



July, 1996

Peak Climbing Section, Loma Prieta Chapter, Sierra Club

Vol. 30, No. 7

Next Meeting

Date: Tuesday, July 9

Time: 6:30 Start charcoal
7:00 Start BBQ
8:00 Start of meeting

Location: Junipero Serra Park,
Sunnyvale

From I-280 turn North on DeAnza Blvd in Cupertino then left on Homestead then right on Hollenbeck. The park is on your left.

From I-85 turn East on Fremont then South on Hollenbeck. The park is on your right.

A 90 person picnic area is 20 yards from the parking lot between the 2 sets of tennis courts. Park or unload here. Extra parking is 1/2 block away on the North side of the park and 1 block away on the West side.

Program: BBQ and SWAP MEET

Bring your own main course to BBQ and your own liquid refreshment (alcohol IS allowed) and a side dish to share for the potluck. A \$2.00 donation will cover the picnic area and charcoal.

Electrical outlets are available at the table. Kids play area is 20 yards away.

Bring your summer trip reports and mark your extra equipment for the swap meet with your name and a price.

Olympus Mons

Are you tired of bagging peanut-sized 14ers and dreaming of puny 8,000 meter peaks? Want to climb something REALLY TALL? Then sign up for the climb of Olympus Mons, tallest peak in the Solar System. It is a broad shield volcano 600 km in diameter and 27 km tall, making it 3 times taller than Everest.

Some routes on the mountain are so feebly inclined that you'd hardly guess you were going up. Since this announcement is intended for hardy PCSers, we have chosen the toughest route: South Buttress, which will require us to scale a 22,000 foot cliff. That's seven times taller than El Cap, 3 times as tall as Everest's Southwest Face, twice as tall as Dhaulagiri wall: four miles of cliff blotting out the western sky. Imagine it! If you have lost your breath, remember class 5 on Earth is class 4 on Mars.

We will establish base camp at the foot of the Talus Slope and Camp 1 immediately above it. From there the climbing is technical and we will have to establish Camp 1 on The Slabs, Camp 2 in the Great Gully and Camp 4 immediately above the Great Gully. Camp 5 will be established at the rightmost edge of the Thank God Ledge and 6 at the left. Camp 7 will be at the midway point of the lower Lightning Bolt Gullies section, while Camp 8 will be in the protected confines of The Cave. Camp 9 and 10 will have to be in the dangerously exposed upper Lightning Bolt gullies section. At Camp 11 we will leave the technical rock behind. Above it we will do a long class 3 scramble up the Snow Bowl which will lead us to the top of the South Buttress and our equipment and supply cache.

After our first victory press conference, we will proceed to march 250 kilometers to the summit on the 6% grade upper flank of Olympus Mons. We should accomplish this in a few days and it should be somewhat anticlimactic, unless we run out of oxygen.

Martian Costs: \$40,000 plus \$10,000 for first ascent fee. This is a real bargain; just compare it to the toll on Everest. Those who can provide ride sharing to basecamp will be given priority.

Guidebook: Green Mars by Kim Stanley Robinson, copyright 1985. (I refer to the novelette, which is harder to find than the novel with same title and author.)

– Tony Cruz <cruz@idt.com>

Been there, done that, got the tee-shirt.
P.S. JPL's phone number is 818-354-4321

– Eugene Miya <eugene@nas.nasa.gov>

Whoaaa.. Hold everything galacto speedos... somebody's going to jail on Uranus.. because YOU DID NOT GET A PERMIT!

– Rich Calliger <calliger@infolane.com>

Notes and Requests

Non-Native Plant Eradication

As a NPS Resource Management Volunteer (Yosemite National Park) and a Sierra Club/Loma Prieta member, I'm recruiting volunteers for National Park Service in Yosemite to do non-native plant eradication (primarily bull thistle & mullein). The season begins late June and ends in early September. You can volunteer for one to several days at a time, weekdays and some weekends. Work parties are led by me and one other NPS volunteer. Participants are provided entrance to Yosemite & shared camping space for the time they are volunteering. Participants are on their own for meals, showers, camping gear, etc. Volunteers must be in very good physical condition, and for some (not all) of the work sites must be experienced cross-country hikers (day hikes only, no backpacking). If you are interested in having more info about this opportunity to help improve Yosemite's ecological integrity, send email to <gstigall@aol.com> or send an SASE to: Georgia Stigall-Volunteers, 17287 Skyline Blvd Box 102, Woodside, CA 94062.

– Georgia Stigall

Sportiva For Sale

Sportiva Rock climbing shoes, stealth rubber, worn twice, excellent condition. Women's size 8.5 - \$75.00 OBO. Will mail to you at no charge. E-mail: <WBenti@aol.com> or call 310-369-1750 and leave a message (will answer after 7/1/96 - in AK until then).

– Wynne Benti

Mountain Hardwear Trango 3 4-Season Tent

I have a Mountain Hardwear Trango 3 4-season tent for sale. It's similar to a Sierra Designs Stretch Dome, but better. I have used both, and the Mountain Hardwear tent has better features. If you have read the reviews, you know that Mountain Hardwear makes some of the best 4-season products around. Hard-core mountaineers like Ed Vestiuers use Mountain Hardwear tents. This tent is like-new, used maybe three times. More details can be viewed on the web:

<http://www.sportsite.com/mountain/trango.html>

It's a \$400 tent. Make offer at 408-446-0387 (work) or email.

– Will Estes <westes@netcom.com>

Private Trek: Nepal 1996

The world's most scenic views of Ana Dablam and Mt. Everest from the Tengboche Monastery will be only one of the many mountain views we'll enjoy. This 18-20 day trek takes us through Namche Bazaar with the climb of Gokyo Ri - Kala Patar - option of Island Peak (20,300ft.). This private \$1550 trek is in October which is the best weather time. For more information, fax 415-4493-8975 or phone 415-493-8959.

– Warren Storkman <dstorkman@aol.com>

Trans-Sierra Ski Trip x 2

Five Sierra Club friends skied a scenic trans-Sierra route from Glacier Lodge to Roads End at Kings Canyon, then returned to

the East Side via Bubbs Creek and Kearsarge Pass. En route, we skied Split Mountain and Dougherty Peak. May 5-12, 1996.

