

THE



BOULDER

motherlode chapter · sierra club

MARCH-APRIL 1985 / ISSUE #8

THE CHAIR'S CORNER

I was recently asked to speak about the Peak and Gorge Section at a meeting for new Sierra Club members. I was astonished to find the McKinley Garden & Arts Center with standing room only! It was an enlightening experience to bring our Section into the perspective of the whole organization and a reminder to be perhaps more conservation-minded on our outings. One thing seems certain, our Section definitely has a reputation for sponsoring the toughest trips of the Club! I reminded everyone that John Muir was a mountaineer, too, and we are hopefully carrying on that tradition.

The audience was, for the most part, young and single so there is ample potential for growth of our Section. Perhaps only a handful have ambitions of mountaineering, but others may warm up to the idea after trying it. This means that a variety of trips, at all skill levels, will continue to be needed. And this means that more of you folks with leadership training need to start leading trips! And the next leadership training course will be May 2. See the Calendar.

SPRING TRIP REVIEW

Mar 16	Little Round Top--from Echo Summit with skis
Mar 30-Apr 7	Escalante River--Utah backpack and canyon scrambling
Mar 30	Sierra Buttes--with skis, ice axe and crampons
Apr 13	Snow climbing practice
Apr 20-21	Five Lakes Falls--backpack and gorge scramble
Apr 20	Forestdale Peak (9381') & The Nipple--ski mountaineering
Apr 27	Roundtop--ski or snowshoe to base, then ice axe and crampons
May 4	Rockclimbing practice for mountaineers
May 11-19	Escalante River--Utah backpack and canyon scrambling
May 12	Freel Peak--ski mountaineering
May 25-27	NAS Peak Climb--location not yet determined
May 25-27	North Fork of the American River--canyon backpack
Jun 1	Jeff Davis, Reynolds, or other nearby peaks--rockclimb
Jun 1-2	Devil Peak/Royal Gorge/Palisade Peak--peak climb and gorge scramble
Jun 8	Pyramid Peak--ice axe desirable
Jun 8-9	Leavitt & Sonora and other? peaks--car camp; ice axe required
Jun 15	Dick's and Jack's Peaks--ice axe required
Jun 15	Pyramid Peak
Jun 22	Mt. Shasta--ice axe and crampons required
Jul 4-7	Morey Peak and possibly Mahogany and Big Fandango in the Hot Creek Range of Nevada

Additional ski mountaineering trips will appear in the Bonanza from the Winter Sports Section.

THE ATTRACTION OF THOSE EARLY SUMMER TRIPS

Springtime in the high country in California usually comes in June and early July. Unless we get considerably more snowfall in northern California, spring will arrive even earlier. The southern Sierra, however, has reportedly had an above average snowfall thus far this year, so that trip planning and participation should take this into account.

Whenever spring arrives it inevitably brings green corn lilies sprouting through snow patches, the arrival of early wildflowers, early mosquitoes, long days, and the frolicking mountaineer glissading down slopes of glistening snow.

If you sometimes tire of climbing our peaks of "piled rocks" in the summertime, you will find spring snow mountaineering a pleasant change of pace. This can be done on skis, of course, or with the use of ice axe and perhaps crampons, too. Skills in the use of these tools can provide the mountaineer with many added joys in the fresh mountains of springtime. Check your trip schedules for the many applicable trips.

Mar 9 Sat Galen Rowell at Sac City College, 7:30 pm.
 Mar 18 Mon Gorge meeting at Barb Beddow's, 7:30 pm. Details in Bonanza.
 Slides of canyon country by Bill Wolverton.
 Apr 1 Mon Peak and Gorge meeting at Andy Sawyer's, 500 'N' St., #1403,
 7:30 pm. Slides of Ecuador mountaineering.
 Apr 30 Tues Deadline for summer trip write-ups to Jackie Stroud.
 May 2 Thurs Leadership training at CSUS, 7-10 pm in the Oak Room.
 May 6 Mon Next Boulder deadline to Pete Yamagata.
 No Peak and Gorge meeting in May.
 Jun 3 Mon Peak & Gorge meeting at Linus Platt's, 2320 Barcelona Way at
 7:30 pm. Slides of Washington Cascades and Canadian Rockies by
 Roger Rollins.

PRIVATE TRIPS

John Skaglund plans to climb the Mexican volcanoes, Popo, Ixta, and Orizaba (~18,800). Rent a car and share expenses. This is a non-club, private trip. Call him for details at (707) 763-3885.

