

THE



BOULDER

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Chair's Corner

The Peak and Gorge section is facing a crisis of sorts. Because of job changes and other events, a number of the long-time leaders and staunch supporters of the section have moved out of the area or become less active.

That has led to fewer climbs being scheduled this year. Fewer climbs and fewer active members of the section has seriously decreased the number of articles submitted for the Boulder. Attendance at section meetings and functions has been extremely low for the past two years. All up, a bleak picture. Is the section worth saving? A few of us would like to keep something going, but not if there is no interest from the members.

We're holding a **very important meeting on October 7** at John Sarna's house to discuss the future of the section and the Boulder. If you're at all interested in continuing the section, we either need you to be there or to at least register your thoughts. You can call me at 685-7164 or e-mail me at jimbily@ns.net. John lives at 9556 Appalachian Dr. in Sacramento. You can call him at 363-9243 for directions.

See you on the trails!
Jim Bily

Last issue was incorrectly labeled as Issue No. 75. It was in fact Issue No. 76.

Due to the late arrival of articles, this issue is being published one month later than our usual schedule. There is no calendar. The only trips I know of are the ones that currently appear in the BONANZA. -Ed.

Hoover Wilderness Backpack — Jim Bily

Having been blessed with a gift of an unexpected three free days, I decided to head for the hills. At first, I thought I'd go to the Humphrey Basin out of Bishop but a call to the wilderness office dispelled me of any such silly notion. Do a spur of the moment overnigher? Not a chance. You either have to write for a permit months in advance or arrive early the morning before you actually want to leave to try to snag a permit. I knew that, except on the weekend, the Hoover Wilderness just NE of Yosemite is not afflicted with the same crowds so chose to go there.

Sure enough, I was the first walk-in looking for a permit that Wednesday, even though I got there around 11:00. After a quick lunch in Bridgeport, I left the trailhead at Twin Lakes at noon. There wasn't a cloud in the sky and the forecast was for good weather so I decided to lighten my pack a bit and left my rainpants behind. I also had my pack cover and rain hat out, but then reconsidered and put them back in the pack.

The first mile or so of the Robinson Creek trail is in dense pine forest and the first half of that is through a large, private campground. The trail climbs very gently through high desert scrub after breaking out of the trees, then steepens as it approaches Barney Lake. Because I was cruising to get through the scrub, I got into a rather fast pace and made the 3.5 miles and 1200' gain to Barney in an hour and 15 minutes. While I was taking a breather above the lake, I noticed some dark clouds forming on the other side of the mountain crest. Hmm.

My destination for the night was Peeler Lake, another 4.5 miles and 1300'. Halfway there, I heard a thunderclap and felt a few big drops. Time for the raingear. As soon as I stopped, I was attacked by swarms of mosquitoes. Oh, joy. I rushed to get started again, applying bug juice as I walked. By the time I got up to Peeler, the sky was as black as any I'd ever seen and the thunder was frequent. No real rain, though. I walked around the lake, found a secluded campsite on the east side and was just about to put up my tent when the skies opened up and it started hailing. Not wanting to get things wet, I huddled down and waited out the storm, all the while wishing I hadn't left my rainpants in the car.

Peeler Lake sits at the crest of the range, actually draining both to the east and west. It is surrounded by granite but Crown Point on its south side dominates the view. The granite is horizontally fractured, often creating crevices of up to 15' that have to be descended and then reascended to hike across. A very pretty spot.

Next day, I hiked down to Kerrick Meadow, a huge, flower covered meadow with a pretty stream running through it. I could see trout in the stream, had blue skies above, no people, no bugs, granite peaks all around. Sure beats the heck out of working! I moseyed through the two mile meadow, stopping often to "smell the flowers", before beginning the ascent to Rock Island Pass. As I neared the pass, the mosquitoes came out again. Rather than reach camp early and face the buzzing hoards, I chose to leave the trail and head for the ridge. I figured there'd either be a breeze to blow the bugs away or I'd do a little climb. From my map, it looked like a traverse over to Slide Mountain would be possible. The view from the top of the ridge said otherwise. Well, maybe possible, but with a full pack, much more work than I needed to do. Still, the views were grand. Crown Point again dominated, but Slide and its ridge were close rivals with parts of Sawtooth Ridge, Tower Peak and the mountains and valleys of northern Yosemite all calling for attention. I spent an hour or so admiring the view until the bugs found me and chased me away.

