

<http://peakclimbing.org/>

General Meeting

Date August 10, 2010
Time 7:00 – 9:00 pm
Presenter Emilie Cortes
Where Sports Basement
1177 Kern Avenue
Sunnyvale, CA
(Directions below)

Climbing Makalu

The Makalu Barun region is extremely remote and is the least trekked area in all of Nepal by far - typically seen only by those venturing to climb Makalu or Baruntse. In April/May 2010, Emilie Cortes traveled to the region with a small team of three other climbers to attempt Makalu, the world's 5th highest mountain at a formidable 27,766ft. The team dealt with a hairy dirt airstrip landing, a Maoist strike, violent GI illnesses, unusually rough terrain, numerous animal encounters, a near emergency bivy on the way to ABC, difficult team dynamics, high sustained winds, unprotected crevasses, the effects of extreme altitude on the body and the mind, and Emilie's biggest nemesis of all...scree.

Come hear the story of her first Himalayan expedition and first 8000 meter peak.



Directions:

<http://peakclimbing.org/node/42>

Editor's Notes

This isn't a trip report, but I'm thrilled that I just returned from England, where I completed a week-long backpack on the South West Coastal Path. The scenery was spectacular, the weather almost perfect, and the exhilaration of walking along cliff tops beside the ocean was wonderful. I learned all about backpacking in California, so it was fun to take my skills back to my native country. Happy backpacking to all! Judy

P.S. Note that Bob Rockwell is featured in two trip reports!

Chair column

Well, it is hard to believe, but we have already made it to August. Hopefully that means that you are all out climbing instead of reading Scree. But don't forget about the PCS! We have many trips scheduled and our monthly meetings, which are never to be missed. This month our very own Emilie Cortes will inspire us to climb bigger mountains than what normally do by telling us about her recent expedition to Makalu.

Last month we had the annual BBQ, which I gather was a great success! Thanks to Louise, Jim and Emilie for arranging it!

And let's not forget the usual pleas: Please send new and exciting trip descriptions to Louise and speaker suggestions to me.

Jesper

PCS Trip Calendar

These are required statements.

Note: CST 2087766-40. Registration as a seller of travel does not constitute approval by the State of California.

Note: All Sierra Club trips require you to sign a Liability Waiver.

<http://www.sierraclub.org/outings/chapter/forms/signinwaiver.pdf>

August 8 - 19 - Lodgepole to Mineral King
Leader: Louise Wholey

August 21 - 23 - Mts. Thompson, Powell
Leader: Aaron Schuman

August 28 - 29 – Unicorn, Cockscomb, Echo Peak #4
Leader: Ron Karpel

August 28 - 31 - Center Basin Trip
Leader - Jesper Schou

September 4 - 7 - Puite, Petit, Volunteer
Leader - Louise Wholey

September 11 - 13 - Tehipite Dome
Leader - Louise Wholey

September 25 - 26- Merced Peak
Leader - Louise Wholey

PCS Trip Details

Lodgepole to Mineral King

Goal: Ten Peaks in Ten Days

Location: Sequoia National Park

Dates: August 8 - 19

Leader: Louise Wholey

Difficulty: Strenuous, long trip, recent mountaineering experience required.

Join us for 10 peaks in 10 days starting with a hike on the High Sierra Trail from Crescent Meadow and ending in Mineral King.

The targeted peaks are Lion Rock (12,360+'), Triple Divide (12,634'), Stewart (12,200+'), Eagle Scout (12,000+'), Red Kaweah (13,720+'), Mt. Kaweah (13,802'), Lippincott (12,265'), Eisen (12,160+'), Sawtooth (12,343'), and Needham (12,520+'). Peaks are class 2 - 3.

An option exists to do the first part of the trip with us as a 6 day trip, Sun Aug 8 to Fri Aug 13, starting and ending at Crescent Meadow, climbing Lion Rock (12,360+'), Triple Divide (12,634'), and Stewart (12,200+'). Eagle Scout (12,000+') could be added by staying another day.

