

THE



# **BOULDER**

**motherlode chapter · sierra club**

Issue No. 68 Nov - Dec 1995

## **Chair's Corner**

Peak climbing season still lingers and I hope everyone is getting out to take advantage of the fall weather. In this *Boulder* report on three list finishers -- our first since Tobi Tyler finished the list last summer.

The annual Christmas potluck and social will be held this year at John Sarna's house on December 12 at 6:00 PM. I hope to see everyone there. Also note that in November, Bob Buckles will host the almost-annual beginning cross country ski 'clinic.' I hope to see everyone there as well.

side you will note a write-up of our climb of Jeff Davis Peak -- the Peak and Gorge section's first climb under the mountaineering insurance. Leaders should be pleased to hear that the process seems to work fairly well and easily. For more information about the process, feel free to give me a call.

Finally, the only true peak climbing trip currently scheduled is Bill Hauser's annual (more or less) trip to the desert. I might be going on that so if anyone from Sacramento wants to go and carpool, give me a call.

Alan Cooke, Peak and Gorge Chair (916) 756-5083  
726 Adeline Pl., Davis, CA 95616



## 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).



Nov. 23 - 26 Tu. - Sun. Nov 25, Sat.	<b>Carrizo Gorge/Anza-Borrego Backpack (Desert Survivors)</b> Hike 4521' Jacumba Peak in Anza-Borrego Desert State Park. <b>Intermediate Ski Tour (Sierra Club)</b> Along I-80 if conditions permit. CSUS arboretum at 7am. Leader AL Gutowsky, 457-3338.
Nov 25, Sat.	<b>Carson Falls &amp; Lagunitas Canyons Loop (Sierra Club)</b> Grade 3 B dayhike. 12 mile loop on Marin Municipal Water District land. Meet 11th & P at 7 am. Jack Busio, 457-3794.
Nov. 30 Thurs.	<b>Intro to Snowshoeing (REI Store)</b> 7:00pm, Free. Bern Kriessman will discuss equipment, clothing, fitness, and destinations.
Dec 3, Sun.	<b>Beginner/Low Intermediate Ski Trip (Sierra Club)</b> Contact Bob Buckles, 624-3620.
Dec. 7 Thurs.	<b>Track, Backcountry, or Skate Skiing clinic (REI Store)</b> 7:00pm, Free. Paul Peterson of Bear Valley Cross Country Ski Resort discusses options available in resort cross country skiing.
Dec. 9, Sat.	<b>Ski Lessons (Sierra Club, Maidu Group)</b> Free lessons with El Dorado Nordic Ski Patrol at Echo Pass Summit Snow Park. (Cars need Snow Park permits). For info call EDNSP message machine, 647-1825, or Ron Murray, 644-6758.
Dec. 9, Sat.	<b>Ski Tour (Sierra Club)</b> Carson Pass Area for experienced skiers. Meet El Dorado Hills Park & Ride at 7am. Leader: Dave Vandershaf, 933-3116.
<b>Dec. 12, Tues. Christmas Potluck (Peak &amp; Gorge Section)</b> 6:00pm Bring a dish to share. Host: John Sarna 9556 Appalachian Drive, Sacramento 363-9243	
Dec 14 Thurs.	<b>Rock and Ice Slideshow (REI Store)</b> 7:00pm, Free. Mark Leffler of Rocknasium on Alpine climbing. Alaska, Canadian Rockies and Sierra Nevada.
Dec. 16, Sat.	<b>Intermediate Ski Trip (Sierra Club)</b> Hazel Ave Park & Ride at 8am. Call Bob Buckles to confirm trip, 624-3620.
Dec. 16, Sat.	<b>Beginner Ski Trip (Sierra Club, Maidu Group)</b> Loon Lake. Varied terrain and warming chalet. Limited to 20. Call Karen Leyse, 644-2542.
Dec. 17. Sun.	<b>Mt. Tamalpais (Sierra Club)</b> 10 mile loop, 1500' gain on the mountain's north side. Meet 11th & P at 8 am. Leader Alan Cooke (916)756-5083.
Dec. 27- Jan. 1 Wed. - Mon.	<b>Carcamp/Desert Peaks (Sierra Club) Desert peak bagging trip.</b> Call Bill Hauser, (408) 243-4566.
Dec 30-31 Sat-Sun	<b>Ski Tour Sierra Club)</b> Lassen National Park. Day trips from the south entrance for experienced skiers. Call Dave Vandershaf, 933-3116.