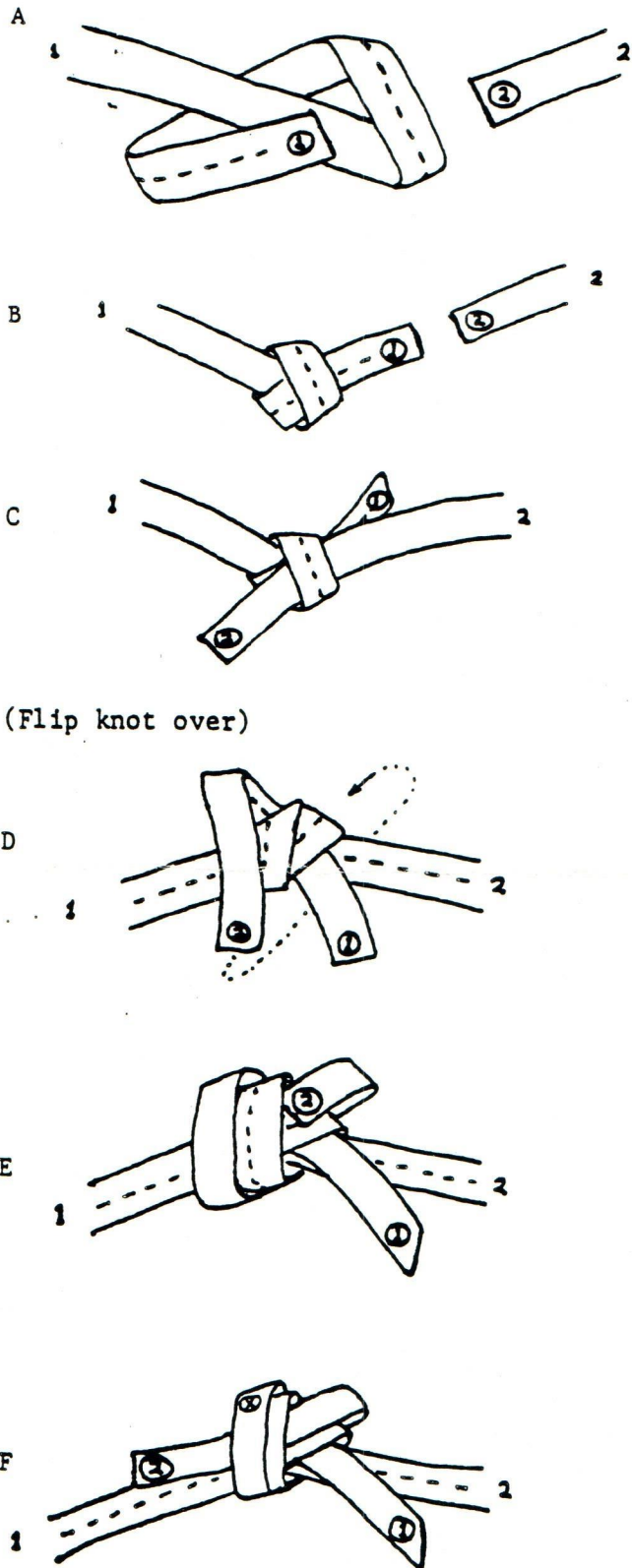
John Skaglund is also looking for climbing partners to do some of the major peaks in Ecuador this summer. This will involve high altitude (to 20,500+ feet) snow and glacier travel. This is also an unofficial trip, non-club trip.

Roger Rollins has plans to climb Mt. Robeson in the Canadian Rockies this summer. This will involve technical snow and ice climbing and perhaps waiting out storms. Contact Jackie for his phone number if you don't have it. This is also a non-club sponsored trip.

