

The Sierra

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ECHO



ECHOES FROM THE CHAIR

ELECTION

The results of the Sierra Club's Board of Directors annual election are history. In spite of a very determined and commendable effort, the three pro-mountaineering candidates sponsored by GROPE finished last. In fact, none of the seven candidates from California was elected. These results are very disappointing and sobering. The Section wishes to express its gratitude to Barbara Reber, Bruce Knudtson and R. J. Secor for their candidacies in our interest, as well as Rob Roy McDonald for his consuming support of the GROPE effort and all those others who responded to our appeal for time, treasure and talent.

TASK FORCE

The Mountaineering/Insurance Task Force presented its momentous report to the Board on 7 May. (Please refer elsewhere in this issue for a partial transcript of the report's findings and recommendations.) Again, the SPS wishes to express its gratitude to Cal French, John Cheslick, Bruce Knudtson, Andrea Bonnette and other Task Force members for their strong effort in our behalf. Their meetings and report involved a lot of personal time and self-sacrifice. Such dedication deserves acknowledgment and it surely deserves a productive outcome.

Chapter Ex-Com Chair Bob Kanne attended the Board meeting, and his lengthy synopsis of its actions will appear in the June Southern Sierran. I excerpt from his report:

The following motion was approved unanimously: "The Board requests that the staff explore the availability and the costs of liability insurance for a Sierra Club mountaineering program, and provide this information to the Board as a possible addition to the FY90 budget (FY90 begins 1 October 1989). The Board thanks the Task Force for their work and the excellent report, and supports the implementation of the controls it suggests, if a Sierra Club mountaineering program is reinstated."

Cal French and Bob expressed grave concern that this resolution did not call for any action to be taken during the summer, other than the solicitation of insurance quotes (by Chief Financial Officer Andrea Bonnette). The Board felt that any implementation process should wait until quotes are in hand and the program has been given the green light. In response to their concerns, Club President Richard Cellarius read the following statement, which was approved by consensus: "The Moun-

taineering/Insurance Task Force is disbanded, with many thanks for their dedicated work. The President is directed to establish as soon as possible a process to study the best method of administering a mountaineering program with adequate guidelines, if proper insurance is obtained. This study shall include consideration of establishing a separate corporation." He actively solicited suggestions from Chapters, Board members and others regarding steps (beyond obtaining insurance quotes) that can be taken in the coming months to help achieve a positive resolution of the mountaineering insurance problem. The Board will not meet again and pass upon the FY90 budget until 16 September.

The Section is certainly very grateful to Bob Kanne and the Ex-Com for their strong stand on this outings issue. It is heartening that the Board appears receptive to restoring mountaineering insurance. It is clearly disheartening that it appears we're another four months away from a resolution. The outcome crucially depends upon obtaining more affordable insurance quotes, as well as strong Board support and the users' willingness to pay a supplemental mountaineering fee. In response to the President's solicitation for suggestions, it might be a good idea for the Chapter to form a group made up of former Task Force members and other people from impacted sections to lend their assistance.

GROPE

In the coming months GROPE will be investigating the formation of a private mountaineering club, with or without insurance, affiliated or unaffiliated with any other organization. Their preference, of course, would be the restoration of mountaineering within the Sierra Club.

INSURANCE RESTRICTIONS

Reminder from my column in the last issue: under revised guidelines, the leader and the assistant leader may now each carry one ice axe, and there may be one rope carried by either (per Bob Hicks of the Chapter Safety Committee). These items, which only the two leaders may bring, are not to be used as climbing aids, per se, but are along solely for emergency use. With the availability of the rope, however, the Management Committee again invites leaders to submit for *Echo* publication trips which include most third class routes. Leaders need to carefully screen that all participants are competent on third class. For the SPS, third class implies that the rope is along just in case and that one is not on a route where experienced and cautious mountaineers would expect to need it climbing up or

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PHOTO CREDIT: The front cover photographs features Mt. Darwin, an SPS emblem peak, taken by Tom Ross in July 1968 from peak 13,400+ northeast of Darwin. We appreciate Tom's frequent contributions of quality photographs.

ECHOES TO OUR READERS

REPORT OF THE MOUNTAINEERING/INSURANCE TASK FORCE May 1989

The task force has met three times to review correspondence from Club members, formulate plans of action, share information, and prepare recommendations. The task force has determined:

(a) That perhaps four thousand members (out of 500,000+) participate in mountaineering at least once a year in scheduled activities on which ropes, ice axes, or other mountaineering gear must be taken or used for safety.

(b) Persons making claims against the Club following mountaineering accidents tend to be new members or even non-members, and the accidents resulting in claims tend to occur during training sessions.

(c) There is no centralized authority within the Club that controls mountaineering or mountaineering training. Sections, groups, chapters, and subcommittees of the Outings Committee have, before the current ban on the use of equipment, conducted climbs under the guidelines and policies established by the Board of Directors and their own management committees.

The task force also discovered:

(d) That insurance brokers and companies are generally unfamiliar with climbing and mountaineering, that the claims history of the Club in the past few years makes us an unattractive insurance risk, and that insuring climbing during the 1989-89 fiscal year would have cost the Club approximately an additional \$500,000 over the \$400,000 it is currently paying for liability insurance (for \$47M in protection).

In its research of the law relating to liability, the task force has received several legal opinions:

(e) That properly-executed waivers from participants could reduce our exposure to claims.

After considering the issues and the options open to the Club, the task force recommends:

(f) Paying an additional premium to provide liability coverage for the Club for claims resulting from mountaineering accidents;

(g) Collecting fees and soliciting donations to provide, in part, for this insurance coverage;

(h) Requiring signed waivers from all participants in climbing;

- (i) Centralizing record keeping an authority;
- (j) Investigating the establishment of a new corporation, legally separated from the Sierra Club, that could manage either all outings or only those carrying greater risks.

