



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

December 1992

Vol. 25, No. 12

PCS Christmas Party

Aaron Schuman has reserved the Cafe Iris for the PCS Christmas Party from 7:30 **pm to 10:30 pm on Tuesday, December 8.** The Cafe Iris is the new Silicon Graphics cafeteria, in Building 5, just down the street from the old cafeteria where we met last year.

Members can bring in a maximum of 10 slides to show at the Christmas party. Exhibitionists are encouraged to set up singalongs and skits.

To get to Silicon Graphics, take the Shoreline Blvd exit from US-1 01 in Mountain View. From either the northbound or southbound directions, make a right exit, then turn left at the top of the ramp, heading north through the industrial park.

1.3 miles from the top of the ramp, there'll be the unmistak-

able Shoreline Amphitheater on your left - a giant two poled white tent (easily visible from the left side of your plane when you descended into San Jose).

Another landmark at the same corner is the charming red abstract sculpture on your right. Turn right at that corner, onto a named but poorly marked drive. Congratulations, you're on the SGI campus.

Park anywhere that isn't a fire lane, a handicapped space, or a loading dock. Refer to the campus map for directions to Building 5.

Food assignments are based on your last name

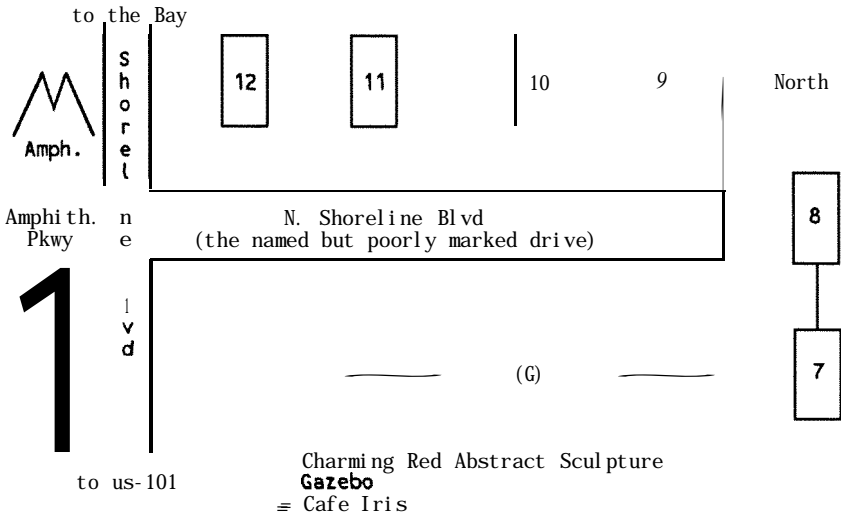
A-F Desserts

G-L Snacks , appetisers or salads

M-Q Drinks

R-Z Main Course

How to Find the Fun



Forced Relaxation Technique

Did you hear that Kai had an accident about a week ago and broke his hip? It was a work accident (no high altitude drama, this). He will be laid up for up to 6 months!! Evidently he had surgery and had a plate put in his hip.

It seems that he will be home any day, and would welcome phone calls and/or visits.

He will be inactive for several months. For someone as active as Kai, this will be a difficult time. Spread the word so all his friends can keep in touch with him and keep him part of the group over the long haul. Kai has contributed greatly to the PCS, and now it's our turn to contribute to his return.

Thanks to the many members who contributed information about Kai-Ed.

High Drama In The High Sierra

Labor Day weekend saw quite a large group laboring to conquer Mt Stanford, one of the Sierra's least visible major peaks. It makes up for its lack of prominence by its inaccessibility and its altitude (a healthy 13963'). The aspiring graduates were Debbie Benham, Debbie Bulger, Dave Caldwell, Joe Coha, Jim Curl, Dodi Domish, Anne Gaillard, Kelly Maas (co-leader), Chris MacIntosh, Peter Maxwell (leader), Jim Ramaker and Richard Stover. Apart from the grueling hike in and a very long ascent day, there were other, unplanned sagas and a few lessons learned.

To start with, it's a long way to the Onion Valley trailhead so too early a start was not reasonable. We eventually got away around 9.30 for a hike which entailed some 13 miles, 2500' up to Kearsarge Pass, down 2000' to Vidette Meadow and up a further 1000' to our campsite on (whoops, near) the John

Muir trail just past the junction to Center Basin. Although long, the hike goes through beautiful countryside with lots of variety and incredible views of the Sierra.