Cast: Dave Erskine, John Langbein, Lin Murphy, Roy Lambertson, and Butch Suits. We had sunny weather throughout the trip, though cold at times--temperatures on two nights were in the single digits at around 11,000 ft. The snow was pretty good corn, though the recent hot spell had formed fields of small nieves penitentes (spikes of snow) in places, a washboard of tiny suncups in other places.

On the first two days, we started from Glacier Lodge (hitting snow at 9000') and crossed South Fork and Mather Passes. South Fork was not icy, requiring laborious but secure step-kicking. Mather was a bit ugly, with slushy, steep snow, some rock outcrops to avoid, and "death cookies" from past wet slides.

On the third day we skied Split. Unfortunately, the snow cover was not continuous on the north slope, but we did get an exciting run from the summit on packed powder. The sharp rocks at the base of this snowpatch provided a good incentive for completing our turns! We skied about half the vertical drop; walked the rest.

Domestic arrangements each evening were a source of endless diversion. The reasons were (1) we had a mixture of two and three-person dinners due to a last-minute dropout, and (2) we wanted to rotate tentmates between our small Bibler (cramped for the tall folks), larger Bibler (Ahhh...very comfortable) and a 1-person bivy tent (so cramped that John dubbed it the "doghouse," later modifying the name to "mutt hut"). The doghouse had a nice ventilated back panel that made for icy toes on those 5 deg nights. An enduring quote captured from these domestic discussions: "You don't have to sleep with the person you have dinner with."

The next 2-1/2 days we plunged into terra incognita for most of us: a spectacular, high traverse along the Cirque and Monarch crests to Road's End at King's Canyon. This route, described in Moynier's guide, crosses about 8 high passes/ridges en route, high above the Muro Blanco canyon of the Kings River. Most of the passes were not skiable, requiring step kicking: the hardest was about 50 deg at the top. Highlights included the pristine, conifer-dotted swales of upper Cartridge Creek--we pointed our skis downhill and schussed for over a mile. The most spectacular "pass" was the summit of Dougherty Peak, which is the easiest way to traverse the crest in that area. We got a great run from the summit down the southwest bowl. We were able to ski over the last few passes in the Kid Creek-Glacier Basin area--beautiful ski terrain.

At this point, I discovered what Roy called "the law of the conservation of klister." I scraped klister off my skis and wiped it on the only thing available--my ski basket; the next day, while draping my sleeping bag on my gear to dry it--I discovered the klister had migrated to the inside of my bag!

I had been carrying a banana-walnut muffin, protected from compression in my drinking cup, and a single candle wedged into my toothbrush case. That evening, after we pitched our tents at the rim of Kings Canyon, we assembled these two items, lit the candle, and sung Happy Birthday to Dave. A broad smile lit his face.

We had hoped to devote 2 days to hiking/skiing back to the east side via Bubbs Creek, but we were behind schedule. So, on Day 6, with uncanny routefinding, Roy led us down the final finger of snow to within a hundred feet of the trail; we hiked the rest of the 5000 feet DOWN to Road's End, jumped in the creek, feasted on the Ranger Station with drying clothes; then, after lunch, hiked

UP to Charlotte Creek in the afternoon heat. In his best preacher's voice, Roy admonished those of us who wanted to bail out: "Brothers, the temptations of the valley are many." The trip was becoming a death march: heavy skis on our packs, sore feet, sore backs, glazed stares from my sunburned companions.

On Day 7 we came through, however. We got up at dawn and started hiking, then cooked breakfast at our first rest stop. We didn't hit skiable snow until about 10,000 feet near Bullfrog Lake but skied over Kearsarge Pass to our cars by late afternoon. It was a memorable, though strenuous, trip.

– *Butch Suits*

**Experience is that marvelous thing
that enables you recognize a mistake
when you make it again.**

- F. P. Jones

Wilderness First Aid Course

Earlier this year I started looking around for a good Wilderness First Aid course. I tried to find one that went beyond the Red Cross Standard First Aid course and yet didn't require weeks of time.

I ended up choosing the "Extended Wilderness Care" course that Cal Adventures, Berkeley puts on. It took up a Friday night and all day Saturday and Sunday. It cost \$105.

As the weekend approached, I was regretting having committed my whole weekend to the course. But I ended up wishing it was longer. Two days and a night were just too short to adequately cover this subject. But for the time allotted, it was a really good course, made more so by the guy who taught it.

Along with the usual Red Cross stuff, which we polished off Friday night, a great deal of time was devoted to being able to manage an injured person on your own, sans 911 support. In addition to lecture and handouts, we practiced our skills in acted out scenarios in which classmates would pretend to be injured and we would attempt to care for them. This part of the course was quite an eye opener.

They will be offering this course again, if anyone is interested. It also includes the Red Cross First Aid and CPR certifications.

Cal Adventures, Berkeley, phone 510-642-4000
\$105, three days (Fri 6pm-10pm, Sat&Sun 8am-5pm)
Dates: July 19-21, Sept 27-29

So now, if any of you are out climbing with me, choke on your dehydrated tri tip steak, fall over backwards off a cliff, land on your head, break your neck and go into cardiac arrest -- don't worry. I'll know what to do.

– *Jim Curl*

Angora Mountain (10,198)

What's white and fluffy and warms the heart? Angora Peak of course! Over the Memorial Day weekend Richard and I climbed this seldom visited peak in the Golden Trout Wilderness.

Golden Trout Wilderness is a special treat for spring backpacking. We traveled through lofty old growth forest starting, at lower elevation, among cedar, majestic sugar pines and occasional giant sequoia. As we climbed, we moved through

lodgepole to immense red fir and Jeffrey Pine. At higher elevations we found foxtail pines.

For bird watchers Golden Trout is a colorful feast. Woodpeckers of several kinds are plentiful. Chickadees and junco abound. I even saw my first female crossbill, an unusual yellow bird that feeds off pine cones using its strangely crossed bill. At night we heard the who-who-who of a great horned owl.

Since the Little Kern River was high, the ranger advised us to cross at the stock bridge instead of at Burnt Corral Meadow as we had planned. I had never thought about it before, but I'm sure that's where the city of Stockbridge (pick your state) got its name. Discovering the obvious!