The task force also recommends:

(k) Rapid action on these recommendations so that plans can be made for climbing during 1989-90.

(l) The Finance Department, working through brokers, should attempt to obtain insurance for the program described in this report, which is, in short, that

(m) All climbers are to be registered and identified;

(n) Leaders are to be trained, evaluated, and appointed;

(o) Only members with adequate training, experience, and equipment will be permitted to participate in climbs and practices.

The task force report goes on to provide an outline of the Proposed Policy and Organization. The report was presented by Cal French to the Sierra Club Board of Directors in San Francisco on 7 May 1989.

UPDATE - Annual SPS Banquet - 13 December

We will be featuring and honoring both Glen Dawson and Jules Eichorn in a very special program that will include first ascents of Thunderbolt, the East Face of Whitney, Cathedral Spires, El Picacho del Diablo (2nd), and Tahquitz routes. Other well known Sierra Club mountaineers of the '30s are expected to join us. Not to be missed! Relive the golden age of Sierra Club mountaineering as we honor those whose legacy we hand on.

PEAK INDEX: VOL 33-3 (MAY-JUNE '89)

Agassiz	Merriam
Black Giant	Pilot Knob
Finger	Red
Four Gables	Reinstein
Gilbert	Ritter
Gireaud	Royce
Johnson	Scylla
Julius Caesar	Thunderbolt
McDuffie	Tunemah
Merced	Winchell

WILDERNESS MAPS

April 1989

Dale Van Dalsen

I'm repeatedly surprised to see how many of us still use, and even BUY the obsolete USGS 15' topos! Get the United States Forest Service (USFS) map: JOHN MUIR WILDERNESS / NATIONAL PARK BACK-COUNTRY for \$2.13 at the Lone Pine, Bishop or other Ranger Stations. By mail: send check for \$3.50 to EISA, P.O. Box 8, Lone Pine, CA 93545. The Map Shop at 12112 Washington Blvd. has them for \$3.50 + tax. This remarkable map, out since 1983, is a set of three maps, on two sheets, 36" by 48", with a scale of 1:63,360, exactly 1" = 1 mile. (15' topos are 1:62,500.) Trails, roads, and, of course, wilderness boundaries, are updated - not perfectly, but a quantum improvement over the 35 year old fifteens. Best of all: Your get about 17 of our 15' topos for less than the cost one! Also, feet, not meters, used!!!

Covered: 172 of our 246 peaks: Areas 4 through 18 plus last 8 in Area 3, last 5 in Area 2, and Iron in area 19. Too much paper? The 24 square feet of map weighs 7 oz.! Take 1 sheet, cut 'em up, hang 'em on your wall, leave your T.P. at home and tear off map portions! Read the amusing Wilderness Travel Tips on the backside while tented. Beats Roper or Rushdie!

Wealthy SPSers (ambulance chasers, slumlords, Cal Tech pranksters flogging ambient fusion, gods playing doctor) will opt for the 7.5' topos and carry a calculator with 0.3048 preset to convert altimeters to metric. Sadly, USGS drafting machines have been set to such a large radii that the cartographic detail is usually the same as on the old fifteens, copied in the John Muir Wilderness Map.

Others: Ansel Adams Wilderness Map (1987, \$1.07 at Ranger Station, \$1.75 ppd. from Lone Pine (address above)) takes the northern limits from Mammoth to Tioga Pass and covers Area 19 and the last seven of Area 21. Emigrant Wilderness Map suffices for forgettable slag heaps like Black Hawk and Leavitt. Golden Trout Wilderness Map, 1986, is great for Crag, Smith, Kern, Angora, Coyote, N. Maggie, Moses, Olanchia, Cartago, and Muah.

Lastly: (Having fun; bear with me!) US Forest Service maps have the latest on redheads: Latest revision dates as of 8-88 were: Inyo: '87, Sierra: '86, Sequoia: '87, Stanislaus: '84, Toiyabe/Carson: '83, Toiyabe/Bridgeport: '84, Eldorado: '82?

THANKS!

The Editor wishes to thank again Suzanne Thomas for helping with the production of the current issue and also Bill Oliver for submitting all of his Echo input in computer readable format. Again, I encourage everyone to submit their Echo input on floppy disks (IBM/MS-DOS format).

PROPOSALS FOR THE 1989 BALLOT

1. That honorary SPS membership be granted to Glen Dawson and Jules Eichorn. This honor has only been given once before: to Norman Clyde at the Annual Chapter Banquet in 1960. Although their friend Clyde was in a class by himself, both Glen and Jules were at the leading edge of roped climbing in California. They also served the Sierra Club with terms on the Board of Directors.

2. There has been some interest expressed in again presenting the addition of Palisade Crest to our peak list. It would have barely passed last year but for the tardiness of several ballots.

3. Section bylaws currently allow any of the five elected officers to hold that office only once in five years. This appears uniquely and unnecessarily limiting. The DPS, for example, would not allow an officer to have more than one two-year consecutive term in five years, and the HPS has no restrictions at all. The SPS is growing old and we need the continued service of former officers in addition to younger blood. It is proposed that we adopt the DPS restriction. (The current SPS Chair is unwilling to repeat!)

Comments on any of these are invited as well as the introduction of other proposals. Please address your views to the *Echo* Editor. Ballots will accompany the October *Echo*.

ECHOES FROM THE CHAIR (continued from page 2)

down. Again, anyone seeking to evade or stretch this conservative interpretation should lead his or her trip privately. Please review the cautionary comments printed in the last issue of the *Echo*. Leaders are responsible for understanding and abiding by these restrictions.

