

THE



BOULDER

motherlode chapter-sierra club

Issue No. 65 March & April 1995

Chair's Corner

Greetings. As newly elected Chair I think it appropriate to recognize Bob Buckles for all his hard work on behalf of the Section. Bob did a fine job sustaining our Section in an era when interest is waning across the country in groups such as our own.

As you may have noticed already, this *Boulder* edition is late. Submittals were, shall we say, scarce. Based on this fact and on conversations with other Peak and Gorgers I believe increasing our membership is the most important task I can work to accomplish as the Chair. To this end I will work to try to get more Tahoe area peak climbs into the upcoming summer outings schedule. I have listed a couple additional items that might work to increase membership. I would appreciate feedback on whether these would make a difference.

Finish the Coastal Peaks List: Would this increase the interest in the Peak and Gorge Section? What assumptions or objectives should underlie the list. Should it be a winter 'work-out' list? Should it cover the area between the Yolla Bolla Wilderness and Monterrey Bay? Should it cover larger areas? Should it contain day-hikable peaks only, or be more all inclusive? Give me input and, using the list that Bill Hauser put together years ago, I'll pull together a draft.

Would additional Emblems Help: Would interest be increased if we had Ogul and NAS Super Emblems? In terms of increasing membership, is this idea worth the effort of trying to overcome the first-cost hurdle?

Tahoe-Area Climbs: I encourage all leaders to schedule a few dayhikes that they, perhaps, would not otherwise schedule to get more hikers involved in peak climbing.

In 1987, then-Chair Doug Joy published a list of suggestions for Section Members to increase the quality of the Section's activities. Some things everyone can do to help out include:

- Update your leadership skills. Take Basic First Aid and CPR. If you taken the Basic class, upgrade to Advanced.
- Plan a trip. If you aren't ready to lead a trip, find another leader and offer to plan the trip and assist in the leadership.
- Write a Boulder article or a poem, or submit something that everyone else would find interesting and newsworthy.
- Prepare a presentation for a Section meeting. Bring and present slides to a meeting.

Feel free to call or write with suggestions. I can be reached via the Internet at lan_cooke@sac.rmiinc.com. This a 'work number' so please keep the number of e-mails to a minimum. Leaders can submit trip write-ups via e-mail.

Alan Cooke 726 Adeline Place, Davis, CA 95616

916/756-5083



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.

Mar 17, Fri.	PEAK AND GORGE SOCIAL Technical Climbing Discussion and Slides. Discuss climb of Jeff Davis Peak, the only technical peak on the Ogul list. Bring snack and slides to John Sarna's. 9556 Appalachian Dr., Rancho Cordova, 963-9243.
Mar 25, Sat.	Ski Tour (Sierra Club) Loon Lake to Tells Peak. For experienced backcountry skiers in good condition. Meet CSUS Arboretum at 6:30am. Jackie Stroud (916)457-6338.
Apr 1, Sat	Intermediate Ski Tour (Sierra Club) Desolation Wilderness. Pyramid peak or Ralston Peak or Haypress Meadows? AL is open to suggestions. Meet CSUS Arboretum at 6:30am or Twin Bridges at 8:30 am. Al Gutowsky, 457-3338.
Apr 7-9, Fri.-Sun.	Lassen National Park Ski Tour (Sierra Club) Either stay in Motels or snow camp as group prefers. Call Bob Buckles, 624-3620.
Apr 8, Sat	Intermediate Ski Tour (Sierra Club) Dicks Peak in Desolation Wilderness. Meet CSUS Arboretum at 6:30am or Bayview Campground, Emerald Bay(Hwy 89), 8:30am. Leader: Al Gutowsky, 457-3338.
Apr 10-13 Mon-Thur	Leisure Ski Tours (Sierra Club) Lift-served telemarking at ski area, then 3 days of backcountry tours and car-camping. Call Jeff Gottesman,(916) 758-9942 (Davis).
Apr 15, Sat	Intermediate Ski Tour (Sierra Club) Rubicon Peak in Desolation Wilderness. Meet CSUS Arboretum 6:30am or Lucky Parking Lot, Tahoe City (Hwy 89) at 8:30am. Leader: Al Gutowsky, 457-3338.
Apr 22, Sat.	Ski Tour (Sierra Club) Tahoe Haute Route. Shuttle tour from near Mt. Rose to Brockway Summit. Lengthy, demanding tour for experienced skiers. Meet at Newcastle Park & Ride(south side of freeway) at 6:30am. Leader: Dave Vandershaf, 933-3116.
Apr 23, Sun	Mt. Tam (Sierra Club) Cataract Falls and Coastal Trail. Great ocean views and wildflowers. Meet CSUS Arboretum at 8:00am or 2nd & C at Davis. Sid Arnold, 381-4315.
Apr 23, Sun	Intermediate Ski Tour (Sierra Club) Place depends on conditions. Meet Hazel Park & Ride near Hwy 50 at 8:00 am. Bob Buckles, 624-3620.
Apr 29, Sat	Intermediate Ski Tour (Sierra Club) West side of Lake Tahoe. Exact location depends on best corn snow conditions. Meet CSUS Arboretum 6:30am or Lucky Parking Lot, Tahoe City (Hwy 89) at 8:30am. Leader: Al Gutowsky, 457-3338.
Apr 29, Sat	Intermediate Ski Tour (Sierra Club) Ralston Peak, climbing skins required. Meet Pollock Pines Safeway parking lot(Sly Park exit from Hwy 50) at 7:30am. <i>Participants must call leader.</i> Bill Campau, 644-5339.
Apr 30, Sun	Intermediate Ski Tour (Sierra Club) Place depends on conditions. Meet Hazel Park & Ride near Hwy 50 at 8:00 am. Bob Buckles, 624-3620.
May 6, Sat	Ski Tour (Sierra Club) Carson Pass Haute Route. Shuttle route from Carson Pass to Kirkwood. Experienced skiers in good shape. Meet El Dorado Hill Park & Ride, 7:00am Barbara Manwell 989-3295.
May 9,11 & 13. Tue, Thur & Sat.	Orienteering Class (Eldorado Nordic Ski Patrol) Class includes 2 evening indoor sessions and an outdoor session. Participants need an orienteering compass. Call Karen Leyse, 644-2542.
May 13-14 Sat-Sun	Ski Tour (Sierra Club) Aim for Sonora Pass area. Car camp. For experienced skiers. Call Dave Vandershaf, 933-3116.
May 13, Sat	Intermediate Ski Tour (Sierra Club) Location depends on conditions. Meet Hazel Park & Ride near Hwy 50 at 8:00 am. Bob Buckles, 624-3620.
May 19, Fri	PEAK AND GORGE SOCIAL Winter Season Wrap-Up. Bring slides of winter ski trips and desert peak climbing. Host: Alan Cooke, 726 Adeline Place, Davis. From I-80, take Mace Blvd exit. Go north to bottom of hill, turn left onto 2nd St. Drive to Pole Line, turn right. Drive past 5th street, turn left onto Lehigh (between 5th & 8th) Turn left onto Adeline. First house on left. 756-5083.

