

December, 1998 Peak Climbing Section, Loma Prieta Chapter, Sierra Club Vol. 32, No. 12

World Wide Web Address: <http://www.sierraclub.org/chapters/lomaprieta/pcs/>

## Next General Meeting

**Date:** Tuesday, December 9

**Time:** 7:00 PM

**Program:** Party and Slide Show!

Bring ten of your most exciting, embarrassing, or "hideous exposure" slides to show at the party

Someone may kick you out if you show up empty handed or try to get by "on the cheap" with a liter of Coca Cola®! Bring your "best" potluck dish. If you need a suggestion for what to bring, follow this guide based on the initial letter of your last name:

- A-F: Desserts
- G-L: Snacks, Appetizers, Salads
- M-R: Drinks
- S-Z: Main course

NOTE: Names have been re-arranged for 1999 to avoid picking on the same people!

**Dress Code:** Black Tie and Balaclava Optional

Check the Web for any last-minute changes and late breaking news. (Hey, it could happen!)

**Location:** The world famous. "Cafe Iris" on the Silicon Graphics Campus.

To get to Silicon Graphics, take the Shoreline Blvd. exit from US-101 in Mountain View. From either the northbound or southbound directions, make a right exit, then turn left at the top of the ramp, heading north through the industrial park 1.3 miles from the top of the ramp, there'll be the unmistakable Shoreline Amphitheater on your left - a giant two poled white tent Another landmark at the same corner is the charming red abstract sculpture on your right.

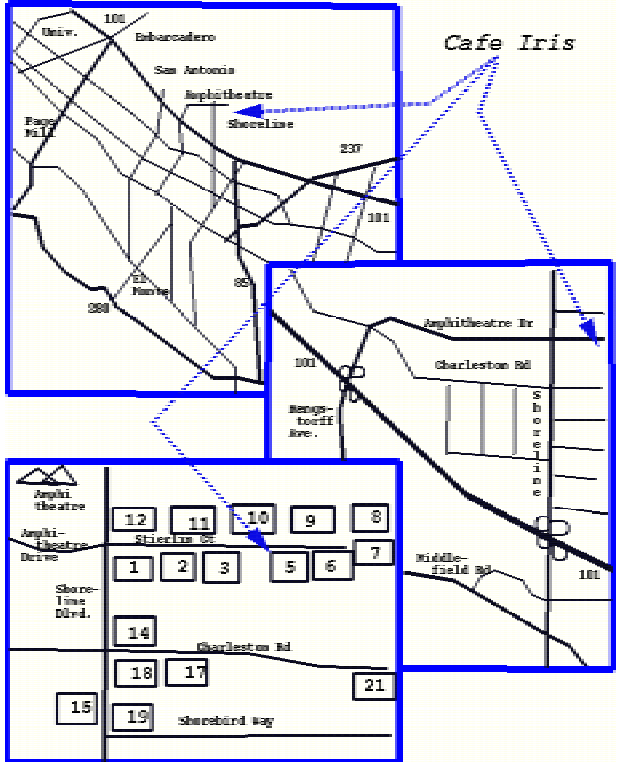
Turn right at that corner, onto Stierlin Court. You're on the SGI campus. Park anywhere that isn't a fire lane, a handicapped space, or a loading dock.

*Building 5* (with Cafe Iris) is the fourth building on the right.

There's a gif map to the Cafe Iris on the Web at:

<http://www.sierraclub.org/chapters/lomaprieta/pcs/Meetings/cafeiris.gif>

## PCS WINTER PARTY



**Deadline for submissions to the next Scree is Sunday 12/27/98. Meetings are the second Tuesday of each month.**

## PCS Trip Leaders Wanted

Becoming a PCS trip leader is easier than you probably think. The main requirement is climbing knowledge and experience. Here's what you need to do to become a PCS trip leader:

1. Join the PCS and the Sierra Club if you haven't already.
2. Take a Red Cross-approved first aid class and obtain a Red Cross first aid card.
3. Fill out the "Application for PCS Leadership" below.
4. Submit your completed application to the chair of the PCS Mountaineering Committee.

Mountaineering Committee:  
Ron Karpel  
rkarpel@usa.net  
650 594-0211 home  
903 Avon Street, Belmont, CA 94002

### Application for PCS Leadership

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone numbers: \_\_\_\_\_

Sierra Club Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Are you over age 18? Yes\_\_\_ No\_\_\_

Are you a PCS member? Yes\_\_\_ No\_\_\_

What class of climb are you applying to lead?

Class 1\_\_\_ Class 2\_\_\_ Class 3\_\_\_ Class 4\_\_\_ Class 5\_\_\_

Are you also applying to lead winter climbing trips?  
Yes\_\_\_No\_\_\_

Attach photocopy of your Red Cross first aid card.

Please answer the two questions below in order to verify that you have satisfied the requirements for leading the class of climb that you have checked. These requirements are listed following the questions.

1. Summarize your climbing skills, navigational skills, and any other information related to your mountaineering knowledge and experience.
2. List the major peaks you have climbed. For each one, include the class of the climb, the name of the leader (if a PCS climb), and whether you led the climb.

I hereby apply for leadership with the Sierra Club Loma Prieta chapter-Peak Climbing Section.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

**When using a public campground, a tub placed on your picnic table will keep the campsites on either side vacant.**

## Requirements for PCS Leadership

Class One (walking on trail):

1. At least eighteen years of age. PCS and Sierra Club member
2. Red Cross Multimedia First Aid or approved equivalent. Mountain Medicine course conducted by Red Cross and Sierra Club may be substituted at alternate renewal periods.

