

The Sierra



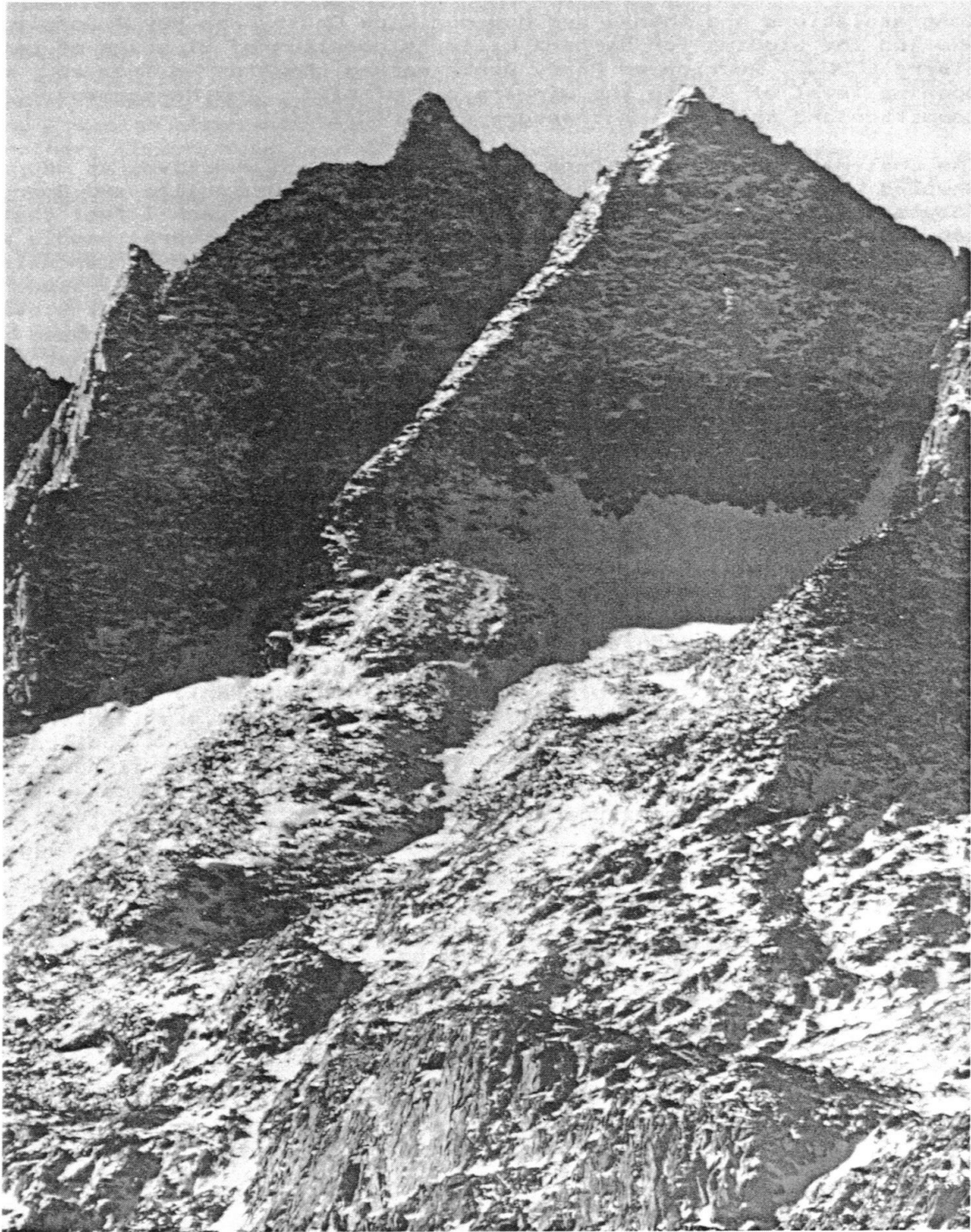
ECHO

VOLUME 31

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CHAIRMAN'S COLUMN

"For me, and for thousands with similar inclinations, the most important passion of life is the overpowering desire to escape periodically from the clutches of a mechanistic civilization. To us, the enjoyment of solitude, complete independence, and the beauty of undefiled panoramas is absolutely essential to happiness."

Bob Marshall (1901-1939)

Congratulations and thanks are due our Vice Chair, Rob Roy McDonald, who led the bidding for Barbara Lilley's donation of 21 years of past Sierra ECHOS. Auctioneer Randy Danta worked the bids up from an opening level of \$10 to the winning bid of \$125. The Management Committee and the Section treasury are grateful.

