

THE



BOULDER

motherlode chapter · sierra club

Issue No. 72 Aug - Sept 1996

Chair's Corner

I hope your summer went by slower than mine did. It seems like the snow disappeared just a few weeks ago and already I'm wondering whether snowshoe leads are what I should plan for the next issue of the Bonanza. How can that be?

We had the section picnic in July. Either the night we picked was just awful for your schedules or there isn't much interest in such things. Attendance was very light. We got a nice workout playing volleyball but it wasn't the grand gathering that I've heard used to occur.

Meeting attendance has also been declining tremendously. I told you all last issue that meetings are not why I'm involved in the section. What about you? What would cause you to attend a meeting? I'm not well enough connected to promise scintillating speakers every month. Would workshops on various aspects of climbing/backpacking/mountain travel be of interest? Slide shows of climbs? Purely social gatherings to swap lies? I need some help here and some expression of interest. My wife, Linda, has agreed to help organize meetings if we tell her what we want. If you're interested, drop me a line. If I hear from a bunch of folks, we'll schedule meetings. If I hear from no one, we won't worry too much about it.

Call me at 394-4020 days or e-mail me a jim_bily @ coregis.com.

See you on the trails!

Jim Bily



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).

Sept. 13-15 Fri.-Sun.	Class 2/3 Peak Climb (Sierra Club) Mt. Morrison (12,268'). Near Mono Lake. Possible climbs of Bloody and Laurel. For details contact John Sarna, 363-9243.
Sept. 13-15 Fri.-Sun.	Backpack (Sierra Club) Ebbets Pass area North of Hwy 4. Optional climbs of Reynolds Peak or Raymond Peak. Contact Dan Gargas, day, 322-9950.
Sept. 14, Sat.	Day Hike/Peak Climb (Maidu Group) Job's Sister Peak. Meeting 6:30am at Pollock Pines Safeway Parking Lot(Sly Park Exit from Hwy 50). <i>You must call leader, Bill Campau, 644-5339.</i>
Sept. 14, Sat.	Day Hike/Peak Climb (Maidu Group) Phipps Peak from Eagle Falls to Meeks Bay. 16 miles and 2700' gain. Meet at Eldorado National Forest office, 100 Forni Rd., Placerville at 7am. <i>You must call leader: Mark Olsen, 677-1010.</i>
Sept. 15, Sun.	Day Hike (Sierra Club) Emigrant Lake. Contact Wayne Luney, 383-9393.
Sept. 28-29 Sat.-Sun.	Peak Climbs (Loma Prieta Chapter Peak Climbing Section) Ebbetts Pass to Reynolds Peak (clas 3). Carson Pass to Roundtop (Class 2). Leader: John Ingvaldstadt (209)296-8483.
Sept. 28-29 Sat.-Sun.	Backpack (Sierra Club) Desolation Wilderness Cascade Valley. Optional class 2 climb of Mt. Tallac. Contact Jeff Gottesman, 758-9942.
Sept. 28, Sat.	Peak Climb (Sierra Club) Pyramid Peak from Twin Bridges. 8 miles and 4000' gain. Descend via Rocky Creek. Call Mark Olsen, 677-1010.
Sept. 28, Sat.	Peak Climbs (Sierra Club) Stevens and Red Lake Peaks from Carson Pass. Class 3 summit block. Meet at Hazel Park & Ride at 7:30am. Leader: Bob Buckles, 624-3620.
Sept. 29, Sun.	Peak Climb (Sierra Club) Henry and Bull Run Peak. Near Pacific Grade Summit Hwy 4 west of Ebbetts Pass. Meet at Park & Ride at Hwy 99 and Sheldon Rd. 7:30am. Leader: Jim Bily, 685-7164.
Oct. 5, Sat.	Peak Climb (Sierra Club) Roundtop, Carson Pass. Meet Hazel Ave. Park and Ride at 8am. Leader Bob Buckles, 624-3620.
Oct. 12-14, Sat.-Mon.	Backpack/Peak Climb (Sierra Club) Mt. Stanford, Pioneer Basin. From Rock Creek Trailhead over Mono Pass. Contact Jackie Stroud, (916) 457-6338.
Oct. 20, Sun.	Ridge Hike (Sierra Club) Class 3 from Dark Lake to Gertrude in Desolation Wilderness. Contact leader: Jim Bily, 685-7164.
Oct 26, Sat.	Peak Climb (Sierra Club) Waterhouse Pk. (9497'). Carson Pass to Luther Pass. Contact Leader: John Sarna, 363-9243
Oct 26, Sat.	Peak Climb (Sierra Club) Mt. Mildred (8398') Plan for a long, exploratory hike into this hidden peak and a view of Heaven's gate. Meet at Roseville Square (Douglas & Harding) at 7:00. Call Bob Buckles, 624-3620, to confirm trip.
Oct 29, Tues. ☺	Peak and Gorge Social <i>Bring your slides or pictures of trips from the summer and share them with the rest of us. Also, a snack to share. Tentatively scheduled for 7:00 pm at 9179 Lagrange Ct, Elk Grove but call Jim Bily at 685-7164 to verify location and get directions.</i>
Nov. 10, Sun	Day Hike (Sierra Club) Stagecoach Route. Take a leisurely Sunday hike up and down the Old Stagecoach Route near Auburn. We will start down near the river and hike up to the top and back down. Meet at Roseville Square at 10:00 a.m. Leader: Marilyn Jouini 334-7293.
Nov 16, Sat	Intermediate Ski Trip (Sierra Club) Somewhere. Moderate trip for experienced skiers with plenty of hills. If no snow, may change to a 2B hike. Meet at Roseville Square (Douglas & Harding) at 8:00. Call Bob Buckles, 624-3620, to confirm trip. Though I do not require people to call ahead in order to go on my trips, work commitments may require a schedule change.
Nov 23, Sat	Intermediate Ski Trip (Sierra Club) Somewhere. Moderate trip for experienced skiers with plenty of hills. If no snow, may change to a 2B hike. Meet at Roseville Square (Douglas & Harding) at 8:00. Call Bob Buckles, 624-3620, to confirm trip.
Dec 7, Sat	Beginner/Low Interm. Ski Trip (Sierra Club) Somewhere. This will be a moderate trip for beginner back country skiers who have some previous experience. Meet at Roseville Square (Douglas & Harding) at 8:00. Call Bob Buckles, 624-3620, to confirm trip and get additional information if this is your first trip with me.
Dec. 8, Sun	Gr 2A Day Hike (Sierra Club) Muir Woods. We'll walk a number of different trails in the Muir Woods area. It will be a loop trip which will take us up to Pantoll and back. Meet at 11th and O at 7:30 a.m. Leader: Marilyn Jouini 334-7293

