

THE



BOULDER

motherlode chapter-sierra club

NOVEMBER - DECEMBER 1987 ISSUE #24

THE CHAIR'S CORNER

Next time you see Boris, propose a toast, shake his hand, or just plain congratulate him for being the first person ever to climb all 63 peaks on the Ogul list. Old Man Mountain was the last to fall, he climbed it solo October 17th. Boris says he climbed his first Ogul peak with Rex in 1982, but only got serious about finishing the list in 1985. Of course, he's kept working at the NAS list at the same time - at the September meeting, Boris submitted his peak list qualifying him for the NAS Super Emblem under either qualifying plan. He has climbed 89 NAS peaks to this point. Boris joins Jackie Stroud and Pete Yamagata as the only persons holding the Super Emblem (Pete has qualified twice and possibly three times).

After slides ranging from the southern desert to Nevada's mountains to the rain forest of Washington at the September meeting, we did discuss two business items of interest. Most importantly, the assembled members agreed to raise the Boulder subscription rate to \$5.00 per six issues with continuous renewal, effective immediately. The other item brought up that evening deals with the regions we'll use to classify books for our section lending library card file. It was agreed that we should include the name of the state as well as the range and drop the suggested US-West region since there are several ranges with the same names in the West. Except for the champagne toast for Boris, October's meeting was devoted to business (with the usual poor attendance). The six who attended agreed that we could properly recognize those who have completed the various peak lists by periodically publishing the honor rolls. We discussed how difficult it was to get invited to assistant-lead on trips, and I agreed to make a greater effort to encourage trip leaders to take assistants. Finally, we discussed the possibility of holding an annual banquet. The thought is to honor achievements by section members (i.e. new emblem holders, new leaders), thank our officers and have a slide show. Pete had inquired with Carrow's and found that a banquet room could be had with the only charge being for meals (only \$25 for each hour in the room). While this seemed reasonable, we felt the banquet should be scheduled for the December 1988 meeting to allow us to arrange the program and get announcements out.

You may have deduced that I'm keeping your addresses on a computer database to help print Boulder labels. I'm also keeping home, work and emergency phone numbers, and an item indicating which of our activities (peak bagging, gorges, skiing and technical climbing) are your interests. I would appreciate it if you would bring me up to date on these items each time you renew your Boulder subscription. Thanks.

Doug Joy

FOR YOUR CALENDAR

- Nov 17 Section meeting: Boris' Ojos del Salado slides. Don't miss this one! At Boris and Camille's: US 50
7:30pm East, exit left onto Cameron Park. At stop sign before Arco station turn left onto Country Club. After 1/2 mile turn right on Royal, then 2 blocks to Amethyst Lane, 3276 Amethyst. Phone 1-677-4600. Bring snacks to share.
- Nov 21 Intermediate ski trip. Call Fred Fischietto 985-7587 (Folsom).
- Dec 15 Holiday potluck dinner, 6:00 pm. Bring a dish to share and utensils. At Doug Joy's, 570 39th between McKinley and H. 452-7126.
- Jan 19 Section meeting: Bagging Fourteeners in the Colorado Rockies. Boris and Camille's, see directions
7:30pm for Nov. 17 meeting. Bring goodies.
- Feb 16 Section meeting: Tales of Bivouacs, stories of unexpected nights out told by several of our own
7:30pm trip leaders. At Ellen's, 1105 Alamos, turn west from Del Paso at Marysville Blvd. 927-9288
- Feb 27-28 Beginning snow camping. Basics of snow camping and winter survival will be taught. This trip was a lot of fun last year. Advance sign-up required, call Preston at 758-0374 (Davis) by Feb 24.
- Mar 15 Section meeting: A Hiker's View of Great Basin Geology, slides by John Watters. At Doug Joy's, 570
7:30pm 39th between McKinley and H. Bring goodies to share.

NEW BOULDER POLICIES:

It was agreed upon by a general vote at the September, 1987 Section meeting to raise the subscription rate to \$5.00 per year.

Boris Nahlovsky has volunteered to be the Section's new treasurer. Thanks Boris! New subscriptions and renewals should be sent to him (see back).

We have kept track of when your BOULDER subscriptions and renewals were received. Effective immediately, YOUR SUBSCRIPTION WILL EXPIRE ONE YEAR FROM YOUR LAST PAYMENT. This means that everyone will receive 6 issues per subscription. Your address label will let you know when it's "Time to RENEW!" For Issue #24 only, the words "Peak and Gorge" are printed where your renewal notice will appear.

