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[www.angeles.sierraclub.org/wtc](http://www.angeles.sierraclub.org/wtc)

# Newsletter

Newsletter of the Wilderness Training Committee





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**On the cover:** *Robert Neighbors discovers the only known copy of the Fall, 2002 WTC Newsletter while on Markey Neighbors' Mt. Stanford provisional and WTC experience trip. Alas, minutes later it blew into a crack in the rocks, never to be found again. Our sincere apologies.*

*The WTC Newsletter is published quarterly for students and staff of the Wilderness Training Committee and delivered via U.S. Mail or distributed at class sites. The WTC Newsletter is also available in color at [angeles.sierraclub.org/wtc](http://angeles.sierraclub.org/wtc)—as a download in PDF format. All questions, copy and photo submissions should be directed to Edd Ruskowitz, WTC Newsletter editor at (714) 771-6710.*

WTC Info Line 310-967-2029

## Love On the Rocks

**Love** is a wonderful thing. Just ask Michael Bolton. Love makes the world go round. You can even find love on a two-way street. But one thing is certain: love is truly blind. I know; last month during my navigation check off I too fell in love... and it wasn't pretty.

It was a two-day nav event at Joshua Tree National Park, led by some of the Sierra Club's more venerable leaders. Harry Freimanis, Bob Bradshaw and their buddies volunteer their time, effort and expense several times each year instructing and testing leaders looking to move up the rating ladder. Like me.

The first day's instruction and practice primed us for the following day's testing. I was confident, I'd studied, done my homework; you could say I was pretty hot guano.

Sunday morning began well: Landform recognition? Not bad. Oral exam? Pretty good. Diorama? Excellent! Taking bearings? Aced it! Man, I was cruisin'! Now we lunch, then head out to nav-noodle our way across the desert on the trail to triumph!

So Joe Wankum dots my map and I strut out for my rendezvous with Don Creighton; Don manned the first rock formation I was to find. Took a couple bearings to prove I was found and was on my way. Any nerves I had going were definitely gone now.

Rounding a bunch of rocks I see Ray Riley waiting for me at a formation that looked just like my target on the map. "So where are you," asks Ray? "Number three," I say. "Hmmm..." says Ray.

Now, this is where that blind thing begins. Ray pauses, then asks me to take some bearings — just a formality you understand, to prove that I am where I am. I tell Ray the bearings bear out and here's my sheet for you to sign thank you very much. "Why don't you take some bearings off in that direction and see what you come up with," Ray suggests.

Now the blinders are *really* on. I take another bearing in a different direction that merely proves my compass has malfunctioned. Or the map's wrong. Or something. Another bearing. And another. A girl walks up, stops, looks at her map, looks up, then continues on. Naturally I pay no attention to the rock formation she heads for that just happens to be on the same line as mine. Why? Because I'm hopelessly in love with this rock and *nothin'* and *no one's gonna tell me it's the wrong rock for me!*

Ray, I'm confused. My first two bearings worked. Of course, they were only about 25 degrees apart... As Ray gently consoled me, wondering aloud if perhaps those rocks over there might be on my map, a light goes on! This rock was all wrong for me!

My *true* rock was a mere 400 yards away! I bid Ray adieu and speedaddled over to the real number three where, after a hurried couple of bearings, Bob Beach signs my sheet and recommends I call it a day. Then it occurred to me: I'd spent 45 precious minutes with that stone siren and only a miracle and a hotfoot would get me to my final point in time — **I went for it! Go Edd!**



*It's 8 a.m. on December 8th. Harry Freimanis organizes the nav check off at Warren Point. Can you tell in which direction Harry's pointing?*

Time ran out, of course. I was angry, embarrassed; I'd done so well right up until I fell in love with my error, ignoring and dismissing every clue that suggested otherwise. But of all the instruction and experience I gained that weekend, *humility* was my most valuable lesson. These are the learning mistakes.

Three weeks later I passed my nav check off at Black Rock. Diane Dunbar, my check-off leader, concluded that, although a bit slow, I was very thorough and safely found my way. Rock on.

— Edd Ruskowitz

## Headline Deadlines

### For publication in the Spring 2003 WTC Newsletter:

**January 27** Last day to submit restricted outings to the Outings Chair.

**February 10** Last day to submit non-restricted outings to Area Outings Coordinators.

**February 17** Last day for Outings Coordinators to submit write-ups to the Outings Chair.

**February 24** Last day for all WTC Newsletter submissions.

### For publication in the July 5 through October 31, 2003 Angeles Chapter Schedule:

**February 17** Last day to submit restricted and non-restricted outings to Area Outings Coordinators.

**February 24** Last day for Outings Coordinators to submit write-ups to the Outings Chair.

# Those Who Don't Make Dust Eat Dust

**Tired of following? Think you'd like to lead some hikes or trips?** As a WTC student, you've been provided tools that will give you a huge head start toward achieving leader status. The **Leadership Training Committee (LTC)** trains leaders at four levels – O, I, M and E – as defined in the Rules of Conduct. Your first step is to attend an all-day seminar, held twice a year (spring and fall); attendance at only one seminar is required. Leader candidates can get enrollment information and applications by sending a large (#10) self-addressed, stamped envelope (sase) to the LTC Registrar Don Creighton. For more information, applications and contact info go to [angeles.sierraclub.org/ltc](http://angeles.sierraclub.org/ltc) and the **Angeles Chapter Schedule of Activities**.

