



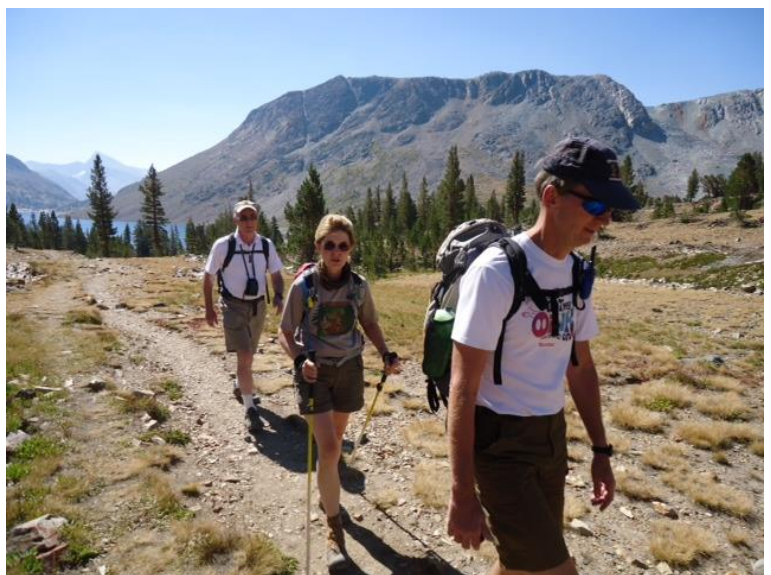
High Sierra and Yosemite Part 2 Trip Notes September 5-13, 2014

This was my sixth hike of the year with www.ParksPlusHiking.com and my favorite hiking leaders Steve and Nola. They have been telling me about alternate hikes in Yosemite and I'd asked the owners of their previous company a number of times for a Yosemite "2" hike, but it took them creating their own company for it to happen. All of which has turned out excellent. I've hiked with them this year in New Mexico, Canyonlands, Yellowstone and Grand Tetons (a second time around for me), their Colorado Rockies out of Salida, Lassen Volcano and now this one. (There they are in front of Rainbow Falls.)

Yes, I do other things as well, but only when I can't get engaged with their company. I hiked Joshua Tree National Park earlier this year, then Provence, Dolomites, Portugal, and soon the Lakes of Italy followed by Argentina. Then there are marathon trips and also trips with Tom Life is good.

I'd invited grandson, nephew and daughter along but the only taker I got was nephew Colin. He was excellent company, new to hiking and took to it well, and is likely a convert now.

These trip reports are becoming trip notes as first I had a broken computer for far too long, and now I'm simply not home sufficient time to form a report. So here are a few pictures and my emails sent home and to immediate family.



Colin and Diana at Ediza Lake, then coming out of Twenty Lakes Basin with Steve Meckstroth, leader, and Steven Leach, my Wall Street hiker friend. Photos compliments of Nola.



Colin and Diana near Ediza Lake. Diana coming out of Shadow Lake area.



That's ME! Up on top of Lembert Dome in Yosemite. Thank you Nola, first for getting me up there, and now for the pictures!

Notes from Mammoth Lakes

I am still in California and currently at Mammoth Lakes. Tomorrow we head toward the eastern edge of Yosemite.

The attached video is of our very long hike today. From about 9 AM until 4:30 PM we hiked up and by the side of Shadow Lake continuing on up to the upper lake. 13 to 14 miles. With the sand, and the steps, and the elevation gain and loss, it certainly equaled a marathon. The upper lake, called Ediza Lake was our picnic spot and the video shows our leader Steve. Colin was probably around on the other side at that point.

As you can tell the views were amazing all the way up and then at the top. I believe we all felt very lucky to have not only such a good hike but also perfect weather. We hiked along the stream beds and under big cliffs and through the carved out steps to take us to our final destination and picnic spot.

Young Collin, some of you have asked who is that, is my nephew age 25 and on his first real long hike. He is taking it in so well and getting along with the old folks and totally convinced that hiking will be in his future. I am thrilled.

