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## General Meeting

**Date**            July 12, 2011  
**Time**            6:00 – 9:00 pm  
**Where**            Wildwood Park  
                          Saratoga, CA

## Annual BBQ and Gear Exchange

The July meeting is our annual BBQ and gear exchange. Bring a dish to share, your own specialty, or choose according to first letter of your last name:

A-G Main course (think grilled items)

H-M Appetizer

N-S Veggie or Fruit side

T-Z Dessert

BBQ should be hot by 6 pm for families on an early dinner schedule. Bring your own beverage (alcohol is ok), \$3 to cover reservation and BBQ coals, dinnerware, friends, family, and used gear. Bring the kids to climb on the play structures.

Bring whatever gear you find cluttering your garage or closet. Someone may want or need it. You can even charge something for it, but

experience indicates that the lower the price the more likely for a sale. Free is best!

### Directions from 280

Exit at De Anza Blvd; go south for about 5 miles, crossing Hwy 85 about half way to Saratoga. The road changes name at Prospect Rd to Saratoga Sunnyvale Rd. At the village traffic light at the intersection of DeAnza Blvd, Big Basin Way, Saratoga Ave and Saratoga Los Gatos Road, turn right on Big Basin Way and drive part way through downtown Saratoga. Turn right on 4th St, the first through street on the right. The park is at the bottom of the hill on your right. Park in park parking (appears to be mostly hotel parking for Saratoga Inn), or park across the road, or along the road, where-ever parking is allowed. **Google** <http://tinyurl.com/6cpch4>

*Last Year's BBQ*



## Editor's Notes

The snow level this summer is clearly changing some of our experiences in the mountains. Please read "A Cautionary Tale" below, for an extraordinary story of survival after falling through a snow bridge. Stay safe! Judy

## 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>

July 20 - 24 - Deerhorn, E. Vidette, W. Vidette  
Leader: Lisa Barboza

July 28 - August 1 - Table and Picket Guard  
Leader: Daryn Dodge

August 13, 14 - Iron Mountain - Louise's 70<sup>th</sup> Birthday and List Finish  
Leader: Louise Wholey

August 13 - 21 - Mather's Day  
Leader: Aaron Schuman

## PCS Trip Details

### **Deerhorn, E.Vidette, W. Vidette**

Goals: Deerhorn (13,281'), E. Vidette (12,356'), W. Vidette 12,583'+)

Location: Onion Valley, Eastside of the Sierras

Dates: July 20 - 24

Leader: Lisa Barboza

Difficulty: Class 3

Access is via Kearsage Pass. Camp between the Videttes. Experienced class 3 climbers in good shape only.

Leaders: Lisa Barboza ([Lisa.Barboza@gd-ais.com](mailto:Lisa.Barboza@gd-ais.com)) and Louise Wholey ([louisewholey@yahoo.com](mailto:louisewholey@yahoo.com))

## **Table and Picket Guard**

Goals: Table (13,632'), Picket Guard (12,303')

Location: Independence, Eastside of the Sierras

Dates: July 28 - August 1

Leader: Daryn Dodge

Difficulty: Class 3

Access is via Shepherd Pass, probably climbing Table (class 3) first, then Picket Guard (class 2). Experienced climbers in good shape only. Leaders: Daryn Dodge ([DDODGE@0ehha.ca.gov](mailto:DDODGE@0ehha.ca.gov)) and Louise Wholey ([louisewholey@yahoo.com](mailto:louisewholey@yahoo.com))

## **Louise's 70<sup>th</sup> Birthday and List Finish**

Goal: Iron Mountain (11,149')

Location: Mammoth area, Eastside of the Sierras

Dates: August 12 - 12

Leader: Louise Wholey

Difficulty: Moderately difficult, 2D2

The climb of Iron Mtn will be on Saturday August 13 with a celebration following the climb in Mammoth, location TBD. This trip will be an overnight for some people and a day trip for others. We have permit space for 12 people to stay at Anona Lake Friday night. To reserve a spot on the wilderness permit for camping at Anona Lake, send \$5 to Louise at 21020 Canyon View Drive, Saratoga, CA 95070.

