The Sierra Echo
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SPS Snow Days Far and Near
View to Illiniza Sur from Illiniza Norte, Ecuador, page 10

Onion Valley, California
Vish Nath explains the boot ax belay during his snow checkoff, page 8

Also in this issue: Pikas, Trail Tech, Passages, The Mystery Puzzle
For many years we’ve talked about the graying of the section and the need for younger members. What about promoting the idea that climbing peaks isn’t for adults only, plan some family-oriented trips? Vicky Hoover wrote that her kids’ first outing with the SPS was led by Jerry Keating in 1972 to Mt. Silliman, that signing a peak register for the first time really was magical, transforming them from hikers who had to be prodded to keep going into climbers happy on the trail “as long as it led to a listed peak.” Parents, why not think about trips and climbs that would be appropriate for you and your kids to participate on? If such a trip isn’t scheduled, contact leaders about leading such an outing. Some leaders will embrace these opportunities to get young people hooked on the Sierra and climbing.

Besides trying to hook young members, we should also be encouraging participants with decent climbing skills and good people skills to become leaders. We can never have too many leaders. The more leaders, the more outings! Many of our peaks can be led as I-rated outings (class 2 climbing, cross-country travel), but we also need M- and E-rated leaders to offer outings to help SPSers climb the harder peaks on our list. Many thanks to all the leaders who lead for the SPS.

Our mountains do change! We’ve learned that the summit block of Mt. Wallace many of us have climbed is no longer the high point. See the short article about that and the revision of the List elsewhere in this issue.

Have a great and safe Sierra climbing season.

Happy trails,
Tina
Tina Bowman, tina@bowmanchange.com

Denied: The Proposal to Name a Peak for Dr. Andy Smatko

By Tina Bowman

For over two years the SPS management committee has been working to name a peak in the southern Sierra for Dr. Andy Smatko. At first we focused on a peak quite close to Cottonwood Pass that is unofficially called Smatko Peak, but it turns out that naming an unnamed feature within federally-designated wilderness is well nigh impossible. Instead of that peak, we focused on Peak 8916’ near Sherman Pass in the southern Sierra, a peak that was the last Sierra peak Andy climbed. Although the naming was approved by the California Advisory Committee on Geographic Names, the U.S. Forest Service made a “negative recommendation,” which the U. S. Board on Geographic Names used as its basis for not approving our proposal at its May 10th meeting. The very helpful person on the research staff I’ve worked with, wrote, “I confess I was somewhat surprised, although I’ve long ago given up predicting the outcome of the Board’s decisions. The Forest Service tends to be very conservative when it comes to commemorative naming.”

At its June 4th meeting, the management committee discussed the Smatko Peak idea and the possibility of the SPS unofficially naming the peak. But then raised the issue of which one? If we do endorse calling an unnamed peak Smatko Peak, should it be the one already called that by some peak baggers, i.e., the one close to Cottonwood Pass above Horseshoe Meadows, or Peak 8916’ near Sherman Pass that we proposed to name officially for Dr. Smatko? Should we support calling either one Smatko peak?

So, please give us your thoughts? Should we unofficially name a peak Smatko Peak and which peak? Please contact me, and we’ll share your thoughts on the matter in the Echo (tina@bowmanchange.com).
The Mount Wallace Summit Block and a List Revision

Apparently, sometime between July 19, 2012, when I was last there and August 6, 2013, according to an entry in the climber’s log for Mt. Wallace on SummitPost from MarkB (http://www.summitpost.org/mount-wallace/climbers-log/153374), the former flat summit block of Mt. Wallace fell, leaving a harder but slightly lower summit block as the new high point of the peak. We’re indebted to Bob Davey for letting us know about the change; he was there August 31, 2016, and says the new summit is about ten feet high. He and his climbing partner Mike Bigelow would rate it somewhere between class 4 and 5.3. The photo shows about the top seven feet of the current summit. If you have any more information about the collapse of the former block, new elevation of the peak, or a more precise rating of the new high point, please let me know. I have revised the list to reflect the new summit rating but would like the correct elevation once that’s known. I’ve also changed the summit elevation of Alta Peak back to the correct 11,204′; the 18th edition in March 1999 changed the elevation to 11,240′. Unfortunately, I no longer know the source of that incorrect change. For the new edition of the list, see http://sierraclub.org/angeles/sierra-peaks/sps-peaks-list—Tina Bowman, Keeper of the List

2017 Management Committee

Elected
Tina Bowman  Chair  chair@sierrapeaks.org
Jim Fleming  Vice-chair/banquet  vicechair@sierrapeaks.org
Alexander Smirnoff  Treasurer  treasurer@sierrapeaks.org
Paul Garry  Secretary  secretary@sierrapeaks.org
Lisa Miyake  Fifth officer/outreach  outreach@sierrapeaks.org

Appointed
Archives  Dan Richter  dan@danrichter.com
Conservation Chair  Sharon Moore  justslm@earthlink.net
Echo editors  Tina Bowman  tina@bowmanchange.com, Beth Epstein
Echo mailer  Tina Bowman
Emblem Committee  Paul Garry, Kathy Rich, Daryn Dodge, Shane Smith, Ron Bartell
IT Support  Greg Mason  admin@sierrapeaks.org
Keeper of the List  Matt Hengst  matthew.hengst@gmail.com
Merchandise  Tina Bowman
Mountain Records  Patty Kline  patriciakline@aol.com
Outings  Harry Langenbacher  register@langenbacher.org
Safety Chair  Gary Schenk  gary@hbfun.org
Webmaster  Doug Mantle  Joe Wankum  webmaster@sierrapeaks.org
Assistant Webmaster  Harry Lagenbacher  register@summitregister.org

Regional Representatives
San Diego  Joe White
Central California  Daryn Dodge
Northern California  Lisa Barboza
Eastern Sierra  Shane Smith

Photo by Bob Davey
Welcome new members!

Eddie Sudol

Eddie met six mountain climbers on a Desert Survivors trip on July 4th, 1992, and was very interested in their stories. His first Sierra peak was Mt. Whitney on Labor Day 1992. Two weeks later he climbed Mt. Shasta, then two weeks after that White Mountain in the Inyos. In 1993 his first peak was a climb of Thunderbolt—now he was hooked! He has been climbing for twenty-five years and has climbed 221 SPS peaks, mostly with friends but also with the Loma Prieta Chapter (PCS). His goal is to finish the SPS List in 2018.

New Leader Ratings!

Peter Lara

Peter Lara has stepped up from being an M-Rock leader to full M. Congrats, Peter!

We also welcome new member Fred Stehle.
SPS Snow Practice and Checkout 2017

A group of six participants met with leader Nile Sorenson, the snow guru, and assistant Tina Bowman on April 29th at Onion Valley for a snow checkout/practice. The wind had finally died down to an intermittent gentle breeze on this fine, sunny day. Because the road had been plowed and the snow was still deep, the group was able to meet near the trailhead but needed to go only a short distance from the cars to find an excellent slope for demonstrating arrests, various types of belays, and all the other components of the checkout. Participants were Bob Gallants, Vish Nath, Garry McCoppin, Kay Keng Phy, Ron Webber (a long-time SPS member), and Su Yi. Congratulations to Bob, Ron, and Vish, who passed at the M level! — Tina Bowman

Be Careful Out There!

By Tina Bowman

Feast or famine, that’s the way the Sierra snowpack often swings. After five years of drought, the winter of 2016-2017 brought one of the largest snowpacks recorded in California, with an average of 164% of normal for the range, with 175% for the central Sierra and 164% for the southern end of the range. Reservoirs are full, and many communities are bracing for flooding as all that snow melts. But what does this mean for hikers and climbers? One should consider, plan for, and avoid some very real objective dangers.

One danger is avalanches, which we tend to think of as a winter and early spring hazard, but as snow melts, the consistency of layers changes, and the melting snow can lubricate layers that then slide. As you may know, it’s the twenty-five- to fifty-degree slopes where avalanches are often triggered, and we often (continued on page 6)
Be Careful continued from page 5:

climb on slopes up to forty degrees. Most victims are caught in avalanches they or another member of their group trigger. Learn more by Googling “Avalanche Safety” or taking an avalanche safety course.

So besides snow falling down on us, we need to consider the melting snow and how that affects streams we need to cross. A stream that normally is crossed easily and safely in summer might be a raging torrent at times this summer. Keep in mind that streams are normally at their lowest in the morning hours when melting and runoff have slowed. You might cross easily in the morning but return in the afternoon to find it is no longer safe to cross. When you can cross a stream safely, remember to unbuckle your waist belt and sternum straps so that you can extricate yourself from your pack should you fall in. Though we should always camp at least a hundred feet from water, be aware that streams might crest after midnight and flood low areas. Make sure that it isn’t your tent that’s flooded!

Another often hidden danger is snow bridges. Pay attention as you travel on snow to where water is likely running beneath the snow, eroding it. At some point that stream will be visible, and you don’t want to be the one creating that hole to the stream. Remember hearing about Ranger Randy Morgenson, a Sequoia-Kings Canyon ranger who disappeared some years ago? His remains were eventually found in a location that makes people think he was the victim of a snow bridge collapse. If you fall in, you might not be able to get out or be swept downstream and drowned. Sometimes you can see clearly where the bridge is; evaluate it carefully for depth and strength of the snow over the water and its likely integrity.

No doubt some snow in the Sierra this year will never melt if it’s shielded from the sun especially on north- or east-facing slopes and shaded areas. And that means treacherous footing on ice to avoid. I remember very firm snow and ice on the slope just below Bishop Pass in December 1995, snow leftover from the previous winter. Though the trail was safe, the slope beyond it was rock hard, and at the bottom were the bodies of some deer that had fallen to their deaths. Some places where we’d like to climb might not be safe for us this year.

Remember: sometimes the best thing to do is turn around and come back another time. Carefully consider that snow slope you wish to ascend or cross. What will that stream be like when you return? Practice your ice axe self-belay and self-arrest skills and always think safety first.

(I used an LA Times March 30, 2017, article for the snowfall percentages [http://www.latimes.com/local/lanow/la-me-ln-sierra-nevada-snowpack-measurement-20170330-story.html] and Inyo Register article, “Record-breaking Snowpack Triggers Increased Danger,” April 29, 2017, for other information. Thanks to Barbara Lilley suggesting we run an article about the dangers we’ll face this year.)
Brooks-Range Cloak 30 Quilt and the ThermaRest NeoAir Xlite Pad

By Homer Tom

I have a problem, I admit it. However, I’m not the only one with this problem and because of that, I am willing to let others know about it. As a WTC instructor, I talk about it every year, and now I have a chance to write about it. I own a lot of gear. In recent years I have breathlessly waited for the latest Gear Guide issue of Backpacker and pretty much read it cover to cover. Then I would usually order “just one more” of something I probably already two or three or more of, but this newest one manages to fill some gap (real or perceived) in my arsenal of equipment. This is why my garage is full.

Despite having a multitude of gear, I usually gravitate to my favorite items, but I do stop and consider whether they are appropriate for the expected conditions on that next trip. Sometimes I take an item that may be a bit warmer or beefier or cushier, but usually not. Currently I have been favoring summer trips in the Sierra Nevada and my sleep system of choice for the past three years has been a Brooks-Range Cloak 30 quilt paired with the ThermaRest NeoAir Xlite sleeping pad. This combination is perfect for mid- to late-summer fair-weather adventures because it is so packable and light and guarantees a good night’s sleep.