Our group is cohesive and fun and all good hikers. So it is no reason other than that I am used to quiet and empty time that I gave up the group dinner tonight. No I didn't go hungry.

We are off in the morning to another exciting 9 to 10 mile hike and then onto Lee Vining. Some of you may recognize the name Lee Vining by the recent Publicity of their unique restaurant. I was there during the summer I hiked Yosemite and I can tell you that its reputation is well deserved. It is a gourmet restaurant in a gas station. One orders from the counter and are always surprised at the gourmet food offerings.

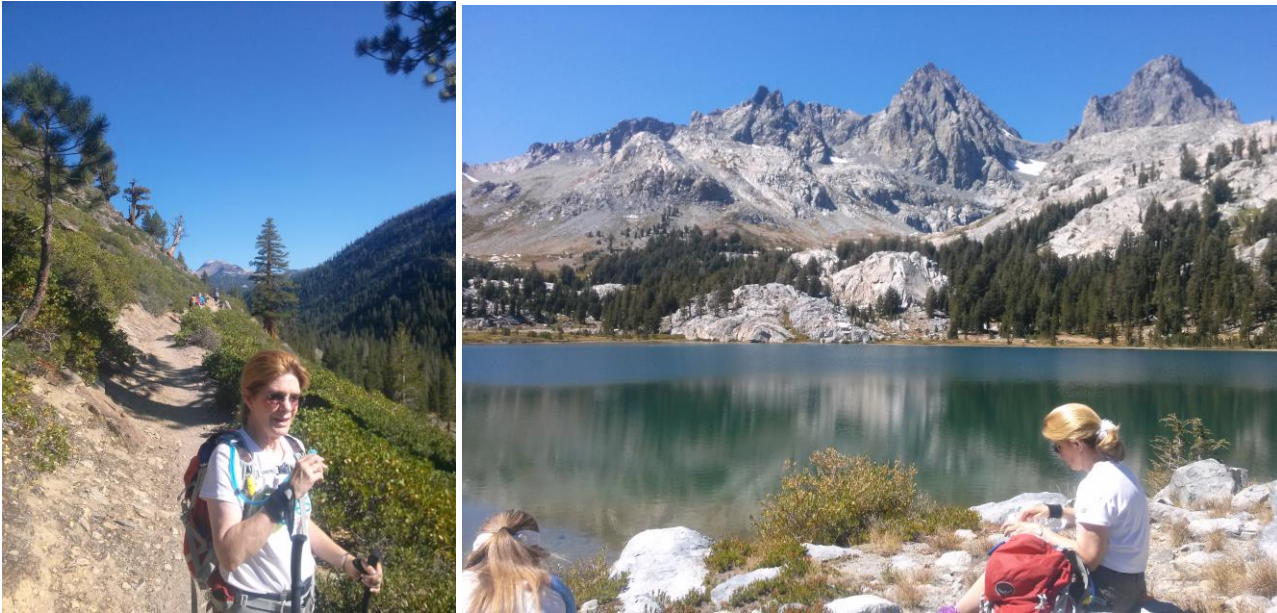
Please forgive the fact that me and Siri do not always get along. In my last report she thought I said Squab Valley whereas I meant Squaw Valley but of course you all know that the 1960 Olympics were held at Squaw Valley.

So if Siri and I miscommunicated in this report, please use your imagination and make a guess.

Then look at my lovely video. We were at an area that was like being at a small Dolomites. Plenty big for me.



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Second day of our hike in Mammoth Lakes

And this was my second trip into Reno because I had been there the week prior for a hike and Lassen Volcanic National Park.

Before starting the hike I had a full day to be a tourist again. Colin got hung up and missed the tourist day so Nola very kindly agreed to go with me. I rented a car.

We drove the perimeter of Lake Tahoe, went up the tram to the top of the squab valley where we had a meal and went through their Olympic museum. The Olympics were held there in 1960 and where all of the athletics were home just couldn't even contain the American athletes now days.

