

# The Sierra



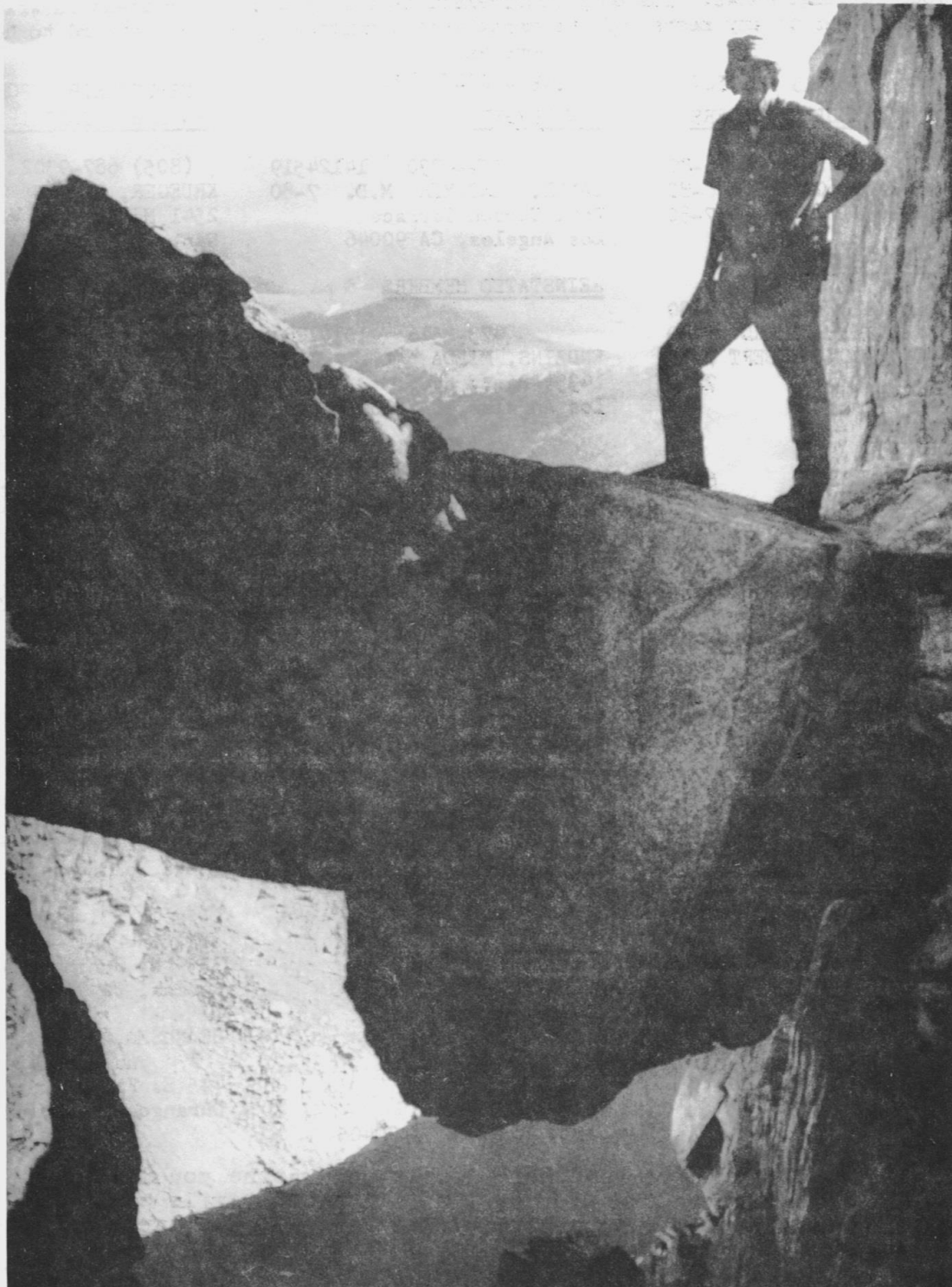
# ECHO

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CHAIRMAN'S CORNER

Here is an update on the peaks list "improvement" program. Thus far your management committee has received several responses with wide ranging and thought provoking suggestions. For these we are very appreciative. The original deadline for receipt of suggestions (June 30) was extended to July 31. It now develops that your management committee has been unable to fairly evaluate the various suggestions in time to meet the Echo publishing schedule as specified in the Section's policies and procedures. Therefore, we have decided to continue accepting suggestions through the balance of 1980. Then, all inputs received will be entrusted to the 1981 management committee for disposition. I do not like having to drag this out so long but there appears to be no other way. So, those of you who have been procrastinating still have time to make your feelings known. The only requirement is that you put your ideas in writing and forward them to any member of the management committee. We look forward to hearing from you.

Gene Mauk

SIERRA PEAKS SECTION

JUNE - JULY, 1980

MEMBERSHIP REPORT

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NEW MEMBERS

NEW ECHO SUBSCRIPTIONS

#59 SPARKS, DON 6-80  
 #60 BARNES, GEORGE 6-80  
 #61 ERB, JIM 7-80

874-4730 14124519  
 LANGE, VLADIMIR M.D. 7-80  
 7661 Curson Terrace  
 Los Angeles, CA 90046

(805) 687-9302  
 KRUEGER, DENNIS  
 2541 Modoc Rd., #20  
 Santa Barbara, CA 93105

NEW EMBLEM HOLDERS

REINSTATED MEMBERS

#401 OMBERG, MARY G. 7-80  
 #402 KUTSCH, RICHARD 7-80  
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 #404 HILL, AL 7-80

473-2516 10101204  
 ENDZINS, MILDA 1-72  
