

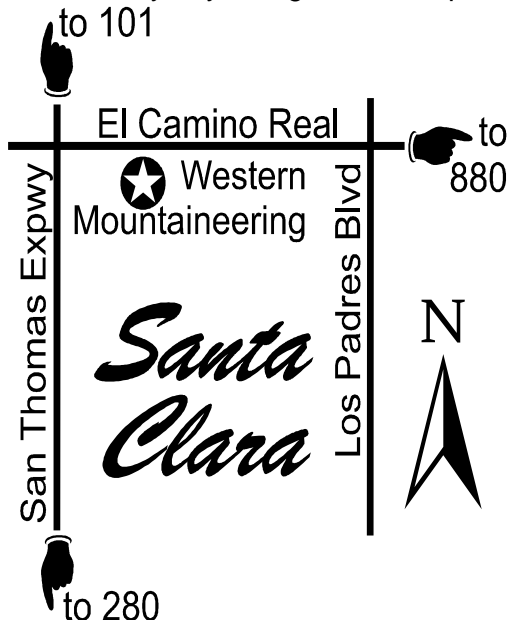
World Wide Web Address: <http://lomaprieta.sierraclub.org/pcs/>

Next General Meeting

Date: Tuesday, March 12
Time: 8:00 PM
Program: Khumbu the Hard Way: Trekking and Climbing around Mt Everest by Tim Hult
 Thirty days in a trekking circumnavigation of the Khumbu region of Nepal featuring climbs of 4 passes over 15k, climbs of two 20k peaks, views of Everest. See Italian guides retching, Buddhist monks quoting foreign exchange rates, baring bodies and frozen laundry all in one Technicolor presentation.

Location: Western Mountaineering 2344 El Camino Real, Santa Clara (between San Thomas and Los Padres)

Directions: From 101: Exit at San Thomas Expressway, Go South to El Camino Real. Turn left and the Western Mountaineering will be immediately to your right. Limited parking back.



Deadline for submissions to the next Scree is Sunday 3/24/2002 Meetings are the 2nd Tuesday of each month.

First Aid Info

Date: Wednesday, March 6
Location: UCSF campus, San Francisco
Time: 7-10pm
Who: for any one who has taken a wilderness first aid class and wishes to practice their patient assessment system facilitated by: Outdoors Unlimited and Bobbie Foster of Foster Calm. She has been teaching wilderness first aid for 8 years in the Bay area
Cost: FREE but please sign-up by calling the Outdoors unlimited at 415-476-2078 to register (best by March 1)

Here is a chance to practice your patient assessment again. In your wilderness first aid class you learned how important good patient assessment is to providing good care. If it has been awhile since you last practiced or used this skill come join us for an evening of review and skills practice.

Bobbie Foster Calm
 15135 Lake Lane
 Nevada City, CA 95959
 530-265-0997 - phone/fax bobbie@fostercalm.com
<http://www.fostercalm.com/>

Trekking Around Mt Everest

Companion Article for the March Program

Amphu Lapsa Nepal2000 Nuwang strode across the great flat alpine bowl stepping across the sharp line of deep shadow cast by the 20,000-foot mountain behind him and into the bright afternoon light. His gait was strong but showed his fatigue. His expression matched his physical stride; tired but confident, assured and measured. With a great scarf wrapped to keep out the chill air, and a floppy campaign hat set authoritatively on his head, he looked very much the leader that he is. Surdar, boss of the camp staff and porters, the one man we ultimately depended on to get us through our journey through the hardest trek in the Kumbu region of Nepal. He smiles as he describes how the pots, stoves, plates and utensils tumbled out of one the great baskets a cook's assistant had tied on a tump line stretched over his head when he slipped on a repel down the pass. The porter was tied in, and suffered no serious injury, but the basket tipped and sent its entire 50-pound plus load down 2,000 feet of rock and snow. This year, an Italian mountain guide with one of the other parties had to be carried off when his bad cold turned into an altitude-aggravated

