

# The Sierra



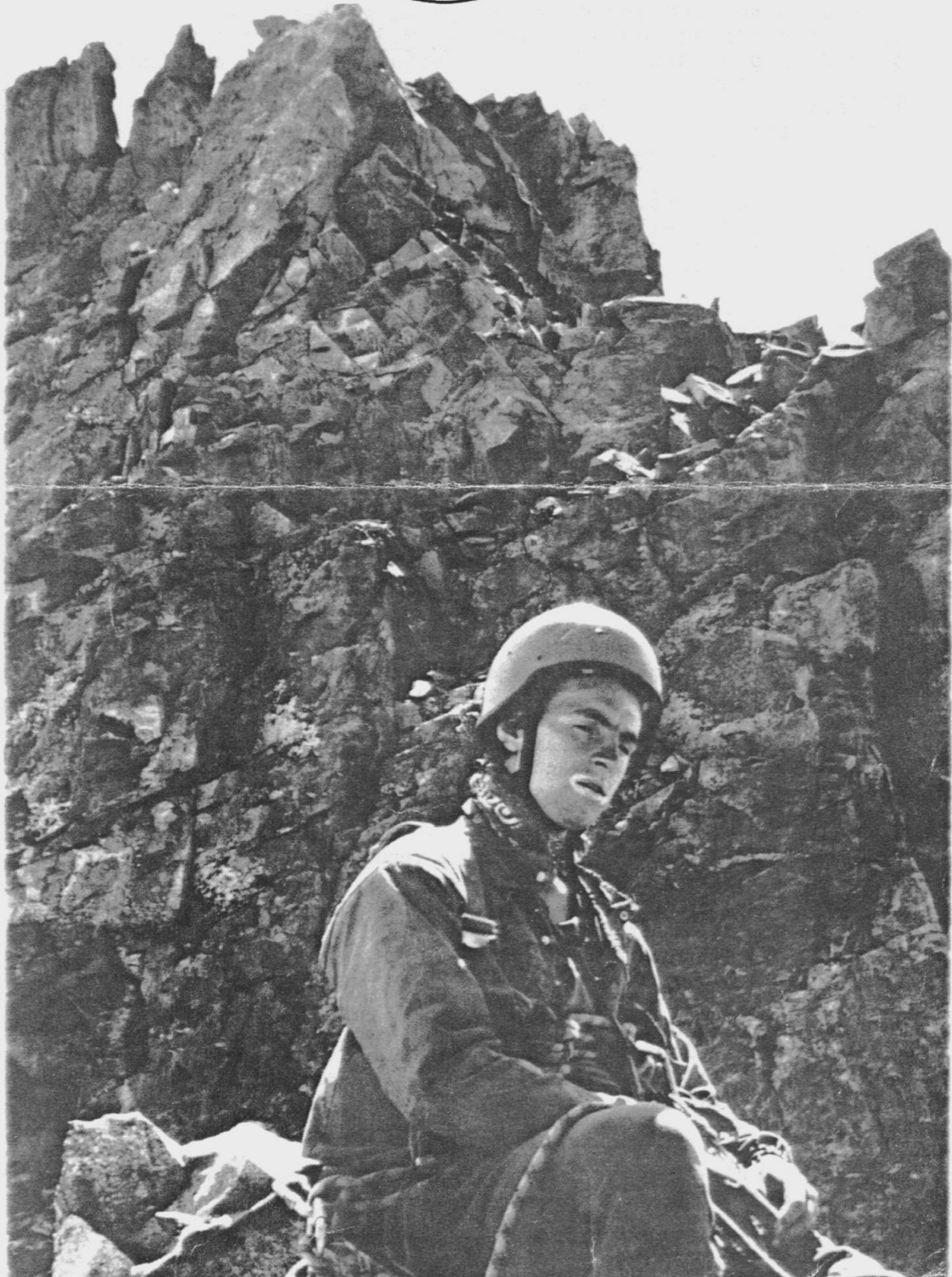
# ECHO

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Another active Sierra climbing season has passed. The Management Committee extends a hearty thanks to our dedicated leaders whose scheduled trips made for such an ambitious and successful climbing season this year.

Beside trip leaders, members of the Management Committee have played a large part in this year's success. Dave Dykeman, the Vice-Chairman and Schedule Chairman, gathered a great number of trips for our schedule. Mary Sue Miller, Secretary, did a thorough job of keeping track of our membership and our meetings. Randy Danta, Treasurer, amused us with interesting financial reports, but managed to keep the books straight. Maris Valkass, Alternate Officer and Program Chairman, provided us with excellent programs to enjoy. Jim Murphy, Council Rep, kept us well informed about Club activities and concerns. Bill Bradley, Safety Chair, set up many excellent training trips. Bill T. Russell, Conservation Chair, kept us well informed on conservation issues. Larry Hoak, Mountain Records Chair, saw that canisters and peak registers were placed on the peaks, and he also updated the membership information for the Schedule. Cuno Ranschau, Echo Editor, did an exemplary job of compiling news items, trip reports, and humor for our newsletter. Ella Hoselton, Echo Mailer, collated and faithfully got the Echos to the post office. Ron Bartell, monitored the computerized membership list and Echo mailing labels. Ruth Armentrout, Banquet Chair, made our annual SPS Banquet a pleasant and memorable occasion. They are all to be commended!

