

The Sierra



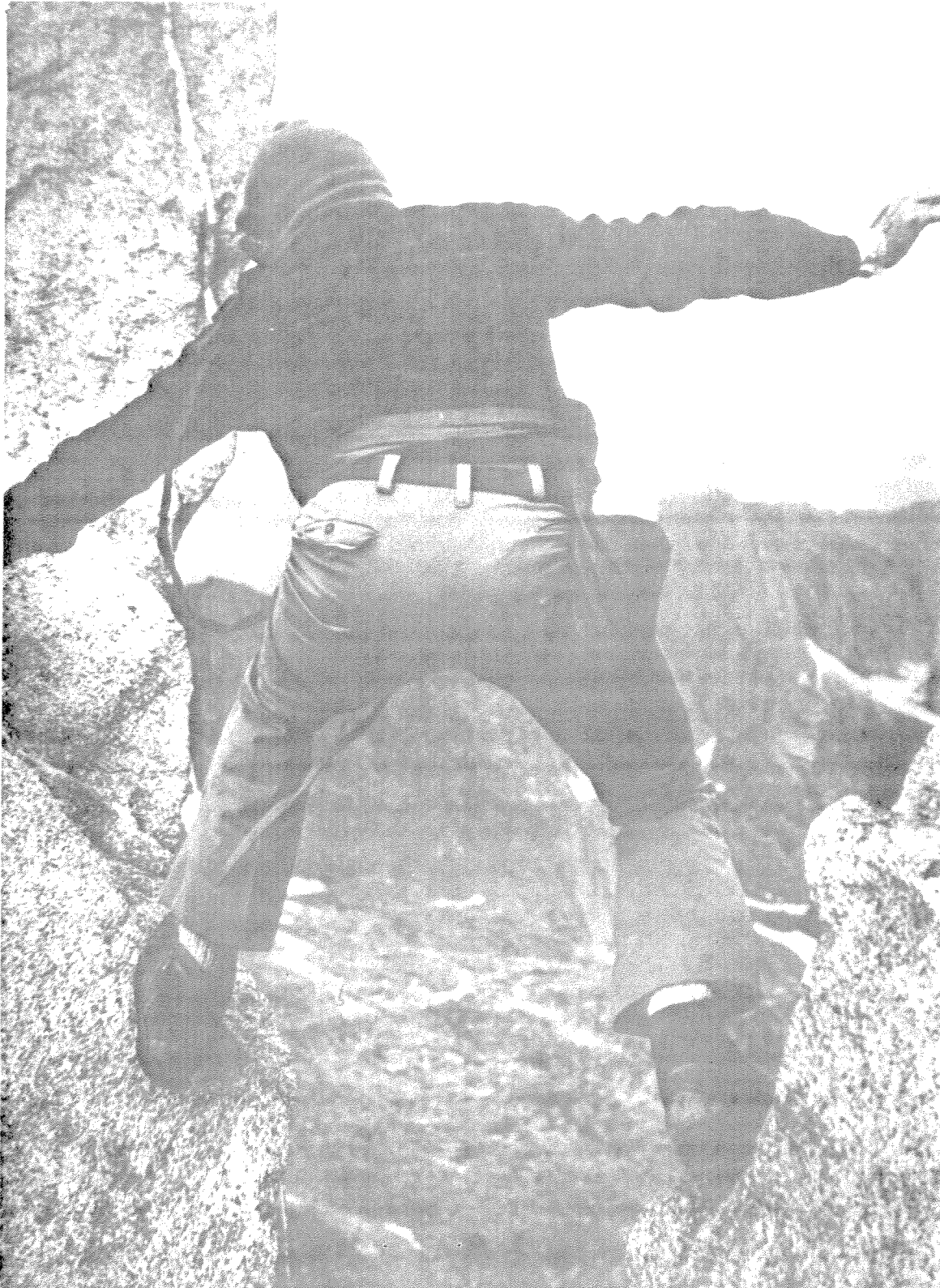
ECHO

VOLUME 24

SEP - OCT

1980

NO. 6



Chairman's Corner

Another Sierra hiking season has passed with no serious mountaineering accidents involving SPS scheduled trips. Considering the number of trips scheduled (80 to 90 per year), plus the inherent difficulty of many of the trips, I think our safety record is remarkable. There are a number of factors involved that have facilitated our excellent record. Foremost among them have to be both the leadership training program and our own snow and rock training sessions.

