

# The Sierra



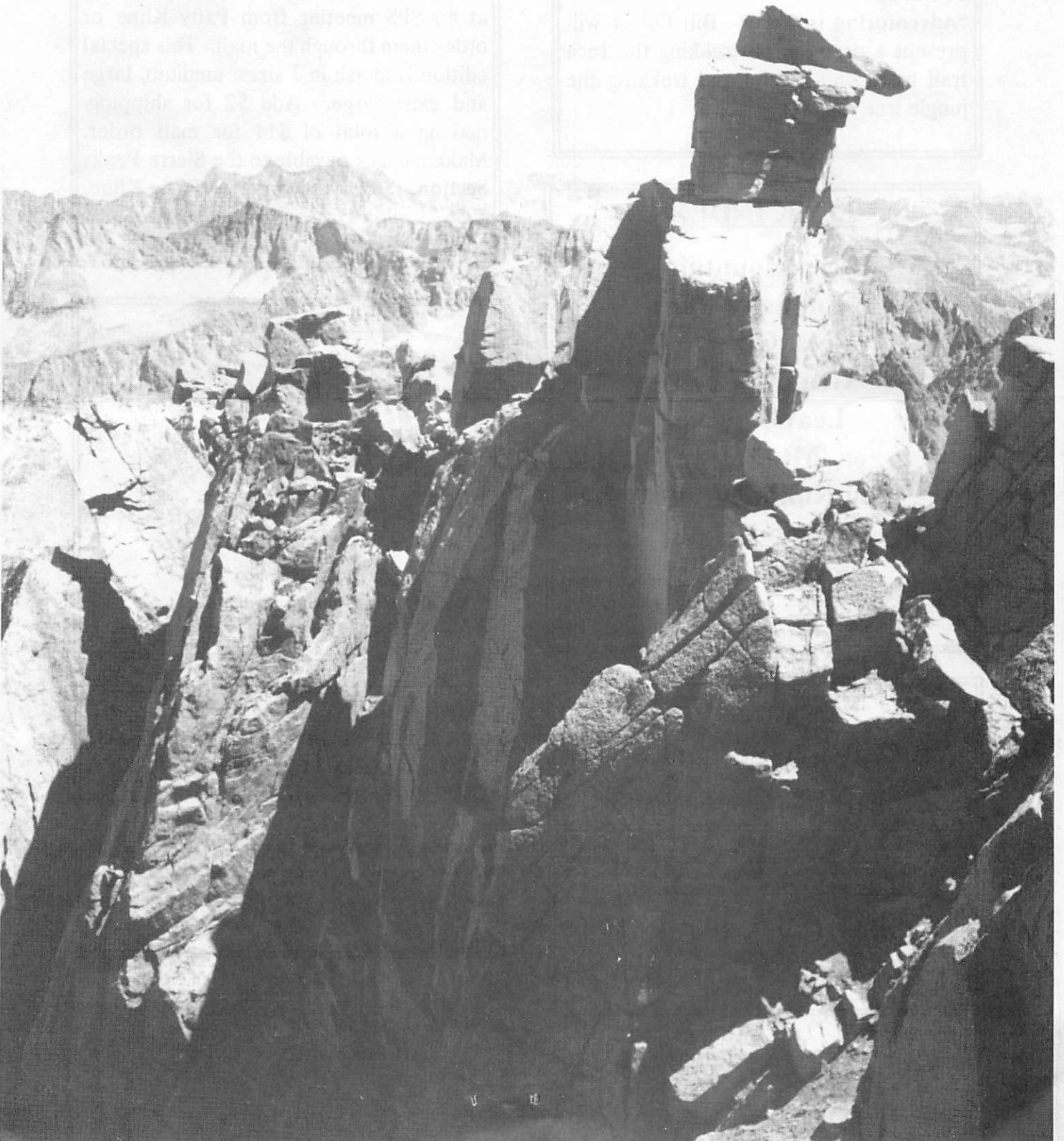
# ECHO

VOLUME 39

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NUMBER 3



### **SPS MONTHLY PROGRAMS**

Sierra Peak Section meetings will be held in the Los Angeles room behind the cafeteria still at the DWP. 7:30 pm Dept. W&P Meeting Room 1st flr/cafe., 111 N Hope St, LA, Free prkg on site.

JUNE 12

"Adventuring in Peru" Bill Oliver will present a program on trekking the Inca trail to Machu Picchu and trekking the jungle tree tops.

### **PEAK INDEX**

**Deer Mountain  
English Mtn  
Mt. Gibert  
Granite Cheif  
Leavitt Peak  
Mt. Lola  
Puu Kukui (Hawaii)  
Round Top  
Sierra Buttes  
Thunderbolt Peak**

### **COVER PHOTO**

**Mt. Darwin's Summit Spire**

Photo by John Dodds

### **The Editor is on E-Mail**

My E-Mail address is:

Norman#m#\_Wayne@DLVD.MDC.COM

Messages, Trip Reports, etc can be sent to me at the above address.

### **SPS 40th Anniversary T-SHIRTS**

Celebrate 40 years of SPS climbing by ordering a 40th Anniversary T-Shirt. The same design beautifully done by Wynne Benti-Zdon features North Palisade on the front. On the back is the entire list of 247 SPS peaks with the caption "1955-40th Anniversary-1995." Buy them for \$12 at an SPS meeting from Patty Kline or order them through the mail. This special edition is in ash in 3 sizes: medium, large and extra large. Add \$2 for shipping, making a total of \$14 for mail order. Make a check payable to the Sierra Peaks Section. Send your order to Patty Kline, 20362 Callon Drive, Topanga Canyon, CA 90290.

### *Wedding Announcement*

*Mr. and Mrs. Arthur L. Colgren  
have the honour of announcing  
the marriage of their daughter  
Ruth Ann  
and*

*Mr. Wayne K. Norman  
on Saturday, the sixth of May  
Nineteen hundred and ninety-five  
Huntington Beach, California*

**MARIO GONZALEZ WOULD BE GRATEFUL FOR LEADERSHIP TO ASCEND THE FOLLOWING PEAKS: MT. STARR KING, DARWIN, THUNDERBOLT, GARDINER, NORMAN CLYDE, PALISADE CREST, DEVILS CRAG, THUNDER, GLACIER RIDGE, HERMIT, CATHEDRAL. (213) 614-2344**

