



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

## Next General Meeting

**Date:** Tuesday, December 11

**Time:** 7:00 PM

**Program:** Holiday Party and Slide Show

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. However, if you have a really special dish you would like share with us that is outside your category, by all means bring it!

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

NOTE: Names have been re-arranged for 2001 to avoid picking on the same people!

**Location** Caliper Technologies  
605 Fairchild Drive  
Mountain View, CA

People should park in the back of the building and entrance to the party will also be through the back doubledoors.

**Directions:** From San Jose (Northbound Highway 101): Take the Ellis Street Exit and turn left going back under the freeway. Turn left on Fairchild Drive (first exit after freeway on-ramp). Go approximately .25 miles to the Caliper building on the right.

From San Francisco (Southbound Highway 101): Take Ellis Street exit and turn right onto Ellis Street. Take the first left (100 ft) on Fairchild Drive. Go .25 miles to the Caliper building on the right.

Deadline for submissions to the next Scree is Sunday 12/23/2001 Meetings are the 2nd Tuesday of each month.

## Old Clothes & Shoes Needed

From children's to grandparents. Will distribute to family after Kilimanjaro climb January 2002. Please bring to Christmas P.C.S. party this December.

- Warren Storkman

## Special Thanks

Thanks to the following people for helping out this past year:

Thanks to **Dee Booth**, **Nancy Fitzsimmons**, and **Scott Kreider** for their service as Chair, Vice Chair, and Treasurer.

Thanks to the following volunteers: **Rick Booth**, PubCommChair, **Jim Curl** Webmaster, **Steve Eckert**, Listmaster, **Bob Bynum**, Scree Editor; **Kelly Maas**, Mountaineering Committee Chair; **Bob Suzuki**, MC; **Charles Schaefer**, MC; **Peter Maxwell**, **Landa Robillard**, **John Wilkinson**, Election Committee, **Paul Vlasveld**, Mailing

## Rate Increase

### Hardcopy Scree Subscription Rate

The costs of printing and mailing the hardcopy Scree are greater than the current subscription price of \$10.

The costs are currently running about \$12.33 a year per subscriber and are likely to increase over time.

Therefore we are proposing to raise the Scree subscription rate to \$15. This matter will be discussed at the January meeting.

- *Scott Kreider and Arun Mahajan*

## Beginners' Snow Camping Seminar

Jan 2002

Does the thought of sleeping on the snow give you chills? Beginners' Snow Camping Seminar prepares you for traveling and camping happily in the snow, and also gives tips for day skiers or snowshoers caught out overnight. Participants must be experienced summer backpackers, as this course will give you winter information, but doesn't teach basic backpacking.

Three evening classes will be held in the Stanford area on Thursday, Jan. 10, Tuesday, Jan. 15 and Thursday, Jan. 17, 2002. There will be one weekend field trip on Jan. 26-27 (with a rain date of Feb. 2-3). The \$40 cost includes books, workshop, and common equipment used on the field trip. Questions? Contact Chris MacIntosh at <[cmaci@attglobal.net](mailto:cmaci@attglobal.net)> or 650/325-7841, or Tom Wolf at <[tom.wolf@stanfordalumni.org](mailto:tom.wolf@stanfordalumni.org)> or 650/961-2682.

To sign up, send a \$40 check, payable to BSCS, to P.O. Box 802, Menlo Park, CA 94026. Include a S.A.S.E., your name(s), phone #, postal address, e-mail, Sierra Club member number. [http://lomaprieta.sierraclub.org/SnowCamping\\_0201.html](http://lomaprieta.sierraclub.org/SnowCamping_0201.html)

## Gear Review:

### GigaPower Auto Stove (GS-100A)

"Neee, neee, neee". Its four AM and the pathetic alarm in the watch has gone off. It's cold and dark and it's another alpine start. A hand shoots out of the bivy sack. It grabs a small stove sitting under a pot of water. "Click....FOOOOOSH", the stove ignites. The hand goes back into the bivy bag. Muttering begins from the bivy bag and the one next to it. Familiar? Probably the alpine start and the bivy bag and certainly the muttering but a stove that can be started by just squeezing a starter is new. The stove? It's the SnowPeak GigaPower Auto (GS-100A).

During the Triassic era when I started climbing I started with a canister stove that ran on just butane. This was an ok stove but it was pretty cantankerous when it got even remotely cold so I put it on the shelf and bought a Svea 123 which ran on white gas. This was a great stove, in spite of blowing up once, and I used it for years until deciding to use a MSR Whisperlight. Now there is a cantankerous stove. A few years ago I climbed the Twilight Pillar with Dave Ress and he brought a Gaz stove and canister. It worked like a charm and the new propane/butane mix was supposedly much more robust at lower temperatures. The Monday I returned I had a Gaz stove for a whole \$18.

