CHAIRMAN'S CORNER

A number of people have contacted me recently regarding membership in the Section, the qualifying list of peaks and meeting the requirements of the Third and Fourth Class lists. So once and for all, here are the procedures:

The list of Emblem and qualifying peaks is available free from Dick Sykes, secretary, upon receipt of a self-addressed, stamped (20 cents) business-size envelope.

Membership in the Section is obtained by climbing any six peaks on the qualifying list. A list of the peaks climbed and a check for $1.00 (for the section newsletter, the ECHO) must accompany a letter of request for membership to the Section treasurer, Bep Bingham.

Bep also handles Emblem requests. To get an Emblem, mail a list of the ten Emblem peaks you have climbed and a check for $5.25 to Bep.

Those who are interested in joining Third Class climbs must be on the Third Class list. To get onto the list you must demonstrate your ability to use an ice axe properly, proficiency in Third Class rock climbing, and familiarity with backpacking and traveling in mountainous regions. A Third Class Qualifying Form can be obtained from the secretary.
CHAIRMAN'S CORNER, Continued

An eligible climber can qualify by demonstrating his abilities to an SPS member who is on the Third Class list. This may be done on any scheduled Section activity, such as a climb, or on one of our Third Class ice axe or rock climbing practices, which are held each winter. The signed and completed form should be mailed to the secretary, who will forward it to the Management Committee for final approval. The applicant will then be notified of the Committee's decision by mail. Current Section membership is a requirement for membership on the Third Class list.

Participation in a Third Class climbing practice session does not automatically entitle one to Third Class membership. These sessions are intended as instructional periods. However, the leader of the practice may sign Third Class forms if he feels an applicant shows the required ability.

Applicants who wish to progress to the Fourth Class list must attend a scheduled Fourth Class practice session and demonstrate their proficiency to the session leader. Forms which define the requirements are available from the Mountaineering Chairman, Arkel Erb. After sign-off, they must be returned to the Mountaineering Chairman or given to the session climbing leader. Membership on the Third Class list as well as active Section membership is a requirement for Fourth Class climbing status.

- John P. Thornton -

From the "Wall-e-vents," the San Fernando Valley group, comes this report:

A deserted farmhouse in a gullied field was pictured in a farm journal which offered a prize for the best 100-word description. An Indian took the prize with this:


"Indian no work. White man crazy."
ASCENDS

MT. WILLIAMSON, June 29-30 ............................................. Bill Hunt

At 7:30 a.m. Saturday, 30 climbers set off for the long backpack up George's Creek to climb the spectacular emblem peak Mt. Williamson. The early start paid off with a relatively early arrival in camp. The group was reduced to 29, as one hiker turned back with a sore foot. Five of the more ambitious people climbed Trojan Peak, 2,700 feet above camp, Saturday afternoon.

The climbers awakened at 4:45 a.m. Saturday morning, and all but two got up to face the brisk cold wind. Ascent of the peak was begun at 5:30 and proceeded uneventfully with all who started reaching the summit by 9:30. An eleven year old girl in the group was among the first to reach the top! Williamson was the 10th emblem peak for Bill Rausch from San Jose, and the sixth qualifying peak for Barbara Akawie.

Four climbers, including the leader and assistant leader, set out for the first of the two bumps to the NE of the main summit of Williamson. Three made the ascent of the enjoyable Third Class route, but the second bump was not attempted, for it looked like dirty Fourth Class. An appointed leader took the group back to camp with the leader and assistant leader bringing up the rear.

All were back in base camp by 12:00—we thought. However, a head count found that two climbers were missing. We waited in camp until about 1:30, then selected volunteers to start a search while the rest of the group packed out. Ten climbers, split into three groups, climbed again to the 13,000 foot plateau, but found no sign of the missing men. The searchers descended by the steeper slopes to the west of camp thinking the two might be found there, but in vain.

Back at camp Wally Henry and another hiker volunteered to again climb back to the plateau with their packs and hike out by Bair's Creek—one canyon north of George's Creek. If the two were not found there, we would notify the authorities and start a search on Monday. The rest of us walked out carrying our own packs and those of the missing climbers. Shortly before dark, when we were about to drive to the roadhead of Bair's Creek to meet Wally, one of the lost men showed up in a car. He had hiked out the north fork of Bair's Creek—two canyons from George's Creek. He had lost sight of the group for a short time and started down the canyon. When he realized that he was going wrong, he just kept going anyway.