Flagpole/Echo Peaks

August 17, 1996: Thirteen of us left from the Echo Lake parking lot at mid-morning. We crossed the dam, went up the hill a little way and then left the formal trail to follow a footpath along the ridge. There was a smoky haze in the air, limiting our views, but we could see where Lake Tahoe would be on a clear day. As we neared Flagpole Peak, we dropped off the ridge to the east, lost a little elevation and then climbed up a gully to get to the backside. A short traverse brought us to another gully which we ascended to the top of the mountain ridgeline. The rock scrambling was easy but the brush was tough on legs. We had a contest at the end of the day to determine who had the most impressive scratches.

After lunch, we finished the climb of Flagpole. Mostly easy class 2 and 3 but a bit airy at the very summit. Dropping from the peak, we began our ridgeline hike to Echo Peak. Nothing hard and we had constant views either into the Tahoe Basin or into The Desolation Wilderness. Very nice. A short scramble brought us to the top of Echo and a well deserved break.

We crossed a little snow patch coming off the summit. A few snowballs were flung and I saw one baby snowperson constructed. The snow was an unexpected delight. We quickly connected with the use trail and then the Lily Lake Trail. We followed that down to the PCT and then out. We reached the cars around 6:00. I'd estimate that we covered just under 10 miles and had about 2000' of elevation gain.

(For those of you on the hike, I went back this past weekend and did Flagpole again from the other side, just to compare the difficulty. As long as you're careful with the route finding, it's easier because there is no brush and the rock is solid. There is more scrambling and a bit of airy exposure but nothing too serious. Next year, there's no debate. The west side wins.) ---Jim Bily

Congratulations to Marlene Mirassou !!!

She qualified for the Ogul List emblem on August 1996.



Mount Mildred and "Picayune Peak"

Mount Mildred from the east is one of the few peaks that has "skunked" me over the years that I had not gone back to "clean up." Prior to leaving California, I decided to go back and clean it up. Here is my account. Bob, notice the round-trip statistics. I guess I underestimated the first time. Alan Cooke

Attraction: Mount Mildred (8,398) faces the west side of the main Sierra crest as it rolls past northern Lake Tahoe. Because it is west of the main crest, Mount Mildred provides a different perspective than other Tahoe-area peaks. Views include Granite Chief, Needle Peak, Lyon Peak, and Picayune Valley which sits in the center of the wilderness. To the south, views include Twin Peaks, and Dicks Peak, Jacks Peak, and the Crystal Range in Desolation Wilderness. Views to the west and north take in Anderson Peak, Castle Peak, Snow Mountain, Devils Peak, and Sierra Buttes.

On the primary hiking approach you get scenic views of the Five Lakes Basin region of the Granite Chief Wilderness. In mid-June, just as the last of the snow is melting off, the primary route provides good wildflower viewing as well. I identified 13 different flower varieties on one trip -- and I am florally challenged.