The Gaz stove is pretty compact and light but when I saw the GigaPower stove I had to try one. Actually, Dee got to try one since she got one for Christmas. This stove has three outstanding features. It is very light (under 4 ounces including the starter) and ultra compact. It also has a piezoelectric starter, which means it can be started by pushing a button without using matches. This is how our intrepid alpinists discussed above got going early in the morning. This technology is based on flexing a ceramic element and then releasing it. When it releases a large voltage is developed across the crystal and this is turned into a spark by a little finger of metal near the burner. Presto, instant flames.

Compared to the Gaz stove it is much more compact and lighter and has the auto starter. A version of this stove may be purchased without the starter but I don't recommend this at all. There is also a titanium version available that saves a whole .75 ounces for an extra \$35 and unless you are an engineer or technology aficionado this will probably not be cost effective. There are two down sides to the stove. The first is the price. The non-titanium version runs about \$64. The second down side is this stove cannot be used with the Gaz canister which means it won't be usable in Europe.

Dee and I have put some mileage on our stove. It can be used with the SnowPeak, Markhill, Primus, and MSR canisters. This gives a lot of selection. The SnowPeak canisters come in a small version which is perfect for one night out for either one or two people. The only problems noted so far are it sometimes fails to light with the auto starter on the first try and the flame is very concentrated due to the small burner. This makes making alpine quesadillas more difficult than using a Gaz stove. I would recommend bringing some matches just in case the ceramic crystal breaks. Not likely but it is an easy back up.

Where do you get one? They seem to be available about everywhere including REI, Western Mountaineering and Mountain Gear. All the local stores seem to carry one or more of the acceptable canisters.

• Rick Booth

## Book Review

### Close-Ups of The High Sierra,

by Norman Clyde

(1998: Spotted Dog Press, Bishop, California; Edited & Designed by Wynne Benti)

On my week in the mountains this past summer, I took a couple of layover days in the Owens Valley, resting blistered feet and rearranging plans. Stopping by Wilson's Eastside I happened to look at the book section and among other things picked up this book, curious about the legendary Norman Clyde, about whom I knew very little. He was born in 1885, he died in 1972. He was the most prolific Sierra Nevada peakbagger of his day and still one of the 3-4 most prolific of all time; his Sierra first ascents outnumber those of all but one other climber. His initial first ascent was Electra Peak in Yosemite in 1914; his final first ascent was Kid Peak in Kings Canyon in 1940. He climbed Mt. Whitney 50 times. He continued climbing into his 80s.

The book is a slim 170-page paperback. It begins with a forward which provides an historical background on the book itself (which was originally published in 1928 by the Auto Club) then an introduction which provides an excellent short biography of the author (in contradiction to the once-prevailing view, he was once married, briefly but happily), then a recollection by Glen Dawson. At the end is a closing, a list of Clyde's first ascents (actually a useful reference although a portion of the list consists of citations like 'Peak 12,415' which is who knows what peak) and a selected list of Clyde's other writings.

The book itself consists of 21 short chapters. Occasional photos (new and old) are interspersed along with old hand-drawn maps. The first four chapters describe noteworthy peaks grouped by elevation (fourteens, peaks over 13,500, etc.) and a fifth, peaks of Yosemite. The rest of the chapters consist of essays, most being essentially short reports of various trips and climbs, including rather noteworthy first ascents (east face of Mt. Whitney, Clyde Minaret, Mt. Russell). There are also a few chapters on general climbing topics such as thunderstorms and avalanches. Clyde has a writing style that manages to squeeze out florid almost contorted phrasings about the repetitive observations characteristic of climbing (views, views, views); it makes the reading more interesting for sure. Everything about the climbs is, of course, understated. Things get strenuous but never out of hand. Solo unroped fourth class climbs, thousands of vertical feet, all compressed to a jump or a hop or a walk. It is amazing that he survived his career.

I read the introductions then skipped to the penultimate chapter and read the vignettes back to front, lastly reading the sections on peaks, then closing with the last chapter (a sad story). It let me get a sense of the man first and I would suggest that approach to anyone reading it. For those comparatively few peaks that I personally have climbed, it was fun to compare his impressions to mine. I felt that the book does convey a sense that us avid peak climbers are following in his footsteps (since mountains erode quite slowly, of course, this is literally true but still enjoyable), that his climbing experiences were not that different from ours. There is ample opportunity for Sierra travelers to find personal common ground. For me it happened when he related a scene in Desolation Basin in the early summer when snow cover was virtually continuous; a tiny patch of grass is uncovered and some tiny yellow flowers (Draba) are blooming. I have only camped in Desolation Basin once; it was an early summer in identical snow-bound conditions; the only time I have ever attempted a close-up photo of flowers in the Sierra, was exactly that shot (it turned out

nicely). Finally, the closing essay describes a trip gone awry in a snowstorm; his hiking partner dies in the cold. He describes it as an unfortunate but freak occurrence, caused by that individual's quirkiness. I read it and saw a clear-cut case of hypothermia (I would be interested to hear if others agree or disagree). In closing, this book is an easy, quick and entertaining read, one which I highly recommend to any Sierra Nevada peak climber.

