



World Wide Web Address: <http://www.climber.org/pcs>

## Next General Meeting

**Date:** Tuesday, September 12

**Time:** 7:30 PM

**Program:** "Climbing Mt Rainier: the Kautz Glacier Route" Ron Karpel, Joe Budman, and Maxym Runov..

**Directions:** Peninsula Conservation Center  
3921 East Bayshore Rd, Palo Alto, CA

From 101: Exit at San Antonio Road, Go East to the first traffic light, Turn left and follow Bayshore Rd to the PCC on the corner of Corporation Way. A sign marking the PCC is out front. Park behind.

Deadline for submissions to the next Scree is Sunday 9/24/2000 Meetings are the 2nd Tuesday of each month.

## Wilderness First Aid

To help trip leaders and would-be leaders get the required First Aid certificate, the Chapter sponsors a First Aid class each quarter, based on a nationally recognized first aid text, but with added material and emphasis on wilderness situations with no phone to dial 911. The next First Aid classes will be Saturday, Sept 23 and Sunday, Sept 24 at the Peninsula Conservation Center in Palo Alto (from Bayshore/Hwy. 101 at San Antonio, turn toward the Bay; turn left at 1st stoplight, then right at Corporation Way to park behind PCC). Class is 8:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. (1 hour for your bag lunch) and is limited to 12 people. To sign up, send choice of day, and a check for \$40 with a stamped, self-addressed business-sized envelope to: Health Education Services, 200 Waverly, Menlo Park, CA 94025. Cancellations get partial refund if a substitute attends. For more information, call 650-321-6500.

• Marg Ottenberg

## Chapter Picnic

The Loma Prieta Chapter is having a picnic on Sunday, October 8 in Alum Rock Park between 11:30 am and 4 pm. for Sierra Club members and their guests. This is a great opportunity to meet Chapter officers, staff, leaders from other activity sections, conservation and political activists, and other Sierra Club

members. Bring a friend and enjoy a fall afternoon under the oaks in this historic park. RSVP to John Wilkinson at (408) 947-0858 or [jjwilkinsonca@earthlink.net](mailto:jjwilkinsonca@earthlink.net).

## 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.

### Mt. Goddard

**Peak:** Mt. Goddard (13,568 ft.), East Ridge  
**Rating:** Class 3  
**Dates:** Sat-Mon; September 2-4  
**Contacts:** Cecil Anison ([cecilann@earthlink.net](mailto:cecilann@earthlink.net))  
Kai Wiedman (650)347-5234

Mt. Goddard is one of the dominant peaks of the High Sierra. This solitary giant's position west of the crest makes it visible from many points in the range. We will climb the more interesting East Ridge, first climbed by Walter Starr, Jr., who wrote the definitive guide to the John Muir trail. You may recall that he died while attempting a solo climb of Michael Minaret and his body was later recovered by none other than Norman Clyde. This climb entails a very demanding 40 mile round trip.

### Kearsarge, University, & Independence

**Peaks:** Kearsarge (12,618'), Independence (11,742'), University (13,589'), Class: 1-3  
**Dates:** September 15-17, Fri-Sun  
**Map:** Kearsarge Peak, Mt Williamson 7.5' topos  
**Contact:** Bob Suzuki, [rsuzuki@dsptlg.com](mailto:rsuzuki@dsptlg.com), [bobszk@bigfoot.com](mailto:bobszk@bigfoot.com), (W) 510-657-7555 x223, (H) 408-259-0772

Try these 3 late summer day hikes from the Onion Valley campground at 9200', and enjoy the company of your fellow PCSers in the quieter eastern Sierra. Co-organizer wanted.

### Tenth Annual Yosemite Family Camp

**Peaks:** To be determined (Looking for hike/climb leaders)  
**Dates:** September 23-24  
**Contact:** Cecil Anison ([cecilann@earthlink.net](mailto:cecilann@earthlink.net))  
(408)395-4525

The trip will be in Yosemite Valley this year and family members are welcome, as usual. Plan on lots of fun as we hike, climb, explore, and commune in this spectacular setting. Space is limited to three reserved campsites so be sure to sign up early.

# Haeckle and Wallace

July 30, 2000

On Saturday, July 29, Dee and I headed up towards Echo Lake from Lake Sabrina. The trail essentially goes to Hungry Packer Lake. On the flat open area just below Hungry Packer an unmarked use trail takes off to the left towards the Echo Lake drainage. We guessed this was our turn and headed off in that direction. The use trail peters out pretty quickly so we put our packs down near Sailor Lake (formerly Drunken Sailor Lake) and decided to look around. We ran into Charlie Rankin of the Bay Area Day Hikers who informed us that there was no camping near Echo Lake and that the Haeckle-Wallace environs could be accessed from Sailor Lake by going up the grey bumpy ridge that drops down to Sailor Lake. This ridge separates the Echo Lake drainage from the Hungry Packer Lake drainage.

We decided to camp at Sailor Lake and Dee went up the gray bumpy ridge to check it out and after a couple of hours came back with the info that the ridge would work out. This looks like it saves a tedious chug up from Echo Lake on big tallus. Sunday we started out at 5:30 AM and headed up the ridge. This ends on the tallus above Echo Lake. Climb up and right on the tallus to get into the drainage that comes from Wallace and Haeckle. This passes a nice water outlet below a moraine. Ascend the moraine above the outlet to a "depressed" tarn that is at the base of Haeckle. There is some snow on the moraine which can be skirted on the right side by sidestepping on scree (ugh).

