderness experience may be inversely proportional to the number of users. As practicing conservationists, our goal should be to preserve something better than a wilderness suffering from overuse and trampled to near extinction.

Abe Siemens

DROUGHT YEAR CONTINUES

The March 11, 1976, issue of the Inyo Register reported precipitation in the Inyo-Mono area of the Sierra was only 70 percent of normal to date and the snow water content was 55 percent of normal.

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

1717 Campus Rd.
Los Angeles, CA 90041
February 5, 1976

(Continued)

Mary Omberg, Editor
The Sierra Echo
4311 El Prieto
Altadena, CA 91001

Dear Mary:

I must take issue with Barbara Lilley's letter in the Nov.-Dec. Echo, urging support of the position taken by Abe Siemens in his letter published in the Nov. '75 Southern Sierran.

Personally, from a purely selfish point of view, I'd like to have jurisdiction over all of my favorite wild areas, so I could limit their use to levels I consider acceptable. Since this is not possible, I think it is important to have high levels of informed users in the wilderness.

One of the best arguments for establishing new wilderness, and to prevent development in de facto wilderness areas, is to point to overuse and crowding in currently designated areas. Conversely, while underused areas are great to visit, they support ORV users, timber industry public relations men, and others in their claim that wilderness classification "locks up" land for the benefit of "a few hardy individuals."

Granted, the BMTC could and should stress to a greater extent the letter writing, trail maintaining, and camp cleaning responsibilities of all backcountry users. However, the result of abolishing it would either be to leave future users uninformed, with a greater impact on the land; or to leave users' numbers smaller, with wilderness being shortchanged in land use management as a result.

Sincerely,

Kenneth C. Jones
Kenneth C. Jones

.....

Rebuttal to letter by J. Davis

Dear Editor,

The ambiguous situation to which my letter (in the Nov-Dec. Echo) referred is that the BMTC by its very existence encourages excessive back-country use, while the current philosophy of the Sierra Club is apparently to discourage back-country use by supporting entry quotas and other restrictions imposed by the Park and Forest Service.

Continued

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR
(Continued From Previous Page)

I can understand the reluctance of the Angeles Chapter to dissolve something that is financially profitable to them, and I'm sure many of the BMTc instructors are doing a good job and believe they are doing the right thing. But, of course, there is an alternate way. Before BMTc, those who were really interested still found their way into the mountains as Sierra Club members through the various activity sections of the Sierra Club--100 Peaks, Desert Peaks, Rock Climbing, Sierra Peaks. Now there are even more activity groups to fill an even greater variety of interests and provide a variety of experience through sharing of knowledge, by observation and formal training within the activity. This process may be a little slower but in the long run should produce a more sincerely interested, more thoroughly experienced and better conditioned mountain traveler. After all, is it really necessary to be exposed to all aspects of mountaineering the very first year?

If one of the main purposes is to inform potential back-country users about the purposes of the Sierra Club, then this could be accomplished by directly contacting non-Sierra Club groups conducting mountaineering classes (without the need of a large bureaucracy) while the Club takes care of its own members through the activity sections.

Barbara Lilley

ANNOUNCEMENT

SIERRA CLUB SPONSORS ENVIRONMENTAL EXPO

Everyone is invited to the Sierra Club's second annual Environmental Expo on Sunday, April 25th., from 11 A.M. to 5 P.M. at the Cheviot Hills Recreation Center (Rancho Park), 2551 Motor Avenue (south of Pico Blvd. and west of Century City). Organized by members of the West Los Angeles Group, the Expo has expanded into an exhibition of the Angeles Chapter's many activities. Sierra Club members from the Climbing, Conservation, Backpacking, Bicycling, Rafting, and other Sections will have demonstrations, display booths, films and slide shows. Other local conservation groups have also been invited to participate. It's an opportunity to meet old and new friends, find out how to get the most out of the Club's activities, whether it be bus trips, hikes or meetings, and acquaint newcomers with the Sierra Club.

The Expo will include a Bake Sale and an Arts and Crafts Sale to defray expenses. If you can contribute baked goods or your handiwork, please contact Kathy Defani (Bake Sale) 559-3094 or Doug Silvestri (art goods) 392-7516.

Expo Chmn: R. L. (Puf) Bailey (463-4588)
Publicity Chmn: Evelyn Levine (653-9589)

Editor's Note: The SPS representative is Cuno Ranschau.



ASCENTS

ROCK CLIMB PRACTICES....Dennis Lantz

November 15-16, 22, 1975

Rock climbs back-to-back: first a weekend at Joshua Tree, then a Saturday at Mt. Rubidoux. The weather gods were kind at the Monument, as we had two beautiful days. Of course, Indian Cove isn't the finest quartz monzonite you ever climbed on, but there are loads of fine beginner and rope work practice pitches. Forty people came out on the bargain bus, the \$5 round trip being subsidized by MTC for their group leaders (and others), and another forty car-pooled.