I descended to Snow Lake and found a great granite slab on the lake with just enough breeze to keep the bugs at bay. I lounged through lunch, took a frigid dip in the lake and then looked for some more exercise. Rather than heading back to the trail, I went up the granite ridge, hoping to find an off-trail traverse to Mule Pass. The fractures in the rock made this ascent quite a lot of work, especially with my pack. Finally, I got a clear view of my intended route. End of that thought. Besides a series of cliffs, there was at least one steep snowfield to negotiate and I did not have my ice axe. Back down I went. Keeping to the trail, I descended the 700 vertical feet to Crown Lake, found a secluded spot and set up camp.

On the third day, I woke up early and decided to try to climb Crown Point before heading home. I zipped back up the trail, intending to do the class 2 climb from Snow Lake. Just before the last set of switchbacks, however, I looked up a talus field and saw a gap in the cliffs above, giving me access to the peak, I thought. I really enjoy talus climbing, so abandoned my initial plan and set out. After a while, the talus petered out and I was on scree and sand. Three feet up, two feet back. Slog. And, a steep one at that. Not a good place to fall. It also became apparent that the gap in the cliffs did not lead to the top of the ridge west of the peak, but to a saddle east of the peak. That's what I get for trying to navigate off trail using a 1:63,000 scale wilderness map. A 7.5 minute topo would have told me that I was headed for trouble. I thought I could still gain the peak, but it was now a class 3, maybe 4, climb.

Reaching the saddle, I began the rock climbing. First class 3, then a class 4 section ending in a blank wall. I traversed over to the next gully, did some more 3 and 4 and 10' of low class 5. If there hadn't been a safe landing spot, I wouldn't have tried the 5, but there was and it looked like easier climbing above. Nope. I was starting to get myself into a spot I didn't like and I had no intention of pushing too hard and being stuck by an impossible down climb. I bailed out 200' feet from the top. I figured the peak would be there another time and I needed to be sure I was, too. There was one dicey moment getting down the class 5 section, then clear sailing.

The descent down the scree slope was quick and fun; almost a standing glissade. I got back to camp in short order, passing many early weekend hikers on my way down. The good campsights at Crown Lake were already taken by the time I got there, with one group ready to take mine as soon as I vacated. Quite a different scene from the solitude my mid-week jaunt allowed me.

This is a great three day backpack. Without the off-trail stuff I did, the total stats would be something like 22.5 miles and 3500' of elevation gain.

The Hoover has much to offer, especially if you can get away during the week.

Subject: Mokelumne River Trip

Hi, Guys!

Here's a trip I want to lead in September. Kate and I did this trip the opposite direction last year in 3 days--we about killed ourselves, so it will be alot nicer now that we(kindof) know the route and are taking a more-reasonable 4 days. By the way, these dates are Friday to Monday. In September the air is a bit cooler, the river is easy to cross, and the swimming is very nice.

Happy trails,

John Ingvoldstad

Mokelumne River Canyon, Class 2, September 5-8 Topos: Mokelumne Peak, Pacific Valley, both 15 min

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Mt. Siegel and Oreana Peak

Attraction: Mt. Siegel (9,450), the high point of the Pine Nut Mountains, provides interesting perspectives on desert mountain ranges. For those who are unfamiliar with the Great Basin, the primary trip offers a taste of the region — a stroll through a 'pygmy forest.' Pine nut trees (pinyon pines) grow 20 to 40 feet tall. In the Pine Nut Mountains, pinyon pines dominate — much as they do in other high desert regions.

Mt. Siegel provides views of the Carson Valley and the eastern face of the Carson Range. Views also include the Sierras as far south as Yosemite, the Sweetwater Mountains, Mt. Grant, Nevada's (snow capped) central ranges including the Toiyabe Range and Arc Dome, and the Sweetwater Mountains.

Mt. Siegel sits on the western edge of the Pine Nut Mountains' crest. Neighboring Oreana Peak obscures some views to the east. A quick trip to Oreana Peak (9,316) provides interesting views directly down into Smith Valley. Red Canyon features some tortured looking terrain and cliff faces of several colors. This area features many of the Great Basin's more attractive attributes. The secondary route follows a noisy creek for a number of miles through an impressive and scenic gorge. You can pretty much count on solitude — listening to the wind howl and the creek babble. You also get the sweet smells of sage brush (and associated vegetation). The creek supports a thriving community of water-loving foliage. Looking at some of the near-by area, the creek provides an interesting lesson in the transforming influence of water in the desert.

The valley running between Mt. Siegel and Oreana Peak is named Pine Nut Valley. Much of the valley is bare, with vegetation limited to bunch grasses and sage brush. However, the valley features a large wet meadow. The BLM fenced the meadow to protect it from livestock and wild horses.

Trailhead: The roadhead is the junction of Pine Nut Road with the jeep trail that begins at the creek.