Class Two (walking cross-country; using hands for balance):

1. Qualifications for class one
2. Minimum two years mountain experience
3. Demonstrated navigational ability
4. Demonstrated sound judgment, mountaineering competence, and leadership ability on two class two or harder PCS trips or equivalent

Class Three (use of hands for balance while climbing):

1. Qualifications for class two
2. Recent experience with roped climbing, including belaying, rappelling, knot tying, and/or anchor setting
3. Recent experience with ice ax, crampons, self-arrest, and/or ice-ax belay
4. Demonstrated sound judgment, mountaineering competence, and leadership ability on two class three or harder PCS trips or equivalent

Class Four (use of rope for belays):

1. Qualifications for class three
2. Knowledgeable and experienced in roped climbing (including belaying, rappelling, knot tying, and anchor setting) ice ax use (including self-arrest and ice-ax belay), and use of crampons.
3. Demonstrated sound judgment, mountaineering competence, and leadership ability on two class four or harder PCS trips or equivalent

Class Five (technical rock climbing):

1. Qualifications for class four
2. Led at least three routes equal to or harder than climb to be led
3. Knowledgeable and experienced in all aspects of rope management and handling. Proficient with anchor setting, placing of protection for safety, belaying, and rappelling.
4. Demonstrated sound judgment, mountaineering competence, and leadership ability on two class five PCS trips or equivalent

Winter Trips

1. Qualifications for class of climb to be led
2. Two seasons of winter mountaineering, including extensive snow camping
3. Proficiency with skis or snow shoes, ice ax, crampons, and ice ax belays
4. Substantial navigational experience, including white-out and storm conditions
5. Advanced first aid preferred, with an understanding of hypothermia, frostbite, and pulmonary edema
6. Avalanche course
7. Demonstrated leadership on one PCS winter trip as co-leader

## For Mt. Whitney

Appearing as a puncture in your precipitous pores,  
I disappear.  
Without seeing me  
(And that is holy)  
You send a wind that still  
Caresses,  
Crystallizing the blood in my fingertips,  
Clear.  
Thank you for having me as a witness,  
Not a spectacle.

-- Adrienne Van Gorden

Editor's Note: The above poem was written on the October 24, 1998 ascent of Mt. Whitney. Adrienne Van Gorden is the daughter of PCS chair George Van Gorden

## Official (PCS) Trips

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

### Chalone Peak

Peak: Chalone Peak, Class 1  
Date: Sunday, December 13, 1998  
Leader: Roger Crawley 650-321-8602,  
rcrawl@earthlink.net

Meet on Sunday morning at the Hyatt House Hotel at North First Street, San Jose - Take the 1st Street exit from Highway 101 - the Hyatt is at 1st St and 101. I'll be there at 7 am having pancakes in the coffee shop and we'll leave the parking lot at 8 am. The drive is 2 hours to the East entrance to the Pinnacles on the road passed Hollister. Flashlights are mandatory because the trail goes through some dark caves. After a full day we'll stop at the micro brewery in Hollister and dinner on the return to San Jose.

### Out In the Freel World

Peak: Freel Peak; class 2, winter conditions  
Dates: Dec 12-13, (Sat, Sun)  
Map: Freel Peak 15 min.  
Leader: Kelly Maas H 408-279-2054  
W 408-944-2078, maas@idt.com  
Co-Leader: Aaron Schuman H 650-968-9184  
W 650-943-7532  
aaron\_schuman@yahoo.com  
Details: <http://sj.znet.com/~cynthiam/freel.html>

Snowshoe from the outskirts of the town of South Lake Tahoe to the 10881' summit of Freel Peak, the highest point in the Tahoe Basin. Saturday we'll backpack close to the mountain and set up our snow camp; Sunday we'll climb to the top for a view of the lake and the forest painted white.

### Treasure of the Serra Padre

Peak: Junipero Serra Peak, 5862 ft, Class 1  
Date: Sunday, January 10 1999.  
Maps: Junipero Serra 7.5'  
Leaders: Arun V. Mahajan <arun@tollbridgetech.com>,  
(h) 650-327-8598  
Ron Karpel <ronny@luxsonor.com>  
(w)510771-3231, (h)650-594-0211

The native Americans called it Pimkolam Peak, it has also been called Santa Lucia Peak, and now goes by the name Junipero Serra after the venerable padre. At 5862 ft, it is the highest peak

in the Santa Lucia Coast Range. It is also the high point of Monterey County and the highest peak that you can get to in the Bay Area.

Join us as we take an enjoyable and mildly strenuous (6 miles and 3900 ft gain, one way) tramp to this peak. There is trail all the way to the top. Carpool suggestions from Bay Area: Meet at the Carl's Jr. that is at the Dunne Avenue exit on 101 in Morgan Hill at 7 am on Sunday, January 10. We will carpool from there. Non Bay Area People: Contact the leader for directions to the trailhead.

### Tam Times Two

Peak: Mt. Tam (east peak and west peak), class 2  
Date: Saturday, January 30  
Leader: Steve Eckert <eckert@netcom.com> 650-508-0500

Co-Leader: Jeff Fisher <han1cannae@aol.com>

This has become a classic hike for the leader... including redwood groves, lunch on the beach, and a loop route that includes both East and West peak of Mt Tamalpais (that big lump north of the Golden Gate). You might not think there is class 2 on this well-trailed peak, but we guarantee you'll use your hands without leaving named trails. Short days require a fast pace. Send email or call for meeting time and lace, and be prepared to convince us you can do 20+ miles and 5000+ feet of gain/loss "in good style".

## Mt Silliman Kids Trip

August 28-31 1998

A graphically enhanced version at

[http://home.earthlink.net/~karpel/Silliman\\_98.html](http://home.earthlink.net/~karpel/Silliman_98.html)

Starting from Rowel Meadow trailhead, we took 2 1/2 days of backpacking to get to the top of Silliman Pass. One could get here from Lodgepole in less than a day (9 mile, 4000 ft climb). But we took our time enjoying the Sierra.