The continued prohibition against the use of the ice axe as a climbing aid severely impacts the SPS. We must have the restoration of mountaineering insurance if we are to remain an active and viable part of the Sierra Club. For the time-being we must carefully and strictly abide by these onerous restrictions. What is at stake is not whether or not we again venture into the High Sierra but whether or not we do so as part of the Sierra Club. We believe that it is in the Club's interest as much as our own to maintain and nurture this tradition. It is unreasonable, however, to expect the Club to procure insurance no matter what the cost. We must all earnestly hope with the Club that affordable insurance can be found. In the meanwhile, the Club needs to prepare for the mountaineering restoration. This cannot be a time of idleness.



Thank you, Greg Gerlach, for keeping the string of correct mystery peak guesses alive for 1989. At least one person (out of 300) has figured it out! Last issue's mystery peak was Mt. Clarence King. Wrong guesses included Bear Creek Spire and Mt. Ericson.

So far, Patricia Kline has come the closest at identifying the mystery mountaineers. The editors want to extend the time to the Echo readers to correctly identify all who graced the banquet photo shown in the last issue (33-2). (Clue: they are SPS'ers)

Pete Yamagata provided last issue's msytery peak photo. The one shown here was also taken by Pete. Now, please take the following clue as inspiration to send in our guess: this peak is schedualable this year.



RED & MERCED *(continued from page 9)*

to where the trail crosses the stream a mile or so below Lower Ottoway Lake. This proved to be a good campsite.

Sunday, the eager set off for Red Peak, via Red Pass. This is probably a less tedious, more interesting, but slightly longer route to Red. I suggest you drop not more than 200' over the other side of the pass before traversing to an obvious chute. The eager met the Sybarites at the outlet of Upper Ottoway Lake for lunch, then proceeded with the ascent of Merced. First east to an obvious saddle, then south up the north shoulder to the ridge, then west, gaining a couple of hundred

feet, to the summit. The Sierra looked to be covered with smog and the Minarets were barely visible. There were a couple of forest fires visible but some believed that most of the smoke was from the huge fire in Yellowstone. Without a view, I wonder how long peak-bagging would be popular.

Sunday night was the real social hour and a good selection of delicacies was shared by all. Bears did not visit this campsite. The 14 mile hike out was hot and interrupted several times by someone taking a dip in the creek, with the last chance being at Illilouette Creek, where everyone got in the act. The last couple of miles were uphill; we arrived at the cars at 4:00 pm and had dinner in Fresno.

ECHOES OF OUR CLIMBS

ON RITTER WITH MUIR

June 24-26, 1988

Bill Oliver, Reiner Stenzel

It was 10:20 am and strangely quiet on the saddle - very subdued. The eleven of us had just summited Banner, coming up from Lake Ediza. We slowly sorted our gear, collected our thoughts, and paused - on the brink of something special. John Muir had come this way first, alone in Oct. of 1872, west from Yosemite. We had been sharing his journal the last day and a half, and we were now poised to share in his journey.

Mount Ritter is the king of the mountains of the middle portion of the High Sierra, as Shasta of the north and Whitney of the south sections. moreover, as far as I know, it had never been climbed. I had explored the adjacent wilderness summer after summer, but my studies thus far had never drawn me to the top of it. its height above sea-level is about 13,300 feet (13,157'), and it is fenced round by steeply inclined glaciers, and canyons of tremendous depth and ruggedness, which render it almost inaccessible. but difficulties of this kind only exhilarate the mountaineer.

["A Near View of the High Sierra" comes from Muir's first book, *The Mountains of California*, 1894.]

It was the end of June, 1988 - first BMTC from early in January and now our 5th and final weekend of AMTC. Yesterday we had reveled in an awesome and pristinely beautiful backpack up from Agnew Meadows. The afternoon had been packed with advanced snow climbing practice.

.... in so wild and so beautiful a region was spent my first day, every sight and sound inspiring, leading one far out of himself, yet feeding and building up his individuality.

Now came the solemn, silent evening. long, blue, spiky shadows crept out across the snowfields, while a rosey glow, at first scarce discernible, gradually deepened and suffused every mountain-top, flushing the glaciers and the harsh crags above them. This was the alpenglow, to me one of the most impressive of all the terrestrial manifestations of God. At the touch of this divine light, the mountains seemed to kindle to a rapt, religious consciousness, and stood hushed and waiting like devout worshipers. Just before the alpenglow began to fade, two crimson clouds came streaming across the summit like wings of flame, rendering the sublime scene yet more impressive; then came darkness and the stars.

.... the dawn in the dry, wavering air of the desert was glorious. Everything encouraged my undertaking and betokened success. There was no cloud in the sky, no storm tone in the wind.

We had begun our day at 3:45, after a night alternately restful and fitful. BMTC students continue to be shown slides of the great Ritter tragedy of Memorial Day weekend, 1971, when

four of five climbers with a Sierra Club outing perished in a blizzard on the peak. The body recovery shots are not easily forgotten and, though this event remained unspoken, it was never far from our minds' eyes.

How glorious a greeting the sun gives the mountains! To behold this alone is worth the pains of any excursion a thousand times over. The highest peaks burned like islands in a sea of liquid shade. Then the lower peaks and spires caught the glow, and long lances of light, streaming through many a notch and pass, fell thick on the frozen meadows. The majestic form of Ritter was full in sight, and I pushed on rapidly ...

... every feature became more rigidly alpine, without, however, producing any chilling effect; for going to the mountains is like going home.