Getting There: To get there, find Pine Nut Road, east of Gardnerville, Nevada. Pine Nut Road intersects U.S. Highway 395 near the southern end of the Gardnerville. Pine Nut Road is found 4.7 miles south of the intersection of NV Highway 88 and U.S. Highway 395. Two green signs hang over the highway, each readable from only one direction. The sign readable from the north says Riverview Drive. Turn left at the intersection. From the south the sign says Pine Nut Road. Turn right at the intersection. One last clue to finding this intersection is to look for the 7-Eleven store that sits on the corner.

Follow the paved Pine Nut Road for 2.2 miles, then turn left when you reach a sign saying Sierra Spirit Ranch. At this point, Pine Nut Road becomes an excellent dirt road. Follow Pine Nut Road for 7.4 miles until reaching a fork in the road with a creek crossing the left hand roadway. (There should also be a mine on the right side of and just uphill from the road.) Along the 7.4 mile journey there are four notable forks in the road. The first is at the 2.0 mile mark -- go to the right towards the Buffalo sign and away from Sierra Spirit Ranch. The second is at the 4.6 mile mark, the third is at the 5.4 mile mark, and the fourth is at the 5.9 mile mark. Go to the right at these junctions.

The road deteriorates after the last junction. The last 1.5 miles to the roadhead rate only as a good dirt road but can easily be driven in a passenger car, with modest care. A jeep trail branches off to the left, crossing the creek. Park in a wide area near where the jeep trail leaves the road.

The Hike: On foot, follow the jeep trail to the east. Cross the creek and walk along the old corral. In 1/8 mile, the jeep trail reaches a fork. Take the fork departing to the left. From this point onward, the jeep trail is obvious. Until you hit the crest of the Pine Nut Mountains, you only encounter two obvious forks in the trail. At the first fork, stay to the left. At the second, located at the base of Galena Peak (9,418)¹, stay to the right.

From the corral to the crest of the range, the trail winds up Dutch Canyon, through a modestly hilly region of pinyon pines, sage, mountain mahogany, and other basin and range foliage. In late May and early June many of the larger shrubs and trees bloom, as do several flowers including lupine, Indian paintbrush, and mule ears. Also in the spring, a plentitude of water turns several meadows to green, and allows the meadow flowers to flourish. This makes spring the nicest time to do the hike.

After about 4 1/2 miles of generally upward trending terrain, the trail intersects the Lone Pine Canyon jeep trail at the base of Galena Peak. From there it heads steeply uphill for one mile to Galena Summit where a

¹ Elevation as shown on the old 15 minute quadrangles. The newer 7 1/2 minute quadrangles no longer provide a specific elevation. Instead, Galena Peak appears as a closed circle indicating a 9,400+ foot elevation.

jeep trail branches off to the south (right). Stay to the left. Within 1/2 mile the trail circles behind (i.e., to the east of) the ridge that has dominated the view up to this point and you reach a cross road and decision point.

You now have three options. You could follow the set of tire tracks that heads east straight towards Oreana Peak. Oreana Peak's Class 2 summit block requires maybe five steps that could require use of hands for balance. A set of tire tracks leads all but to the summit.

You could also head directly up Galena Peak and walk the ridge to Mt. Siegel. Walking the ridge to and from Mt. Siegel is the shortest route up Mt. Siegel. From the cross roads an old road leads west, directly to the ridge just south of Galena Peak. Follow this road to the ridge. Then, trending generally uphill but staying below the ridge, head north along the eastern side of the ridge. The ridge itself is a Class 2 collection of boulders requiring some effort to climb up, over, and through. If you stay on the east side of and a few feet lower than the actual ridge, you can find sandy trails winding among the boulders. You will also find plenty of evidence that the trails were made by wild horses! This also keeps you out of the blasting winds often encountered along this ridge. Galena Peak's summit features several rock mounds. A heavy steel rod marks the highest mound.

Continuing the second optional route -- to get to Mt. Siegel head north from Galena Peak. Drop off the ridge towards the west for the 2/3 mile walk to Mt. Siegel. Again, you will find sandy trails left behind by horses - and probably by a few people. If you stay to the west, you probably won't even find places you need to use your hands for balance. The only trick is to stay a few (10-40) feet below the ridge. The low point on the ridge between Galena Peak and Mt. Siegel is named the Galena Saddle. From the saddle, usage trails head uphill to the north, skirting the west side of a visible high point along the way. After circling this high point, you finally see the six-foot cairn that marks Mt. Siegel's summit.

