

THE



BOUNDER

motherlode chapter · sierra club

MARCH-APRIL, 1984 / ISSUE #2

AN INSIDE PEEK AT PEAK AND GORGE

It seems everytime I tell a new friend that I belong to an organization called Peak and Gorge their inevitable response is "what's Peeking Gorge"? "It's p-e-a-k, peak like a mountain and gorge like a canyon" I retort. Noticing their quizzical look I quickly explain that we are an organization comprised of hikers. To be more specific we are an outings division of the Mother Lode Chapter of the Sierra Club whose primary purpose is to offer interested persons the opportunity to climb and explore a broad range of peaks and to explore and scramble a likewise broad range of rivers and gorges. Though these are Peak and Gorge's primary goals, there are also a few other activities we've included in our repertoire such as training courses, service trips, fund raisers, monthly meetings, and a bi-monthly newsletter.

Peak and Gorge, as the name implies, is comprised of two major divisions; the Gorge Division and the Peak Division. Currently the Peak Division is the more popular of the two, and its sizable core of active leaders and climbers lend proof to that. In fact, peak trips occur year round-even in the harsh winter season, for it is then that those die-hard mountaineers can shoosh the icy slopes of their favorite snowy peaks. So whether a climber is looking for an adventurous climb or a casual spring walk-up, they will find a trip listed in the Bonanza to suit their preference and skills.

In addition to offering frequent trips, the Peak Division has two climbing list programs; the Northern Alpine Section (NAS) and the Tahoe Ogul. Both programs are intended to encourage people to explore and climb a wide range of peaks. The NAS is a grand list of peaks within the Sierra Nevadas, Klamath Range, Warner Mountains, Cascade Range, and the Range and Basin Nevadas of Nevada. The Tahoe Ogul, on the other hand, is a smaller list of peaks within the Tahoe Region. Both lists are similar in that they list a great number of peaks which one can climb, and each

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of these peaks are graded according to class difficulty, accessibility, elevation, view, and dominance. Both programs also offer rewards to members who climb a specified number of peaks. A qualified climber (depending upon which list they complete) will either receive an attractive patch from the NAS or an equally attractive T-shirt from the Tahoe Ogul. (There is a small fee for the patch and the T-shirt).

Finally, for the novice or beginner climber who wants to be a mountaineer, the Peak Division is offering a Basic Mountaineering Training Course (BMTC) to aid them in acquiring mountaineering skills. The BMTC will start April 5th and the following subject matter will be taught in both the classroom and the field: Physical and mental conditioning; equipment and clothing; field navigation with map and compass; basic rockclimbing skills; snow travel and ice axe technique; mountaineering medicine and first aid; wilderness search and rescue; food planning; and minimum impact wilderness travel. Upon satisfactorily completing this course the graduate should have acquired the basic knowledge and skills necessary for basic mountaineering. Time, experience, and further training are the requirements for more advanced mountaineering; and sorry, we don't offer such a course.

It's no surprise that the Peak Division draws such a large number of members to Peak and Gorge, for it offers a broad selection of activities. The Gorge Division, by comparison, does not draw as many active members (due to its seasonal limitations) but the sport this division offers is no less challenging or exciting than any peak or mountaineering trip.

"Gorge scrambling", as the term is coined, can be both exciting and relaxing depending upon which section of river is scrambled. Some gorges may require all the skills of a well trained mountaineer plus the strength and knowledge of a well trained river swimmer. Other gorges are gentler, and the scrambler may spend more time diving into deep, pristine pools and basking on warm rocks. Scrambling, as with peak climbing, offers a wide range of levels from easy to technically challenging.

When the rivers are down and the waters warm up is when gorge trips will dot the Bonanza. Usually this is around mid-summer; however, heavy or light snow pack can influence these conditions greatly.

