



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

Next General Meeting

Date: Tuesday, October 14
Time: 7:30 PM
Program: Some Favorite Places In The Sierra Nevada A slide show by Charles Schafer
 I've climbed in a lot of different areas of the Sierra, but there are a few that I'm drawn back to because of the scenic beauty of the area, the ruggedness of the mountains, and/or the quality of the climbing. For this slide show I propose to focus on a few of these areas. And to heck with a story line, I'll let my pictures do the talking.

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

Directions: 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 10/26/2003 Meetings are the 2nd Tuesday of each month.

PCS Elections on November 11

It is that time of the year again! Becoming a PCS officer is a great way to get involved with the climbing community and give back to the club which taught you so much about climbing.

The positions to fill are:

Chair
 Vice Chair
 Treasurer

This year our nominating committee is Arun Mahajan (650-823-9058, arun.mahajan@att.net), Dee Booth (408-354-7291, rdbooth@att.net), Debbie Benham (650-964-0558, deborah4@pacbell.net). Please contact them if you are interested in any of these positions. Alternatively, feel free to contact any current PCS officers if you have questions on the tasks associated with their position. Their contact information is on the PCS website and the back of the Scree. We are looking forward to hearing from you!

• *Stephane Mouradian, PCS Chair*

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.

Cockscomb

Peak: Cockscomb (11040) class-4
Dates: Oct 5th, 2003
Maps: Tenaya Lake 7.5' or Tuolumne Mdws 15'
Leader: Ron Karpel, ronny@karpel.org, 650-594-0211
 Arun Mahajan, arun.mahajan@att.net, (650) 327-8598

This is a restricted trip of the Sierra Club. Participants must be experienced in class-4 climbing, tying to and giving belay. One of the highest and most striking features along the Cathedral Range

http://www.karpel.org/Ron/Pictures/sockscomb-trip/20030810_07_Cockscomb.html the Cockscomb also offers a great climb on solid class-4 rock and a terrific view from the summit.

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

Yosemite Valley Car Camping

Date: Oct 10-11 (Fri-Sat)
Goal: Contact leader for details
Location: Sierra Nevada
Contact: Chris Kramer, ckramar@onlink.com

Virginia

Peaks: Virginia Peak (12,001')
Dates: Sat. Oct. 11 to Sun. Oct. 12, 2003
Difficulty: Class 3
Leader: Kelly Maas 408-378-5311, kellylanda@sbcglobal.net

This is a repeat of a trip Gary Pinson led 13 years ago. "Climb Virginia Peak and four or five class 2 peaks! Spent the summer by the pool? If you're an efficient, conditioned alpinist, willing to rise early and hike late, you can redeem your reputation in one easy weekend." Co-leader accepted.

Independence and University

Peaks: University Peak (13,589 ft) cl 2 Independence Peak (11,742 ft) class 3
Dates: Oct 18-19
Maps: Mt Pinchot & Mt Whitney 15 min; or Kearsarge Pk & Mt Williamson 7.5 min
Leaders: Ron Karpel; ronny@karpel.org

Nancy Fitzsimmons; Pkclimber@aol.com

The weather cools, the days shorten, and the end of another climbing draws closer. Come join us and add these peaks to your season's total, without having to drag your backpacking gear anywhere.

Saturday we will day hike University, Sunday we will day hike Independence.

Potential warm-up on Kearsarge Peak on Friday and maybe finish with Dragon on Monday.

Excelsior Mountain

Peal: Excelsior Mountain
Date: Nov 1 (Sat)
Leader: Aaron Schuman, 650-968-9184(H),
650-943-7532(W), aaron@climber.org

Round Top

A Splendid Little Afternoon Climb

August 18, 2003

The week before the Mt. Russell trip, Gretchen and I spent five nights at our fractional-ownership condo at Kirkwood. Since it is located at 7,800 ft it is perfect for acclimatization. Also we did some hiking and climbing in the area.

On Monday we decided to hike to Round Top from the Woods Lake campground. We used a trail designated 17E47 which took us to Round Top Lake. We started hiking at about 12:30 PM and arrived at Round Top Lake at 2:00 PM. For both of us, it was the first time at altitude this season. We felt it. Gretchen decided she didn't want to do the peak and turned around. I did the peak alone and summited at 3:00 PM. The weather was perfect. There were no clouds, temperature of about 67 degrees, and clear visibility.

I arrived back at Woods Lake around 5:30 PM. We returned to the condo, showered up, and cooked dinner. This was not your typical up-at-the-crack-of-dawn peak climb, but just a splendid little afternoon climb. This was a good acclimatizer.

• Bob Bynum

Mt Russell

To Climb or Not to Climb That is the Question

August 23-24, 2003

Trip Participants: Kai Weidamn, Cecil Anison, Mumtaz Shamsee, Brian Boyle, and Bob Bynum.