The Cloak 30 weighs in at one pound and is filled with 850-fill down. It has been treated with a DWR finish which is enough to repel light condensation or an errant water spill. In a compression sack it scrunches down smaller than a Nalgene. Though it is rated for 30 degrees, I sleep a little cold so I use it with temps down to 40. The Cloak has a sleeve at the bottom into which you slide a sleeping pad to create a roomy foot box. Besides that, it just lies over me. The edges of the Cloak are slightly heavier than the middle to prevent air from getting in, but I have not found this to work very well. (More in a moment on how I...
solved that problem.) I am of average height and a side sleeper, but the Cloak covers me completely even as I spread out more than I can in a mummy bag. Rolling over to my other side is a bit of a trick. Since the sleeping pad is not very wide, however, I don’t really roll over, and instead I must partially wake up to arch my body and flip over. I never overheat because it’s just so easy to stick a leg or arm out to cool off or let in some air. Now, about the times when I don’t want to let air in. My quilt has been customized thanks to my friend Scott. With an aftermarket add-on, he has improved upon an already good thing. Being handy with needle and thread, he sewed on two straps that clip onto the Cloak and wrap under the pad. This holds down the quilt a little better as I turn and thrash. I can adjust the straps to wrap the quilt snugly around me. Finally, he sewed a snap and a drawstring across the top to form a draft collar that cinches tight around my neck. Yes, the cloak has become a cape! Fully wrapped up, I feel snug as if in a mummy bag.

A quilt depends on a good sleeping pad, which is where the NeoAir Xlite comes in. This pad weighs a mere 12 ounces, inflates to 2.5”, and also packs down to the size of a Nalgene. It has a decent R-rating of 3.2, which is enough insulation for most conditions. Full disclosure: I usually bring a closed cell foam pad for more insulation but I have been fine the times I have not brought one. It takes about two dozen puffs to inflate fully, but I don’t recommend doing this for two reasons. First, if you’re setting up camp when the sun is still out, your pad might heat up and expand if your tent is in direct sunlight. Nothing can be more devastating than literally blowing a seam in the Xlite. I usually add more air right before turning in, which brings me to my second reason not to fully inflate it. Sleeping on this pad is like lying on a bag of potato chips, making all sorts of crinkly noises, particularly when brand new. My pad is a few years old now and probably broken in and quieter, but I also found that leaving it slightly under-inflated decreases the noise by a lot. The pad still has enough loft for almost just-like-home feel. One of the trade-offs with being so light is that you should carefully inspect the ground you’re pitching camp upon, else you may undertake a late-night repair or a (literal) hard night’s sleep. This has never happened to me, but I always bring the repair kit that comes included.

This setup has served me so well for three years that I always look forward to crawling in, curling up, and sleeping snugly and comfortably after a great day on the trail or back-country. I mentioned it is ideal for fair weather trips, but my most memorable experience was on a trip where the weather was not ideal. Our group was on a dayhike to Pilot Knob but ran into rain and hail on the return—four hours of it. Despite our rain layers, we were pretty much soaked as we trudged into camp. We all dove into our tents to change clothes and warm up. With a fresh layer of clothes on, I crept beneath my Cloak and was toasty and revitalized within minutes. Not bad for a system weighing 28 ounces and being the size of two Nalgens. Performance like this also doesn’t come cheap as the Cloak and Xlite list for $299 and $129, respectively, but you can pay significantly less online. I cannot imagine replacing either of these with anything else, but the latest issue of the Gear Guide just arrived.
Nowhere To Go But Up

By Sharon Moore, Conservation Chair

“Charismatic megafauna” often serve as symbols for environmental causes. The panda stands for wildlife conservation, elephants and rhinos in the fight against poaching, and the polar bear as the representative for climate change. But the American pika, *Ochotona princeps*, at a fraction of the polar bear’s size, is an equally potent example.

These small (6.5 to 8.5 inches) creatures live on the heights throughout the Sierra and other mountain regions in the Western United States, generally in talus piles at or above the tree line. You’ll probably hear them before you see them. They sound like squeak toys and look like adorable mice. But they are not rodents, belonging to the same order as rabbits. One of their common names is “whistling hare.” You can see and hear them in action on YouTube at [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D-SnlpqeiPo](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D-SnlpqeiPo). If you are in alpine terrain and see grass spread out on a rock, that hay is the work of a pika preparing food for winter storage. They do not hibernate and must literally make hay while the sun shines. Please find somewhere else to sit.

Why are they vulnerable to climate change? They have thick coats to protect them from winter cold and cannot survive prolonged elevated temperatures. Six hours in the upper 70’s will kill them, and climate extremes do bring this kind of heat—greater than what used to be considered normal—to higher elevations. Pikas have migrated to higher elevations in response to warming temperatures, but what will happen to them if they run out of mountain? Populations in different ranges are isolated from one another, and as their territory shrinks, so will their numbers. They might as well be polar bears on melting icebergs. For additional information on how our changing climate affects the pika, visit [https://www.nwf.org/Wildlife/Threats-to-Wildlife/Global-Warming/Effects-on-Wildlife-and-Habitat/Pika.aspx](https://www.nwf.org/Wildlife/Threats-to-Wildlife/Global-Warming/Effects-on-Wildlife-and-Habitat/Pika.aspx)

*Pika photos courtesy of National Park Service.*
In February 2017 I went to Ecuador, a fantastic place to climb. The country has a diversity of vegetation zones, from the tropical equatorial jungle to the high alpine plateau and snow-capped volcanoes. I was one of seven participants—three others from Australia, two from England, and one from New Zealand—on this World Expeditions guided trip. For the glacier climbs we had four guides for the seven of us, and I was pleased with the guides, drivers, and the food.
On the non-climbing days we did lots of sightseeing. From Quito we drove north through beautiful Andean countryside to the famous market town of Otavalo. The markets here date from pre-Incan times, when people came from the jungle areas to trade their produce with those of the highlands. This is still the case today, as well as offering many crafts and wares for tourists. It is considered by many to be one of the best markets for textiles and crafts in South America.

Taking in the colonial architecture of the Old City (a UNESCO World Heritage Site), we explored Quito; visited fascinating sights, such as the Equatorial Monument; and took a ride on the famous Devil’s Nose train.

The plan was to climb three peaks and become acclimated and then attempt to climb the highest peak (Chimborazo 6310m/20,702’). In the Northern Province of Imbabura, we began acclimatizing with a three-hour hike to Laguna Cuicocha, a crater lake at the foot of Cotacachi Volcano.

Next we ascended Fuya Fuya. Part of a complex of two volcanoes, Fuya Fuya is 4197m/13,769’, compared to its higher neighbor Mojanda (4293m/14,085’). From the summit, we had views of the Lagunas de Mojanda, three crater lakes. On a clear day (we were not that lucky), one can see the surrounding volcanoes of Imbabura and Cayambe.

Next we attempted Imbabura but aborted the climb when we were nearly at the summit because it had begun to rain. We made a hasty retreat, despite the class 3 descent.
We departed from Otava in the morning to the Cayambe Refuge (4700m/15,419’). The ride in a 4X4 jeep itself was an adventure itself because there were almost no roads and it was raining/snowing. The guides gave us glacier-climbing training (harness, crampon, ice axe, self-arrest, etc) and skills practice needed for the glacier climb. We had an early dinner, rested, and at 10:00 p.m. started climbing. Due to the extreme wind, snow, and cold, I was able to climb for only an hour and at altitude 16,000’ turned back. It turned out after a few hours it became so dangerous that all the climbers turned back without reaching the summit of Cayambe (5790m/18,996’).

From Quito we next traveled south towards Illiniza Norte and Illiniza Sur. On the way we had views of some of the the highest volcano peaks in the world—Cotopaxi, Tungurahua, Chimborazo, Sangay, and Altar. From the Illinizas parking area, we took a three-hour hike up to the refuge (4600m/15,091’) on the flank of Illiniza Sur. The next day, we left in the early morning for the summit of Illiniza Norte (5125m/16,814’).

Next we drove to Chimborazo National Park and to the refuge, where we did more technical training. We started climbing at 10:00 p.m.; however, we experienced really bad weather again and turned back at 17,060’, well short of Chimborazo’s summit at 6310m/20,702’. It’s not surprising that climbers often wait for days and need good luck to have a good day to climb. No such luck for us!
Distant Echoes / The Palisades, 1959

We thought now and then you might enjoy photos and stories from the early days of the SPS. Jerry Keating here shares the Schedule announcement for a Labor Day 1959 trip to North Palisade and Mt. Sill and the two trip reports that appeared in The Sierra Echo at the end of 1959 for the climbs of both peaks. Enjoy!—the Editors

Note from Jerry Keating: Twenty-nine persons participated in the SPS’s major Labor Day weekend trip of 1959, and all reached their chosen summits. The photos accompanying this report focus on the thirteen members of the nineteen-member North Pal group who opted for the LeConte route. The others made their North Pal ascent via the U Notch. Al Finney’s report appeared in the November-December issue of The Sierra Echo. With it in the same issue was Harry Melts’ report of the Mt. Sill climb. Following is the trip announcement from the June-September 1959 Angeles Chapter Schedule of Activities No. 161. It’s not remembered why Jon Shinno could not be part of the trip.

Trip report extracted from the November-December 1959 issue of The Sierra Echo:

NORTH PALISADE
By Al Finney

It would be difficult to find a more fitting climax to an enjoyable summer of climbing than an ascent of the SPS’s most formidable emblem peak, North Palisade (14,242’). This was the target on which 19 climbers set their sights during the three-day Labor Day holiday [of 1959].

Led by SPS Chairman Bill Sanders and ex-Chairman Chuck Miller, this ambitious group was part of a large party of

SEPT 5-7, (1959) SAT.-MON, SIERRA PEAKS
No. Palisade (14,242’)—8:00 a.m.: The climb of this imposing emblem peak will be both strenuous and technical. Third class and a pitch of fourth class will be encountered. Alternate peaks, including Mt. Sill, may be climbed. Leaders must be contacted. Leaders and trans.: BILL SANDERS, JON SHINNO.

Top: North Palisade from the highest Barrett Lake. Below: Tom Amneus and Bill Sanders in chute extending up to U Notch. Left: Ascending easy terrain in bowl leading to summit (Photos by Jerry Keating).
Sierrans who left South Lake at the beginning of the holiday to hike and climb in the Palisades area.

Ascending to Bishop Pass, the party contoured across the upper slopes of Dusy Basin and then entered Palisade Basin via a "no-name" pass which was directly under the impressive cliffs of Thunderbolt Peak.

Camp was established at 11,500 feet on the highest Barrett Lake, and preparations were made for early morning ascents of North Pal and Mt. Sill.

While the first fingers of daylight were appearing, the North Pal group ascended the southeasterly chute toward the U-Notch. By prearranged plan, the party split into two units, one of which continued to the U-Notch and then to the summit by the standard Class 4 route. The second group, consisting of 13 climbers, followed the LeConte route, which provided an ample helping of thrills before ending on the summit block. In the lower portion of the route, a narrow ledge liberally sprinkled with gravel and terminating in 1,000 feet of fresh air, was successfully—if somewhat cautiously—traversed. The second major obstacle encountered was a small cul-de-sac with built-in refrigeration [i.e., a remnant of snow]. This pitch resisted the efforts of the party for almost an hour. (continued on page 15)

MT. SILL  By Harry Melts

Ten members from the main party preferring a longer and less technical climb set out for Mt. Sill (14,162') at 6:15 a.m. with Ralph Merten leading and Harry Melts and Monroe Levy assisting.

Ducks guided the group over a col and down to the headwaters of Glacier Creek. At the saddle just north of Sill, a party was met which had come up via the Palisade Glacier route.

Our group did not consider the mountain an enemy; therefore, no "assaulting of the summit" was necessary. The top was reached by all participants after an enjoyable climb on the west face.