The Chairman gets letters Department: Dick Beach who lives at 388 Shepard Lane in Bishop writes, "After reading Dick Jali's and George Toby's on-going account of who has the oldest Kelty pack I feel that I can add a new chapter to this adventure. There are several people who should be included in them ole Kelty days. Steve Rogero of Lancaster, a long time SPS member who died in 1986 had mentioned several times that his old Kelty was one of the first 100 made. Noting that Steve's R.E.I Co-op number was # 3 leads me to believe that his was indeed an early one. Sy Ossofsky, my neighbor here in Bishop, has one that has seen the years and he claims his is one of the first. I've seen these packs and they are not the present olive green but more of a brighter mint-like green. (Walt Wheelock tells me that he went with Dorothy Cutler to the Kelty shop in Glendale about 1960. Dorothy wanted to leave her pack there for repairs. Dick Kelty looked at it and told Dorothy that her pack was older than any of his packs he had in his collection and would she trade hers to him in exchange for a brand new pack. She traded. --Ron)

Dick goes on, "Elwyn Beach, my late father, a 1930 Angeles Chapter member and an early SPSer created an experience that locates 4 more packs into this early chapter of Kelty history. Starting with the old G. I. rucksacks and Trapper Nelson packs my father had many horror stories about using these old pack frames. In the early 1950s veteran Sierra Club climber Lynn Grey had a Swiss frame which was lighter than the GI pack frame. My father had Douglas Aircraft build a duplicate frame out of aluminum and they used it on different trips (I used to ride within one of the old frame packs, a ride par-excellence as a child carrier which had zippers on each side for my legs and feet).

(Continued next page)

VOLUME 31-4 PEAK INDEX (1987)

Alta	Colosseum	Goode	Rockhouse
Agassiz	Coyote	Perkins	Spanish Needle
Angora	Dragon	Pettit	Taylor
Bloody	Florence	Piute	Vandever
			Volunteer

Photo Credit: Dave Vandervoet sent in this photo of the twin summits of Deerhorn, a fine SPS Mountaineer's Peak, highlighted by the first snow of winter. (Note on last month's Half Dome cover: The strange left margin and streaks were caused by the reproduction process, not the ECHO Editor! Apologies to John Reed whose photo didn't receive justice.)

CHAIRMAN'S COLUMN (Cont.)

Well, back in about 1954 when Dick Kelty was just starting to make and sell his packs from the little white garage back of his home in Glendale, anyone who carried the old GI rucksack would be impressed by a better frame. He had heard about these new Kelty packs and my father went to Dick Kelty's home within the first month his packs were sold and bought a new pack which cost \$25 for my mother, Zoya who lives now in Bishop, and because he couldn't afford 2 new packs he bought a less expensive prototype frame for himself. Then he had my grandmother meticulously copy the bag design using an old GI mummy bag cover. He was so impressed with this new style of pack that he asked Dick Kelty if any used Keltys were returned. Dick was amused by this but took my Dad's number. Sure enough, a week later he got a call that a large and a medium model had come back after one climb of Mt Whitney. My brother, Robert Muir, and I accompanied our parents to Glendale (I was only 8 years old) to get our promised Christmas gifts, a back pack for us each. These used packs were selling for a total of \$28.

I remember my great disappointment when I saw my new pack to be. It was used and had spots on it especially when everything else was so new looking. Dick Kelty picked up on this display of emotion because to this day I remember him kneeling down and looking at us from our level and reassuring us that providing that he would be succesful we would someday be very proud to have one of his first packs (he told us these packs were numbers 68 & 69, therefore my mother's is earlier). He told us that we would never know know the difference after our first hike. I remember my father repeating this several times over the years. I even remember how upset Kelty was that these had been the first packs returned. Kelty kept reassuring us that they would be just as good as new. I still have the packs and like all Kelty lovers still use them with the usual updating of replacing cotton to nylon on the shoulder straps and the belly bands changed. They are still great enough to pass on to my kids. My mother still has and uses her pack. And as for my father's prototype, the sleeping bag cloth had been repatched too many times until both my mother and grandmother refused to work on it. My dad retired it to the garage rafters. Ten years ago he gave it away to a girl going to Europe. The straps wore out in London but she continued with it on a round-the-world journey. Last week I called her and located the Kelty in her back yard. She returned it and the pack is sun bleached, weathered and with holes in it and I can not use it without repair. I thank Ron Jones for encouraging me to write this episode to share with Dick and George and all of you and the point is that these Kelty packs never die." *Ron*

ECHO EDITOR NEEDED FOR 1988!

The current ECHO Editor is resigning at the end of this year. If you would like to edit the ECHO, talk to Ron Jones or Pat Holleman so the next Management Committee will know of your interest in this rewarding job.

MEMBERSHIP REPORT

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NEWLY ANNOUNCED SPS TRIPS

SEP 19-20

SAT-SUN

SIERRA PEAKS

M: Mt. Mills (13,468'), Mt. Dade (13,600'): Sat backpack 3 mi 2000' gain to camp and Mt. Mills. Sun Mt. Dade and out. BMTC welcome. Send sase with experience to provisional Leader: DAVE FURLONG, 2610 Voorhees Ave. #4, Redondo Beach, CA 90278, H(213) 370-3156, W(213)416-7887. Asst: RON HUDSON.

LEADERS!!!

