

# THE



# **BOULDER**

**motherlode chapter · sierra club**

Issue No. 79 Nov. - Dec. 1997

## **The Interim Guest Corner**

Greetings,

As the first guest writer in this space, permit me to welcome you to the new Boulder Newsletter. Actually, all that's really new in it is the title of this column. Even though the Peak and Gorge Section has gone on "inactive" status, as you probably gleaned from Jim Bily's writeup in this space a couple months ago, the Boulder will continue to be distributed --- that is, until interest wanes or our hard-working editor, John Besbekos, moves on to other things without a replacement. So, thanks go to John for continuing to provide us this means for local area climbers to exchange stories and information.

As for Peak and Gorge Chair, Jim Bily, he has since moved up (with his job) to Washington, and we wish him many enjoyable climbs up there. In the process of moving, Jim left me with all the Peak and Gorge ropes and files (anyone wanna break out of dis' joint), so if you've a need for any such stuff, please give me a call. Unfortunately, all the ropes are good for is practice, since they're too old for belaying actual climbs. But, if any closet bureaucrats want some files to shuffle around, just fill out a form PgS2-35-98 in triplicate and fax it to me via e-mail.

But, in all seriousness, please continue to send in your articles, artwork, trip suggestions, etc. This is really your newsletter, and we welcome new ideas on its content. In fact, if you have any new ideas for us to pursue, please tell JohnB or me. No reasonable offer refused, and, in any case, we need a volunteer to write up this "Guest Corner" for the next issue.

Happy hiking. 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.

