



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

General Meeting

Date: February 12, 2007
Time: 7:30 pm
Where: Peninsula Conservation Center
3921 E. Bayshore Rd.
Palo Alto, CA
Program: North Ridge of Everest
Presenter: Bill Tyler

In the spring of 2007, Bay Area mountaineer Bill Tyler set out from Lhasa, Tibet with other members of the 7 Summits Club Everest Expedition to make his second attempt to climb the world's highest peak. Join Bill for slides and a summit video of his successful six-week climb of the North Ridge route on Everest. Learn what it takes to make an Everest dream a reality as Bill discusses gear, skills, physical and mental training, and how to best cope with the hazards of high altitude and inclement weather.

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 and enter in the back of the building.

For a Google map click <http://tinurl.com/2f3bkg>

Trip Planning Meeting

Come One, Come All!

The semi-annual trip-planning meeting, for PCS trips through about October, will be held at 7:30 PM on Tuesday February 19. That is Tuesday one week after the regular monthly meeting. Pizza, cookies, and beverages will be available.

All peak-climbers are welcome, especially trip leaders, aspiring leaders, and co-leaders. We want to hear what people are interested in climbing this year, and then we'll see what trips we can arrange to have led.

The meeting will be held at Rod McCalley's house, at 3489 Cowper St. in Palo Alto. This is one block north of the end of Cowper Street at Mitchell Park.

From the north, take 101 to Oregon Expressway, then left from Oregon onto Middlefield, and south through about 4 lights to E. Meadow, and turn right.

From the south, exit 101 at Old Middlefield Way (just north of the 85/101 merge), follow this as it merges with Middlefield and crosses San Antonio & Charleston to reach E. Meadow, turn left, and then right onto Cowper.

Rod McCalley, Vice-Chair & Trip Scheduler
3489 Cowper St., Palo Alto
Phone: 650-493-2378

From The Chair

Why We Climb

When we're here... the cares of the world fall away...there are few humans and it's just the greater us...it's just you and the elements...quickly, the human created universe becomes irrelevant. So much as a misstep can lead to injury or worse. Listening to the bird call, the song of the wind, and looking at the bobbing flowers and trying to be one with it – leaning one's head over a babbling brook – looking for Sierra yellow legged frogs – and wondering about the rock - the color, the hardness, the striations – and wondering where it had been and the heat and pressure it had seen to become so incredibly unique. And all of it deeply humbling.

One fine June morning, we hiked in 10 miles from a trailhead in the western King's Canyon approach at Road's end. The road to the end goes along the roaring King's river through a deep canyon. The elevation here is about 8000 feet. Near the end of the road is a large, flat rock right on the river, where John Muir would famously hold lectures for nature lovers and early Sierra Club members. The rock is much as it was over 100 years ago. Groups would come in from the city (San Francisco) and listen to Mr. Muir extol the wonders of the Sierra. The knowing river rushed past without heed.

The hiking trail traces the King's River. About 3 miles along the trail, we turned south and headed up Sphinx Creek. This steep creek, with many waterfalls, is named for a prominent granite buttress that has a decidedly sphinx-like appearance. The trail is steep, rocky, and wildly beautiful, and leads to snow fields in about 7 miles. After climbing through some flat talus, and through snow, we arrived at a pristine lake at 10,000 feet.

We made our dinner and watched the sun play over the peaks above us. For June, near the solstice, the light was slow to leave us, and a fine alpenglow entered the atmosphere and painted the peaks a dusty purple, and the snow a dusky rose. We rose before sunrise and were stepping across snowfields as the sun came up. The going was easy and stunningly beautiful, ringed by rock and snow with ancient glacial forms all around us, glaciers formed in the Little Ice Age that lasted from the 15th through the 19th century. This year, we thankfully had a lot of snow and I had secret desires for a return of the ice ages. It just seemed that nature had such a better plan for managing the earth.



