THE SIERRA PEAKS SECTION ECHO

VOLUME 9 Summer 1965 No. 2

CHAIRMAN'S CORNER

The SPS qualifying peaks list is a continuing topic of discussion. At the next SPS management committee meeting this subject will come up again. Several peaks have been mentioned as possible qualifying peaks. Cal Tech Pk (12,832') and Chester Versteeg Pk (13,470') are the only officially named peaks over 13,000 ft. which are not on the present list. Other peaks which have been brought to my attention as possible qualifying are Mt. Ickes (12,930') located west of Pinchot Pass, Gemini (12,666') located near Seven Gables, Woold Mtn. (12,029') located west of Matterhorn Pk., Mt. Harrington (11,005') located west of Kennedy Mtn, and Mokelumne Pk (8,371') an isolated peak in the northern Sierra. We would appreciate hearing from anyone having any opinions on the addition of these peaks or the deletion of any peaks on the present list.

There also are some discrepancies in the classification of some of the peaks on our list with the classifications in the Climbers Guide. Please send any comments that you might have pertaining to the peaks list to our mountaineering committee chairman, Dick Jali. (Phone: 621-7952 or write: 11928 Kiowa, L.A. 69)

It is also nearing the time to plan the spring schedule (March through June). We would like to hear from anyone who would like to have any specific peaks led, or who would like to lead or assist in leading a SPS trip. Please send your scheduling suggestion to Bill Hunt. (Phone: 370-0036 or write: 2409 Inglewood Ave., Redondo Beach).

SIGN-UP SHEETS

Those SPSers who have led a trip recently and have forgotten to send in the sign-up sheets, are kindly requested to do so. These forms should be sent to Dick Jali (11928 Kiowa Ave., Los Angeles 69). Dick would also like to have recommendations from past leaders, selecting those individuals who could qualify to lead future trips.
FOOD NEWS:

In addition to their current line of Starlite freeze-dried package meat dishes with which backpackers are familiar, Armour is now offering Starline gourmet-type freeze-dried meals such as Lobster Newburg, Chicken Almondine, etc., which are apparently becoming available in supermarkets. They are advertised as not to be served before 6:00 PM which should be ideal for later returning climbers! Has anyone found a market in L. A. where these are available?

NEW MEMBERS

We extend a warm welcome to the following new SPS members:

Elton W. Fletcher, and family (the entire family qualified at the same time!) 1127 S. Avena Avenue, Lodi, California.

Wally Henry, 10837 E. Avenue, N-8, Palmdale, California.

Tom McNicholas, 201-41 Street, Manhattan Beach, California 90266.

Fred Hoeptner, 1226 McClellan Drive, Los Angeles 25, California.

Kenton Larson, Route 1, Box 980, Yucaipa, California 92399.

Bob Michael, 1025 Bonnie Brae Street, Pomona, California.

Gary Bowen, 398 N. Loop Drive, Camarillo, California.

T. K. Jones, 201-B Groves Street, Chino Lake, California.

William H. Slack, Rt. 2, Box 273h, Auburn, California 95603.

Ben A. Neffson, 3155 Sepulveda Blvd., Los Angeles, California.

Gordon H. Palmer, 15156 Dickens Street, Sherman Oaks, California.

Nathan P. White, Jr., 20554 Quedo Drive, Woodland Hills, California.

Wes A. Sharp, 4799 Excelente Drive, Woodland Hills, California.

Hank Frync, 10922 Buford Avenue, Inglewood, California.

Dick Sykes, 2808 Pearl Street, Santa Monica, California 90405.

QUOTE OF THE MONTH

The West, with all its natural beauty, was won, by men on horseback and is being lost to men on bulldozers.
NEW EMBLEM MEMBERS

Our heartiest congratulations to the following people, who attained emblem status:

Don A. Cubberly, 1370 Muirfield Road, Riverside, California. He has climbed the following emblem peaks: Olancha Peak, Matterhorn Pk., Mt. Kaweah, Mt. Sill, Mt. Humphries, Mt. Ritter, North Palisade, Mt. Abbot, Mt. Lyell and Mt. Whitney. We might mention - Don is only 14 years old! Well done!


ANOTHER MOUNTAINEERING "CASUALTY:"

George and Marcia Wallerstein were married during Easter vacation of 1965. He has accepted a position in the Astronomy Department of the University of Washington in Seattle. Their new address is: 12302 Sand Point Way Seattle, Washington 98125

NEWS NOTE

After 9 years of "night work" Dr. Robert G. Loretz received his Ph.D. in Economics from U.S.C. For 11 years he has been a full-time active partner in the advertising agency - Boylhart, Lovett & Dean, Inc.

THE SIERRA ECHO: Published bi-monthly by the Sierra Peaks Section of the Angeles Chapter of the Sierra Club. Mailed to subscribers on even numbered months. STAFF: Bud Bingham, Barbara Lilley, Neko Colvins, John Holloway, Sy Ossofsky. SUBSCRIPTIONS: $1.00 per year. Subscribing to the "Echo" is a requirement for active membership in the S. P. S. REMITTANCE: Must be sent to the S. P. S. Treasurer (1965 - Ellen Siegal). NEXT COPY DEADLINE: November 21, 1965. Articles should be typed double spaced and mailed to: John Thornton, P. O. Box 1532, Manhattan Beach, or Neko Colvins, 10900 Santa Monica Blvd., #6, West L. A. 25.
ANOTHER CATASTROPHE

Tom Ross, a well-known Sierra climber and SPS member, has finally met the fate that sooner or later seems to grab nearly all mountaineers. Tom recently announced his engagement to Miss Nancy Candace Slater of Bishop. Plans are presently being made for a 1966 summer wedding.

