

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

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October 1992

Vol. 25, No. 10

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## Transitions

(or: Is There Anybody Out There?)

Ron Lingelbach is working on the nominating committee for the 1993 officers. Any suggestions?

We are looking for a few good (umm)persons to help steer the PCS through the up-coming year. You do not have to take office, just help pick the lucky ones that will. All of the positions listed on the back cover are up for grabs as of the January issue, so contact the Chairman if you are interested.

On another topic, **your faithful editor is about out of steam.** What we really need is someone to take over the task of compilation and editing. The desktop publishing equipment (PC, software, and laser printer) can be made available if you do not have your own.

If you are someone capable of finding those tidbits and graphics that make the Scree more interesting, call the current editor. You will have to do a bit of typing: It turns out that a full issue has about 30,000 characters of text under the assumption that drawings are just used for tiller.

— Editor

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Seen in Truckee: a copy of Mark Wellman and John Flinn's book about Mark Wellman! Why John used that photo of him on the dust jacket,

one would never know. I wonder who selected it. It was John with a sweat bandanna and a silly grin.

— Eugene N. Miya

# Trip Planning Meeting Report

With our supply of trips quickly drying up, a trip planning meeting was held at Ron Lingelbach's house on September 22. The pizza was very good, but the attendance was underwhelming and few trips were planned

PCS trip activity naturally diminishes in the colder months, as many of us turn more to skiing or simply pause to catch our breaths. Even so, it is hoped that a few brave soles [sic] will step forward and volunteer to lead either official or private trips between now and spring.

The remaining months of this year in particular are virtually tripless. Don't wait for me to call you!

If you have something in mind, give me a call and we'll get it scheduled: 408-279-2054.

Leaders and potential leaders: You don't have to be a hearty mountaineer (e.g. Dan Tupper) and lead winter mountaineering trips to the high Sierra, though such trips are certainly welcome. Give some thought to the local mountains (Diablo, Tamalpais, Santa Cruz, Henry Coe Park, etc) as well as the desert, beaches, etc. Consider hiking, mountain biking, skiing, snowshoeing, etc.

Thanks again to everyone who lead a summer trip.

— Kelly Maas (scheduler)

## Advance 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 |

**"There's only one thing about the 1992  
Presidential race that worries me....  
someone has to win. "**

# Field notes from the Brooks Range, Alaska

The 1991 trip Miriam Peterson and I took over most of the Alaskan national parks really whetted our desire to explore some of those areas on the ground, feel the tundra between our toes, and mash the mosquitoes on our skin.

We took off from the Palo Alto airport in a small single-engine Cessna airplane around the summer solstice in search of the midnight sun. In the midst of our flight up the MacKenzie River to the Arctic Ocean, west to the Siberian coast and south along the glacier shrouded Gulf of Alaska, we spent 4 days peak climbing in the Brooks Range Gates of the Arctic Park.

We landed at a gravel  strip in the native town of Anaktuvuk Pass, located at the head of the John River in the Brooks. (This airport, also served by a commercial carrier, saved us the \$1000 drop/pick up fare in a float plane out of Bettles. Bettles is the main access point to the park although it is not located in the park.)

The Brooks range has an extremely ancient appearance, yet contains some rather steep topography. It is mostly treeless, but some trees can be found in certain valleys (facing South and getting a larger share of the small amount of annual precipitation). We hiked up the treeless tundra valleys that are in many ways similar to the high alpine areas of the Sierras.

The area was fairly wet (we hiked in knee high rubber boots) with lots of streams . . . similar to the boggy areas of a Sierra spring. We could travel at about 1 -2 mph (unlike Bob Marshall's description of several hours per mile in his 1930s explorations), impeded mainly by the flat areas of tussock grass with their 12 inch differential between the tops of the tussocks and adjacent eroded areas.

Our progress seemed somewhat bionic as distances were deceptively less than they appeared. A pass one "Sierra hour" away

would take us about 30 minutes. This might be due to the fact that although the mountains appear as rugged as the Sierras, they are about half the size (tops around 6000 ft). Another possibility we considered is that haze due to the clouds of mosquitos diminished the image of the peaks.

