

The Sierra



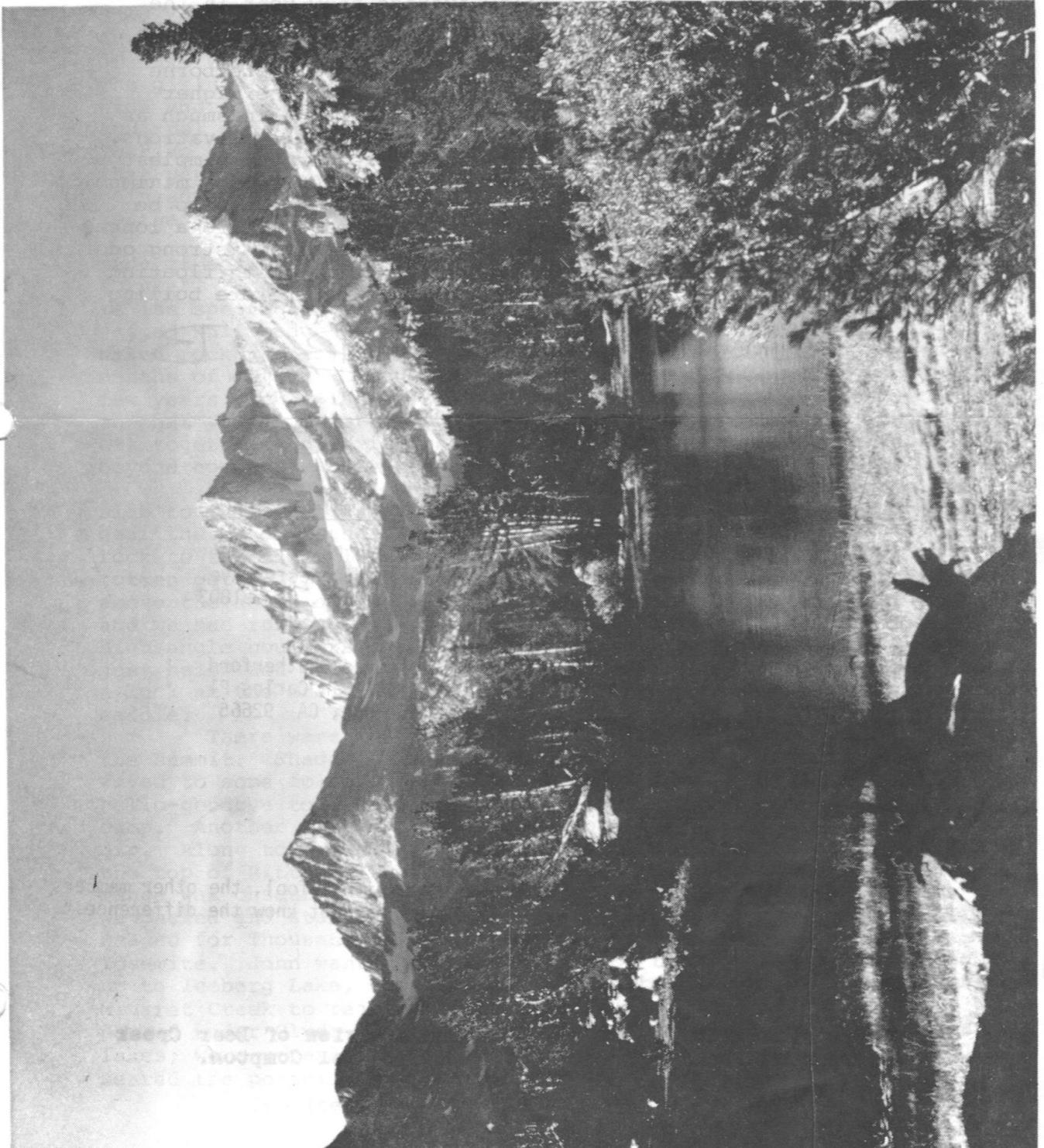
ECHO

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FROM THE CHAIRMAN

Congratulations to Dale Van Dalsem on being appointed to the Qualified Safety Instructors list. And also to Mary Omberg on making the Mountaineer's list.

