

<http://peakclimbing.org/>

## General Meeting

**Date** November 9, 2010  
**Time** 7:30 – 9:30 pm  
**Where** PCC  
3921 E. Bayshore Road  
Palo Alto, CA  
**Program** Expedition to Noshaq  
(24,581') in Afghanistan  
**Presenter** Sam Roberts



32 years ago, Sam Roberts was part of a seven person expedition that went to Afghanistan to climb Noshaq (24,581'). Their expedition was the last American group to climb in that region until this past summer when Bill Lyden, an American from Alaska, also travelled to Noshaq. Sam's presentation will show his expeditions experience, as well as some images from Bill's recent trip. Sam Roberts is an award winning photographer and writer based in the San Francisco Bay Area of California. To date, Sam has shot on four continents usually while pursuing in his other passions: mountain climbing, skiing and backcountry travel.

### **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.

**Google** <http://tinyurl.com/28ngaw>

### **Editor's Notes**

I am proud to bring you a jam-packed issue this month, including trip listings and trip reports from all over the world! Enjoy reading!

## **Party Time**

What? It's the end of the year already? Yes! Get ready for our 35<sup>th</sup> annual PCS Festivus Party on Tuesday, December 14 at 7:00 p.m., at the Whisman Station clubhouse, at 420 Kent Dr., Mountain View.

Bring a potluck dish that you will be proud to share with your fellow climbers.

Here's your assignment:

A – D - appetizer

E – I - salad

J – N - main course

O – S – dessert

T – Z – beverages

In addition, feel free to bring your alcoholic beverage of choice, and of course, since we are a green organization, bring your own plate, cup, and eating utensils.

Bring 35 mm slides or a CD with 10 or 12 of your most thrilling climbing photos, from this year or from long ago. Bring your family and friends. Bring a swimsuit and a towel if you envision yourself dipping in the clubhouse hot tub. (Yes, a swimsuit! What? You think this is Tenaya Lake? Even you, Kai.)

## **Chair Column**

It's election time. The nominating committee has been busy twisting arms, and we have a few good people. But if you have not been contacted and feel like running, it is not too late! See below for more information.

We have also been discussing ways to improve our already excellent club. Details to come in future issues of Scree and at our meetings, but here are a couple: finding better ways to recruit and retain new members and working on conservation issues, especially related to our favorite haunts. So let me now if you are interested in helping with those issues.

We recently had a trip planning meeting, see separate announcements for details of what is planned. Regarding the issue of trips it would be great if we could have a few more beginner trips next year. Perhaps to well known peaks well suited for getting people into peak climbing. So leaders, please sign up!

## **PCS Elections**

At the November meeting we hold our annual elections. This is a great opportunity to help the PCS and to give back and we seek and welcome your participation.

During October a nominating committee was formed to contact members about serving the section as officers. This year the committee is pleased to announce the following slate of prospective officers:

- Chair: Emilie Cortes
- Vice-chair/Scheduler: Louise Wholey
- Treasurer : To be decided

Additional nominations, will be accepted from the floor, at the meeting on November 9. Elected officials take office on January 1, 2011. Please contact the committee members, Louise Wholey (louisewholey@gmail.com ), Lisa Barboza (Lisa.Barboza@gd-ais.com) or Arun Mahajan (arun.mahajan@att.net) if you are interested in serving. You may also contact the current chair, Jesper Schou (schou@sun.stanford.edu) or chair nominee, Emilie Cortes (mountaineerchica@gmail.com). Only Sierra Club members may run for office and vote in elections.

Here is a brief description of the roles:

1. Chair. The Chair of the Section calls and presides at the meetings of the Section, enforces the By-Laws of the Section, and appoints and may remove members of committees to carry out the work of the Section. The Chair of the Section may attend, or appoint an alternate to attend, the meetings of the Executive Committee of the Loma Prieta Chapter.

2. Vice-Chair. The Vice-Chair of the Section is responsible for the selection of leaders for, and the scheduling of, the outings of the Section, subject to the approval of the Mountaineering Committee. During the absence or disability of the Chair, the Vice-Chair shall act in his place.
3. Secretary/Treasurer. The Secretary/Treasurer of the Section shall keep an up-to-date roster of members; and manage all financial matters.

More information may be found at the PCS web page here:

<http://peakclimbing.org/details/duties>

Thank you,

The PCS Nominating Committee

Louise Wholey

Lisa Barboza

Arun Mahajan

### **New Trip Rating System**

(with thanks to Louise Wholey)

We are extending the system for rating for PCS trips to include a rating that will describe the effort required. The new PCS rating system is a series of three designations from the following groups:

Miles (to summit the peak)

1 = Less than 5 miles of total distance

2 = 5 to 10 miles

3 = 10 to 15 miles

4 = 15 to 20 miles

5 = 20 to 25 miles

Climb

A = Less than 1000 feet of total elevation gain

B = 1000 to 2000 feet

C = 2000 to 3000 feet

D = 3000 to 4000 feet

E = 4000 to 5000 feet

Travel

T = Trail

1 = Limited/easy X-C

2 = Moderate X-C

3 = Strenuous/difficult X-C

A trip rated as 2D3 means that the trip will be five to ten miles long to reach the peak with nearly 4,000 feet of climbing at times over strenuous/difficult cross country terrain.

Peak climbs typically have three phases:

1) backpacking to camp (often on a trail), 2) the peak climb (usually only a few miles but X-C with lots of climbing), 3) the return to the trailhead.

Rather than make this too complex for leaders, we will start by using this system for an over-all rating of the trip. If a trip, however, has one day that is particularly strenuous, the leader should identify that day as having special demands and give a separate rating for that day as well as the over-all trip. Longer trips climbing multiple peaks probably require a rating for each day, but leaders may wish initially to rate just the hardest day of the trip.

Class ratings will continue to be used to describe the technical difficulty of a climb.

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.

Please note: most trips listed below do not yet follow the new system (except for Emilie's - thank you!), but these new ratings will be in place for upcoming trips listed here.

## **Advanced Trip Schedule**

On October 19th, an [Advanced Trip Schedule](#) was proposed. This schedule is only intended for planning purposes. In many cases, permits have not yet been secured and dates and destinations may change.

You can also read the advanced trip schedule on page 19 of this edition of Scree.