Overnight participants: Backpack from the ranger's station at Soda Springs (7400') to Anona Lake (9100') via Fern Lake, about 8 miles. Bring a treat to share for our pre-dinner party. Next day, climb the east slope (class 2) to the south ridge and walk the final ridge to the summit.

Day-hikers: The route is the same. We will leave camp ahead of you but expect to meet you on the summit.

We plan to reserve some campsites near Mammoth for the night of the party. Louise will collect in advance a reservation fee for a spot there.

Contact: louisewholey(AT)yahoo.com

### **Mather's Day**

Goals: Striped (13179'), Bolton Brown (13491'), Prater (14471'), The Thumb (13356'), Birch (13602'), Wynne (13179'), Pinchot (13494'), Perkins (12566')

Location: Above Independence, Kings Canyon National Park

Dates: August 13 - 21

Leader: Aaron Schuman

Difficulty: Class 2 with possible snow

Devote an entire week to exploring the High Passes region of the Sierra Nevada and climbing many of the spectacular, rugged peaks in the area. We'll begin with a grunt up Taboose Pass, from its desert trailhead (5400) up to the Pacific Crest (11400). We can climb Striped Mtn (13120) there. We'll move to the lovely and little visited Upper Basin (11599), from which we'll be in position to climb Mt Bolton Brown (13538) and Mt Prater (13329). We'll pack over Mather Pass (12080) and camp at Upper Palisade Lake (11767), in order to climb The Thumb (13665) and Birch Mtn (13665). Then returning over Mather Pass, we'll camp near Lake Marjorie (11440), from which we'll be set up to climb Mt Wynne (13179), Mt Pinchot (13495), and Mt Perkins (12591), with a day hike over Pinchot Pass (12500). We'll return the way we came, down the long, dry Taboose trail. The days will be strenuous, but the rewards will be incomparable.

Leader: Aaron Schuman 650-968-9184

### **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.

July 7 - 19 - Rocky Mountain High Points  
Leader - Tim Hult

July 29 - 31 - Mt. Ritter and Banner Peak  
Leader - Terry Cline

August 20 - 28 - Table, Thunder, Geneva, Ericsson, Caltech  
Leader: Jim Ramaker

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

October 8 - November 6 - Makalu Base Camp to Khumbu Trek  
Leader - Tom McDonald

### **Private Trip Details**

#### **Rocky Mountain High Points**

Goal: Kings (Utah high point) class 2, 3-day hike; Borah (Idaho high point) class 2, 3-very-steep-day-hike; Granite (Montana high point) class 3, 3-day-hike

Location: Utah, Idaho, Montana

Date: July 7 - 19

Leader: Tim Hult

Difficulty: Class 2, 3 and possible use of ice axe and crampons.

Tim Hult will be climbing the high points of three states in this period: Utah (Kings peak), Idaho (Borah Peak), Montana (Granite). All are worthy peaks in spectacular settings. None of these are walk ups, Kings and Granite will require multi-day backpacking trip, and Borah is a stiff day hike. I plan to fly to some convenient start / stop point, rent a car and drive to all of the destinations. I'm looking for someone to share the expenses, and enjoy the climbs with. We will be meeting Steve Eckert for the Montana climb. Please contact Tim Hult: tim d hult at sbcglobal dot net (no spaces, use appropriate substitutions)

### **Mt. Ritter and Banner Peak**

Goals: Mt. Ritter (13143'), Banner Peak (12,936')

Location: Near Mammoth, Eastside of the Sierra

Dates: July 29 - 31

Leader: Terry Cline

Difficulty: Class 3, Ice Axe required

On Friday we will hike from Agnew Meadows up to a camp just above Ediza Lake. Saturday we will climb to the saddle between Ritter and Banner, climb Banner (class 2), descend back to the saddle and climb the North Face of Ritter (class 3), and then descend the class 3 Southeast side of Ritter to camp. Sunday we will hike back out to the cars. Ice Axe required. Rating: 2E3, Class 3. Leaders Terry Cline and Monique Messié.