Scrambles can last from one day up to a week or longer, and box canyons, cascading creeks, and gentle or wild rivers are all good scrambling material. There is even a Sierra Gorge Section (SGS) that is designed much like the NAS (its sister).

The SGS is comprised of a list of gorges or rivers that are graded according to such factors as stream rage, river traverses, rock scaling, loose talus crossing, rock hopping, belaying, equipment ferrying, bath of fire, and the amount of time or days required to scramble. As with the NAS, a certain number of gorges must be scrambled in order to qualify for the SGS patch.

Though there are no Basic Gorge Training Courses offered that are similar in comparison to the BMTC, there are introductory classes offered with follow-up field trips for the beginner. One thing though, good swimming skills are necessary in order to scramble; sorry all you tadpoles.

As you can see there is frequently something stewing with Peak and Gorge, and sometimes that is literally true. Currently our annual fund raisers have been stew-in' some mighty tasty foods with country kickin' parties to boot! Foremost leader of these mountain folk fund raisers has been the Great Mountain Swimming Hole Retreat, or the "Retreat" as it is commonly known. Proceeds from this event have gone into the Dan Dobbins Fund for Youth, and are given annually as stipends to promising youth under the age of 24. The stipends are intended to help youth to further their experiences or knowledge of the wilderness; contribute wilderness conservation projects; or further their wilderness leadership training.

The "Retreat" has been so successful these past five years that the Dan Dobbins Fund is now earning enough interest per year to draw the stipends directly from the interest rather than the main fund. In light of this we are happy to say that all the hard work and donating that went into this event each year has finally helped us to achieve our goal of a self sustaining fund. As of 1984 we no longer need to raise money for the Dan Dobbins Fund; therefore, the "Retreat" will be discontinued from the Peak and Gorge activity list. The stipends will, however, continue to be awarded each year.

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With so many activities to keep members abreast of , it's no surprise that we've gone to our own newsletter. Each bi-monthly issue contains a variety of topics such as trip write-ups, a monthly meeting outline, a meeting review, general business, announcements, and classifieds. Other topics included are articles of historical or conservation importance, or informative topics such as basic wilderness first aid, or wilderness hazards. Peak and Gorge members are encouraged to submit articles, especially trip write-ups. If you are interested in subscribing to our newsletter, send \$4.00 and your name and address to Peak and Gorge Boulder, 2520 Greenwood Ave. Sacramento, CA. 95821. Please make checks payable to Peak and Gorge. Our next issue will be the May/June issue and the January/February and March/April issues are available upon request.

Peak and Gorge has a broad base of activities to offer, but it wouldn't be possible without people like you who make up the core of leaders, climbers, and scramblers who have donated their time, efforts, and expertise that have made so many trips and activities the success story of Peak and Gorge. Thanks once again to all of you who have supported us.

If you're not already actively involved with Peak and Gorge and you'd like to get more involved with our organization, just come to one of our monthly meetings (at the above address) on the first Monday of each month or call 481-3415 and talk to our chairman Harry Erl.

UPCOMING MONTHLY MEETING OUTLINE

April 2, 1984 Monday-7:30 pm

1). Summer schedules are due in May, so leaders please bring a tentative schedule of the trips you plan to lead this summer. As a group we'll try to coordinate our trips so as to avoid trip conflicts.

2). Interested gorge scramblers, the Sierra Gorge Section will discuss some important business for the upcoming scrambling season. A highlight topic will be a possible exploratory scramble on the N.Fork of the American River from Palisade Creek above the Royal Gorge to the Iowa Hill Bridge. If your interested in participating in such a scramble bring your ideas and enthusiasm .

MEETING PLACE: 2520 Greenwood Ave. Sacramento, just off El Camino Ave.

May 7, 1984 Monday-7:30 pm

1). Northern Alpine Section (NAS) needs promoting and revising . We'll discuss how to do this.