## **Tim Hult Request - Please Read!**

(Posted separately since dates will vary, depending on snow conditions.)

- 1) I am willing to act as coordinator for a one night weekend trip to Ostrander. Payment must be advance (\$60 night) before I submit names for the lottery. Please contact me at: timothy.hult(at) gd-ais.com to discuss your interest.
- 2) Shasta winter ascent. Doing a winter ascent of Shasta can be a tricky affair involving waiting and watching for the perfect weather window that matches your schedule. Contact me to be put on an email / discussion list. We will do either the Cassaval or Sargent's ridge route. Participants must have arctic appropriate gear.
- 3) Also but with no descriptions: I'd like to try another spring tour this year, or, simply do some spring yo-yo skiing as well. This past year would have been a terrific one to do some of the high trail head passes on skis as day trips and I feel bad that I missed them.

## **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>

December 4, 5 - Pahrump Pt, Stewart Pt.  
Leader: Daryn Dodge

January 8, 2011 - Junipero Serra  
Leader: Lisa Barboza

February 12, 13 - Donner Summit Dayhikes  
Leader: Joe Baker

March 20 - Round Top  
Leader: Arun Mahajan

March 26, 27 - Cone Peak  
Leader: Joe Baker

March 26, 27 - Sandy Point, Last Chance Mt.  
Leader: Daryn Dodge

## **PCS Trip Details**

### **Pahrump Point and Stewart Point**

Goals: Pahrump Pt.(5,740'), Stewart Pt. (5,265')

Location: Just east of Death Valley NP

Date: December 4, 5

Leader: Daryn Dodge

Difficulty: Rated I

From the Desert Peaks Section:

Pahrump Point (5740') and Stewart Point (5265'): Join us for one or both of these fine DPS-listed limestone peaks just east of Death Valley National Park. Saturday climb Pahrump Point (3400' gain, 8 miles). Happy hour Saturday night. Sunday climb Stewart Point (2600' gain, 6.5 miles). Send e-mail with conditioning and experience to

Leader: Daryn Dodge [ddodge@oehha.ca.gov](mailto:ddodge@oehha.ca.gov)

or Co-leader: Kathy Rich

[kathrynrich@gmail.com](mailto:kathrynrich@gmail.com).

### **Junipero Serra**

Goal: Junipero Serra (5,862')

Location: Junipero Serra, King City

Date: January 8, 2011

Leader: Lisa Barboza

Difficulty: Class 1

This is an annual January Loma Prieta Peak Climbing Section tradition. It's a 12-mile round-trip to the summit of the peak. We'll be carpooling from San Jose for this trip as it is a 150 mile drive to the trailhead.

This peak is the highest in the Santa Lucia range. On the summit, we'll find exotic ponderosa pine, white fir, and other plants normally associated with the Sierra. We'll start at the trailhead at 10AM, summit by 2PM and be back at the cars by 4PM. This is a class 1 day hike open to all.

Contact Lisa Barboza at [Lisa.Barboza\(at\)gd-ais.com](mailto:Lisa.Barboza(at)gd-ais.com)

### **Donner Summit Dayhikes on Skis/Snowshoes**

Goals: Mt. Judah (8,245'), Boreal Ridge

Location: Donner Summit, near Truckee

Dates: February 12, 13

Leader: Joe Baker

Difficulty: Beginner/Intermediate Level Skiing

We will stay at the Southbay Ski Club lodge at Donner Summit, and do day trips. One day, we will climb Mt. Judah, and the other day we will do a loop from Highway 80 to Highway 40, following the PCT on the way there and coming over Boreal Ridge on the way back. Destinations may change based on snow conditions. Contact Judy Molland at [judy@judymolland.com](mailto:judy@judymolland.com).

### **Round Top**

Goal: Round Top (10,381')

Location: Carson Pass

Date: March 20

Leader: Arun Mahajan

Difficulty: Intermediate Level Skiing

Day hike on snow, ice-axe, crampons, skis or snowshoes. Skis with skins or snowshoes needed for the approach then ice-axe and crampons for the summit area.

Meet at 8am at Carson Pass Sno-Park on Highway-88, ready to go. To park there you will need a sno-park permit.

Difficulty: Snow/winter conditions but

otherwise intermediate level skiing and you have to have some experience with axe/crampons and be able to handle the altitude of over 10k ft, early in the season.

Contact Arun Mahajan at [arun.mahajan\(at\)att.net](mailto:arun.mahajan(at)att.net)

### **Cone Peak**

Goal: Cone Peak (5,155')

Location: Ventana Wilderness, Limekiln campground

Dates: March 26, 27

Leader: Joe Baker

Difficulty: Class 1

We will climb Cone Peak from Highway 1. Cone Peak is the most spectacular mountain on the Big Sur coast of California. It is the second highest mountain (Junipero Serra Peak is higher) in the Santa Lucia Range. The trip is on-trail but somewhat strenuous. This will either be a dayhike, or we'll camp at Vicente Flat and do the longer loop. I'm leaning toward the second option because Limekiln Campground (trailhead at the ocean) is still closed due to the fire. With the second option, we can take a leisurely hike up to our camp spot, where we'll spend the night on Saturday, then climb our peak on Sunday morning, before hiking out. This should be an excellent time to see lots of wildflowers.

### **Sandy Point and Last Chance Mountain**

Goal: Sandy Pt, Last Chance Mt.

Location: Death Valley

Dates: March 26, 27

Leader: Daryn Dodge

Another DPS- sponsored trip. More details to follow.

### **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.

November 21-28 - Potrero Chico, Mexico  
Leader: Emilie Cortes

December 14 - 30 - Kilimanjaro, Mt. Meru  
Leader: Daryn Dodge

December 18 - 23 - Williamson and Tyndall  
Leader: Emilie Cortes

March 11-13 - Split Mountain  
Leader: Lisa Barboza

June 30 - July 16 - Uganda Trip  
Leader: Emilie Cortes

October - Mt. Kailash, Nepal/Tibet  
Leader: Warren Storkman

### **Private Trip Details**

#### **Potrero Chico, Mexico**

Goal: Potrero Chico (The Little Yosemite of Mexico)

Location: Hidalgo, Mexico

Date: November 21 - 28

Leader: Emilie Cortes

Difficulty: Your choice!

