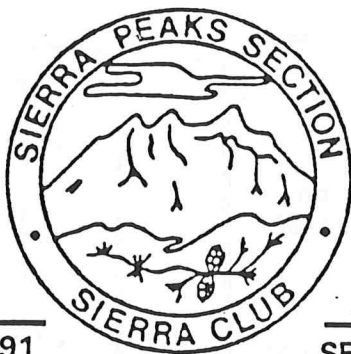


The Sierra



ECHO

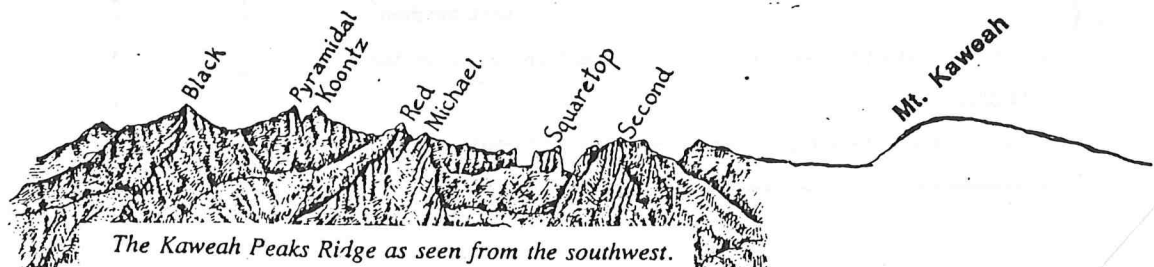
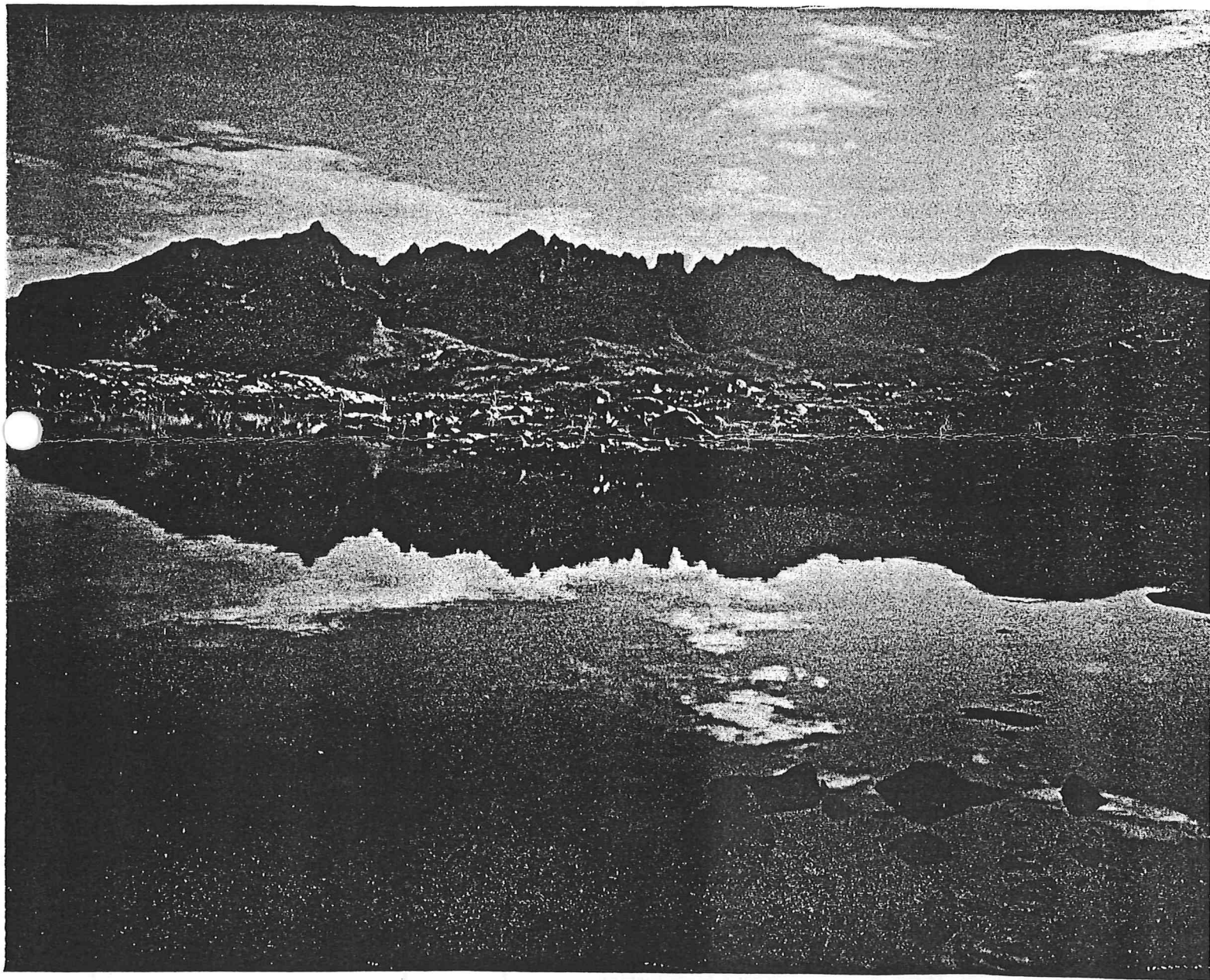
VOLUME 35

1991

SEP-OCT

NUMBER 5

SPECIAL ISSUE: CLIMBING THE BLACK KAWEAH



The Kaweah Peaks Ridge as seen from the southwest.

SPS MONTHLY PROGRAMS

OCTOBER 9 WEDNESDAY
 "The Khumbu". Patty Kline speaks on the heart of the Himalayas, the Khumbu region of Nepal.

NOVEMBER 13 WEDNESDAY
 "Aconcagua". Tom Taplin will describe his 1989 climb of the highest peak in South America.

DECEMBER 11 WEDNESDAY
 ANNUAL BANQUET: "Underground Mountaineering". Spectacular slides by Carol Vessey and Bill Farr of an international expedition to the world's deepest cave near Oaxaca, Mexico. Pacifica Hotel.

JANUARY 8 WEDNESDAY
 "Ecuadorean Odyssey - from High Volcanoes to Lush Jungles". Bill Oliver will share his experiences from this July 1991 trip.

FEBRUARY 12 WEDNESDAY
 "Kayaking in the Sea of Cortes". Andy Fried will tell us about his trips to Baja California's Eastern coast.

Monthly meetings are held at the L.A. Dept of Water and Power Bldg at 111 N. Hope St in the L.A. Civic Center. Auditorium on Level A (1 floor below main lobby). 7:30 PM. Newcomers welcome!