2). It's time to start planning for the spring and fall Trail Service Trip. We'd like to finish cleaning up the historic Giant Gap Trail; it needs quite a bit of work. We'd also like to have these service trips be one of our social get togethers where we work Saturday and campout down at the river that evening to potluck dinner and old miners' tales and finish work the next day. If you're interested in helping build trails and you'd like to work on one this spring then come to the meeting.

3). Fund raisers are important but they are a lot of work. If you're the type who likes to organize these activities then please come and share your enthusiasm.

4). A slide show will highlight the evening.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

ADVANCED FIRST-AID FOR WILDERNESS EMERGENCIES

Training of this class will concentrate on Cardio-Pulmonary Resuscitation and Advanced First Aid with emphasis in handling emergencies and conditions specific to the wilderness environment. Upon completion of this course certificates will be issued for CPR and Advanced First Aid and Emergency Care.

The class starts April 3rd and concludes June 3rd. Classes will be held at the Arden Manor Parks and Recreation Building on Tuesday and Thursday evenings from 6:30 pm to 10:30 pm. Two field sessions will be held in May.

No previous first aid experience is required, but wilderness experience such as hiking, ski touring, mountaineering, etc. will be expected.

The course fee of \$35 is for books, handouts, and class materials. Preregistration is required since enrollees will be accepted on a first come basis. This class will be instructed by Waldy Wisniewski (FMT 1), and checks should be made out to him (mark "first aid class" on checks). Send checks to:

W. Wisniewski
3042 Beldon St.
Sacramento, CA 95815

Waldy can be contacted by phone at:

920-1900 (days)
929-4672 (eves)

After having a brief sampling of Waldy's class, I would recommend that anyone interested in wilderness outings take this class; I believe it will be a very thorough training for wilderness emergencies that range from treating common simple sprains to rescuing and treating complex emergencies such as found in rock climbing accidents.

The wilderness is not the place to be injured and unprepared. Janet

SEMI-CENTENNIAL (600 MOONS) BIRTHDAY

Join in a Toast and Roast in honor of Gene Markley's Semi-Centennial (600 Moons) Birthday! This tribute will be Friday, May 18th at 6:00pm at the downtown Newcastle Fireman's Hall.

Bring a potluck dish; a bottle or six-pack for the bar; and a photograph or memento for the gift scrapbook.

Entertainment, music, and cake will be provided by Markley's Marauders. For more information call Maria Scagliotti at 663-1477 (eves).

Phil Blagg
878-7287

PLEASE SEND YOUR TRIP WRITE-UPS

We want your trip write-ups and or articles to publish in our newsletter. Your input and articles are what makes this newsletter a success, so please help keep the fire going, even if it is just a classified advertisement, and send us some write-ups, articles, or classifieds.

Articles for the May/June issue are due by the last week of April.

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OUTDOOR ACTIVITY INSTRUCTORS SOUGHT

Helen Harper, superintendent of the City of Sacramento Leisure Services recently contacted me in regards to recommending to her persons who might be interested in teaching outdoor activities such as hiking and backpacking to youth.

The City of Sacramento would contract (pay for such services) with persons who would teach such classes. The curriculum might include a week long residence/teaching at Camp Sacramento as well as going on outings in the local Sacramento area.

Experience in working with youth would be important.

It would be a good opportunity to help youth get acquainted with the wilderness just like Dan Dobbins did. These kids might also be a new resource for Dan Dobbins Fund For Youth candidates.

Helen can be contacted at: 449-5174

HOT NEWS!

USGS topographic maps, we just got a huge stack of 'em before the newsletter went to press. We obtained these from the Sacramento Group of the Sierra Club, who purchased some two thousand or so maps some years back. We estimate that there are over five hundred maps of numerous regions of California and some regions of Nevada. These maps are for sale to Sierra Club members for the mere price of \$1.00. This is quite a savings from the standard price. Get your orders in while the maps last!

This is the artwork design for the Tahoe Ogul T-shirts.