Private trip to the little Yosemite of Northern Mexico. I speak Spanish and will assist with logistics. You can either come as a pre-formed climbing team, meet up with others that are there (Thanksgiving is the high season but it is still not too crowded), or hire a guide. Previous rock-climbing experience recommended but not required given guided options. As I do not lead on rock outdoors, I plan to hire a guide for the tougher multi-pitch routes I would like to do and team up with other climbers for mellower routes. Contact Emilie at [mountaineerchica \(at\) gmail](mailto:mountaineerchica@gmail.com). You can also visit [www.potrerochicoclimbing.com](http://www.potrerochicoclimbing.com) for more info on the area.

#### **Kilimanjaro and Mt. Meru**

Goals: Kilimanjaro (19,341'), Mt. Meru (14,980')

Location: Tanzania

Date: December 14 - 30

Leader: Daryn Dodge

For more information, contact Daryn Dodge at [ddodge@oehha.ca.gov](mailto:ddodge@oehha.ca.gov)

#### **Williamson and Tyndall**

Goals: Williamson (14,370'), Tyndall (14,019')

Location: Eastside of the Sierras

Date: December 18 - 23

Leader: Emilie Cortes

Difficulty: Intermediate/Advanced; 2D3 with class 3 winter climbing

Climb two coveted California 14ers in winter. This is a private trip and participation will be subject to the leaders' discretion given the difficulty of the trip.

Snowcamping, winter backcountry travel (either skis or snowshoes OK), and crampon/ice axe experience required, as well as proven ability to acclimatize. An adventurous attitude is also required as winter climbing can be challenging and require tough decisions. You should be prepared to carry a heavy pack (45-55lbs) for anywhere from 6-14 hours each day. The pace will be moderate but good endurance is necessary.

I would categorize this as an intermediate/advanced trip, more for the physical challenge than the climbing. Using the backpacking trip ratings, it would be a 2D3 with class 3 winter climbing over 5 days. Led by Emilie Cortes & Lisa Barboza. Contact Emilie Cortes at [mountaineerchica\(at\)gmail.com](mailto:mountaineerchica@gmail.com).

## **Split Mountain**

Goal: Split Mountain (14,042')

Location: Big Pine, Eastside of the Sierras

Date: March 11 - 13

Leader: Lisa Barboza

Difficulty: Intermediate/Advanced; 2D3 with class 2 winter climbing

Another prized winter 14er. Winter backcountry travel and snowcamping skills highly recommended.

This is an intermediate/advanced trip and you must have previous crampon/ice axe experience. You should have a solid backpacking/hiking foundation to carry a heavy pack, a proven ability to acclimatize, and an adventurous attitude as winter climbing can be challenging and require tough decisions. Many winter attempts do not result in a summit as conditions typically must be ideal. Possibly includes Prater and Tinemaha. Led by Lisa Barboza, co-led by Emilie Cortes. Contact Lisa Barboza at Lisa.Barboza(at)gd-ais.com

## **Uganda Trip**

Goal: Mountains of the Moon

Location: Uganda

Date: June 30 - July 16

Leader: Emilie Cortes

Difficulty: TBD

Trip to Uganda: includes trekking and climbing in the famous "Mountains of the Moon" – the Ruwenzoris, gorilla tracking, and rafting the Nile. Planning is in early stages and tentative dates are 6/30/11-7/16/11. Contact Emilie Cortes at mountaineeringchica(at)gmail.com directly to be kept apprised of details.

## **Mt. Kailash, Nepal/Tibet**

Goal: Mt. Kailash - Lhasa

Location: Nepal/Tibet

Date: October 2011

Leader: Warren Storkman

Camping 14 days, hotel 7 days. Contact Warren Storkman (650-493-8959) or email: dstorkman@aol.com

## **Trip Reports**

### **Devil's Crag**

**August 26 - 30, 2010**

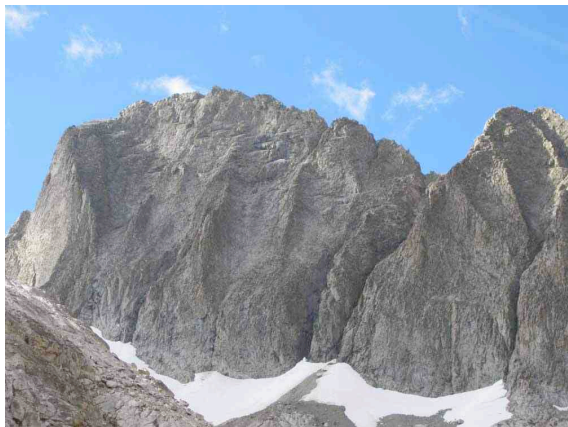
**By Louise Wholey**

Several friends had previously chosen to use a guide to climb the feared and dangerous SPS list peak Devil's Crag #1. SP Parker of Sierra Mountain Center (SMC) was to be my guide but unfortunately returned from his previous trip with a pulled calf muscle. His associate Chris Simmons agreed to tackle the peak despite its reputation for hurting and killing people. I was quite skeptical at first of going with someone I did not know, but I should have known that people do not get to be guides unless they are really neat people. Chris was very nice. I greatly enjoyed his company.

The trip is a long one, typically 5 days if one also wants to climb Wheel - one for getting over Bishop Pass and dropping into LeConte Canyon, one for ascending up Rambaud Creek, over Rambaud Pass (cross country with a full pack) and up Wheel Mtn, one for climbing Devil's Crag, one for hiking most of the way out, and the last short day for returning to the cars. At first I felt uncomfortable having to pay for a guide for numerous days of hiking, though some people do hire guides for hiking the JMT. But once I got on the peak I changed my mind; it was simply great fun to be climbing and this made it possible!

The route is relatively obvious; you climb the NW ridge. We awoke at 4:30 am to be sure to have enough time for success. The start of the route is convoluted; it goes almost over a 12,200' peaklet west of the summit (the sunny blob far right in the photo), then down a very rotten gully and across the east side of White Top, peak 12,262, obvious due to its color (foreground on far right). The white rock was incredibly fragile but the approach was at

most class 3 so we were unroped. At the base of the jagged ridge we roped up with a plan to simul-climb the class 3 and quickly be able to set up belays for the class 4 sections.