case of pneumonia. We were later informed he was taken to a lower village and helicoptered out to a hospital in Kathmandu. Aside from our party of nearly 30 porters, cooks, and Sherpa climbing guides we started this October 2000 trip with, our little band consisting of Christine Desrosier, Bob Foster, Mike Trueman (our guide) and myself. As the trip progressed and we ate more food, we sent porters back such that by the time we finished the full loop from Lukla, over Mera La, up the Hunku valley, over the Amphu Lapsa, climbed Island peak, up the Kumbu glacier, climbed Kala Patar and finally back to Lukla via the standard Kumbu trekking route, our total party was a more manageable 12. What a trip it was: 4 passes over 17,000 feet, climbed 2 mountains at or near 20,000 feet high, trekked 110 miles in 30 days, and collectively lost 60 lbs. Most importantly, we came back friends. Aside from coming back safe, the real objective of the trip was to climb three named peaks, and complete a giant circle trek over some of the remotest terrain in the Kumbu. Having missed our chance to climb Mera peak due to stomach problems, took our climb of the Amphu Lapsa as a spectacular consolation prize in terrific weather. The other highlight had to be trekking through the seldom-visited Hunku valley. Being in a National Park, the Hunku was a near-wild place with faint trails, no villages, and few visitors. A place as remote as it was 100 years ago; no radio telephones, no chance for re-supply in a storm, no way out except over a the Amphu Lapsa pass. Surrounding the valley are the great named peaks Ama Debal, Hunku, and Chamlang. Towering over all that the head the valley beyond the pass sat Mt. Everest. A beacon drawing us closer with ever more spectacular views with every step. Climbs of 20,323 foot Island peak were to follow our Amphu Lapsa adventure, as was a hike (not really a climb in the mountaineering sense) of Kala Patar from which a spectacular view of Mount Everest may be seen. While both Island Peak and interesting, and certainly challenging, they somehow lacked the drama of getting 3 parties of clients and porters with 100 lbs loads safely up and down this tricky bit of mountaineering. The Nepalese are an amazing people: kind, good-natured, resolute, hearty, strong, and most of all hospitable - all at the same time. The children are curious, playful and always display ruddy, sunburned cheeks highlighting cheerful, laughing smiles. We should all hope and pray for their deliverance from this time of turmoil in their land were Communist insurgents are running amok and the royal family as suffered a terrible tragedy.

• *Tim Hult*

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. Sizer

Peak: Mt Sizer
 Date: March 10 - Mt Sizer - Sunday 4D
 Leaders: Ron Karpel ronny@karpel.org or (H) 650-594-0211 and coleader: Nancy Fitzsimmons Pkclimber@aol.com or (H) 408-957-9683.

This is a wonderful loop with great vistas from the ridge. This hike will be fast and strenuous. Please call the leaders if you haven't hiked with this group. Heavy rain cancels.

Carpool: 7:30 am at Cubberley High in Palo Alto (Middlefield & Montrose), or 7:45 am at Cottle & 85 Park & Ride, or 8:30 am at Henry Coe Park Hdqs. This hike is co-listed with the PCS.

Rock Climbing Practice

Dates: Thu. April 18th (evening session), Sun. April 21st (practice)
 Leaders: Ron Karpel, David Ress
 Contact: Ron Karpel, email: ronny@karpel.org 650-594-0211(H)

This is a restricted outing of the Sierra Club. To participate, you must be a Sierra Club Member. Participants must be experience on class 3 terrain and will be required to use a helmet.

Our practice will emphasize safe rock climbing using rock climbing gear. The goal is to cover the kind of rock climbing situations one might encounter during mountaineering in the Sierra Nevada. We will practice climbing rock routes of class-4 and easy class-5 (up to about 5.4) levels. Participants will train in general use of ropes, tying knots, using harnesses, using protections devices, setting anchors, using slings and biners, providing belay to leaders top rope belay to followers, tying in to a belay station, using belay devices, and practice rappelling. We do not intend to train in leading rock climbing.

The theory session will take place in the Peninsula Conservation Center. The practice itself will take place in the Pinnacles National Monument.

Yosemite Rock

Peak: PCS Site for Yosemite Rock Climbing
 Dates: May 18th-19th, 2002
 Maps: Yosemite Valley if you must
 Guide Books: Plenty to choose from
 Leader: Ron Karpel, ronny@karpel.org
 Co-Leader: Rick Booth, rwbooth@attbi.com

This is an official trip of the Sierra Club. You must be a Sierra Club member to sign-up.

We have reserved two campsites in Yosemite Valley in order to organize a weekend of rock climbing. You must have a partner, and one of you needs to be able to lead SAFELY the routes you are going to climb, while the other partner must be able to follow. You also must use your own gear. You must use a helmet. We will encourage, but not require, people to climb in groups for safety and company sake.

I will be happy to keep a list of people who are looking for partners, but you will need to make the contact.

To sign-up, send a climbing resume (rock climbing), the name of your partner, and your Sierra Club member number to the above e-mail address or call Ron Karpel at 650-594-0211 at home.

Echo Peaks

Peak: Echo Peaks (11,000 - 11,160+) class-3/4/ and maybe 5
 Dates: June 16th, 2002
 Maps: Tenaya Lake 7.5' or Tuolumne Mdws 15'
 Leader: Ron Karpel, ronny@karpel.org 650-594-0211
 Co-Leader: Jim Curl, jhcurl@pacbell.net 415-585-1380

This is a restricted trip of the Sierra Club. Participants must be experienced in class-3 and 4 climbing.

Late last season, a debate about identifying a few of the peaks lead me to make an unplanned day trip to the area, and to realize that the 9 Echo Peaks are an attractive day trip destination.

We will set ropes for peak #4 which is 4th class. If we have enough skilled climbers, some of us may climb peak #9 which is rated 5.7. The rest of the peaks are 3rd class.

Send your Sierra Club member number along with a climbing resume to the leaders.

Mt. Langley

Peak: Mt. Langley (14,026 feet) Class 2
Dates: July 12-14, 2002
Map: USGS Mt. Langley topo, 7.5'
Leader: John Wilkinson jwilkinson@sbcglobal.net
(408) 947-0858

A leisurely trip to climb California's southernmost fourteener. We'll drive down on Friday and do a short backpack in, camping probably at or near one of the Cottonwood Lakes. Saturday we'll dayhike the peak via Old Army Pass, and hike out and drive home on Sunday. This is suitable as a beginner's trip. Most of the route is on trail or use trail.

