

THE

LAUNCH LIZARDS

No. 653 - September 16, 1987

A Six Page Issue

A newsheet published by and for the Ski Mountaineers and Rock Climbing Sections of the Sierra Club's Angeles Chapter since 1938. Send subscriptions and address changes to Pat Holleman, 1638 6th St., Manhattan Beach, CA 90266. \$7 per year due in October.

ILLITERACY RIFE AMONG SECTION LEADERSHIP!

Writing Test Failed By Those Who Should Know Better!

Climbers Suffer As Deeds of Glory Go Unreported!

How. Will It All End???

It seems to be the year of the 5.8 Grade IV, whilst writer's cramp sets in among the Lunch Rock Laybacking (Liebacking?--oops, not that again) Lazy Lounge Lizards passing themselves off as RCS leaders. I won't mention any names, but their initials are RF and DDeR and they've led the Suicide trips I've been on this year and there have been no writeups and none of my friends who have missed those trips will know that I'm still alive and climbing and doing damn well as good as when I was getting out every weekend. I should have been suspicious when I noticed that not only did the sign-up sheet arrive hours after the Real Climbers (not THAT again, TJ) roped up, but, on both occasions, there was a serious attempt to break with all past tradition by instituting a permanent Sunday Brunch signup at Jan's. Pity the poor climber who might have breakfasted at Banning that morning, arriving to find no one familiar at the trailhead or Weeping Wall. Are we going to put up with this?

Well, my climbs were so memorable that I hereby regale y'all with a grunt-by-grunt commentary. Mike Baca helped me find the end of a long rainbow when we managed to find and do Root Canal all on the same day. This time I didn't (1) confuse it with Paisano Chimney, (2) do Munge Dihedral instead, (3) have to back off the first pitch so one of the party could catch an airplane. For a reasonable fee, I proffer my guiding services to anyone wishing to find and do this excellent climb. Thanks to Mike for a great and demanding lead (this 5.7 will put hair on your chest--oops again, don't mean to be sexist) and to Don Havens, Jim Shirley and Tom Jenkins for companionship on past attempts. I feel that you all have helped me get there.

The second trip featured midnight revelry by our self-appointed magister ludorum (probably not right, that), ol' TJ, who trotted out for the millionth time his album of fake RCS poem tang, being the granddaughters of the women who posed for Hawkeye's nudist magazines during the Korean conflict. It did make a good impression on those too young to know better, I must say, and it was the first I had seen the picture of that well-known RCSer (who has bribed me to remain forever nameless) doing a very interesting fingercrack jam while belaying his partner at Big Rock. "XxXxx saw this picture and he was NOT happy about it," TJ chuckled.

- Continued on page four -

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NEXT ISSUE.....21 October 1987
 COPY DEADLINE...14 October 1987
 PHOTO DEADLINE...7 October 1987

SUBSCRIPTIONS...see front page

MEETINGS: RCS - Third Wednesday
 of the month. SMS/SPS - Second
 Wednesday of the month. Time
 and place for both meetings is
 7:30 PM, Griffith Park Ranger
 Auditorium, 4730 Crystal
 Springs Drive, L.A..

OCTOBER RCS PROGRAM
 ANNUAL BUSINESS MEETING

J-TREE SITES for OCT. 3-4

Group sites 10 and 11 have been
 reserved at Indian Cove for the
 Oct. 3-4 weekend.

Please see the other story on
 the Braille Institute segment
 of that weekend's activities if
 you're interested in helping
 blind kids climb.

FIRST AID KITS

Again, anyone who has an RCS
 First Aid Kit should please
 contact Margo Koss
 (H 213/227-4973 W 213/222-0319)
 as soon as possible.

-MK

FOR SALE: 1977 VW Camper bus
 with bed, super condition.
 Contact LeRoy Russ 213/227-4973

WOULD BE RCS COURSE APPLICANTS
 Should send SASE to Margo Koss
 ASAP. Deadline for submission
 of applications will fall
 before next Mugelnoos publi-
 cation. Members, if you have
 recommendations for any
 applicant's participation in
 the course, contact Margo,
 4225 Via Arbolada #557,
 Los Angeles, CA 90042.

-MK

CLIMBING SCHEDULE

Sept. 19-20..Christmas Tree Pass
 Bob Havens/Koss
 Sept. 26-27.....Suicide
 Carter/Bailey
 Oct. 3-4.....Joshua Tree
 (Braille Institute)
 Koss/O'Shaughnessy
 (Jelf)
 Oct. 10-12.....Red Rocks
 Vernon/*
 Oct. 10-12.....Yosemite Valley
 /
 Oct. 18.....RCS Picnic, Big Rock
 Koss/Jelf
 Oct. 24-25.....Owens Ridge
 Vernon/Shields
 Oct. 31- Nov. 1.....Joshua Tree
 /
 Nov. 7-8.....Bouldering at
 Wagonwheel
 Vernon/*

* Chapter-rated trip leader
 needed. Call listed leader or
 RCS Chair for info.