 1433 $\frac{1}{2}$  Barry Ave.  
 Los Angeles, CA 90025

BROWNE, GORDON  
 1808 Belmont Lane  
 Redondo Beach, CA 90278

HENNEY, VICTOR  
 1645 N. Holliston Ave.  
 Pasadena, CA 91104

NEW MEMBERS

SHELBERG, WESLEY 6-80  
 4615 Utah St., #2  
 San Diego, CA 92116

392-5923  
 HALL, ALBA 11-78  
 20 Brooks Ave., #304  
 Venice, CA 90291

COOPER, PATRICK W.  
 2541 Modoc Rd., #20  
 Santa Barbara, CA 93105

346-7928  
 GORDAN, NANCY 6-80  
 6550 Ellenvue Ave.  
 Canoga Park, CA 91307

10760178  
 ABBOTT, ERIC 11-75  
 303 19th St., #1  
 Huntington Beach, CA 92648

COOPER, MICHAEL J.  
 2541 Modoc Rd., #20  
 Santa Barbara, CA 93105

STEVENS, JOSEPH 7-80  
 10201 Russell  
 Garden Grove, CA 92643

378-6612 11129196  
 THOMAS, DONALD 9-71  
 23144 Ladeene Ave.  
 Torrance, CA 90505

ADDRESS CHANGES

HOLLADAY, DELORES  
 1510 San Pasqual, Apt E  
 Santa Barbara, CA 93101

PETERSON, HARVEY 7-80  
 17612 Prescott Ln.  
 Huntington Beach, CA 92647

333-4031 11764967  
 GLOCKNER, PEGGY 11-73  
 820 S. 4th Ave.  
 La Puente, CA 91746

GAEFCKE, ROGER  
 8650 Gulana Ave, #C-2067  
 Playa Del Rey, CA 90291

(714) 539-9965  
 LOCHNER, FRED JR 7-80  
 12641 Jerome Lane  
 Garden Grove, CA 92641

NEW ECHO SUBSCRIPTIONS

CROWTHER, JACK  
 3047 W. Birch St.  
 Bishop, CA 93514

331-4272  
 WYKA, ROBERT  
 3359 N. Fenimore Ave.  
 Covina, CA 91723

295-3995 13797218  
 MOLINA, EMMANUEL 7-80  
 1800 W. 45th St.  
 Los Angeles, CA 90062

LIMBURG, PAUL  
 2627-A 26th St.  
 Santa Monica, CA 90405

BRANDSMA, MAYNARD  
 and CHERYLE  
 445 E. Fifth Ave.  
 Durango, Colo 81301

COVER PHOTO: If you have seen this double chockstone you have been both alert and deep in the Sierras. It is located  $\frac{1}{4}$  mile west of Kern Point on the ridge. Submitted by Ron Bartell- the daring subject- who else?

