



Next Meeting

Date: Tuesday, November 12

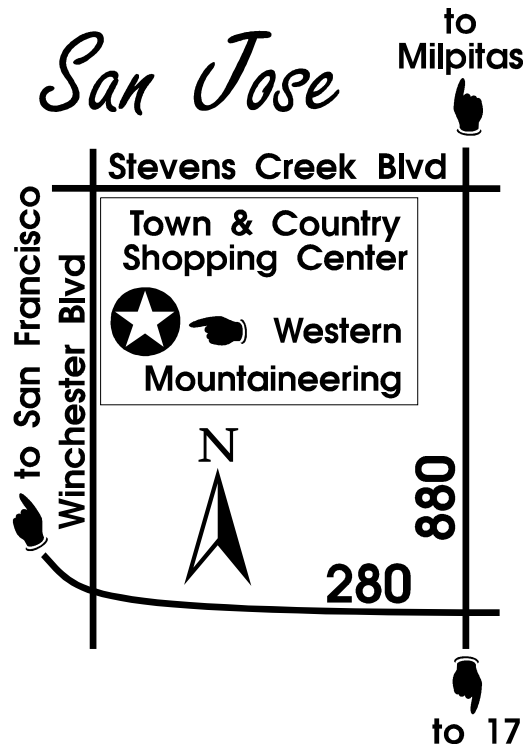
Time: 8:00 pm

Program: The Awe of Aconcagua

Charles Schafer presents slides from a 1996 expedition to the high point of the Western Hemisphere, 22,800' Aconcagua, in Argentina.

Location:

Western Mountaineering
Town & Country Village, San Jose



All paths lead nowhere, so it is important to choose a path that has heart.
- Carlos Castaneda

1997 Officer Nominations

The PCS Nominating Committee has twisted arms, pleaded, and threatened, all in search of the perfect slate of candidates. While we did our best, this year YOU have to do your part, too! Come to the November meeting in order to vote for one of these nominees (or contact the Chair if you can't attend):

- ◆ Chair:
Warren Storkman
- ◆ Vice Chair / Scheduler:
Bob Bynum, Palmer Dyal, Jim Ramaker
- ◆ Treasurer:
Jeff Fisher, George Van Gorden

In addition, nominations will be taken from the floor, and the ballots will have a spot to write in names not listed above. The winner will be announced at the meeting, and the new officers will take office immediately.

- PCS NomCom (Steve Eckert, Kelly Maas, Aaron Schuman)

Advance Trip Schedule

An enthusiastic bunch of PCS leaders gathered at Roger's house to sketch out a winter season of hiking, climbing and ski mountaineering. Eighteen trips were proposed, but the names of leaders were withheld by agreement of those at the meeting. *Contact the Editor and the Scheduler if you have a change to this list, or if you wish to have your name listed.* Leaders, get your announcements, with trip details and contact information, to the PCS trip Scheduler for the full trip announcement:

Nov 9	Mission Peak-----	Debbie Benham
Nov 9-11	Mt Shasta - Whitney Glacier	
Dec 1	Forest of Nisene Marks-----	Cecil Magliocco
Dec 7	Junipero Serra -----	George Van Gorden
Dec 7-8	Tinker Knob & Castle Peak -----	Aaron Schuman
Dec 14	San Benito Mtn	
Dec 27-29	Mt Lamarck -----	George Van Gorden
Jan 12	Mt Sizer - Henry Coe Park	
Jan 18-19	Pyramid Peak	
Jan 18-20	The Needles (Southern Sierra)	
Jan 25	Mt Tamalpais	
Jan 25-26	Round Top	
Feb 8	Mt Diablo -----	Aaron Schuman
Feb 15-17	Mt Eddy (near Mt Shasta)	
Feb 15-17	Mt Lassen	
Mar 8	Waddell Creek	
Mar 15-17	Excelsior & Dunderberg -----	(SPS) Steve Eckert
Mar 22-23	Ventana Double Cone	
Apr 5-6	Lamont Peak & Pilot Knob -----	Aaron Schuman
Apr 18-20	Gilbert & Johnson-----	(SPS) Steve Eckert

More Furry Friend Encounters

Below is a group of wildlife stories solicited and assembled by Butch Suits from PCS mailing list members.

Curiosity and the Cat

I'll never forget the cold January 1989 evening when I sat staring into the face of a mountain lion only 15 feet away. The moon was full, and I was alone in the Ventana Wilderness. Probably the sardines I had eaten for supper had attracted the big cat.

Bigger than I was.

I was sitting in the dark after supper hoping to see some deer or raccoons when I heard rustling in the chaparral. Suddenly a dark shape emerged. It came closer and closer. At 15 feet distance, I decided I had better turn on my headlamp. It stared at the light for about 15 long seconds, then leaped into the brush. I heard it twice more circling my tent in the night. In the morning there were fresh tracks all around.

– Debbie Bulger

Of Mice and Campers

The setting was Anza-Borrego, at Thanksgiving, a few years ago. After a hard day of riding in a 4WD on the dirt roads, Peter and I returned to the car-camp, and I carelessly dropped my backpack in the tent. The pack contained a few leftover packs of fruity dinosaurs. Unknowingly, I had infringed on the "no food in the tent law".

We zipped up the tent as we went to bed... In the middle of the night, Peter exclaimed: "Something ran through my hair!" At first I did not believe him. But soon, I heard a scratchy noise, and I came to the realization that we were sharing the tent with a mouse.

I remembered my mother catching escaped pet rats in her pre-school: specifically, I knew rats ran along the walls. So we piled up our stuff in the middle of the tent, clearing the sides, and proceeded to scare the mouse from the end of the tent. Sure enough, it followed the tent walls to freedom.

The damage: half-eaten dinos and mouse teethmarks on my parka sleeve. The lesson: I never leave any food in a tent.