Apparently there weren't too many SPS'ers represented, as the "leaders" looked around the fire at 8:00 p.m. or so on a perfect Saturday evening and discovered nearly all of the "students" were in bed already! Maybe it takes more time to get in shape for these desert trips.... Anyway, alphabetical thanks to leader/teachers: Harry DeGrasse, Chuck Muell, Meridee Muell, Chris Nelson, Ron Piper, Dick Sale, Uncle Tom, Doug Young, and Chuck Youngberg -- who also chased the bus on Sunday when it got lost and sent it to the right campground.

Last year at Rubidoux, close as it is to Los Angeles, we were rained out once, flooded out once, and nearly blown away on one occasion when the wind quit only after it covered us with imported smog. We started getting even on the 22nd, with a dry, sunny, smogless, perfect-temperature day. Fortunately, there were 60 climbing witnesses (about 1/3 of them female), or nobody would believe this weather report.

We soon had people strung out all over the hill, concentrating on whatever level of skill or climbing for which they were ready. As usual, several tigers were reassigned from the advanced groups when they were unable to tie basic knots. Besides the admitted beginners and the brush-up or advanced beginners, intermediate groups worked on anchors, safety skills and just plain climbing. And thanks to the following safety-oriented leaders who are willing to teach others instead of climbing for fun: David Lantz, Ray Lantz, Cuno Ranschau, Dick Sale, Tom Sarazen, Bob Wheeler, and Chuck Youngberg.

It must be the outdoors and the climbing that gets to us, instead of only the Sierras. This is being written at Hidden Valley in Joshua Tree on a blustery evening by Coleman light. The climbing was good today, and the Thanksgiving turkey will be good tomorrow. And, for such opportunities, we can truly be thankful.

Would you pass up a three day weekend for a one day trip? Instructors Tidball, Cunningham, Jeter, Youngberg, Lantz, and Fried, as well as 32 other interested persons, did for a jointly sponsored SPS/RCS rescue seminar. Among those attending were members of both sections, along with persons involved with LTC and BMTC. In addition, there were observers and participants from the National Speleological Society, Sierra Madre Search and Rescue Team, and the Los Padres Search and Rescue Team.

Among the exercises conducted were: lowering an injured climber by various methods on steep faces, raising a climber on a similar face, and aiding a fallen climber hanging by a swami from an overhang. It was observed that most participants were able to prussik to the victim and put him into a full body harness in well under 20 minutes. This last problem was perhaps the most difficult and the most fun. The victim was then hoisted up with a "Z" system as soon as enough climbers arrived to man the system. Special credit goes to Dennis for hanging around all day. Andy Fried asks that all who participated please send their comments and suggestions to him.

PRIVATE CLIMBS

GRANITE PASS AND VICINITY July 19-27..... Jerry Keating

The high country north of the South Fork of Kings River provided the setting for Andy Smatko's annual mid-summer quest for new summits, and the nine-day trip yielded several first recorded ascents.

In contrast to the daily rains in July 1974, the 1975 outing was favored by dry, warm weather. But mosquitoes were a constant nuisance - both day and evening - and they even swarmed on some of the lower summits. The climbers prevailed, however, with 46 different peaks or peaklets visited during the trip.

Besides Andy, the party consisted of Barbara Lilley, Bill Schuler, Dave Wallace and Jerry Keating, who gathered at Roads End (5035') early July 19 to start the 5000-foot backpack into Granite Basin. Upon reaching South Granite Pass (10,347'), we interrupted the backpacking grind to summit pack over Pk. 10,340 to Mt. Hutchings (10,785), which offers a splendid look down Granite Creek into Kings Canyon.

Camp was maintained for three nights about 250 yards east of the first stream crossing in Granite Basin. From it, our routes were as follows:

Day 2: After crossing Granite Basin, four of us climbed to a saddle north of Pk. 11,406 on the Comb Spur, thence southward along the west side of the ridge to the summit of this imposing yet still Class 2 peak. Finding no record of previous ascent, we dubbed it South Comb Pk. Next, we reversed direction and headed north, climbing 11,365 (Cox Pk. - no record), 11,360 (Spur Pk. - no record), 11,618 (Comb Pk.), 11,561 (Brush Pk.), 11,562 (Hair Pk.), 11,443 (Curl Pk.) and 11,391 (Shampoo Pk.). Enroute back to camp, we added 11,200+ (West Granite Twin) and its 11,200+ companion (East Granite Twin).