PEAK INDEX

Angora Mtn	Matterhorn Pk
Coyote Pk	Mt McGee
Emerald Pk	Mt Mendel
Florence Pk	Mokelumne Pk
Mt Henry	Whorl Mtn (2)

COVER PHOTO:

Kaweah Peaks Ridge from the southwest. Taken from highest of Little Five Lakes by Bill Oliver. Cover silhouette from The Climber's Guide to the High Sierra by Steve Roper, Sierra Club Books, 1976.

ADVERTISE!

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.

SPS FALL TRIPS 1991

OCTOBER

5-6	I: Three Sisters	Dave Petzold, Carolyn West
12-13	I: Clouds Rest	George Hubbard, Mary McMannes
12-13	M: Harrington, Kennedy	Vaughn Sherman, Bruce Parker
19-20	I: Silver Pk	Dave Petzold, Carolyn West
19-20	I: Scodie Mtn, Lamont Pk	Jerry & Nancy Keating, Walt Whisman
26-27	M: Sawtooth, Needham	Ed Zdon, Bruce Parker

NOVEMBER

9-10	I: Stanislaus Pk, Mt Patterson	Larry Tidball, Scot Jamison
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ECHOES FROM THE CHAIR

("Keep it short," Editor Sumner says. "Trust me," I tell him.) We're all indebted to Nominations Chair **Graham Breakwell** for developing an excellent roster of candidates. Congrats to **Barbara Cohen** on achieving her M-Rating; thanks to Dave Petzold and Jim Raiford for assisting with her provisional leads. Re. **Joe Stephens'** letter [enclosed]: He's agreed that we should leave the matter of re-consideration of the Mountaineer's List up to the membership, and that we should allow a year for ample expression of views.

Our Sierra **ECHO** subscription has risen to **\$12/year**. The increase, well overdue, is necessary to rescue our depleted checking account, to cover increased operating costs, and to allow purchase of various Section pins. **Early renewals** will be very helpful and greatly appreciated. Want to help even more? **Sustaining Memberships** are going for only \$25/yr. For this you get the satisfaction of helping the Section, special recognition in the **ECHO**, and **1st Class** postage on your subscription. Go for it!

Special thanks to our newest **Sustaining Members: Bill T. Russell and Patty Kline.**

Re. **December Banquet:** Attendees are encouraged to exhibit photos of the past year's outings.

LEADERS: Trip Writeups for the March - July 4 Schedule are due NLT Nov. 1. As Karen Leonard is out of town, please address all input and inquiries to Bill Oliver.

Mountain Records - 9/18/91

by Bill T Russell, Chair

The peaks needing a container and book are:

Arrow	Dade	Henry	Powell	Three Sisters
Brewer	Emerson	Jordan	Senger	Tunemah
Clarence King	Genevra	McGee	Silliman	Virginia
Cotter	Gray	Muir		

The peaks needing a book are:

Bear Creek Spire	Haeckel	Middle Pal	Rockhouse
Gabb	McAdie	North	Taylor Dome

Notes: Someone apparently removed the original rectangular SC box from Brewer and left it in a bear box. Someone else started to take it back up but when it got too heavy they left it in a pile of rocks near a trail. Where is it? Help!

McGee, Henry and Dade in the above list have inadequate containers. When new ones are placed, please bring down the old or inadequate one.

We would like more information about registers than is asked for on the current sign up sheet. What kind of register can? Dates and kinds of books, e.g., full top spiral, 1974-81. It is helpful to get a written report from people. I have a hard time coping with spoken inputs that I receive at meetings, especially if I get several at once.

Thank you: Valuable information and/or service has been received lately from Joe Stephens, George Toby, Andy Djon, Richard Carey, Gene Mauk, Bill Baker, Dave Dykeman, Dave Petzold, Larry Tidball, Yi Grasso, Gary Guenther, Don Slager, R J Secor.

Register containers: We wish to evaluate nested tin cans as register containers. Would people please give me some one lb coffee cans and some 46 oz fruit juice cans; the latter fit over the former. I will paint them and we can try them out. Does anyone know of sources and costs for ammo boxes? We are out of the SPS cylinders but have ordered more from Charles Gerken.

ECHOES FROM OUR READERS

(Original letters have been retyped, unabridged, to fit page.)

13 June 1991

Dear Editor:

I am writing about the short item in the middle of page 3 of the Mar-Apr Echo, where it says that some argue that "restricted" peaks should be removed from The List. I disagree with that idea.

Over the years The List has been developed as a Guide. The idea was that if one was unfamiliar with part of the Sierra, he could refer to The List to decide what in that area was really "worth" going after. In line with this, when I was Chairman in 1966, we extensively reviewed The List in this regard. We made very few additions or deletions, but we did make some peaks "Star Peaks" (by putting a * before them) to create a class of peaks more interesting than ordinary peaks but not as outstanding as Emblem Peaks. This became the basis of the Mountaineer's List, now known as the mountaineers peaks.

As a Guide, The list has worked very well. I have nothing against a little "fiddling" with it to add a peak here and there (for example, I have long wanted to see Caltech Peak added), but I feel that it would be a real mistake to "destroy" The List by removing a large number of what are really many of the most interesting peaks. Many SPS'ers will climb them anyway, with the CMC or on their own, so they should stay there. Besides, The List is even historical; leaving it the way it is provides a link with the "Good Old Days" of the SPS.

Sierraly,
Rick Jali

July 12, 1991

Dear SPS Officers,

I would like to propose a ballot measure for the November election regarding the thirty-five peaks which are on the mountaineer's list. As the years pass, new peaks are added to the list and easier routes are discovered on the existing peaks. This has created inconsistencies which undercut the credibility of the mountaineer's peak designation. I propose that we authorize the management committee to re-evaluate the mountaineer's list.

There is a history of the list written by Bill T. in the 30th Anniversary issue of the *ECHO*. In 1966, chairman Dick Jali called for a survey of the experienced climbers in the SPS to refine the emblem peaks list and to define a list of "Star Peaks." The mountaineer's peak list was originally announced by chairman Sid Davis in 1967 as 50 peaks including the 15 emblem peaks. This appeared in the 9th edition of the SPS list in 1968. In 1974 Charybdis was substituted for Scylla as a mountaineer's peak, reflected in the 12th edition of the list in 1976. In 1981 the number of mountaineer's peaks was reduced from 50 to 35 by excluding the emblem peaks.

In 1973 the bylaws were changed to require a vote of the membership to change the list. I am not sure if this is a conflict. To my mind, a mountaineer's peak is one of the more difficult peaks on the list - excluding emblem peaks. I propose that the management committee be authorized to re-evaluate the list of mountaineer's peaks with two provisions.

- 1) Changes to the mountaineer's list will not affect anyone's current emblem status.
- 2) A suggestion period will be defined during which the membership can write-in with their suggested changes. The management committee will have the final decision.

This could make the list more realistic and useful.