The other climber who had strayed was found by Wally along Bair's Creek. His story was essentially the same, but he had decided to camp for the night before hiking out. Needless to say, we were very glad to find the men, for they had caused no little worry and could have initiated a large search effort.

There is a lesson for leaders in this incident. When leading a group whose capabilities are unknown, everyone must be kept in sight at all times. It's hard to see how anyone could get lost descending Williamson since the route was so obvious. However, two separate individuals were confused. Even though those who go into the mountains should be able to take care of themselves, there are so many newcomers on SPS trips that we must realize some do not meet these standards. Therefore, leaders—even though it is a distasteful chore—must keep a watchful eye on their groups at all times.

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ASCENTS, Continued

MT. KEITH & BRADLEY, July 4-6

The Keith and Bradley trip started out with only two enthusiasts showing up--Steve Rogero and Gary Bowen. We left Symmes Creek at 6:30 a.m. and set up base camp at the last trees on Junction Pass Trail. The location is an old packer's camp in excellent condition.

We reached Keith's summit at 8:30 Friday by the easy route. Steve and I tried to climb Bat Pinnacle--future parties should bring a Prussic sling and small piton. Our main objective was to traverse to Bradley. We found the ridge to be high third, taking over three hours if one favors the east side.

Once on top we had an easy talus run to Center Basin, reaching it by 4:00. Everyone was still feeling good, so we decided to do Center Peak, reaching it in an easy hour. After dropping back to Center Basin we picked up the old Junction Pass Trail. We had a little trouble finding the pass on the Anvil camp side, but by dropping right we picked it up at the base of Junction Creek and reached camp by 9:00.

We came out a day early due to a freak rock fall that cut Steve's wrist.

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MT. WINCHELL, MT. AGASSIZ, July 13-14

Saturday noon, ten SPSers settled into camp at Sam Mack Meadow. After lunch eight of us set out to bag an extra prize--Mt. Agassiz. The route from camp leads up past Sam Mack Lake, west from the upper end of the lake, to the foot of the east spur of Mt. Winchell.

We contoured north of the east spur, past a small lakelet, and across the small glacier north of Winchell toward Agassiz Col. From the terminal moraine of the Winchell Glacier, we climbed up a loose Class 2 chute to the ridge north of Agassiz Col, and followed the ridge to the summit.

The trip was uneventful until we passed the small lakelet below the Winchell Glacier on the return trip. While crossing some large talus, Don Anderson dislodged a large boulder which pinned his ankle against another rock.

After two climbers removed the rock, we could not determine the extent of Don's injury. A crutch was made from two ice axes and Don started slowly toward Sam Mack Lake with Bill Wickmer and Elton Fletcher as escorts.

The rest of us continued back to camp, which we reached just at dark. After a quick snack, Erick Shumacher, Steve Rogero, Gordon MacLeod and I carried two Kelty's of food, sleeping bags and a stove up to the edge of Sam Mack Lake. Eric and Steve continued on to the other end of the lake where they met Don, Elton and Bill.

At dawn on Sunday, Steve and Elton returned to camp and then continued to the roadhead to arrange for a packer and extra horse. Don, in the meantime, made his way down to camp, a process which took several hours.
ASCENTS, Continued

The packer arrived at the meadow about 2:00 p.m. Don reached the roadhouse in about 2 1/2 hours. The charge for the guide and extra horse was $20, decidedly cheaper than a helicopter operation!

As a sidelight, several interesting life forms were observed in the marshy pools in Sam Mack Meadow. Caddisfly larva, which made their homes in a small, hollow stick, were observed. These larva, which also manufacture their protective cover from grasses, sand particles and small pebbles, are in the pupal stage of development, and will eventually emerge as adult caddisflies.

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RITTER (13,151') and BANNER (12,945'), July 20-21 ................. John Robinson

John Muir, in his classic book The Mountains of California (1894), bestowed the title "King of the Middle Sierra" on Mt. Ritter. In the book, he gives us a colorful, exciting account of his solo first ascent of the peak in 1872. Although Ritter is apparently a much easier climb now than it was in Muir's day, it still richly rates his "King" title. Along with its adjacent twin sister, Banner Peak, it clearly dominates the region immediately south of Yosemite.