From Silliman Pass we followed the ridge towards the summit of Mount Silliman. About a mile later Silliman lakes came into view. We dropped from the ridge, hiked by the lakes and up through the drainage to the saddle between Mount Silliman and the picklet to its west. Mount Silliman is protected by a formidable cliff on its north and east sides. There is only one way to get to the top. It is a narrow couloir cutting through the cliff. The couloir is visible only once you have reached top of the saddle.

In spite of the hot sun, there was lots of snow in the area, ruminant of last winter's Al Nino. The slope of the couloir was about 30 degree, and the snow was hard, but it didn't look too difficult. Still we didn't have ice axes or crampons, and we were not about to use them anyway. Without the ice gear there was no way to continue.

It is worth noting that the west side of the ridge looks doable. We didn't have enough time to try it though.

Once back at Silliman Pass, we set our eyes on Twins Peak. Just 1/4 of a mile from the pass, and it looked like a reasonable class 2. We thought it would be an easy consolation prize. But a closer look revealed no easy way up. We finally were able to follow the ridge line to the top. It was a reasonable but airy class-3 friction climb.

Participants: Ahmad & Nolan Zandi, Dennis & Matt Rosman, Ron & Ethan

-- Ron Karpel

# Taking It Easy On The Silver Divide

September 18, 19, 20, 1998

A boat cruise on Lake Edison, a 4-hour hike in with only 2500' elevation gain, a camp fire each night, 2500' to the summit, solid rock, crystal clear weather: what a combination for a relaxing trip. So it was for the extended weekend of September 18, 19 and 20 where the destination peak was Izaak Walton (12077'). Participants were John and Chris Kerr, Larry Hester, Elmer Martin and Peter Maxwell (organizer). Not all PCS trips are death marches and this one definitely fell into the alternative category.

Larry and I arrived at Edison Lake around 8 pm on Thursday night. The Kaiser Pass road at night is not much fun so to calm our shattered nerves we went to the resort and drank beer sitting by the large fire they had on the outdoor patio. We also obtained a wilderness permit there, a service they offer since the High Sierra ranger station was closed for the season "due to budget cuts" (so the sign there said). Suitably refreshed, we camped the night at a very nice flat area near some trailhead parking, a short distance beyond the campground. Elmer, on the other hand, made our drive look tame, since he drove all the way from LA after work, arriving about 2 am.

Not wishing to walk any further than necessary, we took the ferry across the lake, a journey which takes about 20 minutes and costs \$15 return, or \$8 one way. They also offer custom pickups, at \$45 minimum or \$10 per person. Since the only afternoon ferry is at 4:45 pm, we took advantage of this service and arranged for a 1:30 pm pickup on the Sunday, figuring we didn't have much distance to do.

Although I'd brought breakfast with me, Larry convinced me to enjoy the resort cooked breakfast, which was definitely nicer than cereal and banana. The ferry didn't leave until 9 am so we had plenty of time to sit back. It carries 15 people, but there were so many there that it had to make two trips.

We had expected a quiet off-season, but the place was packed, at least around the resort. I guess many people were making up for the late start to summer. The air was still chilly (it had been right on freezing when we woke up) and although it was warm sitting around at lake's edge, on the ferry it became really cold with the wind, so we were huddled in our parkas.

The hike up to Mott Lake was delightful, and largely in the shade of trees. In hot weather this would be a really pleasant trail to be on to climb the 2500' or so up to the lake. At several spots there were cascades and portions of the creek we were following (North Fork of Mono Creek) flowed over broad sheets of granite, making for very nice water breaks and lunch.

Arriving at the lake, the competition began to find the best campsite. My original suggestion of "why not down by the lake" was voted down as being too damp and likely to have bugs. The site discovered by Larry was the one we used, up on a bench above the lake, sheltered by trees and with a million dollar view of the lake and surrounds. Elmer still thought his site was better, however, and to prove his point he put his tent there. This is not as antisocial as it sounds, because he used it only for sleeping. On the contrary, it was his idea to have a campfire, the rest of us being too used to stoves for the idea to occur. Amazingly enough, even at 10000' there was ample wood for a fire and it didn't take us long at all to gather enough for an inferno, had we wished to have one. Quite apart from the enjoyment of huddling around a fire, it also served to discourage the mosquitoes, of which there were sufficient to be annoying. This was amazing for September, but

more or less par for the course this year, El Nino having delayed everything by a month.

Alpine starts were forbidden on this trip, and the summit day saw a relaxing 8:15 am departure. We pushed up the steep slopes immediately behind the lake, but in retrospect it would have been better to have simply followed the creek, which we did on the descent. The peak is well hidden and didn't become obvious until we'd climbed the bench to Bighorn Lake, at which point the saddle to the northwest of the lake, referred to in Secor, was very evident. Unlike much of the climbing in the area, which is notorious for loose rock, the northeast ridge, leading up from this saddle, was excellent rock, offering great class 3 climbing. Route finding posed some fun challenges, and Larry's comment on arriving at the summit was "That was some gnarly class 3". On the summit, the air was so clear that we could see the coast range off in the distance. There was a splendid view of the Mono Recesses and, a little further off, Abbott, Mills, Dade and Gabb.

On the way down to Bighorn Lake we made a slight detour and climbed up to check out Rohn Pass, which is the route over the Divide to Tulley Hole. The north side of the pass still had quite a bit of snow which was steep enough and hard enough to make ice axes extremely useful if one wished to cross over the pass, even in the middle of the day. An early morning crossing probably would have required crampons also. Tricky as it might have been, it was nothing compared to the snow on the other side of the saddle mentioned earlier. This was really ugly, with a vast amount of snow still remaining, very steep at the top with no way of avoiding it. Anybody wanting to cross over here would be in for a nasty surprise.