## SPS Outings Schedule: July 5-October 31, 1995

Dates	Peaks	Leaders
July 7-12	I Trail Maintenance Party	Fred Camphausen, R.J. Secor
July 8-9	I Striped, Goodale	Tom Sexton, Sigrid Sexton
R July 15-16	M * Mt. Whitney	Rich Gnagy, Greg Roach
R July 15-16	M Banner, Ritter	Dan Richter, Asher Waxman
July 21-23	M State & Goat	Barbee Tidball, Barbara Cohen
July 22-23	M Johnson, Gilbert	Beth Epstein, Herb Fiala
July 22-29	I * Theodore Solomons Trail	Ron Jones, Bill Oliver
July 22-30	M S.Guard, Brewer, N. Guard, Bago Deerhorn, W. Vidette, & Rixford	Dave Dykeman, Nancy Gordon
July 29-30	I Split, Prater, Tinemaha	Dan Richter, Erik Siering
Aug 5-6	I Merriam, Royce	Tom Sexton, Sigrid Sexton
R Aug 12-13	E Mt. Starr King	Maris Valkass, Igor Mamedalin
Aug 12-13	M Stanford, Morgan	Sigrid Sexton, Beth Epstein
Aug 12-13	M Mt. Gayley	Rob Talbert, Tony Pond
Aug 12-17	M Pyramid, Arrow, Striped, Goodale Cardinal, Ruskin, Marion	Dave Dykeman, Nancy Gordon
R Aug 19-20	M Dragon Peak, Kearsage Peak	Barbee Tidball, Scot Jamison
Aug 26-27	I Iron Mtn.	Beth Epstein, Sigrid Sexton
Sept 2-4	M Tehipite Dome, Spanish Mtn.	Igor Mamedalin, Maris Valkass
Sept 2-5	I Piute, Volunteer, Pettit	Al Conrad, Bob Wyka
Sept 8-10	I Hale, Young, & Picket Guard	Ron Hudson, T.B.A.
Sept 9-10	I The Thumb	Joanne Andrew, Patty Kline
Sept 9-10	I Sawtooth, Sirretta	N & J Keating, Walt Whisman
Sept 9-10	O ** Alta Peak	Michael Lorr, Dave Dykeman
Sept 9-10	M Mt. Mills, Mt. Dade	Charlie Knapke, Barbara Cohen
Sept 16	I Warren	Larry Tidball, Barbee Tidball
R Sept 17	M Cathedral	Larry Tidball, Barbee Tidball
Sept 16-19	I Iron Mtn Backpack	Gordon Macleod, Dave Underwood
Sept 16-17	M Mt. Eisen	Dave Dykeman, Nancy Gordon
R Sept 22-24	M Mt. Lyell, Mt. McClure	Ali Aminian, Henry Arnebold
Sept 23-24	I Mt. Morgan #2	Charlie Knapke, John Cheslick
Sept 23-24	I Royce, Merriam	Patty Kline, Ron Hudson
Sept 23-24	I Cloud's Rest, Mt. Dana	Mary McMannes, Bob Hartunian
Sept 23-24	I Sawtooth Pk, Needham Mtn.	Jim Adler, Kathy Wood Price
Sept 23-24	I Mt. Tom	Scot Jamison, Barbee Tidball
Sept 30-Oct 1	I ** Alta Peak, Mt. Silliman	Rich Gnagy, Greg Roach
Sept 30-Oct 1	I Mt. Tyndall	Dave Endres, Randy Danta
Sept 30-Oct 1	I Mt. Baldwin	Beth Epstein, Nick Moore
Sept 30-Oct 3	I Goat, State, & Marion	Al Conrad, Ali Aminian
Oct 14-15	I Sawtooth, Needham, Vandever	Evelyn Reher, Ron Jones
Oct 14-15	I Sawtooth, Lamont	Asher Waxman, Rudi Beuermann
Oct 14-15	I Koip, and more	Doug Mantle, Duane McRuer
Oct 21-22	I Moses Mtn, N. Maggie Mtn	Tina Stough, Doug Mantle

R = Restricted to Sierra Club Members

\*\* = List Finish

\* = SPS 40th Anniversary

## ECHOES FROM THE CHAIR

Yesterday I went to the Angeles Chapter Council meeting with your Council Representative Julie Rush to ask that the Council recommend to ExComm that the SPS be reimbursed for some or all of leader insurance expenses on restricted trips. Julie and I figured we'd get a pretty cold reception in light of the present financial crisis within the Club and I certainly was not looking forward to asking for help. After listening to an hour and a half of reports of declining membership and the woes of the Club my turn came to speak. I spoke about how the Club's founder John Muir found his inspiration on the high peaks of the Sierra. I pointed out that the climbing of them this summer on the SPS schedule will require \$1,150.00 in insurance costs for our leaders. I told them that we had stretched our resources last summer by paying over \$1,900.00 for insurance for all leader costs and half of the participants costs in order to get restricted trips off the ground.

The response was tremendous. Dave Bybee started by saying the SPS was "the jewel in the crown" of the Club's mountaineering. Southern Courtney from the HPS said he not only supported the motion but he also thought that the HPS would be happy to contribute to our costs. Bob Marshall and Bonnie Sharpe felt help with this season's cost was just a band aid and how could we really revitalize mountaineering and what we now call restricted trips. A motion was made and passed 8 to 1 with 2 abstentions to recommend to ExComm that the SPS be reimbursed \$625.00 for insurance costs.

The discussion that the motion caused was long. I was struck by how it revived and animated the council which had been up till then wading through the depressing financial state of the Club and Chapter. There was a real recognition that what we do, mountaineering, lay at the very heart of the Sierra Club. Many of the council members wanted to know how we could bring back BMTC. There was a recognition that if the Club loses mountaineering it would be a symptom of a greater sickness, like a body without a soul.

I was telling Frank Sanborn today about how enthusiastically Julie and I were received by the Council and he said it reminded him of the reception ExComm gave to him when he pitched the idea of a new section. According to Frank, on October 24, 1955, Frank, Pat Meixner, Barbara Lilley, Bud Bingham, Miles Brubacher, John Robinson, Bob Sheller, and Leo Scotti went before ExComm which was chaired by Bob Bear. Frank said that when he stood up to ask them to approve the SPS he was amazed by how well they were received and the Section was approved and came into being that very evening.

Frank went on to tell me that during the summer of 1954 he was sitting around a campfire with Barbara Lilley and other climbing friends after climbing Glacier Divide. As they looked at the alpen glow on Humphreys Frank had the idea to form a new section devoted to climbing in the Sierra and called The Sierra Peaks Section. As we continued to talk on the phone he reflected on what the Section has become. "The SPS is the heart and soul of the Club".

The road to Whitney Portal is open again. The snows are melting at the lower elevations and the Sierra is beckoning.  
Climb on.

Dan Richter 4/26/95

## Charge for Schedule of Activities

Bill Oliver 4/6/95

You've got to be kidding! You say the Angeles Chapter Executive Committee (ExCom) has implemented a charge for the Schedule of Activities - \$9 for the three issues per year. But the Schedule has always been distributed free to all Chapter members. How could this possibly be happening?

Believe me, as a member of the ExCom, no one is more upset about this turn of events than the ExCom itself. For many weeks we agonized over how to arrive at a balanced 1995 budget. The largest source of income to the Chapter comes from National Sierra Club in the form of a partial return of the dues we all pay. Unfortunately, National has had to wrestle with its own budget problems, which have been aggravated by a decline in membership.

The Chapter budget has been balanced the past few years by dipping into reserves. As this is no longer possible, it was essential that we balance expenses with income. Looking at a draft projected budget shortfall of about \$100,000 in December, the ExCom imposed cuts everywhere - to the Conservation Committee, office expenses, publications, etc. One staff member was laid off and the other three full-time staff were reduced to 90% time. The Southern Sierran, which we are required by National to publish, was cut from eleven to eight issues a year. (We have no control over National's Sierra magazine.)

Additional cost savings would result from restricting distribution of the Schedule to only those who wanted to receive it. However, it was clear that we were still far short of a balanced budget. A carefully-designed telephone poll was conducted late in December to assess the feasibility of charging for the Schedule. Most people who wanted to receive the Schedule said that they would be willing to pay \$9/yr for it. Estimating the number of paid subscriptions at about 6,000, the \$9 figure would, along with all the cuts, allow us to arrive at virtually a balanced budget. Let me note that the San Francisco Bay Chapter began charging for their Schedule about ten years ago - presently also \$9 for their three issues per year.

Some have said that the Chapter should have raised dues, instead of charging for the Schedule. According to Sierra Club bylaws, however, the Chapter does not have the authority to do this.

The reduction in staff support impairs all that we do - member services, conservation efforts and outings. Some may feel that the Schedule charge is an unfair hit on outings. The Schedule is most useful for outings, of course, but it is also an important resource for who serves on what and how to contact people. We are all hurt and upset that it will no longer be free. (Sierra Club members with Lifetime Memberships who wish to receive the Schedule will not be charged.)

