

THE



BOULDER

motherlode chapter-sierra club

Issue No. 48, May & June. 1992

Chairmans Column

At the March social meeting we discussed possibilities for summer peak climbs and coordinated dates as much as we could. If you have a summer climb in mind, you might want to check this issue of The Boulder to find out if there are any conflicts before sending in write-ups. Also leaders appear to be more frustrated than ever with mountaineering restrictions so look for many private trips this summer. Paying for wilderness permits in advance is also driving people toward the option of private trips. Not to mention the fact that official carpooling is now off limits, also it's a lot harder to find peoples addresses because collective paranoia has caused the chapter to stop publishing them. These and other issues lead me to conclude that the **Freedom of the Hills ain't what it used to be.**

If you've managed to wade through all the limitations and restrictions and you still want trip write-ups published make sure that you get them to me by May 3. I'm still a nice guy when it comes to the outings schedule so if you must get them in at the last minute they will be accepted.

John Besbekos informs me that Boulder subscriptions are reaching an all time high. Thats great! But wouldn't you know it, article contributions are reaching an all time low. Boooo. To the best of our knowledge we have yet to receive a gorge scramble write-up from anyone and although there are many cross-country ski trips its very seldom that we get articles about them. Most articles come from peak climbers and that's great but things do get awful thin in the winter months. Once again i'm asking skiers and gorge scramblers to write articles about their trips. Take advantage of all those new subscribers who want to read about your exploits. Those of you who are writing articles keep it up, you've got a bigger audience then ever before.

Finally, I want to remind everyone that the Dan Dobbins Award Ceremony is coming up on May 28th, see schedule for details. I hope many of you will show up and demonstrate your support for the section and the young people who will be honored.

See you on the trail.
John Watters, Chairman

SPRING CALENDAR

May 2, Sat. **Intermediate Ski Trip.** Meet at C.S.U.S. Arboretum at 6:30 a.m. Leader: Al Gutowsky, 457-3338.

May 3, Sun. **Summer Outings Schedule Deadline.** Trip write-ups must be in to me by Sunday morning. John Watters, 488-8467.

May 15-17, Fri.-Sat. **Mono Lake Area Peak Climb/Car Camp.** For details call Bob Buckles, 624-3620.

May 16-17, Sat.-Sun. **Intermediate Ski Trip/Spring Snow Along 395.** For more details call leader Al Gutowsky, 457-3338.

May 16, Sat. **Mt. Tamalpais State Park.** Meet leader at 11th & O parking lot at 7:30 a.m. for directions to trailhead. Leader John Besbekos, 729-2725.

May 26, Tues. **Peak & Gorge Social Meeting/Joint Slide Show.** "People on Peaks" by John Sarna and "Climbing in Washington" by Tim Island. Hostess: Jacquie Patterson, 1141 35th Ave. From I-5, go east on Fruitridge, south (right) on Lonsdale, and east (left) on 35th. 424-9007 Meeting begins at 7:30.

May 28, Thurs. **Dan Dobbins Youth Award Ceremony.** Hosted by Gene Markley at 7016 Filbert Ave, 988-0791. (from I-80, exit on Greenback, left on Elm, left on Filbert, see house on right) Bring a side dish (hamburger will be provided) and something to drink. Time: 7:00 p.m.

June 6-7, Sat-Sun. **Tuolumne Canyon Waterfalls.** Backpack limited to 10, call leader Al Gutowsky for details 457-3338.

June 9, Tues. **Peak & Gorge Social Meeting/Gorge Scramble Clinic & Potluck.** Bring a side dish for the potluck, host will provide beverage and barbecued German hot dogs. Meet at 6:30 p.m. at 1604 Valley View Court in Roseville. Take Riverside Exit off I-80, go east on Cirby, turn right on Vista Creek, turn right on Valley View Court. Details call: Fred Fischietto, 773-0870.

June 13, Sat. **Snow Mountain 7056'.** Meet at 11th & O parking lot at 8:00 a.m. Leader: Gary Campbell, 454-5140.

June 13, Sat. **Wade Peak.** Meet at C.S.U.S. Arboretum at 7:00 a.m. Leader: Al Gutowsky, 457-3338.