– Anouchka Gaillard

Of Rats and Climbers

Kai Wiedman and I were traversing Matthes Crest in Yosemite, and we bivied on the only viable ledge. We were bothered all night by a little rodent that was intent on scurrying around and over our sleeping bags, generally preventing us from getting much sleep. It also loved the (salty?) leather of Kai's running shoes and proceeded to chew a hole in one of them. I got a great flash photo of it in the middle of the night.

I later identified it as a bushy tailed wood rat, otherwise known as a pack rat. What it lives on I don't know. Matthes Crest sees few ascents, so the shoe leather must have been a special treat.

– Kelly Maas

Rodents Have Summit Fever Too.

Back east, I went for a hike up Mt Monadnock. It was a nice windy day. While we were hiding from the wind on the summit, the local mammal was scurrying around. It took a few glimpses before I believed what I was seeing: the local camp robber was a weasel.

– Hal Murray

Who's Herding Who?

Well, it was in spring, just as the last snows were melting. I went for a hike by myself along an old road that was bordered on one side by a geyser basin and on the other by a power line through cleared pine forest. As I started out, three bull elk were lying in the middle of the road, chewing their cud or whatever bull elk do out of season. "Pas de probleme" thought I. There was a boggy little meadow just to my left, so I went that way and squished along the far side of it. The elk stood up and looked at me. I looked at them and kept going. They paced along the road, going in the same direction as me.

At the end of the meadow I could keep walking along the power line route, I thought, until I could pass the elk and get back on the road. Well, they kept pace with me. Then one left the road and stood ahead of me under the power line, blocking the way. I couldn't go any further to the left without climbing a lava flow in dense forest. Elk ahead of me, elk to the right of me, cliff to the left of me. Somehow I was getting the message that these elk didn't want me to keep going. And one bull elk is a large, well-armed animal. Let alone three of them. So I said "OK guys, I'm leaving" and turned back.

At the trailhead I met another group of hikers, and we all went down the road together. Of course now the elk just moved away from us, leaving my story of being herded off by them sounding pretty silly.

– Chris MacIntosh

Mission Peak Menagerie

The steep west face of Mission Peak overlooks the densely populated South Bay. Despite the urban sprawl nearby, if you leave Mission Peak's trails and hike up among its crumbling sandstone cliffs, you are likely to see wildlife. You're almost sure to see a red-tailed hawk, who protests your presence with a distinctive call: a scream that falls in pitch.

Once, from the foot of one of the outcrops, I observed an aerobatics team more skilled than the Blue Angels. Cloud of swifts banked in the sun with breathtaking speed and precision. Random squadrons would break off from the huge mass, there cries tittering in unison; moments later, they would spiral back into the larger vortex of black and white birds.

Once while hiking up a steep grass slope between the cliffs, I saw a small animal climbing ahead of me. What was it? A coyote? A cat? I sped up in order to identify it. I was astonished to find my companion was a small bobcat, a quarter of a mile from the nearest cover, seemingly climbing to the summit! It moved slowly, as if tired. I got within about 15 feet but it avoided me by moving behind a big fin of rock. Mischievously, I hurried up to where the fin ended, and greeted him at the top, as he continued to labor up the hill. He had enough energy to bare his teeth in displeasure, as if to say: "What? You again! Cut me some slack." So I did, continuing up to the summit.

Earlier this year, descending a cross-country route back to the main trail, I heard a voice unlike any I had heard in the 15 years I've been hiking on Mission Peak: a ridiculous, high-pitched ululation coming from the forested creekbed nearby. The cry resounded every half-minute or so. Though its origin was hidden, there was no mistaking its identity: It was a wild turkey, calling for a mate. "You pathetic creature," I thought with amusement. "You think you're going to find a mate down there? You're in for a long, lonely night." Then I compared his plight to my own single lifestyle of recent months, and I realized that deep down, men and turkeys have a lot in common.

– Butch Suits

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.

Mission Peak Conditioning Hike

Peak: Mission Peak (2,517') class 1
Date: Nov 9 Sat
Leader: Debbie Benham 415-964-0558
Co-Leader: Anouchka Gaillard 408-737-9770

Meet at the Stanford Ave trailhead [near 880 and Mission Blvd] at 9am and join us for a brisk, morning jaunt up Mission Peak. Please be prompt! We should be back by noon.

Shuffling up Chalone

Peak: North Chalone Peak class 2
Trailhead: Bear Gulch Trail, Pinnacles Nat Monument
Date: Nov 17 Sun
Leader: Roger Crawley 415-321-8602

This is spectacular volcanic area and November is a good time to see it. Pinnacles is a 2 hour drive south of San Jose. The trail takes us through "the caves" and requires flashlights. We then climb 2,150' over a distance of about 5 miles to our summit. Time permitting, we'll return via the Balconies Trail (another 5 miles). Afterwards we'll stop at the micro brewery in Hollister for refreshments.

On Your Mark...

Trip: Forest of Nisene Marks class 1
Date: Dec 1 Sun
Leader: Cecil Magliocco 408-358-1168
cecilm@ix.netcom.com

Forest of Nisene Marks conditioning hike. This will probably be about a 3C (up to 15 miles and 3000' gain). If you haven't seen this park in the fall, you've missed out. Meet at Los Gatos Park & ride on Hwy. 9 and Santa Cruz Ave. at 8:00 a.m.

Junipero Serra

Peak: Junipero Serra (5,900') class 2
Date: Dec 7 Sat
Leader: George Van Gorden before 9: 408-779-2320

Great winter mountain, a forest of sugar pines singing seductively in the incessant winds, the eternal light of the Sant Lucias, something of what Faterh Serra must have dimly beheld through the veil of his faith, and if there's been a recent rain the possibility of a bit of snow near the summit. The walk is about 12 miles round trip with 4000' of gain. We need to be to the trailhead by 9:30 am.