Write up your Spring and Summer Schedule trip reports for the ECHO! The trip reports are needed NOW for publication!!!!

SPS PROGRAMS FOR SEPTEMBER AND OCTOBER

September 9 Meeting: "PICACHO DEL DIABLO": Baja California's highest peak and the Sierra Pedro Martir will be presented by GENE MAUK as he shows slides of last year's Sierra Club national outing to this beautiful area. Refreshments by George Toby. Griffith Park Auditorium, 7:30 p.m.

October 14 Meeting: "POTLUCK PLUS TALL TALE SWAPPING": Join in a special format "meeting" focused on exchanging 'high' adventure stories of the summer's climbs. Bring a salad, entree or dessert to share with others. Refreshments: ALL. Griffith Park Auditorium, 7:30 p.m.

SUMMER CLIMBING SAFETY

This is a low snow year in California and the characteristic hazards of mountain climbing in the summer are somewhat different from those we guard against in years of more normal weather patterns. Nevertheless, there are still plenty of good reasons to recognize the inherent problems of our sport and take the precautions necessary for good safe mountaineering. Let me suggest a few considerations worth some thought.

Avalanche dangers still exist as warm weather loosens some of the remaining high snowfields and breaks residual cornices loose. Be alert for exposed traverses, particularly after midday.

Loose rocks are always hazardous. Their danger is accentuated when the size of the climbing group is large and/or the route calls for switchbacking. Particular attention must be given to what (who) is below when passing loose areas. Occasionally higher, leading traffic must be halted while lower, following traffic passes areas of potential rockfall. Rappelling is considered by many to be perhaps the most dangerous phase of mountaineering for a variety of reasons, one of which is the ease with which rocks are broken loose by the action of a taut rappel rope on a mountain face. A leader must be vigilant in guiding and advising his followers so as to minimize these perils. Hard hats markedly reduce the severity of the consequences when rockfall accidents do occur and their requirement should be seriously considered when climbing in any areas of steep or loose rock.

Rockfall will occasionally occur, whether climber initiated or not, and the reaction taught in BMTC classes should be impressed on all climbers. Whoever sees any rockfall anywhere near the climbing party should immediately call out loudly, "ROCK!". Others should look up to locate the source of the danger and repeat the alarm, "ROCK!". That word and no other, to avoid confusion, should be used. Looking up is important. Often a small move one way or another will allow a rock to miss one or a hand can deflect a rock, but if one doesn't know where the fall line is, he doesn't know what evasion to take.

Some of us enjoy solo climbing occasionally and we must recognize its particular drawbacks. Rocks roll in easy country and pull out in steeper. We've had enough warning incidents to know how important it is to leave word where we are going (in some reasonable detail) and when we should be expected back. If you must go alone, give yourself and the poor searchers a break.

Let's have a good and safe climbing season.

Norm Rohn
SPS Safety Chairman

Sierra Club LTC-SPS Snow Practice and Checkout
25-26 April, 1987

Ron Hudson
8 April 1987

We met at Onion valley and backpacked up the Golden Trout Drainage to the meadow area at about 10,800'. Practice and checkout went smoothly; Leaders were Ron Hudson, Virgil Talbot, Randy Danta, and Nancy Gordon. By Sunday morning, after crampon practice, 10 had checked off (3 of them "E") - congrats to all! We then proceeded to Dragon Peak. The snow was great, and we climbed up a steep gully on the right side of the bowl S of the peak. Some were belayed for the well-known exposed 3 inch wide ledge. Weather on Saturday was hot (in April?); Sunday was a little windy with some snow. There was some post holing while backpacking the one hour back to the cars, but we got back by 3:30 pm. Later we ate together in Mojave to finish off a great weekend.

Mount Fuji climb's once-in-a-lifetime ritual for Japanese

JORDON HOT SPRINGS

The Forest Service does not plan to renew the lease for operation of Jordon Hot Springs beyond 1990. The historic buildings will be leveled and nothing but a campground will remain. It is difficult to say whether a building constructed in 1862 is "natural", but they have to power to renew or not to renew. It is therefore important to get to Jordon Hot Springs before the historic buildings and fine facilities vanish.

You can spend as much or as little money as you like there. It is \$1.50 per day to use the springs, \$15 for a steak and wine dinner, and beer and soft drinks are available at the store. There are 4 tubs, at 130, 110, 98, and 98 degrees. It is an uphill trip back to the cars, but only 5½ miles, so a late afternoon start is best to take advantage of shade and an afternoon breeze.

To get there take 395 to Kennedy meadows. Pass Chimney Creek Fire Lookout to Kennedy Meadows. Continue past meadows 14 miles to Blackrock ranger station. Go 6 miles beyond to road 21s03, to roads end. Do not park close to corral. Wilderness permit is required from Blackrock Ranger Station or by mail from Cannel Meadow Ranger District in Kernville, I do have an address for them.

