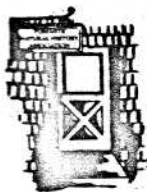


# YOSEMITE

AUGUST, 1974 VOLUME FORTY-FOUR, NUMBER 3

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**WHAT'S YNHA DOING?** In the last Member's Bulletin, we reported that our office was being 'redone' and would become an Indian Museum and that we would be relocated to a new area. Progress to date: Jane Gyer has done a magnificent mural in the lobby of the rooms to be the museum. It was enjoyable watching her work and you'll enjoy her painting. Meanwhile, our new place has been walled, a floor put in, window frames are in place, etc. The carpenters were redirected to more urgent tasks (they've built several new employee tent houses in Camp 25, formerly Camp 6). So, we're ready to move whenever the office is completed. We have held several plenary discussions about the decor, which will be Indian-oriented, 'though just how, we've not concluded. Committee decisions often are drawn out. The best news is that the National Park Service will be able to pay most of the construction costs for the office, thus saving YNHA about \$3,000 (total cost, about \$6,000). They, the N.P.S., of course are the "landlords" and the first right to the new office is theirs. To those several members who sent in donations toward the construction, we offer a thank you. We will use their money toward the myriad of projects in mind.



**YNHA SUMMER PROGRAMS.** Our field seminar programs started July 15 and ran through August 30. The early exception was the Birding Seminar, which was held mid-June. Overall, enrollment ran about 65% capacity; heaviest enrollment is in Alpine and Subalpine Botany, Ecology of the Giant Sequoias, Natural History for the Backpacker and Interpretive Techniques, conducted by Naturalist Bruce Fincham. Carl Sharsmith, who historically has spent his summers at Tuolumne Meadows and who has conducted botany seminars, is in Europe this summer examining Alpine flora. We hope he will return next summer to Yosemite's high places.

These classes are aimed at the park visitor who wants to learn more about Yosemite than he can acquire on the traditional two hour 'nature walks.' The instruction will be at an advanced level. They run through July and August, with classes offered four times a week. We're "borrowing" specialists from the naturalists division for these programs.

We're quite elated at our involvement in two new environmental programs. We sponsored, with help from Bruce Fincham, Valley District Naturalist, a series of 'mini-seminars' and a 'family backpack.' The first will include one-day programs on botany, ornithology, entomology, geology, limnology, and Indian Culture.



Last summer, a fascinating young naturalist, Sharon Dequer, took families on all-day hikes in the Valley. On these, the children and the parents learned together about the environment and the wonders of Yosemite. The parents, in addition, saw how to explain the complexities of ecology in terms their children could understand.

With this as a base, we asked Sharon if she would lead three-day backpack trips for families. She agreed and, with Roger McGehee another outstanding naturalist, took families out from Bridalveil Campground for two nights in the wilderness. On the hike, simple skills of camping will be demonstrated, there will be 'discovery walks,' a 'night prowl' and a 'trust walk.'

Families ate as a group for some meals, others they took as a family unit.

When we discussed with Sharon her thoughts about a minimum age for the children, she said calmly, "probably not under four."



We are proud of our newest publication, DISCOVERING SIERRA TREES. It was written by Steve Arno of the National Forest Service and illustrated by Jane Gyer; Dumont Lithography of Fresno did the printing. The booklet was co-published with the Sequoia Natural History Association. It contains descriptions and fine pen and ink illustrations of 36 conifer and broadleaved trees found in the Sierra, from Sequoia National Forest on the south to Stanislaus and Toiyabe National Forest on the north. Acceptance of the book by the park visitor and the professional forest people has been very gratifying. It is available to members for \$1.95 including tax and postage.

Being revised are two of our old standbys, A BRIEF STORY OF THE GEOLOGY OF YOSEMITE VALLEY and BIRDS OF YOSEMITE. Jim Warner, staff naturalist and a fine ornithologist, has made some rather minor alterations to Stebbins' text, mainly changes in nomenclature. Jane Gyer will provide a cover drawing.

Steve Olsen, also on the naturalist staff, who knows the park's geology well and can articulate it, is making revisions to 'Brief Geology.' Jane has a fine new cover for this publication.

**NATIONAL PARK SERVICE** The National Park Service has three rather major undertakings in one or another stage of development.

Essential, but not particularly exciting is the sewer system, to be started this fall running between the existing treatment plant near Bridalveil and a new plant at El Portal. The present plant hasn't met the prescribed criteria since 1968, being not only of inadequate capacity, but also allowing an intolerable quantity of nutrients to enter the Merced River. According to the assistant superintendent in charge of such matters, the new plant is not scaled to accommodate greater numbers of visitors in the Valley.