These two dark-hued giants of the Ritter Range were the objectives of 56 climbers (less than one-third SPSeers) who assembled at the Agnew Meadow roadhead Saturday morning. The six-mile knapsack to Lake Ediza was accomplished by noon, and about half of the group spent the warm afternoon loafing, sun-bathing or wading in the cool waters of the lake. The other half indulged in the strenuous exercise of climbing Banner Peak via the class three Ritter-Banner saddle. Twenty-nine reached the summit by 4 p.m. and returned to camp about an hour before sunset.

A veritable army of climbers took off for Mt. Ritter early Sunday morning. Ascending by the standard Ritter Glacier route (Number 6 in Climber's Guide), a record total of 45 reached the summit by eleven. This topped the previous SPS Ritter total by 15 (1960). The immediate panorama was superb, with the jagged black spires of the Minarets rising like cloud rippers a mile to the south. Distant views were hampered by a forest fire near Bass Lake, which hazed up everything from Yosemite to the Rock Creek area.

The large party left the summit in staggered intervals to minimize the danger of loose, falling rocks during the descent. All were back in camp by 2:30. Several were so impressed by beautiful Lake Ediza that they remained an extra day, but the majority returned to the cars that afternoon in leisurely fashion.

Leaders were John Robinson and Gary Bowen.

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-5-
The 1968 Mt. St. Elias Expedition was led by Louis Reichardt, of Palo Alto. Other members were Paul Gerhard, Steve Altman, Steve Arnon, Mike Coffen, Chris Shank, Bob Rice and myself.

We had planned to attempt a new route on the east side, either the East or Southeast ridge. Jack Wilson flew us in on June 16 and was unable to find a suitable landing site on the Newton glacier, so landed us on the Columbus, near the base of the Blanchard route to Mt. Newton.

Later it was decided we could still attempt the SE ridge, by crossing a pass between Mt. Jeannette and Mt. Bering, so we had Wilson return next day and ferry us over to base of the pass.

Several members had a new type of rigid adjustable crampon (which we later found were incorrectly tempered). Before we reached the pass, several crampons had begun to crack, and it was decided to abandon the SE ridge. Instead we traversed the ridge over Mt. Jeannette (unclimbed) and two unnamed peaks, to Mt. Newton and down to Russel Col and the Abruzzi Ridge.

This proved a very enjoyable route to Newton. The greatest difficulty was on the initial ascent of Mt. Jeannette, which was over 50° in spots and required a few thousand feet of fixed rope.
The weather was generally fine for the first two weeks, but as we approached Russell Col we began getting more and more storms.

The ridge down from Newton was the most difficult part of the climb. Our final camp, Camp 8, was finally set up along this ridge about \(\frac{3}{2}\) mile short of the col. Several days were spent, between storms, preparing a route along the last part of the ridge. Fixed ropes were used the entire way, and a ramp was shovelled along the ridge, which we named "Yukon route 1". It followed the brink of the cliff like Calif. Route 1.

July 6 was a beautiful day and the day we should have gone to the summit, but unfortunately we had not completed route 1. It required all day to get the route past an 80° wall of blue ice which had to be traversed downward.

With the route ready at last we got up at 1:00 a.m. on the seventh and all except Bob, (who had the right idea and stayed in camp) started for the summit around 3:30. Weather was still perfectly clear, but a wind was beginning to blow from the east. The wind gradually increased all day, and when we reached 15,000 feet it was blowing snow into our faces quite painfully. We attempted to cross to the right, hoping to get some shelter from the wind, but came onto very unstable snow. Paul, in the lead, was swept over the cornice by a slab avalanche. Chris held him and he jumped back up, unhurt.

After another 1,000 feet or so of unstable snow several of us were ready to turn back. Louis took over the lead again, however, and went back, left, into the full force of the wind, but on firmer snow. We all continued slogging along behind him, for endless hours of torture in the stinging wind.

I had my bunny boots on (1/4" ensolite) and my feet were never cold. But my face mask became so iced up I could not keep it on, and I thought my nose was freezing for a while. It did not, however.

