

The Sierra



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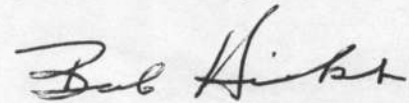
CHAIRMAN'S CORNER

Hard to believe this is the last 1979 Echo and my term as Chairman is over. This was a learning process for me, helped tremendously by a Committee composed of capable, easy to work with people. My thanks to them all.

The 1980 election resulted in a strong selection; returning Gene Mauk and Bill Bradley and adding Pat Holloman, Harold McFadden and Dale Van Dalsam. A good balance of new and old.

The SPS is alive and well. The mountaineering outings and training sessions have continued at a high level. I feel we should continue to make efforts to encourage new members, particularly those relatively new to mountaineering. Leading trips that would appeal to these prospective candidates would help.

Thanks to everyone for making the 1979 SPS Chairman's job a rewarding one.



The SPS officers for 1980 are: Gene Mauk - chairman, Bill Bradley - Vice chairman, Harold McFadden - secretary, Pat Holleman - treasurer, Dale Van Dalsem - alternate officer.

WANTED: CLIMBERS TO JOIN US FOR POLISH GLACIER ROUTE ASCENT OF ACONCAGUA (22,835 ft. highest outside Central Asia) Argentina in Feb 1980. You need 5 weeks off, fit bod, altitude experience, winter gear, \$850 r.t. airfare plus expenses. Serious? Phone Dale Van Dalsem (213) 822-9668 and write to 4143 Via Marina #1120 Marina Del Rey Ca 90291.

Santa Monica National Park

The Congress must authorize funding for the Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area at the full \$75 million approved in the Omnibus Parks bill last year. The Office of Management and Budget has recommended a mere 8% of the total. This figure is unrealistically low.

There is a need for the Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area. It treasures several species of animal and plant life that are endangered; it is perhaps the only refuge in America where mountain lions and golden eagles live naturally within minutes of a major city; and it fulfills a social need of Californians and millions of visitors who come to Los Angeles. The Santa Monica Mountains should be protected quickly and completely. The national government must now make its contribution to preserve this national heritage.

CONGRESSMAN JIM CORMAN

COVER PHOTO: This scene of the gentle slopes of Mt. Morgan by John Alden reminds us that our favorite playground is asleep until spring.

SIERRA PEAKS SECTION
MEMBERSHIP REPORT
SEPTEMBER-OCTOBER-NOVEMBER, 1979

NEW LIST FINISHERS

#13 SANDERS, W. G. 9-79
#14 RANSCHAU, CUNO 10-79

NEW SENIOR EMBLEM HOLDERS

#53 ROHN, NORM 9-79
#54 DAVIS, SID 9-79
#55 MACHLEDER, LARRY 9-79
#56 MAUK, GNE R. 10-79
#57 CAMPHAUSEN, FRED 10-79

NEW EMBLEM HOLDERS

#397 LANGLEY, STEVE 9-79
#398 MIHALJEVICH, DAN 9-79
#399 NEUNER, GEORGE 9-79
#400 ANDERSON, KAREN 9-79

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JULY 21,22

LONE PINE, IRVINE LARRY MACHLEDER, HAROLD MCFADDEN

Nine persons met at the Meysan Lakes trailhead at 7:30am Sat. Eight were prospective peak baggers and one camper. The eight were in camp below Meysan Lake at 11:30 am. After a leisurely hour and a half break for lunch and to set up camp, the eight started for Lone Pine amid clouds and fog. Three gave up along the way and were allowed to return alone as they were in good shape and the camp in view across the valley.

At the top of Lone Pine what might have been a pleasant stay to enjoy the splendid view was interrupted by hail and we hurried off. Incidentally, both the container and register need replacing.

Sat. evening it was decided that only three persons could attempt the Mallory/Irvine loop. However, six wished to climb on Sun., therefore, considering the weather also as a factor and with a view towards getting the most people on a peak, we decided to do Irvine first and probably only it.