|               |   |
|---------------|---|
| Jan. 7, Wed.  | <b>Intermediate Ski Tour (Sierra Club)</b> Leisure tour in the Mt. Rose area. For details contact Al Gutowsky, 457-3338.  |
| Jan. 10, Sat. | <b>Ski Tour (Sierra Club)</b> Moderate paced tour. Location depends on snow conditions. Contact: Fred Fischietto, 773-0870.   |
| Jan. 10, Sat. | <b>Intermediate Ski Tour (Sierra Club)</b> Pyramid Peak from Twin Bridges. Alternate trip, Ralston Peak to Echo Sno-Park. Meet CSUS Arboretum, 6:30am. Leader: Al Gutowsky, 457-3338.   |
| Jan. 10, Sat. | <b>Day Hike (Sierra Club)</b> Mt. Tamalpais. 8 mile loop from Pantoll Ranger Station to East Peak. Meet 11 <sup>th</sup> & P in Sacramento at 7:30am or 2 <sup>nd</sup> & C in Davis at 8:00am. Leader: John Besbekos 729-2725. |
| Jan. 10, Sat. | <b>Backcountry Beginner Ski Tour (Sierra Club Maidu Group)</b> Meet Pollock Pines Safeway at 9am. Limited to 15. Call Ron Murray 644-6758 to register.  |
| Jan. 10, Sat. | <b>Full Moon Ski Tour (Donner Memorial State Park Winter Programs)</b> 3 hours, 2 miles to China Cove. For reservations call (530) 582-7892.  |
| Jan. 11, Sun. | <b>Cross-Country Ski Trip (Sierra Club Shasta Group)</b> Lass Park. Meet 9:30am at Manzanita Lake Ranger Station. Leader: Steve Moore, (530) 335-2743.  |
| Jan. 14, Wed. | <b>Intermediate Ski Tour (Sierra Club)</b> Somewhere in Donner Summit area. For details contact Al Gutowsky, 457-3338.  |
| Jan 17, Sat.  | <b>Ski Tour (Sierra Club)</b> Tough tour to Waterhouse Peak near Luther Pass. Meet El Dorado Hills park & ride at 7am. Leader: Dave Vandershaf, 933-3116.   |
| Jan 17, Sat.  | <b>Novice Snowshoe Hike (Donner Memorial State Park Winter Programs)</b> 3 hours, 2 miles on level terrain. For reservations call (530) 582-7892.   |
| Jan 17, Sat.  | <b>Snowshoe Hike (Sierra Club)</b> For location, time, snowshoe rental info., contact Bern Kreissman, (530) 753-7788 or bkreissman@ucdavis.edu.   |
| Jan. 19, Mon. | <b>Day Hike (Sierra Club)</b> 7 Miles in Muir Woods. Meet 11 <sup>th</sup> & P at 8am. Leader: Jack Bussio, 457-3794.   |
| Jan. 21, Wed. | <b>Intermediate Ski Tour (Sierra Club)</b> Possibly Hwy 89 to Monitor Pass from Markleeville side. For details contact Al Gutowsky, 457-3338.   |
| Jan. 24, Sat. | <b>Backcountry Advanced Beginner Ski Tour (Sierra Club Maidu Group)</b> Echo Lake, 4 miles. Meet Pollock Pines Safeway at 9am. Limited to 15. Call Ron Murray 644-6758 to register.   |
| Jan. 24, Sat. | <b>Intermediate Ski Tour (Sierra Club)</b> North of Hwy 80 and Soda Springs in Sand Ridge area. For details contact Al Gutowsky, 457-3338.  |
| Jan. 24, Sat. | <b>Backcountry Advanced Beginner Ski Tour (Sierra Club Maidu Group)</b> Forestdale Creek, 5miles, 700' elevation gain. Meet Pollock Pines Safeway at 9am. Limited to 15. Call Ron Murray 644-6758 to register.                  |
| Jan. 31, at.  | <b>Ski Tour (Sierra Club)</b> Fast pace to the north of Pickett and Hawkins Peaks. Meet El Dorado Hills park & ride at 7am. Leader: Dave Vandershaf, 933-3116.  |
| Jan. 31, Sat. | <b>Day Hike (Sierra Club)</b> Tennessee Valley to Muir Beach. Meet 11 <sup>th</sup> & P at 8am., In Davis at 2 <sup>nd</sup> & C at 8:30am. Leader: Jack Bussio, 457-3794.  |
| Jan. 31, Sat. | <b>Snowshoe Trek (Donner Memorial State Park Winter Programs)</b> . For reservations call (530) 582-7892.   |
| Feb. 7, Sat.. | <b>Ski Tour (Sierra Club)</b> Moderate paced tour. Location depends on snow conditions. Meet at Roseville Square at 8am. Contact: Fred Fischietto, 773-0870.  |
| Feb. 7, Sat.. | <b>Full Moon Ski Tour (Donner Memorial State Park Winter Programs)</b> 3 hours, 2 miles to China Cove. For reservations call (530) 582-7892.  |
| Feb. 7, Sat.. | <b>Backcountry Intermediate Ski Tour (Sierra Club Maidu Group)</b> Echo Lakes. Limited to 15. Call Ron Murray 644-6758 to register.   |
| Feb. 14, Sat. | <b>Snowshoe Hike (Sierra Club)</b> For location, time, snowshoe rental info., contact Bern Kreissman, (530) 753-7788 or bkreissman@ucdavis.edu.   |
| Feb. 14, Sat. | <b>Ski Tour (Sierra Club)</b> Tough tour to Red Lake Peak near Carson Pass. Meet El Dorado Hills park & ride at 7am. Leader: Dave Vandershaf, 933-3116.   |
| Feb. 21, Sat. | <b>Ski Tour (Donner Memorial State Park Winter Programs)</b> Schallenberger Ridge, difficult 5 miles. For reservations call (530) 582-7892.   |

**A Church Without a Pew or a Pew With a View**  
September 18-21, 1997



**Cathedral Peak 10,970 ft.**

Steve was making me a little nervous as postured for the picture. Not so much because I feared he'd fall to his death, but more the fact that we were roped together and I would have to haul his butt up if he fell! I had been invited to accompany Steve, Mike N. and Lance on their annual "adventure". This year's objective was to climb John Muir's favorite Sierra peak, Cathedral peak (10,970 ft.). I was along to do the technical section of the climb, which consisted of a 15ft. crack at the summit block.