Arriving on the summit of this dividing crest, one of the most exciting pieces of pure wilderness was disclosed that I ever discovered in all my mountaineering. There, immediately in front, loomed the majestic mass of Mount Ritter, with a glacier swooping down its face nearly to my feet, then curving westward and pouring its frozen flood into a dark blue lake (Lake Catherine), whose shores were bound with precipices of crystalline snow; while a deep chasm drawn between the divide and the glacier separated the massive picture from everything else. I could see only the one sublime mountain, the one glacier, the one lake; the whole veiled with one blue shadow - rock, ice, and water close together, without a single leaf or sign of life. After gazing spellbound, I began instinctively to scrutinize every notch and gorge and weathered buttress of the Mountain, with reference to making the ascent. The entire front above the glacier appeared as one tremendous precipice, slightly receding at the top, and bristling with spires and pinnacles set above one another in formidable array. Massive lichen-stained battlements stood forward here and there, hacked at the top with angular notches, and separated by frosty gullies and recesses that have been veiled in shadow ever since their creation; while to right and left, as far as I could see, were huge, crumbling buttresses, offering no hope to the climber. The head of the glacier sends up a few finger-like branches through narrow couloirs; but these seemed too steep and short to be available, especially as I had no axe with which to cut steps, and the numerous narrow-throated gullies down which stones and snow are avalanched seemed hopelessly steep, besides being interrupted by vertical cliffs; while the whole front was rendered still more terribly forbidding by the chill shadow and the gloomy blackness of the rocks.

.... I could not distinctly hope to reach the summit from this side, yet I moved on across the glacier as if driven by fate. Contending with myself, the season is too far spent, I said, and even should I be successful, I might be stormbound on the mountain; and in the cloud darkness, with the cliffs and

the crevasses covered with snow, how could I escape? No; I must wait till next summer. I would only approach the mountain now, and inspect it, creep about its flanks, learn what I could of its history, holding myself ready to flee on the approach of the first storm cloud. But we little know until tried how much of the uncontrollable there is in us, urging over glaciers and torrents, and up perilous heights, let the judgment forbid as it may.

Our intended route on Ritter had been intermittently discernible from the upper flank of Banner, as morning clouds alternately cloaked and flushed the peak. Abandoning the security of the saddle, I quietly headed up the center of the snow-blanketed glacier - aiming for the middle one of three chutes starting higher up. As the snow was firm yet kickable, the crampons stayed in our packs but ice axes were in hand. Not yet half way up the slope I looked back and suddenly felt very alone as no one else had yet taken up the course. As the terrain steepened, I steered right and exited onto the rock by the right-hand gully - and we were all in tow.

I succeeded in gaining the foot of the cliff on the eastern extremity of the glacier, and there discovered the mouth of a narrow avalanche gully, through which I began to climb, intending to follow it as far as possible, and at least obtain some fine wild views for my pains. ... I thus made my way into a wilderness of crumbling spires and battlements, built together in bewildering combinations, and glazed in many places with a thin coating of ice, which I had to hammer off with stones. The situation was becoming gradually more perilous; but, having passed several dangerous spots, I dared not think of descending; for, so steep was the entire ascent, one would inevitably fall to the glacier in case a single misstep were made. Knowing, therefore, the tried danger beneath, I became all the more anxious concerning the developments to be made above, and began to be conscious of a vague foreboding of what actually befell; not that I was given to fear, but rather because my instincts, usually so positive and true, seemed vitiated in some way, and were leading me astray. At length, after attaining an elevation of about 12,800 feet, I found myself at the foot of a sheer drop in the bed of the avalanche channel I was tracing, which seemed absolutely to bar further progress. It was only about forty-five or fifty feet high, and somewhat roughened by fissures and projections; but these seemed so slight and insecure, as footholds, that I tried hard to avoid the precipice altogether, by scaling the wall of the channel on either side. But, though less steep, the walls were smoother than the obstructing rock, and repeated efforts only showed that I must either go right ahead or turn back. The tried dangers beneath seemed even greater than that of the cliff in front; therefore, after scanning its face again and again, I began to scale it, picking my holds with intense caution. After gaining a point about halfway to the top, I was suddenly brought to a dead stop, with arms outspread, clinging close to the face of the rock, unable to move hand or foot either up or down. My doom appeared fixed. I must fall. There would be a moment of bewilderment, and then a lifeless rumble down the one general precipice to the glacier below.

From the bottom of the right-hand chute, Reiner took the lead and we soon crossed back left to the middle chute. It was easy, and critical, for us to replenish our water bottles from snow melt. Slowly, cautiously we worked our way up, targeting on the prominent leftward-leading diagonal chute up near the crest. Deliberate route-finding kept the climb below very high third class, and no belays were needed.

When this final danger flashed upon me, I became nerve-shaken for the first time since setting foot on the mountains, and my mind seemed to fill with a stifling smoke. But this terrible eclipse lasted only a moment, when life blazed forth again with preternatural clearness. I seemed suddenly to become possessed of a new sense. The other self, bygone experiences, instinct, or guardian angel, - call it what you will, - came forward and assumed control. Then my trembling muscles became firm again, every rift and flaw in the rock was seen as through a microscope, and my limbs moved with a positiveness and precision with which I seemed to have nothing at all to do. Had I been borne aloft upon wings, my deliverance could not have been more complete.

The snow in the diagonal chute was deep and soft, so we carefully threaded our way up along the rock on the outward rim. Topping the chute put us on the highest battlement, with the jagged summit finally in view and now near at hand.

Above this memorable spot, the face of the mountain is still more savagely hacked and torn. It is a maze of yawning chasms and gullies, in the angles of which rise beetling crags and piles of detached boulders that seem to have been gotten ready to be launched below. But the strange influx of strength I had received seemed inexhaustible. I found a way without effort, and soon stood upon the topmost crag in the blessed light.

How truly glorious the landscape circled around this noble summit! - giant mountains, valleys innumerable, glaciers and meadows, rivers and lakes, with wide blue sky bent tenderly over them all. But in my first hour of freedom from that terrible shadow, the sunlight in which I was laving seemed all in all.

