

Issue No. 63 November & December 1994

Chair's Corner

The number of hikes led this year is down but we have had some excellent trips, including private trips climbing Mt. Lyell and North Palisade. Lyell included use of ice axes to climb a glacier and some interesting class three rock climbing. See John Sarna's article for a description of the North Palisade trip.

Because of the weak showing for the social meetings, I am not planning the next social until January. I am a bit at a loss about what to do on this front. Are people really interested anymore? If so, what needs to be done to improve participation? If you have ideas, let me know.

The Boulder newsletter is a good news area. Despite some concern about dropping subscription numbers, we appear to have stabilized around 60 paying subscriptions. Our membership base includes a number of out of town people who enjoy the newsletter, use our hiking schedule as an outing source, and have even been contributing articles. We have done pretty well on number and size of articles the last few issues. Keep them coming!

The last issue of business I need to bring up is election of Chair for the section. Our organization has no official By Laws and therefore tradition rather than formal rules has governed most of our activities. In the past the Chair position has been an elected office vacated approximately every two years for a new candidate. Elections were last held at the Jan 92 meeting, resulting in my appointment. I am prepared to step down in favor of another candidate and therefore nominate Alan Cooke for the Chair position. My nomination of Alan is based on his service to our section leading hikes, contributing articles to the Boulder, etc. Alan has been a very active member of the section for many years now, recently completing the Ogul list, achieving emblem status for the NAS list, and is currently close to qualifications for the Desert Peak Section. Alan was a close runner up in our 1992 election and would have gotten the job if I could have swung a few more votes his way. If anyone else wishes to submit a nomination, please do so. Because of the low attendance at social meetings, I am also considering mail in balloting by all Boulder subscribers as more representative for voting purposes. Any comments for or against this proposal would be appreciated.

Bob Buckles, 6120 Rainier Ave., Rocklin CA 95677, 624-3620.

Calendar

Note: The outings and events listed here are items that may be of interest to our readers. They are a mixture of private trips and other organizations as well as Sierra Club trips.

Oct 21-23, Fri-Sun	Car Camp (Sierra Club) Tuolumne Group, Carson Pass area off highway 88 on eastside Sierra. 7,00' to 8,000' elevation. Contact Karl Merrill (209) 962-5389.
Oct 29-30, Sat-Sun	Blak Rock/Calico Mts. Carcamp (Desert Survivors) 2 day carcamp in the Black Rock Desert of Nevada's Great Basin. Contact Steve Tabor (510) 357-6585.
Oct 29, Sat	Mt. Wittenburg (Sierra Club) Hike to high point of Point Reyes National Seashore then down to coast. Meet CSUS Arboretum at 7:30am or Murder Burger in Davis at 8am. Leader: Wayne Luney, 383-9393.
Nov 4-6, Fri-Sun	Coxcomb Mts-Pinto Basin Backpack (Desert Survivors) Located in Joshua Tree National Monument. Includes hike to Spectre Peak. Call Dave Halligan (510) 528-3360.
Nov 5, Sat	Snowshoe (Sierra Club) Somewhere in Sierra foothills depending on snow. 5 to 6 miles. Call Bern Kreissman for info on meeting place, time, rental info. (753-7788).
Nov 5-7, Sat-Mon	East Side Canyons of the Inyo Mts Carcamp (Desert Survivors) In the great sink of the Saline Valley. Carcamp with moderate day hikes. Contact: David Holten (916) 583-2021 PO Box 671, Tahoe City, CA 96145.
Nov 11-13, Fri-Sun	Corridor Canyon/Saline Valley (Desert Survivors) California Desert Backpack. Between Saline and the Racetrack, just west of Ubehebe Peak. Contact Bob Ellis: (510) 526-3788.
Nov 12, Sat	Cross-country Ski Trip (Sierra Club) Low intermediate skill level. Depends on snow conditions. Meet at Roseville Square at 8am. Leader Bob Buckles 624-3620.
Nov 12-13, Sat-Sun	Cosco Petroglyph Tour/Carcamp (Desert Survivors) 1st day a guided hike to the best preserved petroglyph site in California, at China Lake Naval Weapons Station near Ridgcrest. 2nd day watercolor with artist Deborah Green. Limited to 15. \$20 tour fee. Contact: Rochelle Gerratt (510) 769-1706.
Nov 19, Sat	Inverness Ridge (Sierra Club) An 11 mile loop hike with 1200' elevation gain/loss at Point Reyes National Seashore. Meet 11th & P at 7:30am or Murder Burger in Davis at 8 am. Leader: John Besbekos 729-2725.
Nov 24-27, Thu-Sun	Big Maria Mountains Backpack (Desert Survivors) 4 day backpack with a climb of Big Maria Peak (3381'). Call Steve Tabor (510) 357-6585.
Nov 26, Sat	Snowshoe (Sierra Club) Somewhere in Sierra foothills depending on snow. 5 to 6 miles. Call Bern Kreissman for info on meeting place, time, rental info. (753-7788).
Dec 17, Sat	Beginner/Intermediate Ski Tour (Sierra Club) Meet at Roseville Square, 8 am. Call Bob Buckles for details, 624-3620.
Jan 7, Sat	Intermediate Ski Tour (Sierra Club) Must be experienced in hilly terrain. Meet at Roseville Square, 8 am. Call Bob Buckles for details, 624-3620.
Jan 14, Sat	Beginner/Low Intermediate Ski Tour (Sierra Club) Meet at Roseville Square, 8 am. Call Bob Buckles for details, 624-3620.