Limited to 10 people. There is a \$5 charge for the permit, payable at or before the trailhead. Contact John to sign up or for more information.

More details and carpool contact information will be sent out a week or so before the trip.

Minarets

Peaks: Minarets Mountaineering Classic, Ansel Adams Wilderness, California Trip #: 02154A
Dates: July 26-August 4, 2002
Price: \$675; Dep: \$100
Leaders: Margi Waller & Anne Muzzini; Climbing
Leaders: Doug Mantle and Tina Bowman

SUMMARY: Experienced mountaineers will retrace the routes of the firstexplorers of the Minarets. On layover days we'll have opportunities to enjoy either technical (limit of six participants) or non-technical peak climbs. (Prior rock climbing experience is required for technical ascents.) A packer assist will lighten our loads and allow us to combine strenuous days with great food and a few creature comforts at night.

<http://www.sierraclub.org/outings/national/brochure/02154a.asp>

Gnarly Adventuring

Trip: Gnarly Adventuring Above Yosemite Valley
California Trip #: 02170A
Dates: August 18-25, 2002
Price: \$615; Dep: \$100
Leaders: Bill Oliver & Will McWhinney

SUMMARY: John Muir came to Yosemite in 1868. He marveled at this wondrous place, exploring its canyons and climbing its peaks. We, too, will marvel, explore, and climb. First we spend four days among the pinnacles and domes of Tuolumne Meadows. Then we backpack from the Valley to Little Yosemite Valley for a three-day finale. Ascents will include Cathedral Peak, Eichorn Pinnacle, Mt. Starr King, and Half Dome (cables). Rock climbing experience required only for optional summit blocks. Non-climbers welcome for non-technical segments.

<http://www.sierraclub.org/outings/national/brochure/02170A.asp>

North Peak Mt. Conness

July 20-22, 2001

When Bob Suzuki and Charles Schafer invited me to go with them to climb the North Couloir of North Peak and the North Ridge of Mt. Conness, they didn't have to ask twice. Both climbs are high-quality alpine routes in the gorgeous and easily accessible country just north of Tioga Pass. The plan was to hike in a few miles on Friday evening, do both climbs on Saturday (they're less than a mile apart), and then play it by ear on Sunday. But with the usual delays getting out of town on Friday afternoon, it was 8 p.m. before we arrived at the trailhead at Saddlebag Lake.

Nevertheless, we decided to hike in a bit, which actually worked out well. As the last afterglow faded from the sky at 9 p.m., we found a nice campsite next to Greenstone Lake -- much nicer than spending the night in the barren, gravelly area near the Saddlebag Lake dam.

Saturday morning, we left camp at 7, hiked up past Cascade Lake, and crossed the moraine to the foot of the North Face of North Peak. Our goal was the right-hand couloir, which looked fairly moderate -- 40-45 degrees and only about 600' high. The left-hand couloir was very impressive -- much longer, much steeper, and with a mini-crevasse that created a short vertical wall of snow near the top.

We started up the right-hand couloir, finding good neve with a few hard icy patches. Bob set up the first belay station at the right end of the bergschrund, then one on rock on the right wall, another one on pickets in the middle of the couloir, and two more on rock on the left wall. With just an ice axe, it was nice to be roped up, though with two ice tools, soloing it would've been a possibility. The weather was cloudless and warm, and we passed a leisurely morning in the rhythms of climbing, waiting, and belaying.

By the time we finished the last short pitch and arrived on the saddle, it was 2 p.m. Instead of rushing off to Conness, we decided to take a badly needed snack break, summit North Peak, take our time, and do the second climb on Sunday. The last 200' to the top of North was the most enjoyable part of the climb -- a steep class-3 gully on beautifully solid rock. The top of the gully has a class-4 move, which you can bypass by escaping to the left. On the summit, we ran into three guys from Western Mountaineering, one of whom knew Bob because of his years of lavish spending on climbing gear. They had just completed the North Ridge of North Peak, and were planning to do the North Ridge of Conness on Sunday from a well-chosen camp on the saddle between the two peaks. Not us -- we had to descend 2000 feet to our camp, and then drag our gear back up Sunday morning. We needed the exercise though.

Our late-afternoon descent was pleasant and unhurried, though the sharp knife-edge that was tomorrow's objective, with a deep gap halfway across it, was far from comforting. Wandering cross-country on the descent, Bob and I strayed too far left (north), and ended coming down into the maze of the Wasco Lakes instead of directly to Greenstone. As I said, we needed the exercise, and sometimes it's just too much work to stop and get out the map.