Editor's note: This issue of the Boulder is almost a month late. *No one submitted any articles by the requested deadline !!!* The heavy winter storms probably minimized the number of trips. If you do any spring skiing, coastal hiking, or desert trips why not share your experiences? -- JB

From the Assistant Editor: Since the submittals for this *Boulder* were extremely limited (read all but non-existent) I took the liberty of submitting write-ups for a number of peaks that can easily be led as dayhikes. All of the peaks are a little out-of-the-way but worthy of more attention than they receive in the Schedule. They would make good trips for next summers schedule. -- Alan Cooke

BEGINNING SKI TRIPS

My first cross-country ski trip this season was at the ever popular Castle Peak area. I asked Bob Buckles if he wanted to join me on a short introductory type outing. He didn't mind doing an easy trip for a change. I was glad there was someone who could go for help if I slammed into a tree or something, that is if I could stay on my skis long enough to pick up any speed.

We parked the vehicle in at the snow park next to Boreal ski resort. For those who don't know, you must have either a \$3 day permit or a \$21 season pass to park in any area with a SNO_PARK sign. We lugged our gear down the underpass of I-80 across to the other side where the trail starts. It didn't take long for us to shed our outer coats as we scooted uphill. Soon we come to a fork in the trail - snowmobiles to the left, skiers to the right.

There was no worry about falling down on this leg of the trail as it still continues to go uphill. It was quite a nice day and there were lots of people out. We passed people with snow-shoes, people with track skis, people with dogs, people with struggling children. Not exactly a place for a solitude back-country experience.

Eventually we came to the end of what is in summer time a jeep road. We had to mostly side step up to the top of a saddle. Traveling along this ridgetop sure gives you some wonderful views of the snow covered Sierra. Most people then head down the other side to the Peter Grubb Ski Hut. We continued along the ridge to the saddle between Basin Peak and Castle Peak. The terrain was quite steep here and I felt I was getting beyond my skill level. No peak-bag today, but I'll call it a ridge-bag. We headed back down and I ended up doing a lot of intentional falling on my butt as felt myself to begin to careen out of control, all the while Bob admonishing me to quit giving in so easily and practice telemarking!

Another place much less challenging to try cross-country skiing is Donner Memorial State Park at Donner Lake, just a few miles up the road from Castle Peak. It is pretty flat terrain so there is virtually no falling down here. The road that curves through the summer camp ground is groomed much like the private resorts only this is free (except for the Sno-Park fees). You can practice or kick and glide as you loop around the park. Alternately you can easily cut your own trail through the pine trees or along the lake edge. The nice thing about this place is that you can easily ski back to the vehicles for lunch or to pick up or drop off coats. Therefore you don't have to carry a big backpack around all day.

-- JOHN BESBEKOS

A trip to Southern California, Arizona and Mexico - November 9 - 27, 1994

Since there were delays in our departure date, the trip that started out as one week in Southern California turned into two and a half weeks exploring some exciting new territory for us. In the middle of the trip, we decided it would be ridiculous to drive all the way back home just to turn around and drive back for our planned Thanksgiving trip in Death Valley. We never made it to DV, but did have a great time in Arizona and Mexico. The trip turned out to be one of the wettest and coldest ones we've taken in the desert. After three days of nearly constant rain, the skies finally cleared on Howard's birthday, the 12th, and we started on a three day backpack up the ridge to Rabbit Peak.