Ten miles of pipe will be laid in the Arch Rock roadbed and during construction, electrical conduit will be put down for future undergrounding of the Valley power supply.

Two contracts have been let, the pipeline for \$5.3 million and the treatment plant for \$5.3 million.

During construction there will be a certain amount of traffic control though there will be no prolonged closures.



We attach somewhat more delight in learning of the plans for bicycle paths in the west end of the Valley. Envisioned, and funded, is a loop of some twelve miles of trail to run from approximately Yosemite Lodge to Fern Springs and return on the opposite side of the river. The preliminary plans are in and, at present, the impact factors are being assessed. Visitor safety and enjoyment are also considerations.

Paths will be hard surfaced and sufficiently wide to allow cyclists to pass. There will be 'speed limit' of 10 miles per hour.



Murray Odette is artist-in-residence in Yosemite. He's a V.I.P. (Volunteer in Parks), here because he loves it, being paid a pittance. He's a student of Cooper Union, New York and an artist and poet. He seems unflappable, except about the Park. Then, he turns on. This is what he wrote for us.

**FOR TIMPANI, WOODWINDS AND STRING** I am high. In trees that hover higher. Some thousands and hundred feet high.

Beyond. Hulking mountain monsters. Moulting majesties with sno-cone topped ice cream peaks. Staring down from imperious heights through great grey granite eyeballs. Mottle scarred arms. Encrusted with eons of energy mark the valley below. A miles wide basin of trees. Encircling a tapered meadow. Cool green. Top of the inside. Highest of high. Even they be shrouded and turned to sky.

Clouds appear. Costume changes before our eyes. Peeling, pitching, rolling, roiling. Pacing to and

fro. Each and every color of day. Red, yellow, blue, night. Audacious clowns. From higher or high. Hide sun. Hide moon. Hide sky! Shadow notes to be read below. Or endlessly above. Symphony of symphonies. On the grandest of scales. Staged and costumed in magnificence. With and for all to hear.

Nature waves her strong, supple, subtle baton. Wind. Cueing each player. One or more. He tunes the trees. "C" Tree "C" They all wave their arms to agree. Ultimate in sympathetic resonance. Bass background violins. Cello. Birds sing. Higher strings. Notes accented in flight. Misnomer of course and fall and mist the eye. Flutes, oboes, clarinets, bassoons, or timpani. Bass, kettle, snare. Glide. Ripplingly, rippling, ripple, glide. Sound that comes from everywhere.

"For timpani, woodwinds and strings." In a cycle of always. Directed and conducted by the creator of score. Great mistress of space. In whose womb this pittance of planet gestates its way to birth. The ultimate note. End. Beginning. Who knows what waits. Imagine the score.

Roar. Or silence. Still.



**ROUNDHOUSE** The Roundhouse (hanje) in the Indian Garden was dedicated recently; we were privileged to attend. Our exposure to the affair began early, about 7 a.m., when we walked through the garden. A number of visiting Indian families had occupied the several umatcas. There was a little smoke in the air; sunlight filtered through the trees. It took little imagination to believe the time was a hundred years ago.

Dedication day was a grand success. Old friends greeted one another warmly 'though they are quiet people, apparently not given to shouting.

Agnes Castro read a prayer in Paiute, then in English consecrating the Roundhouse; others spoke, Indians and whites. Then the ceremonial dancing in the Roundhouse began. It was impressive — the measure, the chanting and the attire.

Miwoks, Maidus and Pomos moved through their ritualistic cadence and, if one watched closely, the subtleties of the chant and the movement were discernable.

During the afternoon, the hand-game (hinowu) started. To us, this had never been more than a demonstration. Now, here were two teams of four facing each other, one team of Miwoks another of Paiutes and Monos. In a basket were lots of dollars for the winners. In a sense, the game is similar to the shell and pea game in that one team must guess in which hand his opposite is hiding a bone marker. It is played to the accompaniment of a chant which reaches a high level when the guess is made. There's laughter over a wrong guess. Four games took most of the afternoon; each team won two games.

At the evening meal more than 500 guests were served barbecued beef, acorn soup, fry bread and other dishes, pre and post-Caucasian.

So the tribes gathered — Mono, Pomos, Paiutes, Miwoks, Maidus, Wintuns, Washoes, Sioux, Navajos, Papagos and Chuckchunsie in a grand reunion, the largest since the turn of the century.



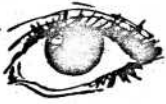
**YOUTH CONSERVATION CORPS** Yosemite again had three groups of young people, sponsored by the Youth Conservation Corps, in the park for the summer; they worked in four areas.