Another option is to enter at Mineral King around Saturday Aug 14 (on your own permit) to join us for the latter part of the trip, that is, the peaks above Big Arroyo, Red Kaweah (13,720+'), Mt. Kaweah (13,802'), Lippincott (12,265'), Eisen (12,160+'), as well as Sawtooth (12,343'), and Needham (12,520+'). Contact louisewholeyATyahoo.com

Mts. Thompson and Powell

Goal: Thompson(13,494') and Powell (13,356')

Location: Sabrina Lake, Eastside

Dates: August 21 - 23

Leader: Aaron Schuman

Difficulty: Class 2

We'll enter the John Muir Wilderness at Lake Sabrina (above the town of Bishop), and hike on-and-off trail past rockbound lake basins to our camp at Sunset Lake, below the stunning cliff face of Mt. Powell. We'll trek up to the saddle between our two peaks, and then climb them from the gentler southwest and southeast sides. From the summits, we'll enjoy spectacular views of the north faces of the Palisades. We'll camp a second night at Sunset Lake and hike back out the way we entered. Email Aaron Schuman: a.j.schuman AT gmail.com

Unicorn, Cockscomb, Echo Peak #4

Goals: Unicorn (10,880'), Cockscomb (11,065'), Echo Peak #4 (~11,000')

Location: Tuolumne Meadows, Yosemite

Dates: August 28 - 29

Leader: Ron Karpel

Difficulty: Class 4, rock, rope

Driving through Tuolumne Meadows one cannot but admire the surrounding peaks. Yet we are often too rushed to reach mountains in faraway places. This time we will stop and enjoy the ones nearby. To add to our fun, we have chosen peaks that require a bit of technical climbing. To be able to use ropes and climb as a group, the technical section is limited to one short pitch of class 4 or so.

Participants must have previous mountaineering experience, must have experience with rock route of at least class 3, be experienced in tying in and giving top rope belay, and be in excellent physical condition. Not for beginners!!

This is an official Sierra Club trip. You have to be a Sierra Club member. You must include your Sierra Club number with your application to be considered.

Contact: Ron Karpel, ronny AT karpel.org

Co-contact: Charles Schafer, c_g_schafer AT yahoo.com

Center Basin Trip

Goal: Mt. Keith (13,977'), Mt. Bradley (13,289'), possibly University Peak (13,632')

Location: Independence, Eastside

Dates: August 28 - 31

Leader: Jesper Schou

Difficulty: Class 2 or perhaps 3

Day 1: Start at Onion Valley, go over Kearsage Pass, head south on the John Muir Trail, camp near Golden Bear Lake - 14 miles. Days 2 and 3: Climb Keith and Bradley. Day 4: Pack up and return to the trailhead. We may throw in University for good measure, depending on time, weather, and the desires of the participants and whims of the leader. The trek to Center Basin is quite long, but the trip should be easy from a technical point of view. Email: jschou AT solar.stanford.edu

Piute, Petit, Volunteer

Goal: Piute (10,541'), Petit (10,788'), Volunteer (10,481')

Location: Twin Lakes, Northern Yosemite

Dates: September 4 - 7

Leader: Louise Wholey

Difficulty: Strenuous

This is a "fast and light" style trip designed to cover many miles per day. The plan is: Day 1: Hike to Seavey Pass from Twin Lakes -15.2 mi, 2000' climbing; Day 2: Climb Volunteer and Petit from camp - 15.5 mi, 3600' climbing;

Day 3: Climb Piute, hike to Peeler Lake - 14.4 mi, 5400' climbing; Day 4: Hike out, 8 mi. A trip report describing the route and climbing is available in the October 2008 Scree. Strong and fast backpacking skills plus recent mountaineering experience required. Contact louisewholey AT yahoo.com

Tehipite Dome, Tunemah

Goal: Tehipite Dome (7,708') and Tunemah Peak (11,894')

Location: Wishon Reservoir, Rancheria TH

Dates: September 11 - 13

Leader: Louise Wholey

Difficulty: Strenuous, very long hike

Hike through the lovely forests of the southern parts of Sierra National Forest through Crown Valley to Tehipite Dome. We plan to climb the dome and return to camp below Kettle Dome the first day, covering about 20 miles. The second day is a 20-mile day hike into the NP through Blue Canyon to climb Tunemah and return to camp. The last day hike out, about 15 miles. Participants should be extremely well-conditioned for long light-weight backpacking and long multiple-day hikes. Contact: louisewholey AT yahoo.com

Merced Peak

Goal: Merced Peak (11,726')

Location: Yosemite National Park

Dates: September 25 -26

Leader: Louise Wholey

Difficulty: Intermediate

Backpack from Sky Ranch Road to Upper Ottoway Lake via Chiquito and Merced Passes. This route takes us about 15 miles to camp through the southernmost regions of Yosemite National Park. Sunday climb Merced Peak (class 2) and hike out. Contact: louisewholey AT yahoo.com

Private Trip Calendar

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.

