

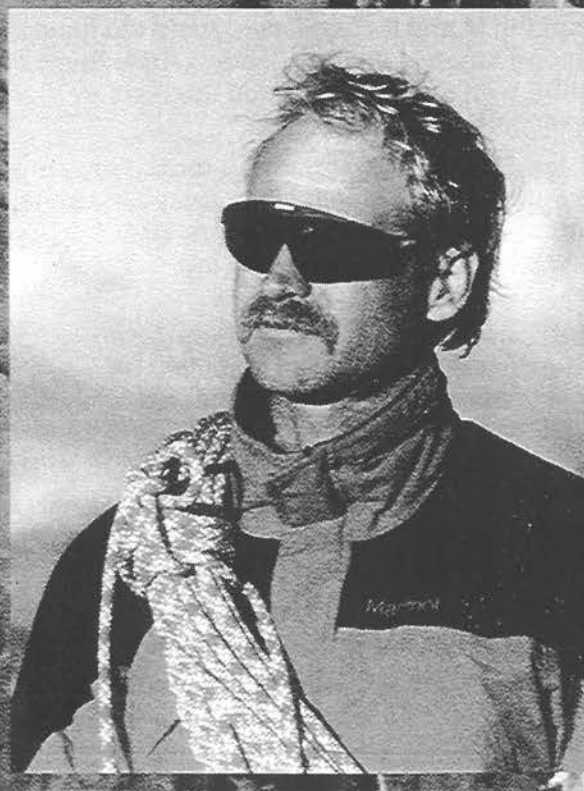
# The Sierra

SEPTEMBER - OCTOBER 1997



# ECHO

VOLUME 41 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. Except the up coming Jan. 8<sup>th</sup> meeting.

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

NOVEMBER 12

**Eric Buschow/Mt. Kilimanjaro**

DECEMBER 10

**SPS ANNUAL BANQUET**

**Jeff Lowe - speaker**

Jeff will present highlights of his experiences waterfall ice climbing, big wall climbing, adventure trips, Alaska, Himilayas, etc. This should be an exciting and diverse talk from the reknown author, ice climber and mountaineer. Location - the Cultural Center of the Greek Orthodox Church, Long Beach, catered by Buon Gusto. Tickets \$25.00. Send check made out to SPS and SASE to Barbee Tidball, [REDACTED]

JANUARY 8 - THURSDAY

**JOINT MEETING/HPS,DPS, SPS**

**Rich Henke - speaker**

Join Rich on a trek to northern India through kingdoms of Sanskar & Ladhk. Visit Nubra & Spiti & see area which is more Tibetan than Tibet. Refreshments, discussion socializing.

**Location Griffith Park Ranger Station, 4730 Crystal Springs Drive.**

## SPS T-SHIRTS

Own your own SPS T-shirt. They come in Ash in medium, large and X-large and in Light Blue in x-large. We also have a lot of yellow medium size shirts left. Specify size and color. Cost is \$12 plus \$3 for shipping per order. Buy them from Patty at the SPS meetings and save the \$3 shipping charge. Make check payable to the Sierra Peaks Section. Send your order to: Patty Kline, [REDACTED]

## PEAK INDEX

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Dicks  
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Highland

## FRONT COVER

**JEFF LOWE**

**1997 SPS BANQUET SPEAKER**

## SPS WINTER TRIPS: DECEMBER - FEBRUARY

**E Dec 20 Sat. Rubidoux Rock Practice.** For aspiring M and E candidates, rusty old hands, among others. Location, leaders TBA. Send 2 SASE with qualifications and interests to reservationist Doug Mantle

**E Jan 17 Sat. Snow practice - local.** For aspiring M and E candidates, rusty old hands, among others. Location, leaders TBA. Send 2 SASE with qualifications and interests to reservationist Doug Mantle

**M/E Jan 24 Sat. Rock Workshop - Stoney Point:** refresh your skills, stretch a bit, learn new techniques. For WTC,SPS among others. Send SASE w/ resume and objectives to Leader: Dan Richter, Co-leader Doug Mantle

**M Feb 7, Sat. Annual Baldy Snow Refresher.** All aspects of snow (not ice) climbing will be covered. Trip for WTC leaders, SPS and other SC members. Send 2 SASE Bradley/Reber

**E Feb 21 Sat. Snow practice - local.** For aspiring M and E candidates. See Jan 17<sup>th</sup> for details.

## **JEFF LOWE**

### **1997 SPS BANQUET SPEAKER**

Jeff Lowe has been a climber since his father first partnered him up the Grand Teton in 1956 at the age of seven. His boyhood home in Ogden, Utah, backed up to the Wasatch Range and there, in the company of brothers and cousins, Lowe began honing the skills that would prepare him for his extraordinary accomplishments on rock, ice, and snow.

With over 500 first ascents to his credit, he is a leading alpinist in the movement toward light and fast climbs of the most technically difficult routes on the highest mountains on Earth. Eschewing large expeditions, the use of bottled oxygen and fixed ropes, and the support of high-altitude porters, Lowe prefers aesthetic, technically challenging new routes alone or with a small company of friends.

His lengthy list of representative alpine-style Himalayan climbs includes a nearly completed attempt of the North Ridge of Latok I (the party came within 100 meters of the summit before being forced to descend due to illness and lack of provisions); the first ascent (solo) of the South Face of Ama Dablam; the first solo and first winter ascent of the French Pillar on Pumori; the first ascent of the Northeast Ridge of Kangtega, and the first ascent (made in winter) of the East Face of Tawoche. Lowe is also famous for first ascents of the North Face of Mount Temple and the Ramp Route and Grand Central Couloir on Mount Kitchener in the Canadian Rockies; the first winter ascent of the West Face of the Grand Teton, the first alpine-style and second overall ascent of the West Pillar of Taulliraju in the Andes, and the solo first ascent - in winter - of Metanola on the North Face of the Eiger.

But Jeff Lowe is more than a high-altitude climber. In the late 1960s and early '70s he specialized in big walls. He has numerous early ascents of the Yosemite classics (i.e., the seventh ascent of the Salathé Wall and the fourth ascent of the North America Wall) complementing first ascents of the North Face of Angel's Landing (V 5.9 A3), The Toad (VI 5.9 A3), Moonlight Buttress (V 5.9 A3), and Jacob (V 5.10 A3) in Zion, and new routes in the Wind River Range and the Rockies.

Climbing those vast sweeps of rock eventually led to encounters with ice, and ever since his first ascent of Bridalveil Falls in Telluride, Colorado, in 1974 (followed by his solo ascent of Bridalveil in 1978) Lowe has been recognized as one of the world's premiere ice climbers. His list of first ascents on ice - which includes Kwangde (VII W16 VS) in the Himalayas in winter, Alaska's Keystone Green Steps (III-IV W15), Canada's Asteroid Alley, and Colorado's Birdbrain Boulevard (III W16) - is a tick list of the world's ice test pieces. Continuing to push international climbing standards in his local ice-climbing area, Vail, Colorado, in April 1994 Lowe created Octopussy (M8) and in April 1996 he pioneered Resurrection (M8), two of the most difficult mixed climbs in the world.

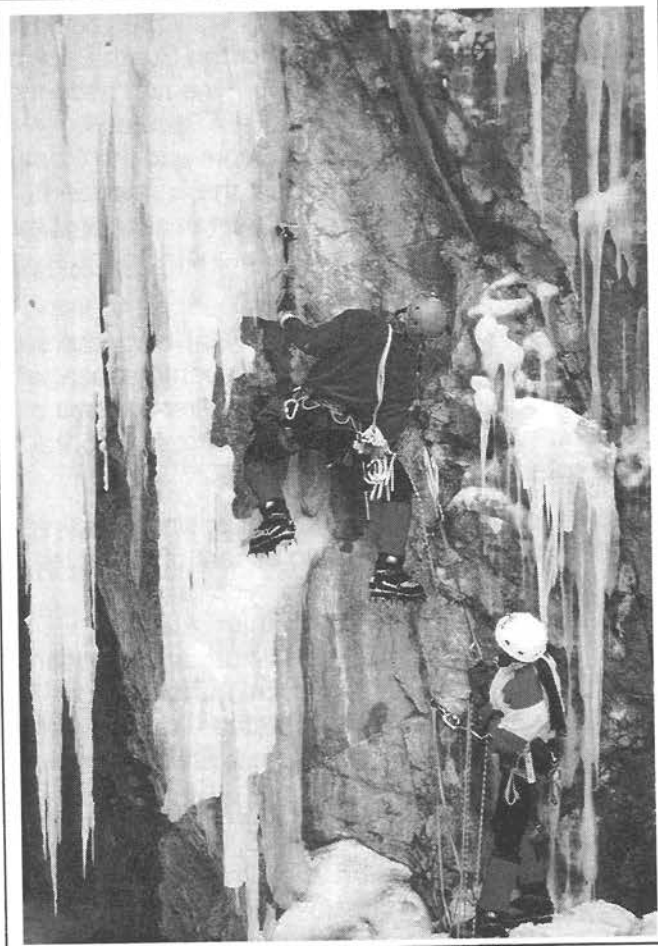
On rock, Jeff Lowe is a free-climbing master, with first ascents such as Icarus (5.11 c/d) and Risky Business (5.11+ S) in the Rockies, Wind, Sand, and Stars (5.12c) in Zion, the Direct Bonatti Route on Grand Capucin (5.11d) in the Alps, the second free ascent of the Yugoslavian Route on Nameless Tower (VI 5.12a) in Pakistan, and the first free ascent, solo, of the North Buttress of Puscanturpa Norte (VI 5.10 A13), in Peru.

