

The Sierra



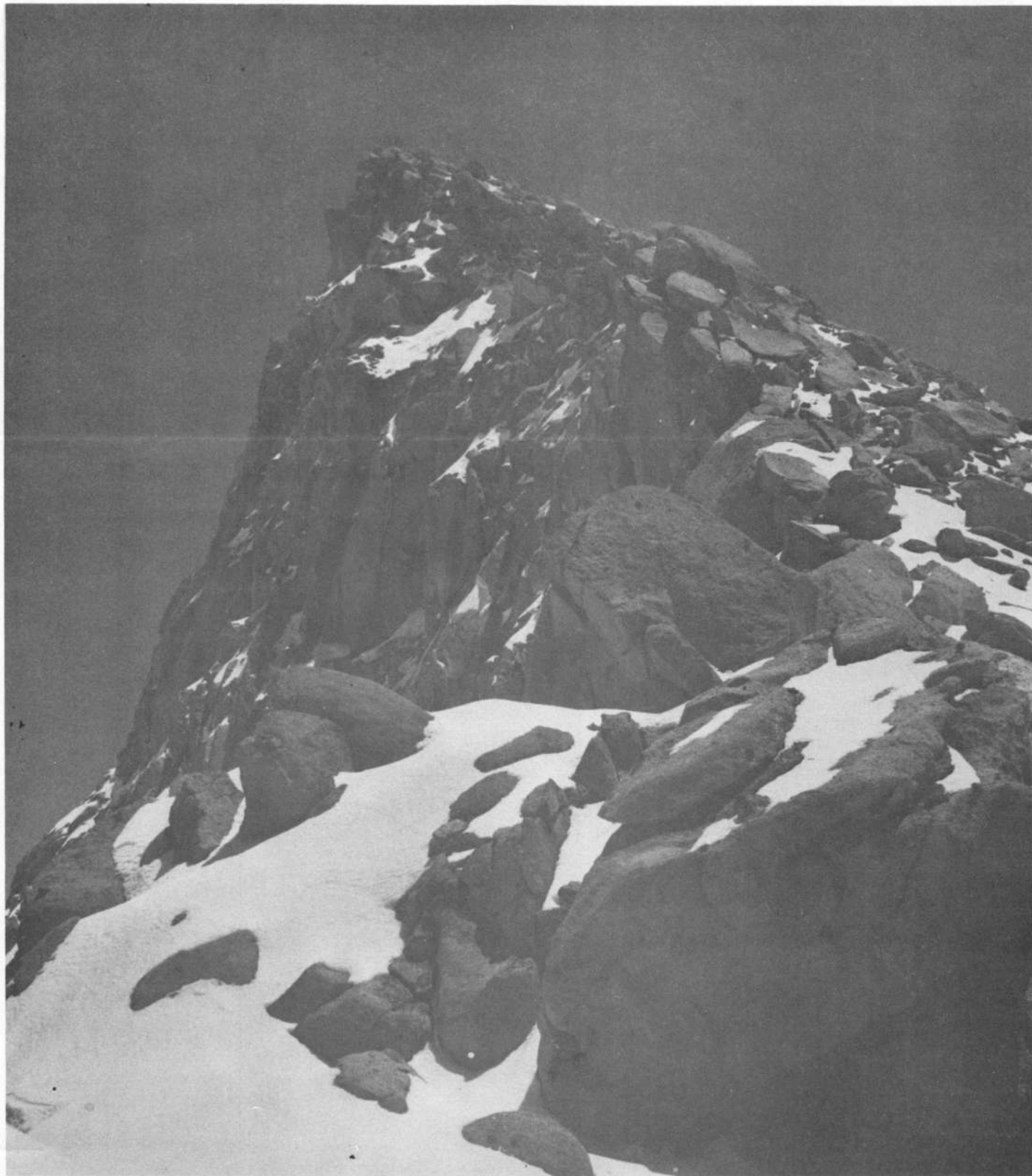
ECHO

VOLUME 23

JULY

1979

NO. 4



CHAIRMAN'S CORNER

The EXCOM has requested a response to a proposed resolution that would be sent to HEW concerning the composition of the county Health Service Agency. The letter to HEW would call for maximum possible representation of health service consumers in the HSA. Representatives should be chosen from the community by the community with regard to their concern for environmental health factors.