We arrived in camp at 6, leaving plenty of time for a leisurely dinner and rest. During supper, a ranger lady stopped by and told us we were illegally camped -- while we were well over 100' from the lake, we weren't aware of another rule saying that you're supposed to camp at least 100' from the nearest trail. (Seems like an odd rule -- wouldn't it be better to concentrate use along trails, instead of scarring pristine areas with camps?) We'd also failed to pick up our permit, though Charles did reserve one. Clearly a highly disreputable group. But after gazing into our exhausted faces, and listening to some diplomatic explanations from Charles, the ranger lady let us stay put.

Sunday we again got moving at the non-alpine hour of 7 a.m. and hiked up past Greenstone and the lowest Conness Lake, picking up a nice use trail the roughly followed the watercourse up to the central and then the westernmost Conness Lake. Just north of that lake, we climbed a sandy gully through a cliff band and then began a long traverse left on a brushy scree shelf perched above a major cliff. This shelf looked airy from a distance, but had a nice climbers use trail all the way.

After that the actual north ridge began, with a long level section of moderately exposed class-3, leading to a large double-humped tower, visible from below. The tower was almost vertical but still

moderate class-3 on huge holds, and it led to a second, long, nearly level class-3 section. This part of the ridge was solid and blocky, with really big air on the left and a smaller cliff on the right, but it was wide enough on top so that it never really felt scary. The end of this section rose to a sharp pinnacle followed by a 100' deep cleft, the most prominent feature on the ridge and clearly visible from our camp. We climbed unroped to the top of the pinnacle, found a rap sling, and rapped about 50' down to a blocky ledge. A couple of class-4 traversing moves took us to a second rap sling and a second 50' rap, to the slabs at the base of the notch. A piece of fixed pro indicated that you could avoid the second rap and traverse instead, but it looked like hard class-5 on a smooth vertical wall.

From the base of the notch, the ridge turns into a wide, 400-foot high face with a pointed top, inclined at about 70 degrees. From a distance, we thought this face might require several roped pitches, but we ended up third-classing the whole thing. It was the best class-3 rock I've ever climbed on -- clean, solid, rough-textured, with small cracks and ramps angling upward, and even a few small ledges and stances to stop and rest. A party just to our right was roped up, but only because the second appeared to be very inexperienced. Parties who want to make this section sportier can rope up and climb along the left edge of the face, next to the 1000-foot vertical drop to the Conness Glacier.

Since we'd done no roped climbing except for the two short rappels, I expected the top of this cliff to reveal a hideously exposed knife edge leading to the summit. Instead I topped out and was surprised to see a 300 feet of easy class 2-3 boulders leading over to the huge summit cairn. So that was the north ridge -- lots of high-quality class-3, a little bit of 4, two short raps, and no class-5 climbing. Apparently the 5.6 rating applies to climbing it in the other direction -- the two raps could be combined into one long class-5 pitch.

We topped out at 2 p.m. and talked to a couple just off the west ridge, another fine route on this peak. Bob knew the woman from Planet Granite, and in the register, we noted that Noriko Sekikawa and Maxym Rynov had signed in off the west ridge a few hours before us. As the saying goes, mountaineering can be a small world, even in a state with 35 million people.

After a break, we descended the standard class-2 route onto the vast, sandy plateau to the southeast, and then found the east ridge, which you can't see from the plateau unless you're walking along the very edge of it. We dropped off the plateau onto the east ridge, then stopped to discuss the remainder of our descent route. Charles wanted to continue our classic ridge-running along the crest of the east ridge, directly across the jagged pinnacles at 11,500 feet. He gestured toward the highest pinnacle about 500' away.

"See that white streak over there, between those peaklets?" He said.

"That's a trail."

"That's no trail," I said. "That's a dike of white rock on a 5.9 face. I think we should drop down to the Conness Glacier and pick up that nice use trail we used this morning."

"The glacier!" Bob said. "That's steep glacial ice! We don't even have crampons and ice axes. We could get killed."

Smiling slightly at this Suzuki humor, I climbed out a few yards and leaned over the edge of the cliff to get a look at the glacier below. I peered down at an expanse of filthy eroded snow, covered with rockfall and dirt.

"Bob, I've never seen such pure white snow," I said. "It looks nice and soft for glissading too. Almost like white velvet."

"No way," Bob said, gesturing toward Alpine Lake to the southeast. "I think we should drop down to that tarn over there, then contour over to the saddle just above our camp."

"Way down there -- are you crazy?" Charles said. "We'd have to climb back up 1000 feet to get up to the saddle."

And so forth for several more minutes. We ended up taking a route none of us would have chosen -- a sidehill traverse about 200 feet below the base of the pinnacles, circling eastward toward the saddle above our camp at about 11,100 feet. It turned out to be ideal -- solid white boulders and slabs, patches of green grass, beautiful little sky gardens, and easy walking all the way. We passed the "contact zone" between the Conness granite and the reddish east-side rock (supposedly a good place to look for gold) and continued on to the saddle, ending with a gentle climb of less than 100 feet.

Down a talus slope to Greenstone Lake, and finally to our camp at 6 p.m. We packed up our camping gear and hiked out past Saddlebag Lake in the evening light, watching the alpenglow on the vast, barren slope on the east side of the lake. A hearty, home-cooked supper at Tioga Pass Resort topped off a great day of alpine climbing in an especially beautiful and accessible corner of the Sierras.

