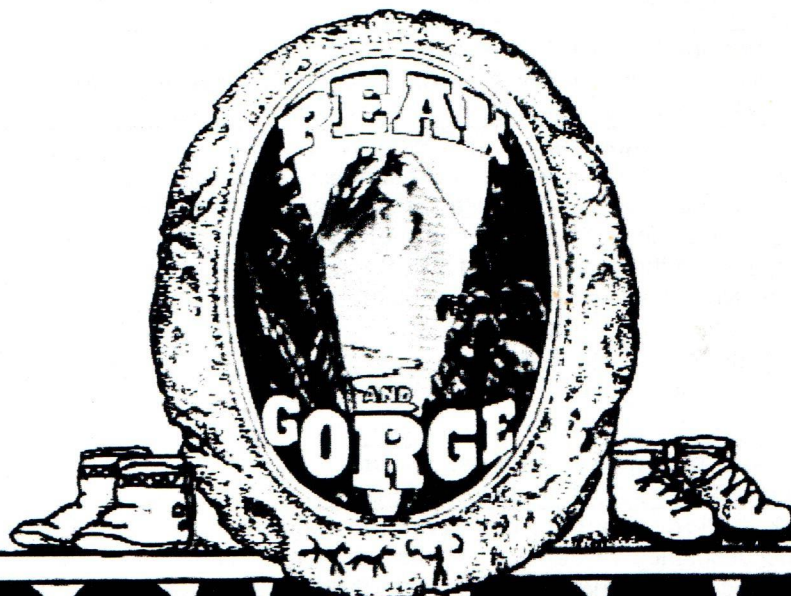


THE



BOULDER

motherlode chapter-sierra club

Issue No. 75 Apr. - May 1997

Chair's Corner

"Man must go back to nature for information." -Tomas Paine.

Greetings from a past life! All our Peak and Gorge Section leaders, with the obvious exception of Boulder editor, John Besbekos, and myself, have become overburdened with other duties, you know, the mundane facts of life, like employment and recreation. Of course, John would dispute being so excepted, as he has to both get out the Boulder and be ready to fly to Chicago soon after. In any case, this space subsequently became available on a first come, first serve basis, and, having written this into a couple dozen times in the more distant past, I (got) volunteered. First the bad news. It looks more and more like Bob Buckles, prior PGS Chair and current Treasurer, is leaving Sacramento, perhaps permanently. Thanks, Bob, for your past contributions to this section. We'll miss all those ski trips and climbs and, moreover, your house in Rocklin where we had so many a meeting. But also, since Bob is leaving, we now need a replacement Peak and Gorge Section Treasurer. Anyone who has not been sent to the big house for embezzlement is more than welcome to take over his duties as treasurer. To volunteer, please call Jim Bily at 685-7164 or me, phone number below. We could also use some inspired Boulder articles and what better time than now for YOU to write something up for us. Think of it like this, here's your chance to get published and become a famous author. Rumor has it that Steven King got his start this way, so take advantage of this golden opportunity and wield a mean pen. And if you are the strong silent type that prefers deeds to words, we could also use some artwork.

Permit me to leave you with these words by Stanislaw J. Lec:

"The weakest link in a chain is the strongest, because it can break it."

(John Sarna 363-9243)