Effective Issue #25, the deadline for submissions to THE BOULDER will be one week prior to the first of each odd-numbered month. The exact date will be found on the back of each issue.

C.S.

MT. ELWELL (7818'), MT. ADAMS (8197'), MT. ROSE (10,776') AUGUST 29-30, 1987

Steve Thaw, Rose Certini, and I left town late Friday night to camp near Sierra City. After a good breakfast at the Sierra Buttes Inn, we drove to the Lakes Basin trailhead and followed the Mt. Elwell trail. All of the junctions were well marked, and we finished the $3\frac{1}{4}$ miles trip to the sum mit in 1 hr. 45 min. A SPS group had placed a register and the views were nice. Back to the car by 1 p.m., we headed to Chilcoot and the dirt road that led to the southern ridge of Adams. Fighting lots of manzanita, we struggled to gain the summit in about the same time as on Elwell. The clouds lent a hand to the exciting views.

Back to the car and out, we camped on a lonely dirt road just north of Reno. On Sunday, we hiked Mt. Rose with a leisurely pace, taking less than three hours. Apparently the forest service has placed a book inside a baggie and left it on a vandalized register tray. The register went back to August 2, 1987 and was about two-thirds full. There were some comments against mountain bikes, some of which were seen going up the trail. Several runners were seen, with a comment made that one "fellow had made it to the top in one hour." After the post-summit drinks, I was home by 5:40 p.m. after a speedy drive home on I-80.

Pete Yamagata

the suncupped Wintun-Hotlum snowfield. Even after this 3000 ft descent Doug was feeling no better after arriving at camp. At this point we suspected that extreme exhaustion was his problem rather than AMS. Because it was now after 5 p.m. with Doug weak, unable to keep food down and mildly hypothermic, we decided that two of us should stay with Doug while the rest of the party went out. This gave Ed and I, who stayed with Doug, enough extra food for the unplanned dinner and breakfast, and permitted most of the heavy climbing equipment to be taken out by Charlie, Terry, Bradley and Tara. Doug was able to keep some warm broth down that evening, and spent a warm and restful night with the help of the extra clothing left behind. Doug ate a light breakfast the next morning and the three of us started down about 8 a.m. with light packs. Within an hour we met Charlie and Terry coming up, who took Doug's pack and some of the gear Ed and I were carrying. We exchanged stories and hiked out to meet Bradley and Tara at the trailhead.

Participants in this year's glacier practice and ascent of Mt. Shasta were Bradley Brooks, Doug Joy, Charlie Smith, Tara Townsend, Ed Vandercook, Terry Wenner and myself.

Preston Andrews

MT. HUMPHREYS (13,986', Aug 14-15, 1987)

Due to several last-minute cancellations, Terry Wenner, Charlie Smith and I made up the entire party attempting Humphreys. The trail up to Piute Pass proved easy going, and the two lakes we passed provided scenic diversions on the way. From the pass, we hiked north and east through a maze of low ridges and shallow gullies to a tiny pond above the highest of the Humphreys lakes. We camped there. It proved so silty that pumping water through Terry's Katadyn became the greatest problem of the trip. I spent much of the evening studying the route through binoculars and dreading the morrow's long grind up unstable talus.

My dread was misplaced. The talus was stable (contrary to reports I had gathered) and while the gully/ledge which constituted most of the route was sometimes steep and loose, the unavoidable stretches were short. Mostly, when the gully was unpleasantly loose, we could skirt the problem by rock climbing the gully's left wall, easy class 3. We sunned for a bit at the gully's notch in the peak's north ridge, and prepared for the final 500 feet to the top. This too presented no difficulties. The initial class 3 chute was obvious, as was the exit onto a large ledge or platform where the class 4 was to begin. The class 4 arete was momentarily very exposed, but several slings provided protection and Charlie had a good belay on me. I placed nuts to anchor and took my turn belaying Charlie and Terry up to the class 3 summit ridge. A two-minute scramble put us on top, where we studied the register and angled for the best photos (using the subsidiary summit fifty feet southeast of the real top). Camp to top took about four hours, including generous rest stops.

