

THE



BOULDER

motherlode chapter-sierra club

SEPTEMBER - OCTOBER 1988, ISSUE # 28

THE CHAIR'S CORNER

A few items of business have come up lately, which I'd like to discuss now so we can address them quickly at this month's meeting. First, Charlie had only one article submitted for the July Boulder, clearly too little to justify the duplication and postage costs. The Boulder is our own, personal newsletter, serving our needs and interests - but we must supply the material to achieve this. If you don't contribute, then the issues will either be empty or few and far between. It doesn't have to be a full-blown article: a few lines describing your feelings on remembering a high country view, or a short verse, or a sketch, or your latest climbing joke will do. Introduce some controversy, complain, suggest ideas, express yourself here! It's your forum.

Having missed an issue, we face the problem of how not to shortchange our subscribers. Up to this point, a Boulder subscription delivered the (six) issues occurring in twelve months, but the subscription period was one year. In discussing how to address the missed issue, Charlie and I agreed to propose that we redefine the subscription period as six issues, taking effect retroactively, so that anyone who should have received the July issue will get at least six issues for their last subscription payment. That will be the new policy if those attending the September meeting concur.

I also plan to discuss briefly the question of whether Peak and Gorge can and should lend its ropes to members for private trips. We do little technical climbing on Section trips, and our ropes suffer more from age than wear. Factors favoring loaning the ropes: (1) more members can learn technical climbing skills, (2) members can get more rope handling experience, (3) few Section trips require full-strength ropes. Factors against loaning: (1) it's possible that only worn ropes will be available for a Section trip, (2) greater liability risk if a rope breaks, (3) more likely that a rope will be unavailable because borrower can't be reached, etc., (4) greater need for fund raising since ropes will wear faster and need replacing more often, (5) Club or Chapter policy may preclude loaning. Some of these issues can be

addressed with the right policies, for example: (1) establishing two classes of our ropes - lead quality (newest and not available to loan) and top-rope (older, can be loaned); (2) requiring that at least two (three, etc.) Sierra Club members participate in the private trip, so that some benefit accrues to the Club; (3) requesting a higher rope fee donation for a loan, eg, \$5 instead of the usual \$2 - but this must be distinguished from renting the rope. Personally, I do not support this proposal, but I believe it has sufficient merit to warrant discussing it further within the Section.

Our September and October meetings will be slide shows. September is your chance to show the slides you took on this summer's trips and tell us about them. For our October meeting, Paul Richins, Jr. will show his slides and describe his successful ascent of Mt. Logan in Alaska's St. Elias Range. Be sure to attend this exciting show.

Looking forward to seeing you (and your slides) soon

D.Joy

CALENDAR

9/17 Rubicon Peak (Cl 2) via Meeks Creek trail. 9099' Ogul 10 mi rt x-c/2500' gain. Meet CSUS Arboretum, 6:30 am. Al Gutowsky, 457-3338.

9/20 7:30pm Meeting: Bring a few slides showing your trips this summer, and snacks to share. At Doug Joy's, 570 39th St. midway between McKinley and H, phone 452-7126.

9/23-25 Highland (10,934' NAS, Ogul) and Silver Pks (10,774' NAS, Ogul; both Cl 2) via Nobel Cyn; hike Sun. near Kinney Lk, (maybe climb Reynolds or Ebbetts). Limited. Departs Fri. eve. Leader: John Watters, 383-6150 (eve's); John Sarna assisting.

10/1-2 Mother Lode Chapter annual Conservation Issues Conference at Clair Tappaan Lodge. See Sept. Bonanza for details.

10/1-2 Mts. Emma and Walker from car camp near 395/108 jct. Leader: Al Gutowsky, 457-3338.

10/8 Rock climbing practice - exclusively for Peak & Gorge regulars to polish their skills. Donner Pass. Limited, call Doug Joy 452-7126 by 10/6 to sign up.

10/8-10 Jackson Mts, Nev. Exploratory trip, about 12 mi rt x-c/3000' gain to determine height of an unnamed peak - possible submittal to be named Dan Dobbins Peak officially. Kyle Hot Springs on return. Meet at Winnemucca P.O. noon Sat. Leader Bill Hauser, 408-243-4566.