GRANITE PASS AND VICINITY (Continued)

Day 3: From the saddle north of Pk. 11,354, all of us picked our way up the exposed ledges on this craggy fin, which - in deference to our buzzing followers - was called Mosquito Crest*. Descent was via a steep, sandy chute to the southeast, allowing Bill and Dave to ascent Goat Mtn. (12,207'), after which Dave went on to pursue some fishing. Other peaks climbed that day were 11,520+ (Grouse Pk.), 12,076, 12,000 (Albicaulis Pk.), 12,059 (The Devil's Horn), 11,760+ (North Tent Pk.), 11,797 (South Tent Pk.), 11,520+ (Nanny Pk.) and 11,323 (Granite Pk.). Day 2 was 12+ hours, while this one topped 13.

On Day 4, we backpacked over North Granite Pass (10,673') to the higher of the two State Lakes (10,480') and were pleased to find no one else there. Bill scrambled up nearby State Peak (12,620'), while Andy and Bobbie explored the slopes north of camp, being thwarted by the jagged, class 4 W ridge of Peak 12,524'.

Day 5 found everyone on Pk. 12,524 (Horseshoe Pk.), with Dave and Jerry then heading N down Windy Ridge to bag 12,045 and 11,778. The others traversed to 12,400+ (County Pk. -no record), with Bill soloing 12,320+. Then, the trio traversed along the Cirque Crest to 12,400+ (44 Magnum Pk.), 12,480+ (30.06 Pk.) and another 12,480+ (Howitzer Pk. - no record), with Bill going on alone to Marion Pk. (12,719'). To get back to camp, the three descended to the South Fork of Cartridge Creek and crossed Windy Ridge at the 10,900-foot level, eventually picking up Dave and Jerry's footprints near Horseshoe Lakes. This day, too, exceeded 13 hours.

Day 6's itinerary started with Dougherty Pk. (12,244'), followed by 12,000+ (Sour Dougherty Pk.), 12,004 (City Pk.), 11,916 (Maple Leaf Pk.), 11,608 (Evergreen Pk. - no record) and 11,600+ (Thumb Pk.), a first ascent. Dave fished all day but with no success, while the others bagged all or most of these peaks along and south of the Cirque Crest. Glacier Valley was the route back to camp, a beautiful glacial valley harboring exquisite lakes.

After striking the State Lakes camp on the morning of Day 7, we all walked up 10,743 (Trisnag Pk.) and then backpacked toward Volcanic Lakes, setting up another camp at a lakelet (9760+) west of the Middle Forst of Dougherty Creek. Despite extreme heat, Andy, Bill and Bobbie made a first recorded ascent of 10,849 (Coxcomb Crag). They went up the peak's west face into a notch that led to the highest pinnacle. A rope was used from the notch area and to the summit. For the descent, they used a steep Class 3 chute on the peak's east face. Dave, meanwhile, bagged a huge trout.

Dave backpacked out on Day 8, while the four diehards crossed the Volcanic Lakes basin to climb 11,040+ (Volcan Pk.), followed by 10,979 (Dead Pine Pk. - no record), 11,032 (Nopine Pk.), 10,844 (Saddle Pine Pk.), 10,532 (Little Pine Pk. - no record), and 10,664 (Big Pine Pk. - no record). Subsequently, we picked up the trail at Dead Pine Pass, retrieved our Keltys at the lakelet camp and set up our final camp along the Middle Fork (9440+).

On the way to the cary on Day 9, thunder rumbled nearby, but the rain held off until seconds after we reached the road! The cloudiness did keep temperatures down, however, and helped prevent more blistered feet. For Bill, whose feet showed the toll of his climbing 43 peaks in 90 miles with 35,000 feet of elevation gain, the cloud cover was a particular blessing.

Although we'd carried a rope most of the time, it was infrequently used. But others going into this area are advised to watch for technical spots that do not show on the map. Often they can be bypassed by dropping several hundred feet, but time is lost in the process.

*Note: Mosquito Crest was the name given by the first ascent party)

DISAPPOINTMENT PEAK (13,917)....August.....R.J. Secor

Last August, Earl Kesler, John Harpole, and I climbed Disappointment Peak by way of a route which is becoming known as "Doug's Chute," made famous when Doug Mantle climbed it solo when his partner felt that to go on would be suicide. The route description is as follows: About a quarter-mile south of the Middle Palisade moraine, a wide band of red rock is intruded into the cliffs below Disappointment Peak. On the right side of this intrusion is a prominent (I love to use that word; it drives mountain climbers crazy!) chute. Climb this chute, 150 feet of loose Class 3-4. From the top of the chute, climb the obvious couloir that leads to the notch south-east of the peak, the low point between Disappointment and Balcony. This couloir is Class 3 with loose rock. The summit is easily reached from the notch.