We tarried longer than I would have chosen on top to allow a guided party from Bishop to climb through the class 4 section before we descended. They were having a good time. The descent was no more trivial nor more difficult than the climb, but again proceeded without a hitch. We were in camp by 3:30. Our little pond then gave me a lesson in the fragility of life in the alpine environment - when we went for water we found the pond's level had dropped by some six inches and its surface area had decreased by a quarter from the night before. We guessed it wouldn't last more than another week at that rate, stranding its population of insects, frogs and trout fry. Being back in camp early enough, and tired enough not to go for Emerson, we packed up and made our way back down to the pass, reaching Piute Lake for that evening's camp. I guess that was the night we were supposed to hum for the harmonic convergence, and I hope our tired snores made sufficient harmony for the universe, because that's as close to a hum as we managed that night.

D.Joy

Seven climbers and gear, snugly fit in Terry Wenner's van, headed north on Friday evening towards Mt. Shasta. Brief stops were made for fast food (?) and registering our climb at the Mt. Shasta Ranger Station. Finding Fowlers Campground east of McCloud full, we threw our bags out for the night at the nearby Lower Falls Picnic Area. The next morning we bounced our way over 22 miles of logging roads to the Brewer Creek Trailhead on the east flank of the mountain. After last minute preparations we were on the trail by 9:30 a.m. Within a couple, easy miles we reached Brewer Creek. We turned west following the south side of the creek, climbing up unpleasant morainal debris to a level area near 10,400 ft at the base of the giant snowfield between the Wintun and Hotlum Glaciers. We cleared tent platforms and spent a leisurely afternoon adjusting crampons and discussing glacier climbing techniques. As evening approached, the surrounding forests 2000 ft below disappeared from view as the smoke from the big forest fires accumulated around the mountain.

We awoke early Sunday morning and were off by 5:30 a.m. cramponing the snowfield above camp towards the saddle leading to the Hotlum Glacier. We roped up at the saddle and traversed north onto the glacier, winding our way through debris-covered ice up into the seracs and crevasses of the lower icefall. We set up bollard and ice screw anchors here and spent the day practicing crevasse rescue using prusik, Z-pulley and Bilgiri systems. We also spent some time practicing ice climbing on the steep face of a nearby serac. During the day we saw several bozos climbing in the icefall unroped. Fortunately, none of them needed our rescue expertise.

We arose at 2:30 a.m. on Monday in preparation for our summit attempt. Using headlamps we retraced our route up through the lower icefall. Dawn came as we wound our way through the exposed crevasses of the middle icefall. Because of the fine weather and our excellent progress, we decided to take a direct line through the upper icefall. Everyone found the route over seracs and through crevasses most exhilarating. From the top of the upper icefall we traversed towards the summit ice slope which rises above the Wintun-Hotlum snowfield. One exhausted member of the party decided to wait at a rock outcrop at the base of this slope while the rest of us went on for the summit. As we climbed the 30° ice we placed ice screws periodically as a "running" belay to protect us above the Hotlum headwall. When we reached the top of the ice slope only a few hundred feet of Class 2 scrambling separated us from the summit. But Doug had become exhausted during the ascent and apparently had a case of acute mountain sickness (AMS). Because it wasn't yet noon and the weather was still excellent, it was decided that Charlie, Tara, Ed and Terry would go to the summit while I stayed with Doug. Upon their return we descended the ice slope using a "hasty" rappel with a prusik safety loop. This allowed us to rappel 300 ft at a time with our two ropes tied end-to-end. Charlie rappelled first and set up the next ice screw anchors, and I released the rope at the top after everyone had rappelled and was anchored below. Then I removed the ice screws and downclimbed unroped to the next anchor. Three of these rappels were needed to get down the steepest part of the slope. After the entire party was reunited we began the long, monotonous descent of

Banner, pulled crampons and ropes out of their packs and used them to walk up the hard-packed snow to the shattered rock face nearest us. Snow-climbing gear was exchanged for Rock-climbing gear and, they unabashedly continued up the face. Their leader mentioned in passing that the packed snow was "Doable" with ice-axes, but observing their super-cautious technique made our group even more wary. Could our rope and ice-axes provide sufficient protection to cross that 150 yards of hard-packed snow? That question must remain unanswered, as I reluctantly surrendered Ritter to the fortunes of another day and publicly challenged the hopefully less-secure defenses of Banner to check our advance in its direction.