August 20 - 22 - Mount Sill

Leader: Kelly Maas

October 2010 – Nepal

Leader: Warren Storkman

Private Trip Details

Mount Sill

Goal: Mt. Sill (14,162')

Location: Big Pine, Eastside

Dates: August 20 - 22

Leader: Kelly Maas

Difficulty: Class 4 and snow

Mt. Sill: One guide book quotes Walter Starr, Jr as having written ". . . it can be said to be the [ultimate] of all Sierra peaks in the extent and quality of the views it offers." It's also part of the main Palisades massif, overlooking the largest glacier in the Sierra. I'll lead a crack team of qualified adventurers up the North Fork of Big Pine Creek, across this glacier and up the North Couloir route. The difficult section isn't long, but participants must be solid on class 3 and must have some ice axe and crampon experience. A rope will be used. If you think you have what it takes, send me your resume. Map: Tom Harrison Kings Canyon High Country, or North Palisade & Split Mtn USGS 7.5 min. Leader: Kelly Maas, 408-378-5311, kellymbase-pcs@yahoo.com

Nepal

Location: Tibet

Dates: October 2010

Leader: Warren Storkman

Climb both Gokyo Ri and Kala Patar. 19-day camping trek, \$1600.00 For more details, contact Warren Storkman: email dstorkman@aol.com or phone 650-493-8959.

Trip Reports

Black Mountain: 13,289'

June 29, 2010

By Debbie Bulger

The Baxter Pass Trailhead was resplendent with wildflowers as Lisa described in her trip report in the last issue. Richard Stover and I met the PCS group as they were coming out after their successful climb. We also met the unprepared hiker who shivered away the night with only a borrowed parka from Eddie Sudol. Richard and I took two days to climb the over 5000' to our base camp on a lovely bench at 10,800' overlooking headwaters of Oak Creek with a spectacular view of Owens Valley.



Richard crossing Oak Creek

As we were getting settled, we met Bob Rockwell, now well into his 80s returning from his successful climb of Black and later Daryl Hinman who had climbed both Black and Diamond. The next morning we were up bright and early, donning crampons for the still hard snow. The footprints and steps from both groups which had preceded us made the climbing easier. However, the snow was melting fast.



Debbie on steep snow

By afternoon we were post holing and walking became treacherous with water rushing underneath the snow in places. The ascent is steep as reported and the rock scrambling once the ridge is attained is fun. Early on we heard massive rockfall which seemed to last forever but was only about 20 seconds. We could see no dust or falling rock and surmised it was either on the north side of Diamond or on Mt. Mary Austin.



Debbie on summit of Black Mountain

The view from the summit of Black is fabulous. Peak after peak reaches forever. Clarence King, Gardiner, Williamson, Rae Lakes immediately below. Lots of snow cover. On the partial scree descent we saw lots of bighorn scat, but alas, no sheep.

Lone Pine Peak, with Mt. Irvine and Candlelight Peak

July 3 - 5, 2010
By Dara Hazeghi

Lone Pine Peak is located near Mt. Whitney off the Owens Valley. While not especially high, it has the distinction of being nearer to the town of Lone Pine than Whitney itself, and thus appearing more prominent. Trip leaders were Kelly Maas and Landa Robillard, with Joe Baker, Judy Molland, Chris Prendergast and myself participating.

The six of us met Saturday morning at the Meysan Lakes trailhead. We set off just before 9AM on what was rapidly becoming a warm summer day. The trail led us through the main campground and past several well-appointed private cabins, before commencing a steady climb up the Meysan creek drainage. With the exception of 2 pairs of dayhikers and a grouse, we had the trail to ourselves for the rest of the morning.

Getting up to the lakes in the basin proved a bit of a 'schlep', as the trail covered 3000+ vertical feet in around 4.5 miles. Views back toward the Owens Valley were predictably stunning. Views ahead improved as we worked our way up, revealing a lovely granite basin with several prominent peaks. Despite the heavy snow year, there was little snow save a few large areas in the upper part of the basin.



A perfect campsite

We found an excellent campsite around 11000 ft. off a large meadow, more or less where the main trail ended. After eating lunch and settling ourselves, it was only 2:30PM, so leaving Joe to take a hard-earned nap, the rest of us decided to do a little exploration. Another group of 4 hikers had just passed by, so at Landa's suggestion, we followed them on a use-trail heading up the northwest side of the valley. When we caught up with them, we learned they were on their way to climb Candlelight Peak, a small promontory our map had omitted to name on the ridge between us and the Whitney basin. We decided to follow them.