The attendees at the June SPS membership meeting were polled concerning support of this resolution. The nearly unanimous vote was to submit a recommendation to the EXCOM that the Chapter refrain from becoming involved in this issue.

The SPS is sponsoring another "extended trip" to the Cascades this summer. The trip led by Virgil Talbot and Gene Mauch has scheduled Mts. Shasta, Hood, Adams and St. Helens for the July 21-30 period. Last chance to sign up for a great trip judging from the one we led last year.

Employees of large businesses are frequently assaulted by United Way recruitment drives. Here's a way to keep your management happy and to make your contribution relevant. Sometimes not mentioned is the fact that you may designate your contribution to go to any non-profit organization. I know that the Sierra Madre Search and Rescue Team meets this criterion. Presumably other teams do so as well. So you might consider having all or part of your payroll deduction go to them. That way you'll have paid for your inevitable rescue in advance.

INCREASE YOUR WORD POWER

NEWT: He was really a salamander but no one newt.

NICHOLAS: "I can't marry you. You're penniless." "That's nothing, the Tsar of Russia was Nicholas."

OPPORTUNE: Any well-known operatic melody.

PACE: Male jogger to female jogger: "My pace or yours?"

QUART: People who drink before they drive are putting the quart before the hearse.

REBATE: Put another worm on the hook.

RINGLEADER: The first one into the bathtub.

SHED: As the critic wrote of the stripper: "Some things are better left unshed."

TEUTONIC: Not enough gin.

SEP 8-9 SAT-SUN

SIERRA PEAKS/HUNDRED PEAKS

M: SIRRETTA PK(9977), TAYLOR DOME (8774), CANNEL POINT(8314).

Easy slow-paced trip of two SPS peaks and one HPS peak in the southern Sierras. Sat climb Sirretta class 1, 2300' gain, 5 miles rt, then for the tigers we will do Cannel Point, class 1, 2½ miles rt, 700'gain.

Sun climb Taylor Dome 1200'gain, class 2, 5 miles rt. Send SASE to leader: ROY WARD, 12201 E. Garvey #32, El Monte, ca 91732. ASST: DON BEVERAGE.

COVER PHOTO: Come to Mineral King. Enjoy the beauty of the trees, streams, meadows, slopes, and summits like Sawtooth peak. Taken by Peggy Morrison in May of 1977.

SIERRA PEAKS SECTION

MEMBERSHIP REPORT

MAY AND JUNE, 1979

NEW EMBLEM HOLDERS

#387 ED WHEELOCK

NEW MEMBERS

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Fullerton, CA 92635

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Westlake Village, CA 91361

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Santa Monica, CA 90403

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456-8898
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18904 Pacific Coast Hwy
Malibu, CA 90265

247-7474
LAKE, RONALD
431 N. Brand, No. 201
Glendale, CA 91203

FURNISS, JAMES E.
P. O. Box 1334
Joshua Tree, CA 92252

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7101 W. Yale, #3904
Denver, Colorado 80227

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1355 Elysian Park Dr.
Los Angeles, CA 90026

641-8201
STAUFFER, WILLIAM H.
7414 Flight Avenue
Los Angeles, CA 90045

ECHO SUBSCRIPTIONS REINSTATED

CUDECK, ROBERT A.
Dept. of Psychology
University of So. Calif.
Los Angeles, CA 90007

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BLAUVELT, ART
1622 Ford Ave.
Redondo Beach, CA 90278

FULMER, WILLIAM
1930 Vista Ave.
Sierra Madre, CA 91024

(714) 871-3990
HILLMAN, RANDALL B.
423 E. Commonwealth
Fullerton, CA 92632

943-8508 10378524
WELDON, V.M.
12203-47 Santa Gertrudes Ave.
La Mirada, CA 90638

MILLER, JACK
8789 Swallow Ave.
Fountain Valley, CA 92708

POINTS TO PONDER

- EDUCATION: Reading the small print in a contract.
- EXPERIENCE: Not reading the small print in a contract.
- GOOD JUDGEMENT: Comes from experience.
- EXPERIENCE: Comes from bad judgement.
- EXORSIZE: If you fail to pay your exorsist, you may get repossessed.
- What some people lack in intelligence, they more than make up for in stupidity.

