

THE



BOULDER

motherlode chapter-sierra club

Issue No. 66 June - July 1995

Chair's Corner

Greetings. You may recall that in the last *BOULDER* I put forth a few questions concerning the Coastal Peak List, Emblems, and Tahoe-Area climbs. I received one comment or attempt at providing input. Richard Carey sent me a version of the list that included 7 1/2 and 15 minute topographic maps, and a number of other pieces of data that will help to flesh out a real list. I was going to run a new version of the list in this *Boulder*, but, for a variety of reasons, it will have to wait for the next edition. Anyway, thanks to Richard for his input.

I have not tried counting peak climbing trips to compare to previous years' schedules. Given the snow levels this year, I am not convinced comparisons would mean much. Despite the snow, we did appear to get a reasonable number of trips scheduled.

The annual picnic is scheduled for July. I hope to see a lot of you there.

My Internet address in the last issue appeared incorrectly for some reason. The correct address is alan_cooke@sac.rmiinc.com Leaders can submit trip write-ups via e-mail.

See you on the peaks this summer.

Alan Cooke 726 Adeline Place, Davis, CA 95616

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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 events of other organizations as well as Sierra Club trips. Unless noted all area codes are (916).



Jun 22, Thur	High Trail Cookery (REI Store, Birdcage Walk) Learn how to prepare home cooked meal to take on your next outdoor adventure. Linda Yaffe, author of <i>High Trail Cookery</i> will demonstrate, 7pm.
Jun 24, Sat.	Ski Tour (Sierra Club) Intermediate level skiers call Al Gutowski, 457-3338.
Jun 24, Sat.	Reynolds Peak (Sierra Club) 9690' peak near Ebbetts Pass. If snow conditions permit, meet at Hazel Park & Ride at 7:30am. Call info call Jim Bily, 685-7164.
Jun 24, Sat.	Orienteering Skills (Sierra Club, Maidu Group) Compass, Quad map and some prior skills required. Call leader Karen Leyse, 644-2542 for info.
Jun 24, Sat.	Service Trip/Climb (C.R.A.G.S) Climbers And Rope Adventurists of Greater Sacramento climbing club. Tentatively scheduled for Lover's Leap. Call Jennifer Gibson or Jeff Ennis at 421-6876.
July 1-3 Sat - Mon	Class 2 Peak Climb/ Car Camp (Sierra Club) San Grogornio - San Jacinto. Leave Friday, drive back July 4. Expect strenuous day hikes. Call John Sarna for details. 363-9243.
July 1-3 Sat - Mon	Warner Mountains Climb/ Car Camp (Sierra Club, Maidu Group) Dayhike Eagle and Warren Peaks in Northeastern California. For info contact Mark Olsen, 677-1010.
July 1-4 Sat - Tues.	Mummy Mountain/ Mt Charleston Backpack (Desert Survivors) Desert floor to 11,000' peaks in southern Nevada for 4 days. For info contact Steve Tabor (510) 769-1706.
July 1-4 Sat - Tues.	Badger Flat/ Waucoba Mountain Backpack (Desert Survivors) High altitude, scenic backpack in the Inyo Mountains. Contact Grant Blocher (510) 601-7167.
July 1-4 Sat - Tues.	Pioneer Basin and the Railroad Barons Peak Climb. (Sierra Club) Mammoth area, Mosquito Flat trailhead. Hike over Mono pass for numerous climbing options. Limited to 8. Call Al Gutowsky, 457-3338.
July 1-4 Sat - Tues.	Class 2 Peak/Backpack (Sierra Club) Carson-Iceberg Wilderness. Start at Rodriguez Flats trailhead. Loop trip with climbs of Antelope, Fish Mountain, and Mineral Mountain. For details contact Alan Cooke 756-5083 (Davis).
July 4, Tues	Day Hike (Sierra Club) Frog Lake Overlook, Castle Peak area. Meet 11th & P parking lot at 8 am Leader: Jack Bussio, 457-3794.
July 8, Sat.	Class 3 Peak Climb/ Day Hike (Sierra Club) Reynolds Peak. Climb from Indian Valley. Meet CSUS arboretum 7:30am. John Watters, 683-2748.
July 8, Sat.	Ski Tour (Sierra Club) Intermediate level skiers call Al Gutowski, 457-3338.
July 9, Sun,	Day Hike (Sierra Club) To top of Hawkins Peak (10,023') overlooking Hope Valley. Meet at Hazel Ave Park & Ride at 8 am. Bob Buckles, 685-7164.
July 9, Sun,	Day Hike/ Peak Climb (Sierra Club) Freel Peak (10,881') May be some snow to cross. Meet at CSUS arboretum, 6:30am. Jackie Stroud, 457-6338.
July 14-16 Fri - Sun	Car Camp for Kids (Sierra Club) Castle Crags State Park. Aimed at ages 4 to 8. Others welcome. For details call John Sarna, 363-9243 or Cheryl Morrison, 632-7791.
July 15, Sat.	Tells and McConnel Peaks (Sierra Club, Maidu Group) From Van Fleck trailhead. Limited to 15. Participants <i>must</i> call leader. Mark Olsen, 677-1010.
July 16, Sun.	Grouse Ridge Area Hike (Sierra Club) Optional climb of Fall Creek Mountain. Meet CSUS at 8am or Auburn Courthouse at 8:45. Leader Wayne Luney, 383-9393.
July 21-23 Fri - Sun.	Peak Climb (Sierra Club) Rush Creek and Blacktop Peak. June Lakes trailhead. Limited to 8. For details call Al Gutowsky, 457-3338.
July 21-23 Fri - Sun.	Excelsior Mtns/Huntoon Valley Backpack (Desert Survivors) West Central Nevada, between Mono Lake and Hawthorne. For info contact Bob Ellis (510) 769-1706.
July 22 - 23 Sat - Sun.	Car Camp/Peak Climb (Sierra Club) Salmon Peak (Highest point in Marble Mountain Wilderness) and Boulder Peak (highest point in Humboldt County). For details contact John Sarna, 363-9243.
July 22, Sat.	Work/ Day Hike (Sierra Club, Maidu Group) Volunteer maintenance work on Ralston Peak Trail. Call Leader, Jim McErlane, 622-3436.
July 22, Sat.	Peak Climbs (Sierra Club) Tells and McConnell Peaks. Desolation Wilderness, east of Loon Lake. Long day, some off trail. Meet Hazel Ave. Park & Ride at 7am. Bob Buckles, 624-3620.
July 25, Tues	Peak and Gorge Social (Sierra Club) Annual Picnic at Swanson Park (Sacramento), on Northrup between Howe Ave. and Fulton Ave. Bring a dish to share for the potluck dinner and beverages for yourself, and any lawn games (e.g., croquet) you may wish to play. A volleyball and net will be provided. Meet at 7pm at the park. Call for more info. Alan Cooke, 756-5083 (Davis).

