

FUN AT "BALDY SADDLE"

Some old timers will remember the good times they had at the Saddle the day before the PRESIDENTS HIKE in September.

A number of hikers backpacked up to the Saddle, stopping on their way at Bellows Spring to fill a few jugs with water before climbing the 39 short switchbacks to reach the Crest Trail leading into the Saddle.

The area was a nice place to camp, with lots of soft grass, a large tree and some smaller trees amongst some boulders, on the north side, that gave shade, and places to sit. A fire ring surrounded with stones was a short distance from the large tree.

As hikers arrived they chose a spot to drop their packs as that was where they would sleep at night. When they were settled everyone was asked to go and scrounge firewood for the night's bonfire.

After eating super and it got dark, they sat closer to the blazing fire. Then Lorna gave each one a printed book of 33 SAHC songs and were asked to choose a song. When all were ready the singing started with music played by a guy with a harmonica and another with a guitar. Eber's favorite song was all 13 verses of "THAIS".

As the night wore on many songs were sung, the fire got low, the drinks ran out, the singed marshmallows consumed and many voices were hoarse, so it was time to find your sleeping bag and lay looking up at the stars until sleep took over.

In the morning the fire was rekindled to heat water for breakfast or whatever need, then wait to greet the hikers from the PRESIDENTS HIKE as they arrived, and hike to the top of BALDY and count ladybugs.

This tradition went on for many years until we had used up all the firewood within a reasonable distance of the Saddle.

About a mile down from the Saddle, on the east side of the Santa Ritas, in 1973 a forest fire, near the Gardner Canyon trail, had created a nice place to camp with lots of firewood available. So the pre-PRESIDENTS HIKE continued but with fewer hikers as time went on but we still got up to the Saddle the next day to greet the PRESIDENTS DAY hikers and climb to the top of Baldy.

Joe Hoxie

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