Eight of the nine ExCom members are rated outings leaders. All of us were especially reluctant to impose a charge for the Schedule. All of us, however, could recognize and accept the necessity for doing so. Balancing the budget secures the present and protects the future. It allows us to prudently retrench and move forward. We understand that many members are upset and frustrated - as are we. We ask for your understanding and continued support.

**SPS Membership Report** by Dan Richter 4/26/95

**New Member.....Welcome!**

Lasta Tomasevich  
2610 Regent Street # 202  
Berkeley, CA 94704  
(510) 548-9459

Joanne Andrew  
12141 Cherry Street  
Los Alamitos, CA 90720

**Reinstatement....Welcome back!**

Bob Bruley  
17572 Norwood Park Place  
Tustin, CA 92680  
(714) 731-6782 w:832-3369

**Address Changes**

Bob Sumner  
P.O. Box 8243  
Incline Village, NV 89452

Rick Chval  
16501 PCH #100  
Sunset Beach, CA 90742

**New Subscribers Thank you!**

Bill Stall  
124 Corinthian Walk  
Long Beach, CA 90803  
(310) 433-4184 w:(213) 237-4550

Marjorie M. Hutton  
6140 Monterey Rd. #414  
Los Angeles, CA 90042  
(213) 258-5846

Peter Klapper  
1429 Shenandoah Street  
Los Angeles, CA 90035  
(310) 854-4404

Leo Alaniz  
282 Twickenham Ave.  
Los Angeles, CA 90022  
(213) 728-4793 w: 342-8218

Jackson Budd  
17834 Juniper Street  
Hesperia, CA 92345  
(619) 956-1680

Walter R. Studhalter  
22263 Ninfa Ct.  
Woodland Hills, CA 91364  
(818) 347-4375 w: (714) 525-3338

Bill Baker  
P.O. Box 8131  
Fountain Valley, CA 92728  
(714) 964-0237

Tim & Suzanne Pletcher  
2723 Lyons Ct.  
Carlsbad, CA 92008  
(619) 434-7338

**Accomplishments.....Congratulations!!**

Emblem #537 Bob Bruley on Olancha 5/2/76  
Emblem #538 Jack Wickel on Clarence King 9/2/94

**Sustaining Members for 1995 Thank you!**

Frank Sanborn, Gus Ordonez, Al Conrad, Joe Stephens, Bob Latter, Rick Chval, Judy Richardson, Ed Zdon, Dave Dykeman and Leonora Wills, Ron Grau, Doug Mantle.

**TREASURER'S NOTES**

by Patty Kline

I am very pleased to say that to date (April 25th), we have 80 Echo Subscriptions at the Sustaining level. This is fantastic to have so may Sustainers of the SPS. By being a Sustaining member you pay \$25 instead of \$12 and get the Echo first class rather than third class. It also helps out the section.

The help is especially appreciated towards our climbing insurance. It is a great feeling to be doing rock and snow climbs with ropes, ice axe and crampons again in the SPS. It does take more funding though because insurance doesn't come easily these days.

Again, thank you so much to every one of our Sustaining members and subscribers. Especially thank you to the several individuals who gave over the \$25.

## CONSERVATION NEWS

Republicans in the California legislature encouraged by the Republican victories in the national elections are proposing their own contract. Some of the proposals to change California's Environmental laws are:

Change the California Endangered Species Act to require economic considerations when listing an endangered species, compensation to land owners when endangered species on their land reduce the value of the land, and decriminalization of some actions which kill endangered species.

Changes in the Environmental Quality Act creating loopholes and exemptions, add restrictions to legal challenges, and limit project mitigation.

Privatize some of the responsibilities of state toxic regulators, including the authority to issue permits.

Require loser in suits to pay all legal costs, including those of the prevailing party.

Build the Auburn Dam.

On the national level there are some very disturbing trends. For example: Although large agricultural corporations in the San Joaquin Valley already receive subsidized water from federally financed water projects, under the "takings" legislation passed by the house last month, farmers would have to be compensated for any water diverted from their allotments for salmon run restoration. Corporate farmers could claim compensation at market rates which would pay them 10 times the rate they are now paying for subsidized water.

In Nevada, Wayne Hage, a rancher and a leader of the West's private property movement has filed a suit in federal court alleging that the government owes him compensation because federal fish and game agents do not prevent elk herds from grazing and drinking on his ranch land. Mr. Hage and other ranchers have also sued the U.S.F.S and the B.L.M. claiming takings when the agencies tried to restrict their grazing on public land. The U.S.F.S. confiscated some of Mr. Hage's cows when he repeatedly defied orders to cease grazing on land that federal range experts considered compacted, gullied, and trampled. Mr. Hage is asking for \$28.4 million in damages.

In Colorado the operators of the Summitville Mine, a Canadian company, went bankrupt leaving the E.P.A. superfund with cyanide laced tailings to clean up at an estimated cost of at least \$120 million.

Now the owners, Aztec Minerals Corp., Gray Eagle Mining Corp., and South Mountain Mineral Corp., are suing Colorado because the regulators that allowed them to mine and make a profit permitted mining which polluted their property and devalued it.

These are just some of the effects of the takings law being proposed by the Congress. Although such actions may eventually be lost the possibilities are enormous. Of course there have been abuses of private property by the government also but the pending legislation is not the way to fix the problem. Write or call your congressional Delegate and let him or her know how you stand on such issues.

The Honorable \_\_\_\_\_  
U.S. Senate  
Washington D.C. 20510

The Honorable \_\_\_\_\_  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington D.C. 20515

U.S. Capitol Switchboard 202/224-3121  
Angeles Chapter Congressional Delegation

Dist	Member	Phone	Fax
	Senator Barbara Boxer	202-225-5161	415-956-6701
	Senator Dianne Feinstein	202-224-3841	202-228-3954
24	Anthony Beilenson	202-225-5911	
25	Howard P. McKeon	202-225-1956	202-226-0683
26	Howard L. Berman	202-225-4695	202-225-5279
27	Carlos J. Moorhead	202-225-4176	202-226-1279
28	David Dreier	202-225-2305	202-225-4754
29	Henry A. Waxman	202-225-3976	202-225-4099
30	Xavier Becerra	202-225-6235	202-225-2202
31	Mathew G. Martinez	202-225-5464	202-225-4467
32	Julian C. Dixon	202-225-7084	202-225-4091
33	Lucille Royball-Allard	202-225-1766	202-226-0350
34	Esteban E. Torres	202-225-5256	202-225-9711
35	Maxine Watters	202-225-2201	202-225-7584
36	Jane Harman	202-225-8220	202-226-0684
37	Walter R. Tucker III	202-225-7924	202-225-7926
38	Steve Horn	202-225-6676	202-226-1012
39	Ed Royce	202-225-4111	202-226-0335
41	Jay C. Kim	202-225-3201	202-226-1485
45	Dana Rohrabacher	202-225-2415	202-225-0145
46	Robert K. Dornan	202-225-2965	202-225-0275
47	C. Christopher Cox	202-225-5611	202-225-9177
48	Ron Packard	202-225-3906	202-225-0134

## ECHOS FROM THE PAST

by RON JONES

*An ongoing series from Echo 38-6, 39-1 & 2*

### Forty Years Ago in the Angeles Chapter

Planning for a climbing section, specializing in Sierra climbs, was continuing to grow both on trips, around the campfire, and private meetings, some at the home of Frank Sanborn's parents in Palos Verde. It was felt that a Section in the Sierra Club should be dedicated to climbing in the "Range of Light", the mountains that our Club's founder, John Muir, first hiked in. Barbara Lilley still lived in San Diego but joined Frank & others on some scheduled and "outlaw" ( private ) trips. John Robinson was in Korea and was out of climbing & planning for 1954 & most of 1955. Active planers were led by Roger Gaefke, Pat Meixner, Miles Brubacher, Bud Bingham, Leo Scotti, Bob Sheller, Owen Blackburn, John Wedberg, Owen Blackburn, George Wallerstein & others. Chapter trips this period included Paradise Mtn in Sequoia N.P. led by Frank Sanborn & Owen Blackburn. It snowed Saturday night. Sunday, in better weather, they hiked to beyond 9,000 ft when fresh snow turned them back without reaching the peak, and this day, back to the cars, totaled 26 miles!, Memorial Day trips to Olancha Peak led by Frank, Reuben Schreiner & June Kilburne, and another to Falcon Pk (11,700') led by Toni Gamero & Howard Hill. In late June, Frank, Barbara, Bob & Pat together with Lyle Gaston & Bob Smeltzer made a private climb of Maggie & Moses Pks out of Balch Park.