And speaking of those snow and rock training sessions, they don't just fall together of their own accord. They are planned and scheduled by our hard working safety committee (Duane McRuer and Doug Mantle). Probably the hardest part of the job is the recruiting of leaders and instructors to adequately staff each session. In fact, leader recruiting seems to grow more difficult year by year. Duane has stated that the safety instructor pool must be increased if we are to continue our current level of training activity. This is a subject that will certainly receive increased management committee attention in coming months.

On another subject, we have received a letter from Dennis Lantz regarding the naming of a Sierra peak for Francis Farquhar. The letter is printed elsewhere in this issue. Dennis is asking for inputs from the SPS membership relative to the peak selection. Accordingly, I plan to bring the subject up for discussion at the November membership meeting. After the meeting I will forward to Dennis a consensus of SPS sentiment on the subject. Individual responses to Dennis are also encouraged.

Gene Mauk

Banquet Notice

Be sure to reserve Wednesday, December 10 for the SPS annual banquet. It promises to be one of the best ever with a program featuring world renowned mountaineer Fred Beckey showing us the "Mountains of America". Fred has made numerous first ascents throughout North America and especially in the Pacific Northwest. His accomplishments include the the writing of several climbing guides to the Cascade range.

The banquet will once again be held at Caltech's Athenaeum. Seating is definitely limited so get your check (\$16 per person) to either program chairman Rob Roy McDonald or any member of the management committee as soon as possible.

SIERRA PEAKS SECTION		Fall - Winter 1980-81	activities
Nov 1-2	Alta Peak climb		Burdett, Lavengood
Nov 1-2	Rock climbing prac. Indian Wells Val.		G.Vernon, C.Heller
Nov 8-9	Rock climbing prac. Fossil Falls(LTC)		Ranschau, Banner, Etc.
Dec 6	Rock Climb Prac, Rubidoux		Hartunian, Kabler
Jan 17-18	Rock climb prac., Joshua Tree.		Van Dalsem, Hartunian
Jan 31	Experimental snow workshop		McRuer, Russell, Hicks
Feb 14	Snow travel, Ice axe practice		Bradley, Toby
Feb 28	Rock climb practice		C.Stein, Hartunian
Feb 28-Mar 1	Sierra snow camp & peak climb		Camphausen, Banner
Mar 6-8	Winter climb in Sierra		Boyles, Keenan
Mar 7,8	Snow travel, Ice axe practice		Vandervoet, Mauk

COVER PHOTO: Watch Dale Van Dalsem ascend the notch of Jordon.
August 1979. Photo by Dick Akawie.

Dear Fellow SPS'ers,

Many of you may be familiar with the late, great Sierra Clubber and Mountaineer, Francis Farquhar. If you're lucky, you may have seen his signature in a summit register and you have probably seen the famous picture of him on the summit block of Mt. Brewer. It seems appropriate to many people that a Sierra peak be named after him. Numerous Climbing Luminaries have contributed their ideas and the matter has boiled down to the following two nominations:

Peak 13,520, one mile north of Bolton Brown, on the Sierra Crest, in Kings Canyon National Park. This is pictured in Plate II, volume V of the Sierra Club Bulletin, to the extreme right of the picture. Francis Farquhar made the first ascent of this peak with Norman Clyde. It is not known if this has ever been climbed on a scheduled Sierra Club trip, but the south ridge is class four or five.

Peak 12,893 (also known as "Notch" or "Green"), at the northern end of the Great Western Divide 1.6 miles north northwest of Mt. Brewer. This has been climbed on SPS trips to the Brewer region and is shown in the 1941 Sierra Club Bulletin, as well as other pictures of the Brewer/North Guard region.

As Mountain Records Chair of the Sierra Club Mountaineering Committee, I have been requested to gather comments in determining the Club's position. It is highly probable that the peak we recommend will be given the Farquhar name. If you have an informed opinion on these two nominations, or good reason for proposing yet another choice, please get in touch with me as soon as possible. Also let me know if you'd be interested in climbing both of them for comparison, though perhaps not on the same day...

Dennis E. Lantz P.O. Box 914, 128 North St., Healdsburg, CA 95448

NOV 8,9

SAT, SUN

SIERRA PEAKS - LTC

M/E: Rock Climb Practice: Fossil Falls, near Little Lake. Skills and climbing practice for novice thru advanced climbers. Send SASE with resume of recent rock experience and your interest. Reservationist: Cuno Ranschau, Leaders: Cuno, Dick Banner, et al.

