



Scree

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

December, 1993

Vol. 26, No. 12

Come One, Come All to the Annual PCS Holiday Party!

Once again, Aaron Schuman has reserved the Cafe Iris at Silicon Graphics for our annual holiday pot luck party. Thanks Aaron! This is a marvelous opportunity for all you crazy climbers to bring your spouses, SOs or whoever to meet your friends, get down to some heavy duty eating, watch some trip highlights, and hopefully have a few laughs at the expense of other PCS members making fools of themselves on "stage." We encourage you to bring a maximum of 10 slides to show and prepare a skit or any other form of entertainment you can dream up. **Partytime is 7:00 PM this year.**

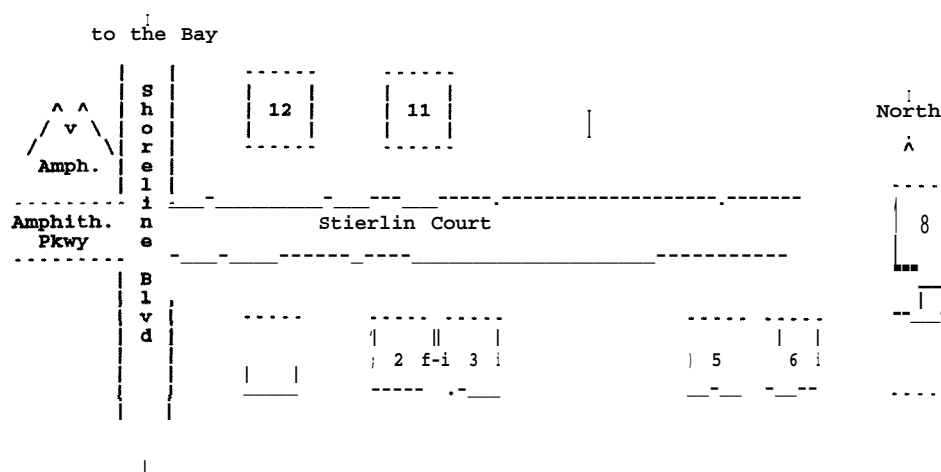
To get to Silicon Graphics, take the Shoreline Blvd. exit from US-101 in Mountain View. From either the northbound or southbound directions, make a right exit, then turn left at the top of the ramp, heading north through the industrial park.

1.3 miles from the top of the ramp, there'll be the unmistakable Shoreline Amphitheater on your left - a giant two-poled white tent. Another landmark at the same corner is the charming red abstract sculpture on your right, Turn right at that corner, onto Stierlin Court. You're on the SGI campus. Park anywhere that isn't a fire lane, a handi-

capped space, or a loading dock. The Cafe Iris is in building 5, the fourth building on the right, immediately beyond the gazebo.

Food assignments are based on the first letter of your last name:

- A-D Beverages
- E-L Main Course
- M-P Desserts
- Q Power Bars
- R-Z Appetizers, Salads, etc.



Official PCS Trips

Christmas Desert PeakBagging Class 2-3

Date: December 27-31
Leader: Bill Hauser
Home: (408) 243-4566

Let's climb these desert peaks at the best time of the year. This year we will climb Edgar, Mitchell, Stepladder, Turtle, Mopah, Granite #2 (second attempt) and, as a grand finale, Rosa Point high above the Salton Sea. We will also visit "Oh My God" hot springs deep in the desert, We will be getting up early and moving fast due to the short days of winter. Be prepared for temperatures in the 20's at night. No mountain bikers allowed. Fill up your gas tank in Barstow, CA and drive east on I-40 116 miles to Essex Road. Meet at 7 AM, December 27 at the junction of Essex Road

and I-40. These peak are all class 2 except for Mopah which is class 3. Call Bill to sign up.

Mt. Diablo (3,849') Class 1

Date: February 5
Leader: Bob Suzuki
Home: (408) 259-0772
Work: (408) 473-2402

A strenuous climb of two peaks of this 3,800+ ft. mountain should reward us with panoramic views. Rain cancels. Co-listed with the Day Hiking Section. No Host Carpool: 7:00 AM at Cubberly High (Middlefield & Montrose), Palo Alto. Time at Trailhead: 8:00 AM. Trailhead location: Rock City parking area (near South Gate in Diablo Park).