Mount Mildred sits at the southern end of Mildred Ridge. Located at the other end of Mildred Ridge is Peak 8,509, known to Sacramento climbers as "Picayune Peak." If you hike from Picayune Peak to Mount Mildred you will encounter Heavens Gate, an interesting columnar basalt formation. Heavens Gate provides interesting scenery.

Mildred Ridge's east side drops steeply to the valley below. The steepness shades snow on the east side providing conditions where you can walk the ridge on the top edge of the previous year's snowpack when virtually all snow is gone from the west side.

The primary trailhead described below provides a long and physically challenging day.

Trailhead: The trailhead is the Five Lakes Trailhead in the Alpine Meadows ski area.

Getting There: From the intersection of Interstate 80 and southbound CA Highway 89 in Truckee, drive south on CA Highway 89 for 10 miles to the turnoff for the Alpine Meadows ski area. From the south, the turnoff is 31.4 miles north of the intersection of U.S. Highway 50 and CA Highway 89 in South Lake Tahoe. For a closer landmark to the south, the turnoff is 3.9 miles north of the stop light on CA Highway 89 in Tahoe City.

After leaving CA Highway 89, drive 2.1 miles to the trailhead located on the north side of Alpine Meadows Road. Park.

The Hike: From the trailhead, head uphill on the Five Lakes Trail. The trail follows the side of the valley occupied by Alpine Meadows, occasionally switching back and forth. After 2 1/2 miles you top the ridge at the west end of the valley and reach a trail junction. To the left is the Five Lakes area. To the right is the Pacific Crest Trail (PCT) and Whiskey Creek Camp. Head to the right.

Next is a trail junction with a trail to Squaw Valley. Stay to the left heading for the PCT.

The third junction is with the PCT. The sign says Whiskey Creek Camp 2 1/2 miles to the right, and Barker Pass 11 miles to the left. It was at this junction I first started to notice inconsistencies in the mileages on the trail signs. Pay attention to mileages. They baffled and amused me. Head to the right towards Whiskey Creek Camp.

The next trail junction says Whiskey Creek Camp, 1/2 mile to the left; PCT north to Granite Chief straight ahead; and Barker Pass 12 miles back in the direction you just came from. Obviously something has changed since the signs were put up -- or else a random number generator was used in the selection of mileages to use on the signs! Head to the left to Whiskey Creek Camp.

Between the PCT and Whiskey Creek Camp, you must cross Whiskey Creek. That can be challenging in early season (i.e., mid-June and earlier). I crossed to the south of the trail on a downed tree that had fallen across the creek. Otherwise, I would have had to wade.

At Whiskey Creek Camp, turn right onto the trail heading towards Picayune Valley. Note here that the sign says 3/4 miles back to the PCT -- the third different number in this trail mileage saga!

The Picayune Valley Trail is hard to follow in several places, especially early in the season when there are still occasional patches of snow. In addition, there are plenty of downed-tree caused trail changes in this area. The trail is marked with old blazes, so if you hit a patch of snow or a spot where downed trees obliterated the trail or caused informal re-routing of the trail, look for blazes.

Once you hit the Picayune Valley Trail you leave the crowds behind. The Picayune Valley Trail heads relentlessly uphill for the next mile to mile and a half. At the end of this uphill stretch you emerge onto a hillside that provides splendid views of the Sierras, from Granite Chief to Twin Peaks to the Desolation Wilderness high country. You also look straight across the valley at the Five Lakes area. This is a very good lunch spot, because of the views and because, by this time, you have covered at least six miles.

Continuing along, the trail starts trending downhill along a sparsely wooded hillside covered with mule ears.

You now start getting good views of Chipmunk Ridge and occasional views of Mount Mildred and Heaven's Gate. During this stretch you also pass the last trail junction, a trail that branches to the left to Shank's Cove. Stay on the trail to Picayune Valley.

The trail continues along this hillside for a while longer, skirting below two large volcanic rock outcroppings and among several volcanic boulders. Shortly you reach a saddle, with the aforementioned hillside behind you, a

large volcanic cliff dead ahead of you, and a row of signs crossing the trail indicating you are about to enter a State Game Refuge. Sit down and take stock.

If you haven't figured out which peak is Mount Mildred, this is a good time to do so. Look at the ridge to the north of the large volcanic cliff. Along the ridge you see a layer of expose rock. In the low point on the ridge, almost due west of where you sit, all of the dirt has eroded away from above the rock layer, and it looks like some giant took a big bite out of the rock layer. (This is the only spot on the ridge where all of the dirt has eroded away from the rock layer.) That spot is Heaven's Gate. Just to the south of the Heaven's Gate is Mount Mildred.

You could try climbing around the rock cliff in front of you, but I tried that once with a nervous climber in my group, and ultimately was forced to give up the idea because of steep ground, treacherous footing, and no protection.

