

# SCREE

June, 1994  
Vol. 27, #6

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

## Next Meeting

**Date:** Tues., June 14, 1994

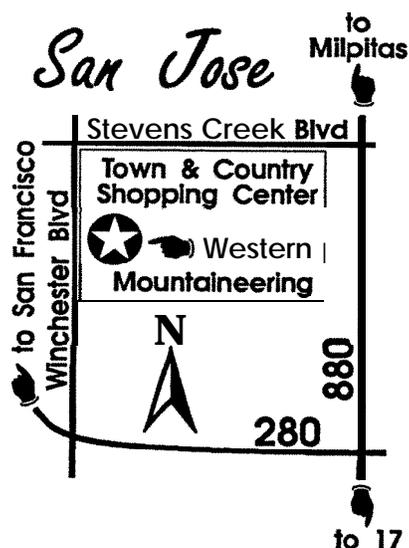
**Time:** 8:00 p.m.

**Place:** Western  
Mountaineering

Program:

**The Mountains, People  
and Villages of Nepal in  
pictures and sound.**

John Flinn Butch Suits and Tim Hult present a combined slide show on their trek and climb in the Annapurna region of Nepal last Oct. If you only see one slide show this year, this is the one to see! Many fine pictures of people, mountains and our very own PCSrs on this classic trek to one of the most beautiful regions of the world.

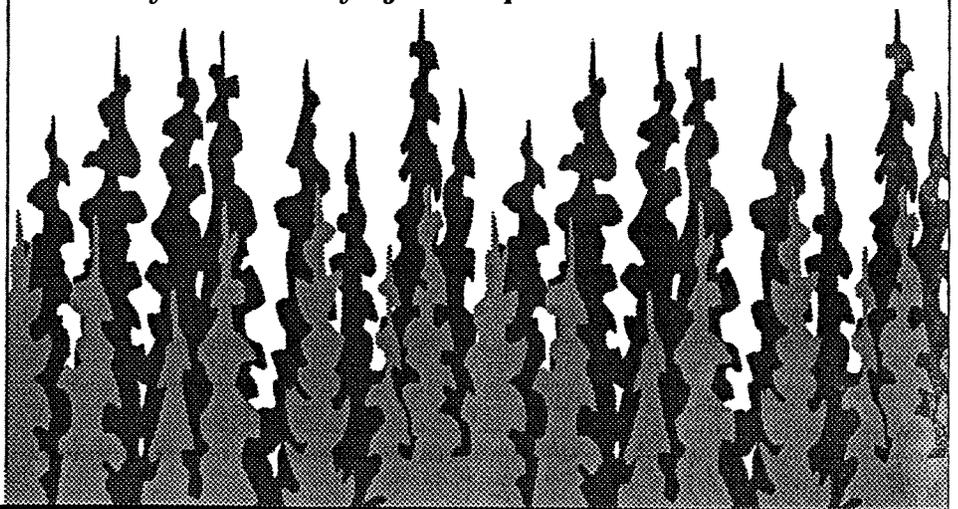


## Restored Mountaineering/Rock Climbing Insurance Coverage

The per day, per participant fee for the required Accidental Death & Dismemberment insurance for 1994 has been set at \$10.00. This amount will recover a reasonable portion of the insurance premium for AD&D coverage. Every participant on a mountaineering trip must pay the fee for this, even if the participant already has their own AD&D insurance. If an outing is certified by Cal French and the Mountaineering Oversight Committee, the trip leader will be required to submit a post-trip summary evaluation within 30 days of the trip.

If some members feel that charging participants the amount of the AD&D makes their outing less competitive, there is the option of having the Chapter absorb the cost, and pay the AD&D themselves, thus charging the participants nothing for this coverage.