Learn to Camp in the Snow

Are you excited – or at least curious – about camping in the snow? Come to the Beginners Snow Camping Seminar sponsored by the PCS and Ski Touring sections. The seminar consists of three evening lectures by six experienced climbers, snowshoers, and skiers. A weekend ski trip to the high country lets you practice under supervision.

Lectures will be in Cupertino on January 18, 19, and 20. Cost is \$40. To register and to get more information, call Chris Maclintosh, (415) 3257841, or Sheldon Firth, (408) 988-5050.

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.

Mt. Lassen (-10,500,) Snow

Date: February 12-14
Leader: George Van Gorden
Home: (408) 779-2320

Skis or snow shoes. Crampons/ice ax possible.

Mt. Shasta Snow

Date: December 27-29
Leader: Kelly Maas
Home: (408) 279-2054

One last climb for 1993. Snow

climbing and winter camping experience are helpful. Alpine style ascent sans porters or Sherpas. Ask Santa for plastic boots.



Trip Reports

Stately Pleasure Domes Near Chamonix

On Friday the 13th of August I embarked on a grueling mountaineering adventure in the French Alps near Chamonix. This was a 1 1/2-day trip to the Domes de Miage, a part of the Mont Blanc massif, although somewhat lower at a tad over 12,000'. The trip involved 8,400' of elevation gain, of which 5,000' was done the first afternoon. The second day involved climbing the remaining 3,400' to the summits and then descending the entire 8,400'. There was no telepherique here to help out either, so the knees took it all. Fortunately, staying at a refuge overnight meant there was no necessity to carry a tent, sleeping bag, cooking equipment, or any food other than lunches.

Given there was nobody else I knew to go with, I signed up for a "collective" with a guide company. This is where they put on a trip and take up to some number of clients who may not know each other, so it's a gamble. The price is fixed per client and here it was 820 francs, or around \$140. For this trip the maximum number of clients was three, but the 3rd must have bailed out, so that left two others on the trip: a woman-Yvette, and Alain-the guide. I lucked out because Yvette's abilities and speed were comparable to mine so we were a compatible group. It was also a challenge to

my French since neither spoke English. I rapidly learned the words for "crampon," "ice ax," "faster," "idiot," and "snore" (one of the first things Yvette asked me).

The Domes are to the south of Mont Blanc and the trip started at road's end at 3,600' up the north/south valley of Les Contamines, an hour's drive from Chamonix. The meeting time with Alain was 3:00 PM at a refuge (Refuge Tre la Tete 2,500' higher up, which takes about two hours. The weather was humid and the sun hot, so it didn't take all that long to completely saturate my t-shirt. My one moment of shame (fortunately private) during the trip came when I found a beautifully secluded spot for lunch overlooking the "refuge," which turned out to be a power station and not a refuge at all. I was thinking what a spectacular site, right in the gorge by this fast-flowing river.

I must have looked very non-local with my Australian hat and had been at the refuge hardly 10 minutes before this woman approached me and asked if I was waiting for Alain. Introductions being over we lazed around on the grass in the shade awaiting him. Right on 3:00 PM I spotted this "hunk" coming up the trail, tanned, no shirt on (it's fairly common over there to see

people hiking without a shirt), rippling shoulder muscles and legs like an elephant's. This was Alain all right! I think that throughout the trip he took Valium to slow himself down to our mere mortal pace.

The rest of the day involved walking up to the refuge, which is at 9,000'. We spent about 20 minutes on the glacier (Glacier de Tre la T&e for those interested) although we didn't need crampons at this stage because at these low elevations enough grit had melted into and embedded itself in the glacier that it was like walking on sandpaper. The refuge itself (Refuge des Conscrits is one of the oldest around and hasn't been rebuilt like many others in the area. There were 50 people altogether there and although I heard them say it would take 60 I wondered where the extra 10 would go. We were packed together on mattresses about the width of a Thermarest. Of the 50 people, three were from England and everybody else spoke French as near as I could tell. This English group was interesting in that firstly, it was their first experience on a glacier and they were reading a "how-to" book as they went. Secondly, their French was so bad that when they phoned up to make a reservation the proprietor thought they were 13 people instead of three people on the 13th. He told them no way so they lugged up all their

gear only to find there was plenty of space for the three of them.