Once on the moraine above the "depressed" tarn there appears to be two possible ascents of Haeckle. The first is to go past the tarn on the right and ascend the south face and then moving left towards the more broken area. The other option is to go up and left to the Wallace-Haeckle Col and cruise the ridge. Lacking Prozac, we decided to avoid the "depressed" tarn and headed for the Col. Near the Col we then angled up and right to get on the ridge line. This is followed from zero to 100 feet below the ridge line all the way across until it starts to angle upwards. The snow from the permanent snowfield did not reach the ridge line anywhere and was easily avoided. The traverse itself is class 2 with one or two moderate class 3 moves thrown in.

Once the ridge is finished the route angles up in the chute that appears to split Haeckle. Follow this to about 15 feet from the top and look for a narrow chimney on the left. Go up this, step around the back, and go up a few moderate third class moves and there is the summit. One hour to the summit from the Col.

We retreated back down the ridge and headed up towards Wallace. We stayed on the big tallus until the top. This looks like a much better way than the scree slog 100 feet to the left, however, there are a few hard fourth class moves near the top. These can be avoided by shifting further to the left sooner and getting in the scree. The route down goes down the scree and gets back on the moraine. Both peaks 10 hours round trip from Sailor Lake.

The south ridge route on Mt Haeckle is an outstanding moderate third class route. Most of it is second class with some low third class thrown in. In only one or two sections was there loose scree that caused some thought and concern. The summit block area is fun moderate third class. Most of the rock is typical Sierra rock...sorta loose, sorta solid. The views from the summit are outstanding, especially of the dark, enormous mass of Mt Darwin. When looking down from the ridge it appears that the ledges on the south face would work also, however, it looked like there was a lot of sand on them. Mt Wallace is a pile of junk. It

can be made a little more interesting by sticking closer to the north ridge. Crampons were not needed on this trip. An ice axe was handy but not required. It appears that the camping at Echo Lake is nonexistent but that the intermediate area below Echo has some trees and flat spots that would work if one should decide to pack in that far.

• *Rick and Dee Booth*

## Climborama 2000

The fifth annual PCS climborama took place in the Kearsarge Pass area during the first week of August. The main organizer of this year's trip, Bob Suzuki, was unable to go because of a foot injury, so Steve Eckert took over as leader and the party included Tim Hult, Aaron Schuman, Charles Schafer, Joe Budman, Linda Roman, Richard Carey, and your scribe Jim Ramaker.

Steve, Joe, and I spent a pleasant night at Deadman Summit on Highway 395 and then met Linda and Richard at the Onion Valley trailhead. (By the way, the name of the side road at Deadman Summit has been changed from "Glass Flow Road" to "Obsidian Dome Road.") The five of us hiked over Kearsarge Pass and down to Bubbs Creek, camping in the forest at a bear box across from East Vidette Peak (12,350), our first objective. On the hike in, Joe split off and bagged the first peak of the trip, Mt. Gould (13,005). After supper, Tim Hult strolled into camp, having left the trailhead later in the morning. The evening was very warm for being over 10,000 feet, and the bugs were moderately bad.

Sunday, we tackled the east ridge of East Vidette, gaining the crest of the ridge by circling around to the left (south) of a huge dome-like gendarme and then climbing a short airy class-3 section. After that we had a very pleasant hour of class 2-3 ridge running, and the top was ours by 10:30, three hours after leaving camp. We descended by a more direct route down a scree gully on the north side of the east ridge. Footing in the gully was unpleasant, with loose scree on top of slabs and bedrock.

After a rest in camp, we cached the bulk of our food in the bear box and hiked cross-country to the west to circle around to Vidette Lakes. We found a gorgeous camp at the lake closest to East Vidette Peak, and for the second day in a row, we had plenty of time to relax in camp in the evening. This was a welcome contrast to past climboramas, when we were often on the go until 7 or 8 p.m. Tim even had time to set up his fishing rod and catch four nice trout, which he then cooked and shared with those of us not yet asleep. Around this time, Aaron and Charles appeared, having hiked in a day after the rest of us. So our group of eight was finally complete, just in time for Monday's attempt on Deerhorn (13,265), our first really interesting peak.

We got up at 5:30 am and at 7 started hiking up the beautiful alpine valley leading up to Deerhorn. Deerhorn is a twin peak, with northwest and southeast peaks separated by a steep snow couloir. The route goes up a buttress on the northwest peak, then crosses over a saddle to the slightly higher southeast peak. It's surprisingly easy if you go just the right way, but steep rock abounds if you get even slightly off route.

By 10 we were picking our way up a steep, loose, scree slope to gain the buttress. This was the hardest part of the climb, particularly with our large group, as we were continually sending down missiles and getting in each others' fall lines. The best way to climb this section, which Richard Carey discovered on the descent, is to start about 500 yards right of the toe of the buttress and traverse gradually up and left, aiming for a weakness in the cliffs with dark rock about 100 yards right of the toe. This route

has the added advantage for a group of keeping people spread out horizontally.