10/18 7:30pm Meeting/Slides "Mt Logan via the East Ridge" with Paul Richins, Jr. Share the adventure as Paul shows his slides and relates the story of this demanding expeditionary climb. Please bring snacks to share. At Al Gutowsky's, 5700 Shepard near CSUS (457-3338) or call Doug Joy, 452-7126.

11/1 Winter Outings Schedule Deadline - trip writeups due.

11/15 7:30pm Meeting Agenda and meeting place to be determined. See Boulder or call Doug Joy, 452-7126 for details.

----- Trips of interest from the Day Hikes Schedule -----
These trips are not sponsored by Peak & Gorge, but appear in the
Fall Outings Schedule.

10/1 Desolation Wilderness/Dick's Pk (Gr 2B) from Eagle Lake. 4 mi. 1-way, 2000 . Limited. John Besbekos, 348-3584.

11/6 Old Man Mt. (Gr 3C-D, 7789' Ogul) Meet at BofA, Rosevll Sqr. 7:30 am Leader: John Sarna, 439-8024. Assistant: Robin Reed, 923-1553.

11/12 Mt. Tamalpais from N and W (Gr 3C) 14 mi rt / 2500' gain. Meet at 11th & O parking lot at 7:30 am Leader: Patrick Purcell, 422-5864.

12/26 Crystal Caves (Gr 1B). 1200' initial descent, then explore cave. Bring flashlight. See Bonanza for details or call Jack Bussio, 457-3794.

Iron Mountain, June 25-26, 1988

Terry Wenner was good enough to drive his van, so he, Brad Brooks, John Besbekos, John Watters and I talked about politics, thrillers and wildlife management as we made our way toward Mammoth Lakes Friday night. The excitement picked up in the morning - we had a ringside seat to watch the Mammoth telephone exchange burn while we waited in vain for Boris and Camille to meet us (the VW broke down). When they were finally able to phone, we proceeded by bus to the Minaret Falls trailhead and started the long grind out of the San Joaquin valley. We made fair time given the heat and rapid elevation gain, but had started later than planned, so as morning gave way to afternoon the chances of a summit attempt slipped away. The decision was made firmly when we reached Ashley Lake under cold, dark, rapidly lowering clouds. We had the tents up before the rain hit, but John B. and I got pretty soaked pumping water for cooking. He had signs of mountain sickness, and I was badly worn out from the approach, so we retired to dry clothes and sleeping bags to conserve energy. The storm let up about 6:30, allowing us to cook and discuss Sunday's strategy in the light of Terry's explorations.

Somehow, getting up in the cold at 4:30 seems as heroic as any other part of the climb, especially when contemplating it from a warm sleeping bag. We were on the trail at 5:45 with the first rosy light of dawn. The snow gradually steepened, but the step-kicking was excellent. We got a moment of excitement climbing a delicate, 6-foot vertical tongue of snow in a small gully connecting the upper and lower snowfields, but everyone surmounted it with confidence. Terry then led us up sixty feet of easy class three rock to a marvelously flat ledge. After a brief stop, I moved the party onward, hoping to take a longer break where we could see the route above better.

We hopped across a short bit of snow, then climbed two or three hundred feet more of class three to a 25-foot blank wall. John B and I took a long rest - I for one was too tired to climb much further safely. Terry climbed the wall directly, while Brad and John W found a much easier route around the corner. They returned in about 30 minutes, Terry having reached the top via a bit of class four that stopped Brad and John.

The descent was easy. We took a much wider gully (more south than west of the lake) down, postholing only once or twice. It steepened tremendously to connect with the lower snowfield, and I led off in a standing glissade. The skiing was great, but I lost my balance and cut up a finger pretty badly (for lack of gloves) in a failed self-belay. After spraying blood around for a while, then patching me up, we more carefully plunge-stepped the rest of the way down. The trail out was a long slog, even downhill, but good food and beers (and a \$120 emergency room visit to get a BAND-AID!) were waiting.