June 13, Sat. **Rubicon River/Gorge Scramble.** Meet at 7:30 a.m. in Roseville Square. Leader: Fred Fischietto, 773-0870.

June 13-15, Sat-Mon. **Domeland Wilderness Exploratory.** Call asst. leader for reservation and duties in the anticipated group commissary. Assistant leader: Susan Hildreth, 489-6423. Leader: John Sarna, 429-8024.

June 19-21, Fri-Sun. **Mt. Davis.** For more details contact leader: Al Gutowsky, 457-3338.

CALIFORNIA MOUNTAINEERING CLUB 1992 UPDATE

The CMC Newsletter reports on 37 scheduled leads, from April to September, of over 100 peaks, including El Picacho del Diablo, Russell, Whitney (via Mountaineers Route), Humphreys, Williamson, Brewer, Gardiner, Rainier, the Kaweahs, Matterhorn (in Europe), Darwin, Goddard, Lyell, Tower, Ritter, and plenty more. These trips are open to CMC members.

To join the CMC, one must pay an initial \$20 fee, and climb pursuant to provisional status, accompanied by a Regular Member. The candidate's mountaineering skills and fitness must be demonstrated. For more information call me or Steve Thaw, Northern CA Rep, at (510) 376-3380. PY

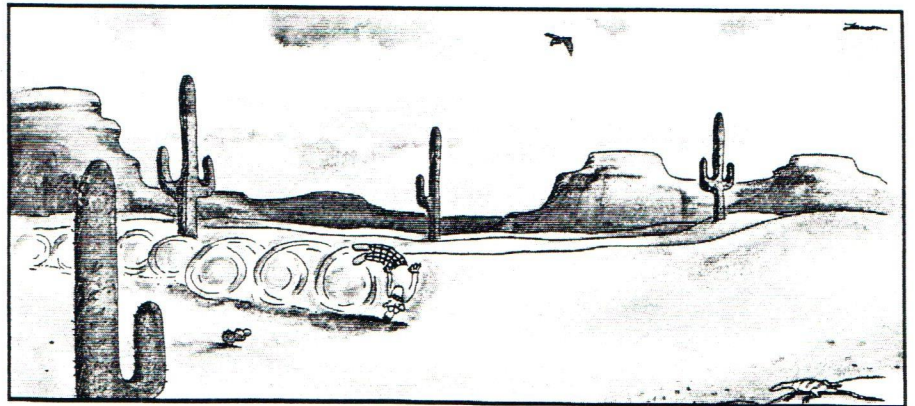
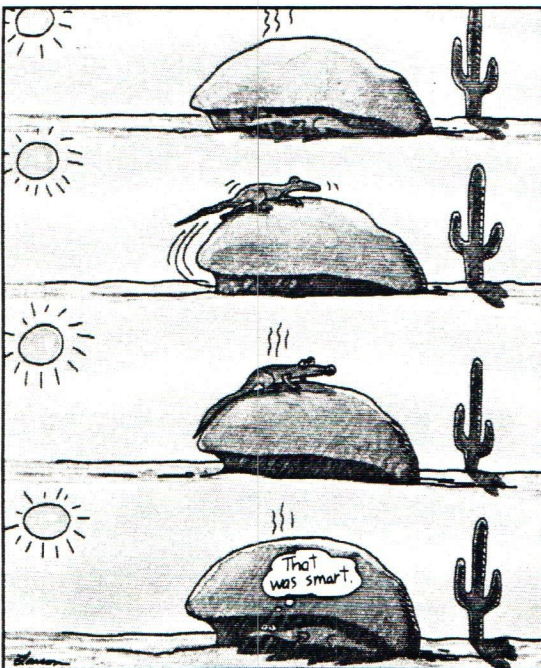
NEVADA COUNTY HIGHPOINTS UPDATE

With thanks to the Sierra Club Bookstore regarding map ordering, the highpoint of Storey County, NV, has been more precisely identified as Mt. Davidson (7864'), which appears to be an easy hike from Virginia City. For more information, see "Nevada Handbook" at the Sierra Club Store. Also, a new edition of "Hiking the Great Basin" is out, containing details on climbing and access to a number of Nevada peaks, including some County highpoints. PY

PRIVATE LEAD: Arc Dome (11,773') and others. Leave Fri Afternoon, and climb Arc Dome Sat (14 mi. r.t., 4,000' gain). Explore or climb Sun and Mon. Car camping. May 23-25, 1992. Contact Pete Yamagata, (916) 444-6319. Some snow travel may be required. Good vehicles needed.