SPECIAL USE PERMITS

A letter was recently received by Al Gutowsky from Cal French of the Angeles Chapter regarding the requirements of Special Use Permits (SUP's) by the Inyo National Forest. On Jan. 10 of the this year several persons of the Angeles Chapter participated in a meeting with the U.S. Forest Service regarding the new requirements. Basically it will be up to each Chapter to work out an agreement with Inyo N. F. This has not yet been done by the Mother Lode Chapter but we will probably need to work in that direction. In summary:

- 1) Only Inyo N.F. so far is requiring organized groups to get SUP's for all backcountry travel (not just in wilderness). They have heavy use of their land from packers, Scouting, YMCA, Sierra Club, etc. Packers have to pay fees and they have complained that organizations use the forest for fundraising but pay no fees. Thus everyone is now being reviewed to see if a fee is needed. If not, then a "free" permit is issued -- at least for now.
- 2) There is no hcage for the SUP if the trip does not generate any income or provide free transportation for the leader.
- 3) All trips to Inyo which generate no income, etc. can come under one permit written to our Chapter, but it has to be worked out in advance.
- 4) All national forests are supposed to be doing this but probably aren't staffed to do all the horrendous paperwork. In the meantime, Cal French recommends not asking other forests what they plan to do.
- 5) If you hear of other forests asking for SUP's, let me know, as Cal French wants to be kept informed, too.
- 6) Leave the "organization" space blank on all wilderness permit applications.



(Flip knot over)

Fig. 1 Overhand Bend (Water Knot)

Overhand Bend (Water Knot)

- A. **Fold** an overhand knot into the end marked (1).
- B. Close but do not tighten the knot. Note that the dotted side is outermost thru the knot.
- C-F. Put the dotted side of (2) against the dotted side of (1). Keeping the dotted sides together, backtrack end (2) along (1) thru the knot. (D shows the back of C: flip the knot over, top to bottom.)
- G. (Optional: moving slack thru the knot) Tighten the inner knot by pulling 1 away from (1). Pull slack into the knot by pulling (x) away from (1), then (2) away from (1). Repeat as needed.
- H. Tighten the knot by pulling 1 and (2) away from (1) and 2 as hard as you can.

An Anchored Stance

Can you anchor yourself as shown in less than five minutes? Three?

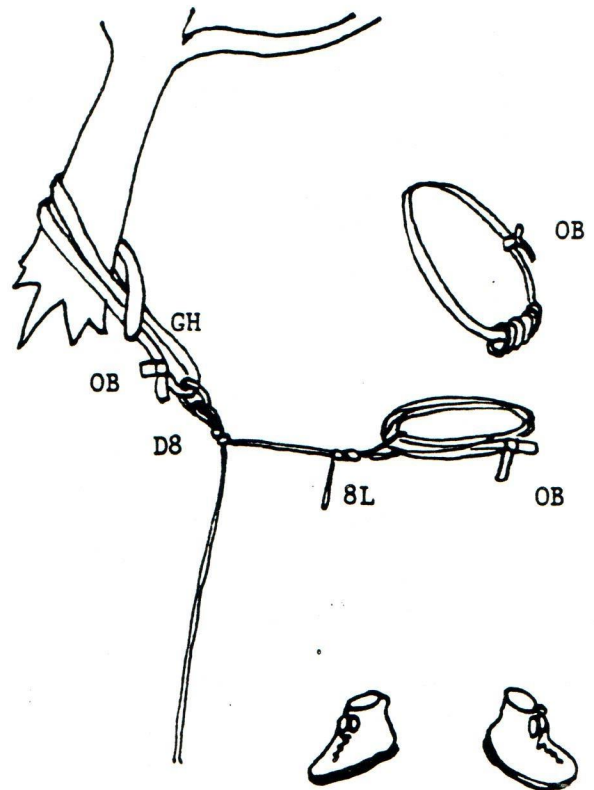


Fig. 2 Knots for Anchoring

TRIP REVIEW

EASTERN MOJAVE PEAK CLIMBS AND EXPLORATION
KINGSTON PEAK (7,323') AND CLARK MOUNTAIN (7,929')

MARCH 30--APRIL 3, 1984

The plan was to bag a few peaks on our own, and then, for the weekend, to join an Angeles Chapter Desert Peaks Section outing to climb two peaks near the Nevada border. I had been previously enraptured by this area while passing through on I-15 enroute to Zion National Park, and vowed that I would sometime explore this area. The aura of mystery and desert beauty is one hard to ignore.

