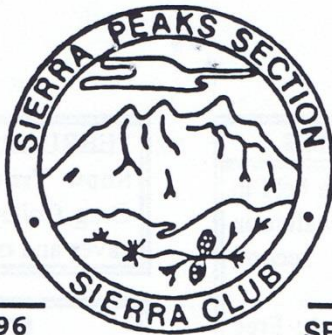


The Sierra



ECHO

VOLUME 40

1996

SEP-OCT

NUMBER 5



SPS MONTHLY PROGRAMS

Sierra Peak Section meetings will be held in the Los Angeles room behind the cafeteria at the DWP, 7:30 p.m. on the second Wednesday of the month.

Dept. W&P, 111 N Hope St., LA, Free parking on site.

OCTOBER 9.

Sierra Madre Search & Rescue Jon Inskeep of Sierra Madre Search and Rescue will show how volunteer mountain rescue works for the victim.

NOVEMBER 13

Dhaulagiri Rich Henke will show slides of an expedition he led of a successful climb of Dhaulagiri, Nepal in 1994. At 26,000' it is the 6th highest mountain in the world. Two members of the expedition had to bivouac after summitting and required a helicopter evacuation.

DECEMBER 11

SPS Annual Banquet This year our featured speaker will well known climber and author Doug Robinson. Doug will show slides of the Sierra and you will have a chance to buy his book "*A Night on the Ground, A Day in the Open*" Location is the La Canada Flintridge Country Club. 6:00 pm for a no host bar, dinner at 7:30. Tickets are \$25. Send your SASE with check made out to the SPS specifying vegetable lasagna, chicken piccata, or baked snapper almondine to reservationist Patty Kline at 20362 Callon Drive, Topanga Canyon, CA 90290. Any questions call me at 310-455-1956.

JANUARY 8

SPS, DPS, HPS Joint Meeting This is the second joint annual meeting of the SPS, DPS and HPS. This is a great time to meet old and make new climbing friends. Refreshments will be served. Steve Smith will show slides of his 1993 ascent of Aconcagua(22,800') and his 1995 ascent of Ojos Del Salado(22,600'), the 2 highest points in the Western Hemisphere.

FEBRUARY 12

Snow Travel and Safety Extreme Skier Greg Colley will discuss transceivers, snow caves and other current winter essentials.

FRONT COVER

North Palisade

PHOTO BY

LARRY TIDBALL

SPS T-SHIRTS

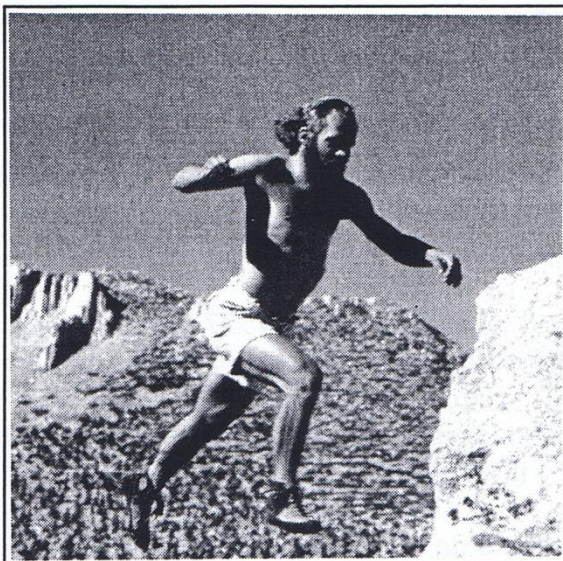
Own your own SPS T-Shirt. They come in Ash in medium, large and X-large. We also have a lot of yellow mediums left. Specify size and color. Cost is \$12 plus \$2 for shipping. Buy them from Patty at the SPS meetings and save the \$2 shipping charge. Make a check payable to the Sierra Peaks Section. Send your order to Patty Kline, 20362 Callon Drive, Topanga Canyon, CA 90290

PEAK INDEX

**Black Kaweah
Mt. Chamberlin
Four Gables
Mt. Hitchcock
Merriam Peak
Needham Mtn
Mt. Newcomb
Royce Peak
Mt. Stanford (N)**

In Passing

Ray David Dykeman
Died Sunday, September 1, 1996
while descending Devil's Crag



SIERRA PEAKS SECTION SIERRA CLUB ANNUAL BANQUET

WED., DEC. 11, 1996
DOUG ROBINSON - SPEAKER
Mountaineer, Climber, Writer

TICKETS \$25.00

Happy Hour: 6:00pm Dinner: 7:30pm

La Canada Flintridge Country Club
5550 Godbey Drive
La Canada Flintridge, CA

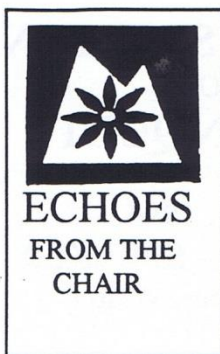
After 37 years of climbing, including dozens of first ascents on ice, rock and alpine terrain Doug Robinson has earned international recognition as a climber. His climbing fame has been achieved in the Sierra. Doug is a professional guide, skier, writer, photographer and product designer. Doug will be the speaker at the SPS 1996 banquet, to be held for a second year at the La Canada Flintridge Country Club. Doug will present a slide show that features his new book *A Night On The Ground, A Day In The Open* as well as showing many other slides of climbs on peaks in the Sierra. Doug is looking forward to meeting the group whose signatures he has read on so many Sierra Peaks, as we are looking forward to seeing his slides and hearing the tales of a Sierra enthusiast.

Most SPS members are familiar with the writings of Doug Robinson. Doug wrote the classic essay "The Whole Natural Art of Protection" for Chouinard in 1972 and he has gone on to write many other climbing essays. Articles by Doug have appeared in *Outside, Climbing, Rock & Ice, National Geographic, Ascent* and the *LA Times Magazine*. He was editor to Starr's Guide to the John Muir Trail and co-wrote *Climbing Ice* with Yvon Chouinard.

Doug has been a guide in the Sierra for 28 years. He was the first president of American Mountain Guides Association.

Mark your calendars to attend the SPS 1996 Banquet. See the back of the Echo for ticket order forms.





It has been an eventful summer.....Lots of great SPS trips and private trips by our members have been successful and fun. I, for one, have had a wonderful climbing season. I've climbed over passes into areas of the Sierra seldom visited and I even managed to climb a few peaks on the list along the way. I believe my favorite pass area was from the Colby Pass trail West over Triple Divide Pass. The high valleys between the two areas are spectacular!

As this summer ends, we need to begin plans for 1997 in the Yosemite and Inyo National Forest Areas. If you are planning a Memorial Day trip to these areas in 1997, reserve your permits up to 6 months in advance, that is the end of November 1996! (And I thought it was hard enough to plan trips ahead for the Sierra Club Schedule..... at least that is only 4 months in advance!)