**Steve posing for a "HERO" picture atop Cathedral Peak**

Thursday, after stopping in at the Tuolumne Meadows kiosk to pick up our wilderness permit, and to rent a bear proof container at the store (it seems that the bears are wise to the hanging method and one bear in particular has now resorted to intimidation, he bluff charges while campers are eating and when they run he cleans up) we were off to Bud Lake. The instructions were pretty simple and should not have been a problem but it seems that the "yellow marker 7ft. up the large tree" no longer exists, so.....we were on the wrong trail, and that after we had gone less than two miles. Some boonie crashing and debating finally brought us to the right trail and within two hours we were setting up camp in the shadow of Cathedral peak.

The weather was changeable and as the cloud cells passed over it would cool and occasionally there would be light hail but the weatherman had promised clearing conditions. By now it was late in the day and as we boiled water for dinner I watched a couple parties climb the southeast buttress route. This is a must do climb and I fully intend to one day do this Sierra classic! As the water boiled Steve would start his stopwatch so that he was sure it had boiled the prescribed 3-5 min. He was obsessed with this every time we boiled water. As for me, just let it boll a few minutes and it'll be just fine. Steve wouldn't drink any water that hadn't been thoroughly boiled. Neither of us got a case of Giardia!

Steve and I brought our food for the trip as had Mike and Lance. I have to admire the other two for the cuisine they brought. I was envious watching them having cheese and crackers, chicken and pasta, Gouda cheese and desert as Steve and I ate our watery Rice-a-Roni. They certainly weren't going to starve! By now it was dusk and the temperature was dropping as the sky cleared. I called it a day.

We arose at the crack of noon for our assault on Cathedral peak. Steve and I had a Kudo bar and apple as we watched Mike and Lance eat a five course breakfast. A little over two hours later and we were standing at the base of the summit block. The climb to that point was class 4. Mostly scrambling over ledges on the west side of the peak. Some shaded spots were still icy which made the footing a little precarious. In spite of the ice we all were now looking at the last 15-20ft. to the summit. I put on my harness, shoes and racked a couple friends and stepped out onto the ledge on the south side of the summit block. It has been a while since I've had 800ft. of air below my feet. With Steve belaying me I traversed into the crack which led to the summit. It felt good and I was soon standing on the summit taking in the view. I could see Half Dome to the southwest and Lembert Dome to the northeast and far off in the distance

was Matterhorn Mountain. By now Steve was chomping at the bit so I set up a belay and brought him up. The other two sat huddled in the little alcove below the summit block shivering. Neither one wanted the thrill of climbing to the summit. Steve and I took the obligatory pictures and I then belayed him off and down climbed to the shaded alcove. By now the other two were half frozen so off the mountain we went. While on the mountain Lance had spotted a solitary pinnacle a couple miles to the southwest which he wanted to check out. It was late so we decided to make it the next day's destination. After returning to camp I spent the afternoon exploring the area around Bud Lake. I discovered this fantastic slot canyon which reminded me of the ones in the desert. That evening we boiled water (3-5 min. by the stopwatch) while Steve and I watched the other two feast, we again ate our soupy Rice-a-Roni!



**View of Cathedral Peak from the north ridge**

The day dawned crystal clear with a hint of fall in the air. This was to prove to be the most memorable day of the trip. We hiked over the ridge into the Cathedral lakes drainage and took the John Muir Trail south towards the pinnacle Lance had spotted the day before. We identified it on the topo map as Columbia Finger. Climbing to the ridge north of the finger we scrambled up the west side to just below the summit blocks and with a few easy 5" class moves we were standing on the summit. I was surprised to find a register resting on the summit. Lance, feeling a little more adventurous joined Steve and I on the summit for views of Cathedral peak, Tenaya Canyon, Half Dome, Clouds Rest and Glacier Point. We had lunch on Columbia finger (three day old peanutbutter and jelly sandwiches) under a clear Yosemite sky. Mike elected to remain below and enjoy the view from the ridge.