The water supply and wastewater treatment systems at the Sunrise High Sierra Camp was rehabilitated by one group; it also installed a new water storage tank at Tioga Pass. In the Mariposa Grove, YCC members worked on trails, signing, visitor interpretation and when the weather was right, engaged in a cutting, slashing and burning program to help return the grove to an earlier and more natural state. The over-protection from fire, since the arrival of white man, has resulted in a cluttered and overly thick understory.

A fourth group undertook a similar project in the Tuolumne Grove.

The YCC projects are funded by the U.S. Government to provide essential work on natural resources and an environmental education experience for young people. They are paid the minimum wage for their work and are provided their meals and lodgings.

Because of the delicate nature of the areas in which the work must be done, heavy machinery cannot be used. The YCC people do their tasks by hand.



**ONE PERSON'S AIMS** Wilma Bauman, a pleasant, mature woman, runs the Tuolumne Meadows Visitor Center. In what would appear to be a moment of reflection, she wrote an (unsolicited) set of objectives for the people who work with her.

"Have you ever asked yourself to what uses the Visitor Center could be put to serve the naturalists' causes the best? Or is it for you just a small cubby hole in which a few books and maps are sold, a question and answer counter as to where the toilets are? the store? the post office? After observing your reactions at last week's staff meeting — your rather look-down-the-long-nose attitude of 'My education has prepared me for something greater than working the Visitor Center' and your general eagerness to avoid the place like the plague, I got to wondering what I was doing there. Surely my qualifications and interests are considerably greater than those of helping lost children to find their parents or examining a toe to see if it's broken or sprained. Probably we're all in the wrong business as a seasonal kind of work if what I've just said is true. But what a pessimistic stance to take. I have, consequently, jotted down a few possible objectives for the Visitor Center so our working there won't be reduced to the status of broomsweeper, nose counter, and seller of books and maps.

#### OBJECTIVES:

"To arrive at the main objectives, we could simply state that we are here to serve the visitor. In light of this, we must recognize and be aware constantly that Yosemite National Park belongs to the people and that the visitors are part of the people. Our visitors then become the owners of this grand steeped sea of granite, of this meadowed chase of galloping waterfalls and it is our obligation, when they come to visit, to help them spend their day or week in the mountains in a way that is rewarding.

Our objectives then are these: Whatever wilderness awareness and knowledge we have we should want to share with the visitor. So we must teach him to respect the laws of nature in its wild state; we must excite in him the wonder of the flora, the fauna, the rocks, the rivers. We must convince him of the fragility of mountain and meadow; we must spell out for him a set of rules for safe hiking. Communicating our knowledge should be done generously.

All of this is done on our guided walks. But, at the Visitor Center one reaches ever so many more visitors than on walks. Although the approach is necessarily different, the same kind of knowledge and guidance can be imparted.

When a visitor comes in to buy a map or ask a question, without too much effort he can be engaged in conversation which tells him something of our story. Some of us may be turned off by questions of no consequence; but even a foolish question can be redirected. I can think of nothing more deadly than for a visitor to come into the Visitor Center and be confronted by a bored-to-death 'answering service.' Can we feel that we have served the public well at Tuolumne Meadows if the Visitor Center is viewed as nothing more than a bookstall? I know it can be depressing to work in a cold dark building while outside the beautiful sun is shining hot and cheerfully. No doubt we'd all prefer to work a Visitor Center on the structure of an Open Market. But as things are, we make do with what we have. So, if we can't honestly be friendly and exciting in our dealings with the public, perhaps we can try to muster enthusiasm. It might even catch up with us — unawares.

Let's help the visitor appreciate his heritage, even if he has only a day to spend at Tuolumne Meadows. A woman once asked a Ranger what he would do if he had only a day to spend and this Ranger replied, 'Madam, I'd weep.' John Muir expressed it differently. He said, 'He who spends a day in the mountains is rich forever.' We spend many days. How rich our lives should be. I think our job at the Visitor Center is to help the visitor spend his day finding that richness."

We think this expresses a great spirit of helpfulness — and that there should be more Wilma Baumans.

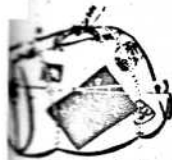


**BEAR STORY** Universal Studios has been filming a TV series in Yosemite, which will be carried this fall on the NBC Network. According to present scheduling, the hour long program will be shown Thursdays at 8 p.m. beginning Sept. 12, 1974.

The story deals generally with the duties of park rangers in varied situations and locales. One of the Yosemite episodes includes portrayal of a 'bear incident' and a studio bear was brought in for the scene.