POSSIBLE PRIVATE TRIPS - late fall and/or winter

Howard Steidman, Toby Tyler, and I have been talking about organizing a couple of trips this fall and winter to climb desert peaks. The usual dates for these would probably be best, i.e. over the Thanksgiving holidays and/or just after Christmas (leaving Dec. 26 or 27th). One possible trip is to Death Valley, climbing **Sandy Point, Last Chance, Grapevine, Palmer**, and/or others. Another possible trip is to Arizona, climbing **Weaver's Needle, Superstition Mtn, Baboquivari**, (little) **Picacho, Signal, Kino, Castle Dome**, and/or others. Some of these climbs require Class 3-5 climbing abilities and occasional use of ropes. I'd also like to find others interested in climbing **San Jacinto** or **San Geronimo**, along with other HPS peaks which can be done on the same hike. Please give me a call if you're interested and can handle long drives. You can also call Howard and Toby in the Bay area at 510/538-5699.

John Sarna 916/429-8024.



IF ANYONE HAS CLIMBED THE MEXICAN TRILOGY :

Iztaccihatl (17343'), Popocatepetl (17761'), Orizaba (18851') --

Retta Cooper from Chico is planning a December climb and would appreciate any info !!! (894-7805).

LIST COMPLETION ON WHITE MOUNTAIN PEAK

On August 16, 1994 I was very happy to complete the list of California County Highpoints by hiking up the regular road route to White Mountain Peak. At least I completed the county highpoints owned by the public. Regarding the privately owned ones, well, maybe I climbed them and maybe I didn't.

The walk to the top of White Mountain Peak is about 15 miles round trip, and nearly 3,000 feet in elevation gain. The middle third of the route is almost level. There are two potential problem areas worth thinking about ahead of time. First, the road to the trailhead is a modest motor vehicle challenge. This comes in the form of a steep highway followed by a prolonged graded surface along the scenic crest of the White Mountain Range. My old car overheated, and some other hikers ran out of gas, but were able to beg some from the people at the science lab.

The second potential problem is the high altitude which is sustained throughout the length of the hike. At 14,246 feet, White Mountain Peak is the third highest mountain in the state, and the highest of the entire Great Basin. It is also the only California County Highpoint on the DPS list. This time I was able to avoid altitude sickness by training with two climbs up Mt. Shasta, the highpoint of Siskiyou County.

We parked at the warning sign, and started up the road on foot. People working at the lab are free to drive up and down this part of the route, and there was a surprising amount of traffic. The lab seemed to be in a flurry of activity. Military jets were making multiple passes just over our heads. They would carve spectacular 180° turns in the airspace just south of White Mountain Peak, and then come back over the lab. They kept this up all day. The jets would pop into our field of vision silently, but soon followed by a roar so loud that we learned to cover our ears as soon as we saw them.

We crossed a low ridge behind the lab, near an old rusty observatory. This would be a great place to watch stars. The country really opened up here. The road was essentially closed from this point on to the top, but functioned to concentrate foot traffic through the rock gardens, large and small, and full of interesting alpine plants. Endless views expanded in all directions, with a grand finale at the summit, a fire spot to finish a great quest. Many thanks to Gary Suttle, the pioneer of California County Highpoints, and his excellent book on the same subject. My brothers Phil and Ken, and my wife Judy were my companions on WMP, and this was Judy's first 14K mountain!