The best bet is to head down into Picayune Valley, and head directly uphill towards Mount Mildred on milder and safer slopes. You will encounter a little bit of buckbrush, and the footing is loose and steep at times, but overall it is a fairly safe and sane route.

To get to Picayune Peak, head to the north along the ridge, and drop down off the west side of the ridge to skirt Heaven's Gate. I looked at Heaven's Gate briefly once and decided not to even think about climbing it, but I also had my dog with me. It appeared, from my brief look, to be technical climbing. Skirt it on the west side. Getting off the ridge to skirt Heaven's Gate, heading south to north, entails dealing with buckbrush, then boulder hopping across the exfoliation region directly below the gate, then some Class 2 to 3 scrambling on the northern end of the gate to regain the ridge. From there the ridge traverse is fairly simple, albeit somewhat brushy on the south side of the bump in the middle of the ridge. If you want to minimize your elevation gain and loss along the ridge, deer trails skirt the western side of the ridge allowing you to avoid the bump in the middle of the ridge. The elevation gain savings are minimal. Picayune Peak is the highest point on the ridge and is immediately recognizable as such.

Total round—trip statistics: Round-trip statistics total 17 miles and 5,840 feet of elevation gain. Mount Mildred is a Class 2 peak.

Adding Picayune Peak increases round-trip statistics to 20 miles and 6,740 feet of elevation gain. Picayune Peak is a Class 2 peak.

Parting Notes: The register on this peak was placed in the early 1980s by Kerry Drager, the author of the book *California Deserts*.

Maps: The 7 1/2 minute *Tahoe City, Calif.* quadrangle depicts the primary trailhead. The 7 1/2 and 15 minute *Granite Chief, Calif.* quadrangles depict the peak and much of the hike.

Permits: Mount Mildred is within the Granite Chief Wilderness. Permits are required for backpacking but not for dayhiking. Granite Chief Wilderness rules limit group size to 12 people.

Mount Mildred is also within a state game refuge. Dogs are prohibited from May 15 through July 15, fawning season.

English Mountain

English Mountain, from Catfish Lake, was another hike I have planned for some time. I decided to do it on my way out of state, moving to PA. Here is my account. Alan Cooke

Attraction: English Mountain (8,373) offers views to the north of Sierra Buttes, Mt. Elwell, Haskell Peak, and Mt. Lassen. Views to the south include Black Buttes, the granite and lake terrain of the Five Lakes Basin. The immediate area features seemingly countless lakes, ponds, swamps and marshes. It is an extremely scenic area that, in the spring, provides outstanding and varied flower displays. English Mountain's east face drops steeply to Echo Lake, providing a scenic look straight down into the lake's bluish-green waters. Farther south, English Mountain's views take in Basin and Castle Peaks, Snow Mountain, Devils Peak, Granite Chief, Needle Peak, Lyon Peak, Anderson Peak, and, to the far south, the Crystal Range.

The summit offers routes ranging from Class 2 on up.

Trailhead: The trailhead is at Catfish Lake, near Jackson Meadow Reservoir.

Getting There: From Interstate 80 in Truckee, take CA Highway 89 north. Roughly 15 miles from the intersection of I-80 and Highway 89, turn left onto Forest Service Road 07 and travel 16 miles to Jackson Meadow Reservoir. If coming from the north, the turnoff is 8.7 miles south of the intersection of CA Highways 49 and 89 in Sierraville. There should be a sign along Highway 89 indicating the turnoff to Jackson Meadow.

After 17 miles you reach the dam at the end of Jackson Meadows Reservoir. Cross the dam. At 17.5 miles, the road surface changes to a very good dirt surface. At this same point you come to a "Y." Stay to the left. At 19 miles you see a sign indicating Woodcamp to the left. Stay right. Immediately, this once-excellent dirt road changes into a good to poor dirt road. (The road was a victim of logging in 1996.) After another 0.7 miles, turn left onto the good dirt road to Catfish Lake (and two other lakes). Almost immediately you encounter another road. Turn left onto this good dirt road and follow it for roughly 0.8 to 1.0 miles to Catfish Lake. Park.

The Hike: Walk around the northern end of the lake to reach the west side of the lake, then head to the top of the ridge found on the southwest side of the lake. Aim for the highest visible point on the ridge. This puts you in

knee-deep brush, but it also gives you a good view of the area. From this vantage point, English Mountain looks gnarly!

Look at the base and lower slopes of English Mountain, particularly where the slopes reach down to Jackson Lake. At the southeastern corner of Jackson Lake you see what looks like three major gully systems ending, basically, right at the edge of the water. One system comes down off the mountain and angles towards the corner of the lake in a northwesterly direction. A second gully comes down slightly west of the first. The third gully is barely visible, coming down farther to the west -- in an area where the slopes aren't as steep and where you cannot see clearly. The following description talks about the first and third gullies.

