

The Sierra



ECHO

VOLUME 21

AUGUST

1977

No. 5



CHAIRMAN'S CORNER

Recent ECHO's have published letters concerning additions to the Peak List and in this issue Tim Treacy raises some good questions. In my opinion we lack a consensus as to what the Peak List should be or criteria as to how it should change. In the early days before the SPS, the Sierra Club Mountaineering Committee published its Climber's Guide to the High Sierra. It covered many named and unnamed peaks and gave several routes for the more significant peaks. It is really a guide to climbing routes. The SPS Peak List seems to serve different purposes. There are undoubtedly some old timers still active who were present when the original list was compiled and I hope that they will volunteer some information on this subject.

I might speculate that the list had several purposes. First, it was a "qualifying" list which set a minimum standard as to ascents which were adequate for section membership. Second, it was a guide to a favored set of peaks from the larger number in the Climber's Guide and from a larger area of the Sierra. Third, it formed the basis of a peak bagging game that added psychological spice to the mountaineering enterprise. Admit it or not, most people climb only peaks on the List. They enjoy earning the emblems and finishing the list. These are real and recognizable achievements.

If these speculations are valid, there may be good reason to limit the list to a fixed number of peaks and to select the best set of peaks within that number. There could be several ways for those who finish the list to continue to obtain recognition. An auxiliary list of additional peaks could be created, or a list of recognized routes like the Mountaineer's Route and the East Face of Whitney could be formed. The latter would be in tune with the general mountaineering tradition.

Whether or not the number of peaks on the list is fixed there should be some agreed criteria as to Peak List additions. Criteria used in the past are: elevation, dominance, view and inaccessibility. Barbara Lilley and others have suggested adding "New Area for SPS" and "Special Consideration Because of Name". Tim Treacy points out that "Area Impact" is increasingly important. I suggest adding "Climbing Interest" and "Proximity to Other Peaks on the List".

~~Only a few peaks are outstanding in terms of these criteria and most are just average. I do feel that the standards applied to new peaks should be well above the average just as standards applied to deletions should be well below the average.~~

SECRETARY'S REPORT

The middle of the good climbing season is here and is reflected in the sudden increase in paperwork required to keep ahead of new applications for memberships and emblems. We welcome the following new members to the SPS and wish them good climbing:

Sherry and Kevin Sullivan
Eric S. Flora
Virgil D. Talbott
Raymond Borun
Jim Barber

W. Louis Brecheen
Dale W. Van Dalsem
Robert and Ella Hoselton
Stan Icen

Congratulations to new emblem and senior emblem holders:

Emblems

#353 Don Croley (6-25-77)
#354 David Marcus (6-25-77)

Senior Emblems

#26 R. J. Secor (6-13-77)
#27 Frank Meyers (6-25-77)
#28 Mike Riseley (6-26-77)
#29 George Hubbard (7-3-77)

COVER PHOTO

R. J. Secor captured ecstatic expressions of successful summit party on George Hubbard's scheduled trip to LeConte and Mallery on June 18, 1977. The two in front, from left, are Bill Spina and Cliff Cameron. In the back row, from left, Don Sparks, Joe Vasilik, Greg Vernon, Duane McRuer, Bill Russell, and Dale Van Dalsem. The picture was taken on top of Mallery with LeConte in the background.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

The September 24-25th. Mt. McGee trip will be extended to three days (September 23-25th.) - Ed Omberg

The fall session for the popular class, "Learn the Ropes," will be held November 6th. in the Angeles National Forest.

Held under the auspices of the Crescenta Valley Group, this course is open to all local Sierrans. It is the only course taught in the Chapter's area that deals specifically with skills required on 3rd. and 4th. Class Sierra Peaks. The highly concentrated session covers mountaineering knots, ropes, slings, belays, anchors, chock and protection placement, prusiks, Jumars, rappels, and basic rescue techniques.

Course leader is Norman Kingsley, Chairman of the Club's National Mountaineering Committee. Instructors are RCS'ers Fred Day, Ron Miyakawa, and Bob Samoano.

Total class size is held to twenty students. The fee is \$5.00, of which one is returned to students when they show up. For further information, call 790-4275 or immediately send \$5.00 to course leader as past sessions have filled up one week after announcement was made.