Bill Bighorn Broeckel

HELICOPTER ASSAULT ON DUANE BLISS

This was a very disappointing trip. Though we achieved our goal of climbing the peak, we spent most of the hike looking at the victims of a major logging operation on this section of the Tahoe Rim Trail. Never having hiked this section before I was left to imagine how nice the trail once was before nearly every large tree in the area was felled. The size of the majestic pines now laid out on the ground indicated it had been beautiful. In addition to having to look at stumps and downed trees everywhere, we had to listen to the continuous thumping of a large helicopter as it hauled logs to a central loading area.

As we reached the base of the peak, it was obvious that we could not take the most direct route up. Hundreds of trees, many of them ponderosa pines three feet or more in diameter lay across our path. We skirted to the south, following the edge of the old growth forest up until the logging halted just below the last few trees before the summit. Though the summit provided good views of Lake Tahoe to the west and Carson City to the east, it was marred by the view directly below and the distant sound of the helicopters. I don't know what the rationale for the Forest Service allowing this area to be logged was. I do know it has effectively ruined a major section of the Rim Trail.

Bob Buckles

FROM MT SILL TO NORTH PAL private trip, Aug. 6, 1994

As one of the dozen 14ers in California, Mt. Sill was but the secondary objective for our small group, which consisted of Alan C, Alan M, Bob B, Howard S, Toby T, and yours t. Our primary objective was the highest point of the Palisades, the only slightly higher North Palisade. Considered by many to be *the* most worthy climb in the Sierra due to its height and technical difficulty, the easiest way to the top, called the LeConte Route, presented a complex navigation problem across an exposed "Catwalk" and up a steep Class IV side-chute. Still, this was our planned ascent, and since none of us wanted the thrill of imminent death due to an accidental slip of the hand or foot, we carried two ropes and weighty climbing equipment along with a full week's gear for the backpack in. Our base-camp was at Barrett Lake at 11,500'. Getting there was a strenuous hike in its own right, entailing following a trail from South Lake up to Bishop Pass, crossing Dusy Basin, and then cross-country hiking over Knapsack Pass. This took us the best part of Friday, causing Bob enough wear and tear to write the next day off, although the rest of us thought we had enough energy left for a serious climb on the morrow. We had originally planned to climb North Pal first, but to give Bob a chance to "bag" it too, we opted to first go for Mt. Sill. Seriously optimistic, we decided to carry all the climbing equipment up Sill, not just for exercise, but so we could try the Class IV ridge-walk over to the nearby Palemonium Peak.

Saturday, August 5th, dawned clear and only moderately cool. About 8 am, as the sun touched our tents, we set off for Mt. Sill. After rock-hopping around upper Barrett Lake and continuing up to Potluck Pass, we turned northeast to climb up to and through a keyhole in the high boulders on a 13,000' ridge. From here, Mt. Sill displayed its weak (least steep) side, but I found it difficult to focus on the route ahead after having been just about blown back through the keyhole by a cold gale-force wind. This wind, unfortunately for us, continued until evening, a portent of things to come in the next few days. In any case, we bundled up and traversed north to the remnants of a tarn lake. With helmets on and spread out to avoid rock-fall, we then climbed up the steep



scree to reach to the summit of Mt. Sill in good form. For some strange reason, the strength of the wind was diluted on the summit, though it began bringing in some high clouds. After over an hour of enjoying what Roper calls "the ultimate of all Sierra peaks in the extent and quality of views," we decided that a climb of Palemonium would have to wait for another day. Our calculations indicated that it would add an extra 3-4 hours of hiking to a day that had just enough daylight left to securely get us back to camp. Someone also remarked that Palemonium is not as alluring as Sill was, being on the NAS peak list but not the SPS peak list.

Hiking down once again brought us into the full force of the wind. It harassed us for the next 2 hours as we made our way down a boulder-strewn valley until we reached the south (opposite-from-camp) side of Potluck Pass. After some Class 3+ climbing to get back up to the pass where we stood hours before, we easily circumvented the rock-bound lakes to reach camp an hour later. Dinner in the dark was, as is usual for such a day, one of the best I've ever tasted, though I don't even remember what I ate. The question of climbing North Palisade the next day, as planned that morning, came up after dinner. Some said "I'll go but I'd rather not," and others said "I'll go but I may not make it", so we all decided to take a day off to rest.