- D.Joy

The trailhead for this trip is located on the left side of the paved road from Plasse's Resort (Silver Lake) just before reaching the parking lot of the Stockton Muni Camp. The trail climbs 700 feet in a little over 2-½ miles before reaching our camp site at Coe Creek Lake. After reaching the ridge and enjoying our first view of Mokelumne Peak and the peaks of the Desolation Wilderness, we hiked down the trail a short distance to a dirt road which we hiked along, passing the Allen Ranch before coming to a trail that climbs the 400 feet to the top of Squaw Ridge and the site of the trading post (Plasse) that served the many wagons traveling into California in the 1850's and 1860's. The Plasse Site is located along the upper reaches of the dirt road we had previously hiked and is also the location of the trailhead and boundary signs denoting entry into the Mokelumne Wilderness.

It was a long two mile downhill hike from the Plasse Site to Coe Creek Lake. Coe Creek Lake is a short hike off the main trail and is the best place to camp. Long Lake is another possible camping site, but in low water years it is a series of small, shallow, unattractive pools being turned into a meadow. However, both lakes are shallow and contain large amounts of organic material.

After setting up camp and having lunch we returned to the main trail and started our hike to Mokelumne Peak. After hiking a mile we reached three forks in the trail. The Silver Lake Quad (1956) denotes only two trails at the fork. The left trail goes to Long Lake, the right trail goes to Shriner Lake, and the middle trail (a new trail) goes to Munson Meadow. We took the middle trail and two miles later, all uphill, we reached Munson Meadow. At the meadow we came to another fork in the trail, one leading to the Mokelumne River and Camp Irene and the other, rightward, to Votaw. We took the right trail and hiked downhill until reaching open slopes at the base of Mokelumne Peak. After a short hike through tree covered slopes we reached the red colored granite covered slopes of the peak. We traversed upward on the left side of the northeast ridge until reaching a large gully that lead to the top of the ridge. Once on the ridge it was an easy scramble to the top.

On top (9332') one has a speactacular view of the Mokelumne drainage and the Sierra Crest; to the north the high peaks of the Crystal Range in Desolation Wilderness; eastward the high peaks of the Carson Pass area and to the south the many major and minor peaks found in the Carson-Iceberg Wilderness between Ebbetts and Sonora Passes.

We left the peak by hiking a short distance down the southeast ridge before dropping off the ridge and traversing down the peak's east face until we regained the open slope we had started our climb on and retraced our route back to camp. After a day hike of 15 miles and gaining approximately 2500 feet, camp offered us a different set of options to end the day: a swim, drink, food, and good conversation.

Bear Creek Spire (13,713')

July 1-4, 1988

A spur of the moment decision to try the northeast ridge of this fine looking peak. Ellen & Oscar agreed to our (Jolie & I) crazy plan of heading down without a prior permit on this busiest weekend of the summer. Brought every High Sierra map I own in case we couldn't get in there. Spent Friday night at McGee Creek & arrived just before the Rock Creek info/permit kiosk opened at 6:00 only to find a long line already waiting. Snippy ranger told me the Mono Pass quota was full, but--hah!--we wanted the other trail (Morgan Pass). Permit in hand, we had a leisurely breakfast in Tom's Place before taking off.

Easy hike to Dade Lake--about 5 miles & 1500'--lucky for me as I was kind of out of shape. Half the gain comes on the last off-trail mile--we followed the ridge west of Gem Lakes rather than following the talus-choked drainage.

800 feet of firm snow brought us to the base of the ridge next morning. The lower talus was reasonably in place & we were soon enjoying the third class ridge. No route-finding problems here--pretty much can wander at will--if you don't like the looks of one crack try the next one over. After gaining the summit ridge, the way seems blocked, but a hidden ledge to the west provides the key. It's interrupted at one point by a steep gully, so we roped up & a few horizontal cracks allowed us to traverse the wall. A chimney a bit further brought us up to the register, not far from the summit block. The northwest side of the summit block has some cup-like depressions which offer an unprotected, exposed way up--I opted for the off-width on the south-west side which I could protect a bit with a sling.