Although Lowe himself prefers long, naturally protectable climbs in remote areas, in keeping with his personal vision of the beauty and diversity of climbing, he organized the first World Cup competitive sport climbing competition in the U.S. in 1988. Because of his efforts, the climbing wall at Snowbird Lodge in Snowbird, Utah has, for the past eight years, been host to America's National Sport Climbing Championships.

Lowe spent his college days as an internationally ranked downhill ski racer, training that was good preparation for the extreme couloir descents he now enjoys. He left college to become an Outward Bound instructor and consultant/ designer for Lowe Alpine Systems, a company founded by his brothers Mike and Greg. Developer of the internal-frame pack, Lowe Alpine Systems was also the

innovator of such quintessential climbing equipment as Footfang crampons, Snarg and R.A.T.S. ice screws, Tuber belay/rappel devices, spring-loaded camming devices, single-point suspension hanging tents, Tri Cams, and the Lowe Pro line of camera bags, among many other designs. Lowe later went on to form Latok Mountain Gear, a company that specialized in extreme outerwear. Lowe Alpine Systems and Latok were eventually sold, but Jeff Lowe's interest in equipment design continues to this day. He currently consults with equipment for such companies as Lafuma, La Sportiva, Marmot, Terramar, and Trango USA.

Lowe has been featured in numerous commercials and advertising campaigns in addition to being spotlighted on the Discover Channel, Planet Central Eco Sports and Travel, USA Today, Good Morning America, The Merv Griffin Show, ABC's Wide World of Sports, and ESPN. He has written, directed, rigged, and/ or starred in many documentary films, including *The Prayerbook*, *Ama Dablam*, *Ice Climb*, *Cloudwalker*, and *Waterfall Ice*. He has been profiled in *Sports Illustrated*, *People Magazine*, *Rocky Mountain Magazine*, *Mountain, Rock & Ice*, *Frontier Magazine*, *Men's Journal*, *Outside Magazine*, and *The Denver Post*, as well as in many foreign publications.



Lowe is the author of numerous articles published in *Ascent*, *Outside*, *Backpacker*, *Rocky Mountain Magazine*, *Climbing*, *Rock & Ice*, *Young Athlete*, and many other publications. He is the author of three books: *The Ice Experience* (1979); *Climbing* (1986, written in conjunction with Ron Fawcett, Paul Nunn and Alan Rouse); and *Ice World* (1996), his latest book encompassing the history, logistics, techniques, gear, environmental factors, and personalities in ice climbing as it has evolved around the world.

Since 1993 Lowe's company Arctic Wolf has been producing instructional/inspirational mountaineering videos. *Waterfall Ice* and *Alpine Ice* are the first in a set of seven instructional tapes in the Jeff Lowe's *Climbing Techniques* video series. The series will eventually include instructional videos on *Big Wall Climbing*, *Adventure Free (Traditional) Climbing*, *Ski Mountaineering*, *Alpine Climbing*, and *Expedition Climbing*. In the *Arctic Wolf Classic Climbs* video series the initial releases are *Cloudwalker* and *The Ice Game: From Bridalveil Falls to Bloody Sunday*.

A compelling lecturer, Lowe's slide shows put a human face and voice on the world of extreme alpinism. He has been the keynote speaker at such events as the Banff Festival of Mountain Films, the Telluride Mountain Film Festival, the Mountain Summit Conferences on Mount Rainier and at Sundance and Snowbird, Utah, the Buxton British Mountaineering Conference, the Mountain Wilderness Conference in Biella, Italy, and the International Film Festival in Graz, Austria, as well as making hundreds of presentations to business organizations and outing clubs around the world. Since his days as an instructor/program director for Outward Bound and as an original founder of the International Alpine School in the early 1970s, Lowe has shared his technical climbing expertise with hundreds of students. He currently offers instructional seminars in waterfall ice climbing, alpine ice climbing, mixed climbing, adventure free climbing, and big wall climbing. Through his company, Arctic Wolf,

Ltd., Lowe will be publishing a quarterly newsletter of international climbing news, technical recommendations, new-route ideas, etc. called *Howl: The Voice of Arctic Wolf*, (available November 1997).

## JOIN YOUR FELLOW CLIMBERS AT THE 1997 SPS BANQUET. TICKETS \$25.00

Send your check, along with dinner order specifying chicken, fish or vegetarian and a SASE to Barbee Tidball, [REDACTED] Questions and for a full description of the dinners call 5 [REDACTED]  
**See you at the Banquet.**

### Echoes from the Chair

Congratulations to Duane McRuer in receiving the Oliver Kehrlein Award, a Sierra Club national award for service to the outings program. Mac is a prime mover behind the Leadership Training program. Where would outings be without properly trained and qualified leaders? As a Safety Committee co-chair with Doug Mantle, he has done so much to revive the process of preparing and examining future M- and E-level leaders through the scheduling and conducting of practices and checkouts. Helping at a rock checkout this spring, I had the privilege to hear him talk about and demonstrate physics principles regarding the placement of anchors for protection in rock climbing. What a treasure we have in Mac! I'm glad he's getting a bit of the great recognition he deserves for many years of service to the club.

I hope that everyone has had a good season of climbing and exploring in the Sierra. Now that it is September, I can't help but wonder how much longer the season may last. Will it go into December as it did in 1995, making up with a late finish for the very heavy snow pack that changed our early climbing plans so much? Will El Nino stop our climbing just as it stopped traffic through Red Rock Canyon last week with major flooding?



Climbing in September and October can be so enjoyable when we may have lovely Indian summer days and crisp nights, no mosquitoes and no crowds.

I'm very thankful for the SPS and its list, for without them I probably would not have been in Humphreys Basin recently to climb Pilot Knob north. I would not have seen a golden eagle soaring or two falcons sporting, wheeling, and feinting; would not have seen so many lupine that areas were purple with it; would not have seen a profusion of larkspur and other flowers along a small stream seemingly so late in the season. Though I took many trails off the beaten path as a hiker before I developed into a climber, I'm thankful to the list for prompting me to explore areas of the Sierra I may never have visited. Some of us are list driven (oh no, I'm not obsessive-compulsive!), and some of us are not, but we all come to the Sierra--at least from what I've seen--with a real love for it, a deep appreciation for the beauty and majesty of this range as well as the challenge it presents us as climbers. So with that, let me wish you all safe climbing and

Happy Trails!

*Tina*

September 8, 1997

### Minutes from the SPS Meeting at DWP 7/9/97

Tina Stough began the meeting at 6:40 p.m. Present were Keith Martin, Dan Richter, Mattias Selke and Barbee Tidball.

Dan read the minutes of the last meeting which were amended and approved. Matthias reported

our balance as of 6/30/97 to be \$2,481.45 in checking and \$4,322.00 in savings.

The Committee decided that the SPS would take part in the Club Outings Fair on September 21, 1997.

The Committee voted to give Wynne Benti free advertising space for her book "Climbing Mt. Whitney".

The Committee approved the text for the new listing of the Section in the Schedule of Activities with grammar corrections from the Chair.

The meeting adjourned at 7:30 p.m. and was followed at 7:39 p.m. by the general meeting. Tina opened the meeting by welcoming newcomers. Following the minutes, treasurer's report, and schedule discussion, David Underwood updated the group on conservation issues regarding the proposed

Eagle Mountain landfill and the Southern Sequoia proposal to clear-cut ridge tops.

After a short break Wayne Norman gave a very interesting slide show of his and Ruth's recent trip to the White Mountains in New Hampshire.

