ECHOES FROM THE CHAIR

1988 started out like an average year. Things seemed to be running smoothly, and we had pretty much the same Schedule as last year. The highlight was going to be the fine work done on the Shepherd’s Pass Trail. Well, the trail work is still a highlight, but it was overshadowed by the Sierra Club Board of Director’s decision not to buy insurance coverage for any trip involving the use of ice axe and rock climbing gear. This virtually relegated us to Sunday afternoon walks in the park.

The Board’s decision will stand this coming year, but the fight is not over. The Section will not be leading the prohibited trips. However, as a service to our members, we will publish in the Echo the names of individuals, who submit them, indicating their interest in a particular “prohibited” peak. This way anyone interested in the same peak can make arrangements privately.

Some members have stated that they will not renew their membership to protest the Board’s action. My recommendation for you is to stay with the Club. In spite of the current directors, Sierra Club is the prime organization that looks after our environment, and we must support it. If this Board does not support us, let us get one that does. (I have renewed my membership).

My thanks to all the members of the Management Committee for working so diligently and enthusiastically for the Section. I am proud to have been a member of it. My thanks also to all the people who worked on the Shepherd’s Pass Trail, I hope that more of you participate next year.

Finally, my best wishes to the next Management Committee, who will be carrying the insurance fight next year.

Maris 11-17-88.
The climbing restrictions placed upon us by the Sierra Club will prevent us from scheduling trips to many of the finest mountains in the Sierra. Many members will wish to plan private trips to these more interesting peaks. With a long list of desirable peaks, many active members and a short climbing season, it is going to become painfully clear just how valuable the SPS climbing schedule has been in planning ones trips. Who has climbed which peak? Who wants to go with me over Labor Day to climb Milestone and Thunder?

The SPS Management Committee wants to help. A list of Emblem and Mountaineer's Peaks will be published in the Jan-Feb Echo together with the names of members who have expressed an interest in climbing them next year. Thus, members can see who wants to climb which peak. Members can then arrange private trips, deciding when to go and arranging for Wilderness Permits, etc. You are on your own! If a climber wants to advertise a particular trip in the Echo, the current policy is still in effect. A fee of $1.00 will be charged for private trip announcements up to four lines.

The SPS is not endorsing any private trips. It is merely offering a service to its members by publishing an expression of interest in peaks desired in 1989.

If you are interested in participating, please send a 3" X 5" file card with the name of the peak, your name and your phone numbers to the SPS Outings Chair, Tina Stough, by January 10. One card for each peak, please. These cards will be sorted by peak and the lists of interested climbers will be published in the Jan-Feb Echo.

In order to keep this service manageable, you are asked to express an interest only in one or more of the following 53 peaks: (1) 15 Emblem Peaks (2) 35 Mountaineer's Peaks (3) Glacier Ridge, Hooper and Jordan. If it appears practical, the list can be expanded later, but for now please restrict the cards you send in to these 53 peaks. All 4th & 5th class peaks and most of the tough 3rd class peaks on the list are in this group of 53.

Please note that some of these peaks (e.g. Olanche, Kaweah, Red Slate, Matterhorn, etc) may be scheduled as SPS trips if conditions permit. Also note that the list does not include many other peaks which can not be scheduled early in the year.

Time is short! You don't have much time to prepare your cards and mail them. There is very little time to sort the cards and prepare the lists for the Echo. And there will only be a few weeks after the Echo comes out to arrange your trips and send for Wilderness Permits by March 1. Come to the February meeting to get your Echo earlier.

If you really can't make the January 10 deadline, send in your cards anyway. If there is enough demand, we can publish an amended list later.
SPS SCHEDULE - SPRING '89

MARCH
18-19 O SHEPHERD PASS TRAIL PARTY  
RJ SECOR, CHUCK STEIN

APRIL
15-16 O SHEPHERD PASS TRAIL PARTY  
22 I OWENS PEAK  
RJ SECOR, NORM ROHN
JERRY KEATING, WALT WHISMAN

MAY
13-14 M SAN JOAQUIN MTN (W/SMS)  
27-29 M ANGORA MTN, COYOTE PK  
DAVE DYKEMAN, NANCY GORDON
DAVE DYKEMAN, NANCY GORDON

JUNE
03-04 I TAYLOR DOME, SIRETTA, ROCKHOUSE  
10-11 M N. MAGGIE, MOSES  
17-18 I KERN PEAK  
17-18 I OLANCHA PEAK  
DOUG MANTLE, HICKS, McRUE
GERRY DUNIE, SCOT JAMISON
IGOR MAMEDALIN, S. THOMAS
PATTY KLINE, CAROLYN WEST