## Navigation Practice / Checkout

**January 5** Warren Point, JTNP. Harry Freimanis / Bob Bradshaw  
**April 12-13** Indian Cove Nav Workshop, JTNP. Harry Freimanis / Bob Bradshaw  
**May 3-4** "Places We've Saved" Noodle - Mojave National Preserve. (no check-offs) Virgil Shields / Harry Freimanis  
**May 18** Grinnell Ridge, SBNF. Harry Freimanis / Bob Bradshaw

## Environmental Awareness

**January 4** Beauty Pk (5548'), Iron Spring Mtn (5755').  
K. Schwitkis, K. Issacson Leverich, S. Ross  
**January 11** Natural History Museum of Los Angeles (\$).  
Bob and Maureen Cates  
**January 12** Bolsa Chica Ecological Reserve. Joe Maynard, Donna Barker  
**February 15-17** Salton Sea Birding ALL C Natural Science.  
Bob & Maureen Cates

## Rock Practice/Checkout

**March 22** Stoney Point, San Fernando Valley Rock Workshop. Ron Hudson  
**April 26-27** Indian Wells Canyon, Ridgecrest. Ron Hudson  
**November 15-16** Indian Cove Rock Workshop, JTNP. Virgil Shields

## Snow Practice/Checkout

**February 1** Baldy Snow Practice. Nile Sorenson / Doug Mantle.  
**February 15** Baldy Snow Practice. Tina Bowman / Tom Bowman.  
**April 12-13** Sierra Snow Checkout. Tina Bowman / Tom Bowman.  
**May 17-18** Sierra Snow Checkout. Randall Danta / Virgil Talbot.  
**June 7-8** Snow Checkout. Nile Sorenson / Doug Mantle.

## Leadership Training Program Seminar

**April 5** at Griffith Park. **Applications must be received by March 22, 2003.**  
Go to [angeles.sierraclub.org/ltc](http://angeles.sierraclub.org/ltc) for information and application.  
This valuable program is offered only twice a year. Don Creighton, Registrar

# Where to Eat Dust

*The list of outings in this newsletter merely scratches the surface of hiking opportunities. In addition to your Angeles Chapter Schedule of Activities (the outings bible) you receive thrice yearly as a Sierra Club member, you should look to the websites and newsletters from each of the sections below for even more outings.*

## SPS Sierra Peaks Section / [angeles.sierraclub.org/sps](http://angeles.sierraclub.org/sps)

A varied schedule of climbing activities is offered during the climbing season. SPS Introductory Trips are offered for beginning climbers and WTC graduates. A good sample of our trips can be found in the SPS Climbing Archives on this site.

## DPS Desert Peaks Section / [angeles.sierraclub.org/dps](http://angeles.sierraclub.org/dps)

The Desert Peaks Section encourages members to explore and enjoy the desert mountain ranges of California and the southwest; to become familiar with their scenic resources; and to stimulate interest in climbing these vast desert ranges in the interest of preserving their desert resources and to enlist public interest and cooperation in protecting them.

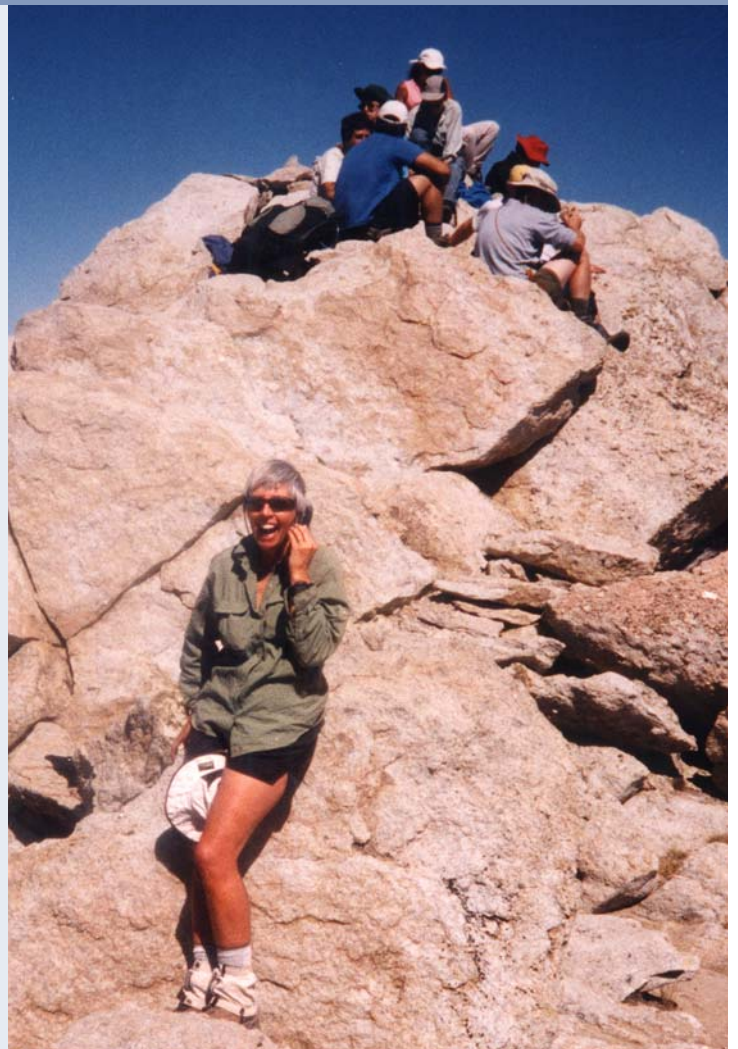
## HPS Hundred Peaks Section / [angeles.sierraclub.org/hps](http://angeles.sierraclub.org/hps)

We love to climb the local mountains. In our case this covers an area from the Southern Sierras to near the Mexican Border and from Caliente Mountain in San Luis Obispo County to Rabbit Peak near the Salton Sea. We keep an official list of peaks, the HPS Peak List, containing over 270 peaks in this area.

## LPC Lower Peaks Committee / [angeles.sierraclub.org/lpc](http://angeles.sierraclub.org/lpc)

The Lower Peaks Committee encompasses summits below 5,000', of which there are currently 72 named summits. We select only those peaks that are of climbing, historical or geological interest and those which present us with special panoramic views.