• *Mike McDermitt*

## 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.

### Mission Peak to Sunol

Peak: Mission Peak 2517 ft  
Date: Sat, December 1, 7:30 AM  
Leaders: Arun Mahajan 650/327-8598 (H)  
408/585-2114 (W)  
[arun@tollbridgetech.com](mailto:arun@tollbridgetech.com)  
Ron Karpel [ronny@karpel.org](mailto:ronny@karpel.org).

Mission Peak to Sunol –(co-listed with the Day Hiking Section) DHS Rating: 4C (mileage between 15 and 20, and altitude gain, 3000+ ft, round trip). PCS Rating: Class-1. Meet at 7.30am at the Stanford Ave parking lot and trailhead. We will hike to the top of Mission Peak and then drop down and hike to Sunol Park. The strenuous part is hiking back from Sunol towards Mission Peak which is mainly uphill. Rain cancels.

## Eight is Enough

### Being the Adventures of the Author in

#### The Sierra Emblem Challenge: 10 peaks - 10 days

August 4-13, 2001

Bob Burd conceived of the idea of hiking ten of the Sierra Emblem peaks in consecutive dayhikes. I enthusiastically joined up, along with 6 or 8 other people with like interests. As the date for this event approached, Bob mentioned that many of the original participants wouldn't be coming. As an organizer of events myself, I could tell what this meant, and in fact for 7 of the days, it was just Bob and myself. No matter!

As a timid climber, with a poor sense of balance and a well-developed fear of dying by falling off a mountain, I knew I wasn't going to be summiting on all these peaks, but thought that with some moral support I might be able to do Matterhorn, Lyell, Ritter, Abbott, Split, Whitney and Olanca. But really it's just a reason to be in the mountains.

Pictures of the hikes are posted at <http://blake.prohosting.com/snwburd/emblem/index.html>

Day 0: I get out of work, stop at home to pick up a few last minute items, and am headed out of town by 7 pm. I arrive at Bridgeport around 12:30, and after a little wandering around because I'd left behind the map showing where the road to Twin Lakes intersected with 395, I'm in the parking lot at the Twin Lakes resort. I throw my sleeping bag behind a big log, where I probably won't be noticed, and crawl in. It's 1:30, and I can try to sleep for a few hours before our 6 am start. I notice that the lake is only about 6 feet away, and hope that there are no mosquitoes.

Day 1: Matterhorn Peak, 11M RT with 5200' gain, 11 hours and 45 minutes

Bob shows up promptly at a few minutes to 6, we introduce ourselves, strap on our packs, and are off. Bob carries only a 2-bottle fanny pack; mine is somewhat larger. The trailhead is a little

hard to locate, and Bob takes several shortcuts, to which I pay little attention, a detail I am later to regret. Bob is a very strong hiker, and I have trouble keeping up. He also doesn't bother treating his water, but graciously waits for me as I filter mine. The east side approach up Horse Creek is a pleasant mixture of meadow and rock--strewn slopes, and we make good time. Just before Horse Creek Pass Brent comes up behind us, and he's more of a match for Bob as the two pull away from me.

The other side of the pass is an ugly scree slope up to the peak boulders; we each take a route that seems best. I finally arrive at the summit boulder jumble; the final 100' seems class 3 and I sit and contemplate it. After half an hour Bob comes down.

"What's wrong?"

"I think I've had enough."

"Too tired to go on?"

"No, I just don't like the looks of that last little bit."

Bob explained that just around the corner was a class 2 route, so I went over to look and 15 minutes later was at the summit.

On the return, Bob wants to take the east couloir; after looking at it, I prefer the approach route and we split up. Now, we just followed the drainage up, and all I have to do is to follow the drainage down. I had also looked back quite a bit to fix in my mind what the return looked like. But in spite of this, each canyon that I came to looked strange, and I was unable to find the trail. I bushwhacked down steep canyon after canyon, convinced that I had somehow gotten into the wrong drainage, although that seemed impossible. By 3 pm, I had become quite concerned. Nothing looked familiar. I considered my position. I had food and a filter, and just had to continue down this drainage, eventually it had to cross highway 395, but I didn't look forward to that 30 mile hike. Finally I came across a trail, and, almost simultaneously, a hiking couple.

"What trailhead does this lead to?" I probably sounded a little crazed, like McCoy in the Star Trek episode "The City on the Edge of Forever", when he accounts the drunk in NYC, "What planet is this!!?"

"I don't know, but this is Horse Creek."

I was flabbergasted. "Then I'm not going to die. How far is it to Twin Lakes?"

"Down this canyon and around the corner to the right."

So I wasn't going to be walking all night after all. After walking for more than an hour I finally see Twin Lakes, and after 1/2 hour of wandering around in the campground trying to find the parking lot and my car, I'm back.