JULY
01-06 M NORTH SIERRA CARCAMP PEAKBAG  
DAVE DYKEMAN, NANCY GORDON
11/09/88 BO

OUR MEAGER SPRING SCHEDULE HAS FALLEN VICTIM TO THE SIERRA CLUB'S BOARD'S FAILURE TO OBTAIN MOUNTAINEERING INSURANCE. (HAVE YOU WRITTEN YOUR LETTER TO THE BOARD YET?) WE ARE GRATEFUL THAT SEVERAL LEADERS, ESPECIALLY DAVE DYKEMAN, ARE WILLING TO LEAD UNDER THE CONSTRAINTS OF NO ICE AXES AND NO ROPES. SOME OF THESE TRIPS MAY BE CANCELED OR POSTPONED DEPENDING ON THE SNOWPACK. SHOULD WE BE SUCCESSFUL IN PERSUADING THE BOARD TO OBTAIN COVERAGE, WE WILL SOLICIT A NEW FOR THE SPRING.

1989 SIERRA PEAKS SECTION MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

Elected Positions:
Chair
BILL OLIVER
Treasurer
RUTH ARMENTROUT
Programs Chair
MARIO GONZALEZ
Vice Chair (Outings)
TINA STOUGH
Secretary
VI GRASSO

Appointed Positions:
Chapter Council
MARIS VALKASS
Safety Chair
RICHARD FRITSEN
ECHO Editor
IGOR MAMEDALIN
ECHO Mailer
RON GRAU
Membership Records
GERRY HOLLEMAN

Conservation Chair
CAROLYN WEST
Banquet Chair
BRUCE PARKER
Mountain Records
ROB ROY Mc Donald
ECHO Associate Editor
JEFF SOLOMON
ECHO Printer
SHARON CONRAD
Trail Maintenance
R. J. SECOR

JAN 11 WED SIERRA PEAKS

FEB 8 WED SIERRA PEAKS
PRESERVING THE CALIFORNIA DESERT. Jeff Widen will present a slide show on the California Desert and discuss the California Desert Protection Act. Glendale Federal, Pico & Overland, 7:30. Refreshments.
While climbing a route on Ragged Spur, we spent a night on a ledge overlooking the Enchanted Gorge and we contemplated the people in the SPS and remarked how the SPS resembles a "family" with people assuming various roles. We then categorized these roles and identified certain people in each role. Our results are provided for your comment and perhaps this may help you pass a long evening in discussion.

Category: The Ancients
Description: A person who has permeated all facets of the SPS and whose opinion is accepted as direction by most members
Example: Russell, McRuer, Jones

Category: The Patriarchs
Description: A person (male) who has completed The List
Example: Mantle, et al

Category: The Matriarchs
Description: A person (female) who has completed The List
Example: Lilley (see description in "Downward Bound" by Warren Harding), et al

Category: Dust
Description: A person who started climbing peaks back in the days when John Robinson led 60 people up Cartago from the Owens Valley and still climbs today. These people are generally in the background and attract little public attention
Example: Glassner, K. Davis

Category: Mist
Description: A person who was active in the SPS and is now climbing The Great Mountain in the Sky
Example: Kellow, Henry, Stephenson

Category: Old Soldiers
Description: A person who climbed actively with the SPS but now pursues other activities
Example: Petitjean, Hellman

Category: Braves
Description: A person of less than 10 years membership who fervently chases The List
Example: Most of the membership

Category: Pathfinder
Description: A person who climbs mountains, not necessarily ones on The List, for aesthetic reasons and uses non-standard routes
Example: D. Beach

Name Withheld by Request
The curtailment of technical climbing by the National Office of the Sierra Club severely hampers our enjoyment of the Sierra as a mountaineering group and casts a shadow over the function of the SPS as an organization. Do you have some thoughts on the subject that are printable in the Echo? Suggestions for getting around this chockstone in 1989 are especially welcome from SPS members.

Mystery Peak #5 features Mt. Whitney (with Mt. Russell next door). Joe Stephens, Tom Ross, Lance Dixon, Pete Yamagata and Ron Grau have figured this one out. Again, judging the correct respondent’s addresses, it appears that Southland smog detrimentally affects climber’s memories.

Now, for the “ugly” peaks. Cartego looks like the biggest wart on a hill. Mt. Adams is “not much”. Lamont is scraggly. We asked two seasoned mountaineers: Norm Rohn found Mt. Prater lacking in peak status, and Ron Jones called Four Gables a “nothing” from the west.

We are now even more desirous to hear from you regarding the peaks you want to do next year. Since many more trips will be privately sponsored, your name attached to a desired peak(s) would be of benefit to you. Please read Rob Roy McDonald’s article on page three about the peak “dating” service that we will be providing to our readers.