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 14, Sat	Intermediate Ski Trip Somewhere. Enjoy the spring skiing. Moderate trip for experienced skiers with plenty of hills. Lack of snow will change to 2B day hike. Meet at Hazel Park & Ride (just north of Hwy. 50) at 8:00. Call Bob Buckles, 624-3620, to confirm trip.
June 7-8, Sat.-Sun.	Gr. 2A Backpack Salt Springs Reservoir / Blue Hole Area. Mokelumne Wilderness Area, south of Hwy. 88 and south of Bear River Reservoir. Good lower elevation relatively level hike, some scrambling involved, with a nice set of water falls complete with natural chase lounges scoured out of the granite to enjoy them. A must see! We start at the Salt Springs Reservoir Dam heading due east on trail along the north shore of Salt Springs Reservoir. At the head waters to the lake we will make camp. Next day we return via the same route. Weather Contingent Group size is limited. Call Leader: Dan Gargas, Message: (916) 322-9950 or Evenings after 8:00 PM: (916) 682-1811.
Jun 13 - 15 Fri - Sun	Desert Survivors Trip - Sheldon Refuge Service Trip Carcamp Northwestern Nevada. Help remove fences at Charles Sheldon Antelope Preserve. Call Steve Tabor (510)769-1706.
June 14, Sat	Mt. Tamalpais Interpretive Association Moderately paced, 5 to 7 miles, Meet at Rock Spring trailhead parking area at 9:30 AM. Bring lunch and water.
June 14, Sat	Peak or Ridge Climb Somewhere: Depending on snow conditions, we'll hike and climb something in the Desolation Wilderness. My assumption is that we'll leave out of Wrights Lake and head for the Crystal Range crest. Call the leader, Jim Bily, a week or two ahead and find out where we're going. 685-7164
Jun 15, Sun	Mt. Tamalpais Interpretive Association 7 to 12 miles, Meet at Frank Valley parking area (.5 miles from Muir Woods - don't block gate) at 9:30 AM. Bring lunch and water.
Jun 21, Sat	Ralston Peak Off Hwy 50 across from Camp Sacramento. Meet at CSUS Arboretum at 8 AM Leader: John Besbekos, 729-2725. co-leader John Krogsrud.
Jun 21, Sat	Mt. Tamalpais Interpretive Association Moderately paced, 5 to 7 miles, Meet at Pantoll Ranger Station (\$5 parking fee) at 9:30 AM. Bring lunch and water.
Jun 28, Sat	Horsetail Falls Day Hike Rough, steep trail. Some rock scrambling. Meet CSUS Arboretum at 7:30 am or Placerville Donut Shop behind McDonald's at 8:30. Jack Busio, 457-3794.
Jun 28, Sat	Lake Basin Recreation Area Day hike near Gold Lake. Meet 7:30 am Arden Mall Parking lot by bus stop next to Macy's. More info. Call Leader: Dan Gargas, Message: (916) 654-5222 or Evenings after 8:00 PM: (916) 682-1811.
July 3- 6 Thur - Sun	South Warner Wilderness Backpack. Group size is limited. Weather Contingent. Call Leader: Dan Gargas, Message: (916) 654-5222 or Evenings after 8:00 PM: (916) 682-1811.
Jul 19, Sat	Hutsink, Salmon, Loch Levin Lakes Day Hike Meet at CSUS Arboretum at 7:30 or Auburn Foresthill exit Burger King at 9 am. Jack Busio, 457-3794.
Jul 20, Sun	REI Calm Water Outings Consumnes River Preserve managed by The Nature Conservancy. Potluck Lunch. Cost \$69 plus \$10 equipment rental if needed. Includes instruction and guides. (916)642-9755 or toll free 888-4-KAYAKING
Jul 25 - 27 Fri - Sun	Lassen Peak Area Lassen Peak trailhead cross-country to Soda Lake. Sacramento area participants call Coleader: Dan Gargas, Message: (916) 654-5222 or Evenings after 8:00 PM: (916) 682-1811. Chico area participants call Coleader: Allen Mendoza at (916) 872-0419.
Aug 2, Sat	Island Lake Ridge Line Scramble Desolation Wilderness, Wrights Lake Trailhead. From Twin Lakes to Mt. Price. Some Class 3 sections. Contact Jim Bily 685-7164.
Aug 3, Sun	Castle Peak Along Pacific Crest Trail. 2000' elevation gain. Meet CSUS Arboretum at 7:30am or Auburn at foresthill exit Burger King at 8:30. Leader: Jack Bussio, 457-3794.
Aug 9 - 10 Sat - Sun	REI Sierra Lake Overnights Loon Lake on edge of Desolation Wilderness. Kayak/canoe touring. Cost: \$115 Professional guides and instructions. (916)642-9755 or toll free 888-4-KAYAKING.
Aug 9 - 10 Sat - Sun	August 9-10 Tower Peak - Class 2-3. Long approach. Leave Friday after work - drive, sleep at roadhead. Sat: pack into basecamp. Sun: 4:00 AM start, climb, walk out, back late. Be in good physical condition and comfortable on steep rock scrambling. Call Nancy Pallister (916) 635-2829, 7:00 - 10:00 PM weekdays.

