

THE



BOULDER

motherlode chapter-sierra club

JANUARY-FEBRUARY 1988-ISSUE #25

Happy New Year's! Hope all your holiday trips went well.--I ran into Bill Wolverton a few weeks ago and pass along his greetings to old friends. He's still living in Escalante, Utah, determined to explore every nook and cranny in the region, and hoping for a job with the Park Service next year. He also had some wild tales of his three day gorge scramble on the Feather River last August.--There's an article comparing the new Spectra with Kevlar and nylon cord and webbing in the latest (#22) issue of Rock & Ice worth looking at (along with some nice photos of the Needles above the Kern River where Preston and I spent a week climbing last August).--Finally, I'd like to thank all the BOULDER contributors for their efforts and to encourage others to consider submitting something. Especially needed are items pertaining to gorge scrambling. It needn't be long; a paragraph or two will be greatly appreciated. Have a fun and safe time enjoying the snow. Best wishes. C.S.



View from Cloud's Rest
by Ellen Van Fleet

FOR YOUR CALENDAR

- Jan 8 Slide show. Peaks from the Siskiyou's to the Sonora Desert. 7 pm at Pete Yamagata's, 2109 10th Street (rear). 444-6319.
- Jan 19 Section meeting & slide show. Bagging Fourteeners in the Colorado Rockies. At Boris & Camille Nahlovsky's. US 50 East, exit left onto Cameron Park. At stop sign before Arco Station turn left onto Country Club. After ½ mile turn right on Royal, then 2 blocks to 3276 Amethyst Lane. Phone: 1-677-4600. Call Doug for car-pooling, 452-7126. Bring snacks to share. 7:30 pm.
- Feb 1 Spring trip write-ups deadline. Call Doug for details, 452-7126.
- Feb 16 Section meeting. "Tales of Bivouacs." Stories of unexpected nights out. At Ellen Van Fleet's. 1105 Alamos, turn west from Del Paso at Marysville Blvd. 927-9288.
- Feb 27-28 Beginning snow camping. Basics of snow camping & winter survival will be taught. This trip was a lot of fun last year. Advance sign-up required. Call Preston Andrews by Feb 24. 1-758-0374.
- Mar 5 North Crystal Range Peaks. Long loop ski tour from Loon Lake. Ascents to include Tells, McConnel, Silver, Red's & more. Expect to travel after dark. Leader: Jack Rankin, 457-0776. Assistant: Bob Carlson, 965-5952.
- Mar 15 Section meeting & slide show. A Hiker's View of Great Basin Geology by John Watters. At Doug Joy's, 570 39th Street, between McKinley & H. Bring snacks to share. 452-7126.
- Mar 23-24 Map & Compass Training. Class sessions, 7-10 pm. Sign-up by Mar 16. Doug Joy, 452-7126.
- Mar 27 Map & Compass Training. Field session. Fee for materials.

See the Bonanza for peak climbs in the coast ranges & ski mountaineering trips offered by the other sections.

Look for Spring training sessions in:

- First Aid
- Ice Axe (training & practice)
- Rockclimbing



DUFFER PEAK (9458')

OCTOBER 10-12, 1987

Duffer Peak is the highest peak in the Black Rock Desert area. Ten years ago Humboldt County, Nevada wanted to transfer Blue Lake (below Duffer Peak) from the BLM to the county in order to create a theme park at Blue Lake--a glacial tarn deep in the Pine Forest Range. I wanted to see what happened to Blue Lake as well as check off Duffer Peak from my Peak & Gorge Qualifying List.

We all met in Gerlach, Nevada at 11:00 am Saturday. People were: Bill Hauser, Rex M. Smith, Robin Reed, Camille & Boris Nahlovsky, Charlie Smith, Jolie Lipsig, and Mary Lou Ramsey. Gerlach Hot Springs was closed to the public but Mary Lou & I got permission from the Sheriff to go in. It was nice swimming--plus we had it all to ourselves.

