



Scree

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

April, 1991

Vol. 24, No. 4

Next meeting

DATE: Tuesday, April 9

TIME: 7:30p.m.

LOCATION:

Pacific Mountaineer

200 Hamilton Ave.

Palo Alto

PROGRAM: "Of Sand Flies and Snow," by Peter Maxwell.

Peter will tell us of some exploits in New Zealand involving the Southern Alps, the Milford Track, lots of sheep and torrents of rain.

Climbing Junction Peak on a fine warm October morning

The sun quickly warmed the air as we lay in our bags on the scrubby bajada above Independence. We were at Shephard's Pass trailhead, and at 7 am it was almost comfortable in just a tee-shirt. Not bad for October.

Pat Toreson and I headed up the trail, enjoying the autumn's yellow patchwork scattered below the ragged granite peaks. The trail starts out gradually crisscrossing the creek but soon there is nothing but switchbacks.

Cresting the first ridge, Mt. Williamson came into view-an impressive mountain, next year. We continued on to Anvil Camp below the pass where we found ice patches on the nearby stream

Sunday we picked our way up Shephard's Pass (Deadhorse Pass), following some steps kicked in the thin snow cover. The ravens were there gleaning the last tidbits from the hide and bones of the unfortunate pack animal. Reaching the top of the pass I was impressed with the views and with the as yet unverified 5.5-hour (trailhead to pass) time claimed by those backcountry speedsters Bob Noble, Balu Sharma and Dan Tupper.

From the pass it was an easy walk north up the drainage to a cirque lake between Table Mountain and Junction. Pat wasn't up to climbing the peak so she lounged in the sun. There were a number of scree chutes to choose from and at the lake it was

Due to severe technical problems, SCREE is a major mess this month. Apologies to everyone who sent in articles. They'll appear next month.

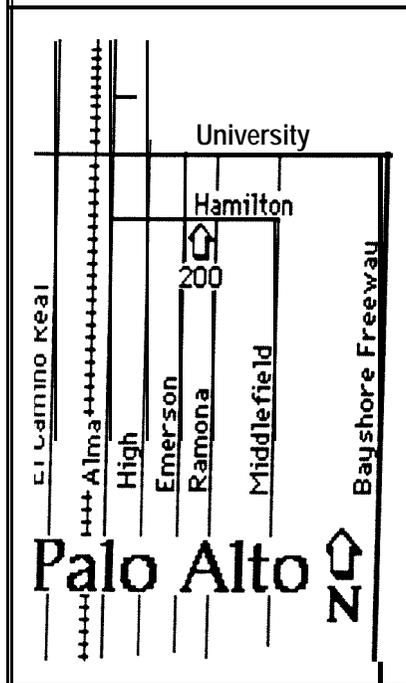
hard to tell which peak along the serrated ridge was the highest. The 15-minute quad I had didn't give enough information, either. Upon reaching what seemed to be the top I realized the problem.

The actual summit was farther north and couldn't be seen earlier. The fun climbing began here with a knife-edge ridge leading the way. The granite was stable but still wet in spots. The summit, at 13,888 feet, provided stunning vistas of the King and Kern drainages and the peaks beyond.

I had carried along a new summit register for the Sierra Register Committee. After mounting the new box I hurried down to join Pat for the hike back to camp just making it before dark.

We hiked out the next day and stopped to soak a while in Hot Creek.

-Larry Sasscer



Upcoming outings

April 6-7
DEWEY POINT SNOW CAMP

Level: intermediate

Leaders: Ray Stafford
(415) 591-9348
ChrisMacIntosh
(415) 325-7841

Dewey Point is located on Yosemite Valley's south rim, across from El Capitan. Incredible views make it one of the most memorable and desirable camping sites available.

Only a short distance from the Badger Pass Ski Area, the trip is ideal for **beginners** who have graduated from the snow camping seminar and for experienced snow campers. Call Chris to sign up. Of course, stormcancels-snowpermitting.

