



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

October, 1993

Vol. 26, No. 10

Next Meeting

Date: Tues., October 12, 1993

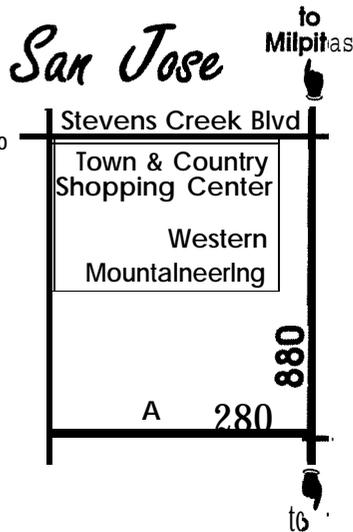
Time: 8:00 PM

Place: Western Mountaineering, 840 Town & Country Village, across from the Winchester Mystery House in San Jose

Program:

MARMOTS IN THE MIST

Adventures in the Cascade Range of the Pacific Northwest. Highlights include climbs of Mt. Shuksan and Liberty Ridge on Mt. Rainier, as well as insights into Cascade weather.



U.S. Parks Want Climbers to Buy Rescue Insurance

Associated **Press**, Washington
Adventurers who risk their lives on the nation's mountain peaks will have to work out payment for their own rescue if a new National Park Service policy is adopted.

The agency is working on ways to shift the multimillion-dollar burden of search and rescue to mountaineers and others who tackle nature in pursuit of ultimate wilderness experiences.

"With scarce dollars to manage our national parks, we should not be trying to foot all the bills for rescuing people who knowingly engage in very high risk adventures," Bonnie Cohen, assistant Interior secretary for policy, management and budget, said in a statement this week,

The most likely option for the new policy will be requiring the mountaineers to buy insurance, said Park Service spokesman Duncan Morrow. "If we need to haul you down off a cliff face or something, the insurance company would foot

the bill," he said yesterday.

A task force of search-and-rescue professionals and climbers will consult with insurance companies to work out details including how the policy will work and how it will be enforced.

If the adventurers fail to buy insurance, however, the policy will probably require them to reimburse the government for the rescue operations, which often entail helicopters and other expensive methods, he said.

The Interior Department plans to have a trial program under way next spring during the height of the mountain climbing season in Alaska and the Northwest. The likely areas for the pilot program are Denali National Park in Alaska and Mount Rainier National Park in Washington state, where climbers die every year,

The program in future years would be extended to other parks, and perhaps to other government agencies that conduct their own search and rescue operations.

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Official PCS Trips

PRELIMINARY WINTER TRIP LIST .

An amiable trip planning meeting was held on September 21, with good pizza, drinks and conversation. The following is a very preliminary list of offerings as they stand at the moment. We'll update you as more information comes in. As you can see, the list is not huge and we need more. Please phone Peter Maxwell with your ideas.

October 16	Mission Peak
November 14	Pescadero - Skyline - Pescadero followed by dinner
November 27	Mount Tam Times Two (Muir Woods to sea and back)
December 4-5	Stanislaus and Disaster Peaks (near Sonora Pass)
January	Maguire Peak (Sunol Regional Park)
February 5	Mt. Diablo
March	Ralston Peak (Desolation Wilderness)
March	Traverse between Alta Peak & Silliman
April	Cabin ski trip at Tahoe

Depending on leader status, some of these trips may be private. There might also be a private Mt. Shasta attempt on President's Birthday weekend in February. Stay tuned.

Columbus Day Weekend Jacks Peak (10,198') Copper Mountain (9,911')

Date: October 9-11

Leader: Bill Hauser

Home: (408) 243-4566

Come on to Northern Nevada and enjoy the fall colors in the Independence Mountains just north of Elko, Nevada. Saturday we will climb Jacks Peak after a short visit to Tuscarora. Sunday we will climb Copper Mountain in the Humboldt National Forest, Monday we will explore a remote and unknown hot spring, so be prepared for cold weather, Meet Saturday, 8 AM October 9 at the junction of highways 225

and 226 about 26 miles north of Elko, Nevada. No mountain bikers allowed. We will also try and see the rare Nevada River otter. Call Bill to sign up.

Grovers Hot Spring Class 3

Date: October 16-17

Leader: John Ingvoldstad

Home: (209) 296-8483

Work: (415) 604-3 156

Nothing like a good, hot soak on these nippy fall evenings. However, if you like Class 3 (or are ready to try it for the first time) this is your trip! There's some good practice rock at Carson Pass and that's where we'll start

on Saturday morning. From there we'll make a "few good moves" on some alternate routes on Round Top (10,381'). On Sunday we'll climb Reynolds (9,679'), also Class 3. So forget the Niners (you know they're gonna win) and come climb!