James R. Kuivinen

Japanese tradition says Mount Fuji should be climbed once in every person's lifetime. Japanese wisdom says anyone who attempts the 12,285-foot summit more than once is a fool.

The mountain is open to climbers year-round, but the peak of activity — and the "official climbing season" — is in July and August. During last year's official season, 192,500 people climbed at least part way up Fuji and about 102,300 reached the summit. On Aug. 2, the busiest day last year, 16,000 people jammed the narrow, zigzag trail.

Despite Fuji's popularity, the climb can be anything but pleasant. The barren brown slope is steep, the footing of volcanic rock sometimes loose, and the thinning air soon becomes hard on the lungs.

Most climbers actually begin at the 7,600-foot level, where buses from Tokyo, 60 miles northeast, and other cities deliver them to the fifth of the eight stations spaced along the route.

A specialty of the souvenir stands clustered there is the kongo-zue or pilgrim's staff, a wooden walking stick that, for a fee, will be branded with an inscription indicating that it has been carried to each of the higher stations.

From the fifth station, it is a

five- to six-hour climb to the top, about 4,870 feet. At the seventh and eighth stations are limited accommodations for sleeping.

The preference for viewing the sunrise means traffic is heaviest along the trail before daybreak. A procession of glowing flashlights carried by huffing climbers marks the upward route.

The weather at the peak is clear at daybreak only 20 percent to 30 percent of the time in July, which falls in the rainy season. In August, it is clear slightly less than half the time.

"Every day I watch the changes in the snow. Nature never fails to entertain me," said Nogi, who runs the hostel at the eighth station, about 1½ hours below the peak.

Each season about 6,000 people stop to rest or eat at the hostel at the 8th station about 1½ hours from the summit. The accommodations are tight, with two to three people sharing one sleeping mat.

Emily Graves, a U.S. Army lieutenant based near Tokyo, said she could not get any sleep in the cramped conditions, and found an early morning trek in the rain to the summit miserable.

"But I'm really glad I did it, it's so ritualistic" said Graves. 25. "This has made my experience in Japan complete."

AND YOU
THINK I HAD
IT BAD ON
THE TRIP!
CRAG SMITH
Rick Judd

Five left Mono Village at Twin Lakes at 8:20 AM on Friday. We hiked up to Barney Lake, where we lost one; then on up, steeply, to Peeler Lake for a late lunch. Then a half mile out to the Puckeye Pass Trail, which we took South, six miles to the base of Seavey Pass and the intersection of the PCT. .3 of a mile up to Seavey Pass and 1-1/4 miles down the other side to about 8,500' for nice campsites a few feet off the trail on the East side. There is a stream of running water on the right of the trail.

Sat morn, up at 6, away at 7, down the trail, past grim, Benson Swamp (see The Sierra Echo, Vol 24, Nov-Dec, 1980) at 7,600'. Then up to a trail junction with signs, one of which points to Smedberg Lake. 1/2 mile E on that trail to the junction with the trail passing beneath Volunteer Peak to Rodgers Lake. Just above Rodgers Lake, we left the trail and went part way around the E end to a couloir leading up to the saddle between Pettit and Regulation. At the saddle, we turned left and walked up to the big rocks comprising the Pettit summit.

The ridge between Pettit and Volunteer is rough class 2, but can be negotiated ok with a little judicious "up & down" contouring. Gene did the route-finding on this mile and a half traverse, staying mostly on the left side of the "bumps". From the ridgeline, Volunteer is only about a 500' climb, though steep, through jumbled boulders. Views are fine. The Yosemite country is all available from there.

We regained the Rodgers Lake Trail by climbing down the South side and taking the first little cut going West. This led down, through weeds & brush, past a little tarn to an intermittent streambed. The trail was a hundred feet or so across the streambed. Back down to the Benson Wire, up the rocky trail, 900 feet to camp. The day's total was about 12 miles RT with a little short of 5,000' gain. Dick Agnos, who chose not to climb had a cheery fire going and a batch of "Mai-Tais" prepared. The weather was cold and the scudding, low clouds were threatening. In fact, we had endured a couple of short snow-flurries and a brief rain shower during the day. Early to bed allowed us to arise, reasonably refreshed, to climb

PIUTE MOUNTAIN. This was to be the time when Larry Machleder finally got Piute. But, alas, for personal reasons, Larry was not able to participate, and therefore; we were disappointed once again. Piute went exactly according to the B Magnuson description. At 9600' we left the trail just above our camp, crossed the stream and the little meadow and headed up the 1100', grassy slope toward a prominent Pine tree in a notch in the NE ridge. Once on the ridge, we turned left and followed it. The ridge is bumpy and while we tried to stay along the crest, occasionally we contoured along the left side, up and over some ribs. Until we came to the 4-5 class East face of the mountain. Here, we downclimbed about 80' to a snow bowl, crossed it to a sandy chute and climbed up the sand for 100' to the first ramp leading left. This goes very well for a short distance (100 yds?), crossing a little smooth slab, then zigs back to the right, providing an easy route to the North ridge. There is 30' or so of scrambling among large boulders, which are so placed as to keep the route barely Class 2. Just a couple of inches one way or the other would make this short space Class 3. At the top of the boulders is the sandy, summit plateau, and a hundred yards away is the rock pile denoting the high point. We had a bite to eat, enjoyed the views some and returned to camp along the exact, same route--getting back at 11:15.