After having lunch on the summit, we descended the same route with a 150 foot rappel down the chute onto the glacier. We were on the glacier by 2:30, so we decided to climb Middle Palisade. This was accomplished without incident, arriving on the summit at 4:00. We arrived at Finger Lake at 6:00, only to find Doug Mantle and others ready to climb Disappointment the next day. For more information on the peak, contact Doug Mantle; the masochist has managed to climb it three times now.

MOKELUMNE PEAK.....Dave Vandervoet

The difficulty of climbing Mokelumne Peak, one of the new peaks on the list, is not the actual ascent of the peak itself but the route-finding necessary to go from the car to the base of the mountain. Most of the description of the route below was provided by Jon Petitjean, with a little polishing by Larry Hoak, Big John Hellman, and Dave Vandervoet during the fall, 1975, expedition. A copy of the forest service map for the area is useful.

Turn off Hwy 88 near Tragedy Springs. Drive or walk up the road from Mud Lake past the second barbed wire gate to where a dirt road turns right from the main road (50 feet past an old wooden sign, "Emmigrant Road"). Follow the jeep road to a meadow in the upper portion of section 29. Sight and head for the clearing on the ridge directly in front of you (section 28). Go over the ridge and intersect a trail about 200 yards below. Turn right and follow to Pardoe Lake. A warning: the water in the lake is not good. Walk around the left edge of the lake and watch for a duck, or observe volcanic outcroppings about 5 to 10 feet in height about 50 feet above the lake. A faint trail leads around the right side of the volcanics to Cole Breck Lakes. The best lake to camp at with the best water is the biggest, southernmost lake. The trail continues along the east shore and intersects a main trail going from here to there. Turn right and follow to a three way trail junction. Take the middle fork toward Munson Meadow. As you go over a bare ridge 100 yards before reaching Munson Meadow, sight the peak and go for it. It took our group four hours to go from the car to the summit.

PRIVATE CLIMBS

The Jungfrau August 2, 1975 Paul Bloland

Having come to Wiesbaden, West Germany, for the summer to teach in the University at Southern California overseas program, I had slipped a few extra pounds of climbing clothes and gear into my luggage, hoping that I might find time to do some climbing in the Alps. A June trip to Switzerland and a visit to the guide's bureau in Grindelwald was all it took for me to decide that the Jungfrau, a 13,653 foot giant of the Bernese Oberland, would be my goal.

A fellow USC faculty member, Dwight Goehring, agreed to join me and share expenses. We were fortunate to obtain the services of the veteran Grindelwald guide, Hermann Steuri, whose father first led the Mittelegi Ridge of the Eiger and whose own climbing exploits, including the North Face of the Matterhorn, have taken him all over the world. I have found his name in several mountaineering books including Harrer's, The White Spider, and he has been in charge of rescue operations on the Eiger for several of the better known and more disastrous ascents of the Nordwand.

After two six-hour, 630 mile weekend trips to Grindelwald, both rained out, we phoned Herr Steuri from Germany, and he gave us the Swiss equivalent of "all systems go" for the weekend of August 1-3. We drove up the Rhine to Basel and on through Berne to Grindelwald on the 1st and, after helping the locals celebrate the 684th anniversary of the Helvetic Confederation, met Herr Steuri the next morning at the railway station in Grund for the longest but least arduous pitch of the climb, the cog railway to the Jungfrauoch. We changed trains at Kleine Scheidegg with its grand view of the Eiger's north face and a few minutes later, during a brief stop, found ourselves looking down that same face from the glassed-in gallery cut into the Nordwand.

Disembarking at the Jungfrauoch, we dropped down to the surface of the Aletsch glacier on a snow path, shivering in the biting wind and jumping our first crevasse en route. The well-beaten route led us west across the upper reaches of the Aletsch, across several snow bridges, and up a steep slope to the bergschrund where we paused to rope up and put on our crampons.

The bergschrund itself was choked with snow but immediately above was a very steep wall of ice and snow which, as we had approached it from the glacier, had seemed an impassible barrier. Now, however, we found ourselves inching up a narrow, six-inch wide path cut diagonally up and across

(Continued)

the wall. Imbedded in several strategic locations on the upper side were wooden stakes which Herr Steuri explained were to be used for a rope belay if needed.

The slope eased off somewhat as we surmounted the wall and traversed a sloping terrace to our right under another ice wall and up past deep crevasses and broken blocks of ice. Several guided parties were coming down, including one large group from a Swiss climbing club which, to Herr Steuri's intense disapproval, appeared to have twenty people tied together.