At 5:30 p.m. we left Lewis Camp trail head (7680) on the historic Jordan Trail built in 1857 and easily made it the seven miles downhill to the bridge (5940) before dark. (On the way out this uphill section proved to be much longer.) Soon after leaving Lewis Camp, the trail affords a spectacular view of the Great Western Divide. We could see where we had twice crossed the Divide last year over Farewell Gap and Shotgun Pass.

The next morning we crossed the bridge and took a cross country shortcut due north over a bump to Deep Creek where we continued uphill to 8276' where the climb began to get serious. In about two miles we ascended to 9600' and dropped our backpacks. By then it was 4 p.m. and socked in.

Whenever I travel cross country, I have a heightened sense of awareness which usually includes a mixture of adventure, sometimes trepidation and great pleasure. It's always a thrill to successfully return to a stowed pack or find a landmark where the compass needle promised it would be. With the clouds swirling around us limiting visibility, we used altimeter and compass to navigate from 9600' through the snow to a 10,000' saddle and then the final 200' to the top of Angora. Entries in the register were few, mostly once a year during Memorial Day weekend. There were primarily SPS members & Bill Rauch.

Miraculously, the clouds parted to give us glimpses of the sheer wall of Coyote Peaks to the north and the warm meadows to the south. Photos taken, we plunge-stepped back to our backpacks and continued another two miles to a good campsite at 9400'. By then it was approaching dark, snowing and getting cold. I hadn't the patience to prepare a fire from all natural materials as I had the night before, so I sacrificed my candle and soon had a warming blaze. We had come 16.5 miles and about 5,000 feet elevation gain.

I highly recommend this fabulous Wilderness with many possibilities for exploration. Because of the old growth trees and generally dry climate, there is less underbrush than many other areas of comparable elevation making cross country travel enjoyable. Oh yes, Angora is on the SPS list.

– *Debbie Bulger*

Official (PCS) Trips

PCS trips must be submitted through the Scheduler (see back cover for details). Trips not submitted to the Scheduler will be listed as PRIVATE, without recourse.

Darwin, Evolution Region

Peaks: Darwin and others (13,000+) class 3
Trailhead: North Lake, with car shuttle to Bishop Pass.
Dates: July 4-7 Thur-Sun
Contact: Chris Kramar W 415-926-6861

Cross country over Lamarck Col into one of the most famous and popular areas in the Sierra Nevada. Walter Starr Jr. wrote that the Evolution country was "the region where the grand crescendo of the Sierra touches at once the heart of the mountaineer and the artist." We will travel through Evolution Canyon to Muir pass and out Bishop Pass in four days, catching Darwin and other peaks along the way. Possible peaks include Goddard, Black Giant, Scylla, Charybdis and others. To reserve a spot, send \$3 (permit fee) and contact information (name, address, phone etc.) to 4302 Ribera St., Fremont, CA 94536

Editor's note: This trip was MISTAKENLY listed as private last month.

Ansel Adams

Peak: Mt Ansel Adams (12,760') class 3
Map: Mt Lyell 7.5 min topo
Dates: July 4-7 Thur-Sun
Leader: Kai Wiedman 415-347-5234
Co-Leader: Phyllis Olrich 415-322-0323

Steve Roper calls this peak a spectacular sight from the Lyell Fork of the Merced. The real attraction of this area lies in the remote, sublime beauty of these peaks, lakes and views. Some of the most spectacular scenery in the Park is found in this area with its vast sweeping panoramas. Our trip will take us 22 miles into this rugged and remote landscape. Come join us for this once in a lifetime experience.

It's Brewer, Bubb!

Peak: Mt Brewer (13,570') class 2
Dates: July 12-14 Fri-Sun
Leader: Roger Crawley 415-321-8602
Co-Leader: Bill Kirkpatrick

From the trailhead in Cedar Grove, Kings Canyon (5075') the route follows Bubbs Creek to Junction Meadows, then East Creek to our camp at East Lake (9,445'). The second day we'll go up Ouzel Creek and climb the south ridge to the summit. Permit for 6.

Virginia and Twin

Peaks: Virginia (12,001'), Twin (12,314') class 3
Map: Matterhorn Peak USGS 15'
Dates: July 13-14 Sat-Sun
Leader: Jim Ramaker 408-224-8553 evenings
ramaker@vnet.ibm.com

Steep metamorphic rock and beautiful surroundings keep bringing me back to this enchanting corner of northeast Yosemite. Join me for another go. We'll do the 7-mile hike from Green Creek to Return Lake on Saturday, and maybe do a warm-up climb of Grey Butte (11,200) in the late afternoon. Sunday we'll tackle the east face of Virginia, and time permitting, traverse the ridge over to Twin (12,314). Virginia is fairly steep and loose, so experienced class 3 climbers only on this trip.

Will You Sing, Gale?

Peak: Gale, Sing class 2
Dates: Jul 20-21 Sat-Sun
Map: Merced Peak 15 min Quad
Leader: Warren Storkman 415-493-8959
dStorkman@aol.com

We go over Chiquito Pass in Southern Yosemite Park. Call leader for more information.

Russell's Horns

Peak: Mt Russell (14,086') class 3
Dates: July 28-30 Sun-Tue
Leader: Roger Crawley 415-321-8602
Co-Leader: Bill Kirkpatrick

Starting from the Mt Whitney trailhead we'll go up the North Fork of Lone Pine Creek and camp at Upper Boy Scout Lake. Monday we'll head for the east arete via the Russell-Carillion saddle. The scary part will be crossing from the east horn to the west horn (which is the highest). An option after the Russell climb is to hike in the Mt Langley area for 3-4 more days. Permit for 6.

Red and White

Peaks: Red and White (12,850') class 2-3
Dates: August 17-18 Sat-Sun
Leader: Chris MacIntosh 415-325-7841
chrism@CLBooks.com

A pleasant hike in to camp at scenic McGee Lakes, and an even more scenic and enjoyable climb of this peak will make for a good 2 day weekend. Room for 8. Send \$3 (permit fee) and your climbing/backpacking resume (if not known to leader) to confirm your place: Box 802, Menlo Park, CA 94026-0802.