*Orange County WTC leader Patty Rambert orders a pizza atop 12,590' Mt. Conness in Yosemite National Park during her Sept. 20-22 Wilderness Adventures/WTC sponsored outing, promising a big tip for speedy delivery.*





# Outings

Please see Outings Leader Directory on page 3 of the WTC Newsletter print version for SASE and contact information

**December 23 - February 10 / Every Monday**

**WTC**

## **0 / WTC Evening Hikes-Temescal Gateway Park**

Find out more about WTC (Wilderness Travel Course) by joining WTC's West L.A. instructors on our Monday night hikes! Meet at 6:45 pm at Temescal Gateway Park (TGP). Hike departs promptly at 7 pm. (Rain Cancels) Plan on 3.5 mi, 1000' gain, bring water, flashlight, windgear & a sense of adventure! Meet in TGP's parking lot at Sunset Blvd & Temescal Canyon Road, Pacific Palisades. (First parking lot immediately ne of Sunset Blvd) Street parking is available or fee parking (\$5) in TGP lot. Leaders: Georgette Rieck, Jan Nissley, Jim Fredo, David Coplen, Rona Amichai, Garen Yegparian, Will McWhinney, George Denny, Gerard Lewis, Marc "Roadkill" Hertz, Bill Jackson, Jane Simpson, Peter Vance.

**January 18 / Sat**

**Los Padres Chapter**

## **0 / The Peaks of Boney Mountain**

The Peaks of Boney Mountain. Big Dome, Boney Peak, and four other spectacular summits await us on this tour of highest points in the Santa Monica Mountains. Easy paced 11 mile 2300' gain hike along the Mishe Mokwa and Backbone Trails. Meet 8 a.m. at the Circle X Ranger Station. Bring 2 qts water, lunch, boots, and ten essentials. Email Leader for pre-hike information package. Ldr. Bill Valentine. Co-Ldr: Cheryl Gill.

**January 18-19 / Sat-Sun**

**Desert Peaks Section, WTC**

## **1 / Panamint Butte (6584'), Tucki Mountain (6726')**

Two day hikes in Death Valley area. Join us for one or both. Sat Panamint Butte, 8 mi rt, 5000' gain; evening carcamp with happy hour. Sun Tucki Mtn, 7.5 mi, 2000' gain. 4wd helpful. Send sase or email, H&W phones, conditioning, rideshare info to Ldr: Patty Rambert. Asst: Virgil Popescu.

**January 26 / Sun**

**Santa Monica Mtns TF, WTC**

## **0 / Boney Mountain**

Moderately paced 10 mi, 2000' gain hike amidst massive metamorphic/sedimentary rock formations in the western Santa Monica Mtns. Route involves some off-trail travel, easy rock scrambling and easily traversed chaparral. High points could afford impressive landscape views. Meet 8 a.m. Malibu rideshare pt or 8:40 a.m. Mischa Mokwa trailhead (7 mi from PCH on Yerba Buena Rd, 2 mi E of ranger station). Bring water, lunch. Ldrs: Ray Riley, Anna Chirra

**February 8 / Sat**

**WTC**

## **1 / Pre-conditioning Hike, Boney Ridge**

Get in shape for WTC and enjoy beautiful views from the high point of the Santa Monica Mtns, Sandstone Pk (3111'). Moderately fast paced, 11 mi, 2100' gain. WTC graduates are also invited—see old friends and encourage new students. Meet 7 a.m. Malibu or Woodland Hills rideshare pts. Bring 3 liters water, lunch, lugsoles, rain gear, long pants for brush. Ldrs: Will McWhinney, Garen Yegparian

**February 22 / Sat**

**Hundred Peaks**

## **1 / San Jacinto Peak (10,840')**

Moderately paced but strenuous snowshoe day hike. 10 miles round trip and 2400' elevation gain from the Palm Springs Tram (fee required). Weather and snow conditions could affect plans. Send esase or sase with conditioning and snowshoe experience to Ldr: Scott Nelson, Asst: Maria Roa.

**March 15-16 / Sat-Sun**

**DPS, HPS**

## **1 / Chili Cookoff Challenge, Queen Mtn (5680'), Pinto Mtn (3983')**

Want to cook, judge or eat hand-crafted chili prepared right there in the desert on a camp stove? Tell your best whopper around the campfire? Or, just experience the desert in early spring with the possibility of seeing wildflowers or desert critters? Then join us for all or part of this 11th annual chili cookoff weekend! Location this year will be in a primitive camping area just northeast and outside of Joshua Tree National Park. Sat morning climb HPS-listed Queen Mountain (1000' and 4 mi rt) led by HPS. Sun morning pancake breakfast and optional climb of Pinto Peak (northeast route of approx 2000' gain and 7 miles round trip). Well-behaved dogs on leash in camp only. Cooks come free, tasters \$5.00. Prizes will be awarded to winners. Send \$\$ and SASE to Suzanne indicating whether you will be a cook or taster. DPS Ldrs: Leora Jones, Igor and Suzanne Mamedalin. HPS climb leaders: George Wysup and Diane Dunbar.

**April 5-6 / Sat-Sun**

**Sierra Peaks, WTC**

## **E / Bloody Mountain (12,552')**

Trip restricted to SC members with ice axe and crampon snow climbing experience, and strong physical conditioning. Sat backpack along Laurel Creek Canyon to camp near Laurel Lakes. Sat climb north couloir snow chute to peak. Sun hike out. Detailed resumes of snow climb experience and fitness training required. Send resume, H&W phones, email, rideshare info to Ldr: Tom McDonnell Co Ldr: Doug Mantle.

**May 31-June 1 / Sat-Sun**

**WTC, Hundred Peaks**

## **1 / Mt Burnham (8997'), Throop Peak (9138'), Mt Hawkins (8850'), Mt Islip (8250'), Mt Williamson (8214') and more**

Strong WTC students and others are welcome on this strenuous weekend backpacking trip in our local San Gabriel Mountains. We will backpack and hike 12 miles, 5100' gain on Sat, part with daypacks, some off trail on steep terrain, then camp at Little Jimmy Campground. See spring's response to the Curve Fire firsthand. A night hike is planned to Mt Islip. The next morning, we will pack out to Islip Saddle and change to daypacks for the hike over Mt Williamson and do some xc navigation to find "Goodykoontz Peak" (7558'). Second day is 8 miles, 3200' gain, 4000' loss (if our students find the correct route!). Two short car shuttles. No early checkouts. Send sase or esase, WTC group name, conditioning, H&W phones to Ldr: KC Reid, Co-Ldr: Sandy Sperling.