Lately, I have heard members say they would like to do something to support the section. I know many of the long time SPS members know the best answer....but let me encourage everyone who is looking for the best way to support the SPS Climb with the SPS/Lead trips for the SPS. We are about climbing and it is the most wonderful way to see the mountains and support the section I can imagine.

If you are inclined to climb and work though, we need a new Echo editor. The job is open to almost anyone who has lots of enthusiasm. A computer is a good plus, but the editor does not have to have a scanner and all the other newest, greatest and latest desk top publishing gadgets. We want to have a newsletter that communicates with all our members. The newsletter needs to pass along information and to provide a place for us to write about our climbing adventures. Over the years the newsletter has progressed from a mimeographed publication to our current editor's computer generated format. The Echo, however maybe a combination of computer generated material, cut and paste copied material, and photographs prepared at the printer for the best clarity. If a we find a new editor who wants to explore desk top publishing...go for it, but we do not have to have slick....we do have to have a newsletter that communicates to everyone. Please call myself or Wayne if you are interested.

For the cooks in the Section ... it is time for picking Elderberries, Currants and Gooseberries as you head out from a weekend climb. Pick only blue Elderberries (red will make you ill). In the Park areas the rangers have told me that you may pick only those berries you will consume in one day, well it takes 2 1/2 cups of Elderberries plus 1 1/2 cups of apples for a fabulous Elderberry pie. Be conservative but enjoy these mountain treats!

Unfortunately the mountains took from us a great SPS leader. Dave Dykeman fell to his death while descending from the summit on Devil's Crag in September. As expressed by so many of Dave's fellow climbers in their comments in this issue of the Echo, Dave Dykeman will be sorely missed as a companion and as a leader in the Sierra.

Good climbing (and safe)

Death Of CMC President Dave Dykeman

by Jon Inskeep

Dave and Herb Buehler were descending from the summit of Devil's Crag #1 (12,400'+) about 2 o'clock in the afternoon on Sunday, September 1st. They had climbed the peak without incident, sumitting in about six hours. Just below the summit arete, they set up a short rappel of about 25'. Herb went first while Dave waited, unroped, at the top of the rappel. Just when he reached the bottom of the rappel, Herb heard the noise of a large rockfall, and ducked against the wall for cover. He heard Dave cry out, "oh, no!" When the noise subsided, Herb looked up at the top of the pitch; Dave was gone. All of the falling rock, and Dave's body, had fallen down the northeast side of the peak, a drop of over a thousand feet. Herb retrieved the rope and climbed down alone to their camp at Rambaud Lake, a difficult descent that required two more rappels. He then continued out for help, arriving at the Le Conte backcountry ranger station at 10:00 p.m., where he found Park Service Ranger George Durkee who radioed news of the accident to Park Headquarters. Park Rangers helicoptered in the next morning and located Dave's body, snagged on a rock about midway down the 1,200-foot northeast face. Climbing down from above and traversing across the face, Rangers Randy

Kaufman and Scot Wanek were able to reach Dave's body on the following Thursday. Early Friday morning, they hooked his climbing harness to the end of a 50' line from a helicopter hovering next to the wall and he was flown out. The difficult operation had taken four days overall.

Devil's Crag #1 has a well-deserved bad reputation for unstable rock. All the rock on the top of the mountain is badly shattered; big unconnected blocks piled on top of one another. It is probable that one or more of the slabs on which Dave was standing simply slid suddenly out from under him. The entire upper part of the mountain is one narrow arete after another, dropping directly off to the steep faces on either side. Dave was a very experienced climber, having made over five hundred ascents in the Sierra, as well as others around the world. He had a reputation of being a conservative, safety-conscious climber and leader. This accident may have been prevented if Dave had been tied in while waiting for his turn to rappel. However, having climbed this peak before, he was aware that overly conservative use of ropes has resulted in many parties being benighted and having to endure an uncomfortable bivouac high on the mountain.

Ray David Dykeman

1932 - 1996

I first met Dave Dykeman after being invited to join a group of friends who were climbing Tehipite Dome in the High Sierra over the fourth of July weekend of 1983. That was a very heavy snow year, and I was astounded by his skill with the map, compass, and altimeter as he led us through the snow-covered forest, utterly devoid of landmarks, to our planned campsite. I was very impressed

and told him that he was one of the finest mountaineers that I had ever met. I soon became very grateful that I had given him such a high compliment so early in our friendship. The next day I became entangled in the "safety" ropes that we were using to facilitate our crossing of flooded Crown Creek during the late afternoon thaw. At considerable personal risk, Dave jumped into the stream and

dragged me to safety on the far bank. Dave saved my life.

Dave went to Aconcagua, climbed Mexico's volcanoes, summited Mera in Nepal, climbed all 247 peaks on the Sierra Club Sierra Peaks Section's list, and had climbed 224 of these peaks at least twice. He not only finished The List, but he led, on a scheduled trip, *every single peak* on the SPS list. Completion of the SPS list is noteworthy, but to have led climbers of all abilities to the summit of every peak on the SPS list was a tremendous achievement. Dave will be remembered for maintaining a strong group integrity on his trips, and he achieved this through example, rather than demand. There was once a slow climber on one of his trips who considered returning to the trailhead, rather than disappoint the group. Dave told him that the group would be disappointed if he turned back. He continued the trip, and everyone succeeded. Dave had it all: a talented, accomplished mountaineer with strong people skills.

As one of its most respected leaders, Dave was soon nominated and elected to several management positions in the SPS, serving as its Chair in 1985. When the Sierra Club abandoned mountaineering in the late 1980s, he was instrumental in the creation of the California Mountaineering Club, and served as its third president. One of the duties of the leader of these organizations is to write a column to appear in their newsletters. Aside from the obligatory discussion on club policy, his columns frequently addressed risk

management in mountaineering, telling the membership how to Climb Smart before it became a national slogan. And this makes his death hard to accept and understand. He was killed descending the northwest arête of Devils Crag No. 1 in the High Sierra.

Dave was born in Tacoma, Washington. He studied electrical engineering at the university level, yet he never graduated. Dave was one of those gifted "mustangs" who climbed very high in the electronics industry without a formal college degree. He spent most of his career at Litton Industries, designing electronic guidance systems for ships and aircraft. He was so skilled in this field that he had a Top Secret security clearance to design the inertial navigation systems for the United States submarine fleet. He also personally installed and tested the inertial navigation system in Air Force One. In May 1996 Dave received the prestigious Silver Snoopy Award from NASA. The Astronaut Office gave this to Dave for his professionalism, dedication, and outstanding support that greatly enhanced space flight safety and mission success to the manned space program.