Climber summing North Guard – credit: Lisa Barboza

So we found our way through the rock bands and increasing steepness to the summit pinnacle of North Guard (13,327). Only this pinnacle leaned way out over the abyss, 2000 feet below. It had an airy, electric feel to it, and somehow temporal (and indeed, it would be different in a year) – for all of this is new all of the time, the rocks change, the peak changes, you can climb the same peak every year and it's always new...We hiked back to camp, watched new alpenglow, went to bed early with the sun, rose with the sun, and grudgingly returned to the trailhead and the awful engines – wondering when we would feel this way again...

Note about the author: Lisa Barboza, the chairperson of the Peak Climbing Section (PCS), has an abiding love of nature, trees, and mountains and can be found most of the time above 10,000 feet, prefers to sleep on the ground, and is also a docent of Sierran flora, fauna, and geology.

Volunteer Wanted:

Hi everyone; we're looking for someone to chair our **publicity committee**. The person need not be a climber, but must have passion for the outdoors, be humble before peaks, and have a willingness to get out there and find others who want to climb to come to our amazing slideshows and join our trips (over 50 last year) into the High Sierra. If you're interested, please contact Lisa Barboza at pcs.chair@lomaprieta.sierraclub.org

Thanx!

Lisa

News

Sierra Avalanche Center

P.O.Box 358
Truckee, CA 96160

Avalanche forecasting for the central Sierra (Tahoe)

<http://www.sierraavalanchecenter.org>

Hotline: 530-587-2158

This is a wonderful service to winter backcountry users. Every day a new forecast is posted on the web that includes not only the avalanche forecaster's observations but numerous reports on the many areas around the Tahoe basin.

Mission:

The mission of the Sierra Avalanche Center includes disseminating current snow pack stability information to the general public; providing educational information, knowledge, and understanding of avalanches to recreational users and groups; and facilitating communication in the region to reduce the impact of avalanches on recreation, industry, and transportation through a partnership with the U.S. Forest Service.

Needs:

Money: Funding has been cut. They desperately need help to fund the program and a forecaster. They are a 501.c3 not-for-profit organization.

Workers: They need volunteers to observe snow conditions, to help with events and fundraising, and to do printing and graphics design.

Skiers: They need downhill skiers to buy lift tickets (about half price) through snowbomb.com. These are the remaining dates:

Feb 13 Mt. Rose \$30
Mar. 2 Homewood \$30
Mar. 7 Sugar Bowl \$35
Mar. 30 Alpine Meadows \$35

All the proceeds from the sale of these tickets go to SAC!

All Ski Day tickets ONLY available online through -



Official online lift
ticketing partner for
SAC Ski Days.

This is a great service! I use it every day. They also have archives so that you can see what you missed. Past reports are in the forums at <http://tinyurl.com/2kg7p5>.

Rescue at Denny Creek

Last month I included an article on Survival. Recently I found a blog by Scott Staton, one of the rescuers. For a very interesting perspective, see <http://tinyurl.com/3ys6yc>.

This reminds me of the program we had last year by our local mountain rescue organization, BAMRU. What a great service they provide!

Incidentally, a recent report from Chris, the frostbite victim, says that of the 10 people on the mountain that day in three separate parties, 5 did not come back, 2 more were injured, and 3 have yet to be found. Apparently there is some issue as to whether people got wrong weather forecasts or perhaps interpreted the forecasts wrongly.

Those of us that were climbing around 1970 recall the disaster on Mt. Ritter when a Memorial Day storm trapped 5 people. Did they get a forecast? I never heard. Only one survived. He forced himself to stay awake all night by staying on his hands and knees. In the morning he walked out down the San Joaquin drainage. His companions never awoke.

Last night a presenter at the Adventures Series slide show at Squaw Valley told a similar story of managing to stay awake. He survived a night in snow without much, not even warm clothes. The message: Stay awake!

