



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

February, 1991

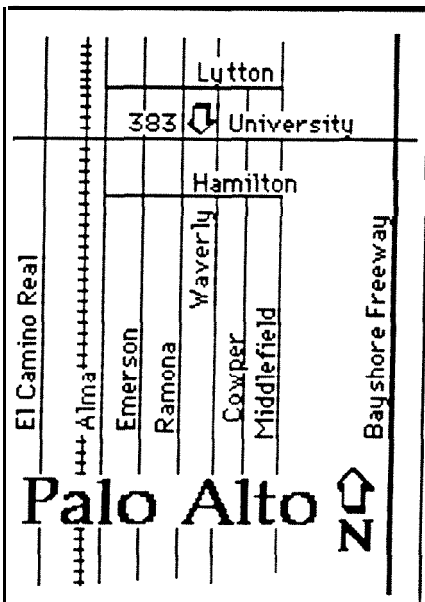
Vol, 24, No. 2

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The Matterhorn

Date: Tuesday, Feb. 12
Time: 8 p.m.
Place: The North Face
 383 University Ave.
 Palo Alto

NOTE NEW LOCATION!
Program: "Scrambles
 Amongst the Alps: The Next
 Generation," by John Flinn and
 Kai Wiedman. In the 135 years
 since Whymper first climbed
 the Matterhorn, the peak has
 seen ascents by a 7-year-old,
 several blind men and even a
 dancing bear. You're probably
 saying to yourself: That's all
 well and good, but did Flinn
 and Wiedman have what it
 takes?



THERE ARE hundreds of mountains higher than the Matterhorn; there are hundreds that are harder to climb. But there is none, anywhere in the world, which has so consistently and deeply stirred the imagination of men.

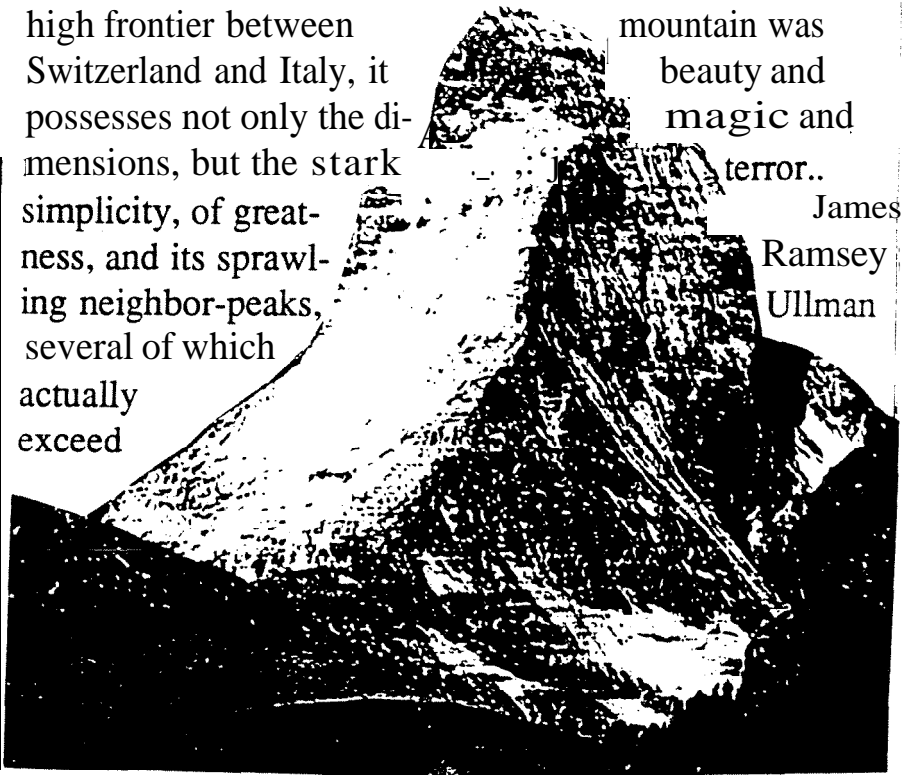
Rising in an immense isolated pyramid on the high frontier between Switzerland and Italy, it possesses not only the dimensions, but the stark simplicity, of greatness, and its sprawling neighbor-peaks, several of which actually exceed

its 14,782-foot altitude. seem to shrink into insignificance beside it.

