

THE



# BOULDER

motherlode chapter-sierra club

NOVEMBER - DECEMBER, 1988

ISSUE #29

## THE CHAIR'S CORNER

Remember 1986? Similar restrictions have been placed on Sierra Club mountaineering trips again this year, for the same reason - no liability insurance. Several interpretations of the new rules have been discussed since Jackie received the announcement from the Club's national office, but we must keep in mind that only those restrictions established by the Club Board of Directors are official Club policy. The written policy we now have states that for Club-sponsored trips, including practice sessions and gorge trips:

- (1) Climbing or scrambling of rock climbing class 4 or 5 is not permitted,
- (2) The party may carry a climbing rope to deal with unexpected circumstances, but may not attempt a route knowing beforehand that the rope will be needed,
- (3) Teaching of ice axe technique is not permitted.

Unlike the restrictions of 1986, the Directors expect these to be permanent.

At the September meeting, John Sarna agreed to contact the Los Angeles area climbing sections and report on the actions they are taking and those we can take to encourage the Board of Directors to reinstate the full range of climbing activities. His suggestions about what we can do appear later in this issue, and I strongly recommend that you make your feelings known to the Directors - if they feel that enough Club members are impacted by these restrictions, they may try to find a way to remove them.

For those of us interested in Mono Lake's future, John Watters has a copy of the Draft Environmental Impact Statement and Draft Comprehensive Management Plan just released by the USFS. He will bring copies to the November and December Peak and Gorge meetings to help prepare comments. John is also planning to organize a group to attend the public hearings in Lee Vining January 7th. The public comment period for these documents ends January 19th - this is our opportunity to help keep water in the lake. For more information, call John evenings at 383-6150.

2621  
11/15/88  
J. Watters

CALENDAR

11/15 7:30pm Meeting at Johanna Gaedeke's, program TBA, but several people have offered slide presentations. Also, John Watters will have the Mono Lake plan documents available for examination. Bring a snack to share. 237 Hartnell Place. From Howe Ave turn west on University (just south of Fair Oaks); take first left onto Campus Commons Road; then first right onto Commons Drive; first right onto Hartnell. Park just after Hartnell turns left sharply - Johanna's house is in the first cluster of homes on the right, just after the third lamp in from the street along the walk. Call Doug Joy, 452-7126 for details, or Johanna 927-9371 for directions.

12/13 7:00pm Christmas Potluck - bring a dish to share and your own cutlery. Note that this is the second Tuesday in December. At Doug Joy's, 570 39th St. midway between McKinley and H, phone 452-7126.

1/7/89 Mono Lake Public Meeting. A public meeting regarding the USFS Draft Comprehensive Management Plan is scheduled for 2:00pm at the American Legion Hall in Lee Vining. We'll depart at 6:00am Saturday from the CSUS Arboretum to attend, and stop for a Basque dinner in Minden on the way home. Call John Watters evenings at 383-6150 for information.

1/17 Meeting, program and location TBA. Some attention will be given to cold weather equipment and survival in preparation for the winter camp Feb 11-12.

1/29 Strawberry - Station Pk (7550') and nearby ridges and canyons. North-facing descent should offer good runs downhill. Great views of Crystal Range and Sierra crest. Meet at CSUS Goethe Arboretum, 6:00am. Leader: Jack Rankin, 457-0776.

2/11-12 Winter Camp - build a snow shelter and spend the night in it. This has proven to be a fun trip for each of the past two years, and teaches important survival skills. Try to attend the January meeting if you plan to come on the trip. Leader: Doug Joy 452-7126.

3/3-5 Sierra Madre Exploratory, Class 2: drive to Aliso County Park Campground Fri (5-6 hr); climb Peak Mt (5843') and McPherson Mt (5749') on Sat, then Fox (5167') Sun before driving home. Moderately paced hiking, dinners out, car camping. Call leader for details: John Sarna, 446-6178; Robin Reed assisting, 923-1553.

3/11 Double-digit peak bagging along the divide between the South and Silver Forks of the American. Little Round Top (or Pineapple Pk, 9595'), Buck, Cody, Station and Eagle Pks, Bald Mt and others via a long, fast ski of about 25 mi, but not as hard as some recent trips. The alpine scenery along the divide crest should be fabulous. Call leader for meeting time, place, and other details: Jack Rankin, 457-0776.