Gear Corner

Stoves

If you are looking for an idea for a backpacking stove, you might find just what you need here: <http://tinyurl.com/ynrv2y>

More recent thoughts include these controllable alcohol stoves:

The Swiss Trangia: <http://www.rei.com/product/657906>

Thermojet: <http://www.thermojetstove.com>

FeatherFire Ultra-light Backpacking Stove: www.packafeather.com/stove.html

Peak climbers typically like lightweight Snow Peak Giga Power stoves or similar canister stoves. They are fast and convenient to use when you arrive at camp quite late and tired after a long peak-bagging day. They can be found in stores like REI or on the web, or check the manufacturer's site <http://www.snowpeak.com/back/stoves/ultralight.html>.

PCS Trip Calendar

Feb 15 – Backcountry Ski Series (#3)

Leader: Louise Wholey

Feb 23 – Dayhike Chalone Peaks/Pinnacles

Leaders: George Van Gorden, Bill Kirkpatrick

Mar 21 – Backcountry Ski Series (#4)

Leader: Louise Wholey

Apr 11-13 – Mt. Morgan (N)

Leader: Louise Wholey

April 18 - Siretta (9977) and Taylor (8802)

Leader: Lisa Barboza

Apr ? – Sawtooth, Owens

Leader: Charles Schafer

May 2-4 - Olancha (12123) and Cartago (10480)

Leader: Lisa Barboza

Private Trips Summary

Important: Private trips are not insured, sponsored, or supervised by the Sierra Club. They are listed here because they may be of interest to PCS members. Private trips may be submitted directly to the Scree editor. Details on these trips follow the trip reports. In this issue.

March 23, 2007 – Round Top

April 5-6, 2008 – Pinnacles

May, 2008 – Nepal – Kailash – Tibet

PCS Trip Details

Dayhike Chalone Peaks/Pinnacles

Peak: Chalone Peak

Date: Saturday Feb 23, 2008

Leaders: George Van Gorden (yangorden321@al.com),

Bill Kirkpatrick (wmkirk@earthlink.net)

Starting near the East Side Entrance, we will head south on a primitive trail that follows Chalone Creek. At the base of South Chalone Peak, we will go off-trail on our ascent of the peak. At the top, we will again be on trail on the way to North Chalone Peak. From North Chalone, we will descend to the Visitor Center and then return to our cars. Carpool: Meet at Carl's Jr in Morgan Hill, off Hwy 101 and Dunne Avenue. [Colisted with Dayhiking Section]

Backcountry Ski Series

Peak: Tamarack Peak, Castle Peak, or Mt. Judah

Date: Feb 15, Mar 21

Leader: Louise Wholey (louisewholey@yahoo.com)

Co-Leader: Jim Wholey

Join us for a day of backcountry skiing in the Tahoe area. Requires advanced skiing skills, avalanche training. Randonee or Telemark skis, climbing skis, avalanche beacon, shovel, and probe required. Location determined each day by snow conditions. We seek powder snow and will climb and descend multiple times. Limit 6.

Mt. Morgan (N)

Peak: Mt. Morgan (N), cl 2, ski mountaineering

Dates: Apr 11-13

Leader: Louise Wholey (louisewholey@yahoo.com)

Co-Leader: Lisa Barboza (pcs.chair@lomapieta.sierraclub.org)

This is the ultimate backcountry skiing - ski mountaineering in the High Sierra. TH is Rock Creek if open, else Hilton creek. Ski to base of peak, snow camp, ski up and down peak, snow camp, ski out. Requires advanced skiing skills, avalanche training. Randonee or Telemark skis, climbing skis, avalanche beacon, shovel, and probe required. Expect a hedonistic experience. Limit 6.

Siretta (9977) and Taylor (8802)

Peaks: Siretta (9977) and Taylor (8802)

Date: Apr 18

Leader: Lisa Barboza (pcs.chair@lomapieta.sierraclub.org)

Join us for carcamping in the Big Meadow in the Southern Sierra. Enjoy wildflowers, satisfying climbs, and early spring fun. Siretta is suitable for beginners (CL1) and Taylor will require intermediate skills (CL3)

Olancha (12123) and Cartago (10480)

Peaks: Olancha (12123) and Cartago (10480)

Dates: May 2-4

Leader: Lisa Barboza (pcs.chair@lomapieta.sierraclub.org)

Join us for a Southern Sierra east side climb of these two peaks. These east side peaks offer outstanding views and one of them is in the background of Crystal Geysers water bottles. These are intermediate trips.