Mystery Peak #6, depicted unobscured above, merits your attention and response. The photograph was taken by Ron Grau from an uncommon angle. Can you identify it? Send your responses to the Associate Editor, Jeff Solomon, 16 Silver Fir, Irvine CA 92714.
"ULTRA-FEET"

The following paragraphs are excerpts from John Rosendahl’s press release:

Between August 25th and August 30th, 1988, John Rosendahl ran and walked unaccompanied the entire 220.1 miles of the John Muir trail through the spine of the Sierra Nevada. Starting by headlamp at 3:30 AM at the Mt. Whitney Portal parking lot with a very lightweight pack of 17 pounds containing all the food, clothing and shelter required for the next five days, Rosendahl spent some 17 hours a day covering the see-saw elevations (net 32,000’ gain, net 35,000’ loss) that traverse some of the most spectacularly beautiful mountain terrain in the world. Ambitious parties usually spend two weeks or more to make this same trek and often rely upon pre-planned food caches to supplement their original supplies. Rosendahl’s time of five days is a full two days faster than any reported or documented self-contained, self-sufficient trip of the past. In 1982, Don Douglass of Bishop, California, sped over the Muir Trail in just under five days but utilized a support crew at each day’s end to provide food, shelter and other supplies.

The task of running 43 miles a day was made challenging by two consecutive days and nights of bad weather that produced snow at some of the passes over 13,000’, and many flooded trails and creek crossings. Rosendahl arrived at the end of the trail, Happy Isles in Yosemite Valley, exactly 127 hours and 50 minutes after he started.

To train for this demanding run, Rosendahl ran between 100 and 130 miles per week for many consecutive weeks prior to the event, including shakedown runs through portions of the actual course. He also practiced running straight through the night in order to adapt to the mental stress of sleep deprivation.

The skills to survive such a broad range of weather conditions with so little equipment as well as rely on a scant 2,000 calories per day (an estimated 8,000 to 10,000 calories per day were expended) are the culmination of many years of rock climbing, winter mountaineering and other wilderness adventures.

John’s equipment list and trip summary are included below. How is that for planning, perseverance, and performance?! How much less miserable we would be on our peak bagging outings if we could adapt to survive off such a light load? How many more peaks would we be able to summit if we stepped up our pace a bit? A foot note to this story: John revealed that the most difficult aspect of this challenge was overcoming mental fatigue.

**RUNNING LOG**

| ARRIVE: | Glen Pass | TIME: 7:15 AM | HOURS: 15:50 |
| DAY 2: AUG 26 | DEPART: | Glen Pass | TIME: 4:30 AM | MILES: 36 |
| ARRIVE: | Deer Mdw/Palisade Creek | TIME: 10:05 AM | HOURS: 17:35 |
| DAY 3: AUG 27 | DEPART: | Deer Meadows | TIME: 5:00 PM | MILES: 40 |
| ARRIVE: | Heart Lake/Selden Pass | TIME: 9:35 PM | HOURS: 16:35 |
| DAY 4: AUG 28 | DEPART: | Heart Lake | TIME: 4:30 AM | MILES: 44 |
| ARRIVE: | Devil’s Postpile | TIME: 10:10 PM | HOURS: 17:40 |

(continued on next page)
**Average speed:** consistently a little bit less than 2 miles per hour.

**Equipment List / Weight Budget** (weight in ounces)

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<td>running shorts/briefs*</td>
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<td>sleeping pad</td>
<td>11</td>
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<td>tent</td>
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<td>wind pants (vapor barrier)</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>cotton/polypro socks*</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
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286 oz. Total (17.8 lbs.)

**Membership Report**

**List Finisher**
- J. Don Palmer

**Senior Emblems**
- 35. Ret Moore
- 46. Pete Yamasaki
- 39. Tina Stough
- 90. Ruth Armentrout
- 91. Jack Miller
- 32. Wilson Harvey
- 33. Larry Tidball

**New Members**
- Al Craun
- Ingrid Knoblich
- Linda Landau
- 481. Graham Breakwell
- 482. Dave Underwood
- 483. Patty Kline
- 484. Nathan Wong
- 485. Dave Petzold
- 486. Ross Yates
- 487. Reiner Stenzel
- 488. Scott Sullivan

**Sustaining Members**
- Judi Richardson
- Janet Scott
- Brian Smith

**New Subscribers**
- Andrea Goulet
- Roger A. Rotta
- 1355 Mt. Piesag #19
- 17043 E. Alcross
- Walnut Creek, CA 94596
- Covina, CA 91722

