



CATHEDRAL LAKE AND PEAK, YOSEMITE

*William Menken*

# SIERRA CLUB BULLETIN

*September  
1955*

# Letters

Oslo, March 29, 1955

Morley Committee,  
Sierra Club,  
San Francisco 4.

Dear Sirs: Enclosed I am sending you a little article I have written about the burro trip I joined in July last summer. . . . I thought it might be interesting to you to see that it has been written about your club in a weekly magazine that is widely distributed in Norway.

I am happy to know from what people have told me, that my little article has made many of its readers realize that America and Americans are different from the Hollywood movies and the American magazines. In the introduction of the editor it is written: ". . . The author has met Americans that are different from how we usually imagine them. Who would believe that people 'over there' would have the patience to go on a burro trip? . . ."

I will just give you a short summary of the article. . . . First I explain that your club works toward conservation of nature, and teaches people to enjoy being out in nature.

**THE SIERRA CLUB**,\* founded in 1892, has devoted itself to the study and protection of national scenic resources, particularly those of mountain regions. Participation is invited in the program to enjoy and preserve wilderness, wildlife, forests, and streams.

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\*Reg. U.S. Pat. Off.

## What mountains mean to three generations

". . . Try to meet some members of the Sierra Club if you want to escape civilization for awhile, and be among the wild mountains . . ." About the trip itself, I first describe Onion Valley where we started (it looks much like a Norwegian valley), and then I tell how we learned how to handle and treat the burros. I then describe how we were walking for two weeks in the most beautiful scenery, seeing flowers and animals that were strange to me.

Thank you again for inviting me to see your high country.

Yours sincerely,  
BERIT RUUD

Orinda, January 30, 1955

Editor: On July 30, last summer, my oldest son, John, and I climbed Mt. Fiske from Muir Pass after backpacking in from Florence Lake. For me this was a return pilgrimage having special significance. Thirty-two summers ago, when I was a boy of 14, my father made the first ascent of the peak, taking me, my brother and a family friend along for our first introduction to the High Sierra. His brief account of this trip appeared in the 1923 *Sierra Club Bulletin*.

Last summer was an especially fitting time for me to make a return visit to the mountain top. John had just had his 15th birthday and I had reached the age my father was when he made the climb.

Father now confines his Sierra travels to lower levels but he was of course pleased to hear our account of the second family visit to the top of Fiske. I like to think that he started a family tradition that will be repeated for generations.

STEPHEN B. FISKE

Colton, Oregon, April 4, 1955  
Dinosaur National Monument Council  
251 Kearny Street  
San Francisco, Calif.

Dear Sirs: Just received your letter of April 1st yesterday. We must save Echo Park by all means. I'm so sorry I can't help much, but I will contribute a little to the great cause of conservation. I am an old man 74 and my earning days are about over, but I'm inclosing a dollar bill. *I'm willing to fast a day or two, if we can only win. I know the time is short.*

Yours for the success of conservation.

HENRY CADONAU



# Sierra Club Bulletin

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... TO EXPLORE, ENJOY, AND PROTECT THE NATURAL MOUNTAIN SCENE ...

## A New Conservation Chairman

THE chairman of the Sierra Club Conservation Committee holds the most important and by far the most exacting of the committee assignments within the club. This summer the committee acquired a new chairman, Dr. Edgar Wayburn, who comes to it with a full experience of conservation leadership. Formerly chairman of the San Francisco Bay Chapter conservation committee, and for the past two years President of the Federation of Western Outdoor Clubs, he is familiar with the conservation problems of the western states from Mount Rainier to San Jacinto. A great hiker and camper, Ed Wayburn has traveled far to see for himself many of the threatened areas. His work for conservation brought him a citation of merit this year from the California Conservation Council. One of his fields of particular interest is Mount Tamalpais State Park, which owes much to his careful planning of land additions already made and still in contemplation.

Retiring chairman John R. Barnard has headed the committee for two years, and has also served a year as President of the F.W.O.C. Jack was secretary of the committee for two years before becoming chairman, and so has carried a heavy share of the work for the past four years. Those committee members who worked closely with Jack know his grasp of the important issues and the unflinching patience and attention to detail with which he handled our conservation problems. He has been tireless in his efforts in the long, sometimes discouraging, still unsettled campaign to save Butano Forest.