Villager/Rabbit/Rosa Point, Sombrero

Knowing that we wouldn't find much snow left on Rabbit, we started out with 11 quarts of water between the two of us. The ridge was a grunt, but easy walking. Northeasterly winds grew stronger as we traveled further up the ridge. We camped just east of the summit of Villager, sheltered somewhat from the winds by an old juniper. The next day we hiked up over Villager and about nine other little bumps to Rabbit Peak (I counted them on the way back). We hunted around for Rabbit's register for awhile and finally found it on the "furthest rock outcropping near the western edge" (we had not purchased the guidebook at that point). There was just enough snow on top to nibble on. The winds, which increased in the afternoons, were actually a blessing in that they kept us cool and less dehydrated. The next day we headed down the ridge, over to the 4230' saddle, then up the ridge and over a series of bumps to Rosa Point. We started down the mountain at around 1:00 PM, following a trail we had seen from the top. Careful route finding was necessary even with this use-trail, since going down the wrong ridge or canyon could have been disastrous with as little water and daylight as we had left. We lost the trail a couple of times, then finally decided to get into the canyon that we thought would lead us out of the maze of canyons and back to the car. After being forced to climb back out twice by dry waterfalls, we decided that the canyon was not be such a good idea after all. We only had about an hour of daylight left, so we faced the possibility of staying out another night without any water. We knew there was supposed to be a trail of some sort leading up to the "Natural Rock Tanks", it was just a matter of finding it. Fortunately, Howard hit upon it as we continued to climb up further away from the canyon. I was extremely relieved to find such a good trail, being as exhausted and thirsty as I was. We arrived back to the car just as the sky was turning into desert dusk pink; I downed an entire quart of water without stopping.

After a good meal and a Jacuzzi that night in Borrego Springs (the only night on the trip that we stayed in a motel), we were ready for Sombrero Peak the next day. We drove in through Indian Valley to the end of the road where a wonderful little Palm grove lies. Heavy vegetation in the canyon drove us up out of it and more or less straight for the peak. It was a nice afternoon hike.

That night we drove in on the 4W drive roads south of Jacumba for a second time (we had planned to do Jacumba first before Rabbit, but the weather was just too miserable). By the morning, the rains had begun and we were, once again, defeated by weather. This was when we decided to head east into southern Arizona and northern Mexico.

Mt. Ajo, Cerro Pinacate, Kino Peak

Organ Pipe Cactus Natl. Mon, which grew increasingly crowded with "snowbirds" as our stay there went on, was obviously the place to escape the cold, wet weather, although even there, apparently, it was unusually cold. The Ajo range, as viewed from the one-way road into the trail head, is very impressive. A popular day-hike in the area, Ajo had a good trail to the top; there was only one fairly steep spot where it was apparent that people had various opinions on which way to go. A very unusual plant on top of Ajo peaked our interest, especially when we did not see it anywhere else on the way down. We talked to the botanist at the Visitor Center, who thought it might be a type of milkweed (pear-shaped seed pod and needle-like leaves). Mt. Ajo was a very enjoyable hike, with very interesting geology, vegetation, and great view.

The next day was laundry, shower, and relaxation day, which also allowed us time to drive into Mexico to get ready for Cerro Pinacate. This area is very different; more recent volcanic activity has given it a more barren look than the area just north in Organ Pipe, which was lush even in comparison to So. California deserts. Apparently, they get monsoon-type weather in the summer. From the top of Pinacate, we could see the Gulf of

California to the SW. Pinacate took almost the entire day, but there was just enough time to make the drive to the edge of the Elegans Crater. We wished we'd had more than about 2 minutes of daylight to view the crater; this geological feature is definitely worth seeing.

We took the Puerto Blanco drive west of the Visitor's Center the next day; notable stops on this drive were the Cristate Saguaro and its unusual growth patterns, and the Quitobaquito spring, a wetland marsh right next to the Mexican border. In fact, the noise from Highway 2 just over the border disturbs the tranquility of this oasis. More than 150 species of birds have been sited here -- it's worth a visit.

Kino Peak was a full day due to the long hike in to the base of the peak. The anxiety we felt over this peak after comments we'd heard from various people proved to be unwarranted, as it turned out to be an enjoyable and fairly easy climb. The cliff wall that rises up from the saddle (U-notch) between the north ridge and the high point did not look particularly easy, but it wasn't bad. A well-worn path and plenty of "ducks" led the way up a series of ledges, allowing a traverse/climb from east to west. Eventually, we topped out on the summit ridge and it was an easy walk back (eastward) toward the high point.

Signal and Castle Dome

The next morning we drove from Organ Pipe to Kofa National Wildlife Refuge, and up the Kofa Queen Canyon to Indian Canyon, where we started the hike up Signal Peak. This route, a four hour round trip hike, is definitely the easiest way up the peak; we can attest to this since we returned just over a month later with Allen Cooke to climb up and down the other two routes. The views of Kofa's rugged pinnacles to the S/SE of this peak are spectacular.

The climb up Castle Dome the following day began with a hike up the wash NW of the peak. Upon reaching a saddle NE of the summit, we circled around a large cigar-shaped pinnacle to where the third class section began. Unfortunately, someone had painted red arrows on the rock leading us the entire way up to the top, although I'm not sure we would have picked this route up if the arrows weren't there to induce confidence in it. This route on the NE side was interesting and very doable, even though most people, from the register entry, came up from the opposite side (from the SW side of the peak and the main route described in the guidebook).

