



Newsletter of the
OCTOBER 1990



Upson trips

Oct 1 Gaillard
Mt. Diablo
Frazier 7-9790
Co-leader: Benham
(945-8030) Debbie

0-mile Mt. Diablo.

Upcoming Private Trips

Oet17

Very Private Trip
Mt Stakes (3480 ft)
class2
Leader: Raul Mocho
408-243-4566

Come along on this Sneak Peak Section (SPS) day hike. **2500** ft gain. It's the high point of Stanislaus County. Wear your Gulf Chic **camouflage** suits and be ready to crawl under fences and fight brush Good guerrilla warfare training for the Arabian desert fighting to come. (Translation: trip leader (guess who?) plans to trespass.)

Oct 27-28

RCS Base Camp
in The Valley
Class 5

Contact Eugene Miya **415-961-6772**

Last minute note from

Eugene: We have many **summits** which need visiting. Do not take registers from summit **without** a little briefmg. At this **time** we have a copy of an old **historic** register which needs to **be** returned to Mt. Williamson (in a container). If you can **return** this copy ASAP, please let me know.

Nov 18

Pinnacles
Class 1
Leader: Greg Schaffer
(408) 996-3637

Trip Reports

Tower Peak, July 11-12.

This was the weekend of the **fires** that closed Yosemite, so **the** air was hazy but not too **bad**. There were four of us: **Liz** Harvey, Patrick **Colgan**, **Rebecca** Dreiser, and myself, **Roger** **Crawley**. From the **Sonora** Pass road at Leavitt Meadows you **can** see Tower Peak on the northern boundary of Yosemite rising up by itself **with** snow fields and steep **ap-**proaches. We got a permit at Leavitt Meadows Lodge and stuffed our packs across the **road** where the 7th Marines **conduct** physical training. The **Marines** weren't there; they **were** already on their way to **Saudi** Arabia. David **Caldwell** and his group stopped to say "Hi, y'all!" on their way over to North Peak.

We hiked 15 miles and **camped** just below Tower Lake. The trail takes you along the edge of beautiful Piute Meadows and we were **impressed** with Ehrnbech Peak (11,240') with its sheer west **face**. Sunday we followed the **trail** up to Tower Lake. We **wished** we had camped there. We reached the summit by 10 **AM**. It's a particularly nice **mountain**, and the standard **route** is not difficult. Patrick's entertaining account follows:

The easiest approach to Tower Peak is from the **col**

between Tower Lake to the **North and Mary Lake** to the South. Standing in the **col** looking east and south you can see the approaches in clear & tail, including the Class 3 chute to the left of the summit block From the **col** the chute looks not only impossible, but life threatening. In reality the reverse is true. It is straight forward relatively safe and quite manageable.

The climbers guide advises you to "**...gain** the ridge" running north of Tower Peak. In gaining the ridge head for its central low spot to the left of a large ice field This is an easy walk along large fields of slab granite and stable talus. On the crest of the ridge turn right and head south towards the peak. Stay on the crest of the ridge until it terminates sharply against the huge exposed buttress that supports the summit block. Once again this is all easy walking. However **from** this approach the summit looks impossible, and you will probably consider this author to be out of his **fucking** mind Nonetheless, ignore the thin trickle of shit **running** down the back of your left leg and press on.

To get into the Class 3 chute that takes you to the summit, you must leave the approach ridge and traverse to the right

Trip Reports (Continued)

of the main buttress; you can not go to the left unless you are bent on suicide. On the route to the right you will find yourself first ascending large talus fields which, as you get higher, become steep but clearly negotiable granite slabs affording an abundance of good hand holds and foot holds. You can look up and see the obvious chute to the left of the peak. And as you get higher you will also see how direct and attainable this route is: there are numerous, well trodden routes up it.

The summit is wide, and has an old iron Sierra Club register box dated 1941, and it goes without saying that the views are breathtaking and indescribably beautiful. It is suggested that you come back down the same way you went up. Allow two and a half hours to three hours round trip from the col. Happy climbing!

--Roger Crowley & Patrick Colgan

From a local newspaper.

Someone ought to tell learned Easterners that to call our mountains the 'Sierras' is to display ignorance. The Spanish word is /Sierra and properly cannot be made plural. Nor is 'the Sierra Nevadas'...correct. According to Erwin G. Gudde's authoritative *California Place Names*, Sierra means 'mountain range' and Nevada means 'snow-covered.'