Greg Vernon

Chamberlin, Newcomb, Corcoran

September 23, 24, 1978

The story of this trip began on a rather drizzly winter morning in the bustling metropolis of Shoshone just prior to the annual DPS mire marathon in the Greenwater Valley. A trip was turned into Ron Jones which included the peaks Corcoran and Newcomb. Ron, noting that another Corcoran trip had been turned in for the following week, inquired whether the date could be changed by a few months or the objectives altered. The trip then became Chamberlin and Newcomb which seemed rather nice since these peaks are seldom led. Somehow, everything got convoluted in the schedule and the trip was officially listed to include all three peaks. Mamma Mia!

After the initial shock of seeing this in the schedule, I thought of all my sportsmanlike qualities and decided to give the thing a try. Three potential assistant leaders who had indicated a desire to have a crack at it found one reason or another to cop out by the time the week of the trip came along. Some would-be participants also wised up and invited their mothers in law over for the weekend to provide an alibi for not being able to come.

Thus on Saturday morning, five naive participants produced themselves at the Cottonwood Lakes trailhead to begin this death-march which was thinly disguised as a celebration of the autumnal equinox. The 32 miles of hiking were mentioned in the trip write-up. I let those with ambition and topographic maps figure out that there were 13,000' of elevation gain as well for those who completed the entire trip. Two of the participants were in fact marathon runners who thought the trip would be a challenge, two were BMTC ers who needed an experience trip to graduate, and one was a nice, everyday Joe who was out for an outing to the hills.

We reached New Army Pass at 11:00 and were in camp at 11,200' just below Sky Blue Lake at 2:00. It was then off to Corcoran. From the West, the ridge coming down from LeConte is a coxcomb of branching chutes and pinnacles. Choosing the correct chute to the Corcoran summit involves guesswork and luck.

A large talus fan drops into Irridescent lake. By staying to the extreme left of this fan near cliffs to the north of the lake, one arrives at a choice of three chutes. The one on the right goes directly to the summit but is steep and loose. A large chute on the left narrows and runs into tough climbing. A narrow chute to the right of this leads to the notch to the north of the summit provided that you remain to the right when the chute branches. After some exploration of a couple side chutes, the correct one was located (only three guesses needed!), and 4 participants made the summit by 6:00 pm. The fifth participant remained in camp and built a fire which served as a beacon for the tired group that staggered into camp at 8:00.

Sunday morning, three of the group left for home obviously feeling that their obligation to BMTC had been fulfilled. One was heard to remark something about always having wondered whether or not the rumors he had heard about SPS trips were true. It should be noted that all of the participants had climbed less than 5 listed peaks before this outing, a fact which came to my attention at the Saturday evening campfire. Three of us then departed for Newcomb and Chamberlin, packed out to the cars in the dark, and were back in the IA basin in time to observe a beautiful sunrise. Fatigue probably was responsible for the late arrival back at the trailhead, but one should not expect to return home before 2:00 am if Newcomb and Chamberlin are ever led again on a weekend.

Mt. Corcoran

Sept 30-Oct 1

D. Vandervoet
J. Hellman

Twenty one people wandered in to the Tuttle Creek roadhead Friday night in anticipation of climbing the elusive Mt. Corcoran. In the morning, while signing in, introductions were made and not a single person recognized Rich Gnagy with his new toupee. We left the cars at 8:30 am following the excellent route description provided by Jerry Keating in the Echo several years ago. After inspecting the stone house in the canyon, we climbed along Tuttle Creek which was filled with the golden color of the willow and birch trees. Hiking at a leisurely pace, we reached the campsite at 11,000' before 2 pm.

