

# THE CATHEDRAL CALL

August 26-27, 2012

Yosemite National Park, California



*4 words to describe  
our Yosemite day*

CATHEDRAL



**Gordon stands on the granite beach of Lower Cathedral Lake. Above him is Cathedral Peak, which he sketched for the cover of this newsletter.**

## 4 words to describe our Yosemite day

If we'd had pumpkins, there would have been frost on them.

The fire I'd built in the cast-iron stove when Gordon and I went to bed in our tent cabin had long since burned out. The light brightening the tent walls and seeping around the window flap indicated the sun was rising.

The fog bank hovering above my face indicated a nip in the air.

Nope. "Nip" was too tame a word, as I discovered when I folded back the blankets and my bare feet hit the concrete floor.

In words that have surely been uttered by people in the wilderness since the Children of Israel wandered in the Sinai, I looked over at Gordon and said: "Check the temperature app on your smart phone."

"Twenty-eight degrees," he said.

Six-thirty a.m., Monday, Aug. 27, Tuolumne Meadows Lodge in Yosemite National Park.

The couple at our breakfast table was from Hawaii. They were interested in the weather.

Several of the diners one table over were in caps and polar fleeces spooning up oatmeal with gloved hands.

"Nip" didn't capture the feeling at all.

But late summer in the high Sierra is a time when nights are rushing headlong toward winter while days prefer a lazier transition. It was in the 50s at 9:30 when we put on our packs, locked up the SUV and headed out on a four-mile stretch of the John Muir Trail toward Lower

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# 4 words to describe our Yosemite day



**It looks like sand, but the beach surrounding Lower Cathedral Lake is solid granite.**

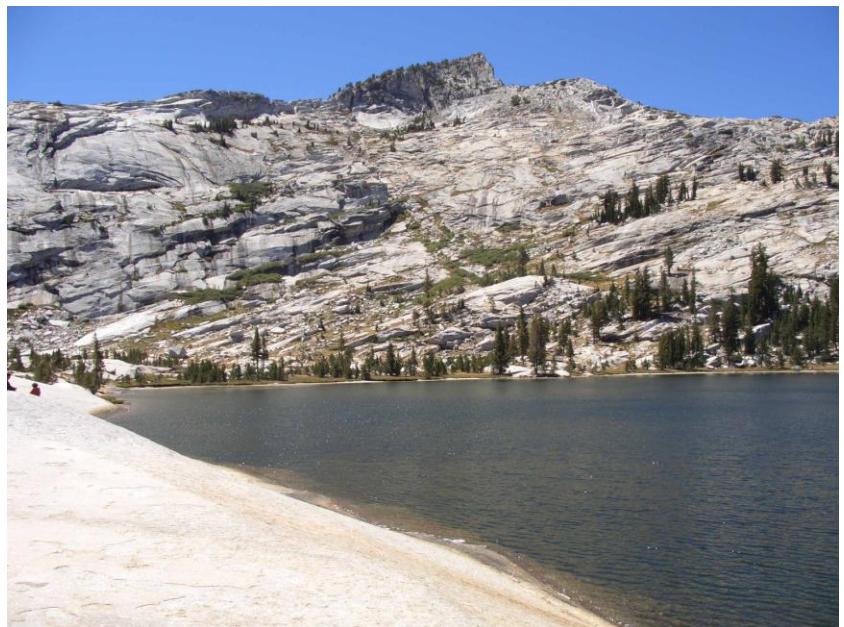
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Cathedral Lake less than a thousand feet above.

“Brisk” was the word for it – the weather, not my pace.