We had intended to pack out to the lower end of Kerrick Meadows, but made such good time (with the cold wind moving us along) that we went all the way to Peeler Lake before making camp at 4:30. It was higher at Peeler and much colder. Monday morn, Gene's thermometer read 25°. Another fire and more mai-tais helped us through it all. We reached Twin Lakes at lunch and had time for hot showers before heading home. Trip participants were: Lou Brecheen, Gene Mauk, Bill Faulkner, Dick Agnos and Michael George.

(WLB)

BLOODY MTN. & TOBY'S ANNUAL GOURMET BACKPACK

Sept. 13-14, 1986

G. Toby, D. Beverage

Eleven happy hikers loaded with good things to eat began the trip at the Convict Lake hiker parking lot. It is relatively new and is .4 mi NE of Convict Lake. If you see the lake, you have gone too far. Good parking but no facilities. Toilets are in the campground near the lake. There is a self issue permit station about a mile up the trail. No quotas on this trail. The route up Convict Creek is impressive with its steep multicolored rock walls. We hiked up to Mildred Lake, then W to Dorothy Lake and N to Lake Genevieve at 10,200 ft. A really beautiful setting in a deep bowl. Fine camping at the S end. The hike in was easy but two problems came up. I had heard the new bridge about 3 miles up the trail was destroyed last February by an avalanche. I called the Mammoth Ranger Station. They informed me that the wood and steel bridge was completely washed out and we should use extreme caution in crossing the stream. It was still running very fast, but some hikers reported a log crossing near the bridge. Armed with this dubious info, we carried a rope, some slings, and biners expecting a wet crossing. When we arrived at the bridge, it indeed was badly damaged by the avalanche but it was still there. Debris was everywhere. The bridge rested in a severely tilted position with one end partly down in the water. It was easily passable to hikers, but not to stock. Apparently there was no effort made to repair it this year. Another avalanche or heavy spring runoff next year could do it in for good. Of course no log crossing was to be found.

The other problem was, that unknown to us until we arrived, the deer hunting season opened two weeks early this year. There were hunters with guns all over the lower canyon area. Gunshots were heard popping all over the place. Two hunters shot a deer ahead of us and were hauling it back down the trail. Other hunters were sitting near the trail with guns ready, waiting for a deer to show as we passed by. It was not exactly a warm feeling. We did a lot of loud talking and rock kicking as we hiked up the trail. On the lighter side, this happened to be Toby's 65th birthday. The gourmet dinner was especially good with all kinds of delicacies of food and drink, and a birthday cake. We all sang happy birthday and enjoyed a cheery campfire. My thanks to all for the party and gifts.

On Sunday the climb of Bloody was rather easy. From the N end of the lake we continued on a trail a short distance then climbed a loose slope to the NE ridge; then followed the ridge up to the summit. Although only 12,544' the view from the summit was impressive. Mammoth Village and some of the ski runs were clearly visible. It was very cold and windy on top. We carried up a new register and aluminum can. The hike out was thankfully uneventful. Not a hunter to be seen, or a gunshot to be heard.

George

COYOTE PK, ANGORA MTN

Sept 13-15, 1986

Bill T Russell
Bob Hicks

This fine trip in crisp weather started at 0720 on Saturday from the Jerkey Mdw trailhead. We went to the suspension bridge across the Little Kern River and then continued northeast to the trail junction in the middle of Sec 6. We went west to the Deep Creek trail and north on it to an excellent camp spot at the edge of a meadow at about 7900' which we reached at 1530 (11mi, 3400'). There is plenty of wood and ample sleeping spaces but also some old cow pies that needed removal.

The topo maps for this area show a trail system that in part is long gone. The Sequoia USFS map has the correct trails but the best map is the 1986 Golden Trout Wilderness map. It uses the topo maps as a base.

(Continued next page)

COYOTE, ANGORA (Cont.)

On Sunday, we went north up the Deep Creek trail for about one mile to the junction with the Coyote Lakes trail. This junction is in the saddle between the drainages of Lion Creek and Table Meadow Creek; it is incorrectly shown on the topo map and on the Golden Trout Wilderness map. We went eastward up the hill side and then north to the saddle at the south edge of Sec 12. From here we went cross country to reach the trail at about 10300' at the south edge of Sec 1. There is no point to descend to Grasshopper Creek unless one needs water or forage for ones animals.

We traversed across the flank of the western Coyote peak and ascended the rocky ridge of the principal peak. The view from the top is great! After lunch we went out to Angora through park like terrain and then descended on the SW side of the ridge to pick up the trail at about 9300' and thence to camp.(0720 to 1700, 15 mi, 4100'). We had another splendid happy hour and campfire with eats supplied by all and fire wood provided by John Secor, R.J.'s father, who did not climb the peaks.