Dave is survived by his wife, Lenora Wills, his son and daughter from his first marriage, Raymond Dykeman and Penny Batt, his sister, Doris Hash, brothers Vincent, Phil, and Roy Dykeman, and his four grandchildren, Amelia, Isabelle, and Joshua Batt, and Isaac Dykeman.

R.J. Secor

From Barbara Cohen

I met Dave Dykeman in July of 1989 when I was the assistant leader on a backpack to Mt. Whitney via the trail. Our group was on the way down when Dave was coming up. I stopped to ask him why he was hiking up so late and he explained that it was his 57th birthday which he was celebrating by dayhiking

Irvine, Mallory, Le Conte, Muir, and Whitney. At the time, I had not climbed the first four peaks, but I remember being impressed by anyone who could climb 5 Sierra peaks each over 13,700' in one day. I told him that I was interested in climbing Sierra peaks but that I needed someone who could lead me. He said

that he loved to lead people up peaks.

In the ensuing years, I found out how true that statement was. Dave led more scheduled trips to Sierra peaks than anyone. He enjoyed seeing people attain their climbing goals. He was always very encouraging and would gear the trip to the pace of the slowest person without making them feel bad. He was an outstanding navigator, route finder, and climber who could understand that a move that was trivial for him was not trivial for someone else. Dave was always willing to find another way or give a rope when requested.

He had led or assisted on a scheduled trip to every peak on the list (of 247). His goals were to lead the few peaks on which he had assisted as well as to finish the list for the second time which he had planned for next year.

"We took risks, we knew we took them; things have come out against us, and therefore we have no cause for complaint, but bow to the will providence, determined still to do our best to the last." Robert Scott from his last Antarctic Journal Entry.



Photo by R.J. Secor

Dave led me up 48 Sierra peaks. I will never forget his encouragement and the resulting feeling that "yes--I really can do this!" He was a mentor to me and to so many others. I truly will miss him.

SPS 1996 Fall Trips

M	Oct 12-13	Sat-Sun	Temple Crag, Gayley	Keenan/Mantle
R	M Oct 12-14	Fri-Mon	Disappointment, Middle Palisade	Tidball/Jamison
I	Oct 12-17	Sat-Thu	Leavitt, Stanislaus, Disaster, Highland, Mokelumne, Patterson	Roach/Roach
I	Oct 19	Sat	Morgan (S)	Sholle/Cohen
I	Oct 19-20	Sat-Sun	Mt Henry	Mantle/Stough
R	E Oct 26-27	Sat-Sun	Rock Workshop	Richter/Bradley

Advance Notice of Fall 1996 HPS Trips

O	Nov 2	Sat	San Sevaime (5240'), Buck Point (6433')	Ray Soucy, Haven Fearn
I	Nov 3	Sun	Queen Mtn (5680') from Indian Cove	Diane Dunbar, Asher Waxman
O	Nov 9	Sat	Ken Point (6464')	Maggie Wilson, Chuck Sale
O	Nov 9	Sat	Sunset Pk (5796')	Frank and Ruth Lee Dobos
O	Nov 9	Sat	Throop Pk (9138'), Mt Hawkins (8850')	San Jac Davis, Neko Colezins
O	Nov 10	Sun	Mt Hilyer (6162')	Charlotte Feitshans, Jo Solomon
O	Nov 16	Sat	Winston Ridge (7003'), Highway Cleanup	Jim S Fleming, Peter Doggett
O	Nov 16	Sat	Josephine Pk (5558') via Colby Cyn	Ralph Turner, Haven Fearn
I	Nov 17	Sun	Apache Pk (7567'), Spitler Pk (7440')	Carleton Shay, David Eisenberg
O	Nov 17	Sun	Mt Islip, Middle Hawkins, Mt Hawkins, Throop Pk, Mt Burnham, Mt Baden Powell	John Connelly, Peter Doggett
I	Nov 23-24	Sat-Sun	Onyx Pk #2 (5244'), Five Fingers (Aquila Pk)	Charlie Knapke, Barbara Cohen
I	Nov 30	Sat	Beginning Navigation Hike to Smith Mtn (5111')	Diane Dunbar, Don Creighton
O	Dec 3-4	Tue-Wed	Sewart Mtn (6825'), Cobblestone Mtn (6730'), White Mtn #2 (6253'), Snowy Pk, others	Carleton Shay, Peter Doggett, Frank Goodykoontz
O	Dec 7	Sat	Rabbit Pk #1 (5307'), Granite Mtn #1 (6600'), Round Top (6316'), Iron Mtn #3 (5040')	Ron and Penelope May, John Wells
I	Dec 7	Sat	Josephine Pk (5558'), Strawberry Pk, Mt Lawlor	Diane Dunbar, Frank Goodykoontz
O	Dec 7	Sat	Mt Gleason (6520'), Iron Mtn #2 (5636')	Ray Soucy, Haven Fearn
O	Dec 14	Sat	Mt Lowe (5603')	John McCully, Carol McCully, Jennifer Lambelet, George Denny
I	Dec 14	Sat	Monrovia Pk (5409')	Maggie Wilson, Chuck Sale
O	Dec 14	Sat	Mt Lowe (5603')	John Connelly, Peter Doggett
O	Dec 14	Sat	Mistletoe Hike	Stag Brown, Joe Young, Bobcat Thompson
I	Dec 14-15	Sat-Sun	Caliente Mtn, McPherson Pk, Peak Mtn	Asher Waxman, Beth Epstein
I	Dec 14-15	Sat-Sun	Villager Pk (5756'), Granite Mtn #2 (5633')	Dan Richter, Charlie Knapke
O	Dec 15	Sun	Reyes Pk (7514'), Haddock Mtn (7431')	Patty Kline, Peter Doggett
O	Dec 15	Sun	Strawberry Pk (6164') via Colby Canyon	Jim S Fleming, Bob Freed
I	Dec 21	Sat	Mt Hilyer (6162'), Mt Mooney (5840')	Luella Fickle, Erich Fickle
O	Dec 21	Sat	X-Mas LA by Night	Stag Brown, Joe Young, Bobcat Thompson
O	Jan 1	Wed	Monrovia Pk (5409')	Asher Waxman, Peter Doggett
I	Jan 4	Sat	San Ysidro Mtn (6147')	Carleton Shay, Diane Dunbar
O	Jan 5	Sun	Big Iron Mtn #1 (8007')	John McCully, Carol McCully, Jennifer Lambelet, George Denny

From the Editor:

BACKGROUND NOISE

I'm a bit late finishing up this issue of the ECHO. My wife and I took a wonderful vacation in the White Mountains of New Hampshire (trip write up next issue). We were gone for two weekends and these were the weekends I normally do work on the ECHO. There were also some late inputs that had to be included. In order to get the ECHO to the printer in time for the

meeting (I hope), it was necessary to leave out the Secretary and Membership reports, among others, from this issue. They will be included in the next ECHO.