After some last minute shopping in Gerlach & Empire, we caravanned across the deadly Black Rock Desert toward the town of Sulphur, Nevada. This traverse is the desert rats equivalent to climbing K2. Many people warned us about the Black Rock Desert. Pete called Camille six times and tried to persuade her not to go on the trip because of this crossing. However, diehard pilgrims all, we went onward in our pursuit of the sacred Black Rock and unknown hot springs. If Gene Markley can cross the Black Rock Desert so can we, I figured...and yes, you can see King Lear Peak from the town of Gerlach!

After passing the Garrett Ranch we located Mt. Trego (5642')-- a nice stately looking peak. Some of us wanted to climb it, but others wanted to get going in order to see as much of the Black Rock Desert as possible before it got dark.

A special steel sign was found that said "Trego Hot Springs" but the pool near the sign was totally dry. We checked around for more thermal waters because the map showed the hot spring close to the R.R. tracks...Lo & behold we hit it! A giant pool 300' long and 10' wide filled with nice mineral waters. The closer one swam up to the source the warmer it got. The best place was $\frac{1}{2}$ way down where campers had placed a rug to get in.

Amazingly enough there was a group of about 100 motorbikers camped here. Their sign said: "No Women, No Dogs, No Guns" and they called themselves "The Mountaineers"-- incredible but true. Mountaineer motorcyclists! Sounds like they learned "doublespeak" real well from our Mr. Ray-gun. We talked to them and they almost convinced me to simply drive the dry lakebed over to Sulphur. "Faster, no curves,"--"we can go 150 mph out there"--"no cops" etc. I checked my maps but it didn't seem like the dry lakebed went exactly to Sulphur itself, so I chickened out. Robin really liked driving the road in her new Accura; however she was upset when her license plates dropped off!

Sulphur hasn't changed a bit since I was there in 1978--only the hippie couple was gone along with their goats. People were really impressed with Sulphur. Boris, in a rare moment of emotion, said: "Is this it?"!!

After Sulphur we headed directly north past Navajo Peak (7726') and King Lear (8923'). Just before Navajo Peak we discovered an unusual hot spring on top of a 100' deposit of travertine. We called this one "Jet Hot Spring" because the water actually came

out under the pool in a jet--just like a jacuzzi. The water drained off in two directions; one to a cow basin, the other to a tub for soaking. The tub was bone dry so we opened up the channel to fill the tub. It was real slow so we went on our way. People were pretty soaked out from Trego Hot Springs anyway. However, Trego had a lot of sediment in it and sort of caked up your hair--like Masai warriors do with cow's blood and clay added to their hair.

We camped out up the road toward Blue Lake in a real pretty grove of aspen. Had a good bonfire and slept peacefully after a big day of three hot springs and 100 miles or more of dirt roads. We camped about 3-4 miles from the end of the road. The next morning we got up and drove a short distance, couldn't drive any further due to steep ruts, parked and hiked to Blue Lake. From the "Blue Lake Threshold" we had a choice of a 1/3 mile steep trail or a 1 mile moderate trail up to Blue Lake. From the "Threshold" the road is closed the rest of the way to Blue Lake.

We hiked up to Blue Lake--a real pretty tarn nestled under the NE face of Duffer Point. Duffer Peak was behind Duffer Point. We crossed over a well-defined terminal moraine to the other side of Blue Lake and went along a lateral moraine with aspens, limber pine and a few lodgepoles to a saddle just west of Duffer Point. We then dropped down a bit to a meadow, then climbed up to the ridge directly in front of us, heading toward the point on the USGS map that said Duffer Peak 2864 meters. Blue Lake should be called Blue Lakes because it is a series of tarns formed by successive glacial advances and retreats and not just a single tarn as the name implies.

Going along the ridge for about a mile we hit the high point which the USGS map said was the summit; however, we could see a pinnacle further to the east that was obviously higher. I was in a dilemma--do we place the register on the USGS stated high point, or do I take the group over to the furthestmost pinnacle?

