



# Scree

Newsletter of the Peak Climbing Section, Sierra Club, Loma Prieta Chapter

September 1990

Vol. 23, No. 9

## Next Meeting

## Autumn Trip Planning Meeting

Date: TUES. SEPT 11

Time: 8:00 PM

**Location:**

Western Mountaineering  
Town & Country Shopping Cntr.  
San Jose.

See the volcanoes of Ecuador without paying exorbitant air fare or suffering from turista. Bob Rolands will illuminate us (or at least his slides).

Kai will be fresh from triumphs in the Alps. Expect anything to happen. He may even let Dave Caldwell finish a sentence.

**Tuesday, September 25, at 8:00 pm**  
**Ron Lingelbach's house in West San Jose**

Tired of the timberline and ready for the redwoods? Jaded over glaciers and thirsty for desert peaks? Prefer frost to mosquitos when you camp by the meadows? The new season is upon us and it's time to get ourselves organized.

If you lead trips for the PCS, or if you want to start leading trips, come to the autumn trip planning meeting. If you already have destinations in mind, bring them; if not, other trip leaders will have suggestions for you. Bring your calendar and be ready to make plans for outings from October through April.

Even though the insurance company no longer lets the PCS sponsor trips that require ice axes, the club can still announce ice axe trips for you in the private part of the schedule. So bring your plans for high country adventures to the meeting too.

If you're not yet a PCS trip leader yet, think about becoming one. Yes, I mean you! You don't need to be able to climb the face of Half Dome barefoot in a snowstorm to lead PCS trips. You just need a current First Aid card and some co-leading experience. The autumn planning meeting is an excellent place to meet leaders who need co-leaders for their trips. See you there!

**Directions to Ron's house:**

From I-280, take the Southbound Lawrence Xway exit

Turn right on Bollinger

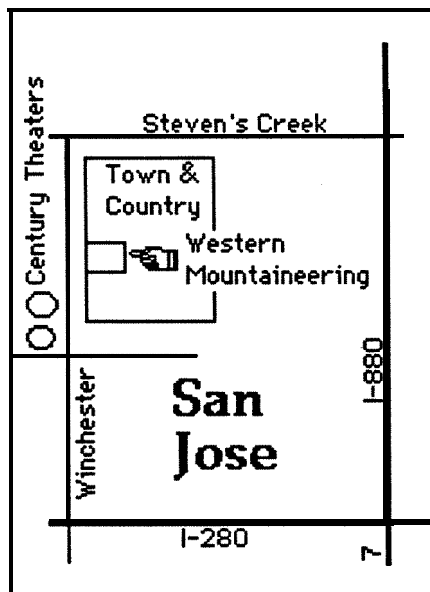
At the next light, turn left onto Johnson

Proceed 1/2 mile, pass the first stop sign, then turn right onto

Royal Ann

Make an immediate left onto Pine Grove

Ron's is 1492 Pine Grove. 4082538036



# Upcoming PCS Trips

## September 22-23

Mt. Hoffman (12,719')  
Echo Peaks (ca. 11,000')  
Class 3  
Leader: Kai Wiedman  
(415) 347-2843 H  
Car camping at Tuolumne  
Meadows. Let's go climbing,  
enjoy the outdoor life. Class 1  
peak baggers and day hikers  
welcome. \$5 camping fee.

## October 6-8

Jack's Peak (10,198')  
McAfee Peak (10,439')  
Copper Mtn. (9,910')  
Leader: Bill Hauser  
(408) 243-4566 H  
Let's sojourn north of Elco,  
Nevada and climb these three  
NAS peaks in Humboldt Na-  
tional Forest. We will also  
explore Wild Horse Hot  
Springs and the ghost town of  
Guscarora.

## October 6-7

Virginia Peak (12,001')  
Class 3  
Matterhorn Quad  
Leader: Gary Pinson  
(408) 997-0298 nights  
Climb Virginia Peak and five  
or six class 2 peaks! Spent the  
summer by the pool? If you're  
an efficient, conditioned alpin-  
ist, willing to rise early and  
hike late, you can redeem your  
reputation in one easy week-  
end. Co-leader accepted.

## Nov 3-4

Eagle Peak (7779')  
El Capitan (7042')  
Both Class 1  
Yosemite Quad  
Leader: Gary Pinson  
(408) 997-0298 nights

We'll **backdoor** Eagle Peak (one  
of the Three Brothers) and El  
Capitan by a long, steep, but  
beautiful trail on Saturday.  
Sunday will be more laid back.  
Co-leaders, "beginners", and  
gourmands wanted. \$5.00 ad-  
vance camping fee per person  
(non-refundable; profit, if any to  
PCS leader reimbursement fund).