• *Jim Ramaker*

Mt. Kaweah

September 1-3, 2001

This was a successful 3-day solo trip to climb Mt. Kaweah (13,802') from Mineral King via Glacier Pass and Black Rock Pass. A detailed trip report and route description follows.

Arrived at Mineral King at mid-day on Friday after picking up topo maps the day before at Blueprint Service Co. in Bakersfield, which sells all kinds of maps, professional grade compasses and a lot of other neat stuff. Got a permit at the Mineral King ranger station for entry Saturday and rented a bear canister, then settled down in a cabin at the Silver City Resort (great store has everything, restaurant has good food, cabins - no hot water, no electricity, no sheets- ain't cheap) to relax and pack.

Drove the few miles to the Sawtooth Pass trailhead (appx. 7,800')

Saturday morning and was hiking by 8am. The trail to Sawtooth Pass is initially fairly steep the first mile or so then steadies out to an easy grade with long switchbacks that is easy to handle. As probably the first hiker through that morning, I was treated to the sight of deer at several spots, many sporting fuzzy 4-point antlers, all leisurely munching on breakfast not disturbed by my presence. On the way to Mineral Lake, I noted one map error the trail is not shown correctly in the vicinity of where it divides, with the other branch going to Crystal Lake. As it turns out, the intersection is clearly signed so there is no need for one to presume that it has been missed (and retrace steps, as I did) if the map vs. local topography seems to suggest it has been passed. Reaching Mineral Lake, the trail swings over and starts up sandy slopes towards Sawtooth and Glacier Pass. Very unpleasant. At around 11,200' I realized that the trail I was on (there are many in the sand) didn't seem to be making the veer over towards Glacier Pass as indicated by the map, so rather than continuing up I sidehilled over, ending up only slightly above the 11,100' pass. At that point I stopped for lunch and relaxed for about 30 minutes. From this direction the pass is the approximate low point although higher up there also seems to be a passable ledge down [NOTE: when coming from Spring Lake, the pass is the low point to the left of a whitish knob which itself is left of the true low point]. The correct route is on dark rock and has a trail over it. Going down there is one point where some careful hand holds are necessary otherwise

it is basically class 1 on trail. The trail, faint in just a couple of places, then continues all the way down to Spring Lake. I contoured around at the 10,000 foot level towards the Black Rock Pass trail which was quite clearly visible across the valley. The contouring idea is not advisable, it was not that bad but not pleasant either and definitely not worth saving 200'; I did better going more direct on the way back as described below.

The Black Rock Pass trail is in good condition and nicely switchbacked however the pass is high (11,600'). In the afternoon sun after the gain and mileage already completed, it seemed like forever to reach the pass. Again the map was inaccurate as regards the switchbacks (there are more than indicated) and for awhile had me thinking I was higher than in fact I was. At or shortly before 5pm I reached the top and took a food break a few feet below on the other side. At which point, the Kaweah range came into view WOW, comparable to the view of the Ritter Range from San Joaquin ridge. Within an hour on good trail I was down to Little Five Lakes and found a spot at ~10,500' near the intersection with the trail down to Big Arroyo. Visiting a few minutes with the nearby ranger before dinner, he offered up a shortcut for my route tomorrow.

Up early the next day and on the trail by 6.30am. I do not have any trip reports nor Secor since this trip was impromptu after some car trouble nixed the rest of my planned east side trips. I follow the trail towards Big Arroyo for about a mile to the outlet stream for the group of lakes beneath Mt. Eisen, cross the stream, then leave the trail and start following the stream down to Big Arroyo. Per the ranger, Big Arroyo is low this year and can be crossed anywhere; he recommends this route to save mileage so I try it. It's a long way down but goes OK and Big Arroyo is indeed low and easily crossed anywhere. I cross it then head uphill and to the right towards the High Sierra trail. I realize after the fact that the mileage saved is somewhat offset by the effort of a very steep uphill non-trail climb, but I reach the High Sierra trail without undue difficulty at about the 10,000' level after a gain of 500' or so (but make a note to take the trail on the way back which, for the return at least, is advisable).

Following along the High Sierra trail I now need to find a suitable place to leave the trail and veer towards Mt. Kaweah. After using compass to locate my position on the trail, I reach a point where the trail crosses the outlet stream for the lake which is almost dead south of Red Kaweah. Shortly thereafter I leave the trail heading uphill and across (southeast). My intended route is to go up the north side of a prominent broad rib between Mt. Kaweah and Second Kaweah to the connecting ridge between them, then over and up to the peak of Mt. Kaweah. Observation the prior day had shown a red streak seemingly indicative of something short of a use trail in the talus on the north side of the rib. Proceeding at first through forest, which progressively thinned as I gained altitude, I cross a couple of small streams not on the map but which drain small ponds that are on the map.

Eventually at about 11,600' I break into the open and stop for lunch.

