



January, 1995

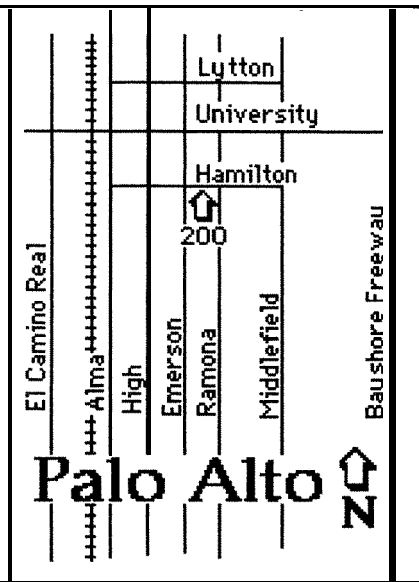
Peak Climbing Section, Sierra Club, Loma Prieta Chapter

Vol. 28, No. 1

NEXT MEETING

Date: Tuesday, Jan. 19
Time: 7:30 p.m.
Place: The Pacific Mountaineer
200 Hamilton Ave.
Palo Alto

Program: "Backcountry Skiing and Snow Camping in the Sierra Nevada" by Robert Muonio. Robert has been backcountry ski touring and winter camping since 1972. Join him for a short slide show covering one of his many trips into the Sierra. In addition to leading winter trips, Robert has been guiding rock climbs, both locally and in the Lake Tahoe area, since 1971.



Ostrander Hut will be closed for entire season

THE Ostrander Hut, a popular destination for backcountry skiers in Yosemite, will be closed for the entire winter season, according to its caretakers, The Yosemite Association.

Crews sampling the water quality at Ostrander Lake last summer found "a significant problem with human waste," specifically a fecal coliform reading beyond the acceptable limits.

The culprit: leaking chemical toilets at the hut. Workers checked into the possibility of a makeshift retrofit to get through the winter but concluded it was unfeasible.

Crews plan to replace the toilets next summer. The Yosemite Association said it expects the hut to be open next winter.

UPCOMING TRIPS

PYRAMID PEAK

Jan. 14-16
9,983 feet, Class 2
Leader: Palmer Dyal
(415) 604-6545 (w)
(415) 941-5321 (h)
Co-leader: wanted

This will be a moderately paced, three-mile snowshoe trip to climb a relatively easy peak in the Desolation Wilderness area southwest of Lake Tahoe. The elevation gain is about 1,000 feet per mile and we plan to camp at tree line. By using three days we will have time to build snow caves and view the marvelous scenery. This will be a good trip for beginning winter climbers.

JUNIPERO SERRA

5,900 feet, Class 1
Leader: George Van Gorden
(408)779-2320

A beautiful day hike. Great views at the top and a good chance of a little snow. From Morgan Hill a two-hour-and- 15-minute drive. The hike takes five and a half to six hours.

SNOW CAMPING SEMINAR

Classes: Evenings of Jan. 9,10, 11
Field Trips: Jan 28-29 and Feb. 4-5
Leaders: Chris MacIntosh
(415) 563-5870
Marj Ottenberg
(408)867-4576

This popular seminar, which the Peak Climbing and Ski Touring sections have sponsored from the beginning, is now in its twenty-second year. This is a golden opportunity for anyone interested in a cooler camping situation. Instructors include Dave Kutty, Sheldon Firth, Tom Wolfe and Jim Macrander.

GLACIER POINT

Jan. 28-29
Leader: John Flinn
(415) 968-2050
jnflinn@aol.com
Co-leader: Noreen Ford
(41.5) 493-5700

Here's your chance to soak in the grandeur of one of America's most awe-inspiring vistas without smoke-belching buses or ice cream-dribbling tourists. It's about 12 miles each way on groomed tracks on a roadbed. Modest skiing ability and snow camping experience needed. Before Jan. 10 sign up with co-leader.

Your chapter needs you

As a group of the Sierra Club, it's important that people who join know that the Sierra Club is a multi-faceted organization. The Sierra Club is unique in its approach to coordinate protection of the environment so as to fully enjoy and appreciate it through hiking, skiing, climbing, paddling and cycling.