During the hour rest in the hot sunshine, Monroe Levy was congratulated for earning his emblem status. The party also watched other SPS climbers posing for "hero" pictures on North Pal.

The fact that Sill was climbed by several other groups that day attests to its popularity. The return to camp was completed about 5 p.m.
An elaborate arrangement of fixed ropes plus considerable grunting finally got all hands over this barrier and into a sloping bowl which provided easy access to the summit.

After lunch and an appropriate celebration for new emblem peakers Cliff and Maurine Myers and Al Finney, a leisurely descent was begun. A brief but enjoyable rappel was the highlight of the descent on the LeConte route, while the U-North group did more roping down over their Class 4 pitch. By 6:30 p.m., all climbers had returned safely to camp. A major point of agreement among participants was the extreme care and patience exercised by the leaders in navigating such a large group to the peak.

On the following day, the entire group packed out over Knapsack Pass and back to South Lake by way of Bishop Pass. It should be noted that, in spite of the somewhat woodless nature of the campsite in Palisade Basin, a high degree of culinary ingenuity was achieved by certain members of the party. Certainly, it should not pass unnoticed that pizza has finally found its proper place on the backpackers' menu.

Left: Traversing carefully along the gravel-covered ledge with exposure below (Photos by Jerry Keating).

Dare to Lead! Spring Leadership Training Seminar Set for October 7, 2017

Becoming a Sierra Club outings leader starts with curiosity and a love of the outdoors. What better way to step up and lead than by taking advantage of the training opportunities that the Angeles Chapter’s Leadership Training Committee provides each year?

As home to one of the largest outings programs on the planet, the Sierra Club Angeles Chapter’s many groups, sections, and committees sponsor thousands of trips ranging from beach barbecues to mountaineering expeditions. You can take the first step toward becoming a leader by attending a class offered October 7th at Eaton Canyon Nature Center in Altadena. Deadline to register is September 23rd.

The seminar covers all the basics of leadership. Experienced leaders will tell you how to plan a trip, prevent problems on the trail and make sure that everyone—including you—has a great time. They’ll also explain good conservation and safety practices. And they’ll give you tips for getting your “O” rating quickly and then, if you choose, pursuing more advanced ratings.

The all-day class costs $25. The application is on-line at angeles.sierraclub.org/ltc. At this same site, you can pore over more of LTC’s upcoming offerings, which are also on the Schedule of Activities page.

Mail the application and check, payable to Sierra Club, to Steve Botan, LTC Registrar, 18816 Thornwood Circle, Huntington Beach 92646. You also can reach Steve by email (ltseminarregistrar@gmail.com) or by phone (714-321-1296).

Scholarships are available for those with financial need. Apply to LTC Chair Anne Marie Richardson AMLLeadership@gmail.com
Outings

Descending Warren on August 30, 2015 (Photo by Beth Epstein).

We've chosen the photo above showing Mat Kelliher leading a group down Mt. Warren to represent the outings section. Do you have a photo you would like to see here? If so, please send your submission as an email attachment to tina@bowmanchange.com or via USPS to Tina Bowman.

Jun 30- Jul 3 | Fri-Mon
SPS
MR: Mt Baxter (13,125’), Colosseum Mtn (12,473’), and Mt. Cedric Wright (12,372’): Join us for four days in the Eastern Sierra with a backpack over Sawmill Pass on Fri to camp near Woods Lk (c. 11 mi, 7,000’ gain). Sat we plan to climb Colosseum (cl 1) and Cedric Wright (cl 1 or 3, depending on route) (c. 4 mi, 2400’ gain). On Sun we’ll climb Baxter from the north, either cl 2 or 3, depending on route (c. 6 mi, 2400’ gain). Ice axes and crampons may be needed as well as helmets. Mon pack out to cars. Participants must be Sierra Club members with appropriate class 3 rock-climbing and ice axe experience. Send climbing resume to Ldr: Tina Bowman. Co-ldr: Gary Schenk.

Jul 15-16 | Sat-Sun
WTC, SPS
M: Moses Mtn (9331’): Join us for a trip into the Sequoia Natl Forest in the Southern Sierra near Springville, CA. Perfect M-level WTC Experience trip for students wanting to get back out onto the rocks. Sat we’ll hike in on trail about 3.0 mi with 1,000’ gain to set up camp and spend the afternoon snoozing, fishing, or just relaxing under the trees prior to settling in for a Festive evening Happy Hour alongside a babbling stream. Sun we’ll set out cross country through steep and sometimes brushy terrain up a Class 2 gully system that leads us to a fun Class 3 scramble up to the summit of Moses Mtn. After enjoying the views up top we’ll head back to camp for a total of 5.0 RT mi with 2,000’ gain. Back at camp we’ll pack up and head out. Helmets and comfort on Class 3 rock required. Stream crossings required. Email Mat Kelliher with contact and carpool info, recent conditioning and experience, for trip status and details. Ldrs: Mat Kelliher, Jeremy Netka.

Jul 15-16 | Sat-Sun
WTC, SPS
L: Mt Stanford (N) (12,383’): Join us in an easy-paced two-day backpacking trip out of Rock Creek! Sat we’ll hike in 5 mi and 1500’ to set up camp and enjoy a lakeside happy hour. Sun will be an early start towards Mt Stanford (5 mi, 2500’ rt) and pack out (5 mi, 400’). Email leaders with most recent conditioning, backpacking experience, and phone number. Provisional Ldr: Gracia E. Plascencia. Asst Ldr: Matthew Hengst.

Jul 15-16 | Sat-Sun
WTC, SPS
L: Alta Pk (11,204’): Join us for two leisurely days backpacking Sequoia National Park. We’ll come in from Wolverton and camp at Alta Mdws (6 mi, 2300’ gain) with a quick visit to the peak the second morning (4 mi rt, 2000’ gain) and back out 5 miles to the trailhead. Space extremely limited and the peak is extremely beautiful, so sign up early! Ldrs: Paul Warren, Kristen Lindbergh

Jul 22-13 | Sat-Sun
WTC, SPS
L: Mt Warren (12,327’): After a leader provided pre-trip trailhead breakfast, we’ll hike an easy 3.3 mi and 1,900’, stopping along the way to explore mine ruins before setting up camp by a lake and enjoying a traditional Sierra Club happy hour. Sun we’ll be up early and climb nearby Mt Warren (4 mi, 2800’ rt) before returning to camp and hiking out (3.3 mi, 100’). Please send climbing experience and conditioning to leaders. Ldrs: Matthew Hengst, Paul Warren.

Visit the SPS website for an even more up-to-date listing of upcoming trips at http://www.sierraclub.org/sps
Also, please check at summitregister.org whether a peak needs a register book or pencil before you go on a climb.
 Jul 22-23 | Sat-Sun
I: Mt Johnson (12,871’): Introductory trip to the scenic
Treasure Lks from South Lk near Bishop. Camp after hiking
3.75 mi and climbing 2000’ on Sat. Early start on Sun to climb
Mt Johnson, 1100’ gain, 1.5 mi, return to camp, pack, and
return to trailhead for a total of 5.2 mi. Contact Ldr Rudy Fleck
with hiking resume and conditioning information. Co-ldr: Tina
Bowman.

Jul 28-31 | Fri-Mon
MR: Mt Whitney (14,505’) and Mt Russell (14,088’): Join us
for a late-July double-whammy and knock off two classic
third-class Sierra routes in one long weekend. Fri, backpack to
camp at Upper Boy scouts Lake (3 mi, 3000’ gain). Sat, climb
Whitney via the Mountaineer’s Route (5 mi, 3100’ gain). Sun,
climb Russell via the East Ridge (5 mi, 2700’ gain). Mon, pack
out to the cars. Must be comfortable on exposed third-class
rock and have previous experience at altitude. Trip restricted
to Sierra Club members—helmet and harness required.
Permit limits group size. Send email with experience and
conditioning to Ldr: Regge Bulman. Co-ldr: Monica Suua.

Jul 28-30 | Fri-Sun
MR: Vandeuer Mtn (11,947’) and White Chief Mine: Join us
for 3 days in a spectacular corner of the western Sierra! We’ll
hike in 4 mi and 2500’ to camp by White Chief Lk, spending
the afternoon exploring White Chief Mine and other nearby
ruins in a valley filled with meadows and bounded by rugged
colorful cliffs. That night we’ll enjoy a lakeside happy hour
and get ready for the second day when we’ll climb the 3rd
class northwestern ridge of Vandeuer (4.5 mi, 2500’ rt). Day
three we’ll have a relaxed hike out (4 mi, 500’) and celebrate
with post-trip Mexican food down the hill before getting
home at a reasonable hour. Helmets, harness, and an active
Sierra Club membership required for Vandeuer. Preference
given to WTC students who need the trip to graduate. Ldr:
Matthew Hengst. Assts: Garry McCoppin, Kristen Lindbergh.

Aug 4-6 | Fri-Sun
I: Red Top (10,509’): Fri we’ll hike in from Reds Meadow to
Lost Dog Lk (4.5 mi, 2,300’ gain), explore the area, and enjoy
a classic Sierra happy hour. Sat morning we’ll clamber 1,000’
in a mile up off-list Red Top, where we anticipate awesome
views of the Minarets; we’ll then backpack about 4 mi over to
Beck Lks and enjoy some afternoon fishing. Sun we’ll hike out
9 mi (1,000’ gain). Total miles 20, 5,500’+ gain. Send recent
experience, conditioning, and carpool info to Ldr. Priority
given to WTC students who need the trip to graduate. If
interested in fishing, bring fishing pole, tackle, and permit.
Ldrs: Ross Doering, James Montross.

Aug 4-6 | Fri-Sun
I: Emerald Pk (12,546’): Join us for a strenuous adventure into
the remote reaches of Kings Canyon NP. We will cover quite
a bit of terrain on a section of the John Muir Trail that will
culminate with stunning views from Emerald Pk. Our trip
begins on Fri on the western side of the Sierra with a ferry
ride across Florence Lk and then backpack on trail 11 mi,
1,200’ gain to the junction of Goddard Cyn where we will
camp. Sat trail and class 2 cross-country climb to Emerald Pk,
6.4 mi round trip, 4,200’ gain. Sun pack out to the ferry and
cars 11 mi. Send email (preferred) or SASE with conditioning/experience

Aug 5-6 | Sat-Sun
I: Goat Mtn (12,212’): Backpacking trip into Kings Canyon
suitable for strong WTC students. Sat backpack from Copper
Crk trailhead to Grouse Lk (6.3 mi, 5200’), all on trail, and as
we all know, trail miles are free miles! (-ish!) Lakeside
camping and Sat night happy hour. Sun, travel x-c to climb
Goat Mtn via class 2 northwest ridge (4.5 mi rt, 1800’ gain).
At the summit, we will enjoy vistas of the Palisades, Mt
Whitney, and Kaweah Ridge. We will descend back to camp
and pack-out the same day. Email ldrs with recent
conditioning and backpacking experience. Ldrs: Matthew
Hengst, Jennifer Blackie.

Aug 10-13 | Thur-Sun
ER: Norman Clyde Pk (13,855’), Disappointment Pk
(13,917’): Head into the south Palisades and climb one of the
finest Sierra Mountaineers peaks, Norman Clyde Pk, along
with another Palisade behemoth, Disappointment Pk. Thur
backpack from Glacier Lodge to bivy camping above Finger Lk,
5 mi and 4000’ gain. Fri climb Norman Clyde Pk via the 4th
class North/Northeast Ridge route, 3 mi and 2600’ gain. Sat
climb Disappointment Pk via its Northeast couloir, 3 mi and
2600’ gain. Sun reverse the backpack out, 5 mi. Restricted to
Sierra Club members with strong rock mountaineering skills.
Participants must be in excellent condition, have roped
mountain climbing experience, and be comfortable on
exposed class 3/4 and loose talus. Send e-mail with climbing

OUTINGS

SPS outings can always be viewed online on the
electronic Angeles Chapter Schedule of Activities:
http://angeles2.sierraclub.org/activities
http://angeles.sierraclub.org/sps/outingsAwesome.asp
Mosquito Lakes.

