

# The Sierra



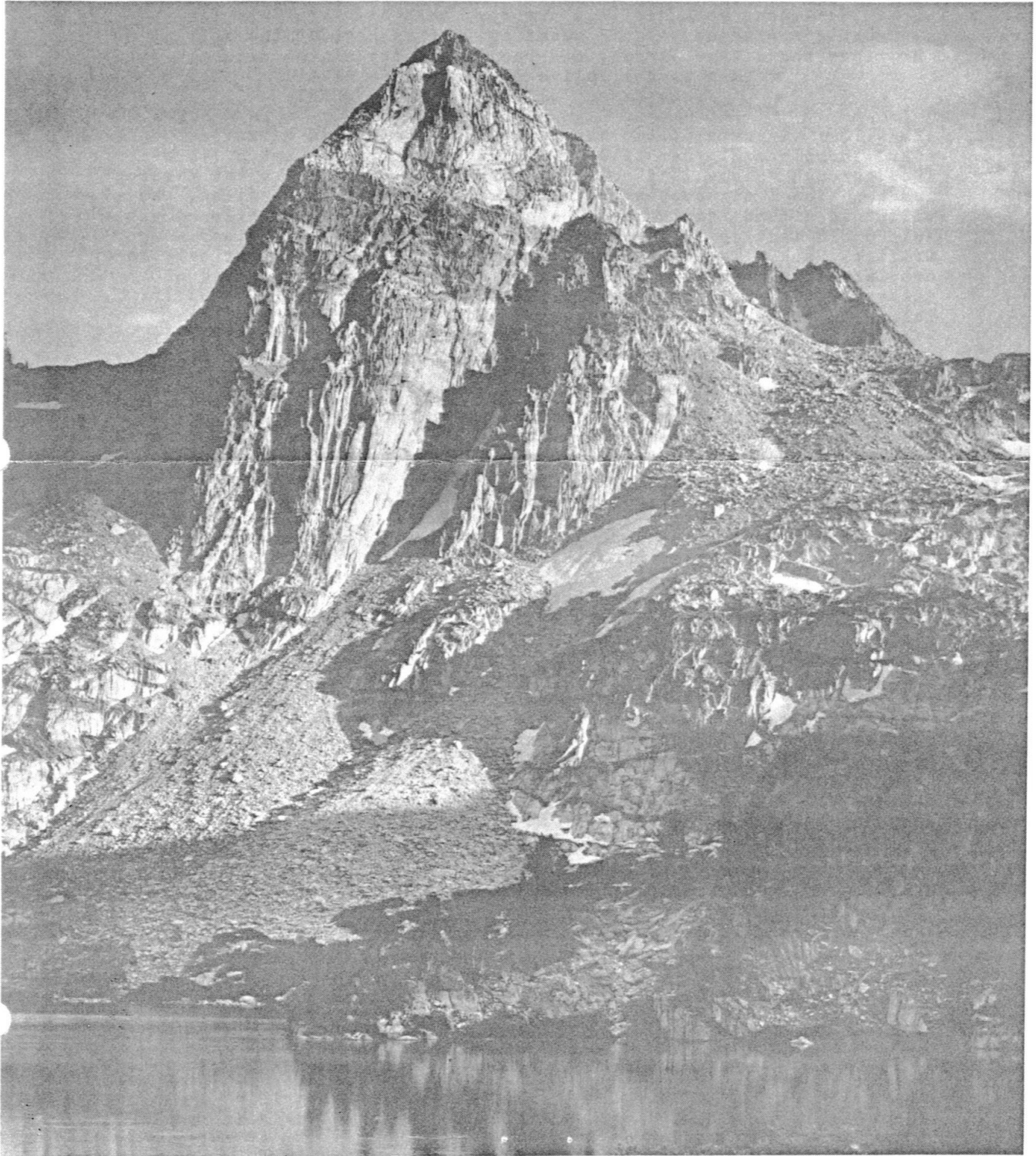
# ECHO

VOLUME 31

MAY - JUN

1987

NO. 3



CHAIRMAN'S COLUMN

"Climbing needs no justification,  
no more than watching a sunrise, or listening to a great symphony,  
or falling in love.

A man climbs because he needs to climb;  
because that is the way he is made.

Rock and ice and wind and the great blue canopy of the sky  
are not all that he finds on the mountain-tops.

He discovers things about his own body and mind  
that he has almost forgotten in

the day to day, year to year routine of living.

He learns what his legs are for, what his lungs are for,  
what the wise men of old meant by 'refreshment of the spirit'.

He finds the divine harmony and the simplicity of the natural world,  
and himself alive in it, a part of it."

James Ramsey Ullman - HIGH CONQUEST

ATTENTION: Barbara Lilley has donated to the Sierra Peaks Section a nearly complete 21 year file of SIERRA ECHOS from Volume 8 #1, January 1964 through Volume 28 #7 of December 1984. There are a few missing issues which I can supplement with zerox copies from my files. We will hold a fund raising auction of the complete Lilley file at our July 8 SPS meeting at the usual place, the Ranger Auditorium in Griffith Park. The donation will not be sold in pieces but only as a complete file. Mail-in bids will be accepted. Send your bid or instruction to me, Ron Jones, 13 Meadowsweet Way, Irvine CA 92715. Telephone bids will not be accepted and the buyer will pay any necessary postage. Returns from the winning bid will go directly into the SPS treasury. This may be your only chance to get many hard-to-find issues of early ECHOS.