Both these chairmen have the good fortune to be most ably assisted by wives who

are themselves keenly interested in the committee—an invaluable help when the mail stacks up a foot high and the telephone is insistent.

We hope Jack Barnard will enjoy his well-earned vacation in Europe. We look forward to seeing him among that valuable group of Chairmen Emeritus, with Arthur Blake and Harold Bradley, when the Conservation Committee meets again.

CICELY M. CHRISTY

### *Annual Number Next*

Coming in October: the annual issue of the *Sierra Club Bulletin*. Among the contents: the Makalu climb of 1954, by members of the California Himalayan Expedition; a new study on belaying, by Dr. Will Siri; the real discoverer of Rainbow Bridge, by Weldon Heald; and an assortment of burros, caves, sugar pines, avalanches, and other somewhat related subjects. Photographs, too, of course.

### *Two Yosemitees on Film*

"Two Yosemitees" is the title of the Sierra Club's latest film, which tells in ten minutes, in color and sound, how the once lovely valley of Hetch Hetchy looks today. The contrast between the living waters of Yosemite and the muddy rocks and blowing dust of Hetch Hetchy shows what kind of "recreational area" results when such a dam is built. Dave Brower (who speaks the commentary) and Phil Hyde photographed the film in one day's visit to both valleys. At Hetch Hetchy, they were the only visitors. At Yosemite, there were crowds. Had Hetch Hetchy been left in its original state and the Tuolumne River dammed farther down-

stream to supply San Francisco's water needs, it could provide rest and recreation for part of the thousands who now choke Yosemite.

The film is new ammunition in the Dinosaur campaign. Its lesson can also be applied to other conservation situations. Arrangements may be made through the club office for its showing to groups and organizations.

### *Handbook's 3rd Printing*

Just off the press is the third printing of *The Sierra Club: A Handbook*. Each new member will receive a copy, and others may have one for the very modest price of a dollar.

Edited by David R. Brower, now the club's Executive Director, the *Handbook* first appeared as an issue of the *Bulletin* in November 1947. In 1951, with the help of Blanche

Stallings, it was revised and became a separate publication. The third printing, with all the information brought up to date, was prepared with the assistance of Blanche Stallings and Fred Gunsky.

Besides explaining the purposes of the Sierra Club and presenting the history of its role in the conservation movement since 1892, the 120-page *Handbook* contains 16 magnificent plates of national park scenes by Ansel Adams, tells about the club library, lodges and lands, winter and summer activities, and conservation education program, and provides easy reference to such information as the club By-Laws, skiing and climbing tests, lists of the outings, publications, and names of directors, chairmen and honorary members.

You may order a copy of the new *Handbook* by sending one dollar, plus tax, to the club office in San Francisco.

## Short Time Out on Dinosaur

With the recess of Congress, conservationists won a breathing spell in the fight to save Dinosaur National Monument. The backers of the Colorado River Storage Project, fearing defeat, decided not to bring Project legislation to a vote in the House in the closing days of the session. The legislation remains alive, however, and will be brought up again next session when new, determined efforts to enact it will be made.

In the closing days, the Project's backers, recognizing the strength of the conservationists' opposition and seeking to appease it, deleted Echo Park dam from the House version of the bill. One of the Project's leading backers in the House even announced he would vote to kill his own bill if Echo Park dam were restored to it in Senate-House conference.

Conservationists, however, aware that Echo Park dam already was written into the Senate version of the bill and aware of the legislative surprises that often occur in the hurried closing days of a session, decided to oppose enactment of the Project legislation until Echo Park dam is engineered out of the Project, not merely dropped out of it during the legislative process. This decision

contributed greatly to shelving the Project.

Conservationists can take much credit for this outcome, temporary though it may be. They not only demonstrated their own strength but they aroused others to study and develop their own reasons for opposing the Project.

The struggle will be renewed in January when Congress reconvenes; possibly before then, if a special session is called. Project proponents are planning to resort to the taxing power in the four Upper Colorado River basin states to raise \$180,000 for a great propaganda effort to swing enough votes to put the project over in the next session.

All conservationists must be prepared to play their part again in the fight to save our national park system which will reach its most critical stage at the next session of Congress.