TRIP REVIEW

THOMPSON RIDGE, OR "SKI MOUNTAINEER'S PEAK" (13,323')

MAY 21-22, 1983

A few years ago, a prominent Angeles Chapter leader confided to me his delight on having just skied what really sounded like a really great peak--"Ski Mountaineer's Peak," a formidable-sounding 13'er somewhere above Bishop, CA. A check of my maps produced what may have been the referred objective as the high point of Thompson Ridge. Examining my old slides taken from Mt. Gilbert and from Mt. Thompson for the usual panoramas revealed the peak and the slope--even in June there was sufficient snow to ski on an east-facing gradient. A side-on shot showed the angle at about 30-35 degrees--safe enough, on a warm day. However, another face-on photo produced a horrifyingly steep portrayal. Perspective, I assumed.

Finally, the suggestion was made to conduct a joint Angeles-Mother Lode outing. The wind was chilly and brisk at the rendezvous point at the junction where Hwy. 168 splits up...not a good sign for the snow. However, it was early in the morning and a group of four from Southern California joined Dave Vandershaf, Jim Boyd, and me to drive to the trailhead plowed to Rainbow Lodge, about 1-1 $\frac{1}{2}$ miles below South Lake dam. Congestion grew as other skiers, part of the newly formed Alpine Touring Section, parked and unloaded their vehicles. A group including a woman whom I was told was the famed Barbara Lilley headed for Inconsolable Peak, another fine tour, I presumed. Few words were exchanged, and our group set up the road, straggling in various groups.

Out of shape and suffering from back problems, I decided that we should camp among a secluded grove on the far side of the lake, not a great distance to carry packs. We crossed the broken lake side and contoured up to camp at about 10,400.' Having nothing else to do, we day-toured exploring our intended route, with Dave taking the lead. Ah, such blue skies and beautiful High Sierra scenery! After climbing through a series of excellent bowls and runs, we reached what I termed "the High Sierra version of the Concordia Amphitheater," a large cirque surrounded by high, jagged summits with corniced, steep chutes that would probably be the dream of extreme skiers like we were not. Dave went ahead and practically skied to the top of our goal already. We departed for camp, leaving the first of innumerable squigales down the immensity of untracked spring snow.

The silence of the snow-bound environment overtook all of us--no throaty singing, no raucous shouts... mostly quiet introspection and the awe of our tiny presence amid such a lofty spot of honor. Alpenglow, stars, sleep...these seemed to be the most natural things in the universe.

Summit day was anti-climatical... windless, warm, peace. We duplicated our tracks of yesterday, and as my photography and slowness dictated my dropping to the rear of the foursome that tracked to the summit, Dave tested the slopes out with his superlative skiing. Lunch, signing the register, pictures...all of these seemed routine for such experienced peak climbers. A long rest on top, then the challenge of the runs practically from the summit...I concentrated on photos as the others flew by, the Sierra Crest or the White Mountains as backdrop to the concave slopes. Long turns, short turns, all worked in that effortless spring soft forgivingness that only this California climate could produce (like grapes? fine wine?). Endless turns, telemark, stem, parallel, each to his own. Thousands of feet. On and on.

Then the progressive U.S. 395 dinner: soda pop in Bishop, main course (Mono Lake) somewhere, and finally, ice cream at the Big M in Minden. Still light to drive by, even. A perfect weekend---too bad they aren't all like this!



TRIP REVIEW

MT. LANGLEY, CIRQUE PEAK

AUGUST 6-8, 1983

The usual, long Friday night drive south on U.S. 395 culminated in a rest stop near Tom's Place. Three participants, leader Andy Sawyer, Al Vargas, and myself awoke before dawn, stuffing gear into a 1974 Datsun that I prayed would not break down this weekend. Zooming south to Lone Pine, I sought to identify some of the many peaks that formed the massive skyline to the west. Andy's plan was to obtain a permit in person at the Lone Pine R.S. I crossed my fingers as there was a substantial line of backpacker types whom I hoped would not fill up the trail quota.