Clouds are building; I hope they are harmless as I know I will be pushing my turn-around time. Starting up, I now have a 2,000'+ class 2 talus grind on an open high windy slope. However it is a short distance and relatively steep grade, so elevation is gained fairly quickly. By about 1pm I am near the ridge between Second Kaweah and Mt. Kaweah at 12,800'+ but the peak stills seems quite distant and clouds keep building, though mostly to the west. Persevering, I continue on and eventually top out on the peak ridge just before 2pm, a few hundred feet northeast of the peak. A few minutes later and I am at the peak and settle down in the nicely constructed wind shelter for food and drink.

Views east to the Whitney group and west to the Great West divide are outstanding. The skies do not have any smoke but to the west plenty of very large clouds. The register indicates this to be a less frequently-visited peak. I stay for about 45 minutes, and then start down. I aim for a small lake almost due south of the peak, intending to pick up the trail as quickly as possible and spend less time cross-country. The going seems slow but is mostly easy class 1 for the first 1,000 or 2,000 feet until the grade picks up then some class 2 down to tree line, on the way passing what appeared to be a grove of bristlecone pines. The talus however is unremitting all the way to the small lake (dry as per Secor) which appears out of nowhere after I had given up on finding it. The trail is right there and so by about 4.30pm (as I recall) I am northeast bound on the High Sierra trail. The sun is shining but the skies over the Great Divide are filled with huge clouds, (making for an absolutely beautiful view) and it is raining over by Farewell Gap. I move right along, following the trail down to and across Big Arroyo. The first raindrops begin at that point, so I pull out my raincoat and get moving; there is a 1,000' gain over 3 miles back to camp and it is just almost 6pm. As I proceed up the grade out of Big Arroyo, the raindrops continue, not heavy just harassing. When it starts to seem like real rain, I stop and put on the rain pants, but then it backs off again. Fine. As I approach camp, the sunset is stunning in both directions. The Kaweahs are shrouded in low-hanging gray clouds; the setting sun, not visible below the peaks but apparently shining through Kaweah Gap, leaves a red streak across the range at about the 12,000' level; in all a very dramatic scene. Finally I reach camp about 7.30pm, an approximate 13 hour day for roughly 18 miles and 5,300' gross gain. Now, dinner or tarp first? I start working on dinner and then oops! the rain and hail really start. Dashing around trying to stay dry. About 9pm it stops and I come out and start wringing out everything left out in the wet. My dinner is still warm (the styrofoam cup for the ramen noodles really insulates well!) so that's a big plus. I quickly down dinner and hit the hay.

Up the next day at 6.30am under clear skies. Most everything is wet but I am in no rush and am moving slowly anyway. Taking the time to dry out everything in the warm sun while having breakfast, I do not break camp until 10.15am. By that time, everything in my pack is dry but yes clouds are already in the sky. The 1,400' and two miles of trail up to Black Rock Pass go reasonably quickly, I am over the pass and after a quick bite am heading down the other side by noon. Clouds continue to build and now I am constantly in the shade; precip seems only a matter of time. The reward on the way down was the view at about the 11,000' level of Spring, Cyclamen and Columbine Lakes beneath Needham and Sawtooth peaks: an outstanding otherworldly sight of blue ovals floating in a sea of fractured gray granite in flat light that truly looks straight off a Yes album (and I was never that much of a Yes fan). At perhaps 9,900' I come across a trail intersection with an old trail clearly originally a constructed trail, not a use trail and follow it until it disappears in the flats at 9,800'. Then continue cross-country across Cliff Creek and up to Spring Lake. The raindrops have started so after crossing Cliff Creek I put on the rain suit. At Spring Lake I pick up the trail to Glacier Pass. Quickly refilling water bottles in what is now steady rain and hail I then start up the trail, which except for one or two spots is easy to follow all the way up to the pass. It is now very wet and cold, prime hypothermic conditions, so I keep moving and pretty soon reach the pass and get over it there is one spot where maybe a class 2/3 move is needed otherwise a walk up trail then hike across sandy slopes towards the Sawtooth Pass trail. There are myriad footpaths in the sand, I follow the ones that seem to make sense without much deliberation and find my way down towards Mineral Lake, eventually finding a nice chute that is mostly rock and easy to step down which takes me out of the sand (now being

wet the sand is firm and I can't slide down it). [NOTE: For those headed up to Glacier Pass from Mineral Lake, at the THIRD GREEN POLE there is a duck indicating the bottom of this chute, which makes for much easier uphill travel.]

Coming to Mineral Lake, I smell cigar smoke and after assuming it's a mild hallucination, I find a backpacker who has bivvy'd under the great bivy rock by the bear box there, who has in fact broken out a cigar. So much for surprises. The rest of the trek down to the trailhead is uneventful but wet and I get back to the car at about 5.20pm with the rain still falling. The simple drive on Mineral King road takes more than of the entire drive time back to San Francisco. But I am rewarded with a beautiful sunset. Trip stats for the 3 days: approx. 42 miles and 13,000' gross gain. IMHO, I do not understand why Secor and the SPS rate Mt. Kaweah class 1, there is no trail on the mountain and no way to walk up with hands in pockets.