Contact Terry Cline at [terry\\_cline@yahoo.com](mailto:terry_cline@yahoo.com)

### **Table, Thunder, Geneva, Ericsson, Caltech**

Goals: Table (13,632'), Thunder (13,517'), Geneva (13,054'), Ericsson (13,583'), Caltech (13,832')

Location: Independence, Eastside of the Sierras

Dates: August 20 -28

Leader: Jim Ramaker

Difficulty: Class 3 and 4

Join us for a week-long trip to climb some challenging peaks on the Kings-Kern Divide. We'll hike in over Shepherd Pass and camp in the high basins near these 13,000-foot peaks. Expect challenging cross-country travel and class-3 climbing, except for Thunder, which is class-4.

Contacts: [ramaker@us.ibm.com](mailto:ramaker@us.ibm.com),  
[SuzukiR@sd-star.com](mailto:SuzukiR@sd-star.com)

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

Goal: Mt. Kailash - Lhasa

Location: Nepal/Tibet

Date: October 2011

Leader: Warren Storkman

October is generally the best month to travel in Nepal and Tibet - for weather and holiday events and particularly for the Kora around Mt Kailash.

Reason for starting the plans early:

To give the opportunity to arrange vacation time for the 21 day trek, the 7 days in KTM and air travel.

There will be two separate flights within Nepal.

The first flight will take us west to a large lowland airport with a hotel overnight. The second day we'll fly in a smaller (20 seat) plane and upon landing will start the trek.

There will be 6 nights of camping, then on the 7th day the group crosses into Tibet with an interesting army border check. This entry is by foot - no roads in this area.

The group will then stop camping and use a hotel on the 14th night.

For those wishing to skip Lhasa a return to KTM is on the 16th day. The Lhasa group will return to KTM on the 21st day by international air.

Without a commitment or obligating yourself just let me know if this trip is of interest to you. If you change your mind, I'll drop your name. I'll e-mail more information and try for an early trip cost. Contact Warren Storkman (650-493-8959) or email: [dstorkman@aol.com](mailto:dstorkman@aol.com)

### **Makalu Base Camp To Khumbu Trek Over East Col, West Col, and Mera La (6000+m passes x2)**

Goal: Mera Peak (optional ascent) 6476m

Location: Nepal

Dates: October 8 - November 6

Leader: Tom McDonald

Difficulty: This is a rigorous 4-week trek, with sustained altitudes over 5000m

I'm trying to put together a small group of like-minded folks for the "world's highest trek" in Nepal- the traverse from Makalu base camp to the Khumbu. Two passes over 6000M, option of ascending Mera 6476M. I'm a physician at PAMF and have no commercial interest in any

trip. A few of my "patients" (fitter than me!) are members of the Loma Prieta peak climbing section. I will provide medical backup in route but will not be in any official role- just a participant. I have contacts with several Nepali guides and will act as intermediary for setting up the trip \*without\* any financial interest at all. I've recently trekked with a large mixed group that was ill-suited for the challenges we faced- I'm hoping to put together a great group with a good Nepali Sherpa crew.

Trek info: A rigorous 4 week technical trek with sustained high altitudes over 5,000M. Two passes over 6000m and option of ascending Mera Peak at 6400+M. Roped descents of two passes. Alpine experience with fantastic view of Makalu, Lhotse, Everest, Chamlang. and Baruntse. The road much less traveled into the over-traveled Everest area. Experience at altitude and glacier travel essential.

Maps:

<http://www.nepaltravelandtour.com/Trips/Nepal/Makalu+Arun+Valley/Trekkin...>

Leader and contact info: Tom McDonald;  
[mcdonald\\_tw@yahoo.com](mailto:mcdonald_tw@yahoo.com)

## **Advance Trip Schedule**

In addition to all these amazing trips, you can check out future trips on the advance trip schedule:

[https://spreadsheets.google.com/ccc?key=0AtE\\_Co39b8vfdGJTaWtBVTIpWHEtMjBubXZjZWdrQ2c&authkey=CM3z24AL&hl=en#gid=0](https://spreadsheets.google.com/ccc?key=0AtE_Co39b8vfdGJTaWtBVTIpWHEtMjBubXZjZWdrQ2c&authkey=CM3z24AL&hl=en#gid=0)

Thanks, Louise!