The Dan Dobbins Youth Awards Ceremony

for outstanding leadership in wilderness education and mountain outings will be held on **May 28 at 7 p.m.**, hosted by Gene Markley at 7016 Filbert Ave (from I-80, exit on Greenback, left on Hazel, right on Elm, left on Filbert, see house on right, 988-0791). Bring a side dish (hamburgers will be provided) and something to drink for this pot-luck dinner while we congratulate Shane Smith and Peter Gutowsky.



As the cactus stood watch over the sun-drenched land, a red-tailed hawk hung motionless in the desert sky. Little stirred, except an occasional lizard scurrying for shade or a tumbleweed drifting by.

CROSS COUNTRY SKIING: A REVIEW OF THE 1991-92 SEASON

A couple years ago, my wife came home with some cross country skis. After some initial reluctance, she convinced me to try the sport. Since then, she has gotten involved in other things, but I got hooked. Today, I have trouble deciding whether I want the weather to hold for some late season climbs, or get early snows so that I can return to the slopes. In my third season, I have learned telemark turning -- steep downhill is suddenly fun! I also had an opportunity to go on a number of Sierra Club outings with a variety of leaders to many local backcountry ski areas.

The Maidu section (usually starting out of Pollock Pines) had many good trips this year. Bill Campau led many trips suitable for skiers with low intermediate skills. By low intermediate, I mean that terrain was not very difficult, snow plow turning technique would get you down the hill (perhaps with a few crashes), and distance was modest (4-8 miles total in good snow with about 1000' elevation gain or less.) An example of a typical mid-season trip was Bill's trip to Ralston Lake. This began at the Echo Lake Sno-Park, following the road to Echo Lakes. We then skied across the lakes and climbed upwards to Ralston Lake. Part of the group stopped about one mile short of the destination. The pace was easy going with plenty of rest stops. The downhill sections were mostly short and seldom steep. Most people used snowplow technique for turning. The Maidu group, usually starts from Pollock Pines about 7:30-8:00 a.m. and finishes early, often getting off the slopes before 4:00 p.m. and getting back to Pollock Pines between 5:00 and 6:00.

For those just starting to learn, these trips may still be a bit much. If you are just beginning, I recommend 3-5 trips to a resort first to learn basic technique and find those skiing muscles. Hopefully, next season will begin with several beginner trips for those just starting.

After gaining some confidence with the Maidu group, I went on a couple trips with Fred Fischierto and Al Gutowsky. It was definitely a tougher pace. While I had been in the front of the group going with Bill, I was often in the back half with Fred and Al's groups. The major difference was not in distance but difficulty of terrain. The uphill was steep, 1500'+ of climbing, and climbing skins were used by many of the skiers (though not the leaders on the trips I attended.) The pace was moderately fast and those bringing up the rear did not get much of a break. Though I can imagine harder paced trips, I would not want to be on them. The downhills were demanding, often on steep, tree filled slopes. Though some people did not use telemarking technique, it was difficult for them to keep up with the group. An example of Fred's style was a recent trip to the Big Bend / Loch Leven area. We started on the trail about 10:30 and did not get back to the cars until 6:00. We climbed steadily until lunch, then climbed some more, took in a long traverse, then skied down a long, steep, tree covered slope before finishing the run on a road.

Unfortunately, this season did not have the best snow conditions. I didn't get started until the first week of December. Much of the season conditions alternated between deep heavy snow and Sierra cement. My personal best day was on a trip to Forestdale Divide, April 4. Though very icy in the morning, the snow softened to perfect telemarking conditions in the afternoon. The worst day for me was when I skied Castle Peak right after a big storm on February 16. Outside of the trail some superman had made, wet heavy snow made progress almost impossible. When I left the beaten path to ski down a steep hillside, I sank up to my neck. That was the same weekend that they lost some people to avalanches around Mt. Rose.