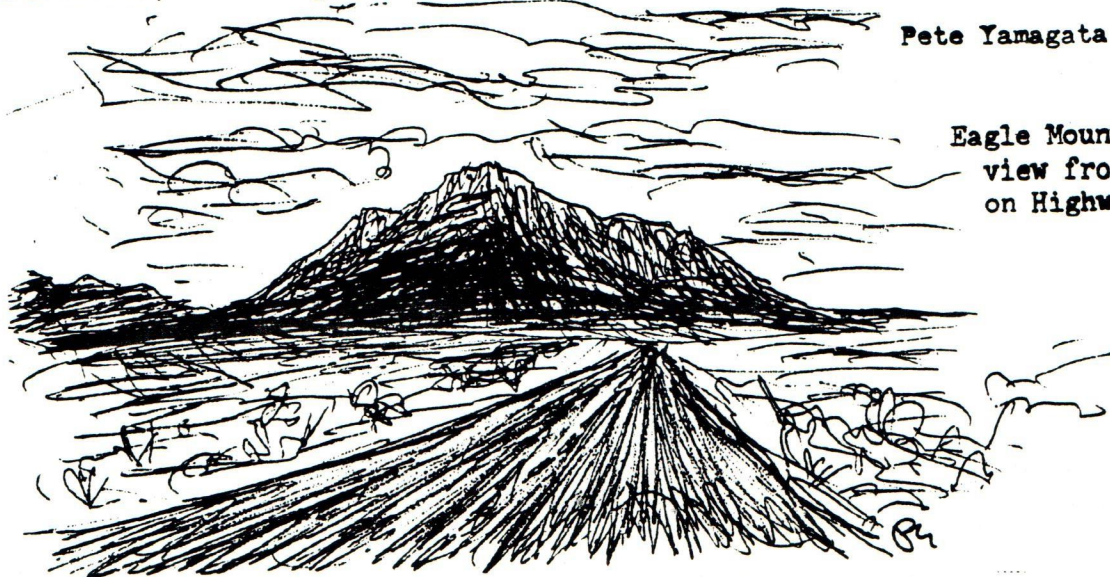
I practically drafted Ben Stoecker to join me on this getaway despite his many pleadings of "I hate the desert!" We left after work Thursday night to lodge at a motel along I-55 near Buttonwillow, and then to try Old Dad Mountain (4250') several miles south of Baker and I-15. However, some bad road navigation led us to a sandy wash where we frantically dug for three hours to free the car from bottomless sand. We continued on, staying on mostly paved roads to view Kelso Dunes, the Providence and Granite Mountains, and the Joshua Tree forests near Cima Dome. We then camped at the "trailhead" for Kingston Peak as per the instructions on my trip sheet from the Angeles group. About 15 DPS'ers showed up in the morning for the 3500' gain through pinyons, yucca plants, and various other desert shrubs. The pace was laid-back, with several stops for regrouping and rests. Tiny flakes of snow fell on us while descending from the summit ridge, although it did not feel particularly cold. On our return, we drove to the campground on Clark Mountain.

The trip sheet advertised belly dancing as part of the traditional nightly celebration typified in the DPS outings write-ups. The dancers apparently did not show, leaving us to merely sampling the array of hors d'oeuvres on the picnic tables. We viewed a hauntingly beautiful sunset on the hills across the valley, enjoyed a brief fire thanks to a presto-log, and then experienced 25°F temperatures for the night.

A few in the group stayed at the cars while the rest of us climbed Clark Mountain, a third-class ramble from the south side of the peak. A limestone bridge was passed. An ancient stand of firs, relics from prehistoric times when the climate was much wetter, was also seen. A little traversing and climbing was necessary to cross the Great Wall-like band of limestone cliffs stretching across our route. Snow fell during the descent on this peak, too.

An early return to the cars left Ben and I to drive north to Death Valley, where we enjoyed a sunset and a starry desert night in a remote valley. The next day, we investigated various other possible peak climbs in the area. My main fear was getting the car stuck in bottomless sandy tracks on the approaches. After a stop at Scotty's Castle, we visited Ubehebe Crater. We ran to the bottom and set times climbing out on the sandy trail of about 12 minutes for 500 feet. We drove to Bishop where Ben chose to stay in a motel, and I chose to car-camp to save money. The drive home was uneventful, returning at about 2:00 p.m. to end a fairly successful short vacation.