## **A Cautionary Tale**

The following story is reprinted from the Los Angeles Times, June 21, 2011.

Please read and keep in mind when out in the mountains this summer! (Thanks, Joe, for passing this along.)

## **Woman describes harrowing rescue from icy tunnel**

The hard-packed snow atop Franklin Creek in Sequoia National Park appeared safe, but when Marcia Rasmussen, 51, walked across, it collapsed, plunging her into an icy tunnel with frigid water. For three hours, in freezing temperatures, she clawed at the frozen ceiling, her bare hands going numb and her body giving out before passersby found her.

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**FOR THE RECORD** An article in the June 21 LATEXtra about hiker Marcia Rasmussen identified Ed Patrovsky as a longtime friend of Rasmussen. He is a longtime friend of Rasmussen's husband.

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An experienced hiker, marathon runner and skier, Rasmussen, of Squaw Valley, described last week's ordeal Monday. She said she is still recovering from minor frostbite that has blackened and blistered her hands and left knee, preventing her from training on the park's high-elevation trails. She said she "feels very, very lucky to be alive."

Temperatures were rising toward 80 degrees when Rasmussen left the Farewell Gap trailhead on Wednesday for a day hike to train for an ultra-marathon. She assessed the snowpack and crossed the bridge without incident, but by the time she came back, the 4-foot-thick foundation had weakened. It cracked open, dropping her into fast flowing, freezing currents below. "There was no warning," she said. "One second I'm walking on top of snow, then I'm in the water. There was no warning."

Rasmussen trained wilderness search-and-rescue teams in Virginia for 30 years. So she didn't panic as she fell through the 4-foot-thick snow bridge. "It was like being flushed down a toilet," Rasmussen said.

Dragged by the current along the narrow, icy tunnel, she tumbled down a waterfall before finding branches to stop herself. She told herself not to panic. "You don't have time to think," she said. "My only thought was: get out of the water. It's a very fast way to die. There is no swimming in water that cold."

She pulled herself out of the water into a small alcove. But she was still stuck beneath several feet of hardened snowpack, wearing only nylon jogging clothes.

Rasmussen looked for telltale light blue patches in the snow, a sign that it was thin enough to let light through, and began clawing at what turned out to be 2 feet of frozen snow. "I used to do search and rescue, so the whole time I'm digging, I know what I'm up against," Rasmussen said. "I know how people die in the snow, but there wasn't much I could do."

Spiritual but not religious, Rasmussen said she prayed and "talked to myself a lot, telling myself I had to be smart and think through my options, telling myself to keep digging." About the time her freezing arms were beginning to give out, she threw her hydration pack out of the hole, which was about 6 inches in diameter. "I hadn't seen anybody on this trail all day, but there's always hope," she said. "And that's exactly what happened."

Stefan Barycki, 26, a photographer from Visalia, noticed the backpack. Barycki said he wasn't alarmed when he examined the pack, thinking that someone had left it behind. When he saw the hole and peered down, he spotted Rasmussen looking back at him.

"It freaked me out someone was down there," Barycki said. "I could see her mouth saying 'Help,' but she couldn't speak and was shaking like crazy."

Barycki screamed for his friend to come over and they enlarged the hole. They hoisted her out, took off their shirts, and wrapped them around her. Rasmussen was incoherent and suffering from hypothermia. She said she remembers very little of the rescue.

After feeding her PowerBars, Barycki left to get water out of his pack on the other side of the snow bridge, when it collapsed under him. He scrambled out, but was shaken and cautious, and remained on the other side, monitoring Rasmussen from a short distance. By chance, Ed Patrovsky, a retired park ranger and longtime friend of Rasmussen, walked by on her side of the creek, and gave her his sleeping bag and more clothing. The men waited for about two hours until the park's helicopter arrived, as well as a medic and ranger on foot.