April 6-7
THREE SISTERS
10,619 feet
Class 1

Leader: Chris Yager
(408) 243-3026
(408) 243-3027 (msg)

Another mystery Yager trip. We'll assume these are the Three Sisters east of Fresno, and not the ones in Oregon. But who knows?

April 13-14
ANDERSON PEAK
999 ft., class 1
Ventana Wilderness

Leader: Aaron Schuman
(115) 494-3299, before 9:00 p.m., h
(115) 335-1901, w

A short but grueling sprint (3.8 miles, 2600 ft.) up DeAngulo Trail brings us to the top of Partington ridge. Another 1.3 miles brings us to old Springs Campground. From the top, we have a 4.8 mile walk on the Coast Ridge fire road to the summit. One of the two days is going to be a real workout

April 20
MT. DIABLO
3,849 ft, Class 1

Leader: Vreni Amsbaugh
(415) 582-5578

Scale the Mt. Everest of the Bay Area via the Wall Point "Arete"
Lots of lupins, iris and shooting stars. Descend via magical Pine Canyon. Fifteen-plus miles roundtrip with 3,000-plus elevation gain.

May 4
MT. TAMALPAIS
2,571 ft. Class 1

Leader: Debbie Benham
(408) 945-8030
Co-leader: Joe Coha
(408) 252-7053

Mt. Tam offers a variety of vistas, as well as diverse flora and fauna. From the town of Fairfax, we'll start up the north side for an approximately 10 to 12 mile hike. Call for carpool information.

May 4-5
ROUND TOP
10380 ft. class 3
El Dorado National Forest
Aaron Schuman
(415) 494-3299 before 9:00 p.m., h
(415) 335-1901, w

Since it'll be early in the climbing season in the High Sierra, we'll make a short hike from Carson Pass and camp at Winnemucca Lake. Round Top should afford us with considerable technical challenge. If conditions are good we'll try for some other peaks in the Carson area.

May 11-12
MERCED CANYON BACKPACK
Class 1
24 miles
Leader: Kai Wiedman
(415) 347-2843

A trip into this broad river basin becomes an exploration of an ever-changing environment with waterfalls, huge domes lakes, wooded canyon floors and glacier-worn walls.

June 15-16
DUNDERBERG PEAK
(12374 ft., Class 2)

EXCELSIOR
(12,446, Class 2)
Leader: John Ingvoldstad
(408) 259-3399

Early season conditioning trip. These are the two highest peaks in the Hoover Wilderness. We'll car camp a Twin Lakes.

Private trips

Private trips are not insured, sponsored or supervised by the Sierra Club or the PCS. They are Listed here because they may be of interest to PCS climbers.

May 25-27 memorial Weekend)
MT. SHASTA

Hotlum/Bolan route
14,162 feet

Leader: Kai Wiedman
(415) 347-2843

"An enormous snow-capped volcano, it looms like a Himalayan giant over the surrounding landscape. Unlike many other mountains, Shasta stands by itself, awesome in its isolation." An ice axe will be needed for this private trip. Assistant leader wanted

June 15-16
TENAYA CANYON
Class 4

Leader: Dave Caldwell
(408) 945-8030
Co-leader: Kai Wiedman
(415) 347-2843

A day "hike" through the pristine canyon from Tenaya Lake to Mirror Lake. This cross-country ramble has the potential for making a PCS death march look like a stroll through the mall. Participants must be proficient at rappelling and have fresh headlamp batteries. Avoid the rush! Sign up early!

A beginner's guide to armchair mountaineering

While armchair travelers dream of going places, traveling armchairs dream of staying put.

— Anne Tyler

IT HAS BEEN suggested that we devote some space in SCREE each month to armchair mountaineering. Perhaps, the suggestion went PCS members would be interested in reading (and writing) reviews of climbing books.

For many of us, after all, the words “open book” are more likely to conjure up visions of a paperback thriller, rather than a granite dihedron. We hope PCS bookworms will take the opportunity to share their reactions to newly published epics as well as hunkwom old favorites. If you hink Boardman is brilliant and Bonnington is a bore for vice versa), let's hear from you.