A combination of outstanding leadership, co-operative weather, good camaraderie, a beautiful sunset and sunrise, and a challenging class 3 climb equaled one of our most memorable peak climbs. Several events made me think of some passages from Shakespeare's plays.

The trip started on Saturday morning. We met at the Whitney trailhead at 8:30 AM and started hiking at 9:15 AM. Gretchen Luepke Bynum started hiking with us, but didn't intend to camp out or do the peak. After about a mile, we left the Mt Whitney trail and headed up the North Fork of Lone Pine Creek. At this point, Gretchen stopped and returned to the trailhead to do other exploring in the area. The rest of the day we followed a use trail that in many places is not well marked. This proved to be challenging with some bush-whacking and boulder-field crossing. There were some difficult stream crossings, but a very picturesque waterfall where I wish we could have spent more time and gone for a swim. Also climbing the Ebersbacher Ledges in full backpack was a little hairy due to exposure.

We arrived at our campsite next to Upper Boy Scout Lake at about 2:30 PM. This gave us plenty of time to set up our tents and relax

before cooking dinner. We were treated to a nice alpine glow on the White Mountains to the East as the sun set. We all went to bed at about 7:30 PM.

The weather was absolutely perfect for the backpack up to our base camp on Saturday. The sky was perfectly blue with not a cloud in sight. The temperature was in the 70's with a slight breeze. It was just enough to keep us cool, but not gusty. At sunset everything seemed calm. During the night, however, things changed. Around midnight, I woke up and noticed a strong wind blowing. When I looked up, I could still see the stars and figured that a storm wasn't imminent. At this point I didn't worry. By dawn things had changed.

Cecil awakened us at 5:45 AM as promised. We were scheduled to start climbing at 7:00 AM. Cecil was uncertain about doing the peak. The winds had blown in and in the pre-dawn light there were clouds swirling around Third Needle, Day Needle, Keeler Needle, and Mt Whitney like some witch's brew. Above us there were numerous dark clouds. This made me think of a variation of a passage from Shakespeare's Macbeth.:

"Double, double, toil and trouble
Clouds are swirling 'round Whitney's rubble
Thrice a stir around Third Needle
Double dark clouds about Day Needle
Killer winds on Keeler Needle
For a charm of powerful trouble
Like a hell-broth clouds do bubble
Now what about climbing Mt Russell?"

Cecil decided to wait for about 45 minutes before we made the decision to do the climb. We wanted to see if a storm was imminent or if it would just be cloudy all day. This made me think up a variation to Hamlet's soliloquy

"To climb or not to climb, that is the question:
Whether 'tis nobler in the mind to suffer
The slings and arrows of a feeling of defeat
Or to take on a climb against a raging storm "

Around 7:00 AM Cecil decided to start the climb. She thought we could turn around if the weather became inclement. For the first part of the climb, we could see the clouds swirling around Mt Whitney. It was an ominous, but beautiful sight. As we climbed higher and could see over the ridge, we had a clearer picture of the weather. There were many patches of dark cumulus clouds, but it looked like there would be no rain until late in the afternoon, if at all. The wind subsided and it was calm. Once again, I thought of another Shakespeare quote. This time from Julius Caesar.

"Friends, Californians, Peak Climbers, We come to climb
Mt. Russell, not to run from it"

Our route took us from Upper Boy Scout Lake up to the Russell-Carillon saddle. As we climbed towards the saddle, Mt Russell came into better view. From below the saddle Mt Russell looks like a giant glass shard from a broken mirror. From the saddle to the summit is a long ridge hike along the East Arête. This is the route that Norman Clyde first ascended in 1926. His description of the summit I found quite appropriate.

"The whole summit, in fact, is nothing more than a knife edge with a high point at either end."

The climb along the East Arête has some very exposed class 3 that is quite frankly very hairy. Although it is scary making an exposed class 3 maneuver, it gives me a great feeling of accomplishment. With excellent guidance from Cecil and Kai, we were all able to cross these stretches. At 10:53 AM we all summited.

For me, actually reaching the summit of any peak produces a great sense of euphoria. The more difficult the peak the greater the sensation. This was especially true for Mt Russell with its exposed

class 3 climbing and 14,086 ft elevation. I am sure the whole group agreed with me here.

The view from the top was spectacular. Although there many patches of cumulus clouds, it was still a very sunny day. One notable feature is Lake Tulainyo which at 12,818 ft is the highest in the continental United States. From the peak, it appears have smooth beach on its Western shore.

We began our descent shortly after 11:00 AM and arrived back in camp at around 2:00 PM. Originally, the plan was to spend an extra night at Upper Boy Scout Lake, but we were not sure if the weather would produce a storm that night. We packed up and began hiking out at about 2:45 PM and arrived back at the trailhead at 5:45 PM. This was the end of wonderful trip.