Last month I recognized Gerry Holleman for his magnificent work in keeping up the SPS membership list. I should have reached further back in time and recognized a former SPS Chair, Diana Dee, for setting up our membership list on computer and also to Ron Bartell, who is responsible for much of the format and work on the list.

One last researching of that list yields the facts that emblem holder and former Chair, Miles Brubacher, now in Kailua Hawaii, lives the farthest west of any member (not counting Jay Suehiro who lives in Japan); Ross Yates lives the farthest east in Lexington Massachusetts; former Chair and senior emblem holder, Rick Jali, lives the farthest north in Mukilteo Washington; and Chuck Wild lives the farthest south in San Diego California.

The SPS Management Committee recently approved a new unofficial and "honorary" class of membership, the Sustaining Member. A Sustaining membership costs \$20 annually, receives the benefits of a regular member and will be specially recognized in the ECHO. Our SPS treasury is at a low level this year and your Committee is looking for ways for members who have benefited from their past membership, and who are able, to help their Section out at a time of need.

Thanks, *Ron*

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VOLUME 31-3 PEAK INDEX (1987)

Arrow	Feather	Marion	Ruby Mtns.	Thunder
Banner	Gabb	North	Ruskin	White Cloud
Brewer	Goodale	North Guard	Sawtooth Mtns.	Mtns.
Cardinal	Hale	Notch	Sphinx Crest	Young
Cathedral	Hilgard	Pyramid	South Guard	
Conness	Julius Caesar	Recess	Striped	
E. Humbolt Mtns.	Lone Pine	Ritter	St. Helens	

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Photo Credit: John Reed submitted this photo of Painted Lady taken from Rae Lakes for our enjoyment. Thank you, John!

MEMBERSHIP REPORT

NEW EMBLEM HOLDER

# 474 J. Holshuh

NEW MEMBERS

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SPS SUMMER SCHEDULE CHANGES AND NOTICES

Original Dates	Revised Dates
Disappointment, Thumb, Norman Clyde, Jul 3-6	Jun 27-30
Cirque Pk, Jul 25-26	Aug 8-9
Boyce, Merriam, Aug 8-9	Aug 15-16
Observation Pk, Aug 14-17 - Hubbard, Kline	Aug 13-16 - Kline, Hubbard
Mt. Humphreys, Sep 5-7	Sep 11-13

Disappointment, Thumb, Clyde trip scheduled July 3-6 is now June 27-30.  
Trip is full; 18 qual. applicants by March; taking 12. Taking a few names on  
wait list: SPS members and passed M rock or RCS safety test only - Dale

JULY 18/19 MT. MUAH LIST FINISHER CLIMB AND PARTY

Dave Dykeman plans to finish the SPS list July 18 with a DAY-HIKE climb of Mt. Muah. Come along for a moderate climb and a party. SASE to Dave.

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WINTER SCHEDULE NOTICE

Leaders! Send Norm Rohn, SPS Safety Chairman, your trip write-ups for the Winter Schedule, November 1987 - February 1988, by June 30.

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SPS PROGRAM FOR JULY

July 8 Meeting: "Himalyan Rescue Association Clinic": JOY FAGERT will discuss her experiences in helping Westerners and Nepalese at the clinic in Manang and her climbs of Pisang and Chulu West. Refreshments by Carolyn West. Griffith Park Auditorium, 7:30 p.m.

# ANNIVERSARY ECHO UPDATE

## MOUNTAIN RECORDS

Rob Roy McDonald

Dale Van Dalsem has submitted the following addendum to the article on mountain records in the Anniversary Echo:

### MOST PEOPLE ON AN EMBLEM PEAK DURING ONE TRIP:

Mt. Goddard	18	9/ 2/79	Dale Van Dalsem/Jim Murphy
Split Mountain	18	9/17/78	Dale Van Dalsem/Bill Grey
Mt. Clarence King	13*	6/24/79	Dale Van Dalsem/Jim Murphy
Mt. Darwin	13	7/11/81	Fred Camphausen
North Palisade	13	5/27/79	Dale Van Dalsem/Chuck Stein

\*10 on the summit block at one time. Now that's cozy!

### MOST PEOPLE ON A MOUNTAINEER'S PEAK DURING ONE TRIP

Bear Creek Spire	20	7/23/78	Dale Van Dalsem/Jon Hardt
Mt Clark	19	7/ 1/79	Dale Van Dalsem/Norm Rohn
Mt. Starr King	16	7/ 3/79	Dale Van Dalsem/Norm Rohn

As Duane McRuer stated on pg. 36 of the Anniversary Echo, the all-time record was set when Dick Jali led 124 up Smith and Crag in April of 1964.

My thanks to Dale for submitting these statistics on climbs before 1982. Does anyone else recall any?

## MOUNTAIN RECORDS

Rob Roy McDonald

Cuno Ranschau has submitted the following addendum to the article on mountain records in the Anniversary Echo:

### MOST PEOPLE ON A MOUNTAINEER'S PEAK DURING ONE TRIP:

Bear Creek Spire	25	9/29/74	Cuno Ranschau/Diana Dee
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The article in the Anniversary Echo covered the period 1982-1986 because complete records are not available for earlier years. Thanks, Cuno, for the info. Any other inputs will be added to the data base.

There are several peaks for which no information is currently available regarding the condition of the summit register. These are:

Adams Peak	Disaster Peak	Mt Elwell
Half Dome	Leavitt Peak	Pilot Knob #1
Rodgers Peak	Sierra Buttes	Tunnabora Peak
Mt Warren		

Please let me know if you have any knowledge of the register condition on any of these peaks, now or from a future trip; in writing, please. In fact, I welcome info on any peaks at any time because conditions can change abruptly!