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED for BRAILLE KIDS' CLIMB

Climbers who'd like to help visually impaired (legally blind)
 kids experience rock climbing are invited to volunteer for the
 Braille Institute Youth Council portion of the Oct. 3-4 Joshua
 Tree trip by writing or calling Mike Jelf, 1819 W. 254th St.,
 Lomita, 90717; (213) 326-3430.

Members with climbing teen-agers are especially urged to join
 the Braille climbing. RCS people and guests will set anchors for
 top-roped climbs, belay and act as seeing-eye kibitzers for the
 Braille youths.

Regular, non-blind J-Tree climbing will proceed from the regular
 meeting place of Intersection Rock (Margo presiding), while Braille
 participants meet at Indian Cove. Group sites have been reserved
 at Indian Cove, thanks to Darral Freund's efforts.

Mike Baca, Bob London and Gerry Cox (a.k.a. "Ed.") have already
 volunteered (at Tahquitz Aug. 30), but a few more helpers would be
 good to have.

-MJ

CHARLOTTE DOME

AUGUST 20-23

JIM ERB/THERESA RUTHERFORD

When Theresa and I scheduled Charlotte Dome in 1985, two additional people signed up for the trip, which was cancelled at the roadhead because of weather. We scheduled the trip again this year and again two additional people signed up but had to cancel. Theresa and I ended up as the only participants.

I can't improve on Roper's route description in *Fifty Classic Climbs* except to note that when in doubt, move right at each of two or three opportunities. We had been cautioned not to start in the amphitheater, so began our climb on the buttress which forms the right wall of this huge bowl. Still, during the course of the next few pitches we had to back down a couple of times and move right.

Our approach via Kearsarge Pass may be of interest to future parties. From Charlotte Lake we took the Gardiner Pass Trail to about the 10,000 ft level on the north-south perennial stream. From this excellent campsite, the eastern flank of Charlotte Dome is less than 10 minutes away. The stream may appear dry but look for it to re-emerge, springlike, just below the campsite. Although the Gardiner Pass Trail hasn't been maintained for decades, it remains very serviceable to this point. From Onion Valley, the backpack via this route is 12 miles with 3200 ft gain. Going out, the gain is 2200 ft.

Previous Mugelnoos issues with writeups on Charlotte Dome (since 1974) include 596 (Aug 1982), 598 (Oct 1982), and 621 (Sep 1984). The June/July 1978 issue of *Summit* contains a nicely illustrated account of the climb.

I would like to know how many RCS members have climbed Charlotte Dome and would appreciate a postcard from anyone who has done so, with date of ascent. I will summarize the results in a future Mugelnoos. Jim Erb, 1546 San Carlos Pl, Orange, CA 92665.

TWILIGHT PILLAR NORMAN CLYDE PEAK 13,920'

On Saturday August 29, RCSer Tom Brogan and partner Mark Fox reached the summit of Norman Clyde Peak via the beautiful Twilight Pillar route; grade III, 5.8. The route reached via the south fork of Big Pine Creek, is one of the most beautiful in the Sierra, following a direct line to the summit along the prominent prow seen from the start of the Big Pine Creek trails.

To reach Norman Clyde, follow the South Fork trail to Brainerd Lake. Skirt around the right side of the lake then follow the path up the talus slope to Finger Lake. After the 5 hour approach you're ready to make camp at the north end of the lake where you can relax and study the route.

We left camp at 6:30 AM following the east shore of Finger Lake then turned right up the talus and followed the line of least resistance bearing right to the Middle Palisade Glacier. We continued west along the moraine until an apparent impasse is reached - the North-Northeast ridge of Clyde. Two black vertical streaks will be noticed on the wall approximately where the moraine butts up against the ridge. Climb ledges at the base of the right streak then diagonal up and to the left streak. Follow a gully to the top and out on to the lower face of Clyde with the large snowfield mentioned in Roper's. Go straight left from the snowfield to the start of Twilight Pillar, stash your approach shoes and rope up.

We roped up at 10 AM and for the first four pitches followed the prow or close to it. There was some 5.7 at the start, but most of these pitches were easy class 5 with a fair amount of class 4. The climbing went quickly and provided fantastic views of the glaciers and lakes below. Pitch 5 and 6 are the crux pitches. Pitch 5 ascends the face left of a right facing open book (mentioned in Roper's) for about 80 feet of 5.8 face and crack climbing and then I traversed back into the book and finished on a comfortable belay ledge at the top. Mark continued up on cracks with a delicate move or two over a slight overhang with loose rock and belayed about 90 feet above the book. We didn't find the delicate traverse mentioned in Roper's. Pitches 7-9 have some 5.8 but are mostly low class 5 following a shallow trough directly to the summit. Actually I went out of my way looking for more challenging climbing, the 5.8 sections could have been easily bypassed by moving a few feet to one side or the other.