On Monday we hiked out (0720 to 1300, 11 mi, 1300'). This is pretty country with open forest but there is a lot of horse traffic and the dust on the trails is deep.

Both peaks have new SPS register containers and books that are in good shape; Coyote from 1966 and Angora from 1972. Participants:

Dale Van Dalsem
Bob Hicks
Jim Murphy
Ted Pinson

Bill T Russell
John Secor
R J Secor
Francoise Walther

Bue T.

FLORENCE AND VANDEVER

SEPTEMBER 20 AND 21

Each peak was operated as a day hike from the end of the Mineral King road. The trip allowed participants to do either or both of the peaks. Saturday, the day for Florence, dawned clear and cold and it did not warm up. The trail starts on the east side of the creek, and proceeds up Farewell Canyon to a junction, where it splits to Farewell Gap, then to Franklin Lakes, then to Franklin Pass. Franklin Pass is a linear .6875 mi to the summit, which we hiked cross country up its recently snow dusted slope. We had a moderately late lunch on the summit with wispy clouds nearby blocking some of the vast Sierra view. Several switchbacks later, some through lush patches of chinquapin, we arrived at the parking area about 6:00 PM.

Sunday started, again, at about 7:00 AM and again on a clear cold day. Warmer clothes were in evidence as we hiked to the pass of Farewell Gap. The deer were at the treed area as the day before. After a rest at the Gap, we left to go up the last 1,460' of gain on the east slope of the peak. Good views in several directions were available including Coyote and Homers Nose. We arrived back at the parking area about 2:00 PM with some of the participants claiming the pace at times was at a rate faster than I claim to be able to do.

Participants for the weekend were Mike Manchester, Dave Dykeman, Donn Cook, Steve Smith, Tina Stough, Charles Morrison, Vi Grasso, Bob Wyka, Wayne Wurzbarger, Mary Sue Miller, Allen Wisniewski, Steve Goodman, and of course, Nancy Gordon, the assistant leader. There were even two genuine no shows: Martha Washburne and John McDermott. Bakersfield provided a Basque dinner for those with the inclination (doesn't everyone eat an evening meal) at Maitias. Road construction made getting there a bit more difficult than expected, but worth the effort.

Jim Murphy

TAYLOR DOME

October 25, 1986

MAMEDALIN/JONES

Thirty-five spooky goblins gathered at the Horse Meadows Campground on a chilly Saturday morning to venture into the Sierra Doomland Wilderness in quest for the elusive Taylor Dome summit. They told of passing through walls of orange flames and inhaling air filled with smoke (if not brimstone) enroute to the meeting place the preceding night. Many complimented the leader on his extraordinary abilities in arranging for forest fires and enhancing the Halloween atmosphere.

The battalion of goblins consolidated into a few chariots and raced around Big Meadow to a cattle loading chute on the east side. Here a well marked but faint trail to Taylor Meadows was followed until it was promptly lost. After consulting his numerous navigational aids, the chief ghouel herded the mutinous spooks uphill toward the obvious (!) summit. Thirty-three eager goblins scrambled over a short pitch of third class rock to devour lunch on top (two chose to watch from below). After lunch, the unsatiated creatures swarmed over the remaining pinnacles in the area before trudging back to the campground.

Three fanatics broke off from the herd and swarmed over Siretta Peak before returning to the festivities being held at the campground. Amusement was found in an early happy hour during which pumpkins were carved and colored and costumes paraded. Costume awards were issued to the mummy flaunting its rancid meat (Helvia Miller), the vicious headhunter (Leora Stoler), sober faced George Washington (Jon Lutz), and the square bosomed Dolly Madison/Parton (Betsy Lutz). The Beast (Dr. Ron "Bones" Jones) was present to lead us into sin and singing around the campfire as the pumpkins eerily lit the way. A guest appearance by Terry "Tina" Turner filled the chilly night air with vibrant notes.

Sunday morning came early to find frost on the pumpkins and meek looking Sierra Clubbers of various persuasions scattered around the campground. Most joined the climb of Cannel Point led by How Bailey and Bob Wright as the chief ghouel and his beastly assistant returned home early. Details of the Cannel Point climb are to be told in the HPS Lookout. Thank you Ron, How and Bob for making it all possible!

ALTA PEAK (11,204')

Private Trip

December 28-29, 1986

This is probably more of a report on ideal, summerlike winter hiking conditions during what was through the end of December a very mild winter, rather than a route description up what may be the easiest SPS peak on the list.

Myself and John Yasuda, a good friend and former BMTC classmate, hiked in Sunday from the Wolverton parking area in Sequoia 4 miles to Mehrtens Meadow, where there are some good camping sites alongside the creek. The trail was easy to follow, and the few inches of snow along part of the trail posed no problem. The weather was nice with temperatures near 40 during the day, dipping into the 20's at night, not unlike what one encounters during an early summer trip!