The weather this weekend was perfect. Saturday, eleven climbers hiked the 4600 foot gain from the Tuttle Creek roadhead to our basecamp located at the foot of the north-east chute leading off Mt. Langley. We arrived in camp early and the leisure time was spent emptying several 1.5 liter bottles of vino and munching corn chips with red and green chile salsa. An interesting experience at 11,300 feet. Thanks to Bill Bradley for perpetuating this fine custom!

Sunday morning we got an early start cramponing from very near our camp. We climbed on hard ideal snow to the summit of Langley. The view from the top was the very best. After a relaxing rest at 14,402 we prepared for the highlight of the climb -- a 2700 foot non-stop glissade back to our camp. What took 2½ to 3 hours to go up went down in about 25 minutes. One party member glissaded in shorts although he was warned back in camp to at least bring wind pants. A bloody thrill. This was the best of the three climbs I have made by this route. The trip makes an excellent early summer conditioner with a chance for climbers experienced in snow to get a nice ride.

## OWENS PEAK

3/29-30/80

Jones/Clark

We had a nice group of six climbers who joined Marlin and myself on this scheduled SPS/DPS climb of Owens Peak on Saturday and Malpais Mesa on Sunday. The road in has been graded and is in better shape than usual. Our hike up to the peak was pleasant and we found large patches of snow on the summit. The lady bugs were present in their usual numbers.

Ron Jones

## SCHEDULED AND NON-SCHEDULED PEAKS

HOGBACK PEAK, MT HARRINGTON AND KENNEDY MTN. 10/27-28/79

Jones/Campy

Twenty five climbers met Campy and me Saturday morning at the Deer Cove Creek trailhead in Cedar Grove. This was a repeat trip for me as I had been rained out two years before in another late fall attempt on Harrington.

The hike in along Deer Cove Creek was enlivened by our sighting of a bear gathering manzanita berries across the creek from us. We watched it for at least five minutes before proceeding on to Wildman Meadow. Here we stopped and talked with the same hunters who were in that camp just outside the park two years before. We hiked on to Frypan Meadow and after lunching in camp we started out for Mt. Harrington.

My previous attempt at Harrington was made in a heavy overcast and lots of rain, so I never saw the peak. This year I had difficulty in following the trail leading to Grizzly Lakes and the peak. We turned up what I thought was the East Fork of Grizzly Creek, proceeded along it and then up the ridge to the west. My embarrassment was total when I looked north from the ridge top and saw not the expected Gorge of Despair but Swamp Lakes. I had turned up the wrong creek and climbed the ridge a half mile east of Harrington. Most of the party went on to climb nearby Hogback Peak, 11,077 ft. The only consolation is that Hogback is 72 feet higher than Harrington. It was decided to not recommend this peak for the SPS list.

The next morning the party split into three groups: Campy took an ill climber back out to the cars; Dan Popper and John Dittmeier took a small group up Kennedy Mtn; undaunted by failure and lured on to a third attempt at peak #222 on my list, I led the remainder of the party on a final successful ascent of Harrington.

Ron

Each year, Theresa and I climb one or more mountains outside of California. This year, we climbed Gannett Fk (13,804'), the high point of Wyoming. Located in the northern Wind River Range, Gannett is surrounded by some of the largest glaciers in the Rocky Mountains and the approach is laced with large milky streams. In its angularity, the range is somewhat reminiscent of the Sierra Nevada.

