

# The Sierra



# ECHO

Volume 12

December

1968

No. 11



Miles and Maureen Brubacher ask this question: Have you gained anything from the Sierra Club?

Yes, we all have. Isn't there some way you can increase your support of the Club's programs that will be very satisfying to yourself?

You've written your congressman and actively participated to save the Grand Canyon, the Redwoods and other conservation projects. Why? For future generations, of course. We have a future generation here and now that needs your help - the YOUTH SECTION.

We need ideas, leaders and assistants in the following areas: outings, transportation, newsletter, mailing, finances, conservation.

Contact Joe Masters, Chairman, Advisory Committee. Or better yet, join us at the committee meetings, fourth Tuesday of every month at Club Headquarters.

## ECHO STAFF

Published monthly by the Sierra Peaks Section of the Angeles Chapter of the Sierra Club.

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### SUBSCRIPTIONS:

\$1.00 per year.  
Subscription to the ECHO is a requirement for active membership in the S.P.S.

### REMITTANCE:

Must be sent to the S.P.S. Treasurer, Bep Bingham, 4337 El Prieto Road, Altadena, California

### NEXT COPY DEADLINE:

Monday, December 23, 1968

## NEWS

Tom McNicholas and Stephanie Evanoff were married September 1 in Syracuse, N.Y. They will live at 1563 Hyde Street, Apt. 1, San Francisco 94109.

\* \* \*

Sy Ossofsky and Ellen Siegal have also been married and will live at Sy's address, 5934 Abernathy Drive, L.A. 90049.

\* \* \*

And Frede Jensen married Maguy Lorre in Las Vegas October 19. Their address: 3250 30th St., Apt. 14B, Boulder, Colorado.

Incidentally, Frede has all but 10 of the 53 14,000-foot peaks in Colorado. He actually sacrificed La Plata Peak in the Sawatch for his October wedding!

\* \* \*

We wish all of you much happiness.

\* \* \*

## F O R S A L E

Bunny Rogero has for sale a pair of Iowa Grosse Zinna Boots, ladies size 5. They are germ free, have only 50 miles of gentle wear. Original cost: \$40 -- Bunny will sacrifice.

How about those of you with children? Make an offer. Contact Bunny at 1750 W. Lancaster Blvd., Lancaster 93534. Or phone (805) 942-8180.

\* \* \*

And John Thornton is still offering a bargain price on two pairs of Grivel crampons. One size 47, 12 points with straps, nearly new for \$12. Another size 48, also 12 points with straps, same price.

Also for sale, one Bluet stove with five fuel cylinders for \$7. Contact John at P.O. Box 1532, Manhattan Beach, or call 376-7716.

\* \* \*

## C O V E R P H O T O

This month Tom Ross has again loaned us one of his fine Sierra photographs. This one shows a clearing storm at sunset from the summit of Mt. Stewart. Eagle Scout Peak is shown in the right background. The photo was taken June 20, 1964.

## CHAIRMAN'S CORNER

Once again a new Management Committee is taking over leadership of the Sierra Peaks Section. The new committee consists of Dick Beach, Bill Hunt, Dick Jali, Ron Jones and Dick Sykes. All five have extensive experience in planning and leading climbs. Four of the five members have been on expeditions to Alaska or Peru.

A glance at the record of participation of our new committee speaks for itself. Bill Hunt, the new Chairman, has climbed with the SPS for five years and has been both schedule chairman and secretary. During the summer of 1965, Bill participated in an expedition to the Cordillera Blanca in Peru.

Dick Sykes, our new Vice Chairman, has been participating and leading trips in the section for several years. A graduate of the Mt. Rainier Mountaineering School in 1967, Dick is on his way to becoming an excellent rock climber. This past summer he organized and led an expedition to the Cordillera Blanca of Peru, at the same time keeping the office of Secretary in good running order.

Our new Treasurer, Dick Jali, has been a member of the Management Committee or on one of the subcommittees almost continuously over the past several years. A leader of many SPS trips, Dick joined the assault on Huascaran with Dick Sykes this past summer.

Ron Jones has been an active section member for many years. He will be your new Secretary. A geologist by training, Ron is an exceptionally good climber. Some of his strenuous Sierra climbs are almost legendary.

Dick Beach is Alternate Officer in the new Management Committee. I had the good fortune to have Dick as a climbing companion in Alaska during the summer of 1967. Dick is one man that you can count on in the toughest of times, and his easy-going and congenial manner makes fun out of the worst of conditions. He has been climbing in the Sierras almost since he could walk.