Royce With Roger

Peak: Royce Peak (13,253') class 2
Dates: Aug 24-25 Sat-Sun
Leader: Roger Crawley 415-321-8602
Co-Leader: (wanted)

We start from the Pine Creek Pass trailhead near Bishop. We climb 4000' to the top - about 11,200' - and camp. On Sunday we climb the southeast ridge to the summit of Royce. I bet that we'll also climb Merriam Peak, but it's an option. Permit for 8.

Marion Bury

Peak: Marion 12,207' class 2
Dates: Aug 31 - Sep 2 Sat-Mon
Contact: Chris Yager 408-243-3026

A real butt-kicker to get this in three days. Involves 5600' gain to the pass, then 10 miles to the lake. If we have time after Marion, we'll do some other peaks in the area.

**"It is not the goal of grand alpinisme to face peril, but it is one of the tests one must undergo to deserve the joy of rising for an instant above the state of crawling grubs."
- Lionel Terray**

Bird Song Day Hike

Peak: Vogelsang (11,400') class 2
Date: Sep 13 Sat
Maps: Tuolomne Meadows 15' quad
Vogelsang Peak 7.5' quad
Leader: Aaron Schuman (no RSVP)

We'll hike on trail to Tuolomne Pass (10000'), and climb to the summit. 18 miles round trip. The Bird Song and Conservation of Energy Day Hikes require no RSVP. Campers at the PCS Tuolomne Meadows Group Camp and other hikers just meet at the Tuolomne Campground group site ready to hike at 7:00 a.m.

Conservation of Energy Day Hike

Peak: Mount Gibbs (12,800') class 2
Date: Sep 14 Sun
Map: Mono Craters 15' quad
Leader: Aaron Schuman (no RSVP)

From Dana Meadows (9600'), we'll hike on trail to Mono Pass (10600'), The Bird Song and Conservation of Energy Day Hikes require no RSVP. Campers at the PCS Tuolomne Meadows Group Camp and other hikers just meet for a carpool to the trailhead from the Tuolomne Campground group site at 7:00 a.m.

Note: Gibbs proposed three laws of thermodynamics

1. Conservation of Energy
2. Increasing Entropy
3. Unattainable Absolute Zero

This trip name may now mean something even to the readers who slept through physics class in pursuit of Law #3.

Hiske and ?

Peaks: Mt Fiske 13,524', Mt Huxley 13,117' class 2-3
Dates: Sep 14-15 Sat-Sun
Contact: Chris Yager 408-243-3026

Approach via Haecle-Wallace Pass or Echo Col, traverse and descend when necessary.

Muriel Peak

Peak: Muriel (12,942'), Goethe (13,240') class 3
Dates: Sept 14-16 Sat-Mon
Leader: Roger Crawley 415-321-8602
Co-Leader: Bill Kirkpatrick

This is the Glacier Divide between Humphrey's Basin and Darwin Canyon. From the North Lake trailhead we go up 2000' over Piute Pass and camp at Muriel Lake (11,336'). Sunday we take the class 2 knapsack pass up through the keyhole (12,560') then up the southeast ridge to the summit of Muriel Peak. Next we drop down to Alpine Col (12,320') and climb the class 3 NE ridge on Mount Goethe. Permit for 8.

ATTENTION ALL PCS LEADERS!

Calling all current PCS Leaders!! For a recent PCS-posted trip into the Palisade Crest/Bishop Pass area, I received about 15 calls on a permit for six. The trip offered was for the novice or hiker new to climbing up peaks. One person commented that if PCS wanted to promote membership, and welcome newcomers, we really needed to offer more trips for the beginning peak bagger. How to solve this?? Please help with this dilemma.

- Debbie Benham

USFS Law Enforcement Division Speaks

Editor's Note: Bryan Laws posted a note on several Internet news groups offering wilderness permits for sale. Here is the official response, as verified by Rich Calliger (who called Special Agent Melle to see if this message was a hoax).

This msg comes from the USFS - Inyo NF, the NPS-Sequoia/Kings Canyon NP's, and from our wilderness permit contractor - Wilderness Reservation Service, re: recent actions of "Waveslide" AKA Bryan Laws of Malibu, soliciting to sell wilderness permits for the Mt. Whitney area.

We've been quiet to date pending the outcome of the criminal investigation by our law enforcement staffs of Mr. Laws' actions. As he voluntarily withdrew and disclaimed his offer and in fact did not obtain or sell the permits indicated, no criminal action will be taken. He has, however, been personally warned of the error of his ways. We take a very dim view of his actions and consider this a serious offense.

As many of you correctly pointed out to him, our permits are government property and are not transferable, and selling or "scalping" them is illegal and also constitutes fraud, as he is basically selling an invalid or unusable product. We do care, and we will take action.

We understand the frustration over our permit system, and are trying our best to resolve concerns and meet everyone's needs. Our contractor, apparently unbeknownst to "Waveslide", is a very small, local, dedicated group of caring people who would NEVER issue permits "under the table", and who have been deeply hurt by this unwarranted smear on their professionalism.

Thank you so much to everyone who brought this matter to our immediate attention, expressed concern, and responded to Mr. Laws so aptly! It's nice to know we have friends out there.

P.S. - most of the few offers to buy he did receive were in fact AKA Smokey the Bear! If anyone has any further questions about this situation, please call [me at] 619-873-2476. Thanks all!

- Special Agent Ann Melle, USFS

Whorled Mountaineers

June 8-10, 1996, Twin Lakes trailhead near Bridgeport. Group included Aaron Schuman (leader), Steve Eckert (co-leader), Gennady Farber, Tim Harris, Daniel Lord, Elmer Martin (an SPSer on his second PCS trip).

If you choose not to sleep at or near the trailhead, make sure you get up in time! Two people showed up about an hour late after misjudging the drive time from a campground somewhere near Sonora Pass, which would normally mean missing the trip. This time, however, we had a short hike in and were lazing around (breakfast at the cafe, repacking, getting acquainted with people we had not met, etc.)

Once underway, we found the trail very flat and very good UNTIL almost at the Hoover Wilderness sign, where it promptly disappears completely. Shortly after that, we got onto some snow mixed with talus slopes, and who needs a trail on snow anyway?