**Behold, I am against thee,
O destroying mountain,
saith the LORD,
which destroyest all the earth:
and I will stretch out mine hand upon thee, and
roll thee down from the rocks,
and will make thee a burnt mountain.
-- Jeremiah 51:25, KJV**

Middle Palisade

September 7, 1996: Rich Leiker and I climbed Middle Palisade, the twelfth 14er in California for each of us. The climb was so

enjoyable that it was hard to understand why we had not done it sooner.

We departed from Glacier Lodge at 7:30 Saturday morning, carrying light overnight packs. I also had a rope, helmet, and crampons because I'd read prior reports about 4th class climbing if you get off route, lots of loose rock, and a difficult crossing of the Middle Palisade Glacier. The equipment was severe overkill.

We took the standard approach up the South Fork of Big Pine creek, reaching the top of the switchbacks at 9, Brainerd Lake at 10, and Finger Lake (by a cross-country use trail) at 10:30. From Finger, we intended to climb to the tarn on the next bench to establish base camp. I led us too high up ledges on the right side of Finger lake, eventually climbing above the tarn and wasting time descending 3rd class cliffs to the water. We learned on the descent that the left side of finger lake was a much better choice, at least in late season when it is not blocked by snow.

By noon we had eaten lunch and enjoyed the great views of the Thumb which overlooks the drainage. We left overnight gear at the tarn and climbed to the Middle Palisade glacier and the moraine running down from the peak. It is important to watch the mountain carefully on the approach to pick out the proper chute. Despite lots of route finding complaints in old trip reports, we had no problem identifying the chute illustrated in the California 14er's book, which turned out to be an excellent path. The key to get in the chute is to traverse about 100 feet left along the top of the Middle Pal glacier from the moraine until a ledge becomes visible leading right. An ice axe was useful, but crampons were unnecessary. Even in late season, the bergschrund was not an obstacle.

The east face of Middle Palisade is very imposing from a distance, but proves to be an easy and enjoyable climb. It was straightforward class 3, bordering on class 2 in many places. The rock is high quality Palisade granite with excellent holds. A bit of loose rock is present on the ledges, but no more than one would expect on any other Sierra climb. Rockfall was not a problem with two people, but could be an issue with a larger team.

Peter Maxwell's PCS trip report was another useful reference for route finding. Climb the obvious chute toward the summit (it's so broad at first that it would better be called a face than a chute). Eventually it narrows and runs out; climb over to the right and continue up the next chute. The chute forks; take the left branch to a notch (from the glacier, the notch is clearly visible to the left of a roundish high point on the ridge with two white bands running diagonally a few hundred feet below the top). Climb left for 50 feet to the true summit of Middle Palisade. We made a slightly interesting exposed move onto the summit from the east, but descended an easier route on the west. We were admiring the views of Norman Clyde and Sill by 3:00.

After a leisurely meal on the top with the obligatory summit photos and sightseeing, we returned to camp. The round trip from the tarn was 5 1/2 hours without pushing very hard, but without having to search for the route or do any ropework. Since we were done so early, we decided to pack out and have a real dinner. We got back to the cars at 8:30, using headlamps for the last 20 minutes.

Overall, we thought Middle Palisade was one of the most fun climbs in the Sierra. The face looks very imposing. The climbing is exciting, yet the holds are good and the exposure is not too severe. The approach is short and the views are magnificent.

— David Harris

Whitney via JMT

On June 30 at 4:30 p.m. my 14-yr. daughter, Christina and I started our hike from Horseshoe Meadows (about 35 trail miles south of Mt. Whitney). We traveled slowly the first few days in order to allow Christina to acclimatize. After that we hiked 10 to 16 miles a day.

New Army pass was the first pass and the most difficult section we encountered on the trail, because the top had the remnant of a steep cornice that we had to plow through. On July 3 we camped at Crabtree Meadows and on July 5 we bagged Mt. Whitney, which was a pleasant 13 hr., 15 mile walk from the meadow with 3,700 feet of elevation gain. The summit of Mt. Whitney is the southern terminus of the John Muir Trail. Forester Pass, the highest spot on the John Muir Trail at nearly 13,200 feet was surprisingly easy and relatively clear of snow.

The section that seemed the most remote and least populated was between Pinchot and Mather Pass. The view north from Mather Pass was the most spectacular on the trip: we could see Middle Pal, North Pal, Mt. Sill and the upper Palisade Lake. The snowiest pass by far was Muir Pass, which had at least two miles of snow on either side.

We collected our only cache at the Muir Trail Ranch, which is 100 trail miles north of Whitney (approximately the half-way point on the JMT, which is 211 miles long) and a few hundred yards off the trail between the junction with the trail to Piute Pass and Bear Ridge. This was convenient but expensive (they charge \$45 per bucket, 25 lb. max). There are no other services for hikers at the Ranch, except they'll take your mail, which they haul down to civilization by mule once a week or so. If I had it to over again, I would hike another day north to a cache at Vermilion Valley Ranch. At VVR they charge \$6 per cache.

VVR was one of the highlights of our trip. We picked up a ferry at Edison Lake, a reservoir 2 miles beyond the junction of the JMT and Mono Creek (near the base of Bear Ridge). For \$14/person, we got a round-trip ticket to the resort, a night in a tent cabin and a free beer (microbrew, no less!). Even better, there was a telephone and hot food. For these reasons, several hikers as far south as Whitney raved about VVR and recommended that we stop there. At the resort, I bumped into a lady that I had only seen once before in my life -- at the hut on Orizaba last January!

Christina hurt herself slightly at a stream crossing so we decided to end our hike at Reds Meadow on July 18. From there we boarded the tram to Mammoth Lakes (\$4 each) and took a Greyhound to LA (\$45 each). We plan to go back on two separate weekends to hike from Reds to Toulomne and from Toulomne to the northern terminus of the JMT -- Yosemite Valley).

The hike was wonderful. On most days there were surprisingly few people on the trail, sometimes only 1 or 2. The exceptions were the day we hiked Whitney and the day we hiked from McClure Meadow to the Muir Trail Ranch (on both days, we encountered about 70 people: climbers on Whitney and California Conservation Core workers on our way to the Ranch).