### **Devil's Crag NW Ridge route is on skyline**

The climb was exciting and delightful. Roped climbing is not that common when doing peaks on the SPS list, so this was a special pleasure! I was so involved in the climb I forgot to take out my camera, but Chris was quick on the draw.



**Louise appears through the rabbit ears  
(Photo by Chris Simmons)**

We mostly down-climbed the route along with 2 rappels. On the timing, we summited at around 10 am and returned to our camp at the lake SW of Rambaud Pass around 3 pm.

The weather had turned quite cool; clouds surrounded peaks in the afternoon, so I delighted in using my tent as a sauna rather than doing further climbing that afternoon.

For anyone retracing our steps, the route is very well documented by Daryn Dodge in his report on <http://climber.org/reports/2006/1514.html>. Chris successfully used Secor's guidebook description for most of the details of the route.

### **Climbing in the Indian Himalaya September, 2010 By Arun Mahajan**

The Garhwal region of the northern state of Uttarakhand in India may rightfully lay claim to being the most spectacular section of an already great chain of Himalayan peaks that lie within India. This region includes Nanda Devi, the highest peak that lies completely within India and also peaks such as the Bhagirathi massif, the spear-like Shivaling and the intimidating Thalay Sagar. Within the Garhwal region lies the sub-region of Gangotri, so named after a holy town and in this region lies the giant peak, Satopanth (7075m), our target.

Landing at the new terminal at New Delhi airport was a pleasure as the terminal has been redesigned for the Commonwealth Games and I was soon able to get a taxi to the modest but comfortable hostel, the Blue Triangle, in Connaught Place. The BT seems to be a magnet for climbers and trekkers from all over the world. The rest of the team, all from the UK, arrived late in the same night. The next day, 2<sup>nd</sup> September, I met with them all: Martin, the leader with whom I had climbed in the Himalaya three years ago, his son, trainee guide and co-leader, Alex, David Bingham (sales consultant), Steve Foster

(anaesthetist), Steve Greenhalgh (Her Majesty's Forces), Andrew Hemingway (environmental consultant) and Stephen Matterson (orthodontist) and all had impressive climbing credentials (Cho Oyu, Alpamayo, Spantik, Ghasherbrum, etc).

The bigger problem was off course, how would I keep from not mistaking amongst these three Steves? Then, there was Mr CS Pandey, the owner of Himalayan Run and Trek, a mountaineer of many talents, who now runs this company that organizes treks and runs in the Himalaya as well as providing infrastructure support for expeditions to the Indian Himalaya and is based in New Delhi and his assistant and general 'fixer', a man of many resources and skills, Navin. It was a pleasure to re-acquaint myself with Martin, Mr Pandey and Navin. Navin had been the expedition cook (one of his other talents) for our trip in 2007. The hard working and efficient Mansi Pandey, Mr Pandey's niece, was also at hand.

We dutifully made our trip to the Indian Mountaineering Foundation, the IMF, to get briefed on our trip and collect permits. We were also introduced to Dhruv Joshi, our liason officer (LO) who was to accompany us on our trip, technically, only till base camp (BC). The care and feeding of the LO is the responsibility of the climbing team. Dhruv was a very pleasant young lad with an impressive resume of hard peaks climbed and we all took an immediate liking to him. These young LOs are not the desk bound bureaucrats who look like retired golfers and are happiest throwing their considerable weight around, ordering tea from their orderlies, as one might be inclined to think, but strong mountaineers, always waiting for the next opportunity to climb a hard technical Himalayan giant.

The rest of the day was spent in sorting common gear for the mountain and base camp, checking out our supplies of food, fuel,

stoves, canisters etc. In these trips, everybody is an equal member of the expedition and everybody chips in. This makes one learn and understand a lot more about expeditions and how they work than simply writing a check and showing up for the trip.

We took an early morning deluxe train to the holy town of Haridwar. The sky was looking ominous already and it was raining when we landed there. The monsoons, normally dying out in the plains in early September and almost non-existent in the mountains, were not letting go of their hold and I was filled with a vague sense of foreboding about what this might mean further on.



At Haridwar, we loaded gear into a very comfortable tour bus and started the drive to the town of Uttarkashi. We had to make slow and careful progress past Haridwar and the town of Rishikesh as the monsoon rains had caused a lot of flooding; many houses had water in them and the roads were not passable for bidirectional traffic. Despite all this we got to Uttarkashi for the night at the hotel Shivlinga and started off the next day to Gangotri. By this time, we had picked up Thupka Tsering, the Sherpa from Darjeeling who was to be in our climbing staff as an assistant and high altitude porter (HAP). Thupka has an impressive resume (including Everest, Kamet, Satopanth and many others)

and we were very glad to have him. Also present were cook's helper, Manish and Saran, the Sherpa cook, also from Darjeeling. Lastly, I was happy to see Govind, another strong HAP, joining us at Uttarkashi. Govind had also been our HAP on Gangstang.

This region is steeped in history, mythology and religion. It is the source of the Ganga (Ganges) and the sister river, Yamuna. The Ganga, more than any river in India, is deeply meshed into the Indian psyche. To the faithful, she is the mother, the cleanser of sins, the giver of life and salvation. She has spawned a civilization that goes back to many centuries before Christ and it is no wonder that her presence is so venerated and the ground she treads is hallowed. And we were going into the very source, the Gangotri glacier. The Gangotri glacier's snout, Gaumukh, has receded to about 18km north of the town of Gangotri where this thirty kilometre long glacier terminates and the Ganga begins its wild and tempestuous journey to the plains of northern India. At the starting point, the Ganga is actually named Bhagirathi, in honor of the mythological king Bhagirath. Legend says that Bhagarith, to absolve a curse placed on his ancestors who had been turned to ashes by the anger of a sage whose ashram they had violated, prayed to the heavens to get the Ganga, who lived there, to come to earth. Eventually, she was convinced to do so and she had come crashing down. She would have destroyed the earth by the force of her fall had not the mighty Shiva stepped in-between and caught her in his matted locks and broken her fall. When she landed on earth, she was greeted by King Bhagirath and he led her to the ashes that represented his ancestors. Thereafter she has been known as the cleanser of sins and so, the Ganga starts her life on the earth as Bhagirathi. Various other glacier streams join it along the way, further below Gangotri, and finally, at a major river junction in the town of Devprayag, she really becomes named Ganga.