Once in camp, most people took naps or read. Rita Gray, however, upheld her SPS reputation by leading the afternoon swim in the large pools nearby camp. ("Lead" is an understatement in this case for once she attained the standard swimming attire in the Sierras, there was nothing that would have stopped the young men in the group, including Butch Hoover and Bob Ward, from joining in.) John Dye, on the other hand, went into partial hibernation by sleeping from 2:30 pm Saturday until 5:30 Sunday.

When the air cooled down the stupor left camp and soon we had a nice campfire burning. While Tad Goguen sat around the fire in her underwear, John Hellman told stories of how climbing use to be in the Sierras in the old days. One of his biggest disappointments was reaching the summit of Mt Whitney in 1942 and not being able to see Fresno. After John had gone to bed, Pat Holleman explained her election platform for her candidacy in the SPS management. In particular, she wants Mt Mary Austin and Mt. Amelia Earhart to be Emblem peaks. The Hoover family, famous for their climbing exploits, amazed the group with their voracious appetite for popcorn. Quickly inhaling the eight large pans of popcorn, they were last heard munching on the unpopped kernels. Most people drifted off to bed by nine, but Jack Grams sat by the fire singing until past midnight.

Setting out Sunday morning with Keating's instructions in hand, we soon found ourselves in the chute north of Corcoran. A combination of old and new snow covered most of the scree making the route slippery. Everything went according to the instructions and everyone was on the summit by 10:30. On descending the peak, Dick Olsen, better known to the group as "Red Shoes", found that he had left his ice axe on the summit. His address and phone are 14 Westminster #25, Venice 90291, 399-7457 and he would appreciate hearing from anyone going in the area. Upon reaching the hard snow, Gerry Holleman treated the group to an outstanding demonstration of an uncontrolled glissade.

The trip from camp to the cars took 2½ hours and we left the roadhead at 5 pm. Fun was had by all.

Seventeen bleary-eyed SPSers assembled at the Squaw Valley main parking lot at sunup. Most had driven all night to get there. While we waited for the last to arrive, a stove and pot brewed IV-coffeestat to resuscitate some of our more comatose participants. With the early morning sun at our backs, we started up the ski area service road toward the ridge behind the bowl. This road replaces the trail shown on the Granite Chief 15' quad. Our objective peak, of the same name, loomed up behind the ridge and the Watkins Monument cairn as we approached. We reached Granite Chief's somewhat nondescript summit after just 3 hours -- 3200' altitude gain and 5 miles from the cars.

Tinker Knob is a rounded pyramid on the N-running ridge about a 5-mile walk from Granite Chief. The Pacific Crest Trail runs below the ridge most of the way and we took it from the point where it crosses the GC saddle. Lunch was in a sylvan setting alongside the trail at Mountain Meadow Lake. About 1400' of lost altitude had to be climbed before we reached Tinker Knob's shaley summit. Dick Jali took the lead on our return to the cars and we were all back by 6 pm.

The Lower Little Truckee Campground is located N of Truckee and it was the group's overnight spot. Mt Lola was to be climbed on Sunday, and from a previously undescribed roadhead which made the climb incredibly easy. At about 16 miles N of Truckee on Hwy 89 there is a left turn onto a paved road. It is shown on the Donner Pass 15' quad and on other maps. A graded road runs more or less parallel to the Henness Pass road and it crosses Cold Stream N of Mt Lola. The trail shown on the map just E of Cold Stream is now a logging road that is passable by cars for 3.5 miles to a small forest clearing and a bridge crossing the stream. This road makes some turns, and there is a fork which should be taken to the right. A small forest clearing at the bridge is for turning around and parking cars, since most cannot make it up the remaining 0.5-mile of road. The trail to Mt Lola continues S from the clearing and follows a creek. The summit is reached after 1500' gain in 2.5 hours.