48 Hours and 5 Minutes

Our adventure launched at 7:00 PM Thursday evening, July 12, when Balu and Bob Coble met Captain Dan Tupper at Reid-Hillview airport in San Jose. Dan informed us of **undertain** weather conditions in the Sierra, a hurricane was moving over Mexico, creating unusually strong thunderstorm activities in the Sierra. Captain Dan, with over 30 years flying experience, decided to attempt the flight over the mountains, with the bail out point being **Mariposa** in the event of storms in our flight path. We encountered a few showers but nothing to concern our hand-picked team. We touched mother earth in Bishop at 11:00 PM. An hour later, we arrived at the **Lone Pine** ranger station via a rental car. The search began for some level ground to lay our heads. The obvious location was an inviting soft **grassy** area at the ranger station. The skies were clear with no chance of rain, at least natural rain. Just as we were entering dream land a noise more horrible and paralyzing than a rock slide awoke us, a hissing sound engulfed us. We jumped for our lives, **frantically** picking up our gear and hysterically running for cover; the **sprinkler** system assaulted us. I guess this is a great way to keep street people like us from devastating the

lawn.

We picked up our permit and began the easy 12 mile **6,000+** foot climb over Shepherd Pass at 9 AM. Our elite team **creste** the pass in 5 1/2 hours, renaming the pass, Dead Horse Pass, due to the poor four-legged friend who didn't make it. The nearby summits of Tyndall and Williamson brought back memories of previous climbs. However, our sights were set on a much further goal, Milestone Mountain. Our first glimpse of the peak was one to behold, a most worthy destination. The summit, a shaft of granite erupting **from** a ragged ridge, reaches an elevation of 13,641'. However we couldn't linger over the view because nimbus clouds were building to a crescendo, with thunder and lightning soon to follow. Plus, we still had 8 miles to reach camp. We descended the west side of Shepherd Pass, outrunning the storm to a lower elevation. The intense rains hit hard, but fortunately we were out of danger. Donning our **rain** gear, we continued hiking to our planned destination, the confluence of the Kern River and Milestone Creek. A very gratifying day of **20+** miles and a significant elevation gain. Our goal, the **mountain**, was only a short 3 miles away. We settled in our camp, but the Alaskan state bird had also selected our campsite. It was a

Trip Reports (Continued)

biting and painful experience.

The delightful climb started at 6 AM, Saturday, passing numerous high Sierra lakes and cascading waterfalls. The ascent was a typical 3rd class climb. We summited at 9:10 AM and were blessed with some of the best vistas in the Sierra. To the south, the magnificent ragged crest of the Kaweah Range was breathtaking. The Whitney group to the southeast was majestic with the clouds forming over her summit and of course the serrated Palasade Crest to the northeast. We could see the Sierra's finest, her entire set of 14,000 footers, by just turning our heads. This was certainly a climber's nirvana. It's a phenomenon that more people don't climb this splendid peak. We were only the 6th party to summit Milestone since Sept. 89, the date of the register. The original summit register was stolen by an idiot.

Balu, the group photographer, took advantage of this monumental opportunity, capturing numerous Galen Rowell type shots. We had a difficult time leaving the summit, however we still had 3 miles back to camp and then the climb out of the Kern River Canyon, not to mention back over Shepherd Pass to Anvil Camp. We begrudgingly extracted ourselves off the summit. Approximately 2

miles east of Shepherd Pass, a storm cell was moving directly toward us as if guided by an unknown force. We huddled together, sitting on our packs as lightning bolts crashed on the nearby massive summits of Tyndall and Williamson. Hailstone the size of small marbles were pelting us; fortunately the storm passed over in 15 minutes. We immediately dashed over Shepherd Pass and descended to the Pothole prior to the next storm's inception. The skies cleared in the late afternoon as we bathed in the sun's full glory. This was, without a doubt, a very exhilarating and stimulating day.

Sunday morning, we hit the trail hard, running the nine miles back to the trailhead, arriving at 9:05 AM. We enjoyed 48 hours and 5 minutes of total ecstasy with a spirit of adventure and teamwork on this trip. I would high recommend this climb to any hardwoman/man with strong legs and an obsession to experience the ultimate panoramic vistas the Sierra has to offer.

I'm sad to report that 13 people were struck by lightning on the summit of Mt. Whitney, Saturday, July 14, resulting in one fatality.