Respectfully submitted,

Dan Richter

**SPS Membership Report** *by Dan Richter 9/30/97*

**Reinstatements...Welcome back!**

Jim Fleming

[Redacted]

Bob Michael

[Redacted]

**Change of Address**

Nancy Gordon

[Redacted]

**New Subscribers Thank you!**

May Gong

[Redacted]

John Helms

[Redacted]

Mark Haas

[Redacted]

David Whitaker

[Redacted]

Thomas Aicher

[Redacted]

Ray Shapland

[Redacted]  
Yuba County, CA 92886

Jesse Schwartz

[Redacted]

James Given

[Redacted]

**New Members Welcome!**

Tracy Sulkin

[Redacted]

Penelope May

[Redacted]

Larry Conn

[Redacted]

**Accomplishments Congratulations!**

Master Emblem #58 Scott Sullivan on Mt. Hooper 8/16/97

Master Emblem #59 Mirna Roach on Mt. Gibbs 9/13/97

Senior Emblem #121 Steve Eckert on Clarence King 8/29/97

Emblem #548: Dave Jenkins on Mt. Lyell 8/18/97

## Minutes from the SPS meeting at DWP on August 13, 1997

Chair, Tina Stough began the meeting at 6:37pm. Present were Keith Martin, Barbee Tidball, and Patty Kline.

The August minutes were read and approved.

Chair's report: Tina asked if there was a volunteer for Membership Chair. Dan Richter has done it for several years on 'Microsoft Office'. The duties include maintaining a roster, making changes, printing labels for the *Echo* and Outings Chair, and checking the Southern Sierran for new leaders.

*(Editor's note: Since this meeting Mirna Roach has volunteered to take over the position of Membership Chair. After years of Dan's great work organizing and keeping up the SPS records we all owe Dan a hand of applause....and Mirna a BIG THANK YOU for taking over this task. We all know you are the perfect Woman for the job!)*

Mountain Records: Charles Gerckens has always been getting complimentary *Echos* as thanks for making the metal SPS cylindrical canisters. From now on, he will be getting it first class instead of third class.

Pete Yamagata reported that someone claims Price Peak is 9,995' compared to Pyramid at 9,983' in the Tahoe area, and wanted to know if this would

have any effect on the list. The Management Committee wonders if anyone among our membership would like to survey this on a spare weekend.

Outings: Keith Martin is co-leading a volunteer project in Yosemite with the OCSS. OCSS will provide the coffee for the mornings and SPS will provide the ice chests and barbeque equipment for the dinners.

Training and safety: Duane McRuer said that Black Kaweah will now be led as R-M instead of M.

Banquet: Barbee Tidball will meet with the caterer to go over the dinner details.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:15pm followed by the general meeting at 7:40. After Tina welcomed the newcomers and read the minutes, Patty called for trip reports from the last month, announced upcoming trips, and told of future training trips. Upcoming private trips were announced. David Underwood discussed Yosemite and other conservation issues.

After a short break, Brad Jensen gave a fascinating slide presentation of his climb of Denali.

Respectfully submitted, Patty Kline



Book Review by Barbee Tidball

### Hiking between Groveland and Yosemite by Hap Barhydt

On a recent SPS volunteer project in Yosemite I had the pleasure of meeting Frank and Bert from the Tuolumne Group

of the Sierra Club. Both Frank and Bert expressed a real pleasure, pride and interest in climbing in the areas near Groveland, CA and introduced me to the hiking guide book (second printing 1997) for the area. The book is being sold as a fund raiser by the Tuolumne Group. The suggested retail price is \$9.00, but Sierra Club members may purchase the book for \$7.00. Please add \$1.50 for mailing. Write Jerry Fueslein, [REDACTED]

Hiking between Groveland and Yosemite, contains descriptions of 43 hikes on trails and forest roads in the Groveland Ranger District on the Stanislaus National Forest and western portions of Yosemite National Park. All route descriptions include distance, difficulty, elevation and information on maps to use in conjunction with the description.

SAFETY CHAIRS MEMORANDUM TO SPS MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE – 9/3/97

The Safety Committee recommends that the following person be added to the Mountaineers List:

Patrick McKusky

In addition the Safety Committee requests approval to add Ron Hudson to the SPS Examiner List  
The management committee approved the recommendations at their September meeting.

CONSERVATION ISSUES

- **BOLTING – Proposed Sierra Club policy** The following Proposed Sierra Club Policy has been developed by the Wild Planet Strategy Team (WPST) after gathering and reviewing input from many Sierra Club (SC) entities. The WPST is at this time officially distributing this Proposed Policy statement for review and comment by Chapters, Groups, Regional Conservation Committees, Outings Committees, Sections and individual SC members.

I have agreed to act as the WPST's liaison gathering comments on the proposed policy. (*Kind of a secretary or accountant position where I "get to" compile all the comments for WPST*) In an effort to assure that all interested parties and persons have ample time to review and discuss the Proposed Policy statement we have set Dec.21, 1997 as the deadline all comments are to be delivered to me.

The purpose of comments on the Proposed Policy is not to "discuss" the Proposed Policy but rather to provide members an opportunity to suggest one of the following options:

1. Recommend that SC not take any position in regards to fixed anchors in Wilderness.
2. Accept the proposed policy as written.
3. Suggest revised wording. Provide an alternate proposed fixed anchor policy.

Please make an effort to discuss the Proposed Policy as a group (Angeles Chapter, SPS, San Diego Chapter, Loma Prieta etc.) wherever possible.

After all comments are received Barbee Tidball will organize the comments and submit the review package to the WPST for further review and/or adoption. When a policy is adopted by the WPST, the team next recommends the policy to the Conservation Governance Committee (CGC) and the National Outings Governance Committee (NOGC). The Governance Committees will consider the policy and if accepted recommend the policy to the SC Board. The Board then reviews and votes to adopt or modify the recommended policy.

I will not include in *The Sierra Echo* the history and discussion I am publishing in the preamble being distributed through out the SC. If you want a copy of the full document please send a SASE.

WILD PLANET STRATEGY TEAMPROPOSED POLICY: FIXED ANCHORS IN WILDERNESS

"Within designated wilderness areas, or areas otherwise protected for their wilderness values," climbing, including the use of fixed anchors, should be subject to the same strict management standards as other recreational activities to ensure preservation of the wilderness character of these lands.

Necessary management actions pertaining to management of climbing in wilderness should be based on clearly-defined objectives that describe desired wilderness conditions and are set forth in individual area management plans prepared with full public involvement. Objective data, and the limits of Acceptable Change management concept, should be used to determine as acceptable level and type of fixed anchor use which preserves wilderness resources and values.



As the Wilderness Act prohibits the use of "motorized equipment," the use of power drills is prohibited in wilderness. However, fixed anchors may be used subject to limitations on type, number, and location of use as determined through area-specific wilderness management plans.

In determining the extent to which fixed anchors will be allowed in a specific wilderness area, the wilderness manager should ensure that their use will be the minimum necessary for administration of the area, substantially unnoticeable, an insignificant impact on the "primeval character" of wilderness, and requisite for the reasonably safe and enjoyable experience of climbing in wilderness.

Based on the findings of the wilderness planning process, management of fixed anchors and other climbing activities should be accomplished using the least amount of direct control needed. Education is preferred over regulation, although the complete range of management options, including resource monitoring, voluntary limits on use, use restrictions, permitting, area-specific prohibitions, area closures, and removal, should be considered and implemented as necessary to preserve wilderness character.

All quotations are from the Wilderness Act of 1964."

*As a side note this Proposed Policy has been discussed with The Access Fund and received their support.*

- **September 29<sup>th</sup> the Los Angeles Times front page ran the headline *Sierra Club to Take On Immigration Question*.** Apparently a small group of Sierra Club members has succeeded in obtaining the necessary signatures for the membership to debate the issue of immigration in the next Club election. Similar to the logging issue last election this measure could pass with a few as 10% of the Club actually voting on the issue. Adam Werbach in an interview on 790 Talk Radio, Sunday October 5, 1997 firmly stated that the Club does not have a policy on immigration. When pressed further on the issue he stated that it would cause a change in Club policies if the measure were to pass. Werbach seemed open to discuss population numbers, logging, dams wet-lands and other environmental issues but he did not appear to support the small group of members who want to control immigration in the name of the environment.
- **Manzanar** The relocation site for Japanese-Americans during WW II on 395 hopes to receive support from the Sierra Club. The Toiyabe Chapter has sponsored the following resolution: The Sierra Club supports immediate efforts to preserve the 814-acre National Historic Site at Manzanar because of its ecological and historical significance. The Toiyabe Chapter is not alone in their support. Other groups behind the project include The Mono Lake Committee, Eastern Museum, five Owens Valley tribal bands, 100<sup>th</sup>/442 Veterans Assoc. and many others. The site has received the political support of the Inyo County Supervisors, Jerry Lewis, Barbara Boxer and Dianne Feinstein. The Senators have committed to try to raise funding for the site. The supporters are planning, in conjunction with the Angeles & Toiyabe Chapters, the National Park Service and the Manzanar Committee, a weekend clean-up of the site in April 1998. Stop by the Manzanar site on your next visit to the Eastern Sierra... a walk around the site really gives one a feeling of history. For more information contact the Toiyabe Chapter Chair, or Wynn Benti Zdon
- **Cows from the Golden Trout Wilderness have been found in Sequoia-Kings Canyon NP.** The cows are tagged the same as the Anheuser-Busch/Cabin Bar Ranch cows that graze on the "Whitney Allotment." The ranch has been warned on previous occasions. You can help by writing the Park Service, Forest Service, and Anheuser Bush, requesting that they permanently suspend the grazing permit for the endangered Whitney Allotment. This area has received the concern of environmentalists for years due to heavy meadow and stream bank degradation from the cattle grazing. Golden Trout habitat is being heavily damaged in this area. Write: Michael Tollefson, Superintendent, Sequoia-Kings Canyon Nat. Park, Three Rivers 93271, JoEllen Keil, Assit. Forest Spvr., Inyo Nat. Forest, 873 N. Main St., Bishop 93514 and August Busch III, President and Chairman of the Board, Anheuser-Busch Co., One Busch Pl., St. Louis, MO 63118.