We also reveled in the panorama at 12:45 pm, taking in the views in every direction, taking scarce note of the somber clouds creeping our way from the south. After 45 minutes topside we headed down by the standard southeast glacier route, taking the chute next to the far right (west) one above the glacier. Finishing this final steepness we were now on large snow slopes beneath leaden skies and lowering clouds.

First a few flakes then tiny pellets, and within ten more minutes serious hail assaulted us. The storm clouds rang out their thunderous crescendoes, while the rocks and our bones shuddered in wild resonance. Our quickened pace was soon arrested as the hail approached the size of large marbles and riveted us with amazing intensity. A meager excuse for temporary shelter was provided by open trenches on the downhill side of some large boulders. The storm enveloped us and excited us

and sent shivers passing from body to body. We waited in vain for the fury to abate while our position became increasingly untenable as the lightning neared.

The word was passed - we snugged down our helmet straps, unsheathed our ice axes and stomped our feet in wild anticipation. A shrill blast from my whistle brought forth an eager wave of mountaineers screaming and charging out of the trenches and down the snow slope. Geronimo! Damn the torpedoes! Far out! Thunder boomed on the right of us. Thunder boomed on the left. Onward we charged into the valley of hail. The lazy brook below was becoming a frenzied torrent at an alarming rate. At the last moment we managed to storm across a thin beachhead and gain the high ground leading down to the lake. The hail finally abated somewhat and the hillsides were now everywhere awash with heavy runoff. Within a half-hour, at 4 pm, our camp was gleefully retaken and we dove into our tents, anxious to shed our wet clothing and to listen to the rain dance from warm and secure bags.

We slowly emerged from our cocoons about 6:30 pm, eager to behold in awe a clearing sunset and anxious to get serious about our final happyhour. Our goodies and our good cheer were shared in a circle of new mountaineers - Al, Daemon, Douglas, Glenn, John, Risto, Sean, Todd and Vance - and we thought about the one who had come this way first. The mountain spirits had looked favorably upon our many weekend ventures - and found us worthy. May it always be so.

Bill

REINSTEIN, FINGER, TUNEMAH

September 2-5, 1988

George Toby / Dave Dykeman

The only way to describe this trip is lots of miles and lots of gain. The peak climbs were relatively easy, but getting there was a bear. I believe Tunemah is the most inaccessible peak in the Sierras. The group consisted of 5 tough mountaineers; George Toby, Dave Dykeman, Wayne Wurzbarger, Graham Breakwell, and Tom Eng. A good paved road goes from Shaver Lake to the Wishon Dam. We started at 7:00 am Friday, Sept. 2nd at the Woodchuck Trailhead about 1/2 mile south of the dam. Good parking and a toilet. This was a long hike in over Crown Pass then down past scenic Halfmoon Lake and down to a good campsite along the North Fork of the Kings. About 16 miles and 4,400' gain.

Saturday, September 3rd: We hiked up along the Kings about 2 miles to Portal Lake. Dropped packs and climbed Reinstein by the class 2 south slopes. We returned to the packs at Portal Lake and climbed up the left side of the creek on a steep use trail to Midway Lake and basecamp. That afternoon we set out for Finger Peak. We hiked directly south about 1/2 mile then hooked to the east to climb up a wide sandy chute that took us up to the low point of Kettle Ridge (11,200'), about a mile from Finger Peak. Lots of talus hopping took us to the summit of Finger (12,404') in good time. We returned to camp well

before dark. This was a real neat route up from Midway Lake. A rewarding climb. Finger really dominates the area, with great views.

Sunday, September 4th: We strode out at 6:30 am for Tunemah. The route was up to the same Kettle Ridge we used for Finger, then descended on a 140 degree course to go past two prominent lakes that fed into Blue Canyon Creek at about 10,400'. Keeping the same course, we climbed up a rocky slope that was fierce from a distance, to a pass at 11,046' just barely on the Mt. Goddard topo. We dropped down to Alpine Creek (10,400') and another small lake just on the top edge of the Marion Peak topo, then up the sandy Western slopes of Tunemah to the summit (11,894'). The climb from the lake at the base of Tunemah was only 1,500' gain but what a devil to get to. From Tunemah we could see Tehipite Dome jutting out over the deep, deep canyon of the Middle Fork of the Kings. Beyond that was all smoke from a fire somewhere down the canyon. Dave led all the climbs on this trip and took us back by an easier route. We crossed from the Alpine Creek drainage to the Blue Canyon drainage by an unmarked col. (11,400') about 5/8 miles N/NE of pass 11,046' we came over going in. A bit higher but more direct and easier to do. Dave then stayed high and contoured north around Blue Canyon, then up past the south slopes of Finger to Kettle Ridge and down to camp. We picked up packs and descended to Portal Lake and on for another mile arriving at a beautiful campsite at 6:30 pm in a meadow along the Kings River. A good days work and nice job of cross country navigation by Dave.

Monday, September 5th: We hiked out on the Woodchuck Trail to arrive at the cars by mid-afternoon. Another 16 to 17 miles. This was a tough but rewarding trip. All five of us made all the peaks. To top it off we all met in Bakersfield at the Maitia's Basque Restaurant for an excellent dinner.

RED AND MERCED

Jim Murphy / Steve Thaw

September 3-5, 1988

Steve "Polar Bear" Thaw and I met a determined group on Saturday morning at the Mono Meadow parking area, about 10 miles up the Glacier Point road. We were a little late getting started at the appointed time due to the distance from the Ranger Station (to get the permit) and the roadhead.

The crossing of Illilouette Creek was simple, this being late summer after a low snow winter. The trip does not offer any technical difficulty but considerably challenges your endurance as both the hike and drive are long. This particular weekend was the hottest I've experienced in the Sierra. Steve and Andi slipped away for a dip in the creek mid-day and some other hikers described it as a revealing sight.