With plenty of time at our disposal we relaxed at the shores of Bighorn Lake, soaking up the sun and enjoying the greenery. The shores had beautiful fine sand and the whole setting lulled the mind into a peaceful dreamlike state. We'd come for peace, and we'd found it!

The evening was a rerun of the previous one, although there was more wind so the bug problem was less. It died down overnight and the temperature dropped enough to form ice throughout my water bottle. As we hiked out we passed through one of the most sudden temperature changes I've ever experienced. In the last 10' or so dropping down to lake level the temperature dropped dramatically, and the grass surrounding the lake was covered in frost. We were extremely grateful for having slept above this cold air trap, which was not at all evident from looking at the local topography. Another reason I was glad I was overruled about camping there.

The hike out was only 3 hours, which left us with plenty of time to have lunch at the jetty before the ferry arrived at 1:30. There was quite a wind, and the air was sufficiently cold that sitting in the sun was pleasant but in the shade meant putting on a parka. Parkas were definitely required on the boat ride back as we were headed into the wind and speed of the boat added to it.

There were only 7 of us going back and the operator asked us to spread out to even the load. Elmer tried to do the decent thing and moved forward, but it meant there were too many up front, with the result the bow was too low and the next reasonable wave (whipped up by the wind) broke over the boat and gave Chris a most unwelcome shower.

Coming out on a Sunday meant there was much more traffic and I was amazed at the number of large trucks on the Kaiser Pass road, some towing large boats.

We must have come across at least 10 between Edison and Huntington Lakes. To their credit, every driver pulled over and let us pass them - I wish slow drivers on many other highways were as courteous.

-- Peter Maxwell

## North Peak Left Couloir

September 27, 1998

John Zazzara and I set up to climb the left couloir on North Peak. We hiked in from Saddlebag Lake trailhead Saturday afternoon and camped by Cascade Lake.

Sunday morning was foggy but dry. We climbed the 1000 ft slope west of the lake to the base of the couloir. There is an excellent view of all 3 couloir from this point.

We roped up at the base of the left couloir (the steepest of the 3) and John start leading. First half pitch was relatively easy and required no protections. The ice was brittle in places and require careful planting of the ice tools before proceeding with the next step. Following this relatively easy pitch came 5 full length pitches with ice angle 45 to 50 degree. Conditions vary from solid water ice to partially consolidated snow. We used ice screws, snow pickets and rock protections at different places. The climb was enjoyable and protected, but also relentless and technical. I was wearing relatively soft boots and having difficulty front pointing. I used a technique of frontpointing with 1 foot and sidepointing with the other to let my feet rest from time to time. I am sure those boots would not do on anything steeper then that couloir. John lead the first 4 pitches, then I lead the 5 and last full pitch which was mostly on softer and slippery snow. I carefully kicked each step in the snow to get a good perch. I was also low on protections. I used the only picket I had about half way up, and slings though some rocks to setup a belay point at the top.

At one point one of John's ice tools flew out of his hand. It slid right next to me and down until it disappeared out of site at the bottom of the couloir. I had to resist the instinct of trying to reach for the tool with my hand, too many sharp edges on these tools. John was able to downclimb with one tool to me and then rappel all the way down to the bottom of the couloir to retrieve his tool. Next time we will use gloves with better grip. Also carrying a third tool may be a good idea.

The descent took us on the loose scree slope on the other side of the ridge. Then following the ridge proper to a relatively low angel snow field that allowed us to get back to our camp. The climb took 5-6 hours, not including the hike in and out.

-- Ron Karpel

## Everest: The Premiere!

Tuesday, October 27, 1998, 8:00 PM

This was the night! The night that I had been looking forward to for over two years. This was the grand opening of the Hackworth IMAX dome Theater and the premiere of the film "Everest" in the brand new Tech Museum of Innovation in San Jose. As a PCS member, an IMAX movie fan, an enthusiast for anything technological, and a staunch supporter of The Tech Museum of Innovation, this was a number of my passions rolled into one climactic event. When you go to see "Everest" you will be in awe!

For the past seven years, I have been a volunteer at The Tech Museum in its old prototype museum. All of us have followed the

evolution of The new Tech Museum and wondered what form it would finally take. It was quite exciting to learn that it would include an IMAX theater. Cirrus Logic founder and CEO Mike Hackworth donated \$1,000,000 to construct the theater which bears his name. I have followed the construction of the building closely ever since. I was there for the ground breaking ceremony on June 11, 1996 when Hewlett-Packard's Bill Hewlett dug the first shovel of dirt and then again for the "Topping Off The Tech" ceremony on July 23, 1997 when we celebrated the installation of the last steel beam.

At that time, the building was just a skeleton of steel beams, but you could clearly see the outline of the IMAX theater. A steel ring, that looked like a hula hoop tilted at an angle, outlined the location of the seating area. During the past six months, some of us have taken hard hat tours of the building as it neared completion. As a volunteer I have been in the building to help set up and beta test exhibits. While in the building during these occasions, I always took a sneak peak at the theater to monitor its progress. First there were just concrete steps where the seats would be installed. Then piece by piece, I observed the hanging of the perforated aluminum dome-shaped screen. Next the carpeting was installed and finally the seats.

Opening the new museum with "Everest" seemed out of the question. Many of us had heard about "Everest" and had seen several PBS shows about the making of this movie, but we had also heard that it was the most expensive of all of the IMAX films. Also the film was playing in other IMAX theaters after its premiere at the Boston Museum of Science in March. At that point I thought that I would need to see it in another city or wait a few years. Upon hearing that The Tech would open with "Everest" I became ecstatic. This was a masterpiece of booking on the part of The Tech Museum's staff!