-- J.P.T. --

INDIA CLIMBING TEAM CONQUERS MT. EVEREST

An Indian team reached the summit of Mt. Everest, the world's highest mountain, on May 20, 1965, the Indian government announced.

A spokesman said the two men who reached the peak tied an Indian flag to a pole left there by American climbers in 1963.

Their feat may be the last of its kind for many years, at least from the 29,028-foot mountain's non-Communist side. Nepal has barred future attempts to all foreigners.

The Nepalese announced last March that they were doing so to prevent mountaineers from losing their way and wandering into Red-rulled Tibet.

Red China has charged that some climbers were engaged in spying. The Nepalese government made an exception for the Indian team then on route for its assault on Everest.

The peak was conquered first in 1953 by a British Commonwealth team with Sir Edmund Hillary of New Zealand and Nepalese climber Tensing Norgay reaching the summit. It has since been scaled by Swiss and American teams.

The names of the two successful Indian climbers were not made known.

The 19-man team, led by Lt. Cmdr. M. S. Kohli of the Indian Navy, followed the same route as previous teams and won after having been beaten back twice before - in 1960 and 1962.

-- Los Angeles Times, May 20, 1965 --

WILDERNESS HEARING LETTERS REQUESTED

The Los Padres Chapter asks club members to send letters for the record of the November 8, 1965 hearing on the reclassification of the San Rafael Primitive area.

Located in Southern California's Los Padres National Forest, the San Rafael is the first primitive area to be reviewed under the terms of the Wilderness Act. Important precedents and legal interpretations affecting the reclassification of other areas in the nation will be established at the hearing.
The Wilderness Society, Sierra Club, FWOC, Audubon Society, and many other riding, hiking, and conservation groups support the Forest Service enlargements as far as they go, but recommend further inclusion of the lands to the north and east up to the Sierra Madre ridge road and the Big Pine-Madulce peaks region to round out a wilderness unit that encompasses the high country zone and geographic climax of the San Rafael and provides protection to the essential flyways and roosting sites of the rare and endangered California condors. Buffer zone areas of wilderness quality are also favored at Manzana Creek and Horse Canyon.

A letter from you, writing as an individual (the aforementioned organizations have already been heard from), endorsing these proposals should be addressed to Regional Forester, 636 Sansome St., San Francisco, California 94111 with the request that your statement be placed in the hearing record.

Fred Eissler  
San Rafael Wilderness Committee  
Los Padres Chapter  
2812 Panorama Place  
Santa Barbara, California

TRIP REPORTS

MT. SAN GORGONIO (11,502') · May 1-2, 1965 · · · · · · · John W. Robinson

A total of 64 persons, the vast majority newcomers, assembled at the Poop-out Hill roadside at noon Saturday to learn and practice the fundamentals of ice and snow climbing. A three-mile backpack brought the large party to the Lodgepole Spring campsite, just beyond Dry Lake, by mid-afternoon. About fifty persons participated in an ice axe seminar later that afternoon on the snowy slopes above camp.

Sunday morning 6 of the party climbed about 2,600 feet, mostly on firm snow, to the grand summit of Southern California, 11,502-foot Mt. San Gorgonio. The sun was cut, but a biting wind that reached gale force on the summit ridge robbed the group of warmth. It was conservatively estimated that, at one exposed spot on the ridge, the winds reached speeds in excess of sixty miles per hour. Thoroughly chilled, the party descended with haste after a short summit stay in semi-protected spots among the boulders.

During the descent, about 500 feet above the Whitewater Saddle, an accident occurred. One member of the party lost control during a glissade when he reached for a tumbling camera, slammed into a tree, and sustained a painful injury just below the knee. Unable to put any pressure on one leg, he was lowered to the saddle and carried to camp by various members of the
TRIP REPORTS (continued)

MT. SAN GORGONIO (11,502') cont.

The party who readily offered their services. The injury was diagnosed at the time by the doctor present on the trip (George Sardinas) as a torn muscle ligament. Assistant Leader Frank Sanborn hurried out to notify the authorities while the injured hiker was ferried slowly down by a variety of ingenious methods, the most effective one being a make-shift ice axe litter. The Sheriff's mountain rescue team reached the ferrying party just above Slushy Meadows, and quickly carried him the rest of the way to the roadhead on a uni-wheel litter.

It was later discovered that the injury was more serious than at first suspected. The Tibia was broken and crushed near the knee, the Fibula was broken in several places, and cartilage and ligaments were torn loose.

The trip leader wishes to express his genuine appreciation to the many members of the party who so readily offered their services in the rescue effort. Special thanks are extended to the following, who as carriers did the lion's share of the heavy work: Bob Van Allen, Ron Eckelmann, Larry Fields and Tom McNicholas.

Other than the unfortunate accident, the trip was quite successful. Many persons were introduced for the first time to snow and ice climbing. The leader recommends this north side of Greyback for an annual SFS snow and ice training trip, with the further suggestion that more than two leaders be assigned to the trip for instructional purposes (a ratio of one instructor per ten trainees is recommended).

OLANCHA PEAK (12123') MAY 8 - 9 ............................... J. L. I.

Thirty-six people met at the Snow Crest Restaurant four miles south of Olancha and convoyed over a good road (paved most of the way) to Sage Flat at 5,760 feet. Illness had prevented one of the leaders from making the trip, so the excellent talents of Dave Scruggs were enlisted. The group left the parking area at 9 AM. Since there had been an unseasonably heavy snow storm in the Sierra in mid-April, we were apprehensive about the snow conditions on top. This proved to be an unnecessary worry; snow conditions were excellent all weekend. We encountered the first snow at 8,600 feet and virtually continuous snow at 9,600 feet.