**M**osquitos were bad but bearable. They had just come out the previous week (yes, there are many times when they are non-existent). 100% Deet repellent was very effective (about an hour between applications). The weather was warm (highs in the 70's) and shorts (with deet on exposed skin) was the most comfortable.

We pitched our tent on high points in the valleys to catch the most wind. The bugs would disperse with a moderate breeze and return the instant it stopped. It was amazing that the bugs are attracted to dark clothes much more than light colored ones.

We saw no animals on our journey (possibly because they saw us first due to the lack of trees) but we came across many reindeer racks and dahl sheep horns. The water, which we drank di-

rectly from the stream, was the best tasting in memory.

The sun was remarkable! We started our peak attempts at 8PM (yes in the evening). Our goal was to reach the top of Nunamuit Peak at midnight and view the sun over the north slope. The super saturated colors of the red and green mosses and wild flowers made us feel that the "bug dope" was getting to us. The photographs we brought back also had saturated colors indicating that the low sun angle enhanced the colors.

The direct approach we chose to our peak that evening turned into a such a steep grade that one of our party opted to turn around. (The next day we followed a more circuitous route which resulted in a class 1 ramp to the top).

**T**here are hundreds of class 2-3 peaks in the range. Most tops have been flattened over the ages. The northern most range in the US is really quite a pleasure for peak climbing. The constant daylight of early summer adds another dimension to endurance possibilities.

— Mark D Conover

# Private Trips

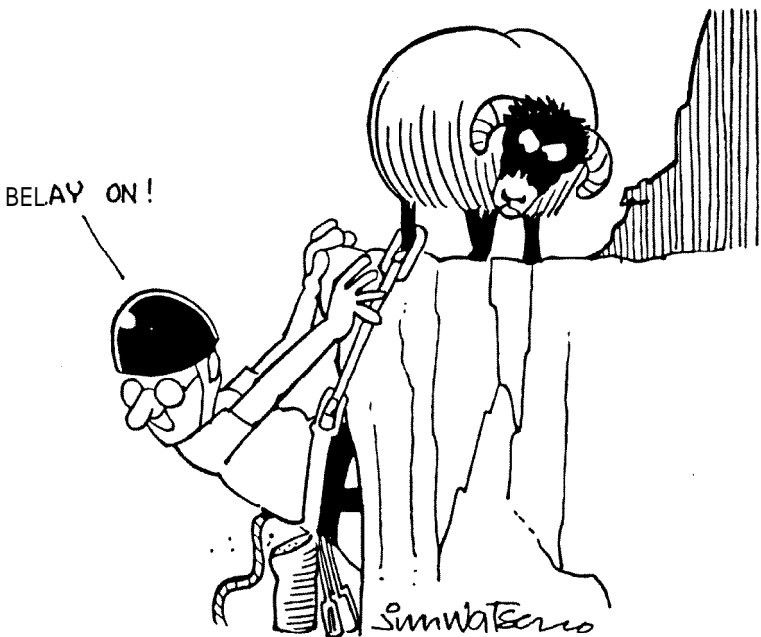
November through February,  
Tollhouse Rock and Vicinity

E. 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 "un-explored" 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: 415-961-6772.

— Eugene Miya



# Boundary Peak Update

Boundary Peak (13,143'), the highest point in Nevada, has usually been approached from the East side via SR 264 and the Trail Canyon Road. The time required to travel the long and very rough road makes a weekend trip from the Bay Area an adventure in driving.

Recently, Joy and I attempted the peak from the Northwest and found both the driving and climbing easier. Unfortunately, an unseasonal snow storm forced us to retreat from just below the summit ridge.

Here is how to do it from the Northwest side:

From the town of Benton (at the intersection of highways 6 and 120), drive 7 miles North on highway 6 to the Nevada state line. Continue approximately 1.7 miles to Janie's Ranch, which will be on your left.