The meal they served was incredible. A huge quantity of vegetable soup, followed by main course (roast lamb, vegetables, rice) accompanied by bread and (courtesy of Alain) a bottle of Cotes du Rhone followed by cheeses, followed by dessert, followed by tea/coffee, followed by potent liqueur. All this together with lodging and breakfast the next morning for **220** francs (\$37).

Next morning we were up at 4:00 AM and on our way before 5:00. Because of the single-file necessary over the domes, nobody wanted to be stuck behind a large or slow party so it was a big race to gobble and go. Somewhere in there we had to pay for the refuge also, as they wouldn't take money the previous night.

Being on the glacier well before any dawn light was a real adventure. We could see the bobbing headlamps of other parties stretched out before, to the side and behind us. All the while we had to light our way and tread carefully.

We started off with a moderate wind and cloudless skies but as we got higher and the day advanced, not only did the temperature drop, but the clouds and wind increased. We were able to see Mont Blanc for a while around 6:30 but it soon became enshrouded by cloud and we never saw it again that day. We were lucky, though, as the wind kept most people off Mont

Blanc that day, whereas we got to most places before the clouds did. On the domes themselves the scene was constantly changing between being in the sun, with views, to being surrounded by cloud. Many times half a scene was in sun and the other half in cloud, which made for tricky photographic conditions. On the other hand, the cloud formations and the steep mountains were extremely picturesque. At one point we had the eerie effect of the shadow of the peak we were on being projected onto the clouds just off to our side.

I rapidly learned the (french) words for "crampon," "ice ax," "faster," "idiot, and "snore" . . .

The Domes are very different from Yosemite granite domes! In fact, they look dome-shaped from only one direction, perpendicular to our trail. The other way they are real knife-edges, with around 45' slopes both sides dropping away thousands of feet. It certainly wasn't recommended to step out of the trail and this was the reason for the great race to be away from the refuge.

We had to descend down very steep, hard ice to get to the col separating the Domes from the other "real" peak we bagged: Aiguille de la Berangere. This descent of 15 minutes or so was the trickiest thing we did in the

whole trip. Instead of the col being like a wind tunnel, there was almost no wind here – mountains do funny things. There was some fun class 3 scrambling up to the peak (11,300'), which we made around 10:30 AM.

After munching and drinking for a bit we headed off down a long snow slope to eventually meet up with the trail leading up the refuge. From there it was a matter of retracing our steps back to the Refuge Tre la Tete, where we arrived around 3:20 PM. A big jug of hot tea went down well with more food (don't know if it was lunch or not) before hiking down the remaining 2,500'. Miraculously, at the bottom I met another couple who I'd met at the Refuge des Conscriots who offered me a ride to the other side of the valley, thereby saving having to wait an hour for someone to pick me up.

This was a superb trip, and could be done by any party which has knowledge of roped glacier walking. The real danger would be in the descent if the weather turned bad. Very careful navigation would be required to prevent getting hopelessly lost in steep, unforgiving terrain.

- Peter Maxwell



Cleaver Peak September 17-18, 1993

For all you who did not go on this trip eat your hearts out!!!!. This trip had all the ingredients for a successful and fun trip. They included a challenging peak, beautiful surroundings, a great group, and the Saturday summit/Sunday relax.

The great group included Kai Wiedman (leader), Bob Suzuki (assistant leader), Jim Ramaker, Steve Polson, and Paul Vlasveld.