By now Steve's appetite for bagging peaks had been wetted so as soon as he was off the finger it was a mad dash for the next peak. Like a man possessed he attacked the peak to the north of Columbia Finger, leaving the rest of us in the dust. I could hear him calling me, his voice echoing off the peaks. "Mike I think this is the way. Hey Mike, over here! All we have to do is get up here.", all the while I was looking for a safe route to the summit. After sizing up the situation I concluded that this was one peak that required a rope and would have to wait for another day. I finally caught up with Steve and pointed out the fact and reluctantly he gave up the idea of climbing yet another peak. The others waited below, bored of peaks and ready to explore the area.



**Steve on the summit of Columbia Finger**

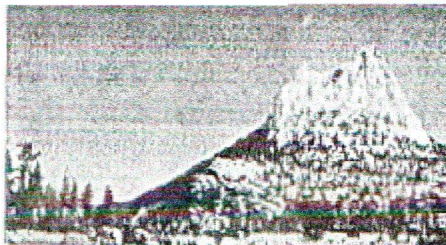
Heading northwest we came to the edge of a large drop, perhaps 1 000ft. below us was Tenaya lake. It was like looking from an airplane, we could see climbers on Stately Pleasure Dome. I even spotted a pair climbing South Crack (one of my favorite climbs). By now it was late and we had a long hike back to camp so we called it a day and headed for camp.

Steve and I watched as Mike and Lance tried to finish off their food, We ate our, yes you guessed it ... Rice-a-Roni! "Forty more seconds Mike, we don't want any of the Giardia bugs in the water....twenty more seconds", Steve was saying as he studied his watch. Boiling water was becoming a chore and we were running out of fuel so I Just turned it off

I always hate packing up. It always seems that the pack is smaller on the way out. I'm convinced it's heavier. An hour and half and we were back at the car. Next stop ... beer! Then on to Grover's Hotsprings for a soak, wow that felt good! It was a good trip



**Thumbs up for another successful climbing trip**



-----submitted by Steve Richardson & Mike Ryan

## The Marble Mountains

Late this past summer, I spent three very enjoyable days sauntering the NAS-listed peaks in the Marble Mountains. All three peaks were day hiked under cool and breezy but friendly skies.

The **Marble Mountain Wilderness** is the centerpiece of the **Klamath National Forest**. To get there, go north on Interstate 5 to the town of Yreka. Then take Highway 3 southwest to the smaller burg of Fort Jones. You can get gas and food here, and it makes a good topping-off and resupply point. Then take the Scott River Road (from a market called "Ray's Food Place") west into Klamath National Forest. About twelve miles later you'll go left across the Scott River on Road 44N45, immediately encountering a campground called "Indian Scotty". This was my base camp for the duration and is very nice as it abuts the Scott River.

My first peak was **Boulder Peak**. From the Indian Scotty campground, go up 44N45 which becomes dirt just past the campground. Within a couple of miles, you'll see the road for the Boulder Creek Trailhead. Go up this to its end and then head on up the trail. Though you have some cross-country options, I think the trail going past the Lower and Upper Wright Lakes is the nicest, even though its longer. Past the Upper Lake you reach a high saddle, then follow a faint trail southwest until you are right under the peak. Then go up fairly open slopes to the 8,299' summit. You look straight down onto the Lower Wright Lake. Boulder is the highest point in the Marbles and you are rewarded with views in all directions: Shasta is off to the southeast and the Trinity Alps to the south; Preston in the Siskiyou to the northwest; and far off to the northeast you can even see Mt. McLoughlin in southern Oregon.

Next was **Kings Castle**. From Indian Scotty, go up the road following signs for the Paradise Lake trailhead. You can't actually get to the trailhead as the road is washed out about a half mile before it. They are rebuilding the destroyed bridge, so this could change by next summer. Just walk up the road and past the bridge to the real trailhead, which is then followed to a saddle just above Paradise Lake. Descend towards the lake, then go around the south side of it picking up a use trail through very tall brush. After this the ducked trail heads west up to a saddle just to the southeast of the peak. From there go up the ridge to the top. At 7,405', Kings Castle is the lowest of the Marbles. Indeed, it barely even emerges above timberline. But once again, you are looking down on a pretty lake.