Turn right on the graded but unsigned Queen Canyon Road, directly opposite the ranch. Drive 6 miles to a broad flat area on your left where you can park and camp. There is a pipe from an

underground spring, but it is best to carry your own water. If you have a 4-wheel drive vehicle you can drive another mile and 500' up to the Queen Saddle (10,000').

From the Queen Saddle (which is called Kennedy Point on the topo map-, climb a couple of hundred feet to the top of the ridge and proceed in a Southwesterly direction along the gentle ridge to the Trail Canyon Saddle (10,800'). Then climb the steep ridge to the saddle West of unnamed Peak 12,201 and continue up the bouldered ridge to the summit.

Driving time from the Bay Area to the camping spot is 6-7 hours.

— Dinesh Desai

**He Worked For You!**

“You folks will quickly understand why I bring so much controversy and flak. I don't like to paddle and I don't like to walk.

— James Watt

Secretary of the Interior, speaking to national park concessioners in Washington DC.

# Graveyard Peak

(September 12-13 3, 1992)

One road to heaven must go through the Graveyard. It sure is pretty up there! Yes, Sir! Bury my heart at Graveyard!

Our party was too small for such a beautiful fall trip: Janet Condino, Charles Schafer, and Roger Crawley. Saturday morning at the Mono Hot Springs Restaurant we all ordered the Mono Queen Breakfast and chatted with a mountain man who shared many profound thoughts. A sign said they were serving buffalo stew that night; that would be the Sierra Buffalo-mighty tempting!

It's a gentle and pretty trail along Cold Creek to Upper Graveyard Meadow, then there is a part that's a little steeper up to Graveyard Lakes. We stopped at the largest lake in a beautiful granite basin at 10,000'. There was a full moon, no rain, no clouds, no wind, no mosquitoes, no potatoes.

Sunday morning we headed for a slightly low point on the ridge 200' south

of the summit. When we got up there Janet and Charlie made their way over on the west side of the ridge while I dithered on the blocks on top.

We guessed the true summit and scrambled up there. The register was there on the north side and we saw familiar names from (if I recall correctly) the June 1990 PCS trip (Kelly Maas was one of them). It took us three hours from our camp to the summit at 11,494'.

We went down the south side of the east ridge. This is the recommended class 2 route that looked to me, from below, to be class 3. The summit, which resembles a phallus, is located close to where the north and east ridges converge, and it is in clear view from the lakes. (WOW) Near the summit there is a rock that looks like an anvil's horn, or a ship's prow, or a chorus girl's chest.

The walk out was serene in the late afternoon sunlight. We saw a few tame deer (one of 'em even had blue eyes!) and even a great blue

heron, apparently looking for trout. By this time poor Charlie was hobbling from bad blisters. He never complained though. No Way!

We ate a late supper at Mono Hot Springs and heard about the bear that crushed the restaurant stove and got into all the food. It was too late for a dip in the hot springs and it was after 1 :00am when we got back to the Bay Area.

— Roger Crawley

### Notable Quote

“The spotted-owl debate. The tragedy is that tens of thousands of families, whole communities, and entire cultures had to suffer before we could begin pulling the pendulum back toward the center. The denial, deviation, and despair spurred by the debate will go down in history as an unsavory reminder of society’s inability to sort fact from the deliberate exaggerations and bald-faced lies perpetrated by so-called environmentalists—those who put birds and bugs above people.

— Charlie Janz

Chairman Oregon Lands Coalition





# Red & White Mountain

(August 29-30, 1992)

Red & White Mountain, a favorite peak, sits west of Pioneer Basin, north of the Mono Recesses, and south of Mammoth. Our approach was from Highway 395 via the McGee Creek trail. (Rock Creek Ranger station issued a permit at 6:00am!) There were six of us: Dot Reilly, Leighton Nakada, Peter Rosmarin, Betty Sills, Dave LaPlante, and Roger Crawley

The trail ascends gradually, following the creek past stands of alder that already had some fall yellow leaves. We camped above Big McGee Lake. All day we watched the rain clouds, and those who walked up to McGee Pass encountered sleet.

