



Next Meeting

Date: Tuesday, September 10

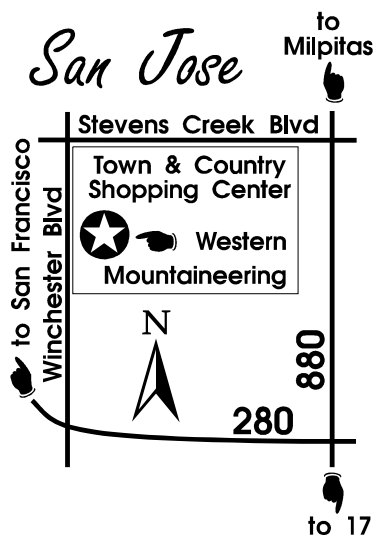
Time: 8:00 pm

Program: Alaska Minus Denali

Perhaps the frequency of Denali West Buttress entered my thoughts, or perhaps the somewhat misleading popularity of Northern Exposure created new interest: a somewhat inaccurate interest by the public. The state of Alaska covers one-third of the area of the lower 48 states combined yet most Denali climbers see less than 1% of the state. There's more to the state than the highest-peak on the Continent.

Other PCSers are invited to bring a maximum of 12 Alaskan slides subject to the same proviso that the main presenters have: no slides of Denali, not even remotely in the skyline of a slide, to keep the evening's theme.

– Eugene Miya



Location:

Western Mountaineering
Town & Country Village, San Jose

At Alta Peak, Mister Marmot reads me the signs

The crag, the cascade, the gale, the lightning bolt. Sierra essences, to each its totem. Mister Marmot gives his voice to the granite. He sings of permanence and hints of change. "Those who know ...", he mocks. It is dawn at the Wolverton trailhead. I left my home while the stars shivered, and drove all night through the valley of grass.

He shrieks as I approach, and scurries away. I carry a headlamp, three water bottles, a fifty year old map of the Marble Fork of the Kaweah. I wear all the clothing I brought with me, but I will peel it soon. They don't tell, I finish his sentence, and those who tell don't know. I break off a piece of my granola bar and toss it to him. "Better!", he chirps. Nearby, a squirrel fights a bluejay over an acorn.

Panther Meadow. A rattlesnake pretends to ignore me. I am already down to my boots, my shorts, and my cap. I refill a water bottle; it could be my last chance. The trail switchbacks up to Panther Gap. He is here too, on a rock, chanting, "The smoke, the mud, the gravel bar! Which of these three is false?" I bounce a pine cone off his rock. The riddle making rodent hops down, laughs at himself for running, and laughs at me for thinking I could change his unbending mind.

The trail follows the ridge. It gives unending views of the North Fork. The pictures in Mister Marmot's book. I feel his eyes on me, but I don't see or hear him. Mehrten Meadow. A few muddy seeps. I could drink if I had to, but I still have water in my bottles. There are coyote footprints. I come upon a doe and a fawn; they bound away. The mountain top stands before me, and the sun stands above me.

Brief nap at Tharp Rock. He invades my dream.

Below the summit, in a shady hole, there is a small patch of last year's snow. I pull off my rucksack and lay down in it. I roll over twice. Ice crystals scratch my cheek. I get up and walk over to the summit. He is there. He waddles up to me and whispers. He tells what I came to Alta Peak to find out. He tells the history of the Range of Light, its future, Man's fate and Marmot's too. He tells about the structure of the world, the forces that bind it together and guide its course. He tells where the next clue is hidden. He steals my gorp.

I return to Wolverton. I bring back Mister Marmot's favorite song, the funniest joke he's ever heard, and the address of his post office box.

– Aaron Schuman

Superlight Stoves

Email readers should note that this has been updated since it was broadcast! A while ago I posted a request for info on super lightweight (tiny) alcohol stoves on the email broadcast list. I ordered one, after tracking down some dealers through a web search for the name "Trangia". This appears to be the only real contender, made in Sweden. Several people requested a report on what I found, so here it is.

Thanks to all on the email list who responded to my request for info. Almost everyone uses white gas stoves (MSR, Coleman, Svea, etc.), and I am the proud owner of an Optimus 111B (a snow-melting beast if ever there was one, and over 20 years with no breakdowns or maintenance beyond greasing the pump). There is a fringe element, however, who prefers alcohol stoves for their totally silent operation and ultra light weight. No pumps, no priming, no possibility of explosion.

"Outside!" magazine seems to have done some stove and fuel comparisons, but reports I found on the web were not in English. URLs like <http://www.abalon.se/beach/utsidan/outside/1995/date.html> abound. Anyone want to guess what the word "utsidan" means? Murray tells me it's Swedish for "outside".

The only brand name I heard for alcohol stoves was "Trangia", which is distributed in the USA by MSR (of all companies). It appears that any US company selling Trangia gets them from MSR, but several of them sell the stoves for less than MSR does. MSR will sell direct, but they warn you that their shipping delays and prices are higher than normal retail channels. MSR's web site was the only one with a picture of the Trangia: <http://www.msrcorp.com/msr/> (Warning - this web site will not display any text in some browsers!) For technical info call 800-877-9677.

Prices for the Trangia stove seem to be based partly on the cookware that is bundled with it, and partly on the retailer's profit margin. I've seen as high as \$84, and as low as \$15, but MSR assures me that Trangia only makes one model of burner. (Campmor claimed otherwise, but then again their catalog is dead wrong on both weight and boil time.) The differences are in the windscreens, pot supports, and the pots themselves. The "Duossal" pots are aluminum on the outside and steel on the inside (supposedly safer because your food does not touch aluminum, but heat more evenly and are lighter than 100% steel pots).

Efficiency is improved by a windscreen, which appears to be incorporated into the more expensive models, but it will take at least 10 minutes to boil a quart. Don't pay any attention to Campmor's claim of 7 minutes... it's just not true, and Campmor will admit that if you hound them long enough to get past the front desk operators. It takes about 1 ounce of alcohol to boil 1 quart of water, so this stove is *not* good for extended trips (where the fuel weight will overcome the advantage of the light stove). Another article I found mentioned that letting the pot get black from soot could improve boil times by up to 30%, which is something to think about regardless of what stove you use. (A shiny pot reflects heat back down on the stove.)

