

Bears, gays populate Yosemite

By JONATHAN RICH

We swung our backpacks on and headed into the wilderness. Seeking escape from the frenetic activity of San Francisco, three of us had journeyed to California's favorite playground, Yosemite National Park. Our goal — to experience California in its natural element, to encounter its most primeval level.

Dennis had the granola bars, the survival books and several great recipes for lichen and saffron roots. Jimmy toted the hunting knife, the compass and rations, while I clung tenaciously to the First Aid kit and the emergency two-way radio.

Escaping the press of humanity was no easy task. It was the Fourth of July, and the trail was packed with hordes of picture-snapping Japanese and other foot-sore tourists. Passing a boisterous Cub Scout troop and a more sedate line of Hari Krishnas on pilgrimage, we pushed ahead into the park's interior.

Several hours of serious hiking brought us to Barlow Falls, a spot renowned for its beauty and tranquility. It was no more. Its desecration complete, the natural pool and surrounding area had become a haven for displaced beach bums and other unsavory characters.

Shades of white, pink and brown flesh dotted the rocks and banks, while the scent of coconut oil and suntan lotion hung heavy in the air. The only true beauty was to be found across the water where the sleek figures of four topless sunbathers, two of them female, lay stretched across the rock.

Disgusted by this infestation of civilization, our party split a granola bar and moved on. Many bootsteps and several thousand feet higher, we finally arrived at our campsite, dusted and tired from our strenuous day in the wilderness.

As the area near the stream was already crowded with tents, we chose a secluded spot under a tall stand of pines. No sooner had we dropped our packs than an energetic, muscular little man came up to greet us. "Welcome to the Great Outdoors! My name is Roger," said he, shaking our hands vigorously.

"Thanks," I said, "but we've been there all day."

"No, no," said our host, shaking his head. "The Great Outdoors, an organization of men dedicated to having fun in a natural setting. This is our annual excursion," he said, pointing to the encampment by the stream.

"That's fine, but what do you do out here?" asked Dennis skeptically. "And I don't see any women either."

Roger looked puzzled. "Well, we teach outdoor skills, we cook, and we ... Oh, I get it. Well, if you guys want to do your private thing, that's fine with us. But remember, we'll be happy to have you if you get bored and change your mind. We've got lots of exciting activities."

After Roger left we held a hasty conference. "Well, we wanted to experience California, and it is a natural setting ...," Jimmy began.

"Yes, but let's not go overboard," countered Dennis. "Besides, we know nothing about their backgrounds or social standing."

Thus dismissing our friendly neighbors and their exuberant gaiety, we set up camp. After a nutritious, if unappetizing, dinner of deep-fried raisins, we settled back contently to contemplate the woods and stars round us. Jimmy produced a good supply of marijuana, price California produce, and soon we all felt very close to nature.

It was in this state of near-Nirvana that the bear discovered us.

"Hey," whispered Dennis, "there's a bear here."

"Yeah," I laughed, "I see one up in the sky." As a large furry shape crossed my vision, I ceased any further astronomical observations. Passing us by, the nocturnal marauder scrounged through



Sunbathers enjoy rays at UNC ... to campers' despair, they invaded Yosemite woods

our camp and made off with our entire granola supply. For some time, we could hear him in the woods, snuffling in appreciation over our donations.

"We never should have disregarded section E 13, clause C of the Survival Manual," muttered Jimmy, who had spent the previous night studying survival techniques. "It says one should always

hang food and never get high in bear-infested areas."

The remainder of the night was spent in nervous vigil as half the bears in Yosemite swept down from the hills to prow through our camp. Clutching the hunting knife, I could only wonder if anyone would respond to a radio distress call at that time of night.

At dawn we were off for the safety of civilization, our enthusiasm for nature's wonders long vanished. We left the bears and gays of California to take care of each other in the great outdoors.

Jonathan Rich, a junior history and political science major from Quogue, N.Y., spent the summer in a West Coast commune.

PATCO From page 1

harm and interferes with the FAA's essential operations."

Another PATCO claim is that the 2,500 supervisors now serving as air traffic controllers are not fit for the job. Supervisors normally do a small bit of air traffic controlling each day at a non-peak period, but mostly they serve in management positions. They are forbidden by the FAA to unionize.

"These guys were working in the office and working with computers," Langston said. "They're not the most highly qualified people in the FAA system."