Being the SPS Chair has been an honor and a privilege; and, with the supportive efforts of the Management Committee and members of our section, it has also been a pleasureable experience.

Next year's officers are: Dave Dykeman, Chairman; Maris Valkass, Vice Chairman; Ron Hudson, Secretary; Vivz Weldon, Treasurer; and Mary Sue Miller, Alternate Officer. Congratulations!

*Nancy Gordon*

I would like to express my sincere appreciation to the leaders and all the participants of the Sep 29,30 Abbot & Morgan #1 climb for their assistance in the rescue. I would also like to thank those with whom I have spoken since, for their concern. The sutures have been out for quite some time now, the laceration on my head is completely healed and I have been on an SPS climb since the accident.

Al Franz

"Anyone wishing to establish a republic in our present day would find it easier to do so among mountaineers, where there is no culture, than among men who are accustomed to living in cities ... "

Niccolo Machiavelli  
The Discourses (I, xi)

*Stan Gelb*  
Stan Gelb

FEB 23,24 RCS/SPS  
M/E High Desert Bouldering, and top roped rock climbing in the open fields between Red Mountain and Trona. Leader: GREG VERNON, Asst & Reserv.: CUNO RANSCHAU

COVER PHOTO! Mike Buettner of Germany belaying on the NW arete of Devils Crag #1. Mike was here with a contingent of youth from Europe in 1981 in a youth exchange program.

## BUS TRIP WORKSHOP JANUARY 12

A workshop on "how to Organize A Bus Trip" will take place on Saturday, January 12, 9:30am to 2:00pm at Angeles Chapter headquarters, 2410 W. Beverly Blvd. (between Rampart and Alvarado). Leaders Harry Goldstein, Clara Goldstein, Frankie Marx and Evelyn Levine will share their years of experience on the problems and joys of running bus trips, Sierra Club style. The agenda includes information about campgrounds, chartering buses, routing, sightseeing, budgeting, and commissary organization.

Whether you want to be a leader, assistant, reservationist or just get information, everyone is invited to this annual workshop, sponsored by the Cabrillo Section, Verdugo Hills and West L.A. Groups.

Bring your lunch; coffee, tea and hot water will be available. No reservations are necessary. However, if you need further information, call (213)928-6758 or (213)653-9589.

### CAMPSITE RESERVATIONS AT JOSHUA TREE

10-2-84

Certainly within the month of October and probably within a week or so of the above date, Joshua Tree National Monument will go on their long awaited Ticketron Reservation system for all group campsites in the Monument. They had anticipated starting the Ticketron reservation system in September but the incoming lines were not in place and in fact are not quite completed at this time. I spoke personally with Superintendent Rick Anderson yesterday and tried to work out a solution to the upcoming problems that the SPS, LTC and MTC with their large training sessions will face at the Joshua Tree group campgrounds. It appears that there will be no exceptions to going through Ticketron once that system begins operations.

Those people with the above groups who might be affected should follow the instructions for their trip now shown in the schedule but send their save early to the listed leader so he can contact them early if that is necessary.

Campgrounds affected by this action will be the GROUP sites at Sheep Pass, Indian Cove and Cottonwood. Also the group and family camp sites at Black Rock. Reservations may be applied for no earlier than 60 days before the intended date of use and will cost \$13 per site (which might handle up to 40 or more persons). Contact your usual Ticketron outlet for reservations or you might be able to get through to the Ticketron telephone reservation line at 213/641 8321. With the last I believe you are able to use a credit card rather than the cash only procedure at the usual Ticketron outlets.

Individual and family campsites at the following campgrounds will not be affected Superintendent Anderson stated and will continue to be available on a first-come basis. These include the sites at Indian Cove, Hidden Valley, Jumbo Rocks and Cotton Wood Springs. ---Ron Jones

Popcorn: A flash in the pan

Euthenasia: They sure have a lot of them.

Parasites: The better to see with.

Despair: Replacement for a flat.

Acquire: A singing group.

Microwave: Too small for surfing.

King-size bed: A lotta bunk.

Condescending: A prisoner rappelling down the wall.

A Guru went to the dentist to have some work done.

Dentist: "Do you want me to give you a shot of Novocaine?"

Guru: "Ah, no, I transcend dental medication".