Sunday morning, Howard, Toby, and I moved camp to the Barrett Lake just below North Pal. The others didn't want to move camp, but joined us for dinner as well as some practice using the climbing gear. We found a challenging 5.4 pitch on a giant boulder near our camp, where we set up belays,

continued

FROM MT SILL TO NORTH PAL

climbing anchors, and rappels. This practice turned out to be very useful, if not essential, for the next day's climb. But, we begrudged another good-weather day lost, as our concerned upward glances took in increasingly cloudy skies.

The next morning, I eagerly started up about 5:30 am to watch from above as the others boulder-hopped their way up to the U-Notch Chute. Unfortunately, as I looked back, I also saw dark clouds building up in the west, this at 6 am. The weather gave us just enough time to belay each other across the Cat-walk, only made difficult by the extreme exposure, before dusting us with some lightly-scattered summer snow. But then the skies cleared up as we worked our way up a steep side chute to become one with the climbing gear we had so grudgingly carried beforehand. This gear was brought out several times in the next hour to secure our persons.

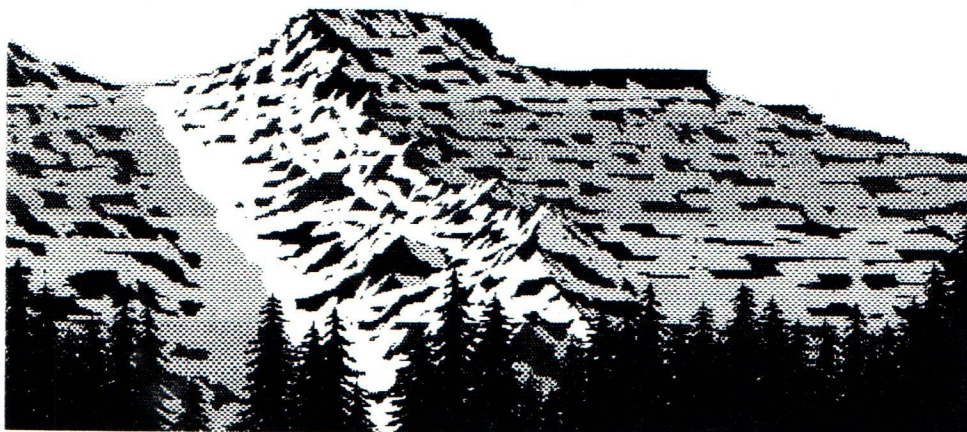
Just as we got close to the summit, dark clouds lined with rain began to fill the horizon. Too close to turn back, we set up the final belay to the very top of North Pal, protecting a couple of Class V bouldering moves and some lesser exposed moves, as we found a way around, over, and even under the huge summit boulders. As the rain relentlessly marched in over the more distant peaks and finally into the valley below, everyone stood at the top to sign the register as a group. Then, without delay, we took turns down-climbing the boulders again. But just as we found the proper chute to climb down, the weather came on us in full force, but surprised us with snow instead of rain. Huge wet flakes fell, some an inch across. Then, the clouds closed in and visibility was reduced to a couple hundred feet.

Several striking memories I have of this trip occurred during this storm. For example, I remember rejoicing to find a sheltered alcove to belay from. But, as Alan C started over the edge, he stopped and insisted that this was a bad (or did he say impossible) route down. He probably was right, but it meant getting out to our former belay position which was in the full force of the wind and snow. One by one, the others down-climbed while I belayed from above. Then, as I unhitched the rope to rappel down, being iced up, (the rope, not me, though I was unconvinced at the time), it slipped out of my hands, or maybe I unconsciously threw it down. Whatever, rationalizing that this would save me a sling and the inherent risk of rappelling, I turned toward the rock and jammed my way down the wet rock to where I could unconsciously follow the others down some scree in their search for the Catwalk.

Without a doubt, lady luck shined on us at that moment as strong as any sun, because the snow stopped and we came out beneath the cloud. Still, the catwalk took some time to belay, but the warmth-stealing dampness was gone, the camp was in sight directly below, and there was sufficient daylight to get to it before dark. From then on, our spirits rose and never ebbed.

Like a shroud, that cloud didn't lift off North Pal until late morning the next day, as Howard, Toby and I trekked out over Thunderbolt Pass. There, we met a national Sierra Club outings group coming into the basin. A few planned to climb Mt. Sill, and we gave them a few suggestions before trekking on for a belated celebration dinner and a long ride home. Somehow we missed meeting up with Bob and the two Alans, who had back-tracked over Knapsack Pass and out, getting to the cars an hour or so before we did. No one stayed in for a full week as originally planned. However, I don't think any of us had regrets about that.