• Bob Bynum

References:

The High Sierra, Peaks, Passes, and Trails, First Edition, R.J. Secor, The Mountaineers, 1992, ISBN 0-89886-313-9

Climbing California's Fourteeners, Third Printing 2001, Stephen F. Porcella and Cameron M. Burns, 1998, ISBN 0-89886-555-7

Echo Peaks Plus One In A Day

August 30, 2003

A couple of weeks ago Dee's annual birthday trip was organized to climb all the Echo Peaks in a day. Well, we made an attempt and the trip ended in a comedy of errors and consequential loss of enthusiasm. A second attempt was made on Saturday, August 30.

The name of the game was to climb all nine in one day so we would have to repeat a few from our previous trip. Further complicating the problem was it wasn't clear which one of the bunch of bumps up there was #6 so we decided we would climb both of them, one as indicated by Steve Roper and the other as indicated by RJ Secor. This became the "Plus One". At 6:15 AM we headed up the Cathedral Lakes Trail and took the cutoff for Budd Lake. At 8:30 we were standing on top of Wilts Col, which separates #8 and #9 from the rest of the Echo Peaks. Wilts Col is one of the cool places in the world. It is wide and sandy and the views on one side are of the Southeast Buttress of Cathedral and environs and the views from the other side are of the spectacular Matthes Crest.

On this day it was also windy and cold. We decided to put off #9 until last since the climbable face was in the shade and wind. This meant we would have to come back to #9 after #4, if we got that far. We hiked up to the top of #8 which is to the left of the Wilts Col. It is easy class 3 and takes only a few minutes to climb. Next up was #7, which is on the right side of Wilts Col. This Echo Peak is considerably harder than #8 and requires some airy moves at about 3 plus or maybe class four. There are footholds on the left side on the narrow part or a "butt scoonch" move or two can be made straddling the narrow rock section. Next up was one of the #6s. The problem is it is not clear which bump is #6. Using Roper's The Climber's Guide to the High Sierra then the bump just off the main ridge between #7 and #5 is #6. Echo Peak #5 is the next easily identified peak right on the ridge itself. Dee and I had climbed the Roper version of #6 on our previous trip and we went and climbed it again. No matter what reference is used this annoying bump is decidedly not class 3. On our initial attempt on the Echo Peaks, Dee and I climbed the right hand edge of this formation up a series of cracks past a couple of loose sounding blocks. This is about 5.4 or so. This time we climbed the easier looking chute about 20 feet left of the right hand edge. This was also about 5.3 to 5.4 or so but was rotten for about half the route

and scary. There are no rappel slings or bolts on the top of this formation so getting off requires down climbing. Just a point to keep in mind. Anyway, the next Peak along the ridge is #5 and is modest class 3 and is really a lot of fun to climb.

The top of Echo Peak #5 gives a view of a thin fin of rock between #5 and the twin Echo Peaks #1 and #2. This thin fin is Secor's Echo Peak #6. The ascent of Secor's Echo Peak #6 is done by climbing the right hand side of the north end of this fin. The north end faces Cathedral Peak. The route goes up easy third class to a gap which is crossed and then the route ascends the knobby face. This is about class four or so, steep and exposed enough that most climbers will be happy to have a belay. Next up is Echo Peaks #1 and #2. These are right next to Secor's Echo Peak #6 and a saddle connects the two of them. This is where Dee and I ran out of enthusiasm on our first attempt. We had climbed the saddle between the two peaks and sat there staring out at #3 and were wondering where #1 and #2 were, like something out of an Elmer Fudd cartoon. "Now where did dat silly wabbit put dose Echo Peaks #1 and #2?" Classic.

We expected that we would have to descend from Peak #2 and go around to the south to get up on #3 so we left our packs at the base of the two peaks. Echo peak #1 is easy class 3 from the saddle and Echo Peak #2 is somewhat harder. An interesting and exposed ledge on the north side affords easy access to a wide flat ledge on the north side and it is an easy few moves to the summit. From the summit of #2 it was clear we could just stroll over to #3. Annoyed, we retreated to the base of the saddle and retrieved our packs and re-climbed peak #2. Echo Peak #3 is easy class 3 up the ridge between #2 and #3.

The last peak along this line is Echo Peak #4. This required down climbing the set of vertically running furrows on the northeast side of the ridge connecting #3 and #4. This requires about a 350 foot loss in elevation. Echo Peak #4 is rated class 4 and I am not sure if this down climb is included in this rating but getting down these furrows is probably low fifth class. The fact we didn't use a rope amazes me since it was difficult, scary, and somewhat rotten in places. It was dangerous and not fun. Echo Peak #4 is modest class four from the platform thirty or so feet below the notch between peak #3 and #4. We down climbed to get off of #4. Both going up and coming down Echo Peak #4 was easier than the down climb from #3.