Late in the day we were getting tired, and low on water. There was no water running at Upper Merced Lake area so we hiked

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The leader had a permit for 10, 8 confirmed applicants, 4 shows at the trailhead, and 3 survivors for this strenuous 7 day, 6 peak cross-country trip. In retrospect, this small turnout allowed us to complete the trip almost as planned without problems. This is how it went:

SUN 8/7: Four men with 60lbs packs left South Lake at 7:30am : Ray Castigliona, Dave Helphrey, Ron Robson, and Rainer Stenzel. After crossing Bishop Pass at 11am we decided to cancel the planned standard ascent of Mt. Agassiz in favor of the less popular Gireaud Peak in Dusy Basin next day. We set up basecamp at Lake 10,742' at 1pm, loafed around the lakes, and let a thunderstorm rain out over us.

MON 8/8: We set out at 5:15am for Gireaud Peak along the ridge South-Southeast of Lake 10,742' in order to enter the saddle between Peak 12,265' and Gireaud Peak. The "easy East ridge" (according to Roper) required some 4th class moves. We worked our way around from the South and reached the summit at 8:30am, to be the second party on this peak in 1988. We descended through the first steep chute West of the peak toward the Rainbow Lakes, then back to Lake 10,742'. Ray had the feeling it would get worse (he was right) and decided to turn back at this point. In the afternoon we carried our packs down into LeConte Canyon, 3 mi South along the John Muir Trail to where Ladder Creek joins the Kings River. There our cross-country route toward the Black Divide and Enchanted Gorge began. The first obstacle was to cross the roaring Kings River. Dave slipped on a wet log and went for a bath, luckily received only a few bruises. After ascending through steep brush and forest we made camp at 5pm near a pretty meadow on Ladder Creek just below Ladder Lake.

TUE 8/9: We left at 6:30am to climb over steep rock faces up to Ladder Lake(10,498'), around the North shore to a small unnamed lake at the Southern inlet stream. There we paused before a 1600' steep ascent to an unnamed lake at 12,200' one mile Southeast of Mt. McDuffie. The last hurdle to cross the Black Divide was an unobscured ridge between the two unnamed lakes at 12,200'. Crossing the saddle turned out to be a 4th class climb with full packs on highly unstable rock which involved time consuming belays and precluded further progress that afternoon. After improvising campsites on a rocky shore we watched the late afternoon thunderstorms and went to bed with the birds.

WED 8/10: We started at 5:30 to climb Mt. McDuffie from the Southwest ridge which, according to Roper few people have ever set foot on. After a class 2-3 ascent we reached the summit at 7am on a clear cold morning. The register contained the original book from 1959 since few people climb this remote peak. We retraced our steps to Lake 12,200', packed out and started at 10am our descent into the Enchanted Gorge following the intermittent stream West-Southwest from Lake 12,200' into the Gorge. This section of the trip was probably the most adventurous and rugged one involving a 2500' descent on huge talus blocks with an uncertain drop into the Gorge. The stream vanished frequently among the giant brown boulders which were scattered randomly between the steep canyon walls and resembled a lifeless moon landscape. After hours of careful downclimbing we slid down a steep scree slope North of peak 9,747' into the Enchanted Gorge. Incredibly steep barren walls rose toward the Ragged Spur in the West. Merciless heat, smoke from forest fires in the South, and continued travel over talus blocks wore us out and we stayed at Lake 9,800' rather than at Chasm Lake as planned. The usual thunderstorm developed at 4pm. We camped on rocky ground since there was nothing but enchanting rocks around us.

THUR 8/11: Now we had to get out from this rock abyss. Ascending the Gorge toward the Ionian Basin we reached Chasm Lake at 7:45am after 2 hours of bouldering and talus scrambling. Leaving our packs on marmot-proof suspensions we set out at 8:30am to climb Scylla. From the North shore of Chasm Lake we headed West to Lake 11,837', from its South shore to Lake 12,100', around the North shore to climb the class2-3 Northwest slopes of Scylla. On the peak at 11am we were rewarded with a spectacular view into the Enchanted Gorge, Ionian Basin, Mt.Goddard, and growing cumulus clouds all around us. We descended along the snowfields North of Scylla and The Three Sirens to Chasm Lake and continued at 2pm our hike out of the Ionian Basin. Although Charybdis was our next goal the plan had to be changed due to a fierce thunderstorm at 3pm which dumped hail and snow on us. In winter-like weather we continued via Lake 11,828' to Lake 11,939' between Black Giant and Mt.Solomons. Campsites at the lake were poor, but rain and freezing temperatures got us rapidly to bed.

FRI 8/12: Ron and I got up at 4:30 to climb Black Giant at 5:30 reaching the summit at 6:45 via the class 2 Western slopes on frost covered slippery rocks. Overlooking deep LeConte Canyon we planned a high altitude cross-country route to Mt.Gilbert and Mt.Johnson, our next destination. At 9am we hiked out toward Helen Lake and a mile East along the John Muir Trail which we left at the 11,300' contour level heading Northeast toward Lake 11,428' South of Echo Col. We proceeded West through a class3 chute over the ridge South of Mt.Powell and reached Lake 11,725' for a late lunch. Continuing for another mile due West we reached the stream and valley leading to Gilbert and Johnson, climbed up to Lake 11,650' below the snowfield West of Mt.Johnson where we camped on good sites. Although the cross-country route kept us above 11,000' it was probably more strenuous than descending along the John Muir Trail into Big Pete Meadows (9,200') and climbing straight up to Lake 11,650'.