After Uttarkashi, the drive became very scenic with the road going above the gorge of the Bhagirathi but we could also see that many sections of the road were partially washed out. As we approached the small town of Gangnani, we had to stop. There was a landslide with boulders the size of small buses blocking the way. Several pilgrims were stopped on either side of the slide, bemused and wondering about their next step.



We decided that it would probably take the road clearing work crews at least two days so using the human chain method, we hauled our bags, communal gear, food, fuel etc up and over the slide and arranged for jeeps to pick us up there (here is where Navin showed his worth in getting us fresh transport on the other side of the slide). The next day, we started off for Gangotri but after two breakdowns of the jeep, we decided that while Navin would come up with the luggage via a lorry that he was planning to arrange, we would hoof the 24 miles remaining to Gangotri. This was a long distance but it helped in the acclimatization, so up we went, on a narrow road, surrounded by steep cliffs and the river below and in due course, landed in the town of Gangotri, almost at 10,000'. It rained on us off and on during the entire walk.

It is a cute little town, catering only to pilgrims. A small temple stands at its head, surrounded by steep cliffs on either side, with the ever-present Ganga, now a raging torrent, passing

through it. The next day, we started off on a day hike, towards Kedar Tal (Tal = lake). This long and scenic hike climbs almost 4000' to Kedar Tal but after gaining 3600', resting on a verdant cliff side, watching the frisky Bharal, the Himalayan sheep run fearlessly down the steep and loose scree, we decided that this was enough for our first hard day and headed back. Thalay Sagar stood at the head of the valley. This dominant peak, at over 6900m is one of the hardest climbs in the Himalaya and is a much prized target for mountaineers.



On the way back, Steve Foster, who was moving the fastest and strongest, unfortunately slipped and fell on a delicate slab traverse that was in the middle of the trail. This fall caused a deep gash to open on his left leg accompanied by a lot of bleeding. If Steve was in pain, he did not show it, but with assistance from us and a hasty bandage to stem the blood flow we made the long and slow walk down were back in our rooms. Steve, being a doctor, managed to stitch himself up too, using the extensive medical kit that Martin had brought for the expedition. Later that evening, we attended a very large and puja at the main Gangotri temple. We were feeling the need for a bit of divine help after this somewhat inauspicious start.

The next day started off with loading up porters. Govind and Navin, invaluable in these situations, dealt with the sirdar of the porters. Curiously, all the porters were Nepali but not

Sherpa or Gorkha, just young men from the plains of Nepal who had come over to India to make a bit of money, hauling loads, to send back to their families back home. Watching them lift loads on a tump line never ceases to be a humbling experience. Single loads run up to 25kgs and double loads go to 50kgs and some porters lift double loads since they get paid by the load. We counted, I think, 48 loads loaded on the backs of only 23 porters.

Then it was time to say goodbye to Steve, our amazing companion ("it is only a flesh wound"). His insurance had been contacted and so also Mansi in New Delhi. Navin and Govind had arranged for a jeep to take him to Uttarkashi and then a chopper would take him further to New Delhi. We wished him a safe journey and were hoping that no landslides would block his way as more bad weather was forecast.

We started our walk from Gangotri. The destination for the night was to be Bhojbhasa, about 14km away. The Bhagarathi flowed on the right as we climbed towards its head. It rained off and on. Mountain streams from the cliffs on the left joining the main flow were also fast flowing and the stream crossings on dodgy looking wooden log-bridges that were also wet, had to be done with extreme care. As the trail skirted cliffs, the group of porters and climbers got strung out. At one point, just as Andy and I were rounding a bend, we heard cries of distress from behind. It was Steve M. We rushed back and were aghast to see Steve on the ground, desperately holding on to a porter who had slipped and had fallen off the cliff side at the edge of the trail, his large load dragging him down. Slowly, Steve too was being dragged down but he was still yelling for help.

Andy reached the porter first and grabbed him by his shoulders and now, with Steve also pulling, was able to get the shaken porter up on the trail. The porter, completely scared,

was hardly talking. Andy even climbed down a few feet below the trail to get the porter's head cap. We ministered to the poor kid (Hari Bahadur) who simply folded into a foetal position and sat on the trail clutching his head. We pulled him away from the area as he had been struck by a falling rock from above and it would have surely been a very bad situation had Steve not been alert and grabbed him. Karma points in the bonus for Steve...good man!

We reached Bhojbhasa in almost a whiteout. There seemed to be a small settlement there but it was hard to make out clearly. We found places to pitch tents once we were able to locate the porters carrying our bags.

The next day, we walked four more kilometers and the formal trail ended at Gaumukh (Cow's Mouth, in Sanskrit) at almost 4000m, where the Gangotri glacier terminates and the Bhagirathi, formally starts. It was raining and gloomy. We saw occasional pilgrims who had braved the weather and the distance to pay their respects to the source of the Ganga, which was marked by a small shrine and the ever present trident of Shiva. After that began one of the harder portions of the trek as we struggled, in bad weather, on the chaotic moraine of the glacier. After crossing some very sketchy terrain, we landed in Nandanvan, our destination for the day and just as the porters arrived, the rain also eased off a little although it was a bit of a bother to pitch damp tents. Despite all this, just for a short while, the clouds parted and we were finally able to see the beauty of the spot. Nandanvan is a plateau sitting above the Gangotri glacier. It is a meadow of sorts and right behind it is the Bhagarathi massif (the three peaks that make up the massif are Bhagirathi-I, II and III). The interesting point here was that the first ascent of Bhagirathi-I in true alpine style was done by our leader, Martin, almost two decades ago. Even more startling than these peaks was the view of Shivling. Rising to almost 6500m, this spear like pillar of rock, terminated by a snow

pyramid is rightfully considered to be one of the most beautiful peaks in the world and can be counted amongst the likes of Ama Dablam, Alpamayo and the Matterhorn.



From Nandanvan, it is at its intimidating best. Next morning was an even better day and the sun broke out as we walked the next section towards Vasuki Tal. Various peaks started to come into view including the monstrosity, Vasuki Parbat (Vasuki Peak). In the legends, Vasuki is a multi-fanged Cobra god who stands guard over Vishnu, fangs spread out. Vasuki Parbat has a face of many pillars that seem to curve up as they reach the top, and it is no wonder that the peak is so named.