WANTED: Experienced, strong, and amenable-congenial climbers to form 4 to 6 member party to climb Mexico's volcanos. Leave Dec. 26, return about Jan. 3 or 4. Contact Virgil Tabott H 714-871-7900, W 714-632-5930

FOUND: Exposed roll of Kodachrome 25 film in Ionian Basin between lake 11824 and Scylla. Have had roll developed and would be glad to return to owner. Call Al Conrad 790-0311.

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Sirs: Summit Magazine P. O. Box 1889 Big Bear Lake, CA 92315

Read with interest the article in the latest Summit magazine about the ascent of Mt. Drum and the sentiments expressed therein.

I am extremely, even violently, opposed to the trend of an ever increasing bureaucracy to continuously reduce freedoms in the name of reducing "risk" and increasing "safety". I am furthermore opposed to the so-called "right to sue" to collect something from somebody when something goes wrong. I, or anyone else, should be free to accept risks, and should also accept the resulting consequences.

These ideas should be applied to wild areas. Unfortunately, most Wilderness Areas in the USA are relatively small, partially "developed" (i.e. trails, campsites, etc.), and near large urban areas. Such areas have to be restricted; otherwise the extremely heavy use would soon convert them from wilderness into some sort of rural slums. Examples are San Geronio and the Mt. Whitney Trail.

However, in larger, more remote Wilderness Areas, especially those in Alaska, a concept of "Total Wilderness" should apply. In a Total Wilderness, no development of any form would be allowed; this means no trails, campsites, clearings or other "unnatural activities" of any form. The idea of causing "light development" then regulating access and use by a bureaucracy and a permit system is patently absurd. Such a wilderness, by its size and ruggedness, could defend itself far better than an NPS or FS bureaucracy could to it.

In a Total Wilderness, or for that matter any Wilderness, the concept of "Total Risk" should apply. Under this concept:

- 1) Any activity may be undertaken by any person, regardless of so-called "qualifications".
- 2) Any such person, however, assumes all risks from such activity, and all liability resulting therefrom. Support or rescue will not be forthcoming unless requested, and the requestor has agreed to pay all expenses resulting therefrom. And there will be no legal recourse from any such liability, i.e., any form of lawsuit will be forbidden.
- 3) The conditions of total risk would apply to anyone entering such an area, even if he was unaware of doing so. Ignorance is no defense.

Furthermore, the Total Risk concept should apply to other areas as well; for example, rock climbing and ski areas. Certain sports, such as climbing and skiing of any form should be defined as Total Risk sports in which the above conditions would apply. (In skiing, perhaps rented equipment and uphill conveyances should be excluded. But only perhaps.)

My qualifications for writing the above include the following. I have skied for 30 years, all over the world. I have been climbing for almost as long, mostly in California and the Northwest. I have been active in mountaineering organizations, and even been on a few expeditions.

I hope you will consider and even publish this. It would be interesting to find out how much appeal these ideas have. If there is a great deal of interest, maybe we can do something about them.



Rick Jali 9418 - 48th Ave. West, #G Everett, WA 98204

Snow is like sex—you never know when it will come or how long it will last. When we went looking for snow during the scheduled trip, it had already come and gone. Plans were to repeat last year's snowshoe trip to Trail Pk, but giant mudslides were now blocking the Horseshoe Mdw road near its start. So we drove first to Lamont Mdw... No snow there! On to Kennedy Mdw (the S one), and the situation got better. We actually succeeded in getting stuck a couple times in the campground at the end of the road.

Everybody's haulage got weighed. Overweight/underweight situations were relieved. Packs ended up weighing between 40 and 55 lbs, with snowshoes or skis attached. At noon we were underway, walking on thin and broken snow up the Monache Mdw trail. First challenge was the Kern River. The leader took the crossing in stride and got his boots filled with water. Once on the other side it was plain to see that there was a perfectly good crossing log in place just 10 yds downstream. But this facility didn't prevent Walt Hill from doing it the hard way. A totally different person (Nancy) also took a dunking on the way out.