Sincerely,
Joe Stephens

29 August 1991

Hi Bill (Oliver):

Reference your idea of leisure peak bagging, I can sure go along with that! My head stopped being into the "death weekends" bit even before the legs and lungs began to revolt. Or was it first my shoulders! Anyway, something is supposed to let go when you get old but I forgot which.

The late Carl Heller was one who started up the "over-the-hill gang" of peak baggers. He was signing registers thus before he or any of us thought we were actually getting old. Something must come on in which the "getting there" objective becomes replaced by the satisfaction of just "being there." Eventually you may get too old to take orders anymore. Pretty hard to organize a group then!

I'm still at the in-between stage and I'll be glad to assist leaders on some of the lay-back trips you envision.

Best of luck. Keep the idea going; form a directory of people who are interested in this. We can compile some of the needed peaks and match these with willing leaders for next year.

Best,
Campy (Fred Camphausen)

CURRENT SPS MOUNTAINEER PEAKS

<u>PEAK</u>	<u>ELEV</u>	<u>CL</u>	<u>PEAK</u>	<u>ELEV</u>	<u>CL</u>
Mt LeConte	13845+	3	Norman Clyde Pk	13855	4
Mt McAdie	13799	3	Devils Crag #1	12400+	4
Mt Russell	14088	3	Mt McDuffie	13282	3
Black Kaweah	13720+	3	Charybdis	13096	3
Triple Divide Pk	12634	2	Mt Sill	14153	2
Milestone Mtn	13638	3	Thunderbolt Pk	14003	4s5
Table Mtn	13632	3	The Hermit	12328	2s5
Thunder Mtn	13517+	3s4	Seven Gables	13080	2
Mt Eriesson	13583+	2	Bear Creek Spire	13713	3
Deerhorn Mtn	13281	3	Red Slate Mtn	13123+	1
East Vidette	12356	3	Mt Morrison	12277	2
Junction Pk	13845+	3	Clyde Minaret	12264	3
University Pk	13589	2	Mt Clark	11522	3
Mt Gardiner	12907	4	Mt Starr King	9092	5
Arrow Pk	12959	2	Cathedral Pk	10911	3s4
Mt Ruskin	12920	3	Whorl Mtn	12033	3
Tehipite Dome	7708	3	Tower Pk	11755	3
Middle Palisade	14012	3			

Total = 35

85% of these peaks are 12,000 feet and higher.
75% of these peaks are class 3 and higher.

We would like to know which peaks you would like removed from the Mountaineer's list and which peaks you would like added. Please send your recommendations, letters, or other comments to the Editor for inclusion in a future ECHO.

MEMBERSHIP REPORT

by Bob Wyka

Recognition to the following SPS members who became sustaining members for this year (contributed at least \$20.00 to the Section):

SID DAVIS & RENE MEVAY

New Members

Steve Chin
330 The Village #102
Redondo Beach, CA 90277
213-379-6120

Keith Martin
P.O. Box 864
Palos Verdes Estates
CA 90274
213-316-7617

Devra Wasserman
2105 S. Bentley Ave. #202
Los Angeles, CA 90025
213-444-9015

New Emblem Holder

Ali Aminian #509

Phone Change

Steven Thaw
510-376-3380

New Senior Emblem Holders

Bobby Dubeau #103
Steve Thaw #104
Scott Sullivan #105

Address Changes

George Hubbard
5006 Medina Rd.
Woodland Hills, CA
91364
(H) 818-992-8897
(W) 818-702-2704

IN MEMORIAM

SCOTT STAMPER
(1964-1991)

I only went on one trip with Scott "Goat" Stamper, but the climb was a memorable one - Humphreys - and he led it. It seemed pretty strange to see a guy covered with tatoos hiking along the trail with a heavy pack, sporting a rope and a full climbing rack. Not exactly the stereotype Sierra Clubber - but then again, he wasn't one!

He had been climbing with total vigor for the past few years only. Claimed that the mountains had saved his life from the fast lane of a Heavy Metal Group. He was drummer, and he seemed to hike to his own rhythm. He would look up at a peak and scour it for the hardest route. We went up Paiute Pass in early July of '91, and he and Tom Ritchie were expecting some ice gullies to play in.

Mt Humphreys was just a toy for Scott to play on. He really wanted to find something difficult on the east side to go up. He belayed Ken McElvany and Jack Wickel and Tom and I up the mountain, and was disappointed that there was no ice to climb anywhere.

The next day looking down from Seven Gables, he was again more than somewhat discouraged that the gullies leading up from Horton Lakes were soft and unclimbable. He was an animal, but he was fun!

We had a video camera along on the trip, and the footage before the Humphreys trip was of climbing ice gullies on and around Mendel. He and Tom traded off with the camera, and it was fun watching them work, because you could tell that the mountains were Scott's place. He had climbed in South America and Canada, and all over the Sierra. He was an aggressive climber who did lots of peaks solo. He was really just starting, but he was good at it.

His rope-work exuded confidence, and he loved to lead. He was careful with his partners, and celebrated on the bottom of the climb, not on top. He was 27, and lived in Yorba Linda.

I don't know what happened on August 27, 1991, when he was solo in the Black Ice Coulier on the NE side of the Grand Teton. The funeral was on September 3, 1991.

Scot Jamison

FROM THE EDITOR

I would like to thank those of you who have submitted trip reports (scheduled and private) for the ECHO. The readers value and appreciate your reports, and these adventures are the core of the newsletter.

If your trip report does not immediately appear in the ECHO, don't worry! The reports I receive must be allocated out over the next eight months until next year's trips begin. Additionally, there is not enough room in the ECHO to print all of the reports right away. I save all trip reports and they will all be printed eventually.

We still need photographs! Your 8 1/2 X 11 black & white picture could grace the cover of the next ECHO. Group shots on summits are especially desirable. I'm also working on a list of SPS peaks which have never appeared on the ECHO cover. This list will appear in a future issue.

Keep those trip reports and photos coming!

SIERRA PEAKS SECTION ANNUAL BANQUET

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 11, 1991

PACIFICA HOTEL & CONFERENCE CENTER
6161 Centinela Avenue
Culver City

No-host Cocktail Hour from 6:15 p.m.
Dinner at 7:15 p.m.

Come join us for an exciting evening.

Program:
THE EVEREST OF CAVING
IN SEARCH OF THE WORLD'S DEEPEST CAVE

Presented by
CAROL VESELY and BILL FARR

Tickets \$24 includes tax and tip

Make checks payable to Sierra Peaks Section
Send stamped, self-addressed envelope to KAREN LEONARD
Indicating entree preference - chicken, fish, or vegetarian
R.S.V.P by December 6th

KAREN LEONARD, 10454 Cheviot Drive, Los Angeles, CA, 90064
(213) 839-3457

SUPPORTIVE FIRST ASCENTS BY
Herb Laeger

Free parking
enter on Mesmer Ave.
(Next to 405; 3 mi N of LAX;
Just S of 90. Map on ticket.)