Back at Galena Pass again for the third option -- if you just want to climb Mt. Siegel, the jeep trail continues to the north along the base of Galena Peak, and then bends east to an intersection with a jeep trail running the length of Pine Nut Valley (the valley between the Galena Peak/Mt. Siegel ridge and the Oreana Peak ridge). Continue on the jeep trail until reaching the intersection, then turn left and follow the new trail to the north. The new trail skirts a fenced meadow, then comes to an intersection with a dirt road heading directly up to Galena Saddle. Follow this new road steeply uphill to the saddle, then head north to the summit as described earlier.

Trip statistics: Statistics total 16 1/2 miles and 3,900 feet of elevation gain, assuming use of the route over Galena Peak. Mt. Siegel and Galena Peak are Class 2 peaks. Going to and from Mt. Siegel by way of Pine Nut Valley adds 1/2 mile and 300 feet of elevation gain to the trip.

Adding Oreana Peak to the trip adds two miles and 660 feet of elevation gain. Going to and from Mt. Siegel by way of Galena Peak, then journeying over to and back from Oreana Peak is the shorter route. A journey via Pine Nut Valley adds about 1/2 mile and 300 feet of elevation gain.

Alternative Hike: The alternative trailhead is in Red Canyon, near Wellington, Nevada. The first step is driving to the intersection of NV Highway 88 and U.S. Highway 395 at the north end of Minden, Nevada.

Drive south on U.S. Highway 395 for 21 miles. Turn left onto NV Highway 208, heading east. Follow Highway 208 for 9.8 miles. Turn left onto the signed, paved road named Upper Colony Road. Follow it for 5.4 miles. At the north edge of the airfield, turn left onto Dry Lane. Follow this excellent dirt road for 0.5 miles. Turn right onto Red Canyon Road. Immediately, the road deteriorates to a good dirt road. Ignore the left turn at 0.2 miles and turn left at 0.25 miles at the junction with the sign saying Red Canyon 2 miles. (Actually, both left hand turns go to Red Canyon — the second is signed.) After 0.1 miles, turn right to follow the arrow pointing to Red Canyon. Drive as far as your vehicle's clearance will allow.

I lost my nerve in my Honda Accord in just under one mile. However, with high clearance, you can drive as far as the second junction described in the Hike. With high clearance and four wheel drive (and maybe a little chutzpa) you can drive almost to the summit.

Start walking up Red Canyon road. If, like me, you don't have high clearance, you will pass the BLM sign announcing Red Canyon. The sign stands next to the noisy stream spilling out of the narrow looking Canyon. The road enters the canyon.

Following the road, I only noted two opportunities to go wrong. The first occurs about three miles past the Red Canyon sign when a road branches off sharply to the left (southwest) to head up a canyon at the base of Eagle Mountain. The second occurs about one mile farther up the road where the road forks. The two forks rejoin near the crest of the Pine Nut Mountains. I took the right fork since the map showed it to be shorter and with less total elevation gain. However, the left fork had obviously been graded far more recently than the right fork.

With high clearance, it should easily be possible to drive this far.

Roughly 1 3/4 miles up the road the forks rejoin. From the point where the forks rejoin, the road ascends to the crest of the range, and hits a saddle west of Oreana Peak. At that point, you finally see Mt. Siegel and neighboring Galena Peak off to the north. Oreana Peak is immediately east of the saddle and can easily be bagged by following an old set of tire tracks that lead to the Class 1 1/2 summit block.

You have at numerous options for bagging Mt. Siegel. You can inflate your peak count by bagging Galena and walking the ridge to Mt. Siegel, then bagging Oreana Peak on the way back. If time is short, or if you don't care about bagging peaks, per se, the jeep trail continues to the north through Pine Nut Valley. From the saddle, you can see the road dropping down into the valley between the ridges, and you can see that there is a road branching off the jeep trail and heading up the east side of Mt. Siegel. This road leads directly — if steeply — to the top of Mt. Siegel. A large cairn marks the summit.

Starting from the last junction on the driving description, statistics total 16 1/2 miles and 4,430 feet of elevation gain, to climb Oreana Peak only. Total statistics drop to six miles and 2,320 feet of elevation gain, with high clearance allowing access to the second junction discussed under The Hike. Oreana Peak is a Class 2 peak.

Climbing Mt. Siegel adds 4 2/3 miles and 1,250 feet of elevation gain to the Oreana Peak statistics. From the last driving junction, statistics total 21 miles and nearly 5,700 feet of elevation gain. From the high clearance roadhead statistics total 10 2/3 miles and 3,570 feet of elevation gain. Mt. Siegel is a Class 2 peak.