As we topped a ridge near Vasuki P, the trail dropped down into a glacier and we could see that we would have to go over ice cliffs and then climb a steep face via a right sloping

'channel'. It looked quite horrible from our vantage point but as we approached it, it was not too bad - a bit exposed and slippery but Govind and Thupka had actually set up a fixed line.



We huffed and puffed to climb over it but it was most amazing to see porters, weighed down by their loads, making short work of this.

From the top of this section, it was a straight forward drop down, a few hundred feet perhaps to beautiful Vasuki Tal (VT), a small lake nestled in a bowl. To the left was the Chaturangi (the four coloured) glacier and beyond it, like a fortress rose Chaturangi Peak, a long multi-summitted peak, on the right was Vasuki Parbat (VP) and behind was Bhagirathi-II and the glacier that we had just crossed. Straight in front was a small hillock beyond which Mana Parbat loomed and to its right, Chandra Parbat. On the hillock fluttered prayer flags and underneath were several tents. We soon learned that this was a unit of the border security force, the so-called SSB, of the Indian Army and they too were attempting Satopanth.

To Be Continued!

In the next issue: Satopanth. The good, the bad and the ugly.

## **Needham Mountain**

### **September 17 - 18, 2010**

#### **By Louise Wholey**

My trip earlier this summer to climb peaks from Crescent Meadow to Mineral King had included a plan to climb Needham at the end of the trip. After 11 days in the wilderness, however, drivers were anxious to get an early start on their long drives home. That left us only a 5-hour window to try for Needham from Lower Monarch Lake. Though it was only an hour or two short of what we needed, it was short. When Aaron scheduled a trip to climb Needham in October, I knew my other plans would interfere. Finally Jim showed interest in a Mineral King fishing trip; I was all for it!

What a cool plan! Fly to Visalia, get picked up by our friend Bruce Berryhill, and drive to Silver City just short of Mineral King for a sumptuous dinner – grass-fed steak, many fresh vegetables and fine wine! Bruce outfitted Jim with fishing gear; they planned to fish Cliff Creek while I climbed Needham. Though I attempted to synchronize with Paul Garry and Keith Christensen for the climb, final arrangements never were made; there's no iPhone service in Mineral King. They got an earlier start and chose to go via Sawtooth Peak, according to the note they left at the ranger's station.

To my surprise the ranger wanted half (senior discount) of \$15 for a permit. This was new to me to pay for a walk-in permit but the ranger assured me this was standard policy for both the parks and forests (!) since 2004. Since I had no money he asked me to pay on the way out. Oh no! I had no money then either!

The hike to Crystal Lake took only 2 ½ hours, so I chose to climb Needham the same day. I picked out what appeared to be the pass leading to Ampitheater Lake and got the right one (36.4450271 N, 118.5560146 W). From

the pass Needham looked disappointingly far away, but following Stephane's report starting on page 6 of the Nov 2002 Scree [http://peakclimbing.org/scree/2002/Nov\\_2002\\_Scree.pdf](http://peakclimbing.org/scree/2002/Nov_2002_Scree.pdf) helped a lot. Many thanks to Linda Sun for suggesting that report.

As I went I looked about for Paul and Keith. Finally while climbing the agonizingly loose sand on Needham I heard a call from lower down toward Sawtooth Peak. I met the guys on my way down; they were still planning to climb Needham and hike back to the parking lot. They had terribly loose conditions on the traverse from Sawtooth and sought details on my route hoping to finish the day on more solid ground. They reached my camp as the beautiful moon rose above peaks colored by alpenglow. It was very pretty but my camera deleted all my images before I could download them, sigh!

In the morning my sleeping bag was coated with a thick layer of frost and my water bottle was totally frozen, a reminder that summer was fast leaving for the year. I enjoyed the peaceful location while waiting for the morning sun to appear and dry my sleeping bag. A pleasant casual hike took me back to the base of the amazing Mineral King valley.

**And For The Continuing Story Of Needham, Read On!**

## **Vitamin and Mineral King A Wet Weekend in Sequoia NP October 1 - 2, 2010 By Aaron Schuman**

On October 2, 2010, we climbed Mineral Peak, but we washed off our primary destination, Needham Mountain. Our group was Chris Prendergast, Alex Sapozhnikov, Dara Hazeghi, Sassan Hazeghi, Mike Murphy, Ken Feltrop, co-leader Judy Molland, and yours truly, trip leader Aaron Schuman.

There was a forecast of "slight chance of showers", but as we hiked in from Mineral King to Crystal Lake, the weather worsened. After we dropped our packs at the lake, half of the team decided to scout Amphitheater Pass. As we were cutting through the cliff band, we were caught by hail. My frigid hands clung to the wet granite like a pair of starfish.

After a drippy night, the sky lightened but the sun didn't rise. There was a break in the weather, so we made the dash up to Mineral Peak. It was Mike's first Sierra Nevada summit. He deserves congratulations for capably and confidently reaching this class-2 destination.

As we were hiking down the trail in the rain, we met a party hiking uphill. They were spelunkers heading for Crystal Cave. The weather is always the same when your sport happens underground. We passed them by the old Chihuahua silver mine; they scoffed at the idea of entering a hole that had been dug by human hands.

On our hike we encountered many deer. There was still plenty of browse for them. Gooseberries and currents were abundant in Mineral King. In addition to the deer, we also met a sage grouse and a frisky young bear.

The trip photo, by Dara Hazeghi, tells the whole story of our wet weekend at Mineral Peak and Crystal Lake.