### Thirty Years Ago

New members this period in 1965 included Dick Sykes, Wally Henry, Elton Fletcher, Bob Michael & Kent Larson, Marlin Clark & Bob Felgar. George Barnes became Emblem holder #99. John Robinson & Frank Sanborn led 50 on a SPS snow practice in San Gorgonio Bowl. One climber hit a tree in a glissade and broke his leg in 3 places. Ron Jones broke the shaft of his ice axe holding John on an arrest. Jess Logan led a conservation trip to Onion Valley where 7 climbers planted trees on

Saturday & climbed University on Sunday. Other scheduled trips included a backpack of Olancha led by Jess Logan, a Memorial Day trip to Tehipite Dome led by Tom Amneus & Frank Sanborn and a group of 4 led by Ron Jones also climbed Spanish Mtn; a snow climb of Basin & Mt Tom led by Ken McNutt and Moses & Maggie led by Robinson & Sanborn.

### Twenty years Ago

In 1975, Bill Bradley & John Klinepeter led 27 to Smith & Crag on May 10-11; Jim Murphy led 7 on a climb to University & Independence in good snow; Norm Rohn & Diana Dee led 15 to Bloody & Morrison; RJ & Bill Stauffer led 9 on Coliseum & Perkins; John Robinson led 20 on a climb of Rockhouse. New members included Mel Johnson, Tony Zaleski & Gary Richardson.

### Ten Years Ago

Rose Certini joined the SPS in May, 1985. Norm Rohn & RJ led Alta & Silliman with light snow conditions. No Ice axe needed. Frank Avella & Jim Raiford led 4 on a nice snow climb of Lone Pine Pk. The Mt Gardiner gourmet feast and ski trip was led, complete with lady fingers & raspberry jam, by Randall Danta & Doug Mantle. Dave Dykeman & Nancy Gordon led a group of newcomers on a tough climb of Inconsolable during snow flurries & rain showers on June 1-2. Dave & Vic Wong led Goode & Aggasiz later that month. Harold McFadden & Nancy led a group of 6 on a snow climb of LeConte & Mallory.

### Five Years Ago in the SPS

In May, 1990 Bill Oliver & Ron Jones led 14 on the easy class 3 climbs of Rockhouse & Taylor Dome. A potluck of Mexican food & a Sunday pig-out at Benji's Basque Restaurant in Bakersfield added to the fun. In June Patty Kline & Bob Hartunian had 18 continuous hour of rain on their successful lead of 20 people to Olancha. George Toby and Ron Young led 12 on a climb of Moses & No Maggie. They had a fine Basque meal in Bakersfield at Maitias.

HAPPY TRAILS, Ron Jones



(Editor's Note: Part 1 of the two part article on Theodore Solomons was supposed to have run in the last ECHO. Due to an error on my part, it did not run. This issue will therefore include parts 1 & 2.)

## THEODORE SOLOMONS

### Part 1

#### The Pioneer of the John Muir Trail article by Ron Jones

This is the title of a biography of this Sierra explorer, a book written in 1990 by Shirley Sargent, & still available. On July 22-29 Bill Oliver & I are leading a SPS 40th Anniversary Celebration Backpack of the Theodore Solomons Trail, named to honor this charter Sierra Club member and early day Sierra climber. You are welcome to join us on the northern 68 mile segment of this 290 mile trail leading from Glacier Point to Cottonwood Pass in the south. We hope to complete the trail in following Sierra seasons.

In this, and the following *ECHO* I will tell the story of this famous explorer and the birth of the trail named for him in 1972-73 by Dennis Gagnon, an equipment salesman at Kely Mountaineering in Glendale (The trail was tentatively named the Kely Trail to honor this innovative backpack maker). There are two guidebooks to the trail, Guide to the Theodore Solomons Trail by Dennis Gagnon, Western Tanager Press, 1987 and A Hiking Guide to the Theodore Solomons Trail by Gary Buscombe, High Adventure Press, 1983. Check them out if you're interested.

Theodore Solomons was born in 1870 in San Francisco, the last of 5 children. In 1884, while watching his uncle's dairy herd near Fresno he would look at the distant Sierra Range and "marvel at the snowy peaks...and wonder if I should not be able to get up there and explore them one day." His ambitions at the time included mountaineering, trail-finding and trail-making. His first peak was Mt Tamalpais in 1886, soon followed by Mt Diablo, a 5 or 6 day trip at the time. After graduating from high school in 1888 he spent most of that summer in the Sierra near Lake Tahoe. He wrote at that time, "this whetted the urge to a full-length crest-wise journey [along the Sierras." For the next several years he studied law and worked as a court reporter.

In May of 1892 he, together with Sidney Peixotto, started from Lake Tahoe, with their mules Whitney & Shasta, "a complete subjugation in a single season of the entire (trailless and un-mapped!-RJ) High Sierra". The story is told in the Sierra Club *Bulletin* of January 1894 and again in the *Bulletin* for 1940. Enroute he met Joseph LeConte and they climbed Mt Ritter. He reached as far south as the Devils Postpile, taking many photos along the way.

After his return he joined the newly formed Sierra Club and met John Muir. Muir told him "what he remembered of the lay of the high streams and the crests they drained." In 1894, with the company of Leigh Bierce, he started south in his Sierra explorations in the Grand Canyon of the Tuolumne. Here he met Will Colby, who he described as "the man who has given more devotion, more thousands of hours ... to the cause of California mountains than any other person, in or out of the Sierra Club". They explored as far south as the Paiute Basin along most of the route "precisely the route of the John Muir Trail" Solomons writes in 1940, climbing & naming Seven Gables Pk & Vermillion Valley. This

summer trip appeared as "A Search for a High Mountain Route from Yosemite to Kings River Canyon" in the *Bulletin* of May, 1895.

In 1895 he and Ernest Bonner headed for Theodore's final camp of '94 and explored south to Evolution Creek, photographing the Enchanted Gorge and mountains of the Evolution area. On this trip he named Mt Senger, climbed Mt Goddard and placed a Sierra Club register there, named Evolution Lake, The Hermit, Mt Darwin, Mt Huxley, Mt Fiske, Mt LaMarck, Mt Spencer, Mts Scylla & Charybdis & other peaks. The story of this trip appears in *Appalachia* magazine in 1896.

In February of 1896 Solomons gave an elaborate report to the Sierra Club including "a continuous route through the High Sierra from Yosemite to Kings River Canyon over which animals may be led..." In March of the same year he proposed in Sierra Club Circular No. 11, "a rough mountain trip with pack animals through regions of the High Sierra lying between Yosemite Valley and Kings River Canyon...and to cost each person between forty and seventy dollars." This project, a precursor of Wm. Colby's High Trips, must have sounded a bit venturesome, for too few responded to justify organizing it. Solomons also made minor Sierra explorations during 1896 and 1897.

