

The Sierra



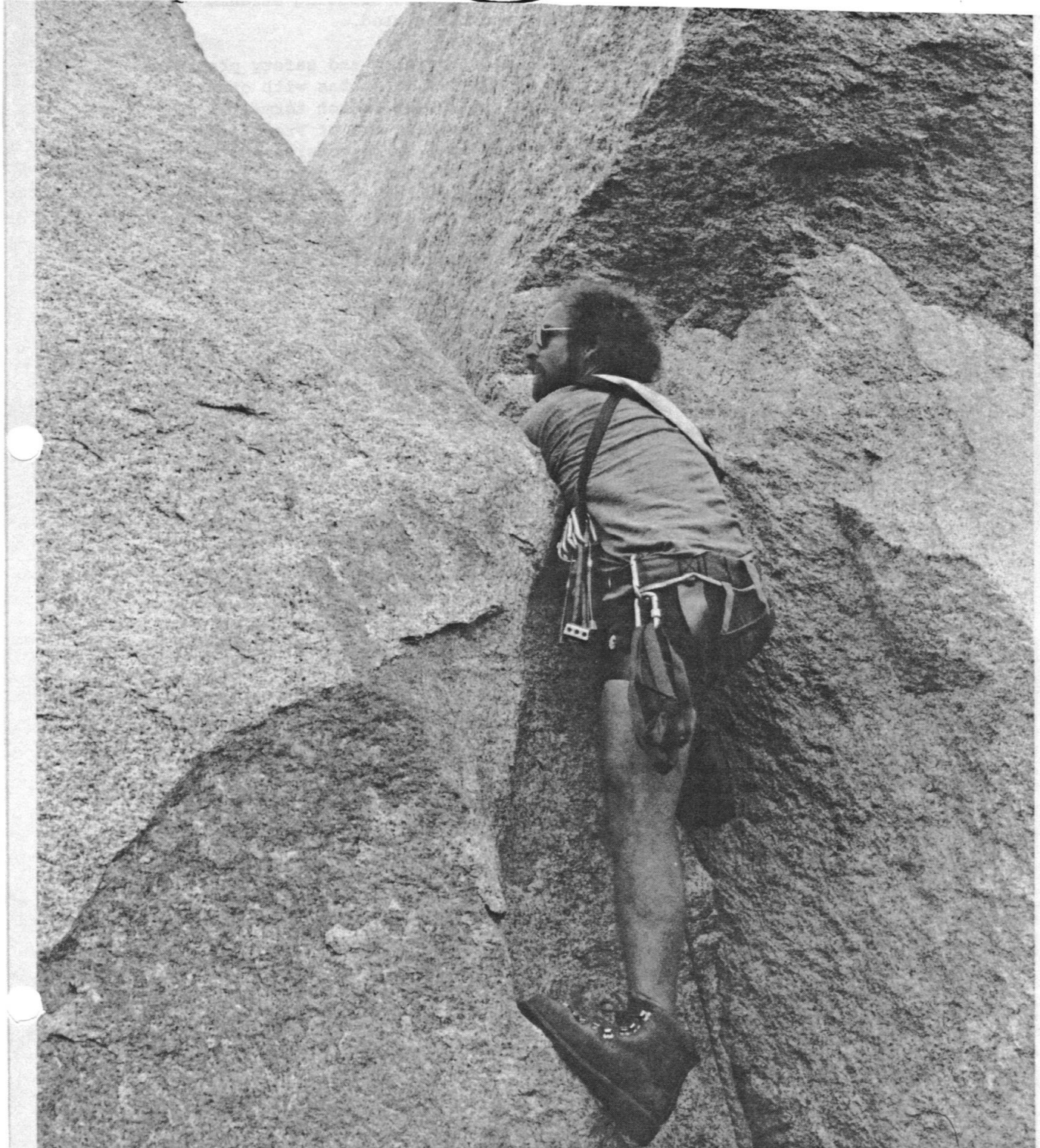
ECHO

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CHAIRMAN'S VIEW

SPS JULY

The record snowfall of this past winter combined with the confusion with wilderness permits is making peak bagging difficult. The heavy snow and cool spring are contributing to a later than usual snow melt and run off; all of us should take a few minutes to ensure we are up to date on knowing the safety involved in crossing streams and that proper equipment is present and being used.

The discussion at the SPS meeting on snow training and safety practices did not generate heated remarks among SPS'ers as it has with others. One last-minute decision was to avoid the use of French terms. I am glad of that. It is my view that the consistent use of French or other foreign words is a practice by those who want to be considered important. Unfortunately, the only words used are those that are popular; equally applicable words are never used, for example, the word pickel. I have a pickel; I know I have one, it even says so on my ice axe. However, in my entire climbing career no one has ever asked me how my pickel was even though there have been several instances when the subject could come up. Pickel is a good word, but people apparently don't find it a comfortable word to use; most people don't use French terms.

It was a "new attitude" on the part of Los Angeles officials that led to compromise legislation preserving the Mono Lake area, the Northern California congressman who authored the bill said Friday.