Aug 9 - 17 Sat - next Sun	Northeast Yosemite Backpack Twin Lakes to Tuolumne Meadows. call Leader: Dan Gargas, Message: (916) 654-5222 or Evenings after 8:00 PM: (916) 682-1811.
Aug 16 - 17 Sat - Sun	PRIVATE - Rock Climbing: Tuolumne Meadows. Possibly Cathedral Peak SE Buttress 11.5.4, Tuolumne Peak East Face 11.5.6, or similar climbs over 5.0 and under 5.6. Experienced multi-pitch climbers only, with rope and gear. Helmets and rock shoes required. Call for details. Restricted trip. Nancy Pallister (916) 635-2829, 7:00 -10:00 PM. THIS IS NOT A PEAK AND GORGE SPONSORED TRIP.
Aug 16, Sat	Tomales Point Day Hike 10 miles at Point Reyes. Meet 11th & P at 7:45am or Hwy 37 Cafe in Vallejo at 9am. Leader: Jack Bussio, 457-3794.
Aug 23 - 31 Sat - next Sun	Backpack Evolution Basin in the Central John Muir Wilderness Group size is limited. Sacramento area participants call Coleader: Dan Gargas, Message: (916) 654-5222 or Evenings after 8:00 PM: (916) 682-1811. Chico area participants call Coleader: Allen Mendoza at (916) 872-0419.
Late Sept. Sat-Mon.	PRIVATE. Tenaya Canyon Descent. Class 3-4. May require rappel. Expect brush, lots of 4@ class slab scrambling. Light pack-bivouac gear trip. Nancy Pallister (916) 635-2829, 7:00 -10:00 PM. THIS IS NOT A PEAK AND GORGE SPONSORED TRIP.
Mid-late Oct - date open	3-D Car Exchange Gorge Trip. Need at least 4 participants and 2 cars. One group start at Bear Valley Ski area, the other at Carson Pass. Meet on the Mokelumne River at Camp Irene, camp Sat night. Cross river (deep ford) , exchange keys, and back to respective cars. Dinner Sun. in Jackson and trade cars. Less used trail, unique, remote, some brush. Call Nancy Pallister (916) 635-2829.

The Wrights Lake road from Hwy 50 is closed due to land slides. You can still get to Wrights Lake area trailheads from a connecting road from Ice House road.

In Yosemite Valley, Lower River CG & Upper River CG are closed. Half of the sites in Lower Pines CG are gone. The rest of Lower Pines as well as North Pines & Upper Pines are open. Camp 4 (Sunnyside also open).

Echo Lakes to Tamarack Lake -Desolation Wilderness

On Sunday June 1st, I decided to go with Don and Chris Fox to check out the snow conditions in Desolation Wilderness. We stopped at the visitor center in Camino where we were told that there was still a lot of snow at Wrights Lake but that the Echo Lakes trail head was clear. This was to be my first hiking trip in the Sierra this year.

On the way to Echo summit on Hwy 50 we passed some of the cabins that having just been rebuilt after the fire had destroyed them, were now demolished from a mud slide. The Wrights Lake road is washed out, but all southern exposed mountain slopes are clear of snow. From the signs at the pier by Echo Lodge, it appears the water taxi is now charging \$6 one way. We were hiking all the way today. There were not a lot of people on the trail that day. In fact we saw more overnight backpackers than day hikers! We didn't have any problems with mosquitoes either. I'm sure that will change in a couple weeks!