The terrace ended, and we climbed left across a steep slope to a sheet of almost black pure ice. Steps were cut, and once across, we were on rock and the ridge for the first time. Turning right and up the easy ridge, we alternated between snow and rock, cliffs dropping off into the misty void on our left and a broad and steep snow slope on our right. A chill wind was whipping up from the snow fields below, and wispy clouds went drifting by, opening and then closing on our view of our route below and the tremendous panorama of peaks surrounding the Aletsch. The regular route was easy to spot. Steel stakes were driven into the rock at rope-lengths to be used by the leaders as protection, a device often found on frequently guided routes in Europe.

We made the ridged summit of the Jungfrau at 12:30 p.m. just as the wind died down and the clouds parted, letting the sun through. It was delightful to sit in the warm sun, eating our lunch, and marveling at the vast wilderness of peaks around us. There, connected by ridges to the Jungfrau, were the Monch and the Eiger, with the Wetterhorn, the Finsteraarhorn, and the Schreckhorn beyond, and in the distance, we could just make out the Matterhorn in the Valais.

The return trip went well, and, after a leap down across the bergschrund to the glacier proper, we took off our crampons and paused to watch the frequent avalanches pouring with a roar off the northern cliffs of the Jungfrau to our left. The afternoon sun was beating down on the glacier, softening the snow and making walking difficult. We kept the rope on because the snow bridges we had crossed so confidently in the morning were now hazardous. Hordes of tourists greeted us curiously as we made our way into the wooden building at the Jungfraujoeh for our train ride back to the valley.

We managed to catch a train at 3:30 for Kleine Scheidegg where we stopped on the terrace for a deliciously cool beer and another look at the summit we had just climbed, now several thousand feet above us. We had hoped to do the Mittelegi Ridge of the Eiger the next day, but a telephone call earlier by Herr Steuri to the hut keeper had indicated that it was jammed with climbers, so we not-too-regretfully gave it up. We were content.

(Continued)

That evening, after dinner in town, we joined Herr Steuri and his family in his chalet not far from the First lift and, sitting on the flower-decked balcony, watched the shadows creep over the valley below and across the great peaks above. We spoke of climbing and adventure and sipped cool white wine as the lights began twinkling on in the now dark valley—a fitting end to a fine day.

RITTER RANGE ROUNDUP Mid-September..... Bill Schuler

No mosquitos, - no hordes of people. No trouble getting a wilderness permit. No pack trains to dodge. No indoctrinated backcountry rangers. No bad weather. (Well, not much). Thus begins another memorable mid-September trip into the high country of the Sierra. Participants were Andy Smatko, Tom Ross, and Bill Schuler, and the location was the John Muir Wilderness, the Ritter Range, and the incomparable Minarets.

Our trip began at Agnew Meadows on a clear, crisp Saturday morning. Shouldering heavy packs, we hit the High Trail to Thousand Island lake, left a cache of food, and continued over Island Pass to a delightful campsite along the Rodgers fork of Rush Creek. Sunday, we donned summit packs and headed north on the Muir trail and up the Marie Lakes trail about a mile. After filling our canteens, we headed up the south slope of Peak 10,901'. There was a cairn, but no register on top. We turned west, then southwest along the ridge to Peak 12,320'+ (1 mi. NE of Mt. Lyell). The ridge, although formidable, remained class 2 to the virgin summit. The views of Mts. Lyell and McClure and their glaciers was tremendous. We dropped down the south slope, passed west of upper Marie lake and ascended Peak 12,560'+, halfway between Mts. Lyell and Rodgers. This peak was ascended once before by a Sierra Club group, led by Cliff Youngquist on 8/7/51. Turning east we descended to the snout of Rodgers glacier, and up the west slope of Peak 12,400'+. This peak was named Klinker Peak, probably because of the musical slate on its flanks. Dropping down the north ridge to Upper Marie Lake, we followed this drainage in the gathering darkness to the Muir trail, then back to camp by flashlight. It was a long day through outstanding country.

Monday, we headed up the Rodgers fork and up the reddish slopes of Peak 12,037'. Our loop today turned us southeast along the ridge to Peak 11,840'+. A short rest, and we continued along the ridge to the formidable arête terminating in Peak 11,627'. A couple of class 4 pitches rewarded us with a first ascent of this majestic spire. Backtracking to a convenient slope, we headed down to Davis Lakes and back to camp. Out of food, we packed up and headed back to our cache above Thousand Island Lake.

