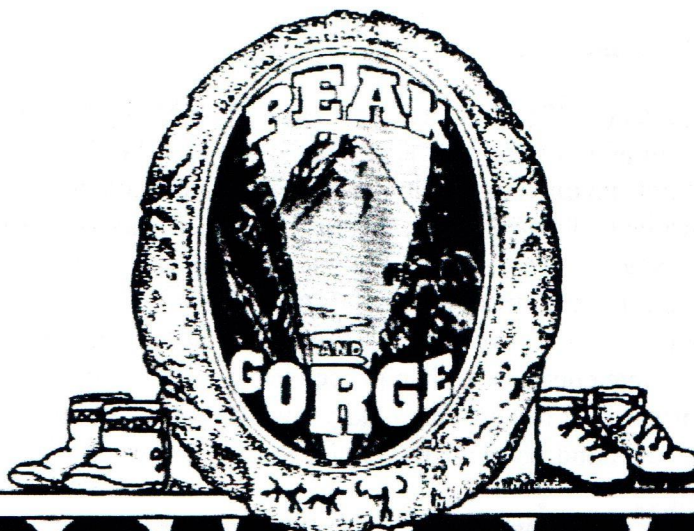


THE



BOULDER

motherlode chapter-sierra club

Issue No. 81 Apr. - Jun. 1998

The Interim Guest Corner

Douglas Joy passed away on March 30, 1998 at the age of 43, after a battle with cancer. Many of us will remember Doug as an enthusiastic climber, a skilled leader, a patient teacher, and a good friend. Doug was Chair of the Peak and Gorge Section from October 1986 to April 1989 and held numerous other positions in the Section. His leadership was largely responsible for the high level of Section activity at that time. During his tenure he actively championed the teaching and practice of mountaineering skills and encouraged Section trips on fourth and fifth class routes. Doug also served as Chair of the Outings Guidelines Committee and as Outings Liaison to the Executive Committee.

Doug loved sharing his mountaineering knowledge and skills. His climbing style was marked by proficient technique and an emphasis on safety, and he was an enthusiastic teacher of this approach. He organized an ambitious training program for the Section and for several years personally taught regular sessions on wilderness navigation, ice axe use, rope handling, rock climbing, winter and survival camping, and general mountaineering. Doug believed in technical competence and disciplined risk-assessment as keys to confident and successful mountaineering. The many Club members whom Doug helped enjoy the challenges of wild places know their debt to him and embody his teaching in their own climbing practice.

Doug led and participated in many trips to California peaks. His focus was always on the success and safety of the party as a whole. On the trail and on belay he was a reliable partner whose expertise and resourcefulness were major assets. In camp, his dry humor, keen intelligence, and extensive knowledge of an astounding range of subjects made him an engaging companion. His ability to listen empathetically and respond from his heart made him a comrade.

Doug had a strong sense of community service and put in many hours rehabilitating the McKinley Park children's playground. He would bite into such a project like a pit bull, disregarding all else until he had given it as much as he could. Doug's family and friends have come up with a plan to enhance the playground with a tree and a memorial bench. Contributions may be sent to: Gifts to Share (in honor of Doug Joy), City of Sacramento Parks and Recreation Department, 1231 I Street, Suite 400, Sacramento, CA 95814.

Doug is survived by his wife Aubrey, son Doran, daughter Aliya, and by other family in Ohio and Florida. At Doug's suggestion, there will be a gathering in July on the summit of Bear Creek Spire to honor him.

---Oscar Balaguer

When Not to Ski Pyramid Peak

We left the parking area (6130) at Twin Bridges at 8:30 A.M. - Ahead of us were two skiers who had left the parking lot an hour earlier. Their tracks climbed the slopes overlooking Highway 50 before heading up the Canyon. As we climbed, we could see and hear Horsetail Falls. Snow conditions were marginal. The tracks cut through a thick breakable crust overlaying eight to twelve inches of powder. Near the top of the low spur ridge coming off the main southwest ridge of the peak, we were forced to make our own trail. As one broke the crust, the breaking ski would sink eight to ten inches into powder. If one were lucky, the tip of the uphill ski would lie above the snow. To save energy one then proceeded to lift forward the other ski over the first ski before pushing it forward. It took the two skiers in front of us two hours to reach the ridge and gain approximately nine hundred feet. It took us an hour to accomplish the same.