Now all that was left was to get over to #9 and finish the project. We debated the merits of rappelling down and then hiking over to #9 or to go back up #3 and go around that way. The one left over rappel station was attached to a dead tree, not exactly my idea of a safe anchor, and it looked like the one live tree would leave us with a rope pulling problem so we opted for heading back up #3. We used the rope this time and it was as hard going back up those furrows as it was going down. This was done in two long pitches plus a little simul-climbing. From the top of #3 we headed over the top of #2 and back down around #6 (Secor's), #5, #7 and down Wilts Col to the base of the route on Echo Peak #9.

We climbed the Southwest Side route in two pitches, setting a belay just below the little roof system. This time I turned back towards the left after the roof and went up a little 5.6 hand crack off the shoulder. This was a little weird since the rope was zig-zagged all over the place. There is a rappel anchor built into the bottom of the hand crack that apparently can be used to rappel into the gap between #9 and #8. The first time we went straight up from the end of the roof system. In any case there are a lot of ways to get up this face. It is a little loose and we succeeded in blowing off a knob or two. We can't seem to climb Echo Peak #9 without some technical difficulties and this time we succeeded in knotting up our double rope system at the belay. We rappelled off the top in two rappels. The first rappel brought us to an

intermediate station that is just above the roof and to the left. From there we rappelled to the base. Echo Peak #9 has a lot of knobs and flakes sticking out and getting a rope stuck would seem to be a problem. We escaped from the stuck rope problem this time and I pulled the rope down to the packs just as it was getting dark.

We headed up Wilts Col from Echo Peak #9 at about 8:15 PM. Using our headlamps we hiked out past Budd Lake and back to the car. It was a little less than 16 hours car to car. This included climbing all the known Echo Peaks #6, just for good measure, and Echo Peak #2 three times and Echo Peak #3 twice. It turned out that this project required 4000 feet of elevation gain, which surprised us both.

The next day was to be a trip to Mammoth for an ascent of the Crystal Crag but the excellent weather collapsed unexpectedly and dramatically Sunday morning. It was massively overcast and raining all over the place.

• *Rick and Dee Booth, Los Gatos, CA*

Final Notes: This was a fun project and pretty much pushed Dee and me to our limit as to what we could do in a day. We have no idea which bump is the real Echo Peak #6. We liked the Secor version better, it is safer and easier and the fact is it is right on the crest while the Roper bump #6 is removed from the crest somewhat, but then, so is Echo Peak #9. Go figure. A better approach to this project would be to hike up and over Wilts Col or around the base of Echo Peak #3 to the base of Echo Peak #4 and start from there. It is supposedly class 4 to the notch between #3 and #4. This avoids the wretched down climb from #3 and puts #9 at the end when the climbing face is in the sun. A 50 meter double rope system was used but it may be possible to use the rappel station in the 5.6 hand crack on #9 to get down into the base of the gap with one rope. I don't know this for a fact. A set of aliens, a couple of camalots, and a small selection of stoppers were brought along. They were all useful in one place or another. The only fifth class is really on Echo Peak #9 with the exception of Roper's version of Echo Peak #6. The remaining hard stuff is maybe hard fourth class.

References:

[The Climbers Guide to the High Sierra](#), Steve Roper, Sierra Club Books, 1976, ISBN 0-87156-147-6

[The High Sierra, Peaks, Passes, and Trails](#), Second Edition, R.J. Secor, The Mountaineers, 1999, ISBN 0-89886-625-1

www.summitpost.com. This web site has some pictures of the Echo Peaks, some of which were contributed by Bob Burd. None of them is particularly useful in figuring out which bump is #6.

First Things First

September 2, 2003

This past Labor Day weekend (2003) Christine and I went backpacking with a long time friend Bob Foster and his son John. I've known Bob for 22 years going back to my earliest days at Lockheed and over the past 10 he and I have traveled to such places as Peru, Africa, Nepal (2x) and several backpacking trips in the Sierras. After 35 years at Lockheed Bob retired this last year and is now traveling "permanently."

The trip was meant to be a scenic, fun but stiff walk in a loop around Tuolumne meadows traversing the High Sierra Camps: Sunrise, Merced, and Vogelsang – some 40 miles in all over a 4 day period. I've done most of this loop at one time or another, but

had never been to Merced Lake or from there to Vogelsang camp.

The area is spectacular in its diversity of flora, the vertical relief of the Granite domes and the sheer pleasure of being out for a long walk with good friends. Four miles from Merced lake, Bob stubbed his toe on a root in the trail, lost his balance and with his 40 lb pack driving him forward fell head first into a cut log by the side of the trail. Walking ahead of the main group by some 20 yards, I heard Christine yell and turned to see Bob crumpled up in a ball. Running back unbuckling my pack as I went, a number of things when through my head, the first of which was where in my pack was my trusty first aid kit. I usually keep it near the top for just such a purpose. When I got closer I could see he was moving - a really good thing - but was holding his head with blood POURING out. Gad! Dropping my pack, and digging for the first aid kit, I asked if he was hurt very badly. The answer was no, but the amount of blood on the ground in such a short time said otherwise. Kit in hand, I asked the others to get the pots out, and a bottle of treated water. I moved over to him but couldn't tell where the injury was with his head down, but it appeared to be his eye. "Let me see?" Bob tilted his head, and removed his hand. Blood spurted from a 3" cut above his left eye. This was De ja vue all over again as Christine had fallen in exactly the same manner and was cut (a smaller, but deeper one) in the same place 3 years ago.