Cleaver Peak, for those of you who did not go on this trip, is part of the Sawtooth Ridge which includes the Matterhorn and the Dragtooth. Even though the peak is only 11,760' in elevation it was a true 3rd class challenge. We started at Twin Lakes on Saturday with the intention of climbing the peak on Saturday and resting on the 7th day. We started out at a good pace; however as the day wore on we were uncertain whether we would make it. As we got closer, the peak looked even more difficult than we thought. Roper's route was nowhere to be seen. At 3:00 PM we set ourselves a goal of reaching the summit at 5:00 PM. At first, it was quite straightforward; we would climb from one ledge to another, then we reached a dead-end. Kai and Jim tried all possibilities. After almost 40 minutes they gave up. Then Paul found a 2ft wide slot which we could pass through **only** if we had our packs off. This is why it is important to have a light pack.

No one wants to lift my pack again. Once we made it through the slot it was a piece of cake to the summit. The summit block is an exposed 3rd class move.

After our brief glory we had to move quickly in order to reach camp before dark. I am glad we did not take the steep scree slope gully going to the peak. This was a classic scree gully filled with sand and loose rock.

We arrived at camp right at dark with the orange alpen-glow reflecting off of the Matterhorn and the Sawtooth Ridge. It was truly magnificent. We were camped in the paradise of Big Slide Canyon. This is truly a slice of heaven. Since we had already climbed the peak on Saturday we could relax and sleep in on Sunday. I believe that the Saturday summit started by Kai could become the wave of the future.

On Sunday we slept in until the ungodly hour of 8:30 AM. During the night our water bottles had frozen shut. After a leisurely breakfast, we continued our loop back to Twin lakes. The rest of our route took us past Little Slide Canyon over Mule Pass and the descent back to the cars. The descent turned out to be much longer and more difficult than all of us thought it would be. The route winds past several beautiful lakes and passes through several plant zones. We finally arrived at the start at about 5:00 PM. Maybe we should not have slept in. The total distance was about 25 miles with about a total of 7000' elevation gain.

This was a fantastic trip. A true 3rd class climb, fantastic group, beautiful, pristine scenery, and sleeping in on Sunday. It was heaven.

- **Paul Vlasveld**



Dead Death Valley Trip

Thank you, one and all, for cancelling out on me. No, really! I mean it! We would have been rained on, snowed on, and blown off the closed roads. We had tom ligaments, blisters, weather, work, friends from the east coast, and other assorted excuses, but the REAL reason was that we were all wimps (according to the one hard-core that still wanted to go). It just was not meant to be.

- **Steve Eckert**



Let's Do Something to Make the Mountains Glad

I met David Brower today. I met a man of 81 years, a mountaineer at heart who forever carries with him his heartfelt vision to preserve and restore our wild lands. Brower was in Yosemite for the premiere of his new video, "Yosemite and the Fate of the Earth," produced by Earth Island Institute's Yosemite Guardian Project. He sadly tells us that acid rain has reached Yosemite. Yosemite cannot be protected as an island; we must save the planet in order to save Yosemite. The video, available soon, alerts people to the need to act locally by protecting their home environments for that is the only way to protect Yosemite and, finally, the planet itself.

For more information about the video and the Yosemite Guardian, contact its director, Garrett DeBell, at Earth Island Institute, 300 Broadway, Suite 28, San Francisco, CA, 94133, or call 209-372-4447.

I was fortunate to speak to Brower before the video showing; it was an event that I will always carry with me. He graciously signed my old Sierra Club books and answered all my questions. But when I asked him about Hetch Hetchy, I learned that there is still work to be done; I was inspired to offer my help. Brower's feelings: "Sell bits of the dam to the tourists as souvenirs and restore beautiful Hetch Hetchy Valley. It must be done. We see flood where there used to be the scenic masterpiece of Hetch Hetchy Valley, drowned for a purpose which other valleys, not scenic master-

pieces, would have served better. The future may not forgive or understand the citizen who not being able to care less, is silent."