TRIPLE DIVIDE/KAWEAH CLIMBERS CAMP, Van Dalsem/Dykeman, Aug 18-26, 84  
Got a permit for 20, but only 10 wanted the peaks badly enough to take a week's vacation. Murphy, Weiss, Secor, Gygax, R. Hudson, Marta Solman, & newcomers Bill Oliver & Scott Sullivan joined the leaders over Glacier Pass, whereupon we flipped a coin & went Black Rock Pass rather than Hands-n-Knees. Halfway up Black Rock, the heavens opened up & punished us with torrential rain, hail, and a huge mud/rock slide. Three of us even pitched a tent in the trail to get out of the wet. R.J. & Scott humped it clear to the Big Arroyo; the rest of us dragged into camp at Little 5. On day 2 Bill & Marta hiked out with various foot problems while the rest of us hiked to a bench just north of Lake 10.4K', tented, then bagged Stewart from the SE (the 12205 W summit, listed, registered, and named, not the 12240+ E summit). On day 3, we packed up to Lion Rock Pass (the W gap, closest to Lion Rock) & climbed Lion Rock from the E. Jim & Ron circled around to the left & found a 4th cl rt from the S, while the rest of us looked at the first NE facing snow chute & went up the rock rib next to it. Touch of 4th; some took a belay. On the way down, we found the best way from the E.: Take the 2nd NE facing snow chute; it's cl 2 with a bit o 3rd on the summit. We then packed down to camp near the outlet of Lake 11,120+, while R.J. left for Kern Point & Picket Guard via Pants Pass. Ron & Jim found a chute up the SW face of Triple D & got to the summit quickly, but couldn't find the chute going down & traversed W. The other 5 went to the saddle between Lion L. & Cloud Canyon & then ran the unending 3rd class ridge to T.D. We took the direct SW chute down a ways, went SE into the next chute, which went (everyone was toomacho to ask for the rope on the Cl 4+ downclimb crux, which Dave led blind).

On day 4 Scott rested while 6 left at 6 AM for Glacier Ridge & Whaleback. We contoured NW above Cloud Canyon & turned the rib extending E from G in Ridge at about 10,900 & placed a new register & container at the base of the nice chicken-headed boulder-practice summit block (Vote was 3-3 on placing the can on the block; leader broke tie. Two took a belay, 4 did without. Lunch in Cloud Canyon, then angled up through some stunted trees to top out on the Whaleback Ridge at about the "e" in Whaleback. Then a lengthy, Cl 3-4 ridge run with some ventilation that reminded me of Deva's Crag #1. We eventually dropped a bit on the east side, contoured N some more & found an easy cl 3 chute with cl 2 cakewalk to summit. Placed 2nd new container. Rained, lightning. Lichened rocks greasy. More 4th Cl on return. Would have been far easier & just as fast to go down Cloud Canyon, up Colby Canyon & do it from the SE, except for a very small patty that can move quickly, unroped on 4th cl. Stragglers, incl leader, back to camp 8 PM after 14 hr day.

Day 5 we packed back through Nine Lake Basin to the east of Eagle Scout, bagged it (best to head for the saddle just S of it, then R), then camped near the old cabin in the Big Arroyo near the trail junctions. Most had 6 peaks now. R.J. rejoined us with tales of no register on P.G (or was it K.P?) & an old tobacco can on the other. Sure, R.J.

Day 6 the party broke up. Ron, Dave, Mary, & Don did Black Kaweah via the usual chute on the SW face. Ice axe, crampons not needed. They met Lloyd Brown & Vicky Hoover on the route! R.J., Jim, & Scott did Lippincott. Then Jim, Scott, & Dale packed up to Little Five Lakes & Dale & Jim did Eisen. Use trail, blocked by branches, goes off main trail just N of stream draining Lake 10410. Follow this use trail up to Lake 10410, take S shore, then N side of creek & benches past pond ESE of Eisen into cirque below peak. Up left of waterstained headwall & slant up to ridge. Follow N to peak. SW peak is true summit. Bit of Cl 3.

Day 7 Scott & R.J. went out over Black Rock & encountered Edna Erspamer, Ron Young, Bob Meador, & Bill Faulkner & Jim Throgmorton going in. Dale & Jim went out Hands&Knees & Jim got Sawtooth (New register July 4th in coffee can; ton o' names: recommends we stop trying to maintain register there.) Dave, Mary, & Don did Red Kaweah, then Dave did Lippincott while Mary & Don traversed high to get Big Kaweah. (MARY GYGAX FINALLY GOT HER SENIOR EMBLEM!).