Rasmussen says she was able to walk away and didn't need the park's medical assistance or evacuation. She left the park around nightfall, went to pick up her husband from work, which is a 2 1/2-hour drive, came home and slept.

"I am strong and determined," Rasmussen said. "I do well in the outdoors and in extreme situations. I didn't know till the last second if I was going to make it, but I didn't let myself dwell on those thoughts.

"I will be back up there as soon as I can run again," she said.

*ashlie.rodriquez@latimes.com*

## Trip Reports

### **Senator, You Are No Mount Kennedy**

**May 27 - 30**

**By Sonja Dieterich**

This Memorial Day Weekend, I joined the "Senator, you are no Mount Kennedy" trip with Steve Eckert and Aaron Schuman as leaders. Participants were myself, Monique Messie, Derek Palmer, Kevin Trieu, and Sandrine. While I am an experienced backpacker, this was my first extended snow-camping trip. This caused me some anxiety when I got my pack together. In summer, I know exactly based on temperature range what I need to be safe and comfortable without carrying too many pounds on my back. Winter, I am still on the steep learning curve. There was also a moment of panic when the weather forecast changed on the day of take-off, dropping by > 10 F to 8 F (-13 C) for one night. Lucky for me, my friend Magdalena saved me from the popsicle (ok, very uncomfortable night) fate by lending me her 0 degree sleeping bag.

It was a very stressful week, but finally I had everything together: clothing, tent, ice axe, crampons, plastic boots, food, stove, snowshoes ... All in all, about 43-45 pounds. I managed to find Aaron's house to meet up for the carpool, and off we went. I rather enjoy carpooling with Aaron. We usually have very deep discussions about everything and anything to pass the time. Friday night, we spent in our bivy's at a NF Campground (Convict Flat). Those drunks loudly interrupting our sleep must have been the escaped convicts.

Friday, the 7 of us met up at Road's End to get permits and start hiking. I admit I had some anxiety about hiking with a leader I had never met. I knew from hearsay that he was very experienced, but a good part of having an enjoyable experience also depends on personality fit. As so often, my anxiety was not

justified; on the contrary, I got a positive surprise. On the hike out of Cedar Grove, there was one thing I did not do optimally, and another teaching opportunity. The leader was very good about picking it up and taught me two new skills. I really liked that, because what is the point of going on a trip with more experienced people if they let me continue my errors?

Unfortunately, I got another surprise. The 4000' ascent is not easy, but based on previous trips I expected to be at about the same pace of the co-leader, or somewhere around the lower middle of the group. I had done day hikes to 9,500' and 10k feet three and five weeks before, nothing out of the ordinary. Training hikes with pack up Diablo and Mission Peak in previous weeks were normal. Therefore, I expected based on previous experience: no headaches unless sleeping over 10k feet the first night; no major change in appetite unless sleeping over 10k feet the first night; some shortness of breath; overnight adaptation to altitudes between 10k and 11k.

Fat chance this time. I slowed down and had shortness of breath at 7k already. No energy transfer to muscles. Headaches starting in the evening and getting worse in the morning, even though we slept just above 9k. It took me way more than 48 hours to adapt to 10k. And after the first night, I could barely stomach a hot chocolate for breakfast. Of course, I got my butt kicked and was the slowest of the group. F-R-U-S-T-R-A-T-I-O-N. And panic, because I was scheduled to do Shasta two weeks from Memorial Day!

There were some factors stacked against me. I had had three rough weeks at work with not much sleep. I was stressed about packing, gear, people. I was inattentive enough to forget my hiking poles, costing me lots of extra energy the first 3000' until Aaron gave me one of his poles (a truly generous man!). My new

plastic boots took some getting used to; I also did not start in regular boots, because I did not know we could store them when reaching snow instead of carrying them all the way. And as Emilie said in a pep talk after the trip, sometimes you just have an off day for reasons you don't know.