Pete Yamagata



Eagle Mountain (3006')
view from the south
on Highway 127

TRIP REVIEW

RETURN TO "SKI MOUNTAINEER'S PEAK" (13,323')
AND SKI ATTEMPT ON MT. GOODE (13,092')

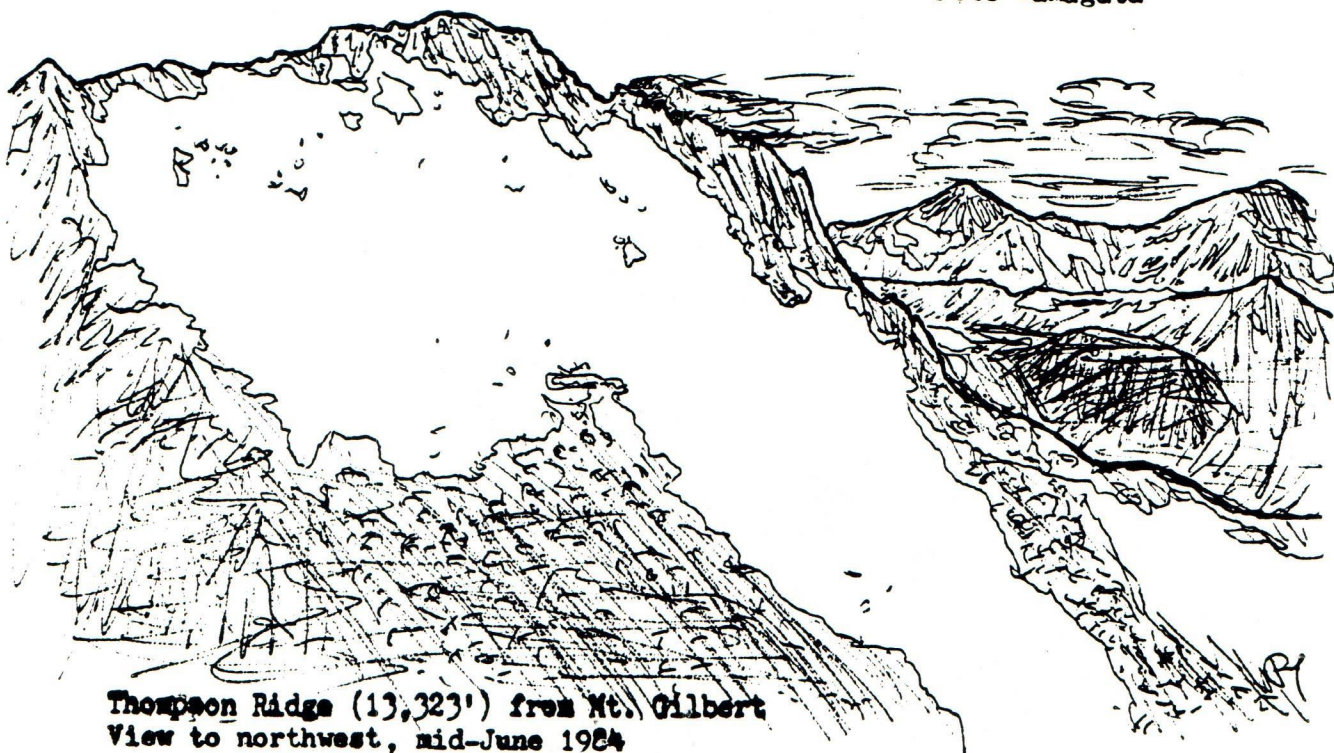
MAY 19-20, 1984

No one called for this highest of ski mountaineering goals in the John Muir Wilderness, so, undaunted, I drove down U.S. 395 to meet the Los Angeles contingent on Saturday morning. Four persons met me at the South Lake parking lot, well cleared of snow unlike the year before. Our group was composed of two alpine skiers and three nordic skiers. There was no snow on the route that we had taken before, so we hiked most of the way on the trail to our base camp at Treasure Lakes. There were plenty of snow-free campsites to be found near the largest of the lakes.

We had passed an advanced BMT group on its way to climb Mt. Gilbert, thus inducing Angeles leader Jean-Francoise to urge the same goal for us. However, it was decided to ski Thompson Ridge on Saturday. We easily reached the top at about 3:00 p.m. except for Owen, who was suffering from an illness. The slopes were already in shadow on our descent, causing the usual refreezing which spooked me enough to ski mostly kick-turns on the steeper areas up high. However, our two French skiers made short work of the 35-40 degree slopes, carving fast turns as though they were at a resort. We made a long contouring return over a ridge to base camp where we enjoyed the long shadows of the evening.