For those not quite ready to give up the season, there is still some snow left and a few outings planned. We probably have a couple weeks of acceptable conditions around Carson Pass (be ready to walk a bit!) If you are willing to drive, there should be plenty of snow for a month or more around Tioga Pass, Lassen and Shasta. Northern exposure slopes are likely to have good spring skiing into June at the higher elevations. For those who didn't try cross country skiing this year, start doing it next winter.

Bob Buckles

OREANA PEAK (9183+')

FEBRUARY 23, 1992

Enjoying beautiful weather and visits to the Surplus Store in Reno (where a parka convertible to a sleeping bag was advertised!) and the Sierra Trading Post in Sparks (good deals on outdoor clothing including Patagonia!), Rick Kraft and I drove to his retreat overlooking the Smith Valley and the Singatse Range Saturday, carbo-loading at a buffet in Yerington, NV.

We began climbing from Rick's property at 7:41 a.m. to make this ascent of this normally trivial peak. We travelled up through dense Pinyon Pine forests and steep ridges to reach the top by 2 p.m. Hundred-mile visibility enabled us to discern Arc Dome, the Shoshones, Mt. Augusta, the Desatoyas, and mighty Mt. Grant as well as the North Central Sierra and the Sweetwaters. We placed a register, then sought to avoid the heavy brush by plunge-stepping down a 2,000' snow chute, but alas, found it to be icy or of breakable crust, with deep powder beneath. We had seen cougar tracks, wild horse and bear (?) scat in addition to a snowshoe hare enroute. We narrowly avoided a nighttime return, getting back to Rick's by 6:20 p.m. Total stats were about 6 mi. r.t., and 4,500' gain. PY

A DAY AROUND THE BAY--ON PEAK BUSINESS FEBRUARY 28, 1992

Rex Smith and I left Sac promptly at 7:30 a.m. to head straight for the Bancroft Library on the UC Berkeley campus to inspect the summit register collection waiting for us in the Heller Reading Room (arranged by phone). I leafed gently through pages almost a century old that bore the names of the early Sierra Club climbers. Rex and I also saw our own names in the Humphreys, Agassiz, English Mtn., and Round Top books, and saw the names of many other old-time Peak and Gorge climbers.

We hit the North Face and Patagonia factory outlet stores, getting the good deals, and had lunch at the Cannery, then toured Fisherman's Wharf.

Fighting the street traffic (due to closed freeways, thanks to the Oct. '89 earthquake), we drove to the Great Outdoors Adventure Fair, where we saw many of the 244 exhibit booths, including the Sierra Club's, and the Desert Survivors' booth manned by Steve Tabor himself! I enjoyed watching the kayaking demo, and seeing persons attempting the artificial climbing walls.

Finally, we watched SPS'er R.J. Secor's slide presentation of the Ten Toughest Sierra Peaks. Castle Rock Spire (5.9, A2) was rated the worse, followed by Higher Cathedral Spire (5.9), and included the Obelisk (5.5), which participants on a climb of Spanish Mtn. enjoyed seeing with me. Of SPS listed peaks, Devils Crags rated the top, followed by Thunderbolt, North Pal, Black Kaweah, etc.

After attending R.J.'s book signing, Rex and I returned home by 9 p.m. This was one of the most interesting days that I had ever spent not climbing a peak, but totally involved in the pursuit of mountaineering!! PY

IN SEARCH OF WATERFALLS

MARCH 1992

Thanks to heavy, soaking rains followed by spells of good weather, I was able to occupy myself in falls hunting in locations accessible by simple hiking.

On the 7th, I attended Jack Bussio's regular chapter outing to Devils Hole, which features the closest redwood grove to Sacramento, but on private land (please get permission!). The falls were roaring at the best anyone could remember seeing them. They are approached via Napa, a long, windy road, and a 2-2½ mi. o.w. trail.

On the 18th, I drove with Rex Smith through Oroville to see Feather Falls, which was also the best that I'd seen it in 5 visits. For some reason, no chapter outings were scheduled this year! This is a 4 mi.o.w. on excellent trail. We detoured to also see fabulous Table Mountain with its sweeping, carpet-like displays of Goldfields, miniature Poppies, Lupine, and Red Maids.