## Caltech Peak – A Proposed Addition to the SPS List

The SPS Management Committee has received the following letter after an approved exploratory climb was led to Caltech Peak, July 16-19, 1997. The letter was received October 1, 1997 after the September 15 deadline to provide sufficient time for SPS members to consider this proposal and to lead other exploratory climbs to the peak, if desired. The Management Committee is not recommending placement of the question of adding Caltech Peak to the SPS list on the 1997 September/October Ballot. *The Echo* has received a few letters pro and con on the issue and these letters will be published in 1998 when the evaluation and possible vote for this peak addition may be acted upon.

October 1, 1997

Dear Members of the Management Committee:

I would like to propose the addition of Caltech Peak to the Sierra Peaks Section list. Here are some criteria, per the SPS Policies & Procedures:

1. Elevation – 13,832 ft., 4216m. It is four meters shorter than Junction Peak, forty-three meters shorter than Mt. Stanford, and taller than Mt. Ericsson, Mt. Geneva, Mt. Jordon, Deerhorn Mountain, both East and West Vidette, and the peaks of the Great Western Divide.
2. Dominance of an area – Caltech is prominent to those hiking on the John Muir trail south of Forester Pass or those traveling to Lake South America. It stands out as a long spur reaching south from the Kings-Kern Divide.
3. View – The summit affords a wonderful view of Junction Peak to the east, the panorama of the Great Western Divide and the Kaweahs to the west and southwest, as well as views of the other SPS peaks in the region. This is one of the outstanding features of the peak.
4. Climbing Interest – On our exploratory climb, we ascended the class 2 southeast slope, which certainly was not difficult. It could make for an interesting Spring snow climb. The west face and east ridge offer class 3 routes.
5. Proximity to other peaks – Caltech is not far from other SPS peaks such as Stanford, Ericsson, and Junction. The aerial distance from Caltech to Stanford or to Ericsson is about the same distance as Ericsson to Stanford. Junction is somewhat farther away across the cirque headed by Forester Pass.
6. Other factors – To be brief: Caltech is a peak that Bill T. Russell (class of '50) hoped would be added to the list. In honor of him, Doug Mantle has proposed the peak as a list addition. I agree, especially since Caltech is the alma mater of other SPSers whom we honor and revere such as Duane McRuer. If you are not swayed by this emotional reason, more objectively the peak does offer truly outstanding views, especially of the panorama of the Great Western Divide and the Kaweahs. Let's offer it for a vote onto the list.

Sincerely,

*Tina*

Tina Stough  
Chair, SPS Management Committee



## Caltech Exploratory and More

July 16-19, 1997

Tina Stough and Dan Richter, Leaders

Fifteen people, counting the leaders, signed up for this trip, but by the time we gathered at the Shepherd Pass trailhead, we were down to three, plus a fourth. Rob Langsdorf, already camped at the pass. A mid-week start, an ambitious trip, and a scary trip sheet decimated the ranks. The only problem was that I had enlarged the permit because of the response-live and learn.

Wednesday, July 16, we began just after 6 a.m. under cloudy skies for our trek to Shepherd Pass. To Dan's and my relief, Erik Siering's pace was tamed by his having had only half an hour's sleep. With several long breaks and a leisurely lunch, we found Rob's tent near Lake 12,002 (3661 m) at the pass just after 3 p.m.-he was off climbing Tyndall. Some snow on the switchbacks to the pass had canceled the trail maintenance trip, but it posed no problem for us. This was a 6200' day, according to my Avocet.

Thursday the four of us sauntered down the trail toward the Muir trail, cutting off on the old trail and then cross country around the toe of Diamond Mesa past the lake at 12,000' (shown only as a swamp at about 3540 m on the 7.5 map). After a short stint on the John Muir Freeway, we headed off to Caltech, passing the lake at about 12,200' (3720 m) to a ramp angling up through a cliff band to the right which we spotted from the trail. From the ramp we continued north on scree and some talus, skirting badly sun-cupped snow most of the way, up to the summit with its marker placed for the Caltech centennial. We had splendid views all around-west and southwest to the Great Western Divide and Kaweahs, northeast to Forester Pass; east to Junction Peak, north to the Palisades and Goddard, south to Whitney, Olancho, and Kern Peak; and more. Back at the lake at 12,200' we had a long lunch, several of us dozing in the sun. We were back to camp at 4 p.m. after only 3450' gain and twelve or thirteen miles-it was declared our rest day.

Friday Rob said goodbye to go to Center Basin via Junction Pass, and the original three set off first for Junction Peak. We went up the southeast corner of Diamond Mesa via another right angling ramp that started a little south and west of lake 12,060' (3680+ m). Easy walking across the mesa led us to the knife edge, which is mostly class one walking, and up the easy southwest ridge to the south ridge, where we dropped down on the west to traverse north to the true summit with easy, fun climbing. I left an SPS cylinder and register book, the old container and book(s) having disappeared some time ago (I suspect it was a Sierra Club cast aluminum box-they seem to have developed legs and have been walking off various peaks in recent years). I was surprised that we didn't find any notes in baggies. Descending the south

slopes was easy through the talus and scree, giving us an easy route back to our camp at the pass for lunch. At 12:45 we started up for Tyndall, taking the class 2 northwest slope to the junction with the west ridge, having to drop down about three hundred annoying feet on the south side to traverse over and up to the summit. Erik (who now was ill as well as sleep deprived) and Dan had declared much earlier in the day that they didn't want to move camp down the pass back to the Pothole or thereabouts. I was outnumbered, and staying put at the pass was much easier, especially since we didn't get back to camp till about 7 p.m. because of various long breaks. This was a 5300' day and perhaps eight miles, maybe more with our squiggle factor of wandering cross country.

Saturday I had originally planned to be our day to hike over Junction Pass and over to Center Peak, then back across for a class 2 route up Mt. Keith and a descent down the south chute back to the Pothole (and a hike out the next day). We changed our minds about that. We started down from the pass at 7 a.m., and I was soon saying goodbye to Erik and Dan, who were out to the cars by 11:30. I went a short ways up the Junction Pass trail (not maintained since 1932 when the Muir Trail was rerouted with the creation of trail over Forester Pass), unloaded stuff from my pack, and started for Junction Pass at 8 a.m. With diligence the trail can be followed, but at times I just went cross-country. Higher up I stuck to the trail more closely up to the pass, sometimes following Rob's footsteps and slowly traversing some moderately hard and steep snow patches over the trail, then went up the southwest ridge of Mt. Keith, first on the south side, then more on the north. I had a long lunch on top and a quick descent of the southwest chute (scree and some snow) back to where the trail turns south from the valley east of Junction Peak. Sticking to the trail more carefully back to my gear, I was back on the Shepherd Pass trail at 2:25. out to the truck at 6:20. In the future I will probably regret not climbing Center on this trip, but I did enjoy being out a day early and getting to my track workout on Sunday, no matter how trashed I was. It was an ambitious but also mostly successful trip. A larger group probably would have led to more plan modifications. One of the perks of the trip was seeing so many wildflowers. The slopes west of Shepherd Pass were purple with low lupines, and I have never seen so many columbines. Phlox, polemonium, blazing star, scarlet gilia, prickly poppy, shooting stars, penstemon, paintbrush, and mountain mahogany delighted the eyes and nose. I certainly had a good time; I trust the others did too.

## Climbing Freel via Armstrong Pass

September 14, 1997

By Owen Maloy

On September 14, 1997 Dolores Holladay and I climbed Freel Peak by the Armstrong Pass route. This is probably the fastest on-trail way up the peak. It took us three hours. Faster (I won't say "younger") hikers could probably do it in two. Estimated distance, 3 mi one-way; gain, 2600', including a small loss on the north side of the pass. We left Lee Vining just before 9 AM, started climbing just after noon, had an excellent and inexpensive dinner at the Alpine Hotel in Markleeville at 7PM, and were back in Lee Vining by 10PM. We had some trouble identifying the trailhead, hence the following instructions.