The next day, we carried packs over to the Bishop Pass drainage and left them near the outlet of Long Lake, then headed for Mt. Goode. The lake was passed on the west shore and soon we began climbing a gentle gully to the base of the southeast slopes of the peak. I was tired and having binding trouble, so I ate lunch while two of the group set off to bag the peak. A fine set of old S's already tracked down the steepest sections. We watched Jean-Francoise as he made the way up, then taking off his skis to climb to the top--he reported that it was too steep for skiing. My bindings came off completely on our return to Long Lake, forcing me to post-hole and carry skis and pack all of the way back to the cars. I arrived at the parking lot ahead of two others who had gotten sidetracked, but waiting for the whole group to return before beginning the long drive home. A beautiful sunset over Mono Lake soothed the aggravation arising from mounting failures on my skis. This was just as enjoyable a weekend as most others, despite equipment problems, with great weather and good corn snow.

Pete Yamagata



Thompson Ridge (13,323') from Mt. Gilbert
View to northwest, mid-June 1984

TRIP REVIEW

KAWEAH PEAKS OUTING
BIG KAWEAH (13,802'), MT. LIPPINCOTT (12,260')
SAWTOOTH PEAK (12,343')

JUNE 30--JULY 4, 1984

As might be expected for a strenuous, extended weekend to climb these peaks, only Boris Nahlovsky and I finally decided to actually go through with it. We left Sacramento after work Friday night to camp along the Mineral King road at 12:30 a.m. Starting up the Glacier Pass trail at 9:30 a.m., we slogged up the steep 3200' gain with full packs to camp at Spring Lake, where there were limited campsites in a very beautiful setting. The next morning, we completed the trek to base camp at Little Five Lakes, crossing Black Rock Pass (11,600') in getting there. We spent the afternoon attempting to climb Mt. Eisen (12,160') from the east, but ran out of time.

Day Three dawned with foreboding clouds looming at 6:00 a.m. Kaweah, a SPS Emblem peak, was the day's goal and the most important peak of the trip (to me). We dropped the thousand feet into the Big Arroyo and had little trouble in finding a crossing. Hitting the High Sierra Trail, we hiked to a tarn at 10,500' and climbed over medium-sized talus and then over 2000' of sand and scree to climb the peak. Two fast young men took the honor of being the first up the peak for the year from us by twenty minutes. The hike back was marked by large, billowing thunder clouds rising from the west. We had some good views of Black Kaweah, a highly coveted climbing goal. The return to camp was unmarked except by the usual greeting from hordes of mosquitoes. I spent a good part of the evening trying to free my cord caught by a branch while attempting to hang food from a tree. Boris secured another cord from the ranger, who was tented nearby.

The next day, I needed another peak to round out the area, so we climbed Lippincott, an easy hike up a pristine canyon with stunningly green meadows and lovely streams. Back to camp by 2:30 p.m., we packed up and out over Black Rock Pass to camp again at Spring Lake. There we were dampened slightly from the first inclement weather conditions of the trip, but compensated by a spectacular sunset. On the morning of the last day, we became objects under close inspection by a curious marmot while enroute to Glacier Pass. We doffed our day packs and set ourselves loose for Sawtooth Peak. I placed a register which was reported by a SPS trip as filled with a "ton o' names" a month and a half later. The recommendation was made that this peak was too popular to maintain a book. Big steps down the sandy scree slopes and then hoofing it down the trail got us back to the van by 3:40 p.m.

With that finish, we had completed nearly 18,000' gain in five days. The drive back down the Mineral King road took the usual hour. We dined at the Merced Carrow's, then viewed a nearly continuous display of fireworks as we passed through a succession of valley towns along U.S. 99. Home by 11:30 p.m., which was later than I expected. Nice to have these peaks out of the way!



Pete Yamagata

Kaweah Ridge from trail
above Little Five Lakes:
view from the west

On Memorial Day weekend of 1984 a group of Sierra Club hikers went into Yosemite National Park under the leadership of Rick Kraft and Janet Wolfe. The first afternoon we hiked from Glacier Point, across several beautiful falls including Nevada Falls and then along the Merced River into Little Yosemite Valley where we set up camp.

After dinner and a lovely campfire we settled down for the night with our food secure in the bear proof lockers. The night was uneventful except for the bear who visited our camp several times and temporarily borrowed an almost empty backpack. The bear took or dislodged a pack of gum and a lipstick pencil, so the next day the hikers tried to find the bear with red lips and breath that smelled like doublemint gum.

Sunday most of the group hiked to Half Dome and climbed to the top via the cables on the east side. While they were rejoicing at being at the top they witnessed two young men conclude a three day climb up the sheer face of Half Dome. What an exciting event to watch for several hours! Did one of the hikers really say he would return to Half Dome next year and climb to the top via the sheer face?