**June 20-22 / Fri-Sun**

**Sierra Peaks, WTC**

## **E / North Palisade (14,242')**

Trip restricted to SC members with ice axe and crampon snow climbing experience, 4th class rock experience, and strong physical conditioning. Fri backpack along North Fork Big Pine Creek to camp at edge of Palisade Glacier. Sat very strenuous climb of U-notch snow chute and traverse to peak. Sun hike out. Detailed resumes of snow/rock climb experience and fitness training required. Send resume, \$5 permit fee, H&W phones, email, rideshare info to Ldr: Tom McDonnell Co Ldr: Nile Sorenson.

**August 29 - September 1 / Fri-Mon**

**Backpacking, WTC**

## **1 / Sequoia NP Backpack Bus Trip**

Join us for an exciting climb of Mt. Silliman (11,188') from Lodgepole Campground. Depart LA Fri. Hike in to base camp on Sat. Climb peak on Sun, then home Mon. 4 mi, 1500' gain the first day. Day 2 summit in 4 mi, 2900'. Mon pack out. Significant xc each day. Cost includes bus, bus refreshments, all fees, Mon dinner. Send \$ tba w/ SC#/\$ tba non-member (Backpacking Committee - Angeles Chapter), 2 sase or email, H&W phones, recent conditioning / backpacking experience to Ldr: George Denny. Co-Ldr: Adrienne Benedict.

# WTC TRIP REPORTS

Compelling and not-so-harrowing accounts of outings associated with and/or having some connection to WTC... or close enough.

## Mt. Barnard / Trojan Peak

April 26-28, 2002 by Natalya Shulyakovskaya, WTC/OC

**GEORGE CREEK LIVED UP TO ITS REPUTATION.** The gully was full of crud, fallen trees, choked in few places, speckled with signs of a recent fire. We had to cross the creek at least 4 times, balancing in sleek trees or rocks. Hiking in on Friday, we got hit by hail. It continued on and off for a while, until we hiked to about 10,000. The large round white balls clustered on the ground, grass, rocks. By late afternoon, as we got higher and closer and closer to the snow, gray fog settled in. We saw the first patches of snow at about 9,800.

Our camp was a level spot in a grove of pine trees located at the top of a small ridge on south side of the creek. There was no snow on the ground, just soft needles. It was a full moon and the night was bright.

Saturday greeted us with great weather. It was crisp and clear. We rolled out of our camp, filled up water bottles, and were on the way by about 6:15. We put our crampons on while still in camp and did not take them off until we summited our first peak, Trojan. As we were marching up the main snow chute leading to the summit, we could see a very prominent cornice above us. It was sparkling blue and we kept to the right side of the chute, trying to be out of its way, in case the cornice decided to slide.

When we got within about 100 feet of the summit, we encountered boulders embedded in packed snow. The very last portion of the climb was a sort of little ridgelette of hard snow. There was a cluster of large boulders on the very top. We summited at noon and spend a bit of time digging around in search of a register. We did not succeed. So, we just had lunch. The wind died out. It was gorgeous.

We glissaded about 800 feet down and traversed to the base of Barnard.

Barnard turned out to be a pile of boulders with a dusting of snow in-between. The wind picked up, we got spread out, and the climb turned into a real character building experience. I just clawed my way up, trying to hug closer to the ridgeline where the slope was more sheltered from the wind. Up on the top, the wind was picking up flares of snow, curving and twisting.

By 3:30 p.m. it was over -- we got to the summit, in sets of two, and quickly rolled off to a sheltered spot bellow. As we descended, the wind died and the sun was back.

By 5:45 we were back in our camp, loaded with water. It was a 12-hour day, all spent in our helmets. Near the camp, by the creek, chuckling, Tom finally issued the "Helmets OFF" command. By then, mine left permanent imprints on my skull.

Next day we rolled down George Creek. It was sunny and warm. Black currants were in bloom. So were a few midget wild apple trees scattered along the sandy lower parts of the canyon.

By noon, we high-fived at the spot where George Creek spewed us onto the glowing warm dust of a 4-wheel drive road.

Leaders: Tom McDonnell, Nile Sorenson. Team: Ron Norton, Don Crowley, Dave Hankins, Natalya Shulyakovskaya, Paul Morash. Augie Medina had to turn back after about 4 hours of bushwhacking. He slipped and cut his leg.

## Cirque Peak

September 6-8, 2002 by Cheryl Gill, WTC/OC

**THIRTEEN HEARTY SOULS HEADED INTO THE TEETH OF A HOWLING WIND** at 12:30 pm, Friday, Sept. 6, 2002 at the Horseshoe Meadows/Cottonwood Lakes trailhead and bade adieu to the last restroom we would see for 3 days! Didn't someone say we were not SUPPOSED to head into deteriorating weather?

We were led into this ever increasing storm front by the inimitable Tom McDonnell. I was just the sweep, and besides, Tom assured us he had spoken with the rain gods and all was supposed to pass by, at least by tomorrow am.

One thing was for sure. . . .we weren't too hot (as had been the case for much of the summer). We found ourselves by the shores of Long Lake at 400 pm. At 11,160 feet of elevation, we weren't moving too fast setting up our camp. Plus most of us had frozen fingers by now. Some WTC students had not EVEN packed gloves nor hats. Weren't we taught to always be prepared for any eventuality?

Shall I mention the names of our OC Group 1 participants? Of course! Because an experience trip is just that. . . .a REAL experience! Along for our fun ride were: Gary Bickel, Joan Clark, Richard Laws, Keven Lee, Caroline Masuda, Norm Moyer, Selena Nutter, Stephanie Pankiewicz, Allan Ruggles, and Jim Western.