In 1898 Solomons left for the Klondike gold rush to stay there for 10 years and to make a modest fortune, not in gold, but in coal mining. He then returned to the "lower 48", and in a story I will tell in the next *ECHO*, died in Hollywood in 1947.

Francis Farquhar said in 1948, "It was a part of Solomons' plan for opening the High Sierra to continuous travel to publish, perhaps in book form, the information he had gathered. Besides his own observations he had gathered data from J.N.LeConte and...from L.A. Winchell of Fresno..." The best published summary of his expeditions is found in a series of six articles written for *Overland Monthly*, "Unexplored Regions of the High Sierra" (May, June, August, November 1896 and January, August, 1897), well illustrated with photographs.

## THEODORE SOLOMONS

### Part 2

#### The Pioneer of the John Muir Trail

In Part 1 we left Theodore Solomons having spent five summers exploring the feasibility of a high route near the Sierra crest. He had then left California in 1898 for the Klondike gold rush to stay there for 10 years and to make a modest fortune, not in gold, but in coal mining.

During his stay in Alaska Solomons wrote, "besides climbing a few mountains and learning to handle a canoe in swift water, I prospected with a 70-pound pack...placer mined; practiced law; rafted logs in the mush ice for a winter's grubstake; wrote and helped act a play; made the long hike to Nome and the Arctic; became a postmaster...ran a store...surveyed; swam horses packed with gold dust across freshet swollen rivers; helped build a railroad...practiced law some more, and opened a coal mine."

He made a fortune and returned to San Francisco a wealthy man. In 1910 he was 40, married to Katherine and had a child on the way. He set up on a 21 acre homestead west of Yosemite Valley high above the Merced River. He named it "Flying Spur". It remained

the family home and retreat until it was destroyed during a forest fire in the mid-1930s (Shirley Sargent, Solomons' biographer, rebuilt the home & lives there now). Theodore took the family on summer camping trips in the Sierra but didn't set foot in the high Sierra.

In 1915, the year after John Muir died in Los Angeles, the Sierra Club proposed to the California Legislature that a high trail in the Sierra be constructed and named for John Muir. In 1925 Theodore Solomon wrote, "I have no special objection that the route...was not named after me, nor has any mountain or other object.... But the vision, not to speak of the energy, I showed in that search for a high mountain route might fittingly been recorded historically....Muir is a better name...for tourists to take the trail, for instance-than Solomons. But mine the idea, mine the pioneering."

Solomon supported his wife & three children by writing for various adventure and travel magazines, basing many of his stories on his time in Alaska. Eventually he moved to a home in Hollywood and became a motion picture script writer. He participated hardly at all in the activities of the Southern California Chapter of the Sierra Club although he recalled that he had given a campfire talk at Griffith Park to our Chapter on June 24 (sic), 1925. { I checked the Southern California Chapter Local Walks Schedule #43 for the summer of 1925 and on Saturday, June 21 Chester Versteeg did lead a campfire at the park picnic grounds which was the annual camp fire held prior to departure on the National High Trip ("bring Japanese lanterns secured to short sticks for effective display about the campfire" reads the writeup). Mr Claire Tappan was scheduled to "talk about the splendid country the High Trippers will pass through [that] year". Perhaps Mr Tappan couldn't make it & Solomon substituted or perhaps they appeared jointly. -- RON} Glen Dawson recalls Theodore liked to visit Dawson's Book Shop in Los Angeles (now at another location but still around in 1995).

In 1932, 62 years old, five-foot-five and 70 pounds overweight, he became determined to sample again his high country route. After a rigorous routine of diet and exercise, he and 38 year old Yvonne Louise Robinson, soon to become his second wife, left from Mammoth Lakes for a 5 week adventure. He wrote, "the whole Sierra seemed to have assumed Himalayan proportions. [Beauty] had enlarged her sovereignty, imprinting itself even on the bare ashen gray of the treeless basins, the peakless slopes. Of these landscapes the youthful impression had been that of 'aweful desolation'. Now they were merely austere..." He lost 35 pounds during his trip. Toward the end of his outing, "fatigue came seldom. I could no longer run down a slope or spring unerringly from [rock to rock] in the descent of a peak. But I climbed nearly as well as ever, though more slowly." The story was chronicled by Theodore Solomons in the 1933 Sierra Club Bulletin. He wrote as a suggestion, "it's a good thing to go into the High Sierra at least every forty years. Get the habit!"

Following his trip he returned to Hollywood where he continued to work as a screenwriter & in several attempts at small business. In 1941 he operated a small restaurant near Lake Elsinore. He died of a heart attack in February, 1947 in Hollywood at the age of 76. Two of his children, Eleanor Solomons Volcani and Leon Solomons were alive in 1986. A short notice of his passing is found in the July, 1947 Southern Sierran.

In August of 1947 there was a proposal to name a Sierra Peak for Theodore Solomons.

It was referred to the Place Names Committee of the Sierra Club, but no action was taken. A similar proposal made in 1950 was also tabled. It has been suspected that Francis Farquhar, no great friend of Solomons, had blocked the actions. Family members thought that the Sierra Club directors were anti-Semitic. Ansel Adams wrote in 1983, "I have no doubt at all that his Jewishness influenced his relationships as there was (and is) a silent racism in the Bay Area...."

In 1964 Hal Roth's book *Pathway in the Sky*, a history of the John Muir Trail, was published. Marshall & Pricilla Darley, reading of the vision of the 14 year old T.S., became determined to rectify the neglect of Theodore Solomon. In February 1968 Pricilla Darley, as an individual, submitted Solomons' name to the U.S. Board on Geographic Names and less than six months later in June 1968, Mt Solomons (13,016 ft), to the south of Muir Pass, was dedicated to Theodore Seixas Solomons.

Then 1972: the year of the first Earth Day, the clean air and water movement, the back-to-nature movement. Dennis Gagnon, while working in the Kelty Mountaineering store in Glendale, became increasingly aware of the pressures and the damage and over crowding occurring in the High Sierra and specifically to the John Muir Trail.

Dennis wondered if an alternate trail to the John Muir would help to take pressure off that popular route. He studied Sierra topo maps. He thought that surely the route couldn't travel any higher than the JMT; that would just compound problems. Putting it lower would help by lengthening the hiking season as you wouldn't need to wait as long for snow melt. There would be more firewood and the terrain wouldn't be as fragile. The trail would have to stay near or cross streams as much as possible.

He put together the Theodore Solomons Trail (TST) by linking many existing trails into a continuous route. It goes through many remote and unused regions and traverses the Sierra from west to east (Glacier Point to Cottonwood Basin) and follows the range from north to south (Yosemite to south of Mt Whitney). Roadheads are located about a week's walk apart at Mineral King, Cedar Grove, Florence Lake, Huntington Lake with other possible entries & exits.

Dick Kelty agreed in 1973 to sponsor an expedition to scout the route, to provide the food, gear and transportation. Dennis field-tested an experimental Tioga pack on the trip. The route worked, Dennis wrote a pamphlet size guide in 1974 and his *Guide to the Theodore Solomons Trail* in 1987. Gary Bunscombe wrote his *Hiking Guide to the Theodore Solomons Trail* in 1983. To both these writers and to Shirley Sargent who wrote *Solomons of the Sierra, The Pioneer of the John Muir Trail* as well as the writings of Theodore Solomons himself, I give thanks for background for this short article. --- RON JONES

## ECHOES OF OUR CLIMBS

### **NORTHERN SIERRA AND TAHOE PEAKS**

a private trip by Patty Kline

On Friday July 15, 1994 Bob Michael, Steve Nardi and I departed for the Tahoe area to knock off some Northern Sierra peaks. We were gone 5 days and had a great time. All 3 of us crammed into my 2 wheel drive Pathfinder along with camping and cooking gear and enough compact discs to play on my player to break up the monotony of the long miles ahead of us. Steve and I had zero peaks in are 23 and 24 and Bob only had 2. We did the peaks to make the most of our time, yet not to be under any death march type pressure. After all, this was a vacation.