At 6:30 am six started for Irvine. One made a good try but had to be left (temporarily) on the ridge while five made the summit by 10:00 am. By 10:45 am amid growing clouds we descended from Irvine. All six were back to a now deserted camp by 12:30pm. the others had signed out and departed before the impending weather.

We hiked out in light rain and were all on the way to Lone Pine by 4:00 pm. In addition to the leaders, Jon Lutz, Adrienne Knute, and Krista Knute made both peaks. LM

June 23-24 Goode-Agassiz Mary McMannes, Barbara Reber, Gene Olsen, Rodney Schaerer, Walton Kabler, et al.

This trip was supposed to be Mary's experience trip for her LTC M-rating, but she bowed out after she broke her leg. Barbara Reber agreed to act as co-leader, but she had to cancel, and Gene Olsen was volunteered for the job. Actually, the trip was led finally by Rodney Schaerer so he could satisfy his basic navigation requirement for LTC, which he did handily. Mel Johnson, Art Day, and Claude Wezeman assisted at various times as well.

Many cancellations and no-shows on this trip. Only eleven of us went in to camp at Saddlerock Lake. Everyone climbed Goode Saturday afternoon; five climbed Agassiz on Sunday. Four participants were BMTC students (this was a combined SPS-BMTC trip); the rest were either SPS or BMTC leaders. Beaucoup expertise.

The most unusual part of the trip was our discovery of about six deer carcasses partially buried in the snow along the switchbacks leading to Bishop Pass. It looked as though the animals were caught and died in an avalanche during the winter. As the snows melt, scavengers tear the deer apart as they emerge. One nearly complete carcass was just visible under the snow; the others were in various stages of dismemberment and decomposition, some reduced to no more than patches of fur and a few bones. In the cold morning, on the way up to climb Agassiz, the scene was grisly enough, but, later, when the sun had had a chance to do its work for awhile, the stench of decay made the pass a truly unpleasant place to be. (W.K.)

Look in the Nov-Dec Sierra Club Bulletin for an article on rock climbing written by SPSer Wild Bill Higgins.

Mt. Clark

June 16-17, 79

G.Toby

Thurs Bars in Yosemite. A year old cub was prowling around the cars only 20 feet away as we prepared to leave on the Mono Meadow Trail. He was a bold one and got into a pack left unguarded for only a minute. Keeping a wary eye out for mama bear, six hikers hit the trail descending to Illilouette Creek. The creek was running too high for a rock crossing and too swift to wade. With feet dangling just above the rushing waters we shinnied across on our behinds on a long slender log. Fortunately no splinters. We picked up the Clark Fork and proceeded cross country by map and compass thru some beautiful dense forests. The topo map is inaccurate in this area. It shows Red Creek flowing into the Clark. Red Creek flows parallel to the Clark but does not join it. Our intended campsite was in a little valley between Mt. Clark and Mt. Gray. What a surprise when we came over the rise. All ice and snow. It looked like the Arctic, however it was melting rapidly. We camped on a small knoll barely free of snow.

On the way in Mike Stone left his camera on a rock near a small stream, but did not discover his loss until some time later. It was too late to backtrack after it. We figured it was about 8400' elevation and would look for it on the way out. The camera was in a waterproof case.

Sunday Clark was climbed by a variation of the Class 3 SE Arette. We crossed over in one of the gaps in the knife edge ridge mentioned by Clarence King in his account of climbing Mt. Clark. A belay was set up at that point. It was a thrill to stand on this summit and see all the wonders of Yosemite in one sweeping glance. It was crowded with all five of us up there at the same time. The weather was deteriorating. Shortly after leaving the peak the summit was covered with clouds and was not seen again that day. It began to snow as we broke camp. It soon became a blizzard with a cold driving wind. Back to the map & compass, but now no peaks or landmarks to take a bearing on. We retraced our course down to 8400' and searched for the camera in vain. The slope was alive with streams not on the map. Every stream and rock began to look alike. The snowfall increased and became wet and sticky, reducing visibility to about 200 ft. We reluctantly gave up the search. Heading West we stumbled around, over, and under the downed timber. I got real cozy with my compass. It finally stopped snowing as we emerged from the forrest but it remained cold the rest of the way out to the cars. A huge black bear was spotted in Mono Meadows less than a mile from the cars. This was an interesting and tough trip with the snow and high water. It was a bit early in the year. Perhaps July or August would have been a better time to tackle Clark. Many thanks to Larry Machleder for filling in as Asst Leader.