The main difficulty on this part of the trip was the warm temperatures, which had cleared the snow but had not yet launched the mosquitoes of doom.

An uneventful climb, mostly on snow, lead us to the saddle between Twin Peaks and Matterhorn. We had intended to camp before the saddle, but found semi-protected sites between glacier-polished slabs just east of the saddle. Jim Curl and Dot Reilly camped just below us on the south side of the saddle, having packed in over the 3rd class East Couloir on Matterhorn. (We did not see their signatures in the register, but Jim assures me that they signed in using their "Nepali aliases.")

Sunday morning we stomped off down the "causeway" we had read about in Langsdorf's route description. Jim and Dot were ahead of us and headed for the same peak, but turned and kicked steps straight uphill unexpectedly. We were all certain that we had to go MUCH further before entering the right couloir... but later we began to doubt that. None of the route descriptions are written with a June snowpack in mind, so identifiers such as "sandy" or "scree" were useless to us. (Jim later confirmed that they turned uphill too soon, dead-ending in snow and rock that could not be traversed in the time available. The correct chute is just around the corner, after the Twin Peak / Matterhorn saddle is out of view, where the slope lessens.)

When the south summit of the Whorl triplet came into view, we turned up toward the saddle between the south summit and the middle summit (the high point). It became clear somewhere just before the saddle that NONE of the route descriptions was matching where we were. To be honest, most of the descriptions half-way matched no matter which direction we faced!

We followed the ridgeline north for a bump or two, until it was clear that we would have to descend to go on. It was at this point that Elmer and Dan turned back, believing that we would not make it or that it would turn into 4th class. Some hunting around led us to a 4 foot wide sandy ledge that dropped gently as it traversed the west side of the ridge to the north. The ledge we used is not visible from the low point of the saddle, but others are (which may work, but will not lead to our route).

Following this sidewalk to just before a sharp chute&rib combination that looked impassable, we easily walked under all of the class 5 cliffs and found decomposing granite blocks that formed a zigzag 3rd class route upward and eastward. The blocks terminate in a huge slab with granite intrusions (bumps). This was the most exposed portion of the climb, very high 3rd class (reasonable holds, but nothing to catch you if you slip).

The sustained exposure had us wondering if we should go on, so we sent one sacrificial climber up while the others picked more or less secure waiting spots. Exiting the slab on the upper right corner, a rest break turned into an epiphany when a slot through the ridge was spotted. This was not the chockstone or slab mentioned in other route descriptions (or those descriptions exaggerate the size), but there was a 4' chimney to pop up through. The summit was only about 100 vertical feet from here, to the north, half 3rd and half 2nd class!

We spent almost an hour at the top, tentatively deciding that this was a new route (or else we had completely misread the other route descriptions). We hit the ridge just south of the summit, from the west. Langsdorf and Secor mention a west-side traverse that appears to cross below the chute&rib where our sidewalk ended, leading to the ridge north of the summit, whereas the standard route(s) seem to stay on the east side of the ridge.

We were the first to sign the register this year, and we had no idea why we made it by such an improbable route. The summit register was full of one-page-per-person entries from some group referring to the "inoculum" (please contact the author if you know what this is). Most entries thanked God for getting them there, but some thanked the other members of their party. Several mentioned "paying off" something, and several mentioned setting off smoke bombs on the summit. Very odd!

Not wanting to risk getting lost on some unknown route, we retraced our steps and arrived in camp just as the sun dropped behind Matterhorn. The wind was relentless all night, having picked up about the time we started down from the summit.

Monday we stormed up Matterhorn, summiting at 9am, not bothering to hunt very hard for the entirely 2nd class route. Everyone summited this day, but with the wind we spent little time on the summit and were back in camp by 10:30. The hike out was even more uneventful than the hike in, with the possible exception of a few glissades fast enough to blow off my hat. We all fed the coin-op showers at Twin Lakes and had a decadent late lunch in Bridgeport before driving home with smiles on our faces.

– Steve Eckert

Conquest of Matterhorn

May 26, 1996: It took Whympers seven expeditions before he finally bagged the Matterhorn in Switzerland, but my climbing team made it to Matterhorn Peak in the Northern Yosemite region on our first try. We did not see any Italians coming up the hard way, but there were some European climbers (probably German or Swiss) on the technical routes just east of us on the Sawtooth Ridge. Luckily, we made it back alive even though a member of our party fell 300 feet, tumbling head over heels down steep snow and rocks.

My climbing partner (and incidentally my dentist) Mark Burhenne and I left the Bay Area on Friday afternoon before Memorial Day and drove over Sonora Pass. East of the pass before Bridgeport we had a fine view of the Walker River and its meadow. Far beyond the meadow in the west we spotted an impressive snowy mountain. Later on our summit we reckoned it to be Tower Peak. Tower reminded me of certain 19th century paintings I've seen depicting the Western mountains in that fantastic way that is strangely true to life. Another peak added to the list.

From Bridgeport it was a short drive to the Twin Lakes Resort. We paid the required hiker parking and camping fees (\$14) and enjoyed a campfire before retiring in Mark's Toyota Land Cruiser (which gets my vote for best commercial four-wheel vehicle ever built). During the night, the whimpers of Charlemagne, the third member of our expedition, alerted us to the presence of a large black bear. With our flashlights, we got a great view of this animal. This is always enjoyable if your food is safe. However, I don't enjoy the racket made in a crowded campground when idiots leave out their food in bear country. Surprisingly we didn't hear any commotion. But the next morning we noticed that all the campground's garbage cans were on their sides -- none were bear-proof!

The trail head is not well marked and a bit confusing to pick out. Two large switch backs led us to good views of Twin Lakes and cascading sections of Horse Creek. Another switchback took us up above the creek, giving us a fine view of it and the rugged peaks in the distance.

The short trail led us south across a nice meadow and to snow and boulder fields. From the beginning I could imagine that I was hiking a miniature version of a route to the Palisades and this illusion stayed with me for the entire trip. I could identify features that reminded me of Sam Mack Meadow, North Pal, the V-Notch, the U-Notch, Palisade Crest, etc.