Luckily, we got our permit and after having breakfast, made a scenic loop through the Alabama Hills, and drove up the long gradient to Cottonwood Trailhead, which at 9600' is one of the higher and more popular entrypoints along the eastern side. Just moments after hitting the trail, who would you expect to see but Bruce Austin, Basil Conday, and Roger Monroe sauntering down the trail in immaculate trailwear, inconceivable to me after a week's backpack. They reported staying at Golden Trout Camp, with their needs apparently well taken care of.

We reached Cottonwood Lakes Basin by early afternoon, allowing time for lunch and a quick swim by the leader. We left our packs and were off to climb Cirque Peak (12,900'), a second-class hike over snowfields with two-foot suncups and the ubiquitous sand and scree slopes. I needed this peak for my SPS Senior Emblem, not being on any Mother Lode Chapter peak lists. Also, this was my hundredth SPS listed peak, allowing me to place a three-digit number under the drawn peak behind my name. After the return and establishment of camp, my mood turned to photographically capturing the subtle glow of dusk with a decently dramatic sky.

The next day broke very nicely, with no ill winds or formidable cloud formations. We decided to try a snow route not described in the guidebook. For once, my perspective failed me. I sometimes rationalize that a route may look bad, but as one gets close, the easier it seems. In the case of the snowy headwall that loomed above us, my estimate of steepness turned from "piece of cake" to "vertical." Thank heavens for Andy who raced ahead and managed to kick steps up a 60-70 degree hard snow slope just above a small bergschrund. Andy gave the other two of us a rather dubious belay using my nylon cord, the rope having been left in camp.

As we tackled the remainder of the climb up the gradual south slopes of the peak, a rather ominous display of dark clouds, then lightning appeared to the west. The group became separated, and I made my summit dash, running into Andy on the way up. Signing in quickly, we were engulfed by mists and, feeling the rocks and air buzzing, I sensed a lightning strike. "HIT THE DIRT!" I yelled, as we were both carrying metal even though we had left ice axes just below the summit. A rumble passed overhead, and I bowed to Andy's impatience, taking a few more photos before departure.

Hastening down the sandy slopes toward Army Pass, a clearing mist revealed the fine etchings and contrast of a new fallen snow dusting below us. We had a fast lunch, verified that Old Army Pass should not be used as a descent route, then struggled upwards over fresh powder to New Army Pass. Things were not over yet! Andy backed down a set of snow steps on a frozen, steep section, facing inward and ramming axe tip into the hard snow several times to make each hole sufficient enough to act as an anchor for the shaft.

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Finally, we were all on the nice, safe, wide pack trail, and after descending several hundred feet, we were basking in brilliant sunshine, chatting to other backpackers who were hoping to make a go of the pass, using a fixed line unknownst to us. To reduce impact, marching orders were presented for a comfy dinner in Bishop, and we were at the car well before dusk. On reaching a gas stop in Independence, we stood witness to a terrifying, swirling, cloudy darkness lowering on the eastern escarpment--no doubt a warning to unprepared itinerants about the power of nature's fury.

I'd forgotten where we had dinner---the Copper Kettle, El Charro's, Mr. Steak, or in Mammoth, but it rained on our camp along the Walker River that night, soaking the makeshift bivvy arrangements we'd set up. This was certainly not the year of the unbroken skies, marked by long, hot, dry summer days with nary a cloud along the entire horizon. I was pleased that such an adventure was still feasible within the sanctions and activities of the MLC outings, and despite my failures at trip organization and planning, felt satisfied that the spirit of Dan Dobbins, and the many others like him, had been carried on.