• *Mike McDermitt*

Tortoises Top Rabbit 6640'

December 24-29, 2001

Was this a visit to a menagerie or the desert? After all, we climbed Rabbit, Coyote, and Whale.

Shortly after Richard Stover and I left the S-22 highway to begin our walk across the desert toward the long ridge leading to Rabbit Peak, we were passed by a speedy couple with camelback water packs and little gear. They announced they were climbing Rabbit as a day hike and sped past.

We trudged along with our heavy packs containing 2 1/2 gallons of water apiece. Since we hike slowly, and the days were short, we had decided to take 2 1/2 days to climb Rabbit (20 miles, 8300' elevation gain). We would camp for two nights on top of Villager. As we ascended the ridge, the words of one of Robert Louis Stevenson's verses kept running through my mind: "Dark brown is the river/Golden is the sand/The stream goes on forever . . ." Substitute the word "ridge" for "stream," and you get the picture.

The day before, we had climbed Coyote Mountain as a warm up. An entry in its register had given me a chuckle. Fed up with climbers boasting about the speed of the ascent and how many bighorn they had spotted, one writer had written something like, "Made the climb in 23 minutes and saw 2,741 bighorn." At about the 2500 foot level, we met a backpacker descending. He had climbed Villager but had backed off Rabbit because the "terrain was so rough." Actually it's not rough at all. There's a use trail the entire way. It's just a LONG, LONG way with a lot of elevation gain and loss between Rabbit and Villager.

At about 4800 feet, we met the speedy couple coming down. "Wow," I enthused, "I'm really impressed."

"Don't be," the man responded. "We decided not to do Rabbit."

Shortly thereafter, as we hiked the ridge which dropped away sharply on each side, a formation of cormorants flew directly overhead. I took it as a good sign.

When we reached the summit of Villager, we found comfortable camping among the pinion pines complete with attractive views of the Salton Sea. The trek from Villager to Rabbit and back took us longer than the DPS estimate of 6 hours. But when we crawled into our bivy sacks that night, we smiled with the knowledge that many parties had signed the register on Villager that month, but only two had made it to Rabbit.

On the way down we picked up the first of the two liters of water that we had stashed on the ascent but were unable to locate the second liter. Apparently there are multiple use trails; we were on a different trail than on the way up. The errant bottle was left about

2000' from the desert floor at a place where the trail passes between two large rocks. I remember a blooming ocotillo to the west of the trail. If you find the bottle, enjoy. It's behind the eastmost rock. We also found a pair of men's blue jeans, but alas, no cowpoke in just his skivvies! We packed them out.

Back on the desert floor we enjoyed the next day hiking between several palm oases. Each could be reached by car, but it was much more enjoyable to hike across the open desert. The geology was fantastic, and it felt both scary and good to drop out of sight of notable landmarks and be totally surrounded by similar-looking low brown hills. We also visited the "Pumpkin Patch" an interesting geologic area with weathered-out concretions which resemble the Halloween vegetable.

Whale Peak, which we climbed on December 29, is far more interesting, albeit easier than Rabbit. The jumble of rocks and mature trees and yucca afford enjoyable terrain and exploring. Some of the native junipers touted sprigs of mistletoe in their branches. Since it was the Christmas season, I made good use of the parasite. A 4WD vehicle is needed to get to the trailhead off the Pinyon Mountain Road as described in Afoot and Afield in San Diego County.

Be sure to stop by Carrizo Bikes in Borrego Springs and talk to owner Dan Cain. He has done some extreme "hiking" and also sells local topographic maps. We originally went there since the Park Visitor Center doesn't sell topo maps! Go figure.

And, yes, for those of you who saw our slides at the PCS Christmas party, we found 6 balloons.

• *Debbie Bulger*

Telescope Peak

February 23, 2002

Eric Miklas and I climbed Telescope Peak Saturday. Wind 23 mph average, gusting to 28. It felt like more. We used crampons the last 500 feet to make the climb easier. A few inches of powder on a mild crust. There were many bare patches, even at the summit.

An ice axe wasn't really needed. That was good, because we are still looking for some experienced climber with ice axe proficiency to take pity on us and critique our self-taught technique.

Very little snow below 10,000.

I could see a huge dust cloud rising from Owens Lake. It went higher than Whitney. I wonder when LA is going to take responsibility for the mess it created there and fix it. We stayed in Wildrose camp Friday & Saturday night. Low 50 degrees at 4200 feet. Great weekend!

• *Ed Lulofs*

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.

Pyramid Peak and Mt Price

Date: Mar 9-11 (Sat-Mon)
Peaks: Pyramid Peak (9983) , Mt Price (9975)
Difficulty: class 2, ice axe, crampons, skis, snowshoes, snow travel
Location: northern Sierra Nevada, Off Highway 50 (USGS Pyramid Peak map)
Contact: Stephane Mouradian
smouradian@hotmail.com,
http://www.climber.org/WhosWho/Stephane_Mouradian.html
Cocontact: Steve Eckert
http://www.climber.org/WhosWho/Steve_Eckert.html

Pyramid Peak is a PCS winter classic. We will spice it up with a traverse over to Mount Price and maybe a side trip to Ralston Peak on the way out. Trailhead is TwinBridges on Highway 50. Crampons and ice axe experience required to sign up for this trip.