We went by the old junky little cabin on the lake where as a child I had spent some summer times. It is now between the lovely Sunnyside resort and a huge zillion dollar house. But it doesn't look like much has changed and I had to wonder if maybe they even still use the wood-burning stove. Tom and I saw it in 2011 when we came to Tahoe for few days and stayed at Sunnyside. Somehow I expected it to be gone.

Nola and I continued to the little city nearby which I think is called South Lake Tahoe. Of course we managed to have another nice meal Lakeside and naturally another drink.

We had also stopped in the city of Truckee and walked through an art festival and remembered some of her old bike trips in the area as I remembered some good times there with Tom.

That was Saturday and I was gone from 8:30 in the morning till 8:30 at night and deemed it a perfect day.

Sunday was pretty good too with our hike after a rather long drive to get to Mammoth Lakes. We stopped by Mono Lake for our picnic lunch. Mono Lake is pretty unique with the tufas looking like hoo doos from Bryce.

Today is Monday and our second hike and I am really pleased to report that young Collin is really taking to hiking. Or if he isn't he is a very good actor. He fits in well with the other older hikers and even manages to stay somewhat near to us.

After three nights in Mammoth Lakes we head over to the eastern side of Yosemite. The big news there is that California's drought has caused still another fire and about 100 hikers had to be evacuated out. It doesn't look like that will affect us but we have no doubt that our fearless leaders know the area well enough to give us alternatives.

One of the reasons I am here is because they have been required to find alternate hikes in Yosemite in years past due to either snow or fires, and they found this favorite hike up North Dome. I want to go up North Dome!



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From Mammoth Lakes over to the eastern side of Yosemite

I hope it is true that a picture is worth 1000 words. Here is my video. 1000 pictures all in one.

Today was day four of our week long hike and we took in the hike called 20 lakes. I think we nearly saw them all and we certainly saw about 20 zillion rocks. We all complained about the rock fields that we had to negotiate but we all agreed that it was well worth it for the beautiful views of the many lakes.

Yesterday was 13 to 14 miles and today was 9 to 10. That may not sound like very much to you marathoners that it usually takes us a pretty steady 6 hours to get it done. I call it a delightful marathon every day with no rush to the finish line and beautiful sites all along the way.

Starting well above 10,000 feet of elevation makes you breathe very hard. I think even those that live at 7000 feet did a bit of heavy breathing but certainly those of us that live at sea level did. Well, maybe not the 25-year-old.

Colin the 25-year-old nephew seems to be taking it all in really well and enjoying the heights. It seems to come easy and naturally to him.

So we moved from the lovely resort in Mammoth Lakes over to Lee Vining and Murphey's Lodge. I had been sort of dreading it because my last time I was at Murphey's Lodge it was pretty dim and dismal. Not so any longer as they have re-carpeted and redesigned and pretty much re-outfitted most of the room so that they are bright and cheerful instead of dark and dreary.

Dinner was in the historic Mono Inn on the edge of Mono Lake. The website explains their history and that was quite interesting as is the lake with its many hoo doos looking tuffas. Look it up. The dinner would have been perfect had they not played jazz as background music. The menu was very generous for Steve and Nola to take us there and we all indulged. I think the usual method is to take us to a luxury restaurant the last night, but there was a private party scheduled that night, so it was moved up a night.