**Address Changes**
- Fred Bode
- Karen R. Duzy
- 827 2nd St #103
- Spring Valley, CA 92277
- Santa Monica, CA 90403
- Pam Kane
- 2360 Selkirk Dr
- Boise, ID 83702
- Mary & Rayne Motheral
- (home again)
- 1511 Del Prado Dr
- Hacienda Hts, CA 91745

**Membership**

- 30. Don Palmer
- 1. Dale Van Dalem
- 2. R. J. Secor
ECHOES OF OUR CLIMBS

TROJAN PK. & MT. BARNARD May 6-8, 1988 George Toby / Ret Moore

Only four were on the trip. Al Conrad could not make it and Ret Moore graciously served as assistant. We met Friday at 7:30 at the junction of the George Creek and Onion Valley dirt roads. The last 1.25 miles to the roadhead are very rough in spots. Four wheel or front wheel drive is recommended. We backpacked up the George Creek route to a good campsite at 10,000' just at the snowline. The trail was poor to non-existent in the bottom of the canyon, but crossing the creek was no problem this low water year. It got very cold at night. Water froze inside the tents.

Saturday the weather was threatening but we set out for Trojan ascending the George Creek drainage, mostly on snow, to a high valley. Williamson was to the North and Trojan to the south. We climbed SouthWest up a large snow chute that took us up to a plateau like area SouthEast of Trojan. It was slow going breaking through and postholing. Williamson and the other peaks disappeared as more clouds kept coming in from the SouthEast. We climbed on to the summit of Trojan, but with the poor weather and slow going it did not appear wise to go for Barnard. We probably would not get back to camp before dark. So for variety we decided to return by a different route. We dropped down to Lake Helen of Troy and proceeded past the outlet and down the canyon. This was a big mistake. It was some time later before we realized that it was not the George Creek canyon. From Lake Helen of Troy we should have climbed up to a small col that led to the head of George Creek canyon. Nothing to do but retrace our steps. Fortunately the weather improved. But now it became evident we would pull into camp after dark. Once it got dark the pace slowed to a crawl by flashlights. We eventually got back to camp, very late. Those sleeping bags never felt better. It was indeed a long exhausting day. My sincere thanks to Ret Moore. He did a lot of the night leading and route finding.

Sunday Ret also led us out the George Creek route in good time back to the cars. We regrouped in Lone Pine at the Sierra Cantina for some fine Mexican food and salvaged a somewhat disappointing trip.

George.

MT. WILLIAMSON, TROJAN PK. & MT. BARNARD May 13-15, 1988

Dave Dykeman / Graham Breakwell

The SPS became active in the U.S. Forest Service Adopt-a-Trail program and adopted the Shepherd’s Pass Trail. To promote turnouts for trail crews, the Management Committee requires that participants of SPS-scheduled climbs of Mt. Williamson participate in the Shepherd’s Pass Trail work, this George’s Creek trip included. I did my weekend and informed all participants of their obligation then left meeting the requirement to their integrity.

The Forest Service quota limit for George’s Creek is six people, and is open only for two weeks at Xmas and from April 15th through May 15th. The trail is nearly extinct. Don Borad was the listed leader. He didn’t make it, so Donna O’Shaughnessy, Daye Petzold and I were glad Graham could be pressed into service. Except for lack of a recognizable trail and the absence of snow, our grind in was routine. Camp was at the 11,000' lake below Trojan and Barnard. Robby Heath did not find the right trailhead. He found us in camp.

The Saturday climb of Big Willie was routine (except for miles of soft snow), and all participants reached the summit. Sunday’s climb found only Graham and I wanting the other two peaks. We bagged them while the others lounged in the sack, then hiked out.
KID PK., GOAT MTN. & KID LAKES
June 14-19, 1988
Norm Rohn (private trip)

For several years I have been wanting to visit the Kid Lakes, an off-the-beaten-path area in the Monarch Divide region of Kings Canyon Park. The opportunity arose in June when Paul Wittkamm and I had a few free days.

A somewhat tedious pull up the Copper Creek trail out of Cedar Grove with 5,400’ of gain put us just below Grouse Lake for the evening. One can take the trail all the way to the Granite Basin overlook and then follow the 10,400’ contour to the lake. If you want fire, drop down a bit to 10,000’ where they are permitted.

An easy morning climb of Goat Mtn. put us half way to the Kid Lakes which we then reached in early afternoon. There are about ten lakes in the area, but we visited only those on the South Fork of Kid Creek. Spent two days there and managed to reduce the large fish population just a bit. There is no obvious sign of human usage, no fisherman’s trails, fire rings of debris.