Plan is to get in early enough to spend the 4.5 mi and 2200’ gain to camp for two nights at the upper lakeside happy hour. Sun we’ll climb Red Slate via the western ridge enjoying 360 degree views of the surrounding high country before returning to camp (7 mi, 3000’ rt). Mon we'll pack out (12 mi, 1400’) and head for home but not before stopping for traditional post-trip Mexican food. Priority given to WTC students who need the trip to graduate. Ldrs: Matthew Hengst, Ross Doering.

Aug 12-13 | Sat-Sun
WTC, SPS
I: Mt Julius Caesar (13,200’): Join us for this moderately strenuous two-day trip up into the John Muir Wilderness north of Bishop, CA, to ascend this somewhat remote peak located in the exact center of some truly spectacular country. Sat we'll pack in on trail up Pine Crk about 5.5 mi with 3,400’ of gain and set up camp at Honeymoon Lk (10,400’). Sun we'll set out first light on trail to ascend Italy Pass and then go cross country up steep talus slopes to the summit of Julius Caesar for a total of about 4.2 mi and 2,900’ of gain. After enjoying the views up top, we'll head back down to camp, pack up, and head out. Permit severely limits group size and permit costs (about $10 per person) will be split among the group. This WTC outing is co-sponsored by SPS. Email Mat Kelliher at with contact and carpool info, recent conditioning and experience, including high-altitude experience, for trip status and details. Ldrs: Mat Kelliher, Jeremy Netka.

Aug 18-20 | Fri-Sun
WTC, SPS
I: Hengst Pk (11,196’), White Chief Pk (11,159’), and Miners Nose (9,423’) Mineral King Extravaganza: Join us for relaxed lakeside camping, happy hours, and three unlisted peaks with blisteringly verdant views out of Mineral King in Sequoia NP. Fri after a leader-sponsored trailhead breakfast we'll stroll in 4.5 mi and 2200’ gain to camp for two nights at the upper Mosquito Lakes. Plan is to get in early enough to spend the afternoon swimming before setting up a fancy happy hour. The next day we’ll have a relaxed start and grab the two nearby peaks (5 mi, 2000’) before returning to camp for another swim and feast. Sun we’ll hike out grabbing nearby Miners Nose for one last view of the area before heading down the hill for post-trip Mexican food. Send recent experience, conditioning, and carpool info. Priority given to WTC students who need the trip to graduate. Ldrs: Matthew Hengst, Paul Warren.
Aug 18-20 | Fri-Sun
MR: Deerhorn Mtn (13,265′) and West Vidette (12,533′):
Join us for an adventure to these rarely climbed peaks near the John Muir Trail. Fri, backpack from Onion Valley to camp (9 mi, 3,900’ gain). Sat, climb Deerhorn via the NE Buttress (2.5 mi, 2,600’ gain). We’ll attempt West Vidette via the East Face (1 mi, 1700’) on the way back to camp, if time allows. If not, we’ll tackle it Sun morning before packing up and heading out to the trailhead. Total stats for trip: 25 mi and 10,700’. Must be comfortable on exposed third-class rock and have previous experience at altitude. Trip restricted to Sierra Club members—helmet and harness required. Permit limits group size. Send email with experience and conditioning to Ldr: Regge Bulman. Co-Ldr: Monica Suua.

Aug 23-27 | Wed-Sun
MR: Lion Rock (12,320+’), Mt Stewart (12,205’), Eagle Scout Pk (12,000’), Mt Lippincott (12,265’), Triple Divide Pk (12,634’), Lawson Pk (13,140’ and Queen Kaweah (13,382’):
Join us as we head out from Mineral King, over Glacier and Black Rock passes, and up the Big Grande to reach the remote Nine Lakes Basin in the very heart of the Great Western Divide. From our basecamp there we’ll climb everything in sight and a few peaks that aren’t. Wed we’ll backpack from Mineral King to Lk 10,440’ in Nine Lakes Basin, 14 mi and 6500’ gain of mixed trail and cross-country. On Thur we’ll climb Lion Rock and Triple Divide Pk, 7 mi and 4200’ gain, all XC. On Fri we’ll climb Lippincott and Eagle Scout, 10 mi and 5000’, all XC. On Sat we’ll climb Stewart, Lawson, and Queen Kaweah, 8 mi and 5200’ gain, all XC. Sunday we’ll reverse our backpack out, 14 mi and 3800’ gain on mixed trail and XC. Totals for the trip: 53 mi and 25K’ gain. Participants must be in excellent condition and be comfortable on exposed 3rd class and loose talus. Send e-mail or SASE with climbing resume and recent experience to Ldr: Neal Robbins. Co-Ldr: Jack Kieffer.

Aug 26-27 | Sat-Sun
WTC, SPS
I: Mt Bago (11,868’): Mt Bago appears as a small 1500’ rise above Charlotte Lk in Kings Canyon NP. Although not the highest peak in the area, its incredible views more than redeem its modest appearance on a topo map. Sat meet at Onion Valley and follow the trail over Kearsarge Pass to camp at Charlotte Lk (7.5 mi 3,000’)
where we’ll relax and make camp for the night. In the morning we will trek cross-country to Mt Bago (2.5 mi, 1,500’ rt) before returning to camp and hiking out (7.5 mi 1,600’). This trip is a total of 16 mi and 4,000’ gain. Provisional Ldr: Dennis Loya. Asst: Kristen Lindbergh.

Aug 26-27 | Sat-Sun
WTC, SPS
I: Duck Lake Pk (12,077’): Join us for two days and a 12k peak above Mammoth! Sat we’ll hike in near Lk Mary to Pika Lk (5 mi, 2000’), where we’ll set up camp and enjoy an afternoon swim followed by a festive happy hour complete with award for the best contribution as chosen by the leaders. In the morning we’ll be up early and ascend nearby Duck Lk Pk (1.5 mi, 1500’ rt) before packing out (7.5 mi, 1500’) to Lk George in time to enjoy post-trip Mexican food in town. Priority given to WTC students who need the trip to graduate. Ldrs: Matthew Hengst, Jennifer Blackie.

Aug 26-28 | Sat-Mon
WTC, SPS
I: Mt Goode (13,085’) and Chocolate Pk (11,682’):
WTC Students: Did you enjoy looking at the gorgeous mountains from snow camp? Want s’more? This chocolate-themed WTC experience trip on the easy side of moderate just may be the dessert you’re looking for. We’ll hike in about 3 mi/1,300’ Sat and climb Chocolate Pk for another 3 miles/1,266’ gain, followed, of course, by a chocolate-themed happy hour. Sun we’ll be on the lookout for lagomorphs as we start out on
trail and then travel cross country to summit Mt Goode round trip about 7 mi, 3,100’ gain. Knowing you never can have too much good chocolate or epicurean delights, we’ll reprise the chocolate-themed happy hour Sun night. Mon will be a leisurely rise and hike out (3 mi). Hikers, Bird Watchers, Nature Lovers, Gourmands, Gadabouts, Fishermen welcome; we’ll be by beautiful lakes, meadows, and mountains, and we’ll have time to enjoy them! No pets. Total Miles 15+, 6,000’+ gain. $5 per person for permit to leader at trailhead. Send recent experience, conditioning, and carpool info to leader. Priority given to WTC students who need the trip to graduate. Ldrs: Ross Doering, Linda Robb.

Aug 26-27 | Sat-Sun WTC, SPS
MR: Mount Emerson (13,204’): Join us for this moderately strenuous two-day trip up into the John Muir Wilderness north of Bishop, CA, to ascend this high and isolated peak near Piute Pass. Sat we’ll set off at a relaxed pace and head up Piute trail for about 3.0 mi with 1,500’ gain and set up camp at Loch Leven. Sun we’ll set out early and make our way up the classic Class 3 “South Slope” route to the summit for a total of 1.4 mi and 3,500’ gain. After enjoying the views up top, we’ll head back down to camp, pack up, and head out. Permit severely limits group size and permit costs (about $10 per person) will be split among the group. This is a Restricted Mountaineering outing; participants must be current Sierra Club members and submit a Sierra Club Medical Form to join us. Absolute comfort on talus and exposed Class 3 terrain required. Helmet, harness, belay device, and experience with their use is required. Email Mat Kelliher with contact and carpool info, recent conditioning and experience, including high-altitude experience, for trip status and details. Ldrs: Mat Kelliher, Beth Epstein.

Sep 8-10 | Fri-Sun WTC, SPS
I: Mt Davis (12,309’): Join us for some lakeside camping on the shores of picturesque Thousand Island Lk in the Ansel Adams Wilderness. Fri we’ll hike in 7.7 mi and 1823’ gain to Thousand Island Lk from Agnew Mdw. We’ll get in early enough to set up camp and swim to all 1000 islands before happy hour. Sat we’ll wake up early to summit Mt Davis (3.6 mi one way, 2400’ gain), passing the graves of a couple who

SPS Management Committee Meeting, Monday, April 17, 2017, 7:00 p.m at Alexander Smirnoff’s home

1. Call to order: Tina Bowman, Jim Fleming, Alexander Smirnoff, & Paul Garry present.
2. Standard business and reports
   a. Approval of minutes—Minutes previously approved
   b. Chair—reports in later items
   c. Vice Chair
      i. Banquet date and location—set for Almansor Court in Alhambra on January 28th, 2018. A $2,000 deposit is required for Palm Court.
      ii. Banquet speaker—Patrick Armstrong (Sierra snow surveyor, lives in Bishop, wrote Log of a Snow Survey) a possibility, maybe Alvin Walter or Reiner Stenzel on ski mountaineering. Snow climbing in the Sierra as possible theme for speaker.
   d. Outings—No report
   e. Treasurer’s report—$9,461.44 current balance. Six people still haven’t renewed their Echo subscription.
   f. Emblem Committee Report—No report
   g. Outreach—No report
   h. Archivist—No report
   i. Echo
      i. May 25th deadline for next issue
      ii. Trial subscription—Twenty-three current WTC students have signed up.
   j. Mountain Records—No report
   k. IT—No report
   l. Website—No report
   m. Conservation—No report
   n. Safety Chair—No report
3. Old Business
   a. Smatko Peak—Still no news
   b. SPS welcome/conditioning hike (local)—Several intro trips scheduled. Jim Fleming to lead Langley-Cirque Peak. Rudy Fleck and Tina leading Johnson.
4. New business
   a. Leadership Award pins—REI no longer has the pins that were once given with the award. Ice axe pins found via a Google search were ugly.
   b. Revise summit rating for Wallace on the SPS list from Class 3 to Class 4?—Yes. Tina to contact webmaster Joe Wankum and Harry Langenbacher to repost the spreadsheet peak list with links on the new website.
   c. Next meeting date—June 4 at home of Tina Bowman, meeting at 4:30, potluck at 6:00
perished trying to summit nearby BannerPk on their
honeymoon in 1934. Sun we’ll hike out along the historic
Pacific Crest Trail back to Agnew Mdws and head into the
town of Mammoth Lks for some post-trip Mexican food. Send
recent experience, conditioning, and carpool info to the trip
leader. Priority given to WTC students who need the trip to
graduate. Provisional Ldr: David Jahng. Asst: Garry McCoppin.