During much of the way we were able to use bear boxes, saving us the hassle of hanging food. We were warned by the rangers to be especially wary of bears in LeConte Canyon (where there were no bear boxes). We were told that someone left food in a tent for 2 days last summer and a bear ripped into it. At the ranger station in LeConte Canyon, we saw a note saying that on July 10 a bear attacked the back pack of a hiker (no one was hurt). I have a

friend who said that his tent was ripped by a bear a few years ago. We avoided camping in LeConte Canyon.

I used a set of thirteen 8 1/2 x 11 inch topo maps that were especially prepared for the JMT (I found it at Western Mountaineering for about \$16); I highly recommend that anyone doing the JMT purchase this set of maps since they're all you need and are cheaper and more convenient than the regular topos. I also recommend the popular "guide to the John Muir Trail" by Thomas Winnett. I bought a JMT video that I discovered while surfing the net. We used a pair of rubber "river" shoes that helped us keep our boots dry and our feet from getting hurt on the rocks on the dozens of stream crossings that we negotiated.

– Tony Cruz

Watch Out For Warren

When Warren Storkman tells you "we did this in 12 hours when I was your age", it's a sure bet you're in for a long hike... but Jeff Fisher and I agreed to accompany him on a day hike from Happy Isle (Yosemite Valley) to Florence Peak anyway (17 Aug 96). We left at first light, with long strides and high hopes for a short day.

Not!

It's all trail past Merced Lake, but the last 3000' gain (out of over 9000' total for the trip) is second-class cross country travel. Warren turned back somewhere near where we left the trail, but still did a 30 mile day. Did I mention that he expected it to be 32-34 miles? Try 38.

Jeff and I summited around 5pm (11 hours up) gritting our teeth and swearing for the last hour or so. We were most worried about getting back to the trail by dark, and less worried about having to do a forced bivy with no gear, and (for me at least) even less worried about Jeff being late for a noon appointment back in the Bay Area the next day.

We collapsed somewhere near the outlet of Merced Lake, around midnight, and tried to sleep for a few hours. We froze, and moved on. We collapsed the second time at Twin Bridges just above Little Yosemite, and froze again. We made civilization (if you call Warren's cute little Kia Sportage civilization) around 8am, 26 hours after we started.

Yep, watch out for Warren!

– Steve Eckert

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.

Wilderness Hot Springs Extravaganza

Trip:	Hot Springs	class 0
Dates:	Nov 9-11	Sat-Mon
Contact:	Dave Bybee	310-827-3315
		105275.155@CompuServe.Com
Co-Contact:	Ursula Christie	805 527-5338

14th Annual Tour of the Mother Load of Hot Springs in the Bishop /Bridgeport area, east of John Muir's "Range of Light". In 3 days of car camping and tranquil saunters, we'll bag (soak) the 10 requisite hot

springs to qualify you to receive the "coveted" Sierra Club Hot Spring Patch [from the Orange County Sierra Singles Section]. Saturday night will include the traditional custom sit-down gourmet dinner; this year at the historic "Old House" at Benton Hot Springs. Sunday night you'll enjoy your own pool-side Bar BQ main dish at another spring. Group size strictly limited by the size of most of the wilderness pools. Dispatch 2 SASE, check for \$46 (payable "Sierra Club"), D & N phone #'s, drive/ride info to Dave Bybee, 5322 Centinela Ave, LA 90066-6908.

Editor's note: Watch for the complete list of hot springs on the PCS web site. Coming soon to a modem near you.

Low-Cal Thanksgiving

Trip: Sequoia National Park easy snowshoe
Dates: Nov 27 - Dec 1 Wed-Sun
Contact: Rich Calliger pager 510.659.7546
calliger@infolane.com

A friend (winter-novice-level), and I are planning a trip within the Sequoia National Park and Kings Canyon and snowshoeing depending on of course the snow fall. Storm cancels, light/moderate snow fall does not as the road to Lodgepole is kept open quite well as I noted the last 4-5 years even in hard snows. (If there is no snow we will still do this trip but plan to do it again in Jan or Feb when there is some.) Itinerary: from Silliman or Ranger Lake NW to Ball Dome, then W to Sugarloaf then perhaps S to Glacier Ridge area- as probably many of you know a very beautiful region as you get close to Triple Divide Peak. Bag 1-2 peaks to the N or S as we decide enroute. There is room for 4 more. Total: 30-52 miles+, 8,500-11,500' gain over 4 days depending on routes/group decisions.

Cool Christmas

Peak: Mt. Lamark (13,400') snow / class 2
Dates: Dec 27-30 Fri-Mon
Trailhead: Aspendale
Contact: George Van Gorden before 9: 408-779-2320

Do something a little different for the new year; give yourself a cool Christmas present. Fairly strenuous with over 5000' of gain and very dependent upon good weather. Winter experience strongly recommended and knowledge of ice axe and crampon use. We will use snow shoes for most of the ascent and I hope to summit on the second day. Depending on snow conditions a third climbing day may be necessary.

Virginia And Twin A La Mode

In mid-July, Cecil Magliocco, Bob Suzuki, and Don Martin joined me (Jim Ramaker) on a trip to these two 12,000-foot peaks in northeast Yosemite. It was my first trip leading experience, and I was unprepared for the flurry of last-minute cancellations by Silicon Valley workaholics, including one at 10:30 on Thursday evening!

But no matter -- the four of us met at the Green Lakes trailhead on a beautiful Saturday morning and headed up the trail to Green Lake. Moving fast, we reached Virginia Pass in 3 1/2 hours and got our first glimpse of Virginia and Twin. The east face of Virginia looks almost vertical from here, and the view once inspired Peter Maxwell to exclaim "My Gahd, it's fifth class!!" Despite the appearance, it's safe class 3, but I was concerned to see steep snowfields high on the face, covering up the class-3 rock, because I hadn't told people to bring crampons.