## COVER PHOTO CORRECTION

The picture on the cover of ECHO 29-1 has been mislabeled as Marion Peak. The photo is actually of Muriel Peak (12,942'), taken from the north, probably from Muriel Lake.

## WHO REALLY HAS THE OLDEST KELTY?

(A response to George Toby's note in the 30th Anniversary issue of the Echo).

George and I can argue about "continuous service", but my Kelty is older than his.

I bought my Kelty in 1959; also out of Kelty's little old garage, where he fitted my Kelty for me personally. It was then out every summer; mostly in the Sierra, but also in the Oregon Cascades and on Mt. Rainier. It went to the Volcanoes in Mexico and to the Andes in Peru. It didn't go with me to Malaysia, but it was back in the Sierra after my return, and then off to Iran where it went on climbing and skiing trips, and through Teheran bus stations at odd hours in the morning. Now it sometimes still gets out in the Washington Cascades and Olympics (I also have a much lighter, frameless pack I use on most weekend trips), and also goes on ski trips to snowbound ski lodges. Repairs have been made, and parts replaced, but the basic old Kelty is still going strong with no end in sight. I suspect that it secretly still dreams of the Sierra.

Now, who really has the oldest Kelty?

*Rick Jali*

## Northeast Ridge of Lone Pine Peak

July 12, 1986  
Dick Beach

The grand ridges of Lone Pine Peak are some of the nicest in the Owens Valley. Climbing friend, Bob Good, and I chose the northeast one, because of its spectacular rise from the valley floor, only paralleled by the Northeast ridge on Williamson. We decided to ascend from the first switchback on the Whitney Portal Road (6200 feet). This would give us a chance to climb the ridge in its entirety. Traditionally, climbers go via the Meysan Lake trail to Little Meysan area and ascend the ridge via the north slope side to the ridges crest. To our surprise, we found the ridge up to that point most enjoyable, even finding an outstanding trail switch backing up through the sagebrush. This is a new trail from valley floor to Whitney Portal via the south side of the portal but considerably lower than the Meysan Lake's trail. The trail was freshly cleaned with remaining rake marks! We followed the trail for a good 45 minutes before it left the ridge to snake around into the south side of the Portal canyon.

The ridge was typical sandy-Pinon, decomposed granite topping out at low 3rd class. The higher up one gets (within 2,000 feet of Meysan Lake, approach junction), is to favor the south side staying close to the ridge proper. When the large southern talus slope can be seen, a huge prominent boulder in the shape of a large ball comes to view. One does not climb the rock but descends to the north side at a noticable notch which is the junction to north side ledge system. If this spot is missed on the ridge, you will not be able to continue.

Following easy 3rd class steps leads down a large stairway on a one tree lined ledge. This is obvious to see at the notch. The lowest point is 200 feet below the ridge. An easy class two ascent of 1,000 feet is made to the Meysan Lake junction spot on the ridge.

Bruce Knudtson's article (May 18, 1985) covered in detail the main route to the summit. As with anyone reading another's description either deletions or additions can occur. I found a few additions that might be helpful.

We carried a 160 foot rope and assorted hardware, none of which needed to be used. I felt the entire ridge was 4th class, but was rated 5.2 - 5.4 due to exposure rather than availability of handholds. Holds were there everytime one was needed. From a rock encircled bivouac site directly on the ridge, one goes upward to a high point then descends 100 feet to a notch at the base of tower one. Rather than descend down the notch chute - ascend from the top to the north side of the notch for 75 feet, go to top of ridge, cross over to the south side, to the base of tower 2. From tower 2 favor south side up to the base of two very impressive rock slab formation, which looks like a large square rock was removed, leaving a big ramp inbetween, with one slab on each side. An impressive site! The "jam crack dihedral", is encountered at the top of this formation. We found it easily bypassed via class 4 ledges just below.

The entire route is fast moving 3 - 4 class. To our surprise, we saw three hang-gliders who said hello as they traveled northerly up the valley. Tragically, one crashed later that day into Mt. Williamson.

After contouring roughly 300 feet below tower two on the south side via more 3 - 4 class ledges, with the usual ups and downs the notch at base of the summit headwall is reached. This is a good spot to take one's hat off to Warren Harding's direct face route on the summit face. We had figured "home stretch", from this notch. A great ledge system to the northwest is carefully traversed with nice holds, making it go smoothly. This brings one to the large notch face chute system where 3rd class ledges, which seems to last forever, leads to the summit.

We arrived at 4:00 p.m., with a slight storm over the Sierra sprinkling rain and showing off flashes of lightning. After an hour to Meysan Lakes and another two hours to the Portal, a few conclusions became evident after reflecting on our days heating.

## Northeast Ridge of Lone Pine Peak

Interestingly, the first aspect that comes to mind, is not the ridge but, the darn Meysan Lake trail which is sad news in terms of trying to stay on it. I am glad I didn't leave anything at those lakes!

Meeting the ridge via Meysan Lakes trail as compared to the ridge proper, is still a toss up on which would be more preferable. Except for the fact that the complete ridge can be done in its entirety via the valley floor start.

Out of all the ridges from the Owens Valley to the crest I would rank Lone Pine second to Mt. Williamson's northeast ridge, because of its enjoyable coverage of different terrain. The Lone Pine ridge is a 7,000 foot gain from valley floor including very decomposed granite at the lower portion, better rock higher.