CONSERVATION

MONEY MONEY MONEY

I'm trying to nose out information about recent developments in government spending for trail maintenance and construction in the Sierra. I hope you will send me your observations and any information you find. The following information relayed by Sally Reid in the June Wilderness Record is not a good har-binger. Sally reports that \$40,000 was spent by the Forest Service on just 6 miles of 'minor' trail maintenance. She hiked the 6 miles and found that the outside contractors hired for the job had effected an environmental "massacre", that no environmental assessment had been done, and that the Forest Service had not supervised the job.

WATCH YOUR STEP!

How do you fare against those little doggies and their owners? I'm sure you've had input from your feet and your nose. Several environmental groups including the Eastern Sierra Nevada Committee of the Sierra Club, Friends of the Inyo, and the Toiyabe Chapter of the Sierra Club are unhappy with the results of this contest and have appealed the Southern Sierra Wilderness Implementation Plan and the Templeton Grazing Allotment Management Plan for cattle grazing in the Golden Trout Wilderness. These groups feel cattle should be excluded from wilderness areas. The Forest Service maintains that grazing is historic and wilderness designation does not exclude grazing.

SNOWY SILENCE OR MOTOR'S DIN?

While doing the northern peaks, have you dreamed of returning to ski in the snowy silence of winter? Nordic skiers are trying to keep your dream possible by opposing the proposal of the Amador Winter Sports Study Group to extend a snowmobile route along Squaw Ridge next to the Mokelumme Wilderness. The Nordic group fears that the route will make illegal entry by snowmobilers into the Mokelumme Wilderness too easy. This has happened in other areas.

If I am at the next meeting, I'll have an edible delicacy for anyone who brings his own cup.

Mary Sue Miller

Climbing the BLACK KAWEAH

by Bill Oliver

Part I - First Ascents

No one dayhikes the Kaweahs. From Mineral King, the closest trailhead, up and down Glacier Pass, cross-country, up and down Black Rock Pass, and finally down to the Big Arroyo involves over 13 miles and 5100 feet of gain and takes about ten hours for a strong party. The Kaweah Peaks Ridge is prominent from Whitney and throughout the southern and central Sierra. Of the many high points along this short sub-range, three appear on the SPS List: Mt. Kaweah (also known informally as Big Kaweah or the Gray Kaweah), the highest - 13,802', the Black Kaweah and the Red Kaweah. The names derive from the color of the upper slopes. The prize, and the last to be climbed, is clearly the Black Kaweah - 13,765'. Norman Clyde noted that within this group *"it is the most spectacularly rugged and the most challenging from a climbing standpoint."* Let us look back to a time when the ridge was still unexplored, and only the eagles could lay claim to the Black Kaweah's lofty summit.

1881

Francis Farquhar's "History of the Sierra Nevada" makes note of the first ascent of Mt. Kaweah. In September of 1881 three friends headed up, what was later named, the Chagoopa Plateau intent on attempting Mt. Kaweah: J. W. A. Wright, of Hanford, F. H. Wales, of Tulare, and W. B. Wallace, of Visalia. They had begun their excursion earlier on the Hockett Trail, up the Kern River, and eventually ascended Mt. Whitney. They actually spent the night on the summit at the invitation of Professor Langley's party, then in residence. Now they were heading south and back out. Let us read from the Farquhar passage: *At noon they left their horses below the first snowfield. "Thence they moved to the west, climbing from rock to rock, upward and ever upward, soon wearied and out of breath. No one can have a conception of the extreme exertion and utter exhaustion from time to time of this rough and trackless peak climbing." It is quite apparent that Mr. Wright is speaking - he was the eldest and the heaviest of the three. His comrades reached the summit more than an hour and a half ahead of him. "After a careful examination not the slightest trace was found that any human being had ever been there before."*

While on the summit they named three major peaks up the ridge (west to east): Mt. Abert (for Wright's uncle and a former Chief Army Topographer), Mt. Henry (a prominent physicist at Princeton), and Mt. LeConte (Prof. Joseph LeConte, U.C. Berkeley). For lack of sufficient publicity none of these names stuck. [Prof. Henry was subsequently honored with a peak in the Evolution area (named by LeConte's son, J. N. LeConte - also a UCB professor). The elder LeConte was immortalized, among other places, by a peak south of Whitney (named by the residents of Lone Pine). Both peaks are on the List.] Although it is commonly assumed, e. g., by Farquhar, that Mt. Abert was appended to the Black Kaweah, let me note that the latter peak cannot directly be seen from Mt. Kaweah. All was not lost, however. The three climbers' efforts were more lasting in their naming of the Chagoopa Falls (from which the plateau derives its name) after an old Piute Indian.

1897

The following information is extracted from "The Kaweah Group" by Professor William R. Dudley [*Sierra Club Bulletin*, January 1898]. Accompanied by two of his Stanford students and a packer, the professor was exploring and mapping the Kaweah region. Earlier maps had placed the Kaweahs directly on the Great Western Divide, and it was commonly held that the Kaweah River originated from its slopes. He easily established the isolation of the Kaweahs from the GWD and the fact that they ultimately drain entirely into the Kern. He also named Picket Guard, the Kern-Kaweah River, Milestone Basin and Red Spur. Referring to Mt. Kaweah, Dudley noted that it is *"somewhat more tedious of ascent than Mt. Whitney, but perfectly safe, and has been reckoned as about 14,140 feet in elevation."*

1908

The very popular High Trips having been inaugurated by Bill Colby in 1901, 1908 marked the Sierra Club's 8th Annual Outing. Marion Parsons chronicled its happenings along the Kern Canyon in the January 1909 *Sierra Club Bulletin* [SCB]. From a lake high on the Chagoopa Plateau, a large party set off at dawn one day for a climb of Mt. Kaweah, little suspecting what lay ahead. Let us join her narrative:

Mt. Kaweah, bearing the reputation of being an easy peak to climb from any point of attack, had been chosen by the committee as a try-out for Whitney. It was, therefore, a most startling surprise to our leaders to find the climb from the first beset with difficulties and dangers far greater than any to be found on Whitney. Our approach was from the south, where a rocky spur seemingly afforded easy access to the main body of the mountain. Almost at once, however, we found ourselves in a short but very treacherous chimney where every moment we were menaced with that gravest of dangers to a large party, falling rocks. ...