We continued cross-country for a mile to the beautiful lake at the foot of Virginia Peak, set up our tents, and napped to ward off the effects of our first day at altitude (10,300'). Cecil was hot to do a peak, as we had many hours of daylight left, but clouds were

gathering, and by 3 they were very black in the south, with occasional rumbles of thunder.

So we settled into an extended rest period and bull session, and I studied the face looming above, trying to figure out a way up that avoided the steep snowfields. At 4:30, we had tea time, which gradually merged into an early supper. Raindrops pattered a few times, but nothing serious.

Next morning we left camp at 6:45 and wandered up the scree to the steep black triangle in the center of the east face. The normal route goes up the right side of the triangle, but a huge steep snowfield blocked the route, so we went left of the triangle and climbed rocks alongside some smaller snowfields in that area.

This face has plenty of loose rock lying around, but the underlying rock of the mountain is solid, with nice incut holds -- a pleasure to climb. Soon we were up on the buttress in the center of the face above the black triangle, and at 8:30 we climbed onto the summit. The weather was so clear and mild we rested on the summit for a full hour, indulging in the usual snacks and photos.

Then we dropped down the class-2 northwest ridge to a saddle and started the traverse over to Twin Peaks via its south ridge. This ridge is class 2 most of the way, with wonderful views west to Whorl Mountain and Matterhorn Peak. The last part of the ridge is blocked by large pinnacles, and normally you can traverse on a class-3 ledge system on the right that goes on for several hundred feet and takes you past the pinnacles. But on this day I couldn't find the ledges, and both Cecil and I commented that the climb seemed harder than when we did it last October.

I wondered if we were off route, then realized we were too high on the side of the ridge, and the ledges were below us, buried under steep snowfields clinging to the rock. We continued on, edging carefully across steep snowfields without crampons, or else climbing on the rock above the snow. Several times we took to the moat between rock and snow in order to make progress. A couple hundred feet short of the summit, we almost hit a dead end in a 10-foot deep section of the moat, with smooth rock on one side and vertical snow and ice on the other. After some false starts, I was able to chimney my way out with my back against the snow and feet on the rock. The others followed, and soon we were climbing the last class-3 rock slope to the summit. The west half of Twin Peaks has three large rounded humps on top, and the third one is the summit.

We had another nice rest there and admired the view, which included not only the familiar Yosemite peaks from Tower Peak down through Conness and Dana to the Cathedral range, but also Half Dome, Clouds Rest, and Banner and Ritter. Finally, it was time to descend.

The challenging climbing was over, which was okay with us, and we dropped into the 1500-foot scree gully that takes you down to the beautiful meadows of upper Return Canyon. On the way down the gully, we admired the multicolored rock -- gray, red, white, brown -- and the fantastic cliffs and rock towers on the right-hand gully wall. It's hard to believe that rock so shattered and broken can form cliffs that are vertical and even overhanging.

We got back to camp at 1:30, packed up, and hiked out as the sky clouded up and dropped a few raindrops on us, just like the day before. We got back to the cars at 5:30 and home by midnight -- another PCS weekend packed with fun climbing and alpine beauty.

– Jim Ramaker

William_some and Tynd_notall

To celebrate the solstice (21/22/23 June), 6 people of the PCS, Nancy Fitzsimmons, Bill Kirkpatrick, Dave Wright, Jim Ramaker, Phyllis Olrich (leader), and me (Arun Mahajan) attempted Williamson and Tyndall.

The group met at the Pines Cafe in the swank downtown of the bustling super-polis of Independence. The weather report boded well for the entire weekend. We began at 9 am at the Shepherd's Pass trailhead. The four stream crossings provided no entertainment since everybody crossed in fine style. The switchbacks were relentless till we reached the top of a ridge from where we get the first breathtaking view of Williamson. To quote Tennyson completely out of context,

"Close to the sun in lonely lands,
Ringed with the azure world he stands,
The wrinkled sea beneath him crawls,
As he watches from his mountain walls".

These would be our words to describe Williamson too, if we could conjure that kind of poetic imagery! The trail dropped *down* now up to a point where the descending waters from a waterfall cross it, and we had lunch there. Then the trail wined up past the Mahogany flats (a flat area with some mahogany nearby...!). Soon after that, we were at Anvil Camp. There we ran into some people from another PCS trip that was led by Tony Cruz. Another bit of uphill on patchy snow and trail got us to the bottom of the final chute leading to the pass. There was ample snow and the chute looked like it did not get a lot of sun, but still it wasn't hard enough for crampons and we managed to get up to the top of the pass using axes. It was six pm then. It had taken 9 hrs to get there. One person from our party had elected to stay at Anvil. The five of us camped near the frozen lake along with three people from the other PCS party. It got into the 20's that night but it wasn't very windy.

The next day we had a semi-alpine, start at 6.30 am. Bill and Dave chose to do Tyndall, while Phyllis, Jim, and I were joined by Martina Faller and Keith Barnes from the other PCS party for our attempt on Williamson. To say that finding the route was a little confusing would be an understatement. But by constantly checking the topos, and being expertly guided by Phyllis and Jim, we made good progress and stayed on the ridge between two lakes before dropping down. The 'black stains' mentioned in the guide books were visible, though we initially thought that they were caused by the water that was coming down from above.

It seemed that we were constantly going up and down, but eventually we made it to the black stains at 8:30. It had taken us two hrs to get there. We headed up the stains. The route to the top is mostly visible. We switchbacked up the loose boulder and talus fields. We hit 2 patches of snow, on the first one we just kicked steps, but on the second one we needed crampons. That brought us to the base of the 60 ft class-3 section. We found the chockstone described in Secor and climbed past it up the chimney by stemming with our backs, and that brought us to the summit plateau. The whoops of joy all around indicated that there was a consensus that it was one helluva view. Further scrambling on huge boulders (to avoid the sloping snow fields) brought us to the actual summit.