July 28 - 30 Fri. - Sun.	Backpack/ Climb (Desert Survivors) Toquima Range backpack in High Center of Nevada's Great Basin. Climb Mt. Jefferson (11,941'). Call Tony Rullan (510) 235-5253.
July 29, Sat.	Peak Climbs (Sierra Club, Maidu Group) Lookout and Peepsight Peaks from Pacific Valley - Ebbetts Pass area. Call Mark Olsen for info, 677-1010.
Aug 3 - 6 Thurs - Sun.	Peak/Backpack (Sierra Club) Mt. Goddard - Kings Canyon National Park. Starting at Florence Lake. Limited to 6. Call Alan Cooke 756-5083 (Davis).
Aug 13, Sun.	Dayhike (Sierra Club) Carson Pass to Four Lakes. Cross country routes over Meiss Col (8760') and Carson Pass (8573'). Meet CSUS Arboretum at 7:30am or Burger King in Placerville at 8:15am. Leader: Wayne Luney, 383-9393.
Aug 18 - 20 Fri - Sun	Car Camp/Peak Climb (Sierra Club, Maidu Group) Dayhike of Mt. Whitney, 22 miles round trip and 6,000' gain. Call Mark Olsen, 677-1010.
Aug 26, Sat.	Adams Peak (Sierra Club) Leave Friday night. For details contact Al Gutowsky, 457-3338.
Aug 26-28 Sat. - Mon.	Boundry Peak Backpack (Desert Survivors) Climb highest peak in Nevada (13,140'), side trip to Montgomery Peak (13,442'). Contact Dave Halligan (510) 528-3360.
Sep 2 - 4 Sat. - Mon.	Ansel Adams Peak (Sierra Club) Leave Friday night. Enter Ansel Adams Wilderness from west side. For details contact Al Gutowsky, 463-3466.

Tuolumne Meadows campground is not expected to open until mid-August due to snow and sewer system repairs.

Reservations for National Parks campgrounds can be made up to 8 weeks in advance through Mistix (800) 365-2267.

Trail Notes from Alan Cooke

I took Annie Coledog and climbed Snow Valley Peak. Started hitting good two-foot deep patches at about the 8,000 foot level, but was able to get through to the summit. You can see the Tahoe Rim Trail for quite some distance in both directions as it runs through open hillsides then through snow patches then open hill, etc. The view from there was studendous -- everything on the west side of the lake is beautifully white. The person at the information booth in South Lake Tahoe had a number of interesting tidbits:

1. The people with cabins at Echo Lake do not expect to be able to get into their cabins until July 1. Reputedly, a number of the lakes including Grouse Lake and Echo Lake are still frozen over, but the lady said she also heard reports to the contrary.
2. Officials at the CHP, the Forest Service, Cal Trans, and Agricultural station do not seem to be able to agree as to whether Highway 4 is open yet. The sign at Meyers says it is but as of last weekend, some recorded messages and some personal contacts at these sources said it was still closed.

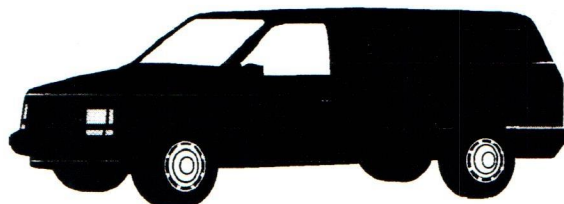
I went to Big Meadows to hike the TRT. About 1/4 mile off the road, the snow was so deep and continuous, I turned back.

TRAILHEAD SHUTTLE SERVICE

Inyo-Mono Dial-A-Ride offers trailhead service for the Eastern Sierra. Arrangements can be made for specific trips for one or more persons to locations in the Eastern Sierra Nevada Mountain Range. Advance reservations are required, and should be made as far in advance as possible to guarantee service. "leave your vehicle at trail's end, and be shuttled to the beginning of your hike by our 8, 12, and 16 passenger air-conditioned vans. . ."