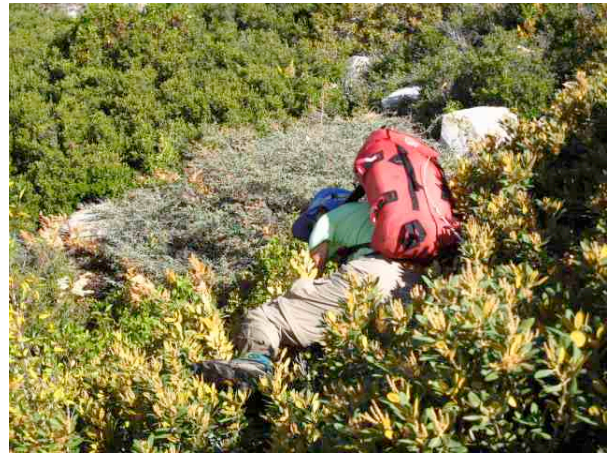


**The Same Wet Weekend in  
Yosemite!**  
**Starr King, Corrine's List Finish**  
**October 2, 2010**  
**By Louise Wholey**  
**Photos by Jim Wholey**

This trip was organized by Corrine Livingston for her final peak of the 248 SPS list peaks. Twelve years of climbing led Corrine to this final peak, a technical climb of Starr King in the heart of Yosemite. She invited many SPS and PCS people who had shared the excitement of those many climbs to join the festivities, which included a wonderful party at Wawona CG that evening. I think I have the whole list: Corrine Livingston, Daryn Dodge, Ron Hudson, Kathy Rich, Scott Sullivan, Elena Sherman, Shane Smith, Steve Eckert, Lisa Barboza, Brian Roach, Bruce Berryhill, Jim and Louise Wholey.

The day started at Mono Meadows parking lot at 6:30 am. What a crowd! It is a good thing it was a day-hike! The route follows the trail for a few miles then goes cross-country

through forest and brush. Unfortunately the area is over-grown with far too much thorny brush, especially if you head over to the gully between the summit dome and its next lower neighbor. Bruce, Jim and I split from the main group and fought our way through the horrible brush in order to maximize the amount of rock climbing.



**Louise tries to step over the brush since pushing through is harder**

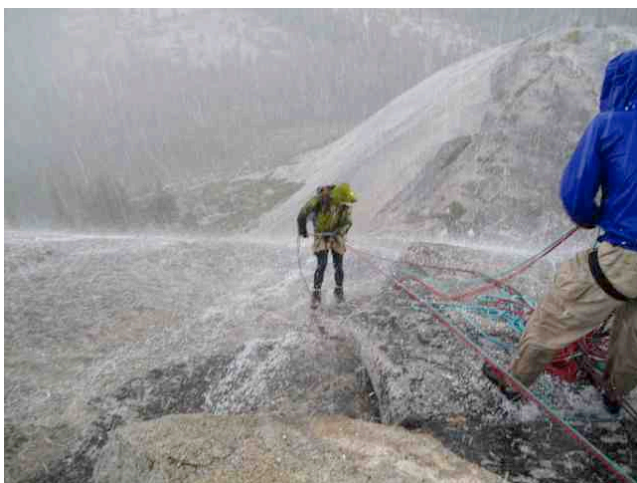
Daryn had reported in <http://climber.org/reports/2006/1553.html> this gully as class 3 but at places wished he had a rope, so we roped up and simul-climbed unless someone requested "Watch me". That was a signal for someone to belay. The gully was great fun!



**Bruce starts up the gully between the main and second dome**

As we neared the top we could hear calls of on and off belay above us. People were just finishing the route as we finally started up our last 2 pitches of the day on the SE face of the main dome. We met the others descending and starting to set up a rappel for the final descent. We dashed off to the summit under threatening weather but had missed the summit celebration due to our lengthy approach. Oh well, we planned to join everyone afterward for the party.

Bruce asked while we were rappelling through the rain and hail if we always set things up for maximum adventure. The answer is, of course, Yes! We wait for the worst forecast of the summer-fall season to do our technical climbing!



**Steve Eckert rappels through the rain and hail**

The group chose to descend the far side of the middle dome to get the easiest hike back to the cars. It was wet and quite slippery. Many people scooted down it on their butts. Those that tried to walk down it sometimes ended up on their butts anyhow, as did most people at some time during the cold, wet, slippery descent. The evening party, however, brought a feeling of warmth to everybody with food and beverages galore! Many thanks go to Corrine for organizing the climb and bringing so many goodies to the party!

## **Excelsior and Dunderberg**

**October 9 - 10, 2010**

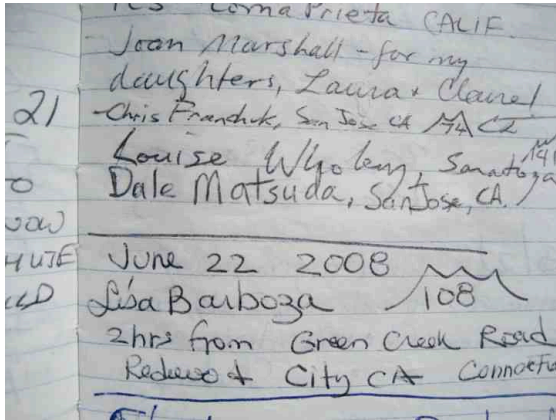
**By Linda Sun**

There was a big storm the previous weekend, but by Thursday it was clear. So I decided to give them a try. I started from Virginia lakes trailhead Sat, October 9, around 9am. There was snow on the ground from the trailhead at 9800', but boot tracks helped me all the way to the pass at 11,100'. After that, there were no more tracks, and the going got tough. Snow covered the boulders so I plunged to my hip several times by surprise. I considered turning around a couple of times, worrying about twisting ankles, and I didn't see anyone else on the trail. I sat and ate a banana and a peach, and I saw these ptarmigans, half white already. Such a treat.



Refusing to be defeated, I decided to set a turnaround time of 2pm, and go very carefully, and get a workout even if I don't get the peak. I set my compass, and went up the ridge. I had my ice axe besides my trekking pole, which helped my confidence but it really wasn't necessary. From there I had to drop about 100 feet, and continued up to the false summit. Lots of snow in this part, I had to break trail to calf and sometimes knee level,

but at least I no longer worried about falling into holes and twisting ankles. I got to the false summit 10 minutes to 2. I could see the peak, and since it was clear and very warm, I went and got to the top at 2:30 pm. Coming back was easier since I could follow my own tracks: back to the car at 5:30 pm.



Sunday I climbed Dunderberg. I went up the south side just before hitting the lake at 10500 feet. It was steep and loose, but the patches of consolidated snow on the south facing slope actually helped.