Many thanks to the leaders who have sent trip reports to me. I have a large stack for the next ECHO. (If you haven't sent in a trip report, it's not too late.)

For those of you who heard about the Boy Scouts who killed a bear in Yosemite NP earlier this year and wondered what happened, the Park Service decided not to prosecute due to "insufficient evidence". Because of the incident the Park Service is rewriting its brochures and procedures on what to do in the event people encounter bears. More next ECHO.

(If you have any questions about the above bear incident, and want more information before the next ECHO, please feel free to give me call. Editor.)



**SIERRA PEAKS SECTION
ANNUAL BANQUET
Tickets \$25.00
DOUG ROBINSON - SPEAKER
DECEMBER 11, 1996**



Time: Happy Hour: 6:00 - 7:30 pm Dinner 7:30 pm

Awards, Recognitions, Announcements and Speaker following dinner.

Location:

La Canada Flintridge Country Club, 5500 Godbey Dr,
La Canada Flintridge, California

Dinner Selections:

- ☐ Vegetarian Lasagna
- ☐ Chicken Piccata
- ☐ Baked Snapper Almondine

Send SASE with check made out to the SPS to Patty Kline, 20362 Callon Drive,
Topanga Canyon, CA 90290. Please include your dinner selection.

Questions: Phone 310/455-1956

Table reservations available for groups of 8. Notify Patty of your party members.

ECHOES FROM OUR CLIMBS

Mt. Newcomb (13,410'), Mt. Chamberlin (13,169'), and Mt. Hitchcock (13,184')

July 4-7, 1996

Igor and Suzanne Mamedalin

We were looking forward to this 4-day excursion into the Sierra; with the continued population explosion in the Southland and the accompanying traffic, weekend trips to the Sierra now appear less and less inviting each year. By leaving Orange County late we managed to avoid most of the 4th of July extended weekend traffic. On the radio waves we've discovered a pleasant addition to Owens Valley .. IROQ; from InyoKern to Mammoth, you can now listen to continuous classic rock music by means of a series of radio repeaters (albeit at different frequencies) along 395.

Thursday at 7 AM sharp eight peakbaggers met in Cottonwood Pass/Horseshoe Meadow hiker parking lot. This being a low snow year no ice axes or crampons were required. We promptly hit the trail and were lounging at the pass in no time. Whiffs of smoke from a 'controlled' burn southwest of the pass drifted by followed by USFS helicopter making its rounds to ensure that the fire was still under control. We continued on at a leisurely pace arriving by 5 PM at a fine camp site with a bear box at the crossing of the Rock Creek. The nearby backwoods ranger cabin is not inhabited on a regular basis. That evening R. J. Secor joined our group at the camp site as planned.

Friday morning we all crossed Rock Creek and followed the trail north out of the Rock Creek drainage to the level bench east of Mt. Guyot. From here we followed a gentle long ridge that runs just west of Perrin Creek to Mt. Chamberlin. At the foot of Mt. Chamberlin, Ann Kraemer turned back due to high altitude sickness. Everyone else easily gained the summit via the southwest slopes and looked on toward Mt. Newcomb. While running the ridge between Chamberlin and Newcomb we came across a few cool 3rd class moves and also needed to drop at least 50 feet on the south side a couple of times before reaching Mt. Newcomb. From Mt. Newcomb we dropped directly via a talus, scree and sandy ledge route to the lake at the headwaters of Perrin Creek. With fine warm weather and plenty of sunlight left, many of us put on our birth suits and took a refreshing dip in the lake. Cleansed, we regained the gentle ridge west of Perrin Creek and arrived in camp with plenty of daylight left to cook and socialize.

Saturday morning several participants chose to spend a leisurely day sniffing flowers in the adjoining meadow while the rest of us set out to follow the long

PCT trail north toward Mt. Hitchcock. About 7 miles down the trail after wading across Whitney Creek and just short of the Crabtree Ranger Station, we crossed Crabtree Meadow and followed an unmaintained trail into the Crabtree Lakes basin. Before the first lake we left the trail and headed up the sand slopes of Mt. Hitchcock. Erik Siering raced ahead oblivious to the 2 steps forward and 1.99 steps back terrain; Bob Wyka and I trudged straight up to the ridge and followed it to the summit reaching it by 3 PM; while RJ and Patti Kline trailed behind following a diagonal across the side of the mountain. On the descent I urged Patti to abandon the summit quest in order to return to camp before dark; however, summit fever had already overcome her and she signed out along with RJ to continue their independent bid for the crown of Hitchcock. Bob, Erik and I raced back to camp arriving there before sunset; RJ returned to camp by 8:30 PM after guiding Patti back onto the PCT trail; and, Patti, victorious and proud of her accomplishment, ambled into camp by headlamp around 10:30 PM. We celebrated her achievement and fed her soup and other hopefully tasty leftovers.

Sunday everyone broke camp at their own pace and headed back over Cottonwood Pass to the cars with Suzanne and I sweeping at a leisurely pace. The trek out proved to be quite an adventure for Terry Turner. First, she accidentally squirted potent bug juice directly into her eye which caused excruciating pain and promptly corroded her contact lens. Bruce Turner provided first aid by first dowsing her eye with water from our canteens and then holding her head beneath a nearby waterfall until the chemical stew was washed out of her eye. Then, along the lengthy trail Terry's boots blistered her feet and severely impeded her progress; at Chicken Spring Lake, Suzanne gave Terry her boots (a size larger) and proceeded to walk out wearing my camp sneakers (3 sizes larger). The sight of Suzanne stomping down the trail in flopping oversized sneakers elicited many a comment from passing hikers and packers.

Everyone arrived at the parked cars by 5 PM safely and continued on their homeward bound journey. We thank everyone for making this a very successful and enjoyable adventure and we thank R.J. Secor especially for assisting on Saturday's hike (since Suzanne was too busy sniffing flowers).