These are the men you have chosen to manage the section for the coming year. However, to do this successfully they need all of your support. The year ahead will be a critical one for the Sierra Club in general, and the future of the section may well depend on your active support.

I wish to thank wholeheartedly all the committee members who have worked so diligently this past year. They have been the mainstay of the section, doing most of the hard work and getting the least of the credit.

And finally, I want to thank all of you who supported me and made my job easier. It was a great experience -- and even greater fun.

— John P. Thornton —

## ELECTION RESULTS

There were two constitutional amendments on the ballot recently, and both passed by a large margin.

The first makes it necessary for two of the six qualifying peaks for membership to be climbed on a scheduled SPS trip. Yes: 104. No: 45.

The second authorizes mascots, children under 12 years old who climb six qualify-ing peaks accompanied by a parent. Yes: 102. No: 31.

# ASCENTS

HOMER'S NOSE, October 26-27

Ron Jones

Twelve climbers met leaders Izzy Lieberman and me at the South Fork Campground, 8 a.m. Saturday. The weather was perfect and the pace leisurely as we made the short backpack to Surprise Camp on Bennett Creek (6,000'). The trail was quite obvious and easy to follow except at one spot near the 5,000-foot level where upon intersecting a ridge in a grove of oaks it turns to follow the ridge upward.

Although led by an intrepid spelunker, Jim Jenkins, we failed to find either Clough Cave near South Fork Campground or Palmer Cave near Bennett Creek. Saturday afternoon twelve persons combed the mountainside looking for Palmer Cave, but found no evidence of it.

Spelunkers we aren't, but climbers we are -- Saturday morning found all of us on our way to Homer's Nose (9,005'). Again the trail was easy to follow until one intercepts the Salt Creek Ridge Trail. However, by merely following the ridge upward we soon arrived at the summit. Time from our camp was three hours. Soon after noon the last of the party left the peak to begin an uneventful hike out.

Marlin Clark led most members of the group to Rosso's Italian Restaurant in Woodville for an excellent after-climb meal. It was generally agreed that Rosso's should be placed on the qualifying list of west side eating spots. Woodville, population 20 , is reached by traveling south on Highway 65 through Exeter and continuing straight at Cairn's Corner on Road 196 instead of following the highway. At Avenue 184 turn west to Road 168. Then turn south two miles to Woodville. Rosso's is in the middle of town.

\* \* \*

ROCKHOUSE PEAK, November 2-3

Bill Hunt

A small but enthusiastic group was waiting Saturday morning at the old Pine Canyon Camp when leaders John Thornton and I arrived. A short wait for any late-comers was spent treasure hunting in and around the old mining camp buildings before we started the 12-mile ride on the new road to Rockhouse Meadow.

In the flat areas this road is pretty good, but it is quite rough on some of the steep grades, and people with large American cars must take special care. This I can verify. Halfway through the drive at a stop a large hole was discovered in my gas tank, and the gas was seen pouring out at a rapid rate. I had heard of using soap to plug a hole in a gas tank -- and it works like a charm! As of this writing (November 12) I still haven't lost a drop of gas.

Twelve of us set off for the peak at about 10 a.m. from Rockhouse Meadow. After baring our tootsies to wade across the Kern, we intersected and followed the faint trail that leads west from the Meadow about 2.5 miles. This brought us to a pass that is about a mile south of the peak. From this point we turned 90 degrees to an almost due-north course to the peak. The summit is not named on the topo map, but can be found from its elevation (8,383'). The elevation gain on the trail is about 1,600 feet and cross country about 1,200 feet -- making a total gain of about 2,800 feet and 3.5 miles one way.

We set a moderate pace which was fast enough to cause one newcomer to drop out. She stopped and rested until the return of the main group. Some of the party were surprised to find that the summit block was third class, but all -- including two girls out climbing for the first time -- reached the top at 2 p.m. The register revealed that the peak had not been climbed since 1963. A SPS register was left on the summit.

A S C E N T S , continued

Because of the short days we did not linger long on the summit, but even so it was almost dark by the time the last climber reached the cars. We camped in Rockhouse Mea-dow on the banks of the Kern River. (Editor's note: Other people had also found there a pleasant campsite -- several Indian metates were found in nearby stone.) The con-genial group talked and sang (with guitar accompaniment) around the campfire until 10 p.m.