We made it through happy hour and dinner and most hightailed it into tents and warm sleeping bags at dusk!

After a night of much howling wind and possible snow or rain, we actually awoke to a somewhat peaceful 600 a.m. with very few clouds around. Were the rain gods correct? The intrepid party set out at 730 a.m. up New Army Pass as our gateway to Cirque Peak, the ascent goal.

With Tom's unwavering leadership, we were nearing the peak by 1100 am. We had one minor setback with one participant unable to breathe real well (Who can breathe real well at almost 13,000 feet?). A kind gentleman toted the participant's pack and the tail end of the party slowed the pace WAY down (not too hard for me!), and all were rewarded with the summit block!

The loop descent took us through talus and scree . . . a nice introduction for the students! And we were back in camp by 130 pm. Now, came the fun part for Tom. One participant had to leave early. He offered to walk said member out part of the way. So they left about 200 pm. The rest of us enjoyed 3 hours of happy hour, naps, wading in the lake, etc. More time passed as we had our dinner. Now, it was getting cold again. . . very clear and cold. No sign of Tom. More time passed. Finally, around 730 pm, Tom returned to camp. He had walked the person ALL the way back to the cars! What a caring leader! He just hadn't had enough hiking that day . . . he needed the extra 12 miles just for drill.

After we fed Tom his dinner, we dove into warm bags and tents. This night our water even froze. What fun!

We had a nice walk out the next morning and couldn't wait to get to Lone Pine Pizza . . . the quintessential end to a WTC experience trip. And all of these students will definitely graduate. They may have been a little cold part of the time, but they were very HARDY!

## Mount LeConte

August 9-11, 2002 by John Paterson, WTC/LB

**MOUNT LECONTE IS A CLASSIC MOUNTAINEER'S PEAK** and I decided to have our group climb it by the infrequently traveled Tuttle Creek trailhead. I led this trip as a joint WTC/SPS that allowed more Sierra Club members to participate. There were seven of us, myself, Mike Adams (assistant Leader), Sheryl O'Rourke, Gary Maxwell, Kristen Mahaffey, Gary Bowen, and Tom McDonnell.

I met everyone at 6:30 a.m. at the Tuttle Creek campground, just outside of Lone Pine, on Friday, August 11th. From there we drove about .4 miles west to Granite View Drive, a dirt road. We drove on Granite View west for about 2.4 miles until it forked near some houses. From there we took the right fork, northwest, for 2 miles where there was a place to park 2-3 cars. We left our 2 wheel drive vehicles here and then drove in our 4 wheel drive cars another .5 miles to the trailhead. There is room for 4-5 cars here.

We started our hike at 7:30 a.m. with light packs along a good trail until we stopped at the cabin after a mile of hiking. The cabin is in great shape with all walls, chimney, ceiling, and stove intact.

From the cabin we headed up the hill past the cabin storage shed and well and then south back towards Tuttle Creek. We hiked a very rough use trail that ran roughly parallel to, and 800 feet above, the Tuttle Creek drainage. The trail is very easy to lose and then the trip turns into a bushwhacking adventure. We were able to keep track of the trail but it was difficult because there are lots of different use trails that require different levels of bushwhacking. After roughly 4 miles we crossed to the south side of Tuttle Creek where the traveling was relatively easy for about .5 miles until we started hitting talus. I found it best to travel along the talus with the thickets on the north.

We arrived at camp at about 3:30 p.m. after a 6.5 mile hike and a 4,200 foot altitude gain. Our camp was located at the top of the tree line at about 11,000 feet. There are about 5 decent places for tents and water is located due north (5 minutes from camp) coming from the LeConte & Corcoran drainage. We spent the rest of the day chatting and resting for the long climb on Saturday.

We started our climb at 5:30 a.m. promptly. From camp we traveled over about 200

yards of talus to the base of the cliffs below the LeConte & Corcoran drainage. We followed the cliffs to the West for about 400 yards, climbed some talus, and hopped on a ledge system that lead up the cliff face. This is a wide ledge you take that goes up to the east. Where the ledge system meets the stream we followed the stream up to the north-west. After we climbed some talus we traveled to the right (north) side of the LeConte/Corcoran valley where we traversed some large ramps back and forth gaining altitude. It was best to stay as far north in the valley, along a northwest ramp, to avoid a giant talus hole in the middle of the valley.

Once we were due east of LeConte we traversed (southwest) along a moraine bench that took us to the base of Corcoran at the bottom of the North Notch. We were able to top off our water bottles from some snow runoff at the base of Corcoran. From here there is a 30-degree scree (in summer) slope that forks towards the North Notch (left) and LeConte (right). We took the right scree slope until the slope forked again. We went right again until we hit the end of the scree slope at the base of some large blocks.

We climbed onto the top of the blocks along a loose ledge that ran north until it turned into a very loose, narrow, scree gully that lead to the base of the East Arete route. At the top of the gully there is a notch that leads to the north side of LeConte and Meysan Lake can be seen. The East Arete route is on the south side of this notch (don't go to the other side) and starts off below the arete.

We climbed from the top of the gully to the left below the top of the arete. The climbing is a mixture of class 2 and 3 but not much exposure. We followed the arete up until we eventually were able to climb on top. If you go too far to the left you hit a very steep gully and you need to backtrack about 40 feet and climb up.