Trip Reports

Palisade Crest

(A heavily illustrative and ponderously detailed account)

by Daryn Dodge

Photos are by Daryn Dodge, unless stated otherwise.

Getting to the high point of Palisade Crest, Gandolf Peak, has been considered by most SPS list finishers to be one of the top 5 most difficult peaks on the list. Just below the high point is the well-known 160 foot class 4 wall. To tackle it we came prepared with two ropes (60 meter and 48 meter in length) to allow everyone to rap off it (i.e., so no one had to downclimb). I carried rock shoes, three cams in assorted sizes and one chock for leading the wall. However, it was the approach to the wall that is the real challenge.

Starting from Glacier Lodge, the five of us hiked about 3.5 miles on the main South Fork Big Pine Creek Trail before turning right (north) on a signed, but unmaintained, trail heading towards Willow Lake. As is common with use trails, this one gets vague-to-non-existent in a few places. Never saw Willow Lake. We easily crossed two minor creeks, which are known to be much more difficult to cross earlier in the year. The use trail eventually leads up the west side of a canyon, north of Willow Lake. When confronted with a marshy area thick with willows, we moved to the east side of the creek in the canyon and onto a ducked route through talus boulders. We crossed back to the west side of the creek once we reached the beginning of the drainage below Elinore Lake. We ran across another use trail following the left side of the creek that drains Elinore Lake. To avoid the willow patches, stay on the left side of the creek. As you near the lake, go farther left away from the creek and find a rocky slope up against a cliff that is willow-free. The hike in to Elinore Lake went well and we were at the lake by mid-afternoon.

Once at Elinore Lake, I walked around it looking for campsites, but could find only two established campsite areas. Both were somewhat hidden on tree-covered low ridges just east of the lake. The best and largest campsite was the most eastern one of the two sites, and was the higher of the two. During the afternoon Jim caught a number of trout in the lake, quite large ones too. It appears fisherman seldom visit the lake. Jim and Louise had so much fish to fry that night that they shared their catch with Steve, Samantha and I.

We started hiking at 6:30 am, heading south for the gap in the ridge that leads up to Scimitar Pass. The gap in the ridge is the same one shown in R.J. Secor's guidebook (2nd ed.) leading from the lake to Scimitar Pass. Once we were on the south side of the gap, we headed up staying near the ridge. One notable section of annoyingly loose moraine rubble was encountered partway up. Above this loose section, the rock gets a little less steep and more stable, allowing one to choose between hiking over the glacier (as Steve did), or hike on top of the ridge leading to Scimitar Pass (as the rest of us did). The snow on the glacier had already softened somewhat, so Steve made good time following the north edge of the glacier.



The group at Scimitar Pass; from left to right, Steve, Jim, Louise, and Samantha.

We regrouped at the Pass, and then started our ridge-run south along Palisade Crest. Exposed class 3 climbing is soon encountered when we were forced up on top of the knife-edge ridge. This part of the route was relatively easy to follow, had solid rock, and was quite fun.



On the knife-edge ridge.



Another view of the knife-edge ridge traverse.

After the knife-edge traverse, we dropped down on the right (west) side of the ridge and picked our way across narrow ledges, leading around a corner where someone's cleared bivy site can be easily spotted. This is followed by passing through a somewhat awkward class 3 slot that slants up and to the left and is open at the top. This slot is actually right back on the ridge crest itself, because the route on other side of the slot is now obviously on the left side of the crest for the first time since Scimitar Pass.