We had lunch, and took the usual goofy summit photos. It was warm, with no winds, clear skies, and great views. In the words of a famous cynic, "lets face it, too much beauty is boring". So

after being bored to death by excessive beauty for an hour and half, we headed down, gingerly making our way through the chute and the now-soft snow patches. Phyllis and Jim were considering Tyndall in the same day, but later gave up on the idea. We were back to the Shepherd's Pass camp at five -- it had been a 10 1/2 hr day. Phyllis and Jim wanted to do Tyndall the next day and stayed at Shepherd's Pass while Martina, Keith and I packed up and headed back to Anvil. It took us 1 hr and 10 mins to get back. Bill and Dave were back at Anvil after attempting Tyndall, and just as it got dark, Nancy returned from summiting on Tyndall with Dennis Hiipakka. All of them reported that Tyndall was not a kinder, gentler mountain than Williamson and that they too had a hard climb.

After a restful night at Anvil, we hiked out at 7:40 AM. on Sunday morning and were back at the cars just before noon (four hrs only!). Again, I am afraid to say, the stream crossings provided no entertainment as nobody choose to fall in.

Phyllis says that she and Jim also headed down the same morning from Shepherd's Pass without doing Tyndall and they got back to the cars at 1:30 PM. The prospect of doing Tyndall, hiking out, and then doing the long drive home was too daunting, and they figured they would have reached the Bay area at 4 AM.

- Arun Mahajan

Not all those who wander are lost.

- J R R Tolkien

Notes and Requests

McKinley Partners Wanted

I am planning to return to Denali Spring of '97 to attempt either the West Buttress (Normal) route or the West Rib. This trip is for those experienced in: high altitude climbing (19,000 ft and above), crevasse rescue, glacier travel, expedition experience, long periods spent without TV, very cold weather, and a desire to eat lots of freeze dried food.

Candidates must be very fit, able to travel in poor weather up to 10 miles / day, carry and drag 120 lbs + loads, and preferably know how to ski as I would like to use rondene' gear again. Estimated cost is \$600 air; \$200 peak fee; \$250 air taxi; \$500 - \$1000 equipment, food, etc. Sorry, no want-to-bes, these are requirements. Call: 408-970-0760.

- Tim Hult <tim.hult@lmco.com>

Half Pound of What?

Had a surprising revelation this past week. My backpack had a minor stitching failure and when I started looking at the situation, I realized my pack was too filthy to work on. So I washed it (by hand). Always been curious about how much weight my equipment gains over the years from dirt and sweat. I know for a fact that my backpacking tent has gained weight over the years. I weighed my pack prior to washing and then after. I'm astonished! There was an 8 once difference. That's 1/2 pound of yuck.

Mark Adrian <mark.adrian@ebbs.cts.com>

Aconcagua Climbing Assistance

Climb Aconcagua - 6959 M - (22,834) Argentina (offered from December 1st to March 15th.) The following services are provided for \$325.00 U.S:

- ◆ Hotel Argentino in Mendoza one night.
- ◆ Three liters of fuel for white gas stove - per person.
- ◆ Transportation on private bus to hotel in Los Penitentes.
- ◆ Hotel Ayelen in Los Penitentes with dinner and breakfast, one night, and non-climbing baggage storage for duration of the climb.
- ◆ Deliver climber and gear to trailhead. Mule service up to Plaza de Mulas and return. Baggage storage in Plaza de Mulas for excess gear and food, during summit attempt - a good safety factor.
- ◆ Return climber and gear to Hotel Ayelen with dinner and breakfast, one night. Help customers to get bus or colectivo at their own expense to Santiago or Mendoza.

For more information: FAX 415-493-8975 Phone 415-493-8959

– Warren Storkman <DStorkman@aol.com>

MacGPS ?

From *rec.outdoors.marketplace*: Free software for transferring data between a Garmin GPS receiver and a Macintosh computer is available at the URL <http://www.csn.net/~lwjames>

– Dr. Lawrence W. James <lwjames@csn.net>

Base Jumper Dies On El Cap

From *rec.climbing*: I just read in the SD Union Trib a short blurb that an Arizona man named Jeff Christman (age 42) died while illegally base jumping off El Cap yesterday. The Yosemite spokesman said that they thought his parachute was loaded backwards and when it deployed it spun him around and he hit the wall. He also mentioned that he narrowly missed two climbers bivying on a ledge. Yikes! That would put one hell of a scare into you in the morning!

– Andrew Gale <agale@scripps.edu>

Roped Accident on Shasta

You may or may not have read the Mercury article about the accident on Mount Shasta. I thought it was quite interesting. The Forest Service ranger mentioned, Dan Towner, is the only ranger who recognizes me on sight. I have had to push to my limit to stay ahead of him a couple of years on Shasta. [San Jose Mercury News Wednesday, October 2, 1996: Trio survive Shasta plunge, climbers battered but alive after harrowing 500-foot fall, etc.]

– Bob Gross <75013.1420@CompuServe.COM>

Editor's note: While I think the text included with this email would be useful to the readers, the Scree cannot run copyrighted material without the owner's permission. Readers may want to check the SJ Mercury on the date noted above for the full text of the article. Contributors should check with their online news sources before sending material to anyone, whether or not it is for publication, because most providers will take action if provoked.

The Passing Of Friends

In conversation with the author last June, I obtained permission to use the lines below. In the light of the recent media treatment of the Everest tragedies, and recent Sierra fatalities, this passage articulates some of the ever-present reality of our years in the mountains.

– John Baltierra <jbaltier@leland.stanford.edu>

"...it is not just the maturing of years; it is the passing of friends, most of whom were killed in the mountains. When one is young and has been climbing only a few years, one's experience is limited and death is abstract. After having been around a while, things are different. Mountains are still magnificent and mountaineering is worthwhile, but there is an overtone of what is at risk that one cannot completely forget."