Kristi Timmings, chapter coordinator, has scheduled new

members meetings each month. She has asked each activities section to help out and attend two to three of these meetings per month and talk for 5 to 15 minutes about their group.

If anyone in the PCS is interested, please call the Chair, Debbie Benham (phone number on back page) and we'll arrange dates and times. Thanks.

— Debbie Benham

We want you on our roster

YOU'RE nobody if you're not on the official PCS membership list. We'll be publishing it next month, and we'd like to make sure everyone's information is up to date.

A lot of the information we have is out of date. If any of yours has changed in the last three years, please send your name, address, home phone number and, if you'd like, work phone number to Paul Vlasveld, 789 Daffodil Way, San Jose, CA 95117.

Citizens of cyberspace: We're also putting together a directory of e-mail addresses, which will also be published in February. Please e-mail yours to jnflinn@aol.com.

Proposal to honor Ferdinand

PLANS TO rename a prominent knob on Mt. Dana above the Tioga Pass entrance station for legendary ranger Ferdinand Castillo are winding their way through the federal bureaucracy. A decision is expected by spring or summer.

Tina Yerzy, an Environmental Protection Agency employee and former Yosemite ranger, is spearheading the effort and contributing much of her own time and money.

She recently flew back to Washington, D.C. to make a presentation to the U.S. Board on Geographic Names, delivering 150 letters and petitions with 1,700 names on them.

Senator Barbara Boxer and a gaggle of congressional representatives, state senators and assembly

members are backing the effort.

A fixture of the Yosemite landscape for many years, Ferdinand manned the Tioga Pass entrance station during the summers. He personally greeted everyone entering the park, often at considerable length. Ferdinand passed away last December.

Yerzy urges supporters to write to the committee to urge passage of the proposal. Address letters to:

Roger Payne
Executive Secretary, Domestic
Geographic Names
U.S. Board on Geographic
Names
523 National Center
Reston, Virginia 22092

YODELS

MUIR DOES 2600 RPM

What good are awe-inspiring mountains, streams and meadows if you can't call up someone and yack about it on your cellular phone? Sensing an urgent need among nature seekers, Yosemite National Park has just allowed a cellular phone company, Golden State Cellular, to install five base stations inside the park and one in nearby Foresta. They will allow cell phone connections in the valley, Tuolumne Meadows, Wawona and some parts of the backcountry. Next summer CellularOne will also get to operate in the park. And, yes, that whirring sound you hear is indeed John Muir **spinning** in his grave. (See related story on page one.)

SOCIAL CLIMBERS

If you are interested in chairing the Social Committee of the PCS please call Debbie Benham at (41.5) 964-0558. The Social Committee would coordinate activities necessary to encourage and maintain membership, help plan the July picnic and the Christmas party, greet new members/visitors, and schedule social events.

BORGE SAYS HI

Borge Nielsen, who is living near Geneva, Switzerland, with fellow PCS alumnus Susan Stipp, was in town recently for a brief visit. He says hi to all his PCS friends. He and Susan can see Mont Blanc from their window and get out to the Alps to climb and ski as often as they can, which is not as often as they'd like. Those who remember Susan's kids, Katie and Robbie, will be stunned to learn that they're now 18 and 16,

respectively, and fluent in French. Borge and Susan have a new address: Chemin de la Piece, F-01 170 Crozet, France. Borge's e-mail is BORGE@cmvma.cem.ch.

JEFFREY DAHMER'S GEAR TIPS

Looking for a cheap bivy bag? A reader recently sent this tip to Backpacker Magazine: "It may sound morbid, but I bought an unused body bag at an Army-Navy surplus store for \$20, and it makes a great bivy sack. It's waterproof, durable, and can be used as a stretcher in case of an emergency." And in case of an even

worse emergency, it can always be used for its original purpose.

KNEECAPS ON THE ICECAP

Stupid altitude tricks are back. Just accept it. We'll start this month with one by your humble editor. While climbing Kilimanjaro recently, he arrived at Kibo Hut (15,530 feet) in shorts, thereby setting what he is pretty sure is a personal altitude record for bare legs. He has a photograph to prove it.

(It was so warm on the 19300-foot summit the following day that he could have stripped down to shorts

there, too, if he had had de energy, which he didn't.)

So the gauntlet is thrown down. Can anybody top 15,530 feet for wearing shorts? (Bare legs only; shorts over polypro don't count.)