Monika Watterson
Program Director

For information and reservations, call:
(800) 922-1930
(619) 872-1901



When the guide book says you should get reservations in advance, listen to them. After hunting for nearly an hour, Troy and I finally found a ranger at one of the buildings back behind the Park Headquarters. Lassen NP doesn't do much winter business and therefore there is often no staff at the South Entrance or the Headquarters office building. And yes, you do need a permit for camping in the backcountry. After talking to a couple rangers, we decided that we wouldn't need one after all. It had been snowing off and on for the last day and they considered avalanche hazard to be high. We decided to follow their recommendation of camping near the Chalet parking lot and not skiing the exposed slopes around Lassen Peak.

We decided to stay down at the lower elevations, starting up the Nancy Creek road to McGowan Road. From there we began to climb up the ridge overlooking Plantation Gulch. The thick clouds threatened all afternoon, making navigation uncertain at times. This was most obvious when in less than 10 minutes we got turned around while trying to climb a ridge. We swung to one side to avoid a steep section and suddenly I felt a bit uncertain of our direction. Then we hit a someone's trail. Troy said something about it not being fresh enough to be ours. I kept looking at my compass. It supported my suspicion that we had made a circle. We followed the tracks downhill a short ways and found the spot where we had stopped a short time before. At that point, I kept the compass out and we began to carefully head out. It's amazing what heavy cloud cover and a bit of snow blowing in your face can do. The rest of the trip was uneventful as we returned to the ridge and dropped back down to the road. I got in a few turns coming of the ridge but the snow was a bit heavy for good telemarking.

Mineral is not a hopping town in the winter. The restaurant was closed, so we settled for drinks at the hotel bar by a hot wood stove. It was thirty miles to the nearest eating place. Reluctantly, we headed back out to set up camp. We dug a small pit to keep the tent out of the wind just over the hill from the parking lot. Though almost in site of the old ski chalet (now closed), we could have been 5 miles in. I sat on our snow bench, eating Top Ramen and catching some snow in the face every minute or so as the gusts whipped it up. It was a pleasant 20 degrees with 20 mph winds. I find it hard to imagine what really cold weather, say -50 degrees Fahrenheit, is like. Well, we did enjoy the heated bathroom before turning in.

Troy didn't sleep too well due to the cold. Those 20 degree bags don't make it when your breath coats the inside of the tent with frost. My winter bag had kept me quite comfortable--thanks to Marmot and my wife last Christmas. Though cold, the morning was clear and beautiful. We ate breakfast, returned our gear to the car, and prepared for a morning ski.

We had to climb a ramp about 20 feet up from the plowed road to get on top of the snow. As we headed towards Brokeoff Peak, I suddenly realized why I had been seeing areas of open ground in spite of the heavy snowpack. Thermal springs abounded in Lassen. Though the water was not steaming, it was warm enough to melt through the snow pack. The result was an unexpected hole in the snow, 15-20 feet deep. I'd hate to fall in one that was hidden. Between the shift from working nights and poor sleeping in the cold, Troy was not up for a long ski. After climbing for a couple hours toward Brokeoff, we stopped for lunch. The run back downhill was great, crisp powder on a firm base. Even with a bit of play, we were back to the chalet in an hour. We finished off the day enjoying the wildflowers and green fields heading back to Marysville.

Bob Buckles

SEASON ROUNDUP, BACKCOUNTRY SKIING**June 1995**

It has been a long ski season and it still isn't over. I started Nov 11 with a trip to Castle Peak to check out conditions, getting some nice powder on the side of the mountain. I averaged 3 trips per month, only getting stopped a couple times by the weather. Conditions were pretty good most of the time. I don't remember a single trip with the hard ice we have had to accept in drought years. I also didn't get any of the extremely deep powder that we had in the 1991-92 season. It's been a great season. Here are the highlights:

Worst trip: trying to get out to Cisco Grove after starting at Kingvale. My asthma bothered me all day, then I got queasy about half way through. I threw up several times in between skiing down the last slopes. That really takes the joy out of telemarking. I must have looked pretty bad since Al came back to check on me. The next week proved I had some kind of nasty stomach bug.

Laziest day: My second day of skiing at Lassen with Troy Davis. Neither one of us were in the mood to do any climbing that day.

Most elevation gained: I cheated. Spent the afternoon at Sugar Bowl riding the lifts. Though I didn't keep track of my runs, I know I'll never climb that much in a day. Also got my first practice telemarking on moguls.

Equipment Failure Day: November 19 when Al leads a trip to Sand Ridge. One person's three pin binding comes off going up Castle Road. Then Barney Jones' cable binding fails on the way out. Duct tape allows our first class skier to avoid a long walk.

Toughest downhill: Rain rutted black diamond run just above Mt. Judah parking lot at Sugar Bowl. I skied that on June 10 (resort was closed.) That's a challenging way to finish the day. Still, it didn't compare to runs I tried to do in past years. I guess the snow was too good this year.

Prettiest view: too many great ones to decide. Top competitors include view of Anderson Peak from north side of Mt. Lincoln, Caples Lake from Elephant Back, my garden when it stopped raining.

Best spring snow: what I'll find on my next trip.

Have a great summer. The snow should be melted just in time for August thunderstorms. Mosquitoes should diminish in time for October snowstorms.