As you already know, this is a below average snow year in the Sierra. This means lower run-off in some streams with some of the smaller streams drying up later in the season. There have already been reports of giardiasis (the No. 1 U.S. waterborne disease) by the Forest Service. Getting water at the higher elevations does not necessarily avoid contamination inasmuch as there are climbers (and the attending wastes) at all elevations. If in doubt, or simply as a precautionary measure, the simplest way to make water safe is to boil it. Over 10,000 feet a minimum of 5 minutes boiling is required. Iodine crystals can also be utilized but depending upon water temperature may require a longer overall time to make the water safe. Any water with a strong odor should be avoided. Water that is dark in color or with floating material should be filtered through a clean cloth before boiling.

Burt B.

MEMBERSHIP UPDATE

New Members

Albert Owens
10108 Dalerose Ave.
Inglewood, CA 90304

Igor Mamedalin
5071 Cinnamon
Irvine, CA 92715

Don Weiss
32351 Phantom Dr.
Palos Verdes Peninsula, CA 90274

Vic Henney
1645 N. Holliston Ave.
Pasadena, CA 91104

New Emblem Holders

Steve Powell
416 Winchester Ave.
Alhambra, CA 91803

Theresa Rutherford
1546 San Carlos Pl.
Orange, CA 92665

"Never argue with a fool, the other members of the trip may not know the difference."

COVER PHOTO: How about this 'inspiring' view of Bear Creek Spire from Rock Creek. Photo thanks to Hal Compton.

MT RITTER

AUG 16-17, 1980

(Pvt trip) Robinson/Jones

John Robinson's daughter - Kathy, Adrienne Knute's daughter - Krista and another young lady "did" the entire John Muir trail this past summer from south to north. John and Ron led a small group in to resupply the girls at Shadow Lake. They wanted to climb Mt. Ritter, too.

Starting from Mammoth ski area, we rode the shuttle bus down to Agnew Meadow - \$1.00 each. From there we took the trail across the river, up to Shadow Lake and on to camp on the north side of Lake Ediza. Camping is prohibited on the south and west shores. The girls were already there. We enjoyed a lazy dinner, a little wine and some chips and dip. Also enjoyed watching a cute ground squirrel and an almost tame mountain chickadee. Also enjoyed looking at the intimidating towers of Mts Ritter and Banner and that part of the Minarets which we could see. From there John pointed out the southeast glacier and the finger of snow extending up the chute high on the Ritter massif where we would climb.

You know, Mt. Ritter is kinda special - because John Muir made it so with his climbing description in "The Mountains of California". But there are many other "specials" for Ritter. There is its spectacular setting with the many permanent glaciers, the jagged knife-edged Minaret ridge, the gemlike lakes and the stark, naked rock scenery. There is its bloody past, too with the deaths of W. Starr jr and the members of the SPS climbing party a few years back. There is its predictable weather - - predictable in that you know for sure that it will be unpredictable. Put this all together and it is like the female of the species - beautiful beyond compare - but just as deadly.

Early on Sat. we started up the frozen earth and friction slab to the southeast glacier with the girls doing most of the leading. Near the base of the glacier, we crossed good snow and some exposed rock to the chute leading into the mountain. The chute was pretty rotten getting into and there was lots of loose rock resting just above the angle of repose in the chute proper. The sun was out and we had running water up to 12,000. There we ascended through high angle boulders and broken cliffs to the summit ridge - keeping just below and to the south side of same - except to peep over for a look at the 3rd - 4th class rock coming up from the Ritter-Banner saddle.

There were inspirational views from and an early lunch on the summit. Shadow Lake is just spectacular from there. We waved to some folks over on Banner, took up all our film, said hello-goodbye to a pair of young fellows and retraced our route to camp. Another lazy afternoon with more Port wine, chips and "duck" dip. Along toward evening, misty, white clouds began to form around the top of Ritter. The cloud thickened and lowered til half the range was obscured. What a sight! What a feeling! Sunday A.M. we packed and started out. The girls went north on the Muir trail headed for Thousand Island Lake, Donohue Pass, Lyell Canyon and Yosemite. John wanted us to make a loop trip of it so we climbed up to Iceberg Lake, Cecile Lake and Minaret Lake and trekked down Minaret Creek to rejoin the Muir trail at the Devil's Postpile. We passed under Clyde and the other minarets, viewed the still frozen lakes, were severely chewed by mosquitoes, got sprinkled on as we neared the postpile and boarded the shuttle for Mammoth.