Day 8 Jim got Needham, Ron, Mary & Don got Lippincott, Dave says he got Eisen, but no register (?). Day 9 Ron, Mary & Don got Vandever & Dave got Florence, while Jim bagged the showers in Silver City. No points for Hot Springs Emblem. Several got 11 peaks, & most cleaned out the area - until the 2nd time around.  
-Dale

BREWER, N. GUARD, S. GUARD, Sep 7-8-9 1984 Van Dalsem & Rohn  
I needed South & Norm needed North and South & friends needed Brewer, so-  
Day 1 we packed the 5K' up Bubbs & Sphinx Creeks to Lake 10,000+. Good sense told me to go a lake or two higher, but idyllic weather and legal firewood were strong magnets, so we pitched camp at 2 PM and had a very long happy hour. We were off next AM at 0630, over 12k\* saddle E of pt 12393, over the next ridge, (should have dropped down & gone around it) & up the cirque between N.G. & Brewer. Up the right chute, over into the central chute, right 80' below summit, the one tough 3rd cl move onto the arrete, N to summit, do the block, & off by 11:15. Down the center chute & the crack move, lunch in the cirque, up Brewer's N. face, solid cl 2 R of the snow, signed in, ran scree down S side, 3 PM. Water at upper pond, angle up slabs to S.G (Read some Echo horror stories about the Brewer-S.G. ridge & it didn't look too swift, besides we were thirsty!). Flogged two laggards up the peak; last sign-in at 5PM+. The sun set shortly after we went back through 12k' saddle. Endless talus hopping in Nike Lava Domes & headlamp is no fun, but we found camp at 10 & the 4 older members of the group built a fire and had a happy hour until 11+. Those under 49 crashed; but all 8 had bagged all 3 peaks that day and about 7100 gain & loss over some rugged stuff, and the rope stayed coiled. Day 3 featured a 9 to 2 hikeout, showers and beer, din-din at the Visalia Sizzler and a decent hour home.

The only way to bag these 3 is to go in on day 1, get the peaks on day 2, out & home on day 3 - but camp at Lake 10520 (nice sites!), and leave at 5:15AM! Marta Solman, Don Weiss (15th emblem peak!), John Leonard, Kathy Price, and strong, agile newcomers Bob Richards & Lisa Freundlich joined the leaders. -Dale

## Crime link studied

INYO COUNTY—Two suspects in the burglaries of trailhead burglaries reported recently in Mono County may be tied to some 30 other similar burglaries which have occurred in Inyo County during the last two years.

That's what Inyo Detective Dennis Gray said after the arrest of two men in Mono County last week. Gray has recently returned from Chico, Ca., where he joined deputies from several other counties in serving search warrants on a ranch where Gerry Gibson and Ernest Glenn had lived.

Gibson and Glenn were arrested by Mono County Deputies and charged with burglary in connection with numerous trailhead thefts in which they allegedly broke into unoccupied cars left by backpackers. Now Gray says evidence indicates that the two suspects may have been involved in some 30 trailhead head theft cases in Inyo County, some of them dating back as far as 1983.

Gray stated that they are prime suspects in numerous break-ins at Shephard and Symes Creek, some of which happened over the Labor Day weekend. Gray said fingerprints were taken at the scene of those burglaries and they are still being processed at a state lab to see if they match those of the suspects now at Mono County Jail. Gray said many other counties are standing in line with possible cases against the two suspects, among them Tuolumne, Siskiyou, Alpine, Plumas and Butte Counties.

The adjacent article appeared in the "Inyo Register" dated 10/3/84. Yes, they do catch some but this is not the first case of thieves making their living by breaking into cars at backpackers' trailheads nor will it be the last. Following precautions are recommended:

1. Wear only your oldest clothes for the car, and leave them scattered about rather than in a duffle bag.
2. Leave everything possible at home and hide things of any value in a cache a considerable distance from the roadhead. This includes ice box, flashlight, jumper cables, etc.
3. Most important of all, PUT AN ID NUMBER ON EVERYTHING! Example: CA-DL followed by your driver's license number. (Or use your Social Security number). The time spent doing this is far less than the time you will spend trying to replace lost items even if they are covered by insurance. (Car trunks are not safe.)
4. If the problem occurs again next summer, perhaps the SPS could consider working with the Inyo County Sheriff to cover the more isolated roadheads. One weekend might do it.

Barbara Lilley



RITTER, BANNER, CLYDE. MINARET, Sep 22-24, '84, Dale Van Dalsem, Elden Hughes  
24 folks wrote & rambled on about all the bumps they'd bagged, so I  
quoted Roper "This is a hazardous route and has claimed many lives" (re-  
ferring to Ritter from the R/B saddle). & wrote "Strongly recommended: Hard-  
hat (rockfall guaranteed on Ritter ascent and on Clyde Minaret)". To  
further reduce the headcount: "Up at 5; off at 6, Sun and Mon". Originally  
planned on Banner day 1 from the saddle, Ritter day 2 from the SE, C.M day 3.  
Got lazy; changed mind: Nydiver camp on day 1, Banner then Ritter from the  
saddle day 2, exit SE. , CM day 3.