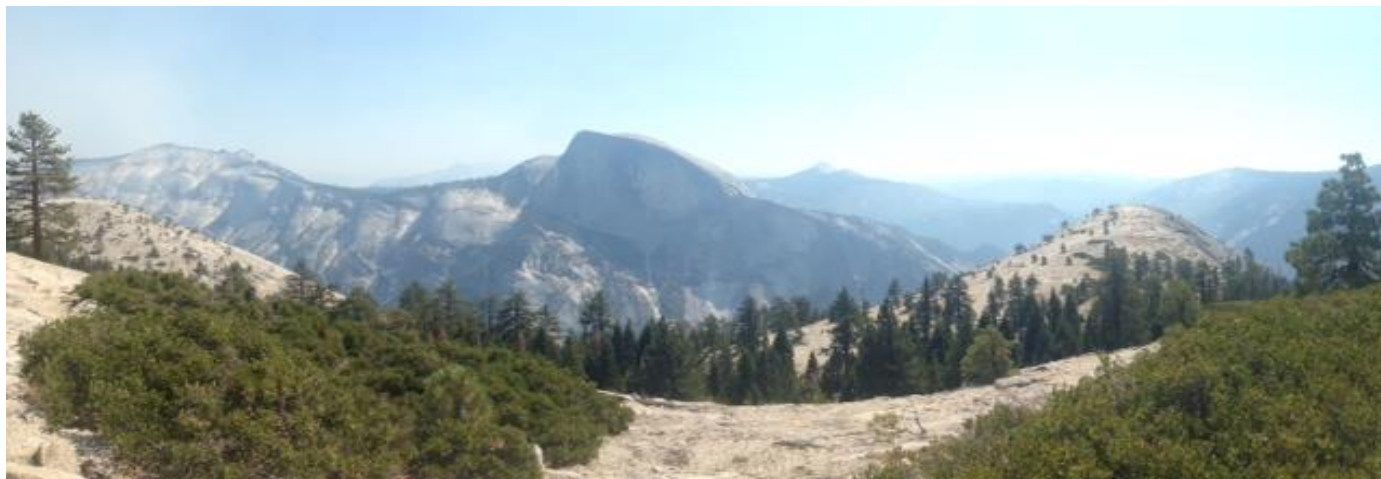
And now it is time to go to bed and if I sound grumpy it is because we have to get up even earlier. I am noted for hating mornings but equally noted for being glad once I'm out there.

And so it goes. Someone has to do it. Here's a video:



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Pictures from North Dome towards Half Dome



On our way down from North Dome, stopping by the Arch

I wasn't going to go up to the Arch. I didn't think I needed any more miles. But obviously there I was in due course, though way back of the pack.

That's Steve and Colin in the Arch.



When I thought I'd made it to North Dome – yet had another downhill, another uphill, a canyon crossing, all before actually making it to The North Dome.



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Last day of High Sierras

All good things must come to an end. Though I am sitting in the Reno airport wondering if there is any end to it. As usual, there are delayed flights. I came to the Reno airport for the Lassen trip two weeks ago and now for this High Sierra trip. I am beginning to know the staff.

The attached video is of our last day hike. We climbed Lembert Dome. I thought I was feeling pretty good and with no soreness but this last days hike had me huffing and puffing a little extra.



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A stop by the famous gas station in Lee Vining with this excellent restaurant was a nice relief from the hike. They had wine and beer. The addition of wine for lunch made it easier to accept the day's events when we ran into a closed highway due to another fire. Our leaders discussed the possible opening up the highway with the police and made the decision to divert about an hour's extra drive. Thank heavens no one had a rush to get to the airport as all of us were leaving the next morning (or hope we are leaving.).

There is a future!

So I think I am done with hiking but in fact on September 23, Tom and I leave to Milan for a few days before he joins me on my hike through the Lakes of Italy. It is also our 44th "legal" anniversary.

We are only home for two days until I leave to London for the Royal Park's (half) Marathon which includes a 10 day tourist visit.

Later in October I travel to Chicago for ice-skating trials with my sister. November is five days in New York City as a spectator at the New York City Marathon. Later in November I'm going to Buenos Aires before I join a hiking tour starting in the Mendoza wine region and ending in Patagonia.

December I am going to Atlanta for a half marathon and joining a few friends. Then Marie arrives and the three of us have Christmas and New Year's in Barcelona.

There is more for 2015 but far too many holes in the calendar that needs filling so I seek ideas. Please! (Can you tell I have trouble stopping one trip without having a few others in the planning stages?)

My favorite photo – up on North Dome



Foggy? Nope – it was smoke from the historic fires. Thank you Nola. Again, for getting me up on top of North Dome, overlooking the Yosemite Valley here, but to the other side, overlooking Half Dome too. And thanks for taking my picture.