I think few of us will ever forget the first glimpse of that wicked, crumbling knife-edge that we caught from the high pile of rocks above the chimney - half a mile, or more, of it, sapped right and left by the snows that, gathering in the vast cirques at its base, insidiously loosen and undermine the great boulders, leaving them, after the thaw, so lightly poised that a touch might set them loose. Its great advantage, however, lay in the fact that our line of progress led along its crest, where loosened rock might crash its harmless way down the precipice without danger to the climbers who were now behind instead of beneath its course - always providing that it did not carry a climber with it. This last danger, indeed, and the necessity for carefully testing the stability of each rock before venturing its support for hand or foot, wrought in some of us such excess of caution that we could scarcely induce our reluctant limbs to move at all. It seemed the wildest of follies to stir a hairbreadth from the hand- or foot-hold which had proved firm toward the untried possibilities that the next step held. Slowly, and with the greatest care, we crept, crawled, and clambered along that knife-edge, some of us grimly silent, some amazingly voluble.

Of the forty-six climbers who started forty-one reached the summit before noon. ... The western slope, which we chose for the descent, proved to be composed of loose shale, easy on the downward path, but of so tedious and uninspiring a nature for ascent that, forgetting the tremors of the morning, we were soon congratulating ourselves on having missed its drudgery and having enjoyed the most interesting climb the Kaweah could have afforded.

1912

The 1912 Outing saw the Club back again in the Kern River Basin. Without elaboration, it was noted in the subsequent SCB that *"the majority of the party ascended the main Kaweah Peak and visited all portions of the Big Arroyo Basin."* Buried in the middle of a long paragraph detailing the group's ramblings appears a remarkable sentence:

Mr. Charles Michael made the first ascent of the middle or Red Kaweah.

This somewhat obscure reference marked the first appearance of the intriguing Mr. Michael in the SCB. Ahead of his time - and ahead of Norman Clyde - he would make many more solo first ascents - most notably on the Devil's Crags (1913) and in the Minarets (1923). [Michael Minaret was originally thought to be slightly higher than the adjoining one, which Clyde would claim first in 1928.] While these latter two climbs would be documented in detail, virtually nothing is known of Michael's ascent of the Red Kaweah, which at the time was held to be slightly higher than the Black Kaweah. It is known, however, that on this same occasion he also made the much more difficult climb of the adjoining pinnacle - Michael's Pinnacle - an ascent that would not be repeated for forty-one years [Jim Koontz, Peter Murphy, and Fred Peters, 8/28/53].

As an aside, it is interesting to note the manner of this Outing's exit from the Sierra: *"We descended 7,000 feet the following day to the mouth of Cottonwood Creek and camped at the railroad crossing. It was a remarkable transition from high mountain pines and temperature below zero, when we left in the morning, to the desert with its sagebrush for a camp at night. Our Pullman train stopped at our campsite the next morning, and boarding it we traveled along the shore of Owens Lake for some distance and paralleled the wonderful Los Angeles aqueduct for many miles on our way to Mojave. This means of leaving the mountains proved the easiest and most comfortable we have ever experienced."*

The 1916 High Trip brought the Club once again to the Kern River region. The only notable activity from our perspective is that one hundred and forty *"intrepid"* members climbed Mt. Kaweah. About a week later *"... two hundred left for the Crabtree Meadow basecamp to ascend Mt. Whitney the following day. One hundred and seventy-five reached the summit, the largest party of mountaineers ever registered there."*

1920

And still the Black Kaweah knew only the eagle's landing. By 1920 it was surely the prize among major yet unclimbed peaks in the Sierra. James Hutchinson would later observe: *"On many occasions, from the vicinity of Mt. Brewer, I had viewed the Kaweahs - ragged and savage peaks, dominated from every viewpoint by the unclimbed Black Kaweah."* Mr. Hutchinson was certainly no stranger to major first ascents. Among SPS Emblem Peaks, for example, he first topped Matterhorn Peak (1899), North Palisade (1903), Mt. Humphreys (1904) and Mt. Abbot (1908). Several of these and other climbs were in the company of one or both of his favorite partners: J. N. LeConte and Duncan McDuffie.

In his 53rd year in 1920, Hutchinson embarked on a month-long excursion from Giant Forest. The party included Mr. and Mrs. McDuffie and six other companions plus a packer and the assistant packer. The latter, who doubled as the cook, was a certain Onis Imus Brown. [His name derives from the New Testament. In Paul's Letter to the Colossians, 4:9, there is a reference to *"our dear and faithful brother, Onesimus."*] Two goals motivated this excursion - if possible, to establish a packer trail over Colby

Pass and, if possible, to climb where only eagles dared to go. With considerable effort, the first objective was finally achieved amid great rejoicing on August 5th.

The First Ascent of The BLACK KAWEAH
(Extracted from "Colby Pass and The Black Kaweah")
by James S. Hutchinson, *Sierra Club Bulletin*, 1921)

... The sight of the Black Kaweah had thrilled us again and again as we had circled the peak, and McDuffie, Brown and I wanted to climb it.

Mr. Farquhar had viewed the peak from various sides and told us he thought the most feasible line of attack would be by the buttress and knife-edge running out from the summit toward the west. I had carefully examined this knife-edge with the glasses from the north, at Miner's Pass and Triple Divide Peak, and also the day before, from the south. It looked pretty fair, but I must confess there were some deep ugly gashes in it, which did not appeal to me greatly. From our camp [at the extreme head of the Big Arroyo, about a mile below the Nine Lake Basin] we could see that the top of the western buttress could be reached by some stiff climbing up one of several smooth avalanche-polished grooves. Upon reaching this top we would then have a fairly near view of the summit of the mountain and could decide on our future course.

The following morning McDuffie, Brown, and I were off at 5:40, carrying with us for emergency fifty feet of rope. In two hours we were at the top of the buttress [via the NW ridge]. The view of the peak from this point was absolutely appalling - the knife-edge running up to the peak, and the peak itself seamed, cracked, scarred, and broken by weathering as on no other mountain we had ever climbed; the whole ridge appeared to be disintegrating rapidly. McDuffie jestingly said we had better hurry over before it should fall to pieces.

From our viewpoint, the best possible route appeared to be along the knife-edge; but again we saw the ugly clefts in several places. One in particular appeared on our side to be most uninviting, but the thought that possibly the north side at that place might be sufficiently broken to get a foothold led us on. We went up and down, around, across, over and under boulders and broken slabs of granite, always on the alert to prevent slipping and overbalancing, every muscle tense and ready to respond. Our footsteps followed a most uncertain zigzag course, and had they been plotted would have indicated anything but a temperance movement. The way those ragged rocks were broken, splintered, massed and piled together, helter-skelter, would have rejoiced the heart of a cubist artist. Again and again I was reminded of the cubist painting "The Nude Descending the Stairs."

Slowly, very slowly, we progressed along the knife-edge, up and down, around clefts and breaks, always in doubt as to what was fifty feet ahead of us. Finally, at a point perhaps a quarter of a mile from the summit and six hundred feet below it, we came upon the deepest notch of all, the one which had been visible from both north and south. It was not more than fifty feet deep, but its sides were almost vertical and perfectly smooth. For a long time we worked at it, carefully going down each side of the mountain until at the bottom of the notch, but with no way to get onto the knife-edge again beyond the cleft. The whole situation looked hopeless and desperate. From our position here we could get a long, sweeping view of the whole north face of the mountain. It was practically vertical for a thousand feet down onto an extensive snowfield, and we turned away for all time from any hopes on that side.