We decided to camp on the ridge directly in front of us and above "Sam Mack." Mark had brought his skis and he spotted a narrow tilted chute coming down from the ridge. When he pointed it out to me, I thought he was nuts to even think about it.

To get to our base camp, we avoided the steeper, rockier section to the right and ascended a snow field to the left. On the way up, Charlemagne got into some difficulty near a cliff and could not make it back to us. His rescue prompted some heroics and loud cursing by Mark. Our site gave us a marvelous panoramic view of the north faces of Matterhorn Peak, Twin Peaks, other surrounding mountains and most of Horse Creek Canyon.

Saturday evening was surprisingly mild and free of wind. According to Mark's Casio, it went below freezing only briefly Sunday morning and never below 27 degrees F. We had hoped for a bit more chill to make the snow harder. We set off at 6:30 a.m. Mark put on his skis and went down past "Matterhorn Lake" and up to the left of camp while I put on my crampons and climbed the ridge to the left of camp. The sky was free of clouds and there was almost no wind. We took many photographs and rendezvoused several hundred yards up on the glacier. As we approached the East Couloir, small snow and rock avalanches that we could not always locate by eye fell from the large rock walls to our left. The going was easy at the bottom of the couloir which we measured to be about 36 degrees. It steepened a bit near the middle to over 40 degrees and was probably steepest at the top. We stayed mostly to the left of the couloir to avoid the exposed rocks to the right and minimize the chance of being avalanched (which was probably minimal but not zero since the soft fresh snow was the deepest in this section). The couloir is probably no more than 400 feet from top to bottom.

The view from the top of the couloir was stunning and invited comparison to one from the Palisades. Dana, Lyell, Conness, Tower, Whorl and many other mountains were in view. Toulomne Meadows and many other wonderful features were highlighted by the still-heavy snow pack and provided great photo ops. I took off my shirt and raised up my arms holding out my ice ax in triumph. At the couloir we found another shirtless man who had erected a seemingly bomb-proof North Face tent. His companions were two German Shepherds, one with three legs. This guy thought that everything about him was "killer." He was intoxicated with his surroundings and could not stop raving about the mountains and his dogs. Charlemagne was the third German Shepherd at the top of the ridge that day. Just after us a young couple arrived from the west via the class 2 route.

Mark had to tie Charlemagne down (or he would risk his life following us). We scrambled up the remaining couple of hundred feet to the summit. The young man who arrived moments after us flashed the peak ahead of us but he warned his girlfriend off. We climbed the Class 3 rock very deliberately and were rewarded with a full panorama even better than that at the top of the couloir. Taking more photos with Mark's fine equipment we lingered, enjoying the perfect day. Mark pointed out the highest spot on the summit and I kissed it. We tried to find the register but gave up without really trying because of the snow. Mark had been on the peak several times and said that this time was a bit anticlimactic, but still enjoyable. He has had several adventures

on this peak, having skied it in the Spring and day-hiked it in dry conditions in the Fall (he doesn't recommend the latter). The peak has special significance for Mark because of his adventures and also because his father wrote a classic Sierra ski touring book which prominently features Matterhorn Peak.

On the way back down to the top of the couloir, we met one other person. He had day-hiked from Twin Lakes with a small pack and had gone up the couloir without crampons or ice ax. His manner was controlled but he also praised the Sierras and compared them favorably to the other great ranges he had visited.

The way down the couloir generated the only grunting we suffered on the whole trip. The snow had softened considerably by early afternoon and it was inconsistent. I wasted time plunge stepping, side stepping, putting my crampons on and off and down climbing with the points of my crampons. Mark didn't fool around and just down climbed it with his points. As he had done throughout the trip, Charlemagne ran circles around us the whole time. We were the only ones seen coming down the couloir that day; the couple went back via the class 2 route; the guy with dogs planned to stay the night and climb the peak that evening; and the day-hiker apparently chose to exit via the class 2 route.

Near the base of the couloir we picked up our packs which had been cached. Mark elegantly skied out of sight in minutes and I managed to glissade the better part of 1,000 feet down to camp soon after. Given his grace on skis, I was surprised to hear Mark say that the snow conditions were terrible and dangerous. On the way down, I stopped to collect one of my water bottles, which I had carelessly dropped at the cache site.

By the time we arrived at our base camp, clouds had obscured the north faces of Matterhorn, giving it a mysterious aura. Mark packed quickly since he wanted to get down before his wife got nervous and called the rangers. He put on his skis and bolted directly off the ridge directly to "Sam Mack." I followed him with a glissade but rocky cliffs barred my way and I was forced to slow down to carefully down climb another crummy section as bad and a third as long as the couloir.

Unknown to me at the time, the skiing conditions had improved enough for Mark to risk skiing that incredibly narrow tilted chute he had spotted on the way up. On the way down he lost Charlemagne. Then to his horror Mark saw the dog slide uncontrollably on the snow and fall over a cliff. Charlemagne tumbled and spun for about three hundred feet and Mark contemplated how best to put him out of his misery. To his amazement, the dog stood up, shook himself off and appeared to be completely uninjured except for a slight bleeding at the lip. Mark broke his rule of not feeding human food to his animal and offered a burrito to Charlemagne, who took advantage of the situation and inhaled it.

The rest of the journey was uneventful and as smooth as a warm brandy. We crossed over Sonora pass listening to "Wish You Were Here" and made it to a fleabag motel in the Central Valley. We woke up early the next morning and were back in the Bay Area by 7 a.m. or so on Memorial Day Morning.

- Tony Cruz

Unofficial (Private) Trips

Private trips may be submitted directly to the Scree Editor, but are not insured, sponsored, or supervised by the Sierra Club. They are listed here because they may be of interest to PCS members, not because they are endorsed by the PCS.

U-Notch To North Palisade

Peak: North Palisade (14,242') class 5
Dates: July 4-7 Thur-Sun
Contact: Peter Maxwell 408-737 9770

Secor describes this as "THE classic peak of the High Sierra. It is striking from a distance, and it has routes that will challenge climbers of all abilities and preferences." We will take the U-notch route from the east, involving a 700' 40-degree snow/ice climb. This will be a difficult climb, and suitable for experienced climbers only. The number of people on the trip will be contingent on class 5 leaders being available.