Through all the centuries that men have known and traveled the Alps their eyes have been drawn irresistably upward to its savage, soaring pinnacle.

Other mountains were, well, mountains. This mountain was beauty and magic and terror..

James
 Ramsey
 Ullman



Upcoming Outings

March 16-17 (Sat.-Sun.)

MT. CARMEL

4417 ft., class 1

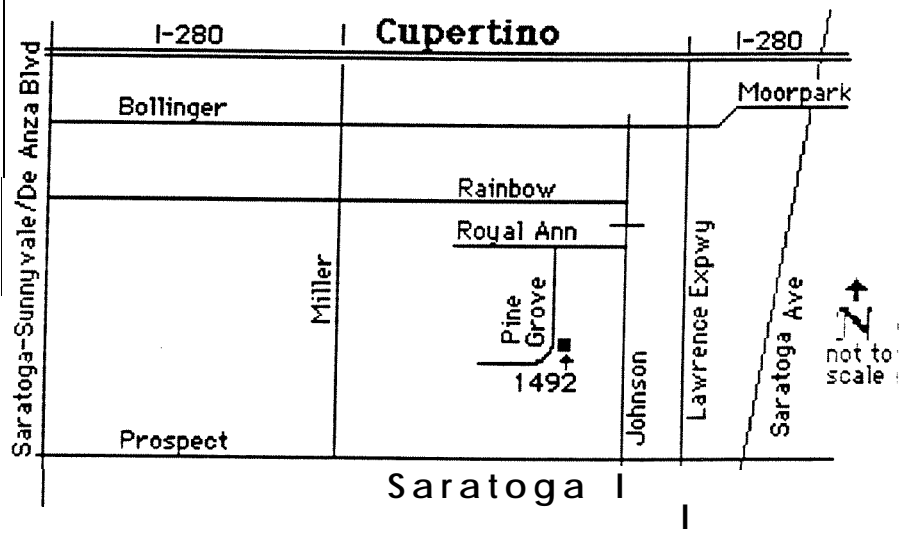
Ventana Wilderness

Leader: Aaron Schuman

(415) 494-3299 before 9:00 p.m., h

(415) 335-1901 w

Normal people would breeze up the 4.7-mile trail from Bottcher's Gap to this madrone-topped summit, but rot us! If I took you that way, I'd be depriving you of most of the fun this rip offers! From Los Padres Dam, we'll haul ourselves up beyond Big Pines and on to the top, a round trip backpack of 26.2 miles.



April 13-14 (Sat.-Sun.)

ANDERSON PEAK

3099 ft., class 1

Ventana Wilderness

Leader: Aaron Schuman

(415) 494-3299, before 9:00 p.m., h

(415) 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 Cold Springs Campground. From the camp, 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.

May 4-5 (Sat.-Sun.)

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 Wirmemucca 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.

Spring/Summer trip planning meeting

PLAN ON showing up at the spring/summer trip planning meeting at 8 p.m. on Feb. 19 at Ron Lingelbach's place, 1492 Pine Grove Way, San Jose.

Ron's phone number, if you're lost or late, is (408) 253-8036.

The deadline for permit applications will be on us soon, and as usual we'd like to offer a full menu of trips to a variety of mountains at a variety of difficulty levels.

Good spring trips are usually hard to plan, but this year we might be able to take advantage of the drought and start heading up to the high country much earlier than usual.

Trip leaders: please give the matter some thought and come to the meeting armed with a couple of good trip ideas.

Aspiring leaders: come to the meeting, and we'll get you started on the road to becoming a leader.

PCS can't arrange carpools

THANKS TO our friends in the legal profession, here's some thing else the PCS can no longer do: arrange carpools on trips.

A passenger was injured in an auto accident on an outing arranged by another chapter, which resulted recently in the inevitable lawsuit against the Sierra Club.

To avoid any further suits, we must make it explicitly clear to all trip participants that *the trip begins at the trailhead*. Carpools to and from the trailhead are at the passenger or driver's own risk. The Sierra Club is not insured for carpooling and assumes no liability for them.

(This, apparently, has been the club's official position for some time,

but some activities sections, including the PCS, have on occasion left the policy unsaid.)

The Sierra Club will continue to encourage carpooling on outings under the following conditions:

*Trip leaders are limited to providing lists of participants and information on who lives near whom. This may allow participants to form their own carpools.