Bob Buckles

Indianhead

Tired of the rain, Pam Coleman and I flew to San Diego, rented a car, and drove to Anza Borrego Desert State Park. Our decision wasn't random. For years, we had wanted to visit Anza Borrego to see the spring flowers. I also wanted to bag Indianhead, one of only two peaks that I have ever started climbing that I hadn't bagged. This was the time to see Anza Borrego.

On Friday night we flew into San Diego and drove to Anza Borrego. The park allows camping outside of established campgrounds so we anticipated no problem driving in and camping. We stayed in an established, unimproved campground.

Saturday morning we drove to Palm Canyon. Palm Canyon follows a spring-fed stream through an extensive grove of Palm Trees. A trail runs up-stream for two miles and the grove extends another two or three miles. To climb Indianhead, you go up Palm Canyon for a mile. You then leave the trail just before crossing the creek (a second time), follow a dry water course to the ridge, and follow the ridge to the summit.

Pam initially intended to walk to the palms while I climbed the peak. Pam dislikes rough Class 2 (Desert Peak Section style) hiking. However, Pam announced half-way up Palm Canyon that she wanted to climb the peak. We took stock of provisions and equipment. Pam had taken her headlamp out and left it in the car. No problem. The DPS Guide calls Indianhead a five hour hike. Together we had had four liters of water. For say six or seven hours, no problem.

Two other groups totaling six people climbed Indianhead that day. We caught one group an hour after leaving the trail. The others climb with the Sierra Club in San Diego and LA. However, this Class 2 climbing gave one of the other group's climbers problems (DPS Class 2 frequently verges on Class 5.6 if you get off-route) and after climbing a dry waterfall with the others, Pam and I chose to climb alone rather than wait for the slower climber.

We then climbed a spur ridge which quickly ascended to third (or fourth) class climbing. We parted company when I climbed over a boulder that Pam couldn't climb and that I didn't want to downclimb without a belay. We were separated for an hour when the spur ridge evolved into a long cliff. We climbed parallel to one another for an hour until the spur ridge faded into the main ridge.

We regrouped at roughly 1:00 pm. This five-hour climb had already taken five hours and we hadn't reached the summit yet!! and the other group had fallen well behind us!! Pam and I regrouped, had a drink of water, and summited in about half an hour.

Once on top we decided the views were very nice, maybe even nice enough to be worth the effort. We took a few drinks (basically finishing all but one-third of one of our original four quarts of water) and tried to eat lunch (never take a lot of dried fruit on a desert peak climb). We had been on top for 20 minutes when one two other climbers summited. We asked them take a few pictures of the us on the summit. Shortly thereafter, two more climbers summited.

We talked to the other hikers about an alternative route down, and decided to take the alternative. (The alternative is Route B in the DPS Guide.) The Guide lists the alternative as taking longer, but it is technically easier.

On Route B, you walk the ridge to the west, drop down a spur ridge to the palms, bushwack two or three miles along the creek to the trail, then hike out. We reached the spur ridge and went down. On the west slope of the spur, near the creek, cliffs blocked our route into the creek. We crossed to the spur ridge's east side and reached the creek just as the sun went down. As we crossed the spur, a rattlesnake provided a brief note of excitement. Otherwise, the downclimb was uneventful.

The creek is no picnic after dark! Especially when two people stumble around to the light of one headlamp. A usage trail follows the creek, but the trail travels through, over, and across numerous cliffs, dense brush, and boulder fields. In many places, the trail was so faint that we had to spend considerable time trying to decide how to get around a particular obstacle. It took us a while to figure out that the trail frequently crossed the creek to avoid obstacles. Once that fact sunk in, our major problem was the frustration of knowing we were close to the end of the journey but the journey refused to end. I even broke down and treated water with iodine and drank it (in honor of the trip refusing to end). It tasted horrible but it hit the spot.

We got back to town at 10:45 and found nothing open to serve us dinner. Anyway, we defeated Indianhead. Pam learned a little bit about why I like climbing peaks. Before Pam and I parted company and then regrouped just below the summit, Pam said she would go part way and then wait for me to come back. By the time we reached the summit she was taking the challenge personally. That is what it is all about.

We got some good pictures of the fragile desert foliage in bloom. Anza Borrego is truly an interesting place in the spring.

Alan Cooke

Snow Valley Peak

Annie Coledog and I went out looking for a peak that had thawed out enough to climb. We found one, Snow Valley Peak. Snow Valley Peak (9,214) offers views of the entire line up of peaks along the southern, western, and northern shores of Lake Tahoe. The view is truly spectacular in early summer when snow still covers the Sierras. Lake Tahoe views stretch from South Lake Tahoe to Fallen Leaf Lake to the Tahoe City area. Views of the northern and eastern edges of Lake Tahoe are constrained by nearby peaks, but overall Snow Valley Peak offers nice views of the lake.

The valley below the peak offers a fairly pleasant outing, in part, because of a bunch of deciduous trees. I'd bet that in the fall, the trees add considerable color to the view. Annie and I had to be content with spring-things, like Morels.

Annie is up to 12 OGUL peaks, and will qualify for her emblem soon.

The following outlines the route we took.