We caught up with the two skiers just before the ridge dead ends. Shortly after passing them we started the switchback climb to the main ridge leading to the summit. The snow was dry, deep powder. Upon reaching the south facing ridge the snow returned to breakable crust, although there was dry powder in the trees. Our two groups played leapfrog climbing the gentle lower slopes of the ridge. Snow conditions improved somewhat, packed snow mixed with powder. In a notch (8100), just before the ridge started its steep ascend to the upper summit ridge, we got our first view of Pyramid Peak, a white inverted V.

A long traverse led us up the west facing slopes of the ascending ridge. Regretfully our traverse was a too high. We should have taken a lower traverse that would have provided access to a gully that provides direct access to the base of the peak. Our traverse took us to one of the many low saddles in the ridge. As we gained elevation the snow-covered peaks to the south of us, Round Top, Little Round Top, Mokelumne, became visible. To add to our pleasure, there was no wind and blue skies surrounded us. On the far western horizon we could see dark clouds. Instead of skiing on the ridge we started a second steep ascending traverse on packed snow. We crossed relatively steep slopes that descended into Rocky Creek. This traverse took us a high point (8800) on the main ridge.

As we gained our new high point we found the snow to be wind packed, although from time to time one would sink into six to ten inches of powder. From this high point the ridge is relatively flat. We skied across wind rows of packed snow to our lunch spot at 9000 feet. It was twelve-thirty, we had been skiing for four hours. Below us to the east and north was Lake Aloha, Woods Lake and on the horizon Mt. Tallac and Lake Tahoe. To the south we could see additional peaks, Freel, Stevens and Red Lake, Waterhouse and right across from us, Mt. Ralston. Our view to the west/northwest was blocked by the impressive mass of Pyramid Peak. To the west was the summit ridge that one follows to the summit. To the northwest, the steep east face of the peak. It felt good to stop for lunch, a turkey sandwich, cranberry juice out of a plastic bottle, a can of Kern's strawberry/banana juice and one date. Jerry offered me a piece of chocolate that was much appreciated. Blue sky appeared above the peak and us as we had lunch. If it were April or May, we might have found spring corn snow. Instead, we found wind rows of packed snow. After lunch we skied a couple hundred feet above our lunch spot in the hope that snow conditions would improve. They didn't.

We bid farewell to our climbing partners and began our descent by following our tracks across the flat ridge to our previous high point. Past the high point and the steep upward traverse, snow conditions improved. We had either spring snow or powder and turning became easier, first one turn, then one linked turn after another. Before we knew it, we had descended 1500 feet and were turning northward to ski the powdered slopes that lead to the lower ridge that would take us back to Twin Bridge. The snow conditions on the last thousand feet were breakage crust that shattered like glass when skiing through it. To add to our discomfort, the sun was not longer shining on these slopes. Skiing the ridge itself wasn't too bad, but once we descended off the ridge it was one kick turn after another through snow that one could only call crud.

I didn't try any turns until the last couple of hundred feet. Below me children were playing in the snow and cars were zooming along I-highway 50. I reached the car at 3:40. Jerry was five minutes behind me. We stopped at Strawberry for a beer, chips and salsa. They tasted good.

Lessons Learned

Unless snow conditions are ideal, and you will know this quickly after leaving Twin Bridges, do something else, like enjoy the north facing slopes of the old ski area located above Camp Sacramento. The best Pyramid Peak skiing probably occurs in the spring.

Which ascent route - Rocky Creek or Twin Bridges - do I take? Either route may require one to hike and carry their skis approximately 1000 feet before reaching skiable snow. Rocky Creek has the advantage of providing the most direct route to the top and 3000 feet of excellent downhill. Its major disadvantage, especially during a heavy snow year, is that the trail may be hard to find or follow. The major disadvantages of the Twin Bridges route is that it requires snow from the highway or one will have to carry their skis through brush for a hundred yards before a the, lower ridge and the snowline.

There is a third possible ascent route. One can view it from the, high point above Camp Sacramento. This exploratory route starts from Rocky Creek but requires one to hike or ski directly up the west facing slopes of Rocky Creek to obtain the open snow covered slopes. Upon reaching the snowline one can either traverse to Rocky Creek's first bench or ascend the ridge following the route discussed above. Whether this route is possible or any better than the others has yet to be determined.

Al Gutowsky

Double Congratulations to John Sarna:
27 June 1998, completed the California County High Points .
He celebrated the event by marrying Marcia Diane Pattee on the
summit.