The completion of all major Owens Valley floor to crest ridges has taken a span of 25 years to complete. I would classify the following ridges which seem to include a full spectrum of qualities similar to Lone Pine that would be worth noting for anyone interested in making future ascents. The finest ridge being Williamson's Northeast Arete. The worst: North Ridge of Mt. Tom, too many 20 foot up and downs. The biggest grunge, North Ridge of Olancha Peak. Most unusual, Mt. Morgan's Nahavbee Ridge due to its dinosaur spine arete. Most fractured: Pauite Crags to Emerson. Of all these and others, which ridge has a little of each to create the atmosphere of a grand climb? I would recommend Lone Pine's North Arete due to having all the aspects of the other ridges combined.

July 2-6, 1986

Fish Creek

Rohn/Jones

Ron and Norm's Fourth of July trip to Iva Bell Hot Springs was over-subscribed but two cancellations and two no-shows (earning positions on the permanent stand-by list) reduced the party to six. We had a good supper at Berger's Burger in Mammoth and drove down to the Red's Mdw campground for the night. Bears visited us but we were prepared and had no problem.

A leisurely start from the Red's Mdw trailhead parking area took us alternately through forested areas, fern bogs, granite slabs, stream crossings and rocky overviews in the eight miles to where the trail drops down over switchbacks to a bridge on Fish Creek. The bridge came as a relief because a crossing there would have been very difficult and very wet. Five miles farther along we had left Fish Creek and were following Sharktooth Creek. The location of the hot springs was not clear on our maps but we finally found that we had to follow the Fish Creek Trail across Sharktooth (the right fork goes SE to Lost Keys Lakes and Goodale Pass) and up the hill to the north a few hundred yards. Here there were fine campsites and some great hot pools. At least two soaks a day were the rule.

We tried some fishing in the Lost Keys Lakes and in Fish Creek up near Second Crossing. Ron did pretty well in the lakes and I got a few. The creek was just too full of water and only Peter Hearst had fly gear. The other three in our congenial group were Mary Heninger, Jeff Mulligan and Ted Franklin, all experienced backpackers and mountaineers and great company. Noone mustered the ambition to go for Silver Peak or explorations of Devil's Top or Double. After three days of this sedentary celebration of the anniversary of our country's independence we moved our camp to a lovely location a few hundred yards upstream of the Fish Creek bridge on its north side to shorten the long hike out on Sunday. An early start got us over the south-facing switchbacks before the day got too hot and we were soon at the cars and the still-cool beer. A short visit to the Red's Mdw hot springs removed the trail dust and we were headed for Mammoth and home.

July 12-19, 1986

Lake Basin

Rohn/Jones

Our write-up for this trip just didn't attract very many people, but the quality was high. Four turned out to be just right to have a great time.

Ron and I started late from the Valley, stopped for a good dinner at the Basque restaurant two miles W of Rosamond (on the N side of Rosamond Rd) and got to the Taboose Pass roadhead before eleven. The June Lake Mtn Rescue trucks were there so we knew something was afoot. As we packed in the morning some Inyo County sheriffs arrived and we learned that a hang glider had piled himself up and was being evacuated. We reached that activity near the 8000' level. The rescuers had gotten nearly down to the trail and a helo had just arrived. The pilot spent a lot of time looking all the terrain over very carefully and finally decided that he couldn't land. As the resultant long carry to the roadhead began, we resumed our upward trek. I'd almost forgotten what a long haul it is to Taboose, particularly with an eight-day pack load. As Ron and I were struggling along somewhere over 10,000' Doug Mantle (on a two-day trip of his own) came charging past us, fresh as a daisy. The three of us stopped for the night at one of the lakes just east of the pass.

Doug took off early for Striped and Goodale and Ron and I proceeded over the pass and down to the South Fork which we wanted to cross to reach the Muir Trail on its W side. The stream was running high. We continued up the E side looking for a crossing until we spotted Ed Kenney whom, with Rob Roy McDonald, we were meeting at 10,000'. The crossing there on downed trees was easy.

The plan at this point was to cross a shoulder of Ruskin and move down toward Cartridge Pass, allowing Rob Roy and Ed to climb the peak. After climbing up to Lake 10,400' east of Ruskin we got smart and changed the plan. The climbers did the peak from there and we returned to the South Fork to camp near the trail. On day three we moved down the South Fork to the Cartridge Pass Trail through more avalanche damage than Ron or I had seen in many years and up to Lake 10,870' just S of the pass. Ed went for Marjorie in the morning while Ron and I hiked to the Lake Basin through a long snow chute and some steep and badly damaged trail. Fishing was poor and the route so difficult that we decided not to move our camp there.

The next objective of the climbers was Arrow and we'd heard that the Bench Lake fishing was good. After we'd dropped back down to the South Fork, Ed found a great crossing on downed trees. We continued downstream on the S side until we could proceed up the wooded drainage from the small lake at 10,280' SW of Bench Lake. Camp was set about 60' above the W end of Bench Lake and we went to fishing. Everyone caught some and we feasted. Ron taught us Indian fishing by catching five ten inch brookies with his hands.

RR and Ed went for Arrow in the morning and Ed continued on to Pyramid, finding that the combination made a long day. After another day of fishing and loafing we packed up and moved to Taboose Pass, stopping for a side trip to Lake Marjorie on the way.

Ron and I headed down the hill in the morning while Ed started for Goodale and Striped. He and RR planned to climb Cardinal the next day.

This was a laid-back trip with everyone doing what he pleased and was a great deal of fun.

July 18-21, 1986

Machleder-Holleman

At 7:30 a.m. only four participants, namely Pat and Gerry Holleman, Diane Rosentreter, and Larry Machleder met at the Pine Creek trailhead for the opportunity to bag three interior peaks. Harold McFadden joined us Saturday as planned for a total of five. There was one no-show and one last minute cancellation.