Daryn below the up-and-left slanting rock slot. Gandolf Peak can be seen through the slot. *Photo by Samantha Olson.*

Passing through this slot leads to the next section of the climb that results not only in an increase in route finding difficulties, but also an increase in climbing difficulty. Climbers have been defeated by the exposure and route finding problems on this part of the climb. After dropping down several feet from the slot, one is tempted to continue contouring across the east face of the ridge, as we did at first. However, a too-wide gap in the rock is soon encountered, showing this to be incorrect route. The correct route is to almost immediately drop down about 15-20 feet after passing through the slot, then contour across a broken series of ledges another 20 feet or so until one can start climbing back up to the main ridge crest. This down-across-up traverse will not look particularly appealing because the initial short descent near the slot is near-vertical over very narrow scree-covered ledges. The exposure is enormous. Samantha and I carefully downclimbed this section while the others quickly and easily rappelled down to a nice ledge, meeting us at the end of the 20-foot traverse section. We then all climbed back up towards the main ridge crest.

The following description is not exactly how we eventually reached the base of the summit, but rather is a description of the easiest way to find (through no small degree of trial-and-error...mostly error).

The next goal looming near us was an obvious rock pinnacle sitting just below the main ridge crest. There is also a minor green lichen covered ridge that leads down behind the pinnacle and towards the glacier below. Going around this green lichen-covered ridge rather than going over it was, for us, the key for getting to the summit. So, starting from the pinnacle, squeeze through a narrow gap just to the right of the pinnacle and downclimb towards some nice flat rocks to the south that lie directly on the main ridge crest. This downclimb and traverse has considerable exposure to the west, but it gets you past the green lichen-covered ridge.

Near the beginning of this flat rock section, step up a few feet to the east onto a higher rock and peer over the eastern edge of the ridge. The next move is a short friction down climb over a highly angled smooth rock. This short friction move probably goes class 4 and doesn't appear to lead anywhere at first. However, continue down a narrow sloping ledge on the north side of the friction slab,

bypassing a funny looking bush with pointy stems or leaves. I mention this bush because I don't recall seeing anything else like it during the climb. Anyway, this sloping ledge system leads to the south side of the green lichen ridge (but there is no green lichen on this side of it). Continue downclimbing near the ridge until you can start down towards the south (towards the peak) downclimbing a series of flakes and narrow ledges into the other side of a wide, but short, gully. The gully has a large, distinct rock cairn at its base.



In this picture taken by Bob Burd in 2004 from the top of the class 4 wall, our approximate climbing route is shown in green. At the far end, the line starts at the slanted rock slot described earlier, goes up and behind the green lichen-covered ridge (indicated by a dashed line), and drops down again over the class 4 friction slab just below the main crest. *Photo modified and reprinted with permission from Bob Burd.*



Another view of the route from below the class 4 wall. The green line crosses over the class 4 friction slab at the very top of this photo. Circled are Steve, Louise and Jim contemplating their next move. *Photo by Samantha Olson.*

This downclimb in the gully was the most challenging part of the climb for me, as my perception of the difficulty was apparently skewed due to downclimbing this steep section first before actually climbing up it. Steve took the lead here and proceeded to downclimb over the broken series of flakes and narrow ledges down into the gully without too much trouble. I followed and found the difficulty to be probably no more than class 3, but certainly the most difficult class 3 section of this climb. Down near the big rock cairn at the bottom of short gully, the route was now relatively easy to follow as we contoured over to a chockstone sitting in the huge notch below the class 4 wall.

In the left corner just below this wall Samantha found an anchor to tie into, so I put on my rock shoes and started up the wall dragging the 60-meter rope. I found a nice crack 1/3 of the way up to wedge in a chock, and then another crack 2/3 of the way up for the smallest cam I was carrying. As other trip reports have indicated, this part of the climb was a cinch compared to the route finding we had just subjected ourselves to. There's a great rock horn for an anchor at the top of the wall in the right-hand (west) corner. I belayed Samantha up next using the 60 meter rope, and she then set up a belay station at the opposite end (east side) of the wall to help bring the others up. The 48 meter rope was long enough to belay people up from Samantha's position, but as we found out, certainly not long enough to belay people from where I sat at the other end of the wall.



Samantha belaying climbers up the class 4 wall. Gandolf's "wizard hat", the high point of Palisade Crest, is behind her.