We climbed Kid Peak which is easy from the lakes. Perhaps it is best to approach up one of the chutes just to the west of the summit. The register was placed in July 1940 by a Sierra Club Hi Trip party of nineteen led by Norman Clyde and Dave Brower. They climbed from Paradise Valley. Relatively few parties have made the climb, the last being in September 1985. I noted that Barbara Lilley and Gordon MacLeod signed-in in September 1988.

Our departure was over the Cirque Creek just north of where it intersects the Goat Crest and we spent the next night at the lower Glacier Lake. Found some fish in those lovely lakes too but did not work very hard at it. Instead of going down Glacier Valley to Dougherty Meadow and taking the State Lakes trail back to Granite Pass, which I had done previously, we took a cross country route west through the wooded saddle a half mile south of peaklet 10,743’ and intercepted the trail at BM 9652, a mile and a half or so north of Granite Pass. Granite Basin was full of mosquitoes and the weather was threatening, so we cannot report on those fish.

Paul was fine company and we enjoyed our visit to this rather isolated part of the Kings Canyon Park.

MT. CONNESS
June 1988
Sam Roberts (private trip)

Not to be confused with the great Southwest wall, the west face of Mt. Conness rises less steeply with numerous chutes and shallow ribs. In June, I day hiked the face from Tuolumne Meadows. The route takes the rail to Young Lakes and then wanders across easy, open cross country to the base of the peak. From here it is merely a matter of picking the easiest looking chute. I crossed from chute to chute several times and found consistent class 3 to 4 climbing for over 1,500’. The rock is some of the best I have ever climbed on, I cannot remember finding a loose rock on the whole climb. The route is mostly class 4 and is a nice alternative to the more popular climbs from the east. Descent is best made down the south side. This area of Yosemite seems to be one of the least populated, I did not see another person the whole day.
MT. CLARK & GRAY PK.       June 10-12, 1988       George Toby / Jon Inskeep

There were seven hikers on my permit and we were joined by two more from Mammoth that got their own permit. We left the Glacier Point roadhead and descended the Mon Meadows Trail to Illilout Creek. There is a big log crossing upstream from where the trail meets the creek. We picked up the Clark Fork and headed East cross country through some dense forest, with lots of downed timber, by map and compass, to base camp at 10,200' in a beautiful alpine valley between Clark and Gray. Eleven miles and 3,800' gain.

Saturday we climbed Clark by the SouthEast Arete Route. We ascended to the Clark/Gray ridge and followed it North up to the base of the cliffs. We went through a small gap in the ridge to contour and gradually climb along the East face of Clark until we were just below the summit block. We got eight climbers on top at the same time. It was rather crowded. We did not use the rope. This was a good group and good rock. The leader was pleased to find the register had been placed there by none other than George Toby, nine years and one week ago. Still only half full. We descended to camp and set out for Gray. We climbed up a snow chute to the NorthEast ridge and then up a very steep snow field to the long rocky summit ridge. We explored both ends of the ridge and found no register. The North end appeared to be the highest. The snow field we climbed up was not very appealing for a descent. It had no run out. So we descended the West ridge until Jon Inskeep found a steep snow chute that went down almost to the lake. A quick way down. It was equally as steep but it had a good run out. Eight made the peak and all were back to camp by 4:30. Under the prevailing conditions Gray was a tougher climb than Clark.

Sunday Jon Inskeep led us back out through the forest in good fashion, going over, under and around downed trees. This was a very pleasant trip all around. My sincere thanks to Jon for filling in as assistant leader. Al Conrad had a sore back and could not make it.

George.

BLACK MTN. & DIAMOND PK.      May 28-30, 1988      Dave Dykeman / Nancy Gordon

A group of 18 met at the Baxter Pass trailhead Saturday morning for a routine spring climb of these moderate Sierra Crest peaks. New BMTC graduates were welcome. The hike in under blue skies was as expected. Then the wind blew all night. It blew harder than we knew; our altimeter said that we blew 600' up the hill. We waited to see what was in store. It calmed a bit and our altitude settled about 100'. We went for the peak(s). As we climbed, things worsened. The summit was hidden in swirling snow. When cold and fatigue began to affect climbers, we turned back. The next day we had realized that the summit had been about 30 vertical feet away. Even knowing, we still would have turned back.

One group member nearly caused heart stoppage with loss of control on the way down. Her ice axe slipped from her grip and she stopped spread-eagle on a rock outcropping. Only then was the absence of any attachment device on the rented ice-axe noticed. OTHER LEADERS: TAKE NOTE.