We then surveyed the southern side of the knife-edge. It was steep enough, but nothing compared to the northern side. The only ray of hope lay in the possibility that if we could get down on the southern slope for several hundred feet, we could then work around toward the east, get more nearly under the main peak, and then by chance find a favorable chimney running up toward the summit. In an hour we had descended far down on this southern side. Here the slope was somewhat more gentle and we were able to work around on various shelves, finally coming to the largest of several chimneys running up in the general direction of the summit. This chimney was pretty well broken up, so that one could get finger and toe holds, but in many places it was worn smooth by the avalanches of rock, snow, and ice which for ages had shot through it. It lay at an angle of sixty degrees, but fortunately kept leading in the desired direction. The greatest care had to be exercised each instant to prevent the starting of rock-avalanches. Brown was a hundred feet ahead. I heard a warning shout, "Look out!" and knew something was coming. I ducked my head behind a boulder just in time to prevent its being hit by a rock the size of a football, which came tearing down. The rock struck my knapsack a glancing blow and bounded off.

After two hours' climbing we again reached the knife-edge and looked over into the deep abyss on the north side. Right above us, two hundred feet to the east, towered the summit. Our chimney now swung directly around to the southeast and narrowed up considerably. Soon we were in a tiny notch on a small buttress running out southwest from the main peak and not more than twenty-five feet from the summit. Here, unintentionally, we started a small avalanche. It shot down in a northwesterly direction, increasing in momentum and volume as it progressed, and in a few moments we heard it thundering down the chimney south and back of us - the chimney by which we had ascended - making a complete turn.

After eight hours of continuous climbing, at 1:45 we were at the summit (13,752 ft.), and spontaneously set up a mighty shout of joy. The peak stands in the midst of a tremendous amphitheater formed by the multitudinous peaks of the Great Western Divide and the peaks of the main crest. We looked into the whole region traversed by us during the preceding weeks and saw the route we should follow returning to Giant Forest. Immediately below us to the south and west lay the Nine Lake Basin; to the northeast lay the Kern-Kaweah Canon; and to the east we looked along the ragged, jagged crest of the Kaweahs.

The only sign of life having been there before was an **eagle's feather** on the extreme summit. This we carried away as a trophy. After lunching and feasting on the superb view, we built a monument three feet high, thus making our mountain one foot higher than the next Kaweah Peak to the east [the Red Kaweah, then 13,754']. Then a flagpole was constructed from the legs of our camera tripod, a white handkerchief was attached, and a flag was left floating from the summit. In the monument we deposited a tobacco can containing the following memorandum: *August 11, 1920.- Left camp one mile below Nine Lake Basin at 5:40 a.m. Attempted to climb along the NW ridge but impassable notches prevented. Then dropped down about 400 feet into the southern cirque and ascended the chimney which reaches the northwest ridge 100 feet NW of the summit. Arrived at summit at 1:45 p.m. Duncan McDuffie, Berkeley; Onis Imus Brown, Lemon Cove; J. S. Hutchinson, Berkeley.*

At three o'clock we started down, following the same chimney by which we had ascended. This work was most trying and tiresome, requiring greater care than the ascent. When we reached the point where we had first entered the chimney, the question arose should we descend to camp by our morning's route, or should we continue down into the cirque immediately below and south of us, past a snowbound lake, around the southern end of the buttress, and down into the Big Arroyo. We were tired of climbing, and so chose the latter course. Then came some rockwork as dangerous as any we had thus far encountered. Our chimney ended in high and abrupt benches and shelves, together making a drop of two or three hundred feet. It took us many long, anxious moments to work our way down to the cirque. At one place near the bottom the rope was used, but I am not at all certain it was essential; possibly there was a way around. The cirque was reached at the top of a snowfield lying there in the form of a huge wish-bone, pointing directly up toward our chimney. ...

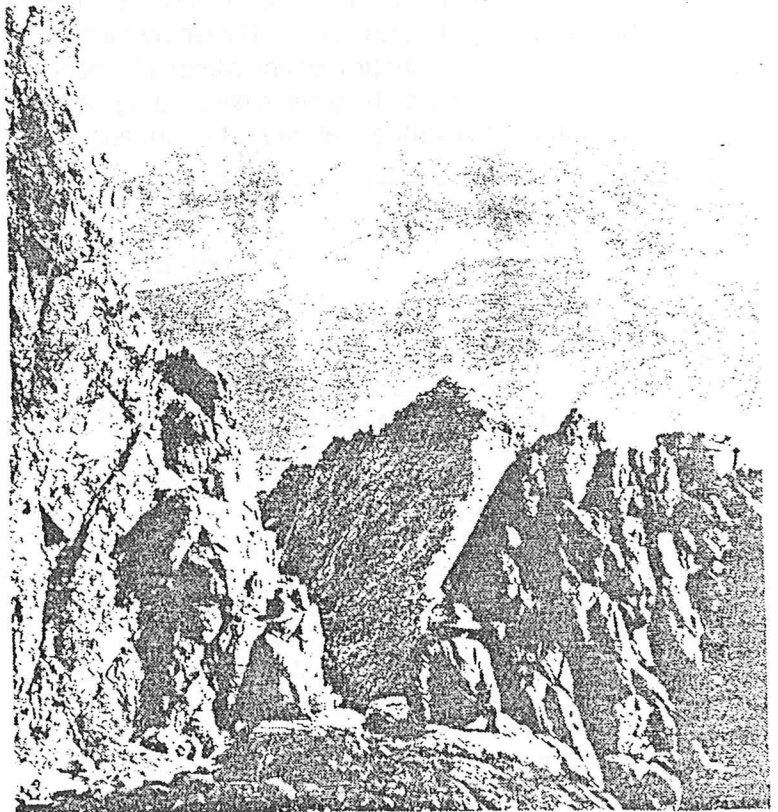
By the time we reached the cirque the sun had long since left it. It was very cold and the snow was frozen and rough. ... After a long, tiresome descent, part of the way over sharp rocks, we reached camp just at dark, having been out fourteen hours. ...

And now five months have passed, and we still lift our eyes unto the mountains from whence cometh our help, and what do we see? - the wondrous afterglow lighting the high points of the trip - Silliman, Brewer, Triple Divide; the inspiring camps of Roaring River, Kern-Kaweah, and Big Arroyo; Colby Pass; and last, but not least, the once defiant Black Kaweah floating the white flag.