We four took a long slow hike over Italy Pass (12,400') and arrived at our campsite above the Lake Italy outlet at 6:00 p.m. The hike in is 14 miles and 5000' and was made to seem even longer by suncupped snowfields hiding the trail, wet meadows, mosquitos, and numerous stream crossings.

We decided to try for Hilgard and Gabb on Saturday instead of Recess to ensure that we would at least get them and not have to go over Italy Pass again for one peak. Recess is much easier from the west via Lake Edison and it's surprising how seldom it's scheduled that way.

Having long days and nice weather, we enjoyed a leisurely breakfast and left camp at 7:30 a.m. We arrived on Hilgard at 10:00 a.m., climbing on the moderate class 2 SE side. We left Hilgard at 10:30 a.m. and headed towards Gabb on the easy ledges above Lake Italy. The climbing on Gabb's south side is also moderate class 2. We arrived on top at 2:00 p.m. and took our usual half-hour break enjoying the register that went back to 1934 (the prior entries have also been copied in).

We left Gabb at 2:30 p.m., dropped down to Lake Italy near Toe Lake and had the pleasure of strolling on an excellent use trail on the north side of scenic Lake Italy. Across the lake we could see Harold McFadden arriving. We all made it to camp by 5:00 p.m. with plenty of time to enjoy the cocktail hour and the late afternoon sun. Harold, by starting early and travelling light, had bagged Julius Caesar on the way in. Doing both Hilgard and Gabb from Lake Italy involves approximately 11 miles and 4600'.

Now with Hilgard and Gabb done, we could pursue Recess in a relaxed manner, with the secure knowledge that we could always do it from Lake Edison with a 5200' gain spread over 2 days. From Lake Italy, Recess is 5600' and 14 miles, somewhat long, especially after the two prior days. We left camp a bit earlier at 6:30 a.m. in deference to the long day ahead. Harold opted for Hilgard and Gabb to make the best use of his trip over Italy Pass. We four hiked down the north side of the Hilgard branch on another excellent use trail using a bit of intelligence provided by a 1985 Rohn/Jones trip writeup and avoiding their travail. Even the weather cooperated by providing a cooling overcast. At 9700' we turned north up the stream coming out of Hilgard Lake. At 11,000' we left the stream and continued on over point 12,692' and then to Recess, arriving precisely at noon. After the obligatory half-hour break, we started back, retracing our steps and arriving back at camp at 5:30 p.m., an 11 hour route. Harold was waiting for us when we returned, having gotten back at 4:30 p.m. after doing both peaks and enjoying a one-hour snooze on top of Gabb.

With all our goals accomplished, people hauled out their goodies and we had a festive time around our simulated campfire. Harold's nutted cheese loaf was especially tasty and the Holleman's 161-rum also had some good "qualities". The following morning we decided on a late departure at 8:00 a.m., noone having made much preparation the night before. We got one additional bit of excitement however when at 7:30 a.m., the ground began to shake and the thunder of many simultaneous rock avalanches rent the air. Huge clouds of dust rose all around us adding drama to the splendor of the surroundings. We hiked out,



(Hilgard, Gabb, Recess continued)

passing a Sierra Club national service trip doing trail work near Pine Lake. Amazingly, many participants appeared to be young women all looking terribly fit and apparently enjoying themselves, not grizzled older men as one might think. We arrived back at the cars at 3:00 p.m. after a rewarding if somewhat strenuous trip. Four p.m. found us enjoying the excellent salad bar and a few beers at the Sizzler in Bishop along with tales of the earthquake by an excited waitress. By 5:00 p.m. we were all on the road for a not-too late arrival home in the light Monday traffic.

Many thanks to Gerry Holleman for his assist (?). He was usually up front and had an unerring eye for the easiest and safest route, to Harold McFadden for his ability to spot trails under the snow and his cheese loaf, and to the gals Pat and Diane for their sparkling good humor and ability to be pleasant at all times even towards the end of some long days. It's nicer to be on a trip where the participants appear to be enjoying their surroundings and the company of their companions - and not just suffering both just to get the peaks.--L.M.

July 24-29, 1986

Humphreys Basin

Rohn/Secor

In spite of all the available SPS peaks, this trip attracted little interest. Finally, only the leaders and RJ's father, John, went. From North Lake we went over Puite Pass slowly, heading for Tomahawk Lake. The afternoon electrical storm caught us out in the open a mile short of the lake so we set up a tent, looked and listened to the too-close-together flash-booms and watched a three inch layer of hail form around us. In the morning we hiked down to Hutchinson Mdw, up French Cyn and on to Merriam Lake. There we worked hard on the Piute-golden trout and caught a few. These are the most spectacular and colorful trout I've ever seen\_\_\_ but they aren't very hungry for spinners. RJ made the only climb of the trip, tackling Feather Peak, just NW of Royce, by its 3rd Class SW ridge.

After another day we returned to French Cyn and proceeded up it and on to Moon Lake and L Lake, camping for two nights at the latter. I tried fishing L and Steelhead Lakes with little success but watched some better fishermen do well in the stream between them. On the fifth day we moved up past the Puppet Lakes and over Carol Col (11,800', 600 yds S of peak 12,228) into Humphreys Basin. I planned to fish Mesa and Desolation Lakes but a cold wind came up and the white-caps discouraged me. We all hiked out, went down to Keough for a rejuvenating hot soak and had a fine dinner at Bishop's Copper Kettle.