Jake's Peak

On the south to north running ridge that overlooks Lake Tahoe between Meeks Bay and Emerald Bay are a number of high points. The northerly high point on this ridge is Rubicon Peak (9183). The southerly high point is peak 9195. A half a mile south of this southerly high point is Jake's Peak (9187). Ten of us met at the turnout (6820) on the east side of Highway 89 just south of the entrance to Duane Bliss State Park.

After crossing the highway we skied in a northwesterly direction gaining elevation till we came to a drainage that flows into Rubicon Creek. We followed the drainage upward till reaching a shoulder of the ridge (7800) that parallels the main ridge. After regrouping, we skied southward on the shoulder staying high enough not to ski into the drainage on the west side of the shoulder or gaining unnecessary elevation. Above us and to the west was a steep avalanche chute that dropped away from the main summit ridge. Unbeknown to us, our route would be taking us up the protected, though steep, slope south of the chute. We followed the drainage till it deadened (8000). From here we turned due west and started to climb.

While my skins made climbing easy, the steepness of the slope required one to expend considerable energy just to put one ski ahead of the other. We were climbing the east slopes of Jake's Peak and the ski upward seem to go on and on. After awhile, It was one traverse after another through powder. Each traverse bringing us closer to the top. The lower slopes are tree covered, while the very upper slope is tree less. To add to our travails, the sun disappeared and clouds reduce visibility and provide us with snow showers. The last two traverses swing southward over a snow hill before exiting onto the ridge. Jake's Peak was less than 100 feet away. For a few minutes the clouds lifted and we could see the north face of Mt. Tallac, the Maggies, Phipps and Velma Peaks and all the high points on the ridge. After lunch Barney and I skied a high point to the south which provided us with a view Emerald Bay. Better weather conditions would have allowed us to ski the ridge, well, we can do that next time, nature permitting.

A short time later our party began the descend. Barney lead the way down while the leader brought up the rear. We followed our tracks through powder snow stopping frequently to account for all members of our party. Once we reached the shoulder we stopped for a snack. The remainder of the downhill again followed our uphill route, although the snow as soft and wet. By 2:30 we were back to our cars. This trip had a length of four miles and an elevation gain 2400 feet.

AL GUTOWSKY

Tower Peak in Summer 1997

Tower Peak can be climbed in a weekend from Buckeye Canyon. Keith Parks and I drove over Friday after work and set out down the dusty trail at 7:00 AM Saturday. The first 9 miles went fast due to the flat terrain. Although the first few miles are dusty, soon you break out into a beautiful (soggy in a few places) meadow. The trail is overgrown in places, but on the whole, easy. A rocky canyon is ascended allowing a great view of the north arete of Hunewill Peak. At the trail junction head north to Kirkwood pass another 1,500 feet higher. We arrived about 1:00 p.m., took a breather and descended to about a quarter of mile and took off cross-country to a beautiful hidden drainage below Hawksbeak Peak. This would have made a great base camp, but we pushed on to the next drainage west and camped directly below Tower Peak at the snow line. In retrospect, the extra mile is not worth missing out on a much better camp site. We set up camp at 3:30 with sufficient time to be lazy, nap, and enjoy Keith's gourmet feast. We decided to go light - no tent, ice axes, or rope and I chose to do the entire approach in tennis shoes. Light (twenty-pound) packs made the 13-mile hike in very enjoyable and fast.

We got up at dawn, had a quick breakfast and were headed up the northeast slopes at 6:30 a.m.. It is basically 3rd class scrambling south of a prominent buttress next to a waterfall until the large gently sloping snow field below the summit is reached. Here we had a front-row view of the classic, clean 5-pitch 5.9 dihedral route (a must-do for another day). We descended slightly across the snow field and intersected the northwest ridge. The lower you intersect the ridge, the easier the climbing on easy but exposed slabs. Soon the ridge turns into a steep arete so we traversed right into a chute which involved a series of 3rd class stair steps. The rock is a bit loose (helmets are a good idea). I took rock shoes which made footing very solid. Kieth climbed in his mountaineering boots and did fine too. For those not accustomed to exposed climbing, a rope may be needed as there is a quite airy step to the summit. We spent a half hour on top enjoying the great view and headed down. We tried going down north of the prominent buttress with a snow-melt lake at its base. Here we encountered steep snow, which required some innovative techniques with tennis shoes - such as chimney stemming down between the rock walls and snow. Keith, a master of trekking pole descents, became a four-footed cross between mountain goat and human. Ice axes would have allowed some great glissades - the trade off of going without was an easier trek in and out. On the descent we met two muscle-bound Marines who had hiked in from Levitt Meadows with everything from ropes to radios and enough gear to climb El Capitan - a bit of an overkill for the standard route on Tower Peak.