John Sarna



CLIMBING CALIFORNIA'S 14,000' PEAKS
by Paul Richins

In 1991, as my daughter, Sierra, and I were descending the 97 switch backs in the trail off of Mount Whitney she decided to set a goal of climbing all the 14,000 foot peaks in California. I had climbed many of them and based on my 10 year old daughter's performance on this trip, climbing Cirque Peak (12,900' by moonlight), Discovery Pinnacle (13,760'), Mount Langley (14,027') and Mount Whitney (14,494'), I was confident that over the next couple of years she could climb the other 14,000 footers.

She seemed to have the drive, stamina and mental toughness necessary to accomplish this difficult goal. At age seven, she climbed her first peak (Round Top, 10,384'). At age nine, she climbed three peaks in Desolation Wilderness Area (Mount Tallac, Dicks Peak and Jacks Peak) in a long ten hour day. And by age 10 she had climbed a total of 14 peaks including three 13,000 footers and these two 14,000 footers.

In all, there are 13 peaks towering over 14,000 feet in California. They range from snow covered Mount Shasta in the North to Mount Whitney in the South, the highest peak in the United States outside Alaska. They vary in difficulty from White Mountain which has a very rough jeep road to the top to Thunderbolt Peak with its exposed summit block jutting skyward barley large enough for one roped climber.

The plan was to climb the easier 14,000 peaks first and as Sierra grew older attack the harder ones. The problem was that after climbing Mount Langley and Whitney there weren't too many easy peaks left. I selected Split Mountain as the next peak to climb. Little did I know that the public road to the start of the trail was blocked by an "outlaw" farmer and the alternate road stopped several miles short of the trailhead. Just getting to the trail was an experience in itself. We had to hike across the desert floor for several miles in the blistering heat fighting the sage brush and cactus. By the time we got to the start of the trail we had finished off all of our water. I was beginning to think that the trip was doomed. So much for the plan of climbing the easier peaks first.

The trail to Red Lake where we planned to camp that night was no better and was in terrible condition. It was very steep and sandy--one step forward, two steps backwards. I wondered to myself what have I gotten my daughter into? I told her we would never go up this trail again. Even today, after having climbed all of the 14,000 foot peaks, it was by far the worst trail to base camp.

We finally reached Red Lake at the base of Split Mountain where we set-up base camp. It was a very lovely spot and a pleasant contrast to the terrible conditions we had endured below. To our surprise some friends were camped at the Lake and were planning to

climb Split the following day as well. The following days climb to the summit was enjoyable and uneventful compared to the previous day's trek into base camp.

After what Sierra went through on Split Mountain I was convinced she was physically and mentally tough enough to climb any of the 14,000 footers, so I discarded the idea of picking the easier peaks first. I had longed to climb North Palisade Peak. Five years earlier I had climbed to within half an hour of the summit via the U-Notch's snow and ice chute but turned back due to darkness. North Palisade is a spectacular peak and one of the most difficult of the 14,000 footers to climb. It is highly coveted by serious climbers with many failing to gain the summit. So it was off to North Palisade to climb the Southwest Chute route.

For this trip I took a climbing rope and Bob Carlson, a climbing partner of mine to help in the technical portions of the climb. This climb went surprising well. In several sections another party just ahead of us used a rope for protection but we felt comfortable and climbed without one. The most challenging part of the climb was near the summit when we traversed left along a narrow ledge into the next chute which led to the summit. The only time Sierra became a bit scared was while inching her way along the exposed ledge which dropped off several hundred feet below in a sheer rock face. In several places the ledge was so narrow that we had to hug the wall above and inch carefully sideways along the ledge with the heels of our boots overhanging the drop below.

By the end of 1992, Sierra was well on her way towards achieving her goal. She had climbed 4 of the 13 peaks over 14,000' and had climbed, what we thought to be the most difficult, North Palisade.

We started the 1993 climbing season out with a bang by climbing, what turned out to be the most difficult of the 14,000 foot peaks, Mount Russell, on the 4th of July weekend. Mount Russell is located in the shadow of Mount Whitney and because it is about 400 feet shorter is often overlooked. However, the East Ridge route we took was the most enjoyable and challenging of all the climbs. From the Carillon-Russell col the route looked impossible. The East Ridge was narrow and exposed. The South side to the ridge was very steep and dropped off near vertical for about a thousand feet. The North side was somewhat less severe but it too was very exposed with a drop of several thousand feet to the snow and rocks below.