Work down through the brush to the east end of Jackson Lake. Cross the marshy area at the end of the lake and climb along the rocky edge of the lake to its southeast corner. The gully system should now be right above and south of your position.

Climb a short ways uphill right along the water course, then head left, away from the bottom of the gully and uphill on the left side of the water course. As you head uphill, the left-trending route becomes a minor gully with a dividing outcropping of rock between it and the main water course. You must work well to the left to get onto a series of ledges that allow you to cross the top of a side gully to get back to the main water course. The climbing is clearly Class 2, requiring hands for balance and some rock hopping.

Once you cross the ledges at the top of the side gully, follow the water course uphill. Through this area, you also follow along the edge of a row of trees that line the creek. The angle of ascent is still steep, but the footing is better than below. After following the trees for a short distance you reach a smallish plateau of rust-colored rock with several small ponds (in early summer) off to the south. To the west is a pronounced high point. Between you and the point is some very rugged terrain -- the top of the second gully mentioned at the outset. To the south is another high point. Both high points give pause to wonder where the summit is and just how far off course you are, but both are false summits. The true summit is still considerably south of your present location.

Looking and continuing south you see a large, bulbous rock outcropping (my first thought was it looked like English Mountain's nose). Continue south across the plateau and head uphill to the west of the bulbous rock. Don't be surprised to find a creek in this area. (I went through there on the remnants of the 1995-96 winter's snow. I heard what sounded like a large creek and stopped to look around only to discover I was standing above the creek -- not a smart place to be in moderately steep terrain.) Behind the bulbous rock you enter forest -- or you will if the area is not logged off. In 1996 a sizeable percentage of the trees had blue bands painted on them. All I can figure is that the trees were marked for logging although I cannot imagine such a logging operation could be cost effective.

From the bulbous rock, head uphill in a southerly direction. Shortly you see, to the north, the high points that you wondered about earlier are false summits. Shortly, you also see the true summit -- a long ridge composed of large boulders. At the northern end of the ridge an obvious "step" gives access to the ridge top. Swing up the end boulder(s), around to the west, then straight up to the ridgetop. From this vantage point you can see the highpoint -- about 1/4 mile and several undulations in the ridge south. The highpoint sports an electrical doohicky with a solar cell. It's hard to miss from this vantage point. Either walk the Class 2 ridge south, or clamber back down and walk the west side of the rocky ridge to find a closer, and easier Class 2 approach to the summit.

To return, try a different route -- the third chute mentioned at the outset. (In doing so, you find it really is not a chute, but merely slopes resembling a chute from that angle.) Travel back to the northern end of the summit ridge. Pull out your compass and set sail to the northwest. Within a mile of steady downhill travel through a moderately forested area you come to the northwest "edge" of English Mountain, overlooking Jackson Lake. From here, the mountain slopes downhill steeply to the lake. With a little effort you can find relatively easy slopes -- and usage trails -- heading down to the western end of the lake. Circle the lake, then head northeast, up and over the original ridge, and back to Catfish Lake and your vehicles.

Total round—trip statistics: Round-trip statistics total 4 3/4 miles and 2,350 feet of elevation gain. English Mountain is a Class 2 peak.

Parting Notes: In 1996 hundreds of trees appeared to be marked for logging. I found it hard to believe these rather pathetic looking trees were worth the obviously high cost of getting them to the sawmill.

Maps: The USGS 7 1/2 minute *English Mountain, Calif.* and 15 minute *Emigrant Gap, Calif.* quadrangles depict the peak and both approaches. The CSAA's *Lake Tahoe Region* and Forest Service's *Tahoe National Forest* maps help on this drive.

Permits: None.

Submitted by Alan Cooke

Pioneer Basin - John Muir Wilderness (Aug. 11-16, 1996)

Bob Buckles, Don Fox, Frank Palmer, and I Drove down Hwy 395 south of Mammoth to the turn off at Tom's Place. The road in to the trailhead seemed to be very popular with fishermen. We ate dinner at the cafe at Tom's Resort and by the time we returned to the trailhead a couple parking spaces had been vacated. We spent the first night at the trailhead walk in campground appropriately named Mosquito Flat.

The next morning we started the backpack by climbing up and over Mono Pass (11920'). On the other side of the pass we dropped almost 2000' down into the canyon then set off into the Fourth Recess side canyon and camped along Fourth Recess Lake. After much discussion, the majority of the group decided against any further elevation loss that would be caused by a visit to Second Recess. Instead we headed cross canyon to the gorgeous Pioneer Basin.

This high alpine area boasted several lakes, meadows full of wildflowers, steep granite walls on three sides and a view across the canyon of some very majestic peaks. On our first layover day, Bob and Don scrambled up the scree slopes of Mt. Hopkins (12,304'). Frank climbed the harrowing Mt. Crocker (12,458') and I went up most the way to Mt. Stanford. I turned back when the exposure and black thunder clouds unnerved me.