We were back at camp by 10:30, rested an hour, cooked lunch, and headed out. We reached the car by 7:00 PM and drove back getting to town about 11:00 PM - not bad considering Tower Peak is generally thought of as a 3-day trip.

I highly recommend the Buckeye Canyon approach even though it is about a half-hour longer drive and about 3 miles longer and more elevation gain. We met no other people on the hike in or out. My rationale for this approach was to check out Hunewill Peak, which looks to have great difficult 5th class rock routes, perhaps even significant first route potential. It would also be a good approach for those coming up from southern California. The total trip involved 33 miles, 7,000 feet elevation gain, about 15 miles each way, and 3 miles for the climb. The cross-country travel is easy but requires good route finding since there are many cliffs to avoid. Strong participants and light packs are essential to do this approach because there is considerable elevation gain.

by Nancy Palister

Climbing Singles in the 90's

*Dear Abby, *****PRIVATE ***** Having accepted a blind date, I am feeling a bit anxious. Advise please; signed: Blind But not Stupid.*

Dear BBNS, on a whole blind dates are never what one expects, but a lunch date would suffice and allows a graceful retreat.

Having recalled hearing such advise at one time in my life, I was standing in the heat in front of the Kiwi Saloon in Chinese Camp waiting for my blind date. My daughter, concerned about my excesses of climbing and lack of dates, gave my phone number to her friend who's fiancée was a fellow roommate with another fellow who rented a room from Mr. B (name changed to protect the innocent), a Santa Cruz climber with a big heart. "Mom, you ought to give it a try, he's really nice." Now, "climbing" is a broad concept- Mr. B was a real 90's Renaissance climber, apparently dabbled in every aspect from indoor sport climbing to underwater rappelling. Finally in August, I called and offered, "want to do Cathedral Peak?" Now I do not know if the East Buttress of Cathedral Peak is what Abby had in mind for a "lunch date" -- well it's grade II - isn't that lunch on the summit? And we did share Power Bars. "Sure, great climb replied Mr. B, did it last year and it was rea--aly co--ol! Meet you in Chinese Camp at 3:00 - I will be in a green Honda Civic."

In sweltering heat, 3:30 rolled by -and so did a lumpy yellow vehicle, front grill torn to shreds, headlight knocked out and a body that looked like it's transport to the wrecking yard was somehow averted. "Hi, said two cool dudes. Mr. B and his roommate, Mr C (evidently Mr. B felt the need for moral support- mind you, we are talking a time warp from the 70's). OK, he *is* kind of cute, and Mr. C isn't bad either. From this point on we were to *go with the flow*. No hurry. I admit I have been accused of being a bit over-organized. I bit my tongue. What we dallied away in the parking lot until 4:00, we made up in going who knows how fast (you guessed it- the speedometer did not work and we were saving wear and tear on the breaks). "Cool car, eh -- got it for \$10. No comment. More dallying. Chat with the Ranger. With such a late start, the only option was to illegally wander (oh- Mr Ranger, we thought we were on the Budd Lake trail!) up the Cathedral Lake trail. Mr. B ran off, Mr. C keeping me company. Damn! How did I end up with the rope again! (My dream date is a man who carries the rope!) We reached Upper Cathedral Lake in time to set up by moonlight.. Now mind you, I could have just tip toed out of camp and thumbed it back to my car, a blind date bail out so to speak. Snug in my tent, Mr. B in his bivy sack on the other side of the rock and Mr. C, thankfully, offering to sleep out under the stars, I thought, what the heck, tomorrow is another day.