Day 2: Mt. Lyell 27M RT with 4400' gain. 16 hours and 30 minutes

It's still dark as we set off from Tuolumne Meadows and I use my green Photon to watch for rocks and roots. Today we're carrying ice axe and crampons, and their weight is an unpleasant addition to my pack. We trudge along Lyell Canyon, reaching the headwall in about 3 hours. We climb the switchbacks up to the next valley, where we leave the JMT and turn west for Lyell. At the Lyell Glacier, Bob leads a route which is a bad choice for me, which I would have known if I had studied the route better, and we end up at the east face. The bergschrund is too wide to cross, and Bob attempts to climb the south end. There's no way I'll try that, and Bob also gives up. He then tries a direct assault on the east face, and after watching him for a few minutes I head back down the glacier.

Bob catches up with me before I reach the JMT at the end of Lyell Canyon, and says that he made it up the east face. By this time it's 4 pm and I confidently claim that we'll be back at our cars by 7:30. Bob switches to sandals, and, complaining that they force him to

walk slowly to avoid stubbing his toes on rocks, disappears from view ahead.

I realize that I have made a strategic error in not carrying enough palatable food; I have no energy but don't want to eat anything I have. While my walking speed is still OK, I'm so tired that I have to rest every 20 or 30 minutes. At 4 miles from the trailhead I pass a backpacker who had previously passed me; she's being "carded" by a ranger. Since I had been sitting with my head down when she passed earlier, she chirps out, "Good! You've decided to continue!"

To which I reply, "Well, I really have no choice."

And the ranger adds, "Yes, he's a dayhiker."

A few minutes later she comes up behind again. "Want to run a little?" I decline and she trots down the trail.

The dusk fades to total darkness; I get out the Photon again. Finally the last bridge over the Toulumne appears, and with it, the final problem. I can't find where the trail goes over the granite slabs. It's 9 pm and I'm sitting on a rock.

A hiker comes by. She claims to know the way, and I follow her until she disappears into the forest. But I'm on a trail. I come to a junction. What's this? Choice 1: High Sierra Camp 0.2 M. Choice 2: Parker Pass 6M. Choice 3: (The way I came from) Donohue Pass 11M. I try choice 1, and 5 minutes later see the hiker again, who is herself now lost. But I see car headlights which are evidently coming from the "High Sierra Camp", so I go that way and it's the Toulumne Lodge. A very considerate lodge employee offers to drive me to the parking lot, which is about 1/2 mile away.

By the time I get to Mammoth, the staging area for the day 3 hike, it's after 11 pm, and thinking about the planned 6 am start, I decide I need a rest day.

Day 4: Mt. Abbott 10 M RT, 3500' gain, 8 hours 40 minutes

We climbed up to the north couloir from Little Lakes Basin. At 10,400', it's the highest trailhead in the Eastern Sierra, and we appreciated the high start. Little Lakes basin also has the prettiest series of lakes we saw all week; sparkling blue gems surrounded by lush green meadows.

It wasn't long before we came to the glacier, where we strapped on our crampons and headed up for the couloir to the left of the "petite gryphon". From below, the rock above the glacier seemed class 4, but Bob assured me there was a hidden easier route.

Just before the top of the glacier, we made a two-step traverse of the ice itself and attained the rock face.. Now we had to work our way around to the right and up. Abbott is infamous for it's loose, crumbly rock, and I definitely didn't like this section. The ledges were wide enough, but everything came loose in your hands. Furthermore, a slip would inevitably cause you to fall onto the glacier 15 feet below, following which you would slide 500' down to meet your destiny on the rocks at the foot of the glacier.

However, soon we were high enough that a slip could be caught before you hit the glacier, and the rock also seemed a little less crumbly. But I couldn't relax with forebodings of returning this way playing in my mind.

Now, I've never understood the "No Fear" motto. It seems to be desirable to **\*\*overcome\*\*** your fear; to achieve something even though you are afraid. What's the accomplishment in walking across a foot-wide class 3 bridge if you're not afraid of falling?

So after we reached the summit ridge, we traversed along it to the afore-mentioned class 3 bridge. The rock on the other side seemed class 3 also, and on this day fear overcame me. I waited while Bob crossed and climbed to the summit. (Check out the photo of me waiting at the bridge.) I could tell I was approaching an undesirable mental state when I kept looking for Bob returning

every 15 seconds. The half hour he was out of sight stretched out to eternity.

But finally he did return and we retraced our route. I had worked myself up unduly - the descent was easier than the climb as we found a slightly better route.

I had purchased some cytomax the day before, as a reaction to running out of energy on Lyell, and drank it all day. It was especially nice when I was able to add snow to my bottles for iced drinks. With the added energy of this food, and perhaps also from my rest day, I was able to run the final section of the return, even with my daypack bouncing around from the weight of the ice axe and crampons.

Day 5: Mt Humphreys ~ 12 M RT, ~3500 gain, 6 hours

I knew after yesterday's performance that I wasn't going to be attempting the class 4 section on Mt. Humphreys, and Bob was happy with that as well, since it meant he could start early and go fast, not having to wait for me. I slept in until 7, then donned my running shoes and set out up the Piute Pass trail. At the crest, I set out cross country for Humphreys. This was the nicest off-trail terrain of the entire 8 days. Broad grassy avenues alternated with granite slabs. There were no talus fields, no scree. But it was really dry, with numerous pond beds evident and only a few concentrated pools left. I decided to wait to fill my bottles.