Parting Notes: The locals fish in Red Canyon. If you call asking about the Pine Nut Mountains, the BLM staff seem to automatically start talking about Red Canyon. There are BLM signs all around stating that this is a Wilderness Study area and restricting vehicles to the existing roads and trails.

The primary route crosses private land for roughly two kilometers in each direction, but no private property signs were noted.

In Nevada, ticks are sometimes a problem in the spring and early summer. The summer heat kills them. These hikes avoid cross-country travel so ticks shouldn't be a problem unless you take a dog. If you take your dog, take precautions for ticks.

Judging from the entries in the register on Oreana Peak, four wheelers drive at least as far as the crest of the mountain range. The road was good below the two junctions. The road above the third junction — above the point where the two forks rejoin — is *iffy*. Note, however, that I have not walked the left fork of the road between the second and third junctions. The lower part of it looked good.

Mt. Siegel can be climbed from Slaters Mine, north of the peak. I have never climbed Mt. Siegel via this route because I did not want to beat my Honda that seriously.

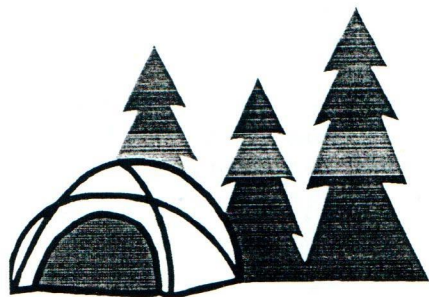
Maps: The USGS 7 1/2 minute *Mount Siegel, Nev.* and 15 minute *Mt. Siegel, NV-CA* quadrangles depict Mt. Siegel, Galena Peak, and the ridge between the peaks. The 7 1/2 minute *Double Spring, Nevada* quadrangle depicts the primary trailhead and the route as far as Galena Summit. The 7 1/2 minute *Oreana Peak, Nev.* quadrangle shows most of the secondary approach plus a 1/2 mile segment of the primary route. The 7 1/2 minute *Pine Nut Valley, Nev.* quadrangle shows the valley between Oreana Peak and Mt. Siegel. Hence, the primary route calls for four 7 1/2 minute maps and the secondary route calls for three quadrangles.

A better alternative is the *Smith Valley, Nev.-Calif.* quadrangle in the BLM's Surface Management Status (1:100,000 metric) series. It covers both routes in their entirety.

The *Minden, Gardnerville and Carson Valley Nevada* map produced by Compass Map and (at least in 1992) available from the CSAA, is extremely helpful for driving. If you choose to attempt Mt. Siegel from Slaters Mine, get copies of the *Smith Valley, Nev.-Calif.* and the *Carson City, Nevada* BLM maps.

Permits: None.

ALAN COOKE



Island Lake Ridge Hike

On August 2, Ed, Michael, Jackie, Jody, John and Kate joined me on a hike advertised as following the ridge line completely around Island and Twin Lakes above Wrights Lake. The intent was really to just get out and enjoy a beautiful day, going as far as time and interest allowed.

We started at the Dark Lake trailhead and followed the trail towards Rockbound Pass and then to Tyler Lake. We broke off from that trail just below the saddle separating lake basins and began our off-trail scramble.

The first section is on granite slabs, then some talus, a bit of scree and finally, boulder climbing. Reaching Point 8926', we stopped for lunch. The views from there are great. On one side, there are Twin Lakes and Island Lake, with the Mt. Price group looming above all. On the other side are Tyler and Gertrude Lakes.

After lunch, we began the crux of the hike. The ridgeline from the Point to the saddle between it and Point 9441' is exposed class 3. That means that we often needed our hands, not just for balance but to gain purchase on the rock. "Exposed" means that there was sometimes a lot of air between us and the probable stopping point, in the event of a fall. Everyone did just fine, though the going was slow. The 1/2 mile or so to the saddle took us over an hour.

By the way, Point 9441', while unnamed on the maps, is unofficially called "Crystal Mountain", according to Phil Oches, the son of the man who named many of the lakes in the area. We ran into him on our way out and had a neat chat about the history of the area. His Dad and relatives had the first cabins at Wrights Lake and Phil has been spending his summers there for the past 67 years!

At the saddle, John, Kate and Ed decided they had had enough fun for the day and chose to drop down to Island Lake. The rest of us traversed beneath Crystal Mountain and scrambled to the top of the headwall above Island Lake. Again, the views were magnificent. The day was as clear as any I've seen in the Desolation and we could see Mt. Diablo and the Coastal Range, Sierra Buttes to the north and as far south as the Sweetwaters! Closer in was the Island Lake basin on one side, Rockbound Valley on the other with Lake Aloha to the south and Clyde Lake and its great headwall immediately below. Wow!