**NOTE: One trip under the new guidelines was already applied for by one of our Chapter's leaders and was quickly approved. Applications for Mountaineering Trip Certification are available. Please contact the Trip Scheduler (Debbie Benham @415/964-0558 if you'd like one or you just have questions.**



# Official PCS Trips

## Williamson/Tyndall

14,375' / 14,018'  
elevations

### class 3

Date: June 17-20  
Leader: Charles Schafer  
Phone: 408/354-1545

On Friday we'll go up via Shephard Pass. Saturday will be our day for Mt. Williamson, and on Sunday we'll go for Mt. Tyndall. That leaves Monday for the hike out and the long drive home.

## Solstice Solitude Hard class 2, unscouted

Date: June 18-26  
Leader: Steve Eckert  
Phone: 415/508-0500 day/eve  
EMail: eckert@netcom.com

Cross through the most remote portion of the Sierra, looking for solitude by a combination of full moon and summer solstice (longest day of the year). We will go over Hell For Sure Pass, through the Ionian Basin, follow Disappearing Creek down the Enchanted Gorge, cross the Black Divide via Mt. McDuffie, and then decide whether to wimp out over Bishop Pass or go over Southfork Pass.

Peak bagging possibilities are endless. This mostly cross country route will take us to the base of Goddard, maybe Black Giant, Scylla, Charybdis, Bolton Brown and The Thumb. How many we get depends on the conditions and our conditioning. If you have never carried a week's

food, get ready for heavy heavy packs since there is no good place to leave a food cache.

If you don't have an entire week, consider doing only the first part of the trip to bag Goddard. We could use the carp001 drivers!

## Mr. Warren 12,327' elevation Mt Dana 13,053' elevation Class 2

Date: June 25 & 26  
Leaders: Debbie Benham  
415/964-0558 eve  
Debbie Bulger  
408/457-1036 eve

No, your initials don't have to be DB to go on this trip. Saturday we'll climb 3300' to the summit of Warren starting from the Tioga Road. Our reward will be a spectacular view of Mono Lake. Optional climb of Lee Vining Peak. Sunday we'll reach even greater heights-as we ascend Dana.. Limited to 8 participants.

## Kid Peak 11,458' elevation Class 2 Goat Mtn 12207 elevation

class 2  
Date: July 8-10  
Leader: Aaron Schuman  
Phone: 415/390-1901

From our trailhead at Zumwalt Meadows (5035 ft), we'll cover an unimaginably great distance and gain a staggering elevation in our march through and out of Paradise Valley.

Well be poised for ascents of Kid Peak and Goat Mountain. On our third day, we'll loop through Copper Creek to return to our trailhead. Marion Peak 15' quadrangle'

## Mills/Abbot 13,468', 13,715' elevations Class 3

Date: July 16-17  
Leader: John Ingvaldstad  
Phone: 209/296-8483  
Message: 415/299-8504

Starting from the Little Lakes Valley Trailhead (Rock Creek) its a short level hike to our camp near or above Long Lake. On Saturday, we'll continue beyond camp to climb Mt. Mills (13,468') leaving Sunday for Mt. Abbot (13,715') and thr trip home.

## Mt. Dana-Mt. Gibbs Traverse, Ragged Peak 13,057'- 12,773', 10,912' elevations Class 2

Date: August 13-14  
Leaders: Bob Suzuki  
Phone: 408/259-0772 (eve)  
Nancy Fitzsimmons  
415/593-5123 (eve)

Enjoy a weekend of car camping at Tuolumme Meadows campground in Yosemite. Saturday we will climb the south slope of Mt. Gibbs followed by a traverse to mt. dana. Sunday's hike will entail a crossing of Delaney Creek in our pursuit of the summit of

Ragged Peak A \$6 fee will cover the cost of the campsites and Saturday's dinner. Limited to 10 participants.