We cut off the main trail and had lunch at Tamarack Lake. There was still snow on the far side right beneath Mt. Ralston and Ralston Lake was still frozen. We could see about 3 climbers on Ralstons summit. After lunch we followed the cascades draining out of Tamarack down toward Upper Echo Lake. After hopping over several stream crossings we headed back in the direction of the trail and came back to the exact spot we had first left the trail. Boy are we good! We had a pleasant hike back to the car, and now I'm ready for the climbing season to start! -----**John Besbekos**

Pyramid Peak

For a variety of reasons, our original plans to climb Mt. Shasta fell through so Larry Cetti, Pete Becker and I decided to do Pyramid, instead.

I'm pretty lazy on weekends so I persuaded Pete and Larry to accept a late start on Saturday, May 3. That late start was delayed even further when I noticed that Pete didn't seem to have his boots in the car. We didn't lose much because of the detour back to his house, though the bakery in Placerville was almost cleaned out by the time we got there to meet Larry.

We expected to pay for our overnight permit into the Desolation Wilderness but received a freebie because the folks at Camino weren't properly set up to start taking money yet.

Our route was up Horsetail Falls. As usual, many families were on the trail. We earned quite a number of stares with our big packs, snowshoes, ice axes and ski poles. Compared to what most people were carrying, which was nothing, our loads were mammoth. I got us off the main trail just once below the falls, but fighting through the more closed-in brush on the side trail with those packs cost me plenty of points from my partners.

Once at the top of the falls, we stayed high above the lakes until we got to a ridge with a view of the mountain and possible routes. At first, we favored a snow gully that promised to be the most direct route. When we got to the next viewpoint, the gully showed as an obvious avalanche path so we decided to do a zigzag approach via Pyramid Lake.

Above Toem Lake was one 20 yard stretch of extremely steep snow with a runout into a hole in the ice. Time for the ice axes. The snow was in great shape so the traverse proved to be much tamer than it had looked. The next obvious hazard was also easily passed as there was a large snow bridge crossing the waterfall draining Gefo Lake. We did skirt beneath evidence of a small avalanche that appeared to have fallen not too long before we got there. A section of snow on the cliffs above had come loose when snowmelt beneath it lubricated the slab. While the snow everywhere was consolidated, this served to remind us to stay away from cornices and water dripping on the cliffs.

We set up camp in the shelter of a small group of trees just above Pyramid Lake. To save weight, we carried my knockoff Megamid, affording shelter for three in less than four pounds. After we dug out a foundation square, the tent worked marvelously for cooking. Sleeping was a bit tight but we worked out a triangle arrangement that proved to be comfortable enough.

Though Larry had pushed for an early start on Sunday, we all lolled in our bags until after 7:00. The ascent of the peak was straightforward once we got started. While the snow wasn't particularly icy, we put on our crampons and took a fairly straight line to a wide bench. Traversing across that followed by another straight line took us to an exposed boulder field just below and south of the summit. Crossing that, and then ascending a short, steep snow slope, put us on the gentle summit ridge.