The ridgeline at this point is easy, mostly class 2, with lots of places to stop and just enjoy the views.

Since our purpose was to have fun, not meet some artificial goal, we moseyed along and did not make very good time. Our original thought of going all the way around the lakes was thrown out and we chose to descend to Island Lake at the gap in the headwall at 8820'. From afar, the way down looks dicey but it really lays back quite nicely and no one had any trouble on the talus slope we used for our descent. Traversing around the lake, we hit the trail and followed it out. Jackie sped ahead to meet up with Ed, who had waited for us since Jackie had driven up with him. Michael, Jody and I enjoyed a quick dip in a pool below Twin Lakes to wash off the trail grime and then caught up with Jackie and Ed. We were back at the cars around 7:00.

Michael, Jody and I stopped for dinner at the Mexican restaurant in Pollock Pines. Maybe not the best in the world, but quite good.

----- Jim Bily

Hiking to the Summit of LaLaLand - June 22 to 27, 1997

Where is it that one can look across the low-lying fog covering a valley in the early morning and clearly see a number of other high peaks; yet, as the day wears on, the peaks slowly dissolve into a growing brown haze? And, where is it that one can spend three nights camped at a high alpine lake with 15 million people crowded together just a few miles away, and absolutely no one else camps there? — Why, a small island of wilderness out of which rises the highest point in LaLaLand, of course, a place more commonly known as the Los Angeles Metropolis of Southern California.

Why would anyone go to Southern California to climb peaks? The simple answer for me was that it sported two of the four peaks I still “need” to finish the County High Points List. Of course, like many peak-baggers, limiting any expedition to climbing only two peaks would be very difficult. Dozens of adjacent HPS-listed peaks were nearby, any of which could provide some extra entertainment, alias, exercise. As for my intrepid companion, Marcia Pattee, she joined me simply to enjoy the mountains and get in shape for bigger and better things to come in the Sierra.

The drive to LA was uneventful, except for a late arrival that made us choose to stay in a motel rather than camping near the trailhead. The third “cheap” motel, the “Queens Inn”, had a vacancy. I regret to report that, besides the freeway noise typical of all motels en route, this place of lodging offered one mean, rock-hard mattress. In retrospect, though, at least we weren't kept awake all night by the boys in the band romping in the room above or below. I could tell you about another trip to LaLaLand when . . . but that's another story.

As for this story, our hike began about 2:00 p.m. the next day, Sunday, June 22. This late start was partially due to a need to pick up some extra food and supplies. Then, we added a further delay in exchange for a quick climb of Constance, an HPS Peak, which was only a couple extra miles off the road on which we drove in. In any case, by 6:00 p.m. that evening, we were 2500' higher and setting up camp near Dollar Lake (9200'). We'd passed many hikers coming down the trail, including one group of at least 25 boy scouts. However, no one was camping at Dollar Lake when we arrived, and, as reported, no one else camped nearby over the next three nights we were there.

The next morning we set off early to climb San Gorgonio. Again, few people were up and about on the trail, only a few boy-scouts from a local troop trekking down from spending the night on Gorgonio. One of their leaders told us that they were bagging the “Nine (Ridge) Summits”. I regret not asking them which summits these were. When we asked the receptionist at the Ranger Station on our return, her guesses were annoyingly characteristic of a flat-lander. Yet, her Wilderness Station sold a patch with the “Nine Summits” representing that accomplishment. Since Marcia and I already planned to do eight of the 11 HPS summits in the area, we could have easily been induced to bag all nine if deemed to be of some significance, i.e., deserving of a patch.

In any case, our trail gradually climbed up and around several false summits to the top of San Gorgonio. After Marcia and I signed the oversized register, we offered it to a couple of retired gents who had just came up from the northern side of the mountain. After telling us they climbed it often, they suggested the register be deposited back into the box it came out of.

Then, we backtracked a mile or so down the trail from San Gorgonio back toward Dollar Lake before trekking up the ridge again to climb Jepson. This peak had several bumps on top, but no register was evident on any, so the identity of the summit remained elusive. Our best guess was the bump that sported a chain linked to the top of an old Army ammo box. We later discovered the same on several other peaks in the area, so I assume that some lowlife had recently traversed the ridge and stolen many cans with the registers.

At the lowest bump, we changed direction and dropped down to the much lower ridge leading to Dobbs Peak. Running that untrammelled ridge was great fun after miles of dusty trail, and the reward was a seldom-signed register at the summit of Dobbs. Apparently, the register thief, an incompetent, lazy fool at best, didn't get to Dobbs because it was too far off the trail. We followed the HPS instructions in getting back up the slope to the trail, thereby avoiding the worst of the scree.