Joshua Tree National Park

Dates: Sun, March 17 – Thur, 21, 2002
Place: Joshua Tree National Park
Indian Cove Group Campsite #4
Difficulty: Class 5
Leader: Hal Tompkins tompkins@SLAC.Stanford.EDU
Coleader: Joan Marshall jmarshall@legato.com
650-210-7551

No scheduled daytime activities. Free choice. Since the entire week was not available, a second site has been reserved in the family campsite area of Indian Cove, for Saturday, March 16, and for Friday, March 22. Bring firewood.

Those interested in rock climbing must have a climbing partner. We can help you find one. Potluck dinner Monday and wine tasting Monday night. Bring your best! There is no running water in Joshua Tree. Limited to 25. 10\$ reserves your spot. Mail to:

Joan Marshall
650 Elmbrook Way
San Jose, CA 95111

Roundtop

Peak: Roundtop
Date: March 24, 2002 (Sunday)
Details: Roundtop, 10,381 feet, snow/winter
Contacts: George Van Gorden, 408-779-2320 home,
Arun Mahajan arun@tollbridgetech.com,
(w)408-585-2114, (h)after 9 pm: 650-327-8598

We will attempt to climb the beautiful Roundtop Peak that is in the vicinity of the Kirkwood ski area. Meet at 8 am at the Carson Pass sno-park on Sunday the 24th of March. This is a day trip and we expect to return by 3pm. Remember to get a sno-park permit for parking there. There is a hefty fine if found to be without one. Sno-park permits are usually available at REI and some other outdoor sports stores.

Snowshoes or skis needed for the approach and axe and crampons for the summit ridge. Basic ability to use axe/crampons is a must. Get adequate warm and windproof winter clothing and footwear and food and drink. We should be back to the cars by 3pm. You must call the leaders to sign up. If we have not climbed with you before, you will be asked to explain your ice axe and crampon usage experience.

Extreme weather will cancel this trip.

Mt. Muir

Peak: Mt. Muir
Date: March 30-April 1
Contact: George Van Gorden gvangord@mhu.k12.ca.us

Climb a fourteener, barely, in winter conditions in the springtime when you can get by with only nine hours in the sack. Participants need to have experience using an ice axe for self-arrest. Crampons will be necessary and we will travel by snowshoe. Some winter camping experience would help.

Tableland Traverse - Alta and Silliman

Date: Apr 6-8 (Sat-Mon)
Goal: Alta Peak (11204') and Mt Silliman (11188')
Difficulty: class 2, ice axe, crampons, skis, snowshoes
Location: western Sierra Nevada
Contact: Steve Eckert - see
http://www.climber.org/WhosWho/Steve_Eckert.html
Contact: Stephane Mouradian - see
http://www.climber.org/WhosWho/Stephane_Mouradian.html

Re-live the first PCS winter trip I ever led... only this time we'll actually DO the high traverse of the Tablelands (above Table Meadow) instead of cutting down across the valley. Expect high angle snow near Silliman and great views into the seldom-visited Ferguson and Deadman canyons from the Kings-Kern Divide. Snowshoers will have more fun near the cars, skiers will have more fun up high.

Tom and Basin

Peak: Mt Tom (13,652'), Basin Mtn (13,181')
Date: May 11-12 (Sat-Sun)
Difficulty: class 2, ice axe, crampons
Map: Mount Tom topo
Contact: Bob Suzuki, SuzukiR@sd-star.com
Co-contact: wanted

This will be a strenuous weekend climb of two 13,000' mountains (Mt. Tom is the large mountain seen when driving northwest out of Bishop). We'll have 6k' of gain the first day. Ice axe and crampons will be needed for Sunday.

Colosseum & Baxter

Peak: Colosseum Mtn (12,451'), Mt Baxter (13,136')
Date: May 25-27 (Sat-Mon)
Difficulty: class 3, ice axe, crampons
Maps: Aberdeen, Kearsarge Peak topos
Contact: Bob Suzuki, SuzukiR@sd-star.com
Co-contact: wanted

Another strenuous outing, a rough first day will get us to base camp at Sawmill Lake. Ice axe, crampons and snowshoes will be needed for the climbs.

The Kaweahs Area

Peaks: Eisen, Lippincott, Lion Rock, the Kaweahs, Picket Guard, and others
Dates: 6/29 - 7/7 (Sat-Sun)
Difficulty: class 1-4
Maps: Mineral King, Triple Divide Peak, and Mt Kaweah topos
Co-contacts: Jim Ramaker, ramaker@vnet.ibm.com, Bob Suzuki, SuzukiR@sd-star.com

Starting from Mineral King (marmots!) we'll try to pack to Big Arroyo the first day. There'll be a lot of accessible peaks to keep us busy for the week! We'll collect names of interested climbers and decide on participants by the end of April. Class 3-4, ice axe, crampons and rope experience required, harness and helmet for Black Kaweah.

Elected Officials

Chair:

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650-594-0211 home
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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 3/24/2002. 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