Sep 9-10 | Sat-Sun WTC, SPS
I: Mt Baldwin (12,615'): Ever been to Convict Lk and
wondered what’s up that big canyon in the back? Come with
us and find out, getting a spectacular peak in the process!
We’ll circle the lake, then climb a canyon to a series of lakes
and meadows (5 mi, 3000’ gain) where we’ll swim and have a
relaxed happy hour. The next morning we’ll be up early, and
after oohing and aahing over the bands of colorful red and
grey rock, we’ll climb nearby Mount Baldwin (4 miles rt,
2000’ gain) and enjoy the views before packing out (5 mi).
Ldrs: Matthew Hengst, Kristen Lindbergh.

Sep 8-10 | Fri-Sun WTC, SPS
I: Mount Langley (14,026’), Cirque Peak (12,900’): Join us for
a late summer weekend high up in the John Muir Wilderness
to climb a couple of classic and wildly scenic Sierra Peaks
south of the Whitney Massif. Fri we’ll pack in from
Horseshoe Mdws (10,050') over trail at a moderate pace for
about 7 mi with 1,800’ to our camp at High Lake (11,500'). Sat
we’ll set out early to make our way up New Army Pass and
cross into Sequoia NP; from here we’ll travel north over x-c
terrain up the barren southern slopes of Mt Langley. After
enjoying spectacular views up top, we’ll return to our camp
the way we came in for a day's total of 7.2 mi and 2,900' gain.
Back at camp we'll celebrate the day with a festive Happy
Hour and turn in under nearly full moon-lit night skies. Sun
we’ll set out at first light to make our way back up New Army
Pass and into Sequoia NP again; this time we’ll head SW and
then SE along the ridge crest until we find ourselves atop
Cirque Pk. We’ll enjoy the magnificent summit views and
then make our way back to camp for a total of 5.6 mi and

SPS Management Committee Meeting, Sunday, June 4, 2017, 4:30 p.m at
Tina Bowman’s house

1. Call to order: Tina Bowman, Alexander Smirnoff, Paul
Garry, Harry Langenbacher present.
2. Standard business and reports
   a. Approval of minutes—Minutes already approved via
      email.
   b. Chair —See Old Business
   c. Vice Chair—No report.
      i. Banquet date and location—No Report
      ii. Banquet speaker—Patrick Armstrong (Sierra
         snow surveyor, lives in Bishop, wrote Log of a
         Snow Survey) is interested in being the speaker.
         Limit speaking program to 45 minutes maximum.
   d. Outings—no report
   e. Treasurer’s report —Current balance is $9,616. A
      $1,500 deposit has been made for 2018 banquet.
   f. Emblem Committee Report—No Report
   g. Outreach—No Report
   h. Archivist—No Report
      i. Echo
         i. August 25th deadline for next issue
         ii. Hand over more old issues to be scanned and
             uploaded to the website. Paul completed original
             batch of scanning and files were uploaded to
             website by Harry. Tina gave more issues to Paul
             and Alexander for scanning. Harry will adjust pdfs
             as necessary for uploading to website.
   j. Mountain Records—No news from SEKI on register
      policy. No new news on Half Dome register.
   k. IT—No Report
   l. Website—Harry would like to see the website
      modernized further beyond what new Sierra Club
      Drupal site can accommodate. Improved content
      needed along with more trip reports.
   m. Conservation—Sharon Moore preparing an article
      for the next Echo.
   n. Safety Chair—No report.
3. Old Business
   a. Smatko Peak—The USGS Board of Geographic
      Names has denied the request to name Smatko Peak
      based on a recommendation from the US Forest
      Service. We did not receive a reason why the Forest
      Service recommended denial. There is still an unofficial
      Smatko Peak near Cottonwood Pass. The
      Committee will poll the membership via the Echo
      about unofficially recognizing one of these two peaks
      as Smatko Peak.
   a. Next meeting date—Monday, August 4 at 7:00 pm
      at Alexander’s house.
OUTINGS

1,600’ gain. Back at camp we’ll pack up and head out the same way we came in. Permit severely limits group size and permit costs (about $10 per person) will be split among the group. Email Mat Kelliher with contact and carpool info, recent conditioning and experience, including high-altitude experience, for trip status and details. Ldrs: Mat Kelliher, Jimmy Quan.

Sep 15-17 | Sat-Sun SPS
I: Mt Langley (14,042’), Cirque Pk (12,900’): Join us for an end-of-summer SPS intro trip to an easy 14er and another pk with a fine view. Fri we’ll take the Cottonwood Lks trail from the Horseshoe Mdws Rd out of Lone Pine in the eastern Sierra c. 6 mi, 1200’ gain to our camp at Long Lk. After setting up camp if time and energy allow, we’ll go x-c to the South Fk Lks and then on trail to Cirque Lk, then x-c to the summit of Cirque Pk (c. 3 mi, 2000’ gain). We’ll then either retrace our steps or circle to New Army Pass and back to camp (c. 3 mi). Sat we’ll take trail to New Army Pass and then go x-c to the summit of Langlely, the 9th highest mtn in California (c 4.5 mi, 3200’ gain). We’ll have c. 400’ gain to return to the pass. Sun we’ll climb Cirque if we didn’t on Fri and then pack up and head back to the cars. Send contact and conditioning info, experience and conditioning to Ldr: Tina Bowman. Co-Ldr: Jim Fleming.

Sep 16-17 | Sat-Sun WTC, SPS
I: Koip Pk (12,968’) and Kuna Pk (13,002’): Join us for two peaks, one of which is the 3rd highest in Yosemite NP! Most people who climb these come in from Dana Meadows so instead we’ll hike in Bloody Canyon to camp near Parker Lakes (7 mi, 3500’) where we’ll relax and enjoy a traditional Sierra Club happy hour. The next morning we’ll start early and hike Koip & Kuna (6 mi, 2400’ rt) before returning to camp and packing out (7 mi, 500’). Send recent experience, conditioning, and carpool info to leader. Ldrs: Matthew Hengst, James Montross.

Sep 17 | Sun LTC, WTC, HPS, DPS, SPS
I: Navigation: Mt. Pinos Navigation Noodle: Navigation Noodle in Los Padres National Forest for either checkout or practice to satisfy Basic (I/M) or Advanced (E) level navigation requirements. Send email with contact info, navigation experience/training, any WTC, leader rating, rideshare, to Ldr: Robert Myers. Asst: Ann Shields. Note: Early (at least two weeks prior to the event) sign-up for all navigation checkoffs and practices is recommended. These outings require substantial pre-outing preparation work, including completion of both a comprehensive written exam and a route planning assignment that will be mailed to you prior to the checkoff. See Chapter 6 of the Leader’s Reference Book for more information. Send contact information (including mailing address) and your qualifications to the leader as soon as possible.

Sep 23 | Sat LTC
Deadline to register for the Oct 7th Leadership Training Program seminar. For information, see the LTC website (http://angeles.sierraclub.org/ltc/).

Sep 22-24 | Fri-Sun WTC, SPS
ER: Mt Starr King (9,092’): Join us for three days climbing the *other* big dome in Yosemite famously thought to be unclimbable by Josiah Whitney. We’ll do it in relaxed style with a cheerful outlook on life (at least when it comes to climbing) required of all participants. Ldrs: Matthew Hengst, Jack Kieffer.

Sep 22-24 | Fri-Sun SPS
MR: Tehipite Dome (7,708’), Spanish Mtn (10,051’): Join us this weekend in the Sequoia NP out of Mineral King to ascend this amazing peak with outstanding views in all

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OUTINGS

directions. Sat morning we’ll pack in on trail at a relaxed pace and set up camp at Lower Monarch Lk for a day’s total of 3.4 mi with 2,800’ gain. Sat night we’ll celebrate with a Festive Happy Hour under nearly moonless, starry night skies. Sun we’ll set out at first light on trail and later cross country to the summit of Sawtooth Pk for a total of 2.2 mi with 2,400’ gain. After savoring the views up top, we’ll return to camp, pack up, and head out. Permit limits group size and permit costs (about $10 per person) will be split among the group. Email Mat Kelliher with contact and carpool info, recent conditioning and experience, including high-altitude experience, for trip status and details. Ldrs: Mat Kelliher, Sridhar Gullapalli.

Oct 7 | Sat LTC
Leadership Training Seminar: Become a qualified Sierra Club leader. For information, see the LTC website (http://angeles.sierraclub.org/ltc/). Next seminar: Spring 2018.

Oct 7 | Sat LTC, WTC, HPS
I: Navigation: Beginning Clinic: Spend the day one-on-one with an instructor, learning/practicing map and compass in our local mountains. Beginners to rusty old-timers welcome, and practice is available at all skill levels. Not a checkout, but it will help you prepare. Many expert leaders will attend; many I-rated leaders started here in the past. 4 mi, 500’ gain. Send sase, phones, rideshare info, $25 deposit, refunded at trailhead (Sierra Club) to Ldr: Diane Dunbar. Co-Ldr: Richard Boardman.

Oct 11 | Wed LTC, SPS, DPS, WTC
M/E-R: Advanced Mountaineering Program (AMP16): Basic Safety System: First of four climbing workshops aimed at developing skills for 3rd, 4th, and 5th class climbing both as a participant or a future Sierra Club M and E leader. This will be an indoor workshop held in the evening, reviewing ropes, harnesses, helmets, basic climbing gear, and knots in preparation for later workshops. All participants must have prior roped climbing experience and commit to all four classes. To register please see http://www.advancedmountaineeringprogram.org Ldr: Matthew Hengst. Assts: Dan Richter, Patrick McKusky.

Oct 14 | Sat LTC, SPS, DPS, WTC
M/E-R: Advanced Mountaineering Program (AMP16): Belaying: Second of four climbing workshops aimed at developing skills for 3rd, 4th, and 5th class climbing both as a participant or a future Sierra Club M and E leader. This workshop will focus on belaying and related principles, starting with standard sport climbing all the way up to advanced techniques to move large groups across dangerous terrain. All participants must have prior roped climbing experience and commit to all four classes. To register please see http://www.advancedmountaineeringprogram.org Ldr: Matthew Hengst. Assts: Dan Richter, Patrick McKusky.

Oct 21 | Sat LTC, SPS, DPS, WTC
M/E-R: Advanced Mountaineering Program (AMP16): Anchors and Real World Application: Third of four climbing workshops aimed at developing skills for 3rd, 4th, and 5th class climbing both as a participant or a future Sierra Club M and E leader. This workshop will focus on rappelling using a variety of techniques with a heavy emphasis on redundancy, safety, and efficiency. All participants must have prior roped climbing experience and commit to all four classes. To register please see http://www.advancedmountaineeringprogram.org Ldr: Matthew Hengst. Assts: Dan Richter, Patrick McKusky.

Oct 27-29 | Fri-Sun LTC
C: Wilderness First Aid Course at Harwood Lodge: The course runs from 7:15 am Friday to 5:30 pm Sunday. Fee includes instruction, lodging and meals. Proof of CPR within previous 4 yrs required to enroll. Fee $250 (full refund until 9/22). For sign-up, see instructions and application at www.wildernessfirstaidcourse.org

Oct 28-29 | Sat-Sun LTC, SPS, DPS, WTC
M/E-R: Advanced Mountaineering Program (AMP16): Anchors and Real World Application: Fourth of four climbing workshops aimed at developing skills for 3rd, 4th, and 5th class climbing both as a participant or a future Sierra Club M and E leader. This weekend completes the series of AMP workshops at Joshua Tree National Park and focuses on building anchors and applying previously learned skills in real world climbing situations with multiple participants. All participants must have prior roped climbing experience and commit to all four classes. To register please see http://

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SPS Income Statement 05-2017

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OUTINGS

Nov 18-19 | Sat-Sun  LTC, WTC, HPS, DPS, SPS
I: Navigation: Indian Cove Navigation Noodle:
Navigation noodle at Joshua Tree National Park to satisfy the basic (I/M) level navigation requirements. Sat for practice, skills refresher, altimeter, homework, campfire. Sun checkout. Send email/s, contact info, navigation experience/training, any WTC, leader rating, rideshare to Ldr: Robert Myers. Asst: Ann Shields. Note: Early (at least two weeks prior to the event) sign-up for all navigation checkoffs and practices is recommended. These outings require substantial pre-outing preparation work, including completion of both a comprehensive written exam and a route planning assignment that will be mailed to you prior to the checkoff. See Chapter 6 of the Leader’s Reference Book for more information. Send contact information (including mailing address) and your qualifications to the leader as soon as possible.