The remaining 3 miles and 2,400 feet of gain to the peak the next day took about 2 hours, following the standard route by trail up the south side of the peak. The air was calm on the summit, making comfortable the stay on the peak for some sun and the panoramic view of the Great Western Divide and Sequoia. The register was in good shape. We hiked out in the afternoon, reaching the car by 5pm.

N. Wong

SPANISH NEEDLE/ROCKHOUSE PEAK

Apr 11-12

Knudtson/Gunion

After one cancellation, five of us (Stephanie Rea, Deborah Main, Bill Clark, Mark Gunion, and myself) met at Chimney Creek Campground for the start of our climb of Spanish Needle. From the campground, we drove two miles to the head of Lamont Canyon, parked, and then began walking up the dirt road which bisects the canyon. We hiked roughly 2.5 miles to the road end, turned south and climbed directly up the canyon slope to reach the Pacific Crest Trail (PCT), then followed the trail east about .25 mile to the saddle due north of Peak 7750. We dropped off the saddle and did a gradual climbing traverse of the east side of the ridge, aiming for a notch just north of Spanish Needle (see Jack Miller's write-up, Echo 31/2, Mar-Apr 1987). After reaching this notch, we stayed on or near the ridge crest all the way to the summit (an excellent description of this 3rd class portion of the route is given in Jenkin's "Self-Propelled in the Southern Sierra, Vol. 1"). It was overcast, cold and windy when we reached the summit; so after signing-in, we hurried back down to a sheltered spot on the ridge for lunch. After lunch, we dropped off the western side of the peak, descended to the PCT, took it to the saddle east of Lamont Peak, followed a use trail left by the PCT construction crew down to the road in Lamont Canyon, and hence back to the cars. As a result of two previous scouting trips and this traverse of the entire ridge, I feel that the most expedient way to climb Spanish Needle (without recourse to a car-bashing grind up Sand Canyon) is from the west, going directly up Lamont Canyon to the saddle, traversing the eastern side to the ridge, then along the ridge to the summit, and finally back the same way.

For camp Saturday night, we drove the Rockhouse Basin road (partially paved) 9 miles west to Long Valley BLM Campground. Latrines, tables, firepits, and a creek are provided.

Sunday morning, we drove 6 miles to the "new" Rockhouse Basin roadhead which is 1.5 miles eastward and 400' higher than the old one down by the Kern River and is indicative of a realignment of the eastern boundary of the Domelands Wilderness. We followed the road west, then south to where it forded the Kern; at which point we did too, wading in water that was only 3' deep at its deepest. We continued south, then west on the road, climbing over a gate and passing through the front yard of a fairly new line shack to the Manter Meadows (35E12) trailhead back by the corral. It appears that some effort has been made to obscure this trailhead and while I am sure that the public has a right to access, I also suspect that whoever owns the line shack is not out to encourage hikers. Nonetheless, we found the trail and followed it up some incredibly steep sections (although it climbs 1600' in 1.5 miles there are no switchbacks) to the saddle south of Rockhouse. From there moderate crosscountry bushwacking lead us around to the northeast side of the peak where easy but exposed scrambling took us to the summit. We then retraced our route back to the cars.

Both days the weather was good to excellent, everyone made each peak, and we all had a great time. My thanks to Mark Gunion for his excellent assist.

-- Bruce Knudtson

We met at Scotty Spring in the Owens Valley. Most cars then drove up about 1500' higher; then the two 4WDs in the group (thanks to Don Weiss and Bill Oliver) carried the packs and a few people up to the 8500' level. We backpacked up to a grove of of foxtail pines at about 10,000', arriving before lunch time. There was time to do Perkins in the afternoon, but weather was uncertain, sprinkling a little bit. Thus we lazed and read, getting to sleep early for a long day Sunday. At 4:50 AM we started hiking, proceeding N up the tree-covered slope from the bowl below Perkins, class 1-2. Then W along a ridge, class 2, to the crest. A few class 2-3 moves and thence to the summit. 11 climbers made it, two turning back along the way. We then continued S along the ridge to the low point between Perkins and Colosseum. The clouds had started building about 9 am, and by 2 pm the cloud cover was heavy. 3 ambitious peakbaggers--Bruce Orenstein, Clive Baillie, and myself continued on in the face of not good weather, route finding, difficult rock, and a late return home. We stayed near the crest; we did not have the time to drop down to the bottom of the gullies cut into the W side of the peak. The route involved some class 3+ moves to get in and out of the steep-sided gullies. The snow that fell just evaporated at first, but on our way down made the rocks sufficiently wet to require a lot of care. Near the top we traversed across the top of a steep snow slope which dropped down the east side; ice axes were necessary. Immediately upon arriving at the summit, I heard buzzing and felt itchy feelings in my scalp. I became frantic to get off, not wanting to end my climbing career transmitting some high voltage message from gods to ground. I didn't see the register nor care to spend time looking for it. On the way back, Bruce slipped, and on a sharp rock cut his hand which we stopped to and bandage. Back at the upper Armstrong Canyon snowslopes, the weather was nicer, and we enjoyed a glissade down about 2000'. We then packed down to the cars, catching up with the others, and left for home at about 6 pm.