Although the wall is solid, climbers sent an occasional fusillade of small rocks down the wall into other climbers waiting there turn to come up. Thus, the recommendation for bringing a helmet. I belayed Steve up the wall, the last one up, while others made the 100 foot climb up the final pinnacle. Samantha called the pinnacle Gandolf's wizard hat, a very fitting name. As I was belaying Steve up, the excess rope slid down into a crack that I thought was shallow, but ended up being bottomless. Naturally, the rope got stuck in the crack when I tried to pull it out. Steve came over and tried for 10 minutes to pull the loop of rope out, but to no avail. So I reluctantly pulled out my pocket knife and Steve cut the stuck loop of rope in two places.



Steve reaching into the bowels of the rock trying to pull out the stuck rope. An embarrassed Daryn looks on helplessly. *Photo by Samantha Olson.*

With the rope we had left, it appeared there was now not enough to do a double rope-rap down the wall. Regardless, Louise expertly tied the now 3 pieces of rope together with double fisherman knots while Steve and I headed up to the summit. Not too surprisingly, the register can was empty. Many Sierra summit registers have been vandalized over the past 5-6 years. I had an extra register book down in my daypack left with the rope below, so we went back down to get the book, had everyone sign the new book, then I took it back up to the summit to deposit into the canister.



Louise on the summit of Palisade Crest. *Photo by Samantha Olson.*

By the time I was down from the summit for the second time, Steve and Louise had solved the embarrassing mess I created. The resulting tied rope was indeed not long enough for a double rope rap from the rock horn at the west end of the slab. However, Steve found a nice crack about 6 feet up at the east end of the slab, where Samantha was belaying climbers up, and threw a sling over it. At this end of the slab, the rope was now just long enough for a double rope rap to the bottom of the slab. The only hitch was we had to remove our rappel device to get past the knot tied in the rope about 2/3 of the way down. This turned out to be not a problem, as there was a nice ledge to stand in while getting past the knot.



Jim rappelling off the class 4 wall, with Samantha and Daryn still at the top waiting for their turn. *Photo by Steve Eckert.*

We retraced our route back towards the south side of the green lichen covered ridge (again, the lichen is actually on the other side of this ridge). Steve made his way to a notch in the ridge, and found he could step across a narrow chimney on the other side. This is the approximate alternate route shown in Bob Burd's photo above. However, this move was followed by a more difficult class 4-5 move, which he protected by throwing a sling over a rock horn above him. The rest of us went up to the main ridge. A quick hip belay for a couple climbers got everyone safely over the friction slab just below the main ridgecrest. After which we put the rope away for good. Backtracking back to Scimitar Pass from here was considerably easier on the way out.

At Scimitar Pass once again, Steve gathered up his backpack and headed west to meet up with a climbing group led by Jeff Fisher near Barrett Lakes. They planned to climb Starlight Peak tomorrow. The rest of us headed back to Elinore Lake, getting there about 45 minutes after dark.

Before we hiked back to the cars the next morning, we celebrated Louise's 66th birthday with a big wooden match stuck in a granola bar, courtesy of Samantha. We had to sing the Happy Birthday song rather quickly because the match flared up like a Roman candle and burned out in less than 15 seconds!

The Friar's Mount – Junipero Serra

Jan 19, 2007

By Lisa Barbosa

Abstract:

Dayhike: From the Santa Lucia Trailhead, 5.75 miles and 4000 feet to the Summit

After a cancelled early trip during a rainstorm where there was sure to be flooded and impassable roads, 17 climbers and hikers met at 7:30 AM at Carl's Jr. in Morgan Hill for the annual PCS January Dayhike. It was cold but clear, and we carpooled up for the drive to the trailhead. This drive takes about 2 ½ hours and is paved all of the way.

Here are the directions to the TH: - Drive South on Hwy 101 a total of 83 miles from Morgan Hill to the Jolon Road exit off of HWY 101. Take the Jolon Road Exit, head west and follow signs to Fort Hunter Liggett US Army Base. Continue on Jolon Road until you see signs for Fort Hunter Liggett, and turn right onto Mission Road. This is approximately 16.8 miles from the Hwy Exit off of 101. At the Military Base checkpoint, all drivers must present valid driver's license identification and it's a good idea for the passengers to have photo ID as well. There is no longer a requirement for an adventure pass for access to the Los Padres National Forest, this was suspended in Summer of 2005.