We awoke Sunday to a dismal day that deteriorated as time went by. Since it was showering, we decided to pack the cars and drive up the poor road before the rain made it impassable. We stopped at Saturday's meeting place and cooked breakfast in the main kitchen of the abandoned camp. The showers continued intermixed with short periods of sunshine, but the clouds to the west looked threatening. We decided not to climb Saw-tooth Peak, which was scheduled for that day; however, four in the group drove to Chimney Creek Campground to attempt this climb. We later learned that there was almost zero visibility when they arrived there, so all thoughts of climbing Sawtooth were abandoned.

The leaders spent an interesting day visiting the Tropico Gold Mine and Museum just out of Rosamond.

\* \* \*



## U N S C H E D U L E D C L I M B S

KERN PEAK, June 15-16

Art de Goede

An earlier ECHO this year mentioned that Bill Wickmer and I climbed Kern Peak from the Cottonwood Creek roadhead -- the approximate vital statistics may be interesting to others planning the climb.

The trip was about 10 miles with 1,600 feet of gain and 2,100 feet of loss to the campsite at the south edge of Ramshaw Meadow, half a mile east of Kern Peak Stringer, The route crosses Horseshoe Meadow, Trail Pass, Mulkey Meadow, a low ridge and Ramshaw Meadow -- all on trail. It took four hours.

We climbed the peak from there in two hours 40 minutes, using the ridge just west of the Stringer. We descended the not-so-clearcut trail along the Stringer shown on the current topos. The climb of Kern from the mentioned campsite involves about 10 miles round trip and 2,700 foot gain. We arrived back at camp at 5:30 p.m., after leaving the summit about 3:20, We departed for the roadhead at 7 a.m. Sunday, but turned east at Mulkey Meadow, went to its head, dropped our packs and climbed Muah Mountain. The roadhead was attained at 4:30 p.m. with mileage of approximately 17 miles and gain of 3,600 feet that Sunday.

Possible advantages of this route over the southern approach are the easier road-head (we started at 6:30 a.m. Saturday) and the relative proximity of Muah (or Trail Peak) as an additional climb on the second day. Otherwise the distances and gain seem fairly comparable and future road development will determine which is the easier and faster approach,

We found one trail on an older topo -- but not the current topo -- which we found helpful. The best way to climb Muah from the roadhead appears to be up the Mulkey Pass Trail to about 10,200 feet where a tree is blazed with a "D", Here one crosses the ra-vine directly to the left and picks up the mentioned trail that goes up to the saddle in which Diaz Creek heads. The trail continues down Diaz Creek but cuts away from it at Dutch Meadow. It is probably better to just continue down Diaz Creek to the meadow at 9,600 feet and then climb Muah.

\* \* \*

BEHIND THE PALISADES, Aug. 1-11

Andy Smatko

On August 1, Bill Croxson, Ellen Siegal, Bill Schuler and I backpacked from the South Lake trailhead over Bishop Pass and then dropped down in southwesterly direction to a suitable campsite about 200 feet above and east of the eastern end of Lake 11,393'. There was no wood, but water was available from a small stream nearby. At the same camp were six other people, with whom prior arrangements had been made for a joint ascent of Thunderbolt Peak,

Early next morning nine climbers made the ascent of Thunderbolt via the first gully beyond Thunderbolt Pass. After the climb we crossed Pot Luck Pass and camped at Glacier Lake. There is no wood at this lake.

On August 3, we four climbed Barrett Peak (13,920'), half a mile southwest of Mt. Sill. The register claimed an altitude of 14,020 feet, but this is probably not correct. Ascent was via the north slopes and was mainly Class 2. From Barrett Peak we went in a northwesterly direction to a high point where a cairn and register recorded the peak as Polemonium. The actual summit lay about 75 feet to the west and appeared to be about 30 feet higher, but to reach it would have required a rappell into a notch and then a Class 4 or 5 climb to the real high point. As we were not equipped with the necessary hardware or rope, we did not attempt this pinnacle, but went on along the ridge and climbed Mt. Sill via the west ridge.

## U N S C H E D U L E D CLIMBS, continued

Apparently we took the wrong route, for we got into high Class 3 climbing and had one fourth class pitch. Descent was via the standard south couloir back to Glacier Lake where we found Sy Ossofsky waiting with a small pile of wood. Where he found it we didn't know, but he said it was cached nearby. Wood can be found about 200 feet lower, below the outlet of the lake.