We first placed the register where we were, everyone signed in, then Rex, Boris & I zoomed over to check out the pinnacle. Both Rex' and Boris' altimeters said the Duffer Pinnacle was 20' higher than Duffer Peak (USGS high point). At 3:00 pm we got the pinnacle and found an old register there! Rex counted a total of 15 names (not parties) since 1961 on the pinnacle! I called over to the others on Duffer Peak to come on over and bring our register with them. They said "come on over and get it yourself!"--so off I went back to Duffer Peak, got our register, carried it over to Duffer Pinnacle and put all the old entries from the rusty film can into our new plastic register. We saluted the Black Rock Desert gods and met the group down in a little valley below the peak. Camped again at our beautiful aspen grove. There was lightning, badgers, deer, and strange noises all night there.

Monday morning we got up and found the world famous spa called "Howard Hot Springs" as shown on the USGS map. We made our respects to Howard ("Hughes") Steidtmann who missed the trip because of a job. It had a nice soaking tub, but would only hold one person at a time .

I told wild stories about Bog Hot Springs west of Denio Junction and off we all went. "Bog" is perfect. 90° F water, big enough pool to swim in, plus therapeutic hot water available if one goes upstream toward the source (Ojo de Agua). We all had a great soak under the hot waterfall (man-made). Lounged in the sun and zeroed in on Duffer Pinnacle all the way from Bog Hot Springs.

It was clouding up so we all left to explore Baltazar Hot Springs. This was a 160° F (or more) hot pool--deep and boiling with no place to soak. The place has an interesting house there, and we saw four skinned coyotes!

Well we all split and headed off home. Funny how we couldn't coax Camille into stopping at one of those super-fine Nevada restaurants. Last time Boris & Camille were seen was heading rapidly toward a nice safe Denny's in California. Six hot springs--only two being in the book, plus a sixth ascent (party) of a peak was a great weekend!

Bill Hauser (408)243-4566

SNOW VALLEY PEAK CLIMB

Oct 17, 1987

Picture eight of us ambling along a simply charming old dirt-road winding up through a Nevada State Park. Groves of bright yellow aspen poke out from the more pervasive evergreens. The sky is a tranquil blue, competing with the aquamarine radiance of Lake Tahoe that slowly opens to the west, guarded by familiar peaks. Freel, highest of these hallmarks, shows a light dusting of snow on its northern flank. A single auto passes and stops ahead to pick up some equipment left by a crew working on the Tahoe Rim Trail (TRT). The driver is more than willing to talk about their trail-blazing work and cordially invites us to actively participate next year. The road ends at the base of a microwave tower near a pile of rocks marking the top of Snow Valley Peak. The register in the rocks tells many stories, including some 'close encounters of a brushy kind' experienced by a dozen Sacramento peak-baggers on Al Gutowsky's trip only two weeks earlier.

Choosing to explore the TRT on the way down, we follow orange ribbons about 2 miles through some low-lying brush to a ridge that parallels the road we came up. Continuing on the ridge, rather than following the ribbons leading down into more brush, a temporary terminus of the TRT is soon discovered. The freshly dug trail beyond draws us irresistibly onward with an proposition of easy walking (and talking). We wind gradually downward along the ridge, taking in several well-placed scenic overlooks. Where the trail crosses Highway 50 at Spooner Summit, we opt to follow a less-travelled path down to Spooner Lake, knowing our transportation is but a few minutes away at Spooner Junction (Spooner must have been well-versed in these parts).

As we pass close to the lake, the ruby light of the setting sun is broken by the silhouettes of hundreds of active waterfowl. They create ever-widening concentric circles on the still water, reaching the shore as our footsteps carry us to the culmination of a picture perfect day.

My thanks to Pete Y for assuming the role of co-leader on the morning of the hike.

PARTICULARS: 6 mi to Snow Valley Pk (9214') on dirt roads (closed to motorized traffic) from USGS BM 7032' at Spooner Junction (Hwy 28 & Hwy 50) on the NV side of Tahoe; assessed \$1 per person to enter the Lake Tahoe Nevada State Park; would have cost \$3 per car to park at Spooner Lk Picnic Area; nothing assessed on other access trails from Hwy 50, eg. N on the TRT from Spooner Summit (7145'). The TRT will be the easiest (and most scenic) hike up to the peak when it's complete in 1988.