#### 1987 UNIMPAIRED SNOWMELT RUNOFF FORECASTS

These figures are the water runoff forecasts in percent of normal, based on a 50 year average. They do not necessarily represent the amount of snow on the ground, but instead indicate the water levels we can expect to find during stream crossings this coming spring and summer.

Merced, 46%; San Joaquin, 49%; Kings, 51%; Kaweah, 46%; Tule, 37%; Kern, 47%; Owens, 56%; Mono, 51%. The Owens basin breaks down as follows: Long Valley, 53%; Long Valley to Tinemaha Reservoir, 66%; Tinemaha Reservoir to Haiwee Reservoir, 38%.

Crown Creek on the 4th of July, anyone?

R. J. Secor

We did not arrive at the Agnew Meadows parking lot until 2:30 a.m. after making frequent pit stops as a result of eating at the Astro Burger joint at Kraemer's Korner. Morning dawned early and we were awakened at 5:30 a.m. to see Jim Farkas and Marty Washburn waltzing away in the parking lot to an invisible string ensemble. As we waited for Tom Scott (obtaining his own permit), Jim also demonstrated the correct French technique as applied to the trunk of a pine tree. Jim and Marty, with their heavy backpacks on, again continued to amaze a large group of budding geology students as they waltzed from the parking lot and on to the trail. The trip sure started on a lively note (and foot).

From Agnew Meadows we headed toward Nydiver Lakes (the use trail to Nydiver Lakes leaves the main trail 100 feet before the obvious stream crossing). Just before noon we set up camp at saddle between a dinky lake and the lower of the three Nydiver Lakes. Intending to climb Banner that afternoon, we set out toward the Banner/Ritter saddle. Avoiding the soft snow, we opted to contour across endless rock shelves and ribs toward the elusive saddle. Waste of time. We abandoned the afternoon endeavour and headed to an early happy hour in camp. Near camp Lisa Freundlich, followed by Steve Crooks and a few others, took brief dips in an ice cold snow banked lake to wash away the day's fatigue. Everybody retired early (before dark) to prepare for an early start next morning.

At 5:45 a.m. we all had finished a sparse breakfast and were on the way to get the two coveted peaks. With crampons on our feet and firm snow beneath we were at the Ritter/Banner saddle in less than two hours. From the saddle eight climbers reached the summit of Banner Peak in forty-five minutes by way of the class 2 southwestern slopes (yawn!). A new ammo can register box was placed.

After descending to the saddle, we headed up a steep snow tongue toward the junction of the two obvious chutes. We all thank Bruce Parker for kicking steps all the way. Being free of snow, the left chute was the better choice. After some class 2 and 3 scrambling, we were temporarily delayed at the ridge where the chute ends. After some exploration Bruce found an exit onto the west face of Ritter that required only one high third class move. We marked this spot with a hefty duck. We quickly scrambled the remaining 300' to the top of Ritter where seven climbers rewarded themselves with lunch and another Emblem peak for their lists. The way down was without any noteworthy incidents. After hitting the snow everyone glissaded almost all of the way back to camp.

We broke camp at 5:30 p.m. and straggled back to the cars at Agnew Meadows by 8:30 p.m. Everyone was happy with the day's achievements but unprepared for the long drive home. Other participants contributing to making this one of my best Sierra experiences this year included Suzanne Thomas, Jim Floyd, and Tom Scott. In retrospect, except for their greater isolation, there is no real advantage to using Nydiver Lakes as a base camp for Ritter and Banner. Lake Ediza is the standard base camp overused by the masses.

THE YEAR OF THE AVALANCHE

Upon retirement in late July 1986, Barbara Lilley (from Hughes) and Gordon MacLeod (from TRW) began their "leisure life" by backpacking from Cedar Grove up Sphinx Creek to start a 9-day trip on July 26, accompanied by Bob Tomlinson and Scott Evans. Fortunately, the NPS had cleared the trail of the now familiar avalanche debris. From a camp at (Sphinx) Lake 10,000' and while crossing South Guard and Longley Passes, climbs were made (by various members) of the Sphinx Crest, "Notch" Pk. (high 3rd Class), North Guard, South Guard, Brewer, Pk. 12,393' and Pk. 12,960'†. Longley Pass is easy on the west side, but the east side is seasonally blocked by a huge spectacular cornice. Fortunately, there is a 3rd class bypass to the north (ropes useful for lowering packs). All 4 climbed Thunder Mtn. from a camp on a bench 1000' above Lake Reflection; there is an easy crossing of the crest east of Thunder. (It was agreed that Thunder should be upgraded to Class 4!)

A long snow tongue provided a quick descent to Lake Reflection; more tedious was the uphill climb around the west side to avoid cliffs. Debris from 3 spectacular avalanches still covered parts of the trail down to East Lake (from which Pk. 12,620' was climbed); one nearly reached the lake. However, the most impressive avalanche damage was below East Lake--for over a mile, huge trees up to 4 feet in diameter were lying like matchsticks in the creek bed. Thankfully, the NPS had opened the trail, although a single scary log was still the only way to cross Bubbs Creek and return to Cedar Grove.