Getting There: From Sacramento, take U.S. Highway 50 to the intersection of Highway 50 with CA Highway 89. Continue one mile farther on Highway 50 and take the Pioneer Trail. Follow Pioneer Trail for eight miles until it rejoins U.S. Highway 50 just west of the California-Nevada border. Follow U.S. Highway 50 for roughly 12.8 miles to Spooner Junction. You have three choices of parking: (1) park along the highway in the various signed parking areas between Spooner Junction and Spooner Summit; (2) continue another 8/10 of a mile east and park in the paved lot near the outhouse at Spooner Summit; or (3) drive 0.4 miles west of Spooner Junction on NV Highway 28 and park at the Lake Tahoe Nevada State Park. For obvious reasons, avoid parking in the areas marked "No Parking." This writeup describes an outing that starts at the State Park.

Alternatively, from the west, take I-80 to Truckee. Take the exit for CA Highway 267 (south). At Kings Beach, take CA Highway 28 east. At the border, the highway turns into NV Highway 28. Follow NV Highway 28 south until intersecting U.S. Highway 50 at Spooner Junction. Park (as noted above). This might be a better route from the west during peak gambling hours since it avoids South Lake Tahoe's traffic.

The hike: Enter the Lake Tahoe Nevada State Park and circle the picnic area until you find the trailhead for the North Canyon Trail. Follow the trail towards Marlette Lake, staying on the trail past North Canyon Campground.

The trail wanders through mixed pine and aspen and eventually enters a long meadow that occupies the bottom of the valley. Just before entering the meadow, the trail passes the North Canyon Camping area, and a trail junction that should be ignored. In the middle of this meadow, watch the peak to the right. From one or two angles, the radar (radio?) equipment on the summit is visible. At the upper end of the meadow, you reach another trail junction with a trail branching to the right. A sign indicates Snow Valley Peak is 1.5 miles up the new trail. Even without the large metal sign, this trail would be easy to find because it is at the head of the meadow, and because the trail is clearly visible as it switches back and forth up the mountain-side.

We started encountering snow at the camping area. By the time we hit the end of the meadow, the snow was continuous, although the meadow and the hillsides were fairly well thawed.

Take this trail uphill to the rim of the canyon. There, you encounter the Tahoe Rim Trail (TRT). Turn to follow the TRT to the south. At this point you should see a summit 'mound' to your right. This is a false summit. The high point sits directly behind this false summit. Follow the TRT for a few hundred yards, going around the false summit, then

turn off to the left for the last short scramble to the obviously higher summit area. Note that this new high point is also a false summit. The true summit still lies above and behind the point you see as you leave the TRT.

Alternatively, from the initial intersection with the TRT, walk up and to the east of the first false summit. The terrain slopes upward towards the true summit.

Reaching the summit involves walking through loose rock on a ridge topped with grass, sand, sage and short trees. You will find no identifiers on the peak – no benchmarks or registers – except for the building housing some kind of radar or communications equipment. Despite the building, the view of the Nevada side of Lake Tahoe, and the distant views across the lake make this a pleasant outing.

We looked around for a register and found one, but the can was covered with Lady Bugs. We decided not to disturb the Lady Bugs for something as trivial as signing a peak register.

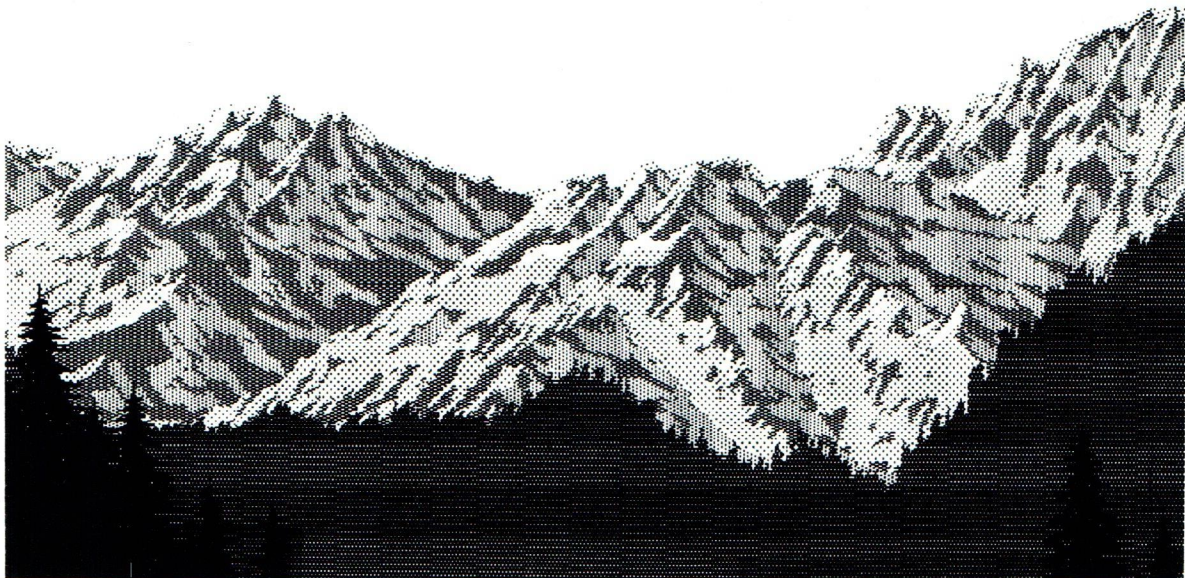
From Snow Valley Peak, you can either return the way you came or do a loop using the TRT. The topographic maps of the area do not show the Tahoe Rim Trail, so you have to take it on faith. To make a loop of this trip, hike to Spooner Pass via the TRT and then follow U.S. Highway 50 back to your car. Because of the snow, we returned the way we had gone.