MSR said that what Piragis described as the "23" was really the "Westwind", so you should make the seller be *very* specific about what is included in your order! MSR says the basic burner weighs 6.6 ounces, and the triangular support weighs 2.8 ounces. (numbers are suspect - see below) The support could probably be replaced with a stack of rocks or even some aluminum wire bent into the shape of

MSR's stove supports in a pinch. By comparison, an MSR XGK (with pump and 0.5 liter fuel bottle) weighs 15 ounces or more.

Late breaking news: Piragis incorrectly described what I was ordering, and/or MSR has the weights all wrong! What actually arrived (labeled "Trangia 23" in 6 languages) was a circular *steel* pot support and a brass burner assembly. The stripped-down burner weighs 3 oz, the flame adjustment piece weighs 1 oz, and the pot stand weighs 6 oz. There is no windscreen. There is no triangular support like they described. Perhaps the "Westwind", at almost twice the price, has the nifty support & wind screen combo. It also may have a bigger burner, in spite of what MSR and everyone else says, or MSR simply can't weigh things. I'm quite pleased with the very light burner, and plan to use rocks and foil instead of the 6 ounce pot support and a windscreen!

The best price (which MSR indicated might be at or below wholesale!) was \$15 at Piragis Northwoods Company (featuring the Boundary Waters Catalog). You can order off the Web <http://www.piragis.com/catalog/index.html> or phone 800-223-6565 between 7am and 9pm central time. Piragis calls this the "Trangia 23", as opposed to the "Trangia 28" that Campmor sells for \$25. The "28" includes a 0.8 liter pot, while the "23" is just the burner and a *circular* pot support that packs poorly. My shipment included mention of replacement parts, and the Trangia part number for the burner alone is 602505.

Wilderness Furnishings sells something they call the "Westwind" for \$25, but they have a "Trangia Stove Kit" for \$14.50 that might be the same as the "Trangia 23" from Piragis. It's hard to tell, because they don't have any phone operators! You can phone them and leave a message, or order via fax, or download and print a JPEG order form to mail in, but they are a virtual storefront rumored to have a mailing address in Texas. If you want to give them a try, call 800-343-3545 or browse the web at <http://www.wildfur.com>.

Campmor can be reached by phone at 800-226-7667 (sales) or 800-525-4784 (returns/product info) or on the web at <http://www.campmor.com>. I order from them fairly often, and am surprised at the inaccuracy of their catalog and sales staff on this item. Their return policy is similar to REI (very generous) and this report should not cause anyone to avoid them in the future.

Anyone wanting to know how the stove actually works should contact me in about a month (sometime in late September) after I've been on a few trips with it. It is not just "a tin cup poured full of alcohol", as some have asked. It has flame jets that burn fuel evaporated in a pre-combustion area, but the flame speed is much lower than a Peak1 or even a Whisperlite, making it more susceptible to wind blowing the heat away from your pot.

I've heard that this stove will burn 151 rum (haven't tried it yet), so you can take that as your spare fuel. Near the end of the trip, you have a choice of what to heat: your belly or your water!

Alcohol is widely available, and may be easier to get away with in your baggage than white gas or gaz canisters... Denatured alcohol is preferred, but it can be poured into a rubbing alcohol bottle and will probably escape most prodding customs agents. (I'm not suggesting this is a good idea, but at 2x2.5 inches the burner itself is small enough to stick into a shaving kit.)

– Steve Eckert

Back Of Beyond In Yosemite

Well hidden at the upper end of a trail-less valley in Yosemite, 22 miles from the nearest trailhead, lies Mt. Ansel Adams (11,770). That was our objective as we gathered at the Tuolumne Meadows trailhead on a sparkling Thursday morning at the start of the Fourth of July weekend. The group consisted of John Flinn, Patty Haight, Ron Lebard, Ted Raczek, Jeff West, Kai Wiedman (leader), Phyllis Olrich (co-leader), and me (Jim Ramaker).

We left at 8:30 and hiked up through the beautiful meadows and open forests of the Rafferty Creek trail. As we passed Vogelsang Lake around 1 p.m., one member of the party came down with severe stomach cramps and agreed to drop out of the trip -- a wise choice as things only got tougher from that point on. From Vogelsang Pass we descended 2500 feet on the Lewis Creek trail, feeling the heat a bit as we hiked through forests and across granite slabs. Halfway down the valley, we passed the spectacular 800-foot Lewis Creek cascade on the south wall of the valley.

By 5 p.m., we'd covered 12 miles and were tired and ready to camp. Plus we faced a 1000-foot 3-mile climb to the next camp with water. But we had to get closer to the peak if we were going to tackle it the next afternoon as planned -- we were still about 10 miles away. So there was nothing else for it but to shoulder our packs and head up. "I will follow him..." sung Phyllis, endlessly repeating the lyrics from a 1960's pop song. "Think of something we can argue about," said someone else. We fell into a disjointed argument about social security, Medicare, radio talk shows, and whether the talk show host Dr. Dean Edell is really a fascist. Before we knew it, two hours had passed, and we were setting up camp by a creek in the woods on the Cony Crags trail. Phyllis amused us after supper by sharing her plan to open a sexual counseling service for women, and by breaking out sparklers for a frenzied Fourth of July fireworks display. Another typical PCS trip.

Friday morning we broke camp and headed up the trail toward the elusive and still unseen peak. About 10:30 we found a beautiful camp by a waterfall, just where the trail starts to descend into the Lyell Fork of the Merced River. We hung our food, set up tents, packed daypacks, and headed up valley, finally free of our backpacks after about 19 miles of hiking. We could now see the peak at the head of the valley, bell-shaped, steep on all sides, and still far away.