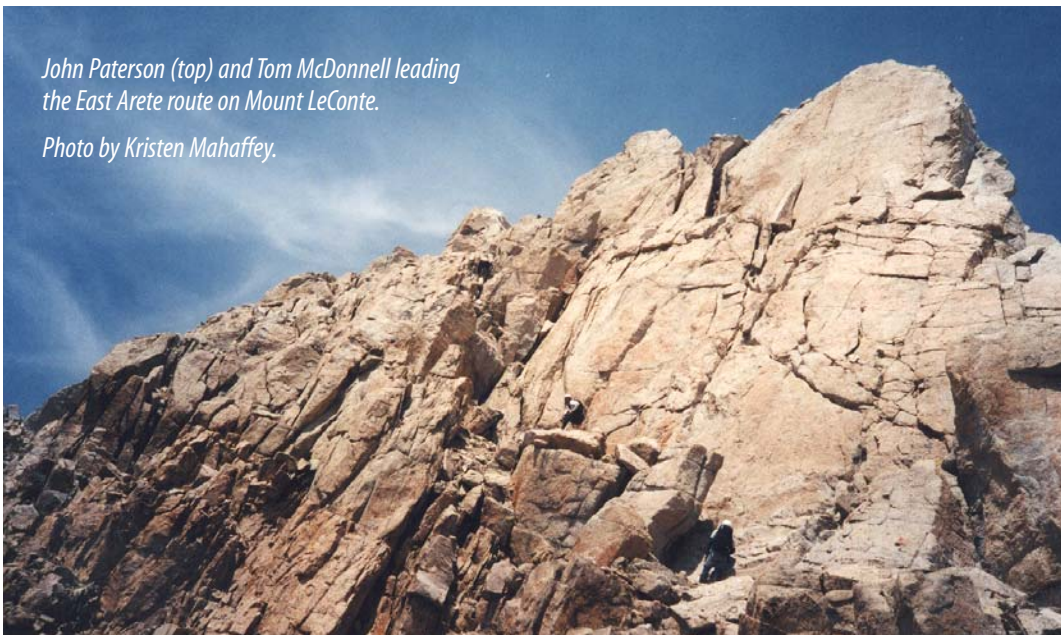
Once we reached the top of the arete we could see the LeConte summit block. From here there is some easy 3rd class climbing to the summit. We had a quick lunch and Mike Adams replaced the Nalgene bottle with the register inside with a Sierra Club aluminum register container.

From LeConte's summit we dropped about 100 feet to the top of a huge gully that eventually drops down into Iridescent Lake. We climbed into a tight chimney one at a time and lowered our packs so we would not get stuck. Tom, the first down, initially got stuck due to his pack but got out quickly. The waterfall pitch is about 300 feet below the top of the gully.

About 50 feet above the waterfall pitch we traversed south, to the left, around a rib. From there we dropped into a wide gully and dropped down about 300 feet to a notch. We traversed around the notch, dropped down again into another gully. Below we could see two notches, the higher one very narrow, the lower one a little wider and more inviting. I checked out the higher notch but the down climbing was class 4. From the lower notch it looked like there was a drop off to a cliff but we were able to traverse around to the left along a series of small ledges until we could drop into the next gully.

*John Paterson (top) and Tom McDonnell leading the East Arete route on Mount LeConte.*

*Photo by Kristen Mahaffey.*







*Topped out on Mount LeConte are Kristen Mahaffey, Mike Adams, John Paterson, Tom McDonnell, Sheryl O'Rourke and Gary Bowen. Photo by Gary Maxwell.*

I think we traversed another rib or two until we reached the last rib. There are lots of cliffs but by slowly lowering and looking for only class 2-3 we wound up all right. Don't climb up any of the gullies until you see Corcoran or you will end up on one of the peaks between Corcoran and LeConte. At the last rib we could see through a keyhole that dropped down about 300 feet into the next gully. Here we went straight up. I climbed up a short pitch of about 20 feet of difficult 3rd class where I set up a belay station. I belayed almost everyone up to the top of a 40-foot steep section.

From the top of this block we traversed along some narrow ledges to the gully below the North Notch. From here we climbed up about 300-350 feet of scree to the top of the Notch where we dropped through. It is better to stay to the left of the gully where it is easier to drop into the scree field below Corcoran. We reached the North Notch about 4 p.m. which was far too late for my tastes so we skipped doing Corcoran which was a quick 30-45 minutes away.

Our group started really slowing down due to the very loose rocks and scree and everyone was very tired by now. We tried to stay very close to make sure we did not drop rocks on each other and made it down. From there we retraced our path to the cliffs overlooking our camp. It took a very long time for our group to travel through the talus so we reached the cliffs about 8:30 p.m., just as it got dark.

From here I navigated down the ramps until I hit the stream on the far south side of the LeConte/Corcoran valley. We followed the stream until we hit the ledge system that traversed due west above the cliffs. From there we dropped back down and then traveled east and then south to our camp. We had a very long day and did not get back to camp until 9 p.m. but we found the camp right away and were all relieved!

The climb took much longer than I had anticipated. The scree and loose rocks slowed us down more than I realized but everyone made the peak. I would recommend not taking any more than six very experienced climbers on this route. Helmets should be mandatory due to the loose rocks.

The next morning we got going at 8 a.m. and we reached the cars by about 11:30 a.m. We did lose the main trail on the way down but were able to continue traversing east along Tuttle Creek until the many use trails eventually converged. From there we dropped down to the cabin again and took the main trail back to our cars.

We all then drove to Lone Pine to have pizza at the Pizza Factory and everyone gave me a hard time about my "death march." Everyone did great and the climb included a tremendous amount of difficult navigation and lots of sustained 3rd class climbing. This is a classic route that is rarely done.

## Kern Peak

June 22-24, 2002 by Patty Kline

**THE WEATHER WAS PERFECT FOR THIS 3 DAY SPS "INTRO" TRIP.** Not a cloud in the sky and not too hot. It was co-listed as a Wilderness Travel Course, offered by the Sierra Club every winter. All but a couple of the 15 people were associated with "WTC." It is nice to see a lot of new faces on an SPS trip.

The Blackrock Trailhead started at Blackrock Saddle at an elevation of 8900'. Take Hwy 14 or Hwy 395 to the Inyokern turn off and proceed N on Hwy 395 for 10 miles. There is a left turn to Kennedy Meadows. Don't let the remaining 45 miles to the roadhead fool you. It takes 1 1/2 hours to drive this on winding mountain roads. It is 25 miles to Kennedy Meadows. Go beyond Kennedy Meadows on 22S05 to Fish Creek (which is a good spot to camp where I paid \$5.00). Go beyond Fish Creek to Troy Meadow on 35E07 to the Blackrock (Ranger Station) Information Center, 37 miles from Hwy 395. From here take 21S03 an additional 8 miles to its end at the Blackrock Trailhead. Non-quota permits can be picked up the morning of the trip or the day before during regular office hours at the Blackrock Information Center. A fire permit, which is required for stoves, is issued only in person.