Monday morning dawned bright and beautiful, but only the leaders and Dave Underwood wanted more. The rest chose to hike out. We did Diamond and then Black. Dave U. did Diamond. Having gone both ways, we can say it is better done Black-to-Diamond: the route is visible that way. New snow covered old snow and talus. Progress was slow and tedious. Our day was long... back in camp about 6:30 to pack up, hike out and drive home.
Twelve of us set off at 7:30 AM Saturday from Mosquito Flat. A leisurely saunter brought us at 10 to a below-snowline, great campsite between the upper Treasure Lakes. This location also provided impressive and unobstructed views of our goals. Ten of us headed off at 11:30 for Dade. Intent on climbing this peak by way of its south ridge, one option was to head up the steep snow slope in the cirque between Dade and Peak 13,268'. Unsure of how steep the snow and its condition, we aimed instead around the rock ribs to the right and started up snow-free terrain. We eventually had to select a snow couloir to gain the ridge. Cresting the head of this chute was a slow and careful process due to the cruddy rock. Having done so, it was then class 2 to the summit, attained about 2:45. We descended 40 minutes later, a little rested and eager for our happy hour. We took the ridge down to the cirque and had a great glissade most of the way to camp, reached by 4:45 PM. Next time, under similar circumstances, I would choose to kickstep up the route we took down.

Our happy hour was well-provisioned and there was much talk about the SPS by its Chair, Maris Valkass, about the DPS by its Chair, Karen Leonard, and about the RCS by its Chair, Donna O'Shaughnessy. The rest of us talked about Bear Creek Spire!

Sunday ten of us were up at 4:00 AM and off at 5:00 AM. An early start assured us first crack at the peak. As we contoured high on the slopes west of Dade Lake, we waved down to an MTC group still eating breakfast near its mostly frozen shore. Crampons were not needed as Brian Smith, Terry Cavicchi (a recent BMTC graduate), Ken Deemer and Tom Duryea alternately stepkicked up the broad slope NNW of the peak. With many notches available but with uncertain exits, we took the one next left from the lowest. As with Dade, the rock at the top of the final chute was very cruddy and required considerable caution. From the ridge crest it took easy bouldering around the back side to arrive at the summit complex by 8:15 AM.

Though fairly calm, the weather was mostly threatening - with light snow flurries interjected by brief, scattered sun bursts. In view of the thus wet rock, most of us took belays for the final high 3rd class rock - up a 20' face with narrow ledges, then a 12' body crack. To our mock dismay there lay a bolted register, at least 30' to the north and about 15' lower than the summit pinnacle. Three of us were content to peak out on the register, while the balance summited thanks to the expert belay arranged by Tom, who free-climbed the short 5.3-5.4 pitch - a real "Mountaineer's Peak". Most of us rapped off the 40-50' down to the easy rock, while the MTC group concurrently ascended without interference. We were back to the crest notch at 11:00 AM and reached camp under clear skies by 12:30 after two spectacularly long glissades. Breaking camp at 1:40 PM, we hit the pavement by 3:20 PM.

Joe Andrews got double summits as did Jan Rayman, a recent arrival from most of the 14,000'ers in Colorado. A second BMTC student got none due to equipment problems and a lingering cold. John Gibba took time off from the DPS to join us. We were a very supportive, fun group. Special thanks to Tom for his usual, fine crux moves. The mountain spirits looked favorably upon our enterprise -- and found us worthy.

Bill.
This was to be a three-day trip for Disappointment, Bolton Brown and The Thumb. Nancy got on a trip to Hawaii, so it went a week early. School was not out so Nancy did not have a third day. We took two days for our main objective. We had both done Disappointment (Nancy twice) before. It is still a major climb. Most put it in the five toughest climbs category on the SPS list. (Don Kershaw died on it in 1986.) We limited the group to ten (that’s a large group for this peak) known, capable mountaineers. Nine came: Don Cook, Dale VanDalsen, Bob Emerick, Dave Petzold, George Toby, George Tucker, Wayne Wurzburger and the leaders. Nancy’s mother was on the trip. She gamely hiked to Finger Lake where she waited for our return.

We hiked in on Saturday, then some of us made an attempt at a peak. Evaluating our performance, various participants turned back at different points. We all gave up short of The Thumb’s summit when it was clear that we would be back after dark with our main climb to come on Sunday.

Sunday saw us up early for Disappointment. We headed up an easy chute between South Fork Pass and Balcony Peak then climbed nearly to the summit of Balcony. From there, we contoured down-and-around on the east. We did a rappel on the way to the notch between Balcony and Disappointment. The route is always a little tricky. Exposed climbing with loose scree is not dull, and there is danger of rock fall. The final exposed approach to the notch was uphill and had non-consolidated snow. Once at the notch, the summit is a short class 3 climb up the ridge. All nine were soon on top. The peak had not been climbed in nearly two years. We retraced our steps back to camp and marched triumphantly out. We commend a fine, strong group on a climb well done and thank them for their support.