WILLIAM J. LOSH  
Executive Secretary,  
Trustees for Conservation

NOTE: *Sierra Club members are urged to support Trustees for Conservation, one of the most active organizations on the legislative front in the Dinosaur battle. Its address is 251 Kearny Street, San Francisco 8.*

## Don't Be Confused About Butano

Through the San Francisco *Chronicle* and other Bay Area papers some Sierra Club members have read, almost daily, accounts of the destruction and irretrievable loss of Butano Forest. To others it will come as a surprise to learn that this long battle has finally culminated in a complete victory for the lumber company and a grievous loss for the public, for now after many years of effort the last of Butano has finally fallen to the lumberman's axe and chain-saw. Those redwood giants that have so long shaded the azalea and rhododendron beds, that have stood guard over Butano Creek, will now end up as grape stakes in somebody's picket fence.

The roots of this calamity are many and deeply buried, but the most recent event that finally sealed the doom of the last remaining portion of the forest was Governor Knight's veto of the Omnibus Bill, which, among other park projects, would have provided funds for a Butano Forest State Park of about 3400 acres, including 1040 acres of virgin redwoods in Butano Forest, 320 acres of Federal land, and 2000 acres of fine picnicking and camping area in the second-growth redwoods of the Little Butano.

Although the newspapers quote State officials as saying that Butano Forest will still be saved, there should be no confusion in our

minds as to what area these State officials are talking about. The virgin redwoods of Butano Forest in 1945 embraced approximately 4500 acres and were known as North and South Butano. At the outset this was to be Butano Forest State Park.

Failure to raise adequate funds fast enough lost section after section to lumbering, until this year the program was reduced to 1040 acres in Butano Forest (Section 16 and parts of 17 and 22), plus newly considered areas of 320 acres of Federal land on the edge of Butano Forest, and about 2000 acres known as Little Butano, south of Butano Forest.

Governor Knight's veto of the Omnibus Bill and subsequent "agreement" by the State that Section 16 could be cut by the lumber company was the kiss of death to the last of Butano Forest.

The area which will be preserved, according to recent press releases, includes the Little Butano, the Federal land, and a portion of Section 22 after the lumber company has selectively cut a portion of it. The Little Butano is a delightful area. It was lumbered more than eighty years ago so few of the scars remain. It has flat lands ideally suited to camping and picnicking and will make a splendid recreational area. Yes, we will have a Butano State Park, but it won't include Butano Forest. J.R.B.

## An Idea for the Rubbish Heap

A Los Angeles County supervisor has come up with one of the worst ideas since man's progenitors first arose on their hind legs and thought of trying to be civilized. More alarmingly, his idea has caught on, to the extent of being turned over by the Board to the county engineer for study. Let's see if we can repress our feelings long enough to summarize the scheme.

The gentleman wants to develop a compressor, like a cotton baler, operated hydraulically, for the compaction of combustible rubbish. The purpose of the machine, in the words of the *Los Angeles Times* (July

13), is "to permit greater ease of handling and disposal of such rubbish."

Well, that isn't so bad. But the projected machine "is reported to have the capacity of reducing average-density rubbish to about one-quarter of its original volume to bring it to a density greater than that of water." And here's the payoff:

"Further studies would be directed to the feasibility of loading the baled rubbish onto rail cars scheduled to leave Los Angeles empty on routings through the hinterlands of the West.

"The compacted rubbish would be dumped

from the cars in uninhabited areas of mountain and desert terrain."

The hinterlands of the West, those uninhabited areas of mountain and desert, Mr. Supervisor, just happen to be the last frontier of wilderness beauty in the United States. And your idea just happens to be a logical extension of the litterbug's creed, against which we have pledged our lives, our spare time, and our sacred honor.

How far shall our messy, paper-bag culture be allowed to spread its slime across the face of nature? In the Far North, at the very shores of the Arctic Ocean, military tractors and planes have been littering the virgin tundra with empty fuel containers, packing cases, and, no doubt, beer cans. Atop California's desert peaks, even where jeep tracks have not been scored, we find scrap iron and other debris left by survey crews. The candy-wrapper and used-tissue brigade has been everywhere.

Now Los Angeles, which made its own desert in taking water from the Owens Valley, may have hit upon the ultimate weapon for the defacing of scenic America. Beginning with railroad rights-of-way, but soon filling every lake and rill not piped into its domestic water supply, then the mountain canyons and the offshore lands as far as the Channel Islands, America's fastest growing city will manure earth and ocean with its baled discards. Other cities will follow suit. Then there will remain a single alternative.