This route starts from USFS road 051, which runs east from CA 89 0.8 mi S of Luther Pass. Drive east on this 3.5 miles until you cross the second bridge. Immediately turn left on a road that

immediately crosses another bridge. Go uphill 0.5 mi to a dead-end with ample parking. This is the Armstrong Pass trailhead. It is only a short distance up to the pass, maybe 0.2 mi and 200' of gain. Then turn northeast on the Tahoe Rim Trail and go almost to the saddle where the trail drops over towards Job's Peak. There are a number of use trails to the right (southeast) up the mountain here. You will do yourself a favor if you pass up the first few, but get as close to the ridge as you can, to avoid most boulders and fallen logs. It is steep for a short distance, and then one enters the bowl below the summit. We had extremely high winds. The jet stream was blowing north right over our heads. The register was placed by Pete Yamagata on June 1, 1997, and is now more than half full. Popular peak!

## Clyde Minaret

September 4-7, 1997

Doug Mantle & Tina Stough, Leaders

We met at the Devil's Postpile hiker parking lot 7 a.m. Friday. Because of injured hand tendons, Dan Richter had turned over the leadership to Doug, and I became the assistant. After cancellations, our participants were Elena Sherman and Scott Sullivan. Our first challenge was crossing the San Joaquin River. True, we could have gone down the trail past the Postpile to a bridge that had not been washed away, but we didn't wish to add more than two miles to our day. We opted instead for the horse crossing beside the site of the former bridge. The water came up to our shorts (especially mine as the shortest in the group) and we knew it would not be pleasant when we were wincing from the cold damp dirt even before touching the water. But the footing was good on rounded stones, and the crossing wasn't difficult or dangerous. Despite forecasts for clearing weather, during our hike to camp at Minaret Lake we watched the scudding clouds with a bit of unease--storms several days before had flooded highway 14 at Red Rock Canyon and on 395 at Little Lake (14 was still closed for our drive north and south) and wet lichen on Clyde Minaret was not something we wanted to cope with.

After lunch, Doug, Scott, and I scouted the route to the base of the Rock Route on the northeast

face. The only problem was a steep snow field across part of the ramp leading to the base of the chute. The snow, however, was a good consistency for kicking steps, so Doug and I went across and back so that the next morning would go well. Back in camp, we had a pleasant dinner despite the wind.

Saturday morning we were on our way to Clyde at 6:30, passing one fellow below the red rocks on his way to meet two others about to attempt a 5.8 route. We were relieved that they had no intention of climbing our route and creating more rockfall potential. Having negotiated the snow without the slightest slip of our feet or ice axes, we climbed well up the chute and the face to the ridge, only using one short belay for a final awkward spot to get onto the summit ridge and then the short rappel down before the final scramble to the summit. We were on the summit before 11:00 and took a long break out of some wind, enjoying the summit registers and view. Because of the steepness of the mountain, we used the rope slightly more for the downclimb, rappelling or downclimbing on belay in several spots. The snowfield was still soft enough in the afternoon to give us secure footing and the flatter snow closer to Cecile Lake gave some glissades and gliding steps.

We investigated a tent at Cecile that we had seen both days without a sign of an occupant--rather spooky given the climbing in the area--but it turned out to be the ranger's tent. We talked to the slower climber for the 5.8 route, who had turned back--part of his excuse was that he was pushing forty. Heavens! We were back in camp at 4:30 and enjoyed another fine dinner and the contemplation of a fine climb safely accomplished. Later that night Doug saw headlamps coming back to the 5.8ers' camp.

Having said goodbye to Elena and Scott the night before, Doug and I started down the trail about 5:30 a.m. by headlamp. At the San Joaquin we didn't stop to take off our boots but plunged boldly ahead. A group about to ford from the other side saw how high the water came (my shorts were wet again) and decided to hike the extra miles. We were on our way home about 8:40. Thanks for a great trip!



### Mt. Goethe (13,264') & Pilot Knob (North) (12,245')

August 8-10, 1997

By Pete Yamagata

Jim Adler (assistant), Kathy Price, Bob Wyka, Barry Holchin, and Penelope May met me at the North Lake parking lot at 7:30 a.m. Friday for my first regular SPS lead. There had been some electrical activity the day before, prompting me to make sure everyone understood waiver policy and the lightning hazard before we took off, even though we were all I-rated leaders. Also, in the latest *Mammoth Times*, an article announced new, stricter food storage (bear

policy in the Inyo National Forest as of July 25, so everyone was advised.

We started out at 8:20 a.m. and, as we reached Loch Leven Lake, we heard thunder and got light rain. We had quite the delay and discussion of alternatives, and I offered to lead a private trip to day climb peaks in the area if

the weather improved (or didn't improve). Continuing on, We went over Piute Pass and arrived at Summit Lake, our base camp, by 1:15 p.m. There

Photo by Pete Yamagata  
Mt. Goethe, August 9, 1997  
Penelope May, Barry Holchin, Jim Adler

is a nice sandy flat area along the trail 500' north of the lake outlet. Bob was anxious to get climbing, so after a discussion of sign-out policy (could he sign back in when he returned?), he left us shortly to go for Pilot Knob #2. The rest of us enjoyed the clearing weather, and Barry and I took a short hike to Muriel Lake to reconnoiter a route. There was a big boulder near camp that required an apparently difficult, class 5 move to climb, so we kept extra food and garbage atop it, thanks mainly to Jim. There were no sufficiently high trees to hang food. Owen Maloy had loaned me his bear-resistant canister.

Bob returned at about 4 p.m. complaining about hurting his leg, and decided to pack out.

Saturday morning, we left camp at 6:40 a.m. to pass the right (west) side of Muriel Lake, and climbed up a short distance to the lower Goethe Lake. R. J. says to take the western side, but we couldn't see anything wrong with the shorter eastern side, so that was the way we went, without difficulty. Passing the outlet of the larger, upper Goethe Lake, we decided to rock-hop upward left over the talus toward Alpine Col. I made use of snowfields to facilitate travel, and we arrived at the Col. by about 10 a.m. The view of Darwin/ Mendel was dramatic, with the fast-moving clouds and stormy light. Deciding to continue, we connected our descent route with sandy, faint, broken use trail to Lake 11,840'+, which had many beautiful ice floes. Traversing around the right (west) side of this lake, we faced a small hazard kick-stepping above the lake on 10-25 degree snowfields, with an icy plunge resultant from any failure to arrest oneself with finger grabs, giving me slight worry with my Nikon gear (I was once told a "drop or a dunk" effectively means the end of your camera). We made it to the far side of the lake, and rested, with the weather holding. Climbing upward, we traversed west and into the wide scree gully which was partially filled with snow. We climbed up, then went left to the summit. I kept the group together, and we summited at 12:45 p.m.

Fast moving clouds made an awesome view, with excellent photographic opportunity. We took many photos with the interesting light. I took portraits utilizing Emblem peaks as backdrop. Using a flash unit really helps with the pictures at close range. After 50 minutes we headed down, getting back to the bottom after 30 minutes.

We traversed back along the shoreline snowfields of Lake 11,840'+, which had softened up a little, then climbed the 400' back over Alpine Col. I headed more directly down back to upper Goethe Lake to kick steps in one small lakeshore snowfield,

which was passed over its top by the others. We slowly took our lakes route back and were in camp by 6:30 p.m.

Sunday, Kathy joined us for our 6:45 a.m. departure for Pilot Knob. We took the trail for about a mile, then beelined for the peak. We stayed at about the 11,200' contour line, passing Tomahawk Lake on its north side, taking slight gain and loss into the upper Knob Lake drainage before climbing to the saddle to the east of the summit. We talked with three persons who were descending. Heading up the ridge, we followed sandy spots on the left, then climbed right up steep talus to the summit ridge. The further outcrop had the cemented-in aluminum box and the highpoint. There was hardly a cloud in the sky, and the temperatures were cool and very nice. We stayed about 40 minutes, and headed back to camp about the same way. I noticed thick, green algae in some of the lakes and streams here, as a sign at the trailhead announced a study was being done with tiles placed in the water to determine growth. Perhaps nitrogen is getting into High Sierra lakes from wind-borne pollution?

Over Piute Pass at 4:45 p.m., we had a 2.5 hour pack back to the cars. This was about a 28 mile, 7,500' gain trip inspired and informed by a 1979 Echo write-up of a SPS trip. I met some participants from that trip while doing Humphreys with a Mother Lode Chapter (Sacramento) group. Thanks to everyone for a successful, enjoyable weekend!