**Mt. Eddy (9,025')**  
**October 18, 2010**  
**By Debbie Bulger**

On our way back to Santa Cruz from Oregon, Richard Stover and I celebrated my birthday with a climb of Mt. Eddy, the high point of the Klamath Mountains. The 9-mile hike is entirely on trail and goes past an attractive series of lakes before the final 1000-foot push to the summit. There are several trailheads to choose from. We chose the hairpin turn on Road 17. Another slightly longer but less interesting option is to climb from the junction of the PCT with Road 17.



**The breathtaking view of Mt. Shasta is worth millions!**



**Another bonus was the profusion of pitcher plants in a boggy place along the way. I had never before seen these unusual insect-eating plants in the wild.**

Directions: Exit Hwy. 5 just north of Weed at Stewart Springs. Head west for 0.4 mi then Left on Stewart Springs Road for 4 miles. Turn Right on Road 17 (paved). It is 9.3 miles to PCT trailhead or 10.6 miles to the hairpin curve. 9 miles RT with 2635 feet elevation gain.

## Elected Officials

### Chair

Jesper Schou / [schou@sun.stanford.edu](mailto:schou@sun.stanford.edu)  
650-725-9826

### Vice Chair and Trip Scheduler

Louise Wholey / [louisewholey@gmail.com](mailto:louisewholey@gmail.com)  
21020 Canyon View Road, Saratoga, CA 95070  
408-867-6655

### Treasurer and Membership Roster (address changes)

Emilie Cortes / [mountaineerchica@gmail.com](mailto:mountaineerchica@gmail.com)  
415-260-3618

### Publicity Committee Positions

#### Scree Editor

Judy Molland / [screeditor@gmail.com](mailto:screeditor@gmail.com)

#### PCS World Wide Web Publisher

Joe Baker / [pcs@joebaker.us](mailto:pcs@joebaker.us)  
1975 Cordilleras Rd, Redwood City, CA 94062  
650-261-1488

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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=LOMA-P-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, November 29. Meetings are held on the second Tuesday of each month**

## Advanced Trip Schedule

[https://spreadsheets.google.com/cc?key=0AtE\\_Co39b8vfdG1MaGhEN2xmNDUwbndCQUVUSTV1aXc&hl=en&authkey=CKyR86UL#gid=0](https://spreadsheets.google.com/cc?key=0AtE_Co39b8vfdG1MaGhEN2xmNDUwbndCQUVUSTV1aXc&hl=en&authkey=CKyR86UL#gid=0)

Month	Peak	Start	End	Leader	Co-leader	Class	Rating	Comments	Status
<b>October</b>	Trans-Sierra Day Hike	10/23/2010	10/24/2010	Jeff Fisher	needed	2	5F1	Lake Thomas Edison up Rock Creek,	Private
<b>November</b>	Pinnacles Climbing	11/13/2010	11/14/2010	Jeff Fisher ?	desired	1 - 5	variable		Private
	Potrero Chico, Mexico	11/21/2010	11/28/2010	Emilie Cortes		5	variable	<a href="http://www.potrerochicoclimbing.com">www.potrerochicoclimbing.com</a>	Private
<b>December</b>	Death Valley	week 1 or 2		Sonja Dieterich	Larry Jang	1 - 2		Numerous peaks - possible cl 5	Private
	Desert Peaks	12/4/2010	12/5/2010	Daryn Dodge	Kathy Rich			Pahrump Point and Stewart Point.	With DPS
	Kilimanjaro and Mt. Meru	12/14/2010	12/30/2010	Daryn Dodge				Contact ddodge@oehha.ca.gov	Private
	Christmas Party	12/14/2010	12/14/2010	ParCom				Whisman Clubhouse	
	Williamson & Tyndall	12/18/2010	12/23/2010	Emilie Cortes	Lisa Barboza	3W	2D3	Advanced	Private
	Shasta via a ridge	12/31/2010	1/2/2011	Emilie Cortes		3-4W		Advanced	Private
<b>January</b>	Ostrander Hut	Jan - Feb		Tim Hull	needed	1W		2 days - \$60 pre-payment before lottery	
	Junipero Serra	1/8/2011	1/8/2011	Lisa Barboza	needed	2			
	Mt. Rose	1/15/2011	1/15/2011	Louise Wholey	Sonja Dieterich			Or Feb 19, lodging available	
	Snow Camping lectures	1/18/2011	1/18/2011	Team		NA	NA	Indoor lectures	
	Snow Camping lectures	1/20/2011	1/20/2011	Team		NA	NA	Indoor lectures	
	Mt. St. Helena	1/22/2011	1/22/2011	Aaron Schuman	Sonja Dieterich	1	T	May be lodging	
	Snow Camping lectures	1/25/2011	1/25/2011	Team		NA	NA	Indoor lectures	
	Snow Camping field trip	1/29/2011	1/30/2011	Team		NA		field trip	
<b>February</b>	Donner summit ski/snowshoe			Joe Baker	Judy Molland	1W		Day outings, lodging available	Beginner
	Mt Shasta - winter ridge climb	Jan-Feb-Mar		Tim Hull	needed	3-4W		Date determined by weather - contact	MOC ?
	Snow Camping field trip alt	2/5/2011	2/8/2011	Team		NA		field trip - alternate date	
	Mt. Rose	2/19/2011	2/19/2011	Louise Wholey	Sonja Dieterich			Or Jan 15, lodging available	
<b>March</b>	Sutter Buttes	3/5/2011	3/5/2011	Aaron Schuman	Linda Sun ?	1	T	Fee charged by park	
	Split Mtn (Prater, Tinemaha)	3/11/2011	3/13/2011	Lisa Barboza	Emilie Cortes	2W	2D3	Advanced	MOC ?
	Roundtop	3/20/2011	3/20/2011	Arun Mahajan	needed	3W		Carson Pass	Private
	Desert Peaks	3/26/2011	3/27/2011	Daryn Dodge				Sandy Point and Last Chance Mtn	
	Cone Peak	late March		Joe Baker	Judy Molland			wildflowers in Ventana Wilderness	
<b>April</b>	Sierra Ski Mountaineering	4/9/2010	4/10/2010	Louise Wholey		2W		Eastern Sierra - ML Perkins ?	MOC ?
	Sugar Bowl to Squaw	4/16/2010	4/16/2010	Louise Wholey		2W		1 day tour across the ridges	Intermediate
	High Sierra Ski Tour	mid Apr-May		Tim Hull		3W		Rock Creek - Mammoth - Yosemite	MOC ?