It is nice to be on a John Robinson-led trip! WJR.

Mary had a hard time keeping Cuno in check but she did ("old guys" who have completed all three lists should be content to dodder pleasantly at the rear). We had the most beautiful weather ever for these day hikes of 2 oft-climbed, highly visible Sierra giants, plus 1 seldom led peak. Sat A.M. eleven hikers met at Tioga Pass parking lot--alas, alas, alas and 8 guys. The Ranger/Caretaker/collection agent took Mary by the hand and guided us around the fragile meadow to the really tough gravel where the real trail up to Mt. Dana begins.

About a third of the way up Steve Langley demonstrated to us that even on a good trail and at a moderate pace, fairly good conditioning is required to operate at 10M feet and above. From the top we had perfect views of that entire, vast and magnificent Yosemite country--Tuolumne Meadow, Half Dome, Lyell, etc. After 45 minutes, Mary led her flock of lambs down the south slope of the mountain, across a meadow with coursing stream and through a boulder field to the notch where the northeast spur of Gibbs rises. A little minimal 3rd class and there we were on Gibbs with that wonderful view repeated, except that this time we could see Dana also.

The hike back was down the west ridge, bearing northwest through the timber and maintaining elevation out to Dana Meadow. All but Cuno and Tom Duryea followed Mary right into and across a marsh. Well, it was only about shoe top deep.

After paying our 50¢ (negotiated by Dick Akawie--he joined us for the party and Warren) we all drove down to the fine sheltered campsites along the stream in Leevining Canyon for the night. There was a wide variety of items for dinner--it's true--anything tastes good "out there" -- even Cuno's old jokes at campfire time sounded good. Mary set the time for next a.m. departure and we settle in for the night by the rushing, brawling stream.

The assistant leader was instructed to encourage participants to be prompt Sunday for Warren and when one brash but nice young fellow procrastinated, we just up and left him - that Cuno don't take no s--- off nobody, even if they drive down from Davis, CA to participate. From the 9,000 foot marker on Tioga Road there are two ways to go for Warren - one is along a well traveled "cowtrail" on the north side of a small stream - the other is to beat and burrow ones way through scrub oak and other stickery bushes where a rabbit couldn't go on the south side. Well, after a while we got onto the trail on the north side of the stream and followed it for about 3/4 mi. then crossed back to the south side of the stream about where the cut between the mountains begins. About a mile of intermittent trail and timber hopping and we recrossed to the north side of the stream and headed for a broad, highly visible mountain slope, a mile or so to the east northeast.

A small notch just south of the high point leads down a short, steep boulder slope to a high basin and a gradual incline to Warren. The peak fills the forward landscape once you get to the said notch. By the way, young Chris caught up with us brashly before we left the trail head and enjoyed the rest of the climb.

Thank you Mary and Cuno for a delightful trip. Truly, "Going to the mountains is going home" jm.

WJB

MC DUFFIE, CHARYBDIS, SCYLLA, BLACK GIANT, HERMIT

Aug 28 - Sept 1, 1980

GEORGE TOBY , GENE MAUK

This was billed as a go get em trip with lots of gain and cross country, commonly called an SPS death march. And so it was, only the intrepid spirit and climbing skills of the group made it appear easy. Participants came from far away as San Diego, Sacramento, and Isreal. We savored 5 days of beautiful Sierra weather.

Day 1; Nine SPS'ers and one guest, Shuka Ravek from Isreal, left Lake Sabrina roadhead at 7:30 am Aug 28. We folowed the chain of lakes to Echo Lake and over Echo Col. Then down into upper Le Conte Canyon to pick up the Muir Trail. Up the Muir to a rocky basecamp at 11,700 ft just below Muir Pass.

Day 2; Climbed Mc Duffie by class 3 North Ridge. From the saddle between Mc Duffie and peak 13,046 we climbed along the West side of the ridge staying 150 to 200 ft below the crest until the summit came into view. Then up some steep exposed rock to the summit. This was a good tuff climb with lots of loose stuff. All 10 made the peak. On the way back 8 picked up Black Giant. It is slightly higher than Mc Duffie but not much more than a walk up.

Day 3; Climbed Charybdis by class 3 Northeast Ridge. This is an imposing black peak shaped like an inverted ice cream cone. Another loose mountain, but the summit is good rock. Eight made the peak (two had done it before) and we got down early and lunched at Disappearing Creek. Gene Mauk lead 5 across the Ionian Basin and climbed Mt. Scylla. This was a long day, returning after dark.