**Black Marble** rounded out the trio and was certainly the most enjoyable. From Indian Scotty, go up the road following signs to get to the Lovers Camp trailhead. This hike goes through a deep and ferny forest for several miles before getting to some open meadows high up in the Marble Valley. There are a couple of old structures here and this is where you first see the rocky summit of Black Marble. Continue up the trail toward the peak for another half mile or so, then go cross-country up to the summit area. There is some brush but it's not too bad. An easy chute gave access to the rocky summit. I believe the centrally located 7,440' summit gave the best views of the Marble Mtn Wilderness area itself. For fun I descended a class 3 knife-edge ridge southwesterly off the summit - the rock is good solid limestone. There are a couple of nearby white limestone domes that contrast sharply with the dark rock of Black Marble. This combined with the meadows and endless pines made this my favorite peak in the Marbles.

What's most striking about the Marbles isn't the scenery, but the solitude. I hiked these peaks over the Labor Day weekend and except for the campground, I pretty much had the Marbles all to myself. I encountered only about 2-5 people on the trails each day, all of whom were backpackers. So the next time you want to get away from the masses on a holiday weekend, the Marbles may be the way to go.

**Bob Sumner**



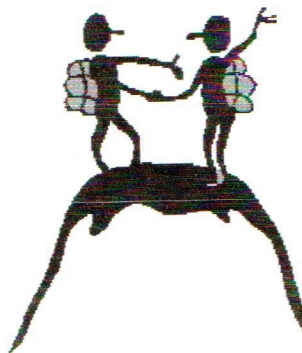
## Rubicon Peak (9183): A Spring Intermediate Ski Tour

It was a perfect day for a ski tour. During the evening it had snowed and temperatures were cold enough to keep the snow dry. Our party of twelve or so regrouped at the entrance to Bliss State Park before driving to our trail head on the one of the paved roads that dead ends into Forest Service land in the Rubicon Point subdivision. While it wasn't "the" trail head, it was good enough to take us to the shoulder of a low ridge coming off Rubicon Peak. The lower elevations of the ridge were open and provided us with a view of Lake Tahoe. We traveled in a westerly direction gently gaining elevation. The first time I skied this peak I had followed this same ridge before heading southward and approaching Rubicon Peak from the southeast. Andy's route was to ski westward until we gained the saddle of the ridge running northward from the peak and to follow the ridge to the summit.

It had snowed three to four inches during the evening and as we gained elevation the powder became deeper. The snow conditions were ideal, dry powder on top of a good base. Gaining elevation, we could see that to the north, our right side, we were skiing about a drainage, Lonely Gully, that ended when it reached the north running ridge. To the south, on our left, the lower slopes of Rubicon Peak were becoming steeper. Upon gaining the saddle we had spectacular views, Lake Tahoe to the east, and Phillips Peak and the Meeks Creek drainage with its numerous lakes to the west and south. The ski up the ridge was delightful, not too steep and ever expanding beautiful views which ever direction one looked. The higher we skied the ridge began to offer us safe north facing descend routes. By noon or before we reached the upper reaches of the peak. An excellent lunch spot was found that provided one an opportunity to climb the peak, take a nap or take pictures. It was a pleasure sitting in the snow and watching the party ascend the peak. The last 100 feet required one to ski up a steep rounded slope. As skiers attained the top of the slope one received the impression that the skiers were arising out of the snow with an expansive Lake Tahoe in the background.

We followed our tracks a short distance down the ridge before descending. The north facing terrain was relatively open with six to eight inches of powder on hard pack. It was one turn after another. It seemed like hardly any time had passed before we meet our ascending track. We traced our tracks back to the car.

---Al Gutowsky



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**EDITORS:** John Besbekos, John Sarna

**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](mailto:jbde@aol.com).

**DEADLINE:** About the third week every other month.  
The next deadline is: 20 Feb. 1998

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