CHAIRMAN'S CORNER

As my last Chairman's Corner, I am going to make it short and sweet!

I hope you all had a nice Holiday.

I want to thank everyone - and I mean everyone - for their cooperation in helping to make this past year a most successful one. A special thanks to the members of the Management Committee.

It certainly has been a wonderful experience for me, and I appreciate all your cooperation because without it I would not have gone very far. This is not a one-man show, - it takes more than one man on a rope to climb the mountain.

The new Management Committee consists of John Thornton, Chairman, John Robinson, Vice-Chairman, Dick Sykes, Secretary, Bep Bingham, Treasurer, and Jerry Keating, Alternate Officer. I do not see how we could improve on this group.

I strongly suggest that if they ask you for help - tie in - and if you have any ideas, contact them, because that is the only way we can make this club bigger and better.

In closing I would like to mention that I have just completed the Mountaineer's List and it should be out in the next Echo.

-Sid Davis-

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EDITOR: Ellen Siegal, 3460 Greenfield Avenue, Los Angeles, California 90034.

STAFF: Bob Mason (typing and printing), Judy Hoeptner (mailing).

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******NEXT COPY DEADLINE****** Wednesday, January 3, 1968.
The annual Banquet of the Sierra Peak Section, was held on December 7th, and everyone seemed to have a thoroughly good time.

After an excellent dinner, we turned to the business at hand, namely the introduction of the new Management Committee for the 1968 season.

John Thornton, our new Chairman, made a fine acceptance speech, stressing the need to concentrate on the training of future mountaineers, by help from the more experienced members. This would include the practice of conservation and safety, while climbing.

He then introduced the other members of the Committee - John Robinson, Vice-Chairman, Dick Sykes, Secretary, Bep Bingham, Treasurer, and Jerry Keating, Alternate Officer.

The evening concluded with John Thornton showing the exciting slides of his trip to the Wrangell Range in Alaska.
NEW MEMBERS AND EMBLEM HOLDERS

We extend a warm welcome to the following new members of the Sierra Peaks Section:

ROBERT AND KEMPER STONE, of Kensington, California. They climbed North Palisade, Thunderbolt, Agassiz, Middle Palisade, Split Mountain and Sill.

MARK GOEBEL, of Pasadena, California, who climbed Whitney, Muir, Agassiz, University, Williamson and Langley.

ANN HUNT, of Redondo Beach, California. Ann climbed Davis, Banner, Olancha, Ritter, Siretta and Owens.

BARBARA SYKES, of Redondo Beach, California. Barbara climbed Independence, Ritter, Lyell, Matterhorn, Thor and Owens.

ROBERT J. BROTHERTON, of Laguna Beach, California, who climbed Brewer, Goddard, Abbot, Ritter, Whitney, and Matterhorn.

RAYMOND H. WILLEMS, of Fresno, California, who climbed Half Dome, Mt. Lyell, Sill, North Palisade, Winchell and Alta Peak.

Our heartiest congratulations and a warm welcome to the following people who have joined the SPS as emblem holders:

LUCIEN DESAULNERS, of Berkeley, California. Lucien climbed Lyell, Matterhorn, Abbot, Ritter, Humphreys, North Palisade, Goddard, Brewer, Darwin and Williamson.

DON WOODS, of San Jose, California. Don climbed Lyell, Whitney, Split, Williamson, North Palisade, Ritter, Darwin, Humphreys, Abbot and Matterhorn.
TRIP REPORTS

RAMBLINGS ALONG AND NEAR THE KINGS-KERN DIVIDE, September 6-17 ....... Andy Smatko

This article will be presented in considerable detail for a number of reasons, chief of which is the value to future adventurers in the wealth of information herein. In addition, the Echo in these winter months is pretty lean, and any climbs or hikes will make one nostalgic for the Sierra in the coming Summer. Details of ascents of rarely climbed peaks will be found in this essay.

On the morning of September 6, 1967, Bill Schuler, Tom Ross, Ellen Siegel, Dennis McAllister and myself started from the Symmes Creek roadhead with light Kelty Packs, as the rest of our heavy gear was being packed over Shepherds Pass by mule power. Our destination was the first patch of timber shown at 11,600' about ½ miles SW of the Pass. Alas, we found that the Geologic Survey can make mistakes, for there was no timber here as shown on the Mt. Whitney Quadrangle map; the first timber was found at Sheep Camp, 3 miles WSW of the Pass (our packer said closer to 3½ miles). By the way, our lone packer was a realy salty character - aged 83 years - and very knowledgeable about this part of the Sierra. We all, the packer included, spent the night at Sheep Camp, elevation 11,200', and for a while it looked as if our first night was going to be a wet one but rain did not deluge us this night.