Dec 10 | Sun  LTC, WTC, HPS, DPS, SPS
I: Navigation: Warren Point Navigation Noodle:
Navigation noodle at Joshua Tree National Park for either checkoff or practice to satisfy the basic (I/M) level or Advanced (E) level navigation requirements. To participate, send email with contact info, navigation experience/training, any WTC, leader rating, rideshare to Ldr: Robert Myers. Asst: Ann Shields. Note: Early (at least two weeks prior to the event) sign-up for all navigation checkoffs and practices is recommended. These outings require substantial pre-outing preparation work, including completion of both a comprehensive written exam and a route planning assignment that will be mailed to you prior to the checkoff. See Chapter 6 of the Leader’s Reference Book for more information. Send contact information (including mailing address) and your qualifications to the leader as soon as possible.

Wilderness Permit Info

In addition to the permit information described below, most reservations for the Inyo National Forest and the Desolation Wilderness up to 48 hours in advance of entry can be handled at: http://recreation.gov

INYO NATIONAL FOREST
Web site: www.fs.fed.us/inyo
Pick up permit closest to departure trailhead.

Eastern Sierra InterAgency Visitor Center, Lone Pine, CA
(760) 876-5500

White Mountain Ranger Station, Bishop, CA 93514
(760) 873-2500

Mammoth Lakes Visitor Center, Mammoth Lakes, CA 93546
(760) 924-5500

Mono Basin Scenic Area Visitor Center, Lee Vining, CA 93541
(760) 647-3044

KERN PLATEAU
Web site: www.fs.fed.us/sequoia
Cannell Meadow Ranger District
105 Whitney Road
PO Box 9
Kernville, CA 93238
Phone: 760/376-3781 fax: 760/376-3795

Tule River Ranger District
32588 Highway 190
Springville, CA 93265
Phone: (559) 539-2607

YOSEMITE NATIONAL PARK
Web site: www.nps.gov/yose
Reservation requests for summer trips (mid-May through September) are accepted from 2 weeks to 24 weeks in advance on-line or by writing to Yosemite Association
PO Box 545
Yosemite, CA 95389
By phone: reservations for summer trips are accepted by calling (209) 372-0740.

Obtain your free permit from the Wilderness Permit Station nearest your departure trailhead. Call (209) 372-0200 for permit station locations.

If entering park from Cherry Lake in the Stanislaus National Forest to Kibbie Lake and Lake Eleanor in Yosemite, you must get your permit from the Stanislaus National Forest Ranger Station on Highway 120 in Groveland. Call (209) 962-7825.

If entering the park from Chiquito Pass in Sierra National Forest, permits for the whole trip must be obtained from the forest Service in North Fork. Call (559) 877-2218

SEQUOIA AND KINGS CANYON NP
Web site: www.nps.gov/seki
47050 Generals Highway
Three Rivers, CA 93271-9599
Phone: (559) 565-3766 for permit & trail info. Fax (559) 565-4239

SIERRA NATIONAL FOREST (WESTSIDE ENTRY)
Web site: www.fs.fed.us/r5/sierra
Ansel Adams Wilderness—North Bass Lake Ranger District
57003 Road 225
North Fork, CA 93643
Phone: (559) 887-2218

Ansel Adams Wilderness—South John Muir, Kaiser and Dinkey Lakes Wildernesses
Pine Ridge/Kings River Ranger District
29688 Auberry Road
Prather, CA 93651
Phone: (559) 855-5355
Bart O’Brien was the first to answer: “It looks like this month’s Mystery Photo is of Mt. Maclure and Florence with Lyell just obscured by the latter. Isberg is probably one of the small peaks in the right of the photo.”

Ron Bartell then weighed in with this detailed answer:

OK, here’s my take on the peaks in the photo from North Dome—it helps to know exactly where the photo was taken, so I could use the distance/ruler function in the Topo Maps app on my iPad (Mt Florence is 13.4 miles from North Dome).

Peak toward the left with snow patch is Florence, Lyell just visible to its left, then a little further left is Maclure (dark pyramid). Broad peak behind Florence's righthand ridge is Pk 12,767 (S of Maclure), little dark bump to its right is Rodgers. Broad sunlit peak just right of center is probably Pk 12,573 (on Rodgers-Electra ridge), further right the broad dark peak with snow patches is Electra, and further right the little dark pyramid is Ansel Adams.

As you’ll note if you compare Hal’s labeled photograph and Ron’s written answer, there’s a discrepancy over Electra, which Ron says is “probably” 12,573. Would anyone like to weigh in on whether it’s Electra?

Check out the SPS website if you have not visited in a while—the puzzle also appears there! http://www.sierraclub.org

Forget to Renew?

Don’t let your Sierra Echo subscription expire! The annual $10 subscription is due each year by January 1st and delinquent after March 31st.

For more information, see the back cover of this issue. Please make out checks to the Sierra Peaks Section and mail to the treasurer:

SPS Treasurer
1701 Paloma St.
Pasadena, CA 91104
Mystery Peak Challenge

This occasional just-for-fun puzzle is for you to figure out which Sierra peak or peaks are featured in the image. If you have a fine mystery peak puzzle to challenge *Echo* readers, please send it to tina@bowmanchange.com. We welcome any mountain images, including those from popular culture—imagery used and abused in film and print!

Hal Browder also supplied this photo of a gorgeous sunrise taken from a lake in the Whitney region. Which two SPS peaks are featured? Send your answer to Tina Bowman at tina@bowmanchange.com.

The editors thought you might enjoy this echo from the past and its connection to the present. This photo, taken July 19, 1965, shows long-time member and current contributor of the Mystery Peak puzzle Hal Browder on a first ascent of the east face of University Peak, a climb he made with Warren Shelton and Timo Piunen. RJ Secor told Hal that he’ll be updating our bible, *The High Sierra: Peaks, Passes, and Trails*, to give credit to Hal and his buddies for the first ascent and change the route description to reflect the climb made in 1965. Here’s Hal’s route: “The book description was not exactly as it was done. Correct route was up the trail past Robinson Lake. Follow the route toward University Pass. About when you are looking at the East slopes of University Peak, head west up the east face picking thru boulders and ridges by free, onsite climbing. Nearing the summit blocks some 3rd/4th class ledges were confronted. A couple of grunt moves led unto the summit block. Great view and we then descended the usual route back to the trailhead. A great traverse of the peak.” Though this update isn’t there yet, note that updates to RJ’s book can be found at the publisher’s webpage for the book: http://www.mountaineersbooks.org/The-High-Sierra-P390.aspx
Passages

Delores Holladay

Along with the obituary which follows, we received reminiscences from several SPS climbers who knew Delores and wrote of some of the fine adventures they shared.

Above: Delores Holladay on SPS Oldtimers Trail Peak outing 2005 (Photo by Jerry Keating). Jerry wrote:

Sadly, I didn’t know Delores too well personally, but I do remember she was a frequent participant in the SPS old-timer series, her last sign-in being on the September 10-12, 2010, trip called “Western Sierra Medley” and reported in the April-June 2011 Echo. There were thirty-nine persons on that trip, and Mary Mac served as leader of the Chinese Peak climb on Saturday, September 11. On p. 34 of that issue, Delores is in the group that climbed Bear Butte on Sunday, September 12 (see http://sierrapeaks.org/newsletters/2011-Vol 55 Number 2.pdf)

Right: Delores Holladay backpacking out of the Grand Canyon after a private climb of Cheops Pyramid in the Grand Canyon, November 14-16, 1974 (Photo by Bob Cates, Bob and Maureen Cates Collection, Sierra Club-Angeles Chapter Archives).

Therese Marie Holladay, daughter of Delores, sent this obituary, to which we contributed additional details about her SPS achievements.—Eds.

Delores Marie Platte Holladay, age eighty-seven, passed away Monday February 2, 2017 in Prescott, Arizona, where she had lived for three and a half years. She is survived by six children, five grandchildren, and two great-grandchildren, many of whom live in Alaska. Delores was an avid mountaineer, having climbed in the Himalayas, on Mt McKinley, and on mountains in almost every continent. She earned SPS emblem #334 on October 24, 1975, and #76 senior emblem on September 1, 1983; she finished the DPS peak list twice. Delores raised her family in Rolling Hills in the Palos Verdes, California, area, and in Santa Barbara, where she was a wilderness Search and Rescue volunteer. After retiring from Union Bank, she lived in a little cabin by the creek below Mt Whitney in the Sierra Nevada mountains that she loved so much. She hung up her hiking boots at age eighty-one, but the mountains have called her back again. Her funeral was held March 15 in Independence, California, at St Vivian’s Catholic Church with burial immediately following in the Independence Cemetery. Donations to the Sierra Club or Catholic Charities may be made in her honor.
Delores Holladay, continued

From Bob Cates

I had the great fortune of climbing many fine peaks in the company of Delores Holladay in the early and mid-1970s. She was a stalwart climber and always willing to take on any adventure, such as coming with Jon Hart and me on our second recorded ascent of Cheop’s Pyramid in the Grand Canyon in 1974. She had the gracious temperament of a fine southern belle, with nary a negative comment about anyone.

From Bob Wyka

One trip I did with Delores was to Turkey. It was October 1987. I had just climbed the Matterhorn on 30 September with Ang Karma Sherpa, and the three of us rendezvoused in Istanbul to climb Mt. Ararat. We flew into Ankara and from there hopped onto a bus to travel the 1400 kms to Doğubeyazıt, Turkey, a two-day bus ride to the east next to Iran. We didn’t really think this through very well! Delores was a great traveling companion, never the
Delores Holladay, from Bob Wyka, continued:

one to complain. We eventually got to the base of Ararat but were turned around when the military stopped us. To this day I haven’t figured out why we couldn’t climb. But we retreated back to Northern Turkey to the Kaçkar Mountains (another eight-hour bus ride) and did some hiking in this remote and beautiful area. We visited some small villages, and Delores fell in love with the people. Meanwhile Karma was using the bus system to travel Turkey on his own. Delores and I reconnected with Karma in Istanbul and went on to Nepal to climb Island Peak. When I went to Delores’ funeral in Independence, California, her family never knew that she had been to Turkey. I shared my story with them as well as some Nepal adventures.

I remember Delores as a very fun and very spirited young woman—her personality and energy belied her age. I had no idea she was twenty-plus years older than I until I met her daughter Therese in the ’70s at Cal Poly, Pomona, where we were both students. Delores loved to climb peaks like I did, so we seemed to hit it off very quickly, climbing many HPS, SPS, and DPS peaks together over the years. Delores came over to my condo several times for dinner when we weren’t hiking, partly because my roommate Mike Treat is a good cook.