*Leaders may also provide guidelines on gas money reimbursement to the driver.

*Drivers must have their own liability and property damage insurance on their vehicles. Passengers should ask drivers to confirm they have this.

Mountain notes

Mission Peak

The Fremont City Council is considering putting a 200-acre golf course, clubhouse, restaurant, driving range and 250-car parking lot in the open space below Mission Peak.

It's a site that for the past 13 years has been used by horseback riders, hang gliders, cyclists and countless PCS hikers--especially members of the Los Cientos fraternity.

Opponents raise questions about the amount of water needed to keep the greens green, the propriety of spending taxpayers' money to convert multi-use land to single-user land and the need for a new golf course when two others are being developed in Fremont.

If you would like to help save the land as open space, contact the Fremont Coalition for Open Space and Trails, 233 Merrill Ave., Fremont, 94539,

Or phone Susan Wilson at (415) 6651-6873, Bonnie Davis at (415) 657-51239 or Mike and Nina Alvarez at (415) 792-1574.

More Mission Peak

If you like to hike up Mission Peak from the trailhead at Ohlone College, don't make the mistake, as someone we know did recently, of believing that campus security looks the other way at parking in the handicapped spaces above the swimming pools on Sundays. Tickets are now \$100. Ouch.

Miss Manners says

Everybody (well, almost) enjoys the occasional witty remark from the floor during our monthly PCS slide shows. But it has been brought to our attention that audience participation has lately on occasion escalated into a cacophony of heckling reminiscent of an episode of "Geraldo."

Let's all try to be a little more civil.

Reaching new heights

From Outside Magazine: "The Fletschorn used to be a 4,000-meter peak near the Swiss village of Saas Grund and a magnet for alpinists out to conquer mountains of 4,000 meters or higher.

Then came a new surveyor's measurement, which revised the Fletschorn's height to 3,998 meters. Fearing a slowdown in visitor traffic, the mayor of Saas Grund, German Anthamatten, has launched a drive to return the mountain to its former glory-by piling up rocks on the peak's summit."

Perhaps the same could be done for the Sierra Nevada's 13,990-foot Mt Barnard, of which Roper says: "Formerly one of California's 14,000-foot peaks. A lot of peak baggers were unhappy when the USGS announced the new elevation."

Next time pack it out

Outdoor etiquette dictates that we bum used our used toilet paper, right? Better think twice. A camper in Idaho who did this recently stood trial for criminal negligence-for accidentally

igniting a 9,000-acre forest fire in Hells Canyon.

However, a U.S. magistrate found the camper innocent in connection with the 1988 blaze in the Payette National Forest, which took more than two weeks to control.

Part of the camper's defense was based on the fact that camping books and even some Forest Service maps instruct campers to burn their toilet paper after use.

Said Payette National Forest Supervisor Sonny LaSalle: "The only safe way to deal with human waste is to bury it." He said toilet paper will decompose if it is put in a 6-inch-deep hole and covered with dirt.

Now you know

Q: What is the largest country (in terms of land mass) without a 20,000-foot peak?

A: Canada.

Today's quote

"The wise find pleasure in waters, the virtuous in mountains."

— Confucius



Trip reports

On Pyramid Peak: discovering the Rites of Romano

THE ABOVE strange title is in reference to an unplanned event which occurred on a trip to Pyramid Peak on Oct. 6-7. Those involved were Debbie Benham, Henry Bugatto, Dave Caldwell, Joe Coha, Anne Gaillard (leader), Dave LaPlant, Peter Maxwell, Linda Smith and Judith Yarborough.

For this trip, perhaps not unlike many others, car pooling was the first "peak" to surmount, with furious behind-the-scenes activity involving three or four changes in pools and substantial use of Pac Bell's facilities. Even at the last minute, one car refused to start (after being loaded up) and another had to be substituted. Funny, on my last trip an exhaust system got wrecked - what next?

Our leader's orders were very explicit: Be ready to go at 8.30 a.m. at Echo Lake. Linda, Judith and Joe shamed the rest of us by turning up in full gear (after having hiked down from the upper car park) while we were still eating breakfast, accompanied by a few ducks waddling around.