Gretchen and I pulled up in front of the Tech at around 6:00 PM. With its mango paint and azure blue Mexican tile work, The Tech looked magnificent. Just a few days earlier construction crews had been sandblasting the sidewalk. It really went down to the wire. On display in front of the museum were an adult Yak and its calf. The premiere and celebration were scheduled to run until 10:00 PM with screenings at 6:30, 8:00, and 10:00 PM. We had made reservations for the 8:00 PM show.

Shortly before 8:00 PM we queued up for the show. Gretchen and I were first in line. It was all open seating. In any other showing, I will not be particular where I sit because all IMAX theater seats are good. For the premiere however, I had to sit in row G, seat 15. When the doors opened, I went for it and there was the inscription, "Robert Bynum gives this seat to all IMAX fans". This was my small contribution to the Capital Campaign. I will admit this was a bit of a splurge, but you only get to build a museum once.

I felt like a Muslim who had made a pilgrimage to Mecca, a Jew who was praying at the Wailing Wall, or a devout Catholic attending mass at the Vatican. With its turquoise side lighted screen, the IMAX theater has the aura of a cathedral. With its hemispheric dome screen it is somewhat like a planetarium. Music from "Everest" played in the background.

Before the movie Tech President Peter Giles introduced Ed Viesturs and Araceli Segarra. They showed us the actual camera that was used for the filming. It is specially designed and weighed 40 lbs. The film canister weighs 7 pounds and lasts for 90 seconds.

Numerous Silicon Valley dignitaries were present. Intel founder Gordon Moore and Adobe Systems founder John Warnock, and their respective families sat in the row in front of me. At the previous 6:00 PM show, Joan and Mike Hackworth had dedicated the theater. Many elected representatives were also present.

Shortly after 8:00 PM, the show started. With sounds of a symphony orchestra tuning up, the turquoise lighting dimmed and changed to sunset orange and red before completely going dark. At this point, the 7 channel, 44 speaker, 14,000 watt sound system roared to life with a demonstration that lit up the catwalks behind the screen and showed in very dramatic fashion the location of each of the seven speaker banks. Next came an opening sequence that looks like stars in the sky rotating overhead. Then came a sequence that looks like the travel through time scene in "2001 A Space Odyssey" ending with "The Tech" logo. Next we saw a preview of "The Living Sea" which is The Tech's next feature in April.

Now that we were all in the mood, "Everest" began. I will not spoil it for by describing every scene. I can not convey to you the experience of "Everest" or any IMAX film with words. It is like verbally describing the taste of chocolate without actually eating it. All I can say is that it was truly awesome. You will leave the theater a different person and you will want to see this film again. Just to give you a taste, I will describe some of the scenes.

In the opening scene, Jamling Tenzing Norgay narrates while we see the inside of a Buddhist Temple, Everest, and Norgay practicing self arrest. I actually had thoughts of reaching for my ice ax! We are then introduced to climbers Ed Viesturs and Araceli Segarra with their own narratives. Ed Viesturs is shown mountain biking with his wife in Zion National Park. An aerial shot makes you feel like you are about to fall down a cliff. Lots of ooohs from the audience. We then see Araceli Segarra hanging from a rope as she climbs a rock off of Baha California. She is an accomplished rock climber and is the first Spanish woman to climb Mt. Everest. In this scene we are given the feeling of sliding down the rope along a cliff to the ocean.

On the actual climb of Everest there are scenes of the ice climbing on the Khumba Ice Fall, crossing the crevasses with ladders, and of course great panoramas from the peak. Also the film documents the tragedy of the other climbers who were killed and shows what looks like a re-enactment of the climbers getting caught in the storm. Ed describes how the tragedy affected everyone. They almost turned back. On the actual peak, we see two of the climbers coming up the Hillary Step to the summit with Makalu in the background.

I could go on describing the movie. You will just have to see it for yourself. During the movie I whispered to Gretchen, "You have done Mt. Hoffman. How would you like to climb Everest". Her response was, "I just did".

I also had three additional tickets for a private showing two days later on Thursday night October 29. I wanted to see the movie again and I just had to share it with other PCSers. I called several people. Many had other plans or I couldn't reach them. Finally I reached Aaron Schuman and he said he could go. You will need to get Aaron's true feelings from him, but he was quiet after the show. He said that he was blown away and was speechless.

When you see this film at The Tech, I want you to know that it took an extraordinary amount of effort to make this film and to open the museum on time. After the disaster that killed eight climbers, the film crew was very demoralized and almost turned back. Opening the museum also took a tremendous amount of effort and cooperation amount many different parties. Although The Tech raised \$96 million for its construction, it was not easy in

the early years. This has been a dream since 1977. During the recession several years ago, it was difficult to raise money and a new museum was in doubt. Once under construction, the museum fell three months behind due to foundation problems. This was made up with massive amounts of overtime.

I really encourage all of you to see this great film. It is breathtaking, spectacular, and has dramatic uplifting music. It is really great that a that a good movie can be made without glorifying drug use, teenage sex, and violence. It will play at The Tech through April. Come and enjoy the show!

-- Bob Bynum, Scree Editor

## Aaron Schuman Adds

Everest was an astonishing work of cinematography. I've never seen a mountaineering picture like it. The detail and depth of the image and the quality of contrast made the film remarkably lifelike. I expect to see Everest again, and I recommend it for everybody who loves mountains.

-- Aaron Schuman

## Disaster Peak

November 1, 1998. 10047 feet

On this cold wintry Sunday in the late fall, the four of us, Ron Karpel, Stephen Meier, Scott Kreider and I, Arun Mahajan took a walk to the top of Disaster Peak in the Carson Iceberg Wilderness. The trailhead is accessed by the Clark Fork Road that is 18 miles east of Strawberry on Highway 108. The start of the trail is a short distance before this road's end and is on the left, about 9 miles from the turnoff.