Total round-trip statistics: Roughly 10.5 miles and 2,200 feet of elevation gain. Snow Valley Peak is a Class 1 peak.

Parting Notes: The TRT is not shown on either of the 7 1/2 minute or 15 minute quadrangles listed below.

Maps: The U.S.G.S. 7 1/2 minute *Marlette Lake, Nev.* quadrangle depicts most of the approach and the peak while the 7 1/2 minute *Glenbrook, Nev.* quadrangle depicts the Lake Tahoe Nevada State Park trailhead. The 15 minute *Carson City, Nev.* quadrangle covers the entire area. The Bureau of Land Management's *Carson City, Nev.* planimetric map is also useful.

Permits: None. The Lake Tahoe Nevada State Park charges entrance fees for walk-in and drive-in entry, and you can park there if so inclined. The park does not have a drive-in campground at the trailhead. In 1994, rules posted at the entrance station indicated dogs were legal as long as they were restrained at all times.



SKIING TO PETER GRUBB HUT

(or CAUGHT WITH MY PANTS DOWN)

February 1995

This was suppose to be a short ski tour about halfway to Peter Grubb Hut with Camille, my 7-year-old daughter, accompanying me. The trip began at the Boreal downhill ski resort, where we could park for free and use their free chair-lift to practice some downhill runs. The free lift operates from about 9 am until about 4 pm. It does get crowded at the resort, especially after 10 when the ski school kids get priority in line to get on the lift. Although the lift only takes you up a couple of hundred feet, it *is* enough to get a few turns in.

Finishing our last run at the east edge of Boreal, Camille and I went cross-country about 200 yards to the Castle Peak turnoff road. The snow was fresh and deep, a good change from the hard-packed ski run. It was an easy walk under I-80 over to the start of the Pacific Crest Trail, but a tiring slog over about 10-20 feet of packed snow covered the PCT road going up into the pines. Where the trail became less steep, we put our skis on once again. Having already had a good dose of sun, the snow was soft enough for skis to get good traction. Unfortunately, others had walked farther, leaving big holes in the ski tracks. After skiing along the trail over a few of these, I led Camille off the main trail, and we skied to the northeast of it. The obvious path was along the wide bottom of Castle Valley, and the warm day made it all very pleasant.

Around noon, that quick Burger King breakfast I had gobbled down in the morning decided it wanted out. Wishing I had brought a copy of "How to S--t in the Woods" along, I left Camille to sit and rest on my pack while I skied over behind a clump of trees. I didn't want to take my skis off and sink in the deep snow, so I just dropped my drawers, balanced myself on one of my ski poles, squatted down, and let nature take its course. Suddenly my attention became focused on my ski pole, which seemed to be moving backward. Then I realized it was really me moving forward, as pushing down on the pole had launched me downhill. Have you ever tried executing a step-turn from a squatting position with your pants down around your ankles? Well, I hope no one was around to see it. I had to straighten up, pants still down, and parallel turn to a stop. Once there, carefully selecting a secure position, I finished the job.

After I returned to Camille, who was just finishing lunch, we skied on to the base of that steep ridge that makes people think twice about continuing on to the hut. Of course, it has the opposite effect on Peak & Gorge types. So, rather than turning back as I had originally planned to do, I decided to continue on, being prodded on by Camille, who later told me she hadn't known what she was getting herself into. We had no problem zig-zagging up the hill with me helping her make kick-turns. The usual spectacular views of the rugged snow-covered peaks way back across Interstate 80 greeted us once we were atop the ridge, and it's a nice ride down to Peter Grubb Hut from there.

The second problem of the day became apparent when I took my boots off in the hut. A blister had ripened on *each* of my heels. Worse, I soon discovered that I had left my moleskin at home. My heels were already smarting and, without protection, the blisters would probably rip open while I skied out. Camille came to the rescue by pointing out an old pencil with some duct tape wrapped around it. What a great idea, I thought, silently thanking whoever left it behind, and applied the tape to my skin. There was too little of it, but it was better than nothing.

In the hut, I also found a cauldron of water on the stove, which I assumed was for general use. Needing to extend our limited drinking water supply, I poured some hot water into both of my liter canteens, enough to melt the snow I planned to add later. By then it was 2:30 pm and past time to ski out. With the sun still shining on the snow, we had no problem getting up to the homeward side of the ridge. Camille had to walk down it, however, because it was too steep for a 7-year-old on skinny skis.

One last problem vividly came to my attention as soon as we started skiing down toward the road. It was 4 pm, and the shadows were covering the trail. The mid-day soft snow had turned into broken-up ice. A couple of teenagers with downhill skies passed us, gaining speed, falling down, getting up, gaining speed, falling down, etc., etc. We avoided the worst of it by skiing uphill and to the right of the trail, but we had to drop down eventually. Whenever we did, we quickly gained speed. Being unable to turn and going too fast in this crud, I purposely fell with Camille at my side. After a couple of falls, Camille had had enough, and she was happy to take off her skis and walk down the steeper parts of the trail. I zig-zagged back and forth, not getting down much faster than if walking myself.