Conclusion in December *ECHO* - PART II - No Longer the Eagle's Aerie

James S. Hutchinson [1867-1959]: a San Francisco native; Harvard A.B. degree in 1897; law degree from U.C. Hastings School of Law in 1899. He practiced in this profession into his 92nd year. In 1892, while yet a sophomore, he became a charter member of the Sierra Club; was a Club Director from 1903-1907, and an Honorary Vice President from 1958. Hutchinson Meadow is west of the Humphreys Basin.

Duncan McDuffie [1877-1951]: a native of Iowa, he came to California while still a youth and later graduated from U.C. Berkeley in 1899. He got into mountaineering on the Sierra Club's 1902 Outing; twice was President of the Club - 1928-31 and 1943-46. For a lifetime of work in conservation, "as well as his creative work in residential real estate development," U.C. conferred upon him the honorary degree Doctor of Laws. Mt. McDuffie is a Mountaineer's Peak in the Mt. Goddard vicinity. [Sources: *American Alpine Journal*]



CLIMBING THE BLACK KAWEAH
At the top of the chimney.
Photo by J. S. Hutchinson

ECHOES OF OUR CLIMBS

Matterhorn Pk, Whorl Mtn

Aug 8-11, 1991

Bill T Russell

The 29th annual Russell Family mountaineering trip started Wed afternoon at Twin Lakes and ascended Horse Creek. We camped that night at a good spot on the trail at 9400' (222202). Our party was smaller than usual; wife Pat, son David, niece Leslie and me.

On Thu, we continued on thru the pass and made camp at a fine big sandy spot with a nearby stream at 10680'(919180). It is about 200m NE of the small lake at the head of Spiller Creek. We climbed Matterhorn that pm. The route goes up the obvious broad, shallow chute directly toward the summit. At about 11900' the route veers to the left and goes up a wall onto the south ridge and then up it to the top.

On Fri we did Whorl. The route description below is from memory after the climb so it may be somewhat off but still useful. The route goes south for 1.5 km past the small lake at 10500' and then traverses upward to about 10900' at a point generally south of the summit rocks. From here the big summit pinnacles are visible and to their left is a pinnacle with a squarish top that is bigger than its supporting base. To the left of this square top is a rock that has a domed or round top. The route goes up to the left of this round top over cl 2 and easy cl 3. At perhaps 11500', find a narrow, sandy, short, lateral chute that goes up the rib on the right. Ascend this and pass thru a notch in the rib and down, or across, a 6" ledge to the neighboring chute. Ascend this chute with moderately exposed 2nd class for perhaps 250' elev and find another narrow little lateral chute leading to the top of the rib on the right. Go up this chute to the top and then make a few moves up the rib and discover a narrow pathway between vertical rocks that leads upward to the base of a wall with a large (10' dia?) chockstone. There is a cave under the chockstone and at its back is a 20' vertical, corkscrew like passage with easy climbing that brings one out at the top of the chockstone. If the cave is full of snow, as it was the first time I did Whorl, one can go up the rock to the left of the chockstone; it has a cl 4 move near the bottom. From the top of the chockstone, the route upward is nice cl 2, then an improbable cl 1 "sidewalk" followed by more cl 2 to the nearby summit.

We were surprised and pleased to meet Dave Dykeman, Nancy Gordon and party at the top of the chockstone as they were descending. After going to the summit, we descended to our camp and the next morning, Sat, we hiked out and drove home. It was a very good outing.

WHORL MTN 12033' (3rd class route description)

OUR ROUTE ON WHORL MOUNTAIN: From the tarn at the head of Spillers Creek, we observed Whorl. It has a north summit, a main summit mass, and a south summit. There is an obvious highway-like ramp across the east face. The ramp is the line of the route. Following this line past the main summit leads to a predominant rock and scree chute which divides the south summit from the main peak. Just above where the line and the chute intersect, the chute splits. The right hand chute is our route. When this right hand nearly ends at a rock face, look right for an easy way across the rib. The famous chock-stone is two chutes to the right. The intervening ridges are easy to cross. Anything tougher than easy class 3 was avoided. Upon reaching the top of the second ridge, we were eyeball-even with the chock-stone. We walked to the chock-stone and encountered the most difficult move: kicking steps into the snow at the entrance. Once inside, the route is a little tight, but solid and easy to the top of the chock-stone. We hauled our day packs up on our rope. From the top of the chock-stone, we proceeded toward the false summit facing. We crossed left to a class one, sidewalk-like ramp and walked to the summit area.

Dave Dykeman

ANGORA MTN (10,202') & COYOTE PK (10,892')

June 22-24, 1990

Igor & Suzanne Thomas-Mamedalin

Initially 24 participants signed up for this spring sojourn into the Sierra south of Sequoia National Park. When the time came to leave one's footprints in the dust only 36 bootprints and 8 paw prints could be counted. The majority of participants heeded the general notice in the Sierra Echo and mailed in their \$3 to cover the cost of reserving a wilderness permit; alas, the leader had to grudgingly return the booty since Sequoia National Forest, the district controlling access to this area, has not instituted the pre-paid reservation system, yet.

The initial plan for the first day was to hump over 14 miles with our backpacks all the way to Coyote Lakes situated at the foot of Coyote Peak and overlooking magnificent scenery. From the Jerkey Meadow parking area we headed over a low saddle and down to the bridge across the Little Kern River. Although this was early spring, the day heated up quickly and the dry trail contributed to everyone's appreciation of the water in the river. Crossing the river by a fine suspension bridge we headed uphill to join and follow the Deep Creek drainage. Progress slowed and the breaks in the shade extended. When we reached the small meadows west of Angora Mtn., over 3 miles and 2,000' short of our planned destination, the consensus dictated to stop and camp at the meadows and to finish off the peaks the next day as day hikes. Just short of the meadows the sound of 'Deep Creek' was silenced and we had to scour the meadows for a water source. Near the bottom of the lower meadow we found a water source capable of filling one water bottle in twenty minutes. The process could be accelerated if one squeezed the mud through a handkerchief, but everyone thought they had ample time to wait.

Camping on the outcrop west of the lower meadow, the group shared a generous garbage bag salad and desert around the campfire. Next morning Joe and Tina Stephens signed out in order to bag the two peaks quickly, hike out, and drive around to join another group the next day for an assault on Kern Peak. The rest of the group followed the 'Deep' Creek drainage to a saddle and then east along a trail to the ridge connecting Angora and Coyote. The walk along the ridge, as we headed toward Coyote Pk, offered splendid views of the Kern River drainage expanses. From Coyote Pk. part of the group dropped down to Coyote Lake for a swim and then rejoined the rest of the group to continue back along the ridge toward Angora Mtn. Angora was climbed in due course by all that needed it. From the saddle north of Angora we cut across the forested slopes to save a couple of miles. Everybody returned back to camp before the sun set and had the remains of the garbage bag salad and miscellaneous other shared goodies.