John Sarna

THE IGLOO WITH A VIEW

Many, many years ago, Peak and Gorge founder Gene Markley led an outing to practice snow survival---one of many instructional trips led over his reign. On a beautifully clear day a number of us drove to Old Donner Summit to build snow shelters. The group split up in the area just east of the ski resort to dig away with snow shovels in various locations on separate projects. One group of persons worked on a snow cave beneath a small cornice.

After watching the various ongoing activities, another person and myself began work on a genuine igloo. We decided on a location first: the side of a small hill that had a view to the west. Unfortunately, the snow conditions in that immediate area proved unsuitable for block cutting, so about a 100 foot walk was necessary to carry blocks from the windpacked area nearby to the construction site. This was arduous work, and in the haste to build this igloo, a few of us (Leo Krastins and I) forgot to put on sunscreen and were to pay dearly for it. However, I think that even if we had, the perspiration from the work would have rinsed it off.

Several persons came over from the other sites, and seeing our progress, pitched in and helped cut and ferry blocks, and built up the igloo walls. One does not really realize the amount of work it takes to build snow shelters like this until gaining the actual experience! After three or four hours work, we capped off the roof of the igloo with a large, 2 foot square block. It was a small igloo, with a person like me having to curl up slightly to be able to lay down---about a $5\frac{1}{2}$ foot diameter inside. However, it was quite a sight!

Later that day we were talking and relaxing about that hill when a series of booms were heard off in the distance---the ordinance train explosions near Roseville. Traffic had to be diverted from I-80 through the Auburn-Folsom Road. There were other sessions; we practiced various rescue methods such as bilgeri, the Z-pulley technique, avalanche probing, and then early summer rock practice with belaying, rappelling, and climbing technique and practice. All useful, practical methods best outlined in the book Mountaineering: The Freedom of the Hills. In the years to come, we never did get to use the crevasse rescue techniques, as no outings were ever led to the big, heavily glaciated Northwestern mountains; the Sierra Nevada glaciers and crevasses offer comparatively little danger. However, the outings were all in fun and it was interesting to see snow and rope engineering in actual use!

Pete Yamagata 1-31-87



TWO WEEKS IN THE HIGH SIERRA

During the summer of 1986 Anne and I traveled among the high peaks of the southern Sierra - crossing the Kings-Kern Divide to the Great Western Divide, then across the Kern River canyon to the Whitney group.

On July 26 we drove down the eastern flank of the Sierra to Whitney Portal where we were met by Desert Area Rural Transportation (P. O. Box 1799, Bishop, CA 93514). They transported us and our gear to Onion Valley. We highly recommend this shuttle service - they will go anywhere in Inyo County and their fees go to support senior citizen projects in the Owens Valley.

The next morning we headed up the trail from Onion Valley loaded with 12 days of food, ice axes and a 75' rope. The trail was busy with backpackers and horse teams; and tales of bear raids circulated among the parties. At Kearsarge Pass (11,760') we met a backcountry ranger. Not wishing to risk losing our food so early in the trip, we listened carefully as he pointed out the locations of the bear poles at Kearsarge Lakes (There is one near the "e" and two near the "g" in "Kearsarge" on the Mt Pinchot 7 $\frac{1}{2}$ " map.). By early afternoon we had found an excellent campsite, with a bear pole nearby, near the outlet of the largest lake. We spent the afternoon exploring Bullfrog Lake and finding fine views of the upper basin of Bubbs Creek, the formidable barrier of the Kings-Kern Divide, and Mt Brewer at the southern end of the Great Western Divide.