On our second layover day, all 4 of us returned to Mt. Stanford (at 12,838' the highest peak in the basin) and after testing a variety of routes, we all reached the summit. The exfoliating granite was breaking away at some odd angles, and at times I felt like I was climbing a stegosaurus. On the descent, Frank and Don took a direct drop down a talus chute. Bob and I took a less severe angle by contouring over to a lower saddle ridge and then scree sliding down.

The third layover day found (1) Bob sitting in camp recovering from an asthma attack, (2) Don futilely searching for a non-life threatening way up the Mt. Crocker summit block, (3) me leisurely circumnavigating the lakes and (4) Frank on a John Muir type multi-mileage death trek.

By the sixth day, Don, Bob, and I were ready to call it quits even though Frank had a few more dayhike/expeditions he wanted to do. Majority ruled and we loaded up our packs for the 2000' elevation gain trek back over the pass. My pack was the heaviest I've ever taken. Although all the stuff I carried made me very comfortable in camp, I was paying for it now. When we neared the pass we came upon Llamas, mules, and horse pack trains, as well as other backpackers coming in for the weekend. I got a lot of comments about how big and heavy my pack looked and I agreed with all of them.

As we crossed over the pass and headed down we were pelted with rain and hail. Knowing I had dry clothes in the car, I didn't stop to pull out raingear. I didn't want to have to put this pack back on if I took it off. We all reached the car within about 40 minutes of each other. The rain went away as we drove north, but soon we ran into deep smoke from several forest fires that had been burning north of us the past week. I felt sorry for several bike riders peddaling down that highway with their bikes loaded down with gear. They were having to breathe all that smoke. I imagine it would be like doing a 100 mile bike trip while smoking 3 packs of cigarettes. Fortunately the sky began to clear as we left Tahoe and headed down to Sacramento.

The 7.5 Minute map for this area is the Mt. Abbot Quadrangle. ----- **John Besbekos**



People with modems can E-mail trip write-ups and articles to JBDE@AOL.COM.

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



Any artists out there?

We always need sketches for cover art.

Island Lake Ridge Hike

July 20, 1996. Eight of us left from the Dark Lake parking lot about 8:45 on Saturday morning to attempt to hike completely around Twin Lakes and Island Lake on the high ridge line surrounding them. I had done pieces of the hike but had never tried the whole thing. I wasn't sure if hike could be done in one day or if taking a purist approach and remaining strictly on the ridge line would be possible.

Starting at 7000', we followed first the Rockbound Pass Trail, then the side trail to Tyler Lake. Once at the top of the ridge separating the two drainages, we took off cross country and headed up the ridge line. The first part was easy on granite slabs. We did a short section of boulder hopping, then some sand slogging through the brush. As we neared the summit of point 8925', we again moved onto huge boulders and remained on them to the top. The summit presented fine views of the lakes and cirques on both sides of us, making for an excellent rest stop before tackling the hardest part of the hike.

We followed the ridge line from point 8925' on class 2 and 3 rock, often quite exposed. A few in our party weren't used to this sort of climbing but everyone did quite well. After about an hour of this difficult hiking, we reached the saddle immediately above Island Lake. After stopping for lunch, we traversed under point 9441' on a surprisingly easy bench. Following the ridge line again, we swung south and hiked the easy ridge forming the headwall above Island Lake. Great views down that drainage plus looking out over Rockbound Valley and Aloha Lake. We proceeded over point 9066' and then down to the pass at around 8850'. Here we had to make a choice. The purist approach tackling the Price Peak ridge line straight on was most daunting and we reached a quick consensus to avoid that. Going to the east would have been quick and easy if we'd had ice axes, but we didn't. That left the west side. Now the choice was to stay high or drop down and then climb back up after passing under a formidable looking solid wall. We chose to stay high and had difficulty in only one short spot overgrown with grass and trees.

Once clear of the corner and into the basin below Price, the walking was easy, the views grand. This is the basin to the south and up above Island Lake. The walls encircling it are steep, there were still major snow patches and even a few cornices. Really quite nice. We traveled over a few snow patches but the snow consistency was fine and the slopes gentle. I did manage to put a hole in my leg when I slipped off a rock, convincing me to get my boots resoled. Tread really is necessary for boulder hopping.

We climbed to the saddle between Price and inexact point 9640', then traversed a snow field back towards Price. We climbed up to the ridge and dropped down a chute on the other side to avoid some very serious walls. Once below those walls, we reached a talus field that provided easy access to the Price summit.