Jacumba and Pico Risco

On Thanksgiving day, we finally made it to the top of Jacumba, which was an easy two hour round trip hike from the old 4W drive mining roads SW of the peak. After a solar shower at the car and a turkey dinner at Carrows in El Centro (the only restaurant open), we were feeling pretty good. That night we drove into Mexico, down Highway 2 and then onto an obnoxiously washboarded road that seemed to go on forever. We camped several miles before the Cañon de Guadalupe Hot Springs NE of the peak. It was a good thing, since the place was crawling with people. The numerous hot springs emanating from the hillside and the large number of palm trees in the area are quite incredible; unfortunately human impact has taken its toll on the area. We parked our car there (\$10.00) for the day and started up the Guadalupe Canyon. The water in the canyon itself is also very impressive, in terms of volume and the scouring effect the flow has had on the bedrock. We hiked up the G. canyon until we were at the base of the ridge running north of the peak and west of the canyon noted as Route B in the guidebook. From the topo map, this seemed the most logical route, although we did have to lose some elevation and drop into the canyon toward the top. In hindsight, after coming down via the canyon, the ridge was easier due to the extremely large boulders in the canyon; it was difficult enough maneuvering down these small house-sized boulders, I wouldn't have wanted to try to maneuver up them. The top was "interesting"; given the length of time it took to make it up there, we knew that we were running out of time. We scrambled up some third class that we weren't sure would go, then after looking around for a while, Howard found the rock and jump-across to the huge sloping rock that, at the end, was the top. We didn't have much time on top, but it was a very satisfying few minutes. The register was placed by a Baja mountain club. Our route down, as already described, would have actually been quite fun if we'd had more time; we made it back to the main Guadalupe Canyon just before dark, then found our way back to the car in the dark. After a dip in one of the pools, we went back to our previous nights camping spot along side the road and away from the crowds.

It was a great trip: new and interesting territory and just the right mixture of R&R and quality hiking time.

Tobi Tyler

Desert Peak Trip, December 26-30, 1994

Monday I drove south of Needles for five days of peak climbing. I camped about five miles in on Turtle Mountain road at a very good campsite I had noticed in 1993.

Tuesday at 8:00 a.m. I met Howard Steidtmann, Tobi Tyler, Bill Hauser, Debbie Bulger, and Richard Stover at the US Highway 95 / Lake Havasu Road intersection. *Stepladder Peak* was first on the agenda. We drove south to Turtle Mountain Road and drove in 10 miles. There, Bill and I parked our cars, piled into Howard's 4-Runner, and then rode to the roadhead. As we bounced along, Bill said repeatedly he could have made it in his Toyota Camry. I wouldn't have done it in my Honda Accord!

Stepladder involves first walking across open desert, then following a wash to the base of the mountain, and finally, climbing Class 2 slopes to the top. The trip took us five hours, including time spent talking to two Desert Peak Section (DPS) climbers -- Andy Zdon and Wynne Benti-Zdon -- and time spent on the top reading the peak register, eating lunch, and taking in the views of Ward Valley, the Turtle and Mopah Mountains, and Chemenehuevi Mountain.

Back at the Turtle Mountain Road we discussed Wednesday's itinerary and decided to head south. By the time we hit Highway 95 Debbie and Richard had decided to head off on their own. Bill, Howard and Tobi, and I headed south planning to regroup in Blythe.

Once there we ate and traded ideas. Howard and Tobi wanted to bag *Picacho Peak* (known to DPSers as Little Picacho). I wanted *Signal Peak*. Bill wanted to check out a county highpoint in Arizona. Howard and Tobi agreed to climb Signal if we did it via the Class 4 Palm Canyon route. We drove to Arizona, parted company with Bill, and headed to the Kofa Wildlife Preserve.

That night was incredibly humid. I set up my tent without a rainfly. An hour later, I soaked a towel wiping condensation off my tent and put on the fly. The tent was soaked the next day (I was dry).

By 8:00 we were at the Palm Canyon trailhead. At the trailhead some campers noticed we were packing ropes, harnesses, helmets and gear, and came over to warn us that the rock in the canyon was terrible. They insisted that they expected a report when we returned. We agreed and headed up.

We covered the first 1.5 miles on a trail. We covered the next 3/4 mile by (1) climbing up a modestly brushy creek, (2) circling to the south through an open area of boot brush, (3) following the upper section of the creek through more brush, (4) roping up and climbing one short Class 3 pitch and one lengthy Class 4 pitch, then (5) walking the ridge to the peak. We roped up 100 yards below a waterfall that bars further travel in the creek.

Along the way we saw three Bighorn Sheep. Two were young and quite curious and watched us for 20 minutes. A bigger animal stayed all but completely out of sight.

The first roped pitch was the Class 3 pitch. This pitch had minuscule holds so we roped up. Tobi led the pitch. Above this pitch we found two possible routes up higher. One was next to another waterfall, and we figured that it wasn't the route because the guide would have mentioned the waterfall. So we went the other way. Tobi led this pitch but with poorer results. After climbing about 25 feet of a Class 4(?) crack system, Tobi reached the crux move. There, a huge flake broke loose barring further climbing. I climbed up and cleaned the pitch leaving one piece that I couldn't reach because of the flake.