Five of the group missed this excitement as they had hiked over to Cloud's Rest in the morning and climbed to the top to enjoy fantastic views of Yosemite while eating lunch. Later they returned to the spot where packs had been hidden for the day, and after a rendezvous with the main group they climbed Half Dome via the cables and prepared to spend the night on the top. At 9:00 p.m. the two groups signalled each other by flashlights to verify that the five had made the climb safely with their backpacks. What a tremendous place to observe the sunset and sunrise!

The hike back to Glacier Point on Monday was relaxed with a restful stop to cool off in the waters of the Merced River. A terrific weekend and many beautiful sights were stored in the minds' computer memory banks for future viewing.

The sights reminded many of the hikers of John Muir and his love for the Yosemite area. We all owe him so much--THANK YOU JOHN MUIR!

PEAK BAGGING NEAR EBBETTS PASS

by Linus Platt

It was a typical 3-day weekend as we drove down Highway 4 toward Ebbetts Pass. We arrived at the campground that Jackie decided on camping at. There were few spaces left, and it would have cost \$10.00 for the stay. Consequently, Claude, his wife, and myself drove on up to find a better spot. Roger met us up the road at our new camp. We had dinner and got a good night's sleep for the day ahead. We got up a little earlier than the others at the campground below because we had to walk down the road to the trailhead. So began the pleasant hike in. We hiked in about 5 miles, left the trail and began picking up elevation on the western flanks of Highlands Peak (10,955'). It started out as a long gravel and scree hike through a few bushes. But eventually talus and suncupped snow appeared at the saddle between Highlands and Silver Peak. From here it was mostly wandering in and out of class 3 boulders. We had to go up a very loose gully filled with scree in order to get to the summit plateau. We then scrambled to the summit. The view was fantastic! We could just barely make out the peaks north of the Yosemite Nat'l Park boundary. After a long lunch on the summit, we descended to the saddle where a couple of people signed off the trip; temporarily. We started up the loose scree of Silver Peak (10,800'). The very top was easy class 3 climbing. In about an hour, we were on the summit, then we realized that Silver had two summits! The map indicated that the two were of approximately equal height. It was getting late, and no one wanted to "go for it," so we descended. Once at the saddle we glissaded to a little creek which had terribly loose cliffs that produced some very hairy climbing and descending. Eventually we got down to the trail below and joined the rest of the group who had descended the original way. Once at the trailhead we got rides to camp. Harry and Janet Erl had arrived for the next day's climb of Reynolds Peak (9,690'). Harry was to be Jackie's co-leader. The next morning, we packed up camp and drove to the pass. We left the pass on foot and hiked about 3 miles of trail, bushes and rock. The peak itself was just a hunk of volcanic rock sticking out of the ground. From the base of the spire, it was solid class 3 climbing. The very summit itself was only big enough for one or two people. I ate some salami, took some pictures, and began to downclimb. The hike back was a little different than the way-in. It was all bushwhacking! Once we got to the road, we car shuttled to the pass, and drove home. END OF TRIP.

TRIP REVIEWS

SIERRA WINTER CLIMB

by Roger Barr

Of six attempted winter climbs of Mt. Goddard in the past ten years, none has been more enjoyable than the one just completed by Ken Collier and me during the last week of February. At this time of the year, seven clear, cloudless, spring-like days in succession are indeed a rare occurrence in the Central Sierra. The route, which begins with a crossing of Lake Sabrina (and eventually more than a dozen lakes) was up through Sabrina Basin, over Echo Col, up the Middle Fork of the Kings past the Black Giant, over Muir Pass and across the northern portion of Ionian Basin to the base of Goddard on the lake at its southeastern shoulder. An easy 1500 foot ascent on skis brings the success of the summit (with a little scrambling near the top). Not technically difficult, we did use crampons, ice axe, and even half a climbing rope for reassurance. Anyone for next year? We don't guarantee the weather.

TELL'S PEAK - Ski Mountaineering, March 2, 1985

After two weeks of no new snow, leader Jack Rankin had the best of luck with 4-8" of fresh powder on a solid base for his trip to Tell's Peak (8879'). Tell's Peak lies southeast of Loon Lake on the Robbs Peak topo. The Loon L. road is routinely plowed in winter to allow access to utility company facilities, but it can be a chancy proposition if there is a storm brewing and the plows don't find you for a couple of days. Extra food and blankets in the cars would make alot of sense.