The route followed to camp on Saturday required 6 miles and 3,700 feet of easy rise. We traveled via trail across Olancha Pass (9,250) and continued north-west for 1.5 miles to the 9,200 foot contour. We then turned north for 0.5 miles to the creek in Cow Canyon. Camp was made up this creek in the edge of Bear Trap Meadow at 9,400 feet. Snow covered the trail that follows this route and continues on thru Brush Meadow (trail not shown on the topo map). Firewood and water are available at Bear Trap Meadow into at least July.

Because of a storm scare, the group divided into two sections - those who wanted to stay up in the edge of the meadow and those who wanted to backtrack 200 yards to the protection of the trees. This proved to be a bad decision in that the two groups did not get ready simultaneously on Sunday morning, causing
TRIP REPORTS (Continued)

OLANCHA PEAK (12123') May 8 - 9 (con't)

the upper group to have to wait around in the cold. Efforts should be made to keep the group consolidated on scheduled trips.

The group left camp at 6 AM Sunday and traveled over almost continuous snow thru the western edge of Bear Trap Meadow and the south-eastern lobe of Bruesh Meadow, crossing over a small pass at 10,400 feet, thence on to Olanche Peak. Climbers should exercise caution to avoid climbing Peak 11,295 (one mile south). After a total distance of about 3 miles with 2,700 feet of gain, mostly in the last mile, we reached the summit. The last people arrived at 11 AM -- an indication of the very leisurely pace that characterized this trip.

Of the starters, one had turned back to enjoy the weekend at Sage Flat, and one was forced to turn back within 0.5 miles of the summit because of the cold weather -- about 20 degrees. Immediately below the summit, we met Gordon Macleod, Neko Colevins and Eric Schumacher on their way up. They had encountered poor snow conditions further north on Saturday, and had decided to come down and climb Olanche again for a little Sunday hike.

As a result of this and past trips to Olanche, two recommendations could be made. First, the length of this trip, 18 miles with 6,100 feet of gain, does not warrant a full weekend unless one has other plans in this area. It can be made into a very enjoyable one day trip by leaving the cars at about 4 AM. Caution, however, should be exercised when there is snow or cold weather. Second, an ideal time to schedule this trip is during the first weeks of June. A disadvantage, however, is that one often has to compete with cattle for trail right of way -- often without too much success.

UNIVERSITY PEAK, MAY 15-16, 1965

The primary conservation weekend of May 15-16 was poorly attended by tree planters -- only 5 or 6 men were turning the spades. Likewise only six turned out to climb University Peak via the N slope. This climb turned out to be one of the finest snow climbs I have made with continuous snow from about 9,700' to the summit. For most of the climb the snow was in good condition for the ascent and for most of the descent.

Saturday saw Frank Yates, Pete O'Neal, Don Tenius, Bill Hunt and myself backpacking to Gilbert Lake at about 10,300', where we were fortunate to be able to find a small amount of dry ground in an otherwise snowy landscape. Later that evening, Tom Ross joined us. A seventh climber was to join us next morning but he missed us and climbed the peak ahead of us. There is no problem till the summit ridge is reached, where one pitch required a rope for safety. Don Rappoleye, the solitary climber who preceded us, told our group how much trepidation he experienced on this summit ridge and well he might, for a slip in a couple of places be fatal. So, seven reached the summit.
After the preliminary briefing and sign up, 21 trip members, plus three who were in the area but had a different objective, left Wishon Dam.

Shortly after turning off on the Cliff Camp trail, it became apparent that the rear end of the party was not present. It later developed that the first of the 4 missing members had passed the turnoff and the others had followed. After making contact and finally convincing 3 of the 4 that they were on the wrong trail and should "come on down", the main group continued on their way.

At Little Rancheria Creek we waded the cold stream and met the only "outsiders" seen on the trip, a group of 3 on the way to Spanish Lakes.

In order to avoid wading more streams than necessary, a change of itinerary was adopted and we continued via the ridge south of Little Rancheria Creek rather than on the Station Meadow Trail. There was up to 5' or 6' of snow on this route.

After lunch at a small stream west of Cabin Creek, we crossed Cabin Creek on a fine log and then went cross-country just north of Cow and Wet Meadows (they were really wet) to the ridge south of Crown Rock. There we met Arky Erb who was wringing his clothes out after plunging through a snow bridge while crossing a stream.

A little later we were joined by three of the missing rear end and proceeded to a fine camp at elevation 8,100 near the west end of Crown Valley. Later in the evening, the 4th member of the rear end arrived, having climbed Hoffman Mountain and Finger Rock and having concluded that he was on the wrong trail. He also adopted Tehipite Dome as his objective.

Sunday morning 20 of the group left camp at 6:00. There was no convenient log at Crown Creek which was full and running fast, so Don Anderson, who had fisherman's waders, went across first, belayed with two ropes. A hand line was established and the rest of the party, using the handle plus being belayed, finally got across, after about 11/2 hours, without mishap. Gordon MacLeod performed the cold job of belaying with the wet rope.

Just as we were leaving the crossing we were joined by Ron Jones who had left Wishon Dam at 5 PM, the day before and had really been moving fast to catch up.

About 1/2 miles from the summit one of the party felt sick and decided to wait on the trail till we returned. The other 20 all made the summit and were rewarded with spectacles views of the surrounding country.

On the return trip, Crown Creek was crossed by all in about an hour and camp reached at 6:20. This was considerably later than the late lunch time that had been predicted and was caused by the unexpectedly long time consumed in crossing Crown Creek twice, and belaying the party up and down the exposed pitch on Tehipite Dome.

