

## Merry Christmas, 1994

Greetings to you after yet another eventful year. I hope your year has had a fair share of pleasant events and wish you more in the future. I have finally settled into my little rental in Menlo Park. My canoe has a home in the garage rafters, my kitchen is set up nicely for cooking, all but about 20 boxes of my books are out and on shelves where I can find them, and my slide collection is almost under control. Another nice aspect of my place is that on Fridays I can close the door, jump in my '62 XKE, and make my nearly weekly runs over to Martha's house near Sacramento. Chris has gone from part time at Williams Sonoma to full time with a building-security outfit (unarmed) tending Bank of America on Powell Street in The City. He and Ida are still dating which is quite nice.

My work at the U.S. Geological Survey as Project Chief of the Pacific Northwest Mineral Resource Assessment has expanded. I was invited to join the Sierra Nevada Ecosystem Project (SNEP) as a Special Consultant to their Science Team. SNEP was created by Congress to assess the present condition and propose management scenarios for the Sierra with the goal of ecosystem sustainability over the next 100 years. I am addressing known and undiscovered minerals and their potential for causing contamination. I'm also making maps of buffering capacity, calcium nutrients, and erosion from failed roads. I'm coordinating work on mercury, recreational placer dredging, geothermal energy, earthquakes, and volcanic hazards. The project is run out of the Geography Department at U.C. Davis which is nice for me because when I go to meetings, I'm getting paid to be near my girlfriend.

The USGS Open House this year featured a visit by Major John Wesley Powell who retired as Director in 1894. Actually, in his place, another fellow and I were asked to play his roll. I put my beard trimmer away for the half year before the gig and studied up on Powell's life and times. The story goes that I could do it with one arm tied behind my back, the Major having lost his right one in the Civil War. The Open House lasted three days and was attended by about 25,000 people including 1,200 school kids. I told a collection of stories including how there is a mighty fine new geology school over there at Senator Stanford's farm with a couple of sharp students named Herbert Hoover and Arthur Diggles. I got on TV both for this and earlier in the Spring as one

of the few viewers of the partial annular eclipse who was above the clouds.

This year's collection of outings began with a very stormy day at Año Nuevo Elephant Seal Reserve for my eighteenth consecutive year. It was raining so hard nearly everybody left their cameras in their cars; I took my scuba camera. The seals loved the storm since warm weather overheats them.

The Explorers Club had an outing to the Marine Mammal Center in Marin County in the Spring. Martha, Katherine, and I expanded the trip to a weekend in Bolinas with a side trip to Audubon Canyon Ranch to see the egret rookery and all the big fuzzy chicks in their nests high in the cypress trees.

The first of two family events this year was cousin Ben Faulkner's wedding to Irene Stephens in Indiana. I think the event more than doubled the size of our clan when we gained Irene and the other wonderful people in her family. I also got to know about nine folks in our own family I had never met. It's not surprising that I hadn't met Oliver since he wasn't a year old yet. Other meetings were decades overdue. On the west coast, later in the summer, the Diggles side of the family reconvened when Aunt Sue and Uncle Fred celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary. Martha and Katherine joined me at the festivities and we got to hang out with, among many friends, the guy who introduced me to Martha in 1975: Karl Hinderer. As far as I could tell none of us, from Sue and Fred on down, have slowed down a bit; trust me.

We got several ski days last winter and one just last month before Thanksgiving. Katherine got her first ski lessons and made successful runs down Sesame Street Hill. Our local Sierra outings began with a Yosemite trip to Curry Lodge. We took our bicycles and looked quite cute with the Yakima rack on top of the car loaded with Martha's road bike, my mountain bike, and Katherine's little pink two-wheeler with the training wheels. It was still quite chilly and we got some nice photos of the snow blowing off the top of Half Dome. Martha and I did a summer camping trip to Tuolumne Meadows for a field seminar with Ranger Carl Sharsmith who has been leading naturalist trips in Yosemite since the 1930s but had to cancel our trip because he became ill. I am sad to say that Dr. Sharsmith died later this summer. Martha and I went to the meadow anyhow that weekend and just made ourselves at home. We

climbed Johnson Peak which is a day hike out of the campground and the site of the world-famous Johnson Porphyry Granite - well known to all, I'm sure, as the core of the Tuolumne Intrusive Series (Martha is sooooo patient on hikes like these).