Once we gained the buttress, the climbing got much better -- moderate class-3 on solid slabs and boulders. We continued up the buttress for 1000 feet or so until we were actually above the saddle, then traversed left over to it. From the sandy saddle, we circled around the summit tower to the right, cut back to the left across a second, higher saddle, and then circled back to the right up to the summit. From the first saddle, the route forms an "S" shaped pathway of class 2-3 climbing. Deviate from this route and you'll find big air. We summited at noon and relaxed in the warm, windless day -- at over 13,000 feet, it was actually too warm. Smoke from the fire at the southern end of the Sierras obscured the distant views, but we could still see plenty of inviting peaks.

The descent went smoothly, and by 2 we were relaxing in a small patch of grass in the boulder field below the peak. Aaron, Joe, Tim, and I then split off to climb West Vidette (12,560), a mundane scree slog with little to recommend it except an exposed, foot-wide summit ridge at the very top. (If you prefer, you can easily avoid this ridge and stay on scree.) This second peak made for a long day, with the summit at 5:30 and camp at 7:30. We'd seen quite a few clouds during the day, and that night we had a light rain shower right at midnight, confirming that the weather was a bit weird.

Tuesday morning we all retraced our steps back to the bear box on Bubbs Creek, where we discovered our food had been attacked not by bears but by human thieves. Fortunately they only skimmed off a few goodies such as energy bars and Steve's gourmet Costco muffins, and didn't take enough to affect our plans. Aggravating nevertheless.

At this point we split up again -- Aaron and Charles to climb East Vidette, Tim and Linda to head up the Muir Trail and find a campsite for us all, and Steve, Richard, Joe, and I to tackle the west face of Center Peak (12,760). This was in keeping with Steve's new post-list-finish philosophy of climbing familiar peaks by new routes.

Access to the west face is barred by a 200' high, mile-long cliff across the bottom of the face. The guidebook says to take a chute 100 yards right of the left edge of the face, but no such chute exists. After some debate, we headed for an apparent chute at least 500 yards from the left edge. This chute is almost invisible from the north on the Muir Trail, but very obvious from the south, and has a dark indentation on its right side. We climbed up the sandy chute, passing a class-3 section a few hundred feet up and gaining access to the huge scree terrace on the left side of the west face.

From here we traversed up and right toward the steep slabs and ribs on the right side of the west face. I kept wanting to climb to the skyline and get our bearings, even though I suspected there was nothing up there, but a jagged ridge with big air on the other side. But Steve insisted that we keep traversing, and his route finding was the key to the climb.

The guidebook says to climb up and right, pass through a tunnel, and climb class-3 slabs to the summit. We traversed across a rib and thought we might be stumped when we saw only steep rock beyond, but then Joe casually mentioned that he'd seen a tunnel a few yards back. The tunnel was a vertical elevator shaft with a 10-ton, car-sized block poised precariously over the top of it. Watermelon-sized blocks in the elevator shaft supplied the holds and appeared to hold up the 10-ton block, and most of them were loose. We climbed carefully up this threatening mess, and popped out of a hole at the top to gaze across a smooth class-4 slab. The slab was inclined at 50 degrees above a death fall, but it did have

a nice 2" crack into which you could insert your boot tips, plus a hairline crack above it for your fingertips. Led by Joe, all four of us soon crept across it, with a promise from Steve that we didn't have to come back this way because there was an easy descent on the east slope. We had a lightweight rope, but no one asked for a belay. As on the day before, dark clouds were building to the south, but we heard no thunder.

After the ledge, fun class-3 climbing led to the top, which has a leaning summit pinnacle somewhat like Bear Creek Spire. After a short rest, we quickly descended the sand and scree on the east slope and came down into Center Basin, one of the prettiest alpine valleys in the Sierras. Cross-country trek past a couple of lakes and through the timberline forest north of Center Peak brought us back to our packs by 5:30 and to our camp further south on the Muir trail about 6:30. Linda and Tim had found an impressive improved camp next to a creek at a bend in the Muir Trail, with even a massive homemade "bear box" constructed of logs and rocks. Charles and Aaron failed to show up in camp that evening, but we just figured they'd taken longer than expected to do East Vidette, which was indeed the case. (By the way, they also had a few goodies stolen out of the bear box the day after we did.)

Wednesday was the day for Stanford (13,963), the peak that everyone on the trip really wanted because it's a "deep peak" (far from the trailhead) with no easy routes. We woke at 5:30 and were rolling just after 6:30 on a cloudless Sierra morning. With four days of acclimatization and a strong, experienced party, what could stop us? We climbed up some beautiful slabs past a lake to a plateau at about 12,000' and then noticed an amazing site -- a huge, thick bank of clouds rolling in rapidly from the southeast. Eight hours ahead of schedule and coming from the opposite direction from typical Sierra thunderstorms, this was not a good sign. Clearly, we were in the path of one of those dreaded "tropical systems" that can bring bad weather to the Sierras for days. Were treated to camp, where a downpour between 8:30 and 10 a.m. kept us tent bound. Well, there are worse things than an early morning walk followed by a deep nap nestled in warm down with rain beating on the tent....