The next day, September 7, found us up early and eager. We headed directly west for 1/3 mile to intercept the Muir Trail, then followed it north to about 12,500', just below (south) of Forester Pass, and headed NW along the north shore of the two lakes in the basin. The saddle in the Kings-Kern Divide NW of the higher and larger lake was easily reached - class I to II - and we then proceeded east along the crest to climb Peak 13,760'+ (class III). The only ascent made of this peak was by Hervey Voge and Dave Brower in 1934. After descending to the large lake, our paths diverged. Bill and Dennis climbed the small peaklet SE of Foresters Pass and Junction Peak. Tom climbed the first peak NW of the Pass from the Pass. Ellen and I tried to reach the same peak from the Kings-Kern crest west of the peak but we were foiled by minimal 4th class walls and lack of time. Meanwhile, Dennis came down Junction Pk. via the NW-W chute and Bill dropped northwards over the saddle between Junction and the aforementioned peaklet, traversed east over the saddle NNE of Junction Pk. (class IV) and then down to intercept the Junction Pass trail. He went on to the roadhead, leaving his sleeping bag cached at Anvil Camp.

Before Dennis, Tom, Ellen and I returned to Sheep Camp a lively rain storm with a wondrous lightning display entertained us for the next 2-3 hours. This storm proved to be the only rain on our entire trip, but at the time our foreboding was plainly visible on our faces.

The next day, September 8th, we backpacked to the pass directly south of Lake South America, climbed Peak 13,030' to the NE. This peak is named Mt. Torchbearer and has been climbed by several parties, including Chester Versteeg. It is class I to easy class II, via our route or from any direction. We then headed directly west along the drainage from Lake South America to a perfect campsites just below the first lake - at about 11,350'. There is ample scattered timber at this elevation although the Topo map does not show timber at these lakes.
On September 9th, our objective was Peak 13,090', 0.5 mile SSW of Mt. Jordan. We four approached the peak from directly east. As we approached it, we were dismayed by its precipitous walls. There was an easy saddle midway between this peak and Mt. Jordan but south of this saddle was a series of impossible gendarmes with deep clefts between. The chute heading directly up between the twin summits looked improbable in its upper 500' (at least class IV to V). The only breach in the peak's eastern defences was a slanting light colored shallow chute going up from right to left just south of the southern summit. However, this chute ended about half way up the wall and we could not tell what happened from there. Anyway, we ascended this loose class II to III chute, passes a big chockstone on its right and reached the base of the south ridge. Two class IV pitches brought us to the south (and lower) summit. There was no cairn or evidence of previous ascent. We traversed to the higher north summit and here too there was no evidence of a previous ascent. The Climber's Guide states that Norman Clyde climbed the first pinnacle south of Mt. Jordan (Old Guide) and the latest edition states that Clyde made the first ascent of Peak 13,090'. Knowing that such information was in the guide, we very carefully searched for evidence of a previous ascent. Those who know Norman say that he always builds a cairn and leaves a register. No such evidence was found. Both summits had plenty of small rocks and flat boulders to erect a cairn. Either Clyde neglected to erect a cairn and place a register or we four - Ellen, Tom, Dennis and I - had made a first ascent. There are plenty of pinnacles south of Mt. Jordan, and as mentioned previously the ridge south from the easy saddle between Jordan and Peak 13,090' is very broken by sharp pinnacles and deep clefts. It was our opinion that this north ridge is high class IV to probable V in difficulty. The SSE ridge is class III to IV from a deep "V". The walls on either side of this "V" are vertical, so access to the south ridge from this cleft would be high class V or VI. It would be very difficult to gain this south ridge from the east - and moderately difficult from the west (class IV). However a class III route could be tracked from the SW up a chute and a series of ledges to the west ridge of Peak 13,090' and thence to the north summit. This would be the easiest route. The NW face is pretty sheer. We built a cairn and left a register and descended via our ascent route.