Next morning, the 4th, we backpacked over Cirque Pass and climbed the peak immediately east of the pass. It was Class 2, and we found a cairn but no register. We therefore left a register, and while Sy, Bill Croxon and Ellen descended to Upper Palisade Lake and camp, Bill Schuler and I climbed the next two summits to the northeast. Both of these peaks were first ascents. We left registers and built cairns. The grade was Class 3 on both.

Next day Sy and Ellen climbed Bolton-Brown via the loose north slopes, while the two Bills and I climbed Balcony Peak via the peak just west of Southfork Pass and thence along the ridge to Balcony. From the summit of Balcony one would have to rappell into the notch between it and Disappointment Peak in order to climb the latter, but again we were unpre-pared, and no apparent route less than fourth class presented itself elsewhere. As we were tired and wished to get back to camp, we stopped looking for an alternate route and returned to Palisade Lake.

On August 6, while Bill Croxon rested in camp, we four climbed the double summited peak .8 miles southwest of Upper Palisade Lake. The northwest summit is the higher. While Sy and Ellen declined to climb the southeast summit, Bill Schuler and I did so -- and to our surprise found that we had another first ascent. We built a cairn, placed a register, and then went on to climb the next peak to the south. This was easy Class 2 to 3 just be-low and west of the ridge connecting the two. We then eyed the next peak to the south-west summit. This looked difficult, particularly the summit block which appeared to be a smooth monolith. We gained the west ridge about 150 feet west of the summit via the dangerous Class 4 north face -- dangerous because of down-sloping, scree-covered narrow ledges. We found a cairn at the base of the summit block with only one signature in it. The block, about 18 feet high, presented only one possible route up the southeast corner. While Bill belayed me with the rope thrown over the block, I climbed this corner. But alas, it had a cairn containing the names of the Werk brothers. Bill then climbed the block and placed a better register. As we did not want to go down that horrendous north face again, we found an easier Class 3 route down the northeast face with one Class 4 pitch. It was decidedly the better route of ascent. The other parties apparently climbed from Lake Basin up the easy southwest face, basically Class 2 except for the summit block.

Next day, the 7th, we backpacked to Mather Pass. From it Bill Schuler, Ellen and I climbed Mather Peak .6 miles northeast of the Pass. It, too, has double summits, the southern one being the higher. Again, Ellen declined to go over the north summit, which Bill and I climbed. We were rewarded by another first ascent. We built a cairn and left a register.

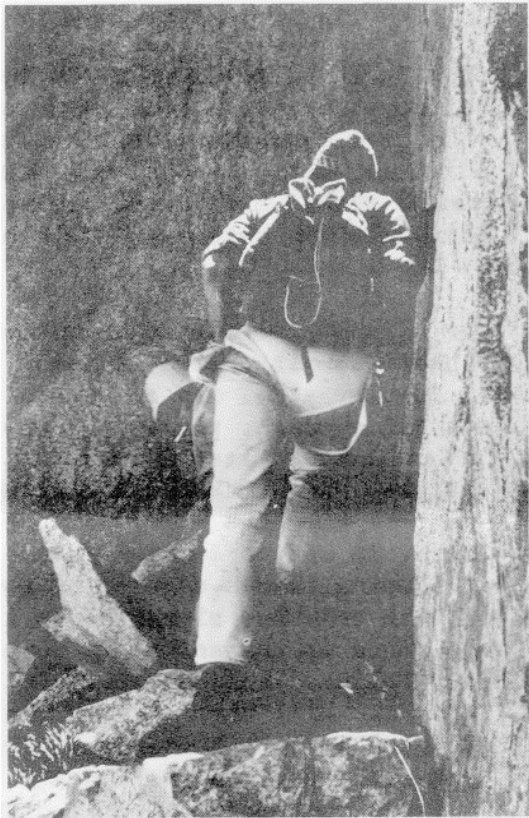
Camp was made about one mile south of the pass. Next day, the 8th, while Sy and Ellen fished the large lake to the east, the two Bills and I reascended to Mather Pass and proceeded southwest. We climbed the first peak (cairn but no register) and then traversed the entire ridge, climbing the next two peaks and two pinnacles between. The further Peak 12,880+-feet, was a first ascent, as was one of the striking pinnacles. Bill Croxon then returned to camp, and Bill Schuler and I climbed the next two peaks further along the ridge. We got second ascents on both. Then we went on to climb Peak 12,880+-feet to the south-southwest, climbing en route the striking subsidiary peak on the ridge to it. This was a long day.