We climbed up through cracks and ledges on the North side of the ridge and occasionally straddled the very top of the ridge. Whenever we thought we could go no further, we would find a crack or ledge system that would allow us to continue. We finally reached the east summit only to find the true summit 1/4 mile further along the jagged ridge. In another 20 minutes we reached the main summit of Russell with spectacular views of the East face of Mount Whitney and Mount Muir to the South, Mount Williamson and Tyndall to the North and the Kaweahs to the West. It had taken us 2 1/2 hours of careful climbing along the exposed ridge. We did

not use a climbing rope but could have on several occasions. To my surprise this route was technically more difficult than the route on North Palisade.

In August we took an eight day, 65 mile backpacking trip from Kearsarge Pass to Mount Whitney. On the first night of this trip a bear broke into our food cache and lightened our load for us, how thoughtful of him. Fortunately we had an adequate supply of food for both the bear and ourselves. As we hiked south, the trail took us over Forester Pass (13,200), the highest pass on the John Muir trail. Near the top of the pass a small summer storm struck with snow, hail, lightning and thunder. We hurried down off the pass and made camp. On this trip we climbed Tyndall (14,018), Mount Young (13,176), Mount Hale (13,495), Mount Muir (14,013), Keeler's Needle (14,240+) and Day Needle (14,174+). Although over 14,000', Keeler's Needle and Day Needle are not included in the list of 14,000 foot peaks as they are not recognized as individual peaks rather sub-peaks on the high ridge leading up to Mount Whitney.

By the start of the 1994 climbing season, Sierra had climbed eight peaks over 14,000' and had climbed a total of 27 peaks. She only had five more 14,000 footers to go. We were confident 1994 would be the year to complete her goal. However, what remained were some impressive peaks, Mount Shasta, Middle Palisade, Thunderbolt Peak, Mount Sill and Mount Williamson.

Mount Shasta (14,161) posed a new challenge--continuous hiking/climbing on hard snow with crampons and an ice axe. Sierra was used to hiking on snow from some of our previous climbs but had not used crampons nor an ice axe. She had no trouble on Mount Shasta and in fact rates Mount Shasta as one of her easier climbs. Before the climb I had told her it would be a difficult climb and that many climbers fail on their first attempt. On the descent, she asked me, "Dad, what's the big deal about Mount Shasta, it was easy." She particularly enjoyed the sitting glissade on the descent. From just below the Red Banks we were able to sit on the snow with feet in the air and glissade (slide) all the way down to Lake Helen, a drop of over 2,000 vertical feet. We used our ice axes as a brake to keep our speed under control. What took us several hours to climb early that morning took a matter of a few minutes to descend.

Middle Palisade was next and we climbed it with a group of friends--Dr. Colin Fuller, his wife Robin Dunwell, Bob Carlson and Tyler Grace. It was a very enjoyable climb with all making the summit on July 3, 1994. We camped at Finger Lake with its beautiful views of The Thumb, Middle Palisade, Norm Clyde Peak and other peaks.

With basketball camps, softball and ballet taking much of Sierra's time in July we were not able to get back into the mountains until the middle of August to climb Thunderbolt (14,002) and Mount Sill (14,162). For Thunderbolt we took a rope and climbing gear and were joined by Nader Tamannaie and Dave Vandershaf. The summit block was very exposed and rated 5.9 using the Yosemite rating

system. We climbed the Southwest Chute to the ridge, roped up and climbed half a rope length to the summit block. Here we lassoed the summit block, tied one end off and prussiked up the rope to the very top. The summit was only large enough for one roped climber at a time so we took turns climbing the rope to the top and rappelling down.

The following day we set out to climb Mount Sill. It was a long hike over Potluck Pass and up Glacier Creek to the base of Mount Sill. It took us nearly six hours from base camp before we even saw the peak. It was an easy but steep climb from the glacier at 13,200 to the top.

Two weeks later we were back in the mountains to climb our last 14,000 footer, Mount Williamson (14,375), the second highest peak in California. On this trip Gene Leach, a retired Mathematics Professor, joined us. In fact, Gene was a college professor of mine 25 years earlier. Over the years we have skied and climbed together. He was with Sierra and I when she climbed her first two 14,000 foot peaks, Mount Langley and Mount Whitney in 1991, and was there to join us on this important climb of her last one. The hike up and over Shepherd Pass was not much fun but the climb of Mount Williamson was great. The scramble into Williamson Bowl is one of my favorites as it is so isolated and spectacular. The Bowl contains six beautiful lakes rimmed by four massive peaks with their sheer granite faces jetting skyward. Mount Williamson has one of the best views from any summit in the Sierra. From Williamson we could see many of the 14,000 foot peaks we had climbed--Mount Langley, Whitney, Muir, Russell and Tyndall and far to the North the Palisades, Mount Sill, Split and White Mountain.