Middle Dissappointment

Peaks: Dissappointment 13,917' / Middle Pal 14,040'
Dates: July 13-14 Sat-Sun
Map: Big Pine
Contact: Chris Yager 408-243-3026

Ice axe, crampons, rope, harness required. Ascend NE gully of Dissappointment (class 4) or standard Middle Palisade route (class 3). Permit is for South Fork trailhead.

Julius Caesar

Peak: Mt. Julius Caesar (13,196') class 3
Maps: Mt. Hilgard, Mt. Tom topos
Dates: July 20-21 Sat-Sun
Contact: Debbie Benham H 415-964-0558
Co-Contact: Phyllis Olrich H 415-322-0323
phylliso@forsythe.stanford.edu

Et tu, Bruts? Join us for a lively, mid-summer climb over Italy Pass. We'll ascend via the west ridge which Roper calls a "Classic Class 3". Permit for 8.

High Mountain Ice

Peaks: Mt. Mendel 13,691' / Mt. Darwin 13,830' ice/rock
Dates: July 20-22 or Aug 24-26 Sat-Mon
Contact: Chris Yager 408-243-3026

Climb Mt Mendel via one of the ice chutes and class 5 rock, or Mt Darwin via north glacier and class 4 rock. Ice tools, crampons, rope, experience required.

Great Western & Kings-Kern Divides

Peaks: Ericsson, Stanford, Table, Midway, etc.
Maps: Mt Brewer and Sphinx Lakes quads
Dates: July 20-27 Sat-Sat
Contact: Andrew Hassell 415-493-3342
hassella@math.Stanford.EDU

Unofficial trip to the the heart of King's Canyon and Sequoia National Parks, July 20-27. Eight day backpacking and peak climbing (class 3 max) trip starting from Bubb's Creek on the western side. We will climb some of the following: Mt Ericsson (13608 ft), Mt Stanford (13963 ft), Table Mtn (13630 ft), Midway Mtn (13666 ft), Milestone Mtn (13641 ft) and Triple Divide Peak (12634 ft).

Western Divide Peaks

Peaks: Table, Thunder, Jordan, etc. 13000+, class 3
Dates: Aug 3-11 or Aug 10-18 Sat-Sun (week)
Contact: Chris Yager 408-243-3026

Entry via Shepherd Pass, hook around the south side of Table Mtn. Ice axe, crampons, rope required.

Close Shaves on Shasta

This editor thinks the next two trip reports make a good case for sticking together as a group. In both cases, the weather closed in on a group that was strung out, with potentially deadly consequences if less experienced people were depending on an experienced leader. I was leading a Shasta trip earlier this year when someone took a long fall down an icy slope and disappeared into swirling wind-blown snow. If we had not been close together, we would not have known where to look (there was no major injury, but assistance was needed). Please think about these three incidents the next time you're about to leave someone behind.

– Editor

20th Annual Mt Shasta Climb/Ski

Over the Memorial Weekend, eleven climbers met for a climb of Northern California's premier volcano via the Standard Route up Avalanche Gulch. As we started up the mountain on Saturday, we passed many unsuccessful climbers departing who reported extremely high winds on the ridges. After making camp at Lake Helen, however, we were blessed by mild weather. One climber continued from camp to the summit that day! Two developed symptoms of Mountain Sickness, so they opted to stay in camp, but the rest went for the summit early on Sunday morning. Again, mild weather held up and ALL climbers who started up to the summit were successful. Lisa Dersh of Palo Alto was the sole woman standing on the summit, and she was there two minutes ahead of the leader! Not bad for a complete beginner to climbing.

Returning toward camp through Avalanche Gulch, a nasty accident was observed. One ignorant kid was attempting to glissade down the very icy slope with his crampons still on. Further, his ice axe was not in the ready position. He caught a point, which flipped him up into a tumble and headfirst slide. His axe was ten feet ahead of him down the hill. Two innocent walkers were surprised by the kid and were knocked off their feet. One man slid 600 feet before stopping. One woman tumbled for more than 1000 feet before coming to rest. Blood was splattered over the icy snow as a lady ranger picked up the pieces right away and administered first aid. I was the first one to come upon the kid lying in the snow. I first asked if he was OK. When he responded, I asked if he had been glissading or did he just fall? He responded that he had been glissading. So I briefly lectured that you NEVER intentionally glissade down a busy slope with crampons on. Then I walked away without offering any further assistance.

After everybody was accounted for at the high camp, we left for the trailhead. The corn snow had very good consistency all the way down, which was a pleasure to this skier. I later heard from Carlos Feldman (who made it), that when the rest of them came off the mountain an hour or two after I skied off, they got hit with a dose of snow and wind storm. But I was already sitting down at Bunny Flat.

– Bob Gross

Mt Shasta (14,162'), May 1996

Over the Memorial Day weekend, 14 people from the Peak Climbing Section attempted Mt Shasta from the north side, by the Hotlum-Bolam Ridge. All summited.

To begin, we met at Fifth Season in Shasta City on Saturday, the 25th at 8.30 am. It was a beautiful day, but very windy. The snow could be seen blowing from Shasta and the lower Shastina summits. George divided the group in 2 parts and Debbie Benham was to lead the other group. After some adroit driving over unpaved roads in the Shasta wilderness, we reached a trailhead that was adjacent to the official 'north gate' trailhead. At 12 pm, we started off. We did not take snowshoes. The trail was gentle at first in the woods, but soon got steep. We arrived to our campsites at about 9500ft at 4 pm. The entire mountain was visible clearly, and George and Debbie showed us the route that we would be taking the next day.

We started off at 7.30 am on Sunday the 26th. Axes were out, and the snow was hard enough to walk on. The day promised to be great. The climb was steep, and un-ending, but we still made good time. Finally we navigated a gully and came to a platform that was at 12800 ft, where we had lunch. Meanwhile clouds started to gather below us, and soon a cloud came over the sun. It got a little cold, we could see some people already coming down, there were some people skiing down too. Rising steeply above us was a section of snow and ice. George was at the notch above the wall and he had set up a rope. Meanwhile the cloud had drifted, and it was bright and warm again. We could all make it to the notch just by kicking steps, though it was good to know that the rope was there. At the notch one can see the bizarre sculptures that the wind has done on the ice that lies on the rocks. It was like looking at massive walls of white coral. Quite impressive.