TBA (about March) John Watters will discuss the geology and ecology of the California and Nevada desert lakes.

Private Trip: Around Christmas. Las Vegas peaks: Spirit, McCollough, Moapa, Virgin and Kino. Bill Hauser, (408) 243-4566

Highland Peak (10,934' NAS, Ogul)  
Silver Peak (10,774" NAS, Ogul)

Sept. 23-25, 1988

After meeting at C.S.U.S. slightly before 7:PM on Friday, September 23rd. John Sarna, John Beseckos and I headed over to pick up Doug Joy at his house. Doug was running a bit late because of work commitments. We spent about ½ hour deciding

which vehical was most appropriate for our purposes and finally got underway around 7:45. With Mars blazing in the Southeastern sky we headed for our nights camp at Silver Creek near Ebbetts Pass.

The next morning we got underway around 8:AM and hiked leasurly up Nobel canyon gaining around 2,500 feet in four miles. At Nobel Lakes we cut off the trail and ascended the summit ridge. After several anticipated false summits we reached Highland Peak. We then descended into the saddle between Highland and Silver with little problem except for John S. getting stuck in a patch of Whitebark Pine. The saddle between these two peaks is fairly long and when we reached the beginning of the ascent for Silver it was late afternoon and we were tired. John B. decided to wait while the rest of us climbed Silver and after placing a register we returned to find him rested and ready to go.

As the afternoon was rapidly turning to evening I decided to take the most expeditious route off the mountain and back into Nobel canyon. Dropping some 3,500 ft. in an hour and a half we slid, skidded and hopped down a sand and scree filled shute arriving about 500 feet above the canyon floor in pitch darkness. Maneuvering through thick woods and over lava mounds in the dark we followed the shute, now a stream, until we encountered the trail. Altogether we had a long day with two successful peak bags and an exciting finale.

John Watters

### Reynolds Peak

On Sunday morning [September 25, 1988 - ed.], John Sarna, Jackie Stroud and I headed for Reynolds Peak. Jackie and I had skirted the base of Reynolds the day before while John was climbing Highlands Peak. This time John and I wanted to climb Reynolds, so Jackie showed us the route via the "back side" of the mountain. She had led a Sierra Club climb of the peak in 1984, but had to part company with us at the base of the peak this time to prevent injuring her knee further. We arranged to meet her at the car later that afternoon.

After climbing above the trees and willows, we found the mountain to be an interesting conglomeration of various rock formations. Violet, red and orange colors were interspersed throughout the volcanic rock, and the weather has eroded weird shapes and spires. The climbing was fairly easy with a steady elevation gain to about 9500 feet. Then there was one last rocky scramble to the top...

It is rated class 3 and yes, it is, but the rock ledge is only 3 feet or less wide with a vertical drop on either side! I guess that feels like a roadway to a veteran climber, but to me it felt like a very narrow ledge dropping away to nothing. I faced the rock and decided to go up. One thing I knew: I could not look down, just at that solid piece of rock I was hanging on to. John gave me pointers in hand holds - keep three points of contact at all times and move the fourth contact (a hand or a foot) one at a time. I followed John one hand hold and step at a time. At one point I said, "John, I think I'm close enough!" John encouraged me saying, "Only this one more steep part and we have it made." I carefully planted my hands and feet and stared at my rock, not daring to look right or left. Finally, John said, "We made it!" I sat down shaking - five points of contact now.

I barely took my hands away from the rocky ledge to reach for the register. Sure enough, Jackie's group was in the register in 1984. There were only two parties since then - and only one other person this year. I signed the register and enjoyed part of the view. One

side of the mountain dropped a thousand feet sheer and I couldn't look that way. Soon we scrambled down. Solid ground on either side of me -- hoorah! I know I love the mountains, but I found out I do have a fear of heights - that makes for a real thrill! It was a great day, and my name is now on top of Reynolds Peak with other climbers.