WORD POWER

Thesis: Professor's cryptic comment on a college essay: "thesis awful".

Thongs: What Thinsatra things.

Urn: What's a Grecian urn? About 20 drachmas a week after taxes.

Wanton: The miniskirt was tried and found wanton.

Zinc: The battery would not have been invented if someone hadn't stopped to zinc.

Zinnia: Farewell, as in "I'll be zinnia".

Zebra: That's as large as they make them.

LION ROCK, TRIPLE DIVIDE PK, GLACIER RIDGE, WHALEBACK,
PICKET GUARD PK, KERN PT, MT STEWART
JUNE 30 - JULY 6, 1979.....BILL T. RUSSELL, DON SPARKS

Eight of us, the leaders and Bob Emerick, George Hubbard, Darrell Miller, Bill Pappas, Eric Schumacher and George Toby, left Crescent Meadows on Saturday at 0720 on the High Sierra Trail. We hiked to Bearpaw Meadow and from there took the "high" trail to Tamarack Lake which we reached at about 1730. The segments of the trail shown on the topo that depict sudden gains and losses are incorrect, the trail actually is at a rather constant elevation. The distance to the lake is about 17 mi. with a gain of about 4000 ft. We found a large, hungry mosquito population at Tamarack Lake and those that had tents were glad to get inside.

On Sunday, the second day, we crossed the creek at the lake outlet and went up the 200' wall to the north, around a swamp, across the stream, and up to about 10,600' where we left our main packs and climbed LION ROCK via the north side of the southerly of the two east ridges coming from the summit area. We then descended, picked up our packs and hiked to the outlet of Lion Lake. From there we traversed up and NE over nice walking terrain to Lion Lake Pass. We then climbed TRIPLE DIVIDE via the west ridge. Our ascent route started out too low on the north side so we ascended a small buttress to the main ridge and thence along the ridge crest to the summit. A good route from the pass is to ascend a narrow chute just north of the ridge crest until it ends after a gain of about 200-300', then cross two small gullies 20' and 30' wide and continue ascending eastward. After another 200' or so of gain, achieve the ridge crest and go up a ledge just to the south of the ridge. When this runs out, follow the ridge crest, which is moderate 3rd class climbing, to the summit. After returning to the pass, we descended over snow into Cloud Canyon to a nice area at about 10,100' where we camped.

On Monday, the third day, we climbed GLACIER RIDGE by the obvious route from the east and southeast. The summit block is about 15' high and has nice "chicken head" projections on the NW face which makes it easy 4th class. We belayed one another by throwing a rope over the top of the block. We descended and hiked down Cloud Canyon to the Colby Pass Trail which we ascended to about 9950'. Eric discovered a nice campsite beside the stream from Colby Lake, about 1/8 mi. north of the trail and 150' above the canyon bottom. Several of the climbers did laundry and took baths; it was a nice late afternoon. The Cloud Canyon trail shown on the topo is essentially nonexistent but the walking is fine anyway.

On Tuesday, the fourth day, we climbed WHALEBACK. Our route was up through the prominent patch of grass and brush to just below the crest at a point perhaps 1/4 mi. south of the summit. We then traversed north into a broad chute which we ascended to the crest and then moved along the crest for about 200 yds to the top. The climbing was moderate 3rd class. We descended, picked up our packs and hiked over Colby Pass where there was considerable, but good snow climbing. We camped SE of the pass where the first stream comes in from the NE at about 11,040'.