--Balu, Dan & Bob

Personal--

I, Kai Wiedman, challenge Larry Sasscer to co-lead a winter ascent of Mt. Shasta-If you have the courage, I got the time.

Johnson Peak-Kings Canyon, July 21-22, 1990

Johnson Peak straddles the main crest of the Sierra separating Rings Canyon from the Inyo National Forest. It's on the Mt. Goddard quad. Approached from South Lake it's at first indiscernible among a jumble of fluted, glacier packed granite massifs and spires, all of which constitute an amazing spectacle to the naked eye while driving south on 395 to Bishop. When you get closer to it, Johnson Peak actually disappears for a while. It hides inconspicuously behind a huge granite buttress that towers above Treasure Lake. One might wonder why we drove all this way to climb something so nondescript when there were scores of far more prominent peaks to challenge us. The Climbers's Guide only gave it a line and a half. Our leader, Chris MacIntosh, knew why. She had it all figured out. We would lolly-gag and snooze in camp till early afternoon then climb it in the evening, and come down in the dark. And that's exactly what we did.

There were six of us, including myself (Patrick Colgan): Liz Harvey, Mark Marks, George Steele-Perkins, and Patty Haight; while Chris and Liz can spin

Trip Reports (Continued)

ine yarns about their **techni-**
al rock-climbing experiences,
ill of us were nonetheless
strong, seasoned backpackers
and peak-freaks with many
fears' experience. On the
drive over from the Bay Area
Friday night we slept at 'Camp
,', a few miles east of Tioga
Pass, and breakfasted on fresh
nuffins from a bakery in
Mammoth Saturday morning.
By noon, we were looking for
a campsite up at Treasure
Lakes. The long afternoon lay
before us.

In reality it was the weather
that prompted us to postpone
the climb. By 2 PM the skies
to the west were black and
flecked with lightning bolts.
Only mad dogs and fools
would have been up on a
mountain top under those con-
ditions. But rather than waste
the afternoon in camp we
decided to explore the ap-
proaches. If the storm rolled
by we might attempt the
summit anyway. We even
packed flashlights, just in
case. By 4 in the afternoon
we had picked our way up the
talus strewn cirque to the
sourth and east of the peak.
The boulders were as big as
houses. Huge sheets of ice,
remnants of prehistoric gla-
ciers, were partially visible
under the scree. Thunder
rumbled, and a few spots of
rain worried us. But then
Johnson Peak swung into

view **framed in** a spectacular
burst of sunlight as the storm
rolled out across the Owens
Valley towards Nevada. We
decided to go for it The climb
was on.

It was **mostly** a long, grinding
Class 2 talus slog, with a couple
of Class 3 pitches on the summit
block. The final approach was
quite steep and in places the
rock was rotten. Chris forbade
me to emit my usual ear-split-
ting, adrenalin releasing primal
scream lest it cause an ava-
lanche and kill the lot of us. But
the exposure was minimal, and
the views from the summit were
an inspiration. Below us lay the
magnificent abyss of the King's
River, while **in** every direction
the finest **Sierra** was visible as
far as the eye could **see:** Haeckel
and **Wallace** and Darwin to the
north, **Devil's Crags** to the south
and west, **all dominated** by Mt.
Goddard sticking up above
everything else **like** a clap of
thunder. We could see the
peaks ringing the **Ionian** Basin,
and was that **Agassiz** and
Winchell to the south of the **The**
Inconsolables? And somewhere
over there was the Palisades.
We felt very small and acutely
aware of our rightful signifi-
cance in the **natural** scheme of
things. It was a binding experi-
ence, like having sex.

The register was filled with
familiar names scribbled in
pencil by numb fingers. They
went back years and years; old

friends and long forgotten
climbing companions from the
PCS, the SPS, and the Bay
Chapter Backpack Section. Our
lives touched again on the peak.
I could hardly suppress a mist-
ing over of my eyes.

Then came the descent; first
an insane but exhilarating scree
run down a sandy chute, fol-
lowed by a spine-wrenching,
knee-jarring talus hop which
became more difficult as the sun
turned into gloaming. Thoughts
of compound fractures and
concussion crossed my mind
briefly but I chased them out.
Nonetheless we slowed, groping
our way in the encroaching
night, hating the talus, fumbling
for our flashlights. A couple of
us were **sick.** Chris, Mark and
Patty went ahead I stayed
behind with Liz and George. A
faint trail appeared and disap-
peared and appeared again. But
we found the log crossing on
the inlet, and finally stumbled
wearily into camp. We were
weak, &hydrated and ex-
hausted, but fired up the stoves
and got the soup on. We were
going to survive. While I
waited for the water to boil I ate
my pre-baked potato, munched
on some gorp and had a splash
of Holy Water' in my Sierra
cup. Chris looked at me and
said, " Now I know you're
Irish! " I winked and replied,
"The cat's arse, mate!" Over-
head the night sky was ablaze
with untold billions of stars.