The campsite itself, apart from being set in idyllic, isolated surroundings, has a metal bear box thrown in to make life easier. Somebody in the group warned us to be sure we didn't lock a little animal *in* the box when we closed it for the night. We arrived about 6 pm, most of us being pretty tired. Up to this point we still hadn't seen the peak!

The next day we had 3200' to climb to the summit with about a further 3-4 miles to hike. Double those figures for the round trip and it makes for another long day. We were away by 7 am on a crisp, beautifully clear morning. We stopped several times in the first half hour trying to figure out exactly

which was the peak and which route to take. This has to be one of the most difficult peaks to locate. It was almost impossible to match the topo map with what we were looking at, and the "peak" looked more like a wall of rock than a peak. Even Gregory's Monument, immediately adjacent, should have been a giveaway indicator but it wasn't.

As it turned out I got more challenge than I bargained for. Our original intention had been to try the North Ridge route, but when we arrived at the valley leading west to the ridge, we could see that the route involved a steep wall. Some people expressed concern at the safety of this route. After discussion, we decided that the entire group would continue further south around a large ridge and into the next bowl.

Beyond this spur ridge it became clear that the route had to go up the bowl and on to the ridge or plateau on top. The bowl was apparently the "steep chute" which de-

scends "directly from the summit" described in Secor - makes me wonder if he ever climbed it personally. This summit plateau/ridge ran all in front of us: from Mt Stanford all the way to the left (past Gregory's Monument and over towards Forester Pass).

Most of it was a steep wall, and on the next peak it was a loose talus slope above a scree-covered glacier. A gully immediately in front of us looked as if it might be possible, although most of it was obscured by a rock curtain, out the base of which fanned a large scree slope.

The more open and visible route on our right was clear - a move off to the east, a traverse across the gully on a wide ledge and then up to the top of the chute by the "ears" - two rock columns. Most of the group agreed that this, the northwest route, was going to be the easiest.

The people who had disliked the North Ridge route did not agree with the decision. The route up the steep scree gully to the west

seemed the easier route to them. There was no consensus reached, so two people signed off the trip and proceeded toward the gully, joined by a third person. With hindsight, perhaps altitude was already affecting judgment. They assured us they wouldn't tackle anything beyond their abilities.

To make a short report of a rather long experience, what the party of 3 found in their gully was first, scree. This had been visible before. Above this was 80' of steep ice: solid, but with some loose scree on top of it. At the top, through holes in the ice, was a cave. The first attempt to reach it, by climbing the rock to the side, failed: the ice was too smooth and steep.

But a second attempt from directly below got all three people into the cave. Despite its icy, blue beauty, the wall above it was almost unclimbable. Kelly later estimated it to be 5th class - and these people had no rope, just a short piece of cord of inadequate thickness. However, the group, misbelieving they

were close to the top, made 20 more exposed feet further up, when the rock became too friable (due to the freeze-thaw action of water). Not to mince words - they were stuck and hypothermia became a real possibility in the cold environment. At least they had the 10 essentials. Two people got out their whistles and started to sound the distress call-3 blasts.

The main party was also climbing. After some initial scree work, the climb turned into good, challenging class 3. At 12:20, the graduation ceremony took place for just five of us.

One of the most amazing things about summitting was reading the summit register. This had been placed there in 1940 and was still only about half full. What's more, the first two pages were photocopies of entries dating right back to the first ascent. In one small book we had the entire history of everyone who had climbed the peak.

On the descent by the upper group, we had gotten as

far as the point where we had parted company with the trio earlier, when Jim Ramaker barely heard a whistle being blown. At first, this was mistaken for some far off backpackers playing with whistles.

However, the whistling was repeated several times in a distress signal and it was coming from the gully where the others had been heading. I gave Kelly the 10m of 6mm rope I was carrying for safety, and he and the two Jims headed up to investigate. Kelly and Jim Curl continued up.

Kelly managed to convince the leader of the three that they were not near the top and that it would be better to descend rather than continue up. The rope was extremely useful, although somewhat short, as the three were belayed down. The episode was not without risk because rockfall was a constant danger.

After exchanging shouts with the others as to what was going on, the rest of us started back on the route to

camp. We stopped when we were about to lose sight of the gully. The plan was to wait until we saw signs of people coming out, at which time we'd head back to camp to let the others know what was happening. It was a long wait and we didn't start back until two hours after we'd first heard the whistle. This put us back in camp as it was getting dark, to report our saga. About an hour later, 3 of the 5 turned up at camp. The other two ended up staying out all night.

This made for additional difficult decisions the next morning as, although we knew they were out of the gully, we didn't know if they had become injured on the walk back to camp. Because of the long walk out and the long drive back we did not want to leave too late. Jim Curl offered to walk back up the trail to try to meet them while we would report them as lost to the rangers on our exit. We left them a note on their tent to this effect.