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.

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.

Black Hawk Mtn. (10,348') Class 2 (Tower Peak Map)

Date: October 9-10

Leader: Ron Hudson

Home: (415) 872-1858

Co-Leader: Phyllis Olrich

Home: (415) 322-0323

Start early from Kennedy Meadows (6,400') on Sonora Pass Road. Backpack in 8.5 miles to camp in Summit Creek area (8,800') and climb peak on Saturday (1,500' climb, 2 miles). Sunday hike out for return to cars by 2-3 PM and drive home,

Panamint Paradox Class 2

Date: November 13-15, 1993

Leader: Victor Anderson

Home: (415) 851-1090

Co-Leader: Steve Eckert

Home: (415) 508-0500

Saturday: Tucki, 6,000' elevation gain up through Mosaic Canyon

Sunday: Optional peak bags: Tin & Dry; otherwise: photography, dune skiing, Scotty's Castle, hot springs, moonlight dancing.

Monday: Attempt Telescope Peak (11,000'+), 7,000' elevation gain. If snow or roads are bad, will do Pyramid or Corkscrew. All peaks class 2. Call co-leader for details.

Expedition Announcement

Andy Skumanich would like to hear from people interested in attending a trip to climb some of the volcanoes of Ecuador in either November or December. This will be strenuous, high-altitude (near 20,000') class 3 climbing (with some glacier roping up). We will form our own group of say six or so and ask a guide to lead our own private trip. The trip will be organized with an eye to economy and lack of travel hassle. Those who have volcanoes in Ecuador say it can

be spectacular. And just the journey itself creates a lasting memory of the Ecuadorian people. Those even tentatively interested please contact Andy:

Andy Skumanich
413 Hershner Drive
Los Gatos, CA 95032
(408) 377-0545

America's funniest Home Videos?

Now that some PCS members are beginning to shoot video of their climbs, we should consider video as an occasional alternative to slide shows at our meetings. Since our regular meeting places are not well equipped for this, we need to look elsewhere. If you know of a place where we could hold a meeting that has a large screen TV and a VCR, please contact Kelly Maas. Also let him know if you have video you'd like to show.

Trip Reports

Wrong Chute, Right Peak

The title could be otherwise described as “crossing to the next chute means staying in the one where you are.” This aptly depicts our situation on Middle Palisade over Labor Day weekend. The group consisted of Noreen Ford, Paul Magliocco, Peter Maxwell (leader), Jim Ramaker, Charles Schafer (co-leader) and Kai Wiedman. We were armed with 7.5 minute topos (amazingly trailhead to peak was covered in ONE map, which defies Murphy’s Law) and the words of both Roper and Secor, but that didn’t prevent us from ascending the “wrong” chute.

Although this trip was intended to be an official one, it changed into a private trip. The reason was that while checking with the ranger the week before the trip, he said there was a lot more snow around than normal and recommended taking ice axes as a safety precaution. Faced with the prospect of running an official but potentially more dangerous trip, and a safer private trip with proper equipment, it didn’t take much time to make the decision.

The planned 9 AM start from the trailhead at Glacier Lodge ended up being 9:30, which wasn’t bad considering driving distance from the Bay Area (694 miles round trip). The worst part about this trailhead was the 15

minute walk to the car-park, which was conveniently situated for the Big Pine Creek North Fork trail but not ours, which was the South Fork. We met Tim Hult and Eugene Miya there, preparing for the V-Notch and another PCSer, Bill Donner, who told us of their ambitions to climb Norman Clyde Peak by a recently discovered class 3 route on the west side. We thought this involved an incredibly long hike but they were optimistic.

Charles was so keen to summit that he had to be restrained from blasting off in the lead and blasting us with rocks.

Almost from the beginning we could see our destination, with its distinctive, broad, **ridge-**type summit. All views disappeared for a while as the trail switchbacked up a long climb, conveniently in the shade, and then as we came over the top we were suddenly out of the foothills and into the **true** High Sierra. From this perspective the east wall looked unclimbable, at least by a class 3 route, and we spent some time speculating what would be our route the next day.

As we were eating lunch at Brainard Lake (or is it Brainerd? – neither the USGS nor the NPS seem to be able to make up their mind on spelling) we quizzed

two day hikers who were returning from the glacier. They informed us that Finger Lake was a bit crowded but there was a completely deserted beautiful tarn with a small lake on a bench above Finger Lake. This then became our camp site. True to word, we had the place to ourselves, and it was on the route to the climb anyway, so we even saved a little time the next day.