Gordon and Barbara then headed north on Aug. 5. First stop was the Ruby Mountains of Nevada. Its highest peak, Ruby Dome, is known to DPSers, but in addition the Ruby Mountains Scenic Area includes other 10,000' and 11,000' peaks, glaciated valleys, alpine lakes, wildflowers and running streams, resembling the northern Sierra more than desert mountains of Nevada. Thanks to a car shuttle provided by Mike McNicholas (now also retired and living in Pahrump, Nev.), Barbara and Gordon hiked the Ruby Crest trail from north to south in 5 days--a strenuous pines-to-aspen traverse which included climbing 8 peaks over 10,000', four on side trips--Lake, King (11,040'† and the best), Green and Tipton--and 3 others the trail nearly went over anyway! After a brief shower the first afternoon, the weather was beautiful. And here, also, the avalanche activity was unusually heavy, especially in the aspen groves.

Continuing north on Aug. 12, Barbara and Gordon spent several weeks near Stanley, Idaho. Two backpack trips were made in Idaho's "gentle wilderness"--the Sawtooth Mountains--where the granite peaks, glaciated valleys, permanent snowfields and numerous alpine lakes create a "mini-Sierra," whose northerly latitude is somewhat offset by its lower elevation--none of the peaks are over 11,000'. Skies can be cloudless for several days at a time--a rarity outside the mountains of California! One backpack started at Grandjean on the west side--where hot baths can be found at Sacajawea Hot Springs--and the other from Redfish Lake on the east. Peaks climbed from Grandjean were Reward, Elk and Glens (all over 10,000') from the Payette Creek trail in nice weather--a 3 day cold, rainy period occurred just after we had packed out! When good weather returned, we took the boat across Redfish Lake and completed a mostly cross-country circle trip, climbing three 10,000' peaks--Braxton, Horstman and Baron--before descending trailless Fishhook Creek. The Sawtooths are well mapped with 7½' quads, but lack a real Climber's Guide--attempts on two other peaks (Regan and Williams) failed due to inability to discover a 3rd class route--if any!

After a brief backpack in the nearby White Cloud Mtns., continual cold weather drove them south for a climb of Hole-in-the-Mountain Peak, high point of the East Humboldt Range near Elko, Nevada, and a visit to the fantastic Ruby Hot Springs. We returned to California in time for an SPS trip on Sept. 6-7 that Gordon was leading.

Although in the Sawtooth Mtns. avalanches are commonplace--it seemed that few trees die of old age there--an excess amount of debris was observed, with many of the trails requiring detours--indicating that what the Mammoth R.S. calls the "subtropical connection" in February reached that far north at least, and 1986 appears to have replaced 1969 as truly "the year of the avalanche." (Although in the Sierra the precipitation was only 5th highest, the runoff was third!)

HALE/YOUNG

29 30 31 July, 1986

MACHLEDER/BRECHEEN

Two zircons in pure gold mountings. Two nondescript heaps in the midst of the most wonderful rock scenery in the Sierras. This must be the correct way to describe Mts. Hale & Young. You actually look down on both peaks from the crossing at Trailcrest Pass. However, the granite basin containing the Hitchcock Lakes, Guitar Lake and other lakes is so beautiful that it makes up for any shortcomings of the ascents themselves. We originally billed this trip as a 7-day outing to also bag Kern Point and Picket Guard. No one signed up and Larry developed sore feet, so we decided to just make a leisurely 3-day hike to get Hale & Young.

Surmounting Trailcrest Pass at 13,600 with a backpack is a tough hike and Lou was about "played-out" when we made camp at Guitar Lake, well after 6 pm. A young German national named Michael (no! not Mike-ul! Its Mic-ah-ale) sort of picked us up before we got to Trail Camp and wanted to stay with us. He was also 'about played-out'. He was just starting out to hike the entire length of the John Muir Trail--a real nice youngster and more proficient in English than we were in Deutsch.

At about 8 am we left our tents, after suspending all food in bags from rock faces to frustrate the Beagle-sized Marmots, and descended approximately 1 mile along the Muir Trail to where we could make an easy cl 1 ascent into the broad plateau leading up to the saddle between Mts. Hale & Young. Continuing North, we veered slightly to the right to get to the cl 2 summit of Mt Hale---about 3 miles and 3,000 gain.

To ascend Mt Young, we returned along the ascent path from Hale to the saddle, then side-hilled around beneath Young's summit and climbed steeply to the top. Young is a couple hundred feet lower than Hale, but steeper and the 2nd class rock is a bit more challenging. We 'scree'ed' back to the Muir Trail and up to our camp by 2 pm. After spending the afternoon resting and soaking in the surroundings, Larry and I slept the sleep of those with a pure conscience and left early in the am for Whitney Portal. The weather was so perfect that we felt guilty and we just knew that something had to happen to make up for it---and it did. During the night, I had to get up to--you know? And I hung my foot in the pack straps and broke my little toe. That made the trip out---interesting. Then, when I got home, the altitude sickness, threatening throughout the climb, hit with a vengeance--all the symptoms, extreme nausea, vomiting along with vertigo. BUT, we got them peaks.

Lou Brecheen

NORTH PEAK (12,242') & MT. CONNESS (12,590')

Private Trip  
August 1-3, 1986

The climbs of these Yosemite border peaks are perhaps most interesting from the east, as was done on a recent backpack with several friends into the Saddlebag Hinterlands.

An early start from the L.A. area on the morning of August 1 put us at the trailhead near the outlet of Saddlebag Lake before noon. A few patches of snow were encountered on the trail along the west shore of Saddlebag Lake, and a reliable log was used for the stream crossing below the outlet of Greenstone Lake. We were going to camp at the Conness Lakes, but no camping is permitted in the basin as it is protected as a natural area. Leaving the jeep trail just below Steelhead Lake, we opted to camp just below Cascade Lake where there are a number of suitable camping spots.