Around 10 we looked out of the tents and saw blue sky and bright sun, which on Wall Street is known as a "sucker rally." Linda, Tim, Joe, and I decided to hike up to Forester Pass (13,200), and if the weather continued improving, try for Junction Peak (13,888). When we got to the pass, the weather was deteriorating again and we could see waves of clouds and rain blowing in from the south, with a few far-off booms of thunder. We huddled under overhangs to wait out the rain, conversing with the Muir Trail hikers trooping over the pass. As had been the case all week, the air was unusually warm and winds were light, which made the storm basically quite mild. This was good luck indeed for some of the hikers -- we saw some Boy Scouts from Ridgecrest dressed in nothing more than blue jeans, cotton t-shirts, and plastic laundry bags with a hole cut in the top for raingear.

Around 1 Tim and Linda bailed out, but Joe and I sat around, enjoying the scenery and waiting out the weather. At last around 2:30, we took advantage of a partial clearing to at least check out the route over to Junction Peak. We quickly reached the sandy saddle between Ski Mountaineer's Peak and Junction, then climbed up about 50' and traversed into a wide scree gully. 50' up the gully we found a wide ledge that took us across a steep rib and into a second wide scree gully. Marking our crossing point, we climbed this gully for about 300' almost to the skyline, and found a second hidden ledge system that took us across another steep rib and into a third wide gully. Wandering up the left side of this gully on steep class-3 slabs brought us to the summit at 4

p.m. By intuition and luck, we'd found a great route to the top that avoided lots of hard climbing both above and below it. The sky was ominously dark with occasional light drizzle, but no thunder and no wind.

After some hero photos, we retraced our route to Forester Pass and hiked happily down the Muir Trail to camp, where we arrived at 7 p.m. Aaron and Charles had shown up, while Tim and Linda had left the trip and headed for the cars. With renewed enthusiasm, the six of us remaining planned a match with Stanford on Thursday. But the weather mocked these plans --at 4 a.m., an hour before our wake-up time, a spectacular lightning display woke us up, the huge flashes coming every 20 seconds or so and lighting up the entire basin we were camped in for a surreal instant Aaron got us up at 5:30 as the storm eased off, and a lengthy discussion ensued about what to do. We still had four days and a number of peaks left on our itinerary, but Steve and others felt the bad weather was going to hang on for days, so he decided to disband the trip and head home.

He, Aaron, and Charles headed for Kearsarge Pass and the cars; Richard set off solo for Mt. Bradley and University Pass; and Joe and I decided to head back to Center Basin and see if we could sneak up some more peaks between storms. After retracing our steps from Tuesday afternoon, we setup our tent at a wonderful spot above Golden Bear Lake. At 10 am, with clouds moving in, we set off up the valley toward Mt. Keith (13,977), the highest but also about the easiest peak on our itinerary. We climbed a rockslide of car-sized blocks up into the talus bowl northeast of the peak, then climbed up to 13,000' and huddled under an overhanging rock as the storm closed in and light rain and hail came down. When lightning started, we moved out onto the talus slope, since an overhang or cave on a mountainside is one of the worst possible places to be in a lightning storm.

For almost three hours, we sat and talked, watching a hard-edged thundercloud move over our heads and billow up into a gigantic mushroom cloud. After that came another bigger and darker thundercloud. Interestingly, most of the rain and lightning was at the trailing edge of these thunderclouds as they moved over us from the south. Around 3:30, with still no break in the occasional thunder, we gave up and decided to at least stroll over to the Sierra Crest and look down into Owens Valley before descending. Just then the lightning picked up its tempo to a strike every 20 seconds or so, sometimes smashing into the peaks just above us. Walking over to the crest suddenly didn't seem like a good idea, and we hurried down into the talus bowl, involuntarily ducking our heads when the lightning flashed, and 3-4 seconds later, the thunder cracked and boomed. We got hailed on pretty good for awhile, and then the rain let up as we walked backed down Center Basin to camp and got inside our tent. Then at 5:30 the sky cut loose in a drenching downpour, the heaviest we'd seen yet. Once again I drifted off into a blissful rain sleep, hoping our tent would stay dry in this downpour that felt like it would go on all night.

But then at 7 came a sudden unfamiliar silence, and we poked our heads out of the tent to see an amazing sight -- a clear sky with just a few shreds of clouds scudding away, and on the nearby peaks of Center, Keith, Bradley, and University, every rock and pebble standing out distinctly in clear golden light. Even better, for the first time all week, the air felt like real mountain air -- cold and fresh. Could it be that the wet, tropical system dogging us all week had finally lost out to a mass of cold mountain air? We went to sleep under sharp stars, hoping for the best.

Friday dawned cloudless, and about 15 degrees colder than previous mornings. We retraced our steps up Mt. Keith, and

finally found the best way through the rockslide of car-sized blocks. Going up from Center Basin to the talus bowl northeast of Mt. Keith are three wide tiers of cliffs-- the bottom two dark and water stained, and the upper one light grey. If you climb past the left edge of the first two cliff bands, a hidden scree ledge leads right, under the third cliff band, and from there you can follow the watercourse up, saving much strenuous climbing up big blocks.

We climbed past Thursday's high point at 9:30, then finally strolled across the sandy rock garden below the summit and up to the top at 10:30. Among the register entries was none other than Sir Edmund Hillary, from the mid-1980s. Views of nearby Williamson, Tyndall, and Junction were spectacular in the newly clear air. After a long rest and snack break, we descended back to Center Basin.