On the ninth day Bill Croxon and Ellen climbed Split Mountain while Bill Schuler and Sy climbed Prater. I contented myself with an ascent of the saddle between the two. This same day we backpacked down to a better campsite.

U N S C H E D U L E D C L I M B S , continued

On the 10th day we all climbed Vannacher Needle via the southeast slopes, Class 2, This peak is higher than Mt. Ruskin, to the south, by a few feet. On return to the camp we then backpacked to the highest timber west of Taboose Bass and had a leisurely Sunday going over the pass to our cars. The weather was fine throughout, except for light sprinkles for a couple of hours one night. Should anyone wish more specific details on routes for the peaks climbed, he may contact me or Bill Schuler. We all liked this area so much that we plan to go in there again for other ascents, and for just loafing.

\* \* \*



Climbing can be pretty tricky -- even dangerous -- business. Just ask Eric Schumacher.

Bunny Rogero recorded this historic view for posterity, lest we forget.

LONGS PEAK, COLORADO (14,255'), October .....Bob Michael

Pikes and Longs Peaks are the most famous of Colorado summits because of their abrupt rise from the Great Plains to 14,000+ feet. But whereas Pikes is a gently rounded mass with a cog railway and a road to the summit, Longs turns an awesome vertical face of 2,400 feet toward the flatlands.

On a weekend in the middle of October two friends and I set out to climb this majestic peak. Leaving the Longs Peak Campground (9,400') after noon on Saturday (having dutifully registered by phone with the Rocky Mountain Park ranger) we arrived after a leisurely four-mile backpack at the Colorado Mountain Club's Chasm Lake shelter hut at 11,600 feet. A short scramble over a glacial rock step from this pleasant and clean little hut brings you to Chasm Lake, a large and deep tarn nestled right against the East Face of Longs -- as awesome a sight as I have ever seen. What a place for organ music! From here you look straight up at the polished tan granite of the Diamond, a nearly blank wall in the middle of the face that has recently been climbed using Yosemite-type aid technique but in much more severe conditions of altitude and weather.



## UN SCHEDULED TRIPS, continued

Next morning we took the trail that swings around to the north side of Longs past a satellite peak with the improbable name of Mt. Lady Washington. At 12,000 feet one emerges out onto the Boulder Field (it is just that) sloping gently up to the start of the Keyhole and Cable Routes at about 13,000 feet. The cable goes up near the corner of the north and east faces. Just at the beginning of the first cable at 13,200 feet a place called "Chasm View" offers an incredible view out onto the face of the Diamond, which here seems close enough to touch. It must be like the view from an elevator halfway up Half Dome.

The first cable, 150 feet long, proved to be a surprise. Familiar with National Park operations, I had assumed it would be nothing but a glorified handrail. Instead, you use it to haul yourself up some impressive slabs which would certainly be (easy) Fifth Class otherwise. I had only a cheap pair of mitts with slippery vinyl palms, so I tried taking them off and grabbing the metal cable. Zap! It was, of course, well below freezing -- and I needed a blowtorch to unglue my frozen flesh from the cable. End of experiment.

About halfway up we encountered a pavement of thick ice on the rock where you would ordinarily put your feet. Signs at the trailhead which warn of the "horrors" of winter on Longs had made abundant mention of this. We cut toeholds in the ice and belayed. There is a second cable above the first, but it traverses much easier terrain and we hardly noticed it buried in the snow. Above the cables a fairly short scramble brings you to the strange Mt. Darwin-like summit, a nearly flat "table" the shape and about three times the size of a football field with steep to vertical drops on all sides. Especially awesome is the drop down the east wall to Chasm Lake. A similar abyss on the west side is the head of Glacier Gorge, an amphitheater of thousand-foot north faces. To the south the view extends along the broken backbone of the Front Range to Pikes Peak. Wyoming's Medicine Bow Range is clearly visible in the other direction.

After about an hour of taking in the scenery and the awful wind, we started down the Keyhole route. The beginning of this route down the top of the south face is on some steep and exposed slabs called the "Homestretch." Paint splotches mark the whole route. This is fortunate, because to get even slightly off route on this sheer, square stump of granite could have dangerous consequences. At the corner of the south and west faces you turn into the "Narrows," perhaps the most breathtaking part of the whole climb, where the route follows a little ledge contouring along the otherwise vertical west face. After the Narrows you descend the tedious Trough, and then traverse out along the base of the northwest arete to emerge once again at the head of the Boulderfield at the Keyhole. This remarkable place is named for an enormous overhanging block of granite poised like a buther'a cleaver above you. It's a spooky place to be -- especially in a high wind. The little round stone sheltered cabin here at 13,200 feet with its pointed top and two tiny windows reminded us of a petrified Ku Kluxer.