Anyway, we then put on snowshoes for the final 2 miles. A couple brave souls brought skis. Around 3 pm we reached camp just below Clover Mdw. Snowshoeing to here had been very relaxing and everybody seemed to like it. Our campsite was a sunlit clearing next to a creek. Early evening entertainment consisted of watching Gisela Kluwin walk around camp wearing her candystripe longjohns.

It got cold, down to +12^oF during the night. Our departure toward Crag Pk Sunday was not prompt. After snowshoeing for 5 minutes we were already strung out 10 minutes apart. Up on Clover Mdw, with snow glistening in the sunlight, we took a sharp L turn to cross the easier contours leading to Crag Pk. The going got rougher as we climbed out of the meadow. Plenty of trees and brush carried up the slopes but we seemed to always find a clear way through. Halfway up the 2500-ft climb we rested, and Westy, Nan, and Lynna decided to go back down to join Barbara Reber waiting in camp. Barbara had climbed Crag before so she chose to kick back and enjoy the sunny morning reading a Jack London story.

We snowshoed upward. "Jock" and Michael skied in yesterday but now they were post-holing in our snowshoe tracks. Reaching the ridge, Campy wasn't sure whether we were at the actual peak or near some bump to the S. We climbed up and around the thing and found ourselves on the top of a pile of snow-covered rocks. A glance to the S about 30 yds away and..."Oh-oh!". Over there, with snow filling its exposed holds and a gap between it and us on the ridge was the summit of Crag Pk. Summit fever was now taking hold of the group. Campy didn't want to take chances since we didn't have a rope. Ron Jones allowed that there might be a way up the other side. We scurried back down and around. Campy sensed that ice axes were now being clutched more tightly, almost menacingly. Now was not the time for him to incautiously announce: "Well, that's it for today; let's go home."

As we each slide down the razorblade of life, peaks nearly won will be lost, and consequent humility endured, until our return in a more certain moment, but now... steep snow leading upward, and it looks avalanchey. Alors! Boot-holes going up there? "Hey, hoosupthar?!?" (Silence.) "Mike André, is that you?" (Who else? No snowshoes; skis yesterday but post-holing with Jacques Brosseau today.) "What's up there?" "...(mumble)" "Do you see the summit?" "Well, maybe, but it looks pretty hard." "(Good! That clinches it, now we can go down)" But leader goes up anyway, others gather below, Jim Murphy and Ron advance to also look over the 15-ft summit block. Back down again; Campy puts on his snowshoes. He opens his mouth and the angry crowd leans forward as a unit. (Campy has visions of his lynching on this relatively insignificant mountain with such violence as to make the Boston Massacre seem like an evening with the Waltons.) Ron and Jim look over the exposed move, then decide to go for it. "It's a good 5-oh", hollers Ron down from the summit. Jim is soon up there too. With assembled jaws dropped, this is now the time: "Th-th-th-that's all, folks."

Twelve ambitious and happy SPSers were on this trip. Our thanks to Barbara Reber for co-leading, and Ron Jones and Jim Murphy for assisting. Gisela's longjohns courtesy of Robinson's. Bill Kluwin's wardrobe from Woolrich. Lynna Walker's and Walt Hill's avalanche detectors were Pieps. (First time any of these ever showed up on one of my trips!) Jim's van courtesy McMillan Ring Free. Westy and Nan Fletcher courtesy Central Casting. Transportation provided by Westy and Walt. Forest by usfs. Snow from Tinker Belle. Campy from hunger.

Filled with ominous phrases left with my answering service by Dave Vandervoet after he climbed University Peak from Bench Lake the prior weekend (road blocked by slides at 800 ft., new storm, seven snow angels at summit, poor route, soft snow, avalanche hazard, etc.), five of us had a leisurely dinner at Indian Wells Valley Lodge and contemplated the weekend ahead. Satiated and spirited, we merged with the maniac skiers on their race up US 395 as far as Independence and now isolated, wound our way through curves and around rocks until a snow drift blocked the road at 8150 ft.