SAT 8/13: After the usual 4:30am rise all three of us climbed with day packs Mt.Gilbert via the class2 Southeastern slopes reaching the summit at 6:45. Great view but ice cold winds. After returning down the same scree slopes we packed out and climbed at 8:30 onto the ridge about 0.3mi North of Mt.Johnson. Leaving the packs on the ridge Ron and I climbed along the class3-4 ridge route to Mt.Johnson which was reached at 10:45am. Certainly, the Southeast side of the mountain would have been the easier route. Since Dave and our packs were close to peak 12,640 on the ridge we retraced our steps, downclimbed the steep East side of the ridge, and continued over lots of talus toward Treasure Lakes. We followed the Treasure Lake Trail for a mile, then dropped straight down to the South shore of South Lake which, due to a very low water level offered a beach walk. At 4pm we were rolling home on four wheels, only interrupted by a warm bath at Keough Hot Springs and a delicious dinner at Curt Herring's Smoke Signals in Lone Pine.

It took about a week to recover from this strenuous cross-country trip which covered over 40 miles and 20,000 feet gain. But it was exciting to explore a part of the Sierra Nevada which is still true wilderness rugged, remote, without trails, horses and people. Very special thanks go to my climbing partners, assistant leader Ron Robson and Dave Helphrey with whom I shared easy and tough times for seven days.

Raiper S.

Raiper

THUNDERBOLT & WINCHELL

5-7 AUG '88

BILL OLIVER & TOM DURYEA

This trip was rescheduled from 2-4 July for lack of a reserved permit, and Tom came forward for lack of the reserved assistant. Accompanied by Marcia Male and Eddie Nunez, and in spite of trailhead thunder overnite, we headed up the N. Fork of Big Pine Crk at 7:30 Fri morning, intent on joining Brian Smith and Jeff Solomon, already at Sam Mack Lake. Moving at a leisurely pace we arrived about 1:30, the route from SM Mdw to the Lake being off-trail with a lot of boulder hopping. I wondered if it was worth it considering the dearth of decent campsites. The four of us set up in a sheltered draw near the pond SSE of the Lake, which afforded imposing and foreboding views of N Pal and Tbolt. Jeff showed up first and told of his & Brian's ascent of Sill and attempt of Polemonium. Brian arrived post sunset having also checked Gayley off his peak list. Unfortunately, Jeff had to call it quits due to a broken crampon.

Sat. we were up at 5 (our first crux move) and heading off for Tbolt (14,003') at 6. The N. Pal 7.5' topo clearly shows the large snow couloir fingering up from the Tbolt glacier onto the N face. Moving up the glacier it was clear to all that this peak was both well and deeply fortified, set to repulse all but the most determined assault. I cautioned everyone that we had come not to conquer the peak but to become one with it. We breached the moat and paused in horror at crux #2 - the ice wall defiantly thrown up behind the schrund. Several of us made a devious feint to the right, enabling Tom on the left to skillfully capture an unguarded route up a 15' headwall. Belayed past this crux, we should have encountered an easy snow climb up the gully - except this was now mid-summer in a low snow year. We ventured up the icy couloir aways but, for lack of nerves of ice and tools for ice, I was forced to veer left onto the rocks and belay the group off this treacherous defense. Not to be so easily outsmarted, the peak offered us sustained, cruddy rock on this arete as we carefully threaded our way directly up to the summit pinnacle. Our trusty helmets served us well as the mountain was apt to turn us back with sorties of rockfall.

A gleeful "Gotch ya!" was heard as it became evident that the prominent high point was not the summit pinnacle but a cleverly-fashioned subterfuge. We had overclimbed and discouragement ran rampant among our small, brave band as we sought to outflank this dreadful sentinel. Passing to the right looked foolhardy; to the left impossible! Tom brazenly scouted down the ridge to the right (W), however, and discovered an unguarded notch, allowing passage over the ridge and down into a large gully system. Heading back left (E), the gully narrowed to a chute separating the fake and true summit turrets.

Having successfully penetrated to the mtn's inner yard, we now drummed up our courage for a determined assault up the final tower wall. Tom managed to free this low 5th class, 30' wall and establish the belay. Having about cruxed out, we cautiously approached the summit around a thin ledge - eager to behold

a white flag fluttering in the breeze. It was not to be. "Gotch ya!" filled the air again as the peak's summit register, through some insidious, evil power, was seen to be precariously set atop a small, steep facet of a tall, upthrust, outward-leaning rock crystal. With our goal so tantalizingly close, amid much wailing and gnashing of teeth, at 1 pm we set about entangling the lonesome spire with our ropes - as if we could somehow capture our prize and reel it in.

Having smuggled up his "rock" shoes, Tom gamely attempted to lead the 12-foot blank face and corner to the register. Their magic strangely spent, however, the shoes failed. The box was secured to the rock by a single, thin screw, around which the box could freely rotate - no hope of securing a rope over it. After much rope tossing (aka lassoing), we netted the crown securely enough to allow each of us, in turn, to make a large, fresh-air leap from a nearby rock onto the steep, sheer pinnacle. Once airborne, during which time one passed into the heady realm of a 14er, the others immediately hauled in the belay and shamelessly dragged the "climber" up to the box we had so recklessly sought. It was made not of silver or gold; it held no emeralds or rubies. But housed within this holy repository was The Book - in which we proudly recorded our vaunted deed as we hurled pagan cries over our newly-won realm.

Our exuberance was bounded only by the dread prospect of escaping from our breathless, golden aerie. Retracing our route, two rapps, a belay and several hours later we were past the schrund by 6 and straggled into camp near dusk, tired but exultant. We were not a fast group but we were diligent and cautious and blessed - the weather had been our secret ally and the peak had befriended us at last.