The FAA's reply is that the supervisors are the trainers of the air traffic controllers and that they are as qualified as the striking air traffic controllers.

Even PATCO members admit that before the strike supervisors in North Carolina received more day-to-day controlling time than supervisors in more populated areas, and that North Carolina airports are not as un-safe as large-city airports.

Closed down

Still, there's no doubt North Carolina has felt the effect of the strike. The control tower at Simmons-Nott Airport in New Bern was closed on August 12. The FAA is currently deciding whether to close the Hickory Municipal Airport also. The FAA ranks airports by the number of flights they handle on a scale of one to five, with a five rating being the busiest. Both the New Bern and Hickory airports are ranked as a three.

Of the 42 controllers at Douglas, 26 remained on strike. At RDU, 22 of the 40 controllers have lost their jobs.

Each day of the strike, aviation-related business — from the airport itself to concessions to parking — loses money. The reduction in air travel costs the airlines about \$30 million a day. USAir laid off 600 workers in its home base of Pittsburgh and Braniff Airways laid off 1,500 workers. Eastern cut salaries of its top executives by 10 percent. Although there have been no reports of major dismissals at North Carolina airports, it appears to be only a matter of time before employees in this state feel the unemployment pinch, too.

The key question to recovery — if the government doesn't rehire the striking controllers and Reagan has said it will not — is the FAA's ability to train new controllers. The Reagan administration has said it might take 17 to 21 months to rebuild the system. F. Lee Bailey, famed defense lawyer who helped form PATCO, said on ABC's Nightline that it would take much longer, probably about four to five years, to rebuild the system. Bailey pointed out that although there was a wedding-out school for aspiring air traffic controllers in Oklahoma, controllers are actually

trained in the control towers by supervisors — most of whom are busy now directing traffic.

Bailey made another point that local PATCO members in North Carolina have stressed. While the government claims 75 percent of all flights are being handled, Bailey said that figure refers to the larger commercial airline flights. If all general aviation is included, Bailey said the system is actually operating at about 50 percent. Commuter airlines, which have grown quickly in the last few years, were hard hit and some face possible bankruptcy.

Good morale

Regardless of how many flights are being handled and how long it will take to replace the striking controllers, local PATCO members said morale is generally high. PATCO members are currently appealing the notices they received from the government that proposes that they be removed from their jobs. The appeal process promises to be lengthy, and most likely will end up being decided in court, but PATCO insists it will fight to the end.

"As a whole, it (morale) is very good," said Charlotte's Kaufman. "It goes up and down but most of the people realize the situation we're in and most are willing to stand by the situation and suffer the consequences, if there are some."

"I'll probably regret it if I lose my job in the long run because it creates a hardship on me and my family. But I don't see things in my present situation to regret it."

Langston felt that public opinion, once measured as favoring Reagan's decision to fire the strikers, may be shifting toward the controllers. In negotiations, PATCO wanted a \$10,000 across-the-board raise, a request Langston said most Americans may have found hard to swallow. Langston said the union had put the raise "on the back burner" and would seek its other proposals: a shorter workweek, earlier retirement and better retirement pay.

Bad boss

Secretary of Transportation Andrew L. Lewis' admission that the FAA was a difficult boss to work for will also probably help PATCO's cause with the public. Still,

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there are no negotiations taking place between the FAA and PATCO. In fact, the government is trying to strip the right of PATCO to bargain on behalf of the controllers; which would, in effect, break the union.

Meanwhile, as the government tries to replace 12,000 employees and PATCO attempts to stay alive, the question of safety remains a primary concern. Is the FAA right: are the skies as safe as ever? Or, is

the government snowing the American people by giving a false sense of safety that would vanish with one unfortunate disaster?

"I think it's going to take some kind of air disaster to get the government to sit down and talk to us and admit their mistake," Langston said. "PATCO tried to tell the general public but they're not getting a true picture of what's going on. I don't want to see 400 people die."

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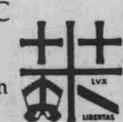
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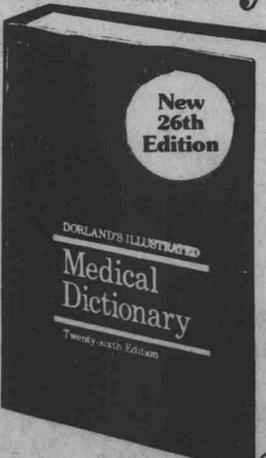

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