TAHQUITZ AUG. 29-30

The weekend was perfect for climbing - no scorcher with partly cloudy skies. There were 211 sign-ins (5 students) Saturday and 12 (3 students) Sunday. Saturday saw a number of interesting climbs being done. Maier/Sanderson were on Toe Bias and El Grandote with 2 hard women climbers. Rumor has it a new first ascent is being looked at by Al but the location is not known at this time. Mike Feldman returned to climbing since breaking his leg last year.

For a change the leader (yours truly) was the last one off the rock. In order to avoid 20 lashes with a wet prussik from the ass't. leader, Mike Jelf, a good defense was offered - traffic jams (maybe we need a "climber 1" lookout to relay info on routes to Lunch Rock). Vernon/Bailey headed to Whodunit where 3 groups were waiting. We consoled ourselves by doing Consolation Direct (Vernon leading). Instead of exiting via the long climb behind a party of 3 Greg lead up for 1 1/2 pitches. Greg made some very hard moves in the horizontal crack 5 feet below the overhang heading left to the Swallow exit. The crack ran out so an alternate route on the ledge below, now protected, was done. The 5.7 Swallow exit was done after 2 parties finished Whodunit by this route. For those who want to repeat this route there is still an RP in the crack. The RCSer who cleans the route should mail the same postpaid to Greg.

Sunday found a smaller contingent on the rock and a lack of Saturday's crowds. Ted Lewis and Sharon Briel both did their first lead climbs. Maier/Szymanski did the Open Book relating a chapter by chapter description to leader and ass't. at Lunch Rock. All parties were off the rock by 3:58 PM thereby avoiding a scourge by leader and ass't.. Thanks to Mike Jelf for his help and the firewood Fri./Sat.. A real campfire was enjoyed Saturday.

Lastly, a note of warning to the lead-footed climbers. The CHP/Sheriff(?) was staking out the Soboba Bypass Road looking for speeders. With the cruise control at 55 - no problem. No speedy - no tickee.

-SB

There would have been more climbers and guests signed in on both days, but release of liability waivers were not to be found.

-Ed.

- Continued from page one -

I climbed the next day with a fine fellow named Mark (please look up his last name, editor), and we managed three 5.10As. I almost (for the second time) did the 5.11 overhang (toproped, of course) on Low Pressure, which Mark, pretty much a first year climber, breezed with ease (however, he got too pumped to do it two times in a row) after Rich Lake showed how. We all got to know a female student from this year's class (look her name up too, editor) who hurricaned up Warm Up (coached by first ascender DDeR, who is not an altogether useless leader) and almost got Low Pressure and was almost enough to restore my long-abandoned faith in our training course.

By the way, for another reasonable fee I will be holding a Writer's Workshop for leaders who wish to be rated "B" (as in novel), "BS" (as in bestseller) or XXXXX.

-TB

Tony,
The fill-ins to the above story are: 1) Mark Maier, with whom you also climbed Hesitation and Superfluous Bolt, and 2) Elaine Berke.

-Ed.

ON-GOING CRACK CLIMBING WORKSHOP

PROGRESS REPORT - SEPTEMBER 1987

In the July Mugelnoos, I announced a six-month crack climbing workshop designed to help RCS members improve their ability to lead and follow cracks in the 5.8 to 5.10d range. At the time, I had little idea of how much interest there might be in such a program.

The response has been very encouraging. Many more qualified and enthusiastic applicants responded than I was able to accommodate. The final selection of participants has been made and our first session is planned for early October. Each person has been sent material on training for physical fitness, the first of several planned handouts.

In addition to the widespread interest and support, I have been impressed by the difficulty levels at which the participants now climb and to which they aspire. Popular leading goals include Exorcist (5.10a), Clean and Jerk (5.10b), O'Kelley's Crack (5.10c), and Rubicon (5.10d). Several 5.11 cracks also appear in the participant's wish lists.

I plan to publish a progress report each month on our activities.

Jim Erb

- Continued from page three -

We topped out at 4 PM after 6 hours of excellent climbing. No one else had been on the summit for a month. We were tired, extremely dehydrated and didn't feel good enough to eat much, so we enjoyed the view, took some pictures and headed down at 4:30.