Johanna Gaedeke

### RESPONDING TO NEW MOUNTAINEERING RESTRICTIONS

By now, you have probably heard about the recent Sierra Club Board of Director's decision to drop insurance coverage for mountaineering activities. I trust Doug Joy has distinguished rumor from fact on the first page of this newsletter and explained how it all applies to us. Basically, restrictions are now in-place that severely limit (or eliminate) our use of protective equipment (ropes and ice axes) on Sierra Club Outings. Similar restrictions kept us from offering any Class IV or V Climbs for a year (1985/86), and the new restrictions could be even less accommodating. In any case, the bottom line was and is still that the Peak and Gorge Section will be unable to offer a good number of the better gorge scrambles and peak climbs (such as Cathedral Peak, Humphreys, and Clarence King, all of which we've done in the past).

Several (printable) responses to these restrictions have been mentioned at the last two Peak and Gorge Meetings:

- Lobby the Sierra Club to bite the bullet and pay higher insurance rates for mountaineering (perhaps through an increase in dues)
- List any outings that could include restricted activities as private trips
- Form a new organization that does not limit our activities

It's a bit too early to consider the last option, but its controversial nature makes it a good topic for extended discussion. I'll contribute my two cents worth at the end of this article by reporting how it worked out for LA's Rock Climbing Section.

Lobbying the Club may solve the problem, as it did two years ago. Several Sierra Club Activity Sections have already launched letter writing campaigns, mostly from Southern California. Letters from other parts of California (and the U.S.) are needed to insure the problem is not perceived as localized to LA. I was told that the LA Chapter's Mountaineering Training Committee (MTC) have found that mountaineering insurance is available to the Club at much lower rates than the Club was quoted. Apparently, insurance for \$40 million dollars can be obtained for between 150,000 and 200,000 dollars lower than the quote received by the Club's insurance company. The reason for this difference may be that the Club obtained their quote from a general line insurance company while the MTC obtained theirs from an excess lines company that deals exclusively with hard-to-insure activities.

Therefore, I suggest that those of us concerned with these new restrictions write letters to our own (Mother Lode) Chapter, the Sierra Club Board of Directors, and their Executive Officers. The time is ripe. It appears that the insurance issue will be considered at the next (November 19) meeting in San Francisco. In fact, a number of people from LA plan to attend and voice their concern (coordinated by MTC chair John Cheslick, 213 399-1839). Also, a few of us plan to bring this issue before our own Chapter at their next (Nov. 9) meeting in Sacramento (7PM at Denny's Restaurant, 3rd & J). Supporting restricted activities through letter-writing need not be time-consuming. Here are several suggestions for the content of letters:

- As a member of the Sierra Club, I am proud to be a part of the unique work done to preserve and protect our environment. I also participate in outings sponsored by the Club. I am angered by the Board of Directors' recent action to cancel insurance for mountaineering. This action will severely limit my participation in Sierra Club activities. I urge you to reconsider your action and to provide insurance for these activities.
- The Sierra Club is one of the few conservation organizations which strives to get its members outdoors. These activities draw many new Sierra Club members. Many of these people would not have otherwise joined the Club. Please be more supportive of this vital component of the Sierra Club.
- Mountaineering provides inspiration to many of us, just as it did for John Muir. The experience and knowledge that is shared through these activities is an invaluable asset to the Club, as displayed in many of the Club's books and calendars.
- I am aware that, although costly, insurance for mountaineering activities is available. I urge you to take the necessary actions to reinstate mountaineering insurance. I would be willing to pay a small surcharge on my membership dues to cover the costs.
- If measures are not taken to reinsure mountaineering activities, I may (will) cancel my membership in the Sierra Club. I would hate to do so, having been a member for many years. I will not, however, continue my membership in an organization which is not sensitive to my needs. A grass-roots organization should not have to take a "comply immediately" attitude with its membership. There are many other organizations which I could support to address my environmental concerns.

Letters can be addressed to one or more of the following people (sending copies of one letter to all will achieve maximum impact):

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Mother Lode Chapter Chair  
2516 9th Ave.  
Sacramento, CA 95818

Richard Cellarius  
Sierra Club President  
2439 Crestline Dr. NW  
Olympia, Washington 98502

Michael Fisher  
Sierra Club Executive Director  
730 Polk St  
San Francisco, CA 94109

Sandy Tepfer, Outing Chair  
2911 Elk Dr.  
Eugene, OR 97403

Ruth Frear, Secretary  
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Oronoco, MN 55960

Please mail letters soon so we can show support at the upcoming meetings in Sacramento (Nov. 9) and San Francisco (Nov. 19).