This is the area where Disney was planning a Northern California ski resort. Rumors circulating around Truckee were that Disney's development plans were tied to the outcome of the November election. If Jerry Brown was re-elected Governor, they would give up their resort plans and pull out.

Now comes the unpleasant part. Our delightful climb of Mt Lola became less alluring to a new and inexperienced hiker who became suddenly and totally lost. The result was a chilly bivouac for him, an anxious day for the leader (me), and a full-blown search operation involving woofers dogs, willing climb participants, and a Sacramento District CHP helicopter. Just before reaching the summit, and while it was in plain view, the hiker suddenly changed course and began climbing down the wrong side of the mountain. He was following a voice that said: "We are down here!" We put together that he had perspired heavily during the short but speedy climb and had become dehydrated and salt depleted. Clad only in shorts, T-shirt, and thin parka, he alternately exercised for warmth and slept under a fallen tree trunk. His actions during the freezing night and until his help rescue at noon the next day were both intelligent and indicative of a positive mental attitude. This episode reinforced the notion that the leader, who was dumb me, should always designate an observant trail sweep. I made the mistake of not doing so this particular day, with a pretty scary result.

We have it on good authority that Mary McMannes climbed Castle Peak and Elwell with cast on her leg. Now, isn't that the true SPS spirit?!

Dragon Pk, Kearsarge Pk

Oct. 14-15, 1978

Jim Erb/

Theresa Rutherford

This was the perfect fall trip one always hopes for: (1) four cars in the Onion Valley parking lot Friday night, (2) warm weather and no wind, (3) unlimited visibility and clear skies except for some high cirrus, (4) 13 congenial climbers.

Saturday we dropped packs at 11,200 ft and were on top of Kearsarge in less than 5 hours from the parking lot. We camped in a nice area on the east end of the high lake just east of Dragon, arriving about 7 hours after leaving the parking lot.

Sunday we climbed to the saddle south of Dragon via a narrowing chute that snakes to the right just below the saddle. We missed the false summit by swinging wide left. The summit top is reached via a 20 foot near-horizontal crack. This was a fun third class move which we all did unroped. We were on top 2 hours after leaving camp.

On our route, there was no residual snow from September's three storms. Last winter's snow was easily bypassed. This is a nice late-fall trip because the cars are less than 2 hours from camp, permitting a quick "get-away" if needed.

KERN POINT and PEAK 13540

LABOR DAY WEEKEND 1978

Dianne Lucas, Ron Jones, Dave Brown and I started at Symmes Creek Friday evening and slept on the first ridge. Saturday we crossed the Kern Plateau and camped on Milestone Creek. Sunday we traversed South over ridges and went up to the main crest and along it to Kern Point. We had plenty of time for a planned traverse back to Milestone Mtn. but rain, snow and lightning made it seem wiser to get off the ridge and hike part way home that evening.

Monday the weather continued bad but we climbed into the rain clouds covering Peak 13540. We were a wet group coming out over Shepherd Pass, but were able to feel sorry for the people going into the bad weather. We also wondered how many rescue calls would result from the sudden change of weather and indeed we had three.

A note of interest was the large number of late blooming flowers which were probably due to the heavy snows last winter. The late mosquitoes were also noticeable and less enjoyable.

Carl Heller

A Gullible's Ascent (travels?)

Being a tolerably trusting, gullible soul fresh out of BMTC training and on the verge of SPS entry, I accepted with alacrity the invitation to join two fellows who had climbed McKinley and the Hindukush regions in a climb of Mt. Williamson by the N-E ridge the second weekend of October. Some queries about the route addressed to a Physicist who had followed the George Creek route (and there fell prey to his one instance of altitude sickness) elicited the information that it was verboten this time of year for the sake of sheep preservation. Well—we saw no sheep, although an owl stared askance at us as predators of its inviolate eyrie.

We set out from Symmes Creek (5,600) towards the timberline and Williamson Creek. The first leg was gutty, tenacious toil, our packs grinding our noses down in the dirt, cobwebs and cactus thorns festooning our sweaty bodies, and the sun boiling over our brain pans. Mark's steak of the evening before was revenging itself abdominally. But either it lessened or he took it stoically. Day 2 his strength waxed rather than waned, perhaps because like Galahad's his heart is pure.