# Private Trips

## September 8-9

Giraud Peak (12,585')  
Class 2  
Leader: Chris Yager  
(408) 243-3026

## September 28-30

North Palisade (14,242')  
Class 4+  
Leader: Kelly Maas  
(408) 279-2054 H  
(408) 9442078 W  
We'll climb via the U-Notch.  
If the Couloir is all ice, an  
alternative peak, such as  
**Winchell**, will be considered.

### For Sale:

Gregory Snow Creek internal  
frame pack. Used, but still  
usable, Medium size with  
extras. Only \$25. Call Ray at  
(415) 591-9248.

# First Chapter-wide Conference Planned

Chapter volunteers have  
been hard at work to plan a  
great weekend of fund and  
information that will appeal  
to both the 'conservation' and  
the 'activities' sections. We  
think we've done it, so set  
aside the time and join us.

On October 20 and 21, we  
will meet at the San Fran-  
cisco Bay National Wildlife  
Refuge. It is located near the  
Fremont side of the **Dumbar-**  
ton bridge and has a fantastic  
view of the south end of the  
**Bay.**

The theme of the weekend  
will be 'Connections' and we  
plan to explore past, current,  
and future issues. Guest  
speakers will cover such  
issues as water, wetlands,  
media relations, and trans-  
portation/regional planning.  
**We'll also** have strategy  
sessions on our forthcoming  
Club Centennial, the Club's  
insurance problem, increas-  
ing our ethnic diversity, and  
how to exercise our power in  
local conservation efforts.  
Speakers are both from  
Sierra Club and our local  
community.

There will be outings and  
social events, too. Nature  
walks at the Refuge are  
planned, and a Wine and

## Conference (Contd)

Cheese' will be held at the end of the day on Saturday.

This is the first of what we hope will be an annual event. Take advantage of a great opportunity to meet new people, explore the wetlands, and connect with the Chapter's programs.

The location is an oasis of solitude in a busy urban area; it alone makes the weekend special. Since space is limited, please watch for details and **registraton** information in the October issue of the **Loma Prietan**.

**WHO:** All Chapter members

**WHAT:** Loma Prieta Chapter Connections Weekend

**WHEN:** Saturday, Oct. 20 (9:30 AM to 5:00 PM) and Sunday, Oct. 21, (10:00 AM to 3:00 PM)

**WHERE:** San Francisco Bay National Wildlife Refuge, Newark

**WHY:** Fun, information, and connections.

**--Carole Hutchinson**

There is little conversation today.

We wait for the sun to warm us so we can break camp.

I wonder if my friends share the fears that kept me awake in the hours before dawn.

**--From Galen Rowell's journal of the Karakoram traverse**

## Trip Reports

### ON TOP OF OLD SMOKEY

This unofficial renaming of North Peak is in honor of the hardy group to whom the fires in Yosemite were only yet another challenge to be surmounted on the weekend of **August 11/12**. The group consisted of Debbie **Benham**, Dave Caldwell, Joe Coha (**co-leader**), Lenore **Cymes**, Anne Gaillard, Betty **McMartin**, Peter Maxwell (leader) and Mike Shields.

Given that the forest fires were all in the western area of Yosemite, we were 'fortunate' in having an east side **approach**, although still had to drive **much** further via Sonora Pass and then back almost to Lee Vining. It would have been really tough if we'd had to go all the way to **Tuolumne Meadows**.

On Friday night, by the time we got to Lee Vining we could smell the smoke and the air had almost a foggy look to it.

I was wondering if we'd be able to see anything the next day. By morning the air had cleared considerably, though.

At the meeting spot at the intersection of 395 and the Lundy Lake road, Joe turned up with flattened ears from all the phone calls he'd been making, particularly in **relation** to the fires.

As we headed toward Lundy, we wondered why

Betty was no longer behind us, and it turned out the rear half of her exhaust system had parted company with the pipe from the engine. Red Cross training doesn't cover the sort of **first aid** required here, but Dave displayed the necessary additional skills and wired things back up again.

Unfortunately, although the trip was billed as Class 2, the road was Class 5, and the final pitch proved too much, with a rock completely wrenching out the **rear** of the exhaust system. Since we'd already lost time we left it as it was, to be fixed when we returned.

At the trailhead, Joe produced a walking cane, saying how he'd twisted his ankle 3 weeks earlier. Any thoughts of 'Oh, no! We're being **co**-led by a cripple' were quickly dispelled as he bounded up the trail so fast it seemed he was using the cane as a pole vault.