Please feel free to suggest your own stupid altitude tricks.

LOST GEAR

If anyone has any equipment/supplies/books belonging to the PCS, please contact the Chair. We're trying to figure out what stuff we actually have. As of now, Marj Ottenberg and Bob Wallace are the keepers and **loaners** of used ice axes and crampons. Anything else out there?

Now YOU KNOW

What does the name "Annapurna" mean? It is a combination of the Sanskrit words *anna*, meaning "sustenance" and *puma*, meaning "filled with." So **Annapurna** is sometimes translated as "The Goddess Rich in Sustenance" or, if you're less poetically inclined, "She who is filled with food." Perhaps it should be **Roseannapurna**

THE LAST WORD

A people who climb the ridges and sleep under the stars in high mountain meadows, who enter the forest and scale peaks, who explore glaciers and walk ridges buried deep in snow – these people will give their country some of the indomitable spirit of the mountains."

– *William O. Douglas*

The mountains are a world apart, a grand and mysterious world between the earth and the sky, a world which one must love before one approaches it and is, discreetly, admitted to it." -- *Gaston Rebuffat*

ARMCHAIR MOUNTAINEERING

Epics galore from the author of Touching the Void

THIS GAME OF GHOSTS by Joe Simpson; 319 pps; *The Mountaineers*; \$24.95

Joe Simpson is the Mr. Bill of the mountains, and the world's great ranges are his personal Sluggo. Simpson, you may recall, is the British climber who plunged 100 feet into a crevasse in the Peruvian Andes when his partner was forced to cut the rope. Left for dead, he somehow clawed his way out and dragged himself four miles back to basecamp on two shattered legs. That epic resulted in "Touching the Void," one of the best mountaineering books ever written.

Well, there's a reason Simpson was able to survive the ordeal. As his new book, "This Game of Ghosts," makes clear, this sort of thing happens to him *all the time*.

It's hard to turn the pages without cringing. Here's Simpson being swept 2,000 feet down Les Droites in the French Alps by an avalanche. Now he's spending 12 hours dangling from a single wobbling piton on the Walker Spur. Yikes, there he goes on a 500-foot tumble down Pachermo in Nepal. *Oh nooooooooooooo!*

I don't mean to make fun of Simpson, who's an excellent climber, an even better writer and by all accounts a fun guy to have a pint with. But halfway through "Ghosts" you want to take him aside and say, "Joe, keep this up and you could get yourself hurt." By the end of the book he's even attempting to climb Pumori on crutches, for God's sake. (He reaches 20,000 feet, possibly setting an altitude record for such.)

At least Simpson makes it to the end of the book alive, which is more than you can say for many of his climbing friends. Just leafing through

the photo captions gives you an idea of the body count: "Richard Cox . . . before his death on the Shivling expedition." "Don Barr before he was killed in the Verdun Gorge." "Before tragedy struck the Ammpurna III team..." "Ari Gunnerson two weeks before he was killed on Pumori." "Andy Fanshare, 1%3-92."

You get the idea.

This is the dark counterpoint to all that gloriously upbeat blather you find in most climbing books.

Simpson and his friends are part of the great British underclass, living off the dole without much prospect of a decent job. Coming of age in the economic hopelessness that bred skinbeads and soccer hooligans, they seem to share some of the same bloody-minded taste for nihilism and self-destruction.

Certainly there's more than the caprice of objective danger at work here. As Simpson makes clear, he and his friends are thrill junkies dancing carelessly on the brink of the void. When Simpson's not cheating death on some hideous alpine north face he's almost blowing himself up with dynamite, getting drunk and tobogganing off a ski jump, or clinging to the roof of a car as it careens through the icy streets of Chamonix.

All this is not to say that "This Game of Ghosts" does not make for good reading. Simpson is a consummate storyteller, and he's got a wealth of edge-of-your-seat yarns to spin. For my money, he ranks with Jon Krakauer as the best climbing-writer alive today (alive as of this writing, at least.)

By the end of the book Simpson is trying to come to grips with his growing doubts about the sport and attempting to wring some meaning out of the many deaths of his friends:

"That's three dead in six months," I said to John in The Broadfield that night. "I wonder who's next?"