At 4:30 p.m., after 13 hours, we finally reached the highest point, and stepped into Alaska for the only point of the climb. Strangely it was almost calm on the top, although the wind was still raging only 100 feet away. About \(\frac{3}{2}\) hour was spent on top, enjoying the fine view. The weather was still clear below, but some high 'mare's tale' clouds were forming overhead.

On the descent the wind continued to get worse, and at around 13,500 feet it began to snow quite hard. It was then quite dark, so we had a hard time finding our route. We had placed wands only every two rope lengths, and visibility was less than \(\frac{3}{2}\) rope length then.

Around 10 p.m. I was leading, and groping my way down the ridge, when I stepped off the cornice on the west side of the ridge. Mike held me, and I climbed back up. Then I tried going down further right, very carefully, but again fell, this time about 10 feet into a big crevasse. I noticed a hole under the lip with space for everyone, so we all spent a few hours in there. The bivouac was sheltered from wind, but the snow came in onto us, so it was quite uncomfortable.
ALASKA EXPEDITION, Continued

When it got lighter three of us went out and Louis found the next two wands. Then we returned for the others, and we continued back to camp. The visibility was still only $\frac{1}{2}$ rope length, and we had to look into the stinging wind to see the wands. Goggles could not be used as they iced up. Sometimes our old tracks could be found, generally by feel under the snow. Somehow we made our way back to the col, and followed our fixed ropes back to camp. Icing conditions were very bad along this part, and I had trouble seeing due to ice building up on my eyelashes.

About 10 a.m. we finally reached camp, and found only three feet of our seven foot Logan tents were sticking out of the snow. Bob had just tunnelled out from one of them.

Paul had suffered minor frostbite to two toes. He had not worn his bunny boots, which were $\frac{3}{8}$ inch, since he would have had to adjust his crampons to get them on.

After a welcome rest the storm let up on the 10th and we began our return. We had left snowshoes, food and personal items cached on the east summit of Newton. When we got there, all we could find was a huge snowdrift. Luckily we had wanded a route part way down from the cache, and by following the wands up we dug into the side of the drift and tunnelled right to the cache, which was under 10 or 15 feet of snow.

The regular route was followed down to the NNW rib of Newton, and base camp was reached in two more days.

No relaying was done on return, but packs averaged in the 80's. Several rappels were used descending Newton.

We found our radio a mess at base camp, as the battery had spilled acid over everything. Finally we got it set up and attempted to use it, but we did not think it was working as we could not get anything on the receiver. It turned out that the transmitter was working, and Wilson arrived on the next day, the 14th. Luckily, Paul's frostbite blisters had not broken.
PRIVATE CLIMBS

MT. MARY AUSTIN, June 29-30. ........................................ Tom Ross

I left the roadhead at the north fork of Oak Creek at 6:00 a.m. and stopped for lunch at Summit Meadows. Just before I reached the meadows, I saw fresh droppings and tracks of bighorn sheep, and a few minutes later I saw one ram, three ewes, and two lambs. They were grazing just below the trail, but when they saw me they ran down into the canyon.

I left Summit Meadows at 1:30 and reached the high pass (12,600') at 3:50. The pass is between Mt. Mary Austin and the 13,000-foot peak east of Black Mountain. Five hundred feet below this pass was a large array of polemonium. The snow was still solid, but sun-cupped deeply in places.

I reached the summit of Mt. Mary Austin, 13,100', at 4:50 p.m. with my pack, for I planned to camp overnight on the summit. At 6:00 p.m. the temperature was 42 degrees.

No one had climbed the peak since I made the first winter ascent last year. At dusk I watched the "seven-mile shadows run" across Owens Valley--it is amazing how rapidly the shadows creep across. The view is tremendous--well worth the long backpack. The sunset was very beautiful, enhanced by the scent of the polemoniums on the summit. There is a good view of Mt. Williamson, Mt. Darwin and Mt. Brewer from here, and I could count eleven emblem peaks.

A quarter moon rose. I enjoyed a quite night until 3:00 a.m. when a west wind began. By sunrise the temperature was 28 degrees. After taking pictures, I climbed the northwest peak of Mt. Mary Austin, which was a first ascent.