Stop the bleeding. What to use?? Ah, my trusty neckerchief. I can't tell you how many times I thought it was dumb that my Boy Scout first aid instructor, Marlin Casker, told us the Boy Scout neckerchief would come in handy someday. While I gave up on neckerchiefs years ago, I usually wear a bandana as a scarf to keep the sun off my neck or to wipe sweat off my brow, as a dish rag, glasses cleaner or a thousand other things including the three times I had used this very neckerchief to stanch the bleeding from a deep cut. Mr. Casker was right! Bob took my bandana and pressed it into his forehead hard while John and I cleared a spot for him to lie down. Speed was critical as I was afraid he would go into shock if he had hit his head hard enough and then we'd have a difficult time moving him.

Some years ago, I took an extensive 40-hour course at UC Berkeley taught by an EMT. There I relearned some lessons I'd forgotten, but the best of all was what to stock in a small, but well provisioned First Aid kit that weighs no more than a pound. The most important elements in the kit are some clear medical tape from 3M, a supply (10) "butterfly" bandages, some no-stick pads, an irrigation syringe (no needle at the end), a bottle of iodine tincture, some antibiotic ointment, and a lot of practice on how to use these simple things. With the bleeding stopped, I irrigated the wound with an Iodine prep solution (made in the pan), cleaned it the wound and the area around it, then taped the jagged cut together with the butterfly closures while holding the wound closed. Topping this all off with a non-stick pad, and some cover tape. Not knowing if Bob would suffer any debilitating head trauma that would cause him to pass out on a big upward push, we changed our plans and hiked out the Merced Canyon to Yosemite valley and made a bee line for the medical clinic the next day. As a rule of thumb if you can't be stitches into a wound within 8 hours and the wound is dressed properly already, the doctors won't open the wound up just to stitch it. I felt pretty proud when the Doc said it was too late to stitch but my handiwork was "impressive." In the end, Bob walked out the clinic with a new supply of Butterfly closures to replenish my kit and a bright red sympathy ticket on his forehead.

Lesson re-learned. Always carry a first aid kit and know how to use it. Even small kits are useful and everyone should have one at all times.

The good thing is I got to see a part of the park, Merced Canyon, I hadn't seen before which was the principal objective of the trip to begin with. Happy hiking and as the Boy Scouts say "Be Prepared."

• *Tim Hult*

Mt Morgan South, SW Ridge

September 14, 2003

Mt Morgan-South (13748 ft), South-West Ridge, class-4/3

Little Lakes Peak (12782 ft), South-West Ridge, class 4/3

A late wakeup causing long periods of indecision and coupled with a long breakfast at Schats caused me to decide to punt on climbing Mt Morgan (South) by the SW ridge but I thought that I would take a look at the ridge anyway. As it was, nobody I knew had done this route so I had little beta of that sort. Roper dismisses the peak as having easy routes and a supposedly good view. Secor rates the SW ridge as class-3 and the SW Ridge of Little Lakes Peak as having class-5 slabs. In their book, *Sierra Classics*, 100 Best climbs in the Sierra (1st ed), Fiddler and Moynier rate the route class-4 and say that it is long and loose as well. Their description mandates a climb of Little Lakes Peak to get on to the SW Ridge of Morgan. I decided to scope out the route from Morgan Pass and leave the climbing for another day when I could get an earlier start but as the day turned out, I climbed it anyway.

Finally, at 8.30am I was walking from the Mosquito Flat TH and at 10am was at the top of Morgan Pass, staring at the SW face of Little Lakes Peak. I thought I could see a class-3 line so I decided to go up and by staying to the right of the harder slabs I avoided the possible class-5 but did get into some easy class-4 terrain. I was on the summit of Little Lakes Peak at 12.30 pm. I stayed mostly on the ridge crest after the slabs. I checked my options. I could bail out by going down on the class-2 stuff towards Morgan Lake and catch the trail back but now Morgan was clearly visible and it looked doable as well. The long SW ridge is certainly striking looking, from a distance. Up close like this, it looked broken up and with several towers that would involve going up and down several times and it also looked loose. I spent 15 mins on the summit of Little Lakes Peak (no register, only a cairn) and then gingerly down climbed to the SW ridge. This was definitely a class-4 step, maybe 10 ft that I had to face-in for but the rock was solid. I was extra cautious here as there was nobody around and I did not want to fall. After that, it was class-3 talus and blocks with a few ups, but mostly down to the black towers at the saddle between the peaks. I stayed on the ridge some times and other times, went to the right, under the crest. A little after the black towers, staying to the right did not look appealing as there were cliffs so I crested and then stayed to the left and/or the absolute top of the ridge. It was all solid class-3. I did encounter some class-4 (solid, not much exposure) but that was because I kept moving from the crest to a little below and then back up, as fancy took me.