On the third day we started off early toward the cars to avoid the heat. Trying to save a few miles of trail we cut across the forest toward the Little Kern for a swim and then along the river to the suspension bridge. Except for the merits of the refreshing swim, the short cut proved to be more arduous than if we had simply plodded along the dusty trail for an extra couple of miles. From the bridge to saddle and back down to the cars in the afternoon heat proved to be quite exhausting. Even the dogs were pooped. Despite the heat, it was good trip and we thank all of the participants for helping make it so. The other participants were: Ron Bartell, Anne Breen, Georgina Burns, Donn Cook, Gary Ericson, J. Holshuh, Sue Leverton, John & Wendy McCully, Tanya Mamedalin, Christine Mitchell, Bill Stevens, Hoda Shalaby, and Chris Stokes. And, of course, Chessie and Comet!

Henry, Emerald, Mendel, McGee
Aug 2-10, 1991 George Toby & Al Conrad

This was a great 9 day backpack and peak bagging fun trip. We began with the ferry at Florence Lake and backpacked to Blaney Meadows, Evolution Valley and Evolution Basin to Wanda Lake; then cross country past Davis Lakes to the head of Goddard Canyon, then down the canyon to return to the John Muir Trail, Blaney Meadows and out to Florence Lake. The first trip of the ferry, "Sierra Queen", loads at 8:00 am and leaves at 8:30 am. Fare is \$9.50 rt. Last return ferry is about 5:00pm. We had a full load of 24 people plus back packs and two dogs in each direction. Great ice cream in the small store after the return trip. Yum-Yum.

Participants were George Toby, Al Conrad, Mario Gonzales, Ruth Armentrout, Tanya Mamedalin, Wayne Wurzbarger, Ed Kenney, and Sylvia (Sur) Kenny. After the second day, Ruth Armentrout decided the trip was too much for her and went back out to join some hikers that were heading back to L.A.

We climbed 4 SPS peaks en route. 7 did Henry and 5 did Emerald by the standard routes. However for Emerald it is better to contour around peak 11,778 about 100 to 150 feet lower than the 11,000 foot level mentioned in the climbers guide. Nice benches and less talus. All 7 climbed Mendel by the class 3 Southwest Face from Evolution Lake with help of some excellent photos supplied by R.J. Secor. My sincere thanks to R.J, route finding was a snap. The serrated summit ridge was rather exciting. Lots of up and down class 3 rock. No ropes. Climbing Mendel was the highlite of the trip. McGee was climbed from the lower end of the string of Davis Lakes. The first attempt was via the West Ridge. This was a poor choice. It involved endless, time consuming talus slopes. We started after lunch after a tough morning backpack. It became evident we would not get back before dark, so we returned to camp. We hit it fresh the next morning via the steep South chute. This chute looks very intimidating, but it went nicely up to the notch between the two peaks. Then we went Eastery up to the true summit. Lots of loose rock. Not good for a big group. 4 made it to the top. It was a very rewarding climb. But due to the second try on McGee we had to scratch the proposed climb of Scylla from Martha Lake. Time just ran out.

This was a fun trip with a fine compatible group. After 9 days we were still talking to one another and having fun. We took time to smell the flowers and enjoy the Wilderness, and climbed the four target peaks. The best campsites were at Evolution Lake and North Goddard Creek. Evolution Valley was beautiful but Goddard Canyon was outstanding for its sheer mountain beauty. Happy climbing.

George

RESTAURANT REVIEW By Igor Mamedalin

On the way home we chanced to stop in Lamont, near Bakersfield, for a great Mexican meal at Casa Lopez. If you are taking a short cut along highway 184, Weed Patch Highway, it is on the southwest corner at Panama Road behind an auto parts store. If you are lost, their number is (805) 845-1520. It is a convinient place to stop on the way home from the Lake Isabella / Southern Sierra peak areas. You cannot ask for a better meal and a friendly atmosphere.

Try it!

FLORENCE PEAK
July 20-21, 1991
Eivor Nilsson/Ron Young

We had our group of nine meet at the Ranger Station in Mineral King for the pre-hike briefing, required when the group size is five or more. It was a clear morning and the climb to lower Franklin Lake afforded views throughout the lush, green Mineral King Valley. The WTC Group that preceded us had the best camp sites nearer to the lake so we had to scatter our troops along the ledges by the higher food box. Clouds formed quickly and by dinner time we were encircled by an uncomfortably cool mist scudding upward toward the pass. The previous day I had day-hiked Vandever Mountain and scurried off the summit shortly after 11:00 A.M. amid swirling clouds and increasing wind. Rob Talbert, leader of the WTC group, was approaching the summit as I hurried off. Although a little later this day, the same weather conditions were occurring with enormous thunderheads over the Big Arroyo. The unseasonable coolness allowed the air to hold more moisture and in spite of the threatening skies there was no rain or thunder.

Sunday morning dawned clear with a brisk, cold wind. Six of the group headed up the fine trail to Franklin Pass where we enjoyed the views before heading over to the slopes of Florence Peak. We angled slightly left of the main ridge to avoid some lingering snow and the large boulders. As we scouted a route among the boulders we met the WTC group descending near the summit. By now the wind was calm and we enjoyed a pleasant stay on top. We left the summit at 11:00 A.M. and were back in camp by 1:00. By 2:00 we were on the trail down with all arriving before 5:00. The summit group, besides the two leaders, included: Kathy Cecere, Edna Erspamer, Andy Zdon and Rod Ziebol. We were pleased to find no marmot damage to our vehicles, although members of our group saw someone submitting a marmot damage report at the Ranger Station, and Andy reported a bear in the Atwell Mill campground Friday night. This was a congenial group and a pleasant outing.

Ron Young

A NEW WAY FOR MOKELUMNE PEAK (9334')

July 24, 1991

Rex Smith and I climbed Mokelumne in a little over four hours ascent time using this approach from the west. Take Highway 88 and drive to Bear River Reservoir Road about 5 miles east of Ham's Static or about 6 miles west of the Mormon-Emigrant Road junction. Take the South Shore drive and coming to a junction, follow signs to Cole Cree and Shriner Lake Trailhead. You will come to 8N14, then drive 3-4 miles up and take 8N14E. In about $\frac{1}{4}$ mile is the Tanglefoot Trailhead. This is no problem for passenger cars.

Take the trail, past the Shriner Lake turnoff, and drop 400-500' into Tanglefoot Canyon. The trail climbs up the other side past Morai Lake, where you are 4 miles from the trailhead. Proceed about 1 mile after you see the peak, then begin a traverse around the south side of bump 8628'. Do not climb too high, as the south-facing slopes are covered with low-lying brush. There is a nice bench about 300' below the point. Gain the ridge, and easy walking will lead to the top. Totals about 13 miles r.t., and 3,700' gain. Pete Yamagata

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