It was raining and cold as we started hiking at 9.30 am. The trail is good and we remained on it till we passed a big meadow and then a smaller meadow, following the directions in Pete Yamagata's Northern Sierra Guide. There is a faint trail that was a little hard to find that takes of on the right, after the small meadow but before a marked trail junction and before two large rocks. The trail was still hard to find due to the rain and the fog but it got much better later on but then got obscured again and seemed to dead end into a cliff-side but it was visible faintly as it went up steeply on the right and the mud was very slick there, needing us to use ski poles for support. As we went up further, the trail improved again but visibility was very poor. The rain had stopped but the clouds persisted. At around the 8800' contour we headed up left, cross-country, on the sage covered hillside. We got intermittent hail and a few small flurries and the snow cover was continuous once we topped onto the southwest ridge of the peak. An occasional break in the clouds showed us the snow covered summit. The frost on the pines and the calf-deep snow on the ground gave it all the feel of a winter climb. Ron put on his snowshoes but the rest of us plodded on the ridge in the snow. The summit hump is a steep talus slope. We summited at 1.30 pm. We could not see the register due to the snow and it was cold and windy and we stayed there for no more than 10 minutes before staggering down to the plateau for lunch. Now the weather improved and we had a pleasant walk out and we were back at the car at 4.30 pm making it a 7 hour day in all.

The summit is very pretty and makes for a good spring or fall trip. If the amount of snow on this peak is any indicator, then we are in for an early winter.

Pete Yamagata's guide and some SPS trip reports have a lot more detail on this trail and there are other route options as well, but our route seemed to be the shortest, albeit steeper.

-- Arun Mahajan

# Ice Climbing in Lee Vining Canyon

November 15, 1998

Sunday morning we met John at the Nicely's Cafe in Lee Vining. Our plan was to go in to climb the frozen water fall in Lee Vining. If there is no ice, plan "B" was skiing on the gated highway 120.

The night before we sleep near June Lake, and the temperature was a balmy 33 degree. I couldn't imagine any ice forming anywhere except in a refrigerator. To top it, there was no snow anywhere around Lee Vining. We quickly devised plan "C". We will hike up highway 120 and peer into the water fall through my hi power binoculars. Then we proceed and climb or snowshoe mount Gaylor.

We started trudging along 120. Bob and John lead and Nancy and I trailed behind. 3 1/2 miles and 1500 feet later, just before we hit camp-9, we got the first view of the falls. There was ice. A closer inspection with my binoculars convinced us that they are climbable. We returned to the cars, and drove into the PG&E power plants parking area. Got all our gear together and hiked the boulder covered canyon towards the ice. Have you ever gone bolder hopping in plastic boots with 4" of snow over the boulders? It was 2 PM when we got to the base of the ice. I guess calling them waterfalls is a bit of exaggeration. The water simply flows over the rocks, and when it gets cold enough, it freezes. The sources for the water is primarily a leak in the PG&E aqueduct that supplies water to the power station. More water comes from melting snow up above the canyon. More water comes from melting snow up above the canyon. The area is immediately below camp-9.

We followed exiting foot steps in the snow to the top of the falls, and setup our top rope. Now it was time to climb, and it was already 3 PM.

I went first. I climbed about 50 ft before my calf muscle started aching. On my second climb I tightened my shoe laces and had no problem. I quickly return down and we all took turns at the ice

Our pitch was around 120 ft tall, but because of poor ice coverage we could only climb about ft. I went first. I climbed about 50 ft before my calf muscle started aching. On my second climb I tightened my shoelaces and had no problem. I quickly return down and we all took turns at the ice. John was able to climb almost to the top going left, but he had to stop when the rope put him into a pendulum situation. I tried to go straight up, but the ice was too thin in places, and my ice tools were hitting the rock. Bob, who was ice climbing for the first time did an excellent job, and he was wearing relatively soft lather boots.

Soon the threat of darkness drove us back down and to the cars. We didn't want to cross the boulder field in the dark. John says that usually the snow covers all the boulders and one can snowshoe all the way without problems.

Participants: Bob Suzuki, John Zazzara, Nancy Fitzsimmons, and scribe

-- Ron Karpel

## Death Valley Trip

November 15-23, 1998.

This could be subtitled "The Hardley Boys" after the Hardy Boys, but more on that later.

Since I was scheduled to go to Comdex in Las Vegas I decided on a driving trip though Death Valley to see the Leonid Meteors

Monday and Tuesday (nice- but not the awesome display that is was in Asia) away from city lights and at some decent elevation above sea level. A little more on the meteor showers: The persistence of the meteors was amazing, some lasting to the count of four to six seconds. The intensity was awesome with some clearly lighting up the horizon! However, the anticipated frequency of 10-15 per minute never materialized...more of the order of 5-6 per minute. But still enjoyable and made the long seven hour drive very worthwhile.

Stopping at the Wild Rose campground (free) Sunday I did Telescope as first a night climb on Monday morning early at 1 AM, Nov. 16, 1998, from Mahogany flats trail-head to view the meteor shower from a higher vantage point. (I camped at Wildrose at 4100 since it would be warmer and less windy at this time of year rather than at 8100 feet; unfortunately a "bad" decision' but more on that later.

The skys were perfectly clear and temps were a crisp 30 deg F by 3 AM. (I went to bed at 5 PM and arose at midnight each night to see the show). Daytime temps were a perfect t-shirt and shorts day at about 70 deg F. and clear.

I reascended Telescope the next day (2hrs 45 min- snow free other than 1-2" of frozen snow/ice that was never an impediment) Since the next day was clear and I was near I ascended Bennet and Rogers; and then Wildrose on day 3. I carried only a water bottle and a power bar each day running up most of the way as the trails were quite easy in the snow free conditions.