Retracing our route passed Bullfrog Lake the next morning, we descended the John Muir Trail to Bubbs Creek amid clouds of dust. Traveling about $\frac{1}{2}$ mile up the trail towards Forester Pass we struck out through brush and tall grass towards the creek. After crossing it on a log, we traveled east along the creek, discovering the remains of one of Shorty Lovelace's pigmy cabins. It was apparently built when he ran a trap line before the park was established. We followed ducks west of Vidette Creek into a beautiful basin filled with rock-bound lakes. The aftermath of an enormous avalanche was evident everywhere as we climbed through and over acres of debris. Having difficulty finding a campsite near Lake 10,820, we finally settled on a reasonable site near a little tarn to the east.

We spent the next exploring a route over the Kings-Kern Divide. There is no path south of Lake 10,820 and the terrain is extremely rugged with talus and steep alp slopes to climb. A narrow gorge exists north of the Deerhorn-Stanford col. Little sun penetrates its depths and our ice axes were useful in climbing the hard neve. The steep, scree headwall below the col was a challenge too, even with our light climbing packs. At the broad col (12,560') we paused for views of Mt Ericsson and Harrison Pass, one of two possible routes across the King-Kern Divide in this area. The steep snow slope at the top of the pass, reported to be dangerously hard in this season, didn't look like a reasonable crossing with heavy packs. But the feasibility of Ericsson Pass would have to wait until tomorrow, as it was not visible from the col. With our reconnaissance complete we headed up talus towards the north ridge of Mt Stanford. This long, intricate ridge led us to the airy 13,963' summit. In the register we found such famous names as Norman Clyde, Jules Eichorn, David Brower, and our own Jack Rankin.

We packed early the next day anticipating a difficult crossing of the divide. We crossed the Deerhorn-Stanford col, descending sandy benches into an immense cirque between Mt Ericsson and Mt Stanford. We ascended talus and narrow ledges towards Ericsson Crags in search of the illusive pass. Nothing was obvious, except the stupendous north face of Mt Ericsson. The climbing became more serious as we ascended down-sloping, scree-covered ledges with cliff bands waiting below. Then just below the crest of the divide we were stopped by a vertical wall. "Roper, you said this pass was Class 2-3!" Before pulling out the rope and hauling packs, we searched the upper ledge for other alternatives. We found that by crossing the head of an exposed gully and climbing an open chimney we were able to reach the crest. The descent from the pass across the upper Kern River plateau to Lake South America was an easy ramble. We spent the afternoon watching the spawning frenzy of eastern brook trout at the lake's outlet.

After a leisure morning at the lake the next day, we headed down an infrequently used trail, passing lakes and mosquito-infested bogs. We took a refreshing swim in one of these lakes before ascending the trail along picturesque Milestone Creek. Cascades over granite slabs and rock-bound lakes abound in this wonderful basin. We found an excellent campsite on a sandy bench above one of these lakes. The next morning we were up early in hopes of climbing the impressive summit pinnacle of Milestone Mtn (13,641'). A talus fan and steep wall led to the classic summit ridge. Sound, class 3 rock brought us to the pinnacle's summit and panoramic views of the Great Western Divide and the Kaweah Peaks.

The next day we crossed Milestone Pass and slogged through snow-filled Milestone Bowl. We followed the Colby Pass trail into the lush Kern-Kaweah River valley. Hoping to escape the hordes of hungry mosquitos we wet up camp atop a breezy knoll near timberline. This worked fine until the wind died in the late afternoon. The next day, being in a slothful mood, we restricted our explorations to the headwaters of the Kern-Kaweah River. We couldn't restrain ourselves from climbing to the crest of Kaweah Peaks ridge at Pants Pass, however, for fine views of the southern peaks of the Great Western Divide, Nine Lakes Basin, and the forbidding hulk of the Black Kaweah.

The next day was spent in the long descent from lodgepole to Jeffrey pine forest at Junction Meadows on the Kern River. The ford, just above where the Kern-Kaweah River enters the main Kern, was tricky in swift water over rounded, slippery boulders. From here, the lowest point of the trip (8000'), we started climbing up Wallace Creek trail. This offered spectacular views down the glaciated Kern River canyon. Then without warning, the rhythm and harmony which we'd achieved after nine days in the wild were shattered by the thunder of jet engines and the appearance of Air Force fighters flying at tree-top level up the canyon. The reverberations of this intrusion would be repeated again and again for the remainder of the trip, especially near Mt Whitney. We camped late in the afternoon at the first of a series of good campsites along Wallace Creek between 10,000' and the intersection with the John Muir Trail.