"I know what you mean," he said. "Maybe we'll get two years off now. It's about one a year, I reckon, so we're in credit by two."

"One a year. God, it's a mug's game. Where will it all end?"

"John looked at me over an empty pint glass with a bleak expression, then laughed, and said, "Who knows? And who cares? It's your round."

By all means read "This Game of Ghosts." But if you are going to climb mountains, don't let your mother read it.

— John Flinn

Free! Peak easier in summer

I WAS impressed by Steve Eckert's description of his and Jeff Fisher's heroic near-winter ascent of Free! Peak in the December Scree. I admired their tenacity considering the conditions described.

However, under summer-like conditions the ascent of Free! Peak is a surprisingly easy hike. Jeffrey P Schaffer describes the route up Tahoe's highest point in good detail in his book Tahoe Sierra. Last September Leighton Nakata and I climbed the peak in about 90 minutes from the trailhead near Fountain Place.

Although there are no trail signs or markers of any kind, one should be able to find the correct route by following Schaffer's description.

There is a trail nearly the entire way to the summit. The views from the top are spectacular. A second summit can easily be bagged by traversing along the ridge (a rudimentary trail can be followed most of the way) to Jobs Sister.

— George Sinclair

"If I should bow my head, let it be to a high mountain." -- *Maori proverb*

Aconcagua breast cancer climb

REACHING THE summit of Aconcagua will be the second toughest thing Vicki Boriack and her teammates have ever done. But it promises to be a walk in the park compared to the toughest: surviving breast cancer.

This month 15 breast cancer survivors, eight of them from Northern California, will leave for Argentina. Their goal is to conquer not only 22,831-foot Aconcagua, the loftiest peak in the Western Hemisphere, but also the disease that will strike one of every eight women in the U.S.

Their expedition hopes to raise \$2.3 million — \$100 for every foot they climb — for breast cancer research and support programs. The women also hope to show it's possible to beat the disease and go on to new heights.

"Surviving breast cancer is a long, uphill struggle that takes determination and teamwork, so it's a lot like climbing a mountain," said Boriack, who designs outdoor clothing for MontBell America in Santa Cruz.

Boriack discovered a lump in her left breast in October 1993 that turned out to be two different forms of cancer. A former mountain guide who named her daughter after Mt. St. Helens, Boriack feared she would never return to the mountains.

But this September, after a mastectomy and six months of chemotherapy, she celebrated her 40th birthday atop 13,057-foot Mt. Dana in Yosemite with her two children.

"I've purged the cobwebs of chemotherapy and I'm back to the kind of shape I was in before this started," Boriack said. "But I'm going to have to be more fit than I've ever been in my life to get up Aconcagua."

The expedition is being organized by the San Francisco-based Breast Cancer Fund, whose founder Andrea Martin, herself a survivor, will accompany the group to base camp.

Leading the group is Laura

Evans, a veteran climber who was given only a 15 percent chance of survival when she was diagnosed with breast cancer five years ago. Since then she has scaled 19,340-foot Kilimanjaro in Tanzania and 19,870-foot Huayna Potosi in Bolivia.

Paul Delorey, president of JanSport, Inc., the expedition's largest sponsor, lost his aunt and a 24-year-

old employee to the disease.

"In this country we can genetically re-engineer a tomato, but we can't seem to invest the time and money to cure breast cancer," he said. "These women are setting out to change that."

For more information contact the Breast Cancer Fund at (415) 775-3997.

ASK GASTON

EDITOR'S NOTE Congratulations to Emily Postpile, Scree's regular advice columnist, who has been selected for the 1995 Poulan Weed-Eater American Express Earth Day Everest International Peace Climb and Chili Cook-off. Filling in for her here will be noted French climber Gaston Rabbitface. With an officially certified IQ of 107.328, Gaston is listed in the Guinness Book of World Records as the World's Smartest Alpinist. He will be supplying Scree readers with mountain etiquette rules, route information, gear tips and advice to the lovelorn.

Dear Gaston: When we're splitting up gear at the trailhead, my partner inevitably shows up with a tiny pack and asks for stuff that's "small but heavy," rather than stuff that's "bulky and light." After a few years of this I am beginning to suspect he's scamming me. What do you think?