We got underway for the 9 mile and approximately 1500' gain with the ups and downs at 10:00 am. Aren't these leisure trips great! 2 miles from the start Casa Viejo Meadows were bright green, as were all the other meadows along the way. We had our longest break at Bear Keg Meadow, which was lunch. It was nice to get off the dusty trail about 5:00 pm to camp at Redrocks Meadows at 8600'. The streams were very warm in and through the meadows. There are a lot of hot springs in the area, the most well known being Jordan Hot Springs, which was too much out of our way to want to go there. There are 2 very well developed fire rings with log benches, one of which is associated with a livestock corral. We chose the fresher area away from the corral with twice as many level areas we needed for our tents.

We started about 8:00 a.m. for Kern Peak at 11,510' on Sunday morning. After heading N on a nice trail for about 1/10 of a mile it was hard to find a continuation. The only evidence of the trail was from blaze marks on trees, cut about 3-5 years ago. Follow these blazed trees another 1 / 10 mile until the trail becomes very obvious again, heading NW in several switchbacks in 2 miles from camp to a saddle at 9700' at UTM 840155. From here leave the trail and take the broad S ridge 2 miles to the top of Kern Peak. The hike is in an open forest until the tree line near the top of the peak. There are the remains of a shelter on top. We sat in and around it for a nice 45 minute lunch and the great views. It was all class 1 except for one class 2 move at the top. The total gain for the day was 3000' and 8 miles round trip. Monday we retraced our steps from camp to the roadhead, experiencing the 800' gain from Casa Viejo Meadows to our vehicles.

Both Saturday and Sunday nights we had community happy hours with prizes awarded for the best munchies. Both nights in a row Jane Tirrell got first prize. She won a blue scarf on Saturday night for her salami with cream cheese sandwiched in the middle. By Sunday night we were all so hungry that her horse radish dip won on its own, Jane getting a mini Nalgene bottle as the reward. Also given away was another mini Nalgene bottle and a carabiner key chain.

This was a very nice trip. Will McWhinney, as always, did an excellent job as my assistant. Will was in charge of a WTC group in West LA with Bill Oliver this year, and all but 4 in their group came for this trip. The participants were Ron Hohaus, Nimia del Rosario, Bonnie Young, Drew Rothmund, Jodi Saign Vance Handley, Charles Rosenberg, Carla Slepak, Jane Tirrell, Elizabeth Untiedt, Ed Vanderliet, Lisa Meseke and Ken Jones.



# Maggie Mountain: Beauty and the Beast

August 24-25, 2002 by Marnie O'Toole, WTC/OC

**THIS IS ONE OF THOSE TRIPS** that I'm really glad we did but I don't think we'll ever do again. With 300' tall redwoods, the dense forest and the beautiful rivers and streams, the scenery is some of the best I've seen on the West side. But the hike in to Maggie Lakes just flat out wasn't enjoyable!

My co-leader, Brad Hinkle, and I felt the exact same way when we scouted the trip a few months earlier over Memorial Day weekend. I had decided upon the trip route by selecting an "un-maintained trail" found on the 15 minute map for Golden Trout Wilderness. The fact that this route was not shown on any of the 7.5 minute quads for the area should have been my first clue! But I like to try the trails less traveled, even if they sometime turn out to be a little harder. So, we started out with some brutal elevation gain that just didn't seem to end. True, that Memorial Day trip was significantly hindered by knee deep snow but even then we knew it was going to be a very tough hike. With about 4,000' of gain in the first 3 miles, we were concerned about this route for a group of WTC students.

Over the next months, I spent a lot of time looking at alternative routes from the same

area. There's the standard route from Shake camp up the Tule River that most take when going for the Moses and Maggie duo. But on that route people generally camp a few miles up the river and we really wanted to get to the lakes. Plus, it would have involved significant bush whacking with full packs. Then there is the longer but more gradual Summit trail that goes to the lakes. Due to the fires that broke out this summer around Kernville though, this trail became a non-option as the forest service closed the road.

So, on August 24th, we all met at the planned starting point of Hidden Falls Recreation Area. Minus two no-shows, the participants on this trip were myself and Brad, Mark Roberts, another WTC leader, and six WTC students in search of meeting graduation requirements; Quang Than, Yim Lincoln, Susanna Kraig, Rich Wood, and Kevin & Ximena Ansel.

We started off around 9 a.m. that morning. On our scouting trip, Brad and I had picked up a copy of the local forest brochure from the visitor center. Here we found a primitive map with some dirt roads and a couple of trails not shown on any of our topos. With the idea of eliminating about 1,000' of gain, we decided to try this "shortcut." The "shortcut,"

better known as the Eastside Trail, turned out to be a beautiful route that crossed streams and waterfalls and had glorious views of the valley below. We realized the downside of this trail however, when after two hours of up and down and up and down, we were at the exact same elevation at which we had started! As we regrouped at the Griswold trail junction, I had to break the news to the group that the hardest/steepest part of the climb was yet to come. Needless to say, this news was not enthusiastically received!

Around 12:30pm people needed a break from the upward grind so we found a spot for lunch. We tried to make it a quick break as the bothersome bees were overly interested in our food and we still had over 2,500' of gain to go.

So the climbing continued. 4,000' of gain on a day hike can be tough but with full packs it was really starting to wear on people. When we finally crested out and reached the Summit Trail intersection, it was apparent that we probably would not make it all the way to the lakes. A couple of people were really feeling the altitude and it was pretty slow going by this point. From our scouting trip we knew of a stream about 2 miles ahead. We set this as a new goal and decided to re-evaluate once we were there.