We hiked across vast granite slabs and past a marshy, flooded area with clouds of hungry mosquitoes. A huge bald eagle took off from the marsh as we approached. At this point John Flinn decided to return to camp, and Jeff West attempted to cross the river, which a ranger had said would be one of the hardest challenges of our trip. Crossing a wide, shallow-looking area, Jeff was soon in water above his waist, and we left him behind and headed up valley to escape the mosquitoes. Around 12:30 we finally began gaining elevation on steep granite slabs and ledges, and the peak started coming within range. Some of us were getting tired, but not Kai. "Every muscle fiber in your body is getting stronger with every step," he roared as we plodded uphill. "It's the seventh game of the World Series, tie game, two out, last of the ninth, and you're up. What are you gonna do?" he screamed at us.

Soon we arrived at the alpine lake under the north face of Ansel Adams and were finally able to cross the river. Here we made the first of three critical route-finding decisions, and had we made any of the three differently, we probably wouldn't have summited. Spurning the advice of the guidebooks to circle around the right side of the peak, Kai had us climb a steep snowfield to the left. Then 600 or 700 feet up, the snowfield split into two snow gullies, with the right branch steep and littered with fresh rockfall. "Which way?" I yelled down to Kai. "Right," he yelled back instantly.

Some members of our party were inexperienced on steep snow, and one

person took a short fall, knocking another person over in the process. But no harm done, and soon we were on a saddle with nothing but steep rock to our right, between us and the summit. To find the class-3 south face route described in the guide books, it looked like we'd have to descend several hundred feet into a snow basin and circle around.

Here we made the third fortuitous routefinding decision. "Descend hell," said Kai, climbing over a rib of rock on our right to inspect a hidden gully. After some silence came the clatter of falling rock, then Kai's voice: "Class 2 -- it goes!" Sure enough -- the hidden gully angled up like a staircase for a couple hundred feet back toward the north face. We scrambled up it, and at the top, climbed a class-3 slot on mediocre holds. A baseball-sized rock knocked loose by one of the new people on the trip whizzed past my face and bounced off my arm, and then Kai's rendition of the theme from "Rocky" wafted down to us from above. Success!

The six of us crowded together on the exposed summit ridge, and ate our snacks, took photos, and read the summit register, which listed only two ascents in 1995 and one (besides ours) in 1996. To the north, the sharp pyramids of Mt. Lyell and Rogers Peak thrust into the sky, and between us and them lay the remote alpine basin south of Mt. Lyell with its dozens of tiny lakes, all of them still frozen.

We departed about 4 p.m., circling around the south side of the peak to circumnavigate it and take the standard route down. It was another good choice -- we got in some great standing glissades on soft, easy-angled snowfields. Of the class-3 south face route described in both Roper and Secor, we saw no sign whatsoever. The entire south face appears to be a steep, loose, class-5 horror, and the saddle we climbed to appears to offer the only non-technical way up the peak. A special gear note: Ted Raczek pioneered some radical alpine footwear on this trip -- running shoes for the long hike in, and high rubber galoshes (like grade school children wear) for snow and water crossings. What the hell -- he summited.

On the way back to camp, we stayed high on the north side of the valley in order to get some additional exercise climbing up and down granite buttresses and doing an adventurous stream crossing or two. Toward camp, we walked for over half a mile on gently angled, sensuously polished granite slabs, finally arriving in camp about 7:45.

Saturday morning we had breakfast in our beautiful "kitchen," at the top edge of the granite slabs that sloped down many hundreds of feet to the bottom of the valley. To our right, the creek that formed the waterfall near camp cascaded down these slabs. We hiked out about 10 a.m. and retraced the 12-mile hike to Vogelsang Lake via the Cony Crags and Lewis Creek trails. At Vogelsang Pass around 5 p.m., I split off to do Vogelsang Peak, a fun 1 1/2 hour round-trip climb, marred only by clouds of hungry mosquitoes right at the summit.

That evening we rejoined the person we'd left behind on the first day, and camped spread out over a wide area on the granite slabs near the outlet of Vogelsang Lake -- a beautiful camp that catches the last of the evening sun. In the morning, we woke to find that a bear had stolen all of our food. It was hung well off the ground, but the bear simply climbed out on the limb and snapped it off under his body weight. Two members of our party said they had heard him sniffing around before the crime, but were too scared to do anything -- a bad mistake.

So it was with empty stomachs but with still soaring spirits that we hiked out the remaining 7 miles, for a well-deserved lunch at the Tuolumne Meadows store at 11:30 a.m. Thanks go to Kai and Phyllis for organizing the trip, and to Kai for his uncanny routefinding on the peak -- an elusive gem of the Yosemite backcountry.

– Jim Ramaker

Notes and Requests

Post/Pre Trip Restaurants?

I would like to compile a list of restaurants that people like to eat at before or after a peak trip. There are many of us who have their favorite eatery in Lone Pine they like to visit after a hard climb or a place in Oakdale to have dinner before living off freeze dried beef stew. If you have a favorite restaurant, send it to me and I'll compile a list and send it back out. The more information you give me, the better. For example, the name of the place, where it's at, is it pricey (\$14.00 dinner), moderate (\$9.00 dinner) or freeze dried beef stew and what you might recommend. If there's a restaurant you recommend staying away from, that would good to know also. I understand that for some of you, this is privileged information, not to be distributed to just anyone. I therefore guarantee that this information will only be distributed to a very select section of the general population. Thanks in advance.

– Alex Keith <akeith@CRC.RICOH.COM>

Giardiasis Data Requested

I got this off the net... the first message below is a request for personal experience with verified giardia problems in the Sierra Nevada (not intestinal distress, but bona fide giardia). The second message is a response to the request for info, showing the type of response Roper is looking for. If you send email to me at <eckert@netcom.com>, I'll collect it and forward to the requester, PLUS compile it for the Scree.