Sierra was very pleased to have accomplished her goal and has set new and more difficult goals for herself. Her goals now include climbing more technically demanding peaks which require roped climbing on snow, ice and rock. In particular she wants to climb the Grand Teton in Wyoming, Mount Rainier in Washington, Mount Sir Donald and Mount Robson in British Columbia, all in preparation of climbing Mount McKinley in Alaska by age 16.

What made this accomplishment even more rewarding for Sierra is that the five peaks she climbed in 1994, she did with a broken toe acquired six months earlier while on pointe in ballet. Neither rain, nor snow, nor bears, nor rock faces, nor a broken toe will keep a determined climber from accomplishing her goals.

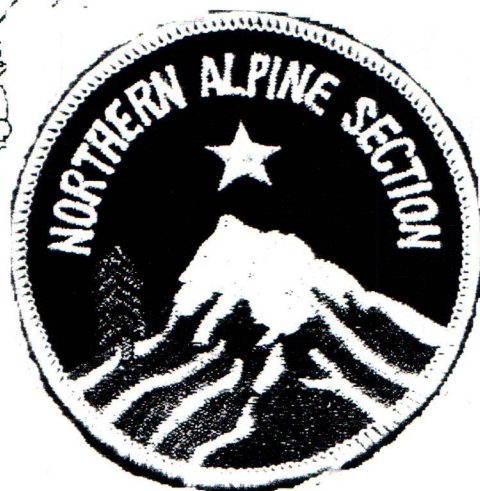


CALIFORNIA PEAKS OVER 14,000 FEET

<u>Peak</u>	<u>Elevation</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Sierra's Comments</u>
1991-age 10			
Mount Langley	14,042	9/20/91	Altitude sickness near the top, could hardly breathe, thought I would die
Mount Whitney	14,494	9/21/91	A real breeze after climbing Mt. Langley the day before
1992-age 11			
Split Mountain	14,058	8/2/92	Awful approach and terrible trail to Red Lake base camp, never again!
North Palisade	14,242	8/22/92	One of my three favorite climbs along with Thunderbolt and Russell
1993--age 12			
Mount Russell	14,086	7/3/93	The most difficult and challenging peak, in places I was really scared
White Mountain	14,246	8/1/93	Easiest hike to the top, follow the jeep road, boring hike
Mount Tyndall	14,020	8/15/93	The descent was tedious, somersaulted when a rock went out from under me
Mount Muir	14,013	8/19/93	Only room for two on the summit block Freezing cold 25° and very windy
1994--age 13			
Mount Shasta	14,161	6/19/94	Much easier than I thought it would be, great glissading down the snow
Middle Palisade	14,040	7/3/94	Relieved to make the summit on my second try, fun trip with friends
Thunderbolt	14,002	8/12/94	Smallest summit block, room for only one roped climber at a time
Mount Sill	14,162	8/13/94	Its a long way to the mountain from Palisades Basin
Mount Williamson	14,375	8/28/94	Great view, glad to have finished my goal in just three years

Note: Some have tried to add to the list of 13 peaks over 14,000' by including minor bumps on high ridges or sub-peaklets of a main summit. I believe peaklets such as Polemonium, Starlight, the East Horn and West Horn of Williamson, East Summit of Russell, Keeler's Needle, Day's Needle, the two minor summits on Mount Shasta, etc. do not rate recognition as stand alone peaks and were not included, although 5 of these minor sub-peaks were climbed.

*Congratulations !!!
N.A.S. Emblem Award
to Sierra Richins
October 5, 1994*



Trails and Tribulations

(Raymond Peak the round-a -bout way)

On August 20, Bob Buckles, Bill Brandt, Scott Nordstrom, and I drove down the Blue Lakes road through the scenic Hope Valley area to climb Raymon Peak. Scott was planning on camping in the area so he followed Bob's Trooper II in his car. We drove as far down the dirt road as we felt the low clearance vehicle could safely follow. We then set off on foot along the dusty road until it intersected with the Pacific Crest Trail.