Royce, Merriam, Four Gables, and Stanford (N)

August 2-4, 1996

by Ron Hudson

This was a very enjoyable mid-summer trip with near-perfect conditions. We started at Pine Creek (7500') 7am Fri and got to "Royce Pass" (above Honeymoon Lk) 11,700' at 1pm. Nice there by the lake, but it is a better take-off point for pks and more vegetation down at the lowest of the 4 Royce Lks. It was still early and we felt good, so we ate, parked our packs there and took off toward the Royce-Merriam Col at 230pm. Sue and Virginia, very strong hikers from San Diego, were new to ice ax use so I gave them a class - the usual self belay, grips, head first, glissading, etc. They were model students, and snow conditions were ideal for practice. Temperature in the 70's. Then up to the col at 12,400'. Some steepness to the snow, but not dangerous win the soft conditions. From the col we all did the easy 900' (class 2) to the top of Royce, and back to the col. John McCully, our 4th group member, opted to head back for a nap while we three did the 700' up the talus to Merriam's summit. Glissaded back from the col; got to camp at 7 pm. I visited with Pat Orris from SCMA who happened to be next to our camp; she and Tom the next day were to climb the 5.10 multipitch route up Merriam's spectacular N buttress.

Wind came up at night but blew away the clouds and humidity that had lingered in the Sierra the last 2 weeks. 39 deg F in the morning -- because of the dry cooler air associated with the weak cold front that moved in. We felt good so went for 4 Gables -- about 5 miles x-country on the other side of Pine Creek Pass. Figured Steelhead Lk best camp spot for the Pk. What a view in the Pass area! Extremely green, water all over, hardly a dried leaf or blade of brown grass. Flowers at height of bloom; polemonium blooming near the top of Merriam. The 120% of normal winter season, and the 180% previous season left snow still feeding the creeks. Recent rain also helped. So we moved across this paradise and deposited our packs at Steelhead Lk. At 10am we went toward the W ridge of 4 Gables to find a good chute to the summit plateau. Secor mentions no summit route from the W in his book. From the E end of the Lk we could see a chute that looked sandy all the way up. It went with no problem-class 2.

4 Gables is impressive from the other side at Horton Lks. But from the west it doesn't look like a mountain. There are higher summits on either side of its ridge. But we used the map and did find the register on the nondescript elevated area at the side of the plateau. The register (3x5 notebook) was started in 1988 but is only 10% full. Windy on top--one of the few times on the trip we weren't wearing shorts and t-shirt. Beautiful with the green and all the Lks above French Canyon and Piute Canyons. Got back to packs at 230pm so decided to hike out. That way I could get still another (the last in the area) peak I needed for the sacred List. At the cars at 7pm, ate pizza in Bishop, and camped at the campground near the "town" of Tom's Place.

At 7000' it was cool for sleeping, yet warm enough in the morning for easy rising. Up at 6 and started the hike to Mt Stanford (N) at 730am from the 9280 level on the Rock Creek road. My old map didn't show the cutoff trail about 1/2 mile farther up the road; it didn't matter because it took us only 20 minutes to hike up the steep slope and meet the Hilton Lks trail.

Then onto Hilton Lks. A lot of forest around there. Talked to a fisherman who offered us "grease pie"?? on our way back. We continued on up the drainage through the life zones from forest to beautiful alpine meadows, alpine fell fields and talus piles. Went through the col as in RJ's book, but not at its N edge as he says. Arrived at noon on Stanford's summit; weather perfect -- bright sun, good view, warm. The register was in a good ammo box but on the wrong summit bump. We put it back on the highest one. Back to the car at 4pm, with stopping for apples from the fisherman, and I took a dip in the lake. We made haste back to LA; stopped quickly at Schat's (and Carl's across the street), and my favorite Fosters Freeze at Rosamond. Got to SF Valley at 9 pm.

I will remember the perfect midsummer Shangri-La conditions on this trip. And John's extensive narratives of his social and international exploits while we all were strolling across the fell fields and enjoying the beauty!

Black Kaweah Climb

By Don Martin

On August 26, 1996 I solo climbed Black Kaweah. This mountain is so rarely climbed that it is one of only

three in the Sierras that have the original summit

register on the mountain. I was only the eighth party to climb it this year.

I left camp at Big Arroyo at 6:20 a.m. After walking 15 minutes on the High Sierra Trail, I turned right at the first stream crossing and followed the stream uphill through a beautiful alpine meadow, over talus until I passed the moraine lake (which has no outlet).

At the base of the mountain, I approached a gully beneath a dried out waterfall (which had the black stains of a waterfall). After climbing to the cliff at the bottom of the waterfall, I turned left on a ramp and traveled 75 feet to the next gully. I took this gully, sloping at about 45 degrees, to the top of the mountain. In the gully I traversed by constantly switching from one ramp to another-these ramps made it a very

reasonable third class the entire way. There were only about three difficult class three moves. The main risk was that if another person were above me he would trigger high velocity rockfall that my helmet could not withstand. If you travel with others you must travel together and move extremely carefully. You will need to slow to the speed of the slowest person in the group. Helmets are a necessity. Rope is not needed. The other serious challenge is that you will need to use handholds and many are "friable", i.e., they are not to be used-you must test each hold before using it.

At the final 50 feet the gully reduces its angle to a 20 degree slope. The summit is a six foot diameter flat spot that is easy to reach. You will really enjoy the summit view and the ancient register with prominent mountaineer's signatures.

Needham Mountain

by Don Martin

I climbed Needham on August 31, 1996 with Steve Thaw. We left Monarch Lake (a two hour climb from the trailhead at Mineral King) and climbed Sawtooth mountain, then we headed east from the top of Sawtooth towards Needham. It was class 2-3, sand, boulders, scree. Going uphill in sand was a case of two steps forward, one step backward. After gaining the base of Needham, we enjoyed climbing stable, solid boulders to the top. There we found the register and enjoyed a great view of the Kaweahs, Whitney Range, Triple Divide. This peak had very few visitors in the

last year, despite the great views and the possibility of doing it as a day hike from Mineral King trailhead.

We were able to downclimb Needham very fast by using the sand to plunge-step glissade to the bottom. After walking to the base of Sawtooth we found that the lower part of Sawtooth is a class five overhead climb out of a bowl area. We had no rope or pro, so we climbed about two-thirds of the way from the bottom of Sawtooth and then traversed to the ridge to get to a third class opening that allowed us to head west back to Monarch Lake.

WANTED NEW ECHO EDITOR FOR 1997

After four years Wayne Norman is stepping down as ECHO editor. (Wayne will finish out the current year.) The SPS needs a new ECHO editor to take over beginning in 1997. If interested, please contact Wayne Norman (310) 426-5388 or Barbee Tidball. (310) 424-1556

FROM THE OUTINGS CHAIR:

SPECIAL MESSAGE TO ALL SPS LEADERS

Please Submit Spring and Early Summer Trips for Publication in the March - July 4 Chapter Schedule of Activities to Barbara Cohen as soon as possible. The deadline for the schedule is Nov 4.