The climb up Lundy Canyon to Helen Lake was beautiful, thanks to the typically rugged east Sierra landscape, and the two magnificent waterfalls at the head of the canyon. This rugged beauty has its price, though, and the trail was very steep.

By the time we got to Helen Lake, the air quality had deteriorated markedly, and it was difficult to tell clouds from smoke in the sky. Exercising Leader's prerogative, I was

## Trip Reports (Continued)

ble to use the smoke as a reason to suggest attempting the peak the next day, thereby tiding the fact that I was feeling too tired to do it Saturday. This proved to be a good decision because by the end of the day we could hardly see the peak, and the range behind, of which Conness is part, was completely obliterated. From time to time ash fell on us and we wondered whether we shouldn't have brought gas masks with us.

We made camp at an unnamed lake just before Steelhead Lake. Most of the afternoon was free and a relaxed time was had by all.

After dinner, was *Joke Time*, which had us rolling on the rocks. All nature of hilarious stories ensued, ranging from Death by Oongawa (see Dave Caldwell for further information on this topic) to badly worded instructions given to a bionic arm (Mike Shields can elaborate).

Upon retiring to our tents, the laughs continued, although for a different reason. For some reason many of us were uncharacteristically bloated, with consequent disastrous effects in the confined spaces of a tent . . . .

Sunday morning dawned brilliantly, and what had been hidden the previous day now stood out crisply in the sun.

Time was more of an issue now, although we were considerably refreshed and better acclimated. While the rest of us headed for the heights, Betty and Lenore elected to take a less strenuous hike to Saddlebag Lake. We had met 2 young guys the day before who had summited by way of the northeast ridge, but had encountered some difficult class 3 climbs on the headwall and it had taken them about 3 hours. We tackled the traditional south slope, but despite the longer distance, our lightning-fast party made the summit in 2! hours. Our 'crippled co-leader was one of the first to summit.

From the top we could see the extent of the smoke, casting its pall over the entire area. The air had become noticeably hazier already, and to the west it hung like a black smear. Any hopes of highway 120 being open for the drive back were quickly going up in smoke.

Coming down we encountered a large amount of that delightful stuff that our newsletter is named after, but it merely filled our boots up, and didn't present any real obstacle. We had avoided the worst of it on the way up by staying on the southeast ridge which runs up from the road to Saddlebag Lake, and then

angling diagonally up the south face, aiming just to the left of the towers there.

We arrived back at camp 15 minutes ahead of schedule, at 12:45, ate lunch (that we had carried all the way to the summit and back), broke camp and departed. Descending into Lundy Canyon was even more impressive than ascending the previous day. Looking down seemed to accentuate the relief, and it was hard to believe that we had to go all the way down there.

The final challenge was Betty's car. Mike came to the fore and after 3 jacks had been set to hold up the car (one from a helpful passer-by), he unhesitatingly plunged underneath, in all the dust and dirt, cut free the loose section and wired up the rest.

This was my fiit PCS trip as leader, and its success was due both to the support from Joe and to all the participants. I'm encouraged, and will lead more.

**--Peter Maxwell**

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**MT WILLIAMSON / MT TYNDALL**

**Thursday, June 28**

Brian Healey calls to tell me the other people who are going on the trip have cancelled. Brian informs me he will not drive by himself. I cannot drive with Brian since I will be

## Trip Reports (Continued)

staying in the mountains another week to join Kai Wiedman's trip to the Evolution area.

### Friday, June 29

I call Brian to reconfii that he is not going. His permit will be in the night box at the Lone Pine Ranger Station. I will be climbing alone.

### Saturday, June 30

I am taking a new route south on county roads, and here I am at lunchtime on J22, 40 miles north of Bakersfield. According to my road map, I am only a short distance from the Colonel Allensworth State Historic Park. And so I stop. One of the pleasures of traveling alone is that you can satisfy every **whim**, every desire for detours. Enjoying the journey is half the fun. Colonel Allensworth was quite a man. Born into slavery, he escaped during the Civil War, joined the Union Army and eventually rose to the rank of Lt. Colonel—the first black to achieve that rank. Not one to let his ego impede his progress, he enrolled in elementary school in his mid 20's so he could learn to read and write. Eventually he completed his formal education and was ordained a minister. In 1906 when he retired from the armed forces, he founded this town in the California central valley to provide a place where blacks could achieve economic inde-

pendence insulated from restrictive Jim Crow laws.

The town thrived, and for more than 20 years provided a boost for black aspirations. However in a story **that** is beginning to sound familiar, a drop in the water table spelled doom for the community's agricultural base. The sand and sage surrounding the empty houses bear testimony to the importance of water in California history. I am the only visitor today in this out-of-the-way place. Slowly, the town is being restored.