By the time we had summited, it was almost 5:00. Not wanting to risk hiking out in the dark, we decided to abandon the ridge line and take the easy way out on the Smith Lake Trail. We

dropped down into the basin containing Lyons Lake, first on boulders, then on a snow field that made travel easy. Some more boulder hopping and slab walking took us to the saddle between Lyons and Smith Lakes. We had a brief route problem when we ended up on a cliff about 15 feet above a snow field and couldn't find a good way down. One of our scouts located a neat little passage through a cave of sorts that solved the problem. We traversed around the lake and paused at the dam while Ed and Carrol went for a swim. They claimed it was refreshing but it sure looked cold to the rest of us.

Once we hooked up with the Smith Lake Trail, it was clear sailing back to the cars. We made it out right at 8:00.

Total stats are a bit hard to gauge because of all the ups and downs. Near as I can tell, we gained about 3750' and Larry's pedometer said we covered 13 miles. I think it was a wonderful hike and one I'll want to lead again.

Jim Bily

Trinity Alps Backpack

Over the 4th of July weekend, Pat Purcell organized a 4 day backpack for about 9 people. Leaving on Thursday the 4th, we headed up I-5, then west on 299. As we entered Weaverville traffic came to a complete halt. The streets were closed for their big 4th of July parade. We ended up getting burgers at a little roadside stand and waiting an hour or so for the parade to finish so that traffic could resume.

When we resumed we took the turnoff at Junction City and took the winding road to Canyon Creek trailhead. We spent most of the remaining afternoon climbing up Canyon Creek trail. After gaining a couple thousand feet of elevation we pitched out tents in a wooded area beside the creek in the vicinity of Upper Creek Meadows. That evening was spent discussing the pros and cons of base camping from this spot or hiking up higher to a more alpine setting. It was finally decided that we would go up higher the next day.

Friday morning we packed up and began another of day hauling our packs up. we eventually made it to the granite slopes of the lower of the two Canyon Creek Lakes. Here the scenery was wide open with views of steep craggy granite mountains. Although the vegetation was similar to what you see in the Sierras around 8000', we were only around 5000' so the nights were much warmer. After setting up camp we spent the rest of the day exploring the upper lake.

Saturday the group dispersed to do various hikes and climbs in the area. I decided to climb Stonehouse Peak which overlooked our camp. I spent about an hour and a half climbing over small cliff ledges and bushwhacking through brush until I decided the easiest way would be to just climb up the creek drainage. After passing several false summits I could see the top and was resting by a tree. I heard some thrashing in the brush below me and looked down and saw Pat! I waited for him and then we climbed to the top together. We spent about 30 minutes lounging at the summit, taking in the scenery then split up again to head down in different directions. I ended up following the dry creekbed down as that way seemed to avoid the brush on the lower slopes.

The next morning the group congregated to begin the long trek down to the trailhead. There was about an hour difference between the time I arrived back at the vehicles and when the last person showed up. We had one last bit of inconvenience on the way home. A wreck blocked traffic for almost an hour in 100 degree heat on Hwy 299. -----John Besbekos

Peak and Gorge Members "Do It" on Mt. Shasta

"While many have proposed marriage on top of Mt. Shasta", a Shasta Wilderness Ranger told me, "I don't believe anyone has ever been married at the summit". *Until now*, that is. As told in the last issue of the Boulder, Howard Steidtmann & Tobi Tyler tied the knot atop Mt. Shasta on June 16, 1996.

Quite a few of us went up to observe the ceremony. There were 23 in the wedding party and about a dozen in the Judge's party. As could be expected, a host of others set the stage, each trying to "bag" this peak for their own multifarious reasons. Hence, this outing didn't offer the usual opportunities for solitude. In fact, it was difficult not to be within earshot of someone at any time during the trip.

Of course, this *was* a wedding as much as it was a peak-climb. There was the usual complement of relatives, of whom more than a few tried the climb. The other (older) relatives waited patiently in McCloud to congratulate the bride and groom at the reception. Among the friends were a number of Peak and Gorge Section regulars. Former Chair, Harry Erl and his wife Janet drove down from Yreka and dayhiked up to our base-camp with us. BorisN, CamilleN, OscarB, SandyH, NancyP, and myself, all ended up in the wedding party on the summit. More PGers may have come, but the announcement Tobi sent to the Boulder arrived a couple days too late for inclusion in the June Issue.

For starters, most of us met for breakfast about 7 am at Wendi's in the town of Mt. Shasta on Saturday (June 15th). After eating, I volunteered to drive to the Ranger Station, where I asked for a permit for 23 people. The attendant looked at me crossly, then bluntly told me that they didn't *allow* groups of more than 10 people in a party. After asking for (and getting) a permit for 10 people, I reassured her that we'd all go up in small groups and only meet on top at the anointed hour for the wedding. I shouldn't have mentioned the "W" word, though. As soon as the attendant heard it, she loudly stated that "special permission" from the Forest Service is required before anyone can get married in the Shasta Wilderness. To this, I could only respond with incredulity. When I later told Tobi about these prerequisites, she exclaimed: "why didn't they tell *me* months ago when I called them to make plans?" You can imagine what was going through her mind --- her long-planned wedding being interrupted by federal marshals just before the judge could finish his "and I now pronounce you ..."; the entire wedding party being arrested; and her relatives trying desperately to bail us all out of jail in some small-town bastion of conservatism.

