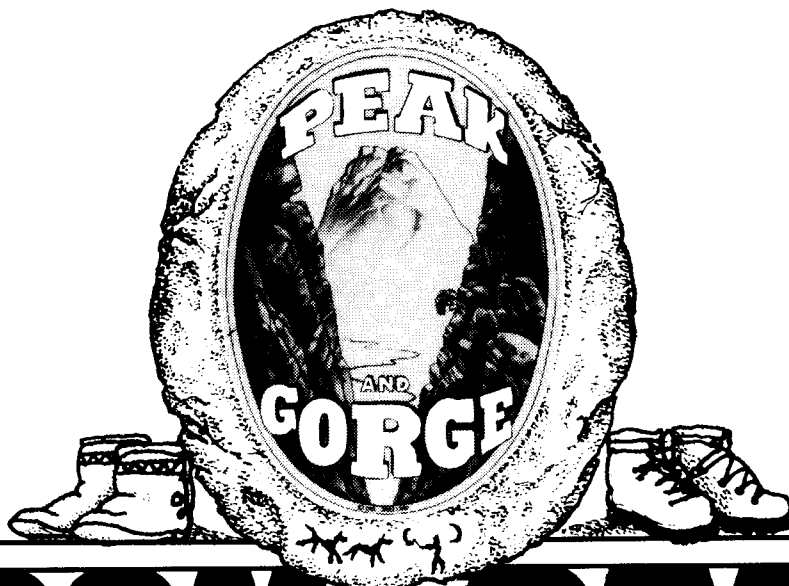


THE



BOULDER

motherlode chapter-sierra club

JULY-AUGUST, 1984 / ISSUE #4

SUMMER'S HIGHLIGHTS

This coming October we are going to alter our regular meeting agenda. Rather than discussing business at the meeting, as we usually do, we instead plan to have a purely fun and social meeting.

The meeting is intended to highlight this summer's climbs and scrambles. Everyone is invited to come and share tales (accompanied with slides) of their best or favorite adventures of this summer. Each presentation will have to be short and succinct. Approximately five slides per trip should suffice to show the major highlights of each trip; however, more or fewer slides will be welcome. Bring slides for as many trips as you wish.

This should be a fun evening full of good opportunities to see new places you might like to explore in the future. If you are interested in sharing the highlights of some of your trips, then bring your slides to the Oct. meeting. Please bring your own carosel if you have one. If not, we will provide you with one. The meeting will be Oct. 1st at 7:00pm. The place is yet to be decided. Please bring delectable munchies.

PS. Everyone is welcome to come-friends as well as guests, so spread the word.

UPCOMING MONTHLY MEETING

AUGUST 6th, 1984 TIME: 7:30 PM
PLACE: COLOMA COMMUNITY CENTER, 4623 T St. SACRAMENTO Ph. 481-3415

PROGRAM: Highlands and Silver peak climbs of this summer.

- 1.) NAS list progress update.
- 2.) Next year's BMTC program update.
- 3.) Update for December election of new officers, also adoption of new Peak and Gorge bylaws.

SEPTEMBER : THERE WILL BE NO SEPTEMBER MEETING.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

CRYSTAL RANGE TRAVERSE: Anyone interested in traversing the Crystal Range from McConnell Peak to Pyramid Peak please call Linus Platt at 925-4982.

USGS MAPS: We still have quite a reserve of USGS topo maps available for \$1.00 per map. Call Harry with an order and he'll check to see if we have the maps you want. Ph 481-3415.

TRIP REVIEW

SOLC TRIP TO MT. EMMA (10,525') MAY 13, 1984 By Pete Yamagata

Having just accomplished one of my priorities in the High Sierra upon skiing Mammoth Crest and the "Blue Couloir" with the Ski Mountaineers, I elected to leave the Angeles Chapter group for my own desires on the second day of the weekend. With such excellent weather and well rested from a comfortable night's stay in a condo, I could hardly pass on the variety of tours to choose from on the drive home.

I had always longed to ski peaks in the Sonora Pass region, and the obvious first choice was the prominent peak visible from U.S. 395 just south of the junction with Hwy. 108. Driving on a good dirt road that leads to Obsidian Campground, an obscure USFS operation, one obtains excellent views of the peak and the route. Passing the campground, one follows the signs to Emma Lake Trailhead. The road winds around Stockade Flat (Fales Hot Springs, USGS 15'), but a snow drift stopped me at 8200'. Heading up the road for a short distance, I shuffled then carried skis to the base of the NE slope. The peak is continuously steep no matter which way you approach it, and here it begins with a thick grove of trees. Encountering open areas several hundred feet higher, I chose to travel where the snow and the gradient seemed the most ideal.

About one hundred feet below the summit, two bands of talus forced me to leave my skis and climb the remainder on foot, giving me an ascent time of just over two hours. The contrast between the green, rolling slopes to the east and the still solidly snow-clad peaks to the west inspired me to take the panorama sequence of photographs that I just love to do. Eating an orange and cookies on top, I lounged on the success in the warm sun and left a register and can.