My dear reader: Let us all pause for a moment while Gaston lifts the problems of the entire world onto his weary shoulders. Uhhhhh! That ought to do it. Now, as Gaston has repeatedly had to explain to that chowderhead Carl Sagan, a black hole is small and heavy, while the Crab Nebula is bulky and light. Here on earth, even someone as cerebrally challenged as you ought to be able to



figure out that tea bags weigh less than a North Face VE-25 tent. Non go wipe that drool off your face.

Dear Gaston: I have a crush on, a cute woman who comes to PC meetings, but I don't know if she likes me. What should I do?

My dear reader: Gaston can only imagine what a chore it is for you to get out of bed every day without a brain or a spine. I have forwarded your question to Ask Beth. Look for your answer next week, right after the one about teenage masturbation. No go and trouble me no more. Gaston has spoken!

Need advice? Seek guidance? Hanker for abuse? Write to Gaston care of the Scree editor. His address is on the back page.

PCS merges onto infobahn

THE PCS is proud to announce that we have merged onto the information highway. One of our members has set up an automatic broadcast facility that allows you to contact all the online PCSers with a single e-mail.

To sign up for the service send an e-mail message to "eckert@netcom.com." Indicate which of the lists you want to be on (peak climbers and/or day hikers), and include your e-mail address in the body of the message, since the "Reply To" fields are often garbage. You will receive confirmation that you have been added to the list by return mail.

To send your own broadcast message, address mail to "eckert@netcom.com" and include

one or both of the following lines, in upper case, without quotes and without leading or trailing spaces, in your message:

BROADCAST TO PEAK CLIMBERS

BROADCAST TO DAY HIKERS

Note that this line goes in the *body* of your message, not the *subject*. *The* most common mistake people make is to use these lines as the subject, the second most common mistake is to change the capitalization and the third most common is to put quotes around it.

There are about 75 people if you count both lists, but around 20 of them are getting Day Hike messages only.

– Steve Eckert

Don't forget to write

WE WELCOME your trip reports, odd musings, book reviews, restaurant reports, equipment notes, poetry, apocryphal tales, **scurrilous** innuendo and off-color limericks. Nobody wants to read eight pages each month of the editor's pseudo-hipster blatherings (least of all the editor.)

Anything of more than a few paragraphs should be submitted in digital form (via disk or e-mail). This is Silicon Valley; if you don't have your own word processor you doubtless know someone who does. Do the keystroking yourself and save the editor an evening.

- Via disk: Mac users-please

submit in a Mac word-processing format (Word, WriteNow, etc.) with a copy in ASCII (text only) format. PC users-please submit ASCII only.

- Via e-mail: The editor's address is Jnflimr@aol.com. You will lose all italics and bold face, so please indicate somehow the places you want to include these. America Online users can submit intact Mac files (please send a copy as regular e-mail text).

- Via snail mail (U.S. Postal Service): Short items may be submitted on paper to John Flinn 133 Promethean Way, Mtn. View, CA 94043.

CLASSIFIEDS

FOR SALE: "New" Five Tennies, size 10, excellent condition. Only worn for about three hours (when I discovered they were too small!). Paid \$80, will entertain any reasonable offer. Jim Curl w: (408)452-6557, h: (408)371-4741.

WANTED: Ice climbing partners. It's that time of year again. May or may not include snow camping. Call Kelly Maas at h: (408) 279-2054 w: (408) 9442078.

PRIVATE TRIPS

Private trips are not insured, sponsored or supervised by the Sierra Club or the PCS. They are listed here as a courtesy to the organizers because they may be of interest to PCS climbers.

TRUCKEE PEAK SKIING

Jan. 21-22

Organizer: Butch Suits
(415) 3254116 (h)

Saturday we ski up Pole Creek and attempt Silver Peak, possibly Tinker's Knob. Sunday we ski Castle Peak via the southeast ridge. You must be a strong crosscountry downhill skier with good endurance. Avalanche transceivers recommended. Lodging in Truckee TBD.

BIG BASIN TO THE SEA

(ANDBACK)

Sunday, Jan. 22

Organizer: Phyllis Olrich
(415) 322-0323 (h)
(415) 725-1541 (w)

e-mail:

PhyllisO@Forsythe.Stanford.edu

There's no NFL football scheduled, so whadya gonna do? Meet at 8 a.m. at the Page Mill Road and I-280 Park 'n' Ride to carpool, or at 9 a.m. at Big Basin Redwoods State Park for this conditioning day hike through the redwoods. Route to be determined day of hike. Elevation gain moderate. Rain cancels.