– Steve Eckert <eckert@netcom.com>

From: jmorton@euler.Berkeley.EDU (John Morton)
Newsgroups: rec.climbing.rec.backcountry
Subject: Giardia in the Sierra Nevada
Date: 21 Aug 1996 17:26:39 GMT
Organization: University of California at Berkeley
Steve Roper asked me about giardia anecdotes recently, and like him, I actually don't know firsthand of an example of giardia contracted in the California Sierra. Nor do most mountain travelers know anything definite about it except "Don't drink the water!" He would be interested in anecdotal evidence, but a legitimate study would be more useful. This is from Roper:
>I'm redoing my Sierra Timberline book and will have to add a section re
>giardia. No one seems to know how prevalent it is, or how it's really spread.
>Was it always there? Can people be carriers? What do you know? Has
>a study been done? How many people does anyone know who got giardia in
>the Sierra? (I've never heard of anyone, myself.)

San Diego Slide Show Invitation

I shall be the guest speaker of the San Diego Chapter's monthly meeting (held at the Otto Center near the San Diego Zoo) next month (Fri, Sep. 20 at 7.30 pm). I'll be presenting a retrospective and a multimedia (a sham because I'll only be using two media) slide show, "Mountaineering, a Love of Wild Places" (I had to choose mountaineering since I'm also chair of mountaineering). I would be immeasurably flattered if any of you PCSers came down but the real reason would not to see/hear me or my slide show. Geoffrey Smith, ex-chapter chair and organizer of the Chapter Bookstore, will have available a few autographed copies of Douglas Adams' latest book, the finale in the much-lauded "The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy" series. "So Long and Thanks for all the PowerBars". Be there!

– Richard Hughes <rhughes@UCSD.EDU>

"Damn Thieving Girl Scouts"

From the rec.backcountry newsgroup:

There was an article in yesterday's (21 August) Wall Street Journal, page A1, about copyrights on songs. It seems that an organization (Ascap) which represents the rights of songwriters has threatened to sue certain organizations for public performances of copyrighted material without permission. Permission, of course, can be obtained for a fee. The "certain organizations" affected include the Girl Scouts, who are now forbidden from singing songs like "Dust in the Wind" and "Puff the Magic Dragon" around the campfire, unless they pay the \$100-\$1,000 fees necessary to license those songs. Failure to silence the singing Girl Scouts can result in fines, lawsuits, and jail sentences. I am not advocating anything here, just passing along some news that might affect some of you. If you or your organization engages in campfire sing-alongs, be aware that you might be putting yourselves at considerable risk of litigation. It is a strange and disturbing world that we inhabit.

– Alan Dove <ad52@columbia.edu>

MSR Dromedary Bag Recall

From <<http://www.msrcorp.com/msr/>>, Aug 7, 1996

MSR has identified a quality issue regarding our Dromedary Bag and is notifying our customers as a result. MSR has learned that trace amounts of OBPA, a chemical substance used in a laminate layer of the bag's fabric, leach through the NSF-grade laminate layer and into stored water. OBPA is an organic arsenical. Organic arsenicals are considered significantly less toxic than inorganic arsenicals. There is no known human health effect associated with trace amounts of OBPA, other than possible short-term mouth and throat irritation. Preliminary tests show the presence of OBPA diminishes with use of the product. OBPA is commonly used as a bacteriostat, disinfectant and fungicide in plastic products. MSR has stopped using OBPA in the Dromedary Bag and is offering to exchange bags with a new model that does not contain the substance. This is consistent with MSR's goal of providing a storage product that maintains the water's original state of purity. We would like to offer you a new Dromedary Bag manufactured without OBPA, in exchange for your existing bag. New Dromedary Bags are expected to begin shipping in mid-September. If you have further questions, please contact our toll-free Customer Service Line at 800-877-9677. [or send a message to info@msr.e-mail.com]

– Dave Bartholomew, President and CEO

Hot Times at High Camp Tonight

I have been looking for this camp pressure cooker that a lot of us have seen on the road/trail but never in the stores. The smallest pressure cooker I can find in the stores is 4qt which is too huge for backpacking. A 2 qt would be about right for those month long trips melting snow for water... Does anyone have any leads? Work phone 415-476-3577.

– Phoebe Couch <Phoebe.Couch@library.ucsf.edu>

Information On Matthes Crest

Would like info on Matthes Crest (traverse from S to N). I have the info from the Sierra Classics but would like much more detailed info. Any help would be greatly appreciated.

– Peter Zurla <peterz@ix.netcom.com>

Cottonwood Pass BBQ

According to various rangers, one horse and one mule were killed on Monday, July 29, just west of the top of Cottonwood Pass when they were struck by lightning. Apparently three human members of the pack train were injured. As of a few days ago, the animals are still there (right by the PCT) awaiting removal. I crossed this same pass two days earlier, and was caught in the same T-storm somewhere between Mt. Guyot and Crabtree Meadow, while on a leisurely week-long jaunt north to Onion Valley.

– Gary Craig <gary@usc.edu>

Used AT Skis Wanted

I'm looking for some used AT skis for ice climbing approaches. Preferred length is 170 or 180 cm, but I'd consider 190 for good skis at a good price. The binding must work for climbing boots, e.g. Ramer's or Silvretta 404's. I live & work in the south bay. Contact me at 408-354-2539 (home).

– Alan Lillich <alillich@apple.com>

Aiguillable Climbing Near Chamonix

Chamonix, France is famous for the Mont Blanc area, and gung-ho climbs involving glaciers, crevasses and ice. Lesser known is the mountain range on the other side of the valley, the "Aiguilles Rouges" (pronounced "aygwee"). These are much lower (the highest is 2953m, or 9688') and in summer have only occasional snow, with no glaciers. However, in addition to class 1 and 2 peaks, they offer superb class 3 climbing, with ingredients to challenge and delight everyone: chimneys, walls, knife-edge ridges with awesome exposure, and with incredible panoramas of the Mont Blanc Massif just across the valley. Elevation gains depend on whether the peak chosen is accessible via telepherique or not. Of the ones I did, the smallest gain was 1600' and the largest was 5000'. Hiking distances are always short, making these ideal day trips. If anyone is in the Chamonix area (even just passing through) and is interested in sampling these climbs, an excellent book is "Summits for All". This book is available in bookshops and sports stores in Chamonix, and is an English translation of the original in French (which is also available) by Edouard Prevost.