We went on two overnight backpacks this summer. A fairly extensive one with just the two of us and an easier one on which we took Katherine. The first backpack was to Thousand Island Lakes in the Ansel Adams Wilderness under Mt. Ritter and Banner Peak. The peaks are underlain by volcanic rocks that were formed by explosions before the bulk of the Sierra Nevada granites came along. We hiked out of Agnew Meadow near Devils Postpile. The route we took in was up the South Fork of the San Joaquin River and the way out a couple of days later went up against the Minarets and past several glacial lakes. The weather was wonderful but a little too cool to do much skinny dipping. We did get cleaned up every day at camp and once in a little tarn up over Island Pass where we dried off with a view of the Great Basin to the east. The scenery was grand and the rocks warm for sunning and dozing.

The second backpack was the annual Boot 'n Blister alumni hike. This was an "off year" hike so we held it outside our usual stomping grounds in the Klamath Mountains. It was in the Desolation Wilderness out of South Lake Tahoe. It was Katherine's third Boot 'n Blister hike in as many years which is pretty good since she's only five years old. There were about 15 of us on the hike including children ranging in age from 13 years to two months. Katherine is no longer the record holder for youngest participant but she still is the youngest to spend the night on the ground in the back country. Next year we are planning to return to Canyon Creek which is our most traditional hike and one we have not done in four years. It will be over Columbus Day weekend as usual.

Martha and I took Katherine and her friend Margie to Bishop for the opening ceremony of the expanded Crooked Creek high-altitude facility at the White Mountain Research Station—part of the U.C. system. The project was funded by selling off recycled cabin logs they acquired to donors like me in their Adopt-A-Log program. For a hundred bucks I have a log now so we went up for the dedication and to meet my log. It's got my name on it and it's in the stairwell that leads to the upstairs lecture room. It is a long two-hour drive around to Westgard Pass and up towards the ancient

Bristlecones to Crooked Creek via the good road. As we were running late again as usual, we were able to cut off nearly an hour and a half by taking the four-wheel-drive road in Silver Canyon that runs straight up the western fault escarpment. The pictures the little girls colored while bouncing around in the back seat will be worth millions some day.

The Peninsula Geological Society, of which I was elected Vice President in the Spring, celebrated its 40th anniversary this year. We had a few field trips this year as well as timely symposia on faults and climate. A spring trip was to the New Almaden Mine south of San Jose. This mine produced mercury used in the extraction of gold during the gold rush and is now an historic park. The usual collection of a few cars filled with geologists turned into a gathering of about 130 people who came to hear about half a dozen lecturers give presentations in the field about the minerals, the tectonics, and the history. We had a trip to the northern Sierra in the Fall to the Devonian arc rocks on the upper North Fork of the Yuba River. For an overnight trip, it got a good turnout also and the lectures by Woody Brooks of Hayward State were wonderful. The rocks were older versions of the volcanic rocks that form the walls of Ritter and Banner I saw earlier this year.

The travel year culminated in a scuba-diving trip to Fiji in October. This was the third major dive trip Martha and I have taken in as many years and the second with the Stanford Travel folks. Martha's mom, Jewel, and her brother Bob went also. The trip was to the second largest of the Fijian islands which is called Vanua Levu. We began most mornings with a scuba trip out at the mouth of Savusavu Bay or along the wall of the barrier reef near our resort. The diversity of marine life was wonderful and it was a joy being with wonderful staff and fellow divers. Activities on shore included a lot of time among the friendliness of the Fijian people.

Since we celebrated Thanksgiving with our family members and friends in southern California, we will gather at Martha's house for Christmas. I wish you the joy of the holidays and we'll all smile as we share warmth and love, stoke the fire, and watch wrapping paper fly off of Barbie dolls.