I left the summit at 11:00 a.m. Sunday after spending 18 hours above 13,000 feet. Just below the summit I saw more Big Horn Sheep droppings and although I looked all around I could not see the sheep. I had seen several beds scraped out of the gravel on the summit and many old droppings on the ridge, so apparently the sheep make use of this area frequently. I reached my car at 4:00 p.m.

It was a wonderful trip and a first ascent by a new route up Mt. Mary Austin for me. I went from Summit Meadows directly up the wide chute past a tiny lakelet to the ridge and from there to the summit.

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TUNEMAH PEAK, July 19-21 ............................................. Jerry Keating

Tunemah, according to an old magazine article, comes from a "Chinese cuss word of very vivacious connotation," and this derivation is fitting for the 11,894-foot peak of the same name. At least that's how Barbara Lilley, Jim Jenkins and I feel after a successful encounter with this extremely remote sand pile which poses as an SPS qualifying peak. Inaccessibility and superb view are its only saving qualities.

Jim, starting a two-week backpack, was free to schedule his ascent in a more leisurely manner, but for Barbara and I the 45 hours between 8:00 p.m. July 19 and 5:00 p.m. July 21 spelled a full-fledged death march. Rigors included 49 miles of hiking (33 with packs), 12,000 feet of gain and a bivouac.

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PRIVATE CLIMBS, Continued

With the aid of flashlights we covered five miles Friday night, stopping at the main (second) fork of Cabin Creek. On Saturday we backpacked 11.5 miles past Crown Creek, over Kettle Ridge and down to the 7,360' level of Blue Canyon. Jim remained there with the packs. From this point, the gross gain to the summit is nearly 5,500 feet, and the roundtrip mileage is 16.

Our route was along the hot trail to the abandoned cabin at 8,400', then up a ducked path to a 10,000' saddle north of Burnt Mountain. We lost about 400 feet on the cross-country contour to Alpine Creek, from which the peak was climbed via Class I terrain. We arrived at the summit at 7:35 p.m., six and a half hours after leaving the packs. At 10:30 p.m. we elected to bivouac because the duck-hunting was too slow without moonlight to augment the flashlights.

Fortunately we were able to get back over the 10,000-foot saddle and down to about 9,200 feet before halting in the pines. Also in our favor were mild temperatures and a stream not shown on the map. We reached camp Sunday at 6:45 a.m. (after starting again at 5:15 a.m.).

Our advice to future parties is to allow three days and add Tehipite Dome to the itinerary. Although still strenuous, the trip would be more enjoyable.

NEW ROADHEAD: Road construction underway this summer changes the starting point for climbs in the Wishon Dam area. It is now possible to drive a passenger car to within five minutes of where the Three Springs trail crosses Little Rancheria Creek, thereby cutting a full mile off the approach to Tehipite Dome and Tunemah. An even greater saving would occur on Spanish Mountain, as the new road replaces the jeep trail reported in issues of the ECHO last October and July.

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WOOD'S LAKE REGION, July 4-6 ......... Carl A. Heller

On a recent trip over Sawmill Pass we climbed along the ridge running west from Mt. Baxter. On the basis of our climbing and of the registers we found, there seem to be some errors in the "Climbers' Guide" description of this ridge. I attach a replacement set of descriptions for part of page 211, and hope some other climbers will check my opinions.

Basically I think that Norman Clyde and the Sierra Club party of 1935 did not reach Peak 12,804. The ridge to it from 12,741 is definitely Class 3, and Clyde's party is not signed in. The 1929 party did place a cairn and register, which Fred Jones probably missed.

Our trip was for China Lake Rescue Group familiarization. There were a total of eleven people with John Castel and myself SPS members. The first day seven climbed Coliseum while I climbed Peak 12,372. The second day we all climbed 12,804 and 12,741. Two went to 12,892 and all went over West Baxter to Baxter. From Baxter the youngsters saw a bighorn on the plateau. On the final day most of us climbed Crater Mt. while John and one of the boys climbed Wynne and Pinchot. As usual we were glad of the soft sand on the lower Sawmill Trail which we reached at dusk.