– Peter Maxwell

Aconcagua 12/96

I am planning a trip to Aconcagua from Dec. 26 1996 to Jan. 18, 1996. I plan to do the normal route and hope to spend 10 or so days on the mountain. If anyone is interested in joining me, give me a call at 408-944-2003. I speak fluent Spanish.

– Tony Cruz <CRUZ@idt.com>

Patagonia and Aconcagua

I am planning to go to South America for ~3 months (late Dec through April) including a month in Patagonia and 2 weeks for climbing Aconcagua. I'd like to get a team together for San Valentin and/or Fitz Roy in Jan and maybe another for Aconcagua (normal route) in early Feb. If anyone is interested, let's get together for some local climbs and discuss plans!

– Phoebe Couch <Phoebe.Couch@library.ucsf.edu>

Kilimanjaro 2/97

My two partners and I are starting to firm up our plan to do Kilimanjaro next Feb, and we are wondering if anyone is planning to go in the same time frame. It would be great to have a group of some people you know (at least through the mailing list :-). We are not organizing this trip, just asking for potential companions. Our initial plan includes flying from here to London or Paris, staying there a couple of days to catch a show or just lazy around, then to Kenya/Tanzania, climb Kili (5 days), then do a safari in Serengeti park for another 3 or 4 days, then we optionally have a couple of days in Paris/London again. The total length of the trip is 14 days. Some of my researches show that the combined fare for 2 legs SFO-London & London/Nairobi is not a lot different from a ticket from SFO to Nairobi. Actually when I was in Paris last April, I talked to a few bucket shops and found some very good deals to Kenya on Al Italia.

– Tuan Tran <tuan@spicey.asd.sgi.com>

Orizaba and/or Itza

I am not a PCS member, but have climbed with many of the members this summer. I would like to recruit partners for a trip to Mexico City. I hope to travel to Mexico City during the first two weeks in November, and climb Orizaba and/or Itza. I plan a 9-day trip, scheduled in such a way as to consume one week's vacation from work. Please call 408-749-2707 for info.

– John Zazzara

Personal Web Site

I uploaded some extra goodies to my personal web site recently. Some illustrations and stuff about HAPE and Diamox, and a reference to a new booklet High Altitude: Illness and Wellness, by Charles Houston (the expert). There is a suggestion for Diamox addicts to take only a half-dose rather than the full dose.

<http://ourworld.compuserve.com/homepages/rwgross>

– Bob Gross <75013.1420@CompuServe.COM>

Bear Bells

There was a guy at the trailhead selling bear bells to tie on your shoes. One newcomer asked whether they were required. The vendor replied that they seemed to work fine on black bears, but not grizzlies. The newcomer, of course, wanted to know how you told the difference... and the answer was that grizzly bear shit has bear bells in it!

– Steve Eckert

Teachers Quoting Kids

- ◆ The inhabitants of Moscow are called Mosquitoes.
- ◆ A virgin forest is a forest where the hand of man has never set foot.
- ◆ A scout obeys all to whom obedience is due and respects all duly constipated authorities.
- ◆ A city purifies its water supply by filtering the water then forcing it through an aviator.
- ◆ The general direction of the Alps is straight up.

Acute Mountain Sickness

From [rec.climbing](#) or [rec.backcountry](#) newsgroups:

Firstly I should like to thank all those people who posted helpful information and/or send me Email. I got lots of pointers to WWW sites. However, I found the most useful one to be "Altitude Illness Clinical Guide For Physicians" by Thomas E. Dietz, M.D. (<http://205.162.195.3/hra/AMS-clinguide.html>) which gives clear and concise descriptions of Normal Physiology at altitude, Acute Mountain Sickness (AMS), High Altitude Cerebral Edema (HACE) and High Altitude Pulmonary Edema (HAPE). The language is not so technical that lay people can not understand it.

Clearly, all references agree that if there are any symptoms of Edema (Oedema in U.K.) then one must descend post haste; either HAPE or HACE may be lethal in a few hours. However, one may suffer from AMS well before such a critical situation is reached and my original posting inquired if there were any "chemical fix" which could help. In particular, I suffer from migraine and this can be induced by rapid ascent.

Although one can usually avoid AMS by slow acclimatization the ascent rate is recommended to be about 300m per day over 3000m. This may be feasible when trekking in the Himalaya (depending on the region), but I gave two examples of where it is not so simple. Last month I flew from Lima to Cuzco which is a change of about 3500. There simply is no reasonable alternative to make the journey in 300m stages even if one had the time. Moreover, as the Altiplano is flat, albeit at 10 or 12000 feet, there is no way to go down without taking an airplane.

The second example was a typical alpine ascent where one climbs up to a refuge above 3000m one day and gets up early the following morning to climb the peak. There are usually no feasible intermediate places where one could stop over even assuming one had the time. Dr. Dietz recommends to take Diamox (Acetazolamide) in these cases, although he does not recommend taking a prophylactic if one ascends more slowly.

I shall relate here my experience from last weekend, whilst emphasizing that other people may have a totally different reaction. I took 125 mg of Diamox Thursday evening and Friday morning before leaving my home at 435m, and one more on Friday evening at the Quintino Sella refuge (almost 3600m = 12000f). I also took one Tonapan "just in case". Diamox is a diuretic which is inconvenient (excuse pun) and requires that one must drink enough to make up for the liquid loss. It also can have side effects, although at this low dose these were very slight (a slight tingling in the fingers of the hand holding my ice axe whilst climbing without gloves). The result was a success. I had no headache and I even got some sleep. (And yes, the view from 4228m the following day was wonderful).

Thus, for me this treatment seems to work. I don't believe I normally suffer from AMS per se but from migraine triggered by the altitude change. The Diamox seemed to avoid this, although I shall need to try several times to get better statistics.