At 5pm we finally reached the first water source. There was no consideration of continuing further — everyone was just too tired. We found the best level camp spots nestled among the tall trees and set up camp for the night. Happy hour, which turned out to mostly be an excellent variety of cookies, was somewhat subdued as people just wanted to relax and feed their hungry bellies before dark. After dinner some fun was had examining the various styles of bear bagging and making bets as to whose food would be the first to go.

We set an early wake up call for the next day with the idea





## WTC TRIP REPORTS

of eating breakfast, breaking camp and then hiking to the saddle to drop our packs and continue on to the summit. Contrary to the punishing hike in, the summit climb was very enjoyable. A fun scramble with good bouldering and exceptional views at the top made everyone almost forget the agony of the day before. We took our standard summit photos, a bit marred yet a bit glorified by the smoke in the background from the still smoldering Kern valley fires. We then headed back down to retrieve our packs and start the hike back to our cars.

The hike out to many was just as punishing as the hike in with knees and toes taking the brunt of the steep descent. At least the scenery was still unparalleled and everyone seemed in good spirits. When we reached the Tule River, Brad, Mark and Quang offered to hike the last mile up to the cars and come back with a car shuttle giving everyone else the opportunity to relax and soak their tired feet. The group gladly accepted this generous offer!

We finished up the trip by discussing the “goods” and “bads” of the trip while waiting for our meals at the local burger joint in Springville. As with most any trip I’ve been on, the

“bads” gradually fade away as feelings of camaraderie and accomplishment gradually abound. It would be a stretch to say this trip was a really good one or one that will be fondly remembered, but it’s safe to say the Maggie trip will not be one soon forgotten!



## Basin Mountain

August 3-4, 2002 by Ron Campbell, WTC/OC

### AH, DECADENCE.

Smoked salmon washed down with a rich merlot on a mosquito-free (though breezy) evening in the High Sierra. Cream of asparagus soup. Chicken teriyaki.

Jealous yet?

The first annual gourmet peak-bag left the Horton Lakes trailhead a half-hour past the announced starting time of 8 a.m. Saturday, getting things off to a suitably relaxed start. We had four participants on the joint WTC-SPS trip and, alas, three no-shows condemned to wonder what they missed.

We arrived at Horton Lake just in time for a mid-day nap and lunch. At 6 p.m. the festivities began. Frank Van der Wall offered edamame (lightly salted fresh soybeans). George Rieck countered with Yukon River cold-smoked salmon, spiced with jalapeno and served in croutades (pastry cups about the size of a quarter, a half-inch deep). The salmon croutades were the clear taste sensation of a trip with many sensations.

Georgette meanwhile spread out a tasteful red-and-white checked tablecloth (held down by rocks in the now-stiff breeze off the lake). She set on it a plate of Kalamata olives with French feta cheese and champagne crackers, later supplemented with marinated red peppers. Somewhere along the way — it got confusing — George pulled out a package of shrimp-flavored chips; they offered a light break from the almost overwhelming croutades.

My wife had recently returned from Spain bringing me two varieties of Knorr’s dried soups that I have never seen in American stores. I spent several anxious hours (okay minutes — but they were anxious) deciding between Crema de Esparragos (just what you think it is) and Crema de Langosta (lobster). My campmates were delighted with the Crema de Esparragos.

It was time at last for the main courses. Frank made bowtie pasta — the first time I have seen a thick pasta cooked successfully at 10,000 feet — with a pesto and salmon sauce. Georgette served chicken teriyaki. We had so much food that I left my offering — crab quesadillas — unopened in the bear canister.



I brought three screw-together plastic wine goblets. Frank politely refused my offer of a fourth goblet in favor of his titanium cup. Frank brought a Blackstone Merlot while George offered a Turning Leaf merlot. I broke the merlot monopoly with a Fetzer Cabernet. We toasted each other, the great food and the marvelous mountains around us.

Even the most decadent peak-bag gets serious at a predictable point — when the climbing begins.

We left camp at 7:30 a.m. Sunday, crossing a bridge over the outlet stream, just before the stream drops into a canyon. We then worked our way along the southern shore to the first inlet stream, which we followed south to a pair of lakes. From the upper lake at 11,480 ft., we climbed an obvious south-trending ridge just to east of the lake. The ridge eventually merges into a bowl well to the left of a semi-permanent snowfield. At about 12,000 ft., we turned left (nearly due east) toward the apparent high point. This is a false summit. We worked our way around its right (southeast) side, dropping perhaps 50 ft. to a notch separating the false and true summits. We then easily made our way up a series of ramps to the summit.

The top gave us superb views of Humphreys, Emerson, Table and Agassiz. The hanging valley just west of the summit of Tom was especially dramatic. Basin is plainly not a destination peak. Only a handful of parties had signed the register in June or July. This is too bad. The peak is cross-country all the way and scree or talus for much of the distance, making it a test of conditioning. (It certainly tested mine.) And the views are outstanding.

From the summit we dropped down the steep northeast slope of the mountain to about 11,800 ft., where we turned almost due west to intercept the upper lake. Once we reached the camp, one more surprise awaited us — a 12-lb. watermelon that Georgette had lugged up the trail. I believe it would have tasted great under any circumstance, but after a climb it was heavenly.

We got off the mountain late, thus missing an important, unwritten trip objective — a visit to Schatts in Bishop. But on Monday, Georgette and I each got something in the mail almost as good as a fresh sourdough loaf — Godiva chocolates. Two of our no-show participants sent us each a box, no doubt hoping to bribe us into silence about their identities. It’s the best bribe I’ve gotten in years.

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A photograph of three women, Melissa Kane, Patty Rambert, and Rosemary Campbell, posing outdoors in a wooded area. They are all wearing black long-sleeved shirts and black leggings. The woman on the left is wearing a blue baseball cap and has her hand on her hip. The woman in the middle is wearing a black cap and has her arm around the woman on the right. The woman on the right is wearing a black cap and has her arm around the woman in the middle. They are all smiling and looking at the camera. The background shows trees and a path.

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