The first horn came in sight while the sun was high and I was bitterly regretting bringing only 2 water bottles although Doug had advised 3. Kipling's refrain coursed through my mind in a dreadful roundelay.. "You may talk o' gin an' beer when you're quartered safe out 'ere/...but ..you'll do your work on water and lick the bloomin' boots of 'im that's got it..."

Water is essential on this route as none exists after Williamson Creek except for patches of snow (foreseeing which Mark had brought a stove to melt). The Roper guidebook calls it "arduous and dry".

Getting onto rock, we encountered vertical, monolithic, exposed slabs which seemed impassable but could be got over by trial and error. One such required a rappel which our 120-ft rope accommodated easily enough. The 4th class use of rope, loop and lariat would come in at the 2nd horn. Meanwhile the party's water store diminished with the thirsty work and our cheeks were caked with salt giving us weirdly loonish, white-stubbled phizes like the Ancient Mariner's.

We got off the big slabs onto a slope with a multitude of jagged boulders to circumvent among to reach the ridge to the 1st horn. Here we reached snow patches and Doug made a strawberry nectar snow cone of which I was allowed to greedily quaff a swallow. At length in a dead heat with the advancing night, we staggered upon the ridge athwart peak 14,125. The first horn, and Table Mt, Milestone Mt, etc. revealed themselves to us afar off in a tranquil sea of blue translucent twilight, which soon became moonlight as I stumbled on, au bout de souffle, about the ridge's black rock spine. Our breaths were short dry coughs. At about 12800' a short colloquy ensued between Doug and Mark—the upshot was that, as 3rd man, I was made arbiter. I elected to bivouac among these restful crags, snow was boiled and swallowed, and I cosseted myself in bag and sack on a slanting platform with a pad of snow beneath me. Mark made his nook cozier with a cunningly piled bed-rail of rocks between him and the abyss. Doug curled up to half his size, stuffing his feet into his pack, to fit inside his egg-cup of rock. Throughout the night I periodically peered out of my womb-sack like a half-etherized patient to check out the meteorological state of the evening sky, spread out like T. S. Eliot's patient on the operating table. I fell out of a dream of being in the White Mts back East asking a friend sighting over a ridge what I was doing there, where were my companions, wondering whether I was concussed...pure twilight zone. The dawn was beautiful, dispelling my all-too-real dream, making me overly ebullient for non-morning people.

We trekked on to Peak 14,125 where Doug laconically notated in the log "cool, breezy". Access to the next horn was a matter of dropping down and climbing up in a region now of snow and ice. Another colloquy and despite my wistful fantasy of ushering ourselves over the col to the beckoning grade of the Georges Creek slope to the summit of Williamson (easy class 2), we at midday had to concede and turn back.

The descent was an epic in itself. Williamson Canyon is a good game plan as the creek intersects with Shepherd's creek and ultimately exits. On the map the contours are harrowingly close and the choice of foregoing the ridge whence we came was the difference between Hell and Purgatory. Our footing on the endless scree slopes was of a wibberly-wobberly quality as if we had been drinking and I slid once down a gully of 'black ice' where I smashed my great toenail against the arresting rocks. At last without further incident except peevish tempers because of dislodged, precipitous rocks we reached the creek where we dunked our battered feet. Looking back up at the sheerness of the grade, we found it amazing we hadn't tumbled off it pell-mell. The rest was rather grim fording and re-fording ad nauseam of this esoteric, trailless creek not too often explored. We passed one of Norman Clyde's famous cast-iron skillets now rusty with age. It was doubtless robbed of him by some itinerant bear and abandoned after he had cooked and eaten his fill of Clyde's grub. The Greek and Latin books we did not see but the bear probably found them inedible as well as unreadable.

In another dead heat with night we stumbled off a panned-out trail into the creek again for the nth time, fought wildly with bramble, floundered up to our knees in a frantic crossing - the last as it proved, for a quick clamber up a bank revealed a road, "a ribbon of moonlight" in the darkness now absolute.