CONSERVATION TRAINING COURSE TO RUN AGAIN IN FALL

Registration is now open for the Angeles Chapter's Conservation Training Course, the CTC. The course will consist of nine lecture sessions and a few easy projects. The lectures will cover both issues and techniques. Some of the issues to be discussed are wilderness, energy, air and water problems, land use and transportation. The techniques include an introduction to practical politics, lobbying, using the media, EIR's and EIS's, lawsuits, and leadership.

The sessions will be held on Tuesdays from Sept. 20 through Nov. 22 at 7:30 PM in the Cafetorium at the Dept. of Water and Power across the street from the Music Center in downtown L.A. Free, guarded parking will be available at the DWP lot.

For details and application form, send self-addressed, stamped legal sized envelopes to:

Jan Pritchard, CTC Registrar
416 W. Lexington Drive
Glendale, CA 91203

FRIDAY NIGHT DINNERS

If you were climbing with the Sierra Club during the 1950's, come to the Friday Night Dinner meeting August 19th. Louise Werner has searched through slides taken by Niles Werner during that time. Irene Charnock, Tony Gamero, Bob and Emily Bear, Bill and Marge Henderson, Walter and Bernice Heninger, Barbara Lilley, James Bonner, Alda Van Pappelendam, Chester Versteeg, Eleanor and Don Kelley, Margaret Jones, Henry Greenwood, and others appear on these slides, and the audience will identify them. We need an audience that can. 7:00 PM, Dept. W&P. - Louise Werner

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

FROM THE MAD SCIENTIST,

DICK JALI

20 June, 1977

SPS Management Committee:

I would like to propose the addition of Caltech Peak (13,832') to the SPS List. I have a sort of sentimental attachment to this peak, since I caused it to be given its present name, after making the third recorded ascent of it in 1961.

Furthermore, it is certainly inaccessible; it is quite high and is quite impressive and dominating when viewed from the west or south. (There are, of course, bigger peaks to the north and east, but that is true of nearly everything in the Whitney area.) I would hope the Management Committee will allow this to go to a vote of the membership.



Timothy E. Treacy
452 Dewey Blvd.
San Francisco, CA 94116

July 15, 1977

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

A letter for the next Echo:

I share a common concern about random augmentation of the SPS list. The traditional criteria can only be applied in a very subjective manner, or by disregarding certain of them entirely. When certain SPSers began the movement to add to the list a few years, no rationale was ever supplied as to why the list had to be increased at all. I felt then, and I still believe that some analysis should be done as to whether the list ought to be increased at all; if so, what kinds of peaks or hills should be considered, and what criteria ought to be applied in light of today's concerns.

As a contemporary concern, I refer to impact and overuse. In the 1950s and 1960s, this was not so important. Today, it is. Yet, we recently added Cotter to the list, an undistinguished peak in one of the most heavily impacted areas, most notable for the fact it sits between two higher peaks already on the list. Barbara Lilley now proposes two more summits on the Goddard Quad, suggesting the quota and parking problems can be resolved by an early or late season trip. She misses a significant point. The reason there are quota and parking and camping restrictions is because of overuse and adverse impact. Our responsibility as concerned mountain users should be to lessen, not increase the impact of overuse.

As another concern, I think a general expression of what kind, if any, additions we wish to make to the list. Thus, again taking the Lilley proposals, we can note that they are adjacent to, or near peaks already listed; they are lower than nearby peaks, and they are easier than adjacent peaks. To suggest that any are in 'new areas' or distinctive Sierra peaks is a most subjective and debatable assessment. For example, to describe Shakspeare as the 'quintessential Sierra climb,' that is, the most perfect of Sierra climbs, reflects either a facetious or sophomoric mind, and I assume the former on behalf of the March-April Echo letter writer.

I share Andy Smatko's concern. If peaks must be added, there are those more worthy of consideration than the ones presently proposed; e.g. Langille, the Citadel, Palisade Crest, Huntington, or CalTech to name a few. I do think that making additions on the subjective and argumentative urgings of one or two people is a bad precedent and a mistake.