Marked by a small unused antenna, the summit afforded us basically a 360 degree view, with Whitney, Russell, Carillon, Lone Pine Peak, Mt. Mallory and much of the Owens Valley. It was also on the summit that we learned that we had been following hiking legend Bob Rockwell and his climbing companions. In his low-key way, Bob told us how he had first climbed Mt. Whitney more than 50 years before, and had since repeated the trip 154 times. He and his companions suggested that we try Mt. Irvine, in addition to or instead of Lone Pine Peak, as it was a 'classier' mountain!



PCSer's and OPCer's at Candlelight Peak

Before Bob and his friends left to make their descent down the steep northern face of the ridge to return via the Whitney trail, he insisted on inducting us into the OPC, or Occasional Peak Climber's gang.

Back at camp, we made dinner, watched a marmot explore our gear, and decided to climb Mt. Irvine the next day and save Lone Pine Peak for Monday.

Sunday morning, we had breakfast and were on our way by 8AM. Our route to Candlelight Pass was the same as the previous afternoon, and once there, we began the long slow slog north up the ridge toward Irvine. The rock was mostly solid, but it became steadily steeper and looser the higher we went. We reached several small summits, and following Bob Rockwell's advice, stuck to the east side of the ridge when downclimbing was necessary. There was a bit of scrambling over and around some larger rocks, but by and large nothing more difficult than class 2. When we finally hauled ourselves up through the last chute onto the summit, it was past noon.



A happy group at the Mt. Irvine summit

Mt. Irvine presented us even better views of the Whitney massif than had Candlelight. We could make out the infamous switchbacks of the main Whitney trail (some of them still in snow) and even thought we could make out the summit hut. Lone Pine Peak, now 1000' feet below, was a sharp notch on a seemingly needle-sharp ridge. Mt. Mallory, connected via a long ridge to Irvine, looked possible, but long, so after a snack, we returned the way we'd come up.



View from Mt. Irvine

Descending was slow going with plenty of loose rocks and big steps to keep us on our toes, except perhaps for Kelly who made it all look easy going straight down (and often up) the spine of the ridge. On the final stretch going down to the pass, we heard an odd sound, and looked to see a glider pass over the ridge, several hundred feet below us! It made a couple of large circles over the Meysan Lake basin, before the brave (and hopefully experienced) pilot turned back out to the Owens Valley. While the rest of us covered the last stretch down to the camp, Joe made a detour to Candlelight Peak, to see what he'd missed the previous day.



Landa leads the way down

At 5AM the next morning we were up for an early breakfast and got to enjoy the sun rising on Mt. Mallory and LeConte before setting off at 6:30. Getting to Lone Pine Peak required first heading down the trail to Green Lake, and crossing the valley there. After a large

boulder field, we reached the southern wall of the basin and aimed up a 1,500' chute for the ridgeline. This proved a 2 hour slog up loose sand and scree, thankfully in the shade.

We found a use trail along the ridge, and after crossing over to the south side, it lead us across a broad sandy plateau, vanishing amidst the rocks just below the summit of Lone Pine Peak. We were on the summit at 9:30AM.



Serious reading on the Lone Pine summit

Given Lone Pine Peak's prominence from Lone Pine, it was no surprise to see much of the Owens Valley from there, albeit shrouded in a typical summer haze. To the north and east was the still snow-capped White Mountain Peak and the rest of the White Mountain range, while to the south, Owens Lake shimmered in the valley heat. Telescope Peak was visible further to the south. Nearer to us, and quite prominent were Mt. Langley, LeConte, Mallory and Irvine were, but we could also see over Candlelight to Whitney and its neighbors. We signed the register, took photos, and tried to absorb the view.

Returning to the chute we'd come up was a simple task. To get down the chute, we spread out, in order to not knock rocks down on each other. We reached camp a little after noon with the midday sun beating down. Decamping by 1:30PM, Landa set a brisk pace for the return, and we wound up at the trailhead in about half the time it had taken coming up.

Even though this was the 4th of July weekend, we saw a grand total of a dozen people on the trip, between leaving from and returning to Whitney Portal. Mosquitoes turned out to be a nuisance, though not a huge one. The crampons and ice axes we'd brought proved entirely unnecessary, in spite of the high-snow year. After our return, we learned from the Whitney Portal Store's message board that Bob Rockwell's group had encountered a hiker in distress on the Whitney trail below Trail Camp, and helped her all the way back to the trailhead. We hope to encounter him and other members of the OPC on the trail again soon!