People with modems can E-mail trip write-ups and articles as either ASCII or UUE encoded binary files to JBDE@AOL.COM.

No computer? No Problem! Handwritten articles will be accepted. Member volunteers will type.

Congratulations to Bill Hauser for completing the OGUL List. Bill finished the list on November 6 with a climb of Old Man Mountain, accompanied by Fred Johnson. Bill's account will appear in the next *Boulder*.

Congratulations also to our newest member, Bob Sumner of Incline Village, Nevada, for completing the OGUL List. Bob is a long-time (relatively) SPS and DPS climber who recently moved north. Bob climbed 2/3 of the OGUL List peaks in 1995!

Congratulations to Erik Siering, a Los Angeles area peak climber, for his peak climbing accomplishments. Eric has managed to bag 123 NAS peaks and 31 OGUL peaks, all within the last four years. That qualifies Eric for OGUL, NAS, and Summit Emblem Status.

I heard it through the Peak Vine: Pete Yamagata has completed the OGUL List for the third time. Congratulations on an amazing on-going feat, Pete!

## Desolation Wilderness Ridge Hike

Tom and I have been friends for a long time. While we've enjoyed swapping climbing and backpacking stories, we had never actually hiked together. We resolved to correct that this summer.

We left Sacramento at a reasonable hour on August 18 and drove to the Dark Lake trailhead near Wright's Lake on the west side of the Desolation Wilderness. We left the car around noon and headed up the Rockbound Pass Trail. We took the Tyler Lake side trail but left that after a few hundred yards to begin a cross-country jaunt. We followed a faint way trail to the creek draining Umpa Lake and followed that upstream. There is a very scenic pool with a number of waterfalls cascading over the cliff hanging over it. We did a bit of rock scrambling to get on top of the rock band, then ascended the granite slabs alongside the creek. Beautiful! We stopped for lunch beside a delightful slickrock falls with great views and no bugs.

We picked our way slowly up the valley to Twin Lakes, then took the trail to Island Lake. We stopped for an early dinner by the lake, being careful to choose a breezy site to blow away the hordes of mosquitoes. I normally just boil water and add it to a store bought freeze dried dinner. Tom is a trail cook, however. He prepared a simply marvelous pasta dish with fresh pasta and a great marinara sauce. He also produced two cans of beer that we cooled in a snow drift.

After dinner, we slogged up the scree slope above the lake to the saddle separating Island and Tyler Lakes. I filled an MSR Dromedary Bag at the lake so we'd have water for the next day. We found an excellent campsite at the saddle, watched the sun go down and hit the sack.

The next morning, Chef Tom prepared a real egg omelet with fresh zucchini and mushrooms. I could get used to this kind of eating! After breakfast, we traversed beneath Point 9441 to the saddle between it and Point 9163. From there, we headed down the other side on a rather steep and hardpacked snow slope. We were glad we had our ice axes! We wandered over a barren granite bench (the one visible from Maude Lake) to the ridge containing Point 9045. We ascended the ridge and then followed it east to Rockbound Pass. The only trouble was at the Pass where the last 20 feet or so involved blind down climbing. We eventually left the rock and kicked steps down a very steep snow slope.

From the Pass, we hit the trail again to Lois Lake. Our plan was to ascend the old Red Peak Stock Trail and spend the night on top of the ridge. Neither of us had ever been on that trail and there was quite a bit of snow so we couldn't locate it. We used the topo and my altimeter to try to at least come close but had to surrender when the snow got too steep and icy. If we'd had our crampons we'd have been okay but without them we felt too exposed. We ended up spending the night on a flat, dry boulder at about 9000' surrounded by snow. My turn to cook so we had freeze dried but Tom produced two more cans of beer. I like hiking with this guy!