Any thoughts of getting a boat taxi across the lake had vanished as everything was closed up, with boards over the windows. The walk around the lake didn't worry us, though, as this was thought to be an "easy" weekend. indeed, we'd been congratulating ourselves on "only 700 feet of elevation gain the first day," and "only five miles or so," and "less than 2000 feet to the peak."

Well, the first part was easy enough apart from the "Romano Episode." At the first water stop I thirstily got out my water bottle, into which I'd put my tasty New Zealand drink crystals (or so I thought), opened the lid, thought it smelled strange and wondered why the stuff hadn't dissolved yet, took a

gulp, and discovered it tasted even worse than it smelled.

In my rush to be ready on time I had emptied a bag of grated Romano cheese into my drink! This is not recommended practice. Even after the cheese was tipped out there was left a greasy residue on the inside of the bottle which smelled almost as bad as the raw cheese, and rendered the bottle unuseable (at least without a nose peg).

Along the way we didn't see much in the way of fall colors, the trees being mostly varieties of pines. Joe had dispensed with his cane from the North Peak trip, and the honor for unusual gear went to Linda, who deftly used two ski poles. The *click, click, click* as they touched the rocks was very distinctive.

We arrived at our campsite around 11.30 a.m. Along the way there was considerable dissent on maps. Judith had an attractive full-color Wilderness Press version, while others had inferior black and white Xerox copies. These latter were clearly inadequate since it was their fault that we camped at the wrong lake.

Thinking we were at Waca Lake, we didn't discover until the next day (by reading a signpost, not the map) that we were really at American Lake.

THE DAY had started cloudless, but by now there were a lot of clouds and a cold wind was blowing, so we elected to do the peak the next day and conquer Cracked Crag that afternoon. This is a much more minor peak on the other side of Lake Aloha (which, by the way, was not one lake at all at this time of year, but rather a collection of smaller lakes). The starkness of the scene walking across the basin was remarkable, and beautiful in its own right. The term "Desolation" was very fitting.

Having accomplished Cragged Crag we also bagged the unnamed bump at the south end of the ridge and posed for "advertising" photos at the top. We figured we could feature

them somehow. The shot of all the women together could be captioned "PCS Women Like It On Top," while that of the men, with Dick's Peak as a backdrop, could be "PCS Men Do It with Dicks Behind Them."

Dinner saw an interesting range of options, from the cold-dry (Henry's homemade turkey jerkey that looked like it took more energy to chew than it gave in return) to the hot-wet (Anne's tortellini that really didn't take the hour of cooking that Henry threatened).

After we were relaxed, and had shared in some jokes, Anne tried to get us to agree to an 8 a.m. departure the next day, but ran into problems. After we realized this was not another joke, Dave Caldwell grumbled out loud, but he was voicing the unspoken feelings of everyone else. If it was going to be an "easy" day, why get up so early? We eventually and reluctantly agreed to a 7 a.m. awakening, to leave hopefully before 8.30.

The next day started off rather negatively, with lots of clouds around and the peak covered. However, we weren't with the "Bail Out or Bust Bunch" so we went for it anyway. We were lucky because the weather cleared to perfect conditions. However, it was a day of underestimation. Fit of all, our "two hours to the top" turned into over three. There was some fun scrambling along the way which made for a very varied climb. and somehow the 2000 feet just took a lot longer than expected.

We goofed around on top for quite some time, munching on our snacks (no lunches because we "wouldn't need them") and arranging group photos. Going down we made a more direct line towards Waca Lake, being careful to skirt the impressive cliffs on the west face.

We were further delayed by more cliffs further down which necessitated a slight detour and the net result of all of this was that we didn't arrive back
(see next page)

(from previous page)

at camp until around 2.45 p.m., our stomachs complaining.

The final underestimation was the "two hours to walk out." After leaving about 3.50 p.m., we didn't get back until after 6.30, by which time the sun had set and it was getting really cold-- 35 degrees, in fact.

Echo Lake seemed to go on and on and we were envious of the one or two boats we saw, thinking to ourselves: "We could be on one of those." We were warmly greeted at the cars by Joe, who was a little ahead and who gallantly helped people off with their packs. I didn't envy him or Judith or Linda, who had to hike up to the upper car park. Frankly I was glad to dump my pack at the bottom and collapse.

Thanks should be given to **Anne**, who not only organized the trip, but did all the work normally done by a co-leader as well. With such efforts, it was no wonder the trip was such a success.