Tim Treacy

Editor's Note: The following letter was written in response to the Barnes report which appeared in a previous Echo. Although the author primarily reflects on the necessity for accurate weather forecasting, the essential accuracy of the Barnes report underscores a problem that evidently has surfaced regarding the publication of inaccurate information of the accident. Interested individuals are referred to Linc Freese's account on p. 37 in April's Off Belay and a correction in the current, August, edition of the same magazine.

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July 7, 1977

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

Dear Ms. Omberg:

The May-June 1977 issue of the Sierra Echo arrived in the mail box at my home at 10100 Firwood Drive, Cupertino, addressed to Dina Lombard, from whom we bought our house a little more than a year ago.

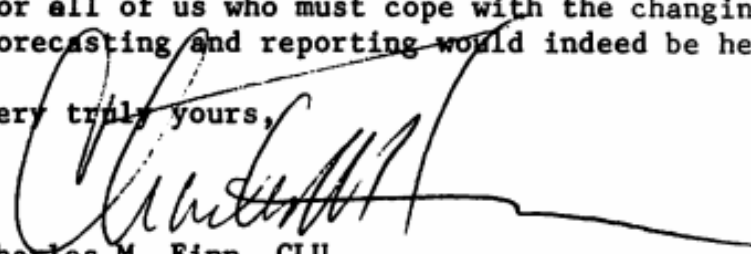
My wife and I had known of Mrs. Lombard's death, had shared in a feeling of tragedy, and read with interest George Barnes' report on the events of February 21st and 22nd 1977.

Particularly, I was interest^{ed} in his observations, lessons learned, and lessons reinforced. I choose to take my risks with nature on the water rather than in the mountains but must heartily concur with the fourth observation.

While on my boat, I constantly monitor the marine weather forecast, which is regularly updated. It is surprising how many times reports of existing weather and the forecasts are in error. For example, it is not unusual to be sailing in a location where the current report on wind, sea conditions, and visibility is markedly different from reality.

For all of us who must cope with the changing elements, more accurate forecasting and reporting would indeed be helpful.

Very truly yours,



Charles M. Finn, CLU
Western Regional Design Manager

CMF:sr

SHEPHERD'S PASS

by Barbara Lilley

For climbing Keith, Junction and/or Tyndall, a good alternate to camping at the Pothole or the trees above is reached as follows: About 25 feet above the Pothole (now a meadow), the Junction Pass trail takes off to the right (N), marked by a pile of rocks. Follow this trail about 1/3 mile until it heads into willows, then leave trail and follow up left side of willows to an old stream bed which leads to a nearly open passage to the right through the willows. About 100 feet in distance above this point is an excellent campsite with a fireplace and an unlimited wood supply.

When driving to the Shepherd's Pass roadhead (take Foothill south from the Onion Valley road), be sure to follow the road signs leading to the Shepherd's Pass Foot Trail, not the Horse Trail. The signs at the trailhead read 3 miles short of the actual distance and may some day prove tragically misleading to an inexperienced hiker starting up in the heat of the afternoon. A protest to the USFS might be in order.

SCHEDULED TRIPS

June 11-12 Mt Johnson, Mt Gilbert George Toby and Ted Pinson

After rainshowers and threatening weather all week Saturday dawned just beautiful. 22 people showed up at the South Lake roadhead and made quick work of the short hike to Lower Treasure Lake and base camp. Lower Treasure was free of ice, but all the other lakes in the Treasure chain were mostly frozen with some thawing at the edges. There is a lot of snow in the area, but it is deceiving. The snow is only a couple of feet deep and we constantly kept breaking thru to the rocks below on the climb of Mt Johnson. The water level of South Lake is so low the entire inside of the dam is visible. Did you know it is entirely faced with wood.