The fourth and last peak on our list for the day was Charlton, the steep slopes of which presided over our view from Dollar Lake. Climbing it was easy, although by this time in the day, a thick brown haze obscured the views over LA. Where, only a few hours ago, Santiago Peak, the high point of Orange County, was easily visible, only a vague outline remained. I pity the poor people in LA who must live and work in such smog every day.

Another short trek was necessary after our return to Dollar Lake. We had to carry water from the spring-fed creek at its inlet back to camp, a quarter mile, since the Forest Service didn't allow camping close to the lake. On the way, Marcia took advantage of the lake's warm waters for a quick bath. I opted for simply splashing the dirt off after watching Marcia remove dozens of tiny leaches while drying off.

Our second day's hike was a repetition of the first with a different set of four peaks: Shields, Anderson, San Bernardino East, and San Bernardino. Each, in turn, fell below our boots, as we followed the long ridge joining them. Shields and Anderson provided the only bit of cross-country travel, and San Bernardino was the only peak with a good register. It's at the end of the ridge, and there we rested and took lunch. While reading through the pile of papers in the register box, I was surprised and excited to see the name of my good friend Bill Hauser. He had not only signed in, but left this delightful bit of prose:

San Bernardino Peak (the "Mount Diablo" of the Southland, 10,624) by Bill Hauser, June 11, 1984. This is the main peak visible from the city center of San Bernardino (east of Los Angeles) and it rises 8000 feet in about 20 miles I highly recommend getting a copy of the HPS list of peaks from the Sierra Club and exploring these fine peaks of the Trans-Peninsular Ranges.

Since this was neatly typed on an 8-1/2 x 11" sheet of paper, Marcia asked if Bill had carried a typewriter along over the 4600' elevation gain. Any comments, Bill?

Coming down from the peak the next morning, we took in some touristy sights around LA. The Desert Museum in Palm Springs is a very interesting place to visit for a few hours. It had exhibits on the Sonora Desert, some old Pottery from pre-European Mexico, and an entire floor entirely composed of modern art by California artists. However, I got into a slight altercation with a guard over not being able to bring our own food into their restaurant and eating area. I still resent their policy that visitors must buy their food in the museum to get a chance to dine in their sculpture garden, this besides paying their \$6 fee.

After visiting the museum, we took the 4:00 p.m. tram up the mountain from Palm Springs and hiked another 3 miles to a campsite we'd reserved. It costs \$17 apiece to ride up, but the tourist package, which was available after 2:00 p.m., included dinner along with the ride for only \$4 more. So, we backpacked in 3 miles to camp and returned directly to the upper tram station for a very enjoyable buffet dinner. The hike back to camp in the dark was very pleasant and helped make the evening.

Four peaks were on our itinerary for the next day: San Jacinto, Folly, Jean and Marion. San Jacinto was the primary objective, being the high point of Riverside County. We followed the trail up to it and continued cross-country over to other side to follow the ridge to Folly Peak, hopping big boulders and several false summits in the process. From Folly we dropped down to another trail and followed up it again toward San Jacinto. We met a couple hikers climbing

Jacinto via this trail, and one told us: "it's only a few minutes more," presumptuously thinking it our one and only objective of the day. A few minutes later, we turned away from Jacinto and the trail to climb Jean. A pleasant jaunt brought us to the summit block, which required a short mantle to touch the very top. Marcia found this to her liking, albeit with protests that the rock was too steep to stand on.

Marion was the last and best peak climb of the trip. It was a mile or two farther along the ridge past Jean, with a classic Class 3 summit block. The instructions from the HPS Guidebook guided us to the top, including getting up a 20' chimney. Marcia claims the rocks above it still bear the marks of her constricting fingers. The shortcut back through the brush was more of an ordeal, but, overall, it was a very enjoyable day's play.

On the way home, we stopped in Venice Beach to observe the local color. The life-in-the-fast-lane crowd had already left the Muscle-Beach Club, and most in vogue were the tattoo and body-piercing shops. These and the usual gathering of reality-denying groups that frequent the area provided great people-watching entertainment. Of course, we could have easily been mistaken for one of these groups, having just come off the mountain strongly extruding the newly dried sweat collected on a dozen of the highest peaks in the LA Area.

By John Sarna

Ragged Peak - Yosemite

Where does the time go? Here was the 2nd week of August and I was just now getting ready for my first backpack of 1997. In years past I would have had several under my belt already, including what had been an annual May season opener at Point Reyes.