The next day we backtracked to the Rockbound Trail and took that back to the car. Home by 4:00 after a very scenic, aerobic, culinary delight of a weekend.

Jim Bily

## Jeff Davis Peak

September 17, 1995

In the first Peak and Gorge trip under the Sierra Club's Mountaineering Insurance program, John Sarna and I led four intrepid climbers to the top of Jeff Davis Peak. Actually, John did the leading and I did the paperwork. Jim Bily, Bob Buckles, Oscar Balaguer, and John Besbekos joined us for the attempt at the summit. John Watters also went along but since he has spent the entire summer at sea level in his sea kayak, John had elevation problems and did not tackle the summit block. Also along for the hike but not the rockclimbing were Sandy Hooter and Marilyn Schmucki.

The hiking portion of this trip went cross country from Blue Lakes road to the east towards Jeff Davis Peak. After passing through the trees near the road, we followed a rock outcropping until reaching the side of the low ridge containing Jeff Davis. We picked up lots of burrs in our socks, but otherwise this was an uninspiring bit of hiking. We then traversed up and around the nearest high point on the ridge and stared straight at the summit block of much feared and greatly despised Jeff Davis Peak.

Then the fun began! Since I climbed Jeff Davis more recently than John, I was given the lead in finding the ten-foot Class 3 "step" that leads to the technical climbing part. Sad but true, I missed it and found a much easier Class 3 step on the east side of the peak that led to a Class 5.10 wall. We circumnavigated the peak before finding the correct Class 3 step on the southern side of the peak. When you look for the correct Class 3 step, if you can't look up and see The Nipple to the west, you are looking in the wrong spot.

We climbed the Class 3 step to a bench covered in scree, sand and gravel. We slogged through the scree to the bottom of the main block where we set up the belay station for the first roped pitch.

The first 30 feet of the technical climb involves moderately exposed Class 3 climbing. After that the pitch curves up to the left and enters a 'cave.' The hardest move on the mountain is just before reaching this cave and while it requires knowledge of hand jams and toe jams, Oscar and Jim (both experienced rock climbers) were loath to rate Jeff Davis as anything above Class 5.2. Most of the first roped pitch features large hand and foot holds. However, some holds are not dependable, and all holds should be tested closely.

Our biggest problem on the first roped pitch was rockfall. John led the climb and knocked down plenty of rock, making the belay station an unsafe place to be lounging around. Bob took a small rock right in the sun glasses, bringing to a close the short life of that pair of glasses. For the second time in my two trips up Jeff Davis, I was hit on the helmet and found myself thanking my lucky stars I was wearing it.

After reaching the ledge, we took the chimney to the top. Jim led this short pitch. Jim checked out closely the outer face of Jeff Davis Peak but there really is no safe or sane alternative to the chimney. It was tight (I had to remove my pack and suspend it from my harness with a carabiner) but it went to the top.

Once we climbed the chimney, we scrambling up the last 50-foot, Class 2 run to the summit. Once there we dug around and found the register and signed in. Amusingly enough, given that Anna Chaput had canceled out on this trip at the last minute, the peak register reads like an "Ode to Anna." Four out of the last five entries say something like, "Hope you make it to the top soon, Anna" or "I was here, where were you Anna?"

On the descent, we rappelled down the same route we had climbed.

In all, the climb took 7 hours. We were on top by about 4:00 and off by 6:00.

**Parting Notes:** John Sarna and I applied for permission to lead Jeff Davis Peak as an official trip under the Sierra Club's national insurance policy, in part, as a 'test' of the insurance rules. We wanted to see how easy or hard it is to apply. It is fairly easy to compile the information required to

apply. We concluded from the experiment that the Sierra Club's intent is to screen out the fly-by-night operators – those who would attempt such a trip with minimal preparation – and not necessarily to scrutinize everyone's qualifications to the 'gnat's eyebrow.'

There is an ironic aspect to the insurance policy. Leaders do not pay the insurance. They do pay for Workers Comp – or something like it. The workers comp actually costs more than the insurance.