In the morning we moved our packs to the west end of the lake, and headed up the southwest inlet to a steep snow chute southeast of Mount Davis to a large plateau. I went up the easy southeast slopes to Davis, while Andy and Tom climbed Peak 12,160'+. When I joined them later, we celebrated our third first ascent. Then we all headed east across a cirque to Peak 12,000'+, finding a cairn but no register. To get back to our packs, we descended to Lake Catherine and followed the ducked route to Thousand Island Lake. Heading south again, we climbed to a pass and then up to Peak 10,572', called Garthow Peak. Back to our packs again, we dropped down to Garnet Lake basin with ten minutes to spare before darkness enveloped us.

(Continued)

Wednesday, we awoke to drizzly skies that were to stay with us till dark. We back-packed up to the pass separating Garnet Lake and the Nydiver Lakes, then parted company, with me dropping down to Nydiver Lake to shed my pack. Tom and Andy headed west along the ridge to climb Peak 11,440'+ (.4 mi. E of Banner Pk.), and then back at the pass, went up Peak 10,704'. Retracing their steps, they took their packs down to keep mine company. A quick lunch and they were off to Peak 10,736' (Nydiver Pk.), via the southwest chute, then along the northeast ridge to Peak 10,324' (Garnet Pk.). Meanwhile, I trudged my way up to Banner Peak, with frequent stops under sheltering rocks when the skies opened up. Returning from a wet lunch on Banner, a detour got me to Peak 11,440'+ and Peak 10,704'. Andy and Tom had found empty cairns on these peaks. I got back to the packs just as the others returned. A short trip to Lake Ediza, and we struggled to get a fire going with wet, scarce wood. Thank God for heat tabs.

Thursday morning it was dry but overcast. Our south trending travels took us to Iceberg Lake and Cecile Lake. Tom elected to continue in to camp, while Andy and I headed for Clyde Minaret. An hour and a half later threatening and dripping skies and technical problems forced a retreat, only to see it clear up again down at Cecile Lake. Hopefully, we grabbed our packs and headed for Pridham Minaret. No luck today. The whole area got drenched, but good. Nothing left but to drop past Minaret lake and join Tom at Deadhorse Lake.

Starr Minaret beckoned above us the next morning, and the sky was finally blue. We forced a steep chute past the sheer northeast wall of Starr and gained the main crest for an easy walk to the summit. Dropping west to a break in the ridge rewarded us with a talus slope and a loose chute to Deadhorse Minaret (11,319'). We found a cairn and bleached scrap of paper before heading down to steep east ridge. Enroute, we scrambled up Regenet Spire (11,200'+), and Crown Prince Spire (11,040'+) forming the overhanging south wall of Deadhorse cirque. A little pioneering rewarded us with a devious route back to camp. On with the packs and back up the now ducked route, and Beck Lakes became our new home.

Another Saturday, with much lighter packs. The peaks above Beck lakes resemble (in miniature) the striking Whitney crest. We headed due south to a prominent saddle and went up the steep loose crud of Beck Peak (10,653'), then back to the saddle and up Peak 11,029' (Little Whitney?). Sy Ossofsky and a Sierra Club group beat us to this one by a year and claimed a first ascent. Heading south again, we went over Peak 10,950' (a hill) and found ourselves at the base of the sheer east face of Peak 10,955'. A 4th class ledge and chimney route rewarded us with the ridge, then the summit, but no sign of any previous visit. We dubbed it Holcolm Peak and began searching for a way down the south ridge (not too bad). A class 3 ledge system got us to Peak 10,907', sporting a large cairn and register and no signatures. Traversing east of the crest got us back to our first saddle and down past Superior Lake to our final campsite at King Creek.

Our last day, and we're getting a little worn out. We hiked up to Ashley lake, then traversed above Anona Lake to the crest west of Peak 10,821'. Two bumps to the north, and I left the others to bag Iron Mountain. We met later on peak 10,821', then traversed the descending ridge to Anona Point (10,171'), and a chute took us to Anona Lake. Going north over a low pass got us to Gertrude Lakes and a route back to camp. Only one thing left to do. We saddled up and took the up and down trail out to Devils Postpile, dragging in just after dark. Andy, sans pack, started up to the car, hitched a ride, and picked Tom and me up. A half hour later we limped into Whiskey Creek for a delicious steak dinner and some spirits.

So ends another chapter in the never-ending quest for new summits. Two days of unseasonal bad weather slowed us, but we know that next year will be even better. Great trip. Great companions. Spectacular country. First ascents. S P S peaks. Jewel-like lakes. Spires galore. AMEN.

Matterhorn Peak, Oct. 8.....Norma Viault

Looking up from Twin Lakes at the fresh snow and the frozen puddles, we raced into Bridgeport for hot coffee. We finally started up the trail and almost immediately ran into snow, which slowed our progress. However, we continued on as rapidly as possible. Our route was up to the pass and around the back of the mountain. Despite the snow, we arrived at the summit at around 4 P.M.