Day 4; We broke camp, went up to Muir Pass, checked out the hut, and dropped down into Evolution Basin. Dropped our packs near Sapphire Lake and headed West over a small col to climb the Hermit via Mc Gee Lakes. We contoured above the lakes but this proved to be a poor route; too many ups and downs and downed timber. We descended to the second lake and found a more logical route the lead up to the base of the Hermit. On the return we found a natural route of about 120 degrees from lake 11,065 just below the Hermit to Upper Mc Gee Lake. There a fisherman's trail goes back to Evolution Basin. We climbed a prominent loose chute up the middle of the West side to the ridge, then left (North) to drop down a bit to cross over to the East side and up to the summit. The summit block was attained by clawing up with a couple of grunt moves or using the traditional shoulder stand. The cast aluminum register is deep down in a crack that splits the summit block. It could not be retrieved. There is a band aid box register on top. Shuka Ravek and Peter Brookes both climbed the crack up to the top using a layback hold. We camped on a sand flat near Sapphire Lake and many tall tales of mountaineering conquests.

Day 5; Gene Mauk lead us directly over the 12,700 ft Sierra Crest just North of Mt. Haeckel. We dropped down to Midnight Lake to pick up the trail and back to Sabrina by early sfternoon to wrap up an enjoyable 5 days of mountaineering. My thanks to the climbers that made it so much fun. Just a great trip.

George

Shepherd Pass Gain Loss, carefully measured by altimeter, including all the 10-ft dips, is 650 ft, +30 ft. If the roadhead is at 6400 & the pass at 12,000, total gain is 6250 going in and 650 coming out. -Dale V.D.

WOTANS THRONE 20-21 February 1981 Campy

On 21 February Gene Prater and I climbed Wotans Throne (12,720'). We left the car at the locked gate on the Whitney Portal road (7000' elev) and carried our snowshoes until the start of the trail. Our intention was to do Mt Whitney; however, a dry front passed through so we made an early camp in the trees above Mirror Lake to avoid the str winds higher up. The day had started clear and warm and ended with swirling snow and impressive snow banners whipping around the higher ridges. By eight the next morning the wind had ceased, and we now snowshoed upward with the more moderate objective of viewing the crest from a good vantage point. Following the vestigial trail above Trailside Mdw, we left the snow and carried the webs while walking up the rock ribs leading to the bench above Trail Camp. Then we changed to crampons to climb up one of the two narrow chutes leading directly up to Wotans Throne. During the hour we spent on the summit we heard not a sound, and the sun warmed up the day as if it was Springtime.

Gene Prater and his brother Bill used to spend the Winter months building and trying out new showshoe designs. Bill's snowshoes became the Sherpa products and Gene developed the handcrafted Prater snowshoe line, and also Gene wrote the popular modern "Snowshoeing" book, while he managed the family farm near Ellensburg, Washington. Before this trip Gene had not climbed in the Sierra, and he later remarked that this snowshoe tour was unmatched in Alpine beauty by any other place he had been to in the Rocky Mtns or Cascades.