We then went to the other route. I led this pitch. Starting to the right of the waterfall, I climbed straight up for about 15 feet, set a couple pieces of protection then worked laterally over the top of a chute resembling a (lesser) water course. At the end of this I anchored myself and belayed Howard and Tobi up. I then led the second half of the pitch. This had lots of hand and footholds but I found few places to set protection where the piece wouldn't come out with an upward tug. Fortunately, I found a couple of horns for runners and the one truly bomb-proof horn was near the crux move at the top of the pitch, thus protecting it adequately.

Once at the top we stuffed gear and moved uphill at the best possible speed. By this time it was about 2:00 p.m. and we still had to get the peak and get out. We headed straight uphill and got a shock a few minutes later when we found ourselves looking over the edge of a cliff on our direct line of travel. However, with a little back tracking and climbing to our right we were able to get on-track. We were on the summit of Signal Peak (aka, *Kofa 2*) by 3:00 pm.

The views from Signal Peak are tremendous. At the base of the peak to the north and east are weirdly eroded rock formations -- columns, towers, and razor sharp ridges. We found no a peak register, only a film canister with a couple of cards. We took in the view for a few minutes, signed one of the

cards and headed out. We exited via a different route, climbing out via Four Palms Canyon, a brushy Class 2 route. Overall, the trip took us about 12 hours. At 8:00 pm we reported on the rock situation to the one camper that had not gone to town for beer.

We had intended to meet Bill in Yuma at 8:00 p.m. We got to Yuma about 9:30 and missed Bill. We had dinner and drove to *Picacho State Recreation Area* where we camped.

Picacho, it turns out, was racked by flooding a couple of weeks prior to our trip. The damage was extensive. One boat launching facility and the adjoining campground were all but removed from the map. Throughout the area the ground was saturated and everything had the smell of wet and decay.

We camped at Picacho two nights. Thursday we took it easy and just hung out. While we were doing so, a Motherlode Chapter canoe trip pulled out at Picacho and I ran into someone I had met at an earlier Peak and Gorge meeting. Small world!

The next day we did *Picacho*. Howard and Tobi needed Picacho to finish the DPS list (they have done 75+ of the list's 97 peaks). Picacho is a Class 6 peak, meaning that it is technical and involves fixed aid to climb. Usually that means bolts, etc. Picacho is bolted, but as discussed below, it also has a ladder.

We spend the first two miles walking up a wash. The wash has a couple of minor constrictions where we had to scramble, but it was pretty easy.

The fun began when we reached the back side of Picacho. First we had to scramble up to a notch dividing the main block from a northern satellite block. Class 2 stuff. Next, we had to climb directly to the right, then switch back and forth up two or three benches to find what is called a Fourth Class Step. Theoretically we should have found a ladder to aid on this Step, but after about an hour of looking we decided that the ladder was history. (We found a couple nails and a board that could have once been a rung.) We therefore decided to climb what we believed was the Step. We set a couple of anchors, Howard led, and I belayed.

When Howard reached the top he yelled that it looked right. He then called for slack, saying he had found the next obstacle -- the Jump Across. Howard gathered in rope, we heard rustling and the sound of heavy footsteps, Tobi almost had a heart attack, and Howard yelled he was across and was setting up a belay station. We left the original rope in place.

I was the last person to reach the Jump Across. The Jump Across is a four-foot wide gap that you, well, jump across. When climbing up Picacho you jump off a small ledge at the rounded top-edge of a precipice and land on a wide bench. It's four feet across and hundreds of feet straight down. The packs were on my side of the jump across so I sent them across on carabiners. Then I jumped. Tobi belayed while Howard took my picture. (My wife will love that picture!) As it was getting late, we left a pack there to reduce "fumble around time."

Next comes a ladder that allows you to avoid climbing a 5.6(?) pitch. I belayed Howard up the ladder and then Howard belayed us up it. That puts you on the roof of the world.

You then walk up and over a false summit to the penultimate obstacle -- the EXPOSED Class 3 north end of the middle summit block. You talk about exposed. If you fell you wouldn't even bounce for 2,000 feet! Howard led and I went last. As I was climbing Tobi yelled "You won't believe what is up here." Howard answered "Let him see for himself." Tobi was right. There is a recliner and a 19(?) inch TV up there! How it got there.. well that's beyond me.

The ultimate obstacle is rappelling off the south side of the middle block. We anchored on the bolts on the north side, stretched our ropes across the block, and rappelled off. I went first. As I leaned back I got 40 feet of rope stretch I hadn't planned to have and I went over uncontrollably. I was on belay, so I didn't go far, but I bruised my thigh most painfully. Howard and Tobi saw me take my header and were warned. Still, Tobi went over badly as well, and ended up hanging upside down on the rope. I probably would have laughed myself half to death if I hadn't been in pain.

Anyway, Howard got down and we scrambled to the summit. It was about 3:00 p.m. as we summited so we didn't stay long. There was a register so we were able to sign in. We reached the jump across just as it got dark. On the down climb, the jump across is gnarlier than the up climb because you must jump onto an upward-sloping rock face. We chose to climb down into and around it. We were back to the cars at 8:00 and had dinner in Yuma.

Thus ended the peak climbing.

Alan Cooke

Haskell Peak

The same day Bob Buckles and I bagged Mt. Elwell we swung through and bagged Haskell Peak as well. We encountered Howard Steidtmann and Tobi Tyler on our drive in to the trailhead – Howard and Tobi were driving out. If you are interested in an alternative route for Haskell Peak, I wrote a description of a hike starting from the Haskell Creek Homesites which was printed in the Boulder some time back.