In any case, the next morning on our hike up, Derek and I were still on the slow side. After about 150' vertical gain, the leader and co-leader decided to have the talk with us. Nicely. They pointed out the obvious: neither Derek nor I were up to the three long hiking days necessary to stick to the peak climbing plan. The leader suggested an alternative approach, staying in Darwin Basin to climb Comb's Spur and Hutcheson. I was disappointed in myself, but had to agree this was a very reasonable suggestion. We discussed meetup procedures on the way back, allowed for contingencies. The leader and co-leader also checked that we had maps, GPS, and they were confident in our skills.



And did those skills get tested! The day started harmlessly enough. Derek and I took our time to get over the ridge into Darwin basin. On the way, we spotted a slim marmot, rabbit tracks and a coyote track. We picked a nice, flat campsite on top of a little ridge near a lake with water access at the base of a tree.

The sun was shining, we put up our tents, spread our gear on a warm rock to dry, and lounged about on a nice afternoon. This lasted until 4 pm, when within 30 minutes sunny laziness was chased away by ominous clouds and a fierce wind. We each dove into our tent not to re-emerge until the next morning.



I remember waking up from sleep in intervals, looking at my tent stakes and wondering about how much wind load my tent could sustain. It must have been a 30 mph wind with gusts up to 40 mph at least. The gusts lifted the outer tent walls at times and blew in cold air. Now and then I shook the snow off my tent. I had some power bars and electrolyte drinks; cooking dinner in this howling wind was out of the question. I wondered how Derek was faring one tent over, but gentle snoring told me I did not need to worry.

The next day around 10 am, the storm let up for a few hours. Just enough time to get up, use the non-existing facilities, cook brunch, and stretch our limbs. About 4 inches of snow had fallen so far. We took a look at the weather and decided not to attempt Comb's Spur. The risk of getting lost in a whiteout was just too high, not to mention the fresh powder load on solidified base on the 40 degree slopes. We contemplated Hutcheson, but it never cleared up enough and then around 1 pm, the weather turned bad again. We both

took a 3-hour nap to awake to another 4 inches. When I fell asleep, it had been fairly warm. My shoulders were out of the sleeping bag, my head uncovered. By 4 pm it had cooled down, and I woke up shivering. Putting on my cap and pulling the sleeping bag over my head stopped the shivering within a minute!



At 4 pm Sunday we emerged again for 2 hours to clear snow and ice from our tents, move about and get a look at the situation. I had to remove some of the snow away from the base of my tent to allow the tent to shed snow. The sitting area I had dug in front of my tent was filled back with snow drift. We had to beat a retreat soon though, because the warm, heavy clouds started dumping snow again. Sometime later on Sunday night it stopped snowing, but the temperature took a nosedive. When I knocked off the snow and ice off my tent at night, my face was sprayed with ice crystals. While I was warm in my sleeping bag, it was quite fascinating to note how calorie intake regulated my perception of being warm. Every few hours, I ran short of energy supply. The result was that every time I moved, goosebumps ran across my skin despite being tucked in, cozy and warm. Sipping electrolyte drinks took care of the goosebumps, despite the water itself being near freezing.

We woke up at 5:30 pm on Monday. I measured 16 F (-10 C) in my tent, which

meant it must have been around 8 F (-13 C) outside. Peeking out of the tent, I saw the sun rising to a gorgeous day, as it is usually on the day I have to leave the backcountry.



We cooked breakfast and packed our stuff. Derek and I decided to wait the 30 minutes until 7:30 am, when the sun would hit our campsite. I have not been so cold since waiting an hour for the bus in freezing winds on a Washington DC January morning! My toes were icy cold despite the warm boots. Finally the sun arrived, and we proceeded to extract the stakes with the help of our ice axes. It took about 45 minutes to get our tents free, de-iced as much as possible, and packed up.

At around 10 am, we were up on the ridge again, taking a 2nd breakfast break in the sun. Derek and I chatted a while, contemplating climbing Hutcheson. On the other hand, we wondered about the other five climbers. We doubted they got to climb a peak, although we thought they were probably gutsy enough to make a go for Kennedy. We tried guessing how long it would take them to reach our meetup side vs us climbing Hutcheson when we noticed snow-covered, deep boot and ski tracks on the ridge. Wait a minute! When we came over the ridge Saturday, the snow was solid and the tracks only two inches deep.