Instead of a short break in camp, my 23-year-old go-getter partner Joe suggested we head directly for Mt. Bradley (13,289), so around 1:30 we started up another tedious 1000' scree gully. From the top of the gully, the 50' high summit tower appears to be class 4/5 from all sides, but it has an amazing, 45-degree, 12" wide sand ramp hidden around the back. The register was an especially good one, extending from 1958 to the previous day, when Richard had left a greeting for Joe and me. We slid and surfed our way down the scree gully and arrived back at our tent at 4:30, for a three-hour round trip. It was great to have a few hours free in the evening again -- Joe rested in the tent reading his hardcover novel and gazing at the scenery, while I explored the nearby creeks and the lakeshore, observing the rocks, flowers, mosses, and darting trout. That night was our first cold, dry, bug-free night of the trip, so I celebrated by sleeping out under the Milky Way.

Saturday it was up and over University Pass (12,700). The route to the pass goes up a long narrow scree gully that heads for the second low spot south of University Peak (13,632). At 2/3 height, it pinches down and is blocked by a chock stone, which we passed via a strenuous class-3 move(me) or class-2 slabs off to the right (Joe). We got to the pass at 9:30, dropped our packs, and headed left to University Peak with just water bottles in our pockets and jackets around our waists. The key to this route is to climb about 30' feet from the pass, then traverse for about 1/4 mile without gaining any more altitude until you can see the summit mass, which is marked by a bunch of thin slabs sandwiched together vertically near the top. (Gaining altitude sooner will take you up and down several false summits.) Most of this traverse is class-1 sand, with some easy class-3 going up to the summit, so it's a mystery why University is an SPS Mountaineer's Peak.

We topped out at 10:30 and talked to a solo climber with one of those alpine dogs that could climb anything up to moderate class-3 without whimpering. After a break, Joe and I quickly traversed back to the pass and plunged down the steep slope to the east. This basin has some of the most savage cross-country terrain I've seen in the Sierras -- not talus or scree, but pure moraine -- everything from sand and mud to car-sized blocks, jumbled together on a steep, loose slope that looks like the aftermath of a thermonuclear bomb.

Going out, with a light pack and a week of acclimatization, it offers a doable alternative to the Kearsarge Pass trail. Not counting the side trip to University Peak, we went from Center Basin to Onion Valley in 4 hours, compared to 9 hours or so to go out on the trail. But going in, with a full pack and no acclimatization, I'd take the trail -- going up that steep loose crap with a heavy pack is not my idea of noble suffering. Of course,

thick, firm snow that covered up the moraine could change the equation completely.

Eventually, we got down out of the moraine and cross-countried down into the forest, picking up the trail at the outlet of Robinson Lake. We reached the car at 3, washed up, and headed for the Bishop Sizzler, as the last flame of the climborama flickered out for another year.

• *Jim Ramaker*

## Pão de Açúcar

August 12, 2000

Pão de Açúcar (roughly pronounced pawn-de-ah-zoo-car) is the conspicuous pyramidal rock monolith that stands at the entrance of Guanabara Bay in Rio de Janeiro. Along with the statue of Christ the Redeemer, it is THE symbol of Rio de Janeiro. It owes its name to its resemblance to the shape of the sugar piles that were produced from sugar cane originally in the Azores and later in Brazil. Its English translation is Sugarloaf.

Gretchen and I spent two delightful weeks in Rio in August. She was attending the International Geological Congress and I tagged along to see Rio.

High on my list of things to do was to climb Sugarloaf. It is class 2 most of the way with one 20-foot section that is class 3-4 depending on who you talk to.

We attended a geological field trip where we were given a detailed geological explanation of the formation of Sugarloaf and then we rode the cable car to the top. This gave us breathtaking views of the entire city and the surrounding area.

Most unfortunately it rained on the day I had scheduled to make the climb on foot and my guide said it would be unsafe. An actual climb will have to wait for a future trip.

• *Bob Bynum*

## Mt Russell-Fish Hook Arete

August 13, 2000

On Saturday, August 12, Dee and I chugged up to Iceberg Lake near the base of the technical routes on Mt Whitney and near the Whitney-Russell Col which is the access to the Fish Hook Arete on Mt Russell. Iceberg Lake on the weekend is kind of like Everest Base Camp. Tents and people everywhere. This chug is about 3.8 miles and 4200 feet of elevation gain so we started there. It looked lower 5th class so we roped up and took off up the arete. I kept to the left of the arete by about 15 to 30 feet and ran the rope out about 175 feet. This was moderate 5th class. We were now committed to this route since it was difficult to downclimb to a lower route or climb up to the arete proper. The next pitch went for another 175 feet and required some 5.9 climbing. The next two pitches were 100 feet each and maybe 5.8. I do not believe this is the route described by Moynier and Fiddler. We arrived above the "Notch" described in Moynier and Fiddler and rappelled down into the notch on a rap point left by someone earlier.