Finally, the ridge ended and dissolved into a sea of class-3/2 talus and blocks and I reached what had looked like the high point and

had been my beacon all along. This grey-white point was not the summit and the summit was still a little further to the left, connected to this point by a narrow ridge. But soon, I was at the summit, signing the register. There was also a PVC tube-register there. It was 3.45pm, a full 3 hrs from the top of Little Lakes Peak. There is indeed a great view of the Sierra from the summit. I was surprised to note that the hour-glass couloir below Dade had become a steep scree slope with just a finger of snow remaining on the very top-left.

After a short break, I started down at 4pm. The first destination was Eastern Brook Lakes. The lakes were visible. I went down to the broad sandy expanse on the NW side and then descended into class-2 hell to meet a dried out creek that makes its way into the EBrook Lakes. The scree and talus had ended by this time and I was on a faint trail that got more pronounced as I approached the placid lake and at 6.45 pm was back at the car taking the trail from the lake that leads to Mosquito Flat and driving by 7pm, with enough time to OD on salty and fried comestibles at Mammoth before the long drive home.

Stats: TH to Morgan Pass: 1hr-30, Morgan Pass to LLPeak: 2hrs-30, 15 min halt, LLP to Morgan: 3 hrs, 15 min halt, back to TH: 2hrs-45. Total: 10 hrs, 15 mins.

The route is long and the ascent is mostly class-3 with some class-4. If I were to do it again, I would start at least an hour earlier, if not more. The SW Ridge on Morgan-South is definitely more solid than the Nevahbe Ridge route on Morgan-North, both of which are in Fiddler's book of the 100 best climbs.

• *Arun Mahajan*

Return To Ritter

September 20 - 21, 2003

After a restful night in the woods behind the campground in Mammoth Lakes and a quick snack at Schaat's bakery, Chris Franchuk, Scott Kreider, and I drove down to the Agnew Meadows trailhead for another one of my fall trips to Mt. Ritter. We were joined there by Wes Burrows, Mumtaz Shamsee, and Aurelijus Vjunas.

A word to the wise: the Forest Service user fee for driving down the Agnew Meadows/Devils Postpile road is now \$7 a person or \$20 a car (whichever is less). You have to drive in before 7 a.m. if you want to avoid taking the shuttle bus, and there is usually no one in the fee booth at that hour, so the fee is not a problem in the morning. Apparently, you can also avoid the fee on the way out in the evening if you depart after 7 p.m. or so. According to the person who took our \$20 on the way out, the \$160,000 collected last year all went to pay for the shuttle bus service, which I assume is needed because the road is only one lane wide in places, and can't handle any heavy traffic.

The six of us departed from Agnew Meadows at 7:40 a.m. and kept a nice pace on the familiar trail down to the San Joaquin River and then up the hill past Shadow Lake to Ediza Lake, where we arrived about 11. We continued on to a camp in the beautiful valley below the Ritter's southeast glacier, about 1 mile beyond and 800 feet above Ediza Lake. Since it was still only noon, we discussed attempting the climb that afternoon, and the consensus was that people were willing but not enthusiastic about the idea. Since some enthusiasm is a good idea on this climb, I suggested we do it Sunday morning as originally planned, when we'd be better acclimatized and much less likely to get caught out after dark. For the rest of the afternoon, we power-lounged or took short walks across the beautiful alpine plateau towards Nydiver Lakes. After an early supper, we bedded down shortly after 7 p.m. on a mild, star-filled night.

Sunday, Aurelijus roused us at 5 a.m. and we were rolling before 6, using headlamps for the first few minutes. After the tedious scree slopes at the head of the valley, we arrived at the snowfield below the Banner-Ritter saddle about 8 and cramponed up it. The steep snow chute at its upper right edge was melted away into a narrow causeway less than 10 feet wide, with deep moats on both sides. At 8:30 we arrived on the saddle, always a morale booster on this climb because you can finally see the north face up close and the summit ridge above it. Crampons came off for a few hundred yards of scree, then went back on for the upper section of the north glacier. Every fall, this snowfield seems to get smaller as its lower edge rises further up the scree, and we had to climb only about 200 vertical feet of snow to get to the ledge leading over to the right-hand gully. At the present rate, by 2010 or so the north face of Ritter in fall may become just another Sierra scree slog and rock scramble, without the sections of steep hard snow that now give it a more alpine character.