My phone recorder started lighting up like R2D2; 15 people cancelled  
and a Craig Schrager was a no-phone no-show & goes on my permanent wait list.  
We met at 7:30 in Agnew Meadows, pried open the hood of Vicky & Fran Hoover's  
ancient VW Bug so they could get sleeping bags out - they'd sat in the car &  
shivered all night. We picked up wood just above Lake Ediza (no fires) and  
lugged it up to Nydiver Lakes & set up camp (fires allowed; no wood) about  
2 PM. An 8-person group from the SF Bay Area met us there and the 16 of us  
had a long happy hour, but it was windy & the weather worsened.

Sunday we were off about 7 in very uncertain weather, very windy, with  
big black clouds scudding around. A bit of gallows humor about being next  
year's BMTC movie. A whiteout socked in just above the lower snowfield &  
the upper snowfield we were on ended at a headwall. Knowing we were to the  
left of the right snowfield leading to the saddle, I led everyone on a trav-  
erse right for some time. It cleared slightly for a moment & we were looking  
down into Garnet Lake! Wrong! We were on the NE shoulder of Banner. After  
a traverse back to the left we found another snow field, went up it & hit  
another blank wall. Left some more; finally it cleared enough to spot the  
real snowfield. By this time (it was 9:30 & I'd blown an hour & a half  
floundering about in whiteout), the Hoover ladies, recognizing gross incom-  
petence, checked out, accompanied by a worried newcomer. Elden, bothered  
by altitude & avoirdupois, faded into a speck below as four of us cramponed  
up to the saddle, turned right, & found the Banner register at 11 AM, signed  
in, tried to follow another one of Roper's hopeless inept descriptions of the  
route up Ritter, gave it up & went the same way I went 12 or 13 years ago:  
Meanwhile, Dick Smith, having made Banner, checked out at the saddle, leaving  
Dale, J.C. Eckert, and Bob Richards as the only 3 out of 24 to attempt Ritter.  
Up the snow tongue halfway, went right on bench into gully to right, up to  
ridgeline, left to summit, first going to the right of the NW arret, then left  
across the N face just below the summit block up a cl 3 ramp to the NE arret,  
R to summit. 1:30 PM. Back to camp at Nydiver: 3:40 P.M.

Day 3 Dale, Elden, J.C. & Bob dropped out packs near the use trail up  
from Ediza & went to Cecile Lake. 10 AM. before we started from the lake.  
We opted for Starr's Route, up the Right gully on the ENE face. However, we  
got into the next gully left & it looked like it would go, so--- it was  
high Cl 3 for several hundred ft, then came the one technical pitch. I went  
up to my left without the rope & it got increasingly thin, perhaps 5.3 &  
very exposed & rotten rock. Backed down. J.C. went up the middle & painted  
himself into a corner. I took the rope up to him & sent a beaner up & he  
clipped into a Thank God fixed pin & completed about a 5.6 move as Elden be-  
layed. I cheated on the fixed pin & went on ahead to scout as J.C. belayed  
Elden up. Next pitch was Cl 4; the rest Cl 3 all the way to the top. This,  
the central gully, tops out 60 ft from the summit block, just left of the  
fresh air step-around move w/ undercling which we found on the way down as  
we found the real Starr's Route on the way down. Bob Richards' achilles  
tendon was strained (he'd danced up the snow field to the saddle to day before  
& did some front-pointing. Never front-point until it nears 55°. He checked  
out before the crux). 3 of us signed in & read the fun register: Last month  
entry by Randy Vogel: "What do you get when you cross a pig with a climber?"  
Ans.: "Nothing. Even a pig will draw the line at certain activities"  
7PM to Ediza, 10PM to cars, 5AM+ home. -Dale

Nine of the ten listed participants met at 7:30 Sat am at the Rock Creek trailhead, accompanied by an additional pair on a separate permit. We hiked in to Treasure Lakes, stopping along the way to pick up some firewood. We stopped briefly at the campsite to drop our packs, and started up the hill towards Mills. At the lunch stop, one climber turned back after feeling the altitude. Two more backed off on a steep snow tongue beneath the approach couloir. Eight climbers scrambled up the slip-and-slide couloir, filled with loose talus and scree, and were on top by 3:30. All were back to camp by 6:15 to commence the magnificent shih-kabob barbeque and Cabernet Sauvignon tasting. After numerous rounds of hors d'oeuvres, wine, pork, lamb, and beef courses we retired in ecstasy.

Sunday we made a short a crampon crossing of the glacier, and approached Abbott via the west buttress route. Some routefinding skill was required to keep the group out of 4th class, but we managed to put seven on top by 12:30 without the use of a rope. We returned by the NW ridge, and were breaking camp at 3:30.