While letters to the Sierra Club are an appropriate first response, forming a splinter group in the Sacramento area could be the best long-term solution. I recently learned that LA's Rock Climbing Section (RCS) already has such a companion organization. When the earlier insurance restrictions took effect in 1985 and eliminated their outings program, they formed the Southern California Mountaineering Association (SCMA), not affiliated with the Sierra Club. The RCS was maintained as a "shell" organization devoted to the promotion of rock-climbing, which directed anyone interested in outings to the SCMA. An attorney, Mike Seldon (818) 249-7439, was instrumental in creating the SCMA. He drew up its articles of incorporation and a liability waiver (never tested in court) which must be signed in order to participate in SCMA rock-climbs. RCS sold its ropes and hardware to SCMA for \$1, besides donating some seed money. When the Sierra Club lifted mountaineering restrictions in 1986, money and equipment was donated back to the RCS. The SCMA recently popped out of dormancy in response to the current situation. In retrospect, it would take a lot of initiative and energy to get such an organization started in the Sacramento area. I suggest the Boulder be used as a forum for further discussion. However, I do recommend lobbying the Sierra Club through your letters as *stressed* earlier.

by John Sarna (916) 429-8024

HIKING THE SMOKY MOUNTAINS - BY JOHN BESBEKOS

OCT 2-7, 1988

I SPENT OCTOBER 2-7 IN THE GREAT SMOKY MOUNTAINS NATIONAL PARK. A FRIEND OF MINE WHO LIVES IN NORTH CAROLINA HAS A POP-UP CAMPER TRAILER, SO WE HEADED TO THE ELKMONT CAMPGROUND INSIDE THE PARK.

THE CONTRAST BETWEEN THE SMOKIES AND SIERRAS IS STRIKING. THE SMOKIES ARE COVERED WITH LUSH VEGETATION. WE WERE ABOUT 2 WEEKS TOO EARLY FOR THE SPECTACULAR FALL COLORS, THAT I HAD EXPERIENCED THERE ON EARLIER TRIPS. STILL THE COLOR GREEN WAS NICE AFTER THIS PAST SUMMER OF DRIED-UP BROWN CALIFORNIA.

WE SET UP OUR CAMPER AND LISTENED TO A RANGER ORIENTATION THE FIRST NIGHT. SKUNKS ARE PLENTIFUL AND BOLD IN THE CAMPGROUND. THE RANGER WARNED EVERYONE TO CARRY A FLASHLIGHT AT NIGHT IN ORDER TO AVOID "DROP KICKING ONE OF THOSE CRITTERS." THE FIRST COUPLE OF DAYS, WE SPENT EXPLORING SHORT LOOP TRAILS. THERE WERE LIGHT SHOWERS AND FOG WHICH CAST AN EERIE, SURREALISTIC LOOK TO THE TRAILS WHICH WERE DARK BENEATH THE TREE CANOPY AND SURROUNDED BY HEAVY UDERGROWTH.

WE FOUND A HIKING STORE IN GATLINBURG THAT HAD PATCHES FOR THE VARIOUS PEAKS, WATERFALLS AND TRAILS. WE DECIDED WE LIKED GETTING THESE LITTLE MERIT BADGES, SO WE WOULD SEE WHAT PATCHES WERE FOR AREAS OR PEAKS AND PLAN TO HIKE THEM. SINCE THERE WERE NO LONG DISTANCES TO DRIVE TO GET TO TRAILHEADS, WE FELL INTO A PRETTY LAID-BACK ROUTINE. SLEEP TILL ABOUT 10:00 AM, DRIVE TO PIGEON FORGE, TENN. FOR THE ALL -YOU-CAN-EAT BREAKFAST BUFFET, DO THE HIKE, GO TO THE HIKE STORE FOR PATCHES, STROLL AROUND GATLINGBURG, AND EAT PIZZA, THEN BACK TO THE CAMPGROUND TO RELAX

AROUND THE CAMPFIRE AND DRINK WHILE WATCHING THE NIGHTLY PARADE OF SKUNKS.