The descent route follows the knife edge ridge west to the lower summit and then down towards the notch where Norman Clyde Glacier hits the ridge. The ridge is highly exposed class 4 climbing with drops of 1000' on either side. Most difficulties can be bypassed on the left side, but when you get to a notch that you don't even want to think about down climbing without a rope, rap down to the 3-4 class loose face below. Work your way down and right to cross the north-northeast ridge (Firebird Arete) at the spot where it abruptly steepens towards the lower Clyde summit. This will put you at the same level as the large snowfield where you left your gear.

The descent to the snowfield took about 90 minutes and then from there we retraced our steps back to camp. We collapsed into the tent at 8 PM too exhausted to eat or walk the 100' to the lake for water. All in all it was an excellent climb in the fantastic surroundings of the Palisades.

GEAR: one rope, helmets, a few slings, and a small rack with nothing fancy required, a full set of rocks with some duplicates plus hexes 5-8 will do nicely.

TJB

Dear Mugelnoos Editor,

I am new to the LA area and the Sierra Club. I was an avid climber in Colorado Springs where I became a leader school instructor for a local mountaineering club. Nearby climbing at the Garden of the Gods and Cheyenne Canyon allowed us to climb on a daily basis. I routinely led 5.9 and occasionally 5.10 routes. My protection consisted of the standard stoppers and nuts assortment. I was eager to try anything that would reduce the bulk and weight of my rack. I tested "friends" and (more recently) "tri-cams" and found them to be most satisfactory. I was disheartened to see M.C.'s article "Some Ideas for New Climbers" in your issue #651. He calls them "shiny toys" and "high-tech chotchga." I most certainly agree that they are tricky to place properly and that "making a reliable placement with such tools requires practice and judgement." I also agree that virtually any climb can be protected with standard nuts and stoppers. Novices should learn to place this gear first, however, friends and tri-cams should not be ignored as valuable protection pieces. One last point, on a climb I have done before and a good recollection of the nuts and stoppers required, I would rather carry a small rack of them than a handful of friends or tri-cams. On less familiar territory a friend can't be beat!

Phil Fitzjarrell, New Subscriber

\$\$\$ MONEY \$\$\$ MONEY \$\$\$ MONEY \$\$\$

Climbers who ascend to the state park campground at Idyllwild now are encouraged to squirrel away dollar bills for the extra car fees exacted by the park, and hence by the RCS.

The current RCS fee is \$3 per car and driver and \$3 per passenger, whether for one or two nights' stay.

Rangers insist we pay for each extra car, even ones parked in the parking lot. On Aug. 29 they even roused one lot dweller at 11:20 p.m. to make the point.

Trip leaders should know that, on the same date, a ranger requested that extra car fees be submitted before 10 p.m. While that procedure could work for all but the latest diners on Saturdays, Friday night fees would still have to be paid Saturday morning, as has been recent practice.

It's to be hoped that climbers and trip leaders will be as helpful as possible, since the rangers are counting cars and insisting on payment.

True paranoids will by now have imagined the possibility that if we don't keep the rangers happy, we may be required to pay extra car fees before 10 p.m. on Fridays, which would require:

—That a leader be there by 10 p.m. Friday.

—That climbers who wish to sleep there Friday night pay the leader in advance, so their license plate number can be submitted to the rangers.

Let's hope nothing that drastic happens. Anyone who's tried the facilities at the Humber Hilton knows what a bargain a \$3 restroom can be.

-MJ

SOMETHING SCREWY HAPPENING HERE

Once upon a time I led a buddy of mine on something that I thought was at the upper limit of his ability. Instead of potentially trimming some of my spare tire between rope and harness should he fall, I opted to utilize a Munter Hitch belay configuration connected to the belay anchor using a Chouinard Pearabiner (not an advertisement). Well, my buddy didn't fall after all, and after he had passed the crux he started to scamper as quick as he could. I brought in rope as quick as I could, noticing that the gate of the pearabiner was becoming unlocked because the rope was running past it. Then, while absorbing a lot of slack line in one pull the rope ran over the top of the gate, striking it, opening it and un-doing the Munter Hitch so that it now merely passed straight through the pearabiner. Informing my buddy of the situation, he stopped at safe haven as soon as possible so that I could re-establish a real belay (on my hip this time).

Since then I have toyed with the pearabiner and other Chouinard locking carabiners and have found that they can all be easily, and perhaps accidentally, locked into an open position. My move has recently been to twist-lock pearabiners, which cannot be accidentally locked open. Hindsight being the 20/20 perspective that it is, I suppose that I could scrutinize the situation and establish a Munter Hitch so that the movement of the rope serves to help keep the pearabiner gate locked, but what might happen the next time that I don't take that much time or that close a look? Who can say? If you're using the Chouinard locking carabiners; take care, check it out, beware.

-GC

Pat Holleman
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