As we blast off to the moon, en route to Mars and Venus, what grand plans we can take with us for civilizing the universe! But a note of caution: the concept that space is limitless may be only relative. At long last, in the dim future of our kind, we may have started a trash capsule spinning in every possible orbit. Our interplanetary rockets, though aided by the calculations of the best thinking machines, may be hemmed in on every side, trapped on earth for lack of a clear path anywhere.

Then, at the pinnacle of our ingenuity, where shall we go? Shall we retrace our steps, to find other solutions to the problem of disposal than baling our rubbish and tossing it at random across the land?

But that won't be possible. Not then.

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## *Federation at Idyllwild*

The first Federation of Western Outdoor Clubs convention to be held in Southern California will take place over the Labor Day week end at Idyllwild in the San Jacinto region. Several hundred visitors are expected, including numerous conservation celebrities. Byron Graff, the Federation's deputy vice-president for California, is general chairman of the committee of host clubs, which has arranged an outstanding program of talks and activities. There will be a full report in the November *Sierra Club Bulletin*.

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## **Park Coöperation In Marin County**

Tamalpais Conservation Club has appointed a Park Coöperation Committee to serve as a means of communication between the government agencies which supervise sections of the Mount Tamalpais watershed and a segment of the public which uses the mountain as a recreation area. The committee has offered its assistance and support to the supervisors of Mount Tamalpais and Samuel Taylor State Parks and Muir Woods National Monument, and the General Manager of the Marin Municipal Water District. It will welcome suggestions from hiking or conservation club members on trail improvements or other matters. Committee chairman is Bob Wing, and suggestions may be sent to him at the Tamalpais Conservation Club, 917 Pacific Building, San Francisco.

## **Still Time to Write About Three Sisters**

The matter of boundary revision of the Three Sisters Primitive Area in Oregon is now under consideration by Chief Forester Richard E. McArdle, and there is still time to express your opinion to the Secretary of Agriculture, whose decision will be final. Letters or wires may be sent to the Honorable Ezra Taft Benson, Secretary of Agriculture, Washington 25, D.C., urging reclassification *without reduction in size*. (See *Sierra Club Bulletin*, January, 1955 and May, 1955.)

# Bulletin Board

## *High Sierra Atlas*

The latest in *Sunset* magazine's sportsman's atlas series covers "The High Sierra and Its Environs." Prepared with the cooperation of David R. Brower and Francis P. Farquhar of the Sierra Club, it is a 40-page book, largely consisting of maps, but with text, charts, and various information concerning camping, fishing, winter sports, pack stations, roads, and other subjects. There are special detail maps of popular areas. The book comes in a handy plastic case. Priced at \$1.75, it can be purchased through the Sierra Club or at your bookstore.

## *Advertising Conservation*

Currently appearing in several national magazines is Sinclair Oil Corporation's series of advertisements saluting various conservation organizations of America. There will be twenty of these ads in all—watch for them. The company is to be commended for calling public attention to the accomplishments of such organizations as the National Parks Association, the Boy Scouts of America, and the National Grange, and their part in preserving our national scenic beauties.

## *Cleanup Campaign*

It's encouraging to see that anti-litterbug publicity is now increasing at almost as rapid a rate as litter itself. On billboards, in national magazines, in advertisements, in publicity sent out by oil companies and brewers, the menace is deplored and suggestions are offered. *Loma Prieta*n editor Eleanor Johnson wrote an article on "The Costly Litterbug" which won a prize in a writers' contest and was published in *The California Highway Patrolman* for June, illustrated with several of Dr. Harold Bradley's photographs of litterbugs' leavings. The July issue of The Colorado Mountain Club's monthly *Trail and Timberline* was a "Cleanup Number," with the Sierra Club's own Hector, the garbage collector bear, on the back cover. Colorado has a slogan: Leave it a *campsite*—not a *sight!*

# Almanac

WE TURNED our daughter Stephanie out of doors into the darkness when she was five. Now eight, she has contemplated the night from the beaver-haunted banks of the Green River in Dinosaur, from the sands of the Nevada deserts, and, of course, from Sierra slopes. One summer evening at Whitney Portal, she retired early to her sleeping bag and watched the sky fill with the sprawling constellations. The stars glowed with that brilliant whiteness that we like to think is seen only from our Sierra heights.