There are two main approaches for Gannett Fk. For some reason, Southern Californians seem to prefer going in from Elkhart Park, southwest of the peak. This is the route described in Frank Ashley's "Highpoints of the States". However, a greater number of people climb Gannett from Trail Lake to the northeast. The decision is really simple: If you are only going to climb Gannett, go in from Trail Lake. If you are going to climb other peaks in the area, such as Fremont, go in from Elkhart Park. A major difference is that the summit day is at least 2 mi and 1700 ft shorter when one approaches from the northeast. We chose the Trail Lake approach because we only wanted to climb Gannett.

Most potential Gannett climbers get all worked up over the possibility of approaching via the Ink Wells trail, which crosses Indian property to the northeast. This has the potential of saving some 10 mi and 2500 ft over the whole trip. So of course Theresa and I wrote to the Forest Service, who referred us to the tribal council. We've just about given up on getting a written response from the Shoshone-Arapaho Indian Reservation, as it's been 15 months since we wrote them!

A personal visit to the tribal council at Fort Washakie revealed two facts: (1) It would cost the two of us 28 dollars in advance for "fishing licenses" if we wanted to hike along the Ink Wells trail, and (2) no one knew whether the road was even passable, except one young Indian girl who thought it wasn't. It's no wonder the people in Paul Petzoldt's mountaineering shop in Riverton, Wyoming, say to forget the Ink Wells trail. We did.

The Trail Lake roadhead is reached by turning off US 287 some 4 mi southeast of Dubois, then driving to the end of the road after swinging to the right of the Audobon camp. You can't miss the parking lot! You'll be entering Fitzpatrick wilderness, but no permit is necessary.

Going in from this direction, you need four 7½ min topo maps: Torrey Lake, Ink Wells, Fremont Peak North, and Gannett Peak. (If going in from Elkhart Park, scratch the first three and add Bridger Lakes, Fremont Lake North, and Fayette Lake. The latter two are not really essential, though.) In order to feel fully equipped, you'll also need a copy of the "Field Book, Wind River Range", by Orrin and Lorraine Bonney. As far as Gannett Fk is concerned, there is no substantive difference between the second and third editions of this guide. A humorous addition would be "Wind River Trails" by fisherman Finis Mitchell. His homespun account of an ascent of Gannett is worth the price of this little book.

One can also find brief accounts of Gannett in Bueler, "Mountains of the World"; Summit (Nov-Dec 1972); Echo (July 1975); and the Canyon Explorers Newsletter (Oct 1, 1976). Save yourself the effort, though. You'll not need them.

At the parking lot the Forest Service has a sign "ATTENTION HIKERS", hailing their new \$250,000 section of the Glacier trail which was punched through in 1978 after a huge avalanche eradicated part of the old trail above the parking area. The

new trail goes up East Torrey Ck almost to Bomber Falls, then switchbacks up to meet the old trail at the top of the Ink Wells quadrangle. Actually, a use trail has been established around the avalanche, so that an ideal plan would be to go in via the new trail (less gradient, plenty of water) and return via the old trail (great vistas, no water).

The normal basecamp for climbing Gannett is Floyd Wilson Meadow (9900'). This is a total of 24 mi and 4300 ft via the new trail, a mile less on the old. Theresa and I broke this up into two moderate days. The first night was spent at Double Lake, a good choice except that our water had to be obtained at the inlet. Double Lake water is a nursing ground for millions of tiny spherical objects which do your stomach no good to look at.

Most of the second day one walks along one side of the beautiful glaciated valley of Dinwoody Ck. This stream was uncrossable except at one point where it fanned out to a width of about 150 ft. However, the only unbridged crossing between the roadhead and Wilson Mdw was Klondike Ck. I hesitate to guess at the flow rate in cfs, but I took my socks off and rolled up my pants.

About noon of the second day, after rounding a bend in Dinwoody Ck, we enjoyed our first view of Gannett Pk and Gannett Glacier. Then our interest perked up and we sped into Wilson Mdw. Most of the luxurious campsites are across Dinwoody Ck, which necessitates crossing three separate channels on creaky log crossings. All in all, the campsites on this side looked good enough!