As we came down off the Keyhole in the lengthening shadows of late afternoon, we had completed a 360-degree "circle tour" on all sides of the mountain. I had a happy feeling of accomplishment I've rarely felt before. For pure fun climbing on a not-too-difficult route with outstanding scenery all the way, Longs is surely one of the best peaks in America.

### **CONSERVATION**

After 40 years of conflict, the Minaret Summit area again is threatened with destruction. Business interests in the Fresno area are urging the construction of Forest Highway 100 -- which would invade the primitive country between Squaw Dome and Devil's Post-piles National Monument (just south of Yosemite), cut across the Muir Trail and endanger the basaltic columns at Devil's Postpiles National Monument.

Fresno businessmen who urge construction of a road through one of the longest and finest wilderness expanses remaining in this country claim increased recreational benefits and the need for a commercial route between the San Joaquin Valley and the east.

C O N S E R V A T I O N ,   c o n t i n u e d

Their arguments are doubtful. Five hundred thousand dollars is being appropriated each year for the next five years to make Forest Highway 100 an all-weather road. Proponents of the plan claim that construction costs would total \$22 million. In fact, over \$125 million will be needed.

Proponents claim also that snow removal from such a highway would cost \$156,000 yearly. Actual expenses would run to \$237,000 per year -- thirty times higher than the cost of snow removal on Highway 50. Although proponents claim commercial vehicles would use the road, the rough terrain, heavy grades and high elevation would render truck traffic most unlikely. And while the Division of Highways admits that no all-weather route is feasible through the mountainous area, recreational traffic estimates are based on winter travel.

Besides the obvious financial peculiarities of the scheme, a highway through this beautiful country would be a conservation tragedy.

Judge Raymond Sherwin, who has done a lot of work on the Minaret Summit road issue, says: "I went over the staked route on foot with the District Ranger and was horrified. The Bureau of Public Roads has apparently made a fetish out of keeping the road to a five per cent grade, and in order to do so proposes to bulldoze through trees, cliffs and de facto wilderness without regard to cost or destruction."

The Muir Trail, protected in most of its length by the Dana-Minarets Wilderness and the John Muir Wilderness area, will be cut in half if the highway is built. Anyone who has walked this inspirational trail will know there can be no justification for a road across it.

Every year more and more Californians head for the mountains -- to fish, to hike, to climb or for spiritual renewal. The Southern California Research Council ("The Challenge of Leisure," 1967) states that in 20 years man's productivity in Southern California will be so increased that workers will have the choice of an 80 per cent salary increase, work-ing 22 hours per week, taking 25 weeks of vacation yearly or retiring at 38. Whatever the ultimate division of these choices, this fact is incontestable: Californians will have more leisure time as the years pass, and therefore will need more and more recreational lands. Land for recreation is already in short supply. We cannot afford to lose another precious wilderness area.

Time is short. Wilderness and roads cannot co-exist. We must stop this road and we must act soon.

It is imperative that each SPS member write letters opposing Forest Highway 100 and urging that the area through which the road passes be classified as wilderness.

Write your Senator or Representative.

Sheridan E. Farin, Regional Engineer  
U.S. Department of Transportation  
Federal Highway Administration  
Region 7 - 450 Golden Gate Ave.  
San Francisco, Calif.

J. A. Legarra, State Highway Engineer  
Div. of Highways - Dept. of Public Works  
1120 N Street  
Sacramento, Calif.

Other addresses:

J. W. Deinema, Regional Forester  
U.S. Dept. of Agriculture, Forest Service  
630 Sansome Street  
San Francisco, Calif. 94111

Orville Freeman  
Department of Agriculture  
Washington, D.C.

For further information, write the Active Conservation Tactics, c/o Dean of Students Office, University of California, Davis, Davis, Calif, 95616.

DO NOT WAIT, DELAY OR PROCRASTINATE! When the wilderness is gone, it is gone forever -- and we will be poor indeed.

"THE SIERRA ECHO"  
2738 Montrose Avenue #17  
Montrose, California 91020

"to explore, enjoy, preserve"