I should like to reply to one respondent who shall remain nameless but made what I consider to me a completely inane remark. He said "Diamox is a crutch". I wish people would start their brains before putting their fingers into gear. What exactly is this supposed to mean? That anyone who needs to take Diamox should not climb mountains? That somehow one is cheating, or what? A crutch is something which allows one to overcome an infirmity. Those people who do not need crutches are indeed lucky, but why should they attempt to deny help to their less fortunate brethren?

From another point of view, my compatriots during the middle of the last century climbed over 100 of the highest mountains in Europe wearing hob-nail boots and Tweed Jackets. They might well consider that their Vibram, Capilene and Gortex-clad descendants with twelve point crampons and alloy ice axes use quite a few crutches.

Whilst I agree that "it is not cricket" to take performance-enhancing drugs in a competition, I don't in the least find a problem with occasionally taking a drug which speeds up acclimatization so long as this is not dangerous. The only possible objection I can see would be if the drug could mask symptoms of HACE or HAPE thereby getting the climber into a situation from where (s)he would have to be rescued by others. This is not the case for Diamox. To quote Dr. Dietz, "if a patient feels well on acetazolamide s/he is well".

– David Myers (CERN, Geneva)

Roger's Russell Report

It was a rainy night in Bishop. In July? Yep. It even rained at El Poral, the Mt Whitney trailhead. We squeezed in at the Backpacker's Camp. In the middle of the night Dave Wright woke up to find that a bear had scooped up his pack right beside him. Dave heard him in the bushes, and just went right up and demanded his pack!

In the morning the weather was beautiful and we started up North Lone Pine Creek to our camp at Upper Boy Scout Lake. Joanie Sutherland, who had just finished a week's trip into Milestone Basin, joined us there. Us: Bill Kirkpatrick, Dave Wright, Don Martin, Will Hurst, and myself, Roger Crawley.

Next day we got going early at 6:30. it's a steep grunt up the Russell-Carillon Saddle. From there we took the standard class 3 route up the east ridge. As one climbs the ridge the exposure can be unnerving. The rock is very good; there are plenty of holds; in hindsight there were no serious obstacles; one can go all the way by hugging the north side of the ridge. Yeah, but after a while the sheer height, the airiness, and the 2000' drop-off on both sides are at least exhilarating.

Joanie, Don, and I reached the East Horn and looked at the West Horn about 100 yards across. "Gee, those clouds are coming in." "Gee, we don't wanna be on this ridge if it rains." etc. "What the hell, let's just go as far as we can." Turns out it wasn't bad at all; there's an easy way around the other side of the west horn. We carefully climbed back down to the saddle.

Meanwhile the others climbed up on Mt. Carillon. We all headed down to camp and the weather broke loose; it rained and hailed for three hours. It's crucial to get up and get off of the long exposed ridge early, because afternoon storms are common. We stayed the second night at the lake. It's a beautiful place. In the morning we skipped breakfast, scrambled back to the cars, and drove as fast as we could to the finest restaurant in Bishop for brunch. Then we had a soak in Hot Creek.

– Roger Crawley

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.

Without a Paddle

Route: Mokelumne River Canyon class 2
Dates: Sept. 7-10 Sat-Tues
Location: Off Hwy 4 below Ebbetts Pass
Leader: John Ingvaldstad 408-996-7129
ingy@svpal.org

We'll explore a largely trailless gorge, with river crossings, scrambling and bushwacking. A loop trip with trails into and out of the canyon, and a short car shuttle. Moderate pace; 3,800 foot climb out.

Bird Song Day Hike

Peak: Vogelsang (11,400') class 2
Date: Sep 14 Sat
Maps: Tuolumne Meadows 15' quad
Vogelsang Peak 7.5' quad
Leader: Aaron Schuman (no RSVP)

We'll hike on trail to Tuolumne 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 Tuolumne Meadows Group Camp and other hikers just meet at the Tuolumne 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 15 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 Tuolumne Meadows Group Camp and other hikers just meet for a carpool to the trailhead from the Tuolumne 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
Leader: Chris Yager 408-243-3026

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

**They are wet
with the showers of the mountains,
and embrace the rock for want of a shelter.
Job 24:8**

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.

Annual Mt Clark Pilgrimage

Peak: Mt Clark (11,522'), Quartzite (10,440') class 3
Map: Merced Peak 15' topo
Date: Sep 21 Sat
Leader: Steve Eckert 415-508-0500
eckert@netcom.com

This is a 30-mile day hike with 8000' of gain and loss. Storkman used to do this each year on his birthday, and has asked me to pass on the route to those who are interested. It is a one-way loop trip from Happy Isle in Yosemite Valley, ascending through Little Yosemite and returning by Starr King. The hiking is mostly trail or class 2, but the summit is both challenging (may be skipped if you choose) and stunning. Fast pace with few breaks, starting before dawn. We may be able to get a campsite in Yosemite for Fri and Sat. Co-listed with Day Hiking Section - come defend the honor of the PCS!

Passes and Splashes

Peaks: Reynolds (9679'), Roundtop (10,300') class 2-3
Maps: Freel Peak 15' and Markleeville 15'
Dates: Sept. 28-29 Sat-Sun
Leader: John Ingvaldstad 408-996-7129
ingy@svpal.org

Carcamp at Grover Hot Spring (the "splashes" part). With easy climb on Sunday, you can be home in time for ESPN NFL highlights! We'll go over Ebbetts Pass to Reynolds Peak and over Carson Pass to Roundtop.

Langley

Peak: Mt Langley (14,000') class 2
Trailhead: Cottonwood Lakes, near Lone Pine
Dates: Oct 12-14 Sat-Mon
Leader: George Van Gorden 408-779-2320

Beautiful area, the yellowing aspens, the meadow grass not so verdant and riotous, the frenzy of the long summer nights abating, a good time of the year. The trailhead is at 10,000' and the trail into Cottonwood Lakes is very good, making this probably the easiest fourteener in the state. We will hike into our camp on Sat and climb the mountain on Sun. It is possible to get back to your car and drive back on Sun night, though you would get home rather late.