Finally, on the 21st, Rex and I took the Donner Canyon-Falls Trail loop in Mt. Diablo State Park to see 5 smaller falls amidst a nice display of Poppies, Shooting-Stars, Brodiaea, Scarlet Delphinium, Baby-Blue Eyes, etc. The Middle Trail had hundreds of infrequently seen Indian Warriors. Seeing these points of interest were oft breathtaking, a lot better than seeing on a tube some wimpy dribbles from a helicopter, no less! When we can move up to the middle and higher elevations after the snows recede, we certainly will continue to engage in this exciting (well, next to climbing and ski mountaineering!) avocation. PY

CASTLE PEAK (9103') 9X

MARCH 28, 1992

Wanting to hit the slopes before the early spring melt, I drove with Rex Smith to make a register check and upgrade on this popular summit. Starting from the standard Sno-Park, Rex used his rather hindersome REI leather bindings with Alaska snowshoes (first time in 25? years!), and I used my Karhu waxless skis which made skins unnecessary. The conditions were 1-2" of primarily unconsolidated old powder over a somewhat crusty base, which turned to spring corn in the afternoon.

Unfortunately, the top of the summit pinnacle was partially buried in a 2-3' bank of snow which, despite a half-hour's excavation, failed to produce a register. Later that day, I listened as a former Peak and Gorge member related his skiing to the "top," (see article, Issue #44 Boulder) and had purportedly skied Basin and Andesite, finishing at "2:15." I saw four other skiers ascending the first bump during our stay on the summit ridge. We could find no evidence (tracks in the snow, other excavations or register placements) that anybody had previously ascended the real high point this winter season! Skiing the west slopes back down to the Castle Pass ridge was a challenge of which skiers' tracks told of several "wahoo" descents. We were back by 4:45 p.m. and declined a mountaineering shops sale check of Truckee. PY

MAMMOTH CONDO WEEKEND WITH THE "CHUTE CORPS(?)" APRIL 4-5, 1992

Enjoying nice early spring weather, I made the drive to join a Ski Mountaineers outing to ski the Mammoth high country. Saturday, nine skiers drove to the southernmost portion of the Sherwin Lakes Road and began skiing from about 7,600' up a forested canyon and thence to nice views of Pyramid Peak (11,720'), high point of the Town of Mammoth Lakes, near the soon-to-be developed, massive, "Snowcreek" ski resort. We had lunch on some rocks and decided to ski a 25-35' gully that offered great views of Mammoth Town from our high point of about 10,000'. Old powder and good corn led me to make three runs, one of 1,000' and two of 600'. However time progressed and we had to return, with warm, bottomless mush causing many a face plant and tumble.

We had a nice salad and spaghetti dinner prepared by our gracious SMS Chair, Nancy, and enjoyed home ski videos and "The Revenge of the Telemarkers," a good instructional and demo film. Thanks, Owen!

Sunday, we started early at 7:30 a.m. (DST) to ski along the groomed trails of Tamarack Lodge and then cross-country to "TJ Bowl," a 3-4 mi. tour with great views of Crystal Crag. The snow was still crusty but pronounced "excellent" by the first two skiers making "s"'s. Some of us took frequent spills trying to master "equal weighting (as failure to do this resulted in breaking through the bread-slice thick crust)." We again reached about 10,000' before calling it a day and enjoying a pleasant, easy run back to Twin Lakes roadhead to end a gorgeous weekend. PY

RIDER WANTED: Carpool to the Whitney Portal trailhead over June 12-15, 1992. Must be self-sufficient for length of weekend. Leave Fri morn, ret Mon. Longer stay negotiable. Contact: PY (916) 444-6319.

CLIMBER WANTED: For OGUL 3X list completion effort; climb assorted Tahoe peaks, share driving. Contact: PY, (916) 444-6319.

ADDING PEAKS TO THE LIST

The Peak and Gorge Section and the peak sections of the Angeles Chapter are unique among Sierra Club Chapters in California in that they utilize "lists" to offer varying statuses regarding the completion of X number of peaks. The Bay Area Chapter has no "list" and only a "peak bagging-knapsacking" section mainly nominal in existence. The Loma Prieta Chapter (South Bay Area) has a fairly large "Peak Climbing Section (PCS)" but no list to speak of. Most Sierra Club peak baggers in Southern California go by the Sierra (SPS), Desert (DPS), and Hundred (HPS) Peak Sections' lists.