## Denali trip report

By Steve Eckert

(You can skip to Day 15 if you just want the summit day story)

### Day 0 - Getting There

If you reserve far enough in advance, a round trip commercial flight from San Francisco to Anchorage is under \$300. Then you'll need to contact a shuttle bus company like Denali Overland Transport, which will pick you up at the airport (or anywhere else in Anchorage) and drive you to Talkeetna for about \$150 round trip (depends on how many are in your group). You can take the train, but few do anymore due to bad schedules. Once in Talkeetna, you check in at the ranger station (and pay a \$150 fee for the permit you applied for at least 60 days in advance), and then a ski plane takes you to the edge of the park round trip from 350' in Talkeetna to about 7,000' on the Kahiltna Glacier costs \$250 each. We used Doug Geeting Aviation, who has a reputation for getting you off the mountain regardless of the weather, but they don't have a bunkhouse like K2 does (which could be a problem if you're stuck in Talkeetna due to bad weather). Fuel is \$5/gallon on the glacier so go with lots of empty bottles unless you think you can drag a thin metal can up and down the mountain without popping it. We used about a pint a day for two people taking 10 liters for the whole trip. Guide services charge you about \$2,700 per person (plus transportation), and provide food tent, rope etc.

### Day 1 - The Slog Begins

Tim Hult and I left Talkeetna about 11am after doing the frantic gear re-packing thing and chatting with the nice rangers about our qualifications. Just a few days earlier there was a backlog of 100 climbers waiting on weather to get out of Talkeetna, but a day or two of reasonable weather had cleared that up. We buried a cache at Kahiltna Base (7,200') with some spare food in case we got stuck on the way out, then roped up and headed down onto the main Kahiltna glacier. The landing strip is 400' up a spur this year (it varies) where there are no crevasses. Sometime around 11pm we made camp just below 8000' having dragged over 130 pounds of gear EACH down to the main glacier and back up about 1,000'. We put some on our backs, and some in drag bags (some used sleds, but the bags hold more and don't roll over).

### Day 2 - Where Are We?

After about 5" of overnight snow, the morning was foggy but not too nasty. We hung around camp trying to decide if a real storm was coming in, and finally decided to push half our load up to 9500' with an afternoon carry. The rules are different when it stays light all night! There's no need to start early because it warms up about 10am and cools down somewhere around 9pm, with walkable light lasting 24 hours a day. We returned to camp at 8,000' as it started to snow, just like the night before. This year most of the people who fell in crevasses did so between 8,000' and 10,000'. One team had four on a rope, and stepped off the trail to let a lone skier go by. The lone skier and the center two people fell in due to the weight concentration, even though no crevasse was visible!

### Day 3 - This Is More Like It!

Light snow lasted until 2pm, and we hit the trail at 3pm. Moved camp up to 10,000', bypassing our cache. This was a HOT day, where a single thin layer of polypro was plenty. The barometer was dropping in spite of the clear sky, and by 9pm it was only 15 degrees. After some vigorous debate, we decided to clear out an old tent hole and prepare for a storm even though the weather looked great. Tim's VE25 requires a platform over 10' in diameter, which is a lot of shoveling even if you can use some old snow walls.

### Day 4 - Fresh Powder

Went back down to 9,500' for the cache, moved it up to 10,800' then went back to 10,000' for the tent and established camp at 10,800'. This camp is where we left our skis, since it gets much steeper from here on. Skiing down between loads was pure heaven, with a firm base and several days of fresh powder on top. Those with snowshoes looked jealous. It stayed around 30 degrees all day with an annoying but not nasty wind. We did not rope up here both because the snowpack looked very uniform and because there were ski tracks all over the hillside. Tim's climbing skins were slipping badly on the final hill so he wound up walking part of it.

### Day 5 - Semi-Rest Day and Booty

In two carries we moved everything from our perch at 10,800' up to the main camp at 11,400'. We suspect the altimeter was reading several hundred feet too high here, but the topography did not match the map and it was impossible to calibrate. The

glacier changes considerably from year to year, so these camps move quite a bit. We were camped about 100' from an open crevasse, in which I spotted a full length RidgeRest foam pad. Setting a picket and a fluke as pro, I down climbed a snow bridge (which went "whump" twice) with an ascender on the rope in case the whole thing gave way. Tim's combination of thin blue pad and thin Thermarest got a much needed boost from this extra insulation, and the snow bridge held up in spite of the visible cracks. (This pad makes up for a similar one I lost on Shasta a couple of years ago - karma is preserved.) A rising barometer seemed to disagree with lenticular clouds and occasionally gusty winds slashing snow in our faces.

#### Day 6 - Real Climbing

From 7k to 11k you're just skiing (or walking) up a big wide glacier. From 11k around Windy Corner to the Medical Camp at 14k (also known as Genet Basin) it gets a lot more serious. There was some blue ice, with white snowpacked into foot-wide cracks. Those with no glacier experience seemed to like walking on the snow instead of the ice, and we saw many places where they had fallen through (probably up to the hip, not all the way in). Beyond Windy Corner (a rocky shoulder kept bare by consistent wind) the crevasses were an order of magnitude larger and the route wound drunkenly between them on snow bridges of varying quality. The route was poorly wanded, but easy to follow because of heavy traffic.

We dug our cache in at 14,500' according to the altimeter (almost certainly reading 300' too high) and sat around watching the show: Some people had carried downhill skis up, and were doing yo-yo climbs on the slopes around the camp. Others were practicing self arrests. One person did a 500' uncontrolled glissade that did not look intentional. A tent bounced around on the slope after blowing over the ridge 2000' above camp, winding up in a crevasse where no one was willing to rescue it. A solo climber was carrying his pack 100', setting it down, going back and dragging a sled, then carrying the pack again, etc. What a zoo! It appears that the 14k camp has become a destination for tourists, not just a place to stage a summit assault. Helicopter flights seemed common as frostbite victims were brought down (one from 16k to 7k dangling in a basket at the end of a rope

for the entire ride), This was one of the first nice days after three weeks of unbroken bad weather up high. We both felt great, with no altitude effects at all. Ascending slowly on the bottom part of a big mountain may be more important than I've thought in the past! Reluctantly, we returned to our camp at 11k.

#### Day 7 - Deja Vu All Over Again

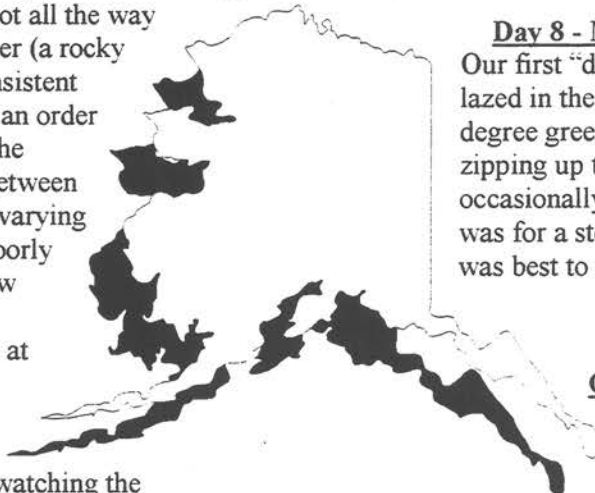
Same as Day 6, except we moved camp instead of carrying a load. We finally met someone who had summited! (In Talkeetna, the ranger indicated 300 were on the mountain, 45 had returned, and only 2 people had reached the summit so far this season.) A very safe climbing season as far as injuries go, but high wind and cold temperatures had prevented most people from even trying to summit. In the tent at 14k we were sweating it out until the sun slipped behind a ridge. Less than half an hour after "sunset" (about 9:30pm) we were freezing in single digit temperatures and fiddling with Tim's failed MSR ("Maximize Service Revenue") stove. We had a spare (my old Optimus 111B) which roared away while Tim got the frozen water drop out of the MSR.

#### Day 8 - Major Rest Day

Our first "do nothing" day of the trip! We lazed in the tent, alternately sweating in 90 degree greenhouse heat and frantically zipping up to keep spindrift out during the occasionally gusts of wind. The forecast was for a storm to come in, but we felt it was best to take a day off anyway.

#### Day 9 - Final Cache and Carry

A falling barometer had pushed the altimeter elevation of camp up several hundred feet higher, but we carried 6 days supplies, climbing gear, and spare clothes 3,000' up to high camp at 17,200' anyway. The first 1,500' of gain was on icy snowpack, but the next 500' was 45 degree blue ice with fixed ropes after an 8' vertical bergschrund! So much for this being a "long walk in the snow" sort of mountain. Once at 16k, the route follows a mixed rock-and-ice ridge along a knife edge to the saddle containing high camp. A fall on this ridge could easily be fatal because it is over 45 degrees on the sides (and sometimes that steep along the ridge itself) with positively NO runoff. You would start banging into rocks as soon as you fell, making any attempt to arrest unlikely to succeed. Some were roped into suicide pacts (not setting protection), but





we climbed off rope because it was unlikely that one climber could stop another's fall. We both felt great at 17k, although Tim was developing a worrisome cough.