Up at dawn. Although Mr. B was laid back, his last encounter with Cathedral Peak almost ended up with a bivy on the top, so I did not have to encourage him to get an early start. We talked on the approach. "You climbed it last year and still want to do it again", I queried. "Yea. man, it's far out. Seemed Mr B. picked up some kid at the climbing gym. Mr. B let it be known that he learned to climb from a book and the kid had never climbed but once in the gym. Mr. B lead until the "fog rolled in" - this is Mr. B's way of saying he was scared as shit. I assumed Mr. B knew where to start. "Oh, no, when I climb I never look around or down - too frightening." I pull out the route topo - 4th class "many ways to go" until the crux pitch at the chimney. Mr B. surveys the buttress- "no prob, man, lets scramble up a ways." I start up with the rope over my shoulder and soon Mr. B suggests we belay. He wants the 4th class pitch. OK with me. I set up an exceedingly uncomfortable belay on a flake and after endless hours (or so it seems) I hear "off belay". Mr. B managed to turn a 4th class pitch into runout 5.7- no wonder he gets terrified --can't find a route to save his face! I am impressed

though - Mr. B climbed a gutsy lead I would not have done. I smile at him, complement him on his lead and arrange gear for my lead. He seems pleased. No hurry, lets groove on the sunshine for a while. Seems we are so slow that another party has come up to our left and now are ahead of us. We chew on some fruit and chat, while the other party gets far enough ahead. Mr. B informs me that he doesn't know how he and the kid ever got up this last year, and would I kindly lead the rest of the climb? Well, I *am* trying to get more practice leading! The next pitch is uneventful. We wait again at the chimney. Seems like a third party on the rock got ahead of the party ahead of us so it's like the line at Safeway. Mr. B is gallant - offers to carry my pack when I lead the chimney. (I should have given more thought to just how he was going to do this gallant deed).

After 20 years of retirement from climbing to raise kids and only 6 months back into climbing, I am myself still bumbling around a bit on lead climbing. The chimney is easy, but I fail to put on a long enough runner for the left traverse, and am enjoying the climb so much that I decide to go out the full 50 meters. Mistake. The rope was literally getting to be a drag. I set up a belay on the top of a column and yelled "on belay". Silence. Tug the rope. Nothing. Pull, yell, pull, yell. Fifteen minutes pass. A fourth party pops up below me, having done the direct approach. The lead climber yells down to Mr. B that it is OK to start. I yank on the rope and it progresses bit by bit. The tension pops one of two opposing nut I placed about 50 feet below and snags the rope. Shit. The fellow climber below thankfully hauls on the rope too. Mr. B's head pops in view, he smiles, his hat blows off in the wind and I see that he has attached both packs to the rope for me to literally haul up the pitch! Out of no where, here comes an apparition heading my way. A fifth party, lead by a fellow with a video camera mounted on his helmet, CB radio, tape recorder and wires dangling all over, climbs up to me. The Cathedral Zoo. In fifteen minutes, utter chaos, ropes tangled and a sixth party on our heels. Mr. B is thrilled. "Hey man, cool. Where you from? - let's party! Hey, everyone is so--oo nice. Want some peanuts?". I suggest that we wait until the other parties pass. Mr. B sees no problem in just rolling the spaghetti ball up the cliff, all parties entwined. After all he says, WE were the first on the route and they are all so nice. Go with the flow.

We untangle. I wait. Mr. B does not want to do the next lead so he is at my mercy. (Uptight mercy, he says). I finally lead to the big ledge and bring up Mr. B. I start up the last pitch, and wham, out of nowhere here comes Mr. Gung-ho leading the seventh party on the route! I back off, not wanting to tangle the ropes. Mr. B loses patience with me -- enough to roll out the fog and takes the lead. Fine. The nice fellow with the video camera talks Mr. B over the crux. I follow to find Mr. B not 20 feet from the top and grand central station at the register. The fog has rolled back in as Mr. B chooses not to go to the top (he did it last year, so why bother). I go up. One party stuck their rope and a tri-cam. Mr. Video Camera comes up and helps free the rope. The bolts have been chopped from the top so it's a down climb. Mr. Gung-ho scoffs at us, coils his rope, scrambles down the 5.4 summit block, leaving his young white-as-a-ghost partner with no belay. He gulps and heads down. The "Stuck rope" climbers leave the cam for posterity and clear off the top. Mr. Video Camera and his group (they were trying out the electronic get-up for a climb of the Mountaineers Route on Whitney, they said) leave. I sit on the summit block and belay Mr. B around the corner. AHH-- the wilderness experience. Only in California!

We are still speaking to each other, although I have to agree with dear Abby- lunch would have been wiser. With quite the sense of humor, Mr. B insists that we walk back into camp me leading him with the 12-foot sling around his neck, crawling on all fours to give Mr. C a laugh. Mr. C has prepared a lavish feast for us. I dip in Upper Cathedral Lake, Mr. B and C decline- too cold for them. We walk out next day, play on the slabs at Tuolumne. I close my eyes as Mr. C, with Mr. B's cheering, pass about 20 cars on a blind corner, all backed up behind a park service.