The Historic Mono Inn at Mono Lake

<http://www.monoinn.com/>

Fires – our hikes were not interrupted but we could see the fires

Yosemite Fire Prompts Helicopter Evacuation near Half Dome Peak by The Associated Press on September 08, 2014 4:00 AM ET

About 100 Yosemite National Park visitors were evacuated by helicopter Sunday when a wildfire that started weeks ago in the park's backcountry grew unexpectedly to at least 700 acres, officials said. Some of the evacuees included hikers who had climbed the park's iconic Half Dome peak, rising nearly 5,000 feet above Yosemite Valley, park spokeswoman Kari Cobb said. Others had to be airlifted from campgrounds and hiking trails in the area, she said. Firefighters had monitored and controlled the lightning-sparked fire that started several weeks ago between Little Yosemite Valley and Half Dome, Cobb said. Strong winds and high temperatures ignited a spot fire on Sunday, and it rapidly grew. "We just got unbelievable crazy winds and unexpected hot conditions," Tim Ludington, the park's chief of roads and trails, told the Fresno Bee. "The fire behavior totally changed." Several trails were closed, but roads into Yosemite remained open. About 15 miles southwest of the park, firefighters were slowly gaining the upper hand on a wildfire near the town of Mariposa. The 300-acre blaze was 70 percent contained, and an evacuation order already has been lifted for the 300 homes most threatened by the fire, the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection said. A portion of Highway 49, a main entrance into the park, was briefly closed. The fire broke out Friday afternoon and threatened a total of 700 homes and five businesses. Steep terrain in the area and the dry conditions brought on by California's drought initially hampered firefighters, one of whom received a minor injury Friday, officials said. Forest Service officials estimate that \$54.7 million has been spent and nearly 2,700 people used to fight the fire.

Selected photos



Our Squaw Valley trip up was by tram. Very civilized especially since I was in sandals. This is the little cabin we stayed in on Lake Tahoe during the summer. It was owned by Mr. Mack who was our boarder and owner of the land which father leased for his small airport. The cabin is surrounded now by a big and lovely resort called Sunnyside (Tom and I stayed there a couple years ago) and a big mansion.



Colin is standing on the top of these giant columns called Devils Post Pile. Then you see them from below.



I'm pretty hesitant to cross water at all, let alone on a log, but we did a few of them. Fortunately there was limited water. See all those rocks? We all had sore feet but thought the many lakes were well worth it.



There was a section that was very steep getting into North Dome. That's Nola showing us the best way to traverse this section. Many did it on their butts. But it was the way to get the closest to Half Dome, here seen from the dome to the far side of North Dome. That's MY Half Dome – I climbed to the top a few years ago. In the last photo, if you look closely you'll see Colin up on the top. The rock looks daunting but in fact the shoes grip well on the surface.

Itinerary

Fri Sep 5 – Colin

5:34pm Depart Kansas City MCI via United #1412

6:22pm Arrive Denver DEN for plane change

7:35pm Depart Denver DEN via United #296

8:52pm Arrive Reno NV RNO

Hotel has free airport shuttle 24/7 or it's just as easy to walk if not heavy luggage

Hotel is across the main street and there is a walkway. As you exit front doors, the hotel would be straight across through the parking area. But walk to end of terminal (toward shuttles) and take sidewalk, cross a 4-lane at crosswalk, look to left, and you'll see the hotel restaurant before you see the hotel name. 5-10 minutes max.

Hotel Best Western Reno Airport – 1st of 2 nights

1981 Terminal Way, Reno, Nevada, 89502-3215 Tele: 800-648-3525 or 775 348 6370

Note that hotel does not include breakfast but there is a restaurant with 25% off for guests; Yes to Wi Fi, refrigerator and coffee service; no other restaurant in area except in airport; Shuttle one casino is free, and to other areas for \$5

Restaurant closes at 9pm.