View from our campsite the evening of July 4

Shepherd's Crest: 12,000'

July 25, 2010

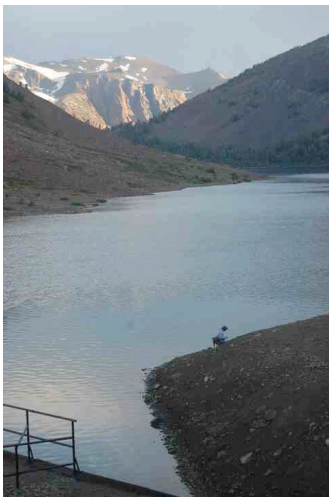
By Arun Mahajan

Three times during the night, at least, we were woken up by the soft patter of rain drops falling on us as we slept in the parking lot near our cars at the campground near the dam at Saddlebag Lake. I was, luckily, inside a waterproof bivy and I was hoping that Kelly Maas, who was sleeping in his bag without a protective layer, was not getting too wet. "I have a synthetic bag", Kelly had told me earlier. Small consolation, I suppose.

We had driven up the previous night with the intention of doing the moderately technical North Ridge route on Conness but this rain

and then the cloudy sky in the morning made us find an alternate peak and so, we decided to climb up to the top of Shepherd's Crest (SC), a peak that is barely over 12000 ft high and not too far from North Peak. It actually shares the same plateau as North, via the North Ridge.

Dawn broke (we later fixed it) as we made our way past the still waters of Saddlebag. A solitary angler cast his line as his dog looked on.



Saddlebag Lake

We made our way around the lake to the very tip and then took the right fork and then landed on what may have been a road but now overgrown. We followed it towards Steelhead Lake and then to a sign that pointed to Helen Lake (in the other direction). Very soon the trail seemed to give up but SC was obvious and straight in front of us but above a plateau.



Heading for the talus

There are many ways to get to the top of the plateau but we took the most direct uphill route from the place where the trail ended. A small stream comes down from high up near here. A snow head wall guarded the plateau but we were able to top it by going left.



Up and over the snow

After that, a longish talus slog got us to the summit of SC, marked by a cairn; a tin box underneath it contained a soggy register. I noted my own entry in the register from 2009 when I had climbed it with Ron Karpel. It had taken us a none too energetic 3 hrs 40 mins to get to the top.

We had great views of Conness, North, the Lundy Canyon, Virginia, Twin, Matterhorn, Whorl, Ritter, Banner, Lyell, Maclure, the peaks of Tuolumne and even Half Dome and Tower Peak in the distance.

More clouds rolled in and we even heard thunderclaps, so we hurried down, this time skirting the headwall by dropping into the snow (skiers left).

After a valiant but ultimately losing battle with the mosquito legions, we made it to the trailhead, making it about a 7 hr day.

While we did SC as a backup peak when plans to do other complex peaks failed, it is a worthwhile objective in its own right and reveals the spectacular countryside of northern Yosemite.

Elected Officials

Chair

Jesper Schou / schou@sun.stanford.edu
650-725-9826

Vice Chair and Trip Scheduler

Louise Wholey / PCSchair@gmail.com
21020 Canyon View Road, Saratoga, CA
95070
408-867-6655

Treasurer and Membership Roster (address changes)

Emilie Cortes / mountaineerchica@gmail.com
415-260-3618

Publicity Committee Positions

Scree Editor

Judy Molland / screeditor@gmail.com

PCS World Wide Web Publisher

Joe Baker / pcs@joebaker.us
1975 Cordilleras Rd, Redwood City, CA
94062
650-261-1488

Scree is the monthly newsletter of the Peak Climbing Section of the Sierra Club Loma Prieta Chapter. Current and back issues are posted on the web in PDF and HTML.

Our official website is

<http://www.peakclimbing.org>. Joining the PCS is easy. Go to <http://www.peakclimbing.org/join>

PCS Announcement Listserv

If you join the PCS Announcement Listserv you will receive announcements and updates of trips and meetings. Use the <http://lists.sierraclub.org/SCRIPTS/WA.EXE?A0=LOMAP-PCS-ANNOUNCE&X=&Y=> web page.

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: Climbing using hands for balance.

Class 3: Climbing requires the use of hands, maybe a rope.

Class 4: Requires rope belays.

Class 5: Technical rock climbing.

Trips may also be rated by level of exertion: easy, moderate, strenuous, or extreme.

Deadline for submissions to the next Scree is Monday, August 30. Meetings are held on the second Tuesday of each month.