By Nancy Palister

Mt. Ellinor Olympic Range, WA

Mt. Ellinor is the southernmost of the high peaks in the Olympic Range visible from Seattle. It tops out at 5944', low by Sierra standards but still impressive rising so close to Puget Sound and sea level.

This was supposed to be a Mazama (Portland climbing club) climb led by one of my good friends. However, he called on Thursday night to tell me that he was canceling in town due to a weather forecast of a big storm. I was bummed because this was supposed to be the first climb since we moved back to the Northwest. However, I was rudely awakened early Saturday morning by a blinding sun streaming through our bedroom window. Huh? Blue sky everywhere; could the weatherman be wrong? I got Linda up and suggested that we go take a look at the mountain ourselves.

The drive from Seattle wound around the Sound and its islands, often revealing tantalizing views of the Olympics under blue skies. A few clouds did move in just as we got to the trailhead at 3500', but no big deal.

The first mile and a half is on an old climbers trail that has been seriously upgraded with steps and nice tread. It is still very steep and wastes little time gaining 1200 feet. The trail ends at a chute that is a nice rock scramble in summer but now was buried under six feet or more of snow. Linda turned around at that point and I proceeded on my own...well, alone other than the ten other climbers doing the same route. While some excellent steps had already been kicked in the snow, I put on my crampons. The chute gets pretty steep in places so I decided to err on the side of conservatism.

The climb up the chute was straight forward. The snow was in great shape, firm enough to not need snowshoes but not icy. Low rock cliffs close in at several spots, adding to the beauty.

The chute tops out at a small basin. I crossed that and ascended another snow slope. At the top, the world changed. My views to this point had been of the Sound, tree covered islands and the Kent Valley south of Seattle. Suddenly, the west side of the ridge appeared and the entire Olympic Range sprang into view. The Olympics aren't high but they do contain glaciers and the tree line is fairly low. What I saw was row after row of jagged peaks, all still covered with snow. Clouds had moved in, but stayed high enough that few peaks were obscured.

There was one more snow slope to climb and I was on the summit. The views were no better, though the summit itself did run out along a ridge with a nice snow cap and some overhanging cornices.

The highlight of the climb was the glissade down. Previous climbers had created deep glissade trenches. The snow was soft enough to provide a comfortable seat and good control so I put on my rain pants and just went for it, using my ice axe to slow down only when I needed to take a different line to avoid a tree. What had taken me over an hour to ascend was a quick ten minutes down. Ah, the joys of snow climbs!

Jim Bily

U.S. Forest Service Bans Use of Fixed Anchors for Climbing In Wilderness Areas

The news release describing this new USFS policy is below, care of the USDA, Forest Service, Washington D.C. I must say I agree that it is within the letter of the law, that is, the Wilderness Act, and it is appropriate in a few cases. The extreme case is drilling a trail of bolts up a Class 6 wall to be the first to ascend a peak, which has been done, albeit not in the U.S., at least to my knowledge. However, it doesn't make a lot of sense to ban fixed pro in most places in wilderness areas, where, typically, their only impact is their visibility to climbers, the vast majority of which actually *enjoy* seeing them due to the insurance policy they offer on the down-climb. Also, permit me to predict that, by eliminating fixed anchors, most climbers will simply leave a couple chocks and slings behind, regardless of what the law is, to protect their own behind, and that will be more visible than the fixed pro. As for others, "a dead climber won't be able to leave anything except a legacy of what should have been" (Mark D. Adrian).

Despite the prevailing attitude of the media, Congress does avoid ridiculous policy, and I seriously doubt they would have agreed with this USFS policy when drafting the Wilderness Act. The way our system of democracy is suppose to work is that Congress will now recognize the problem, then change the law to reflect realities. Hence, lobbying our Congressman seems prudent. However, I wouldn't expect any help from the Sierra Club on this, as the Conservation folks will want to avoid, at any cost, opening the Wilderness Act to changes. Other conservation organizations may oppose a legislative correction for the same reason. Unfortunately, as water runs uphill to money, legislation runs uphill to political clout, and the climbing community has little of either. So, I'm not optimistic for a serious reconsideration of this USFS policy.

John Sarna

WASHINGTON (June 1, 1998)--The USDA Forest Service has prohibited the use of permanent fixed anchors for rock climbing in wilderness portions of national forests. The ban does not apply outside of designated wilderness, nor does it apply to removable devices used to assist climbers.