Just below the talus slope at the very base of Humphreys I ate lunch and looked for Bob. I could hear some climbers shouting in the distance - it didn't seem likely that he would be shouting to himself. The terrain here was so rough that he could easily pass by unseen if he had already descended from the peak, so after 1/2 hour I started back.

Just before the pass I saw a pack train going down, and guided by them I took a shortcut to pick up the trail to the east of the pass. I ran most of the easy trail, getting back to my car at 3:05, at the exact instant that Bob too reached the parking lot.

Day 6: Mt Darwin ~14 M RT, ~3500 gain, 9 hours

I had had a lot of fun yesterday, and planned on the same agenda today, since Darwin has no class 2 or easy class 3 route. Once again this was fine with Bob. And in fact, today was the easiest of all, since I simply followed the trail up to Midnight Lake (with a small route-finding error at Blue Lake) At Midnight Lake I waited for the sun to brighten the eastern slopes of Darwin, in order to get a good picture, then climbed a little on the class 2-3 granite ledges to the west of the lake.

Day 7: Middle Palisades ~ 14 M RT, ~3500' gain, 9 hours

While Bob's plan called for North Pal today, he wasn't going to attempt it solo, so we elected to try for Middle Pal instead. We followed the trail from Glacier Lodge up the south fork of big Pine Creek to Brainard Lake then cross country to Finger Lake. Was it blue! Above Finger Lake Bob choose some class 3 granite, and seeing plenty of wide ledges and obvious handholds, I followed. (Check out the photo.) I'm not sure why Bob said this was class 3, since if you fell you'd surely die, but with solid granite everywhere I was able to climb without fear overcoming me.

When we finally got to a position to climb the terminal moraine to the rib bisecting the glacier we rested a while and I ate my lunch. It had taken 5 hours, and there was probably another 2-3 hours to the summit. I could tell Bob was tired from Darwin yesterday, and when he suggested that we call it a day, I agreed.

Day 8. Split Mountain 15 M RT, 7500' gain, 12 hours 25 minutes

Five years ago, in my backpacking days, I had inexplicably quit on Split a few hundred yards from the summit. I didn't want that to happen again, but the Red Lake Trail is one horrendous climb, 7500' of mostly sagebrush-covered sand. Only above Red Lake do you get the dubious pleasure of scrambling up talus fields. You

also need a 4WD vehicle to get to the trailhead, which neither of us had. We needed a miracle, and got one. Toby decided to join us for Split and Whitney, and he had a Subaru Outback he was willing to drive.

As usual, Bob sprinted out ahead; I stayed with Toby, who was having trouble with the elevation. Finally we reached the final cirque below the crest. Five years ago this had been filled with snow, perhaps 50' deep, which had continued partially up the talus field to the summit plateau of Split on the left. Today there was only a puny remnant of a snowfield, and a great deal of additional loose rock Bob was visible, already halfway up the slope. Toby was overcome with lethargy from the altitude, he said he would wait there and I followed Bob. As I climbed this steep, somewhat loose slope, I remembered that 5 years ago there was a final snow chute that would rocket you down the west flank of the pass if you slipped on it - today there was just rock. Aside from a few sections, there were plenty of places to climb on firm rock and avoid the sand. The Mountaineer's Guide said this was class 3, but I couldn't find any class 3 rock.

Finally I came out on the summit plateau. What's this? It's a 40-degree slope up, when I had remembered a mostly flat plateau. Oh, well. I continued scrambling up, using my hands in a 4-way crawl. The slope seemed endless, and I was perilously close to quitting at the 95% mark, as is my wont. First I decided to climb to a snowfield. After reaching that, I decided to continue until 1:30. Then, precisely at 1:30, I saw Bob up above, presumably on the summit. Wisely, he sat there and didn't climb down to meet me. Another 15 minutes got me to Bob's position, and from there it was only 50' to the summit. The hardest peak yet!

On the way down I cut the water situation a little fine and ran out an hour away from the trailhead. I was staying back with Toby, since I didn't want to abandon him on his first day. The creek was far enough below you would only want to descend to it in a life-threatening emergency, but everything worked out OK and we made it back to the car, tired and thirsty, but, in my case at least, triumphant.

Day 9: Whitney 22 miles RT, 6200' gain, 9 hours 15 minutes

Toby decided that he wasn't properly conditioned for the elevation and decided to leave Whitney for another day. After the long day yesterday I'm not ready for today's hike, but I get up at 4:30 and drive to the trailhead, arriving at 6, and start assembling my gear. I get my permit from Bob, meet Clem and John; they take off and I never see any of them again.