* * * * *

SIERRA SNOW CAMP 28 February - 1 March 1981 Campy

Wotans Throne showed us that this area should be great for the following weekend's SPS snowcamp. We billed the trip as "a snowshoe or ski adventure", and then kept checking with Dr. George during the week to see if it was going to be a weather adventure also. Storm-a-comin'! We met at Lauten's Coffee Shop in Lone Pine, then picked up the key for the gate on the Portal road (see footnote). The 18 of us then drove up as far as we co without having to put on snowchains. Pack weigh-in, now a tradition, showed up only a couple packs outside the 35 to 50-lb range. We started walking up the road. Snow was starting to fall and ideas of hiking up to Meysan Lk to climb Lone Pine Pk evaporated due to part of the trail being avalanche prone. We hiked to the Portal and put on our webs. One brave soul had skis with Silvretta bindings. We were soon able to boogie directly up the slope to Lone Pine Lake. By noontime the snowfall consisted of big fat flakes and the sky was pretty dark. Our group had divided into two basic parts: the front and the back, and for a long time nobody from the back appeared up where we were having lunch just above the lake. Later we learned that they hauled up and made camp just below the lake. We decided to camp where we were. A couple stalwarts made a foray up to Mirror Lake and then returned. We settled in for about 14 hrs of sleep. The next morning the snow was still coming down. We were wondering if we should go down and rescue the vehicles. Still, there seemed to be only about 4 inches of accumulated new snow. So we all decided to snowshoe up to Mirror Lk and then return to break camp and go out. It was a fun trip up, especially while snowshoeing across the soft white expanse of Bighorn Park. We came back down and returned to the vehicles by 2:30 PM. Snow on the road was less than 6 inches, but we put on chains for the trip down to the valley. Well, our adventure was nothing really big, but we all had fun schlepping around on snowshoes for awhile (plus one pair of skis). In our group were: Adrian Acevedo, Mario Gonzales, Steve Powell, Wes Reynolds, Dave Kemp, Cal and Lettie French, Walt Hill, Lynna Walker, Peter Brookes, Ron Hudson, Delores Holladay plus four other Los Padres rescue team people, and Ski and me.

Footnote: Negotiations were required again this year to obtain relief from Inyo County access closures. Locked gates are on the Horseshoe Mdw road at 5600 ft elev and the Whitney Portal road at 7000 ft. The gate at Seven Pines is gone now and the barricade can be driven around, but a new gate will go in closer to Onion Valley. These closures are due to pas vandalism and stranded vehicles. The roads will stay closed until summer even though all the snow may be gone. To obtain a key, request one when you apply for a permit. You will need to lock the gate after you and return the key after your trip. There is also no rescue snowplow in case your car gets buried.

Although it was clear on Saturday morning in Independence, there was a strong wind blowing, strong enough to be moving considerable dust in the Owens Valley. Fifteen climbers drove to the Symmes Creek campground turn-off and thence to the Pinyon Creek Roadhead at about 5600 ft.

There is a use trail generally on the right (North) side which avoids most of the brush and waterfalls. On two occasions it dropped down into the creek bed to skirt obstacles. At just under 8000 ft. we took the left hand fork of Pinyon Creek and on up to about 10,500 ft. where there is a large bench with excellent campsites for 15 or more. The group was fairly evenly matched physically and kept close together.

We arrived in camp at four and checked out the snow for ice axe practice. Unfortunately the conditions were very poor so we opted in favor of other late afternoon pursuits.

The wind which had continued most of Saturday died down in the evening but arose again Sunday morning. The snow was firm and Crampons were in order, although two climbers made the summit without them. We took an obvious wide snow chute readily visible from base camp. Thirteen signed the summit register, but most dropped down off the peak to avoid the wind and resulting chill factor. The snow had softened for the trip back down, and a few enjoyed glissading down to base camp.

The descent from base camp was very rapid inasmuch as we utilized snow and scree to good advantage.

Thanks to Jim Murphy, Dick Akawie and Barbara Reber for their assistance on this one.

Bill B.

KERN PK., INDIAN HEAD, May 23-25, 1981

Jerry Keating/Walt Whisman

Memorial Day weekend, in a below-normal snow year, proved to be an ideal time to schedule an SPS-Backpacking trip to Kern Pk. (11,510') and Indian Head (8,965'). The paved road to Blackrock Gap was open, the trails were clear, and only a few patches of snow remained on the broad S ridge of Kern Pk. All 23 participants made the summit Sunday morning in a little over 2 1/2 hours, and everyone was back to the cars Monday before it began raining. Indian Head was climbed from camp at Redrock Mdws. Saturday afternoon by about a dozen participants.

A highlight of the trip for 15 persons was a 2,200-foot descent Sunday afternoon along Redrock Creek to Jordan Hot Springs, which had just opened for summer. Beer was \$1 a can; baths were \$1.50. The primitive resort is situated in a scenic forest of pines, firs and hugh cedars, making for ideal camping. Monday's ascent along Ninemile Creek to Casa Vieja Mdws. also was a scenic treat as the 15 rejoined the other participants who had opted to stay two nights at Redrock Mdws. and return to the cars via the River Spring Trail. Thanks to Sid "San Jac" Davis for keeping an eye on this group.