Before dinner we stretched out on the ground and enjoyed a really, really excellent bottle of red wine that our good, good friend Leighton hauled up, and Dot's chips and delicious chickpea dip. We gazed at Red & White with its white rock band running diagonally through the red rock. It

looked tall and dark in the cloudy weather. The evening was chilly, so we turned in before dark.

In the morning we were on our way at 7:30 and scrambled up the slabs at the base. We made our way along the bottom of the scree apron and around to the couloirs on the southeast side. Any of them or the SE face will take you to the high ridge near the summit. We couldn't see this ridge because it was hidden in the clouds. The next thousand feet is fairly steep and features the typical loose rock that PCS'rs are so crazy about.

Red & White (12,850') has an impressive and distinct summit that rises three hundred feet above the ridge. It looks tough but it's just a pleasant scramble on unexposed class 2-3 rock to the top.

It took us three and one half hours to reach the summit. Where we were the weather was beautiful, but we could see rain storms on other Sierra peaks. We were

intoxicated from the views and reluctantly left our perch.

Our return to camp was timed perfectly to meet a fierce twenty minute hail storm and we giggled as we tried to cram our wet tents into those tiny bags. Some of us finished off the trip reveling in the soothing waters at Hot Creek just before sunset.

— Roger Crawley

### wanted: Buy or Borrow

A copy of "Norman Clyde of the Sierra Nevada-Rambles Through the Range of Light" Call Jim Curl (408) 452-6506.

### **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.

### New Snow Claws

Sherpa Tucker model TUC100 with TG-7 & toe guard. Cost ~~\$85~~ asking \$70. Contact Rich at 510-795-8411 after 8PM. 60

### New Snow Shoes

Sherpa Featherweight SSF82 Cost \$130, asking \$110 Contact Rich at 510-795-8411 after 8PM. 90

### LQST IN ACTION----

Missing: my old "Hiking Yellowstone" Sierra Club totebook, by O. Bach. Yellow cover, 1970's edition, well-loved and used. Did I lend it to a PCS friend? If so, please call me (Chris Macintosh) at 415-325-784 1.

### LOWE Internal Frame

Medium capacity backpack, in good condition, for \$25. Call Dorothy Coltrin 408-253-1165

### **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. A computer dialup (modem) is available upon request, and both DOS and *high-density* MAC disks can be sent.

Scree articles and contributions must be received by the editor no later than noon on the last Tuesday of the month,

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**For change of address, call or write the Mailings officer as listed above. To subscribe to Scree, send \$10 per year to the Treasurer as listed above.**

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.

**Meeting: Oct 13**

*LOCATION:* Western Mountaineering  
840 Town and Country Village, across from the Winchester Mystery House in San Jose (see map below).

*TIME:* 8:00 PM Tuesday (I Oil 3192)

## The Winter of our Discontent

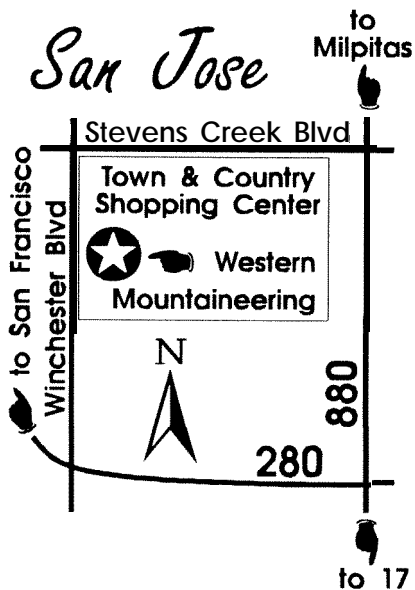
A slide show by Butch Suits of a 1991 attempt to make the first Winter ascent of Gangapurna, a major peak in the Nepal Himalaya.

Challenges included maze-like crevasse fields, psychotic team members, and a high-altitude diet of boiled eggs and cheese.

A climb of Tharpu Chuli, a nearby "trekking peak" is also featured.

### REMINDER

Bring your own reusable cup to cut down on waste, and \$1 to repay JoAnn McDonnell, who is providing refreshments.



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