-- Peter Maxwell

How to submit your articles to SCREE

IT'S A BIG job to keep the front and back pages of SCREE from bumping together each month, and the new-old editor has no intention of doing it all himself.

Trip reports, as always, are a staple of SCREE. We're counting on every trip leader to assign someone to write them. They don't necessarily have to be long-winded—a quick summation of the climb and a list of the participants will suffice.

On the other hand, this can also be an opportunity to let the old muse range freely. If you've ever wanted to crank out prose like Herzog or Tilman, by all means go for it.

We're also looking for reminiscences of memorable past trips (PCS or otherwise), opinions on techniques and equipment, book reviews, restaurant critiques, poetry, fiction and, as always, vicious gossip and innuendo about trip leaders. And don't forget the mouthful-by-mouthful descriptions of gluttonous eating binges.

Also, please keep an eye out for interesting tidbits or cartoons in newspapers and magazines.

It doesn't matter if you're Mac, IBM or pencil-compatible. There are lots of ways to submit your stuff:

*Mail it to the editor on a 3.5 inch floppy disc. (His address is on the back page of SCREE.) Right now we can read all Mac word processing formats (although WriteNow is best if you've got it.) Soon we ought to be able to read IBM files as well. We'll mail all discs back promptly. Please put your name and address on it.

*Send it over the phone lines via modem. Any computer format should work. Call the editor first at (415) 968-2050 before sending.

*Fax it to the editor's office: (408) 288-9723. But before doing so, phone there first at (408) 286-8779.

*Mail articles to the editor's home. We prefer they be typed, but hand-written is OK if your penmanship is reasonably legible.

North Palisade: the one that got away from us (again)

MIKE AND Tim had talked me into making it a Saturday-Monday trip instead of Friday-Sunday. It was good they did. As we stood Saturday morning amid piles of gear near Glacier Lodge, strangers approached. Oh, it's only Aaron Schuman, Gary Pinson and a hiking partner.

"You don't want to go up there" said Aaron, pointing up the north fork. "We were up there yesterday," added Gary, "and it rained so hard and the lightning was so bad my knees were shaking. Look at the snow."

We did and it was beautiful.

"No problem," one of us quipped. "We're equipped."

Although Gary and Aaron were calling it quits on Middle Palisade, we had psyched ourselves up enough for

this climb of North Palisade that we weren't stopping until we were turned back personally by the weather.

As you might guess, not another drop or flake fell while we were there. Clouds only added effect, and the snow was beautiful. Our impediments consisted more of logistical difficulties. Last minute transportation changes, forgotten gear and dead camera batteries at the trail head. It all resulted in a very late start and lost motivation.

I had figured that in theory, by being equipped with such items as crampons, I would be more successful on this peak than last time. It was not unreasonable to expect that we might even summit. And I had brought more experienced people than myself.

But logic doesn't always work. Little things come into play, like broken zippers, loose crampons, wrong boots, and being able to get up early in the morning and move quickly. And we came close to duplicating the communication

difficulties experienced by the first Rum Doodle expedition.

Although we got no higher than I had the last time, and nerves were frayed, I treat it as another learning experience: be aggressive on North Pal, and don't listen to anything Pinson or Schuman says.

The trip was Sept 29 to Oct 1. Our group consisted of Bhalu Sharma, Tim Hult, Mike Sogard and Kelly Maas.

— Kelly Maas

CHAIRPERSON:

Aaron Schuman
3875 Park Blvd #22
Palo Alto, CA 94306
(415) 494-3299 h before 9 p.m.
(408) 335-1901 w

VICE CHAIR/SCHEDULER:

Debbie Bulger
775 A Brommer St.
Santa Cruz, CA 95062

TREASURER:

Debbie Benham
1984 N. Star Circle
San Jose, CA 95131
(408) 945-8030 h

SCREE EDITOR:

John Flinn
133 Promethean Way
Mtn. View, CA 94043
(415) 968-2050 h. before 10 p.m.
(408) 286-8779 w
(408) 288-9723 FAX

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For change of address, write or call Paul Vlasveld 157 Kellogg Way, Santa Clara 95051. (408) 241-1144 h / (408) 257-7910 w. 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.



Peak Climbing Section
133 Promethean Way
Mtn. View, CA 94043



92/02
STEVEN R. ECKERT
1814 OAK KNOLL DR.
BELMONT, CA 94002-

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