- Diana

2:46pm Depart Newark EWR via United #1663

5:59pm Arrive San Francisco SFO for plane change

6:55pm Depart San Francisco SFO via United #5634

7:54pm Arrive Reno NV RNO

Sat Sep 6

Tour – used Interstate Sightseeing Tours / Adventures of Reno at (775) 325-7669 at email

AdventuresOfReno12@gmail.com or <http://www.adventuresofreno.com/sightseeing-tours-2/>

Labor Day was last tour?

Tour – trying for www.SierraComstockTours.com with full day tour from 9am to 4pm. Similar but more of Lake Tahoe and California side added. Tele: 775 997 8649. Needs 3 people to run.

Description from Adventures of Reno: *Picks up at central locations throughout the Reno/ Sparks area – they offer to pick up at the Best Western as well. Enjoy a historical and informative narration along the way by our wonderful tour guides. They will drive you through our state capitol of Carson City where they will point out legislative and other famous buildings. In Virginia City you will have an hour of free time to walk down the wooden sidewalks, grab a bite to eat, and purchase some souvenirs. In Lake Tahoe you will have several opportunities to walk around, enjoy the fresh mountain air, and take photos.*

Sun Sep 7 – Day 1

Summary and pictures from www.ParksPlusHiking.com - Over the years due to late-spring melt offs and other unforeseen circumstances, we have had the opportunity to hike many of the trails in the higher terrain of northeast Yosemite National Park and the nearby Sierra Nevada Mountains--some as alternate hikes in our traditional Yosemite tour, others during our free time on the road. In creating our High Sierra/Yosemite 2 Hike, we showcase the pristine alpine lakes, majestic granite spires,

vibrant subalpine forests, and crystal blue skies of the High Sierra Mountains. We'll also visit Yosemite National Park; our itinerary includes a hike to North Dome with its jaw-dropping views of nearby Half Dome. Finally, we will stay in conveniently located Mammoth Lakes and quaint Lee Vining.

9:00am Pick up at hotel lobby

Sun Sep 7- Day 1

Crystal Lake - Distance: 3 mi - Difficulty: 3

Lodging: Sierra Nevada Resort – 1st of 3 nights
164 Old Mammoth Rd, Mammoth Lakes, CA 93546 Tele: 760 934 2515
Yes refrigerator and coffee maker; Wi Fi in all rooms

http://www.thesierranevadaresort.com/?gclid=CJP_v5ie878CFQQT7AodIFIAFA

From our pickup point in Reno, we will drive south along the eastern edge of the Sierra Nevada to the ski village of Mammoth Lakes. Once there, we will have a picnic lunch then make our way to our trailhead at Lake George. Here we will acclimate ourselves to the elevation with a moderate hike to Crystal Lake where we get our first taste of alpine grandeur, Sierra-style. We then head back into town for the evening.

Mon Sep 8 - Day 2

Devils Postpile, Rainbow Falls - Distance: 8 mi - Difficulty: 3

Lodging: Sierra Nevada Resort – 2nd of 3 nights

Today we visit a most unusual natural phenomenon, the Devils Postpile National Monument. Here we will view from above and below strange and massive hexagonal lava columns—postpiles—that give the monument its name. From the Monument we will continue along the trail to impressive Rainbow Falls before looping back to our trailhead.

Tue Sep 9 - Day 3

Shadow and Ediza Lake - Distance: 14 mi - Difficulty: 5

Lodging: Sierra Nevada Resort – 3rd of 3 nights

The Shadow and Ediza Lakes hike is truly a showcase for the beauty of the Sierra Nevada Mountains. Quiet meadows; mature, thriving forests; cascading high-mountain streams; brilliant late-season wildflowers; mirror-surfaced glacier-carved lakes; and the incredible granite spires of the Minarets--need we say more to pique your interest? Truly amazing!

Wed Sep 10 - Day 4

Twenty Lakes Basin - Distance: 8 mi - Difficulty: 4

Lodging: Murphey's Motel – 1st of 2 nights
51493 U.S. 395, Lee Vining, CA 93541 Tele: (760) 647-6316
Reservations (800) 334-6316 info@murpheysyosemite.com
<http://www.murpheysyosemite.com/> - Yes WiFi, coffee service and refrigerator.