Next morning, the third day, we arose to the pitter-patter of rain drops on the tent, so we rolled over and slept in. That afternoon, we explored both sides of Dinwoody Ck. A surprise finding was a nice 15-in log that the Forest Service had recently dropped across Gannett Ck, so you can forget Bonney's statement that the creek is not crossable. The log can be walked, or if wet, scooped across on.

Thursday, the fourth day, we climbed Gannett Pk via Gooseneck Gully. Now even after climbing the peak, I can't understand Bonney's writeup. But the "tourist route" (1979) is very simple: Climb the right side of Dinwoody Glacier until you can cross over to Gooseneck Glacier. (Cross the separating ridge at 11,880 ft plus.) Then, ascend Gooseneck Glacier until you come to the first snow couloir past (to the right of) Gooseneck Pinnacle. Ascend this couloir to the ridge above the pinnacle, then follow the ridge to the top.

The climbing is all 2nd class except for some steep snow and a bergschrund across the couloir. The steep snow had plenty of deep steps (there were 16 people on top the day we climbed Gannett). For safety we belayed across a 15-ft long, 10-in wide snow bridge (actually a ledge) crossing the bergschrund. This is the only time we used a rope. (The Magnuson's reported that they did not feel the need for a rope at any time during their 1978 ascent, following a heavy snow year.) Actually, I suspect the climbing could be more difficult in late season following a low snow winter. Crampons and especially ice axes are, of course, essential.

What struck me about the view from Gannett was the profusion of glaciers, all with gaping bergschrunds and crevasses, and some with black ugly snouts. All very alpine! We could not see the Tetons, which I guess are visible only on extremely clear days.

About noon, descending past Gooseneck Pinnacle, it started to snow. We were then in heavy rain all the way back to camp, and the clouds settled nearly to the valley floor. This was the only heavy rain of the trip, and we were glad to get back to

the tent. Temperatures were always moderate, however. We learned later that no rain had fallen the previous five weeks. The summit day was 10 mi and 4000 ft.

Next morning, our fifth day, we dried out clothing with a cheery fire, then packed out. At one o'clock, we stopped at the Ink Wells trail junction to watch a couple of packers getting ready to move out. One of them asked if we were going out to Trail Lake. "Yes", I said. "Take you out for 20 dollars apiece", he said. "When will you get out?", I asked. "Tonight, 10 o'clock", he replied. "A deal!", I said (faster than you can slap leather!).

Such is the method by which we arrived at the roadhead that very night, only slightly saddle sore, and got to town in time for prime rib and salad bar. It turns out that Don Stetter, the packer, had just taken two people into the area and was coming back empty. That party had been charged \$225 to have themselves and their backpacks taken into Wilson Mdw.

The next day we went to the annual Dubois, Wyoming, chariot races, then danced 'til after midnight with all manner of drunks and carousers in the local saloon. A fitting end to a good climb!

With this climb, I finished all 11 high points of the contiguous western states. I offer my relative ranking of these peaks as to technical difficulty and overall difficulty by my routes, which generally corresponded to the easiest routes. Overall difficulty takes into account remoteness, weather, routefinding and other related factors. A "1" signifies the most difficult. It should be noted that many might rank Rainier number 1 on both counts.

Peak	Technical Difficulty	Overall Difficulty
Borah	5	7
Boundary	6	8
Elbert	9	11
Gannett	2	1
Granite	1	2
Hood	3	6
Humphreys	7	10
Kings	8	4
Rainier	4	3
Wheeler	11	9
Whitney	10	5

A number of our SPS peaks are more technically difficult than any of these 11 peaks. Considering the distance, weather, and other factors, I would rank few if any SPS peaks ahead of say Gannett in overall difficulty. On Gannett, Granite, Rainier, and Kings, weather plays an important role. Granite and Kings are each three day trips in good weather. Rainier is a big complex mountain, etc. But of course Devils Crags and Norman Clyde Pk.....

Jim Erb

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