Alan Cooke

### Late Season Climbs

On Saturday Oct.28 Bob buckles and I were looking for a short climb to knock off another Ogul peak. After a long work week, neither of us were up for a long drive or death march. After studying the Mokelumne Wilderness map we decided on The Nipple (9340').

Taking Bob's Trooper II we headed up the Red Lake OHV road. This is not a bad dirt road for 4wd vehicles, but it did get a little bouncy in places. Sitting on the passenger side which was also the cliff side as we bounced up the pass gave me the occasional impression that I was on a harrowing roller coaster ride. At the top the road became a normal dirt road and we parked near Lost Lakes which sit along the north end of the ridge. Right at the beginning the trail forked, we took the left one which climbed up and up – right to the false summit. Heading back down to the other trail we walked along until it started to head downhill to the southeast, then we scrambled up the correct ridge top and clambered up the summit block. We ate lunch staring across at Markleville Peak and Jeff Davis Peak. We soon headed back to the vehicle and drove out past Blue Lake and the more familiar Blue Lakes road.

On Saturday Nov. 4 I drove up to Carson Pass with Ken Hoffman. We parked at the Snowshoe Thompson monument and hiked to Frog Lake. Ken tried fishing but had no luck. We then hiked over to Winemucca Lake. The fishing was no better there. Next we hiked over to Round Top Lake. Again Ken caught nothing. Since the fish weren't biting we decided to climb a mountain instead! We headed up to Round Top (10380') passing 4 climbers on the way down.

As we got to the short 3rd class portion near the summit, I thought I'd try a slightly different route. It got scary real quick and I backed down and did the traditional route. It was Ken's first visit to this peak and just as he was commenting on the view a large mass of brown haze came moving up the valleys. Soon you couldn't even see Pyramid peak in the distance. I don't remember smoke like this since the big forest fires a couple years ago. Maybe the rice fields outside Sacramento were being burned?

With our view obscured we headed down. We tried to take a short cut back over to Winemucca Lake and ran into a large ice field. I walked around it. Ken decided to do a glissade. Bad idea - it was frozen solid and he got his tail-end beat up pretty bad as he skidded over the bumpy ice sheet. Coming upon another larger ice field blocking our way, we found one narrow area. Using a short pointed stick and a piece of granite as ice axes we slowly made our way across to solid ground. Neither of us wanted to repeat Ken's previous bumpy roller coaster ride.

Hiking back down the trail we passed a seven year old kid who was showing off to Ken all the fish he caught. We may not have caught any fish but we bagged a peak (that had a great view of smoke).

----- John Besbekos

Ever been cruising down 395 past that culinary mecca of Walker approaching the Sonora Pass junction and wondered about the "Legend of Lost Cannon?" Usually the curves along the Walker River or the thought of food in Bridgeport have my attention, but late one night on a recent Alan Cooke expedition south, the question came up: "Just what is the story behind that cannon?" An interesting discussion on the military buildup under the Reagan administration ensued and I wouldn't have considered the question again if a few weeks later I hadn't stumbled across a publication that promised to "unravel the puzzle of the brass cannon abandoned in 1844 and never recovered from California's Sierra Nevada."

Author Ernest Allen Lewis commenced his search for Fremont's lost cannon in 1957 but as the years progressed and his ability to climb around in these hills declined, he realized he would have to share the massive amounts of data he had collected in his search if the cannon were to be found. The Fremont Cannon, High Up and Far Back published in 1981 is a compilation of maps, photographs, and historical analysis by Ernest Allen Lewis to point the cannon hunter (nice change from "deer hunter") in the direction of discovery.

According to Lewis, the lost cannon is "one of the last unfound artifacts of the early western history of the United States" and can be compared in historical significance to Sir Francis Drake's "Ye Platte of Brass." The following are some facts you should be armed with before you quit your day jobs, take up residence next door to that CHP officer at Devil's Gate, and assume the search.

The cannon in question is a brass twelve pound mountain howitzer manufactured by the French and issued by the United States Army in 1843 to Second Lieutenant John C. Fremont, Topographical Engineer, U.S. Army. Before you start scouting for something about the size of your daypack, however, you should be aware that in the early 1840's a cannon was classified by the weight of its projectile and the powder charge. A twelve pound howitzer typically fired a ten pound shell propelled by a two pound charge. The cannon you are looking for probably weighs somewhere in the neighborhood of two hundred and fifty pounds.