At least on this day, the snow slope was hard and icy with even some sections of water ice, so it got our full attention as we climbed up it, some of using front points and the picks of our axes for greater security at the steepest parts. After taking our crampons off again, the right-hand gully went quickly, with moderate but loose class-3 in the lower half, and steeper, beautifully solid class-3 toward the top. Six people is a bit many for a gully like this, but everyone climbed carefully, everyone wore helmets except for the irresponsible leader who forgot his, and while we knocked some stuff down, we had no close calls.

From the top of the gully, we followed the arete leftward instead of going slightly right onto the easier northwest face, where I had gone on two previous ascents. After a bit, I popped through a notch and spotted the scree ramp described in detail in Bob Burd's recent trip report (which is at http://www.snwburd.com/bob/trip_reports/ritter_2.html and also includes some great photos). The ramp looked fairly easy, so we followed it leftward across the top of the north face, then went up a steep, loose, gravelly section of it that had some small, avoidable patches of ice. Some of us climbed class-3 rock at the outer edge of this last ramp to avoid the loose crap. Earlier in the year, this ramp could be icy, though you might be able to avoid the ice by climbing on the class-3 rock. I was expecting to hit some big air somewhere on this unfamiliar part of the climb, but at the top of the ramp, a few more easy class-3 moves put us on the summit ridge, with the top just a few hundred feet of easy scrambling to our right. We arrived there at 9:45, a full two hours earlier than on my last climb. It was so mild and windless that we relaxed on top for over an hour, indulging in the four usual summit activities -- photography, snacking, reading the register, and lying around.

For the descent, I decided to try "Owen's chute" for the first time, and it was quite pleasant -- much shorter, lower angled, and more wide open than "Secor's chute." Though less direct, it was a better choice for a group of six. Down on the southeast glacier, we found it also quite icy, and we put on crampons to walk down it despite its very low angle. After passing by the hideously steep and narrow "Arun's chute" about 50 feet left (west) of Secor's chute, we got to the large rock island in the middle of the southeast glacier about noon and took another nice break. This glacier is also getting noticeably smaller, with a full 200 feet of scree showing between the top of the glacier and the bottom of Secor's chute. One can only wonder what these glaciers looked like when John Muir made the first ascent (solo) in 1872, following a route similar to ours (except that on the north face, he almost certainly went straight up the left-hand chute). As we sat there, water poured off the glacier in torrents.

Suitably refreshed by this beautiful alpine rest spot, we headed down to the exit gully below the southeast glacier, which due east of the south edge of the glacier, or from below, northeast of the large tower south of Ritter. We cruised down the glacially polished slabs, down some grassy ledges with a few remaining wildflowers on them, and finally down the faint use trail, arriving back at our camp at 1:30 -- a highly enjoyable climb on a beautiful, Indian Summer day. A leisurely hike out got us to the last hill heading up from the San Joaquin River just as the afternoon shadows slowly climbed up the slope and cooled it off, and by 7:30 p.m., we were sitting in Grumpy's restaurant in Mammoth Lakes, watching Mumtaz polish off a well-deserved double supper of burger plus jumbo burrito. As a still somewhat inexperienced leader, I couldn't have asked for a better climbing team.

• *Jim Ramaker*

Recess Peak

September 20-21, 2003

Recess Peak is a fairly remote mountain that stands prominently above its nearby surroundings, with aesthetic ridges extending in 4 ordinal directions, and steep, towering faces on three cardinal sides. It was the intent to follow the southwest ridge over 2000 vertical feet and 2 rambling horizontal miles that brought a team of 9 rugged PCS mountaineers together over the weekend of September 20-21, 2003.

To approach this peak from the west, one may find it necessary to drive the Kaiser Pass road. We considered ourselves fortunate to be on this road as the boating season was winding down; no Winnebagos with 20-foot trailers were reported as our team of 4 automobiles braved the hideous exposure on this single-lane mountain ride from Huntington Lake to Mono Hot Springs. Those with curious culinary persuasions may consider the restaurant at Mono Hot Springs Resort, which is open until 8pm during the summer season and offers a semi-diverse array of fine dishes featuring buffalo (and the ever intriguing "substitute buffalo"). The outdoor seating provides pleasant ambiance, the food is OK, and the restaurant boasts one of the most extensive salad bars east of Kaiser Pass.

Our group of 9 mountaineers (Bob Bynum, Chris Kerr, John Kerr, Dot Reilly, Eric Sovish, Tony Stegman, Eddie Sudol, co-leader Arun Mahajan, and yours truly, leader & scribe Patrick Callery) met early Saturday morning at the turn-off 4WD road to Bear Creek Diversion Dam from the Lake Thomas Edison road. There is plenty of parking at this turn-off for those choosing not to drive the 4WD. The road is fairly manageable and we made good time in our gas-guzzling SUVs, while a pair of sprightly Subarus were left at the turn-off. There were some places where we were glad to have high-clearance, but the road was generally in good shape. The road ends at an area of broad slabs near the trailhead.