I continue my journey. After dinner in Lone Pine, I decide to camp at the Shepherd Pass trailhead. Once again, mother nature reminds me it is not the big things in life that matter but the details.

I have thrown down my tarp and since it is warm, am lying on my ensolite pad with my sleeping bag partly covering me. A small insect brushes against my face. I swat it. Then another crawls through my hair. A minor inconvenience that comes with the glorious stars and the mountain air. Next I feel a painful bite on my thigh. I switch on my flashlight. My tarp, my **pillow**—everything is swarming with ants. Immediately I get up and begin the slow, unpleasant process of de-bugging me and my gear by flashlight. I retire to an **antless** environment for the rest of the night—the back of my

station wagon.

### Sunday, July 1

Shepherd Pass-6500 feet of elevation gain. For years I have heard tales of Shepherd Pass. "Be sure you climb both Williamson and Tyndall while you're there. You won't want to go over Shepherd Pass again." But the trail begins in loveliness. Wild roses, columbine, white sticky poppies and prickly pear in bloom. But after a gain of about 3000 feet, there is a 500 foot drop in elevation that weakens the spirit. Just before this descent I **meet** a man who climbs up here every year. So much for the one time theory. I reach Anvil Camp (10,360) at 3:00 pm. Too early to stop, so I continue. The last 700 feet are steep and desolate. The footing can be treacherous as evidenced by the carcass of a horse that must have recently slipped. Broken legs turned skyward, neck twisted, tongue and face like **Guernica**. I reach the top of the pass at **6:30** pm It has taken me eleven hours.

I select a campsite near the lake, hidden by a small bench so my tent is not visible from the trail. I have earned my rest tonight.

### Monday, July 2

Today I am climbing Mt. Williamson. I am on the trail

## Trip Reports (Continued)

at 7:30 am having slept in slightly to recover from yesterday's marathon. I feel good. I resolve to treat the mountain with respect and expect to make the summit. Armed with my 15 minute topo, directions from Roper and Brian, I head for the Williamson basin. Everything looks just like the map. I am passed by three men from the Bay area. "You climbing alone?" one inquires. "That takes guts!" his companion says. I smile. Frankly it took more guts to quit my safe corporate job and go into consulting. I am more afraid to drive over the hill to Santa Cruz at 11 pm after a PCS meeting in Palo Alto. Out here I feel at home.

There's the water stain just as expected, and now I'm in the 1000 foot second class gully. It stretches seemingly endlessly. From the top of the third class crack, three climbers ready to descend wave at me. It is well protected, and I ascend the 75 feet easily. From here it is an easy 300 Feet to the summit. Luckily the Bay area party is only minutes before me, and obligingly we snap photos of one another. They choose to go down by another route, and I retrace my steps back to camp arriving at 5:00 pm--tired and a half hours since leaving. The summit register

bears many familiar names: Warren Storkman, Bill Isherwood, Vreni Amsbaugh, Kai Wiedman, Dodie Domish, Aaron Schuman, to mention a few. And now mine.

### Tuesday, July 3

I am resting today. I sleep in, make entries in my journal and have a leisurely breakfast. At 9:00 am I leave for Mt Tyndall. I am taking my time. Roper is vague, so I'm just eyeballing it. I climb to the right of the prominent rib facing Shepherd Pass. At 12,700 feet I hear and feel a small explosion in my backpack. Has my suntan lotion exploded? When I open the pack strange unpleasant fumes rise upward. I discover the extra lithium battery for my headlamp has exploded taking as casualties my toothbrush, water purification tablets, and various other survival stuff in my "possible sack." I am able to salvage most of my gear, but the sack itself has melted, and my pack has a small hole in it.

I continue upward and stray too far to the west. My route becomes third class, and I find myself on a long and difficult ridge leading to the summit. It is more challenging rock than yesterday's crack on Williamson. But the handholds and footholds are big, and I won't look down. It's a good thing I've been climbing in Yosemite for the last two weeks.

Eventually, I make it to the

top. This climb has been exciting, but I'm moving with care and most importantly, style. No sweat. More familiar names in the register: Jeff West, Chris Yager, Tim Hult.

The descent is uneventful, and I stay on route to the east of the rib exiting the climb at the top of the 12,400 foot rise between Shepherd Pass Lake and the small lake to the southeast. I am back by 3:00 pm, circumvent the lake and climb the east ridge in search of bighorn sheep. No luck. I have seen no one since leaving this morning.