Trailhead: The trailhead is marked by a marginally legible sign announcing the Haskell Peak trail along the north side of Forest Service Road 09.

Getting There: First reach Bassetts by taking CA Highway 49 east for 17.5 from the bridge on CA Highway 49 in Downieville (59 miles east from Nevada City) or 14 miles west from the intersection of Highway 49 and CA Highway 89 (five miles west of Sierraville). From Highway 49 at Bassetts, drive 3.7 miles north on Gold Lake Road to the excellent dirt road labeled Haskell Peak Road, or Forest Service Road 09. Turn east onto this road. Follow it for 8.6 miles to the trailhead. Note that at mile 1.0, stay to the left at the unmarked intersection. At this point, the road changes into a very good gravel road. Stay to the right at the intersection at 2.7 miles, to the left at 4.4 miles, and to the right at 7.0 miles. The road deteriorates somewhat throughout, but overall is a very good dirt road.

The Hike: From Forest Service Road 09, a very good trail can be located that leads directly to the summit. It is reasonable to bag the peak in an hour from the road.

The first half mile travels through a forested region. As the trail gains elevation, it emerges onto an open ridge, passing two false summits on the way to the top.

There are a few areas where the trail is somewhat sketchy, but if you watch for ducks, there should be no trouble whatsoever following this trail.

Total Round-Trip Statistics: Approximately three miles and 1,100 feet of elevation gain. Haskell Peak is a Class 1 peak.

Parting Notes: Haskell Peak provides an easy half-day outing which can be combined with *Sierra Buttes* or *Mt. Elwell* to provide a full day of hiking.

Maps: U.S.G.S. 7 1/2 minute *Clio, Calif.* and 15 minute *Sierra City, Calif.* quadrangles.

Permits: None.

Alternative Hike: The trailhead is at Haskell Creek Homesites. The homesites are located along Highway 49, roughly 2 miles east of Bassetts (the turn off for Gold Lake Road).

Although it exists on the (ancient) *Sierra City, Calif.* 15 minute topographic map, the trail is difficult to find and follow because it is little used. (In 1992, however, it did appear that someone had gone to the effort of performing some trail maintenance work.) The trail starts near the water tank located between Lot 10 and Lot 22. To find the trail, walk up to the buildings behind the water tank. Attached to the back of the bigger of the buildings is a concrete loading area. In 1992, just a few feet south of this building there was a tree standing off by itself with an old blaze on it. The trail takes off up the hill from this tree.

The trail barely continues to exist. However, watch closely and you will find the trail is marked by blazes, ribbons, and diamond shaped pieces of aluminum nailed to trees. In 1992, the trail was further marked by occasional ducks and metal rods bearing bright orange plastic squares. The trail can be followed but care is needed because some deer trails are more pronounced.

After roughly two miles, the trail intersects Forest Service Road 09. If you have successfully followed the trail, you should find yourself more or less at the trailhead described above. Just before the trail reaches Road 09, the trail crosses a meadow. Ducks mark the trail through this meadow, but if no ducks are visible, the trail can be approximated by simply continuing to head uphill to the north.

Remember, if you get off-trail and simply cannot find the trail, the route is almost directly north-trending. When the author did this route, he went entirely cross country, occasionally referring to a compass to ensure a heading of due north. By going uphill, and bearing north, it is hard to miss the peak. However, dense manzanita makes the terrain difficult in some places. Going directly north puts you to the west of the primary Haskell Peak Trail when you reach Road 09.

For the alternative hike, total statistics are roughly six miles and 2,300 feet of elevation gain.

Hawkins Peak

Last July, for something to do, Annie Coledog and I headed out to bag Hawkins Peak via a route I had not tried before. This route is the route listed on the Ogul list as the primary route. Following the description of the primary route I have attached a description of a route that I used on a hike I led three years ago as well as a description of the route I had intended to lead that day.

Trailhead: The trailhead is a turnout along the Burnside Lake Road.

Getting There: Burnside Lake Road is a very good dirt road that begins at the intersection of CA Highways 88 and 89 at Picketts Junction. CA Highway 88 trends east to west, CA Highway 89 comes in from the north and ends, and the Burnside Lake Road heads south. Follow the Burnside Lake Road for 5.0 miles. At this point a dirt road branches off to the left (east). Pull off and park.

The hike: The hike follows jeep trails for most of the trip. Start on the dirt road heading east from the Burnside Lake Road. Within 1/4 mile, the road forks, with the left fork heading to a mine, and the right fork heading uphill towards a locked gate. Take the right fork. Follow the road for roughly 1.5 miles until reaching a fork in the road on an open ridge. Hawkins Peak's summit will be straight in front of you – 1/2 mile away as the crow flies. Hawkins Peak presents an impressive cliff face from this angle, but on either side of the cliff, obvious and easy routes lead to the summit.

It makes little difference whether you go to the left or the right at this junction. The left branch offers an easier ascent. Follow the road for about 2/10 of a mile until reaching another fork. The branch to the left, while discernible, is far fainter than the branch to the right (which can be seen heading off to the south along the ridge). Head to the left, directly for the summit. The road becomes progressively fainter, finally disappearing just short of the summit area. From there, an obvious usage trail leads to the rocks, and numerous fairly obvious routes lead to the summit. The only major risk factor involves making sure of your footing as you climb.