From the Entry checkpoint, proceed an additional 5.0 miles on Mission Road and turn left on Dal Venturi Road just before you get to Mission San Antonio de Padua (1771). If you have time, the 3rd Spanish Mission built in California is fascinating and was abandoned and in disrepair until the 1940s. On the right hand side, you'll see a famous inn, the Hacienda. Once owned by newspaper tycoon William Randolph Hearst, designed by "Castle" architect Julia Morgan and completed before the Castle was, the Hacienda was Hearst's ranch house. Today, it's located inside Fort Hunter-Liggett and operated as a hotel. It was designed and built by the noted California architect Julia Morgan, who also designed Hearst Castle at San Simeon and other works. This hotel is a great place to stay if you're here for a few days.

Once you turn left on Dal Venturi, in about ½ mile you will cross the San Antonio River. This river can be daunting and the gate is closed if the water is over 8 inches deep. I guess we were OK because the water was only 6 inches deep and it hadn't rained for several days when we went. There is an alternate route on an unpaved road on Lower Milpitas Road. Once on Dal Venturi Road, there is the first stream crossing, and then a second; proceed for exactly 13.0 miles, on the left hand side you'll see some very unusual rock formations called the Indians, and soon after you'll see the Santa Lucia Forest entry sign on your right hand side. Go down this road

for 100 yards and park. You've reached the trailhead. So this is a total of 118 miles from Carl's Jr. our meeting place.

The trail is very easy to follow and proceeds northeast across meadow, with easy stream crossings. The trail is flat at first, then climbs in a steep section to a saddle on the west side of the peak. The day was sunny and warm, and we warned climbers to take plenty of water. It's almost 4000 feet to the top, and the south side is all chapparal and exposed to the sun. It was quite warm for January and most of us were dressed appropriately. Views of the Ventana (a natural rock bridge that fell in the 1700s) for which much of this region is named (and famously, a diving hole in the Big Sur River), can be seen once the ridge is gained. There was snow on the way to the top, and a stand of sugar pine, coulter pine, and black oak forest which you normally only see in the Sierra.

The snow was quite icy, and if it had been steeper we would have needed crampons. But I've seen snow of all types on this peak, from slushy to crunchy to corn snow.

We reached the summit at 2PM, spent a liesurely ½ hour enjoying the outstanding views. There is a fire tower on the peak, and usually the platform at the top is a good (although somewhat shaky) place to enjoy the view. But this year, the platform was completely blown off of the top and had collapsed in a heap 100 feet north of the tower, taking out a good-sized pine tree in the process. The windstorm of January 3-4, 2008 was no doubt the culprit. The metal stairs are intact and several of us did enjoy the view from there. The hike down was liesurely and fun. Carry plenty of water, 3 liters would not be too little.

We got back to the cars at 5PM, and settled in for the long drive home.

Backcountry Ski Series #2, Jan 18, 2007

By Louise Wholey

Ah, winter, the most unpredictable season. Sometimes there is too little snow; sometimes too much creating avalanche hazard; sometimes it is too firm; sometimes too crusty; sometimes it is magnificent. For this occasion, reports were abundant that all the backcountry skiing in the Tahoe basin was terrible breakable crust.

With this background, a group of 4 of us, Mike Snadden, D Guy Ayers, and leaders Louise and Jim Wholey, decided to risk bad snow and headed for Tamarack peak, my favorite place for backcountry skiing. James Rosen joined us there. Unplanned, we also met Neil Gitt and Gooey (chocolate lab) from Reno who wished to join our group.

We skinned up Tamarack Peak checking the snow as we went. The view of Lake Tahoe from the top was supreme.



The north slopes appeared to offer good snow, so we skied down the wind-slab, skipping Hourglass Bowl (Neil had tried it a few days earlier and found to be crusty wind-slab). The wind howled across the bowl; clearly the trees and areas between them were the place to be.