"This decision clarifies our application of national policy to the issue of fixed anchors," said Robert Joslin, Deputy Chief of National Forest System lands for the agency. "It demonstrates our commitment to the integrity of the wilderness resource, and is in keeping with both the spirit and legislative intent of the Wilderness Act. At the same time, it does allow for rock climbing in wilderness that is done in an environmentally sensitive manner."

Today's announcement, which applies only to Congressionally designated wilderness areas in national forests nationwide, is based on a May 27 discretionary review at the Washington DC level of an April 13 decision made in the Forest Service's Intermountain Region. In his letter of review, Acting Associate Deputy Chief Darrel Kenops concluded that fixed anchors are "installations" that are prohibited by the Wilderness Act. The decision over what to do with existing fixed anchors was left up to local Forest Supervisor discretion. The national review stemmed from an appeal of a decision on the Sawtooth National Forest involving the Sawtooth Wilderness.

Specifically, this decision means that metal bolts that are drilled into rock to support climbing hardware, whether camouflaged or not, are not permitted in wilderness. Pitons that are left in the rock are also banned, as are slings or ropes left permanently wrapped around trees or rocks. However, a wide variety of commonly-used cams, nuts and other temporary devices that have minimal impact are still permitted.

It is estimated that about 40 wildernesses with major rock climbing opportunities, about 10 percent of all national forest wilderness areas nationwide, will be affected by this decision.

Lee Vining Ice Climbing

A couple of winters ago, I decided to take a two-day water ice climbing class in Lee Vining Canyon. While I had already been soloing alpine ice couloirs in the High Sierra in the summer, I figured I should take a "real" class to learn all of the "proper" techniques. It seemed like good logic at the time, but it didn't turn out quite like I had hoped...

The class started out pleasantly enough with breakfast at Nicely's in Lee Vining (which turned out to be the highlight of the whole experience). We chatted over breakfast, scarfed down eggs and blueberry pancakes, and then drove up to the canyon. You go up the Tioga Pass Road (which is closed after two miles) then switch onto the canyon road, which is plowed, all the way to the power station. You park 50 yards before it so as to not trespass. There is an attendant who lives there, even in winter.

We pack up and move out and then spend the next two hours floundering through 3-4 feet of powder to go only one mile to the climbing area. Our instructor (let's call him "Tim") is sucking wind, big time. We're talking about a guy who is moving slower than my grandmother. The other five students and myself have to break trail for him, and of course we are carrying all of his gear. After a while I shamelessly feign weakness, and bring up the rear.

Soon we are passed by the much more organized ASI (led by Doug Nydiver) and Southern Yosemite Guide (led by John Fisher) groups. They have 15 and 12 people respectively. They get the choice spots and we get dogmeat. We ask about our pitch. It looks vertical. Tim doesn't know the rating, and says something about water ice 3 or 4.

The next 6 hours is spent listening to his spiels about technique. We each get a turn climbing an 80-foot ice pitch. It is trivial compared to the things I have soloed. And the water ice is very similar to alpine ice. Our pitch is brittle though, and ice chunks land on our helmets all day. We are in the shade. It is cold, about 22. With a 20-30 mph wind that assaults us all day giving wind-chill down into the single digits. The blowing spindrift sandblasts our faces continuously. He marvels in it, exclaiming repeatedly over the howling wind "these are lovely full on conditions!" Right. The spindrift gets in everything except my peehole. After an hour I am completely soaked. I spend the whole day shivering. I can't feel my hands, even when I am climbing. The four layers I am wearing make no difference. I am bloody effing cold.

Another climber and his girlfriend pass by, their soaking dog shivering and floundering in the snow. I feel like the dog looks. The dog scams someone's pack and steals a turkey sandwich. He devours it just before his owner yells at him and kicks him. The man gives the robbed climber his own sandwich. He spits on the dog. The dog jumps away and almost falls over a 20 foot ice cliff, his claws getting purchase at the last second. (The same ice cliff above which our instructor has strategically placed us). My compatriots and I feel for the mutt. The climber plods on, the poor mutt groveling in his footsteps. I am beginning to sense a cycle of pain in ice climbing.