Saturday morning found us at Lake Tahoe. After somewhat of a late start, we decided to drive over to Squaw Valley to get Granite Chief (9006'-class 1) and Tinker Knob (8949'-class 1). Granite Chief is a piece of cake. We paid the \$12.00 and took the ski lift up. It is still a couple miles to the top of Granite Chief. Near the top of this mountain I saw Sid "San Jac" Davis, who is a long time SPS member and E leader, coming down with his grandson. From Granite Chief it was an easy 5 mile hike over to Tinker Knob. We bypassed the ski lift on the way down, reaching my Pathfinder in the Squaw Valley parking lot about 8:30 pm.

Sunday we did Sierra Buttes (8591'-class 1) and English Mtn. (8373'-class 2.) We drove north to Truckee. Then we proceeded north on Hwy 89 to Hwy 49. We went left or west on Hwy 49 to Sardine Lakes Rd. Hwy 93 and Packer Lake Road off of Hwy 49 will take you about 10 miles back into the Sierra Buttes roadhead where there is a locked gate. From here a fire road goes almost all the way to the peak. At the end there are some nice flights of stairs to take you up the large summit block and to the lookout tower on top. The lookout was open to guests. This peak has a granite mass that is very impressive from the main highway. Next was English in a maze of logging roads. We drove back to the east on Hwy 49 past Sierraville and went south on Hwy 89 to the Jackson Meadows Reservoir

turnoff.

After doing English we relaxed in the afternoon sun before driving over to the roadhead for Mt. Lola (9148'-class 1), which we did the next morning on Monday. The logging roads became more and more complex. When it became totally dark around 9:00 pm, we gave up and camped under some huge pine trees. A nice pasta dinner was cooked before going to bed. The next morning we found we were practically at the roadhead for Lola near a nice lake. We drove the Pathfinder a couple more miles before the road became very 4x4. We only had to walk an extra mile where the road basically ended.

The idea was to now get my 2 peaks in area 23 since we had collected 5 in area 24. I "needed" 2 in area 23 for my upcoming Senior Emblem, which I got on August 3 on Table Mtn. a little over 2 weeks later. Well, we didn't get down to Carson Pass on Hwy 88 in area 23 until 2:30 pm. Just below Carson Pass is a nice campground which is very near Round Top (10,381'-class 3) There were a lot of empty spots, probably because it was a Monday. By the time we got a spot and had some lunch it was too late to do Round Top. There were a lot of thunder clouds and the peak was in a white out.

Tuesday we went for Round Top at 6:00 am. It had an easy class 3 summit block. Then we drove over to Sonora Pass to get Leavitt Peak (11,569'-class 1). I have never seen so many wildflowers. They grow bigger up north because of the longer sunlight hours. They were everywhere around Round Top too. I found out that many people time trips here just to see the fantastic wildflower display in mid July. Leavitt Peak is right off of the Pacific Crest Trail and is 10 miles round trip. It is a spectacular landscape of volcanic bareness, lakes, ridges and snow. It was my favorite of the 7 we did. The 3 of us left Sonora Pass around 8:30 pm to return in LA at 3:00 am the next morning, in typical SPS fashion. Steve, Bob and I had a great 5 days.

### **14,003' Thunderbolt Peak**

A Private Trip: 9/16-18/94

Leaders: Fred Bright, Dave Jurasevich, Lester Hill  
Participants: Mark Adrian (author), Ken Olson, Carol Snyder, Richard Carey, Bill Stevens, Robert Poche

When I tried this peak two years ago, we were blown off at the V-notch between Thunderbolt and The Lightning Rod. Despite our attempts, the winds were too cold and fierce to even get within

proximity to the summit's crag. But, this year, determined, we would try again.

Driving up 395 Thursday afternoon, we were concerned about a fresh dusting of snow and a roiling squall in the Whitney area. Nevertheless, our spirits were high, we had come to climb Thunderbolt. Using our HAM radios, the majority of our group unexpectedly rendezvoused and camped at the Willows campground, just E of South Lake.

Friday morning, we utilized four mules to carry loads and dropped our packs at Parchers before proceeding to Apendale for breakfast. Afterwards, we were on the trail by 9 AM, headed for Bishop Pass where we met the mules about noon. We distributed group gear there and headed towards the E shore of Lake 11393 in Dusy Basin and made base camp. The early fall weather was comfortable, despite the high cloud cover.

Saturday morning, we were up at 5 AM and hiking at first light, 6 AM, heading ESE for Thunderbolt Pass and the Southwest Chute No. 1 (re. Secor, pg. 200). At the bottom of the chute, we donned helmets since rockfall is inevitable. Continuing up the chute, we approached the chockstone, as anticipated, and, as the time before, Fred set up a fixed rope to protect the 150' exposed ledge. Several mid-rope cams and sling-anchors at both ends were used. Each climber used a short, fisherman-knotted rope into their locking biner (harness) with two additional biners used to slide along the fixed rope. As each pro point was encountered, each of the two biners were individually moved "around" the pro to insure a "full time" belay. The last climber removed the pro, but we left the rope in place to expedite the return traverse. Once past this obstacle, it was another 1200' of gain in the chute to the notch. Robert experienced a "high-altitude" headache and decided to wait at the ledge for our return.

As we approached the notch, the chute became increasingly filled with snow and very "slippery". So, we set up a belay station at the notch to "protect" climbing the last 100' up the steepening chute. The notch was completely "filled" with snow, and the otherwise "easy class 5" rock was annoyingly/dangerously dusted with the finger-numbing powder.

We had not anticipated climbing class five rock laced with snow and this slowed our progress. Here, Fred led the first pitch and then Les ("nerves of

steel") Hill took the lead. Les attempted the "standard" pitch, but there was just too much snow and very dangerous. Fortunately, there appeared to be an alternate pitch just to the right (W) of the "standard" pitch. Cautiously, Les worked his way over to this steeply sloping ledge, dusting off snow at every move, and setting pro wherever possible. Inching his way past the crux, Les skillfully attained the "flat ridge on the eastern side of the S summit" and received a round of applause from those below. Next up was Fred, on belay from Les, while I got into a belayer's position to belay the next "chute" climber. After Fred, Dave ascended and they set up a fixed rope for the "large crack" traverse over to the summit's crag. I then belayed Ken up the chute and he continued on up the c15 pitch. Next, I belayed Bill up and he continued on with more gear for Fred and Dave. Then I belayed Richard and he became the belayer while I continued. He in turn belayed Carol up the chute as it was my turn to proceed up the c15 pitch.

With snow, this pitch was a significant challenge as foot-holds were slippery and uncertain. But, this wasn't nearly as bad as the stinging-finger-cold hand holds. I had to stop several times to warm my fingers. Even so, they numbed so fast it was hard to determine my grip on hand holds and several times I used fist jams which seemed surer. This 70' pitch took me about ten minutes to climb and at the top I gratefully thanked Lester for his taut belay and commended him on his lead. Then, I went to get warm in the sun as I cried and whined from my painfully-stinging fingers. It took about ten minutes before the pain subsided and sensation to return.

