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Outings Club member Chuck Mens
pauses for a second in the splendor of Cathedral Lake, 5,325 feet above Yosemite National Park.
Editor’s note:
Last Spring quarter outpost ran a tribute to a dying way of life...called hitchhiking. In that article, an experi­enced hitchhiker who had traveled across country, observed that hitching is on its way out because of “too many super highways, state laws, crimes, fast cars and bad reputations.”

On the other hand, after a recent stint from Morro Bay to San Luis and a lot of extensive research, a fellow writer offered her views that hitchhiking is still thriving as a mode of travel around the San Luis area. We decided her view should be printed as well.

Frustrated and ridiculous, that’s exactly how I felt. There I was, standing alongside Highway 1 as the sun began to set, shivering in the cold Morro Bay winds. Scantily clad in a very wet bathing suit, I could actually hear my knees knocking and teeth chattering. Hiding in the bushes behind me, my boyfriend kept urging me on, whispering such assurances as “Go ahead, you can do it, just give it a try.” You yourself have probably always wanted to try it, but you had your doubts. Everyday, you see people doing it for one reason or another. Some people swear by it, saying that it’s the best way to beat inflation and to meet new people. Others loathe it—claiming that it’s time consuming and dangerous. You’ve heard it labeled everything from a “national pastime” to a “national hazard.”

What exactly is it? It’s the art of hitchhiking.

Yea, hitchhiking is indeed an art. I know this to be a fact because of my own ill-fated attempt to hitch from Morro Bay to San Luis. Upon returning from a great, but icy, swim in the ocean, we discovered that we’d locked ourselves out of our VW. After exhausting all the possibilities, we decided that the best way to get home was to travel by way of thumb. Oh, did we ever misjudge: It took us an hour and a half to cover twelve miles.

So I know that hitchhiking is a form of art: you are either a brilliant success or a miserable failure. Since I most definitely belonged to the latter group, I became intrigued and curious about hitchhiking. I wanted to find out what makes a successful hitchhiker. (Or where did I go wrong?) I began cruising the highways and city streets, casually observing the people standing curbside with thumbs thrust out in the search of a free ride. In the course of one week, I must have picked up more hitchhikers than in all the years I’ve been driving. But it was very worthwhile, for I finally learned the truth about the art.

One of the first steps necessary in becoming a champion hitchhiker is to master THE LOOK. This is a most worthwhile tactic, but there are a number of looks to choose from. It can be the desperate, pleading look, or the “who-the-hell-cares—if-you-stop” glares. You might try using the cold, hard stare, or try the apprehensive-questioning glance complete with drooped smile and raised eyebrows. Any one of these or combinations are vital in capturing the drivers’ eye.

Once you have managed to catch the motorist’s attention, there is a second strategic ploy used to arouse their curiosity. I am referring to the use of a sign indicating the hitchhiker’s destination. Create a masterpiece by using bright, bold lettering and colorful designs. In large letters, scrawl across your signboard the name of such places as “Russia,” “Land of Oz,” or “Somewhere.” All are guaranteed eye catchers which cause drivers to think twice about stopping to pick you up!

Another thing to take into consideration—know the law so you won’t get busted for illegal hitchhiking. Remember seeing those signs located to the side of freeway on-ramps, the ones which clearly prohibit pedestrians? Don’t hitch beyond that point on the freeway, and you can save the five to $12 fine. You can also get a ticket (if collecting tickets is your thing) if you’re not standing on the shoulder of the road. Get off the street and onto the curb and you’ll be safe.

Establish your very own clientele, hitch at the same location every day so that you can become familiar with the “regulars,” and vice versa. Since everyone now and then sympathizes with students and their universal lack of funds, look the part of a student. Play this role to the hilt—wear a Cal Poly T-shirt and struggle under the weight of several large textbooks. Finally, he who hitches alone, gets there ahead of the gang.

Now that you are equipped with the formula for mastering the art of hitchhiking, it is highly doubtful that you’ll be anything but a success. But even the best-made and well-thought out plans have their flaws. So be prepared. You never know when you’ll get caught trying to hitch in a wet bathing suit.
Weekends of excitement and adventure are available to those students who are willing to give up some time and a little cash. A number of clubs on campus are dedicated to helping the student relax on weekends. Recently I signed up with 13 other students to go with the Outing Club on a backpacking trip to Yosemite.