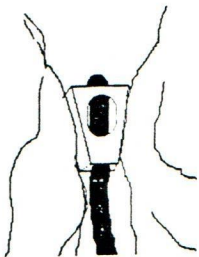
WE DID MANAGE TO BAG 2 OF THE LESSER KNOWN PEAKS, HAVING DONE THE MORE POPULAR ONES ON PAST TRIPS. THE FIRST ONE WAS BRUSHY MOUNTAIN ELEVATION 4910 FT. (THE HIGHEST PEAK IN THE PARK IS ONLY 6600 FT.) THE RAIN HAD STOPPED AND WE WERE ENJOYING A BRILLIANT BLUE SKY, PERFECT FOR A PEAK CLIMB. WE DROVE UP THE ONE-WAY SCENIC ROARING FORKS MOTOR NATURE TRAIL, (A SORT OF HIKING TRAIL FOR CARS) TO THE TRAIL HEAD. WE WERE REWARDED WITH THE SIGHT OF A BIG BLACK BEAR ROOTING AROUND A FALLEN LOG BESIDE THE ROAD. AFTER THE MANDATORY PHOTO SESSION, WE LEFT THE BEAR TO HIS BUSINESS AND HEADED UP THE TRILLIUM GAP TRAIL. CLIMBING UP THROUGH A SHADY HARDWOOD FOREST WE PASSED INTERESTING GROTTO FALLS. WE MADE A SHORT DETOUR TO ROCK SCRAMBLE UP THE SLICK ROCKS AND WALK BEHIND THE FALLS UNDERNEATH THE OVERHANG THAT THE WATER CASCADES OVER. WE SOON REACHED TRILLIUM GAP WHICH IS A BEAUTIFUL GRASSY SPOT SHADED BY BIRCH AND MAPLE TREES. A SIGN THERE INFORMED US THAT WE WERE A MERE HALF MILE FROM THE SUMMIT. AS WE HEADED UP THE LAST STEEP PORTION OF THE TRAIL, IT TOOK ON A TUNNEL EFFECT AS LAUREL GREW OVER AND ENVELOPED THE TRAIL. SUDDENLY ON THE SUMMIT, THE TRAIL BREAKS OUT INTO A TREMENDOUS PANORAMIC 360 DEGREE VIEW OF THE SURROUNDING MOUNTAINS AND DISTANT EASTERN TENNESSEE.

THE OTHER PEAK WAS COVE MOUNTAIN (4080 FT.) THE FIRST 1.3 MILES IS A PAVED TRACK UP TO THE LAUREL FALLS. THIS IS THE SMOKY MOUNTAIN COUNTERPART TO THE YOSEMITE VERNAL FALLS PAVED TRAIL. AT THAT POINT WE LEFT THE CROWDS AND BABY STROLLERS AND CLIMBED UP THROUGH THICK FOREST ANOTHER TWO MILES TO A JEEP ROAD THAT CLIMBS TO THE SUMMIT AND A PARK SERVICE LOOKOUT TOWER. AT THE SUMMIT THERE IS ZERO VISIBILITY DUE TO THE TALL TREES. WE CLIMBED THE FRIGHTENING LADDERS OF THE RICKETY OLD FIRE TOWER AND AT LAST A 360 DEGREE VIEW. WE COULD NOW HEAD TO TOWN AND GET A COVE MTN. PATCH AND USE THE COIN OPERATED SHOWERS AND RETURN TO CAMP FOR A RELAXING TIME AROUND THE CAMPFIRE WITH THE SKUNKS.

#### TUOLUMNE ROCKCLIMBING

Recently, Charlie Smith, Ellen VanFleet, Oscar Balaquer and myself spent a weekend at Tuolumne Meadows rockclimbing. The weather was perfect; sunny and cool with a slight breeze. The mornings were a bit cool but we compensated by simply avoiding most of the mornings.