## **Tenaya Peak** **10,301' elevation** **Class 1**

Date: August 13-14  
Leaders: Warren Storkman  
Phone: 415/493-8959  
Steve Eckert  
415/508-0500  
EMail: eckert@netcom.com

Join me in Climbing this walk-up peak that was my first in 1941. ~~The 10 miles plus a 1400 climb~~ will bring us to Mildred Lake, our camp site. This trip is suited for those who want to test their backpacking skills plus peak bagging. Topo map: Tuolumne Meadow

## **Mt. Henry** **12,196' elevation** **Class mild 2**

Date: September 10-11  
Leaders: Steve Eckert  
Phone: 415/508-0500  
e mail: eckert@netcom.com  
Warren ~~Storkman~~  
415/493-8959

~~This highest peak on the LeConte Divide offers the most spectacular views of Goddard Canyon, (South Fork of San Joaquin) Mt. Goddard, plus the main crest of the Sierra. The 2900 foot gain and 11-12 miles puts us at Rae Lake camp site, with an easy nap-sack walk to Mt. Henry.~~  
Topo Map: Blackcap Mts.

## **Fame, glory, adoration, untold riches, a guest shot on Arsenio-**

none of these await the conquerors of The Doodad.

So why, then, were six of us clinging tenaciously to the top of a knife-edge ridge and trying to prevent a screaming iceberg wind from blowing us halfway into Nevada? "we're either crazy," Kai Wiedman shouted into the wind, "or stupid."

The Doodad sounds more like a candy bar than what it is: a surprisingly elusive summit in the Sawtooth Range, near Bridgeport. The Sawtooths, which include Matterhorn Peak, are probably second only to the Palisades in offering the Sierra's finest alpine climbing.

In terms of architecture, The Doodad doesn't look like a traditional mountain. It's a 30-foot-high, undercut block of granite perched atop a fairly level stretch of the aforementioned knife-edge ridge.

To get there we had to cross the notorious Polemonium Col, which under summer conditions is often considered a significant mountaineering objective in its own right. But on this day (May 14), it provided merely the exhausting tedium of kicking knee-deep steps in the soft snow.

We bedded down for the night on the south side of the col, on bivy platforms stomped out in the snow. Every so often the wind would grab a stove screen, a bii sack or a parka and attempt to snatch it away, necessitating a quick lunge-save. ("Ir-be! Ir-be!")

Morning brought skies as mean-looking as Leona Helmsley and wind as icy as an IRS auditor's smile. As I forced myself to forsake the warmth of my sleeping bag, I discovered my cojones had shrunk to the size of Comnuts. But

Kelly Maas and Bob Suzuki would not hear of turning back. They talked of the glories in store for us if we managed to stand upon the summit of The Doodad.

Which is why, a couple hours later, I found myself crawling on hands and knees along the top of the knife-edge ridge. Kai had me on belay, and the roaring wind was blowing the rope in a ridiculous arc straight up in the air.

Jim Curl later said I looked like an astronaut leaving the command module on a spacewalk. If I lost my grip on the chilly granite I wasn't so much worried about falling-I was worried about becoming a human kite.

Kai and I were the first to reach the summit block. What we found was an undercut and steep pair of cracks: one fist-sized, the other off-width. Either of them looked to be a nasty proposition.

"It's only supposed to be 5.2," I yelled at Kai, but he never heard me as the wind grabbed my words and scattered them somewhere in the direction of Lake Tahoe. On a sunny, smiling day things might be different, but on this particular day the Wimp Chill Factor decided it for us. We turned around and crawled back along the ridge.

Kelly tried the summit block next, but gave up when his fingers turned numb. Peter Davison made one last attempt, but he, too, backed off. We all trudged back down toward camp, leaving the splendid glory of conquering the The Doodad to someone else.  
- John Flinn

# Private Trips

"Private trips are not insured, sponsored or supervised by the Sierra Club or the PCS. They are listed here as a courtesy to the organizers because they may be of interest to PCS climbers.

## MT. Lyell, East Arete

13,114' elevation

Class 3

Date: June 18-19

Organizer: Jim Curl

Work: 408/452-6557

Home: 408/371-4742

Email:

jim-curl@bannet.ptltd.com

Rising to over 13,000 feet, Mt. Lyell is the high point of Yosemite National Park. A worthwhile objective from any angle, our assault will be from the Ansel Adams Wilderness, east of the peak.