The only problem was the mosquitoes. Jim, Paul and I decided to sleep out, the weather being so pleasant, but this was a big mistake. Voracious mosquitoes came out during the evening and stayed out all night. They would discover minute portions of skin that got missed in the repellent application and converge on them. Scalps underneath beanies were also a good target. SO all three Of US got dive-bombed all night and had a miserable sleep as a result. This was all the more surprising because of the time of year. It was definitely an easy decision to sleep in the tent the next night.

Since we had 3,200’ of climbing of unknown difficulty the next day we budgeted for a 12-hour day and decided we should leave fairly early. We planned for a 6:30 departure and made it by 6:45. Being only 15 minutes late made us feel pretty good, as did the temperature, which was a balmy 42”. It was a gentle climb and traverse to get to the glacier (definitely a better

route than going to the south end of Finger Lake and climbing from there), where we filled up with the last water available until the return.

Paul and Charles headed off on the moraine splitting the glacier while the rest of us took a “short cut” across the snow. Despite our intentions to show the other two our way was better, we encountered more difficult conditions and we could see them getting further ahead, easily beating us to the point where we rejoined.

Noreen gave us a show that was as good as the best Barnum & Bailey could offer, by demonstrating the “Demolition Derby” method.

Roper’s description is actually better than Secor’s, since he specifically states to go a short distance on the south portion of the glacier before starting the climb. Had we not done this we’d have had a lot of trouble getting started on the mountain.

The next milestone was to “cross over to the next gully” at a point when we encountered “an obvious patch of light colored rock.” As we discovered on the way down, a far better description would be “follow the obvious chute to the summit” as the so-called crossover was not really a crossover at all, but a continuation in the same direction as the chute we started out

in. We **really** crossed over and ended up in a chute which took us to the north of the summit.

For us, wrong was right, because this chute turned out to have much more solid rock than the other. It also became a lot steeper which made it a lot more challenging and fun. Bordering on class 4, it never really made it as there were always lots of handholds. However, none of us wanted to downclimb it and we were hoping to find a more gentle way down. There was also still loose rock so it was important to stay close together. Charles was so keen to summit that he had to be restrained from blasting off in the lead and blasting us with rocks. At one point someone dislodged a largish rock which in turn created almost an avalanche which tumbled down to the glacier far below. This was not to be taken lightly.

When we “summitted” we were two couloirs to the north of the real summit. We could see it, but the knife-ridge we were on had hideous drops to the west and a decidedly class 4 move to traverse on the east. Without knowing if there was a class 3 traverse we descended about 20’ and explored the ledges. We were in luck, and the traverse turned into an exciting class 3 adventure, never knowing if hand or footholds would degenerate around the next bluff, and always being rewarded. This was High Sierra class 3 climbing as it should be!

Our final assault on the summit block saw all of us

scramble with great difficulty up the last portion, only to discover there was a trivial route round the back side. We made it at noon and lazed around eating lunch until 1 PM. Even Paul, infamous for difficulties with altitude, ate heartily with no problems.

Our descent took us down the “correct” couloir, but although this was less steep than our ascent, the rock was much crumblier and we had to be super careful about dislodging a shower on people below. We all agreed that to climb up this would not have been as much fun as the route we took.

Coming back down the glacier, several of us took advantage of having ice axes and did a sitting glissade. Noreen gave us a show that was as good as the best Barnum & Bailey could offer, by demonstrating the “Demolition Derby” method. This involved hitting a large depression, coming out spinning out of control, loosing her ice ax (right by me as I stood and watched this amazing spectacle) and then careering down the slope, with much vocal sound effects. Fortunately there was a gentle run-out and she came to rest at Kai’s feet, as if the whole thing were staged.

We were back in camp by 4:30, making this a 9-hour day instead of our budgeted figure. The spectacles were not over though. Up on the slope above us we caught sight of a bear! This shattered many people’s ideas of where bears are and are not. It was a small bear and we

wondered if it was exploring because there was nothing up there for it, there being only isolated clumps of stunted trees. This meant that there was nothing much for us to use to bear bag, either. We split the food into two parts, one being hung from the best branch that could be found, and the other, spurred on by Jim & Paul, was taken to some nearby cliffs and suspended over the edge. Neither cache suffered, and we suspect the bear wandered to better

pickings at lower elevations.