To change the list in those Angeles Chapter peak sections the section by-laws clearly delineate the procedure whereby additions or deletions are made. The proposed change (addition) must be led as a regularly scheduled trip to allow members to climb the peak to determine worthiness. Then, in the respective newsletter, the pros and cons of addition or deletion are presented. A section ballot of active members is cast to determine by majority vote whether the change is accepted.

Traditionally here in the Mother Lode Chapter, the lists were just the work of one or a few individuals who took the initiative (or gall!) to decide for everybody just what peaks "counted" toward your "Emblem," "Super Emblem," or "List Finishing." Of course, also, here in this chapter, there are no qualifying requirements to be a "member," or whether you can "vote" at any meeting or on any issue, except the vague condition of being "interested."

I have always thought of the local lists to be logically deranged, providing equal credit, for say, North Palisade and Mt. Lola. Of course, discrepancies in levels of difficulty can be found in all lists, but I think this chapter rates the worse. Apparently, in the minds of its founders, we all can't climb North Pal (or even Virginia Peak!), so it was the intent of the list designer(s) to include magnanimously, everyone, weak or strong, skilled or not so skilled! All this was intended to be coupled with a highly experienced, skilled section chair, who would generally presume to be the sole judge and dictate of all that went on in the section.

The OGUL list revision attempt by John Sarna seeks to further democratize the Peak and Gorge Section, but a long way remains to go. How a membership can vote without experiencing any basis for decision-making will only lead to poor policies, and obviously, a poor outings agenda, so the forthcoming revision should be of some interest to the persons that have chosen to work on this list. Pete Yamagata 3-10-92

BEN LOMOND (6453')

APRIL 18, 1992

Forever in search of new peaks, Rex Smith and I took the 2½ hour drive (with gas and McMuffin stop) to the trailhead for this curiously ignored, excellent conditioner saunter. One begins from the Feather River Highway (Hwy. 70), with three tunnels enroute, and proceeds up a long ridge on good-fair trail to the summit of this mid-elevation peak. We were charged up enough to take the first 1500' gain in one hour! The trail climbs steeply and continues to the main ridge. We encountered snow at elev. 5200' and then continuous, firm snow from just under elev. 6000', and we used ice axes.

The point Ben Lomond is at the end of the ridge, necessitating crossing over Pt. 6478T to get there. We saw the remains of the old lookout and enjoyed a snow-free summit. The views down the Feather River Canyon were interesting; we could not see Lassen, but enjoyed clear vistas afforded by the north winds. We placed a register, then glissaded and plunge-stepped down the snow, and were back to the car in under 2 hours.

Ascent time had been about 3½ hours, with 4300' total gain and 4.8 miles o.w. This certainly should be led as the MLC never goes there (?!), and it is only 240 mi. r.t., not bad for enjoying a totally novel saunter.

Pete Yamagata

THE BOULDER: *Published bimonthly by the Peak and Gorge Outings Section, Mother Lode Chapter, Sierra Club.*

EDITORS: *John Besbekos, Bob Buckles, and Pete Yamagata.*

SUBSCRIPTIONS: *Dues are \$6.00 per year (6 issues). Address labels will note what issue will be your last unless you renew. Send checks (payable to "Peak and Gorge") to this Section's Treasurer: Gary Walker, P. O. Box 141, Weimar, CA 95736, who can be called at 637-4240.*

SUBMITTALS: *We encourage you to submit copy for publication. Articles, letters, fiction, poetry, and artwork that would be of interest to the Peak and Gorge Section are welcome. Copy should be typed single-spaced on 8.5 x 11" paper with half- to one-inch margins, and sent to: Boulder Editorial Committee; C/O John Besbekos; 4428 Old Dairy Drive, Sacramento, CA 95842; phone 729-2725. Submittals will not be returned unless accompanied by a self-addressed stamped envelope.*

DEADLINE: *About a week before social meetings on even-numbered months. The next deadline is: June 23, 1992*

Boulder Editorial Committee
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SIXTY LAKES BASIN 8/9/88