As I rested, Fred and Dave were busy lassoing the summit's 5.9 crag. From my vantage I could easily see distant Starlight Peak and Thunderbolt's summit box register -- we were close! After several throws of the rope, Fred had "captured" the summit and Dave took off using an ascender and brute strength to overcome this awkward 15' pitch. SUCCESS!, he was on top! Dave reset the rope into one of the two available bolts, and also "installed" a quickdraw. To expedite the process, we passed the register down to sign before we each attempted the ascender. The summit's crag is the shape of a dill pickle wedge, and there's room for only one person. Furthermore, the register box is on an angle and the tablet just about falls out when the box is opened.

Dave then rapped down and the next climber

was Fred, followed by Bill, and then it was my turn. Clipping into the ascender-belay, I lurched out onto a 2x8" exposed ledge to begin the "climb". At about eye-level, on the crag's corner is another small ledge. Using the rope and ascender it took me several tries and slips and some "encouraging rhetoric" from Dave before I was able to commit my right foot to this upper ledge -- I wanted this peak! Another yank on the ascender/rope and thrust of the torso found me staring face-to-face with the Sierra Club box-register. Kneeling up on the tip-top, I let out a loud reverberating YAHOOOO! I then clipped into the quickdraw and out of the ascender, then thread the rap rope into my "8", took a quick 360-degree mental picture, unclipped the quickdraw and began the precarious rap down the crag's sloping NE side which was wet with snow melt.

Next up was Ken, who gracefully and seemingly effortlessly ascended the crag (he must have been practicing for this). Les was the final summiteer who replaced the register and cleaned the pitch/summit bolts.

Meanwhile, I went back to gather my daypack and began the rap down to the notch. The snow, again, made this somewhat awkward with many slippery spots. Back at the notch, I rapped down the chute (which would be easy c12 without snow) for about 100', until the snow receded. Rope snags launched a couple of missiles which I had to dodge. We regrouped at rope's end, and about 4 PM,

proceeded back to camp without incident, arriving there about 7:30 PM under a full moon. It was a quick dinner and then to bed.

It had been a tough, long, but rewarding climb. Several climbers commented this was their toughest Sierra peak yet, surpassing even nearby North Pal. Sunday morning, we were packed and out of base camp by 9:00 AM, and left Bishop Pass by 11:15 AM under cloudy skies. By mid-afternoon, back at the trailhead, it had begun to rain with thunder and lightning -- a befitting end to summiting Thunderbolt, and a great end-of-summer climb.

We stopped at Rossi's in Big Pine for a celebratory dinner (thanks Robert). This is a quaint family style restaurant with many decorative paintings, pictures and local artifacts. I asked the owner/cook if he had any pictures of Norman Clyde. Well, to be kind, he said several unsavory remarks about Norman based on his first hand accounts, and that his portrait would not be found in this establishment.

It can't go without saying, that we could not have summited without the efforts of the leaders, especially Les, who led the intimidating "snow pitch". Thanks guys, for your expertise, extreme safety conscientiousness and for Fred's Kitchen Sink rack. - Mark

## **Mt. Gilbert**

A Private Trip - October 30, 1994

by Matthias Selke

A nice, warm late October week-end was in the forecast, and a large storm was due to arrive the week after, so why not drive up the 395 to Bishop and do one or two more peaks to end the season? My wife Xin and I were not the only SPSers heading to the Sierra that week-end: at the Inyo County Museum in Independence we ran into Erik Siering and Paul Graff who were admiring Norman Clyde's photo collection.

The next morning dawned cloudless, and by 9 am (staying in a motel in Bishop does not help in getting an early start) we were hiking up the Bishop Pass Trail, and then the Treasure Lakes Trail. Mt. Johnson was supposed to be the goal, for it is the lowest peak we "needed" in the Bishop area. There was snow down to 10,000 ft. The snow was initially

not very deep, but it was enough to make us lose the Treasure Lakes Trail for awhile. After regaining the trail, we reached the two lower lakes by 11:30 am, and enjoyed a lunch as well as the snow-dusting on the peaks. Because it was almost noon, Xin felt there is no hope to get the peak and decided to return to the car, but she allowed me to hike on and try to get a peak I "needed". So I walked southwest through deep snow toward Mt. Johnson. Just before the base of the east side of the peak was reached, it became clear that the peak was not possible for that day. Huge talus blocks covered with several feet of fresh powdery snow made every step risky and unpleasant. Disappointed, I looked around: in front, the southeast face of Mt. Johnson was looming; to the right (west), the cirque leading to

Treasure Col was branching off. Treasure Col did not look appealing, either, the chute was covered with fresh snow. On the right side of this cirque, there is a talus slope leading to the ridge that extends from the first Treasure Lake to the Sierra Crest near point 12640+ (on the 7.5 min topo). This south-facing talus slope was snow-free. There appeared to be a feasible notch in the Sierra Crest near where the aforementioned ridge meets the crest. This might be a way to do Mt. Gilbert, so why not give it a try? Hence I scrambled diagonally up the cl. 2 talus (and some sand) aiming for the point just below and southwest of peak 12640+ where the ridge meets the Sierra crest. The only difficulty were two minor ribs consisting of cl. 2-3 slabs with good holds just below peak 12640+. Crossing the Sierra Crest where the ridge meets it turned out to be trivial; the notch is class 1-2. From the notch, the plateau south of the summit of Mt. Gilbert was in plain view. All that was left to do was an easy walk along western side of the southeast ridge of Mt. Gilbert. The snow was not very deep, and the summit was reached by 3 pm. The deep trench of Le Conte canyon as well as the Palisades were beautifully illuminated by the late fall sun.

The descent was uneventful, except for a slip on some snow-covered talus. The parking lot at South Lake was reached in darkness, and Xin was happy to see me alive, with one more peak off the list.

## DEER MOUNTAIN

SPS 40TH Anniversary Celebration

A Re-creation of the first scheduled SPS trip

April 22-23, 1995

The first scheduled hike sponsored by the SPS and led by Frank Sanborn and John Robinson was a climb of Deer Mtn over Haiwee Pass in 1956 and it drew 9 participants. Deer Mountain was chosen only because Frank wanted to hike over Haiwee Pass and Deer Mtn showed on the Auto Club map as the nearest "peak". Deer Mtn was never considered for a peak addition. In 1971 Art de Goede and Norm Rohn led a 15th anniversary climb and they had 13 participants (Echo 15-4). In 1986 I scheduled a Diamond Jubilee climb, a 30th anniversary celebration, with Norm Rohn again assisting and we had 14 participants. I thought it quite an interesting route in a new area (Echo 30-5). I remember at the time their had recently been a small lightning fire on the slopes of Deer Mtn which

This appears to be the easiest route up Gilbert from the east, and there is no need for an ice-ax (in summer, no snow or ice would be encountered on this route). Hence this route should be appealing to anyone who wants to lead the peak on an official SPS trip and who does not want to go through the hassle (?) of leading a restricted trip. To my knowledge, this route has not been described previously (neither Secor's book nor Roper's guide contain it), so it seems useful to give a brief summary here:

*From the lower Treasure Lakes, walk up southwest, toward Mt. Johnson. At 11280+ ft., a tarn is reached. To the right (west), the cirque north of Mt. Johnson opens up. Walk up along the right side of this cirque, past some huge talus, until it is possible to go diagonally up the talus slope on the right (north) side of the cirque. Head for the point where the ridge extending from the lower Treasure Lake meets the Sierra Crest, near Peak 12640+. Two minor ribs near the Sierra Crest are passed without difficulties. Stay less than 100 ft. below the top of the ridge until you reach an obvious notch in the Sierra Crest just southwest of Peak 12640+. Cross the notch, descend less than 100 ft. on the other side, and follow the western side of the southeast ridge of Mt. Gilbert to the summit. A nice route that can easily be done as a dayhike.*

had been fought by a crew from the U.S. Forest Service. It was reported in the L.A. Times at the time that the veteran crew leader and one fire fighter had seen and identified with certainty a large "sasquatch like" creature. We kept a sharp eye open.