To return, either retrace your steps, or for variety, find one of the obvious routes down the west side of the peak. The western routes involve steeper and looser terrain than the eastern routes. However, a couple routes offer stair-like rock and slip-sliding chutes to the sagebrush terrain below the summit. Return to the major trail junction on the ridge, and then return by the original route.

Total round-trip statistics: Roughly five miles and 1,850 feet of elevation gain.

Alternative Hike: As an alternative, climb Hawkins Peak and Pickett Peak from Blue Lakes Road. Blue Lakes Road is found 2.5 miles west of Picketts Junction. Start somewhere within the first 8/10 mile from Highway 88.

Cross the meadow and head directly for Pickett Peak. (Make sure that you do not cross private property.) The first obstacle is the creek that wanders through Hope Valley. It is much deeper than it looks. When the author did this trip, three group members removed their pants to cross the creek without soaking their clothing.

From the creek, go straight uphill towards Pickett Peak. This leg of the trip is roughly 2.5 miles, most of it through a relatively forgiving forest. Near the top of Pickett Peak you encounter thick, unforgiving brush. Fight through it – there is no way around it from the west. After fighting past the trees, you encounter talus and, at the summit, large boulders. Don't drop a lens cap – it will be lost forever!

From Pickett Peak, walk the ridge to Hawkins Peak. For most of this route the hillside is open. Old dirt roads along the ridge make the ridge exceptionally easy to traverse and you find no brush on the south side of Pickett Peak. Near the top of Hawkins Peak, on the northwestern side, you encounter trees but no foliage that needs to be battled. Hawkins' summit is an easy Class 2 scramble.

To return, it makes little sense to retrace the route over Pickett Peak. Rather, scan the scene, identify the approximate location of your car, take a compass reading, and head straight for your car. (Use your compass to keep relatively on-course since some of the route is forested.) Alternatively, head north along the ridge, drop down to the west below the brush at the base of Pickett Peak, and then retrace your earlier route back to the car.

This alternative is approximately 10 miles and 3,200 feet of elevation gain.

Alternative Hike 2: The trailhead is the Burnside Lake trail at Grover Hot Springs State Park just outside of Markleeville. In Markleeville, travel west on Hot Springs Road for 4 1/2 miles to the Burnside Lake Trailhead located on the right side of the road just before coming to Hot Springs Creek. Alternatively, pay the Grover Hot Springs State Park entrance fee, turn right towards the campground, and use the day-use parking area just past the campground entrance.

Follow the Burnside Lake trail to Burnside Lake (five miles). Pass the lake and follow the Burnside Lake Road to the primary trailhead about one-half mile past the lake. From there, follow the description for the primary route.

The Burnside Lake trailhead is at roughly 5,800 feet elevation. The trail is a nice, well-used trail. In a few places it is relatively hard to follow as it passes through wet, almost marshy, areas and as it detours around other natural obstacles such as downed trees. However, even when the trail gets faint it is easy to stay on track. The trail gains altitude continuously, sometimes more steeply than a newer Forest Service trail would, but overall, it is a good trail.

The trip is approximately 14 miles and 4,200 feet of elevation gain.

Parting Notes: Wildflowers are not a strong-suit of the primary route. During the height of a very good wildflower season, the only flowers noted here were Indian Paintbrush, Lupine, Buckwheat, and one or two other rather pedestrian flowers. Flowers are much more diverse on the second alternative hike.

Maps: Hawkins Peak is found on the U.S.G.S. 7 1/2 minute *Markleeville, Calif.* quadrangle. The Burnside Lake Road and the primary approach are found on the U.S.G.S. 7 1/2 minute *Carson Pass, Calif.* quadrangle. Both maps are contained on the U.S.G.S. 15 minute *Markleeville, Calif.* quadrangle.

If you use the first Alternative Hike, you will want the *Carson Pass* quadrangle. If you use the Burnside Lake Trail, most of the route is contained on the *Markleeville* 7 1/2 minute quadrangle. For the Burnside Lake Trail route, the *Carson Pass* quadrangle is optional, but part of the route will cross areas covered by that map. If you choose to climb Pickett Peak, you might want the *Freel Peak, Calif.* 7 1/2 minute quadrangle.

Permits: None. Grover Hot Springs charges an entrance and a dog fee. Grover Hot Springs personnel lock the gate on the road to the pools so be sure to park where you can get your car out if you return late.

Alan Cooke

Rubicon Peak

Last fall, after hearing of an aborted attempt on Rubicon Peak, Annie Coledog and I headed out to try our luck at finding the peak. I had climbed it about four years ago but I had not made any notes about the trip and couldn't remember details. The following describes how to climb Rubicon Peak via the main route listed on the Ogul List.

Trailhead: The trailhead is at the end of Highland Drive in Rubicon Estates.

Getting There: Take CA Highway 89 south from South Lake Tahoe. The Desolation Wilderness Ranger Station is roughly 3.2 miles south of the CA Highway 89 / U.S. Highway 50 intersection. Check there for permits since Rubicon Peak is within the Wilderness borders.

On Highway 89 starting from the road into the Ranger Station, drive 10.9 miles to the second left hand turn onto Scenic Drive in Rubicon Estates. Coming from the north, this turnoff is roughly 13.6 miles south of the stop light on Highway 89 in Tahoe City.