On Monday, 4 of the group left to climb Spanish Mountain. The rest, after a 6 o'clock start and a detour south of the intended route caused by depending on an altimeter which read too high, returned via a scenic ridge between Statum and Rancheria Creeks. Rancheria Creek was crossed on a wet log and then a short cross-country hike brought us to the trail near Three Springs. A number of the party shared the load of a participant who sprained his ankle just before this.

The remainder of the trip was uneventful and the cars were reached at 2:30.
TRIP REPORTS (Continued)

TEHIPITE DOME, May 29 - 30 - 31 (con't)

Pleasant weather and a capable and helpful group of backpackers made this an enjoyable trip.

A couple of weeks later, Leon Pimple confided that while he had broken a bone in his hand on the trip he still was able to use the hand so had made the peak anyway.

On the way home, three unshaven members of the trip stopped at one of the Basque restaurants in Bakersfield and were soon joined by four even more hungry, rough-looking customers.

The small waitress, who appeared to be slightly shaken by the appearance of this group, remarked, "You people scare me. I'm afraid you are going to eat up all the plates."

BASIN MTN. - MT. TOM, 12 - 13 JUNE 1965 . . . . . . . . Ken McNutt

Seventeen vehicles containing 44 highly assorted campers - Rock Hounds - songster - hikers - nature lovers and mountaineers of both sex and all ambulatory ages, rendezvoused at 7 AM, Saturday, June 12 in the lot at Bishop Park for the caravan to buttermilk country and the hike in to Horton Lake.

Ignoring a collection of "detour" - "Road Construction" - "Fresh Oil" signs and barricades brought us face to face with the largest road fang boss that ever said, "You can't go this way!" Pleading the noble cause of conservation at Horton Lake ransomed our passage through that stern obstruction and we arrived on schedule (7:45 AM) at the ingeniously locked gate that blocked further travel by car.

Eight o'clock AM saw a disjointed centipede 100 yards long (with back packs) start up the jeep road to Horton Lake. Soon the entipede's head began to pull away from the body and fell back at a slow but even rate until the first rest stop reunited the severed body into one lump on the bank of the swift, clear, cold stream one hour later.

The leaderless head marched away from this rest stop at a smart pace and had gained several hundred feet of altitude in the wrong direction before the leader (still at rest) observed their error and shouted correct instructions, which were obeyed amid return shouts of, "Headless Leader!"

Horton Lake was reached by 11 AM and we watched three strong climbers from Mother Lode Chapter (J. Keating, R. Michel & J. Peckham) start the climb up the snow fields of Basin Mt. while we prepared for our summit pack attempt on Mt. Tom.

Since we had then only back packed about four miles and 2,400 feet and Mt. Tom's summit was a mere five more miles and 3,600 feet, 34 assorted - determined happy - strong - laughing mountaineers started up the trail to the saddle at 11:30 AM. Body elongation again set in, in proportion to the altitude gained and despite moderate pace and hourly rests, it was not until three hours later at the Tungstar Mine that togetherness again reigned.

The first steps off the trail were onto fairly steep snow so a one-minute self-arrest with ice ax was demonstrated. Up we climbed alternating on soft snow,
loose rock and fine scree. The leader did not exhibit any brilliance in finding an
easy route and what had been a disjointed contipede, soon became 3½ individual
route finders, all seeking the best way up a very loose mountain.
At 4 PM the summit was reached by the advanced route finder and the magnificent
view that only comes with unlimited visibility was ours; One half hour of shutter
snapping and viewing and register signing, eating and resting in bright cool sunshine
was fit reward for the effort of the 16 who signed in.
The descent to the mine was again the effort of numerous small groups seeking
the easy route and finding none. By 7:30 PM all stragglers had been started down
the switch backs that dead end at the Horton Lake Camp ground.
The Mother Lode climbers had passed back through camp after 4 PM and had
left word that there was no register on the basin summit and the snow had been soft.
Because a summit register had been found the prior Saturday on a scouting
trip -- it was assumed that this strong trio had failed to climb the true summit
and had turned back because of difficult snow conditions. (Both assumptions were
gross errors as proven by next day efforts on Basin Mt.)
When two of the stronger and more experienced members of our group 5 stated
they were not going to join the morning attempt on Basin because of the
anticipated late return hour, the leader advised all who were interested that the
Basin Mt. effort would be very strenuous and that all who had not climbed Mt. Tom
should not attempt Basin Mt!
Promptly at 7 AM, Sunday, 11 members of the Basin Mt. expressed splash across
the Horton Lake outlet and were on the first of several large deep snow fields
that led toward the upper Horton Lakes. Snow conditions were perfect with a crisp,
firm surface that lug soles bit into like crampons. On the high angle, snow
chutes and fields, old steps from the previous week provided excellent footing as
we climbed into the brilliant morning sunshine. With Gene Gail co-leading, the
entire group was on top by 11 AM. As on Mt. Tom, visibility was unlimited. In all
directions from Basin Mt., ranges of peaks and snow fields extended to the limit
of binocular vision.
The fine new register replaced the old tobacco tin and the old signatures
along with the plastic bag taped to a summit rock by the Mother Lode trio, were
transferred into the new register. After the summit ritual of ceremonies was
completed, the return to base camp started; down, down the still solid snow steps
we had ascended. In one short hour, we were back in base camp. Three climbers
had climbed both summits; Gene Gail and Gerry Huestis enjoyed both views.
A short back pack out to our cars and an early start for home completed this
scheduled trip.
MT. BALDWIN (12,611'), RED SLATE MTN. (13,163') JULY 10-11, 1965 . . Arkel Erb

Eighteen SPS'ers meet at 8 AM at Convict Lake on Saturday, July 10th. The backpack was halted for awhile in an attempt to find a dry crossing of one of the small streams flowing into Convict Creek, but we eventually used the ancient method of stream crossing, known as "wading". We also waded across Convict Creek which was abnormally high because of the heavy snowpack.