THE HERMIT

June 25, 1988

Sierra Club Wilderness Outings,
Evolution Basin Leader Training Trip

(While this was not a scheduled SPS trip, it was a scheduled Sierra Club trip, sponsored by the National Outings Committee. The climb took place on the fifth day of an eight day trip. It was led by Cal French, an SPS member and E rated leader. In addition to Cal, participants included Jim T. Watters, an SPS emblem holder since 1963, Gerry Dunie, an SPS leader and eight others. The group of eleven included five staff and six trainees on this National leader training trip.)

We started from our camp at middle McGee Lake at 7:15 AM. We crossed the ridge north of McGee Lakes and skirted around to the south of Lake 11,065’ and worked our way to the summit block, avoiding the chute and potential rock falls. By 10 AM, all eleven climbers were at the base of the twenty foot summit block. We one highly skilled climber, Jim W. Watters (son of Jim T. Watters), who free climbed the east face crack to the top. We then set up a belay, and combined with a knee and shoulder stand, eight of us reached the top. Three others chose to settle for the peak minus twenty feet. At 11 AM, we started down and were back at our camp by 12:30 PM. Seven of our trip members, who did not join our climb, told us that they shared our experience via binoculars from McGee Lakes area.

Gerry Dunie
Five of us began trudging on a hot and very humid morning through the sand of the Taboose Pass trail at 6 a.m. Thursday. Unfortunately, I felt it necessary to sign out one person who was not maintaining my slow pace. This was truly a death march, with increasing mileage each day, and getting far enough in this first day was crucial for successful climbs. This trail climbs 6,000 feet to make the pass in only seven miles with few switchbacks. Beyond the pass we dropped through the delightful open country to the forest at the south fork of the Kings River, crossing the John Muir Trail and going down the old South Fork/Cartridge Pass trail a short way to camp just below 10,000’ so that we could have a campfire. This trail is not shown on the new 7 1/2 minute map. We put in about 11 miles and 6000’ gain this first day.

Friday morning Joe Stephens, Doug, and I set out at 5:50 for Ruskin, going north and east to swing around the ridge and then come up into the basins on the east side of this mountaineer’s peak. It is easy to go too far north here into the basin north of Ruskin, and we spent some time here taking bearings and reconnoitering. We came around to the south of the east ridge, up a bit of third-class rock, and eventually up onto the ridge. One block not far from the summit looked as though it might pose a problem, but by going on the north side, then up and over it, we easily continued to the summit, getting there at 9:00. After half an hour, we worked down the south ridge a short ways and then down talus, scree, and slabs to the lakelet south of Cartridge Pass. Footprints on the trail confirmed that the trail is still in use, despite its disappearance from the map. My original plan was to take this Cartridge Creek trail to Lake Marion and climb Marion from there, but we decided to run the long ridge from the pass to the peak instead. This worked fine by staying on the south side of the ridge, but it is a very long traverse. With various breaks, however, we were still on the summit of Marion at 1:25. We left after half an hour when a few raindrops began to fall, the thunder was booming closer, and the smell of the air began to change. We dropped down to the tiny lake to the east of Marion and then followed down the stream from there all the way to the south fork of the Kings River, ending up more than a mile from the end of the river trail as shown on the 1953 Pit River map. The going was rather slow through willows, avalanche-bent quaking aspens, avalanche-destroyed lodgepoles and occasional talus fields. Rather than crossing back and forth across the river, as the trail on the map does, we stuck to the north side of the river and occasionally picked up bits of trail. The going got easier the closer we got to the Muir trail and our camp. The rain began just before we reached camp a bit after 6:00. This was a 14 mile day, with only the last part on trail, with about 5100’ of gain.