Fortunately, the cliffs Banner had presented us from all prior vantage points had eroded into a steep, but snow-less ski-run, only a 1000' higher. Phil found the scree more to his liking than snow and practically ran up to the base of some short cliffs near the top. The rest of us eventually caught up and found a route between the cliffs that brought us to the edge of the 500' precipice that Banner presented to our basecamp. Soon, all seven of us were perched on the high point for lunch. Noting an elevation of 12,884' in the register, Rich proclaimed it to be a "personal high", the he'd ever been outside a plane. None were disappointed by the magnificent views promised by the Climber's Guide, supposedly better than those simultaneously observed by the Alpine Skills group atop Ritter.

Getting down from Banner was fun. The glacier had turned into a water-slide, and we splashed hither and thither, not particularly worried about anything more than getting wet, as it was mushy enough underneath to maintain some semblance of control with boot heels instead of the one-legged ice axe.

Since the day was young, we conjugated at a nice grassy spot not far above Lake Catherine for some rest and relaxation. It had a fine rock face with few cracks, giving those in our party who missed the rock-climbing up Ritter a chance to test their skill. It also offered those breathtaking pictures that show people appearing to dangle without ropes above an abyss rather than the reality of soft grass a few feet below.

After an hour or so, we went on to the granite-filled valley which could bring us down to camp and dinner. Following instructions given by a solo climber, Terry and I located a grave in a large grassy meadow with a bronze plaque stating that Conrad and Anne Rettenbacher had died climbing Banner in 1934. They belonged to an organization called Die Naturfreunde (Friends of Nature) from San Francisco. It was a solemn reminder that nature can indeed be a moody mistress and even strikes at the heart of those who defend her.

During the night, nature came up with a more personal twist; Ellen came down with some kind of bug, more exactly, the symptoms of lots of 'little' ones. It was the finale of a series of illnesses plaguing all past and present leaders of this trip. Camille Nahlovsky had to abandon her leadership role only days before because of some other bug(s). And I would have had to cancel only a few days before that, had I not recovered sufficiently from a four month bout with Graves disease.

In any case, Ed, who works as a medical technician, took Friday off to help squish Ellen's bugs. Ed must have chanted better words than my doctor did, since Ellen had recovered enough by Saturday to help Ed and I check out the Minarets. These spires form a sharp jagged ridge with high picturesque walls on either side (see Ellen's drawing) that attract many rock-climbers in spite of their reputation for loose rock. Terry and Rich also decided to join us just before we left at 8AM. A fast-paced hour of contouring above 1000 Island and Garnet Lakes carried us to a saddle overlooking the three Nydiver Lakes, and beyond them, the routes up the Minarets.



As we took in the views, I read from the Climber's Guide, describing potential routes up each one of the 17 Minarets. The ensuing discussion found no one willing to participate in the major excursion posed by any of the Minarets (especially since the guide wasn't clear on the need for a rope and ours was left at camp), but three who wanted to try the route up the east side of Ritter from Lake Ediza, which was recommended by every NAS climber who voiced an opinion. So, we split up; Ed, Ellen and Rich went west toward Ritter; Terry and I took a long, scenic trek back to camp, passing below Garnet and 1000 Island Lakes. From what I heard later, the others explored a lot of territory, eventually reaching a point where they could see an obvious trail 500' below sufficient day left to get down to the trail, up Ritter, and back to camp, so they traded their quest for an early dinner with the rest of us at camp.

For me the most exciting day was Friday, which was spent on the opposite (west) flank of Ritter. I'd heard three tales of the terrain there. The Climber's Guide simply says its class 2 scree. The hiker who directed us to the 1934 grave

RITTER RANGE PEAK BAGGER'S EXPLORATORY

Aug 12-16, 1987

This expedition ended Sunday afternoon as I rubbed off 5 days of dust and sweat in the tepid waters of Hot Creek in a basin just east of the Sierras (see summary at end for exact location). Hot Creek is fed by Mammoth Creek and other cool waters that go underground after falling as rain and snow to the east of Mammoth Mountain Ski environs. Some of the ground water tangles with an intrusive body of magma (molten rock), boiling and flashing into steam that erupts directly under Hot Creek. The consequent display attracts a variety of tourists, many wanting to do more than observe, as evidenced by the Sunday crowd of 35 we found already well immersed on the periphery of one subliminal vent. The seven of us (see participant list at end) wantonly broke into their long, narrow formation and were soon caught with the others between water too hot to bear on one side and refreshingly cool for too short a time on the other. A 10-year-old relentlessly teased Phil and I for daring to enter their Yuppie sanctum in (how gauche) underwear instead of 'real' bathing suits. I felt more humored than embarrassed, mentally still wandering about the High Sierra with a perspective on dress codes that the Pyuppie (Potential Young Urban Professional) needed more experience to understand.