From the vicinity of June Lake, we will follow the Rush Creek trail to camp at Marie Lakes. Above the upper lake, we will work our way onto the arete where third class rock and enjoyable route finding challenges await us. Previous experience climbing class 3 and an ice axe are required.

## Matterhorn Peak

Class 3 or 5.5 (5.63) II

Date: June 18-19

Organizer: Tim Hult

408/970-0760

Tim Hult will lead a trip to this most inappropriately named peak with the outstanding views from the top. This is an outstanding time to be in the Matterhorn Peak region. We will start from Twin Lakes and move up Horse Creek Canyon. Join Tim for an ascent of the peak by

either the East Couloir or the North Arete. Tim is looking for a partner for the 5.5 route. Helmets for the Couloir are advised-

## W'norl Mtn

12,029' elevation

Class 4

Date: June 25-26

Organizer: Kelly Maas

Home: (408) 279-2054

Work: (408) 944-2078

We'll approach this northern Yosemite peak from Twin Lakes and Horse Creek Pass. The suggested tactic is fast and light, as there is ample elevation to gain and trailless country to cross. There's plenty of class 3 climbing, plus a smaller amount of class 4. Sign up by June 15. \$8 registration fee.

## Split Mtn.

14,058' elevation

Class 2

Date: July 2-4

Organizer: Bill Kirkpatrick

408 /445-2804

This mountain west of Big Pine, is one of the most accessible 14,000' peaks in the Sierras. On Saturday we pack on trail to Red Lake (elevation about 10,500'), a climb of about 4,200 feet over six miles, and set up camp. On Sunday we will make the climb, Class 2, to the peak, and down. On Monday, July 4, we will break camp and pack out, intending to return to the Bay Area at same time on the Fourth. No special climbing skills will be needed for this peak. If you are willing to make the long drive to Big Pine, are in reasonable physical condition, and have some experience with high altitude, you will enjoy this trip. Topographic maps are "Split Mountain" and "Fish Springs".

## North Palisade

14 2421 elevation

Class 3

Date: July 2-4

Organizers: Peter Maxwell

408/737/9770

Charles Schafer

(408) 378 9682

Secor describes this as "THE classic peak of the High Sierra. It is striking from a distance, and it has routes that will challenge climbers of all abilities and preferences". We will take the original ascent route, out of Dusey Basin, rated by both Roper and Voge as Class 3, although Secor rates it Class 4. What it means is that this will be a difficult climb, and suitable for experienced climbers only. There will be a \$3 permit fee and a \$10 appearance bond (refundable at the trailhead).

## Mt. Sill Southwest Slope

14,162' elevation

Class 2-3

Date: July 15-17

Organizers: Debbie Benham

415/964-0558 (H)

Joe Coha

408/447-5760 (W)

Roper describes this peak as the "most massive" of the Palisades. We'll go over Bishop Pass, camp in Dusy Basin, and enter Palisade Basin from Knapsack Pass. Limit: 6. NOTE: No permit reserved - we'll be crossing our fingers while waiting in line (alternate plan probable!).

## “Great Western Divide” Class 1-2, Backpack; Class 3 Climbing

Date: July 16-23

Organizers: Paul Vlasveld  
408/257-7910 x3613 (W)  
408/241-1144 (H) Before 9pm

This is a Great Western Divide trek, starting at Onion Valley to Center Basin in King Canyon. Then over Forrester Pass to the base of Table Mountain and Milestone. Finally cross-country back over Kearsarge Pass. There will be several layover days to climb peaks.

## Seven Gables 13,075' elevation Class 2-3

Date: July 22-24

Organizers: Debbie Benham  
415/964-0558 (H)

A west side entry via Edison Reservoir. Probably climb the west ridge to the top, A special note: this was my very first peak climb with the PCS! Limit: 8 on permit. There will be a \$3 permit fee and a \$5 “holding” fee refundable at the trailhead.

## Cloudripper 13,501' elevation Class 2

Date: August 6-7, 1994

Organizer: Chris MacIntosh  
415/325-7841  
or email: [chrism@clbooks.com](mailto:chrism@clbooks.com).