The next morning we started up the road to find huge drifts across the Onion Valley parking lot. After wallowing in the drifts, we finally crossed the campgrounds and the stream coming down from Robinson Lake and marched into the wooded area north of Independence Peak. After setting up camp at Robinson Lake, a late lunch, and brief rest, volunteers for a climb of Independence were solicited. The sole volunteer was tired (and may have had a mild case of altitude sickness) so we spent the afternoon eating, socializing, and sleeping. Early the next morning, to beautiful blue skies, we started up to University Pass. The going was excellent with a firm crust initially which later gave way to a breakable crust over a firm base about one foot down. By the time we reached the summit, the wind had picked up so after signing in and taking the victory photographs we started back down toward the pass and had a quick lunch. The glissade down from University Pass would have been easier if the wind were not trying to push us back up over the pass - alas this wind was not there to help us up the pass when we could have used the help. We stopped at Robinson Lake long enough to finish lunch and pack up. The march out to the cars was uneventful. Everyone made the peak; for two (Bob Steinberg and Tony Mindlin) it was their first Sierra Peak. Others in the party were Joanie Degenkolb (assistant), Hans Beye, and Victor Copeland.

MATTERHORN PEAK, 24-25 May 1980

Andre Korbut-Weberg

After being misdirected by the two ladies attending the store in the Mono Village resort (the trail to Horse Creek does not pass the water tower), we thrashed through thickets, crossed numerous streams, and finally intersected the trail to Horse Creek. Unfortunately this diversion took its toll and Jan Pritchard departed the group with a strained back taking with him his car-pooler and charming raconteur Barry Koeb whose barbed (and forked) tongue was missed. A few hours later three more left the group due to equipment problems leaving seven of us to endure the snow and wind - it continued snowing and blowing until dusk. We made camp along Horse Creek east of Matterhorn peak at the southern end of the wooded area.

A late start (the leader overslept and didn't wake up until 5:45) found the group hurrying to ascend the first slope to get into sunshine. The day started cloudless and without wind but by the time the glacier was reached, the wind had picked up. Other than the wind, travel was pleasant; one or two inches of powder snow over an icy crust until just below the ridge where the depth of the powder reached a foot. The route used was a relatively broad slope south of the two prominent chutes (also south) of Matterhorn Peak - the chutes and slope all open into the glacier east of the peak. After crossing the ridge, we traversed the west side of the ridge to slightly northeast of the summit and then doubled back to the summit via class 3 rock. The route along the ridge and up to the summit was made treacherous by the loose powder covering the talus but four did make it to the summit and off without mishap. Time on the summit was short because of high wind and ominous clouds moving in from the west. We retraced our steps back to camp, quickly packed up and out returning to the roadhead only to have it start snowing on us.

Mt. Mary Austin (Mary Austin is the Poet Laureate of Eastern Calif.)

In the morning I see you rise, Great Sierra Home, as the sun's gentle rays make bright your eastern slopes.

I see the clouds caress your summits; I hear the wind whisper your secrets; I feel your power in the day and your peace throughout the night.

Through my mind flows the music of ages past: Sibelius singing of his hallowed hills; Smetana of his Fatherland; Bach calling out to God.

I gaze across the vast desert to the East and see Winnedumah, the guardian of your first born, jutting his bold granite face out of the soil, his eyes looking at you until time is fulfilled.

I sense the presence of your native people, looking at you in awe. I hear them as their voices rise in prayer to Inyo.

Inyo - The god of thunder and lightning, the god of fire, who makes the earth rumble and the mountains shake and the sky glow in red.

Within you, Great Sierra Home, rests the spirits of many men who found refreshment and solitude in your arms - of Mary Austin and Norman Clyde, John Muir and Clarence King, and countless others who trod upon your ground. To them and to all of us, your children, give a place of tranquility, light, and peace.

For God had raised you as a cathedral unto Himself; A citadel upon which the final rays of sunlight glow on our fair land, from which the sun is seen sinking into the glassy sea as peace settles over your ridges and valleys and stars twinkle over your peaks.

And you, Mary Austin, look Eastward over what we pray will always be: The Home of the Brave and the Land of the Free.

The following excerpt from Mary Austin's "Lost Borders" was found on the summit of the peak (13,100')

Let's have done with stranger faces, Let's be quit of staring eyes,
Let's go back across Mojave where the hills of Inyo rise.
There's a word we've lost between us and shall never hear again
In the mindless clang of engines where they bray the hearts of men.
Let's go seek it east of Kearsarge where the seven-mile shadows run,
From the great gray bulk of Williamson heaved up against the sun.
Let's go look for Nassayampa, with your arm across my shoulder
Through the canyons of lost rivers, by the bonewhite bleaching boulders.
Through the scented gleaming hollows where the gray wolf shadows flee,
Where from Sur to Ubehebe only you and I shall be;
And the word--I cannot name it--but we'll learn its sweetest use
In the moonlit sandy reaches where the desert wind is loose.
There's a little creek in Inyo, singing by beyond the town,
Through the pink wild-almond temple and the birches slim and brown.
Where all night we'll watch the starbeams in the shallow, open rills,
And the hot, bright moons of August skulking low along the hills;
And the word will wake in Inyo--never printed in a page--
With the wind that wakes the morning on a thousand miles of sage.