I finally set off just before 7, and have a good time power-walking on the Whitney trail. It might as well be paved, in comparison to the Red Lake trail yesterday, and in fact in sections I can see the paving that was probably put in back in the '30s. On the notorious "99 switchback" section up to the Sierra crest, my legs feel tired, but by virtue of the week at elevation, I feel fine otherwise, and steadily pass other hikers. The section along the crest is outstanding - huge granite obelisks, sheer dropoffs, stupendous views through the gaps between the Needles, somebody's pack with celebratory balloons. For the first time I feel dwarfed by the scale of these mountains - a little Wagner would really make the mood. I follow what appears to be the authentic trail on the backside of the final crest; it meanders around far to the northwest, but is surely easier than scrambling over huge talus blocks as many hikers are doing. The Whitney district allows 50 backpackers and 150 dayhikers per day, and they're all up here.

Finally the old weather building appears and I am at the summit. I eat my apple, giving the core to a very tame marmot. I don't see any reason to hang around, since the presence of 20 or 30 other hikers makes it more of an office party than a wilderness experience, so after 15 minutes I head down. Right from the first, I

run the good sections of the trail, and running downhill feels great even at 14,000'.

Easily half of the trail is good enough for running, and I have a great time. It's mostly an exercise in picking up one's feet, and I don't trip once. But for safety I carry a water bottle in each hand. More than once in the past I've landed on the bottles rather than my palms, saving a lot of skin.

The 11 mile trip down takes 3:34 (I ran, honest!), including a 15 minutes stop while I pump water through my increasingly recalcitrant filter, and I'm back at the car just after 4. Bob's car is still there, and I figure he's out there climbing some additional peak. Later I learn that he tried Russell, and climbed Muir Peak and the Needles.

I had figured out a few days ago that going down to hike Olancha tomorrow, then driving home afterwards to show up at work on Tuesday would be over the limit, so I say a silent farewell to Bob and drive north up 395. After 9 days, and 8 days hiking/running with an average of 10 hours/day, it's time to go. But aside from the requirements of work and family, I'd be more than happy to remain up here, hiking in the mountains.

While I've considered fastpacking, I have to think that dayhiking is the way to go. Once you're off-trail, it's more of a wilderness adventure than the JMT, and you can't beat the luxury of a hot shower and a restaurant meal after a great day in the mountains!

• *David Wright*

## Florence Peak from Mineral King

September 29-30 2001

The twelve of us met at the parking lot at the end of Mineral King Road on Saturday September 29 2001. That was Leader Aaron Schuman, Noelle O'Sullivan, Evelyn Fluckiger, Fi Verplanke, Shree Mazumbar, Linda Sun, Rebecca and Steve Eckert, Mike Mc Dermitt, Siva Sankaran, Kirsten and Stephane Mouradian, Co-leader and scribe. 12 people originating from 7 countries! The plan for this trip was to go camp at Franklin lakes on Saturday (5.6 miles, + 2750') and summit Florence Peak Sunday (1.8 miles, 2100'). Saturday being a fairly short day, we had a leisurely departure around 8:30am. Siva had a fever at the parking lot, he hiked 30 min and made the reasonable decision to turn around.

The golden aspens in the bottom of the valley reminded us that October was almost there. Skies were bright clear though and the mid-day temperatures must have been well into the 70s. Franklin creek had a reasonable flow but the creek in Farewell canyon was completely dry above the Franklin Lakes turn-off.

Lofty ideological discussions were going strong in the back of our longish line and they kept the group going, while making the world a better place. It was warm and several people talked about swimming in Franklin Lake. We got there around 1:30pm (including a 1 hour lunch), and Fi and Evelyn found the "middle" bear box on a ledge above the lake. Franklin lake has one box just below the dam, one (the "middle" one) one half mile east of the dam 100 ft above the lake, and the third one = miles from the dam and 200ft above the lake (see the GPS coordinates).

As we were setting up camp, the wind was starting to pick up. Evelyn was actually the only one who stuck to her words and jumped in Franklin, while the rest of us set up camp and relaxed in this beautiful spot. Steve suggested Tulare Peak (11,654') as a short trip. Evelyn, Steve, Mike and myself, crossed the lake at the dam and diagonaled up along the South West facing shore while staying below the cliffs. As soon as the cliffs ended, we turned South West and went straight up for the ridge. It was mostly loose

red rock and sand and got steep near the ridge. We then walked the ridge South and reach the summit around 4:20pm, or about 1 hour after leaving camp. There were a couple registers. One contained a 1985 Yvon Chouinard signature, mentioning "good corn snow", meaning he probably had more fun than us coming down. No one had visited the peak since 1999. We modestly printed in the register than ours was the first climb of the year, the century and the millennium, no less. Amazing what oxygen deprivation can make you feel like!

Did I mention the wind? It had shifted and gotten stronger by the time we got back to camp for a lively dinner. The wind grew even stronger through the night.

We had an early start the next morning: everyone was up in the windy cold darkness at 5:30am and we were on our way at 6:40am. We followed the trail to Franklin pass, then headed south along the ridge up Florence. It is mostly class 2+ boulders in our opinion. We stuck south and straight up the ridge to the summit. The ten of us got there at 9:40am, 3 hours from camp. The weather was comfortable and it was clear in all directions. Views included the Kaweahs, Whitney, Olancho, Goddard. We probably spent 45 min up there savoring our achievement, the views, the sunshine and chocolate.