On Wednesday, the fifth day, we hiked down to the Kern Kaweah River, crossed it on some logs and climbed PICKET GUARD via the small lake at 10,800' and then the north ridge. We descended to Gallats Lake, which is really a marsh, and climbed KERN PT going generally up the hill to the tiny pond at 11,700', then WSW to the top. The ground here is talus blocks, not scree as one might assume from the look of the terrain. The view from the summit of Kern Pt is magnificent! It is located in the middle of the Kern drainage and surrounded by major peaks, ridges and canyons. We camped that night where the Colby Pass trail reaches the Kern Kaweah River. The mosquitos were a bit thick, but our repellent did its thing. However, George Hubbard hiked upstream to sleep where the air was not humming so much.

On Thursday, the sixth day, we hiked up the river and over Pants Pass which is the col just north of point 12415'. It was snow covered on the east and had an angle-of-repose scree and talus chute on the west. After crossing Nine Lakes Basin, we reached the High Sierra Trail and climbed to Kaweah Gap. From here we ascended MT STEWART. The sun cups, which were really micro canyons, and the weak snow made going a bit frustrating in places and low clouds moving in from the west put us in a fog occasionally. However, we were glad to reach our last scheduled summit, even though we could see very little to the west. We descended to the Gap and hiked down the trail through what we thought must be spectacular scenery, to Hamilton Lake where we camped.

On Friday, the seventh day, the clouds cleared early and the surrounding walls down which we hiked the evening before did prove to be spectacular. We packed up and hiked out to Crescent Meadow to complete a splendid week of climbing with a fine group of people. The total gain for the trip was about 30,000' with a distance of about 75 miles, much of it involving cross country hiking over talus blocks and sun cups with packs.

The register and container situation is:

- Lion Rock - has a new SPS container & register
- Triple Divide - good ammo can, register almost full
- Glacier Ridge - could find no container, left a slip of paper with our names in a small pill bottle.*
- Whaleback - has only a 35 mm film container and poor register.*
- Picket Guard - has good register in a glass bottle
- Kern Point - good register in a poor rusty can
- Stewart - has a new SPS container and register.

* New cans and registers have been placed here.

CLARENCE KING, GARDINER, COTTER; Dale Van Dalsem, Jim Murphy
June 22-25 1979

This was written in the Schedule as a 3-day trip but sanity prevailed and we changed it to four days several months ago. 14 signed in at 0530 and we were off to N. Dragon Pass at 0555. (Head for the V-notch just north of Dragon Peak. Veer right and diagonally north across the throne-shaped buttress N. of the notch, following a small gully that exits onto the crest. Go N. along the crest and exit left down Cl 2-3 scree chute or better traverse around Right side of 2nd throne-shaped buttress, then run good class 1 scree down to wide shelf, traverse north some more, drop down to Dragon Lake). Two signed out, dropped three hrs behind, but caught up with us at camp at 8:30 PM! We were trying to reach Lake 11394 in the upper Gardiner Basin that night (Fires allowed, and centrally located to bag all 3 peaks). N. Dragon Col had taken its toll, however. Four of the 12 survivors were dragging so we camped at 6 PM just below 60-Lakes Col near the S. end of 60-Lakes Basin. Second-day plans were changed from C. K. to the other two peaks, costing us a sign-out who only had 3 days and didn't need Gardiner.

Saturday we were off at 0540 for Gardiner, followed Bob Hartunian's great cookbook recipe of 1977 Echo vintage, and put 11 people on the summit block (No, not at the same time!). We were all off the peak and having lunch at the sun-warmed rocks below Cotter by 1215. Gardiner: We set up two fixed ropes (A couple of big stoppers & small hexes w/ assorted slings) & everyone clipped in for the traverse from S. peak to N. peak. Makes you pucker and mumble an expletive at first sight from S Peak, but the traverse goes smoothly. The long south ridge to Cotter looked inviting, so we zig-zagged up ledges to the ridge, which degenerated (or elevated) to an arete. After Hours we finally made Cotter, losing one weary soul in the process, but picking up one of the two who rested in camp during the AM. Nine signed in; register container: two Zip-Loc bags. Straight down into camp after two great glissades down to the ledges. Leisurely late afternoon drying socks, stoning marmots (and ourselves w/ 151°) and re-arranging Moleskin. Do Cotter directly from Lk 11394. Avoid the ridge.