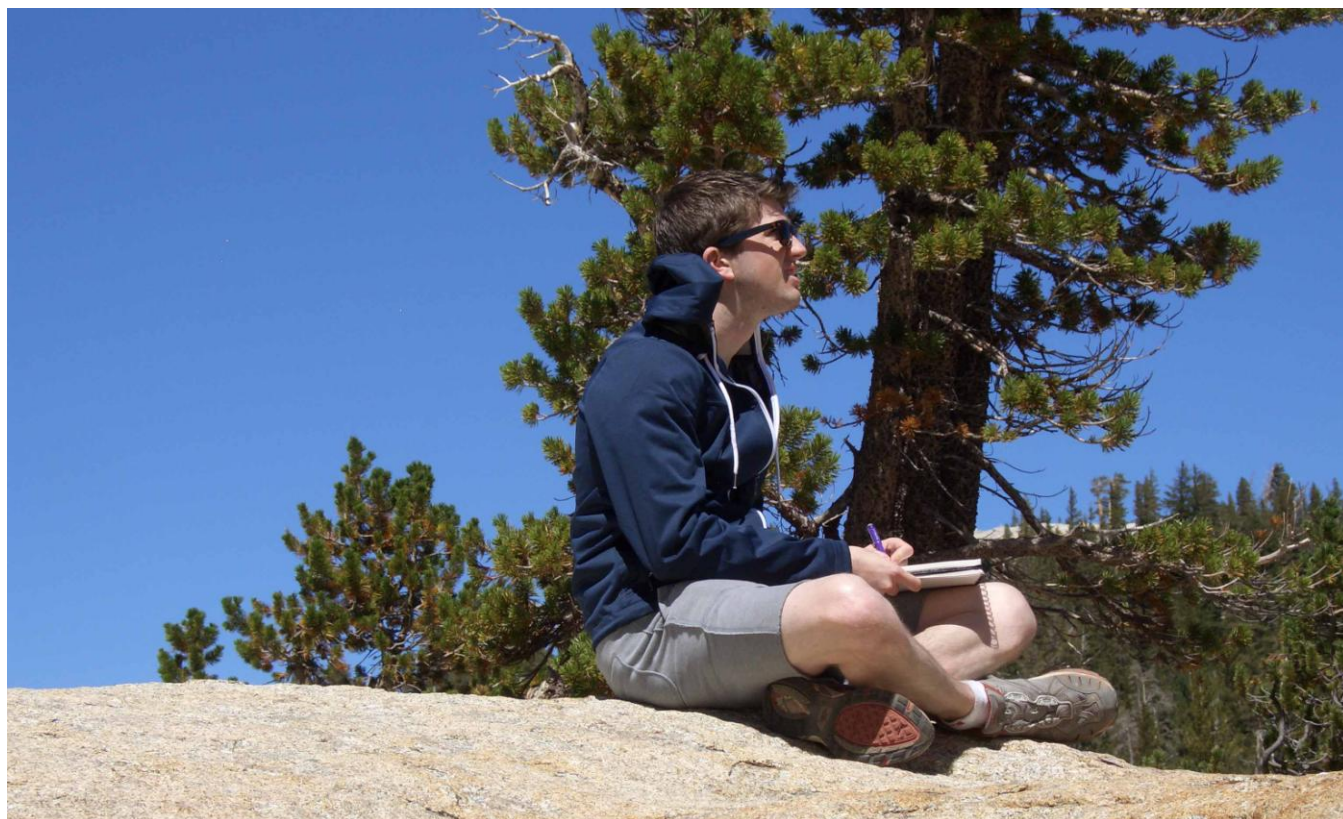
The goal and turnaround point of the hike was one of the glacial tarns that dot the high country, basically a depression in the rock carved out by Yosemite’s pre-historic glaciers before they

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# 4 words to describe our Yosemite day



**Gordon sketching the cover view of Cathedral Peak.**

## Some random accommodation stats

	Sunday 8/26	Monday 8/27
Place	Yosemite Nat'l Park	Tulare
Altitude	8,600 feet	290 feet
Outside temp @ check-in	35 degrees	84 degrees
Inside temp @ check-in	35 degrees	72 degrees
Outside temp @ check-out	28 degrees	75 degrees
Inside temp @ check-out	28 degrees	68 degrees
Room rate	\$117	\$71
Breakfast included?	No	Yes
Shower	10-200 yards away	In room
Toilet	10-200 yards away	In room
Electricity	No	Yes
Lighting	Candles	Incandescent
Heat	Wood stove	Electric
Cooling	Very	Electric

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melted and the hollows filled with water.

By the time we had returned to our car about 2 p.m., the temp was up to 66 and we retreated a bit up the Tioga Pass Road to the Tuolumne Grill for a late sandwich. We parked next to six Harleys.

The guy in front of me in line for a hamburger must have been at least 6-6, and it had been awhile since anyone mowed his back. His leathers, Route 66 patches and stars-and-

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**A stiff breeze roughed up the surface of Lower Cathedral Lake when Gordon and I were there, so I got this reflective image from the internet.**

## 4 words to describe our Yosemite day

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stripes bandana all screamed “American.”

His Confederate flag belt buckle screamed  
“American when it’s convenient.”

So I asked him where he was from.

“My Eeenglish izza notta so good,” he  
said apologetically. “Modena.”

“Italy?”

“Si. The town of Pavarotti. You have  
heard of it?”

I told him I had been through Modena  
once on the train not long after the

tenor’s death in 2007. “Did you bring  
those Harleys all the way from Italy?”

It turned out that he, his wife and several  
other couples from across northern Italy  
– Verona, Padua, Milan – had flown to Las  
Vegas a couple of weeks earlier, rented  
the Harleys, decked themselves out in  
Hell’s Angels duds and were on a long  
ride through the national parks of the  
American West.

They occupied a couple of the picnic  
tables outside.

“Vegas” is the word I’d use to describe  
their craziness.



# Good-bye from Yosemite



**A rider leading a mule train takes supplies to the back country the same way its been done since the Spanish arrived in California.**