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

In High Places: Coming of Age in the Soviet Pamirs

Burton A. Falk

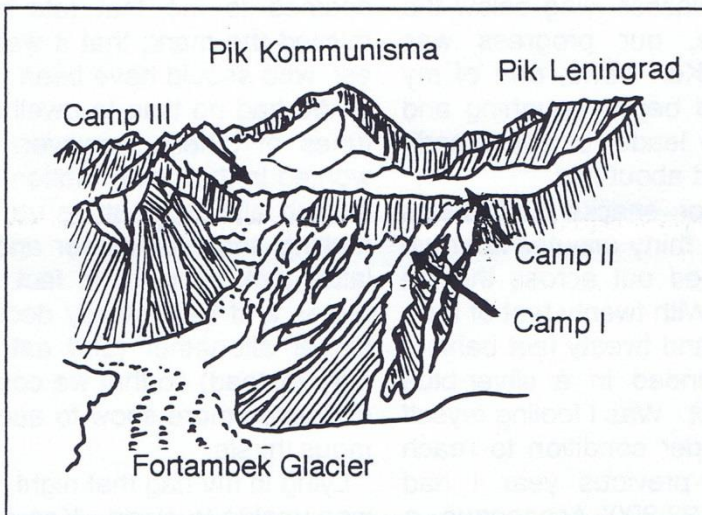
Awakening on the morning of July 29, we found our three tents, located at 19,680' Camp II, half buried in new-fallen snow. Outside, the wind howled, ominous clouds swirled and even more snow fell. At 9 a.m., however, when we checked the daily radioed weather report, we were assured that the skies would soon clear, and so, ignoring the storm, we began to break camp. Our climbing party, having been hampered by so many previous delays, desperately needed to move forward if we were to ever have a shot at summiting on 24,590' Pik Kommunisma, the highest peak in the U.S.S.R.

Personally, I had mixed emotions about continuing. My old pal and climbing partner, Jim Scott, had fallen ill days earlier and, as far as I knew, was on his way back to the States. Two others from our group were at the Fortambeck Glacier Camp, 6,000' below, suffering from some sort of respiratory malady. Another member of our original team of thirteen was there as well. He had taken one look at the mountain and the route we were to follow and had thrown in the towel on the spot.

The director of the Fortambeck Glacier Camp had also been responsible for many of my misgivings in regards to bagging the trophy peak. During his welcom

ing talk in the Camp mess tent twelve days earlier, he had discussed the many hazards of our upcoming climb--the treacherous crossing of the Fortambeck Glacier, the steep, avalanche prone slopes between the Glacier and 17,200' Camp I, and again between Camp I and Camp II--our present location--and the rapid and dangerous changes of weather common to the area. He also dwelled at length on the problem of the 7.2 mile Pamir Ice Plateau, the ice-covered ledge hewn into the north side of the Pamirs, which we were planning to traverse from end to end that very day.

Several lives had been lost on the Plateau's icy expanse, the director said, as its



rolling swells acted as a barrier to rapid descent for climbers afflicted with high altitude sickness. No rescue by helicopter was possible from the ledge, because the atmosphere at 20,000' was too thin for lift off. As I sat

taking notes, he went on to note that beyond Camp III, at the far end of the plateau, it took enormous will power to continue the push toward the summit. He himself had reached Camp III on three separate occasions, but it was only on his fourth attempt, with great determination, that he was finally successful in summiting. Mental conditioning, he asserted, was as important as physical conditioning.

In spite of my apprehensions, I continued on with the team, now numbering nine, as we left camp at 10:30 that morning, heading east toward the slopes of Pik Kommunisma. Arising on the southern side of the ice field was the backbone of the Pamirs, including Pik Leningrad, from which avalanches occasionally rumbled, sending clouds of sparkling ice crystals billowing into the clearing sky. On the northern side there was a sheer drop off, falling away to the Fortambeck Glacier 6,000' below.

Because of the foot and a half of new-fallen snow, the scarcity of oxygen at 20,000', the burden of our equipment-laden packs and our need to be ever vigilant for unseen crevasses lying below the windblown surface, our progress was slow and taxing. Ken Asvitt, one of my two tentmates, had begun coughing and Eric Simonson, the leader of our expedition, was concerned about him.

We stopped for snacks and drinks around 1 p.m., and thirty minutes later we were again stretched out across the ice like a line of ants. With twenty feet of rope in front of me and twenty feet behind, I was soon suspended in a silver-blue sphere of self-doubt. Was I fooling myself about being in proper condition to reach the summit? The previous year I had somehow climbed 22,800' Aconcagua, a feat that had sorely tested my stamina. How would I ever propel myself two thousand feet higher? My rapid rate of respiration, compounded with my pressure breathing, made me sound like the Little Engine That Could trying to get over the damn pass. Also, I was fifty--ten years older than anyone else on my team; probably on the entire mountain. With each foot of elevation increase, it became more obvious to me why senior mountaineers preferred lower peaks. Above us, horse tail clouds spread wistfully over the vast

skies of Tadzhik S.S.R.

Finally reaching the few scattered tents that comprised 20,200' Camp III at 7 p.m., we discovered that a preceding party--a Colorado-based team named Mountain Madness--had two ailing climbers: one suffering from an advanced case of pulmonary edema, another with a broken ankle. The edema afflicted climber--a ski instructor from Crested Butte--had been evacuated by a team of Soviet mountaineers, via the Borodkin Route, earlier that afternoon. I was dismayed to learn that the victim, a fellow named Steve, was only in his early thirties. The idea that such a healthy young man could be stricken by such a fickle malady was appalling. It seemed to me that fate had somehow missed the mark; that it was me, the oldest, who should have been targeted.

We had no time to dwell on the misfortunes of others, however. Instead, we worked in that slow motion peculiar to life at high altitudes setting up our tents and melting snow for dinner and drinks. The latter took so long, in fact, that my tentmates and I eventually decided to forego dinner altogether (and eat Snickers and gorp instead) so that we could continue to melt even more snow to quench our enormous thirsts.

Lying in my bag that night, totally spent, I was unable to sleep. Ken Asvitt, because of his continued cough, couldn't sleep either.

Although the next day dawned clear, the 9 a.m. weather report predicted that yet another storm would move in the following day. That meant that our chances for completing the climb (and getting back for our scheduled departure date) were slim. Additionally, since Ken's cough was even worse that morning, it was decided that he must descend to a lower elevation at once. Because of my previous con-

cerns, plus these new factors, I opted out. I volunteered to accompany Ken down to the 13,000' Moskvina Camp, by way of the difficult but direct Borodkin route.

The Borodkin provides the only direct escape from the eastern end of the ice plateau. An 800' climb, to the top of a 21,000' ridge, however, is required before one can begin the steep descent to the Moskvina Camp, located on the edge of the Moskvina Glacier, 8,000' below. The ice plateau, as the camp director had warned, had indeed become a barrier to any rapid descent.