During our descent we had heard lots of shouting across the valley, and as darkness descended we saw lights on the side of the mountain opposite. These turned out to be the remnants of the ill-fated Clyde Peak attempt, which, as we had originally thought, ran out of time far short of their objective. Bivouacs were called for, which would not have been all that pleasant as the temperature the next morning was 28° with ice

on the ground and tents. We got the full story from Bill, whom we met at Finger Lake on our way back. Not the least of their problems was navigating to Southfork Pass, which apparently is very difficult.

The hike out was uneventful, and we were able to consummate the trip at Sizzler in Bishop for a late lunch at 2: 15.

-Peter Maxwell

Royce and Merriam Pks. September 11-12

Kelly's plan was to meet at the Pine Creek Pass trailhead (just north of Bishop) @ 8:30 on Saturday, climb **5,800'** to the summits of Royce and Merriam peaks, make camp by Royce lakes, and descend the next day. He and the others in his carp001 (Debbie Benham, Cecil and Paul Maglioco, and Mark Jablonski) would go to the Bishop Ranger station on Saturday morning and pick up our permit. The other carp001 (Mark Wulbright, Bill Kirkpatrick, and Dan Ehrenfried) would arrive late Friday night, flop their bags in ample space at the trailhead, and wait for their arrival.

The permit car was early even with a stop over at the local bakery and we took the opportunity to get an early start. The climb to Pine Lake began immediately after we crossed through the pack horse camp passing a

sign warning us to stay at least 10 feet away from all pack animals. It seemed to me, at least, that this would be difficult on mountain trails. As we gained altitude on the narrow road up the canyon, a tungsten mine appeared on our right. It was interesting in its complicated array of buildings, shoots, and holding tanks, but also disconcerting in its harsh visual impact on this otherwise beautiful terrain. After 2,400' of fairly steep elevation gain, we popped up through the canyon pass and onto lake level. Pine Lake comes on you quite suddenly and the clarity and blueness of its water were stunning in comparison to the muted colors of the surrounding granite. We passed by two other lakes (Upper Pine and Honeymoon) on our way through a pass between two unnamed peaks. We dropped our packs just over the ridge in a flat place a little ways up from the first of the Royce lakes (eleva-

tion 11,500'). A fisherman told us that the lakes should offer 2- to 4-pound golden trout. He had none himself, but was also more inclined to nap than fish. We dawdled a little getting water and finally got on our way to our first goal by 2:00 PM.

The route we selected slanted up through a gully on the east face Mt. Royce. It looked class 2/3 but turned out to be mostly class 3. The varied skills of our party slowed us to a point where we did not approach the summit until almost 6 PM. We were late and we knew it. Merriam would be out of the question this late in the season. We crossed a false summit to the north, bellyflopped and buttslid over two final hurdles and finally arrived at the table rock summit of Royce. The register was only a few weeks old, sealed in a plastic bag with a large rock holding it in place.

One the way down, we got seduced into the scree on the

south side, making our progress quite fast and easy on the feet. The register at the top had told of “life-threatening” hard snow at the pass between Merriam and Royce. We progressed with more than a little trepidation towards the doom that awaited us at the pass. Cecil also ventured over the east edge many times looking for a gully to climb down, but it was not to be. Kelly went further down, but found himself in a pickle with no option but to follow in our direction. We drained down through the scree into the pass and onto the hard snow. Most of us resigned ourselves to a butt and finger numbing glissade. We finally noticed a thin tongue of

rock that provided a solid downclimb through half of the steepest part. A twenty step traversal kicked into the snow by Mark and his thick boots, allowed further decent on rock to a part of the snow that was much less steep. Both Kelly and Cecil took minor falls but we were down and on the march home.

Our fears of lost time were confirmed as the sun sank behind the ridge and it grew dark. A forward party was sent ahead to start water to boil and begin to set up camp. There was no moon to light the way and the wind blew cold. We bundled up, ate what dinner we had, told a few jokes, and went to bed. The next morning we discovered

another miscalculation. We had camped under a tall, west facing hill that blocked our morning sun. We were all cold well into the descent home. On the way we met four women that asked how long we had been “in.” The were shocked to hear that all the effort was made for only one and a half days. Truly weekend warriors. . .

-Dan Ehrenfried

Table Mountain September 3-7

Table Mountain is one of the most distinctive mountains of the upper Kern. It is also one of the more remote mountains of the Sierra. Its long flat summit can be easily seen from Mt. Whitney, and the southern part of the John Muir Trail, as well as from some of the hills east of Fresno. From the summit of Thunder Mountain, which I climbed many years ago during a PCS base camp trip to East Lake organized by Dina Lombard.* I had a close look at the mountain. It looked impressive and challenging. Ever since then I had wanted to climb it.