### Wednesday, July 4

Today I hike down the pass to the town of Independence—how fitting this July 4. I reward myself with a hotel room and shower. I am too tired to stay up for the fireworks.

--Debbie Bulger

### Mt. Shasta Supplement--The Real Climbing Experience

Did we drive all the way to Mt. Shasta to see lava tubes or climb Black Butte? Of course not, then there would be nothing to write about. Call us fearless, call us crazy, we came to climb Mt. Shasta on Memorial weekend and away we went.

Most of the oversized group opted to bail out because of the brewing storm. As Kai put it, "Climbing that mountain would be like jumping into a pool with a great white shark." That seemed to scare off the faint of

## Trip Reports (Continued)

heart and more intelligent climbers. Six of us left anyway and drove up the washboard North Point road: Bob Coble, Liz Harvey, Dan Tupper, Balmukund Sharma, Ursula Austin, and myself.

The trailhead was covered with delightful slushy snow. Up the trail we trudged passing a group of climbers who yelled out, "Stay dry." We didn't encounter much falling snow until breaking out into the scrub pine. Putting on our snowshoes we looked at the ridge a quarter mile up and noticed it was just a wee bit windy. A lone Japanese skier passed us on his way down. We asked about wind conditions above the ridge. He didn't speak much English, and there was some discussion later whether he said 'no wind or 'all wind.' The Fifth Season climbing map describes this area as good for testing aircraft aerodynamics.

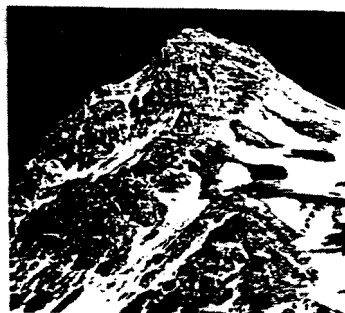
With heads bowed we continued up into the wind. Dan would keep checking his altimeter and tell us we must go higher. It was probably about the third time that Dan and I were knocked over by the wind that everyone headed to a big boulder for cover. The group feverishly built two snow walls, becoming soaked in the process. Ursula and I could not get my tent up with the estimated 50-60 mph wind buckling it. I had to stand shivering and apprehen-

sive as the others finished securing their tent. Then with extra hands, my 3 season tent was erected, and we scrambled inside. The unrelenting wind made me edgy. I was afraid to get undressed, half expecting a big gust to rip the tent open. The tent held up, and we eventually settled in sleeping atop everything we had to avoid the puddles. Ursula and I had a discussion on the proper equipment and procedures for climbing in winter conditions--we were both learning a lot.

Morning broke with the wind still howling. Snow was piling up quite high on the tent. Bob and I mentioned a summit bid with each of us hoping the other would be the first to say, "Let's bail." We packed up and dismantled my tent (which no longer had any straight poles). One half mile down the trail we were out of the wind and spindrift, obviously a good place to camp.

We retreated to Mt. Shasta City to eat and discuss the trip. I weighed all that had happened and decided I was glad I didn't go to the lava tubes.

-Larry Sasser



## Ray's Reminders

Some folks just can't help themselves when it comes to offering helpful hints and nudging us into doing that stuff we were going to get around to. One such individual is Ray Stafford who offers the following (excerpted from articles in the S.F. Chronicle):

"Outdoor enthusiasts suddenly caught in an electrical storm are in very real danger. There are certain things to do: immediately leave ridges, peaks, exposed and isolated trees... Find a clearing in a stand of tall trees...or be among the smaller trees in a high forest. Find a depression, gulch, or canyon, but not one with a running stream.. Wait out the weather in a crouch, squat on haunches with feet together, on any handy, dry insulation."

And in a second article, some researchers at UC, San Diego, suggest that the use of sunscreens may give a false sense of security from developing skin cancer. Though other scientists caution that this theory is speculative and remains to be proved, it might be a good idea to cover up more and use less sunscreen.

And lastly, Ray says that he could use a few more haiku to make the PCS contest a bit more interesting (SEE JULY SCREE FOR DETAILS). Deadline is Sept. 30--so get writing.

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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:

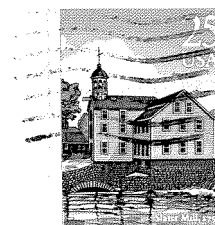
- Class 1: Walking on a trail.
- Class 2: Walking cross-country, using hands for balance.
- Class 3: Requires use of hands for climbing. A rope may be used occasionally.
- Class 4: Requires rope belays.
- Class 5: Technical rock climbing.

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  
Paul Vlasveld, 157 Kellogg Way, Santa Clara 95051. **(408)**  
241-1144 h / **(408) 257-7910** w.



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