Peak 12,804 is prominent from Wood's Lake, is climbed rather frequently, and probably should be named Wood's Peak.
PRIVATE CLIMBS, Continued

Suggested Corrected Descriptions for page 211 of Climber's Guide:

Peak 12,804 (1.5 miles WNW of Baxter, formerly unnumbered)

First claimed ascent July 1929 by the "Sierra Mountaineers" from Wood's Lake. They suggested the name "Wood's Peak." It is a prominent peak on the ridge as viewed from Wood's Lake.

Route 1. ENE Ridge. Easy Class 3.
Route 2. ESE Ridge. Class 3.
Route 3. From NW. Class 2. Fred L. Jones in 1948.

Peak 12,741 (1.2 miles WNW of Baxter, formerly 12,786)

The eastern, unnumbered summit (1.1 miles from Baxter) appears higher despite the map. The southern approach appears easy Class 2.

Route 1. East Ridge. Class 2. First ascent July 1935 by a Sierra Club party led by Norman Clyde.

Peak 12,852 (1.5 W of Baxter, formerly 12,885)

Route 1. NE Ridge. Class 2 (really!). First ascent July 1935 by a Sierra Club party led by Norman Clyde.

* * * *

EMERALD PEAK, June 29-30 ............................................ Barbara Lilley

As it is apparently safer to walk when tired than drive, a recommended procedure on "death marches" is to climb the peak(s) during the first day if possible—this is especially feasible during the long days of June and July.

To accomplish this, Jess Logan, Dick Beach and I packed over Lamarck Col and down to a campsite on the Muir Trail just above Colby Meadows. Leaving there at 1:45 p.m. Saturday, we crossed Evolution Creek and climbed to a pass at the head of the north branch of the stream draining Mcgee Lakes. Descending about 200 feet, we climbed a diagonal ledge (Class 3) to the southeast ridge of Emerald. From there, after descending 100 feet and traversing another 100 to avoid a knife-edge portion, we gained the easy west slope via a chute and reached the summit (12,546') at 5:30 p.m.

Descent was via a rock gully and snow-filled couloir (good glissading) to the basin between Emerald Peak and Peak 11,778. A long downhill contour was followed back to the Muir Trail, crossing Evolution Creek on a log just above McClure Meadows, and camp was reached at 8:45 p.m.
PRIVATE CLIMBS, Continued

Our reward for this effort was a leisurely (8:30 a.m.) start Sunday morning and a moderately paced hike back over Lamarck Col. We reached the car at 2:30 and were home by 8:00 p.m.—not bad for a "death march."

Incidentally, a notebook is needed for the summit register on Emerald Peak.

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CHARYBDIS TO OBSERVATION, July 4-7 ..................................................... Barbara Lilley

Leaving South Lake at 8:00 a.m. Thursday, Jerry Keating, Jess Logan and I backpacked over Bishop Pass down to LeConte Canyon and up to Muir Pass trail, reaching a pleasant campsit just below LeConte Lake (10,800') by five o'clock (20 miles).

With a 6:30 a.m. start Friday, we continued 1½ miles further on the trail, then crossed Black Giant Pass and climbed Mt. Charybdis (13,091') via the Class 3 north-east ridge. After descending, we crossed over a 12,800' pass, dropped 400 feet and then climbed Mt. Duncan McDuffie (13,271') via the north ridge (Class 3). The weather, which had been beautiful Thursday, now began to deteriorate and it was hailing as we reached the summit. We returned over the summit of Black Giant (13,330') in a thunderstorm—we did not even pause to sign the register! We reached camp just after dark; fortunately the weather cleared in the evening.

Saturday morning we backpacked down LeConte Canyon and followed the Muir Trail up to Deer Meadows (8,800'). In the afternoon Observation Peak (12,322') was climbed in intermittent rain and hail; fortunately the storms stayed mostly to the south.

"If I'd known he was going to show home movies, we never would have come."

S.P.S. MONTHLY MEETINGS?
R. Keenan & R. Boyles

Left Friday evening up George's
Creek for Mt. Williamson. Expect
to be back Sunday PM.

8:30
Com' back dinner 6:30
Supper 7:30
Call away 1:30
Camp 12:30
Start down 10:15

Sam:

Lydia:

"To explore, enjoy, preserve..."