After scrambling back along the ridge a ways, a 60 foot rappel brought us to ledges on the east face that diagonal down to the northeast ridge again. One more rap over a steeper section & we were soon glissading back to Dade Lake, glad to have a three day weekend & not have to rush on out. Next morning was spent reading & drawing, then out, with a stop at Mono Lake & a bit of excitement as Ellen's bright beams kept shorting out on the way home.

Charlie



SOUTH GUARD (4,033m), MT GENEVRA (3,979m)
AND MT ERICSSON (4,140m) PRIVATE TRIP

JULY 1-4, 1988

Despite numerous setbacks including two cancelled permits, a broken van, illness, and a late start in warm weather, the five of us, Boris and Camille Nahlovsky, Tobi Tyler, and Howard Steidtmann and me packed the 12 miles and 3,200' gain to Junction Meadow in Kings Canyon- Sequoia National Park.

Getting up early, I left the group to solo South Guard via East Lake, Lake Reflection, and Longley Pass. Almost making a fatal error in going around the left side of Lake Reflection, I had to wade the lake to get past some shoreline cliffs. A steep snowbank-cornice then appeared on Longley Pass, but I passed this on the right, via a class 3 gully and barred the summit, seeing Jack Rankin and Bob Carlson signed in. After a 7:00 p.m. return to our agreed upon camp at Lake Reflection, I came under bitter criticism from others, threatening to destroy the trip. Thankfully, the enmity passed, and the next day looked better.

Awakening early and together, we headed for Milly's Foot Pass (class 3) where Tobi suffered some injuries on a loose rock. From there, Camille descended on the south side to a small lake while the rest of us bagged Geneva. We picked up Camille and went for Lucy's Foot Pass, where the group decided to return to camp while I got Ericsson. I felt Geneva was more like class two, while Ericsson had about 50 feet of class three, taking me about two tries to find the key to the summit. Clouds came in, and the late (5:00 p.m.) afternoon light made for a glorious scene. I expected to bivvy somewhere below when the light faded, but I made it to camp by 8:00 p.m., thanks to a speedy descent and a little glissading.

The next day, while Boris went off solo to get Brewer, I said my goodbyes to Camille (who was staying till Wednesday) and Howard and Tobi (who were staying all week). I finished the 15-17 mile backpack out in 7 hours to Roads' End. My feet were so sore not even a 15 minute soak in Rubbs Creek would alleviate the pain! I was hobbling for another day before going back to work. Not a bad trip considering the \$100 phone bills getting things ready!

Pete Yamagata

LYELL (13,114'), MACLURE (12,988'), AND AMELIA EARHART PEAK (11,982') JULY 21-24, 1988

Meeting in Tuolumne Meadows at 9:30 a.m. Thursday morn, the eight of us, Johns Sarna and Watters (the leaders), Robins Reed and Rutherford, Laura Parker, Jeff Gottesman, Ed Vandercook, and myself began by 10:20 a.m. to proceed to our base camp near the upper end of the Lyell Fork footbridge.

Awakening early, we were off by 6:17 a.m. the next day to climb Lyell. We shortly reached the headwall of the main ridge and found a three route up a series of broken ledges. Most of us were on top by 12:30 p.m. We stayed for an hour, and then John Sarna and I finished Maclure in 35-40 minutes from the saddle. On the way back, we met a SPS group scheduled to duplicate our ascent the next day. Back at camp, a few of us restless ones stayed up till midnight around a small fire.

Sarna decided to climb Amelia Earhart instead of Florence, so all eight of us made the three hour ascent from our base camp. A number of women and C.C.C. crews were signed in the register, but alas, no one from Sacramento! I went straight back to camp with Reed, arriving at 3:00 p.m. and leaving to pack out solo by 3:30, when the rest of the group wandered in. I was back to my car at 7:45 p.m. (about 10 miles) and noted snow on the road just west of the May Lake turnoff (the weather had been stormy every late afternoon). After stops at Taco Bell and McD's in Oakdale, I was unpacked, washed, and in bed by 1:00a.m.