So how come a two hundred fifty pound cannon has remained lost for over a hundred and fifty years, especially with all those Marines running around at the base of the peak bearing the same name? According to Lewis, the answer to this conundrum appears to be twofold.

In 1843 Fremont was commissioned by the U.S. government to survey the territory west of the Missouri to Oregon or as Fremont called it "the interior of our continent." The objective of the expedition was to map the terrain and record the various botanical and geological features along the way.

Shortly before his departure from the banks of the Missouri, Fremont requested a cannon for the road trip. His supervisor reminded Fremont of the peaceful nature of the expedition and turned him down. Fremont then asked the next honcho in command who said "Sure. Take the howitzer." Feeling a bit bureaucratically betrayed, Fremont's supervisor notified the Secretary of War, leaked to the press, and Fremont was ordered back to Washington.

This would have been the end of the expedition and the end of this story if Fremont's wife, Jessie, hadn't intercepted and hung on to the order from Washington before it reached Fremont. Unaware of the raging controversy over the cannon, Fremont headed west, howitzer in tow.

Controversy continued to rage fifteen months and 3900 miles later when Fremont came back to Washington, without the cannon. The Army demanded an explanation. Fremont decided it was time to invoke his Fifth Amendment rights and stonewalled. As a result, the information regarding the location of the abandoned cannon is vague.

To be continued . . . (I still have a day job).

Allison Wunderland



Congratulations to Steve Richardson.  
Successful ascent of Mt. Ranier.

**Steve is interested in a 1996 trip to climb one of the 17,000' Mexican Volcanoes.**

**Anyone else interested should contact him at (916) 989-8942.**

Debbie Bulger summited Independence Peak out of Onion Valley ("really fun 3rd class at the top"). In Yosemite, did Volunteer and Pettit. Completed a 50 mile backpack loop ending by hiking up the Grand Canyon of the Tuolumne.

Check out Norman Clyde's daypack, ice axe, climbing knapsack and back country skis at the Eastern California Museum located in Independence, open everyday except Tuesday and major holidays, 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. The museum is also home to Norman Clyde's extensive photo collection of the peaks he climbed in the Sierra Nevada.

## Charleston Peak

September 10, 1995

Pam Coleman (my wife) and I flew to Las Vegas on Saturday, Sept. 9 to climb Charleston Peak. Charleston is a Star Peak on our NAS list, and an Emblem Peak on the Desert Peak Section's list. I needed one more emblem peak to qualify for a DPS emblem, and Charleston was going to be it.

The trip quickly started off on the wrong foot as Southwest Airlines lost the bag that contained the camping gear. Southwest took about two hours to find my bag.

The trip unraveled a bit more when all of the campgrounds in Kyle Canyon – the trailhead for the southern approach to Charleston – were full. "No problem," one campground host told me. "You can camp for free at the trailhead for Mary Jane Falls. A lot of people go there and camp."

The campground host forgot to mention that the local high school punks camp there, drink beer, and listen to Led Zeppelin until all hours of the night. Since sleep was out of the question, I listened to Zeppelin thinking that it was the same music I would have listened to 20 years ago in similar circumstances. Then at about 11:00 pm, a new, louder, and more obnoxious group moved in next to us. We listened to several beer bottles landing in the grass, then briefly confronted the rude punks about their lack of common courtesy. After being told just how rude we were being for suggesting that they be quiet, and after being threatened and asked what planet we were from, we packed up and drove down the road. We bivouacked on a moderately sloping hillside just west of the Hilltop Campground in Lee Canyon. After a sleepless night, we were up and on the trail by 8:00 am.

The trail starts in a picnic area at the end of the road in Kyle Canyon. The first mile follows a dirt road, uphill, through a mixed forest of aspens and evergreens. The forest provided pleasant surroundings, but the amount of litter was discouraging. My general opinion of Las Vegas residents really plummeted based on the litter-bug punks from the previous night and the level of trash on this trail. Las Vegas must like trash.