Black, Diamond, Mary Austin

April 25-26

When deterioration of his body due to old age forced Gerry Holleman to drop out of the leadership, Jim Murphy and Dave Vandervoet volunteered to take over. The hike up Oak Creek to the campsite at 10,900 was uneventful and the group was eating lunch in camp by 1 pm. Wind, which started gusting in the morning as we hiked in, made establishing camp a challenge. At one point, Steve Powell's ground cloth became airborne and circled the camp twice 20 feet above the ground.

At 2 pm, the departure time for Mary Austin, only five could muster the necessary enthusiasm for the final Messner-like push for the summit. Mike Lorr (carrying the SPS flag) and Steve Powell were on one rope team; Dale Van Dalsem, Jack Grams, and Kavek Shuka on the other. While the two teams raced for the summit, the rest of the group retired to the tents by 5 pm to avoid the clouds and wind which were now howling continuously down the mountain. Upon returning to camp, both groups of climbers could scarcely contain their praise of the fine route up Mary Austin. Dale said that he had never seen such a classic Sierra route as Mary Austin, north face direct, and that it certainly rivalled the legendary east buttress of Mt. McKinley.

During the long night, few slept much as the wind pounded the tents and low clouds raced overhead. (The exception was Jim Murphy who carried his sleeping medicine in a hip flask.) At 4 am the climb of Black and Diamond was scratched due to the degenerating weather and the group's lack of interest for climbing the two peaks under miserable conditions. We left camp at 6:30 am for the hike out to the cars.

Mt GOODE and MT AGASSIZ June 13-14 Nancy Gordon and Cuno Ranschau

Enroute to South Lake we had an interesting confrontation with a Tule Elk that would not budge from our lane on Hwy 395 just south of the Wildlife observation View Point.

Eight climbers started up the Bishop Pass trail from South Lake under clear skies on Saturday morning. Arrival at base camp at Saddlerock Lake was too early for lunch; so after a short rest, we left for Mt Goode. The weather was still clear but the winds had picked up. Ice axes were used intermittently during the lower portion of the climb. The route up Goode was class 2 from the southwest. Seven of us made the peak and placed a new register book at the summit. We had a dandy glissade down one of the snow chutes and were back in camp in time for plenty of relaxation. One of our climbers pulled out her fishing gear and caught 3 trout for dinner.

On Sunday, eight started up the trail to Bishop Pass which was well under snow. The snow chutes on Agassiz were too hard to ascend with only ice axes, so we took a class 2 rock route from the pass. Although quite windy, the summit views demanded more than a brief stay. North Palisade being the most awesome view.

A leisurely pace brought us back to South Lake in 1½ hours to end a very good outing. Participants were:

Joe Boyland	Nancy Gordon	Hirsh Kolp	Dave Ricards
Suzanne Dallman	Jerry Guerin	Cuno Ranschau	John Russell

J TREE ROCK FESTIVAL Jan 17, 18 1981 Dale Van Dalsem, et al
It was a small intimate gathering of nearly 70 people for the annual Joshua Tree rock practice. Traffic control got out of hand due to late arrivals and the rangers were rightfully unhappy with us; we had far more than the 11 vehicles allowed on our permit. Six of the SPS ropes arrived an hour late.

All went well, though; frantic phoning brought a bunch of instructors who did a great job teaching Saturday and leading Sunday: Bob Hartunian, Gene Clinger, Bob Schreiber, Jim Murphy, Gerry Holleman, Pat Holleman, Harold McFadden, Mark Goebel, Cuno Ranschau, Greg Vernon, and Shuka Ravell all pitched in and RCSers John Orange and Alois Smrz joined Bob S. in leading some of the 7's & 8's on Sunday. We managed to shuffle some cars at lunchtime on Saturday & partially pacified the rangers. 9 people tried for BMTC signoff w/ Cuno & Dale; some even passed. We had a super split-level campfire Sat nite. The usual bad jokes (Duck, Camel 1, Camel 2, etc) and worse limericks (Wild West Show: WOW, et al) were greeted with stony silence, so the program became disgustingly wholesome: Carpenters Songbook. About \$50 was collected for the Rope Fund (\$1 from all except instructors). Perhaps best of all, the beginners had organized 5.0 & 5.1 routes to keep them all occupied rather than ogling the rock jocks crank off their 5.11 dyno moves, on Sunday.