The next day we continued up to Wallace Lake, just above timberline, as clouds built over the Sierra crest for the first time during the trip. Climbing the steep talus headwall southeast of the

lake we passed Mt Russell, arriving at Tulainyo Lake. This lake, situated within a hundred feet of the crest, is the highest (12,802') lake in the Sierra Nevada. Its west shore was inaccessible because of 80' ice cliffs still present in mid-August. In order to obtain water Anne belayed me to the edge of the cliff so I could lower our cook pot to the lake's surface on a line. But each time I filled the pot and tried to retrieve it, it caught on the submerged foot of the cliff. To retrieve it I had to sink it by throwing snow into it. We finally abandoned our attempt at getting water from Tulainyo Lake and got it from a small lake in the cirque below Mt Russell's northeast face.

The next morning we climbed steep talus to Russell Pass on the Sierra crest. We left our packs there and climbed the excellent rock of Mt Russell's knife-edged east ridge. From the summit there was a fine profile of Mt Whitney's east face and the ice pack covering most of Tulainyo Lake. From the pass we descended scree slopes to the overused campsites in Clyde Meadows on Lone Pine Creek.

The next morning we continued our descent to Whitney Portal via the "Ebersbacher Ledges". This series of exposed ledges bypasses the willow-choked stream bed. At the trailhead we resupplied food and fuel from the car, and picked up rock-climbing gear to use on our climb of the east face of Mt Whitney. We climbed back up to Clyde Meadows and moved camp up to Iceberg Lake, right at the base of Mt Whitney's east face. Quite a few other climbers were camped there too, so we planned an early start the next morning. The east face route involved a couple airy traverses and alot of loose rock. Ten leads and a short scramble brought us to the crowded summit made unpleasant by the sonic booms of low-flying jets. Tired after a long day of climbing, I made a gross error in judgement, resulting in a dangerous descent of one of the endless, loose talus chutes on Whitney's west flank. Almost to the point of exhaustion we arrived in camp well after dark. After sleeping late the next morning, we descended to Whitney Portal and showers!

Preston Andrews

Gondola sought for extinct volcano

Associated Press

LAKEPORT — Developers want to build a \$4 million gondola to the top of Mount Konocti in Lake County, which they claim will make the extinct volcano one of the top tourist attractions in the state within a decade.

"The ride would be superior to anything Disneyland has to offer. The view from the top is something everyone should experience," said Thomas Bardeen, who with partner Paul Dennett plans to submit the idea to county planning officials next year.

Those plans call for four-seat gondola cars rising nearly vertically for a half-mile from the base of the rugged mountain's north side. The mountain's jagged profile, sometimes graced with fog wisps, gives it an eerie and spectacular appearance.

At the end of the ride, visitors would be at the 4,000-foot Buckingham Peak, one of four high-points of the mountain. The ride would take 10 minutes and would be able to carry at least 200,000 riders a year. The developers say those people will spend at least \$10 million for food, lodging and other visitor services each year.

The Sacramento Bee

Tuesday, December 29, 1987



Ice Climbing Practice
Hotlum Glacier, Mt. Shasta
Photo by Tara Townsend

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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:

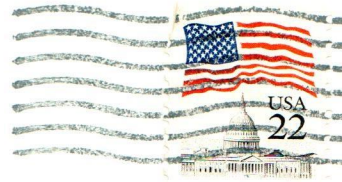
We are interested in articles, letters, fiction, poetry, and artwork that would be of interest to the Peak and Gorge Section. Copy should be typed, single-spaced on 8½ x 11" paper. Materials will not be returned unless accompanied by SASE.

DEADLINE:

One week prior to the first of odd-numbered months. The next deadline is February 23.

THE BOULDER

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Time to RENEW !

Racetrack Valley from Tin Mtn, Death Valley NM--by Ellen Van Fleet