CRAG PEAK AND SMITH MTN

9,455/9,533 feet, Class 3

Jan. 27-29 (Fri-Sun)

Leader: Steve Eckert

415-508-0500

eckert@netcom.com

Co-Leader: Bob Suzuki

408-259-0772

This trip could turn out to be a day hike or two nights of snow camping, but it will involve snowshoes or skis and third-class rock on Crag. There is no gate on the road, so how far we drive will be determined

by snow conditions near Little Lake). Despite the underwhelming response to the last snow climb, at least the two of us will be bagging these SPS list peaks. If we have extra time, or if we cannot get close to the target peaks, we will do some or all of these alternatives: Lamont Point, Sawtooth Peak, Spanish Needle (which are also SPS list peaks). Ice axes and a light rope will be carried, so this is a private trip. A liability waiver must be signed, and a \$10 appearance bond received, before you are on the trip. There are no permit fees: your check will be returned at the trailhead. Send a SASE to Steve Eckert, 1814 Oak Knoll Drive, Belmont CA 94002.

Mr. LANGLEY

Feb. 18-21

14,000 ft., Class 3 snow climb

Organizer: George Van Gorden
(408) 779-2320

Give yourself a winter vacation. Get away from all the stress and hassle of work and family life and get

into the stress and hassle and trepidation of winter climbing instead. You'll be glad to get back to the office. This climb is a moderately serious undertaking and winter camping experience is required; some experience with ice axe and crampons is desirable. Snowshoes will be necessary on the approach. If the weather is too crazy, we will climb a lesser mountain in the area: Mt. Inyo, east of Lone Pine, or Telescope Peak, west of Death Valley.

MT. RALSTON

March 5-6

Organizer: Eugene Miya
(415) %16772(w)

This is a skiing and snow camping trip to a significant but easily reached peak in the Desolation Wilderness near Lake Tahoe. It is being organized with the ski touring section. Beginning snow campers welcome.

PCS finances are healthy

The PCS has had acceptable financial health this past year. The number of members decreased by six (to 197), and our net worth decreased by \$30, due mostly to a \$188 increase in Scree printing costs.

Our net worth is calculated using a method (initiated by Dinesh Desai in 1990) which assumes that the PCS disbands at the end of the

year and returns pro rate shares of unused subscriptions to members.

Such an analysis shows a required return of \$1555, leaving the PCS with a remaining net worth of \$1,174. At this time a dues increase does not seem necessary.

My thanks to Warren Storkman for negotiating lower printing charges and to Paul Vlasveld for his help with this analysis.

— Bob Suzuki

Balance Sheet

Dec. 20, 1994

Assets:	
Wells Fargo Checking	\$2328.87
Liabilities:	
Number of members	197
Average refund owed	\$5.86
Total refund owed	\$1155.00
Net Worth:	\$1173.87

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Scree is the monthly journal of the Peak Climbing Section of the Sierra Club, Loma Prieta Chapter. Subscriptions are \$10 per year. Checks, payable to the PCS, should be mailed to the treasurer, Phyllis Olrich. To ensure an uninterrupted subscription, renewal checks must be received no later than the last Tuesday of the expiration month.

For change of address, contact Paul Vlasveld, 789 Daffodil Way, San Jose, CA 95117; (408) 247-6472 (h), (408) 257-7910 x3613 (w)

PCS meetings are held the second Tuesday of each month. See Scree for location and program information.

The following trip classifications are to assist you in choosing trips for which you are qualified. No simple rating system can anticipate all possible conditions

Class 1: Walking on a trail.

Class 2: Walking cross-country, using hands for balance.

Class 3: Requires use of hands for climbing. A rope may be used occasionally.

Class 4: Requires rope belays.

Class 5: Technical rock climbing.

Deadline for February issue: Friday, Jan. 27



Please recycle



*Peak Climbing Section
789 Daffodil Way
San Jose, CA 95127*



"Vy can't ve chust climb?" -- John Salathe

First Class Mail