There was only one conclusion, since it had stopped snowing around 7 pm the night before: the five must have come through before us, most likely on Sunday afternoon!

We immediately packed up and started the 1000' descent to our meetup point. The descent through a foot of fresh powder atop frozen/slushy base down a steep hill was challenging. Each of us logged about three falls. My first one was memorable: my right snowshoe snagged onto something hidden under the powder. Remembering the leaders' lesson, I immediately shifted my weight and bent both knees to land on my shins. That maneuver caused the momentum of my pack to take over, and I did a nice forward somersault downhill! It must have been quite a sight!!! It all went incredibly fast as well, but I found my self-arrest reflexes to work quite well. As soon as I was able, I turned on my belly and dug the elbows in.

The second and third falls were a bit scarier. I was still on snowshoes on the second fall, where my foot slid under me and I went down with one knee bend. All I could think of was my friend Emilie tearing her ACL in a similar maneuver just weeks before ... but my knee held. Sigh of relief. By the third fall, I had switched to crampons. That one was bad luck; I stepped on a rock hidden under powder. A fall with crampons on is always dicey because of the danger of catching on something, resulting in ankle damage. Because of the slushy snow I slid only five feet, but I was a bit too slow in getting on my knees and crampons out of the way for my taste. Next time.

At the meet-up site, Derek and I stopped at the tent platform Monique, Sandrine and Kevin had dug three nights before, and found a message that they had bailed early, and were far ahead. We pushed on at a reasonable, safe pace. At Upper Tent Meadows, we spotted Monique's ski tracks, telling about fresh powder fun. Soon the

crampons could come off. At Lower Tent Meadows, finding the river crossing and trail proved a little bit of a challenge. The following 2,800' down were easy, trail switchbacks with an amazing view into King's Canyon and the surrounding mountains.

While hiking down, I was wondering about the reception we would find. Angry about us not bailing earlier? Anybody still there? Somebody hiking up to meet us? What we found, at 4 pm, was the trip leader and Kevin. We swapped our stories; as we thought, they had gotten close to their Saturday destination, but decided the weather would not allow them to climb and therefore they had hiked out Sunday. Monique and Sandrine had taken off to pay a visit to the gigantic Sequoias. Aaron was on his way to Cedar Grove to check in with my SPOT recipient as to our whereabouts. I send an ok message from the parking lot pronto.

Soon, Aaron returned with two cold beers. He was visibly relieved to see both of us happy and healthy. So relieved, that instead of giving the beers to the leader and Kevin, Derek and I were the beneficiaries :-). Derek and Steve took off. Kevin went back to cross the Sierra with destination Onion Valley. And Aaron and I packed everything in Aaron's car to head back to our respective homes.

Lessons learned? Many. I know now how it feels to suck physically on a mountain. I have gained a lot of confidence in my winter camping skills after weathering a storm Derek rated as the 3rd worst he had spent outside (Canadian and scout leader speaking here!). My gear was adequate to the task. I met people I had long been interested to meet. I made new friends. I learned a lot of new skills, and caught up on A LOT of sleep. And yes, I had a lot of fun spending time in my beloved mountains.

## Bloody Mountain, (12,552') - North Couloir

June 12

By Arun Mahajan

Bloody Mountain, which is just south of Mammoth, because of its location vis-a-vis Highway 395, is very prominent and can be seen from places as far north as the lookout on 395 that is on the hill as one leaves Mono Lake heading north. It has a couloir on the north side which is its striking feature.