The sun seemed to be going down faster than we were, that is, until, in desperation, we slid on our behinds down to the meadow directly below the trail where we found "real" snow. Reattached to our skis, we continued on to the start of the trail, getting there just before sunset, about 5:30 pm. There we met a distraught man skiing back in to find his buddy whom he had expected a while back.

We were pretty much exhausted from this skiing ordeal. Camille didn't even want to play her usual game of stomping through the roadside puddles as we walked over to use the facilities at Boreal before driving home. While changing shoes, I discovered that the duct tape had worked its way down below my heels. Neither blister was very painful yet, but both had broken open. On finally getting home, I replaced the tape with Second Skin (high praise to its inventor).

Is there a point to this story? Why, yes. To ensure an enjoyable tour, ski where people don't walk, plan carefully so that you get back before 4 pm, bring plenty of water and moleskin, don't forget the TP, and above all, take your skis off to s--t. You'll probably survive even if you do none of the above, tho' the trip will be more memorable.

written by John Sarna (with Ann Stewart's editorial assistance)

RETRACTION POSTED

retraction by John Sarna

In my article titled, "Bear Mtn - It's a Long, Long Way To Del Norte", which appeared in Boulder Issue 64, I erroneously stated that, several hours into the hike, Pinus lambertiana "decided the peak wasn't worth the supreme effort, so she relaxed by the lake while the rest of us boulder-hopped around its shore."

The fact was that poor Pinus had been suffering from lateral patellar subluxation for most of 1993 and was in some pain. She knew that if she climbed to the top of the peak she would have to be carried back to the car and, to spare the rest of the group that burden, she sacrificed her desire to bag the peak, and spent 2 or 3 boring hours with nothing to do while we had fun. Pinus still has the knee problem and has recently been in physical therapy for the third time, this one lasting 3 months. She has made some progress and hopes to avoid surgery to correct this painful condition.

I apologize to Pinus for any implication of laziness or lack of puissance on her part during our climb of Bear Mtn.

Jeff Davis Peak

John Sarna and I applied to Sierra Club National for permission to do Jeff Davis Peak as an official Sierra Club outing under the insurance policy guidelines. If approved, it will hit the schedule in September. Stay tuned.....

Alan Cooke

SURFERS OF THE LOST COAST

Over the Memorial Day weekend Pat Purcell organized a backpack to the Lost Coast consisting of a party of 2 women and 5 men. This area is a stretch of undeveloped coastline at about the same latitude as Red Bluff. After driving to Shelter Cove, we hoisted on our backpacks for the 7 mile tromp up the beach. This was my first backpack trip of 1995. Since the Sierras may be snowed in for a while, I was excited about getting out for any kind of backpacking trip, even if it meant a long sand slog. Some years before I had made a trip here, and on the layover day bagged the crown of the King Mountain Range, King Peak. The hike to the summit was 16 miles round trip and 4000+ feet of elevation gain.

We hiked about a mile past our old campsite at Buck Creek, to a new one at Shipman Creek. The beach is bounded by sheer cliffs, much like Point Reyes, except where a creek cuts through to the ocean. Our camp site was on the sand up next to where the grass and vegetation starts alongside the creek. The place is full of big driftwood logs. Perfect for building dining benches and roaring bonfires. We set up camp, broke out the wine bottles, made dinner, sampled some of the 12 pack that Ethan had packed in, and relaxed around the fire. The next morning everyone was too lazy for any peak bagging, so they just drifted up and down the shoreline.

I headed up about 2 miles to Big Flat. This area is a very long, wide grassy meadow that was loaded with wildflowers. The Big Flat area juts out to a point with a narrow sandy beach and is littered with hundreds of driftwood logs. As I hiked up and around the point I noticed that about a half dozen Gilligan's Island type huts had been crudely constructed with the driftwood. A small colony of surfers had set residence there. I was amazed to see surfers in the "wilderness". I figured there must have been a dirt road that came in from the north. I strolled around a bit then hiked back down the beach to camp.

Our last night was much like the first, and one by one people retired to their tents. Monday morning We awoke to a thick fog. Folks slowly started stirring about camp, making breakfast and starting to pack up. Since I drove by myself, I decided to go ahead and start back down the beach. The thick fog prevented you from seeing more than a hundred yards so you couldn't see any landmarks to measure your progress. It seemed like an *endless* sand hike through Purgatory. Suddenly some large eerie fin-like shapes began to appear before me through the mist, bobbing up and down on the beach. Land sharks? I got closer. Vertical Surfboards! The surfers had full frame backpacks and surfboards lashed to that! Backpacker surfers, I would have thought the 2 sports to be mutually exclusive. There was about a half dozen guys that had packed in a long weekend's worth of gear and carried surfboards up 9 miles of beach. That's dedication. As I got closer to the trail head I met more people returning from week long outings, some from just a couple miles up the beach, people with dogs, horses and a few jeeps. I finally reached the car, and as I made the drive back to Highway 101, the fog cleared away. Nice ending for a great weekend. --- **JOHN BESBEKOS**

Back-country Skiing at Big Bend

On April 2, Bob Buckles and I took a short trip up I-80 to the Big Bend Ranger Station turn off. The parking area was well plowed but there were only a couple cars. It looked like we would have the place pretty much to ourselves to explore. We began by following some ski tracks that went between and behind some cabins that bordered the access road.

The snow was very icy early in the morning. Bob put on his skins as we began uphill. I thought to myself this isn't a good sign because I know I don't have nearly the control that he does and I didn't have any climbing skins for my skis. Everything turned out OK after lot of side stepping on the metal edges got me up some pretty steep hillsides without incident.