As it turned out, Jim saw them only a short distance

from camp and was able to utilize his bionic legs and catch up with the rest of us. The hike out took us past the stunningly beautiful Bullfrog Lake, a slightly different route than our hike in, and highly recommended.

Nobody was hurt in all of this, but had we not had people in the group who were capable of climbing the gully and aiding the trio, I'm not sure how this adventure might have turned out. After all, they were climbing what was at least class 4 with no rope.

There are many lessons to be learned from this. It would not have happened had the party all stayed together. However, signing off a trip is a valid option if a participant thinks the leader has made an incorrect or dangerous decision.

The important thing is not to go off independently and tackle something for which anyone in the group is either ill-equipped or has insufficient ability. If this happens, anyone else in the area (including the group from

which the party has signed off) is honor-bound to try to rescue them.

Morals for leaders are to be aware of the abilities of all participants and to ensure that everyone returns safely. Know when to turn back and don't let initial sense degenerate into an attitude like "we're almost at the top: press on a little more and we'll make it".

Morals for participants are that they can *and should* tell the leader if they feel the route selected is not safe. They should not allow themselves to be talked into doing something they don't feel comfortable with.

— Peter Maxwell

For Perspective:

"The last man's lot is, therefore, not a happy one. He has to bear with meekness all the hail of debris, often sharp and weighty, and does not have the satisfaction of kicking down his share on someone else."

— J. Outram

From Your Editor-Elect

Because of the Christmas holiday and the fact that the January issue will be my very first, I've moved the Scree deadline back to Friday, Dec. 18. I hope this will give me enough time to figure out what I'm doing and get the Scree out on time!!!

I welcome your contributions. In fact, I'm offering you a variety of ways to get your input to me. Here they are (in order of preference):

1) Electronic Mail-

PhyllisO@Forsythe.Stanford.Edu (INTERNET ADDRESS)

PhyllisO@Stanford.Bitnet (BITNET ADDRESS)

2) MAC disk (DD or HD okay)

3) DOS 3 1/2" disk (ASCII format)

4) Fax (415) 723-2011

(several people use this machine,
so please specify me by name on the cover page)

5) U.S. Mail--

750 Homer Avenue
Palo Alto, CA 94301-2907

6) typed material

7) anything scrawled by hand on bits of paper or TP
(preferably unused)

Thanks!

Phyllis Olrich (AKA Phyllis Robinson)

(415) 322-0323 (home)

(415) 725-1541 (work)

P.S. I'd like to experiment with trying to scan photographs into the Scree, so if you have any snappy photos to accompany your articles, please send them in (return promised). Black and white would work better, but I understand not too many people use that medium any more, so I'll try color.

Official PCS Trips

January	Tahoe telemark ski cabin
January	Point Reyes backpack
February	Mount Shasta climb
March	Crater Lake ski
March	Dewey Point ski
May	Ridge Winery conditioning hike

Point Reyes Backpack

Date: Jan 16-17

Where: Point Reyes Class 1

Contact: Paul Vlasveld

Home: 408-241- 1144

Work: 408-257-7910 x3613

Join me for a “Keep in Shape” backpack trip to beautiful Point Reyes. This will be a loop trip with about 7-8 miles per day. We will meet at the ranger station at 8 am Saturday. Let’s hope for a dry weekend.

Private Trips

November through February,
Tollhouse Rock and Vicinity

Eugene Miya is exploring the area around Toll House Rock and its environs. He is totally fed up with Pinnacles “rock” and prefers Sierra granite. Most winter weekends will find him going up to this area (except skiing and ski mountaineering weekends, see other parts of the Schedule). This is NOT rock climbing instruction. The easiest climbs in the region are 5.5 and most harder, into the 5.11 arena.

Most climbs are multi-pitch, (1-6’ pitches) and a few even have single-bolt belay-anchors (not for the faint of heart) or are climbs on “unexplored” rock.

Be warned that the climbing here can be serious. Transportation is 4WD. Weather occasionally is a problem (3k ft. and higher). If you are interested in joining the crew who goes out here, phone: 4 15-96 1-6772.

— Eugene Miya

Oh Yeah? Well You Don't Know...

A guy's going on a hiking vacation through the mountains "out west". Before setting off into the boonies, he stops into a small general store to get some supplies.

After picking out the rest of his provisions, he asks the old store owner, "Say mister, I'm going hiking up in the mountains, and I was wondering; do you have any bears around here?"

"Yup," replies the owner.