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The descent was made conservatively, without too many overwhelmingly fast turns; however, the snow was corned up and rather forgiving. I made a variation on my ascent route, looking to the east for slopes that were more skiable. I had to return through the pine forest and made a few kick-turns rather than risk a slam-bang into a tree (horrors!). Back to my car, I drove up the Sonora Pass highway to examine some other guidebook tours, but there was still a locked gate just past Leavitt Meadows. This is a nice tour to save for an easy day after a big tour further south.

SNOW MOUNTAIN (8014')

APRIL 14, 1984

A large group of skiers attended this tour on a beautifully clear day. We started from Donner Trails School and continuously skied aside from the freeway underpass. Following the road and traveling through the trees, we gained the benchmark point 8007' for lunch. A few skiers elected to drop south to the stand of old-growth firs that supremely overlooks the North Fork American with the plummeting view into the depths of Royal Gorge. Climbing back to the summit flats, I skied to the high point 8014' as indicated on the topo map, although I had placed a register at the benchmark which was lower. Catching the others, we skied past Devils Peak which a few scampered up in rapid style. The corn was good on the return, although snow donuts would form on the steeper slopes. This is a nice nordic tour which certainly deserves to be led more often. Thanks to Dave Vandershaf for no late return on this fine day!

"Pete"

Pete Yamagata

SOLO ADVENTURE--MINERAL KING

MAY 26-27, 1984

An earlier SMS ski tour's trip sheet had included as a goal the beautiful Vandever Mountain (11,947'). It was this peak and another that brought me back to this magnificent area.

Leaving Sacramento at 4:40 a.m. Saturday morning, I arrived at the Guard Station to inquire about permits and started on the trail by 10:40 a.m. I decided to try for Sawtooth Peak (12,343'), the inspiration for the logo on the local T-shirts, coffee mugs, and caps. The first snow was encountered at 8800'. I opted to follow the signs for Sawtooth Pass as I was uncertain about the Glacier Pass Trail (marked not maintained). This was a mistake, as soft, deep snow had to be traversed, which slowed my time considerably. I had heard that this was a nice way in the summer. Slowing steadily, I worked my way toward Glacier Pass, which is a sand and scree slog without snow. I arrived to see the other side at about 4:00p.m. Rather tired, I snoozed on a rock, and awoke to find that it was 5:00 p.m. with the peak some 1000' above. The inevitable decision was made to return, which was accomplished on the Glacier Pass variant which I should have taken to avoid the snow. After cooking dinner at the trailhead, I was forced to look for a campsite outside the park. I parked by a waterfall and fell asleep in the driver's seat in my sweatshirt, awaking at 2:00 a.m. during this warm night.

I drove back up for breakfast at the Silver City cafe, and commenced the climb of Vandever, after a routefinding delay at 8:30 a.m. The trail was very nice with great views back toward the valley. One stream crossing necessitated wading knee-deep snow melt, and further on snow fields led to Farewell Gap. From here the 1400' climb to the summit was done in standard time. The descent took under three hours back to the car, after much sunshine and views of the Southern Sierra. I returned to Sacramento by 12:30 a.m. Monday utilizing the traffic "window", after enjoying a nice roast sirloin dinner at the Merced Carrow's.

Pete

The trek to these 14,000 footers went very well. Our carload left Sacramento at 2p.m. on Friday, June 15 for the beautiful drive down 395 on the heels of a late spring snowstorm. This meant several photographic stops to capture the snow and afternoon light on the mountains. Included was a study of the face of Mt. Morrison in contemplation of a future rockclimb. We stopped for dinner in Bishop to do some carbo-loading at Enrico's. This was a poor choice; the spaghetti was only a notch above Sharkey's!

We continued to Lone Pine where we picked up the wilderness permit about 10 p.m. from the ranger station's night box. To enhance our acclimatization process we spent the night at 6500' at the Lone Pine campground up the Whitney Portal Rd. There was nearly a full moon and the storm had fortunately stayed further north. At dawn my tripod came in handy for shots of the moon setting over Lone Pine Pk. and the radiance of sunrise on Mt. Whitney.

After breakfast in Lone Pine we met the rest of the group in Independence. Andy Sawyer was leader. Participants included Cliff Anderson, Barbara Hinkle, Peter Lipa, Diane Ryerson, John Scagland, Tom --, and I. It was a formidable group and included three triathletes. We left the Shepherd Pass trailhead at 9 a.m. after placing a few cold drinks in the nearby Symmes Creek. We crossed this creek four times in the first mile, but there were no treacherous crossings in this low snowfall year. We soon left this willow and relatively cool canyon and the Shepherd Pass Trail lived up to the Climber's Guide's description of being "an interminable ordeal of dryness and steepness." Geared for the long haul we took only two breaks before our late lunch and two after lunch. In between, conversation was notably scarce. Our concentration was broken only by a few moments of banter such as when the sign told us "Loose Herding Permitted".