During the meteor viewing on the second night I dozed from my stargazing vantage point n a peaklet overlooking Wildrose campground and was awoken (I was the only party there for 3 days) by voices saying something about a pipe bomb. A few minutes later I was rattled and totally scared beyond belief as a huge explosion went off beneath the cliff I was sitting on...a fireball erupted in front of me as I was diving for cover and then the shock wave hit and I was rattled slightly. Being half-asleep as I recounted to the authorities a little later I am sure it seemed worse than it was...I was not thankfully cut, bleeding or injured from the explosion other than psychologically, so I counted my lucky stars there! I shouted down and they said they were trying to light a camp-fire and the charcoal lighter-fluid went off/blew-up.

Almost simultaneously the Ranger's lights went on about 1/2 mile away from the campground and in a few minutes he appeared and took charge of interrogating and citing the two individuals I later learned were from LA. He also confiscated a "lot" of flash powder, pipe fittings, and several bottle of chemicals. He made extensive use of his nightvision goggles after the incident to observe the individuals after the citation. (It carries a mandatory court appearance.) He could not legally search their vehicle other than what was in plain view!

After calming down in about 2 hours I kept a leery eye on my nefarious campground partners until they finally fell asleep at 4 AM. I took to my sleeping bag exhausted and jittery. I awoke 2 hrs later, disbanded camp and moved on to deeper into the Canyon.

But coming back to the subtitle, these guys hardly had the sense to look around to see if the campground was occupied, they hardly had the brains to see that there were vehicles (Ranger and civilian) in plain view; and they hardly had the common sense to do their nasties in a public (Federal!) national park, which carries stricter laws about firearms and explosives than the state apparently. (I spoke at length with the park Ranger the next morning). Finally, with over 10,000 square miles of desert these clowns could have popped off there explosives anywhere else with complete impunity. Talk about the need for punishment...or where were they when the brains were being passed out...and this right after the news report of the little boy getting stabbed at the rest-stop or campground(?) over the weekend.

It is much safer to hike in and climb mountains!! I have decided this car-base camp stuff is just too dangerous for me!!!

Telescope without the snow and the bombs-bursting-in-air is a class 1 "walk-up" (as well as Rogers, Bennet and Wildrose).

I spent the days after Comdex at Furnace Creek exploring several canyons in the splendid 85 degree temps and lush 55 degree nights!

All-in-all a beautiful snow- and rain-free week interlude for November. There is talk of a very dry winter now re "La Nina year"; but there will always be water for that amazingly green golf-course at Furnace creek that always overwhelms my senses everytime I see it.. Talk about conspicuous consumption!

By-the way- out of the three campgrounds at Furnace Creek (Sunset, Texas Springs and Furnace creek), Furnace is clearly the nicest with it being well-treed and somewhat larger spaces. (DV now being a National Park off-road biving is more strictly regulated. But the rangers there seem to share a very intelligent "out-of-sight out-of-mind" philosophy. So if you can drive/hike to somewhere where you can't be seen (officially now called a "view-pollutant") they will ignore your "obvious" camp intents. Very practical and enjoyable attitude.

-- Rich Calliger

## 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.**

### Shasta

Peaks: Shasta (via Clear Creek), Class 3  
Dates: Dec 5/6  
Contact: Tony Cruz, Dennis Hiipakka

### Mount Whitney

Peak: Mount Whitney (14,494) Class 2-3, Ice Axe & crampons  
Dates: December 20-23 (Sun-Wed)  
Contact: George Van Gordon  
This will be a three day trip up Mt. Whitney via Whitney Portal. We will drive up as far as we can and then park. Call leader for details.

### Mt Davis

Peak: Mt Davis (12311) Class 2 / snow  
Dates: 28-30 December (Mon.-Wed)  
Map: Devils Postpile 15' quad

Contact: Steve Eckert, eckert@netcom.com, 650-508-0500

Co-Contact: Craig Taylor, ctaylor@calicotech.com

Get rid of holiday calories, and prepare for New Year's hangovers with a trip to the high country! Starting at the June Lake area, we'll go past Thousand Island Lake to the saddle between Banner and Davis, then savor views of the backside of Lyell and Rodgers as we saunter up the summit plateau. Near the saddle ice axes may be required, but the terrain is reasonable elsewhere. Skis or snowshoes could work, but there are quite a few miles involved so skis are favored. Definitely a full three day trip. Shovel, avalanche beacon, experience are required.

### Mt Baldy

Peaks: Mt. Baldy/Gorgonio

Dates: Jan. 22, 23, 24

Contact: Tony Cruz

## Gear Comments

Occasionally we see discussions about gear on the PCS e-mail broadcast list. Since winter is coming up, I feel that it is beneficial to publish these two discussions on gaiters and ice ax length

### Super Gaiters

Regarding uninsulated supergaiters, I've found **Berghaus** to be very well made and durable. They lasted 8-10 years of hard use (backcountry skiing) before the cordura started getting holes. I know ski in Black Diamonds, which I would rate slightly lower. With my setup, the BD's nylon tends to crease above the rand, which concentrates a lot of abrasion there from crusty snow. As a result, I wore a hole in those in only a 2-3 years.

-- Butch Suits

I enjoy the warmth and quality of my **Wild Line's** (Thinsulate insulated), though you may have a hard time finding them. I think American Alpine Institute in WA sells them. Made with 5.10 rubber. Very warm.

-- Michael Gordon

### Ice Ax Length

A long ice axe (80 cm and above) makes a nice walking stick. But that's not the main purpose of an ice axe. A long ice axe is unwieldy on moderate slopes (say, 30 degrees) because you are constantly raising your arm high over your head to plant the axe. On steeper slopes, where an overhand swing is used to plant the axe, the long shaft becomes even more unwieldy, and you lose a lot of leverage.