This year Bill Oliver and I scheduled a 40th anniversary climb and we received two sase's, one from a SPS member and one from a WTC student. The trip was cancelled for lack of interest. I drove up later in mid-week to the old Sam Lewis Pack Station north of Little Lake and repeated the climb, solo. I hope that the Section's vitality continues to grow. --- HAPPY TRAILS, Ron



## IN HIGH PLACES: MAUI, Part II -- Puu Kukui

Burton A. Falk

Early on in my long fascination with Maui I became intrigued with the idea of climbing 5,788' Puu Kukui (lit., "candle nut hill"), rising just east of Lahaina, the high point of the West Maui Mountains. Doing a little research, I found that this peak--because of its almost permanent cloud cap--is one of the wettest spots on earth. The mountain, in fact, has an average rainfall of 40 feet/year, and often competes with Kauai's Mt. Waialeale as the soggiest spot on the planet.

Further, I determined that the first step for any prospective climb of Puu Kukui was to gain permission from the Maui Land & Pineapple Co. to cross their sugar cane and pineapple fields, which block access to the western slopes of the peak. Maui Pine--as the company is called by the locals--is an old-line Hawaiian concern controlled by descendants of the Cameron's, a missionary family who in the mid-eighteen hundreds, came to the islands from Scotland, intent on converting the locals to Christianity.

In June 1977, on my first attempt of the peak, I discovered that the Maui Pine policy regarding access to the slopes was somewhat autocratic. Because the company owned not only the fields below but the entire west side of the mountain as well, they were in a position to set regulations regarding climbs of the peak. Their policy was that keys would be provided for the two locked gates along the access road, providing that hikers agreed that they wouldn't climb beyond a rain gauge, located mid-way to the summit. The company held that the top of the mountain was ecologically fragile, and that it shouldn't be open to the public in general.

My three companions and I borrowed the keys, but we didn't promise not to attempt the summit. Our rationale was that wild mountains should be accessible to everyone, and, further, why should a company who exploited the natives and their lands wield such power? Unwillingly, however, we complied with company policy on that first attempt. Losing the trail in a bog just beyond the rain gauge, we got soaked to the skin before finally locating it again on the other side. Reluctantly, we turned back.

The following June we were back for another try--this time with plenty of rain gear. Applying once more at the Maui Pine office in Napili, we

were again informed we could hike only to the rain gauge. Once again we kept our collective fingers crossed. Early the following morning, we drove our rented Toyota up through the cane and pineapple fields, passing through the two locked gates. The last section of road was so slippery, however, that try as we might, we couldn't maneuver the car up the final slope. We parked in a grove at about 2,000' and hiked a mile to Kaulalewele (lit., "red ridge"), where at 2,900' the road ends at an unoccupied company-owned house.

Just east of this California bungalow-style building begins the Kaulalewele summit trail, which in my opinion is the only practical route to climb Puu Kukui. East side approaches to the summit are blocked by the steep, crumbly walls of the Iao Valley while approaches from the north and south are cut off by miles of dense vegetation and/or sharp precipices.

After first descending a steep notch we were soon hiking upward at a not unpleasant angle. In my diary I noted, "we passed through a rain forest consisting of graceful moss-covered trees ferns, vines, tall grasses and low shrubs. All the plants were heavy laden with collected rain, all ready to give up their moisture at the slightest touch. As the trail continued along the ridge it became almost knife-sharp at points, with seemingly vertical drop offs of densely vegetated slopes on either side. In areas where the ridge widened, the trail was a stream bed, with puddles collecting in the depressions formed by the many roots."

We reached the rain gauge about 9:30 a.m., where we stopped for a snack break. Because it had been raining since we left the trailhead, we were all wearing our wet-weather gear at this point. Starting off again, we entered the swamp that had defeated us the year before. On this attempt, however, because we knew where to locate the trail on the opposite side, we were able to ford the 200 foot long, knee-deep quagmire with no problem.

After leaving the bog and gaining a little elevation we found ourselves once again on the ridge, where, because the vegetation was lower, we were exposed to a chilling rain blown up from the gorge on our left. The updraft was especially uncomfortable as our raincoats were designed to protect from precipitation falling from above, not

that being blown up from below. Approximately an hour out from the rain gauge we passed Violet Lake, which, though eloquently named, is merely a thirty-foot diameter pond in the midst of a small meadow. That morning it was almost lost in the rain and clouds.

We continued up the increasingly exposed slope, where the vegetation consisted primarily of tussock grasses and low lying plants, including the rare Greensword, a close relative of the famous Silversword. As the wind grew stronger and stronger, the evaporative cooling effect--even though the temperature was in the mid-fifties--was causing us all to chill.

Upward, ever upward we toiled on the increasingly indistinct trail; my son Bret first, Jim Scott next and me lagging a few minutes behind. About noon, after the disappointment of several fog-shrouded false summits, we finally reached the top. There we were surprised to find another rain gauge on the summit- that rusted sheet iron and other building materials were scattered about, leading us to believe that someone had once attempted to construct a small shelter there; and that a small grove of wind-dwarfed trees was tucked in the lee of the summit mound, quite unexpected after the long stretch of exposed mountainside below.

Because we were all shivering by that point, we lingered only long enough to take a few photos before turning back. On an otherwise straightforward descent, I managed to step in one pothole that was so deep I got muddy all the way to my wallet. Compared to the four hours it took us to climb the peak, the downclimb took only two and a half hours.

We reached our car about 3:00, drove down through the sunny canefields, returned the gate keys to Maui Pine, and headed for nearby Kapalua Beach. Parking the Toyota, which had become as muddy inside as out, we crossed the sand and strode into the surf fully clothed, drawing astonished glances from the beach crowd. Trailing a vermilion stain through the pristine waters, I swam out until the weight of my soggy clothing caused me to flounder, at which point I beat an inelegant retreat for the shore.

Still later that afternoon, back at the condo, we popped a few cans of Primo (no longer available) and inhaled a bag of Kitch'n Cook'd Potato Chips--the best in the world. A fine ending to a true adventure.

UPDATE: In November 1993, Maui Land & Pineapple ceded a large portion of the west side of Puu Kukui to the Nature Conservancy.

#### Private Trip Announcement

July 1 - 4. Palisade Crest and others. Climb this challenging Sierra Peak. Snow and rope skills required. Limit 4. Contact David Underwood (310) 534-3967

#### **A Quote:**

*"The mountains have rules. They are harsh rules, but they are there, and if you keep them, you are safe. A mountain is not like men. A mountain is sincere. The weapons to conquer it exist inside you, inside your soul."*

*Walter Bonatti*

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- MISSING ISSUES:** Inquiries regarding missing issues should be directed to the section Mailer: Barbee Tidball, 4160 Del Mar Ave, Long Beach CA 90807-3110. Extra copies of the 30th Anniversary ECHO are available by sending \$4.50 per copy to the section Mailer. Copies of the Tribute issue (Nov/Dec 89) are also available from the Mailer for \$2.00. Prospective new members: For a one time complimentary copy of the ECHO, send 52 cents in stamps to the Mailer
- AWARDS:** All prices include sales tax. Emblem pins (\$16.50), senior emblem pins (\$12.00), list finisher pins (\$15.00), and section patches (\$2.00) are available from the Section Treasurer: Patty Kline, 20362 Callon Dr, Topanga Cyn, CA, 90290. Make all Checks Payable to the SIERRA PEAKS SECTION

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