After a few minutes, she spoke slowly, struggling to express a difficult thought, "Daddy, when we're up here in the mountains, the stars are just right with us."

"Does seem like you could reach right up and touch 'em, doesn't it?" I replied, wriggling into my own bag. I thought her reaction the usual one of a child suddenly impressed with their seeming nearness. But after viewing the heavenly display a little while, I realized her remark had a profundity philosophers might applaud and astrophysicists respect. For really, the stars were neither near nor far in the usual sense of distance. Even though many had ceased to exist milleniums ago, the light from them was reaching the retinas of our eyes, passing through nerve fibers, and coming into contact with our minds. In our relaxed and receptive states, they and indeed all the myriad aspects of nature were "right with us," about us, and in us. We were equally with, and in them, each of us a dynamic functioning part of the universal pattern. And how fortunate to be functioning here, in a nook on Whitney!

I raised up on my elbows to tell Stephanie that I'd just comprehended the richness of her statement, but saw that her eyes were closed.

She had already become one right with the night, and was enjoying the good outdoor slumber, the delicious Sierra sleep.

ROSCOE A. POLAND  
San Diego

Box 33/  
Ocean Park  
12  
1955

## Along Many Trails

**M**ANY of us like to climb mountains. Do we do it safely? Can we influence other climbers we may meet to adopt adequate safety standards? The cases outlined below are object lessons.

*Mount Whitney.* The search was on and Sierra Club rock climbers were combing the great East Face of Mount Whitney. Tragedy had struck a few days before as two 17-year-old boys had fallen 400 feet before one had jammed behind a rock buttress. He stopped, but the nylon rope connecting him to his companion broke and the second boy was hurled another 1000 feet onto jagged rocks below. The crushed body of the lower victim was quickly found, but finding the other body was hard. Finally, after two days, the higher victim was located; a frayed rope hung downward from his waist . . . Who were these young boys—mountaineers? No, just mountain enthusiasts with little or no experience in climbing—ill equipped and ill prepared for the East Face of Whitney. Their mistake: **BEING WHERE THEY SHOULDN'T HAVE BEEN.**

*Yosemite.* In 1949 two dead men were found at the foot of a cliff below the lower Yosemite Falls. Their mangled bodies were still roped together with a regular nylon climbing rope, and one of the victims had a folded Yosemite Climber's Guide in his hip pocket. They had undoubtedly fallen 500 feet or more from slippery rocks that provided inferior footholds. Who were these two—mountaineers? No, rank beginners with absolutely no climbing experience except that obtained by reading a Mount Everest book (of little use in Yosemite Valley). They had never climbed before and will never climb again. Analysis: **ONCE AGAIN BEING IN THE WRONG PLACE AT THE WRONG TIME.**

*Steep snow.* A person with little or no experience in climbing is in trouble the minute he leaves the trail unless he's cautious and safety-minded. A year ago a group attempted to cross a snow field slanted at an angle high enough to make the slope dangerous. A slip occurred, and the victim quickly learned that bare hands and boots will never stop a sliding climber on a hard snow slope. The rocks below inflicted serious injury, and another mountain enthusiast learned the hard way. Analysis: **Stay off places you shouldn't be on with your experience or equipment.**

Accidents do happen, but none of those described above should have taken place. If these individuals wished to climb the vertical face of a large mountain, cross a snow slope, or engage in difficult rock climbing, the simple expedient of learning how would have saved their lives. Learning when to retreat is essential to proper mountaineering.

If the above hasn't destroyed your climbing ambitions (and I certainly hope it hasn't) you can learn what those others didn't know or take the trouble to find out. The Sierra Club has Rock Climbing Sections all over California, and the members are eager to teach newcomers the safety precautions needed to prevent such accidents. Consult your local Chapter Schedule or write the Mountaineering Committee of the Sierra Club for information on practice climbing sessions. The mountains can be safe, but only if you make them safe with knowledge. You must know where *not* to go with your experience and equipment, or you are asking for disaster. **LEARN HOW OR STAY HOME!**

RICHARD C. HOUSTON  
Mountaineering Committee