Ken and I started our ascent of the ridge about noon. A trail through the crusted snow had been broken by yet another Soviet team who had evacuated the climber with the broken ankle earlier that morning. As we neared the top of the ridge, we were overtaken by four more Coloradans, three young fellows and a woman who had summited the previous day. They passed us quickly, and although they looked haggard, they seemed to be in good humor. On the far side of the ridge, we found the descent to be slow going due to the steep terrain, the deep snow and Ken's continued cough. About 5 p.m., while down-climbing a rocky nose, I somehow dislodged a huge rock which caromed off my left thigh, shredding my pants and skin, but which, fortunately, didn't break anything. Although I was left with the mother of all charley horses, I was--thankfully--able to hobble on.

As the last light faded in the west, we reached a small ancillary glacier near the Moskvina Camp, where we were met by still another Coloradan, a fellow who had descended with Steve, the edema-stricken climber, the previous day. He told us that Steve had died on the descent, and that his body had been buried--for preservation--in the glacier,

close by the section of trail over which we'd just passed.

Later that night, in the camp mess tent, where the accommodating Soviets provided us with a late meal, we met the rest of the Colorado group. They were discussing who among them would inform the climber's family of his death. It was a somber discussion, permeated with true regret.

The following day, while I limped around like Chester on the old "Gunsmoke" series, Ken lay in the infirmary suffering from high altitude pulmonary edema, the same affliction that had killed Steve.

Five days later, our entire party--including Jim Scott, who hadn't been able to depart after all--was reunited at Ashik-Tash, the main camp and headquarters for the Soviet Mountaineering Program in the Pamirs. We had assembled there to await our bus for the airport at Osh, from where we would fly to Moscow and then home. Fortunately, because the predicted storm had not materialized, five of our party had reached the summit of Pik Kommunisma. Unfortunately, Eric Simonson had suffered some cerebral stress--probably due to dehydration--during the attempt, and he could remember nothing of the day. Others members of our party had saved the life of a stricken Rumanian climber by literally dragging him down off the summit.

That afternoon, at the Ashik-Tash commissary, Eric traded our left over food credits for a mixed case of Georgian champagne, Moldavian brandy and Hungarian white wine, plus two kilos of excellent Volga caviar. We carried the bottles, the caviar, several loaves of bread and two or three watermelons, to a sunny, grassy plot situated between the rows of family-sized tents, where the flags of the twenty-five nations participating in that

summer's climbing program flapped and clanged on a row of white flag poles.

After spreading our feast out below the American flag, which the Soviets had lowered to half mast in respect for the dead Coloradan, Eric banged on the flagpole with a rock and shouted invitations to the others in camp to join our party. Sleepy

head poked out of the line of tents, and within minutes a multi-national crowd of thirty or so climbers--French, Germans, Rumanians, Japanese, Kiwis, Spanish and

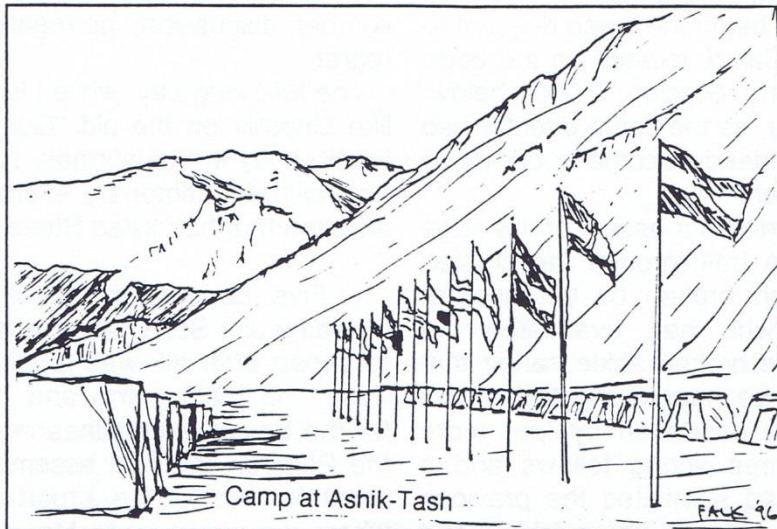
Bulgarians--were gathered around us, many bringing their own bottles.

An hour or two later, the party having grown in size and noise level, Eric decided that it wasn't proper to have the American flag at half mast. "It will look as though the Americans didn't make the summit," he said. So, while he raised the flag to the top of the mast, we Americans joined together in a slightly drunken rendition of "The Star Spangled Banner." Many climbers didn't make it to dinner that night.

On the last afternoon of our stay at Ashik-Tash, I hiked a quarter-of-a-mile down the grassy valley to a large boulder festooned with plaques memorializing lost climbers from years past. At loose ends, I climbed the 1,500' ridge west of the camp, then walked along the narrow crest until I

found a comfortable rock. Sitting there in the late afternoon sun, I surveyed the scene. The Pamirs to the south were mostly in shadows at that hour; only the tops of the peaks remained golden. Down and down their steep slopes tumbled the glaciers, purplish-blue against the oncoming evening. The mess hall and the rows

of tents in the camp below me seemed small enough to be toys. Toys, I thought, for younger climbers who risked--and sometimes lost--their lives pursuing their



Camp at Ashik-Tash

youthful fancies.

To the north, away from the Pamirs, the grassy foothills faded into the haze of Central Asia. In a few short weeks the hills would be brown, the climbers and their tents and their dreams would be gone, and a cold autumn wind would scour the land.

*Update: Mountain Travel * Sobek reports that the Pamir Mountaineering Program no longer operates in the newly independent nations of Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan. MT*S also reports that their own 1996 expeditions to Mt. Elbrus, the high point of both Europe and Russia, have been canceled due to the political unrest in the Caucasus area.*

The Mountaineers have recently published a new guide, entitled "Trekking in Russia and Central Asia, by Frith Maier.



WE NEED A FREE SCHEDULE BECAUSE:

- ✓ We need a central listing of our activities available to all of our members.
- ✓ We need its essential information on our *outings programs* and our *conservation programs*. ✓ We need its vital data about the organization of the Chapter.
- ✓ We need its complete listing of meeting dates and places. ✓ We need its names and phone numbers of people to contact for all Chapter activities.

Last year the Save our Schedule Committee ran a slate of four candidates for the Angeles Chapter Executive Committee pledged to return the *free* Schedule. Three were elected, but this was not enough: ExComm votes to reinstate the *free* Schedule repeatedly lost by one or two votes. Four open positions will be filled in this year's election. Your vote can decide if we continue with a *fee* Schedule (for less than 10% of our members), or whether we return to a truly *free* Schedule for all of our members.