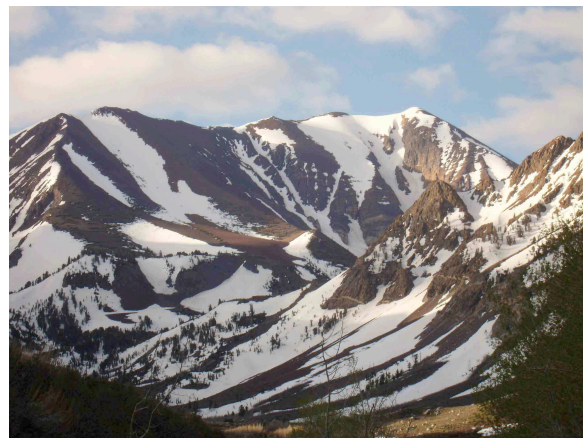


I had a leisurely drive to get to the mountain on Saturday from the Bay Area, over Sonora Pass and I took the rough but driveable Sherwin Creek Road just south of Mammoth till the well marked road, 4S86 on the left. I took this road and parked away from the main

track, just a mile from the junction with Sherwin Crk Rd. A few burly SUVs passed by, going back down 4S86 and I stopped and chatted with the occupants. All of them had climbed the couloir and I got some good beta on the route. A beautiful sunset over Mammoth Mountain was my final sight as I slept.



I was walking at 6am on Sunday; the road climbed steeply, then flattened and went through a clump of trees from where Bloody was visible and the couloir looked a bit intimidating from the distance. The road then climbed further up and I could see snow and the Laurel Creek snaking through it on my right as I followed the road up as it switchbacked and then got covered by snow (tracked by skiers) and then dropped down through a gate to the base of the couloir. Walking at a modest pace, it took me three hours till this point.



Now with crampons and ice-axe, I started on the couloir. Almost 2/3rd of the way up this wide couloir, there is a massive rock horn and above it, another rock protrusion splits the couloir in two parts, the left mellower than the one on the right. Above the first large horn, I could see a party of six as they traversed towards the base of the right fork and there was a solo climber a few hundred feet below them. They all looked very far away indeed.



Initially, the crusty surface broke through under my weight and it was slow going but soon I found steps of the previous party and climbing in them made the going quite a bit easier. As I plodded upward, the upper party disappeared from view due to the curve of the couloir. The angle started getting steeper but it never felt unsafe and I made good progress. Every so often a few rocks would let fly on the right but far away from me. On one occasion, when I happened to be looking down, a tennis ball size rock whizzed by and went through my legs. This was quite sudden, so quiet it had been and I thanked my lucky stars that it had not struck me! A little while later, another similar sized rock came hurtling towards me but this time I saw it and managed to lift my left leg up and it passed underneath. I was going to start on the right fork when I saw a skier come down that route making jump turns on the upper, steepest section. He was very smooth and confident. The snow was also great to ski on. He stopped near me and we

chatted a bit. He told me that the snow was not bad at all on the upper slopes and so it proved.



The angle was the highest so far but previous steps and the good quality of the snow never had me really worried. For that, all had to do was to look down! It looked scarier than it was and I once again admired the guts of that skier. Sunlight greeted me as I topped out on the couloir and onto the ridge. The summit, on my left, was only a few minutes away on the corniced ridge and in a total time of 5hrs 35 mins, from the car, I was at the summit.



It was 11.35 then, three hours on the trail and 2.35 on the couloir. I left the summit at noon, this time going further on the ridge and my axe/crampons packed away. I kept going a ways and then seeing the mining road that I had to get to, I dropped down on a snowfield. It was crusty and I was too lazy to put on

crampons again so I went right on the scree which was not bad and kept dropping down, switching between scree and snow till I found the road again. The road now appeared endless but the view was excellent and it all went fast enough and I was back to the car at 3.30.

In late July, 1999, I had tried to climb the same couloir. It was a moderate snow year, at least not like this year and I had no crampons nor a helmet. I was still able to do about two thirds of the couloir but then bailed on the rocks on the left and had reached the summit. This time, I was able to. A minor redemption.

### **For Sale**

175cm Karhu 10th Mountain XCD skis - lightly used, bindings removed \$170

La Sportiva Makalu Mountaineering boots women's sz 38 (only used on a few training hikes before I realized I just can't wear them). \$150

St. Moritz Momentum VS-1 Altimeter Watch - \$120

Contact: Stephanie Kubik, Email: [sa.kubik@gmail.com](mailto:sa.kubik@gmail.com), Cell: 408-623-3642

### **Elected Officials**

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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, July 25. Meetings are held on the second Tuesday of each month.**