Climbing Notes: MAY 17,18 1980

Mt. Mary Austin (13,100+) 2 Hr. route from camp up class 2 West chute.
8 people on summit. Outstanding views.

Diamond Peak (13,126') 2½ Hr. route from snow camp at 11,000'
via class 3 NE couloir. 12 people on summit. Tremendous glissade
down SE slopes. No canister on summit.

Black Mt. (13,289') 1 ¾ Hr. class 2 traverse from Diamond. 8 people
on summit. All participants reached cars by 3:30 pm.

A Rock and Roll Adventure in the Sierra
May 24-26, 1980

The Memorial Weekend bus trip to Shasta was canceled due to a large price increase by Greyhound. However, 8 SPS climbers did carpool up, and 5 skiing-climbers tried an attempt on Mts Haeckel and Wallace east of Bishop.

As we drove north on 395, Mother Nature was showing an un-Spring like display of weather. Several trailers were blown off the road, the air was full of dust, and later up in the mountains the temperature dropped well into the freezing zone. However, her most unexpected display of natural force was yet to come.

The group included Bill and Gisela Kluwin, June Lane, Bill Spina and Mark Goebel. With heavy packs including skis, axes, and rope, considerable time was spent clawing and skidding our way over frozen snow to Blue Lake, but it was worth the effort. This is usually a very popular and crowded area, and we were the only ones there. In addition, the snowy scenery was outstanding. From Blue Lake we continued on skis towards Dingleberry Lake and finally located camp at 10,800' just as the first snow flakes arrived.

Late in the day the clouds lifted slightly, the temperature was in the low 20's, and with 2 inches of new powder, June said, "lets go skiing!" Although no one else stirred, I needed little persuasion and we were off to explore the neighborhood. Trying to stay warm, we skied quickly up the canyon and soon arrived at Midnight Lake, and there looming through the mist was the great wall of Mt Darwin. As the sun set, low clouds again returned up the valley swirling about the few twisted pines, creating a very austere black and white scene. This sure was strange for late May; freezing temperatures by day and delightful powder skiing.

The sun returned the next morning after a low of 4 degrees, and eventually we were off for the peaks. We skied over a ridge, past a frozen lake, and headed towards Echo Lake while admiring the view and taking pictures. Suddenly a sharp rumbling sound broke the still air, but wait a minute that's no jet, ... the ground is shaking! EARTHQUAKE!! Another rattling sound, Avalanche? No just some ice breaking off a nearby cliff. Just as quickly all was calm again, and the only thing shaking were my knees. So on we pushed and following some steep traversing around a cliff, the basin between Wallace and Haeckel was reached by Noon.

We settled down among some large boulders for lunch and to await the 2 Bills who were still coming up. Both peaks were very iced up and covered with new snow, and the afternoon was creeping along. Bill and Bill were still always down below when the Sierra began rumbling again, and those great boulders around us started shaking. This one was bigger, and to prove it, an avalanche of rock and snow poured down Picture Peak and out across our tracks. Fortunately our companions below were out of range, but now nothing looked really very solid, and a retreat decision was made.

While skiing back to camp, we were amazed at the amount of debris which had come down and the distance it traveled. After-shocks continued through the night and into the next day. However, the sun was out again on Monday creating some super skiable corn, and both the skiing and scenery were outrageous!

Mark Goebel

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

COPY: Send to editor, Cuno Ranschau, 12744 Lorne st, No. Hollywood, CA 91605. Priority will be given to typed, SINGLE SPACED copy.

ADDRESS CHANGES TO: Secretary Harold McFadden, 2237 $\frac{1}{2}$ S. Bentley, LA CA 90064. The post office will not forward Third class mail.

INQUIRIES ABOUT NOT RECEIVING THE ECHO: Direct to James Murphy, 10031 Burnet ave, Mission Hills, CA 91345.

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