ALBA HALL

Walking in Wales Ron Jones

Mary Sue Mead and I spent several months this summer traveling in the non-mountainous parts of Europe during an extended business trip I was on. We did however take time from the work schedule to visit the land of my forebearers (Jones being a common Welsh name) and to see the Snowdon climbing area of North Wales. The Snowdon's, in addition to being a famous climbing area are well-known for their walking areas and there is a locally famous walk known as "The Three Thousands". These are the 14 named peaks in Wales over 3,000 feet in height and which can all be done in a long day's marathon.

The Snowdon massif is located in Snowdonia National Park, an 838 square mile area more like our National Forests as there are small villages, roads and local industries such as slate quarrying, peat cutting, grazing of sheep and cattle and tourist stops. The industries are so small and quaint, the villages so small, and the area so desolate that it does retain a great deal of a wilderness feeling.

The country is chiefly rolling hillsides covered with heather, heath and gorse. There are a few deep but rounded valleys where the roads, farms and villages are located. Sheep grazing is the most obvious business in the area and Welsh wool is highly prized for making rough weather-resistant tweeds and woolens.

There are some significant areas of exposed climbing rock, mostly slates and other fine-grained metamorphics. These are heavily used by climbers in the summer with 100-400 foot pitches being frequently found with all grades or levels of 'over-used' routes. One finds a few 600 foot routes, the best being the Idwal Slabs near Glyder Fawr Mtn. and the longest routes of about 900 feet such as the Great Gully of Craig-yr-Yista or the south side of Lliwedd Mtn.

The "Three Thousand" walk starts from the little village of Llanberis at about 250 feet elevation. One takes the Snowden Mountain Funicular Railway to the summit of Snowden, the high point of all Britain and Wales at 3560 feet. From the summit one covers about 35 miles, traveling generally from south to north, with about 8,500 feet elevation gain and 9,000 feet elevation loss! Properly done the walk must be accomplished in 24 hours and the record time I believe is 8 hours 25 minutes.

From Snowdon an easy 10 or 15 minutes of ridge walking at six in the morning took us to Crib-y-Ddysgyl, 3493 feet, the second highest point in the range. An hour later we were at Crib Goch, 3023 feet, and then a 5 mile, 2700 foot elevation loss to the road leading to Pen-Y-Pass. From the village of Nant Peris it was four miles up through grassy pastures and heather to Elidyr Fawr, 3029 ft., up and down some 2200 foot knobs while contouring around the head of Dudonyn Valley and then the start up for the summit of Y Garn, 3104 feet. Then down again into the hollow of Llyn-y-Cwn at 2300 feet which had a marvelous view down to a flock of perhaps a thousand grazing sheep. Then up to the slaty summit of Glyder Fawr, 3279 ft, and 30 minutes later to Glyder Fach, 3262 feet. Then down the ridge to 2200 feet and up again to Tryfan, 3010 feet. From there we descended to Lake Llyn Ogwen at 984 feet for lunch and a short rest.

Soon we started up the south ridge to gain nearly 2300 feet in a steep 2 miles. Reaching Pen-yr-Oleu Wen, 3210 feet, we followed the bumps and ridges to Carnedd Dafydd, 3246 feet. The Carnedd ridge is rated as notorious for its swirling mists. The day had been beautiful until about this point but by mid-afternoon the mists were starting to set in and thankfully it is all one ridge from Carnedd Dafydd to nearly the finish or one could become easily lost. The next peak on the route is Yr Elen, 3151 ft, and then over to the third highest point on the route, Carnedd Llewelyn, 3484 feet, marked as each peak is by a sturdy 4 to 5 foot high rock cairn. The last 3 miles were an easy ridge walk downhill to Foel Grach, 3195 feet and with the only mountain refuge hut, and finally Foel Fras at 3091 feet. It was late dusk and the walk had taken us 14½ hours. From Foel Fras we walked slowly down the 5 mile long Yr Aryg valley to the little quarry town of Bethesda, set in a somber area of blue slate hills. Fresh lamb cutlets, local spring potatoes and the local Welsh beer which is named "Brains" quickly restored our spirits and our outlook on hundred peaking in Wales. We thought often of Andy Smatko and wondered how many more "named peaks" he might have located on the ridges we traversed.