Planning for a trip like this is just as much fun as going on it. For a beginner like me, equipment can be rented from the Escape Route on campus for a small fee. The only thing they don't have are sleeping bags, but I was lucky in finding a friend who was willing to loan me his. Now, armed with the pack, I began to fill it up with supplies, dehydrated food, salami, granola, candy, and socks. On top of that I loaded one camera, two lenses, one large electric flash, and seven rolls of film. For personal comfort, I put in extra clothing, soap, washcloth and towel. For safety, I threw in some Band-aids, a nylon parachute cord, and one G.I. canteen I had left over from Viet-Nam. Now I was ready.

Five o'clock Friday finally came around and we were off to Yosemite. We arrived at Tuolumne Meadews at 2:30 a.m. and I was fast asleep by 3:00. We got up with the sun and after a good breakfast, were on our way by 8:00 a.m. By 9:05, I felt like abandoning all the food, camera equipment and all the excess junk I thought I would need. My biggest mistake was to take along too much equipment. I packed as though I was going on a two week safari instead of a two day hike. More experienced members of the group kept their loads on the lighter side. One carried only a pack of hot dogs and a bag of marshmallows, and a number of others carried the ingredients of oriental cooked chicken, which still weighed less than my four water proof food packages.

From Tuolumne Meadews at a peaceful 8,000 feet we started to ascend the mountain. The topography map showed only three small passes and the rest was downhill. Well, after a mile of steep uphill climbing, I saw myself as a four legged pack-mule just looking for a quiet green pasture. Three miles and two sore legs later, I found my green pasture. It took the form of three of the prettiest small lakes in the world. Eight of my fellow packers and I decided to stop and have a break while the rest pushed on. Cathedral Lakes were the result of the scooping effect of the glaciers that were in the area during the last ice age. As the glaciers retreated, they left three scooped out basins which are now being filled by the melting snow from the base of Cathedral Peaks. The lakes have good fishing, camping along the shore line and swimming.

Everyone went to the nearest wilderness dressing room, a tree or granite bolder, to change into swimming togs. I, too, had been lugging my swimming trunks and felt I should at least take one dip. The Indians who swim in these lakes reportedly ran and jumped in without delay, well knowing that he who hesitates is lost. I had to feel the water first. My big toe came out blue from the cold, about 2 degrees above the freezing water. I was afraid of the big splash knowing I might turn into one giant gooselimpie. The cold water and the thin air did make for a refreshing swim and the sun-warmed rocks felt good afterwars. The eight of us were talking about revolt and staying at the lakes but we pushed on.

We passed many small streams and beautiful areas. The down hill runs were not too bad as long as we used a good walking stick to help balance our gait. The walking stick should be as long as shoulder height and should be stout enough to hold the weight of your body. Before we knew it, we were at the High Sierra Camp.

We joined our group and mingled and exchanged stories with other groups. One group told us how they were wiped out the previous night. Bears had climbed the trees, chewed the ropes and managed to swipe their food. To avoid this, we planned to string the food between two trees, high enough to keep the grub away from the bears. We made camp at Cathedral Lakes.
sundown and after supper carried out
the plan to outsmart the bears.
About 6:00 a.m. my neighbor heard
sniffing and breaking branches and
yelled, "Hey, get out of there." This
awakened the hiker beside me, who let
out a yell. I sat upright in a hurry. My
legs wouldn't move, (they were stiff)
and my heart was in my mouth. By the
time I was able to get up, everyone
else was looking for the bear. We re­
started the fire and tried to get back to
sleep. Later in the morning, I went to
the tree and saw where the bear had
snatched the tree, and was thankful
our food was safe.
After breakfast, we had a short five-
mile walk to Nevada Falls and it was
smooth hiking down the hill to the
valley floor. We had a memorable trip.
My only regret was that I used black
and white instead of color film. I
would recommend a backpacking trip
to anyone. If a person as out of shape
as I am can complete a 27-mile trip,
you can.

Top Left: It may not have been the
yellow brick road, but this trail
led us through a magnificent
wonderland.
Bottom Left: There was no longer
any need to guard our food when
we took this stuffed bear home
from Yosemite.
Top Right: Fellow Outinga member
Shelia Herron looks for a dry towel
and clothes after taking a dip
in Cathedral Lake.
Bottom Right: Chuck Marks and Glen
Yamashita prepare a hearty trail
meal over a campfire.
As I snuggled down into my warm sleeping bag, a soft, small voice drifted down from the bunk above me. "Dottie, Dottie, I have to barf," it cried at 12:30 a.m. and I was experiencing my first night as a camp counselor.