#### Day 10 - Hitting The Wall

With the weather definitely turning for the worse, we intended to move camp up to 17k and sit out the storm while acclimatizing before a summit push. Before the bottom of the fixed ropes, Tim's cough turned into a cold. He weakened and began to sweat heavily, so we turned around and parked the tent back at 14k. A trip to the resident doctor confirmed that the flu was going around (the rangers and doctors all had it), and that Tim was not suffering from edema. Most seemed to agree that the flu would not go away until we got off the mountain. Your system is working hard to maintain itself at that altitude, and cannot muster the strength to fight off an infection. High camp was socked in with wind by 4pm, so being further down the mountain was not looking so bad after all!

#### Days 11, 12, 13, 14 - Boredom Sets In

The first three days were mostly stormy, with at least several nice hours per day. Some nights we had to get up every 2 or 3 hours to shovel out the tent due to blowing snow. Nights at 14k were always below zero, ranging from -5 to -20 degrees. One night it was -5F inside a fully zipped up double wall VE25, indicating outside temps of perhaps -30. The FM station in Talkeetna said 4 people had summited so far, compared to 42 on the same day last year. A British soldier died after pushing to the summit in bad weather after some of his team (wisely) turned around. The body was recovered from the Orient Express (a direct chute off the summit plateau), several miles from their intended route. The altimeter showed 900' of altitude variation due to the low barometric pressure. We finished the books we were reading, and cursed ourselves for caching the other books at high camp.

Tim was running a temperature of 100.6° and the short walk to the latrine had him coughing badly. We talked at length about what to do, and he decided not to risk getting even more sick by moving up. A very tough call, especially since this was his second try at the peak. I spent part of Day 14 (which was perfect weather) trying to pick up a partner who had room in their tent at high camp. Since Tim could not move up, our tent was stuck at 14k. We also located some spare fuel, since we had carried more than half of our supply up to 17k and

were running low. Finding no options available, we started talking about the possibility of skipping high camp and striking out for the summit directly from 14k. That would be over a 6,000' day at high altitude, but it appeared to be the only option. Staying at 14k, Tim was not recovering and I was at increasing risk of catching whatever made him sick.

#### Day 15 - The Big Push

7am. 17 degrees below zero. No sun on the route. No one moving. This is the one time I was truly alone on the mountain. From 14k to 17k I saw no one moving. Three and one half hours of total solitude, the highest I had ever climbed solo. If I fell now, no one would know where to look. There was just the wind and my breath and the crunching of the snow. Up the snowpack. Up the fixed ropes. Up the knife edge ridge. Plant the axe, kick the crampons, shift the weight, repeat. Plenty of time to think: Tim had repeated over and over "Listen to your body" as I was preparing to leave. Good advice. Twice my toes became cold, twice I wiggled and stomped them back to life (my warm overboots were foolishly cached at 17k in anticipation of moving camp mid-afternoon). At 16,500' I climbed into the sun and my feet were safe. By then I had already changed to thinner gloves and could relax a bit.

11:30am. Denali Pass. Over 18,000', climbing well and passing people who had camped at 17k in spite of my long morning, I was on top of my game. Able to pace myself without regard to other climbers, and to focus entirely on my steps and my breathing. From 17k to 18k is a long traverse, with a very narrow crampon trail that drifts over nightly. A fall sideways takes you into seracs and bergschrunds, and I was not roped. I stopped for some food and drink, introducing some Germans to Cheetos! They gave me chocolate in return. I never saw them again, so I suppose they turned around later. I spent very little time looking back.

The British Marines caught up with me, then fell into step saying they liked my pace. I taught them the rest step and we chatted as we climbed. Nice chaps, carrying Frederick the stuffed frog to symbolize amphibious landings. I tried to contact Tim with their CB radio, but we were too far away and the broad summit plateau blocked line-of-sight transmissions. Almost no wands in the snow here, which is probably why the other British team got off route. Not a problem in good weather, however.



Approaching the Archdeacon's Tower at 19,500' the wind picked up a little. I put on my last layer of fleece and my overboots while the

Frogs pulled away from me. Crossing the Football Field (a dip of several hundred feet on the way up) I caught up with them resting at the base of the final push up the summit ridge. We drank, ate, and dropped our packs. 700' to go. I put on my down coat, stuffed a camera and some spare gloves in my pockets, and headed up. That last 700' took us two hours! (The first 700' out of camp had taken me about 30 minutes.)

The summit ridge is incredibly sharp, at least this year. Sharper than the ridge between 16k and 17k. Some places were heel-to-toe right on the crest, others had a crampon track on one side and ice axe spike marks on the other. No cornice to speak of, just an icy pointy ridgecrest. The wind dropped somewhat near the top, perhaps 10mph, and the temperature was right around zero, a clear and stunningly warm day for this particular summit! We took pictures, shook each others hands, and generally enjoyed the next half hour. I was tired, but not at all sick. 5:30pm, ten and a half hours from camp.

Returning to 17k, my concentration was on not tripping. I was healthy, although tired, and had a lot of elevation left to go. No need for an accident now. While digging up the cache at 17k, a guy I had met near the summit offered me some hot water and we chatted for a bit. Then I shouldered the 60 pound cache load and headed down toward camp in the fading sun. The day would have been a lot more fun if not for the need to remove our junk from the mountain!

I hit the top of the fixed lines (16k) about 1130pm, and moved slowly down the steep icy slope with an ascender on the rope. Again I was alone, this time fighting fatigue instead of the cold. My legs started to buckle about 1000' above camp, and I dug a hole to ditch the pack, we could come back for it the next day with a drag bag, since I was now below the technical part of the route. At 12:30am I banged on the tent and informed Tim that I was back. Then I stood there, Just stood there, For 17 hours I had been telling my feet to walk. Now they could stop,

but I needed someone to tell me what to do next. Tim heated some water for cocoa and I drifted into a fit full sleep without dinner.

#### Day 16 - Going Down

Tim retrieved the cache from 15k, and I drug myself out of the tent around noon. We hit the trail around 3pm, dropping from 14k to 11k and retrieving our skis. our crampons were balling snow to the point of dangerous slips between 12k and 11k. Then we skied from 11k down to 8k, finally stopping around 1pm. The clouds were building, the temperature was falling, and we wanted to be as low as possible if a storm hit. Skiing the crusty snow was a real problem, especially since we were moving all of our gear at once and the drag bags were very heavy. Worse yet, Tim's bindings kept popping off and his skins started to come loose. We walked part of the way, wishing we had been there earlier when the snow was soft corn and we could have whizzed right down it.

#### Day 17 - Hamburgers And Showers

Up at 6am, skiing by 7:30am, the peak was gone in the clouds and we were racing to get to the airstrip before the storm did. Light snow was falling as we ground up Heartbreak Hill (400' of grunting at the end of a very long trip). Fortunately, several planes had just unloaded passengers and we caught them before they took off. Bags and people went onto separate planes, with everyone rushing to make sure we got out before the visibility dropped too far. By noon we were re-packing gear in Talkeetna, then showering and grabbing a bite on the way out of town. It was over, and we had all of our fingers and toes.

Steve Eckert

#### **HONORS NEWS ITEM:**

September 7, 1997

The trailblazer, climber Jules Eichorn was recognized at a ceremony in Big Basin. A grove in the Redwoods was named in his honor. A wooden sign has been erected. The dedication ceremony was attended by Jules Eichorn, his family, and friends.



## Sirretta Pk., Sherman Pk. SPS Scheduled Trip

September 6, 1997

Jerry and Nancy Keating, Leaders

Flash floods had washed out Highway 14 at Red Rock Canyon, and more thunderstorm activity threatened other eastern approaches to the Southern Sierra, so plans to traverse the Kern Plateau by car were scrapped in favor of both entry and exit from Kernville.

Sirretta Pk. (9977'), the listed peak of the day, was climbed in two hours from Mosquito Meadow on a mostly cross-country route still moist from showers on Thursday, while Sherman Pk. (9909') was done that afternoon via an enjoyable trail from Sherman Pass. The route used on Sirretta is a refined version (see below) of one published in the November-December 1994 issue of *The Sierra Echo*.

Once on the SPS list, Sherman commands a spectacular panorama of the High Sierra and also a bird's eye view of the Kern River 6,000 feet below. The summit is marred by several transmission towers and a storage shack, but the hike is through a beautiful forest.