I disclaim any knowledge of the pronunciation of the Welsh-Celtic names in the area, they seldom sound like they are spelled. Further information on climbing and walking in the Snowdon area can be obtained from:

Wales Tourist Board
Department 151, WDO
Cardiff CF5 IXS Wales, U. K.

Ask for their publications list. Of special interest is the Regional Guide to North Wales, The Wales Tourist Map and the Wales Walking Guide with 120 described walks. Climbing info can be obtained from: Snowdon National Park Centre

Llanberis, Wales

and from:

The Snowdonia Park Information Officer
Yr Hen Ysgol, Maentwrog,
Blaenau Ffestiniog,
Gwynedd LL41 4HW Wales U.K.

Freel Peak - June 9, 1979

June is springtime in the Lake Tahoe area and the air is always fresher, the greens greener, the streams more verdant, and the last of the snow gives accent to the peaks of the northern Sierra.

Like Mts. Patterson, Rose, and Adams Peak, Freel is not a Sierra Peak and properly should be grouped in with the "Sagebrush Country" peaks characteristic of northern and central Nevada. The eastern escarpments of the above four peaks certainly have the sagebrush characteristic. The western slopes are plushly vegetated and provide stark contrast to the eastern slopes.

At 10,881', Freel Peak is the highest point in the Tahoe Basin. The nearest higher point is Highland Peak near Ebbetts Pass. Outstanding views are available of the entire Tahoe area and the Desolation Wilderness. A massive microwave relay station near the summit spoils the view somewhat.

This peak is seldom, if ever, led due to the risk of "Cunerisms", named after the person who declaired the DPS list "marbeless" after removal of said peak from the list. For instance, a successful climb of the peak would be a "freeling" experience, while failure to reach the summit would be a "no freels" excursion. A day full of such puns and neither the leader nor the participants would freel so good.

From IA, a 450 mile drive brings one to the mountain. A good place to spend the night (what's left of it) is in one of the Toiyabe National Forest campgrounds south of Luther Pass. I am convinced that the easiest way to get to the Tahoe area is via Gardnerville, Nevada instead of through Markleeville, although Monitor Pass has some fantastic views to offer in daylight.

From the intersection of Rts. 88/89 with US 50, drive about 1 mile east on US 50 to the traffic light. Turn right on Pioneer Trail. After about 1 more mile turn right onto Oneida. After 0.2 miles the pavement ends. 0.1 miles further a sign reads "Fountain Place". Another 0.1 miles the road forks - keep left. 0.2 miles further another fork - keep left and cross the creek. Follow the main road for about 2 miles ignoring all other jeep trails. At this point is a corral. This is the last "safe" place to park. The next mile is steep and somewhat rutted and can be driven in a pick-up truck. There are no places to turn around or park. The last mile to Fountain Place (meadows) is good road except for two delicate spots. A jeep road leads up a canyon toward the peak and may offer a feasible route. The trail to Armstrong Pass was chosen on this trip.

The trail is nonexistent in the meadow, but begins on the west side of the main stream leading toward the pass. The topographic map is accurate after this. The trail is unmaintained. From a meadow before the pass one may begin climbing sandy slopes toward the main ridge or one may go to the pass and climb the ridge. Staying on the main ridge or a bit to the left is the easiest route. Outcroppings are easily bypassed. Avoid the temptation to sidehill - you will end up in miserable crud.

The day may be capped by a dip in Lake Tahoe and/or a fabulous, gambler subsidised dinner in one of the casinos.

Greg Vernon

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INQUIRIES ABOUT NOT RECEIVING THE ECHO: Direct to Pat Holleman, 1638 Sixth st, Manhattan Beach, CA 90266.

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