Camp was made at the large lake at about 11,000' just SSE of point 12,513'. Point 12,513' would be an easy class II to III climb via the south slopes. Meanwhile Bill Schuler had again started from the roadhead on September 8th in the forenoon, and camped at Anvil Camp, and on September 9th came over Shepherds Pass to join us at the above mentioned large lake.

On September 10th the five of us headed west up a most beautiful canyon to Lake 12,280' and climbed Peak 13,231' via the SW slopes. This peak has a series of gendarmes along the SE ridge. This ridge can be gained from the east or west along the SE ridge. This ridge can be gained from the east or west via class 11 slopes and chutes. The actual summit pile was easy class III. This peak had been climbed three (or was it two?) times previously. Ours was the 4th (or 3rd?) ascent.

While Ellen went on back to camp, Bill and Dennis climbed Thunder Mountain (I had climbed it twice previously, and Tom and Ellen had climbed it also). Tim and I dropped down North over the saddle between Thunder and Pk. 13,231'. This was class II, but one must look carefully for the route. Even at this time of the year there was snow almost up to the saddle on the north side. One could easily get into class III rocks and steep icy snow. We dropped about 650' and contoured around the NNE buttress of Thunder and thence ascended the SE slopes of Pk. 13,040', 0.5 mi. NNW of Thunder Mtn., to the summit. This peak was climbed only once previously by Oliver Kehrlein and five others in 1940. A cairn was found, but no register. We rebuilt the cairn and deposited a
(TRIP REPORTS, continued)

(KINGS-KERN DIVIDE) - continued

register on this summit. Return was via the same route over the pass east of Thunder Mtn.

The next day, September 11th, found us backpacking to a camp spot along Milestone Creek at about 11,100'. We then proceeded towards Milestone Mtn. which Ellen, Bill and Dennis climbed via the usual route one (1). Tom and I gained the saddle just SE of Milestone (there is a short pitch of class III near the top). We dropped south for about 75' and then ascended the NW ridge of Pk. 13,520' (the summit register said 13,540'). This is a broad sloping plateau and the summit consists of a pile of rocks - low class III - about 30' above the plateau. I can't be too certain, but I believe only two parties had climbed this peak before Tom's and my ascent. This peak has a sheer north face and nearly sheer east and west walls. The NE ridge would make a fine rock climb as would the east ridge.

FIVE INTREPID CLIMBERS, EAGER TO BE ON THEIR WAY. (From l to r, Andy Smatko, Ellen Siegal, Bill Schuler, Dennis McAllister, and Tom Ross at our camp along the Milestone Creek.)

On September 12th Dennis, Ellen and Bill climbed Midway Mtn. via the east slope and while Ellen descended to camp, Bill and Dennis proceeded to climb Table Mtn. via Route 3, making a few class IV variations here and there. Ellen had previously climbed Table Mtn. Meanwhile Tom and I again went over 13,000' pass SE of Milestone Mtn. and dropped down
(TRIP REPORTS, continued)

(KINGS-KERN DIVIDE) - continued

about 1,200' to a low ridge, ascended this ridge eastwards and then gained the broad chute heading NE between Pks. 13,520' and 13,186' (easy class I to II). From the head of the chute it was a long walk to the summit of Pk. 13,186'. Again I'm not certain of the number of parties prior to our ascent but I believe it was only two. We then dropped down again (west) to the small lakes at 11,700', turned the south ridge of Pk. 13,255' and ascended an easy class III gully to gain the plateau SW of the summit and thence on to the summit. A cairn was found but no register. We placed a register in the cairn and hightailed back to the pass SE of Milestone. Our descent of Pk. 13,255' was via the east face of the south ridge at a suitable point. We had seen this possible area for ascending the peak but weren't sure it would 'go' but it is minimal class III near the ridge top, and if one were in Milestone Bowl, one could gain the south ridge directly from the Bowl just above the highest of the lakes. Needless to say, we were very tired on reaching camp.

September 13th was our easiest day - consisting of a backpack from our 11,000' camp on Milestone Creek, all the way to Sheep Camp 3 miles WSW of Shepherds Pass.

September 14th was a memorable day, as Ellen climbed her 10th Emblem Peak - Mt. Williamson. Our route led us to the base of the west face, and those who have stood here will know what a jagged, rugged face this is. As one studies this face it is difficult to recognize the features described in the Climber's Guide and indeed one could be misled by the description. The following may clarify (or further confuse) those who attempt this face.