PETE

MT. PRICE

July 10, 1983

Yamagata

A call to the Ranger Station informed me that the road to Wright's Lake was closed to "three miles" from the trailhead. Despite this fact, five participants elected to attempt the additional distance. Driving up the Wright's Lake road from the junction on U.S. 50, we passed on fairly new blacktop through the recent burn that occurred some Labor Day weekend a few years ago. We were stopped by snow drifts approximately a hundred yards from the Lyons Creek trailhead. An undefeatable Jack Rankin suggested an approach via Lyons Creek and Lake Sylvia, which seemed entirely feasible. Setting off in slush, mud, and three-inch deep water, we followed a jeep path for several thousand feet, successfully keeping to the track despite intermittent snow fields to the junction that cuts to Flood-Sucker Lake, the only Sierra lake, I am told, that was somehow infested with leeches. Continuing on through fairly solid snow, up to several feet deep, we roughly followed Lyons Creek, traveling up and down over the many drifts, gradually climbing through fairly dense timber. This more tiring mode of travel slowed down two of the participants and encouragement was necessary to enjoin them to a lunch rest at Lyons Lake. Jack, John Richardson, and Barney Jones made the dash to the summit over a tremendous snow field along with the leader; Jack chose to bag the 9500'+ minor summit on the west spur of Price. We climbed the ridge from the saddle on the west over some easy third-class slabs and reached the summit which was John's first Sierra Peak. While I stayed on top placing a book and a can (there was a scrap of notes placed there already), Jack attempted with the others the interesting-looking point 9967.' Running out of time, the leader collected the group and all had great glissades down the south bowl of Price (which would have made great summer skiing) back to the two waiting individuals at Lyons Lake. The long trudge back to the cars was completed by 7:00 p.m. and the drive home marked by a stop, urged by vociferous passengers, at the now defunct 50 Grand.

MONTHLY MEETING REVIEW

Feb. 6th General Meeting

- 1). Slide Show : Jackie Stroud showed slides of her recent climbing expedition in Equador. Highlight of this was Chimborazo.
 - 2). BMTC: Harry outlined specific dates . A list of these is available.
 - 3). Peak and Gorge Funds: Fund raisers and T-shirt sales have been most profitable. It is possible to print the Peak and Gorge logo on sweatshirts, lady's T-shirt, and half shirts; in addition, the design could be reduced (like on the front cover of this newsletter) and silk-screened on the front pocket of t-shirts.
- Fund Raisers are the biggest revenue earners but they are also a lot of work. Currently the Mountain Rendezvous is the highlight event , but it is undecided whether we will continue this event.

March 5th General Meeting

- 1). Peak and Gorge may be getting a large number of USGS topographic maps and these maps will be available to members for a substantially reduced cost of \$1.25. If you're interested in getting any maps contact Harry Erl at 481-3415.
- 2). Slide Show: Mexico's Volcanos Expedition 1983. Harry Erl, Boris Nahlovsky, and Mike Powell combined their slides of their recent climbing expedition of central Mexico's four prominent volcanos Ixtaccihuatl, La Malinche, Popocatepetl, and Orizaba.

ANNOUNCEMENT

Business meetings are an important function of an organization and we find a need to have such meetings separate from the social general meetings. This will enable us to hash out hard to solve problems and to better delegate responsibilities to people. In doing so, information or reports can be given at general meetings in a short and succinct manner , thereby, allowing more time for socializing and group interacting.

We have already had one very productive business meeting, and we will continue to have future one's, so if you're interested in planning Peak and Gorge's future , you would be welcomed at such meetings. However, you will most likely be given some tasks to research and complete.

If you'd like to be a part of this call Harry Erl at 481-3415.

SUBSCRIPTION FORM

Name _____

Address _____

Phone Number _____

Subscribers, what ideas or suggestions do you think would help improve our newsletter? _____

PEAK AND GORGE BOULDER:

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CORRESPONDENCE:

We encourage you to send articles and letters pertaining to Peak and Gorge activities. Please send single spaced copy to the Editor prior to the first of odd numbered months.

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