Sunday morning had been well spent packing up and carrying gear from our base-camp at 1000 Island Lakes to the cars left at Agnew Meadows Trailhead. The Pacific Crest Trail (PCT) offers some splendid views of the north half of the Ritter Mountain Range; on the way out, I savored them like a visit with an old friend, although we were but untried strangers on the same path only five days earlier.

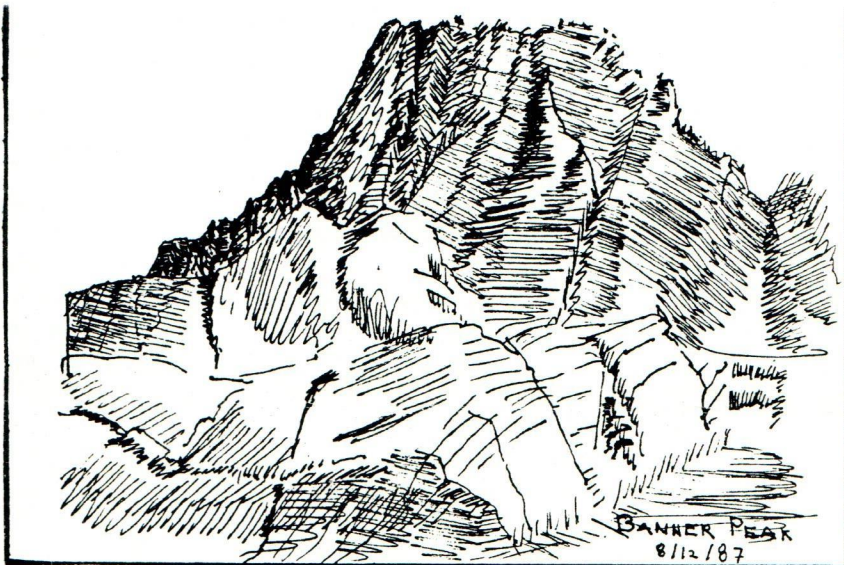
Going in on the PCT the first day (Wednesday) took us up the 10,000' level at 1000 Island Lake, which had a cold rain shower ready to greet us. Banner Peak loomed above the quick camp we made on the lake's northwest shore, its vertical cliffs and sawtooth ridges silhouetted against the grey sky (see Ellen's drawing). Ritter Mountain, only a bit higher, silently brooded behind Banner.

I hoped we could climb both Banner and Ritter the next day after getting to a saddle between them. I'd been told a variety of stories about this particular route up Ritter. Sacramento Northern Alpine Section (NAS) climbers adamantly told me to avoid it. Igor Mamedalin, who led a group of seven LA Sierra Peaks Section (SPS) climbers up from the saddle, attested the worst he encountered was one section of exposed ridge (Class 3) where a rope wasn't needed, and gave me some specific details of this route. Then again, the Climber's Guide to the High Sierra proclaims, "This is a hazardous route and has claimed many lives."

Given this varied advice, we had decided to take turns carrying Ed's 8mm, 150' climbing rope to use with Terry's rock-climbing gear. We would have had to have done without the extended range of capability given us by this equipment had not Terry volunteered to lead roped climbs. The rest of us were willing and able to follow a good lead, but lacked Terry's prior experience and extensive knowledge of rock-craft.

In all, I was optimistic as we started up a gradual valley at 6AM on Thursday morning. The meadows round 1000 Island Lake drifted from sight as we hopped over huge boulders near a snow-field and on up to a saddle overlooking the clear alpine Lake Catherine. The next obvious move was to cross another small snow-field just above the lake before continuing up a glacier that terminated 1000' higher at the saddle between Banner and Ritter. That small snow-field was more of an obstacle than anticipated, a portend of things to come. This year's light winter snowfall and subsequent hot summer had left only old hard-packed snow, difficult and dangerous to cross, even with an ice axe. Avoiding the snow by various routes, including a short crack that sponsored a competitive rock climb, took us to some scree above the snow before dropping back down to the large glacier. The glacier itself proved less treacherous than the snowfield as we climbed along its northern edge where the snow was softened by the sun. Some took to the adjoining boulders to avoid patches of slippery ice, where cutting a few steps with an ice axe sufficed for the skier-types.