The dirt road travels through an area where the trees have been broken off or knocked down by avalanches. It turns into a trail at the base of a cliff at the head of the seasonal creek / avalanche chute. The trail then starts a series of switchbacks that ultimately deposits you on the ridge that circles the west end of Kyle Canyon.

We get scenic views of nearby Mummy Mountain starting at the end of the dirt road, and frequent views as we climbed the trail through the switchbacks. At corners on the canyon end of the switchbacks, we also got views of Kyle Canyon and of Charleston Peak.

It was on one of these corners, looking over a fairly deep drop-off, that I noticed that I was standing in the midst of an extensive grove of Bristlecone Pines. Just before we reached the ridge we started walking through a meadow that extended almost all the way to the summit. Although it was late in the season, the wetness of 1995 extended the flower season such that we were also treated to a fair flower display.

When we reached the ridge we came across the first signed trail junction along the route. At this junction you can either head north along the ridge to Charleston Peak, or south along the ridge to Griffith Peak. We, of course, went north. From the junction we headed north over relatively easy terrain, through a continuous grove of Bristlecones. We circled the end of Kyle Canyon, getting occasional views in all directions. Four and 1/2 miles later we reached the base of Charleston Peak and the last push above tree line and to the peak.

The views from the ridge are outstanding. To the east you see Las Vegas, Lake Mead and the Colorado River, and mountain ranges stretching into the distance. (With the lights of Las Vegas, I'll bet this would be a nice moonlight walk!) Pahrump is seen immediately to the west, with Telescope Peak and the high Sierras forming the western horizon.

On our way up we passed five other groups, only one of which made it to the top. When we reached the top, we shared the wind shelter with approximately 10 other people. They all climbed the peak via the north loop which starts in Lee Canyon, near where Pam and I bivouacked.

On the way down we stopped and took a look at the airplane wreckage just below Charleston's summit, and we stopped and took numerous pictures of flowers. We got down at 7:30 and drove to Las Vegas where we had a leisurely shower, a dinner of prime rib, and a lifetime dose of tackiness, Las Vegas style. I have since applied for and received my DPS Emblem.

Alan Cooke



## Sweetwater Mtns Traverse

Sept. 30 1995, Erik Siering and Bob Sumner

Bob and I recently dayhiked a South to North traverse of the Sweetwater Mtns.

We sauntered over Mts Patterson (11,673'), Wheeler (11,664'), South Sister (11,339'), Middle Sister (10,859'), East Sister (10,402'), and all the intervening bumps on the ridge. It was a delightful deathmarch.

We set up a car shuttle north of the East Sister, at the junction of the excellent dirt Risue Rd (FS050) with the obvious, unsigned turnoff (FS014) for the Rickey Mine, 3.3 miles west from Hwy 338. We then drove on towards Lobdell Lake, to the established DPS Route A trailhead for Mt Patterson. This was accomplished by heading west on the Risue Rd to the unsigned fair dirt FS067 south. One first passes through two wire gates, continues onward to pick up FS116 at Sheeles Camp, and then follows FS115 to the trailhead parking.

Allow up to an hour for this slow, rough 4wd ride. The Toiyabe NFS map, Bridgeport District, is definitely needed to negotiate these roads. The shortest alternative shuttle would be to drive back south from the car drop, on Hwy 338 through Bridgeport and then up to Lobdell Lake.

Starting out in the morning chill (hell, it was freezing), we were over Patterson and atop Wheeler in two hours. Returning past Patterson, we continued along the undulating ridge to scale the barren summit of South Sister, occasionally tracing intermittent mining or motorcycle tracks, and traversing remnant patches of snow. The cold autumn wind blew constantly throughout the day.

We then dealt with the drops of roughly 1700' and 1200' between the South, Middle, and East Sisters, respectively. Trivial. Middle Sister has a nice, long boulder scramble of a summit. Ascending to the left of the south ridge on East Sister avoids much of a heavy brush band down low. The summit offers fine views towards Lake Tahoe and Reno. A 700' scree run on its north slope quickly brought us to the old jeep trail leading north out of Little Smith Valley.