Up at a similarly inhuman hr Sun. Packed to Rae Lks Trail Junction, hid our packs, headed N down 60 Lks Basin thru some of the most incredibly lovely country imaginable, W toward C. King cirque to lake w/ 2 streams flowing in on topo. Asst Ldr, having done C.K. before, knew we should take R.H. fork. Leader, knowing better, took L.H. fork. Fifteen minutes later, we encountered the inevitable 79-ft waterfall w/ sheer cliffs. Somehow, we got up into the snow-choked cirque S.E. of C.K. and got to the up-and-left slanting ledges to the ridge crest, followed it up, staying to the left of the crest, to belay point #1, up to the partially collapsed Keyhole. Up the first wide crack to the left of the Keyhole (5.0 or 5.1), remove pack, slither up & set belay for next climber. Walt Hill, displaying magnificent left-right impartiality, got both boots stuck in the crack, had them unlaced & removed, regrouped & did it. Pat Holloman & Lynna Walker wriggled thru the collapsed Keyhole. Thankfully, Owen Maloy didn't try the Keyhole, but powered his way up the jamcrack. Somehow, all **arrived** at top below the summit block. Rope over the top (small wired stoppers for R.H. anchors.) Belay for the mantle-flop-the-left-leg-over-&-wriggle-up ungraceful non-move onto the block. Snap a beaner into the rusting bolt hanger, tie off the backside belay rope, clip in, get Lex Rohn to lean back against opposing rock & brace boots against summit block. People used those boots as stand-ons before the umph! move (Artificial aid!). Ben Williams subbed for Lex & gave Great Boot. All 13 made the summit block and 10 were on it at one time. Jim Ferris danced about on the block & gave everyone cardiac arrest. Gerry Hoaloman gave Great Belays & corrected Ldrs frequently errant nav. thru the snowfields. Rappel time found us with two pitches, one 2-rope, one doubled single rope. Brooke Roberts looked great on his 2nd rappel, ever. Walking out on Monday was uneventful & we hit the cars in Onion Valley between 4 & 4:30 PM via Glen & Kearsarge Passes. Many thanks to Jon Innskeep, Norm Rohn, & Jim Murphy especially. Their help made it a good, almost great, trip. Opinion: Glen & Kearsarge are better for entry & exit for a diverse

group, despite the 600' of additional gain each way. The Hi-level trail that by-passes Bullfrog Lake & never drops under 10.8K'(not on topo) makes Kearsarge & Glen a breeze. Only very **small** groups in which the slowest person takes rapid gain over 3rd Class should go No. Dragon Col. The average mixed bag of folks that show up for a trip to King & Gardiner are unduly worn out by the steep climb up N. Dragon. - Dale Van D.

MOSES MTN/NORTH MAGGIE MTN - JUNE 2-3, 1979....BILL T. RUSSELL
GEORGE SMITH

I was on it

Twenty-two of us left the new Shake Campground Saturday morning to hike north along the No. Fork of the Middle Fork of the Tule River. At about two miles the good trail crosses the river. Three people took off their shoes and carefully waded across the calf deep strong current and the rest crossed on a large old sequoia log which slopes upward and is high enough above the creek to give one a certain anxiety. We hiked another mile and crossed the river again on some logs and brush. Dick Akawie stepped on a semi-floating log which then quit floating and he ended up with over half his body in the water; it cooled him off nicely. We hiked another 1/4 mile and camped on the south edge of the small meadow indicated on the topo map at UTM coordinates 504169.