The glacier soon fell below (rather than any of us) as we reached the snowless, spacious Banner-Ritter Saddle. Further on down to the east, the picturesque Garnet Lake came into view; above us to the left was Banner; above us to the right, a band of snow blocked the way up Ritter, sticking two tongues into chutes on the north flank of Ritter. This snow was rock-hard and steep, probably 3' up for every 2' forward. Igor (of the SPS) had spoke of snow so soft, they post-holed (had snow up to the waist) all the way up to the scree in the right-hand chute. Stymied, we rested and discussed options. Two in our group wanted to try it, two others maintained it would be crazy to even consider climbing Ritter given this impediment, and the rest were doubtful. As we talked, an Alpine Institute Training Class of four casually came down from



The ten of us who gathered at Nicely's in Lee Vining for an early breakfast headed south on Hwy 395, and then southwest on Rock Creek Rd. to the Rock Creek Trailhead. And then there was nine. Jackie Stroud would car camp, allowing her knee to heal as she shared vicariously in our adventure.

We took the trail to Ruby Lake, and then crossed talus and snow to Mills Lake where we made a high camp early in the afternoon. Treasure Lakes was closer to Mt. Abbot, but this camp was higher.

Doug Joy led the effort, having satisfied voracious work demands that had threatened to keep him in town. Charlie Smith was both relieved and disappointed to settle back into an assistant's role. John Skaglund was the third experienced climber whose skills would be relied upon by the novices.

Doug woke us up at 4 A.M. Eventually we were on our way up the snowfield, slowed by my own lack of preparation and organization as I ate and packed. Doug gave a review of crampon techniques to those in need, and we trudged up the hill, two of us linked to leaders.

At the base of the buttress we stashed the unnecessaries. Doug asked "Who's hot?" and assigned three respondents to John's leadership to form the first group on the ascent, while Charlie would lead the second. John proceeded, deftly climbing up the rock that Steve Roper calls class three. His entourage wasn't so sure. "I think we're off-route; this can't be the way." "I don't think the other group can follow us up this." "I know I can do this, but I need a rope." "Where's the other group?" "Were there some class five moves in that last section?" "We must be off-route." The group's concentration was disrupted by fear and by thoughts of the other group. Progress was slowed by belaying in spots John referred to as class two. Then Doug called "time!" John appealed for another climber to join him in a quick scramble to the summit. With Doug's permission, I joined him, and Charlie soon followed after. We were at the summit in ten minutes, taking too little time to drink in the view to the southwest. I must see that again, and next time I'll have a lightweight camera.

We rejoined the other six at a rappel point not too far from where we'd left them. Charlie descended to set up the next rappel as Doug patiently reviewed procedures with each climber as needed. Doug was last to rappel down, and John collected the hardware and downclimbed. The next sticky wicket was the transition from rock to snow with the resumption of our stashed gear, and from that point we just stepped on down the hill to camp and started packing for the return home. Though I was among the first into camp, the others--Jeff Gottesman, Janet Farrar, Debbie Bulger, Claude Hanna, Ed Vandercook and the leaders were already heading down the trail or loitering with ready packs by the time I had cinched the last strap on mine. "I've got to do better than this" I resolved.

We returned to the trailhead and then convened at Nicely's where most folks had a Sunday chicken dinner that they have enjoyed complaining about ever since. Table talk focused on classifications of climbs. Had the mountain changed? Is Roper unreliable? Are we wimps? Did we miss the class three route? Maybe peaks are more intimidating than one pitch practice climbs. Maybe a hot climber like Roper either forgets the tricky moves or happens onto a nifty line of least resistance and presumes that others will find his footsteps. Maybe the next time we go to Mt. Abbot it will look more like a third class peak.

Terry Wenner

told me he took a group of YMCA kids up that "easy" way a few years back. On the other hand, Pete Yamagata told me of his formidable decent a few years back, having to support himself on boulders where a fall could be fatal.