The next pitch is a neat-o section that ascends the arete directly. It is rated 5.8+ but is probably only 5.7. Big time fun, especially since it is in the sun! Following that is "the Chimney" pitch which is about 5.7-5.8 or so and is mostly a pain. The next section is where we lost it. Supposedly it goes for two 5.5 pitches and then one fourth class pitch on the right side of the arete. We went up one 5.5ish pitch and then up some tough stuff

that terminated on what looked like 5.9 finger locks....we dropped back down and continued around to the right. This ended up with an escape on a grainy 5.6 or so hand cack that allowed access to the summit ridge. This pitch was grainy (nobody goes there), somewhat poor pro, and somewhat runout. There was no fourth class pitch in sight. Once on the ridge, we were done and strolled up to the summit and signed in. Twelve hours from the bottom of the ridge to the summit.

Since the hour was late we packed up our stuff and headed for the East summit in order to look for the way down. About 50 feet or so from the East summit itself, we started looking over the edge. There is a cairn there, not particularly obvious, but it is there (I nearly bashed my face on it looking over the edge...duh). As obscure as it looks it is easy 4th/3rd class (thanks Arun). Dropping down here about 50 feet put us on the scree. We raced the failing light to the bottom of the scree slope heading for a huge groove (trail) in the scree that goes left (east). We made it to the trail just as the sunlight disappeared. From there we just cruised in the twilight/moonlight to the Whitney-Russell Col and dropped down there to Iceberg Lake.

The weather was perfect. No clouds, no threatening weather, plenty of moonlight. The wind was minimal. This route has a reputation for being both windy and cold. In spite of the excellent weather, neither Dee nor I took our windblock 300 weight fleece jackets off all day.

Assessment: I think we went up the opening pitches via the same route that Scott and Arun took and Jim and Dot used in 1998. I think this is off route, if the route is defined in "100 Classics" by Moynier and Fiddler. My guess is that in my haste I went past the escape to the left that would have allowed for easier access to the "notch". The arete tilts a fair amount and once in the middle area it is difficult to escape to the right, on to the arete itself, or to the left (downclimbing overhanging stuff...) in order to try and find the Moynier-Fiddler route. This commits the climber(s) to some tough stuff. If the pitch out of the notch is rated 5.8+ then the climbing in here can get into the 5.9 zone, depending on which crack is chosen. This also forces the climber(s) to go above the notch and either downclimb or rap into the notch. Time consuming.

The pitches past the chimney pitch are not obvious (to me). We went around to the right on what looked like the route (footprints in the sandy area) and then ended on a shelf which looked like hard climbing to get past the next gendarme. We dropped back down and went around to the right. This was loose, grainy, and had some poor pro. We finally gained the summit ridge on a grainy 5.6 crack and then strolled over to the summit. There was no 4th class pitch on the route we took.

Opinion: This route gnawed away at my sense of humor all day. The opening pitches are stone cold, even without the wind. It is not obvious which way to go. If the "crux" is the pitch out of the notch then these pitches have some hard 5.9. The pitches past the chimney are not obvious. We ended up wandering around on 5.5-5.6 with poor pro. Only the pitch escaping the "notch" and the chimney pitch were right on the arete proper. To me, this route is not very aesthetic. It is not right on the spectacular arete and wanders back and forth too much. I do not recommend this route to a 5.8 climber. Getting off route on the early pitches requires solid 5.9 skills (or aid) and getting off route on the top pitches requires running it out somewhat (5.6) over potentially dubious pro.

• *Rick and Dee Booth*

# A Quick Dash up Abbot

August 19th 2000

Saturday morning 7:30 AM, the 4 of us: Nancy Fitzsimmons, Ted Raczek, Arun Mahajan, and scribe Ron Karpel rolled into the Mosquito Flat trailhead to take a stab at the king of Mono Divide. We followed the trail to Ruby Lake and then started the long and sometimes frustrating boulder hopping process up the drainage to Mills Lake and beyond to the foot of Abbot Glacier. Nancy and I were suffering a bit from the altitude, but we figured that as long as we can keep with rocket ship Arun, we should continue.

The glacier starts with a relatively low angled slope, but later on in the couloir it seemed quite steep. Arun declared that ice axe or crampons are not necessary, and started to walk up on the hardened snow. "Maybe," he said, "I will stop later to take them out." He never did. Nancy took her ice axe out about half way up the glacier, and Ted used crampons and ice axe from about the same place. I used crampons and ice axe from the beginning.

True, it was not necessary at first, but as the slope steepened later on, it was a big help. In fact, I was able to catch up with Arun who was kicking steps at the head of the line, even though I took the time to put crampons on. And it was particularly significant given that I was slower than Arun the entire day.

Exiting the couloir early we took the loose and slippery face on the right and carefully made our way on the broken blocks and loose sand to the ridge. We climbed in 2 tight groups with Arun and me first and Nancy and Ted following, which reduced the danger of dropping rocks and debris on each other. As the many reports recommend, helmets are really important here.

There were places we needed to move one person at a time. Once on the ridge the rock is solid. We followed the ridge proper for about 100 yards and then had to drop to the right side for some fun class-3 climbing when the ridge became narrow and steep. The rock is solid, and the exposure is not too great. Finally we climbed out to the sloppy plateau and made our way to the summit. It was around 1 PM. The views were spectacular, and there was not a cloud in the sky.