So when this man asks why are Yosemite's toads and frogs missing and where is beautiful Hetch Hetchy Valley, I realize we, especially as Sierra Club members, need to espouse Muir's philosophy: "let's do something to make the mountains glad." Since we the PEAK CLIMBING SECTION, ARE PRIMARILY AN OUTINGS GROUP, we need to at least make the mountains glad by fulfilling the Sierra Club's outings philosophy as stated by William Colby, the club's first outings director: "An excursion of this sort, if properly conducted will do an infinite amount of good toward awakening the proper RIND OF INTEREST IN THE FORESTS AND OTHER NATURAL FEATURES OF OUR MOUNTAINS, AND WILL ALSO TEND TO CREATE A SPIRIT OF GOOD FELLOWSHIP AMONG OUR MEMBERS." So when we ask ourselves the question: "are our outings being properly conducted," remember Colby had two goals in mind. 1. Are the leaders providing environmental education? 2. Are the leaders providing an atmosphere for forming a communal relationship among participants?

So let's remember to do something to make our backyards, our mountains, our planet, and David Brower glad!

- **Laura J. Sefchik**

Angioplasty-Inspired Rock Climbing Technology

ProTex Corporation (Mahway, New Jersey) announced rock climbing protection devices based loosely on balloon angioplasty. Evonne Ceceo, President, says, "We took the concept of an inflatable device inserted into an artery, and used that as the basis for a device which can be inserted into a crack in the rock."

The device is placed in the crack, inflated, and the rock climber has a safe anchor point from which he or she can continue climbing.

"Early versions had a habit of puncturing, and of loosening at the point where the rope is clipped in. We eventually went with a kevlar-based outer surface and haven't had any problems since."

Advantages over traditional climbing protection devices include light weight, ease of placement, and a wide operating range. Limitations include the necessity for a crack-type feature in the rock, and the inflation time needed.

-from "**New England Journal of Cardiovascular Research & Theory,**"
March, 1993

PCS Officers for 1994

The following officers were duly elected at the November meeting to head up the Peak Climbing Section for 1994:

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(Patt will be moving to Sunnyvale at the end of this month – see January issue for updated information.)

Paul Vlasveld will stay on as maintainer of the mailing list; Judith Yarborough and Dixie

Storkman will take over as mailers of the Scree.

Let us appreciate these hard-working folks – without them, there would be no fun for the rest of us. The same goes for the outgoing officers, Kelly Maas and Brian Boyle. Thanks for the service!



Changing of the Guard

I can't believe it's been a year since I began editing the Scree (on second thought.. .). Thank you for letting me serve. This has been a great learning experience for me. Thanks to all of you who contributed material and gave me those much needed pats on the back I apologize to those of you whose material I was not able to fit in. I know some of the stuff I printed offended or angered some of you – believe me it was not intentional.

Soon I'll turn over the reigns to the capable hands of Patt Baenen. Her address is listed in the previous article. She prefers to receive material electronically (email/diskette). And note that the deadline for the January issue is Thursday, December 16.

So farewell for now.. . Hope to see you on the trail soon!

- **editor**

Army Researchers test "Blood Boosting"

WASHINGTON

For athletes in track and other sports, "blood doping" is banned as a form of cheating. In the military, however, the infusion of extra red blood cells into the body could enhance the physical performance of soldiers who are rapidly moved to high altitudes.

The process, called autologous erythrocyte infusion ("blood boosting" or "blood doping"), involves removing blood from a person, separating the red cells and storing them. After the person's body produces more red cells to compensate for the loss, the stored cells are returned to the bloodstream.

The result is an increased number of red blood cells to carry oxygen to the muscles, translating directly into improved physical performance.

Investigators from the Army Research Institute of Environmental Medicine in Natick, Mass., are working with 16 volunteer soldiers from the 10th Special Forces Group, Fort Devens, Mass. One pint of blood has been drawn from each soldier-volunteer.

After a battery of tests precisely assesses their physical condition, eight of the soldiers will receive an infusion of their own red blood cells. The remaining eight, the control group, will receive an infusion of saline solution as a placebo. The 16 soldiers will not know which group they are in.

Twelve hours after the infusions, both groups will be flown to Pikes Peak, Colo., to train and undergo physical tests for two weeks at an elevation of about 14,000 feet.