**Life may have no meaning. Or even worse, it
may have a meaning of which I disapprove.**

Ashleigh Brilliant

Sunny Sill

On the weekend of July 20th, 1996, four of us (Greg Faulk, Wilk von Gustedt, Bob MacKay and myself) climbed Mt. Sill from North Fork of Big Pine Creek. Four of us plus two of Wilk's friends, who had just arrived from Germany the day before, met at Livermore Airport at 2:45 pm, and started our drive to June Lake. After eating dinner in Lee Vining, we found a camp spot in Oh! Ridge campground in June Lake.

We followed the trail which led us to the beautiful Sam Mack Meadow. The trail (which is called "Glacier Trail" after the meadow) now turned 90 degrees to the left in the meadow. For a while the trail was marked well, but eventually it disappeared in the rock and snow fields. This was not a problem since it was obvious that we were right below the ridge which lied between us and Palisade Glacier. We decided to stay on that place since there were several very nice camp/bivy spots. I did not recall when we arrived at that spot, but it was a long day.

I had a headache until around 4am, but when I finally woke up at 6 am, it was completely gone and I felt good about the climb. After eating small breakfasts, we set off at 7:15 am. It was a totally "non-alpine" start, but the sky was so clear again and it seemed there was very little chance of a thunderstorm.

After walking on the edge of Palisade Glacier, we went up a loose class 4 section to Glacier Notch. This part made me concern about the descent from the notch, but later we would find that we were off route in the morning and the correct route was a much better class 3 scramble.

At Glacier Notch, we could see the whole Swiss Arete and the snowfield which completely filled the chute from the saddle between Sill and Apex Peak (L-shaped snowfield). I've seen pictures of this chute without any snow, but right now, it looked much nicer with a beautiful white coat. After crossing the snowfield, we sorted our rock gears to get ready for the climb of Swiss Arete. We decided that Bob and Wilk, Greg and myself would be rope teams and that both teams would swing the lead.

We started our climb around 9:30 am. Bob first started to lead the first pitch and as soon as Wilk started to follow Bob, I started to lead the pitch for the second rope team. First pitch seemed about 5.5 to me which was interesting enough. My coworker John Feder, who climbed this route about ten years ago, had told me that Swiss Arete was very easy for them (he said it would be like 5.2) and that they mostly simul-climbed in their leather boots. Well, at least I was much less experienced than John, and this seemed like a right amount of thrill for me with my climbing shoes on. This was not a route for me to do simul-climb.

Second pitch was also 5.4-5.5 and very nice. Then there came the third pitch. I saw Bob going up the hand crack on the left side but it did not seem easy. Wilk did not make it look easy either even though he usually climbs 5.10 range and was a better climber than I. Bob told us that he thought he took a wrong turn and the correct route should be on the right side.

Then my turn came. After a few moves, I arrived at that crux-ish section. Following Bob's advice, I first tried to go up the face right in front of me. I tried a couple of moves and it seemed doable. But the move seemed like 5.10a and I was feeling that there was about 10% chance of falling with my capability. Since I did not find a pro placement to protect the move, I decided not to take a chance and moved to the left to go up the same crack where Bob and Wilk went up. Well, the crack was not really easy for me (5.9ish?), but at least there were good pro placements

which made me feel relieved. After this crux section a few easy moves led me to our belay station.

The fourth pitch was relatively easy. So was the fifth pitch, although if I remember correctly, there was one or two 5.6ish move. When I got close to the belay station, I heard Bob saying "It's the top!" but I did not really think it was what he meant. Well, we had not seen the "impasse" on the fifth pitch when we were supposed to traverse to the right. And we had not encountered the "chimney" on the seventh pitch which would be tough with a pack on. (Both Greg and I were carrying our packs.) And most of all, the climb was supposed to be 7-8 pitches. But the way Bob and Wilk were acting finally convinced that they were at the top. Even though I set my belay station lower than theirs, I knew that I was right below them and thus I must have been just 20 feet from the summit.

Quickly, Greg appeared from below and I told him that the summit was there. "No way." he said. "You gotta be kidding." Well, but it was the summit. At that point, we realized that the 5.9ish crux section must have been the "impasse" in the guidebooks. Since we started a bit higher than the start in the books, and also probably since we ended up using almost full rope length for all the pitches, our pitch counts were off. This solve the mystery of "impasse" section, but we never could figure out where we missed the "chimney".

It was 12:30 pm and there still was no cloud. Beautiful sky and outstanding view. This was the very first trip to the Palisade region for three of us (Greg, Wilk and me), and we were totally impressed by the great view.

After lunch, we started leisurely around 1:30 pm for the descent. We were not in a hurry since the weather was so nice. Descent to the saddle between Sill and Apex Peak was class3-4 but route finding was easy since the cairns always showed us the correct route. At the saddle we removed our rock shoes to be ready for the descent on the snow. Bob and Wilk decided to walk down and started slowly. Then, Greg "the garbage sack master" just took off as usual and disappeared out of sight very quickly. I also wanted to glissade, but chickened out a little bit and just did the bottom half. The snow condition was perfect and it was a very pleasant descent.

Eventually, we slowly crawled back to our camp site, packed our tent/bivy sacks and started our descent to Sam Mack Meadow. For me this part seemed long since I started to feel tired. Well, total hat off to the people in the 1930s. I read that after the first ascent of Mt. Sill, Ruth Dyer (her first major ascent in the Sierras) came running (and maybe dancing) back to Sam Mack Meadow because she did not want other people to think that she was tired. Well, I guess she was more than ten years younger than I am now, but I certainly did not have a desire to run and dance.

Camping at Sam Mack Meadow that night was certainly pleasant. It was such a beautiful place. Flowers (columbine etc.), creek, peaks (views of Sill, N. Pal and Winchell), and then the stars. We strolled around the meadow in the morning. Since the trail did not go through the whole meadow, we ended up walking some off trail section to reach the end of the meadow, which made me feel guilty.