Saturday morning we moved camp several miles to some lodgepoles just west of the junction of the Muir trail and the Bench Lake trail. Doug had taken off earlier, and I hiked with Joe and Kevin Morrison to Bench lake and cross country from there to the final slopes of Arrow Peak, where we met Doug coming down from the summit. Joe and Kevin then continued up to Arrow and back to camp. Since I didn’t need Arrow, I joined Doug and continued with him on the traverse to Pyramid. We hiked onto the lake south-southeast of Arrow, staying high and then working down some rock and a gully to the shore. From there we went up easy terrain to the small lakes northwest of the peak and up a talus and scree chute to an obvious notch in the cliffs of the north side of the west ridge of Pyramid--this is fairly far down the west end of the ridge. From there we worked up easy talus and some decomposed granite to the top, arriving just before 1:00. The morning began with a lot of clouds, and now it was windy and dark on top. When we left the summit about half an hour later, sprinkles were falling, which we had on and off the rest of the way back. Our route back to Bench Lake took us along the northeast ridge of Pyramid, working down some cliffs to the two small lakes northeast of the peak. From here we slogged up to a pass of red slates, and down scree into the head of the basin that eventually drains into the South Fork, the basin with several lakes on the eastern side of Arrow peak with some forest and open meadows. We stayed high as we left the first lake and traversed toward Bench Lake, eventually dropping down a bit to avoid wet rock slabs. We worked below more trees down by avalanches and up to Bench Lake and the trail, arriving in camp at 5:00. When the rain stopped, we had a fine game of baseball, using a lodgepole limb for a bat and the myriads of tiny lodgepole cones for balls. This is a nice place to camp because there are trees enough for some shelter, but the country is open and full of light. This was a 6 mile day with about 5000’ of gain for Doug, a mile and about 1200’ less for me.
Sunday morning, Joe, Doug, and I were off at 5:30, following up the Muir trail to Pinchot Pass. I delighted in hearing them recite T. S. Eliot's "The Waste Land." From the pass we followed up the ridge to Wynne, getting to the summit at 7:45. After pointing out the emblem peaks and others we could see from there, we began the traverse to Pinchot. One section of this traverse is easy class 3 with some loose rock—it goes well by staying mostly on the ridge line. From there it was an easy push to the summit, which we reached at 9:00. On this trip we were the first on Ruskin, Pyramid, and Pinchot for this year, testimony to the remoteness of these peaks and the ghostly nature of the Taboose Pass trail. We then worked down scree slopes and chutes to the lake northwest of Pinchot. Several times during the descent we seemed to be faced with drop-offs, but we were able to work around and down to the easier but tedious slopes just above the lake. From here we made our way back to Lake Marjorie and the trail while Joe recited "The Ballad of Benson Lake."

We were back to camp before 11:30 and left at noon. The rise to Taboose Pass was much more tolerable for Doug's reciting "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner," and we entertained ourselves with a game of Botticelli (rather like twenty questions) so that we wouldn't go crazy during the steep and long drop to the cars, reached at 5:00. Thunder and lightning also entertained us and rain on and off, keeping us cooler than a typical July descent of this trail. This day gave us 17 miles, 3900' of gain, and a lot of steep downhill. Thanks to a good group for a most successful and enjoyable trip!

Kern Peak  July 23-24, 1988  Ron Young/Eivor Nilsson

By 7:30 Saturday morning our group of 13 was en route from Black Rock Saddle. We followed the trails via Casa Vieja and Beer Reg Meadows to Red Rock Meadows arriving just before noon. During the last mile showers began so we hurried to set up camp.

During our hour and a half break we lunched, established camp and debated our ascent to the ridge. The lightning and showers did not appear too threatening so 12 of us set off at 1:30, switch-backing westward up to the main ridge. Once on the ridge it is just a long slog to the peak. The last mile or two was done in a cool mist and most of us were a little wet and chilled on the summit, but the views were good.

We arrived back in camp at 7:30 amid clearing weather, making the round trip to the summit in 6 hours. After a long day (12 hours, 4,000 gain and 18-19 miles) we enjoyed the camp fire, tall tales and dinner. Delores Holladay was ever so kind in sharing her libation with the leader who had forgotten his flask.

We got a late start Sunday morning for the leisurely pack out to the cars. A couple of miles down the trail rain showers and lightning started, with rain so heavy at times we took shelter under the trees. Showers continued on and off. The last of the group made the 800 foot climb out from Casa Vieja Meadows in a heavy, cold downpour with hail stones and spectacular lightning. Fortunately, the trail is in a dense forest of tall trees. Nonetheless we looked about cautiously with each clasp of thunder. The frequency of the lightning was so high it almost became a 'pink out'. The final dash to the cars was made in a cold downpour. On the drive out we stopped briefly at Kennedy Meadows and watched the spectacular storm which had not reached that far south. The entire Owens Valley to our north was in inky darkness as we descended to Pearsonville.

The group was a nice mixture of old timers and recent BMTC graduates. There was concern about finding water en route this dry year, but River Spring was gushing and the streams including Red Rock Meadow had ample water, although somewhat laced with cow dung. 

Ron
The Sierra Echo is published seven times a year by the Sierra Peaks Section (SPS) of the Sierra Club Angeles Chapter.

EDITOR: Igor Mamedalin, 24 Almond Tree Lane, Irvine CA 92715. Associate Editor: Jeff Solomon, 16 Silver Fir, Irvine CA 92714. Echo copy deadlines are the 20th day of odd numbered months and June. Priority is given to legible, typed, single spaced copy. MS-DOS format floppies are accepted. Mail copy to Editor.

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