Our plan was to have dinner in Mammoth and find a place to crash for the night. And having taken only 5 1/2 hours to summit left more time than we needed to get out. This made for a pleasant situation. Often on PCS trips we are on a mad rush at the end of the day to get back to camp or the trailhead before turning into pumpkins (or more likely the sun goes down.) But in this case we took our time -- spending 45 minutes on the summit, taking long breaks, and walking leisurely in between. Still, I have to admit that I pretty much hit the wall on the way out slowing down at the end. We got back to the car around 6 PM.

• Ron Karpel

## Royce Peak

August 27, 2000

As we stood on the summit of Royce Peak, we watched nearby Mount Humphreys raise its spiky head like an angry mountaineer with a bad haircut, while all around the tall thunderclouds raved and roared in rage and fierceness.

We had left Pine Creek trailhead on Saturday morning; Phyllis Olrich, Alex Sapozhnikov, Joe Budman and I. We hiked the long steep trail up to Pine Creek Pass, then tramped over to our camp

at Middle Royce Lake just as the sky unleashed its fury. It was a torrent. We were washed away.

At dawn on Sunday, we started up our mountains under threatening skies, filled with pessimism about being unable to reach our destinations. But the weather held.

We clambered up the slick, hard, uncupped snow slope to the gap between Royce Peak and Merriam Peak. Ski poles served us better with ice axes on that surface. We stowed gear and clambered up scree and easy talus to the summit of Royce.

Still concerned about the weather, we hastened down to the gap and then climbed the shorter and rockier slope of Merriam.

At the summit of Merriam, we began to feel more secure, so we lingered for a few minutes to marvel at the sight of the central Sierra crowned with cloud.

We returned the way we came. We descended our snow slope with a combination of standing glissade, mogul jumping, and painfully bouncing on our fannies. We struck camp and made the long hike back to the trailhead, returning just as we ran out of daylight. The rain finally returned, and we drove home on highway 395 with the windshield wipers beating.

• Aaron Schuma

## Discount Mountaineering Gear

The following sites offer mountaineering gear at a discount. These companies are listed for your information only. I have had good experiences with all of them but how you interact with them is up to you.

[www.rei-outlet.com](http://www.rei-outlet.com)

Y'all know this one.

[www.sierratradingpost.com](http://www.sierratradingpost.com)

Y'all probably know this one. Everything is discounted. If you need it this is a great company. Outstanding returns policy. I have bought several ropes from this place.

[www.mgear.com](http://www.mgear.com)

Mostly retail but outstanding specials and sales. Spokane, Washington based, no CA sales tax and free shipping on orders over \$50 (I believe).

[www.northernmountain.com](http://www.northernmountain.com)

Mostly retail but amazing discounts on certain massively expensive items like tents, sleeping bags, etc. CA based and somewhat clunky returns policy.

• Rick Booth

## Rock Climbing Classes

I merged (stole, lifted, edited, plagiarized, whatever) a bunch of comments from a recent discussion on [gear@climber.org](mailto:gear@climber.org) about the Yosemite Decimal System and updated

<http://www.climber.org/Resource/decimal.html>

It's been there all along, but the link to it was missing. It will soon be findable from the main Resource page. Enjoy!

• Steve Eckert

## 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.

### Trinity Chutes (or Dana Couloir)

Peak: Mt. Dana (13,057 ft.) the hard way  
Rating: Class 4 - Ice  
Dates: Sun: September 10  
Contacts: Ron Karpel ronny@karpel.org

A private trip, not associated with the Sierra Club. This is not a beginners trip, but I will consider people with no prior ice climbing experience.

Mount Dana's East face boasts 2 sets of steep Chutes -- the Dana Couloir on the left, and a steeper set of chutes (The Trinity Chutes) on the right. We will attempt the right hand side chutes. Last time I was there (3 years ago) the top was very steep and had a short 90% section. The Number of participants for this trip will depend on the number of capable leaders I can round up.

As for the name "Trinity Chutes." I once heard them referred to in that way, but I cannot verify this. If you happen to have more information about the name of these chutes please let me know. Alternatively, If the Trinity Chutes seem to be out, I may opt to climb the Dana Couloir instead.

Requirements: I need to know you, or a good reference. You need to know self arrest. You need to know how to belay. Each participant will need 2 ice tools (one can be a short ice axe with a proper leash), harness, belay device, rope, ice picket and the like. Oh yes, don't forget a helmet.

### The Classic"

Peak: North Palisade (14,242') Class 4  
Date: September 16 - 18 (Sat thru Mon)  
Maps: USGS 71/2 "North Palisade" & "Mt. Thompson"  
Wilderness Press 15 "Mt. Goddard"  
Contact: Steve Eckert  
Co-Contact: Chris Franchuk (408) 526-0382,  
clif@dellnet.com

We'll follow Joseph LeConte's 1903 first ascent route to the summit of what many mountaineers consider to be the "Classic High Sierra Peak." Starting at South Lake we will follow the scenic trail up to Bishop Pass, continuing to Thunderbolt Pass and camping at upper Barrett Lake. Sunday we will attempt the peak, followed with a (hopefully) triumphant march out on Monday. A rope and harness is required and all participants must know their climbing limitations, turn back if uncomfortable with the climb and be OK with waiting/returning alone if necessary. If interested contact Chris Franchuk.