Back to the cars by 5:30 pm, were were greeted with fine champagne, a cooler of beer and a general continuation of the delightful festivities that marked the weekend as a great success.

Randy Danta - Aug 84

WHORL, TWIN AND VIRGINIA

SEPTEMBER 1984

MARIS VALKASS

Eleven participants met at 7 am in Mono Village. Some had breakfast at the campground restaurant which opens at 6:30, while others ate elsewhere. We left the cars at 7:30 and were over the pass and setting up camp by noon. The hike up was pleasant and the weather was good.

After eating lunch we started for Whorl. We followed the directions of several write-ups which Norm Rohn provided, by going south and past the middle summit. Then up to the right in the first large gully which heads for the saddle. About 3/4 of the way up, start crossing to the right over two smaller gullies until you see a large chock stone which blocks the way up the gully. Climb around it. This is the 4th class section. Continue past it to the right to the base of a false summit. You go to the left on a ledge, through a narrow corridor, and then scramble up to the summit. It is a wonderful climb, lot of fun, and it is not too difficult. All but two persons reached the summit. We were back at camp before dark. We enjoyed a pleasant happy hour where Don Weiss treated us with his super Guacamoli, and retired to our tents.

Next morning we left at 6:00 for Twin Peaks. We climbed easily by way of one of the large couloirs on the northwest side. Eight started, and eight reached the summit. Don Weiss already had Virginia, so he elected to start for home. The remaining seven continued on the ridge all the way to Virginia. We were back in camp by noon. After eating lunch and breaking camp, we returned to the cars by 6:00 pm.

Participants:	Dale Van Dalsem	Marta Solman	Tom Scott
	Sue Wyman	Vic Hanney	Don Weiss
	Grahm Breakewell	Dolores Holladay	Randy Randall
	Norm Rohn	Maris Valkass	

Thank you Dale for assisting me and all others for being there and making this an enjoyable trip.



We followed a deer on the last few turns of the Whitney Portals Road, but the deer escaped through the cliffs, and eventually we found a level spot to sleep before meeting the group Saturday morning.

Our group, hiking alone on the old Meyson Lakes trail (now in a state of disrepair but very serviceable), steadily made its way up canyon. This was a strong, but not overpowering group, many veterans, a few novices, all very determined. For example, how many would continue on when their car quits in Mojave? Don Croley and Rich Henke did, they hitchhiked to the roadhead! What if you were sick Friday nite? Mary Gygax was, so she drove up alone early Saturday morning. However, we never received an excuse from our one noshow. He probably didn't have one.

Some time around mid-day we settled upon a nicely wooded campsite situated near to several questionable, but apparently OK water sources; the sliding scree route to Lone Pine Pk.; and a view of our objectives. Quickly several discussion groups formed (did the route go 5.8 or 5.9 seemed to be the topic in one group), a Lone Pine Pk. blitz group departed, and rain clouds dropped a few samples. Our campfire was imaginary, but Mary lead an entertaining discussion.

Old ice and snow blocked a direct ascent to the LeConte-Mallory plateau area, but we were able to ascend very loose and rocky adjacent slopes. On the plateau, the group was divided, and each headed for a peak. On LeConte, we found the shaded slopes icy with frost, but carefully traversed the ledge and ascended the NE face route. This route is very exposed 3rd and possibly 4th class right to the summit. However, by continuing further out the ledge, one reaches the east arete route which has less exposed climbing, and is a much better down route. Reaching the summit after our exhilarating climb, we discovered storm clouds moving in quickly from the south. We carefully descended the arete and the Mallory group was at the ledge waiting their turn. Those who wanted Mallory were sent on their way, and with clouds now circling LeConte, another quick climb was made via the East Arete. Hail started falling as we neared the peak's base, and once out on the plateau, the ground was soon white. Heavy hail and rain fell all the way to camp, and Leak-tex again earned its name.

As we departed camp for the Portals, the clouds parted and there stood LeConte, now a white sentinel on the Crest. Our timing was just perfect.

MG



On the Mt. Goddard quad, three glaciers are shown lying north of the crest that runs between Thompson and Gilbert. On the left side of the middle glacier there is a gully which can be seen from below to sweep upward unbroken to the crest. Although this gully is not described as a route in the Climber's Guide, Larry and I decided to try it as an alternative to the regular 3rd class route up Thompson.

Saturday, we hiked from South Lake to a small lake in the valley northeast of Gilbert, where we set up camp. Sunday, we hiked over a seemingly endless glacial moraine to the bottom of the middle glacier and then cramponed up to just below the bergschrund. Not knowing what to expect, we roped up, climbed to the 'schrund, passed it to the right over a snowbridge, then crossed the gully and began climbing on its left side. Four 165' pitches of 4th class hard snow with ice patches followed. We did these using moving belays but with softer snow they could go unroped - the angle here varied from 45 to 60 degrees. The fifth and final pitch proved to be low 5th class, owing to an angle of about 70 degrees and the presence of more ice than hard snow. For this pitch we placed protection and used a fixed belay.