The route up North Peak was uneventful, but tedious in spots once the east ridge south of Cascade Lake was obtained. About half of the way along the south side of the ridge to the main crest has bushes of whitebark pine that must be bypassed or hiked through. The summit is a clear shot up the tableland once the main crest is reached. The climb was made in about two hours, promising a return back to camp by dark. The register seemed in good shape.

The climb to Conness was begun about 10:00am the next morning from the lowest of the Conness Lakes after a traverse from camp. The main east ridge was obtained following an easy climb over solid rock straight up from the lakes. A small tableland is reached at the top of the ridge, from which the best approach is to drop down slightly, on the south side, following the ridge just below the crest, rather than climbing on the top of the ridge, which soon becomes very serrated, requiring some roped belays. The former was done, crossing several large snowfields, and then meeting up with the ridge just below the crest, the final pitch being class 2 talus and boulders. The remaining half mile west along the main crest was obvious, as evidence of heavy travel was obvious. The summit was reached about 2:00pm. For variation and a quicker return, dropping down onto the east lobe of the glacier from the east ridge proved worthwhile. There was a lot of snow (but suncups too) for glissading and it was nearly a straight shot down to Conness Lakes. The register seemed in good shape. We hiked out on Sunday.

N. Wong

CATHEDRAL PEAK, SW BUTTRESS

Aug 16

Knudtson/Rea

Combine a spectacularly elegant summit spire with great summit views and you have Cathedral Peak. This is my choice for an invigorating one day peak climb in the Tuolumne Meadows area. Stephanie Rea and I choose the SW Buttress route (II,5.4) because of Roper's laudatory comments in the Guide and, for once, he was right. The use trail to Budd Lake is very easy to follow and we were on the climb 2 hours after leaving the car at the Muir Trail parking lot. As Roper suggests, we started 175' up the right side of the buttress at a prominent bush. Pitch 1 is from here up and left over right-leaning, downward-sloping large flakes to a ledge. Pitch 2 goes directly up up the middle of the buttress, past two old pins, to a large ledge below a chimney. Pitch 3 can start either up the chimney, a knobby face to the right of this chimney, or a crack still further right. After the start, the pitch continues straight up to a belay stance above a small horn. Pitch 4 involves some ledges and tricky cracks before ending on a very large ledge 80' below the summit. Pitch 5 follows a prominent crack past an old ring piton to the summit block. We descended the regular 4th class route to the Muir Trail and then walked the trail back to the car. I think crossing the notch to the north of the summit and descending via the Budd Creek use trail would be easier.

Finally, after a long winter of anticipation, restrictions on climbing to the summit of Mt. St. Helens have been lifted. The effective date was 4 May.

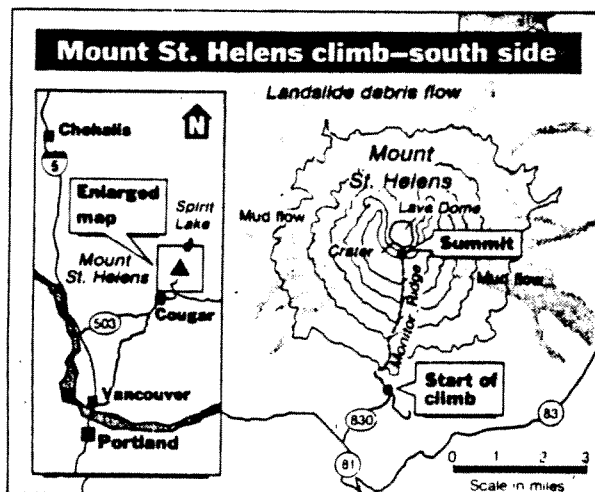
But, starting on 16 May, a permit systems applies, limiting climbers to 100 per day until 31 October, with 70 being available by advance registration and the remaining 30 being first come first serve. In anticipation of the opening, several thousand applications have been received, so that most of next summer's weekends are already fully booked.

So, that left Mother's Day weekend, as the only open weekend with unlimited permits! A climb was hurriedly organized within BoeAlps (Boeing Employees Alpine Club), and on Saturday afternoon about 14 folks in several cars headed south from Seattle. We arrived at Ape Cave (actually lava tubes) in early afternoon on a lovely, clear, warm Sierra-quality weekend. After looking at the "caves", we made camp there; a good choice as it turned out, as the roadhead was extremely crowded and does not have good campsites.

Early the next morning, we drove up Forest Service roads 81 and 830 to the roadhead (3650') and the beginning of the Ptarmigan Trail (216A). Jammed with cars; the sheriff estimated that there had been 700 climbers on the mountain on Saturday! We started out at 0630, followed the trail through increasing snow to timberline, while making several peeling-off-clothing stops as it was already quite warm. Then it was simply a matter of following the beaten path and other climbers up Monitor Ridge to the Crater Rim (8260'). None of it was technical; we only needed our ice axes. Most made it in 4 hours; I took 5 as I was recovering from a pulled ligament in my right knee (souvenir of skiing at Whistler-Blackcomb a month earlier).

Spectacular views down into the crater and around in all directions. Rainier, Adams, Hood and Jefferson were all clear. It was a marvellous summer party day; about 100 people sitting the rim and many others coming up and already going down. Many, many skiers, both alpine and nordic, enjoying a great run back down through the huge alpine bowls. It was much like the top of Mammoth in a normal year.

After a long lunch break in the sun, and a short walk around the rim to the true summit (8365', down from 9770' in the Old Days), we started down, and enjoyed several long glissades before reentering the woods and reaching the cars a few hours later. The soft snow did slow us down--and it was such a lovely day that there was really no reason to rush!



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