Pete Yamagata

BADWATER BASIN TO WHITNEY IN 45 HOURS

For years I've had a desire to hike from the lowest point to the highest point in the continental U.S. I studied maps of roads, trails and contours to come up with a direct route over the Tucki, Nelson, and Inyo Mountain Ranges. I projected it would probably take two weeks as a backpack; after all it was only 105 miles long with 30,000' total elevation gain. Imagine my surprise when I found that a less direct route was regularly done, and took only two days!

I came upon the details in a rather circuitous fashion. It all started on July 30 after I crossed over the Sierra Crest (13,480') and started down the Mt Whitney Trail after bagging Mt Hale and Young above Guitar Lake to the west. For some strange reason, my hands had gone completely numb even though it was quite warm out. In fact, I couldn't even feel my own pulse. Ignoring the problem was my initial reaction; then, my ears went numb, too. This made me sit down to scope out the situation. Along came two guys with walkie-talkies. Great, I thought, and asked one to keep an eye on me to make sure I didn't die unnoticed on the trail. This would not have been easy as, at 5 PM, more people were coming down from Whitney's summit this summer day than could be found on a typical suburban street. In any case, along trots another guy wearing only jogging shorts and tennis shoes and carrying a mere pint of water, and he's going up the trail, see picture. The guy with the walkie-talkie forgot all about me and excitedly began snapping pictures of this runner, who stopped for some 'posed' action shots. Unfortunately, I didn't make inquiries at the time, being too concerned with my own problems. It was six more miles to Lone Pine Lake, where I was to rejoin (Caroline) Curry's Wilderness Expeditions; I went in to climb Whitney with them on their permit. Anyway, my concerns were unwarranted. Some salty food, water, and rest restored my circulation and the miles faded away faster than the evening.

My curiosity, as well as that of others in our group, was piqued again, while hiking out the next day. We passed several signs put up by the U.S. Forest Service which warned of a \$500 fine for anyone engaged in a competitive sport further up on the trail, probably where it went into Sequoia National Park at the Sierra Crest.

A bit further down the trail, we met a willowy, blond woman wearing a 'Badwater to Whitney' T-shirt. She was more than willing to talk about that run, which was now over, having been a member of their 'support team'. Before continuing up to look for her husband, who just may have beaten last year's record, she directed me to one of the participants, Jim Walker of Hi-Tech Sports, 440 Northstar Way, Modesto (209) 577-1861. They gave me the following information and the statistics at the end of this article:

The race from Badwater Basin (-292') to Mt. Whitney (14,495') has been run every year since 1972. Hi-Tech Sports sponsored the 1988 run, which evidently caused some consternation with the U.S. Forest Service (prior runs were unsponsored); just a week before the run was scheduled, they revoked the permit they had issued to use the Mt Whitney Trail. This evidently didn't deter participation, although two runners were subsequently cited by the Forest Service on the trail. Of those who didn't finish, one cut up his feet badly by trying a short cut through Badwater's salt flats, and another was found to have two broken bones in his foot. In spite of these difficulties, the runners hope to see a race similar to the 'Western States 100' (100 miles from Squaw Valley to Auburn over the Northern Sierra), a well-publicized event for which permission is routinely granted.



My opinion (I don't know the Sierra Club's position) is to encourage such activities, even in primitive areas. It's important to have the public associate wild lands that are given wilderness or similar status with a use that involves people - minus their machines. Too much of the public still perceives wilderness as 'closed' lands because they can't make that association. The impact on the area caused by media coverage and support groups, while negative, is relatively insignificant, especially for an event on the Mt. Whitney Trail, which certainly doesn't offer much opportunity for solitude. I passed over a hundred people on the trail going up and down Mt Whitney, and there were over 30 people on top when I did reach the summit. While on top, a woman's hiking group from the Bay Area unfurled a banner proclaiming, "Good girls go to heaven, bad girls go everywhere." On the way down, I noticed that a marmot had gotten into a bag of garbage and food left near their packs and scattered partially eaten food all about, a situation I couldn't leave without a few pointed comments. After one of the 'bad girls' decided to reward the rodent with a pile of trail-mix, I stuck around to make sure the mess got cleaned up. That got me a 'good' cold shoulder, although one of their group eventually did collect the trash into a garbage bag.