Later, one of our climbers knocks off a large chunk of ice that hits me squarely in the helmet. "What was that" I say, as people all around run to me and ask me if I am ok. "No problem, it just glanced me" I say. Tim tells me to be more careful and watch for falling ice. As though I have a choice. I am suddenly recalling why soloing is safer, warmer, more fun, etc. I huddle closer to the ice cliff and hunker down.

I try to eat but my fingers are too numb to grip the ziplock bag containing my precious booty. I try to unscrew the water bottle but it is frozen. I hear a yelp and watch one of our

climbers fall. One of his tools stays in place above while his glove tumbles down the slope. The top rope holds him. He flails slowly upward to retrieve the tool. "Continue the pitch" Tim yells to him. He does and is lowered off. And as soon as he is down he thrusts his ice blue hand down into his crotch. A severe grimace registers on his face followed moments later by a look of relief I hope he hasn't soiled himself

My turn is next. It goes quite well, except for his incessant bellowing about my technique. Oh, and about $\frac{3}{4}$ of the way up the pitch, I kick really hard for a foothold and my crampon pops off. He lowers me and instructs me to tighten the crampon. (Duh.) My friends applaud my effort. I manage a half-hearted smile in return for their generosity.

Finally, around 3 PM he announces we are done for the day. I ask if we can go down but he says "no, we must all go down together". After watching my convulsive shivering for a while, he decides that we should wait for him a couple of hundred feet down out of the wind.

We students descend while he climbs up to break down the anchor and retrieve the gear. We must re-break the trail in the snow since the spindrift has filled the trail completely in just a few hours. Then we wait an hour while he retrieves the gear. All the other groups and climbers have already passed us, merrily stomping down the path we have blazed. Finally he arrives and we go down, arriving back at the cars just ten minutes before headlamp time.

Back at the motel he tries to convince me to stay for Sunday, that the impending storm may not hit. This as the trees are bent over from ferocious wind and rain is already falling in Lee Vining. I bid him thanks and depart. I get back home to Incline Village just an hour before the snow starts to fall. It snows for the next three days.

As I look back on my first (and only) ice climbing seminar, I have no conclusions and no regrets. But I'm thinking that ice does go better in summer alpine couloirs and margaritas.

Bob Sumner

Atlanta Peak-Bagging **Stone Mtn. And Kennesaw Mtn. Georgia**

This past April I was in Atlanta, Ga. for a family reunion. Not the locality that you would think of for peak-bagging opportunities. However, if you judge a mountain not by its size in absolute terms, but by its domination of the surrounding countryside there are 2 major peaks in the area.

The first was Stone Mountain. This giant granite boulder seems totally alien in the green forested Georgia countryside. With an altitude of 1043', it rises 825' above the surrounding area. There is a 1.5 mile trail up the sloping backside to the summit. The other side has a shear face. It is the Mount Rushmore of the south with a large relief carving of Confederate Gen. Lee, Gen. Stuart, and Jeff Davis on horses. The mountain has been heavily commercialized. There is a tram that carries tourists to the summit snack bar.

The hike up is pleasant enough. It amusingly reminded me of a small scale Half Dome with a spread out line of people in varying degrees of physical fitness running or dragging themselves up. From the top there are panoramic views of north Georgia and the Atlanta city skyline. Beyond Atlanta's skyscrapers there is the green ridge of Kennesaw Mountain.

Kennesaw offers a more conventional forested trail to its 1808' summit. This Civil War battlefield was the site of fierce fighting as Gen. Sherman closed in on Atlanta during his infamous march to the sea. Lynne and I did a 6 mile round trip hike from the visitor center to all the highpoints along the ridge. There were considerably fewer people on the trail as compared to Stone Mountain. The top was a bit crowded as many people drove to the summit parking area to explore the trenches, read the plaques, and photograph their children sitting astride cannons. We looked back across the Atlanta skyline in the distance and could see Stone Mountain where we had been the day before. Although these were not 'wilderness' areas, they each make a fun excursion from the city.

---JOHN BESBEKOS

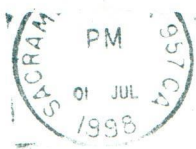
THE BOULDER: Published bimonthly by the Peak and Gorge Outings Section, Mother Lode Chapter, Sierra Club.

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 (put BOULDER as subject).

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



Boulder Editorial Committee
C/O John Besbekos
P.O. Box 417415
Sacramento, CA 95841

Last issue is 85
John Sarna
9556 Appalachian Drive
Sacramento, CA 95827-1109



Kennesaw Mountain Battlefield
Kennesaw, Georgia (near Atlanta)