### Merriam and Royce

Peaks: Merriam (13103') & Royce (13280'), Class 3  
Date: September 16-18  
Contact: Peter Maxwell (408) 737 9770

This trip is a more leisurely version of what is often done over a regular weekend. With a whole day at our disposal, we should be able to bag both peaks without being too rushed. There's still an 8 mile hike in with 4300' elevation gain to get to camp so participants need to be in good shape and can walk at a reasonable pace. The intended route comprises the east faces of both peaks, which are rated class 3. However, it is possible that we'll take the snow slope leading to the saddle between the peaks. Participants need to be experienced in class 3 climbing since the plan involves downclimbing one of the faces. They also need to

be proficient with an ice axe and know how to use one for self arrest.

### Emigrant Wilderness Adventure

Peaks: Black Hawk Mountain, class 2, 10348  
Dates: Sep 23-24, 2000 (Sat-Sun)  
Maps: Tower Peak 15' or Emigrant Lake 7.5'  
Leaders: Aaron Schuman and Bob Suzuki  
Contact: aaron\_schuman@yahoo.com or  
rsuzuki@dspt.com  
Details: <http://sj.znet.com/~cynthiam/blackhawk.html>

Let's backpack through the pine forests of the Emigrant Wilderness up to Black Hawk Mountain.

Saturday, we'll start at Kennedy Meadow, at 6300 feet, near the top of Highway 108. We'll hike past Relief Reservoir and up Summit Creek to near the headwaters of the Stanislaus Watershed. Our campsite, just below Mosquito Pass, is at 9200 feet, and about 9 miles walk from the trailhead. Sunday, we'll scramble cross country, about one mile each way, to the 10348 summit of Black Hawk Mountain, and backpack out.

### Mt. Ritter

Peak: Mt. Ritter (4006m, class 3)  
Date: Sept. 30-Oct. 1 (Sat-Sun)  
Contact: David Harris David\_Harris@hmc.edu 909-607-3623

Enjoy post-Labor Day climbing on the foreboding North Face of Mt. Ritter. On Saturday we'll pack in to the Ediza Lake area. On Sunday we'll scale the Ritter-Banner Saddle, then ascend John Muir's famous North Face route of Ritter. A descent of the Southeast Glacier should round out our mountaineering adventure. Ice axe and comfort with exposed 3rd class climbing required.

For more information, see Muir's trip report:

[http://www.sierraclub.org/john\\_muir\\_exhibit/writings/mount\\_ritter.html](http://www.sierraclub.org/john_muir_exhibit/writings/mount_ritter.html)

### Khumbu region of Nepal

Peak: Island Peak or Mera Peak  
Date: Oct-Nov 2000  
Contact: Tim Hult 408-970-0760, Timdhult@aol.com

Four week trip into a spectacular and storied region of the Himalaya. These are "minimal" trekking peaks open to qualified class 3 peak baggers with snow experience. Views of Everest and all those places you've heard about. Experience and compatibility with groups on long "wilderness" trips a must.

### Argentina - January 2001

Peaks: A Seven Summit Mountain  
Aconcaqua 6959 m  
Contact: Warren Storkman, 650-493-895

### Denali

Peak: Denali, 20,320 ft.  
Date: May-June 2001  
Contact: Tim Hult 408-970-0760, Timdhult@aol.com

Been there twice but unfortunately haven't done it yet as weather and sickness (the flu) have kept me off the summit. Third time a charm? Looking for qualified partners for this major, no nonsense peak. Must have extensive experience in the following: high altitude climbing (18,000 ft +), excellent winter camping skills and equipment, proven ability to get along with partners on a multi-week trip. Ice climbing and crevasse rescue will be taught if required. Prefer those with the ability to ski or willingness to learn how to ski with a pack on - need NOT be an expert! Serious inquires only.

## Elected Officials

### Chair:

Rick Booth / pcs-chair@climber.org  
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237 San Mateo Avenue, Los Gatos, CA 95030

### Vice Chair and Trip Scheduler:

Dee Booth / pcs-scheduler@climber.org  
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### Treasurer and Membership Roster (address changes):

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## Publicity Committee Positions

### Scree Editor:

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### PCS World Wide Web Publisher:

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**Scree** is the monthly journal of the Peak Climbing Section of the Sierra Club, Loma Prieta Chapter. Our mirror website is <http://www.climber.org/pcs/> and our official website is <http://www.sierraclub.org/chapters/lomaprieta/pcs/>

## Subscriptions and Email List Info

Hard copy subscriptions are \$10. 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 official email list ([lomap-pcs-announce@lists.sierraclub.org](mailto:lomap-pcs-announce@lists.sierraclub.org)) or one of the email lists the PCS feeds (either the [sierra-nevada@climber.org](mailto:sierra-nevada@climber.org) discussion list or the [california-news@climber.org](mailto:california-news@climber.org) read-only list), you have a free **EScree** subscription. For email list details, send "info lomap-pcs-announce" to "[listserv@lists.sierraclub.org](mailto:listserv@lists.sierraclub.org)", or send anything to "[info@climber.org](mailto:info@climber.org)". **EScree** subscribers should send a subscription form to the Treasurer to become voting PCS members at no charge. The **Scree** is on the web as both plain text and fully formatted Adobe Acrobat/PDF.

## 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 9/24/2000. 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**