We came upon the railroad tracks and after determining that no train was bearing down, we unfastened our skis and crossed over. The uphill side had about a 6 foot snow bank. I gave Bob a boost and he clawed his way to the top. After I handed him up the gear, he then helped me drag myself up the embankment. We continued to climb for a bit longer until I decided we had gone far enough, after all we still had to get back down! Bob made a few telemark runs and proceeded to crash trying to make quick turns on the icy snow. I reverted to my methodical side-stepping until we recrossed the railroad tracks.

We stopped for lunch and as the afternoon sun thawed the snow out, it became softer and *much* easier to negotiate. We spent a while making some downhill runs, climbing back up, practicing telemark turns, climbing back up again, etc. Eventually we headed back down, winding through the trees then the cabins and out to the road.

--- **John Besbekos**

Death Valley Days

During the week between Christmas and New Year's Eve 1994, the Richardson family of Orangevale vacationed in Death Valley, California. We traveled to the newest National Park via highway 395. We stopped enroute at the Mono Lake Visitor Center. I showed my children around the Visitor's center and looked around the shore of the lake.

After entering Death Valley from the West, we immediately drove to Badwater, the lowest point in the Western Hemisphere at -282 feet. All four of us walked out on the salt flat area and ate lunch. After lunch, my wife and son walked back to the car and rested while my daughter and I continued walking for about 45 minutes further out on to the salt flat. It was really neat because once we stopped walking there was such silence. It is a great feeling being able to stand and look out over hundreds of square miles and hear nothing but the wind. My daughter brought back a large piece of salt to share with her third grade class.

After a peaceful nights rest at Sunset campground, we drove to Zabriski Point. My daughter and I hiked around the area. It is a very unique place. I saw no vegetation in the area. This is a great place to view Manley Beacon which at the time looked like a neat summit to assault. That would have to wait. Then that afternoon we drove to Dante's View which allowed us a tremendous view of Badwater and the rest of Death Valley. We had lunch there, however it was a little cool and windy.

Day three of our trip my wife was kind enough to allow me to solo Manley Beacon. Getting to the base of the Beacon was a little confusing. But once at the base, there was not much room for error walking along the knife-like edge to the summit. I had timed my arrival from the summit for about 60 minutes after departure so that my wife was able to videotape my final ascent of the Beacon. She was able to see me with the 10x1 zoom through the viewfinder but I was unable to see her or my children back at Zabriski Point. While on the summit I jumped up and down and waved my shirt so that it was easy for her to see me. This was the highlight of the trip, personally.

The following day we went to the sand dunes area just East of Stovepipe Wells. We hiked in this area and lost my daughter's camera in the sand. That afternoon we ate lunch in Ubehebe Crater and saw Scotty's Castle prior to departing through the Northeast passage out of the Park and onto highway 95.

Overall, it was an exciting trip for our family and a change of scenery from that of the Sacramento Valley fog.

Steve L. Richardson

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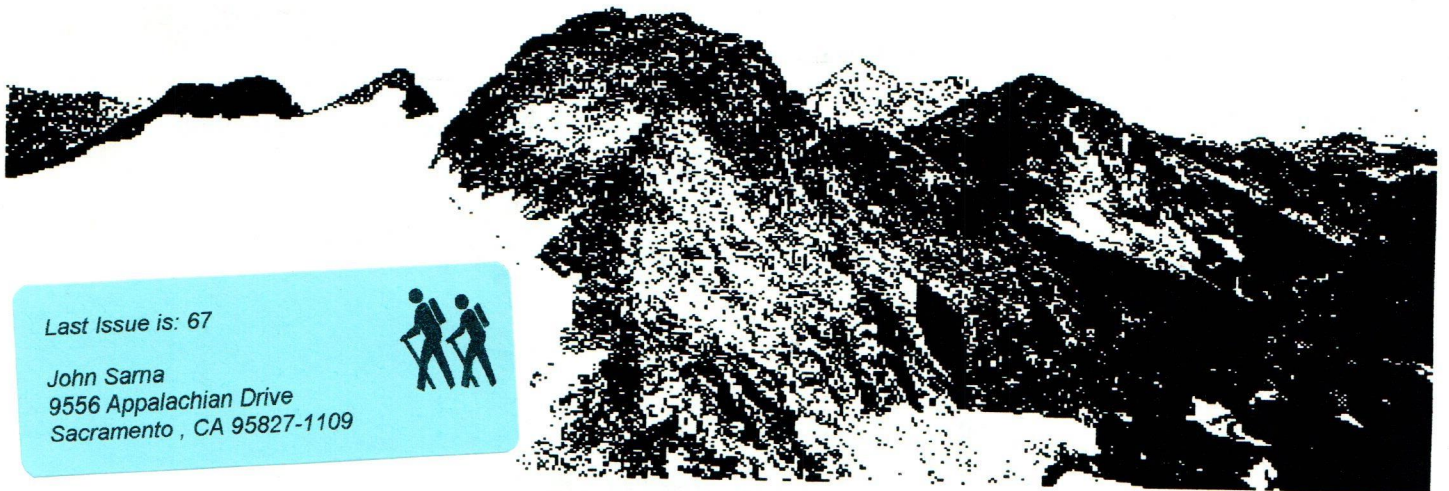
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