A short axe (55 cm or below) is good on moderate and steeper slopes and particularly good when an overhand swing is required. On shallow slopes you may find it difficult to plant because it isn't long enough to reach the snow/ice unless you bend down or lean over. It's also possible for the spike of a really short axe to jam into your body on a bumpy self-arrest.

Personally, I favor a 65 cm axe. For shallow snow slopes I use my hiking poles, unless there is a danger of an uncontrolled slide, in which case the ice axe comes out.

-- Mark Wallace

For technical (frontpoint crampon) climbing, "hatchet" length is better than "axe" length. Swing with the wrist instead of the whole arm.

For general mountaineering (self arrest), I like to hold the head of the axe just ABOVE my collar bone and make sure the OTHER hand is right outside my hip as the axe crosses in front of my chest. Too many people size axes on overall height, but it's really the length of just your torso that matters. Mark's point about jabbing yourself is excellent - sometime things happen while arresting that you wouldn't expect. An axe too short to go all the way across your body can be hard and/or dangerous for arrests.

Anyone want to start the debate on wrist loops? (sorry I asked) If you use one, make sure you can get your hand all the way down to the point (opposite the head) when you need to arrest. Consider how you will discard the axe in a truly uncontrolled fall or avalanche - having it bouncing around on a leash can do some real damage.

-- Steve Eckert

Paul Wilson has strong opinions on the axe and its care and use.

### **Length Sizing:**

1) Hold it in your hand and put the spike on your toe with a slight bend in your elbow. This would be fine for normal lower 48 climbs excluding the Cascades where the slopes are gentile and all you need is self arrest security and ability to walk as with a cane.

2) For steeper angles including glacier travel get an axe several inches (say 3") shorter than the above.

You will trash the long axe long before the short one as it is much more useful and comfortable to use. Both lengths are long enough for safe and effective self arrest.

Both axes mentioned above can be rigged with a correct tether to allow chopping steps above and below without disconnecting the tether from your body.

3) Axes shorter than the above are called ice tools and are used for near vertical climbing, and as mentioned below are very hazardous during a self arrest. And may not be effective at all. I cant imagine using a 55cm ice tool for self arrest as it is narrower than my chest. If you look at Fig 13-26 in Freedom you will see that the axe goes from one shoulder to the opposite waist during the self arrest. For me that would be around 70cm minimum.

My axes are 80 and 85cm. The tools I use are 50...cm, although I have used shorter ones.

Axes come in lengths of 53(rare) 58 (typical) to 80cm these days and usually come without a tether. Ice tools come in lengths from 43 to 58cm with leashes sold separately and are designed for ice climbing not mountaineering.

### **Ice Axe Tether:**

First let me say that I'll take the damage from the axe any time lest I be without the axe when I stop or lose it during the slide. My clothing testifies to this practice as there are many patches but the wounds have always been superficial. The axe is a primary life saving device and needs to be available. It is common to fall and have the axe jarred from your grip but you can recover if you have a tether. This damage is one of the hazards of doing demos for the students in my mountaineering classes.

Never use a wrist strap as it limits your ability to use the axe with either hand. Use a waist tether clipped to either the pack waist strap or your harness. The reason you need to use either hand is that you are constantly changing your traverse direction and the

axe must always be in the up hill hand for at the ready for self arrest.

The rig I use is effective and can be constructed as follows: Materials include 10 feet of 9/16" tubular webbing (finely woven is best), a broken bicycle spoke, Shoe Goo, 5 feet of 1/8" shock cord like the material inside your tent poles, electrical tape, & needle nose pliers.

Any how, you tie the web at the head under the adze with a re woven figure 8 knot. Tie an overhead knot with a loop at the end of the axe shaft making a generous loop so it will fit with your winter mitts and over mitts. Then tie a loop at the end of the tether with a smaller loop just big enough to for your largest waist strap plus a little. Locate this loop so you can swing the axe at full extent way above your head with the strap still attached at the waist when fully extended. Now you discover that the thing is so long it drags on the ground and catches your knee. The solution is to use the spoke and thread the shock cord thru the webbing and cinch it up. use the Shoe Goo to keep the elastic knot from coming untied. (I use some electrical tape to hold the knot in place until it cures). The shock cord does not pass thru the webbing knot as that would make the web knot less effective.

I tie the shock cord at the axe head and bypass the middle loop then tie it at the waist loop. Stretch the thing together until you can walk with out the thing hanging below your knee. Redo the stretch after the first use in the field to get it correct.

**WARNING:** Do not damage any webbing threads when inserting the shock cord inside the webbing. I used needle nose pliers to open a hole big enough to accept the spoke. The nut on the spoke holds the shock cord and the broken end must be filed smooth to avoid catching threads from the webbing.

The above is not likely to be the final answer as more and more of us make the rigging, but I have used this system for many years and it is common to see this rigging on the Nepal glaciers and else where. It sure is nice to know that your primary life saving device is safely within your grab at any time.

Try the tether you will like it.

### **Other Ice Axe Hints:**

Make sure the pick has positive clearance per Freedom Fig 13-3 (controversial ??) Use a file (not very effective) or a grinder being careful not to overheat the metal and screwup the heat treat.

-- Sharpen the pick and adze to be effective on hard ice.

--- Tape the head of the axe with electricians splicing tape the an over wrap with low temp electrical tape for durability to prevent frostbite in the palm of your hand.

-- Interesting subject for a device which need some careful thought before use.

-- Paul Wilson

Editor's Note: Paul Wilson is a member of the Colorado Mountain Club and lives in Colorado Paul teaches mountaineering classes.

**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, rope may be used.

Class 4: Requires rope belays.

Class 5: Technical rock climbing.

**Deadline for submissions to the next Scree is Sunday 12/27/98. Meetings are the second Tuesday of each month.**



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