– Nicholas Clinch, in Preface of his book, 'A Walk in the Sky.' *The Mountaineers*, Seattle, Wash. 1982.

Adventures with Electricity Series

I am seeking new stories from list members on "Adventures with Electricity" (or other interesting encounters with awesome weather phenomena in the mountains). The idea is for you to send me a concise paragraph or two of your experiences. I'll assemble them and prepare them for Scree--this is an easy way to share the labor of creating entertaining articles. Anyone care to resurrect the old PCS story about smoking underwear (induced by static electricity, as I recall)?

– Butch Suits <bsuits@lmsc.lockheed.com>

From Sea to Shining Summit

I've been looking up at Marcus Baker from the highway on and off for over 20 years. When in high school, I even bought the topo maps and tried to plan an expedition. We figured it would take about two weeks to traverse the broken ice fields, and then we were not sure what the climbing conditions would be like on the main mountain.

In July 1996, I was back in Anchorage (Alaska) for a high school reunion and decided to take another look at Marcus Baker (the high point of the Chugach Range). This time I had the money to hire a guide, however, which changed the trip dramatically! I did not have to pack food/tent/rope/etc, and the guide knew a pilot who could fly us over the ice fields onto an 8000' snowfield at the base of the summit ridge. Two of us each paid the guide about \$600 and the pilot about \$300, so this was not a low-budget trip. On the other hand, the guide's knowledge of snow conditions and routes was invaluable. There are no guide books for the Chugach mountains!

Dave Staeheli runs a one-man guide company out of Wasilla called Alpine Guides Alaska: call 907-377-3051 or use a web browser to view <http://www.alaska.net/~paoletti/AGA/AlpineGuides.html> Staeheli had tried this peak before, but had never quite summited due to bad weather and/or bad clients (his version of the story). Most of his clients must lie to him about their physical abilities, because he figured that climbing from 8000' to just over 13000' would require a five day trip! He scoffed at me when I said that even climbing in snowshoes, my estimate was more like three days plus weather layovers, if any... so we compromised on a four day trip.

The first day we had to wait in line at the air taxi hanger, because a large group of Japanese tourists had shown up unexpectedly, and it is obvious that half-hour sightseeing tours bring in more money than lugging climbing gear up 8000' and landing on a snowfield! We finally set down at our target site long after noon, roped up, loaded the sleds with half our gear, and watched the clouds build while we had lunch. The hike to high camp took 5 hours (not 2 days as Dave had estimated) and we started setting the tent up around 8pm in wind and light snow.

In July, in southcentral Alaska, the sun sets around 10pm and rises again around 2am - and it's so close to the horizon that you don't need a flashlight even at midnight. There is, therefore, no reason at all to get up early in the morning or go to bed early at night!

The snow at high camp was fluffy enough to cut blocks with a large snow shovel, which we stacked up as a wind break for the tent. All night the snow piled up on the tent until the wind knocked it off in slabs. We were not optimistic about summiting, but by the end of breakfast (9am) the sky was clear and the wind had died down!

Our route along the ridge proved fairly easy except for two sections that required front-pointing on ice, and several hidden cracks loosely drifted over with soft snow. We used belays in several places, but I did not feel that we really needed them. (Guides must be overly cautious, or they never get very old - Staeheli's partner was afraid of walking on cornices, but died while walking UNDER one.) At the base of the summit mass, however, we found ourselves knee-deep in snow that balled up on our crampons. Under this was a layer of ice in places, all at angles that measured over 40 degrees in places.

As we climbed, salt-water fjords came into view. I have never been at altitude, on ice, looking down at continuous slopes into an ocean! The weather was holding, but as we neared the summit we lost sight of Denali (formerly McKinley) behind distant clouds. From the top, however, we picked up views of Blackburn, Sanford, and Mt Saint Elias - which means that from the top of Marcus Baker you can see every really high peak in the state... and it's a BIG state, too.

Great visibility kept us on the summit for around half an hour, but the wind and the mid-afternoon hour finally convinced us to leave. The walk back to camp was mostly uneventful, except when we found an old rappel anchor (two poorly-installed pickets) near one of the pitches we had front-pointed with crampons. Oh, yes, there was that one last crack we had to cross within sight of the tent...

That crack (not really a bergschrund) had a four-foot-thick snow bridge which had held our weight in the morning. While testing in on the way down, I felt it give. I yelled something unintelligible (certainly not "falling", as I should have) and began scrambling to stay on top of the moving blocks. This was the softest styrofoam snow I have ever been on (or in), and everything was moving in slow motion. Each block that I tried to step on cracked in half and went further down the crack. I wound up half-supported by the rope and half resting on snow, and was able to climb out without a rescue. My partner was in a self arrest holding the rope, while the guide was flitting about nervously watching the whole affair. He still insists he's never had a client fall into a crevasse, but now I understand that his record is attainable only by carefully defining everything as NOT a crevasse.

The next day we started hiking down the glacier somewhere around noon (why rush?), wondering if the pilot would be in the

area with a sightseeing group. Otherwise we had 24 hours to sit and wait with nothing to do. The weather was questionable, and we heard no engines, so the evening was spent napping and pondering imponderables (such as the nature of religion and what to have for dinner).

The next morning the guide and I took off for a nearby bump to get a view of the Radcliffe and Harvard glaciers. The climbing was more exciting than the day before due to knife-edge ridges with horizontal cracks and apparent cornices above eroding rock slopes. The summit bump has 1100' cliffs on 3 sides, and qualifies as a first ascent under Alaska's "it's a peak if it's 1000' down on every side" rule. We're looking into registering a name with the Mountaineering Club of Alaska, who keeps the official log of first ascents. If possible, it will be called Rose-Hulman Peak (after my alma mater) in keeping with the other college-related names of the area.

After a couple of hours in camp, and 30 minutes in the plane, we were back at sea level again. This trip convinced me that there is no need to leave our country for truly high-altitude mountaineering. This far north the 13k peaks have snow conditions that might not be found below 22k in other places, but you can eat the food and drink the water when you get back to town!