Rep. Richard H. Lehman, D-Sanger, said in Los Angeles that the bill creating the Mono Basin National Forest Scenic Area "will go a long way to change the image of Los Angeles," created over the last 50 years as Mono Lake water was diverted to Los Angeles.

The bill does not deal with the dispute over how much water can be diverted from the lake to Los Angeles. That issue is before the U. S. District Court in Sacramento, where an August hearing is scheduled.

Under the compromise, the 67,000-acre lake and surrounding area would be designated a scenic area, protecting it from federal land sales, geothermal drilling and timber sales.

The original legislation designated only that the lake be a monument. Los Angeles water officials worried about the effect that move would have on the city's water rights.

Friday Lehman said, "We have to remember the (city's) legitimate water rights" at Mono Lake, adding there should be mitigation measures to offset

the impact of diverting that water.

Also under the compromise, the city Department of Water and Power would lose its right under a 1936 law to buy federal land around the lake for \$1.25 an acre.

A study of the ecological impact of water diversion, to be conducted by the National Academy of Sciences, also is included in the measure.

The agreement was announced in Washington Thursday.

The SPS Safety Committee wishes to thank ROY WARD for his contribution of rope and slings. This equipment will be used in our training sessions to help us all climb more safely.

B. Bradley

COVER PHOTO: Wayne Howard on the first of two interesting moves on the summit block of Clarence King. Photo thanks to Vic Copelan. Aug '82.

The goal of this trip was to get some real experience mountaineering in the wintertime & climb a Sierra peak or peaks in the Mt. Abbot area. Rock Creek is an excellent spot for x-c skiing, being fairly accessible, relatively level terrain, and a high-altitude roadhead (also making the area very popular for backpackers in the summertime). There had been good snow (128" reported at Mammoth—a record for this time of year?) and the weather report was vague. Anyway, a number of days had elapsed with good sunny weather since the last storm, so avalanches would not be a major hazard. Driving as far as we could after putting on chains, and promptly getting stuck and pulled out, we got to sleep at 3 am.

The next day we shouldered our 60-70 lb packs, and the 4 of us proceeded up the road on skinny skis. Participants were Bruce Knudtson, Maris Valkass, Igor Mamedalin, and yours truly, Ron Hudson. We started at 8400', so it was 6-7 miles to Mosquito flat, the summer roadhead. The goal was to camp at Long Lake or higher, and hopefully climb Mt. Abbot. Because of some ski problems, 7 miles and 2000' gain was all we could do that day. We set up camp $\frac{1}{2}$ mile beyond Mosquito Flat and it was cold! Like you could leave your hands exposed only a few minutes before they turned numb and hurt! So after some hot broth and such it was into the sleeping bags for a long night. In the morning, thermo read -4 F! Nobody was ambitious for an early start--the sun didn't come up until 0930. Abbot, Mills, etc were still 4 miles distant--out of the question this day so we decided to try Morgan #1 - a route up one of its NE rock ridges looked feasible - no avalanche gullies above and relatively free of snow. In fact, the snow depth in Little Lakes Valley was only (low compared to Mammoth) 3-4 feet. Doing Morgan first would give us a better view of Abbot & Mills to check them out.

After proceeding to a ridge above Hidden Lakes we parked our skis. It was only Igor and I then; Maris was feeling some effects of the flu and Bruce was having problems with his rented skis. The first couple hundred feet involved some exposed class 3 climbing but after that it was generally class 2--up the NE ridge. 700' from the summit, Igor was worried about the time (230pm - 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ hours until dark) and turned back. I continued and partook of the grand view this peak (13,748') offers. Temperature on the summit was +10 F with a stiff breeze. I then hurried back down. It turned out that the snow was very compacted--a good wind pack in a snow chute next to the 3rd class rock (in Igor's tracks) made the descent route safe & fast. I arrived in camp just at "dark". Actually, the snow-blanketed landscape and white granite heights under the full moon radiated a daylight-like hue in this renowned range of light.

Nevertheless, it was windy in camp so we quickly retired to our cold, but weatherproof tents for another long night in the cucoons. With snow flurries persisting the next morning the logical thing to do was leave. A couple ^{inches} of dry new snow in our track gave the result of requiring us to pole downhill all the way back to the car. Interestingly, the road had been closed off to cars at Tom's place; we felt lucky we could drive into the canyon 3 days before. A good trip and learning experience!

DEVILS CRAG #1, WHEEL MTN. Aug 8-12, 82 Don Hudson

Sunday morning I arrived at South Lake with two members of the German Alpine Club. Their names: Mike Buettner, a medical student, and Falk Janisch, a merchandising student, both from Munich. R. J. Secor and Mary Sue Miller were already there. With beautiful weather (which lasted all 5 days of the trip) we hiked over Bishop Pass and down to the Muir Trail where we camped near the Le Conte ranger station.

Monday we hiked down to Grouse Meadow. The river was high, making it impossible to cross on the logs. We were able to wade across at a place where the water was not too deep or swift. We then climbed up to Rambaud Lake. The scenery was beautiful.