After 4 hours of enjoyable climbing, we reached the crest plateau about 0.5 miles southeast of Thompson. Shortly after our arrival we were greeted with foul weather in the form of sleet and snow flurries, mixed with an occasional thunderclap. These meteorological phenomena enlivened our descent, which, being entirely exploratory in nature, involved dropping off the southeast side of the plateau on 3rd-4th class ledges, crossing the talus-filled valley below, then climbing over the notch (a 5.7 climb followed by an 80' rappel) between the plateau and Gilbert, and hence back to camp.

A vastly more reasonable 3rd class descent can be made by dropping down to the east from the notch on Thompson Ridge, after first crossing the summit of Thompson.

PRIVATE CLIMB - MT. LANGLEY

SEPT. 9-10, 1984

Dick Farrar

Having been rained out of Langley on two Sierra Club scheduled trips in the month of July (1973 with the late Paul Kellow, and 1984 with J.C. Eckert), I obtained a Sunday-Monday permit for September 9-10 for myself and Bob Bunting. Since I had done Cirque in 1973, the approach was to be up the Old Army Pass, which is no longer maintained, but which is somewhat closer to Langley.

The first day we went up the Cottonwood Lakes Trail, following the signs to New Army Pass. We left the trail midway between Cottonwood Lakes 1 and 2, crossing marshy ground to pick up the trail that went up the east side of Lake No. 3. An excellent tree-sheltered campsite was found at the north edge of the lake. That afternoon we scouted Old Army Pass by continuing up the trail that goes between Lakes 4 and 5. The trail is easy to follow proceeding around the north side of Lake 4 and going up the steep canyon to Army Pass, staying well to the left of the snow and ice. From Lake 4 it took less than half an hour. After reaching the pass (at 12,000) we then proceeded south up the broad slope to New Army Pass (12,385) to gain good views of the route up Langley.

The next day we had a leisurely start at 8:30 a.m. with clear blue skies. Heading up to a rock outcropping at a magnetic compass bearing of 345 degrees from the pass, we encountered a faint trail heading toward Langley. We followed this all the way to a small saddle just southeast of Langley. From here there was about a 700 ft. Class 2-3 rock climb up to the Langley Plateau, where the high point was about 100 yards west. The climb had taken about 3-1/2 hours. The benchmark was easy to find, but the register was partly hidden in a shelf-like crevice directly under the benchmark. Unfortunately, Whitney was obscured by black clouds and mists heading our way. After about 35 minutes at the summit we hightailed it back. At the first ridge above the pass we had a late lunch and were hit by light hail. Arriving at our camp at 3:15, we were hit by heavy rain. We left at 4:00 p.m. during a letup and arrived at the car at 6:30, having been rained on a good part of the way. Going by way of New Army Pass from camps at Long or High Lakes would not have been too much longer, but would have entailed about 800 feet more of total gain.

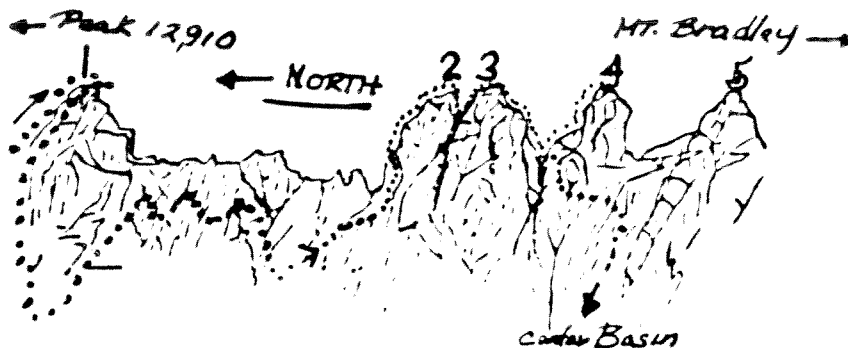
CENTER

BASIN

CRAGS

TRAVERSE - Sept. 1, 1984

Dick Beach



Sketch 26 The Center Basin Crags from the Southwest - Climbers Guide

Few climbers venture to these obscure crags due to their remoteness. Although the crags can be seen from Hwy. 395, a one day approach has always been a thought to have pondered. My idea was to go in light and traverse the crags from Peak 12910 which is just south of University Peak, which would enable us to start with crag 1 and go south on ridge toward Mt. Bradley - some years earlier I had traversed from Mt. Keith to Mt. Bradley and had noted these fine pinnacles.