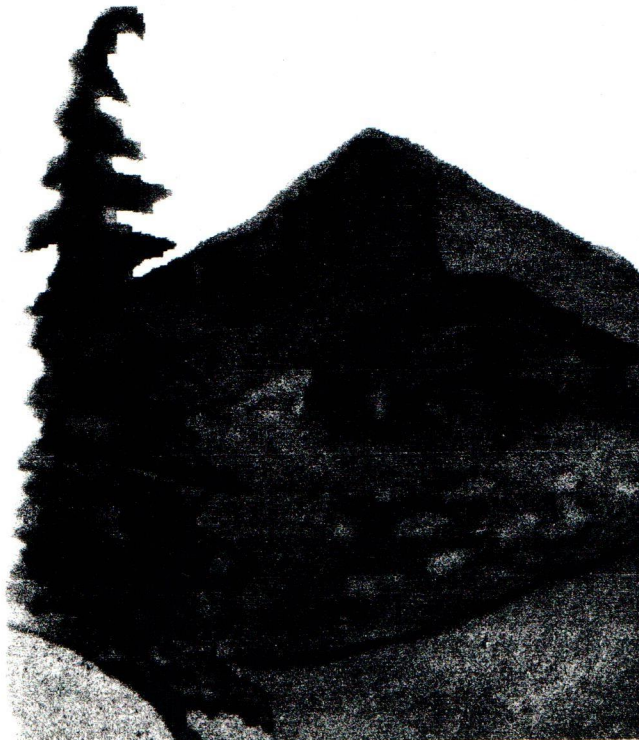
The views from the summit were magnificent. The whole Crystal Range and all of the Desolation peaks, south to Roundtop and beyond, Lake Tahoe...Wow! I don't know about you, but the view from the top is one of the reasons I climb.

By the time we started our descent, the snow had softened, making glissading the quickest way down. My initial glissade started a small avalanche that was about three inches deep, maybe 10 feet wide and flowing at a perfect speed. What a great ride!

The hike out was uneventful. The snow had softened enough that we decided to use our snowshoes. Frankly, we might not have needed them but it made us feel better than to have lugged the darn things up there for no reason.

The basin above Horsetail Falls is beautiful any time of year but particularly so in spring. The combination of snow, granite, waterfalls, turquoise ice ponds, impressive cornices along the ridge lines and the absence of bugs makes this one of my favorite spots. Being able to spend the night, climb a peak and share good company made this a weekend to remember.

-----Jim Bily



Yosemite Hikes: May 10-11

Heather Barkman and Kent Gregory were two brave participants who were not intimidated by "predawn start", "5,000 + feet elevation gain" and "4D hike". We left Sacramento Friday evening and pulled off the road 10:00 PM. "Predawn" became "at dawn" due to oversleeping of the fearless leader. We drove into the valley and were on the trail by 6:45 AM. The hike up by Yosemite Falls was impressive as we were sprayed with water and deafened by the thunder of the Spring runoff. A well earned rest stop at Yosemite Point provided a scenic brunch. The trail soon was buried under snow as we cross-country hiked the 6 miles or so to Snow Creek. A little brown bear curiously watched us pass. At Snow Creek bridge we filled bellies and aired out soggy feet as we were now out of the snow. Around the bend, we were again rewarded by a fantastic view of Half Dome as we started our 100 + switchback descent. About half way down the mosquitoes became pesky but the infamous descent was quite easy. A few more miles put us to the road and shuttle bus at 5:00. The 20 mile/6,300 foot gain stated in the guide book is a bit overstated - it was more like 5,000 feet and 18 miles.

Nevertheless, a good days work. After showering at Curry Village we drank a beer and had a late dinner at the Awahnee Hotel. Rather than stay with the hoards of people and mosquitoes in the valley we drove back out highway 120 to our first campsite on the Hetch Hetchy road, where it was peaceful and free of mosquitoes and hit the sack at midnight. Sunday we drove into the valley and had a tourist breakfast at the cafeteria and decided to do the hike to Glacier Point. Our first choice, Nevada and Vernal Falls, were closed due to washed out foot bridges. A late 9:00 start up the trail and many switchbacks later, we received a panoramic view at Glacier Point. A quick descent brought us to the valley at 3:00 and we hit the road back to town. All in all a great weekend, a good workout and the world's best waterfall views.

Nancy Pallister

April 12. Rock Gym Outing

Larry Cetti and his daughter Denise joined me at the Saturday rock gym outing. We climbed hard and hardy straight through to about 5:00 PM. Denise flashed a few interesting 5.9 routes. Larry tried his hand at a few of the hand-masher cracks. I climbed a few routes using "natural" features only and tried a "no hands" climb (unsuccessful). We all did a few 5.10's and rested in between on 5.7's. We so fanatically climbed that we skipped the pot luck lunch in favor of more climbing. Our numerous "peeling offs" also provided all with excellent belaying practice. Fun and a good workout was had by all.