We came down more or less the same route although we noticed the terrain is a little easier along the Eastern side of the ridge. Steve took off and leaped up Rainbow Mountain (12,043 feet), coming straight down to camp along Rainbow's South West facing slope.

We saw another 8-10 deer on the way back which probably brought the total to about 20 for this trip, and that was with a group of 11 people if that is any indication of their shyness.

We were back at the cars by 3:30 pm and found Siva in a recovered state. To my question whether it was her first PCS trip, Noelle replied "The WHAT trip?" which clearly answered it. Evelyn was new to the club as well. This was a fairly large group for my first co-lead, with experience ranging from 1 peak to tons of peaks. Everyone stuck together, bonded and nobody whined.

Great trip everyone!

• *Stephane Mouradian*

## Dick's Peak and Jack's Peak

October, 2001

The Emerald Bay road was closed due to a marathon race, so we went to the Lily Lake Trailhead (at the end of Fallen Leaf Lake). The hike to Dicks Peak from there is about a mile longer than from Bayview Campground, but if one is adding Jacks Peak it's about the same.

We started on the dirt road toward Glen Alpine Springs, and continued on a good trail towards Susie Lake and then towards Mt Tallac and finally to Dicks Pass on the PCT. From the pass there is a use trail partly up the main ridge to the top of Dicks Peak. There is much loose terrain there, but I was able to avoid much of it by staying on the ridge proper, though there were some easy 3rd class moves involved. After spending some time at the summit (no register), we descended to the saddle between Dicks and Jacks and then climb the easy 3rd class ridge to Jacks Peak, again, choosing the ridge to avoid loose terrain. From the summit of Jacks Peak we descended directly to Half Moon Lake which involved loose and dangerously slippery gullies, though there was nothing technically hard. Then taking the good trail we made good time back to the car.

Stats: 4 hours trailhead to summit of Dicks Peak. 45 minutes from Dicks to Jacks and 3 hours from Jacks Peak back to the trailhead. 8:30 hours total trailhead to trailhead including breaks. about 14 miles and 4,000 feet.

Participants: Olesya Runov, Maxym Runov, and scribe Ron Karpel.

• *Ron Karpel*

## Mt Humphreys

Oct. 6, 2001

Early Saturday morning I met Doug Mantle from LA in the parking lot at North Lake, and after packing up for an overnight trip we were on our way at 7am up the trail towards Piute Pass. A brisk pace kept the cool at bay and around 9.30-10am we reached the pass. We took a 10 min. break to rest and absorb the views of Glacier Divide and Desolation Basin, just long enough to get chilled by the cool breeze in spite of the sun on a clear day. We then headed northward towards the base of Mt. Humphreys, soon picking up a trail for a while then when that trail seemed to be veering away possibly towards Desolation Lake, again proceeding cross country. We reached our initial destination, just above the highest of the Humphreys Lakes, at 11 am.

We unpacked and after a short rest Doug decided we should attempt the peak. Packing daypacks, we were off at 11.30 am. We climbed a loose scree slope on the southwest slope then turned left (north) scrambling up loose rock and scree to the left side of the base of a pointy mass of dark rock (in the photo on p. 313 of Secor 2nd ed. this mass appears beneath the words Hutchinson Route). After stopping for a moment while Doug retrieved a rope he had cached the prior day, we crossed right (south) below the dark mass then climbed upward and southward to a notch which is at the bottom of the deep south couloir which marks the Hutchinson Route (this notch is hidden by a buttress and not visible from the southwest side of the mountain). It had warmed up, and we were now high enough that each pause for breath offered views as far as Mt. Whitney, so the climb was enjoyable despite plenty of loose rock. From this point, after a short break, we followed the Hutchinson Route as described in Secor. As he indicates, two chockstones are encountered in the couloir, both class 4 and passed on the left side. In both cases Doug free climbed then belayed me. The couloir tops out at a notch called Married Mens Point. There is a small keyhole here and the drop-off on the other side is, apparently, quite imposing; with the next part of the climb in mind I did not look. From here as Secor describes there is a 50-foot pitch of ladderlike small ledges rated 5.4. Doug attached himself to another rope he had set here the day prior and I held belay while he climbed the pitch. Then I tied into the rope and climbed while he belayed from above. From that point a short scramble brought to us to the summit, which we reached at 2.30pm after three hours of climbing. The once cloudless day was no longer and a large thundercloud was now pouring down on Mt. Goddard and vicinity. Nevertheless we lingered on the summit for about 30 minutes; haziness reduced long-distance visibility but the 360-degree views were impressive nonetheless.