The black water stains are fairly evident, although there is another black water stain further south on the west face. The larger and more prominent stain is THE one to remember. Directly above this stain an obvious chute leads up and slightly to the left (north). A smaller chute heads up and to the right (south) - forget it. Take the large left chute all the way to the crest and look over. It is a sheer drop on the other side. You will know now that the route lies a short distance to the right (south) of the head of the chute. Traverse over (south) for 100' or so or drop down 30' or so and gain the base of a class III crack that leads up to the plateau. This is about 60' high and very enjoyable. From the top of the chute it is a class II scramble to the summit. It was Tom's third ascent, (ed. note - he made his fourth ascent of this peak just a short time later - EJS) Dennis's first and Ellen's first and Emblem ascent (ed. note - properly celebrated - EJS). Bill, Dennis and I looked longingly at the west (highest) horn, and with no further ado headed for it. The description in the new Climber's Guide for this climb could be clarified and for those interested may be so clarified as follows: Gain the notch between the end of the plateau and the west pinnacle by traversing the east base of the plateau, about 150' below it, in order to gain the chute heading back up to the crest. This roundabout route avoids the class IV direct drop into the notch if one attempted to come directly from the plateau. From the notch climb up (north) for about 40' to another notch. Now descend diagonally down and to the right on the North side of the ridge for about 120'. The route of ascent of the pinnacle will be obvious from here. We found a class III route to the summit. To gain the other pinnacle one drops down the NE side of the higher pinnacle in a shallow gully to the saddle between the two pinnacles (class III).
We gained the west ridge of Pinnacle 14,125' via class III and one class IV pitch only to find a 40' cleft between us and the mass of the pinnacle itself. A rappel would have been necessary and we had insufficient time, so reluctantly we retraced our steps back to the plateau and on to camp. We still don't know how to gain the notch mentioned from the cleft between the two pinnacles (except via the rappel). We felt that one had to traverse along the North side a bit further and then go up to this notch. Such a traverse would be hairy indeed and minimum class IV. We couldn't see the south side of the lower pinnacle and to gain it, one would have to descend the very steep icy chute between the two main pinnacles for an indeterminate descent and traverse the south side (if possible). If anyone plans to climb these pinnacles from the plateau, parties who have climbed them should be directly consulted.

September 15th found Bill and Dennis climbing Mt. Tyndall via the north slopes and ridge and after this climbing also Peak 13,040' (Polychrome Peak), 0.6 mi. east of Shepherd's Pass via the SE ridge-slope. Ellen and I had climbed this peak earlier that day via the SW ridge-slope. Both ridges are class I. The summit rocks were very easy class III and maybe even II if one looked carefully. Meanwhile, Tom climbed West Tyndall, 13,540', along the west ridge and thence the SW ridge to the summit (class II). Camp was made at the Pothole, after packing back over Shepherd's Pass.

September 16th, while Dennis remained in camp, Tom, Ellen, Bill and I climbed Mt. Keith via the SW chute and west ridge (my third ascent). Leaving Ellen in a secluded spot (ed. note - HA! - EJS), we three proceeded to the sharp pinnacles ½ mile to the NE. There are 3 prominent pinnacles, the highest being the further north. We made first ascents of the two lower pinnacles, built cairns and left registers on them. Both of these pinnacles were good class III climbs. The highest pinnacle was easier of ascent right up to the sheer summit slab which was first climbed by Arkel Erb and Sy Ossofsky in 1963. Using an ingenious rope ladder and belayed by me Bill climbed up to where he could touch a horizontal rib just below the summit itself and where he could see a piton left by the previous party. That shoulder stand of the first ascent party was a mighty hairy one as one had to lean forward from a block and brace the hands on the vertical summit slab; BUT between the feet and the hands was a 14' space through which a sheer drop 50' down was gaping. A failure in the shoulder stand here
could have been fatal to one or maybe two people. We admire Sy and Arky for their
tremendous achievement. We left a register and built a cairn on the horizontal slab
at the foot of the summit slab. Future parties would be advised to bring bolts to
make a safe ascent of this summit slab.

Our return from Keith was via one of the numerous chutes on the SW face.

September 17th saw us backpacking out to the cars and on to home.

ADDITIONAL NOTES
Since we intended to return to Sheep Camp after the various climbs along and near the
Kings-Kern Divide, we had strung up, in sacks, food and gear in an appropriate tree.
There was no need to carry such weight forth and back to Sheep Camp.