Of course, being arrested *was* highly improbable. The judge's party included some legal heavy-weights, including a recent California Supreme Court nominee (named Brown). In addition, the media was already aware of the planned wedding. A reporter and photographer were concurrently starting up the mountain as part of a Sierra Wilderness Seminar group teaching novices how to climb a major mountain. Ironically, the Bee later called this a "beginner's climb compared to more intimidating summits --- K2, Denali and Everest" (Sacramento Bee, 7-3-96). I tend to disagree, as, from my point of view, that's almost like saying that a 20 mile hike in the Mohave Desert is a beginner's hike compared to Neil Armstrong's walk on the moon.

That Saturday evening, instead of the moon, I watched a small group, probably from the Wilderness Seminar, walk over to the slope opposite from Lake Helen and practice self-arrest. It seemed worth the effort, as they improved substantially in an hour or two, though, in my opinion, that's too little practice. It was probably that same group that woke up at 3 am to get organized and start up toward the summit. Either they or the 4 am group included a few perverse denizens, as they made sleeping difficult by yelling trivialities at each other across camp.

About 5 am, I left my nice warm sleeping bag to become intimately acquainted with the cold dawn atmosphere outside the tent. Eating a granola bar, I strapped on my crampons and became the first of the wedding party to begin trekking on the ice-hard snow toward the summit. About halfway to the "heart", before the sun had warmed the snow, a climber not 30 feet from me slipped and fell, exhibiting the worst ice-axe technique I'd ever seen. Using only one hand, he chopped the axe over his head into

the hard-packed snow. Luckily, he was only sliding slowly, and he stopped *before* the ice-axe pulled out of his hand. Even so, he had the wind knocked out of him, giving me plenty of time to walk over and advise him on proper use of the tool, advice which he sullenly took in.

Well, all climbs do end at the summit if you keep at it enough, even a seemingly never-ending one like Shasta, and eventually, all of the wedding party made it to the summit except for Camille, Linda and her friend. By the time I arrived with the stragglers, Howard had already pulled his tuxedo out of his pack, Tobi had gathered up her wedding dress, and they were both in the process of changing clothes in front of everyone, somehow still observing normal standards of decency. For the record, Tobi didn't trade in her boots and crampons for high-heels.

Through cold gale-force winds, the well-dressed couple walked over to the summit to flash a couple victory signs before retiring to a small rock outcrop a few yards away where everyone had gathered out of the howling wind to hear their vows. Rings were exchanged, the judge asked the usual questions (with a few frills), Howard and Tobi made the usual answers (with a few frills), and the wedding was done and over (without any last-minute interference by federal marshals sent in by the Forest Service).

As for the concern about permits, as could be expected, the bureaucracy did move, but at a snail's pace, i.e., after we'd packed up and were pushing through the afternoon-soft snow on our way down to the Sierra Club Hut, a ranger intercepted Tobi to "talk" to her about group-size.

As for the media, the Sacramento Bee eventually published an article, "A Peak Experience", which appeared in the Sports Section on July 3. The pictures make it worth buying, especially a half-page color shot of Howard and Tobi decked out in wedding attire at the summit.

However, the Bee article only touched on the wedding, focusing instead on the "experience" of climbing Shasta. Of the few facts it mentioned about the wedding, I believe at least half were wrong. That's probably because, as the Shasta grapevine tells it, while the photographer made the summit, the reporter who wrote the story never even reached our camping spot on Lake Helen. Apparently, she had a bout with altitude sickness soon after leaving the Sierra Club hut, about 2 miles in, and turned back.

Of course, not a word of this was mentioned in the article. In fact, the story was written from the stance that --- this was *my* experience climbing Shasta. For example, she wrote: "Crawling from their wind-blown tents at 3 a.m., the company finds the glacier's snowy surface to be crusted with ice. No longer is it soft and easy to walk on, it crunches under boots like small frozen waves."

Did the reporter get to "experience" walking on these frozen waves at 3 a.m. as implied in the story? I think not. On the way down, one of our party found her hanging around the Sierra Club hut, flirting with the Wilderness guides, from whom she apparently got most of her information for the story. It makes one wonder. Don't news-people have some "code of ethics" beyond generating newsprint? She could have found more than a small measure of integrity by following people who persevere despite altitude sickness and inexperience. SandyH finished the climb despite the former, and AndeeT, Tobi's sister, finished it despite the latter. There are *real* stories in their experiences.

In any case, the most notable story of this day was not that written by the reporter, nor is it this story, which is simply a reflection on the climb. It is the story of two people celebrated their unique marriage on a unique climb.

John Sarna

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