We ate some lunch and leaving two Zaleski's in camp, we climbed Moses Mtn. Our route was up the avalanche chute just north of the meadow where we camped. We reached the main ridge about 0.8 mi. north of the summit and then traversed about 100' to 300' below the main crest over rock ribs and rock gullies to reach the summit area. There were many patches of columbine in full bloom along the way. After a nice time enjoying the view and identifying distant peaks, we descended by a somewhat different route. We went down the first prominent chute north of the summit for perhaps 1000 ft. The upper part was brushy but we had a good standing glissade on the snow in the lower part. From the end of the snow we traversed northeast and downward through the timber to emerge at the meadow where we were camped. Moses can be reached by a variety of routes up the hillside. The two that we used are a toss-up as to difficulty. Our ascent route was more open but had more high 2nd class rock. Our descent route had a little easy 3rd class rock but a certain amount of brush. SPS member Jim Jenkins, who works for the USFS and who was on patrol, happened by in the evening. He checked our wilderness permit, spent the night with us and climbed Maggie with us on Sunday. We saw some bear sign in the meadow and were told that there were a few bears in residence so most of us hung our food, displaying varying skills in throwing rocks with strings attached over branches.

On Sunday we recrossed the river and climbed North Maggie. Our route was eastward and straight up the slope starting at about the "i" in "Middle" on the topo. We moved mostly through the timber which was quite good walking. We went over the ridge north of the "N" on the topo and into the small basin between the "N" and the "A" at about 8700'. From here we went up the draw to the east and then up the steep slope to the ridge that extends north from the summit. From here it was an easy walk to the top. We descended to the saddle west of the summit, then north down the gully to our ascent route with some nice standing glissades on the way.

The hike out was uneventful and we returned to the cars by 4:00 p.m. to end a very fine outing in the Southern Sierra.

CLARK, GRAY, RED, MERCED, STARR KING; June 30-July 4 Van Dalsem/Rohn

This was a mellow, laid-back excursion into a beautiful, little-used part of Yosemite. We were into camp by 5:30 every evening, enjoyed nightly campfires and were out to the cars by 10 A.M. on the fifth day & back in L.A. in time for the fireworks. Tigers were frustrated by full nights' sleep.

19 signed in at the Mono Meadows Trailhead Parking Lot as 6 no-shows set a record for lack of consideration & rudeness and join leader's growing blacklist. We packed into Grayling Lake by 2 PM, proving on the way that Old Hands' claims of the topo being wrong are true. The creek that drains Grayling Lake, Red Creek, does not flow into the Clark Fork, but curves S and empties into the parallel creek S of Clark Fork just SE of 7232 on topo. We spent the afternoon swimming, fishing & sunbathing and had 19 applicants for Sierra Ponds Sec.

On day 2 we traversed N to the creek that drains the basin between Clark & Gray, followed it to about 9800, then headed directly for the S shoulder of Clark, traversed around the E side, climbed the wrong peak, went further N, climbed the right peak via zig-zagging shelves that top out some 50 yds S of the summit, followed by an "Oh ----" step-across that most preferred using a sling hand-hold to cross. 19 signed in and Mary Bihl got her Senior Emblem. The ridge to Gray doesn't go so we stayed W of it, contoured, then struggled up through thick vegetation to the saddle just N of Gray & boulder-hopped to the top, the W. end of an almost level ridge. 17 signed in as we placed new register and can, then went straight for the lake down some very bad, loose rock. If the present rock fall rate continues, the Clark Range will lose 20 ft in altitude over the next 100 years.

Day 3 found 13 of the faithful (6 defectors sunned, read, fished) going up Red, a crud heap, where a red register in a red can (thank you, HPS !) were placed. Nine continued on for Merced. We had to drop down over 1000 ft, then contoured good slabs to saddle N of Merced, which turned out to be a magnificent peak with the best views of any of the 5. Great glissades followed by a fun Nav Noodle contouring Lake Hunt from Lower Ottoway back to a third night at Grayling. Saw one wild bear.