We plodded along steadily from the 6000' start, across the pass at 12,000', to base camp at the northern foot of Mt. Tyndall by 6:30 p.m. There was a gross gain of over 7000', due to a long sandy downhill midway. In the later summer the pass itself has a series of switchbacks, but early this year when there was little snow elsewhere it consisted of a steep north-facing snow slope where ice axes were useful.

Such a sight it was at the top of Shepherd Pass! - Storm clouds looming in the south and west with shafts of light shining through pellets of grolple in front of Mt. Tyndall. Down the Tyndall Crk. drainage and across the gulf of the upper Kern Canyon stood the fortress peaks of the Great Western Divide, butting their heads against the black thunderheads. This big, open, desolate high country spells freedom to me and always makes me feel 'high'. Such was also the view from basecamp. The sunset glowed from the western ribs of Williamson and the top of Tyndall.

The night cleared the heavens and we arose at 5:30 a.m. to crystal clear skies after a not too cold night. We left camp at 6:25 heading for the rising sun. It took some time to get to the base of Williamson -- over a saddle, along ridges between frozen lakes, and down across a big bowl. We stashed crampons as it was obvious they wouldn't be needed. Our route was the standard second second class steep chute up a thousand vertical feet and then a 75' third class cleft to the summit ridge, where we ate lunch before noon. The view was magnificent from the top and everyone was there to enjoy it, although there were a few headaches. At 14,375', only Mt. Whitney,

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in splendid profile a few miles to the south, is higher in California. To the north reigned the Palisades and to the west, the Great Western Divide. To the east lay the parched Owens Valley and also the briny red Owens Lake.

On the return trip to camp storm clouds moved in from the south. The wind came up and the gropple began. Out came our foul weather gear. Our tents, or in two cases, bivy sacs, became cozy retreats for afternoon snoozes. During a well-timed lull in the storm, planned by the leader no doubt, we prepared dinner. There was snow again after dark and a colder night due to wind.

Sunshine and clear skies were again programmed for Monday morning so three of us set off at 5:30 a.m. for Mt. Tyndall (14,018'). John appeared to be trying to set a record. Andy and I enjoyed some third class climbing up to and along the knife-edge ridge to the summit. We were down by 9 a.m., long after John and the others had left for the cars. This was the part of the trip I had dreaded -- a 9,000' knee-jarring descent from Tyndall to the trailhead in one day. The fun part was the glissade down from the pass.

This trip may have set some records for several people -- the highest elevation yet attained, the greatest elevation change on foot in one day, the biggest blisters (there were rumors of some people hobbling afterwards), the longest climbing trip ever recorded using cross-country ski boots ...

A great trip it was; a leisure trip it wasn't! If planning this trip for yourself, remember that the area is closed to two-footed animals after mid-June due to the reintroduction of bighorn sheep.

BLACK BUTTES (8030') DAY HIKE JUNE 3, 1984 Pete Yamagata

Of course, it was the only hike in the schedule that day, and over thirty eager hikers appeared for this 2B hike. Pam Fraser, the scheduled leader, had cancelled and a new leader was sought. Noneother than Jack Rankin stepped in to fill the bill. I immediately realized that we would be coming home late, but how late still astounds me.

Snow drifts blocked all including determined four-wheel drive vehicles about one mile from the intended trailhead. Early on in the hike, it was seen that we would be hiking through snow for most of the day, with the slower participants needing some care. Nine people opted to turn back and form their own group. After many re-grouping and rest stops, a large portion of the party arrived at a large rock where many began munching on their lunches. I asked permission of the leader to take a small group to traverse the main summits. Three persons followed me as we worked our way along the ridge to the high point of the Buttes. We observed another group led by Jack coming up as we had our lunch.

After plenty of rest and pictures, we continued on together as every conceivable high point was visited, with some exciting jumps over 20' deep moats. Late in the afternoon, we had a mediocre glissade down to Glacier Lake and back to where the group had been left. We ambled over to Sand Ridge where more views were had. Jack and I chose to visit Grouse Ridge lookout as well.

Upon the return to the cars, several grim-looking individuals informed us that 15 people were missing. After some discussion, we split into three groups to conduct a search. Upon the 10:00 p.m. rendezvous, it was discovered that the missing hikers were found, but that Jack and Ed Vandercook were unaccounted for. We waited and looked but to no avail. At 11:30 p.m., it was assumed that they had gotten lost or tired and had to bivouac. Barney Jones and I released the other two cars to go home as we made one more sweep of the roads and trailhead. About midnight, two tired, uncertain persons stopped at the Bowman Denny's for some food and rest. The matter was dropped into the 911 operator's hands, who referred us to the Nevada County Sheriff's Office. Arriving back to CSUS after 1:30 a.m., we assured ourselves that we had done as much as we could, and guessed that the lost pair would survive the night and make their way to a phone and home, which was what had happened.

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