The trail drops alongside a creek bed and eventually turns into the good dirt Rickey Mine Rd at a corral. The road passes through a wire gate before intersecting the Risue Rd within a mile. We earned valuable additional exercise by parking at the Risue Rd. Dinner was later served up at the fine Rhino's Bar and Grill in Bridgeport (well, they do have hot food and cold beer).

The beauty of the Sweetwater Range is its endless variety of terrain and vegetation. And the solitude. Only a few fisherman and campers were encountered on the roads. We had clear views of the northern Sierra, the White Mtns, and relatively unfamiliar ranges to the northeast in Nevada. This rambling traverse of the Sweetwaters was approximately 18 miles in length, 6500' gain. Most all of it cross-country. Bob and I took a leisurely 9 hours. Your mileage may vary.



### Echo Peak (8895') Sept. 30, 1995

My annual September trip to Echo Peak in Desolation Wilderness was highlighted by the appearance of one individual who came all the way from Ireland just to go on my hike! Well sort of. John Fury was vacationing in the U.S. and said there were 2 things he wanted to do: 1- hike in the Grand Canyon and 2- hike in the Sierras. Having done the first, he called the San Francisco Sierra Club office and asked if there were any hikes in the Lake Tahoe area while he was visiting. He called me and we arranged for him to meet with me at the Echo Lakes trailhead.

Our group of 6 people hiked along the lake enjoying the mild weather and then headed up to the ridge. As we hiked along the ridge top we got to cross an ice field. It made for a good video of John Fury crossing the "Echo Glacier". We paused for lunch at the top and admired the views of Tahoe.

On our trek back down we detoured over to Upper Echo lakes and hiked along the lakeshore. We came to the thin granite divide between the Upper and Lower lakes. Dave Fox took the opportunity for a refreshing if somewhat frigid splash in the lower lake. After lounging around on the rocks for a while we hiked back to the trailhead and said our good-byes to our visitor from Dublin. A pleasant time was had by all.

----- **John Besbekos**

### Great Smoky Mountains National Park - 16-20 October, 1995

I flew to North Carolina and met up with John Sams and Hamlin Andrews. We hauled a pop-up tent camper to a campground just outside Gatlinburg, Tennessee. After setting up camp we drove to the hiking store to see what patches were available for which peaks and trails. It is a popular custom there to accumulate patches for the various hikes in the park and display them on jackets or packs.

We found that by hiking up one trail to the top of Mt. Le Conte (6593' 2nd highest peak in the park) and down another we could get the Bullhead Mtn, Cliff Tops, Mt. LeConte, and Rainbow Falls patches! This would be a 14 mile loop with 4,000' elevation gain. Quite a haul for the first day. The weather was perfect, 70 degrees, not a cloud in the sky, and the autumn colors were beginning to color the mountainsides. The hike up alternated between being in a yellow leafed tree canopy to open ridge sides with panoramic overlooks. You can't beat the east for fall colors! After 7 miles of climbing we finally neared the summit. The Le Conte Lodge came in to view. They are a series of rustic cabins staggered along the slopes near the mountain crest. Accessible only by foot, hikers can reserve them for the night (need to reserve a year in advance) and enjoy dinner and breakfast in the dining hall cabin with a wondrous birds eye view of east Tennessee.

As John Sams and Hamlin headed for the grassy knoll of the summit I made a half mile side trip to the Cliff Tops overlook (a great view and a patch!). Cliff Tops offered a view from the opposite side of the mountain and some dramatic drop-offs. After my short excursion I found John and Hamlin lounging at the grassy summit of Le Conte. We saw a trailhead sign to Myrtle Point (another patch!) but it was another 1.5 miles round trip and we still had over 6 miles to go and it was getting late in the afternoon. As we headed down hill we bypassed a spur trail which we would later learn went to Rocky Point overlook, - darn! a missed patch opportunity. We passed the highest waterfall in the park at Rainbow Falls and completed the hike.