The snow was coming down in large flakes and the ground and trees were already beautifully covered east of Placerville. After hearing a favorable weather forecast and seeing the clouds give way to large patches of blue, we decided to 'go for it' when we reached the Riverton turnoff. Further up the mountain, snow covered the road and we were the first to make our silent tracks in its virgin whiteness. No chains were needed due to the gentle inclines and some south-facing slopes.

Our 'trailhead' was at the turnoff to the Loon L. campground. First there was a gentle descent to a snowbridge crossing of the Rubicon River. One member of the party, a newcomer from Stockton, was sent back when it became immediately apparent that he was very inexperienced. (He spent a pleasant day skiing in the vicinity of the cars.) Later on Boris had to turn back due to a broken binding that Jack tied to the ski with nylon cord. (He was able to ski all around Loon L., however.) The remainder of the party, ie., Jack, Gertrude Gonzales, Mike Golden, Garth, and I continued up the long N-NW ridge leading to the peak. With the exception of a short distance of steep side-stepping up icy slopes in a 40 mph wind, the ascent was quite easy. I only regretted not having my camera for some excellent ski mountaineering shots.

On top there were great views of the Desolation Wilderness with Lake Tahoe in the distance. After a late (2pm) lunch we headed down the westerly slopes, first dodging some obstacles and then enjoying turns through powder -- the "best snow of the year", Garth said. The view of the peak behind us was magnificent, with snow banners ascending along the ridge due to the strong NE wind.

The trip was done in Jack's true style: following the ridges, in search of "bumps", enjoying the broad vistas and big trees, seeing the golden, then red sunset. After being in the sunshine all day, a snow shower met us as we headed north to the cars where we arrived at 6:15pm. Then, shortly, the stars were shining brightly.

The trip to this peak is well worth repeating.

Jackie

PEAK AND GORGE BOULDER:

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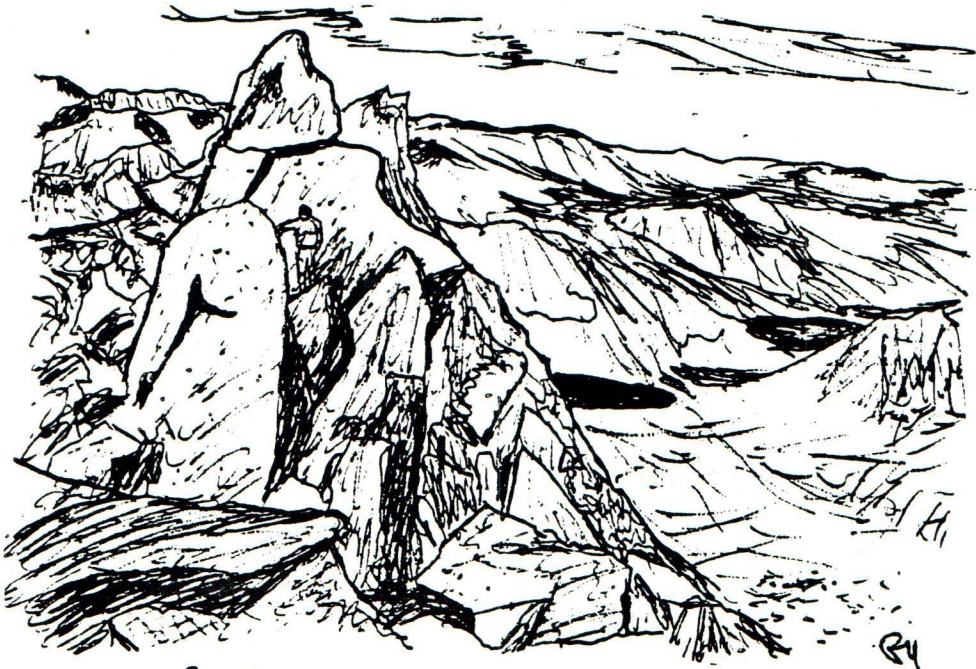
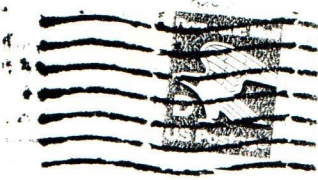
CORRESPONDENCE:

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 months

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Summit Ridge, Mt. Brewer (13,570'): view to west

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