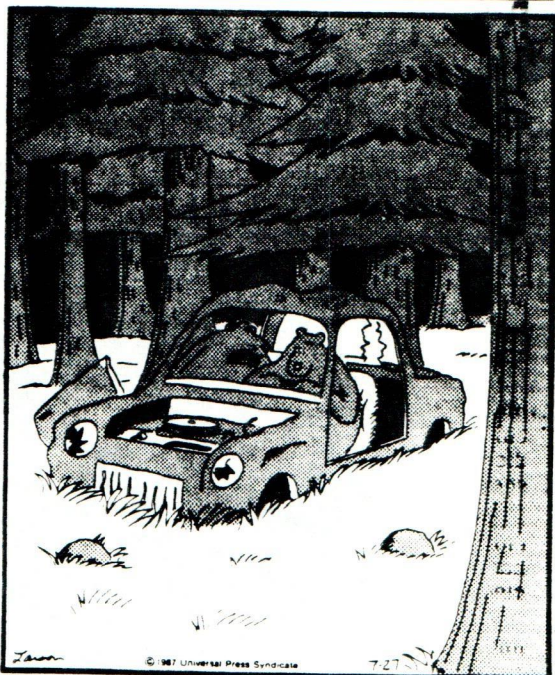
But I've digressed. For those of you who read through all this to get statistics on the race itself, well, here they (finally) are:

Out of the 8 runners who started at Badwater Basin, 4 finished with the following times:

45 hr, 05 min	Tom Possert	Set a new record; prior record was 45 hr, 15 min set in 1987
45 hr, 54 min	Chuck Jones	Was slowed on the Sierra Crest by altitude sickness
60 hr, +	Linda Elam	Of Modesto; first woman to finish this run twice
80 hr, +	Doug Michael	Of Grass Valley; time includes night at Trail Camp to avoid lighting and snow on Whitney

written by John Sarna

THE FAR SIDE



"Think about it, Murray. . . . If we could get this baby runnin', we could run over hikers, pick up females, chase down mule deer — man, we'd be the grizzlies from hell."



Mountain families

Chesler Park--the striped
spires the jumbled
Needles float up
unreal standing sandstones
crowd themselves
this afternoon
sun beats down a
brilliant shimmer
the air
thick in it
not spared the glare
off rock the eye
adjusts, finds
a scarlet
gilia--there

Canyonlands

The desire to fully possess the terrain spread out before you. Not in some sense of ownership, but a longing to belong. An embrace, then, body rolling about in the dry soil, bending grass & flowers, or with arms spread wide, the fingers' tight grip to rock nubbin, foot held via friction purchased by the sole. An embrace, then, of knowledge? In touch. By naming? The names of things and the names of parts of things and the names of things in relation to other things. The whole ecologic web drawn out, made visible, (through words? the mind?), so you've got it then, but no, it's all too neat this great complexity you trace to implicate, way too tidy this logic of interrelating ecosystems we can barely grasp. Eyes apart, though aware of the track of footprints the body leaves behind in the dust, of the following out and beating down the old trails to reclaim the ancient byways of deer, their hunters, the obsidian traders and all those others now long gone. To reclaim an ancient wisdom. Now. Eyes apart soak it all in. There, in that gap, in that embrace of mystery you repeatedly return to, to feed off yet still hunger after, drawn on and out--there blows a bitter wind, there in that gap the shapes of sound form once more, teased into hesitant scraps of speech,

missing the point
leaving you
to lie
in snares the words
lead you to
which each might yet be led
to share

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THE BOULDER:

Published every other month by the Peak and Gorge Section, Mother Lode Chapter, Sierra Club.

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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:

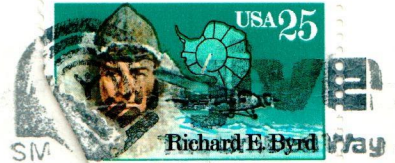
We are looking for articles, letters, fiction, poetry, and artwork that would be of interest to the Peak and Gorge Section. Copy should be typed, single-spaced on 8½ x 11" paper. Materials will not be returned unless accompanied by SASE.

DEADLINE:

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

THE BOULDER

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