Nepal was a natural extension of our hiking friendship, and Delores went with me twice. The first time was when I climbed Island Peak (November 1988, I believe). Delores and I made it to high camp where we tented with Andy Selters, who was leading the climb for American Alpine Institute. On this trip I met Ang Karma Sherpa, who has been our friend ever since. Delores didn’t make it past that high camp, but we sure had a lot of fun together, laughing and trying to stay warm. The second trip was a climb I put together with our dear friend Karma to climb Mera Peak and Island Peak in the Solo Khumbu area of Nepal.
(near Everest). Many well-known SPS'ers couldn't wait to sign up. RJ wrote a trip report up for the California Mountaineering Club newsletter.

**From Karen Leonard’s climbing memoir:**

A final “how I started climbing” story highlights the almost accidental way some were captivated by the mountains, the easy access climbers had to mountains in the 1960s and 70s, and the innocence of American society in those decades. Delores Holladay, mother of six, drove a son to a Boy Scout outing at North Lake, and instead of driving home, she said, “my car just went up to Whitney Portal,” the trailhead to Mount Whitney, highest peak in California. She slept in her car, and the next morning she accepted two peaches and a half-cup of raisins from someone (the little store there had not opened yet) and set off for the peak in nurse’s shoes. Above the upper trail camp on switchbacks, someone showed her the peak, and, realizing she could not reach the summit that day, she drove home. A few weeks later, having made blanket sleeping bags for her children, she packed them all up and they hiked in to a trail camp. Next morning early, she and her sons left the three little girls in a tube tent, and while Delores kept on to the 14,496’ summit, her sons went down and packed up the camp. Waiting for their mother, they baited a line, caught a fish and cooked it, while one daughter kept asking all the hikers coming down if they had seen her mother.

*Right: Delores Holladay on the summit of Mt. Lamarck, Mt. Humphreys behind, during a private climb of Mt. Darwin, August 17, 1973 (Photo by Bob Cates, Bob and Maureen Cates Collection, Sierra Club-Angeles Chapter Archives).*
Royal Robbins
1935-2017

By Bill Oliver

On September 23, 2011, in San Francisco, I had the unexpected privilege of presenting the Sierra Club’s Francis Farquhar Mountaineering Award to Royal Robbins. The honor was created and first awarded to Norman Clyde in 1970. It went to Jules Eichorn in 1972 and the next year to Glen Dawson. A complete list of awardees can be found here: http://bit.ly/2s53SCd

Nomination of Royal Robbins for the 2011 Farquhar Mountaineering Award Submitted by Bill Oliver and Barbara Lilley

Royal Robbins ranks as a giant among pioneers in American rock climbing. Fifty-four years ago, in 1957, he and two others made the first ascent of the iconic NW face of Half Dome—and he would add four more new routes on this face. He also made the first solo climb of El Capitan. These climbs and many others were regularly featured in the Sierra Club Bulletin and then later in the Club’s new mountaineering journal, Ascent.

According to Royal, “I joined the Sierra Club in 1950 so I could be a member of the Los Angeles Rock Climbing Section.” RCS records indicate that he was voted into the Section in 1952 at age 17. Many climbing stories written by him and others appear in the Section’s Mugelnoos. Royal was an early and strong proponent of a new ethic: boltless, pitonless clean climbing. He was instrumental in changing the climbing culture of the late 1960s and early ’70s by encouraging the use and preservation of the natural features of the rock.

Although best known for his intrepid Yosemite Valley exploits, Royal Robbins was also an exceptionally talented mountaineer. He made technically challenging first ascents or new routes in many mountain ranges, including in the French Alps; the Logan Mtns of the NW Territory, Canada; the Wind River Range, Wyoming; the Canadian Rockies; and the Kichatna Mtns, Alaska.


Among a lifetime of honors and awards, one of the earlier, 1976, was Honorary Membership in the RCS, a distinction shared by four other Farquhar awardees: Norman Clyde, Glen Dawson, and John and Ruth Mendenhall. In April of this year Royal was inducted into the American Mountaineering Museum’s Hall of
Robbins Nomination, continued

Mountaineering Excellence, in Golden, Colorado, and he was the featured speaker at this event.

[Co-nominator Barbara Lilley, the 2003 Farquhar honoree, was active in the RCS during Royal’s early years, and she followed him on several Yosemite climbs.]

A Tribute to Royal Robbins

Robbins presented programs for the SPS two or three times, most notably as the banquet speaker in January 2005: “Sierra Adventures—First Ascents and First Descents.” He also appeared with Glen Dawson at the Angeles Chapter’s Centennial Picnic on July 16, 2011. Volume Three—The Golden Age in his My Life series came out in 2012.

Royal Robbins, eighty-two, passed away at home on March 14, 2017, of progressive supranuclear palsy, a degenerative brain disease. I was able to confirm with his widow, Liz, that there will not be a Volume Four, which would have covered “his boating adventures and accomplishments.” Among many wonderful online obits, I commend these:

- Sierra Club Planet: http://bit.ly/2ohieh7

Just out, the Summer 2017 Alpinist, #58, has a wonderful cover story on Royal’s life, including contributions by Doug Robinson and Pat Ament. However, I highly commend My Life for its amazingly honest and insightful detailed view into Royal’s remarkable life. It is also very beautifully and engagingly written with a master’s pen. Below I provide a particular synopsis of Royal’s youth by quoting extensively from his first two volumes.

Royal Robbins—A Troubled and Adventurous Young Life

In 1945, at the age of ten, Jimmy Chandler became Royal Robbins, again! After a brief courtship, his mom had married Royal Shannon Robbins, a dashing and handsome man of Irish stock. Royal Jr. arrived ten months later, February 3, 1935, at home with attending midwives in Point Pleasant, West Virginia. Shannon, as he was known, however, remained a womanizer and openly so. Their union ended in divorce about three years later, and Royal’s mom soon remarried.

James Chandler was the only dad that Royal remembered as a young boy. The family relocated to Southern California in 1941, as the war build-up began, which offered better prospects for his dad, a machinist. However, he could never hold a job for long. They lived first in Hermosa Beach, then Redondo Beach, and then in Culver City. A daughter, Helen, was born later in 1941. By the time Royal was ten, his family was living in the Hollywood area, which remained the locus of Royal’s life into his early manhood. James became increasingly physically abusive to Royal’s mom, and a final violent incident brought the police to their door and soon after led to a divorce. It was then that Royal learned about his real father and eagerly took back his name.

Royal was not an indifferent student; he wanted to do well in school. However, he struggled just barely to get by and thus often felt inferior to others. Advancing from Vine Elementary to Thomas Starr King Junior High and then to John Marshall High School, he kept hoping for a new beginning, but it was not to be.

A few months after James left, I ran away from home. Running away is the weapon kids use to repay...
the adult world for real or imagined offenses. Over the next several days I lived in a Salvation Army warehouse. During the day, when the men were working there, I hid behind the furniture, relishing my newfound freedom. . . . The novelty, intoxicating at first, wore off after four days and I returned home. Like the prodigal son, I was welcomed back and forgiven.

Life got much better that summer, for one glorious week anyway—Royal’s first outdoor experience:

YMCA camp was the highlight of my young life. We spent a week living out of tents, exploring, treasure hunting, building campfires, etc. Camp was a raucous affair, filled with laughing and shouting, but the noise was beautiful—the loud joy of life. Back in the city I was always trying to be something I wasn’t—cool, sophisticated, smart, or whatever—always trying to fit in. Out here I could just be myself. The outdoors seemed to be in my blood.

Between the ages of ten and twelve, Royal and a few friends regularly thumbed rides throughout the summer to Santa Monica Beach. However, they were always on the alert for some “new escapade.” One day they noticed a train moving slowly out of a freight yard, slowly enough to run along and jump aboard. Train hopping quickly became a favorite activity, taking them as far away as Mojave, Barstow, or San Luis Obispo—and even to a rocky area in Chatsworth that Royal would later learn was called Stoney Point! Occasionally they were forced to hitchhike back home.

In the fall of 1947 when he was twelve, the yearning for adventure led Royal and his two train-hopping buds in a startling new direction—burglary: “We weren’t run-of-the-mill burglars. . . . We liked money and had plenty of uses for it, but our burglaries were more about adventure. We didn’t break into homes when people were away. We didn’t steal valuable objects to fence.” While people were still in the house, they would seek to quietly climb through a bedroom window and snatch money from a purse, the victim perhaps none the wiser:

We saw ourselves as the good guys. We took only money. It was a point of honor never to cause serious trouble to our victims. . . . We weren’t hardened criminals; just kids having fun and making off with a little extra money people probably didn’t need anyway. Or so we told ourselves. These petty burglaries became irresistible. We couldn’t stop.

One night early in December, however, their devious adventure came to a screeching stop when a patrol car noticed them emerging from a backyard: “The sad memory of the three of us sitting in the back of the police car, giving our personal information, still haunts me. All I could think was, this is going to be terrible. Poor mom. This is a nightmare.” After several days locked up in juvenile hall, the boys were released to their parents. The court hearing was two weeks later:

Mom took me to the courthouse and pleaded before the judge for my freedom. She said I was a good boy, I had a good heart, and she knew I would never do anything bad again. She would see to it. She believed in me, and she would keep me out of trouble. Thank God, the judge was convinced. He let me go. I owe Mom a lot for that. Her eloquence, and her belief in me, and most of all her love, saved me. . . . My freedom restored, I was determined to walk the straight and narrow. . . . Looking for a way to make a commitment to that ideal, [in January 1948] I joined the Boy Scouts, the best decision of my young life.

It was known as the Rainbow Troop, related to their brightly colored neckerchiefs, and it had the distinction of being sponsored by the LAPD. Who would have guessed! There were about thirty-five boys among the four patrols.

Scouting was a lifesaver that kept me from drowning in a sea of anarchy and aimlessness. The Scouts got me out of the streets of L.A. and up into the mountains into the out-of-doors. . . . We took hiking and backpacking trips lasting up to seven days in the nearby mountains. The outdoors suited me and I took it as a fish to water.

In May 1949 Royal, fourteen, joined two Scout leaders and two other boys on a brief trip to Yosemite Valley to check out camping sites and hiking paths: “This was my introduction to the wonderland of walls and waterfalls that would eventually mold my character and guide my destiny. I little imagined, in that first vision of Yosemite’s great rocks, how many nights I would lie awake high on a ledge, shivering in the early morning hours, waiting for the dawn.”
To his astonishment, the scoutmaster selected Royal as the troop’s “Top Outdoor Scout,” though he had far fewer merit badges than most and was not a unit leader. He had, however, become the troop’s “outdoor expert,” and he uniquely possessed the passion to get into the mountains whenever possible, often alone, to hike and explore. Significantly, the honor meant that Royal would be among two dozen boys from various L.A. troops who would embark in late June 1949 on a ten-day backpack into the High Sierra. They set off with several pack animals from Onion Valley. Topping first Kearsarge Pass and then the next day Glen Pass, they set up basecamp at Rae Lakes.

When a scout leader asked for volunteers to attempt a climb of Fin Dome, Royal’s arm “shot up instantly.” Long before dawn the next morning, two leaders and four boys set off—and they carried climbing ropes! [Fin Dome, 11,693’, was a fairly popular peak among the mountaineering subset of Sierra Club High Trippers of the 1930s. Although not on the SPS list, I imagine most SPSers have climbed it while camped in the area for an ascent of Mt. Clarence King, among others. I don’t know if it still has an old Sierra Club aluminum box.] The party would be ascending the generally Class 3 West Face, though the leaders intentionally took to a steeper section to provide a roped climbing experience. They employed two 100’ nylon ropes, thus two roped teams:

Blessed with a degree of agility, I clambered like a monkey up the short rock steps formed by successive blocks of granite. The movements came naturally, as if climbing was in my blood. . . . At 11 a.m. we six stood on top, shaking hands. It was my initiation into this time-honored ritual of celebrating success on top of a mountain. It was a big moment. I felt I was being welcomed into a special club: the brotherhood of the rope.