We left our packs just beyond Mildred Lake near a mining cabin, used by a group of young miners who were working a calcite mine high up on the north side of Baldwin. While we were having lunch, one of the young men up at the mine was having a bout of altitude sickness. Two of the miners rushed up to see that he got down O.K. We climbed Baldwin via a faint trail up the north side pass some calcite diggings.

Sunday, we climbed Red Slate via the north side which included a little third-class and descended the northwest ridge which was just a talus walk. The Climbers Guide is wrong in saying that the northwest side is the hard side, as even a topo map readily shows that it is the least steep side. One member of the trip became very ill from the altitude on the descent and on returning to camp, was so fatigued that he was only able to return to the car very slowly.

MT. BAXTER, 17 - 18 JULY 1965 . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . Dick Jalli

A cool welcome, preceded by cloudy skies, rain showers in Lone Pine and a brilliant electrical storm in the Inyos nearby, awaited the 20 SPS'ers who assembled at the Oak Creek roadhead for the SPS scheduled climb of Mt. Baxter. The grey clouds swirling around the peaks caused the group to procrastinate nearly an hour, awaiting some favorable sign or break in the weather, and then it was decided to go on anyway.

The weather remained unchanged as the group made its way higher and higher into the mountains until just above summit meadows, the clouds finally turned into rain. It was very different than the usual Sierra trip, with the mountains now hulking dark and foreboding with the tendrils of clouds and mist wrapping around their summits and ridges, and the rain falling gently on the trail and ponchos. It was, in a way, enjoyable but five people didn't agree and started out while the rest sought temporary shelter to wait out the weather before revising plans.

The rain ceased and the sun appeared in the afternoon, though ominous clouds still remained, so progress was resumed. It was now too late to proceed over Baxter Pass to the "sunny west slope of the Sierra" as advertised on schedule, so camp was made at about 10,800' at last timber. This camp not only left the party with more choices and an easier escape in case of further deterioration of the weather, but also turned out to be a better camp anyway, though it made a long second day.

At 0630 the next morning, the group set out over Baxter Pass. Cloud build-up continued but no rain. The north side of the pass posed no problems because of snow (there were large patches but coverage was not general and besides, it
TRIP REPORTS (Continued)

MT. BAXTER, 17 - 18 JULY 1965 (con't)

was soft. We headed down toward Baxter Lakes and then up to the saddle between Baxter and Peak 13183 to the west, then up to the summit which was reached at about 1100 by 14 climbers.

Still wildly billowing masses of clouds and even a little sleet. The Owens Valley was obscured and so were many of the peaks. One felt he was in the Cascades or even Alaska instead of the Sierra.

The weather (such as it was) held and camp and cars were reached without incident.

A local Indian legend tells of the Pot-sa-ga-wah, who were spirits who had created the Sierra and are presently building up the Alabama Hills. In light of the events of this trip and previous SPS trips in this area (Black Mountain last year and Diamond Peak some time before that) it was widely felt that somehow we have gotten on the wrong side of these little fellows. Maybe they are made because they aren't on the Third Class List. Pot-sa-ga-wah!

MT. LÉCONTE AND LONG PINE PEAK, 24 - 25 JULY, 1965 ... K. McNutt

Bright sun and blue skies forecast perfect weather for the 18 SPS'ers and guests who started up the Maysan Lakes Trail, 7:30 AM, Saturday, July 24.

An excellent trail and 3 1/2 hours, combined with a moderate pace brought the group into an ideal camp with wood, water and a magnificent view of the summits of Lone Pine, Le Conte, Mallory, Irving and the Candlelite Ridge.

After a leisurely lunch, up the steep cree and rock chute to the L.P. Ridge we climbed. The weather became overcast before we reached the ridge and the advance group increased pace and 1 hour and fifty minutes from camp arrived at the L.P. Summit register. Sign in and shutter snapping for 5 minutes was all the relaxation permitted by the "worsening" weather and driving sleet was upon us. The static electricity was so great the hair on bare heads and arms was standing straight out like a fright wig. The six climbers on the summit grabbed packs and parkas and started pell mell for the "Down elevator". The first bolt of lightning struck the upper summit ridge about 300 yards from the retreating six and within 3 minutes, the second bolt struck closer to both of us and the summit by a hundred yards. By then, we were looking for large (or small) rocks to crawl under without success. High winds charged across the ridge loaded with half rain and sleet. The rock that had been dry and firm on the ascent, was now wet, icy and unsure underfoot.

Paul Nelson was turned back from the last hundred yards to the summit by a third bolt that struck the very knob of the top. All climbers converged on the scree chute and the group set a mass speed record down to the large talus base. All got off safe if scared. Tube tents and lines abounded as moderate rain and wind existed even at camp and hot food was soon the priority item on several, warm fires.

Rain continued until 6:30 PM and then only the wind remained to crackle tube tents most of the night.
TRIP REPORTS (Continued)

MT. LECONTE AND LONG PINE PEAK, 24 - 25, 1965 (con't)

Five AM Sunday saw the entire group up and searching the high ridge for some sign of LeConte summit block. The summit and upper ridge were hidden by very black clouds and were obviously buffeted by strong and steady winds. The decision was made -- no attempt for LeConte's summit would be made that AM. After a leisurely breakfast, we packed out to the portal and one last look at the LeConte summit and ridge revealed the storm had vanished and at least bright and clear (but wind conditions prevailed).

SILVER PEAK, 21 - 22, AUGUST 1965  . . . . . . . . . . . . Jerry Keating

The SPS first scheduled climb of Silver Peak (11,878') provided a pleasant change of pace August 21-22 from the usual eastern approaches to the High Sierras.