Besides the leaders, participants were SPSers Howard and Beverly Eyerly JK

**Sirretta Pk. Route** -Turn off the Sherman Pass road less than a mile west of the pass, and drive south 2.9 miles on the paved Mosquito Meadow road to its cul-de-sac (8920'), a fire safe area where camping is allowed for persons with campfire permits. Continue south on trail through the forest for about 0.8 mile to a saddle (9390') from which the summit of Sirretta Peak can be seen in the distance. Backtrack 100 feet and turn east and proceed up the open slope, passing to the east of Point 9860 before reaching a broad saddle beyond (9600'). From the broad saddle, seek open areas high on the long ridge leading to Sirretta Peak, passing to the immediate west of Point 9978 before walking along the broad summit plateau to its far south outcrop, which is the designated summit. A three-foot cairn stands atop the designated summit. On the return, it's possible to save some time by descending directly from the previously mentioned broad saddle through the forest, but care should be taken to keep left (south) of the draw at all times. The round-trip distance is about 7 miles. The gain is approximately 1,200'.

## Mount Dana Couloir --- Yosemite --- May 3-4, 1997

After weeks of trepidation fretting over conditions and circumstances affecting the Sierra Club's first couloir snow climb in recent memory --- we were off.

Trimmed at the last minute to five, we were an interesting lot. On alpine touring skis and towing sleds were Brad Jensen and Greg Colley ---just off from Mt Sill on their way to Denali. To keep an eye on these two, Doug Mantle was recruited while resting between Chile and Pakistan. And to keep me company, an elementary school teacher from Claremont, Matthew Richardson, joined in, to complete his SPS membership requirements.

Avalanche transceivers checked and probes in hand, we trundled into Glacier Canyon by almost 9:00 am. Our alpine start was bolstered by an 0700 meeting at Nicely's in Lee Vining, necessitated by Tioga Pass Road's opening

earlier in the week. Handicapped by the sleds, the Young Turks were kept within eyesight as our group quickly overtook children skiing up the canyon. By noon, with Dana Lake below us and the Dana Couloir in our front yard, we leisurely discussed the afternoon's options over lunch, all-the-while enjoying four other climbers kindly kicking steps for us.

With avalanche conditions low, we broke into two groups, with some scouting and skiing the lower portions of the couloir, while others practiced various roped snow-climbing techniques. Happy Hour found us at Colley's & Jensen's Rock Teetotalers' Bar --- with Sharp's fresh off the sled and a potluck plethora. After Doug's demonstration of an ancient Chinese invention --- which diminished none our appreciation of Hale-Bopp --- we smuggled into our bags.

By 5:15 Sunday morning, three stoves could be heard cutting the silence of Glacier Canyon at 11,200 feet. Cast in shadow, the glacier floor crunched underfoot, barely revealing our passing. Crampons were donned and ice axes unsheathed at a rock band just below the thousand-foot couloir, just as its icy dawn glare caught our anxious eyes. Although wind-scoured, the couloir's forty-degree slope yielded to our ax and crampons as we negotiated the sastrugi, and our anxieties slowly melted. Dana toyed with us 'til the end, however, with harder and steeper snow providing exhilarating moments near the ridge crest, just as our faces finally caught daylight.

A quick bite and breather, then the group pushed to the summit along the east ridge, topping out at 9:30. Squeezing our names into the feathered register, we basked in sunlight, Yosemite's glistening splendor surrounding us. Still, only the thought of bettering snow descent

conditions provided group consensus to remain on the summit well over an hour.

Plunge-stepping to the couloir's upper entrance, we found it half in light and half in darkness. Forced occasionally into the shadows of the east ridge, we danced between solid footsteps and sketchy crampon penetration --- where solid self-belays became routine. Stripped of their skis, even the Turks took a cautious attitude to the slope underfoot. Not until the lower couloir, with its softening snow, diminishing angle, and beautiful runout, were glissades attempted.

With traditional protests of tardiness, we slipped away from basecamp at noon, descending quickly to Tioga Lake. Our hearts lightened by the Turks' cool sled tricks, we now faced the final trudge up to our cars, hitting asphalt at 1:30 Sunday afternoon. Our only dilemma left --- pizza in Bishop, or Lone Pine?

**Tim Keenan**



Eric Lesser, Charlie Knapke (assistant leader), Barbara Cohen (leader), Dave Sholle Izaak Walton

SPS trip, July 19, 1997

Photo: by Pete Yamagata

## An Area 23 Odyssey

### Dicks, Tallac, Pyramid, Mokelumne and Highland

September 19-22, 1997

By Allan Conrad

The Sierra along 395 were cloaked in clouds as we drove north. The clearing skies after a dinner at Harvey's teased me into sleeping under the stars. A couple of hours later, the noise I heard was raindrops which activated my tent-erecting energies. A couple of hours later the noise I heard was that of some banging around, followed by Bob inquiring "Al, why are you messing around with the ice chests?" I was fifty feet from where Bob was sleeping in his Range Rover while a bear family marauded our gear three feet from him!

Signing in on a wet sheet of paper the next morning marked one of the last awkward moments of this trip. Dicks Peak and Mt Tallac were approached from the Glen Alpine TH, south of Fallen Leaf Lake. The low clouds above us seemed to rise as our elevation increased. The variable weather was very active and we did find ourselves in a cold, windy and limited-visibility environment on the summit of Dicks Peak. We could see the skies above the ridge toward Mt Tallac clearing as we descended toward Dicks Pass. After traversing to Tallac, some in the group felt we might have arrived just as quickly had we walked the extra mile down and around on the trail to the summit. The day's activities took about 9 hours.

After a good meal at Passerati's near the Tahoe Valley CG and a better night's sleep, we headed for a rendezvous with Greg at the Horsetail Falls TH near Twin Bridges. Here we planned to complete a self-permit for the Desolation Wilderness, where permits are required even for day hikes. With no signs of Greg by 8 am we went a short distance west on US 50 to the starting point for the Rocky Canyon use-trail approach to Pyramid, at milepost 58.96. Parking is on the south side of the road near the electronic highway message board. The use trail begins at the highway on the east side of the trail. One crosses the creek near an aspen grove at about 7300'. The use trail continues on and off all the way to the talus slopes. Only on the way back did we realize this. This being the first day of hunting season, we heard gunfire and saw four hunters hauling out their quarry. Hiking and lunch took about six hours. We found a note from Greg on the windshield saying he had gotten a late start because he'd hit a deer the night before and had to wait at

Topaz Lake until the morning to get a rental car. In an hour our group would grow from five to six as Greg caught up with us, having soloed the peak.

The next phase took us to the Plasse Resort CG for a campsite and a shower in preparation for a delicious dinner at Capes Lake Resort. The Tanglefoot TH was our destination the next morning for our hike to Mokelumne. The route to the TH can best be described with reference to the 7.5' Bear River Reservoir map: follow the road past the Bear Valley Group CG to 6651, where a sign indicates the TH is 6 mi distant. At 6063 turn east toward "Shriner Lake" TH. At about UTM 46156715, there is a trail sign indicating a spur road to the TH. The cross-country route takes you on the south side of Pk 8628. The round-trip time was about 7 hours.

We ate dinner at the Alpine Hotel in Markleeville and camped at Grover Hot Springs SP. The hike for Highland started from the PCT TH east of Ebbetts Pass. Highland was more of a workout than we had anticipated. The round-trip downs and ups took about 7 1/2 hours. The route took us past an interesting variety of rocks, eventually to a pass on the ridge east of the Noble Lake lakelet. Topping out near Pk 10824 gives one a view of the route to the summit, where Al celebrated his birthday.

Participants were Wyka, Sullivan, Sherman, Stenzel, Gerlach and Conrad.

## Letters to The Sierra Echo

July 20, 1997

.....I climbed Shasta over July 4<sup>th</sup>. I had climbed it before in 1983, but there have been two major changes since then that may be of interest to Echo readers:

- The USFS requires a \$15 fee for a permit to be above 10,000 feet on the mountain. This is enforced by two USFS Rangers who camp at Helen Lake and spend time along the usual climbing route.
- All solid human waste must be packed out. This is accomplished by the Rangers passing out waste pack out packages which contain two paper bags with kitty litter, one gallon-size zip lock plastic bag and a set of instructions. These packages are passed out at Bunny Flat, the old chair lift site, Helen Lake and the Ranger Station in town.

The \$15 fee is not a surprise. The Forest Service is not selling very many trees these days but they still need money. They must have figured out that they could solve that problem by charging the people who use the forest for recreation what the traffic will bear. I expect the practice of charging a fee for using the National Forests and Parks to become more widespread.

But the idea of having everybody shit in a bag is a surprise. It's not at all clear why the idea of a hauling a portable toilet in by a helicopter to Helen Lake has not been tried. I would think the Forest Service people who work around Mt Whitney could give them an idea how that might work.

So anyway, if you think any of our climbing friends or Echo readers would be interested in knowing these things please pass it on. For your information and amazement I have enclosed my unused Human Waste Packout System package.

Happy climbing and regards

Jack Miller

*Editor's note.....it seems Shasta has joined Yosemite – wall climbing or Denali, where you must drop waste bags in deep crevasses. Or how about spelunking? In caving you have to pack up and out not only solid waste but liquid too!*

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