Turn onto Scenic Drive. Take the first right onto Woodland Drive. Follow it as it sweeps through a hairpin curve. Shortly thereafter, take the right fork in the road onto Manzanita Drive. Shortly thereafter, turn right onto Lake View Drive. Next, turn right onto Crest Drive. Then, turn left onto Forest View Drive. Then turn left onto Highview Drive. Finally, turn right onto Highland Drive and drive to the point where the road is blocked by round wooden posts and a gate. Park. Parking space is limited. If you have numerous cars, you can park cars off the road completely and block them in with other cars to maximize the use of the available space.

The hike: A usage trail leads to Rubicon Peak's summit block. From the gate, walk to the end of the roadbed (walking past the road to the left that leads to a water tank). The roadbed was dug into the hillside and it dead-ends where the road builders stopped digging. There, in the left corner of the dead-end, the usage trail starts uphill.

The trail leads uphill quite steeply throughout the entire route to Rubicon Peak. In the lower elevations, the trail is quite obvious, and in some places is marked by red squares painted on trees along the trail. As you reach higher elevations, the trail becomes fainter with "ducks" beginning to mark the trail.

In October, 1994, a ducked trail led all the way from the higher elevations to the summit block. The trail was obvious, despite the presence of snow on the ground. Many people find ducks annoying and knock them down so you should not count on ducks marking the route. However, this outing is pretty basic and should be doable without ducks. From the roadhead, follow the usage trail either until you reach the summit block or until it becomes impossible to follow, then keep going uphill until you reach the summit block.

Once you reach the summit block, the west face offers routes that can be done without ropes and equipment. The actual high point is near the north end of the summit block.

To reach Peak 9,269, the east side of the ridge offers the easiest approach because the brush is less intense. Peak 9,269 has two summit blocks. To get the views to the south, head for the south side of the southern summit. From Rubicon Peak, walk just below the ridge the quarter mile to the saddle between the summits. Cross over the ridge to the west side, and circle around the southern summit from the western side. You do not need to climb the summit block to get the views of Emerald Bay and South Lake Tahoe.

Total round-trip statistics: Roughly four miles and 2,300 feet of elevation gain. Add an extra 1.5 miles and 300 feet of elevation gain if you bag Peak 9,269 while in the area.

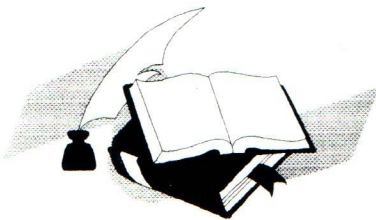
Maps: Rubicon Peak is found on the U.S.G.S. 7 1/2 minute *Rockbound Valley, Calif.* quadrangle, but part of the approach is shown on the *Emerald Bay, Calif.* quadrangle. Both quadrangles are contained on the U.S.G.S. 15 minute *Fallen Leaf Lake, Calif.* quadrangle.

Permits: A Wilderness permit is theoretically required. However, in 1994, a Wilderness Ranger in the Lake Tahoe office said a permit was not required. Check anyway – it's cheaper than the fines. Alan Cooke

Body Briefs

□ A diet for altitude: If you rush from the airport to the high country for that long-awaited backpacking trip, you stand a good chance of losing your appetite, becoming nauseous, maybe even ending up in a funk. This collection of symptoms is known as Acute Mountain Sickness (AMS) and hits more than a quarter of those who go from near sea level to elevations above 10,000 feet too rapidly. The best safeguard is to spend two or three low-exertion days up high, gradually adjusting to the elevation, but who has enough vacation time for that? According to research done for the United States Army and published in the *Journal of Wilderness Medicine*, proper menu planning may help. Avoid fats, which are difficult to digest when you're in the grip of AMS, and stoke up on carbohydrates because they may help prevent AMS and give your body better endurance as it acclimates. If you have trouble keeping solid food down, research with 450 Army troops on duty in Bolivia showed that a high-carbohydrate beverage like GatorLode and a meal-replacement drink that has vitamins, minerals, and proteins go down easier.

18 - FEBRUARY 1995 □ BACKPACKER Magazine



New! The Northern Sierra Peaks Guide by Pete Yamagata
covers 71 peaks and 103 routes, with winter ski ascent information.

To order, send a check for \$10.00 with Sierra Club number, or \$11.00 without, payable to:
Toiyabe Chapter, Sierra Club. Mail check to: Toiyabe Chapter, Sierra Club
Attn: George Churchill, Treasurer
P.O. Box 8096
Reno, NV 89507

All proceeds to benefit Nevada wilderness and conservation purposes.
Expect 4 - 6 weeks for delivery.

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

EDITORS: John Besbekos, Bob Buckles, and Alan Cooke

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 the Section's Treasurer: John Besbekos, P.O. Box 417415, Sacramento, CA 95841.

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, P.O. Box 417415, Sacramento, CA 95841; phone 729-2725. Submittals will not be returned unless accompanied by a self-addressed, stamped envelope.

DEADLINE: About mid-month on even-numbered months.
The next deadline is: *April 14, 1995*

Boulder Editorial Committee
C/O John Besbekos
P.O. Box 417415
Sacramento, CA 95841



Last Issue is: 67
John Sarna
9556 Appalachian Drive
Sacramento, CA 95827-1109