From the new Vermillion Campground on the northwest shore of Lake Edison (7,613'), 29 participants -- including several from the mountaineering training course -- backpacked Saturday morning to the Devils Bathtub, a distance of five miles and a gain of only 1,500 feet. The first part of the trail is open to motorized vehicles, but the Bathtub and beyond is in the John Muir Wilderness Area and therefore off limits. Camp was located in the trees at the far end of the lake, and participants loafed, fished or practiced rock climbing that afternoon.

On Sunday, 20 persons headed for the peak via the canyon above camp. A large amphitheater was encountered at the canyon's head, and glacial polish and the remnants of a moraine were observed. Thence the part climbed to a prominent notch (about 11,400'), dropped to a small lake on the other side (10,720') and finally ascended the easy southeast ridge of Silver, all of which was Class 2.

Everyone except two climbers reached the top within 1 1/2 hours. One had stopped at the notch after vomiting, and another had become too ill to continue only 100 feet from the peak. The latter, who had taken two different pills to counteract altitude sickness, was immobile for 30 minutes before getting back on his feet. In accordance with SPS rules, the party did not leave camp until he was safely back.

The time was 4 PM, however, with the cars two hours away. Fortunately, one leader and two guests of his were in for an extra day, and it was decided the ailing climber should remain at the lake in order to recuperate. This freed the main party and allowed the remaining four to backpack out on Monday with no further difficulty.

Leaders were Gordon MacLeod and Jerry Keating.

MT. CHESTER VERSTEEG DEDICATION, SEPT. 4 - 5 - 6, 1965  . . John W. Robinson

Chester Versteeg loved the Sierra Nevada. During a half century of climbing in his favorite range, he contributed some 250 names for Sierra Landmarks. One summit that somehow resisted his titling onslaught was, until this year, known
MT. CHESTER VERSTEEG DEDICATION, SEPT. 4 - 5 - 6, 1965 (cont)

simply as Peak 13,470' (Mt. Whitney Quadrangle). Today, almost two years after Chester's death, this multi-summitted peak, midway between majestic Mt. Tyndall and stately Trojan Peak on the Sierra Crest, bears the name of Mt. Chester Versteeg - an eternal monument to one who introduced so many to the gentle, primitive intimacies of the Range of Light.

Over the Labor Day weekend, a small party of determined climbers made the long trudge up Sheperd Creek, over the Pass, and up Mt. Versteeg to dedicate the peak. Nine reached the summit via the rocky and in some places loose northeast ridge. A register was placed atop; and Old Glory and the Versteeg family flag were unfurled during the brief dedication ceremony.

The peak itself is worthy of Chester's name, although it seems dwarfed amid the 14,000-foot giants of Tyndall and Williamson and nearly 14,000-foot Trojan Peak. Because it is surrounded by these mighty monarchs of the Sierra, it probably does not deserve SPS qualifying status.

The route is as follows: From Shepherd Pass ascend a gentle slope to the southeast, then drop 400 feet and contour around two small lakes to the foot of the Long Northeast Ridge of Mt. Versteeg. Ascend the ridge, minimum class 3 in spots, until it joins the main buttress of the peak. Climb upwards to the right (west) over very loose rock to the summit ridge. Take extreme care not to dislodge boulders. The summit (Class 2) is the easternmost (leftward) of several granite-block high points.

MOUNT CONNESS, 17 - 18 SEPTEMBER 1965 . . . . . . . . . . . . Bill Hunt

Twenty eight SPS members and guests met at 10:00 AM on Saturday morning in the parking area of Saddlebag Lake campground. All were eager to start the climb of 12,590 foot Mount Conness, an impressive peak on the Sierra crest a few miles north of Tioga Pass. It was to be the first Sierra peak for many in the group. A few gray clouds peeking over the horizon in the west caused no concern for it was a fine brisk late summer morning and the weather forecasts had predicted no storms for the mountains.

At 10:45 after a caravan to Sawmill Campground over a poor road, John Thornton led the party up the valley past the Carnegie Institute Experimental Station towards a low point on the ridge between White Mountain and Mount Conness. The main group took a lunch break on the ridge while some ate lunch below the ridge out of the cold wind that had begun to blow. During lunch, the sky became completely overcast and, surprisingly, snow began to fall.

The leaders assured everyone that there would be only flurries of snow, but nevertheless we hurried on towards the peak a mile away and a thousand feet above us. The altitude began to show its effect on those not acclimatized and progress was slower than had been originally anticipated with the first group not reaching the peak until 2:00 PM. By this time, there was about two inches
of snow on the ground, visibility was poor, and the second class scramble up the several hundred feet to the summit had become treacherous third class climbing on slippery snow covered rocks.

An added factor soon became apparent. While standing on the ridge to the summit with the last of the party I felt the tingling down my back and heard the buzzing of static electricity. Who would expect this in a snowstorm with the temperature in the low twenties? Because of the dangerous conditions, four climbers had to be turned back from a point very close to the top of the peak. In addition, instead of going to the top, John Thornton and Graham Stephenson both of whom had previously climbed the peak spent a cold hour helping the more inexperienced across the slippery rocks below the summit, and so a total of twenty two eventually sighted the register. Under normal conditions, there is no doubt that all would have made the summit, but by this time all were anxious to start the descent. On the summit I had to crawl to the register to escape the static electricity which would crackle down the back when one stood up. At that point, my thermometer indicated 20 degrees and the September snow was coming down harder than ever.

The walk back to the point where we descended the ridge went quickly, but the slippery rocks and slopes below the ridge made the descent from there to the starting point slow and hazardous. It was 6:30 PM before the last of the party reached the parking area after which, no time was wasted in driving to lower elevations. The cars, which were parked at about 10,000 feet, had from 3 to 4 inches of snow on them and the storm was not abating at all. By now, the restaurant in Lee Vining, even with its crowds of opening day hunters, was quite inviting.