The weather was quite cold. We were wearing wool knickers, wool shirts, and long underwear. After reaching the pass, we also put on down jackets, wool hats, and mittens. Even with all this protection, it was impossible to stay on the summit for more than a few minutes. We were able to come down the mountain quickly via scree and snow and arrived at Twin Lakes just as it got dark.

March 20-21

DIAMOND PEAK

Doug Mantle

Well, you blew it. I suppose you expected this to be a snow-soaked slosh to a convenient backoff point. Wrong trip. Four Ski Mountaineers and five mere SPSers found warm, sunny days, an unbelievably serene summit view, a regular DPS type campfire (with appropriate beverages) and decent to good skiing/glissading for their not-easy efforts.*

One reason Diamond went well is that there were no route problems: just go up, up, up the beautiful canyon of Oak Creek. The trail soon was lost in the north side snow, but the low snow year forced us up to 10,000 feet for enough of the white stuff to pitch our tents.

Fireperson Mary Omberg, after studying under Tim Treacy in the DMTP was able to create a perfect campfire. (Of course, to pass the program she still must learn to make it sound difficult and introduce 6,000 of her friends into the program). My thanks, too, to Ed Omberg for kicking steps up the peak, exhausting himself at just the right time so that the leader could charge ahead for the last 217 feet to the summit. No thanks go to Mark Goebel for making the skiing look easy. Anyway, we all had fun. Also -

Correction on my Whaleback writeup - the approach to Whaleback was from the west, not east as printed.

*Editor's Note: Well, of course, there is no challenge without the risk of failure.

- line from a recently released movie

PRIVATE CLIMB

CLARENCE KING.....October 26-29, 1974, & 4-6, 1975.....Edward Lubin

The end of October, 1974, was late in the year to attempt an ascent of remote Clarence King, but the five of us, Andy Fried, Gerard Furburshaw, Tom King, Ed Lubin, and Ben Preyer, had decided to risk being caught in a winter storm. We thought that even if such a storm prevented us from reaching the summit, the winter mountaineering experience alone would prove worth-while. Though optimistic, we decided to pack winter gear, except for crampons, snowshoes, and skis.

Our group started from Onion Valley under a sunny sky with broken clouds. An hour later, we were hiking in falling snow. Despite considerable discussion about turning back, we continued on past upper North Golden Trout Lake, to the west end, and then across the ridge north of that lake. By the time North Dragon Pass was reached, a blanket of fresh snow had already softened the rough terrain.

Instead of going around the minor peak as directed in the Climber's Guide, we hurried down the easy scree slope to its south. Because of this error, a vast snow covered boulder field at the foot of the scree had to be crossed. The effort was strenuous enough that camp was set up at Rae Lakes instead of our original destination, Sixty Lakes Basin.

Mid-morning, the next day, we arose and headed for King. An arctic winter scene was behind us, but to our surprise, towards the peak were few traces of snow. The October weather was perfect.

We continued on the Sixty Lakes Trail to a point due east of Peak 11,691' on the Mt Pinchot Topo. and then headed cross-country directly for King, which soon came into view. (The register is on the first pinnacle on the crest from the top of the south slope.) We used the ledge in the cliff described in the Climber's Guide and then made our way up the south slope and onto the Class 4.

It was 5:00 PM when a point only 15' below the summit was reached, but due to the late hour, slowly deteriorating weather, and uncertainty about our exact position, we decided to return to camp without completing the ascent. Our late start had cost us the peak. Darkness closed in fast, the pitch black punctured only by snow flurries. The fury of the storm increased and continued all nite.

Upon arising, we could see that the hike out was going to be even more difficult than expected, but there was no way of knowing that 25 hours, two days of hiking by way of Glen and Kearsarge Passes, lay ahead.

All traces of the John Muir Trail had disappeared, and there were intermittent snowfall and limited visibility much of the time, forcing us to use map and compass for most of our route-finding. We plowed our way through drifts ranging up to hip level. Progress was not overly difficult because the fresh snow had not consolidated, yet we managed to cross Glen Pass and get only half way down before stopping for the nite.

The following morning, we were up at 4:00 AM and at 9:30 PM, after 15 hours of hiking, on our way home from a very strenuous trip. Valuable lessons were learned.

During the hike out, there wasn't any interest in a second attempt, but a year later, all were enthusiastic about another try, so a date was set. Ben and Tom had to back out later.

3/9/76

The second time we did not backpack together. Knowing the route, we decided to travel separately as fast and slow hikers and meet in camp. This was done largely as an experiment to determine how much difference pace made in overall time.