On the Friday before the

long Labor Day weekend, four of us – Leighton Nakata, Dot Reilly, Dan Tischler, and myself – met at Jack’s in downtown Bishop for breakfast. After sampling their eggs and “world famous waffles” we drove on down 395 to Independence. While half of our group proceeded up to the Shepherd Pass trailhead, the other half continued on to Lone Pine to pick up a wilderness permit. This 45-minute detour into Lone Pine was not exactly convenient for us.

By the time everyone in the group reached the trailhead, and packed their gear together it was about noon-time. Without further delay we hit the trail. Ahead of us was the arduous 5,000’ climb

to Anvil Camp. The lack of shade, the hot sun, and little water help to make this section of trail particularly onerous.

The following day we crossed Shepherd Pass and hiked into Milestone Basin. Throughout this day the views were spectacular. Excluding the traffic on the John Muir Trail, we only saw two other hikers all day. One of the hikers was an older gentleman who talked about enjoying “recreational drugs,” and the other was a young fisherman who boasted of catching “killer fish” from “killer lakes” that were surrounded by “killer mountains.” We dubbed this latter individual “the killer dude.”

On the third day, after a late

start, we headed up towards Table Mountain. Our plan was to climb the south side route, which was discovered by Norman Clyde (who else?) in 1927. We reached the unnamed lake (11,840' +) located southsoutheast of the mountain around mid-day. From the lake we viewed the mountain while consulting various guidebooks in an effort to figure out where the route was. We found Roper's description to be more understandable than Secor's (personally I still like the old Smatko/Voge guide). Like most sides of the mountain, the south side of Table appears to be a shear cliff of 1,000' in height. However, a brownish ledge, which runs diagonally across this face, allows one to reach the summit plateau sans rope, The tricky part is getting onto this ledge. We found a small chimney that

allowed us access to the ledge. Presumably there are easier alternatives, but we couldn't find them. The chimney was found to be hard class 3 or easy class 4, depending on your perspective.

We found a large summit cairn and a Sierra Club register at the far north end of the summit plateau. Upon opening the register book we were surprised to learn that ours was only the second group to ascend Table this year. I thought that this was quite amazing. I knew Table was somewhat remote, and not a particularly easy climb, but I never would have guessed that so few people climb the mountain. As we looked through the register book, which dated back to 1940 and was only half full, it became obvious that the total number of people who have climbed Table is very small. In contrast, nearby Milestone

Mountain is climbed far more often, and its register goes back only a few years.

From the summit of Table it appears that there is an unnamed mountain immediately to the south that is possibly higher. Although neither Roper nor Secor mention this mountain, the Smatko/Voge book does and a comment is made that it may be higher.

The following day we hiked back to Anvil Camp, and the day after that returned to our cars. Once back at the cars we all decided to return to Jack's and sample more of their "world famous" fare before heading for home.

* Dina Lombard died on Mt. Shasta in the winter of 1977

-George Sinclair

Mountain Notes

Peak Climbing Section or Love Connection?

As a long-standing member of the PCS, it is my duty to point out an alarming trend of the past six or seven years. John and Kate started it; then came Cecil and Paul, Sandy and Yvonne; next came Susan and Borgs, Vreni and Greg, Peter and Anne, and, most recently, Kai and Noreen.

What do these couples have in common? They met and

married in the Peak Climbing Section. No, I'm not against marriage: what mountains have brought together let no man (or woman) put asunder. I'm simply concerned that if this trend continues, the focus of our group will change from mountaineering to matchmaking.

At worst, the chairperson's role would change dramatically. Instead of soliciting trip reports at the meetings, he would ask for date reports, smirking like Chuck Woolery of TV's "Love

Connection' as he inquires about what went on behind closed tent flaps. At best, when word gets out about the high marriage rate, we will be inundated with new members from the 1,000-strong Sierra Singles section, each seeking "in-tents" experiences unrelated to climbing peaks. Take heed, mountaineers, lest these things come to pass.

-Butch Suits

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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 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.
- Class 3: Requires use of hands for climbing. A rope may be used occasionally.
- Class 4: Requires rope belays.
- Class 5: Technical rock climbing.

Scree articles and contributions must be received by the editor no later than noon on the last Tuesday of the month: email, 3 1/2 diskettes (Mac or DOS), fax, or U.S. mail okay. Photos welcome.

Deadline for the next issue is October 26!



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