Sunday morning dawned clear and beautiful, but with the Sierra covered with a white frosting from about the 6,000 foot level. A 7:30 AM meeting in the Lee Vining restaurant concluded that the questionable status of the roads to Tioga Pass and Saddlebag Lake was enough to cancel the scheduled climb of North Peak and so the group broke up to engage in various activities before the long ride back to Los Angeles. Six of us climbed to Crater Peak, the high point of the Mono Craters, and enjoyed a fine view of the snow covered Sierra in beautiful sunshine. A dip in the warm waters of Hot Creek near Mammoth concluded the weekend.
PRIVATE TRIPS

SOUTH GUARD AND CROSS MTN. Jerry Keating

South Guard (13,224') was climbed September 5 by Neko Colewine, Gene Brigham, Joe DeVries and I in a trip which indicated that this peak on the Great Western Divide is accessible on a two-day weekend.

After a 5,500-foot backpack on Saturday, we left Sphinx Lakes (10,520') at 7 AM Sunday and hiked over the 12,000-foot pass used by the SPS to reach Mt. Brewer. Thence we dropped to the canyon beyond and followed Brewer Creek to the large basin northwest of South Guard. A very broad Class 2 gully, which start immediately north of the peak, was our route of ascent.

From camp, the climb took less than three hours, and we easily could have returned to Kings Canyon that afternoon had we elected to forgo North Guard (13,327'). As it turned out, we were back in camp by 4:45 PM.

Future parties should note that the USGS's 1956 Mt. Whitney quad correctly places the peak. Earlier maps and the original Climber's Guide, however, show it more than a mile away and lower.

On Monday, we backpacked from Sphinx Lakes over the ridge to a lake mislabelled 11,910 at the western base of Cross Mtn. (12,110'). We toppled the ridge at about 11,300 feet and climbed somewhat higher to find a Class 2 way down the other side. From the mislabelled lake, which is actually 10,600 feet high, we scrambled to Cross' northwest ridge and followed it to the summit on good Class 2 rock. From Sphinx Lakes, the climb took 3½ hours. A more direct descent was made via the gully which starts immediately southwest of the summit. It was also Class 2.

Cross is somewhat overshadowed by several numbered peaks on the ridge leading down from North Guard, but it has an impressive north face resembling that of Sawtooth (Mineral King) and is isolated. Best approach on a two-day weekend would be up the stream which flows into Sphinx Creek just above the trail crossing, a route which we used on our return to the cars.

GLACIER PARK, MONTANA, 14-21 AUGUST 1965 B. Lilley

The week of Aug. 14-21 was spent in Glacier National Park by Rich Grady and Barbara Lilley. After the spectacular drive thru the Park via the "Going to the Sun Highway", they packed in from Lake St. Mary to a shelter cabin on Gunsight Lake, at 5,275' (6½ miles) on Sunday. From here they made the climb of Blackfoot Mountain (9,597') via the Blackfoot Glacier, described as "the only real ice climb in the park". Enjoyable Class 3 & 4 snow and rock, requiring use of ice axe, crampons and rope, was encountered for only about 1,200 feet; the rest of the elevation gain consisted of trail, moraine scrambling and scree. The trail back to the cabin was lost on the return trip, giving the two a sample of Canadian-type bushwacking before they finally reached the cabin at 9:00 PM. Mt. Jackson (10,023), a 4,800' elevation gain on Class 2 and 3 scree and rock via the NE ridge, was also climbed after they hiked all
GLACIER PARK, MONTANA, 14 - 21 AUGUST 1965 (cont')

the way to Gunsite Pass looking for the "last switchback" as described in the Guide Book and had to retrace part of their steps. Descent was more rapid down the east side of the ridge and included a glissade; earlier in the year, this would be a nice snow route to the ridge.

Packing out on Wed., they drove north to Waterton Park, Alberta, and after enjoying some good Canadian beer (10 cents a glass), took the commercial boat up Waterton Lake and packed for 23½ miles up Waterton Lake to Camp Creek (re-entering Glacier Park). From there, the next day they made the climb of Mt. Cleveland (10,438'), highest in Glacier Park, up through 2000' of brush (aided greatly by an elk trail) and up the spectacular but easy west face. A rainstorm the following day discouraged further climbing so they packed out to begin the return trip home. The rock in this area is too poor for technical rock climbing but by visiting the area several weeks earlier, many scree slopes could provide enjoyable snow climbs and subsequent glissades. As the area contains 1,000 miles of trails, a two week period is required to really appreciate the park. Although the Life Magazine article fortunately came out after they had returned, they did use a cowbell tied to a pack hoping to avoid startling bears into an attack. This makes one appreciate more than ever the "Gentle Wilderness" of the Sierras.

THE HERMIT AND MT. GOETHE

A brief penetration into the Evolution region provided highly successful July 24-25 for Sy Ossofky, Barbara Lilley, Gordon MacLeod, Neko Colevine, Rich Gnagy and Jerry Keating.

Prime objective was The Hermit (12,360'), whose granite walls tower 2500 feet above Colby Meadow, but Mt. Goethe (13,210') and Mt. Lamarck (13,117') were climbed for good measure.

Leaving the North Lake roadhead at 7:15 AM Saturday, we backpacked over Lamarck Col by a side trip to Mt. Lamarck, but nonetheless, everyone was in camp by 1:30 PM.