Upon reaching North Dragon Pass, each of us went around the east side of the minor peak referred to in the Climber's Guide, along a narrow dirt covered ledge, steeply sloping both lengthwise and sidewise. There were considerable exposure and weak hand holds. Then down the north side of the basin holding Dragon Lake, thru an opening in the boulder field.

We found that it took each of us 9':40" to reach camp at Sixty Lakes Basin. A time breakdown for our slow hiker was: hiking time, 7':50"; stops, 1':50"; total, 9':40".

Next morning, we again headed for King, following our original route, but upon reaching the inclined slabs at the foot of the Class 4, 40' from the top of the south slope, 60' from the hidden summit, (all measurements are approximate), we detoured to the right onto a 160'x12"-18" wide ledge, ducked at the far end, on the east face of the peak. The main obstacle was a 4' high horn midway, which had to be straddled. Near the end of the ledge, we reversed our direction and headed gradually upward along another narrow ledge, almost the same distance, underneath, and to the southern end of a pointed cantilevered slab. We climbed onto the slab and worked our way counter-clockwise 270° to a 12'x16'x6' deep bowl, then down into and across the bowl to the foot of the summit block, arriving almost exactly where we had been a year earlier after climbing straight up the south slope. It was a more interesting but circuitous route with over 1000' of exposure along the ledges.

Using jam cracks, we worked our way 12' up the summit block to the top of a lower block on the south side. Andy free-climbed the lower and very exposed S W corner of the summit block and attached an Etrier to a permanent anchor on top for Gerard and Ed to climb the remaining 8'. One of the ways to climb the summit. Two rappels were used off the Class 4. We returned to camp and backpacked over to Rae Lakes for the nite.

Next morning, we headed for our car via North Dragon Pass, finding the trip out not as difficult as expected. Our fast hiker was out in 5':30". A time breakdown for the two slow hikers was: hiking time, 6':45"; stops, 1':10"; total, 7':55". Clarence King was a challenging trip, worth two attempts.

ECHOS FROM THE PAST Ten years Ago in the SPS

The early spring of 1966 had an abbreviated schedule of climbs, only one trip being led in April. This was the Spanish Needle-Sawtooth climb mentioned in the last column. The next trip to be scheduled that year was Mt. Mary Austin led by Andy Smatko and Ellen Siegel in May. Tom McNicholas reported in April on a Sierra Club trip he led to New Zealand in order to contact climbers of the New Zealand Alpine Club and other organizations in the Federation of N.Z. Mountain Clubs.

Continued

Twenty Years Ago in the SPS

The year 1956 was the first in which the SPS scheduled trips into the Range of Light. Prior to that year, all Sierra Club trips into the Sierra Nevada were either the High Trips and Base Camps Trips sponsored by the San Francisco Headquarters or more locally, under the auspices of the Desert Peaks Section. The DPS used to schedule an average of three trips into the Sierra during the summer months. Any other local climbing was done as outlaw or private trips. During the summer of 1955, a group of local stalwarts organized a fledgling climbing group to be known as the Sierra Peaks Section. The Section was officially recognized by the Angeles Chapter and National Headquarters in October of 1955.

The founding group of the SPS included Bob Bear, Bud Bingham, Owen Blackburn, Frank Bressell, Miles Brubacher, Roger Gaefke, Izzy Lieberman, Barbara Lilley, Lee Owings, Ted Maier, Pat Meixner (later Gentry), Chuck Miller, John Robinson, Frank Sanborn, Rube Soneiner, Leo Scotti, Bob Sheller, Andy Smatko, and John Wedberg. Quite a few of these people are still climbing today. I wonder where old SPSers go when they stop climbing?

By January, 1956, the Section had attracted 38 members, and monthly meetings were held at the old Sierra Club Headquarters in the Philharmonic Auditorium on Fifth Street in downtown Los Angeles. Officers the first year were Frank Sanborn, Chairman; Bob Sheller, Vice Chairman; Pat Meixner, Secretary; Leo Scotti, Treasurer; and Frank Bressell, Alt. Officer. Many thanks are due to these people and those in the founding group for leading the Section through those early years.

The first officially scheduled SPS trip was led by Frank Sanborn and John Robinson on May 5-6, 1956. Their destination was Deer Mountain near the South Fork of the Kern River. During the first year, 20 trips were led by the new climbing section, quite a change from years before the SPS. That first summer found 7 SPS members earning their emblem from the original list of 200 qualifying and 10 emblem peaks. The first emblem holders were Bud Bingham, Don Clarke, Oliver Kehrlein, Barbara Lilley, Pat Meixner, John Robinson, and Bob Sheller.

- Ron Jones