In the hope of healing past differences, and reducing the contentiousness of the past year, your S.O.S. committee has chosen not to field a slate of candidates this year. Instead we have asked each candidate to answer questions on their position on the Schedule. Seven of the eight candidates chose to reply:

■ **The Angeles Chapter should send the Schedule *FREE* to all members—Yes or No:**

- YES—with no qualifications Eisenberg, Pomeroy
YES—but not to those who ask to be taken off the mailing list Beach, Sailer
YES—but only to members who ask for it Secor
NO—only to those who subscribe (no respondents)
Other (*see essay*) Gelfand, Schoedler

■ **What priority should the Angeles Chapter attach to restoring the *FREE* Schedule?**

- HIGHEST Sailer
HIGH Beach, Eisenberg, Pomeroy, Secor
MEDIUM Gelfand
LOW, or none (no respondents)
Other (*see essay*) Schoedler

■ **Under what circumstances should the Angeles Chapter restore the *FREE* Schedule?**

★ **BEACH**

The Schedule should be included as a membership benefit as it has been in the past. Its cost must therefore be an annual budget item. Members should be able to ask to be taken off the mailing list to avoid annoying them with unwanted mail and to prevent waste. Dealing with the budget is a separate issue; trades must be made to assure funding high priority items (the Schedule is one) and if necessary, steps taken to increase revenue via fundraisers, dues increase, etc., or to reduce expenses.

★ **EISENBERG**

To restore the free Schedule, the Angeles Chapter should seek funding from the Sierra Club Foundation. Alternative formats should be explored, such as monthly in the Southern Sierran.

★ **FATHE**

No response

★ **GELFAND**

The subscription charge for the Schedule was not put forward due to the cost of printing and distributing the Schedule, but rather as a way of generating revenue during a difficult period. Most of us believe that period is now past. I would vote to return the free Schedule provided that the Chapter budget can accommodate the cost. I would offer as my own spin on the matter the following: Some trip leaders may desire a more flexible format with shorter lead times. These outings announcements could be accommodated by an expanded outings schedule section in the Southern Sierran. I would vote for funding this modification. Other outings leaders may wish to continue with the four to six month lead times of the current system and could continue it.

★ **POMEROY**

I look forward to a return of the free Chapter Schedule as soon as we have a sound financial basis for it. The Chapter's new Grants Committee which I chair, can help find ways to strengthen our overall finances. I see the Schedule as much more than a list of hikes: it is our Chapter's basic directory for everything we do—including conservation (committees and activities.) The Schedule should give coverage to both outings and conservation and be in the hands of all members without charge.

★ **SAILER**

The Schedule of Activities is an essential link that ties the Chapter together. It is crazy to have thousands of conservation and outings activities and not tell our members about them. So long as we have the funds we should send the Schedule to all members who will use it. Having worked closely to put the budget together, I know that fortunately we have ample funds to distribute the Schedule to all members, and will for future years. If we did not, I'd reallocate how we spend our funds. The San Francisco Bay Chapter once had as large a membership and outings program as ours, but then they decided to stop distributing their Schedule to all members. Since then, our membership and outings program have grown substantially, while theirs has become stagnant.

★ **SCHOEDLER**

The \$9 subscription fee for the Schedule contributed to the Chapter's recovery from serious financial difficulty in 1995. Without it, there would have been another annual deficit with no operating reserve. If the recovery continues, there is reason to believe it will, some form of free distribution is possible. I propose that serious consideration be given to combining the Schedule with the Southern Sierran with free distribution to all Chapter members, except those who ask to be taken off the mailing list. This option has the advantage of providing wide distribution while unifying the Sierra Club's conservation and outings mission into one enhanced publication. If that option is not viable, and assuming finances permit, I support some form of free distribution to be determined after the budget and publications committees have analyzed the financial and circulation impacts and have found a way to avoid the unnecessary expense of mailing to those who clearly don't wish to receive the publication.

★ **SECOR**

The circumstances exist: the Chapter's membership clearly demands a free Schedule.

Your Official Ballot (in your October Southern Sierran) must be received by November 15—your vote will make a difference!

THE SAVE OUR SCHEDULE COMMITTEE PRODUCED AND PAID FOR THIS MAILING. S.O.S. IS AN AD-HOC GROUP OF ANGELES CHAPTER MEMBERS AND OFFICERS WHO BELIEVE IN THE RESTORATION OF A FREE SCHEDULE. NO CHAPTER FUNDS OR EQUIPMENT WERE USED. NO ENDORSEMENT OF ANY CANDIDATE IS IMPLIED.

- EDITOR:** Wayne Norman, 4147 Del Mar Ave, Long Beach CA, 90807, (310) 426-5388. E-Mail: wknorman@earthlink.net ECHO copy deadlines are the third Saturday of odd numbered months. Priority is given to legible, typed, single spaced copy. Laser-printed or other high quality copy is preferred. Floppy Disks IBM/MSWORD-WIN 6.0 are especially appreciated. Use letter quality setting on dot matrix printers. If you would like your submission returned to you, please enclose a SASE.
- SUBSCRIPTIONS:** \$12.00 per year, due by March 31st. Subscribing to the ECHO is a requirement for active membership in the SPS. Sustaining membership is \$25.00 per year, and includes first class postage. Submit new subscription applications and renewals to the section Treasurer: Harry Freimanis, 256 Kauai Ln, Placentia, CA 92670-6062, and include your Sierra Club membership number. New applications received after October 1 are credited for the subsequent year. Only one ECHO subscription is necessary for multiple members of a family residing at one address. Contributions or gifts to the Sierra Club or the SPS are not tax-deductible.
- ADVERTISEMENT:** Private activity announcements and advertisements are accepted at the following rates. Private trip announcements: \$1.00 for the first 4 lines and \$1.00 for each additional line. Other announcements and product/service advertisements: \$1.00 per line or \$25.00 for a half page space. Reach out to our climbing constituency and place an ad today! Send copy and check to the Editor.
- ADDRESS CHANGES:** Send address changes to Wayne Norman, 4147 Del Mar Ave, Long Beach, CA 90807. The ECHO is mailed via 3rd class mail and will not be forwarded by the post office.
- PEAKS LIST:** Copies of the SPS peaks list can be obtained by sending \$1.00 and a SASE to the section Secretary: Wayne Norman, 4147 Del Mar Ave, Long Beach, CA 90807
- MISSING ISSUES:** Inquiries regarding missing issues should be directed to the section Mailer: Barbee Tidball, 3826 Weston Place, Long Beach CA 90807. 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 (\$26.00), senior emblem pins (\$12.00), master emblem pins (\$26.00), list finisher pins (\$15.00), and section patches (\$2.00) are available from Patty Kline, 20362 Callon Dr, Topanga Cyn, CA, 90290. Make all Checks Payable to the SIERRA PEAKS SECTION
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