Sunday Tom & I were up at 5 and summited Winchell in 4 hours rt, including 25 min. topside. We climbed the standard SE approach - taking the right of two prominent gullies. It was fast, fun 3rd class. Brian had run off to do Agassiz - completing his sweep of the area. Eddie exercised his camera skills, while Marcia bathed in the morning sun. The cars were regained at 3:00. The mountain spirits had looked kindly upon our ventures - and we were found worthy.

1989 UNIMPAIRED SNOWMELT RUNOFF FORECASTS

These figures are the water runoff forecasts in percent of normal, based on a 53 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, 60%; San Joaquin, 58%; Kings, 59%; Kaweah, 58%; Tule, 43%; Kern, 51%; Owens, 64%; Mono, 76%. The Owens basin breaks down as follows: Long Valley, 72%; Long Valley to Tinemaha, 64%; Tinemaha to Haiwee, 66%.

Last year's average of these river basin forecasts works out to 38% of normal, while the 1989 average is 58% of normal.

R. J. Secor

FRENCH CANYON
September 1-6, 1988
Norm Rohn / Ret Moore

After a brief visit a year ago and some of the recent publicity about fishing in French Canyon, Ret and I were eager to give it a try. This combined climbing and fishing outing seemed to be the opportunity. Seven of us made the long pull up the Pine Creek Trail past the tungsten mine and into the lovely lake basin above. Alternating showers and hot sun had us switching gear at intervals. After the pass, we cross-countried over to French Lake and set up tents. The lake looked good, but we saw no evidence of fish.

Day 2: Greg Gerlach, Ed Kenney, and Bob McCurry, who hails from Corpus Christi, headed for Four Gables while the rest of us fished our way past Steelhead and L Lakes and on to Puppet Lake to set up a camp. The two lakes west of Puppet, just below Pilot Knob, turned out to have the best fishing.

Day 3: The three Four Gables climbers joined by Ret Moore and Ingrid Knoblich headed for a climb of Pilot Knob from the north. Things went well and we exchanged signal-mirror flashes between the summit and camp. That afternoon we moved camp to some fine sandy sites between Royce Lakes Nos. 3 and 4 (there are five, starting from the south.) Eivor Nilsson joined us that afternoon.

Day 4: Greg, Ed, and Bob climbed Merriam and Royce in short-order and hurried back to join in the fishing effort. There were lots of golden trout and cross-breeds in evidence but they weren't exactly jumping in the boat. We did have enough to eat, however.

Day 5: Ret and I and the two ladies climbed Merriam and Royce while the fellows worked on their assignment, fish dinner for the party. Lakes 4 and 5 proved to be the most productive. After our return from peak bagging the whole

(continued at right)

SPS TRIP ANNOUNCEMENTS

June 30 - July 4

Friday - Monday

M: Pettit (10,788'), Piute (10,541') and Volunteer (10,479'): Learn of the ballad of Smedberg Lake as we tromp sixty (60) miles with much gain for these remote beauties. Send SASE to Leaders: **Doug Mantle; George Hubbard.**

June 24-25

Saturday-Sunday

M: Kennedy Mtn. (11,433'), Mt. Harrington (11,005'): Backpack 5 miles to camp at Fry Mdw. Both peaks are hiked via trails almost to the summits. Class 3 summit on Harrington. Send SASE with experience and conditioning to Leader: **Larry Tidball, Asst: Richard Fritsen.**

PRIVATE TRIP ANNOUNCEMENTS

DISCLAIMER: *The Echo publishes paid trip notices as a service to its readers. Such trips are private. They have not been reviewed by the SPS nor are they in any way sponsored by the Sierra Club. Please refer to the back page for advertisement submittal policy and guidelines.*

July 28-31

Friday - Monday

Whaleback (11,726'), Glacier Ridge (12,416') and Triple Divide? (12,634'): A strenuous trip with some rope work. Send SASE to Leaders: **Maris Valkass** (1728 Van Horne Lane, Redondo Beach, CA 90278) and **Ron Jones.**

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Advertise your private climbing activity in the Sierra or elsewhere for \$1.00 (first 4 lines, additional lines are \$1 each). Other product/services ads and announcements are accepted at the \$1.00 per line rate.

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Michael Fridella, Jr.
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Jeffrey C. Solomon
Carolyn West

ECHO INPUT!!!

Send in your trip reports, climbing stories, comments and pot shots! We want it all!

party loaded up and took the direct route just northwest of VABM 12563 down toward Honeymoon Lake. We found a beautiful campsite near water and with plenty of wood at about 10,800' and 500 yards north of Golden lake. That night we feasted on golden trout and had a great campfire.

Day 6: Ret, Ed, and Bob dropped their packs near Honeymoon Lake and climbed Julius Caesar while the ladies, Irving Townsend and I loafed our way down the trail to the roadhead. Just as the climbers arrived at the cars it began to rain.

This was another fine fishing/climbing outing with an outstanding group of hikers. All got the peaks they wanted

ADVANCED SPS MONTHLY PROGRAM

July 12: **CLIVE BAILLIE** "Climbing in Bonnie Scotland".

Aug 9: **NORRIS MERRITT** "Guided Climbs in S. America - Cotopaxi, Chimborazo, etc."

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MISSING ISSUES: Inquiries regarding missing issues should be addressed to the section **Mailer:** Ron Grau, 456 Chester Place, Pomona CA 91768. Extra copies of the 30th Anniversary *Echo* are available by sending \$4.50 per copy to the section Mailer. **Prospective new members:** for a one time complimentary copy of the *Echo* send a SASE with 45 cent postage to the Mailer.

AWARDS: Emblem and senior emblem pins (\$12.00), list finisher pins (\$10.00), and section patches (\$2.00) are available from the section **Treasurer:** Ruth Armentrout, 23262 Haynes Street, Canoga Park CA 91307.

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