We departed down the trail shortly after 9am under blue skies and warm temperature. The hike in along Bear Creek was beautiful, as advertised, our main regret being that the trail leaves the creek after only ~3 miles to climb the slopes above. We followed the trail until just past its high point, then departed the trail around the backside of dome 9266' and headed due north cross country over slabs and minor brush. Our route joined the PCT about 9600', where we followed the switchbacks up to ~9800'. There are several small springs crossing the PCT here, providing a very welcome clean water source. We hiked cross-country again, this time due east, through open forest, meadow, and small boulder fields, finally climbing steep slabs to the outlet of the small lake due west of Recess Peak, at ~10,700'. The lake is shallow and muddy, not the best for swimming. We found a broad, sandy campsite adjacent to the pleasant outlet stream beneath the impressive west face of the peak, and were treated to a marvelous sunset over dinner.

At 5am Sunday members of our crew started to rouse and pack up for the summit hike. We started in two groups, the first leaving just before 6am and the second just after 6:30am. The route climbs straight south from our campsite up scree to join the foot of the long ridge at ~10,900'. From here we traced the ridgeline up and over knob 11,706' towards the peak. Descending from the knob to the saddle and onto the SW ridge proper, one may encounter some interesting exposure while climbing over very solid steep flakes and boulders. Once onto the summit ridge, the route broadens and climbers may stay close to the steep west face or venture slightly inland, encountering more flakes and a bit of fresh air underfoot near the former, with more boulders & sand in the latter. The last of our team touched the summit around 9:30am.

The summit consists of a flat, bouldered ridge about 300' long where the four mountain ridges converge. At the west end of the summit, our route meets the spectacularly featured NW ridge with knife edges and huge towers, where the east end of the summit forms the junction of the broad SE ridge and appealingly steep NE ridge. There are many opportunities for exploring other routes on this peak, all of them seem at least moderately interesting. Likewise, the grand west face appears to sport steep, clean granite with several corners & buttresses.

Given the long hike out ahead of us, we reluctantly headed down around 10am. Downclimbing the ridge was somewhat tedious, with no easy scree slopes to hustle down. We finally arrived back in camp about 12:30pm, packing up and leaving camp shortly after 1pm. We opted to try a shortcut on the way out, and followed the drainage leading southwest. Some fairly steep sections with loose rocks and thick brush were expertly negotiated by our team of skilled hikers, with minimal disgruntlement. We followed skier's right of the drainage all the way, with the terrain opening up a little just before crossing the PCT. We continued off-trail past the PCT through more brush until we joined the Bear Creek trail just slightly downhill of where we had left it the day before. As far as bushwhacks go (and I am a connoisseur of fine bushwhacking), I would rate this one moderately pleasant.

The rest of the hike out was typically tedious, but made infinitely more pleasurable given the intoxicating surroundings. Two of us raced ahead downhill to reconnoiter with the refreshing Bear Creek again, and stumbled into a scene out of some tropical paradise. Just where the trail returns to the floor of the creek canyon, a beautiful, broad swimming hole appears, with cascading rapids alongside laminar sheets of cool water flowing down smooth granite slabs into the pool. Somehow we walked right past this on the way up, doubtless after having tripped over many rocks while gawking at the various other falls and pools over the rest of the trail. After lingering here a while, eventually we all plodded out to the cars a little after 6pm. After the SUV shuttle back out to the road, we said farewell and parted our separate ways, mostly content with another fine weekend in the mountains.

• Pat Callery

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.

Kilimanjaro

Peak: Kilimanjaro
Date: Mid January, 2004
Contact: Warren Storkman, dstorkman@aol.com
650-493-8959, FAX: 650-493-8975

Western Breach route on Kilimanjaro Clothes needed - all genders for Kilimanjaro porters

7 day cost:

Park fee	\$480.00
Forest fee	\$20.00
Fully equipped package	<u>\$670.00</u>
Total	\$1170.00

3 nights hotel \$30.00 a night includes breakfast and dinner. More to come later in the year. Open to all.

Can try this website for first information on Kilimanjaro climb
<http://home.pacifier.com/~intersec/tkutscha/kili.html>

Elected Officials

Chair:

Stephane Mouradian / pcs-chair@climber.org
650-551-0392 home

Vice Chair and Trip Scheduler:

Andrew F. Macica / andy.macica@kla-tencor.com
408-859-7634 home
430 Roding Drive, San Jose, CA 95123

Treasurer and Membership Roster (address changes):

Tom Driscoll / tdriscoll@eooinc.com
650-938-2106 home
2149 Junction Avenue, #3, Mountain View, CA 94043

Publicity Committee Positions

Scree Editor:

Bob Bynum / pcs-editor@climber.org
510-659-1413 home

PCS World Wide Web Publisher:

Roger Detloff / pcs_webmaster@climber.org
(650) 474-0352

Publicity Chair:

Arun Mahajan / pcs-pub-chair@climber.org
650-327-8598 home
1745 Alma Street, Palo Alto, CA 94301

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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 10/26/2003. 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