I've hiked a lot in Japan and over there, there were so many places which used to be beautiful marshes but now were just mud fields because so many people had walked on. As a result of that, many high marshes in Japan have trails made of logs so that people don't have to walk directly on the fragile plants. Well, I just hope that Sam Mack Meadow will not be a mud field when I visit there ten years from now.

– Zenta Tsuchihashi

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.

If Charles Were King

Peak: Mt Clarence King (12,905') class 5.4
Dates: Sep 13-15 Fri-Sun
Contact: Charles Schafer H 408-354-1545
charles.schafer@octel.com W 408-324-6003

Co-Contact: WANTED

As Secor so wonderfully puts it "This beautiful peak dominates the entire Woods Creek Drainage." There ain't no easy way up it, so it should be quite a challenge. We'll go in Friday over Kearsarge Pass, then climb the peak Saturday, probably via the south face. Permit for 6.

Dana Day Hike

Peak: Dana Couloir technical snow
Date: Sept 14 Sat
Contact: George Van Gorden 408-779-2320

A long day's climb. Hard snow and possible ice. The glacial basin is spectacular and as we near the top of the couloir the views of Mono Lake make the effort worthwhile. We will put in protection: ice axe, crampons, and harness required. A few ice screws could be handy. We should be back to the cars by dark.

Call to sign up after August 21, and before 9pm.

Whorl Mountain

Peak: Whorl Mtn (12,033') class 4
Map: Matterhorn peak 15' topo
Dates: Sept 21-22 Sat-Sun
Contact:
Contact: Bob Suzuki W: 510-657-7555
(>8pm) H: 408-259-0772

Co-Contact: Debbie Bulger H: 408-457-1036

Here's another opportunity for a challenging climb of this picturesque peak in northeastern Yosemite. We'll begin Saturday from Twin Lakes, hike over Horse Creek Pass and setup camp just south of the pass. An early start Sunday will allow us time to search for one of the class 4 chutes up Whorl's glacial-carved east flank. A harness, rappel device and prior experience with roped climbing will be required to join this private outing. Limited to 8 climbers.

Toulumne Meadows Carcamp

Trip: Car Camp in Toulumne Meadows
Dates: Sept 14-15 Sat-Sun
Contact: Cecil Magliocco 408-358-1168
cecilm@ix.netcom.com

Enjoy the meadows after Labor Day. Bring the family along as we have a group campsite reservation. This carcamp is coordinated with Aaron Schuman's Yosemite climbs on the same weekend. A \$5 non-refundable reservation deposit is requested.

Tenaya Canyon Ascent

Trip: Tenaya Canyon class 3-4, maybe 5
Dates: Oct 12-13 Sat-Sun
Contact: David Harris 415-497-5571
harrisd@leland.stanford.edu
Co-Contact: Bob Suzuki 510-657-7555
bsuzuki@aol.com

According to Secor, "This adventurous cross-country route should only be attempted by experienced mountaineers; many tourists are rescued from this canyon each year." We will ascend Tenaya Canyon from Mirror Lake to Tenaya Lake. Finding the optimal route is non-trivial, so we will bring ropes and you should be a comfortable class 5 climber in the event we resort to brute force.

Yosemite Valley Carcamp

Trip: Car Camp in Yosemite Valley
Dates: Oct 12-13 Sat-Sun
Contact: Cecil Magliocco 408-358-1168
cecilm@ix.netcom.com

Enjoy this fall in the valley. A group campsite is reserved so non-climbers are welcome (of all ages). Co-leader wanted to lead one dayhike. A \$5 non-refundable reservation deposit is requested.

Summit Registers

Many years ago I was climbing in the Palisades with an RCS group. We were doing the Thunderbolt to North Palisade traverse. We had just completed our ascent of Starlight Peak and were rappelling down into the notch between it and North Palisade when I stumbled upon an old sardine can with some papers inside. The can had been carefully placed on a small ledge at the bottom of the rappel. When I opened the can I was very surprised to find what appeared to be a summit register dating back to 1931. There was only one entry in the register and it was made by a team consisting of Norman Clyde, Jules Eichorn, Glen Dawson, and Robert Underhill.

After thinking about it I realized that it probably was not a summit register, but a ridge-traverse register placed during the first traverse of the ridge between Thunderbolt and North Palisade. I think the same team made the first ascent of Thunderbolt a few days previously, and then later went on to make the first ascent of the East Face of Whitney a few days later. After I had inspected the register, I returned it to where I had found it and we continued with our climb. Hopefully, that register may still be there for others to discover.

– George Sinclair

Make Up Your Mind, Ma'am!

In 1994, a woman visiting from the Bay Area embarked on a solo hike to the summit of El Capitan in Yosemite. When she became lost and saw a storm brewing, she called 911 from her cellular phone and asked to be rescued. A helicopter found her barely off the trail and one-fourth to half a mile from the top of El Cap. When the 'copter lifted off and the woman saw how close she was to her summit goal, she asked the crew to set her down on top. When the crew declined, she threatened to sue them for kidnapping.

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

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Hardcopy subscriptions are \$10/year, plus a requested donation of \$2/year to cover operating expenses. Subscription applications and checks payable to "PCS" should be mailed to the Treasurer so they arrive before the last Tuesday of the expiration month. If you are on the PCS email broadcast, you have a free **EScree** subscription. For broadcast info, send Email to <listserv@netspace.org> with the one-line message "INFO sc-peaks". EScree-only subscribers should send a subscription form to the Treasurer to become voting PCS members at no charge, and are encouraged to donate \$2/year to the PCS.

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, Marcus Baker

Distant Reports: Shasta, Ranier, Longs, Cascade Volcanos

Trip Reports: Sill, Williamson, Tyndall, Brewer, Blackcap

Onion Valley, Whitney, Devil's Crag, Red&White,

Royce, Virginia/Twin, Death Valley

DEET Warnings

NOTE: Reports over 1 page long will be shortened by the Editor!

Deadline for submissions to the next Scree is Sunday 9/22/96. 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