On our ascent of Peak 13,760' on September 7th, we could see the scree slope leading
up SW from the basin east of Gregory's Monument to the crest of the Kings-Kern Divide
at Andy's Foot Pass (page 221, Climber's Guide - and sketch 25 of same). On the west
side of the Kings-Kern Divide another scree slope comes down from the pass. On the
Topo map the exact location of the Pass is 1/16th of an inch south of Point 13,840'+
and the pass itself is 13,600'. Point 13,840'+ is 0.25 miles SE of Gregory's Monument.
If one had to make use of this pass, the early summertime would be best, when snow
covers the talus and is consolidated. The pass is class II, and its chief value lies
in permitting one to gain access to the basin south of Harrison Pass from the basin
west of Center Peak and vice versa. One would otherwise have to climb over Forester
Pass, drop down to 11,600' or lower, then climb up over the Pass south of Lake South
America, and then drop down into the basin south of Harrison Pass; - a long and tedious
detour.

There is another pass 0.13 miles SE of Andy's Foot Pass going over the Kings-Kern
Divide. This pass takes one into the basin east of the Cal Tech-Torchbearer ridge
line from which the Muir Trail is easily reached.

I have been tramping around most of the Sierra over the past 12 years and without
reservation think that the area south of the Kings-Kern Divide from about the 10,800'
to 11,500' level is the most scenic and pleasurable one to hike and camp in. It is
uncluttered, and has everything a backpacker would wish for. Tremendous peaks are
readily accessible from high elevations, the scenery is exquisite in all directions,
and wood and water are plentiful. Indeed, the most delightful campspots imaginable
abound everywhere in this region.
Mt. Williamson and Trojan Pk. the Easy Way

Tom Ross

On October 6th I was called out by the Sierra Madre Search and Rescue Team. A man was six days overdue in returning from a scheduled month in the Sierra. He had planned to be in the Onion Valley to Mt. Whitney region, climbing and photographing in this area.

On Saturday our teams met at the Lone Pine Airport. A few members went up the Whitney Trail, but most of us were flown in by a large jet helicopter provided by Edwards Air Force Base.

My first job was to locate various areas favorable for dropping in three-man teams to search for the missing victim. The following areas were where I directed the pilot to land the teams: Just west of Shepherd's Pass, in the Wright Lakes Basin, at Wallace Lake, just north of Guyot Flat and peak, and finally our base camp, at the first lake below Lake Helen of Troy, between Mt. Williamson, Mt. Tyndall and Trojan Peak.

We first searched the lake basins and passes above Lake Helen of Troy. I climbed Trojan Peak up the west ridge. We also looked near the lakes around Mt. Tyndall.

On Sunday we climbed a west chute on Mt. Williamson. It was class II except for a snow filled chimney which was class III. On the summit of Mt. Williamson the new snow was over 3 feet deep in places.

Our pick up time was 3 p.m. We were on radio contact at all times during the search. It only took 15 minutes from the lake to Lone Pine Airport! (ed. note - a bit different from when you climbed it in September, NO? - EJS) A few days later the missing man's body was found on East Vidette. He had been dead a month and had fallen over 1,000 feet down the west face.

Private Trip, November 12

Dick Sykes

What Have We Done?

To all male members of the SPS: WARNING! Bill Hunt and I may have made the colossal blunder of the year. We, I think in fairly good command of our senses, let our wives Ann and Barbara get Sierra Peak NUMBER SIX; thereby disrupting the balance of power in the SPS. Bob Strommer and Sue Sanders were along as witnesses.

After a fine day in the desert, climbing Telescope on Saturday, we managed an early start at about 9:00 a.m. Sunday. It seemed more interesting to climb over the nice looking granite ridge, rather than skirting around the west end. As a result, the six of us found a few easy third class spots to make the trip more fun. Bill was the only one who could keep up with Ann and Barbara and as I approached the summit, nearing total exhaustion, suffering from altitude sickness and fearing frostbite, I could hear girlish
screams from above. There they were, resplendent in triumph, conniving a scheme for electing the first female management committee.

Fellow male members of the SPS . . . . . we can say no more!!! The damage has been done! The die is cast! U N I T E !!!!!

(Ed. note - Hurrah for the girls! And by the way, what SPS peak was it that you climbed? - EJS)