We hit it good! The first slot between the trees gave us a few wonderful runs through the powder with only occasional spots with a bit of crust. We climbed again and hit the neighboring bowl, somewhat more exposed to the sun, but fun anyway. Rather than ski down the front side, which seemed to be a bit frozen, we chose to circle Diamond Peak for a very entertaining tour to the cars. It was a fine day for all, and most of us stayed for the next day. The report continues with another sunny day on Tamarack Peak.

Tahoe Peaks, Jan 19-21, 2007

By Louise Wholey

After driving all the way to Tahoe, Mike and Guy wished to ski more, so we returned to the same spot the next day and joined the San Francisco chapter's Backcountry Ski Section for another day on Tamarack Peak. Twelve people led by Gary Apter climbed Tamarack Peak again. It was another strikingly pretty day, so common in the Sierra.

We skied down the gentle south side on the off and on pleasant breakable crust. After rising to 2 F temperatures, it was amazingly warm in the sun. We climbed the peak a second time and descended one of the north-facing slots that we had missed the previous day. Then we climbed to the near (skiers left) side of Proletariat Bowl and skied down several bowls of quite nice snow to the cars.

Jim and I were signed up for the weekend's Tahoe Peaks 3-day trip with the Backcountry Ski Section, but Sunday we missed the group by parking in the wrong place for Jake's Peak. We tried skiing from where we parked but the snow was rather bad. Then we took a short tour on Silver Peak thinking that the group had gone there. We found the slopes there to be somewhat crusty, but not too bad. It gets very little backcountry skier traffic because of the very long flat approach.

Monday we awoke to lots of fresh snow. An inch or so had been predicted, but it looked more like a foot. Again we joined the group, this time for Silver Peak. It was a gorgeous day, with intermittent snow or sunshine, sparkling skies, snowy trees, and soft velvety snow under foot.



After a late start due to numerous factors including much road congestion, we approached Silver Peak on the long series of roads and climbed part way up the north-eastern ridge of the peak.

It was magic! We found about a foot of beautiful deep fluffy powder. Whoopee! It was incredibly good skiing, a backcountry skier's fondest dream. We dropped down the

steep ridge, and crossed over to our descent path of the previous day.



It went on and on, just fantastic snow and superb skiing. We hit the road and glided back down the silky snow to the cars. What a day!

Private Trips

Note: Private trips are not insured, sponsored, or supervised by the Sierra Club. They are listed here because they may be of interest to PCS members. Private trips may be submitted directly to the editor.

March 23, 2008 – Round Top

Contact: Arun Mahajan (arun.mahajan@att.net)

Annual day trip from Carson Pass on skis or snowshoes. Crampons and ice axe required.

April 5-6, 2008 – Pinnacles

Contact: Rick Booth (rwdbooth@gmail.com) or Jeff Fisher (jeff_fisher_5252@sbcglobal.net)

Hike, Bike, and Climb at Pinnacles National Monument.

Come to the interesting and popular Pinnacles National Monument for a Spring trip. A group camp site has been reserved at the campground for Saturday night, April 5. This is a great area where you can hike, bike or rock climb. Plenty of good hiking and road biking. This is a private trip, no rock climbing instruction is available so be prepared to operate on your own.

May, 2008 – Nepal – Kailash - Tibet

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

We're off again for one of Warren's great trips!

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Our official website is [http:// lomaprieta.sierraclub.org/pcs/](http://lomaprieta.sierraclub.org/pcs/)

Email List Info

If you are on the official email list (lomap-pcs-announce@lists.sierraclub.org) or the email list the PCS feeds (pcs-issues@climber.org), you have a free EScree subscription. For email list details, send "info lomap-pcs-announce" to "listserv@lists.sierraclub.org", or send anything to "info@climber.org". EScree subscribers should send a subscription form to the Treasurer to become voting PCS members at no charge. The Scree is on the web as both plain text and fully formatted Adobe Acrobat/PDF.

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 Monday, February 25th. Meetings are the second Tuesday of each month.



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