Starting down at 3pm, we quickly reached the crux (to me) of the climb: the top of the 50-foot pitch. With Doug's guidance I tied in to two ropes, a rappel and a top belay. Any opportunity for hesitation on my part was mooted by the approaching rain clouds so I proceeded with the rappel, which included an overhang that for some reason was not apparent coming up. Next I belayed Doug down, then he stowed the ropes and we headed back down the couloir wondering when the rain would hit. Happily as we steadily descended it never did. He gave me a top belay on the upper chockstone then allowed me to clamber around the lower

chockstone without belay. After a short break at the notch we hopped down the last thousand or so feet of loose rock without incident and reached camp about 5.20 pm. The prospects of a rainy night in a bivy were less than enticing so after a rest and food break we decided to pack and head back out that evening. My offer of dinner in Bishop may have helped the decision. We were going by 5.45pm, reached the pass at 6.30pm and paused to watch a glorious orange-red sunset before heading down the trail again. Before too long it got dark, the headlamps were pulled out then we continued on, finally reaching our cars well after dark at 8.45pm, tired after the 16-17 or so miles and about 4,700' of elevation gain, much with full packs. But for me very pleased at having succeeded in the ascent. While Doug is perhaps the first person, or certainly one of the few, to have dayhiked Mt. Humphreys two days in a row. This report uses the word we in many places but it was Doug's climbing skills and confident demeanor that got us up this peak.

• *Mike McDermitt*

## Whorl and Matterhorn

October 20, 2001

With the weather still cooperating, I figured I would get in one more trip to high sierra before snow season. I hiked to Horse Creek Pass from Twin Lakes, leaving around 3:30. I got to the pass at around 6:45 -- just after a beautiful alpine sunset -- and camped near the small tarn on the Spiller Creek side of the pass. Skies were clear and overnight temps were in the mid-20s.

Woke at 6:00, ate breakfast in the dark, and set off for Whorl at sunrise. I followed the now "standard" approach from Horse Creek Pass that is well documented in earlier trip reports -- descending to the obvious bench south of the pass, past the small tarn, then angling slightly upwards towards a series of chutes leading to the ridge between the south and middle peaks of Whorl. The confusion over which chute to take is somewhat overblown; just contour below the middle summit, where you can see three spires leaning left (the shape of these spires sort of reminded me of a miniature version of the Three Brothers down in Yosemite Valley). Just past the "three brothers" and the orange-ish rock up above, there are three fairly obvious chutes (see photo:

[http://www.tahoebackcountry.net/features/matterwhorl/images/015\\_a\\_threechutes.jpg](http://www.tahoebackcountry.net/features/matterwhorl/images/015_a_threechutes.jpg)). I took the one on the far left, which is bounded on its left side by a large boulder, and on its right side by a dome-like rock with a single dead bush growing out of its top. I ascended this chute to just near the top, when I saw a sizable gap on the right side, leading into the middle chute. From here, climb the middle chute slightly and traverse into the right hand chute through an obvious notch just below the anvil shaped rock described in Peter Maxwell's report. Coming into the right hand chute, I ran into the fabled chockstone. Being this late in a very poor snow year, the cave beneath the chockstone was completely devoid of snow. However, to get to its base, there is a nasty little traverse across the rib with uncomfortable exposure. Before I left, I told my wife I wouldn't do anything too "risky" on this solo trip. Given the likelihood that I will be the last person on Whorl this season, I did not want my skeleton to be found at the base of the chockstone chute by a reader of this list next June. I turned back.

I was back at the pass by 11:00, ate some lunch, and then started up the quicksand slope that is called the SE face of Matterhorn Peak. The angle is moderate, but the sand and scree on the slope makes for a somewhat annoying ascent. It was made worse by the fact that the summit of Whorl to the south was in clear view the entire way and seemed to be mocking me for my earlier lack of bravado. Climbing higher, I angled to the right in order to peer down into the east couloir. However, upon reaching the summit

block on the right side, I searched in vain for the supposed class 2 route to the summit.

Losing my patience, I scaled up a moderate class 3 pitch to reach the summit ridge (don't tell my wife), then gingerly crabwalked up to the summit. On the way down, I discovered the class 2 route, which is at the southwest end of the summit ridge. In retrospect, I should have paid attention to Ron Karpel's 1999 report, where he says "Once close to the summit we avoided the class 3 headwall by traversing left until we hit the gully on the West side of the summit. That gully is rated class 2."

I made it back to the pass by 2:30 and took a breather and packed up my gear. I left the pass at about 3:15, and made it back to the car by 6:15, pizza at Rhino's in Bridgeport by 7:00 and back in SF by midnight.

Cautionary note: beware of the ridiculous numbers of hungry deer on the road from Twin Lakes to Bridgeport. They were jumping all over the road like grasshoppers in Kansas.

• *Steeleman*

## 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.

### Mexican Peaks

Peak: Citlaltepētēl, (18,400), Iztaccihuatl (17,340) & more

Date: Jan 19-28, 2002

Contact: Bob Evans, [robtwevans@email.msn.com](mailto:robtwevans@email.msn.com)

### Nepal – Tibet

Peak: Kala Pattar, Island Peak

Date: May 2002

Contact: Warren Storkman, [dstorkman@aol.com](mailto:dstorkman@aol.com) 650-493-8959

Climb Kala Patter and Island Peak plus optional 8 day Tibet trip

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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 12/23/2001. Meetings are the second Tuesday of each month.**



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

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