Nancy Pallister

1977 Spring desert Trip

I met Jim Pritchard and his 2 daughters (16 & 18) in Las Vegas. Jim is an old McKinley pal of mine from Seattle.

Mt. Palmer 7979'

We camped at 6800' about 20.6 miles from highway 95. Up at 6 am - we found our water bottles (gallon jugs) *frozen!!* We left at 7 am, climbed up the impasse - a steep 4 wheel drive section - we couldn't get past in our Explorer rental car. After many stops for route finding and guidebook reading we reached the top at 12 noon. We saw John Sarna's and Don Palmer's name and quickly headed back. It was a long pull back up these hills especially 7980. For some reason palmer is on the list at 7979' but poor 8051' a better looking peak to th NW of Palmer is excluded?! After doing 3000 feet we got to the cars by 5 pm; but we were so tired we camped again in Phinney Canyon. The next day we enjoyed a nice soak in Beatty Hot Springs, visited Rhyolite and Death Valley Dunes - Then scouted out the jump off point for Sandy Pk.

That night we had a great camp near Crankshaft Junction. We worried if we were legal because the expanded park boundaries are not surveyed yet!!

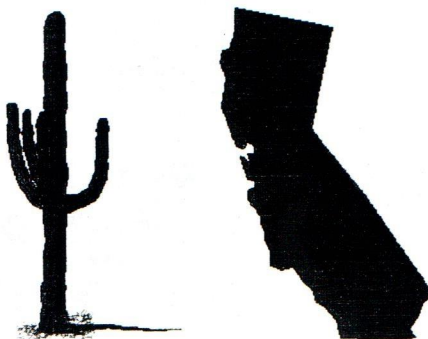
Sandy PK. 7062'

We left the road at 7am. The two girls staying behind again. We followed the guide and by 8:30 am we were on the summit ridge. We followed the ridge to the nice class 1 summit and got a wild view of the Eureka Dunes at 10:30am. We could also see White Mtn. Peak, the whole Sierra, & Waucoba Mtn. With 2700' gain it was a wonderful walk in the desert. The next day we visited Darwin Falls, Salt Creek and Ballarat Ghost Town. the owner of the store in Ballarat said: "You'r from Seattle!... See that big fireball in the sky... that's the sun!" It was real funny the way he said it.

Porter Pk. 9101'

We car camped at 6500' or so. Clear, dry and perfect spot in the pinons. Great vies of the comet. Up here we could clearly see its 2 tails. We drove to 7000' or so. Unable to find the trail we climbed limestone scree to a saddle at 8000' just west of the peak. Soon we were n top for a reat view of Badwater, Sentinel, and Telescope.

----- **Bill Hauser**



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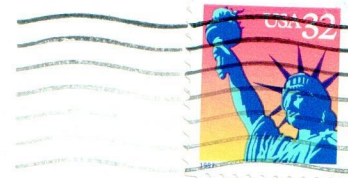
SUBSCRIPTIONS: Dues are \$6.00 per year (6 issues). Address labels will note what issue will be your last unless you renew. Send checks (payable to "Peak and Gorge") to the Section's Treasurer: John Besbekos, P.O. Box 417415, Sacramento, CA 95841.



SUBMITTALS: We encourage you to submit copy for publication. Articles, letters, fiction, poetry, and artwork that would be of interest to the Peak and Gorge Section are welcome. Copy should be typed single-spaced on 8.5 x 11" paper with half to one inch margins, and sent to: John Besbekos, P.O. Box 417415, Sacramento, CA 95841; phone 729-2725. Submittals will not be returned unless accompanied by a self-addressed, stamped envelope. Articles by e-mail to jbde@aol.com.

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The next deadline is: *20 July 1997*

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