According to Dr. Andrew Young, a research physiologist directing the study, autologous erythrocyte infusion enhances physical performance at sea level, and USARIEM investigators have already shown that it reduces heat strain for people working in hot climates. These results may suggest the procedure could have a positive effect on soldier performance at high altitudes.

Young and his colleagues will analyze data to determine whether the suggested effect occurs. **(From the U.S. Army Medical Research and Development Command News)(Army News Service)**

- August 1993 Accent

(Thanks to Brian Healy for this interesting article.)



Wilderness Etiquette

Nudity explored.

by Emily Postpile

Dear Emily: Above what altitude is it okay to forego wearing a bathing suit while swimming?

- *Goosepimples in Groveland*

Dear Goosepimples: This is a tricky one, since there's no hard and fast rule. One must take into account not only the altitude of the lake, but also its distance from civilization (i.e., crowds of people) and also from families with small children who might be offended by such a display. Why, I've even heard about one indiscreet PCS person who skinnydipped in Tenya in September! But in general I would say a hike in of at least five miles to an altitude of at least 8,500' would probably be a safe bet. Above all, take a good look around you and use proper judgment before you disrobe. Certainly the well-known Nude Fisherman of Peeler Lake was a good example of this!

Have a question? Write to Emily, c/o Scree Editor.

Yosemite License Plates to Aid Park

By Benjamin Pimentel
Chronicle Staff Writer

Yosemite Valley's Tunnel View, said to be the most photographed natural scene in California, is also the image on perhaps the most beautiful license plate in the United States.

A total of 7,000 of the special plates will go out in the mail this week to Yosemite supporters who want to further wildlife and restoration efforts, according to a private group that conceived the idea.

Each plate features a full-frame, multicolor "postcard" graphic of the park's most well-known natural rock formations: El Capitan, Half Dome, Leaning Tower and Bridalveil Falls.

The plate costs \$50 more than the usual registration fee, plus a \$40 annual renewal fee. Profits will go to the California Environmental License Plate Fund and the Yosemite Fund, which raises money for the preservation and restoration of the park.

"The Yosemite license plate offers the prospect of being the largest and most sustained source of continuing financial support for the preservation of Yosemite National Park," said Keith Schiller, a Walnut Creek lawyer and park regular, who heads the volunteer campaign.

The campaign has sold about 7,000 plates, making it the largest-selling special license plate since the 1984 Los Angeles

Olympics version, Schiller said.

He said they expect to raise \$1 million for the Yosemite Fund by the end of 1994.

Schiller and a college friend, Matt Mazer, a Los Angeles marketing executive, thought of the license plate campaign after seeing the deterioration of the park's trails.

"We saw the problems, and we decided to do something about it," said Schiller, who said he has hiked on every trail in Yosemite.

Governor Wilson signed the plates into law in October 1992. However, the state Department of Motor Vehicles did not start production until May, when the campaign reached 5,000 orders.

Schiller said the pre-sold plates demonstrated people's desire to help raise money for Yosemite, adding that they sold thousands of plates even before buyers saw the design.

To advertise the plates, Schiller said, flyers and more than 10,000 displays will be distributed to merchants and auto dealers all over the state. Those interested in purchasing Yosemite license plates should call 1-800-4MY-PARK.

- reprinted from the 10/27/93
San Francisco Chronicle



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NEED TWO MORE
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For a list of 1994 officers, see page 7

Scree is a publication of the Peak Climbing Section of the Sierra Club, Loma Prieta Chapter. Subscriptions are \$10 per year. Checks should be sent to the treasurer (payable to the PCS). To ensure an uninterrupted subscription, renewal checks must be received no later than the last Tuesday of the expiration month.

For change of address, contact Paul Vlasveld, 157 Kellogg Way, Santa Clara, CA 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.

The following trip classifications are to assist you in choosing tips 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.
- Class 3: Requires use of hands for climbiig. A rope may be used occasionally.
- Class 4: Requires rope belays.
- Class 5: Technical rock climbiig.

Scree articles and contributions must be received by the editor no later than noon on the last Tuesday of the month (note exception below due to holidays).

Deadline for the next issue is December 16!

This newsletter is printed on recycled paper.



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