Some suggestions for next time:

- 1) 7AM start was a bit early, but far better than usual 9AM start. Suggest 7:30 as best - or possibly 8 AM at the latest.
- 2) We have no obligation to give the world free rock instruction. Suggest \$1 rope fund charge for SPS members, \$2 for RCS members, \$5 or \$10 for all others.
- 3) Traffic problem can be solved quite simply: Run a bus from Pomona. Everyone must meet the bus in Pomona at 5AM Saturday & ride out to J-Tree. No exceptions. The only other alternative is to hire a non-climbing Rent-a-Cop to run off late arrivals while the rest of us are climbing.
- 4) We should schedule 2 or 3 of these each year, or convert the usual SPS Training Committee's annual no-snow snow practices to rock festivals.

-Dale

LYELL/MACLURE TRIP JUNE 12-14 1981

The group gathered at Yosemite Wilderness Permit Kiosk at 7.30 a.m. June 12 where we found a sign saying it would not be open until 8 a.m. (spring season). We were on the trail at 8.05 and reached the 10,160 ft. level on the Lyell Fork portion of the John Muir Trail at 2 p.m. where we set up camp. We started out for the peaks June 13 at 6.30 a.m. and climbed on snow to about 150 feet below the top of Lyell peak, reaching the top at 10.30 a.m. We got back to the saddle at approximately 11.15 a.m. and had lunch. Two of us remained at the saddle while the remaining thirteen climbed Maclure. We were back in camp by 3 p.m. We left camp at 6.50 a.m. Sunday and arrived at the parking lot at 11.30 a.m.

Snow conditions on Lyell were perfect; the weather was beautiful. Since the leader was the slowest person in the group, the party was well bunched. All bridges across Rafferty creek are in and there was no problem crossing streams.

Thanks to John Lutz for assisting and to Bill Bradley for suggesting this time of year for the Lyell/Maclure trip. Thanks also to the group who were highly cooperative and made the leader's job a very easy one.

Art Blauvelt

Chapter 1

Under Mary M's expert advise (she having been there several times last year) we did some extra driving to find the right road to the trail head. But if one tries all possible options one is eventually sure to succeed. There were seven and the single girl (one fewer and we would have been a singing group).

Gene did a good job of pretending to remember where the 'trail' went--now you see it, now you don't. Three stream crossings went very well. Note for future leaders: only lead it when you plan on having a low snow year.

Lunch was at 10000', and we continued to the lake at 10,900' for camp. This place has lots of sandy areas for tents. Another note for leaders: schedule this when you plan on not having winds. Our leader failed in this and we suffered the consequences all the first night and the next day--poor planning. None of us got much sleep that first night. It finally calmed down by morning and we were sure to have a lovely, calm climb to the peaks! After all, if it is calm in camp, how windy can it be on the peaks?? What can possibly go wrong?!

Two renegades headed for Williamson--and thereon hangs chapter 2 --while we, the Faithful, went for said objectives. We were on snow almost the entire way up Trojan, but had elected to leave our crampons. The nieve penetentes made decent steps and we were on top at 10:00,-- first ascent of the year, of course. The snow was much too hard for glissading yet, so it was a walk down--~~to~~ too bad.

Barnard was all clear of snow and we left our axes below. On top at noon with goodly breezes and more. Then down with some glissading to camp and the five went out, Cuno staying behind.

Chapter 2, by Ms. M. may be read at this time.

Chapter 3

Finally a calm night. We had paid our dues to the mountain gods the night before. Sweet, wonderful sleep!

Next a.m. we split up again. The non-conformists went the way we had gone the day before and it was my turn for that "Great, gray bulk". After all, didn't I just absolutely need that peak?

Choosing a proper route up the big slope is useful. Talus up, scree down, that's the formula. It's up past the east side of the largest ganderme and down past the west side.

To ascend from the big plateau to the summit plateau is "As You Like It". There appear to be many fun variations. Only light winds today. Beauty all around. The horns look awesome from here and no doubt are! Then it was back to our designated meeting place and wait, wait.

But they were back sooner than expected! Howcome? Oh, Oh, too bad, they didn't get Barnard. Oh, well.

If you enjoy hearing wild mntnering tales, talk to the Wonderful Ms. M. about Williamson. I'm sure she can fantasize one up for you. CHR

There was a young miss with a sway,
To whom said a Mrs O'Day.
"My husband, my Pet, I
I don't think you've met.
And let's try to keep it that way!"