Trip Reports (Continued)

The peaks looked like black fangs.

Sunday morning found us lolly gagging and snoozing and farting around in the hot sun till noon, spinning yarns, becoming closer, relighting the stoves again and again to make more tea. Then we hiked out and **drove to the** hot creek. It was **over.** Or was it? Mt. Johnson was still there. Even though we couldn't see it, we could feel it, **and the brief but profound impact it had upon all of us. It will never be over. Our spirits will always be there, striding like giants across the awesome Sierra,** and for as long as we live we will never be quite the same again.

--Patrick Colgan

BYOB or Bring Your Own Bivy

A small but serious group of peak baggers under the able leadership of Gary Pinson met at the Livermore Airport on July 23rd for a weekend of adventure. Gary told the group: 'We must go light!' Richard Ottolmi, Rebecca Leiser and Liz Harvey agreed. He inspected our equipment, insuring that we met his weight limitations. No pack rain covers, rain pants or tents on this trip; real climbers don't need these 'extras.'

After carbo loading in Oakdale and sleeping at Dan Tupper's Camp 9 (Dan discovered this PCS treasure many years ago), we were anxious to

snare our **first** peak early Saturday morning. Johnson Peak was first, followed by Rafferty. We looked longingly at Vogelsang Peak, however our stomachs made the decision for us; we opted for dinner.

The long day ended by sleeping in a wind tunnel above Vogelsang Lake, with a spectacular sunset for our reward

Sunday we **began** Fletcher Peak and then on to the Parsons (we were the first recorded ascenders), then Peak 11,500 and lastly Peak 11,779.

Spendif views from all!! We **cross-countried** past Ireland and Evelyn Lakes back to Rafferty Creek and finally to our van.

Later (very late) that evening, **grubby and hungry,** we were lucky to get served at the 7-11 in **Oakdale.** The meal was very forgettable, but inexpensive.

Rebecca (a new recruit **from** the East Bay) commented after her first PCS experience that it would be difficult to just go backpacking in the future.

--Liz Harvey

Roommate Wanted

To share a newly remodeled, fully furnished, 4 bedroom, 2 both Sunnyvale home. Must be a neat, quiet, non-smoker. Rent includes bedroom and own bathroom. Rent is **\$350/month + 1/2 utilities.** Contact Tim Hult-732-08 14.

Fall/Winter Trips (Cont)

Nov 18 - Pinnacles (class 1 (private trip) - Greg Schaffer 408-996-3637

Dec 1-2 - Junipero Serra Peak (class 1) - Aaron Schuman 415-335-1901

Dec 8-9 - Pt Reyes Backpack to Coast Camp (class 1) - Anita Stewart (needs coleader 415-965-2293

Dec 26-30 - Central Oregon Ski Mountaineering (private) - Eugene Miya 415-961-6772

Jan 12-13 - South Cone (class 1) - Aaron Schuman 415-335-1901

Feb 16-18 - Mt. Shasta via Casaval Ridge (winter skills / private) - Kai Wiedman 415-347-2843

Mar 2-3 - Mt. Carmel (class 1) - Aaron Schuman 415-335-1901

Mar 30-31 - Anderson Peal (class 1) - Aaron Schuman 415-335-1901

Apr 27-28 - Round Top (class 1) - Aaron Schuman 415-335-1901

November Preview

Kai will sham his summer trip through the desert to the mountains--Evolution Base Camp. November 13, 8 PM, Western Mountaineering.

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PCS meetings are held on the **second** Tuesday of every month. **See SCREE for meeting location and program information.**

Trip classifications:

Class 1: Walking on a trail.

Class 2: walking **cross-country**, using hands for **balance**.

Class 3: Requires use of hands for **climbing**. A rope may be used occasionally.

Class 4: Requires rope belays.

Class 5: Technical rock climbing.

Deadline for SCREE contributions is two weeks before the next meeting. Mail your contributions to the **SCREE** editor.

For change of address or address corrections, write or call
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