Early Friday morning (the third day) at 1000 Island Lake was foreboding. The weather was cold, windy, and cloudy. Half our group didn't even want to leave camp at 7AM to attempt Ritter again. Phil wanted a layover day and Ed rested and attended to Ellen's bug(s). With clouds swirling around the peaks, the remaining four of us ambivalently climbed up to and contoured around the west half of Catherine, passing over and under small snow-fields on its west shore. As we continued south around another alpine lake, we encountered an intriguing snow-tunnel that spanned a fast-moving stream running between two lower lakes. Ritter now presented us with a plethora of cliffs interspersed with loose rock. Guessing that the route must be further on, we jumped the stream and proceeded to the southernmost of these 'high' lakes. Continuing further south would have led to the Minarets; but luckily, the southwest flank of Ritter yielded a preferable side of our objective, a long scree slope leading to a short set of jagged cliffs that looked easier to climb than anything we had previously seen.

Unfortunately, the weather hadn't changed appreciably; the wind was sharp and the peaks still intermittently lost in clouds. On the bright side, I noticed blue sky below the clouds blowing in from the west. Given a choice, Terry wanted to continue up, expecting the weather to remain consistently drab, Robin and Rich wanted to turn back, feeling rain or snow could be in the cards. Being a committed optimist, I suggested that Terry and I continue up the scree but turn back if the weather got substantially worse. Not reluctantly, Robin and Rich volunteered to go directly back to camp and let people know where we'd be.

Thus, only two of us continued up the scree slope and found an intermittent trail that fanned out into several narrow chutes cutting through the higher cliffs. We took turns climbing (to avoid rockfall) in one chute, but couldn't safely negotiate the dry waterfall half way up the chute, or the exposed rock-face on either side. Backing down, we tried another chute that had signs of prior passage. The nice scree inside led to our nemesis (steep, rock-hard snow) pushing us to the left side of the chute, with less, then less, then no room to maneuver. Leaving the chute did expose us to a long drop, but the solid rock on this face was cracked with plentiful holds that led to some steep broken rock a few feet away. Going slowly up and to the north, we suddenly came upon a saddle, and stood gaping at the top of Ritter, less than half a mile away of boulder hopping away.

Our attention now focused on the wisps of vapor that occasionally engulfed us. Feeling more chilled than threatened, we marched on and soon stood atop Ritter with the clouds rushing all around. The register indicated that most people started up from Lake Ediza, the NAS-approved route.

After taking a few pictures of near and distant lakes and peaks cloaked in clouds, we quickly moved back to the saddle and followed the ducks we had built to guide us back to "our" chute. While contouring over boulders piled above and below shattered cliffs, I kicked a big one loose that went down at least a thousand feet. It was difficult to remain unmoved, seeing the boulder bounce hundreds of feet at a stretch, almost straight down to the lake below. In any case, our chute soon welcomed us in and led to the scree slope where Terry managed to find and note fresh scars on the boulder I had kicked loose from far above.

Tired, but with time to spare, we dawdled along each lake on the way back. The clouds that looked so foreboding this morning now simply reflected the incredible light provided by the setting sun. Little did I realize we were missing the warm fire Phil had started to guide us in and the warm meal Ellen would soon reward us with to dispel the cold and fatigue. Both were relished as the last light left the sky, leading to a bout of feeding, singing, and general revelry around the campfire.

TRIP Picked up permit at Mammoth Ranger Station (opens at 6AM), drove over Minaret summit
SUMMARY (gate on summit closed to cars after 7:45AM) to **Agnew Meadows Trailhead**. 6 hr hike to basecamp on W side of 1000 Island Lk (9,834'). Ice axes needed for morning climb up glacier from Lk Catherine to Banner-Ritter Saddle; further progress up **Mt. Ritter** (13,157') barred by 150m of hard, steep snow (best done with ropes & crampons); did **Banner Pk** (12,945') from saddle (steep cl 2 scree), easy 9 hr round-trip (3300' TEG) from basecamp. **Ritter** from W: went past Lk Catherine to (southern-most) 4th lake, then E and up a long scree slope to cliffs, went up chute at end of right-most scree trail (chutes to left were cl 4-5), stayed in chute on left of snow-field until forced out on ledge (exposed cl 3 on good rock), then went 200m to N (a bit up) on steep scree to saddle S of Ritter, then easy cl 2 to top, 12 hr round-trip (4000' TEG) from basecamp. **Ritter** from E: went SE to saddle (10,500') between Nydiver & Garnet Lks, traversed W & tried good-looking chute under Ritter, backed down & went S to scout, saw obvious trail below coming up from Lk Ediza (typical route taken up Ritter), but turned back for lack of time. **Donohue Pk** (12,025') from Donohue Pass: call Phil for details. Basecamp to Agnew Meadows in 4.5 hr; drove to Hwy 395, then 5 mi E on 395, turned N just W of airport, NE several mi to pullout marked **Hot Creek Hot Spring** (closed after sunset).