Today we relocate from bustling Mammoth Lakes to quiet Lee Vining on the shores of lovely Mono Lake. Along the way, we pause for one of the more interesting hikes in our entire season's line-up, the Twenty Lakes Basin/Saddlebag Lake Loop. Whereas yesterday we visited two high-mountain

lakes, today we'll encounter more than a dozen beautiful and unique alpine tarns nestled among the High Sierra peaks of Inyo National Forest. Are there actually 20 lakes on this hike? We'll have to keep count to check.

Thu Sep 11 - Day 5

North Dome - Distance: 9 mi - Difficulty: 4

Lodging: Murphey's Motel – 2nd of 2 nights

Although our Yosemite experience on this tour does not include a visit to the busy yet scenic valley, we'll get within about a half mile--vertically--during our visit to incredible North Dome. Located nearly 3,000' above the valley floor, North Dome offers probably the best view in the park of famed Half Dome—it is literally in-your-face as you sit on the warm rocks. Better yet, North Dome is reachable by even less-experienced hikers based on its 9-mile round-trip length and moderate vertical rise. This may be Nola's favorite hike anywhere, certainly her favorite in Yosemite.

Fri Sep 12 - Day 6

Lembert Dome - Distance: 4 mi - Difficulty: 3

Our final hike includes a second memorable visit to Yosemite, again the high country off Tioga Pass road. Today we begin our hike in lush Tuolumne Meadows, but climb quickly onto massive Lembert Dome. No 45-degree granite climb using steel cables here a la Half Dome, just a moderate climb on an excellent trail and gently sloping, sure-footed granite to fantastic views atop another famed granite monolith. Following our descent we'll stop on our way back to Reno for a final lunch at the unusual but absolutely delicious Whoa Nellie deli, located inside the Lee Vining Mobil gas station!

Hotel Best Western Reno Airport

Sat Sep 13 - Diana

10:03am Depart Reno RNO via United #6484
11:22am Arrive San Francisco SFO for plane change

1:15pm Depart San Francisco SFO via United #1289
9:31pm Arrive Newark EWR

- Colin
1:37pm Depart Reno RNO via United #677
4:46pm Arrive Denver DEN for plane change

5:57pm Depart Denver DEN via United #4931
8:46pm Arrive Kansas City MCI

Car? Shuttle?



Packing List – as given to Pat

2 long sleeve tech (marathon) t-shirts

4 short sleeve tech (marathon) t-shirts

2 hiking socks, 2 running socks, 2 dress socks, 2 of all undies, 1 PJs

2 EMS hiking pants that zip into shorts

2-3 pair of light weight washable all weather dressier pants in no-show-dirt color

3-4 nicer shirts but still washable

1 pair all terrain trail runners, 1 pair sandals, 1 pair ballet flats – to go with any and everything (socks are packed inside)

2 light weight jackets with one with a hood (that might be worn together and work with everything) along with 2 BUFFS (for head and neck) and 1 pair of gloves. (With 2 shirts, 2 jackets and BUFFs I can do okay starting out in 32 degree weather.)

1 lightweight foldable hat.

Cosmetics/supplies/drugs plus 1 legal size zip bag of -3 oz products

Computer, electrics, camera and charger, iPhone charger, usually 2-3 books

Small baggie of powdered laundry detergent. (Dry fast by rolling in towel, standing on the roll, and laying on floor with pointed hair dryer. I sort-of wash everything in bottom of shower.)

Hiking? Pre-packed backpack with extra ground cover (plastic bag ok), rain gear (poncho works best and will cover pack), BUFF or kerchief, wet wipes, baggie with first aid stuff, extra baggies to hold camera and phone if rain storm, Kleenex and/or TP, sunscreen, and insect repellent. Water bladder or two large water bottles.

Also see packing list on www.ParksPlusHiking.com