6:20 am Tuesday R. J., the two Germans and myself started out for DC. We climbed to the saddle between DC and Wheel Mtn. and headed for White Top. We made a mistake, however, by going in too southerly a direction, and ended up on a peak between DC and Mt. Woodworth. We traversed back over to the saddle just below White Top. The mistake cost us an hour. From there we climbed the N. W. arete route which has been described in accounts of earlier ascents. We roped up at about four places, two of which I can vividly remember. The first was the prominent notch on the ridgeline which can be seen from camp below. 60 to 70 feet of almost vertical rock has to be climbed to get out of the notch and onto easier rock above. Mike led the rope on this and greatly impressed us with his technique and climbing ability. The second was at a smaller notch about 300 yards north of the summit. A short but difficult downclimb followed by an airy knife edge section of the ridge. I led the rope on this and found it to be a very scary experience. We left a fixed rope there. We continued unroped along the exposed ridge to the summit. The view from the top was magnificent. We were the first party to make the ascent this year. Once back at the saddle of White Top, instead of going back to the DC-Wheel saddle, we headed straight down a chute full of loose rocks and snow. We arrived back at camp at about 7 pm.

Wednesday morning Mary Sue and I climbed Wheel Mtn. Then we all headed down and back across the river. Next day we hiked out to South Lake.

Mike and Falk were very congenial and interesting climbing companions. They spoke good English, and we all had much lively conversation in camp.

Friday we went to the hot creek. Mike and Falk wanted to do a technical climb on Mt. Whitney. So I left them at Whitney Portal on the way home Saturday.

RANDOM SELECTION

Marriage is the only adventure open to the cowardly--Voltaire.

Divorce can be an early warning sign of a faulty relationship.

The average woman would rather have beauty than brains because the average man can see better than he can think.

If your parents didn't have children, chances are you won't.

AAAAA is an organization for those who drink and drive.

Statistics can be like a bikini: What they reveal is suggestive, what they conceal is vital.

SPANISH NEEDLE/ROCKHOUSE OCT 23-24, 1982 Vernon/Brecheen

Twass the week before Halloween and all through the hills,
not a brook was murmuring, not even the rills,
Nine climbers were gathered and waiting with glee
to see if they could top the ridge known as Spanish Nee-----dle.

Then we were told on the banks of the Kern
before we could go home,
we must tread our way through the Wilderness
known as Dome-----lands.

A moment to ford El Rio de Kern and to the ridge
south of Rockhouse we shortly did earn.
Then it was onward & up, beyond the dwelling of men
but we all attained the top of Rockhouse-that granite pin-----nacle!

Nine climbers met at 8 am 150 yards west of the LA aquaduct on the Sand Canyon road. The Sand Canyon road leaves Hwy 395 almost directly opposite the well-signed Brown road between Indian Wells and Pearsonville. At this point the aquaduct is a huge pipe, painted white. We tried loading the participants into a 4-WD Datsun and a VW and went west along the not-too-bad dirt road 3-4 miles to a stream crossing where the VW failed to clear a rock protruding from the edge of the stream. A short ferry in the Datsun delivered all climbers to the roads end at the point where the ridge comes down from SN directly east. We ascended this ridge to a place where we could contour south to get into a couloir leading to the notch immediately to the right (north) of the main peak. Lots of sidehilling, bouldering and pine needle slipping brought us to the eye of the needle and Greg led up the last few feet of third class friction and jutting granite slabs to the windy peak. Only eight signed in because Joyce Sherman lost a contact lens and chose not to continue. Lunch on top lasted an hour as we soaked in the views then we followed the same route down. It was too early to have dinner at the Two Sisters plus 1 in Inyokern so we dropped into the Sierra "Club" a couple of doors down the street to down a couple of pitchers.

Following the fine \$5.85 buffet at 2 Sisters, we drove across Walker Pass to the Chimney Peak road which we took north. About 9 miles up this road we found that the Forest Service has constructed a trail from the road to Lamont Peak - with signs and ribbons and everything. After another 3 miles we came to a sign reading in part: Long Valley Recreation area. This road led west a couple of miles to a nice wooded campground at the 5,600 foot level. Here we spent the night with campfire, coyotes and hootowls. In vain did we wait for the Great Pumpkin but Dick Akawie showed up instead and told us we were a week early.

Sunday morning, those of us sleeping outside were awakened by the gentle patter of fine raindrops - but it was 7 am - time to get up anyway. After breakfast, we caravanned north to the signed road leading to: "Rockhouse Basin". Here, we again left the excess automobiles and piled the eight climbers into the Datsun and the VW and drove the 4 miles down into the basin to Rockhouse Meadow and parked on the bank of the South Fork of the Kern River. By the way, we left two Toyotas, a Saab and a Peugeot back at the road fork. Why don't the Detroiters build a car we can drive on dirt roads? The river was almost knee-deep there and we had no trouble at all wading across. By cutting south into the drainage leading up to the low (appearing) saddle to the west, we struck the trail which leads to that saddle. The cars were parked at 5,600 feet; the saddle is at 7,300 feet and the peak is north of the saddle at 8,383 feet. The light rain did nothing to deter us and we were on top at 11:30 but the rain did make the rocks a bit slippery and some did not feel comfortable at the summit block on the friction. An uneventful return to cars and to home followed.

WJB

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