Many college students were experiencing the summer job market place at a placement center during spring quarter looking for interesting summer jobs. Many camps advertised for fresh young new recruits for camp counselors.

I was one of those who put in my name when I learned of a camp that was in desperate need of counselors. I unknowingly volunteered for a week that would not soon be forgotten.

My camping experience was small, but I figured I could hack anything. When I arrived, I found I was totally unprepared. I had expected cabins with bathrooms close by and a dining hall. As I hauled my luggage up the hill to the camp (it was too far in the wilderness for roads), I was equipped with my electric shaver, hair dryer, curlers and blanket—all the necessities of life.

Finally I saw tents through the trees and a small shack farther down the path. As I got farther into the clearing, I spotted a man sitting on a bench next to some plywood tables. He came toward me in great bounds with a broad smile spread across his face. "Welcome to our camp. I am sure we are all going to have a wonderful time. I'm the camp director. How do you like our little camp?"

Being very slow sometimes, I asked, "Where is everything?"

"Why, this is it. We eat here at the tables after they pack in the food before every meal. Those tents over there are our sleeping quarters and that small building down the path is our little outhouse."

I couldn't believe it. There was no water, no washing facilities (bathe), no cooking facilities, and no electricity. I couldn't even use half of the stuff I brought. I felt foolish, almost like a city slicker in some of those old western movies.

As I dragged my luggage into my assigned tent, I watched a giant bull snake slither across my path on his way to the tents. Being deathly afraid of snakes, I just managed to suppress a scream as I imagined finding one in my sleeping bag that night.

A few hours later, just when I began to think I might enjoy my return to nature, 168 nine, ten, and 11-year-old campers invaded every inch of the little camp. I was assigned ten of these bundles of energy. We got through the first hours fine, but as the...
10 Kids and an Outdoor Toilet

I began to go down and bedtime approached, my troubles began.

Three of the charges decided they needed aspirin for their headaches and (it was their first night without parents). The medicine kit was in the bedroom a fourteenth of a mile down the path. Muttering my courage and slipping my trusty flashlight, I led the wide-eyed girls down the path and back again, wondering where that bull snake had gone.

The girls were restless that night and after four trips to the teak room, my patience was beginning to wear a little thin. The little campers seemed to sense this and tried something new, slowly wrapping ladders hit them all and they all requested a trip to the bathroom. Out we tramped in a little line to the outhouse, teeth chattering in the cold night air.

The girls seemed to settle down and was relieved, because it was now 3:30 a.m. and I had to be up at 6 a.m. in the morning for a counselors' meeting. It was then that I heard the little voice which couldn't be ignored, informing me that she was going to "pooe." This called for quick action. We made a swift trip to the outhouse, and by then, I was ready to tape the mouths of a few kids if I didn't get some sleep!

As the week went on, the kids got used to being without their mothers at night, but never was my sleep interrupted by small voices in the wee hours.

We would wake up to a hearty breakfast of luke-warm, lump-y oatmeal that had been brought up the hill. It had been a long time since I'd had a treat like that!

During the day we would gradually progress to activity time. We all played kickball and softball and rooted for our teams. There were two teams, the McDonalds and the Taco Bells— we were the McDonalds. We all had our yells and I heard them so often I began to hear them in my sleep.

We went to the pool every afternoon which was located two miles down the hill—straight down. Going down wasn't bad, so long as you could stop when you got to the bottom. However, the trek back was agonizing. As the little kids scammed up the hill, I slowly labored up with my calves hurting so bad I felt like curling up and dying right there. I never felt so old in all my life as I did at that camp.

That last night, after I cleaned up a sleeping bag that had housed a girl with an upset stomach, and after retrieving medicine for another small camper, I walked around the tents at about three in the morning.

The entire camp seemed to be floating in a mist much like movie makers portray scenes in a dream. I had never seen anything like it. I couldn't see the sky and I almost felt like I was on a movie sound stage. It was beautiful. From somewhere came beautiful diffused light and I had no need for a flashlight. All I could hear was the rhythmic breathing of all my sleeping girls, and I realized that I had come to love them in a way, and I felt good that they were all tucked in safe and warm.

The next day my little charges left, and suddenly I felt empty for awhile.

Illustrations by ALISON STONE

missed them all. That night however, back at home, as I eased myself under my electric blanket in the quiet of my room, without any little voices to wake me, I was glad it was all over and I was childless again.

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