Hopes of climbing The Hermit that afternoon were abandoned when a severe thunderstorm erupted, but four of us were able to climb Mt. Goethe after the lightning abated. The hogback-like summit is visible from Darwin Canyon and should not be confused, as we did, with the more impressive outcrops immediately to the northeast. The roundtrip took less than three hours via the easy southeast slopes.

With skies threatening, we left at 7:15 AM Sunday for The Hermit. After dropping to Evolution Lake, we contoured to the east base of the peak and ascended a steep chute with a huge chockstone at its mouth. This chute is very loose and is third class in places despite "A Climber's Guide" rating of Class 2.

Upon reaching the chute's head, we turned right (N) and scrambled to the 20-foot summit block, a fourth-class stone which once was called "unclimbable". With the help of shoulder stands and belays, five of us reached the top and placed the register in its rightful place.

Jerry Keating
PRIVATE TRIPS (Continued)

THE HERMIT AND MT. GOETHE (con't)

We returned to camp at 1:30 PM, lunched for half an hour and then backpacked to the cars in four hours. Skies were threatening all the way, but the rain held off until the moment of our return, giving further evidence of the trip's success.

THE CLEAVER -- TUNNABORA (June 5 - 6, 1965) . . . . . . Henry Frye, Jr.

A clear Sierra sky greeted Ellen Siegal, Andy Smatko, Tom Ross and myself when we left Whitney Portal early Saturday morning. The North Fork of Lone Pine Creek afforded us ample opportunity to exercise our city-bound lungs; by the time we ascended the Esrebach Ledges, we were all agreed that it would be a working week-end. Below Lower Boy Scout Lake, where a side tributary enters the main creek (or as we called it, the North Fork of the North Fork), we turned north-west into the canyon just east of and parallel to Mt. Carillon.

We traversed back and forth across the creek thru a series of ledges and continued beyond the tree-line to snow level (between 11,0001 and 12,0001) where we established our camp. The head of the canyon was formed by the south wall of The Cleaver (a local name - 13,355') which is 6th class. Our early arrival enabled Ellen, Andy and Tom to climb an unnamed peak (approximately 13,000') just north-east of Mt. Carillon, while I lazed the afternoon away atop my sleeping bag. No cairn was found atop this peak and none was left.

Cold winds coming down-canyon plus lack of camp-fire wood made us all turn in early that evening.

An imposing view of Lone Pine and the sheer east wall of Carillon Candlelight Peaks to the south inspired us when we left camp Sunday morning for the head of the canyon where we ascended a long snow chute to the ridge between Carillon and The Cleaver. We traversed to the north-west ridge of The Cleaver and ascended via easy 3rd class ledges. From the top, we were able to see across the still frozen Tulainyo Lake to the Kern-Kaweah area for good views of Kern Point, Milestone Mtn., Midway Mtn., Table Mtn. and Thunder Mtn. A quick descent to the ridge between The Cleaver and Tunnabora Peak and the traverse to the summit of Tunnabora gave us additional views of Mt. Barnard and Mt. Williamson. For me, the climb of Tunnabora was my 6th official peak for entry into the SPS -- which occasion prompted some impromptu remarks from Ellen, Andy and Tom. Our return to the Carillon-Cleaver ridge was slowed by softening snow but a slushy 1000' glissade down the snow-chute helped speed us to camp. Tom chose the easier way of coming down on his short skis, and his graceful turns caused hardly a guffaw. Lightened pack loads, raised spirits and the thought of a hearty dinner in Lone Pine did much to hurry our descent to the Portal. Newly melted snow had raised the main creek as well as the side tributary causing us to emerge with soggy boots, but did not dampen our feelings of a well-spent and pleasant week-end. Our dinner revived us sufficiently to return to Los Angeles about 1 AM looking forward to another Sierra climb.
Three of Yosemite's most isolated summits, Pettit Peak (10,788'), Volunteer Peak (10,479') and Piute Mtn. (10,541'), were climbed August 7-9 by Rich Gnagy, Barbara Lilley and I in what qualified as a roller coaster-type death march.

Leaving Virginia Lake (9,700') at 7:30 AM Saturday, we backpacked over Summit Pass, dropped into Virginia Canyon, crossed the ridge to Matterhorn Canyon, ascended Benson Pass and finally made camp at 9,850 feet about a half-mile below the pass. The mileage added up to 20½ (all on trail) and the gain exceeded 4,300 feet.

With its ups and downs, this approach is about 4 miles longer than the White Wolf route described by Andy Smatko in the July-August, 1962 Sierra Echo but it is higher and less subject to heat. As it was, we could have climbed Pettit or Volunteer that evening but elected instead to bathe in a pond near camp and fight with the mosquitoes.

It took 12 hours Sunday to climb the three peaks and return to camp. First, we contoured to a broad saddle west of Rodgers Lake and then scrambled southward to Pettit. From the summit, Volunteer was visible 1½ miles to the north and Piute was sighted 5 miles to the northwest. The climb of Pettit took 1½ hours and a similar amount of time was spent traversing to Volunteer. Piute, however, was harder for there is no feasible way to avoid dropping to 7,600-foot Benson Lake.

From the lake, which also was mosquito-infested, we hiked to about 8,300 feet on the Seavey Pass trail, then turned southwestward to follow a stream leading from the amphitheater below Peak 10,368. A loose but easy chute led to a saddle just north of Peak 10,368, and we walked the short distance along the ridgetop of Piute's summit. As was the case with Pettit and Volunteer, Piute was Class 1 and 2. Returning to camp involved a 2,200-foot gain, but we saved at least a mile of trail by going cross-country up the stream flowing down from Smedberg Lake. The day's gain was about 7,000 feet and the mileage was in the neighborhood of 20.

On Monday, we retraced our steps, reaching the car in 9 hours, 30 minutes quicker than the march in, despite a similar gain.