"What kind?" asks the hiker.

"Well, we got black bears and we got grizzlies," he replies.

"I see," says the hiker. "Do you have any of those bear bells?"

"What do you mean?" asks the store owner.

"You know," replies the hiker, "those little tinkle-bells that people wear in bear country to warn the bears that they are coming, so they don't surprise the bears and get attacked."

"Oh yeah," replies the owner. "They're over there," he says, pointing to a shelf on the other

side of the store. The hiker selects a couple of the bells and takes them to the counter to pay for them.

"Tell me something, mister," the hiker inquires, "how can you tell when you're in bear territory, anyway?"

"By the scat," the old fellow replies, ringing up the hiker's purchases.

"Well, urn, how can I tell if it's grizzly territory or black bear territory?" the hiker asks.

"By the scat," the store owner replies.

"Well, what's the difference?" asks the hiker. "I mean, what's different between grizzly scat and black bear scat?"

"The stuff that's in it," replies the store owner.

Getting a little frustrated, the hiker asks, "OK, so what's in grizzly bear scat that isn't in black bear scat?" he asks, an impatient tone in his voice.

"Bear bells," replies the old man as he hands the hiker his purchases.

— anonymous LA resident

Langely Trip Report

Cast:

Leader (whose only mistake was thinking she had made one)

Chic (millinery specialist)

Funky (audiophile extraordinaire)

Haute (haute cuisine chef)

Perfectly (the normal person)

Lover (fine books a specialty)

On Thursday, July 24, four seasoned PCSers--Leader, Chic, Perfectly, and Lover--set out for the Eastern side of the Sierra and a jaunt up Mt. Langely.

By the time we came to Hopyard Road, it was evident that at least one more warped personality could fit into the car, so we stopped and collected Funky who was hanging around the Burger King checking out the Musak.

After a night at luxurious Camp 9, we took off for Lone Pine with only a slight stop for some terrific muffins and caffeine in Mammoth. At Lone Pine we connected with Haute, who had been scouting out the area for a day or

so and had picked up our permit. A little more driving put us at the Cottonwood Lakes trailhead, with elevation of 10,000'+! After what began to seem like endless packing, repacking, weighing, sun block application, bathroom trips, water bottle filling, and general merriment, we headed down the trail.

Not far along, we came to a handmade sign, handsomely illuminated with day-glo yellow and green. It politely requested hikers to behave in something like a responsible fashion while in the area. We later learned that the Ranger had made it herself, and day-glo colors were specially chosen to attract the attention of folks arriving from L.A.

A bit further, we ran into the sign maker herself along with her dog. She checked our permit, and then gave us directions to a great campsite which was not too far off the trail, level, and possessed of a great view.

After a walk of only a few miles and a little elevation gain, we reached our goal. Chic divested herself of her gleaming white Lawrence of Arabia headgear and most of the group collapsed by the lake to enjoy the scenery and an oddball game of Hearts.

Lover, of course, could not keep her hands off the steamy fiction that other trip members had been enviously teasing her about since they read a choice bit in the car on the way up. Funky wandered off to go climbing around, for Pete's sake. Clearly he thought this was a mountaineering trip or something.

Come supper time, Haute broke out the first of his extravagant meals--Pemmican bar avec eau d'iodine. The rest of us furtively tried to disguise our pitiful attempts

to produce a meal up to Haute's standards, but we were doomed to failure by his second course - warm Pemmican bar bathed in mosquito repellent and sunscreen.

Next morning, our egos damaged by the sight of Haute savoring his Pemmican breakfast bar, we struck out for the peak. On the advice of the kindly ranger, we headed up New Army Pass and offered many thanks to the inventor of the switch back.

It was here that Leader discovered that the map for the peak had gone missing from her pack. But from the top of the pass, our objective was easily in view and, according to the map that Lover had brought along, there was a trail to the summit.

We discussed how to make the route more interesting and then sensibly set out on the trail. The usual amount of stopping to admire the view while actually catching your breath occurred, and soon we were near the top. Then we discovered the fallacy of believing the USGS--

the trail disappeared into a jumble of rocks, scree, and a bit of snow. The better to worry Leader, we split up and swore and scrambled our various ways along until we reached the large summit plateau.

Just as we were congratulating ourselves and the other dozen souls who had cheated death to reach the summit, we saw a dog coming our way. How, we asked each other, had a dog made such a steep and rocky ascent? Clearly, the dog and its master had found what we had missed--the trail.

So we started down, heartened that our descent would be on the lovely, well maintained trail that the dog and his master had come up. But again the mountain demons struck, luring us onto nasty scrambles on ugly scree filled gullies. As we slipped and slid downward, we saw below on the trail--yes, dog and master who had somehow slipped past us on the way down.