Participants: Phil Silva
Terry Hubbard Richard Strohl
Robin Rutherford Ed Vandercook
John Sarna, leader Ellen VanFleet, asst ldr

John Sarna
drawings by Ellen Van Fleet

THE BOULDER:

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SUBSCRIPTIONS:

\$5.00 per year (6 issues). Address labels will note when it is "Time to RENEW!" Send checks, payable to "Peak and Gorge," to Boris Nahlovsky, 3276 Amethyst Lane, Cameron Park, CA 95682.

SUBMISSIONS:

We are interested in articles, letters, fiction, poetry, and artwork that would be of interest to the Peak and Gorge Section. Copy should be typed, single-spaced on 8½ x 11" paper. Materials will not be returned unless accompanied by SASE.

DEADLINE:

One week prior to the first of odd-numbered months. The next deadline is December 24.

THE BOULDER

Charles Smith, Editor
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Admonition

Don't stray off the trail.
There's thistles

But . . .

Poison oak

But . . .

You'll get lost

But . . .

Pickers, thorns

But . . . Blackberries!

John Sarna
12 Park Vista Circle
Sacramento CA 95831
Peak and Gorge

Debbie Bulger

BOOKS - BRIEFLY NOTED

Adventuring in the California Desert by Lynne Foster, Sierra Club Books.

This newly published travel guide to the various desert regions of California is a well-researched conglomerate of information that undoubtedly was written to support the club's stand on the California Desert Protection Bill (S.7) authored by Senator Alan Cranston. It is a much-needed guide considering the sketchy information previously available about the desert.

Peak climbers will welcome the numerous descriptions on hiking, scrambling, or climbing to the summits of many DPS peaks. There are also many descriptions of other fun activities such as hiking, ghost town exploring, auto tours, and even four-wheeling (legally and where established). Areas covered include the Sweetwaters (Mt. Patterson hike) down to Algodones Dunes (San Diego County).

Numbering 438 pages long, this is a detailed comprehensive guide as well as a geologic and natural history reference, with a substantial section on surviving and appreciating the desert. Listed price is \$12.95, a real bargain if one is planning even a casual outing. Unlike some Sierra Club guides, this seemed to be quite accurate in its various descriptions and no information appeared to contradict my own findings in my personal exploration of the various peak climbs that I have done.

However, I would question the section on Mt. Patterson which was placed in the heading "White Mtns.-Last Chance Mtns." Unmentioned was the route that I took recently from Lobdell Lake which is probably the easiest way to go: a closed off jeep trail leads to the summit. Quite a bit of history is usually mixed in with the area descriptions. This book will be my traveling companion on all my future visits to the California Desert. I understand a similar guide is being prepared for the Nevada Great Basin. Desert peak climbers will have never had it so good!

Carson-Iceberg Wilderness by Jeffrey Schaffer, Wilderness Press

I have only glanced through this recent publication, and like the previous book, seems to be another very detailed and comprehensive guide to the large wilderness area between Sonora and Ebbetts Pass Highways. However, I found just by a off-hand check that the description of Lost Cannon Peak is somewhat awry. The book talks about the "Class 3" summit which conflicts with my assessment of the summit area. Clearly, we climbed each of the possible high points and determined that the northernmost pile of rocks was the highest point which was only class 1-2. However, immediately south of this high point must have been the "class 3" summit that the author was raving about! This was the only class 3 that we found and it was somewhat devious short route-finding with more than the usual short exposure that one will find on Northern Sierra peaks. Also, unmentioned was the "balanced rock" which we found just SW of the summit area. However, this appears to be primarily a backpacker's and hiker's guide, so I suppose the author must be allowed his discretions. By, the way, I think that even Highland Peak was rated 3!!!!

Pete Yamagata 10-87