Still excited by our triumph, and unrestrained by the rope, I dashed down, jumping from ledge to ledge and block to block, fearlessly flinging myself downward . . . Intoxicated with my newfound ability, I acted the fool and very nearly paid the ultimate price. In my exuberance, I jumped too hard and too far and careened out of control, stopping just in time on my tiptoes right at the sharp lip of a ledge of granite, my momentum very nearly carrying me off the edge and down a hundred feet. Backing away from the void, I glanced back at my companions, happy to realize none of them had seen how close I had come to death . . . [Overall] I had been taught a priceless lesson. I had learned there was a power within me that I hadn’t dreamed existed, a power to climb. I had looked through a magic window and found something of great depth and wonder, something I was made for. Fin Dome was a turning point.

Back home Royal’s troop was not into climbing, so he regularly went off, usually alone, into the local mountains to rock scramble as much as a possible:

I appropriated lengths of Manila hemp that had been discarded by trucking companies as worthless. At army-surplus stores I purchased climbing gear made for the mountain troops of WW II: soft iron pitons for 25 cents each, heavy steel snap links called carabiners for 75 cents, and a piton hammer for one dollar. From books out of the L.A. Public Library, particularly Kenneth Henderson’s Handbook of American Mountaineering, I learned the proper method for using this gear. . . . I picked up other techniques such as rappelling, belaying, and prusiking and began to think I knew something about climbing. This was a mistake. I would later discover that learning to climb from books alone can be very dangerous.

In the summer of 1950 the Rainbow troop made a six-week cross-country bus trip targeted on attending the National Scout Jamboree in Valley Forge, Pennsylvania: “This would be the first time in Boy Scout history that an entire troop traveled across country to attend a jamboree.” Only incidentally does Royal mention that President Truman addressed the 47,000 assembled scouts.

In early September 1950, having recently begun his freshman year at John Marshall High School, Royal remembered Stoney Point from one of his train-hopping trips. One Saturday he hitchhiked there alone: “I scrambled all over Stoney, investigating its secrets, laying plans for future visits. . . . On top of one rock I found some large bolts, evidence that ‘real’ climbers had been there.” Royal continues,

That same month at the library, I came across High Conquest, an intriguing history of mountaineering by
James Ramsay Ullman. This book, with its philosophy of adventure, changed my life. Climbing was more than fun and outdoor action. True conquest was not of the physical mountains rising from the surface of our planet, but rather the inner mountains of the soul. Those were the mountains worth conquering. Right after this epiphany, I went climbing as often as possible. I didn’t wait for weekends. Right after school I grabbed my equipment and thumbed my way to Stoney Point. . . . Occasionally I was able to cajole a fellow student into joining me, but I never could get the same friend to go twice.

Then later that same September he arrived with another novice friend:

I clipped a carabiner to the piton and attached my rope. Asking my belayer to hold me in tension, I leaned back, applying my full weight to the peg. It instantly popped out of the crack. Tumbling over backward, I crashed down into the rocks at the base of the cliff. The pain was overwhelming. I couldn’t believe I had actually fallen. As I writhed in agony among the boulders, I swore to myself I would never go climbing again. Nothing was worth this!

Royal ended up with a badly sprained ankle and a broken wrist, which resulted in a cast on his left arm: “After a few days I renounced my vow never to climb again. Nothing came close to the joy I felt moving over rock, whether effortlessly or fighting for every inch. One setback couldn’t destroy my desire. I was made for climbing. I had to go back.”

Just two weeks later, in October 1950, Royal was back at Stoney, alone:

I was astonished to see a couple dozen adults with ropes, rugged climbing clothing, and jaunty alpine hats. Real climbers! . . . I stood there awhile, watching them, unsure of my next move. Then suppressing excitement and trying to act casual, I wandered down to the group of strangers. I must have appeared a peculiar specimen, a skinny fifteen-year-old kid with my arm in a cast and a ratty hemp rope over one shoulder.

They were friendly and welcoming. “We’re from the Sierra Club,” a lady in climbing garb cheerfully responded. “We’re here to practice rock climbing. Want to join us?” Of course I did! Real climbers—the only ones I had ever seen except for the Scout leaders on Fin Dome. I could scarcely believe my ears. This was a dream come true. These were real mountaineers and maybe I could be one of them. They were members of the Rock Climbing Section (RCS) of the Los Angeles Chapter of the Sierra Club. Friendly and encouraging, they seemed the best people I had ever met. Shyly asked if I could try a climb. A serious-looking, strongly built man wearing an alpine hat offered me the end of a rope. I passed it around my waist, tied a bowline backed up by two half-hitches, and offered it to his inspection. To my immense relief, he smiled and nodded OK. Now I was part of the group. I surprised them—and myself—by getting up five of the six routes on the large boulder [the arm cast interfering too much on the other route].

In my chance falling in with these Sierra Club rock climbers, I had stepped into a new world. At last I had discovered true companions in the vertical endeavor. No longer was I forced to solo or compel reluctant schoolmates to come along to belay. I’d found mentors and leaders whose passion for climbing matched my own. . . . The RCS quieted down during the winter. Many of its members also belonged to the Ski Mountaineers Section (SMS), and this time of year they put on their boards for the white stuff. In the spring of 1951 the RCS resumed outings to Stoney Point. I was there every time.

A few weeks ago I made a quick visit to the American Alpine Club library in Golden, Colorado. Thanks to Ruth Mendenhall long ago, the library has a complete bound set of Murelogo. Created by Glen Dawson in 1938, the newsletter was shared by LA’s RCS and SMS. The earliest entry I could find that named Royal Robbins was a brief citation of a climbing trip in July 1951 to Kings Canyon on which Royal and another fellow joined John Mendenhall on a long route. Royal recounts,

On Sunday, I teamed up with John Mendenhall and Darel Towler to climb a 1,000-foot route on the north wall. A bit nondescript, and not hard, it was nevertheless the longest climb I had ever done, and I liked the feeling of being so far above the canyon floor. Also, it was my first climb with Mendenhall, who would become one of my personal heroes [as would Chuck Wilts].
The “Noos” also records that over the following Labor Day weekend, Royal joined a party that climbed the north face of Mt. Williamson, a Sierra 14er, while Barbara Lilley was part of a team ascending Mt. Whitney by its East Buttress route. Barbara then lived in San Diego, where she was active in its RCS. The San Diego climbers often joined the LA group, especially at Tahquitz and other far away places.

The extensive LA RCS archives are in the very capable custody of John Ripley. At my request John was able to fetch Royal Robbins’ climbing card. At seventeen Royal was voted in as a full member on April 20, 1952, which happened to be just three months after Barbara Lilley’s acceptance.

Just several weeks later Royal’s first climbing trip to Yosemite Valley was with the RCS over the Memorial Day weekend. He joined a team that climbed the Higher Cathedral Spire. Having been given vague route directions, he, nevertheless, led the toughest pitch, completing the entire route as a free climb (as opposed to aided). His new route was named the “Robbins Variation.”

In late May of 1952 Royal was still a sophomore at John Marshall High School, an increasingly exasperating time for him:

Some sane part of myself, a deeply healthy element of my soul, demanded a hearing. . . . It was different outdoors. In the mountains I didn’t carry this monstrous backpack of mental rubbish. If school was that bad for me, then to hell with it! I had a choice. I could quit! Summer vacation was coming soon; after that I would not return. With that thought, an immense burden fell from my shoulders. I was free!

In the spring of 1954, while working at a bank, Royal would graduate from Hollywood High Night School, to his mom’s great delight. That issue finally settled, over the July 4th weekend, Royal got his first introduction in the use of ice axe and crampons on a RCS trip to the Sierra Palisades. In summary, on each of three days they climbed a 14er: first Mt. Sill, then North Palisade from the U Notch, and finally Thunderbolt Peak by the Underhill Couloir. He evidently was a quick learner in this new medium: “As we drove back to L.A. I thought about all the new experiences the trip had given me. I could see why people said the Palisades had the best alpine climbing in California. I wanted to come back and do more—and get ready for bigger things.”

I’d like to close down our story now as Royal is finally done with school learning and becomes increasingly focused on learning what can be done when roped up. However, perhaps as a bonus, let us consider one final “climbing escapade” in the fall of 1952:

Don Wilson and I were on a roll (having just completed the first free ascent of the Open Book at Tahquitz). On October 18, we drove to Yosemite with Barbara Lilley and hiked up the trail to Upper Yosemite Fall, where we camped on the rim near our objective, the Lost Arrow Spire. Barbara, a very capable climber, had recently moved to Los Angeles, where she worked as a secretary at Hughes Aircraft. I had climbed with her at Tahquitz. In the morning we three rappelled from the rim to the notch, leaving fixed ropes for our return, and started up the Spire.

The climbing on the first part of the Lost Arrow turned out to be not as ghastly as it had been.
Royal went on to many first ascents on valley walls and in far away ranges, to founding Royal Robbins outdoor apparel with his wife Liz, and when he could no longer climb, to many first descents of raging rivers by kayak. We will not soon see the likes of him again, and we are the poorer for it. His legacy described in a *Sierra Club Bulletin* article by Ax (Anton) Nelson. . . . Above the Salathé Ledge, Don and I traded leads, and whoever was second belayed Barbara up each pitch. We reached the summit in mid-afternoon. It was a thrilling moment to stand atop this granite needle, devastating in its isolation. I imagined being an eagle gazing down from his eyrie at the tiny, ant-like cars creeping slowly along the roads far below.

. . . It was after dark when we left the Valley. While Don and Barbara slept, I drove down the twisting mountain road toward Fresno, fighting back sleepiness. I thought I was succeeding but my eyelids got heavier and heavier. Suddenly, there was a loud crash and my eyes popped open. The headlights were sweeping back and forth across the road as the car careened out of control. I managed to bring it to a stop. Now my friends were wide-awake. We got out and assessed the damage; it didn’t look good. I had really screwed up. It was Barbara’s car, and I had wrecked it. . . . It hadn’t occurred to any of us to be thankful that I had run into the hillside instead of plunging off the other side of the road into the canyon below. . . . Barbara and I missed a day of work and Don a day of school at USC. I later paid to have Barbara’s car repaired. She was nice about it. She never lit into me, though she would have been justified in doing so. It was a sorry end to a thrilling and very successful trip, and it was the last automobile accident I would ever have when I was driving.

Robbins Tribute, continued:

endures in his inspiring books and in his passionate promoting of a clean climbing ethic.

[I’m very grateful to Barbara Lilley for sending me the two color photos of her climbing with Royal Robbins and for clarifying some details. What a remarkable climbing career she has had and continues to pursue. I remain ever grateful to Echo co-editors Tina Bowman and Beth Epstein for their superb editing and layout craftsmanship.]

On June 3, 2017, while this issue of the Echo was being prepared, Alex Honnold made the incredible first free solo ascent (without the aid of a rope) of the 3,000-ft face of El Capitan—and he did it in just under four hours. Close to fifty years earlier, in April 1968, Royal Robbins made the first solo climb of El Cap (using ropes for aid)—and it took him ten days. http://on.natgeo.com/2sG1r9J

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IN HIGH PLACES

By Burton A. Falk

A collection of 57 essays, most of which originally appeared in The Sierra Echo, describing 40+ years of climbing world-wide high points, including Denali, Aconcagua, the sometimes wettest place on earth, a first ascent in Chile, the Soviet Pamirs, remote Atlantic and Pacific islands, and, most recently, with four grandchildren.

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