The next day we did short hikes to let our aching muscles heal. We had to study maps to determine where our next hikes would be because the Park Service had closed the *ENTIRE APPALACHIAN TRAIL* through the park!!! Some hurricane had blown inland a couple weeks before and knocked 200+ trees down in some sections. The NPS decided it was easier for them to close the whole thing down while they cleaned up rather than rope off certain sections!

We did one more climb up to Russell Field ridge which overlooks the popular Cades Cove section of the park. Short hikes rounded out the trip and we returned with 8 or 9 new patches to add to our collections.

---- **John Besbekos**

## JUST ONE MORE TRIP

After leading ski trips from November 11 to June 10 this last season, I wasn't sure when to plan my next ski season. On the off chance we had enough snow, I scheduled the first trip for November 5. A little optimistic, but even if ski conditions were poor, why try to schedule a hike that late.

To finish the regular hiking season, I had scheduled a back pack trip to Mokelumne Peak (9332') on September 23-24. Though Mokelumne Peak is doable as a day hike, I chose to make it into a back pack for those who might enjoy a short pack in for the weekend. Our small group of six hiked in from near Bear River Reservoir to Moraine Lake. We chose to stop there since the streams were almost completely dry as we hiked in. In spite of the heavy winter, this area had little running water. We reached the lake in a few hours and spent a leisurely afternoon reading, swimming or walking as each member of the party chose. The next morning we left our overnight gear behind and reached the peak in about 3 1/2 hours. The views from the peak were beautiful, looking over an expanse of granite outcroppings, deep stream gorges, and distant peaks including Round Top, Raymond and Reynolds. The route out was quick except for the climb out of Tanglefoot canyon near the end.

In case the weather held, I had scheduled Snow Valley Peak (9214') for October 21. After a little confusion regarding a sign indicating helicopter logging, we started up from an abandoned road south of Marlette Reservoir on Highway 28. After losing the trail where it disappeared into the stream bed, we got back on route and continued our climb up to Marlette Lake. The wind was brisk at the notch in the ridge where Marlette Lake emptied to the west. We also ran into a lot of mountain bikers when we reached the Lake. Apparently a well traveled cyclists route to Incline Village had been developed. The cycle traffic was a bit inconvenient for those of us on foot. Fortunately there were not too many and most were gone by the time we descended from Snow Valley Peak. The portion of the road from Marlette Lake to the turnoff for the peak was especially beautiful with golden aspens fluttering in the wind. The route up to the peak was also a road and we did see a couple cyclists descending as we started up. As we got on top of the ridge, the full force of the wind hit us. The mountain top was flattened to accommodate a microwave building and antennas. A look in the register indicated that there were few days the wind was not fierce as it pushed across Lake Tahoe. Though we could see the casinos in Reno, we did not have a good view to the west. We quickly descended. After joining the main road again, we continued on to Spooner Lake, reaching our car shuttle just before dark.

October 28 and still no snow. John Besbekos and I decided on a short hike, taking in an Ogul peak that we needed to complete the list. I wanted to get Siegel but lacked proper maps. I knew better than to use any guesswork trying to bag a Nevada desert peak. Instead we drove in to the Blue Lakes area and did the Nipple (9340'). This peak is a nuisance in that it is very short for a day hike but requires a long drive on dirt roads for the approach. It took less than three hours round trip to bag the peak by walking the ridge. Oh well, we were feeling pretty lazy that day.

Since I had to go out of town the next weekend, it wasn't a real problem that I canceled my ski trip. On the way back down I-5, we passed Mt Shasta. It only had a slight dusting of new snow high up.

Come November 11, we still had no sign of snow. I accepted Marilyn Jouini's offer to drive up to Carson Pass. Five of us made the circuit of Frog, Winnemucca and Round Top lakes. Without a touch of new snow, it was amazing how much snow was still there from last year. But sun cups and solid ice make poor skiing. But lack of snow did not mean summer had not ended. The cold nights were freezing the runoff so that we broke ice crossing stream beds at midday. There was a cold wind at Round Top Lake. When we got back to the car, I suddenly realized we were illegally parked. We didn't have our sno-park permit! I guess the local law enforcement let us off pending the first snow fall.

Bob Buckles, still waiting for snow.

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