The name of this peak tempts me to check out the weather on its summit. Trailhead is near South Lake (Bishop) and we'll ascend the peak from Green L. Topo map is Mt. Goddard 15'. Private trip until/unless I renew my 1st aid certification. Room for 8

## Bear Creek Spire Class 3, 4 or 5.8 III

Date: August 20-21

Organizer: Tim Hult  
408/970-0760

Tim has a permit for 4 to climb this Sierra classic. Elaine Holland and I will make up one rope team, and we are looking for another pair of “rock-jocks” to accompany us on this route, or two peak baggers to climb one of the non-technical routes in support. Preference to rock-jocks.

## Mt. Tom 13,652" elevation Class 1/2

Date: August 20-21

Organizer: Bii Kirkpatrick  
408/445-2804

This is a huge mountain west of Bishop. There is an unused road that goes almost all the way to the top. On Saturday we will pack about six miles and about 3,000' to the Horton Lakes, elev. about 10,000', where we will set up camp. On Sunday we go the peak, a climb of about 3,600', then pack out. If you would like to find out what it is like to stand on the top of a big mountain, but have never done so, this is an excellent trip. No special equipment is required except for sturdy shoes and a good sleeping bag. This is a long walk up a very big hill. Topographic maps are “Mt. Tom” and “Tungsten Hills.”

## The East Face of Whitney:

Clip and save this article if you're ever thinking of climbing the East Face of Whitney.

The East Face is one of the great routes in the Sierra, and it's one of the few of the so-called Fifty Classic Climbs within the reach of most PCSers.

But it can present one major route finding problem. The Fresh Air Traverse, the key to the upper part of the route, is notoriously tricky to locate. If you've never climbed it before and even if you have it's easy to get off route here. The alternatives are generally not recommended.

Most of the guidebook descriptions, photos and drawings I've seen are only marginally helpful. But recently, in the middle of a book review in Rock and Ice magazine, I came across a good verbal description by Bela Vadasz of Alpine Skills International, who has guided me many times. It follows verbatim:

**“From the top of the Washboard, climb the wall on the left to the notch on top of the ridgecrest. As you belay, study the wall across and to the left, and identify the Fresh Air Traverse. (Editor's note: good luck!)**

“Next, climb down and left across a ledge system, into the new main corner system. Belay. Climb up about 30 feet to the blocky ledge system, traversing left to the step across the gap.

Meander up and left to the edge of the arete, then move to the base of the Loose Chimney. One more pitch up the chimney leads to a belay at the base of the Giant Staircase.”

I can't vouch for this description 100 percent, but in light of my own botch up of the East Face a few years back, I think it makes sense. If anyone climbs the route this summer, please check out the description and report back to SCREE. — John Flinn

# Cold Feat on Eagle Peak

Late in the day six cross-country skiers crested Buckeye Ridge to a scene of alpine splendor: across the deep chasm of Robinson Creek, the Sawtooth Crest, one snow-clad granite spire after another, crowned the southern horizon. The Matterhorn, the Dragtooth, the Three Teeth-I knew all the peaks from previous visits, but never had I enjoyed such a beautiful view of the entire range.

We had started skiing that morning from Buckeye Hot Springs Campground, near Bridgeport on the east side of the Sierra. With the help of Bill Keegan's 4WD Suburban we plowed through the snow patches that still lingered on the dirt access road. Besides Bill and I, the team included Roy Lambertson, Xander Karim, Whitney Smith, and Andy Hudson.

The sky spit random snowflakes as we cooked breakfast. The flurries persisted as we skinned up the steep lower part of the ridge. The sun, however, glowed steadily through the haze, which after a few hours burned off to reveal the vast meadows of Bridgeport Valley, 2000 feet below. Wending our way up the ridge, we realized that we were skiing not on spring "corn" snow, but four to five inches of powder, apparently deposited during the unsettled weather of the last few days. Just above 9000 feet we broke above timberline. As we crossed a shallow pass to the other side of the crest, an arctic blast of wind sent us digging for our parkas. There was just enough snow covering the clumps of tundra to keep us from taking off our skis.