Thursday Aug 7, Dan Harrison and I drove down to Yosemite with the intention of backpacking into Fletcher Lake and then bagging Vogelsang Peak. The Park Service trailhead quota system squashed that idea. It seems that they limit the number of backcountry travelers by trailhead and not destination. We could camp at Fletcher Lake -no problem, just can't take the trail there. Of course we could day hike there, just not carry our backpacks!

We accepted the permit-giver's suggestion of Young Lakes. It was just across Tioga Road going in the opposite direction of our original route. Soon we were on the trail slowly gaining altitude as we lugged our packs along the 6.5 miles to Lower Young Lake. As late afternoon turned into early evening we began to doubt the Lake's existence. I had been there a few years before, but it had obviously been moved.

At around 7:00 PM we finally reached our destination. We practically had the place to ourselves. We staked out a spacious campsite had enough light left to cook dinner and unpack our gear. We were a little rusty with our food hanging technique. Only a dozen throws to get the rope over a suitable branch. Then we both tied our food bags on either end of the rope at the same time, forgetting that you had to pull one end up to the top of the branch first. Eventually, food was hung, tents were set up and that was it for the night.

The next morning we decided to try our luck at nearby Ragged Peak. We got our daypacks together and hiked around the lake just below the face of the peak. We generally headed up the saddle just to the left of the peak. We found a crack that seemed to run through the granite to near the top. Thinking this would save us some time and seemingly a bit more interesting, we tried following it until we were forced to do a couple pull-ups to get over some boulder overhangs. Deciding we were not mentally nor physically prepared for any 4th class rock climbing, we had to back track to the snow filled gully below the saddle. From here it was a boulder hop to the top of the saddle. We were surprised to find there was a large

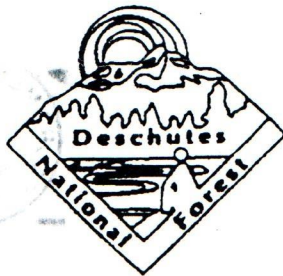
plateau at the top surrounded by spires and peaks on the edges. There were a lot of footprints indicating that this was a cross-country alternate route to the Young Lakes area.

Heading to the peak from behind it now, it was mostly a talus slog until we got nearer to the spires. As the 3rd class climbing became more exposed we became less inclined to actually bag the very highest chimney. We got to the last flat spot and declared it "close enough". We ate lunch and photographed the scenery. We descended back to the lake and continued to circumnavigate it. We had a much more leisurely dinner this night. I tried to stay up to see the Perseid meteor shower, but after a long time and only seeing 2, I gave up and crawled off into my sleeping bag.

The next morning we had a pleasant hike out. The Saturday crowds were beginning to show up. Several backpack groups were heading in and as we neared Tuolumne meadows there were dozens of day hikers and horse riding tourists. If you can get the time off from work, these midweek trips sure make a difference. We drove out the park back down Tioga pass. There was a line of bumper to bumper cars waiting to get in. Glad I was on the way out!

On the way home by the Walker river we watched fixed wing aircraft and helicopters zooming through the canyon and dropping that red fire retardant on a small wildfire up on the canyon hillside. They were so close, it was quite spectacular! Further on down the road there was a bus load of fire rangers carrying all those shovels and gears up into the brush. I thought about how tired I was from walking along a trail with my pack. I couldn't imagine lugging all that stuff up a hillside in this heat. When I got home I heard no news about the fire so they must have been successful in stopping it before it became newsworthy!

-----John Besbekos



Paulina Lake - Newberry Volcanic National Monument

Just 30 miles south of Bend, Oregon along Hwy 97 lies a park big on scenery and low on crowds. My wife Lynne and I visited this area in July. It has a lot of the features that you see in Lassen or Lava Beds parks such as lava flows, obsidian flows, lava tube caves and cinder cones. We did an auto tour of most of the park including a drive up to the top of Paulina Peak which gave you views of most of central Oregon and the various cascade peaks in the distance. It directly overlooked spectacular, deep blue Paulina Lake. We came back the next day to do the 7.5 mile hike that circumnavigates it.

This lake seems to be a trout fishermen's paradise. There were several campgrounds filled with anglers (not crowded by California standards). We got to the far end of the lake and saw that there were vacant campsites with picnic tables presumably for those arriving to camp by boat. We probably didn't see more than a dozen people on the whole trail, most of the action being centered on the small fishing boats on the lake. The trail was basically flat except at the halfway point where it climbed up to the top of a volcanic outcrop. This offered panoramic views of the lake and Paulina Peak. We finished our hike with a one mile sidetrip to view Paulina Falls where Paulina Creek plummets into a narrow canyon. Coffee and ice tea at the lakeside lodge rounded out the pleasant outing.

-----John Besbekos

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