We skidded our way down Old Army Pass and back to

camp. Here we discovered that bear bagging has its limits. The hanging sacks of food were surrounded by squawking Clark's Nutcrackers who had pecked their way into the plastic bags and were making a fierce attempt to get into the nylon ones as well.

We drove them off and began our meal, wondering what elegant creation Haute would have for his evening repast. Such was his exhaustion from the rigors of the day, that he allowed himself two Pemmican bars deluxe before cleaning up Perfectly's dinner-Perfectly having retired a bit early owing the bracing effect a strenuous day at high altitude had had on his head and tummy. Leader, on unloading her day pack, discovered that the correct map had mysteriously reappeared just where it was supposed to be.

Next morning, the group strolled back to the cars and a wonderful 8+ hour ride back to the flat lands. The only problem with the return was Funky's evident failure

to appreciate the selection of tapes and the Pete Seeger sing-along that Lover and Chic organized for a few hundred agonizing miles.

For those of you who feel the need to know the flatland names of the PCS band, they were:

Chris Macintosh, Debbie Benham, Peter Rosmarin, Charles Schafer, and Craig Payne. To fit names to identities, just join a trip with any of the above mentioned. At 10,000' (a bit lower for Perfectly), their true selves emerge.

— Judith Yarborough

Snow Claws & Shoes

Sherpa Tucker model TUC100 with TG-7 & toe guard. Cost \$89, asking \$60. Contact Rich at 5 1 0-795-8411 after 8PM.

Sherpa Featherweight SSFS25. Cost \$130, asking \$90. Contact Rich at 510-795-8411 after 8PM.

/The Business of Climbing

You can purchase the bumper sticker below from Sierra Club/PCS member Georgia Stigall. White letters on green background, \$2.00 each. P.O. Box 2152, Sunnyvale, CA 94087.



Trip Classifications

These 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: Walking cross-country, using hands for balance only.

Class 3: Climbing which requires use of hands, occasional use of a rope.

Class 4: Climbing which requires rope belays.

Class 5: Technical rock climbing.

Private trips are listed only because readers might be interested in them. They are not authorized, insured, sponsored or supervised by the PCS or the Sierra Club.

Meetings & Deadlines

PCS meetings are held on the second Tuesday of every month. Each month's meeting location and time is printed in the Scree which arrives near the first of that month.

You may Email or FAX entries to the Editor as indicated on the back cover. MAC or DOS disks can also be sent.

Scree articles and contributions must be received by the editor no later than noon on the

l a s t

Officers of the PCS

Chair: Ron Lingelbach
1492 Pine Grove Way
San Jose, CA 95129
(408) 253-8036 H
Email: lingel@convex.com

Vice Chair/Scheduler: Kelly Maas
2422 Balme Drive
San Jose, CA 95122
(408) 279-2054 H

Treasurer: Charles Schafer
5143 Paseo Olivos
San Jose, CA 95130
(408) 378-9682 H

Scree Editor: Phyllis Olrich
750 Homer Avenue
Palo Alto, CA 94301-2907
(415) 322-0323 H
(415) 725-1541 W
(415) 723-2011 FAX
Email: PhyllisO@Forsythe.Stanford.Edu

Mailings: Paul Vlasveld
157 Kellogg Way
Santa Clara, CA 9505 1
(408) 241-1144 H

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To ensure an uninterrupted subscription, renewal checks must be received by the Treasurer no later than the last Tuesday of the expiration month, as listed at the top of your mailing label.

**SCREE is a publication of the
Peak Climbing Section
of the Sierra Club,
Loma Prieta Chapter**

Next Meeting: Dec 8

Time: 7:30 pm to 10:30pm

Program: Christmas potluck and slide show. Bring a dish as described below and some slides to show.

Place: Cafe Iris at Silicon Graphics (follow the map inside)

Food: Assignments are based on your last name:

A-F Desserts

G-L Snacks , appetisers or salads

M-Q Drinks

R-Z Main Course

**A big THANKS to all
the people who
supplied food and
drinks for the
monthly meetings
in 1992:**

January	Aaron Schuman
February	Debbie Benham
March	Larry Hester
April	Mike Johnson
May	Greg & Vreni Rau
June	Rex Naden
July	Linda Smith
August	Judith Yarborough
September	Lieke Vlasveld
October	JoAnn McDonnell
November	Marcia McCord

We need someone to supply the food for the January meeting in Palo Alto. Please call Kelly Maas or see him at the December meeting.