Up early on day 4 & out to the confluence of the Clark Fork, trail, and edge of topo. Deer so numerous & tame we were more worried about them eating our food than bears (lousy syntax but you know what I mean) Stashed our packs & headed N a mile, then NW toward obvious Starr King, a 3-humped camel of domes in a row, with the NW dome the biggest hump. Up the scree & rock between domes 1 & 2, over dome 2, then ready for the steep (43° to 47°) friction w/ not many holds. Leader went up to the obvious crack, placed a wired stopper, clipped in, went right, got about a third of the way to the big ledge above in 7½ lb Iowa Matterhorns - and froze. Downclimbed. Mark Goebel put on his tennies, led the first pitch in style, belayed leader through who led far easier 2nd pitch. Then, with yeoman work on the belay stations by Lex Rohn, Rob Mauk, and especially Cliff Cameron, all 16 people in our party were on top, sighed in, and reading a great 1937 bound register with all the great names in American climbing in it. That register should be Xeroxed and published! Rappels were beautiful as John Backus did his 1000th peak climb!! Starr King can be done free, sans protection by good climbers wearing good shoes. The average mixed bag of SPS'ers will need: (2) 165' 9 or 11 mil ropes for top rappel, (2) 150' 9 or 11 mil ropes for lower rappel, #4 wired stopper for protection leading 1st pitch (with runner & beaner), 2 expendable slings w/ descending rings, and good friction shoes if you're going to lead (you can follow in ski boots!) All should be wearing sit harness, diaper sling, sling shown in LRB or what I call the "New Zealand", and a locking beaner - Dale

JAMES CHARLES JENKINS

1952-1979

"Nowhere have I felt more desolate and lonely than at Connel's Cow Camp, of Thousand Mile Summer fame. There were no people for miles, and a swarm of persistent, biting deer flies hung a veil of depression over the day. I feel a growing empathy with the philosophy of John Steinbeck in Travels with Charley. I find that I derive no pleasure in camping alone, miles from anyone; I want to discover not only the land, but the people who love it. And I will get the opportunity of pursuing my new purpose, for I am about to begin the densely populated John Muir Trail."

Jim Jenkins
Tuolumne Meadows
July 29, 1979

He was a sincere young man with a deep love of the wilderness, admired and respected by all who crossed his path. A decade ago he dedicated himself to learning all he could about the southern Sierra Nevada, preserving its pristine high country, and writing about it. From his facile pen came four guidebooks, detailing the roads, the camps, the trails, the natural and human history of his beloved Southern Sierra. He knew this gentle wilderness as few others have known it.

As a person he was unique. There was nothing artificial or temporal in his makeup. He sought truth and meaning in life, and these qualities radiated into all who were fortunate enough to know him. Truth is reflected in his writings. His books, so painstakingly and thoroughly researched, are monuments to accuracy. He was a congenial and gentle person, willing to go to almost any length to help a friend or acquaintance in need. His intellect was straight-forward and captivating, his sense of humor delightfully subtle. He will be sorely missed by many.

My most treasured memories of Jim date back to the summer of 1973, when we were working together on two guidebooks for Wilderness Press. We criss-crossed the Kern Plateau and Mineral King country that summer, checking out landmarks and trails. Jim toted a heavy pack and pushed along a mileage wheel to measure trail distances, much to the astonishment of passing hikers. He insisted on absolute accuracy, even when it meant discomfort to him. I remember one late afternoon, the sun low on the western horizon, trudging along the West Stringer Trail from Volcano Meadow toward the Kern River. We had walked twenty miles that day, and I felt we had covered enough of the trail and needn't continue the final four miles to the river. Jim was tired too, but he insisted on walking the entire distance and back. He returned to camp well after dark, totally fatigued but in good spirits. His sense of honesty and responsibility to his readers would allow him no shortcuts.

In subsequent years Jim covered every trail and feasible cross-country route from Sequoia National Park south to Tehachapi Pass. Out of all this toil, sweat and tears was born Self-Propelled in The Southern Sierra, Volume I, one of the finest trail guides ever written. Fortunately, Jim finished work on Volume II before his passing; it will be available soon.

Jim's rich but all too short life came to a tragic end on Interstate 5, near Fort Tejon, on the afternoon of August 27th. He was returning to his duties as a summer ranger in Sequoia National Forest when he stopped alongside the highway with car trouble. Standing beside his VW camper, he was killed instantly when struck by a passing vehicle. Fate plays cruel and unfathomable tricks on some of us. How tragic that Jim's "turn" came when he had so much of life ahead of him.

John Robinson

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