To get the ball rolling, we've jotted down thumbnail reviews of 3 of our favorite climbing books. lot necessarily the 10 best ever written, mind you, but 10 that would make a good start for any aspiring armchair mountaineer.

In alphabetical order they are: **Annapurna** by Maurice enog. Many consider this the ost beautifully written mounineering epic in the English language. (Not a bad achievement, coconsidering it was originally penned in French.) It's the grip pping story of the 1950 French Himalaya Expedition, the first to bag an 8,000-meter peak During the homeric, storm-battered retreat the two summiteers survived almost unspeakable hardships.

Climbing in North America by Chris Jones. Every American climber ought to be familiar with

fun-to-read book is a great place to start. Beginning with early explorers, it chronicles the epic ascents and oftentimes bizarre characters who helped make mountaineering what it is today.

Everest The West Ridge, by Thomas Hombein. A moving account of one of the most impressive accomplishments ever by Americans in the Himalaya & Hombein and Unsoeld's 1963 ascent of the untried West Ridge of Everest. With their retreat cut off, the pair traversed the peak and descended the South Col route after surviving a bivouac at 28,400 feet. Great pictures, too, if you an get your hands on the original coffee-table edition of the book. (Thanks, Kai.)

Fifty classic Climbs of North America, by Steve Roper and Allen Steck. Yes, it's largely to blame for all those lines at the bases of the best routes from Yosemite Valley to Jackson Hole. And, sure, there are too many of those VI, 5.9, A4 horror routes that I'm sure even the authors would never dare to attempt. But, hey, you can't beat Fifty Classics for engrossing bathroom reading. Each selection is just the right length for the average session.

K2: The Savage Mountain, by Charles Houston and Robert Bates. The writing is only average, but the story is one for the ages. Pounded by a storm high on K2, expedition members face an awful choice leave a stricken climber to die, or try to get him down the mountain with the likelihood they'd all be killed. They didn't hesitate to do the latter, and their heroics make quite a contrast with the following selection.

The Last Step: The American Ascent of K2, by Rick Ridgeway. Sex, drugs and rock 'n' roll feature in this warts-and-all account of the successful 1978 American K2 Expedition. At times it reads like a soap opera played

out at 8,000 meters, with redneck John Roskelley and long-haired Chris Chandler at each others' throats.

The Seven Mountain-Travel Books, by H.W. Tilman. As the name implies, this is not one book but seven compiled into one shelf-buckling volume. And while I confess I have yet to finish all 896 pages, I can still highly recommend it. Tii and frequent partner Eric Shipton were the premier explorer-mountaineers of their day, and as British as buttered scones and tea Included here are the first ascents of Mt Kenya, Nanda Devi and dozens of other peaks, and the filling in of many blank spots on the map.

Touching the Void, by Joe Simpson. A can't-put-it-down survival thriller. During a harrowing nighttime descent of 21,000-foot Siula Grande in the Peruvian Andes, the author's partner is forced to cut the rope and Simpson plunges 150 feet into a crevasse. Left for dead, he somehow manages to crawl back to basecamp four days later, delirious and barely alive.

You're Standing On My Fingers, by H. Warren Lewis. Hardly an epic, but irresistibly charming (to me, anyway). These are the mountaineering adventures of the Lewis family, onetime members of the RCS, and they take place amid backdrops familiar to us all: the Minarets, Yosemite Valley, Mt. Shasta, the Pinnacles, the Tetons, etc. Lewis evokes a time (early to mid-1960s) when both climbing and family life were more innocent.

A Walk in the Sky, by Nick Clinch. The authors dry wit enlivens this account of the first ascent of Hidden Peak (Gasherbrum I). Eschewing large scale siege tactics (mainly because they couldn't afford them), clinch's 1958 expedition became the first and only American team to knock off an 8,000-meter peak.

-John Flinn

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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.



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Dated Material!**