- Steve Eckert

Glockenspiel

Mt. Carillon, Mt. Russell, 28-29 September 1996: At 8am on Saturday, 28 September, climbers David and Elaine Baldwin, Jack Wickel, Steve Blackmon, and John Blanch gathered at the Whitney Portal trailhead for an assault on Mt. Russell, a mountain described by R.J. Secor as "the finest peak in the Mt. Whitney region". Setting off at a moderately brisk pace, we shortly reached the North Fork of Lone Pine Creek (the second stream crossing in a normal year) and the start of the North Fork use trail.

After a brief stop at the packet distribution box for the "North Fork Pack-Out-Your-Poop Project" we proceeded up the well defined trail to the start of the Ebersbacher ledges which we identified with the aid of a photograph from "California's Fourteeners". Exercising due caution, we traversed the ledges without incident and continued up the trail to Lower Boy Scout Lake and the talus field beyond. Using a combination of paths through the boulders, we proceeded up the south side of the drainage until it was possible to pass through the low bushes to the slabs adjacent to the creek which we followed to Upper Boy Scout Lake.

After establishing our camp near the northeast shore of the lake, there was some discussion of an attempt on Thor Peak, but the thin air, the exertion of the morning, and the warmth of the sun invited most of us to simply relax and acclimate for the following day. I later took a short hike up the north slope of Thor to get a better look at our route on Russell. After climbing a scree slope to the southeast of the outlet of lake 11,560, I reached an area of high angle slabs which I surmounted via a short class 3 chimney to the east. At the top of the chimney, I was tempted to break my promise to return in an hour and ascend the class 2-3 terrain to the summit of Thor, but contented myself with a grand view of the east edifice of the Whitney group before descending to camp. Due to the proximity of Pinnacle Ridge, the sun set at our campsite before 5pm but was replaced around 10pm by a brilliant, near-full moon which bathed the terrain in a ghostly white light.

The moon was still bright when we rose at 5:30am Sunday for the main event. After the usual preparation, we were all underway by 6:45, trudging up the seemingly endless scree slope northeast of the outlet of Upper Boy Scout Lake. After two hours, we were glad to reach the Russell-Carillon saddle and get our first look at the East Ridge route on Russell. Steve roused us from a short snack break with a cry of "Let's climb this mountain!", and we were off up the talus. We stayed to the north side of the ridge for most of the route, venturing occasionally onto the crest, but never to the south side, following ledges and cracks with occasional stretches of scree and small patches of new snow. Most of the route was ducked, as if one could get off of a route with a margin of error seldom exceeding a few feet. About an hour of climbing put us on the registered west summit, which of course looked a few inches lower than the east.

After enjoying the fantastic views under the cloudless sky and snapping a few photos, we retraced our steps to the Russell-Carillon saddle where Steve and John bolted for home while the rest of the party paused for a snack before launching a 12-minute ascent of Carillon. At the summit we had our best view of the north face of Russell and the fantastically exposed east ridge route best described by Jack as "gnarly". Unfortunately we had to leave the Carillon register unsigned for lack of a pencil. Leaving

the summit, we returned to the saddle for our packs and then enjoyed the scree slide to camp considerably more than the trudge of the morning. After packing up, we returned to Whitney Portal, then filled up on barbecue at Smoke Signals in Lone Pine before the long drive back to LA.

My thanks go to everyone in the group for a successful weekend enhanced by great weather, and especially to Jack for filling a vacancy at the last minute and for leading the way up Russell's east ridge.

– David Baldwin

Vogelsangfroid

The first snow of autumn crusted Tuolumne Meadows as we set out for Vogelsang Peak. Though PCS groups often do this 18 mile, 2900 foot trek as a weekend backpack, we tried it as a day hike. A superbly maintained trail took us from our campground up to our lunch spot at Vogelsang Lake. Some straightforward class 2 hiking took us from the lake to the summit in about an hour. The peak commands a huge area, and the views were stunning. The Cathedral Range, the Merced Basin, and the Clark Range laid before us, and in the distant north we could see as far as the Sawtooth Range.

David Wright, Dee Booth, Robin Ross, John Cordes, David Lou, Scott Kreider, Marilyn Hurley, Bob Bynum, Nancy Fitzsimmons, Brian Xyzzy, and I made the ascent. Trip organizer Cecil Magliocco missed the summit because she went back home with a sore throat. A few others who camped with us skipped the hike.

Back in camp Saturday evening we celebrated David Lou's fiftieth birthday. I'd say Vogelsang Peak was a pretty impressive accomplishment for such an old dude.

Sunday, September 15, a smaller group set out for Mount Gibbs, but by the time we reached Mono Pass, we decided that the strong winds would make us miserable up on that barren ridge, so we declared the weekend a success and went home.

– Aaron Schuman

Although Cecil Magliocco didn't go on the hike on Saturday, she and several others went on a little geology field trip. Cecil, her two children Joseph and Johanna, their friend Tammy, and Gretchen Luepke took a trip to Mono Lake. Gretchen, a geologist with the U. S. Geological Survey since 1967, gave a professional perspective.

They visited Pantum Crater, the South Tufa Towers, had a picnic lunch in a county park near the North Tufa Towers, and visited the new Mono Lake interpretive center. The interpretive center features a short movie on the history and geology of Mono Lake and has many displays on wildlife and geology in the area. It is located on Highway 395 a few miles north of Lee Vining and is well worth a visit.

This car camp was a success for the non peak climbers because they had some interesting nature related activities that they could do.

– Bob Bynum

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

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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)

Foreign Reports: Ojos del Salado, Aconcagua, Mont Blanc

Distant Reports: Elbert, Ranier, Colorado Solos

Trip Reports: Onion Valley, Deerhorn

Special Features: Hot Springs list, Shocking Kids story

Deadline for submissions to the next Scree is Sunday 11/24/96. 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