We continued on the PCT and passed what seemed to be a spur trail that was blocked by a tree branch. I could vaguely remember cutting off the main trail somewhere around here a few years ago when I climbed this peak with Alan Cooke and Anna Chaput. I just thought the small obstacle was there to keep hikers off a dead end spur. That was our first mistake. We would later find out that the branch was put there to keep the PCT hikers from wandering off the main trail, but that is exactly the cutoff we should have taken.

We continued down the trail and it soon became evident that we were headed around behind the mountain. As the trail crossed a creek, I suggested we follow that creek up the drainage to get back to the far side of the ridge to the point where I had climbed with Alan. The going was pretty good as the underbrush was not real thick and we seemed to be headed in the right direction. Next we veered up a slope that appeared to be a route to what looked like the summit. We gleefully scrambled up the tallus slopes and I thought that this way seemed much easier than the route I took before. We rock climbed up some pinnacles that we thought led to the summit when lo and behold there loomed the summit -- across a canyon where the ridge bent back around. Not only were we on a false summit we were on the wrong end of the whole ridge!

We tried to contour around and keep our altitude but we constantly came to big drop offs and sheer crumbling cliffs. We would drop down make our way back up around a large block only to find that we should have stayed low due to another sheer block. Eventually we ended up below the real summit. As we tried to avoid bombing each other with loose rocks we scrambled around to the left and behind the summit. So we ended up climbing up from the far side as we would have done had we just kept going along the trail! We joked about how intimate we felt with this peak, having seemingly explored every nook and cranny.

We did a much better and more direct navigation of our way back down the peak. We only had to make one major detour to spend about 30 minutes retracing our steps to a previous rest spot after Bob discovered that he lost his camera. After several minutes of scouring the area it was found under a bush.

We made it back to the vehicles only a *few* hours behind schedule and headed back down highway 50 with a stop at St. Paulie's for dinner.

— John Besbekos

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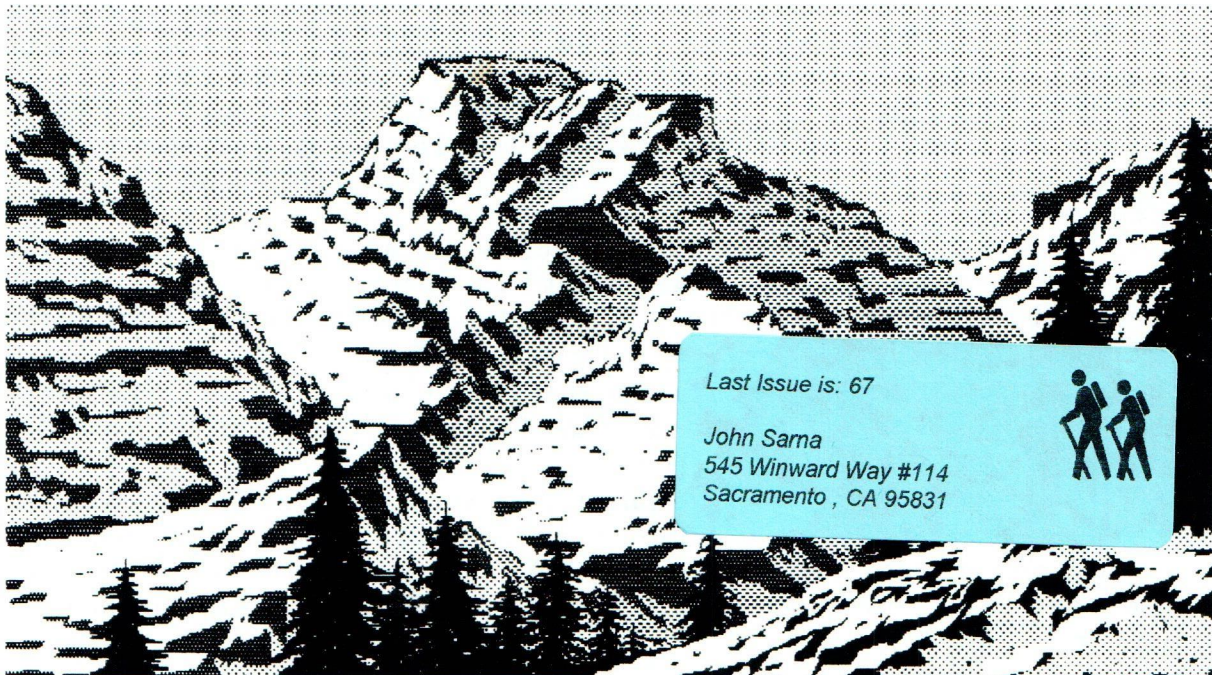
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