It was relatively flat now, but hard and rippled with ice. We descended a gully and then traversed up. There we smell the sulfur, and we could see sulfur fumes coming out of the fumaroles. Then we were upon the switchbacks leading to the final summit block. There we met the people who came from the other routes. Soon we reached the summit.

George headed down, warning all of us not to dally at the summit. There were many people on the summit, and we had to stand in line to get to the summit block to get our pictures taken. It had taken us 7 hrs (2.30 pm) to get to the summit. It was all so perfect. Too perfect! We reached the place where we had to downclimb the snow/ice field. Suddenly, without warning, clouds engulfed us, it got very cold and it started to hail. The hail was pelting me so violently that I could feel it underneath my 3 layers...and we were in a whiteout. There was thunder and lightning. Thor had just checked in!

I could only see Debbie and Ted in front and vaguely make out Dennis. Dongshil was right behind me, as we cautiously downclimbed the wall. We still had a way to go before reaching the place where we had lunch, but we could see nothing and we had no idea which way to go. A mistake would have grave consequences at this point. One could feel the power of the mountain. Debbie herded us all together.

From behind us, people started appearing. With relief we accounted for all the people in our party we knew were behind us. Meanwhile the weather was not letting up. Finally we heard Bill and George yelling to us from the mist below, and we could

dimly make out their silhouettes. They were yelling "get down quick and DON'T stop", we came down, plunge stepping as quickly as we could. There was George, with Bill and the rest of our party. We started down fast, the visibility was better, but it was still snowing. We took off our crampons and glissaded down to the 10000 ft level and then walked back to camp.

It was snowing fast, and it was wet. Shasta was blanked out behind us. Our tents were drenched. George wanted to hike out back to the cars (it was 5.30 pm then) right away and took a vote. Me, Ted, George, his daughter Adrienne and her friends Liz and Dongshil decided to go down. The rest decided to stay.

We made it back to the cars at about 8 pm. What a day! We had climbed from 9500 to 14100+ and back, and then from 9500 to 7000 in 13 hrs, the last 5 in forbidding weather. Debbie says that it snowed a foot and half at least that night. She and her crew had to shovel all that snow the next morning (Monday). Their group left at 8 am and were back to the cars at about 10 am without incident.

We are glad that we had the able leadership of Debbie and George when we were in the whiteout, and that we all stayed together. We could summit and get down in time, because we had an early start and kept a steady pace. George had said that if we don't get the summit by 3, we head down, thus we had reserved time to get back. When at the whiteout, Ted had taken a compass bearing, and it was in the same direction that we eventually took after hearing George and Bill, so even if we had not seen or heard them, we would have been OK following the compass, the value of which cannot be underscored.

As some might have read in the newspapers (SF Chronicle and the Record Searchlight, of Redding), a 49 yr old college professor from Oklahoma City was found frozen to his death at 9500 ft on the day after Memorial Day (tue). He was climbing with his friend on the same day as we were, Sunday. He and his friend had been separated at a point, and he had probably strayed away in the whiteout that the storm had caused. Some of us had spoken to him on the way up.

I too had spoken with him, earlier in the day. I had passed him and his partner and then had noticed that he was wearing a jacket of the same make and color as mine and that had caused me to stop and exchange pleasantries. His death was due to a compounding of many small mistakes (he was suffering from diabetes, from MS and wore leg braces, he was already looking tired when I spoke to him, he had left his pack at 12000 ft, as per his partner, and then, the worst of all, he had split from his partner...as well..he was quite brave to try despite his physical disabilities, but he ran into bad weather.

This accident brings out the unforgiving nature of the rapidly changing weather on a mountain, and is a harsh reminder of the risks that are inherent to the sport of mountain climbing. I am reminded of a statement made by an older mountain-rescue person in New Hampshire after bringing down yet another dead person from Mt Washington, "the reason that I am still climbing mountains is because I know when not to climb, the mountains will be there forever, I won't."

List of the people who summited: George Van Gorden (leader), Debbie Benham, Bill Kirkpatrick, Mara, Yanuka, Adrienne, Liz Binkley, Dongshil, Dennis Hilpakka, Eddie Sudol, Richard and Helena Verrow, Ted Raczeck and Arun Mahajan.

– Arun Mahajan

Scree is the monthly journal of the Peak Climbing Section of the Sierra Club, Loma Prieta Chapter.

Elected Officials

Chair:

Charles Schafer / charles.schafer@octel.com
408-354-1545 home, 408-324-6003 work
115 Spring Street, Los Gatos CA 95032-6229

Vice Chair and Trip Scheduler:

Roger Crawley
415-321-8602 home
761 Nash Avenue, Menlo Park CA 94025-2719

Treasurer and Membership Roster (address changes):

Jim Ramaker / ramaker@vnet.ibm.com
408-224-8553 home, 408-463-4873 work,
188 Sunwood Meadows Place, San Jose CA 95119-1350

Appointed Positions

Scree Editor, Email Broadcast Operator:

Steve Eckert / eckert@netcom.com
415-508-0500 home/work, 415-508-0501 fax
1814 Oak Knoll Drive, Belmont, CA 94002-1753

PCS World Wide Web Publisher:

Aaron Schuman / schuman@sgi.com
415-933-1901, <http://reality.sgi.com/csp/pcs/index.html>
223 Horizon Avenue, Mountain View CA 94043-4718

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Rock Climbing Classifications

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.

Class 4: Requires rope belays.

Class 5: Technical rock climbing.

In Upcoming Issues:

(if you sent something that is not here, please send it again)

Trip Reports: Ojos del Salado, Aconcagua

Trip Reports: Shasta, Shasta, Palmer

World's 60 Highest Mountains

Searching for Small Worlds to Conquer

Bear Damage in the Eastern Sierra

Deadline for submissions to the next Scree is Thursday 7/25/96. Meetings are the second Tuesday of each month.

Peak Climbing Section, 789 Daffodil Way, San Jose CA 95117



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

First Class Mail - Dated Material