There was a lady from Kent,
Who said that she knew what it meant.
When invited to dine,
To drink beer and wine.
She knew what it meant--but she went.

There was a lady from Wren,
Who ate onions, garlic, and Sen Sen.
'Til a fright one day,
Took her breath quite away,
And we hope she can't find it again.

I sat next to the duchess at tea.
It was just as I feared it would be.
Her rumblings abdominal,
Were truly phenominal.
And everyone thought it was me.

CHAPTER TWO

The Continuing Saga....of "...the great gray bulk of Williamson heaved up against the sun...."

by MARY McMANNES

For nearly two years, I have cast my eyes westward and upward gazing on mighty Williamson and salivated with desire to climb that magnificent giant. After all...wasn't that the peak chosen to grace the SPS Emblem pins and wasn't it described by Mary Austin as "...that great gray bulk-heaved up against the sun..." My last attempt at Big W. had been marred by a blizzard and an earthquake which occurred within a 12 hr. period in 1980. Ah yes.. I dearly wanted Williamson in my bag...but on with the story.

Signing up on Gene Mauk's climb of Trojan and Barnard, I started making plans about getting Williamson, too. On May 14, I found myself in the company of mighty-strong Maris (Valkass) and raucous Ranschau driving to Lone Pine. A few miles north of Lone Pine on 395, we turned left on an obscure dirt road (nearly directly across from a road marked "Manzanar Reward") and rode past the white Manzanar monument. After joining up with Gene's faithful team, we proceeded a few miles south on that same dirt road, crossed a stream that ran across the road, and turned right heading toward George Creek roadhead. After parking and packing, we began the pleasant parade plodding up George Creek trail which was enhanced by three stream crossings. These crossings proved not to be as exciting as in the previous heavy snow-melt year. But what nature did not provide in exciting stream crossings, she definitely made up for later on in the night. Reaching 10,900', we camped at a small, partially iced lake and were relieved to find we weren't camping on snow. Williamson was to my north and Trojan/Barnard to the west. AND then the wind began..tent bags, hats, and finally my Pocket Hotel blowing into the lake (well, nearly). We hastened to our tents and spent a restless vigil hoping that the violent zephyrs would not blow us and our tents to the proverbial Kingdom Come. An auroral dawn found us bleary-eyed but eager for the ascents. Mauk's faithful team up Trojan/Barnard, and renegade Maris and I on our way to "the great, gray bulk".

WILLIAMSON: The first part of the climb was on scree and talus, and Maris and I worked our way up to the plateau staying to the right of a prominent gendarme. At the top of the talus, we found ourselves on a plateau and began working northward towards an enormous snow bowl. We traversed the snow bowl battling the onslaught of WINDS all the way. At the top of the snow bowl, we rested on a second plateau and looked westward towards the snowy ridge which held the magnificent summit of Williamson. At this point the winds became merciless. We were shaking from the cold and fatigue of fighting the gales. (...sounds worst than Everest..ed.) Hovering by a rock, we put on down-jackets and decided to put on crampons. One of my mightiest struggles in mountaineering, to date, was stretching the crampon strap with numbed, freezing fingers to fit the buckle into the hole. Choking down a bite of peanutbutter sandwich perhaps would give me the needed strength to make the final sisyphusian lunge. As we edged towards the summit, Maris was in front of me and suddenly, I mean SUDDENLY, an enormous monstrous wind blast blew us upward and nearly blew us over the edge, THE EDGE OF WILLIAMSON. I saw Maris on his knees grasping his ice axe and hanging on for dear-life. I instinctively did the same. If people pray in foxholes, well let me tell you, people pray on summits, too. Our prayers must have been answered, because there was a 2 minute lull, and Maris and I raced for the summit rocks. There was the gleaming silver summit box, but no time to saver the register..no time to saver the view..no time for pictures...no time to wave my red SPS flag..(no time for sargeants..ed)

QUESTION: Should we risk our lives and sign the register or make a run for safety below the Wind Dome? You guessed it..being bold and vain and searching for the elusive posterity, we signed the register, prayed for a lull, and dashed for the safety of the plateau. Williamson was ours for one brief climatic moment, but nearly with a too dear price. Maris and I made our way back to camp, weary and smiling... we cast our eyes in another direction, towards Trojan. But that's another story. And not nearly as good!!

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