A Yosemite Nature Notes of 50 years ago reveals that 'movie bear' was brought to Yosemite with a Tom Mix filming company. It was billeted in a cage ordinarily used to remove unruly bears from the garbage dump. It seems movie bears have a temperament and this one was so upset by the scent left by the former occupants that he was not disposed to play his part and it became necessary to give him quarters in a horse barn. Here, he regained his poise.

The story going the rounds now is that the TV bear is the highest paid actor in the company. Questioning of all sources failed to disprove this, 'though it may be a bare faced lie.



**DIRECTOR LEAVING.** David O. Karraker became Chief Park Interpreter and Director of YNHA in May of 1972. Recently, he was ordered by the National Park Service to take up the duties of Director of the service's Training Center at Harpers Ferry, West Virginia. It is here that all interpretive training is formulated and where interpreter's are schooled.

During Dave's tour in Yosemite, he has been responsible for innovative approaches to providing all park visitors with avenues of understanding of nature and the environment. He has served the YNHA well and we shall miss him. At this time, his successor had not been named. Whoever fills the chief interpreter role vacancy will become Director of YNHA.



**FROM THE RESIDENT ENTOMOLOGIST** We usually think about insects only when they are eating trees, transmitting diseases, or biting us. But insects play much more positive roles everywhere, including within our national parks. They are a source of food for such animals as birds, frogs, salamanders, lizards, snakes, shrews, moles, bats, coyotes, bears, raccoons, skunks, fish, spiders, scorpions, tarantulas, centipedes, and other insects.

They are decomposers, helping to break down dead vegetation and remove dead bodies and fecal matter. Certainly, it would not be possible to have horses in National Parks if it were not for the thoughtful insects which quickly clean up their droppings from the trails.

In eating pollen, insects accidentally spread pollen from flower to flower. Throughout the last couple of hundred million years, plants have evolved in such a way as to make the flowers more attractive to the insect pollinators. The bright colors, sweet smells, and large flowers which we all enjoy are adaptations to attract insects.

In any national park, there will be more numbers and kinds of insects than all other forms of animal life. Within Yosemite, it is a fact that visitor will encounter more insects than any other animals. National Park Service interpreters conduct "Bug Walks," "Bug Talks" and "Bug slide programs" to help the visitor deal with the great diversity of insects which abound within Yosemite.

Insect stalking and observing is simple and rewarding. A mammal or bird hunt may not result in many sightings, but an insect hunt is always a successful experience. Insects may always be found in abundance, and may be observed eating, mating, molting, pupating, crawling, swimming, flying, and whatever else insects do.

It is a great satisfaction to say to your children that "today we will find \_\_\_\_\_," and to find \_\_\_\_\_. By inserting "insects," you will be assured a triumph. "Gee Mom, guess what we saw . . . !"

Suppose that you have decided to drive hundreds of miles to a national park to stalk and observe insects; where do you find them? If you arrive during mosquito season, just get out of your car and stand there. These marvelous creatures will leave you breathless (and bloodless) as you watch them slowly probe around for a proper spot, methodically insert the mouthparts into your skin, and greedily borrow a little of your vital fluid. Their bodies will expand to the point of exploding and the female mosquito will fly away with great difficulty, happy with the thought that her offspring will survive — thanks to you.

As you tire of mosquito-watching you may look for insects on flowers, leaves, under rocks, under the bark of dead and down trees, under rocks in a creek or river, swimming around in ponds, fluttering about and running along the ground. Most summer insects will be found grazing in the meadows. They will be either chewing the leaves or sucking the sap out of the stems. Another large group of insects will be feeding on the grazers. Some of these predatory insects will chew on the bodies of their prey; others will pierce the bodies of their prey and suck out the body contents. Other meadow insects will be slurping nectar and gathering pollen. Watch to see how each type of insect feeds.

Try opening up your Yosemite experience to insects. Get to know their ways of doing things. Even if you are an "old timer" to Yosemite, you may discover a whole new aspect of the Park. Get down on your knees and become familiar with a new world.

—Roger McGehee

**THE PRESENCE OF SNOWMOBILES** We mentioned in the last issue that the snowmobile presented a minor sort of conflict between the snowmobilers and the cross-country ski people. It would appear that, after the winter of 1973-74 found only a handful, maybe a dozen using snowmobiles in the park, there wasn't all that much demand; whereas, the number ski tourers seems to have cubed. The Park Service, seeing an obligation to a proliferating activity and perhaps none to a one becoming declassé, has regulated against snowmobiles . . . no more, no where.

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