We ascended Mt Johnson by the class 3 North Ridge. The last 1,000 feet was all rock. Everyone handled it easily and most were on top by 1:00. A very enjoyable climb with lunch on the summit. 21 made the summit. One fellow turned back with a bad knee. It was too early to go back to camp so 13 opted to climb Mt Gilbert while Ted Pinson led the less ambitious climbers back from Johnson by the somewhat easier South slope. Gilbert is not a particularly interesting climb. It is just a long slug up the S.E. slopes, but the 13,100 foot summit offered rewarding vistas of the Sierra. We enjoyed some fine glissades from the saddle between Johnson and Gilbert. The snow was rather icy and abrasive and chewed the seat out of the leaders pants. All were back to camp by six; a busy day. With both peaks under our belt, Sunday we enjoyed sleeping in, had a leisurely breakfast, and returned to the cars for an early start back home.

ARROW PK, PYRAMID PK (JULY 15-17).....BILL T. RUSSELL
JIM ERB

Fifteen people met at Roads End in Kings Canyon Friday, 15 July, and started hiking east at 0800. The nine miles up the river through Paradise Valley to Woods Creek was most pleasant. We hiked east on the Woods Creek trail for about 1/4 mile after crossing the South Fork of the Kings River and then went up the hill to the north to intersect the chute containing Arrow Creek. Climbing in the chute was not hard, but there were some complaints about willows and other vegetation being slippery underfoot. We went up the chute to a point about 300 ft above the spot where the creek comes down the wall of the chute. Here, at elevation of about 8000', we left the chute, climbed over the spur and back into the now broader Arrow Creek basin. One person turned back at this point. From here the route paralleled the creek over granite slabs and meadows, with gradually decreasing slope to the first lake at 10,500', where we camped. We arrived about 5:00 p.m. This is all beautiful open country.

On Saturday we hiked up the creek past the lake at 11,000' and thence up the slope to the summit of Arrow Pk. The slope consists of medium-size blocks and is quite comfortable walking. The view from Arrow features Clarence King to the south, Split Mtn and the peaks near Taboose Pass to the northeast, and Ruskin, Marion, State and Goat across the Muru Blanco to the north and west. After awhile we descended, went past the upper lake, down a little more and then back up to the two small lakes east of Arrow Creek on a bench at 11,100'. From here we went straight south up an obvious 2nd-class chute (about 20' wide) to the west ridge of Pyramid Peak at about elevation 11,500'. The chute was at the angle of repose and had much loose rock, making a real challenge in careful foot placement. We had lunch and then moved up the easy talus slope to the summit of Pyramid Pk. It was threatening rain and a few thunderclaps could be heard in the distance. We then descended along the same line but continued to the southwest down the basin that leads to the lower Arrow Lake and to our camp. We reached camp at 3:00 p.m. and had a nice afternoon killing time until dinner.

The peak list has Pyramid Pk as 3rd class, but the route we used in descent is comfortable 2nd class. -- Even the chute we ascended to the west ridge should be considered 2nd class.

On Sunday we left camp at 0615, had a nice descent down Arrow Creek followed by an uneventful walk down the trail, and reached the roadhead at 1230. Thus ended a fine week-end in very nice country, but with two rather uninteresting talus slopes for the peak climbs proper. The 14 people were good companions and strong climbers.

Thanks are due Jim Erb, who led the ascent and who replaced George Smith as assistant.

Bill

The Sierra ECHO is published seven times a year by the Sierra Peaks Section of the Angeles Chapter of the Sierra Club.

COPY: Send to Editor, Mary Omberg, 4311 El Prieto, Altadena, CA 91001.
Priority is given to short, typed, single spaced articles.

COPY DEADLINE DATES are the 20th of Jan, Mar, May, June, July, Sept, Nov.

ADDRESS CHANGES: Diana Dee, 2120 Dufour Ave., #8, Redondo Beach, CA 90278.
The post office will not forward 3rd class mail.

INQUIRIES ABOUT NOT RECEIVING THE ECHO should be directed to ECHO mailer
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SUBSCRIPTIONS ARE \$3.00/year due by March 31. Subscribing to the ECHO is a requirement for active membership in the SPS. Send to Cuno Ranschau, SPS Treasurer, 12744 Lorne St., North Hollywood, CA 91605. New SPS membership applications received after October 1st are credited for ECHO subscription for the next calendar year.

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COMMEMORATIVE ISSUE: The Twentieth Year Commemorative issue is available from the Section Treasurer for \$1.00 by mail or for 50¢ at the meetings.

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