We rendezvous at the Tuolumne meadows campground Friday night. Saturday we drove down (7 miles) to Stately Pleasure Dome. Charlie and Oscar climbed Eunuch (5.7) while Ellen and I climbed Great White Book (5.6). I cannot recommend this climb. There is no protection for the leader on one pitch. Anyone skilled enough to lead this climb safely will not find it challenging, anyone who finds leading 5.6 challenging should not lead this one! Hardly matters, considering the number of great climbs there are at Tuolumne. Oscar and Charlie both spoke highly of their climb. The one thing we all agreed upon was that the descent off Stately was as steep as our toes would tolerate (especially me in my not so comfortable climbing slippers. Remember Steve Martin and his crazy shoes?).



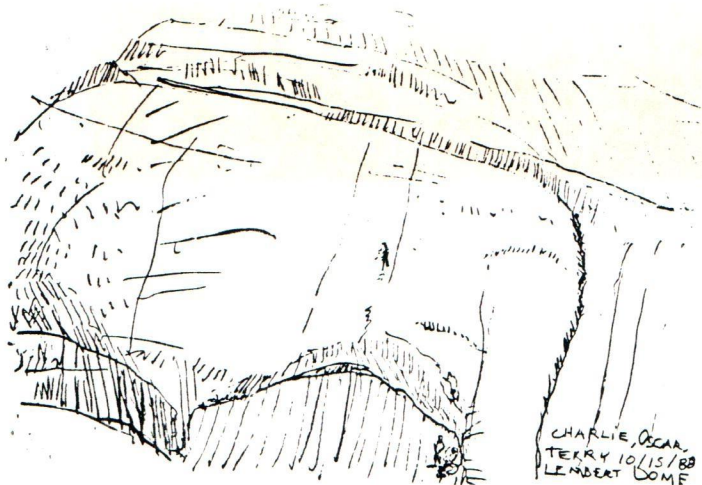
That afternoon we moved over to Lembert Dome which is right across from the campground. Oscar and I climbed the Left Water Crack (5.7) and the others climbed Werner's Wiggle (5.8). Both were nice climbs, Werner's being the better of the two. With the evening approaching and Ellen having been seduced by the scenery, the remaining parties roped up and climbed Truck-n-Drive (5.8). This turned out to be a first rate short climb with a tricky crux pitch that Charlie led skillfully.

Sunday morning, we again moved down to the shores of Tenaya Lake to climb South Crack (5.8) on Stately Pleasure Dome. We had to wait on a couple of parties to clear the route but finally Oscar and Charlie led off on the first rope. While waiting for them to clear the first pitch, Ellen and I top roped some interesting crack and face problems in the 5.8 to 5.10 range. The rock is very good quality, the smallest holds are quite strong (if you are skilled enough to stand on the edge of a dime!). Ellen and I alternated leads on this 6 pitch, thin, varied but always well protected route. South crack is a Tuolumne classic. It's popular but worth the wait. The crux is the second pitch with a sloping and thin crack leading around and over a bulge.

Monday morning found us once again in the campground thanks to Charlie's poetry reading the night before, the cool (more like brisk which means that guilt is one's primary motivator in the morning), and a certain belligerent and unresponsive automobile. Ellen and Oscar headed for home. Charlie and I headed for Pywiack Dome. Pywiack looks like this puny little dome compared to its neighbors, but it has a wide variety of good quality climbs and is close to the road (who wants to walk, we came here to climb). Anyways, we climbed the Dike route (5.9). The first belay bolts are way up on the face on what feels like should be about a third of the way up the first pitch. The rock is very rough with large crystals. The first three pitches are face climbing, the last pitch is a interesting jam crack. Bring a large nut or friend. Getting down Pywiack is not easy, its either a long walk or down climbing 5.4. I'd recommend the latter but rope up.

The afternoon saw us at Stately Pleasure Dome again. I wanted to try Footnote (5.10c). After falling off this several times, I decided I'd had enough. Convincing Charlie to leave Tuolumne meadows has to be rated at least 5.11.

Terry Hubbard



Terry neglected to mention his finest lead: Lunar Leap (5.9) on Lembert Dome which he and I climbed late Sunday afternoon.

CS

Ellen Van Fleet

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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 Dec. 21

THE BOULDER

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