-- Ron Hudson --

MTS GOODE (13,085') & AGGASIZ (13,893') May 2-3, 1987 Jones & Valkass

The first weekend of May this year was perfect for great snow climbs of these peaks. Graham Breakwell, Pam Kane, Karen Leonard, Jeff Solomon and Francoise Walthert met the leaders early Saturday morning at the South Lake parking lot. The lake was still partly frozen but there wasn't much snow around the shoreline. We chose to leave our crampons at the cars and set out alongside and then through increasingly deep snow drifts and at Long Lake we found the ground completely covered with snow. Our camp was at 11,200' on the west side of the totally frozen Saddlerock Lake and we had to melt snow in order to get water. After making camp, we ate lunch, took a siesta and then leaving one person behind to nap we set off on the totally snow covered route up the bowl to the east of the peak. We climbed to the lesser and higher saddle on the south ridge, over a false summit made difficult by some high angle snow covered rocks, and on to the peak. This was a perfect 1800 foot climb on snow just perfect for kicking steps that held. Our descent was marred by our inability to glissade the softening snow. At camp Karen Leonard organized an hors d'ourves party and following supper we were in our bags early to recuperate from the Friday night drive. Temperatures that night remained just at freezing.

The next morning all seven were climbing between 6:30 and 7:00 and were on snow the whole way, at first more or less paralleling the trail up to Bishop Pass and then following the most obvious gully up about a thousand feet, then crossing into another gully, steep in places and with some hard snow and up to the summit -- a great 2700 foot snow climb. We enjoyed the views from the top while snacking then set off down slope, glissading on the lower slopes to Bishop Pass and we were in camp before 1:00 pm. It was a routine hike out and an early departure to our homes. SPS newcomers Jeff Solomon and Pam Kane climbed very well and will be an asset on any SPS trip, Karen was stronger than I had ever seen her while Francoise and Graham were in their usual top form. My thanks to Maris Valkass for assisting on this trip. --- Ron Jones

I didn't get this in the schedule in time so I mailed a trip announcement to the earlier PCT participants. Joe and Duane had started it all at the Mexican border a couple trips earlier. From the very beginning people were wanting to calculate how long it would take to hike the whole Mexico-to-Canada trail. An average of 20 miles of PCT can easily be done in a weekend. Say there are 3 such weekends in a year. Then it will take roughly 43 years to finish the thing. Plus travel time. So we then had to decide whether to take parts of the PCT out of turn (that's called leapfrogging) in order to keep going year-round and in-season for each part. We decided to leapfrog to the Sierras in June. It's cooler up there. I picked the area north from Kennedy Meadows.

Sierra car shuttle distances are pretty large and this means we're talking backpacking weekends and not day-hiking weekends. Six backpackers showed up to shine on the Kennedy Meadow to Summit Meadow segment of the PCT. We left the campground at 7:30 and used the new footbridge built over the Kern River South Fork. Starting at Clover Meadow there is a recent burn and the trail has been relocated right up in it. Joe McCosker and Harry Brumer caught up and now joined us. Day-hiking.

Monache Meadows is huge. It shows up on the topo map as a large white octopus with arms having other meadow names. The South Fork meanders down the middle. Beck Meadows is where the trail first levels off going north. Mt Whitney and Langley can be seen from here. The Forest Service put in a new trail to get the PCT away from the cows. Except they made it climb 500 feet up Deer Mtn and then goes down the other side. Vicky Sharpsteen and Ruth Kocher decided to make camp at a spring near the meadow. Now there were 4 of us left: "Ski", John Lutz, Roger Potts, and me. We went up and over the ridge and finally got down to the river where we found another new bridge. It didn't take much arguing to decide to make camp. This was 16 miles in from the start.

The next morning the 4 of us hiked east of the meadow and up Cow Creek to where the PCT meets the trail from Olancha Pass. This additional 6 miles made it complete--we tied-in with the PCT segment between Olancha Pass and Horseshoe Meadow.

We broke camp and decided to hike back by way of the Dutch John Flat trail. After only a mile we already had to wade bare-footie 2 times across the South Fork. This convinced us that we had made a mistake and we should go cross-country to get back to the regular trail. We started climbing out of the canyon. Going south was right but the terrain was pushing us up Deer Mtn when we really wanted to sidehill. This had to be the worst short cut I'd ever been on. We weren't lost 'cause we knew where we were. Just inconveniently located. The mountain kept pushing us north and after 2 hours we finally reached the regular trail only about a mile from our camp. It was a 30-mile day and we didn't get back to the vehicles until 7 pm.

The next "Best of the PCT" will be in October. That will be Part 4. Don't miss it.

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