Once again the climbers guide was dealing with one or two ascents with 1940's description and with an area that was very remote to go into to climb. The guide did present a picture of crags 1-5 but grading of crags has much to be desired as I soon found out.

Leaving Onion Valley at 4:50 AM with old climbing friend Bob Good, we started up the Robinson Lake trail - we passed Robinson and soon ascended ridge just south of Independence Peak. Morning was just breaking with a brisk clarity in the air. It looked as if we would have a beautiful day. Once getting to the ridge Bob picked up a beautiful 3 1/2" spear head, probably some lone indian hunting for Bighorn many years ago. I once found a horn on Independence peak.

The ridge went easy but covered 2 miles of small ups and downs. By 8:00 AM we reached Peak 12910, the true beginning of the traverse.

Having traversed the Kearsarge Pinnacle Ridge, I was able to make comparisons in regards to rock type. Center Basin Crags were more decomposed. Rock areas looser and more unstable - Kearsarge has crud but for the most part is fine and clean.

There was a certain element of excitement as we started down the ridge to Crag 1 which still was some ways off. We found many interesting pinnacles 3 and 4 class - 5 or 6 in all. The ridge is not easy but one can traverse with some smoothness by favoring the west side. It seemed to take forever to reach Crag 1 - this is a very formable rock. Climbers Guide had stated Brower had done it from south Class 5 - this was very high class 5, with many pitches. To our delight we found a new route, 4th class up on the North - unfortunately after looking down on Brower's approach, a definite no-go, we descended the way we came and had to drop 400 ft., then regain the ridge for Crag 2.

Very little is said about Crag 2. Our whole approach was the reverse of Brower's ascents. This meant if we saw something interesting from the North we should give it a try. That we did!!

Crag 2 has an imposing North Face with a beautiful crack leading to the summit. Practically all the crags deal with 2-3 pitches, Crags 2-4 were all highly technique requiring chocks, pine (small wedges and angl) and many slings (4-6). I would grade Crag 2 at 5.6 with an off rappel to the South Notch of Crag 2-3 - one would not want to come down that crack we ascended.

Once at Crag 3 the notch is tiny and steep. It took one good lead of 5.8 with high angle and much exposer to gain the summit of 3. Crag 3 is tough from North or South. There are no approaches East or West. Back then I truly feel Class 5 was given to anything above Class 4, so was the case here. Looking down to the Notch between Crag 3 and 4 it looked just as difficult, requiring a 50 ft. rappel over a 5.6 wall.

Between Crags 3-4, the Climbers Guide helps in getting off the ridge just south of Crag 4. Between Crags 4 and 5 a large scree slope leads to Center Basin. The view from Crag 3 over 4 leaves you with the thought "maybe we should pass on this one". But once at the Notch, route is a good 5.6 with some big loose flakes involving 2 pitches. At one point I had to climb a 5 foot rock leaning away from the ridge, keep from pushing it over while standing atop of it. It is classic that after all these years it still remains balanced.

By the time it was 5:00 PM at the Notch and by the time I reached the summit of Crag 4 it was 6:30 PM. Daylight was leaving us so Bob stayed at the Notch and I used one 60 foot rappel and removed 2 pins in descent. Crag 4 is probably the most spectacular in steepness. Crag 5 is a class 2 scramble.

Now came the fun part. We just barely made it down to Center Basin before dark. We had spent 12 hours of climbing on the Traverse, our choice was either climb back up and over into Robinson Lake Basin or out via Kearsarge Pass. The security of a good trail at night has a lot of advantages even though our mileage would be incredibly longer. This was no stroll coming out. It took us 5 hours to reach Kearsarge Pass at a lovely 1:00 AM. Finally with both flashlights low we arrived at Onion Valley at 5:15 AM. We did beat the sunrise to Bishop but needles to say we were BEAT.

I had placed two small registers, one on Crag 1 and the other on Crag 3. Crags 2 and 4 had none although we found many old slings on Crag 4, the others looked as if they climbed in many years. After 23 hours of hiking and 28 miles, this one day exertion had taken a little longer than expected.

The climb took 10 hours longer than anticipated - finding routes and avoiding loose crud seemed to be the biggest problem. Once descending into Center Basin if one had daylight and energy to climb 2,500 ft. back over the crest just west of Peak 12,910 via a long scree slope your exit would be much less miles (originally was my plan). Maybe next time!!

P.S. Don't tell your wife and friends that you'd be back at 6:00 PM.

When the marriage councillor talked about fidelity, the TV repair man thought he meant two tweeters and a woofer.

He: "I'm really stuck on you".

Q: When is a door not a door?

She: "The feeling is mussilage".

A: When it's ajar.

Q: Why does the bee buzz?

A: You'd buzz too if somebody stole your honey and neckter.

Thought for the day: Free love discourages private enterprize.

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