Higher up, the snow deepened, and our pace slowed from the fatigue of trailbreaking at 10,000 feet. After the panoramic view of the Sawtooths, we peered 3000 feet down steep gulleys to the blackwater of Twin Lakes. In the blizzard of February 1986 these gullies spawned huge avalanches that bulldozed several cabins into oblivion. I remember driving through the area that year and seeing the remains of one cabin tottering over the road, a shattered pile of lumber.

One of our group began to suffer nausea from the altitude. Instead of skiing over the top of Robinson Peak as planned, we traversed south, contouring to a nice campsite between Robinson and the massive snowy bulk of Eagle Peak to the northwest.

After pitching the tents, Andy and I still had enough energy to sample the powder on Robinson. The summit wasn't far, but the Sawtooths, now rosy with alpenglow, so enthralled us that we didn't reach the top until 6:30. The powder, however, was forgiving enough to be skied in semi-darkness, and we soon rejoined our friends. As we cooked dinner, clouds of stars exploded from the black firmament.

It was a cold night. Because of the rigor of the trip we had all packed light-between 26 and 34 pounds per backpack according to my spring scale. Now, as water bottles began to freeze and frost formed on the inside of tent walls, we made do with our meager gear. With all my clothes on inside the bag, including my Gore-Tex I stayed warm most of the night.

At dawn I lit my stove with numb fingers, but soon the sun burst over the ridge, radiating blessed warmth

through the tent walls. The plan today was to ski with our backpacks up the white eastern flank of Victoria Peak, then traverse a high ridge to the summit of Eagle Peak. At nearly 12,000 feet, the top of Eagle would give us nearly 5,000 feet of skiing to the cars. Our ill comrade, however, still did not feel 100%, so we set our sights lower. We would contour around to the north ridge of Eagle, dump our packs, and ski unladen to the summit.

Descending the upper bowl of Eagle Creek was delightful-our skis whispered quietly through the powder as we schussed the gentle slopes. After a 10-minute run, we stopped to regroup. Five skiers assembled; where was the sixth? After a half hour wait, Andy volunteered to go back up the hill to find him.

After a short climb Andy saw ski tracks heading down the valley out of view of the rest of us. Our missing skier had chosen to ski a different route below ours-without telling us. We followed his tracks and were soon reunited. A long traverse took us out of the valley and onto Eagle's immense north ridge.

It was noon. Did we have enough time to ski the peak (at least two hours) then descend 3,500 feet through steep, unscouted terrain with variable snow cover? I decided we did not.

We had lunch, then carved turns down the first 600 feet. Already the powder was getting wet and heavy, but everyone proved to be good downhill skiers. At the first saddle, a convenient ribbon of snow led us to the top of a barren knob. As we had guessed, the far, north side of

the hill was white with snow. Making good time, we swooped down the slope, threading our turns through trees and bushes. One east-facing slope offered a brief taste of perfect corn snow, easy for turning.

Ahead we saw snowless expanses on lower Sawmill Ridge, so we kept following the drainage as it angled down to Eagle Creek. Finding a route through the saplings was challenging. Once I missed a turn and my metal edges crunched into a cluster of drystalks. "I'm just doing some pruning," I explained. At Eagle Creek we noted two unsettling trends: the saplings were getting thicker, the snow thinner. Slowly we worked our long skis through the maze of slender trunks. I dreaded the tedious hours ahead. Good thing we didn't ski the peak.

I doubt if we made a mile in the next hour. Then a **celestial** vision appeared: a snow-covered dirt road abruptly started down the west side of the creek. Relieved, we schussed the last 3 miles to Buckeye Valley, past countless tangles of underbrush and intermittent patches of snow.

The final obstacle was a corral fence at the bottom of the valley. Xander discovered the difficulty of doing a kick turn over barbed wire: his ski tip snagged and for a few moments he hung on the cruel barbs. Unfazed, he extricated himself with a laugh. (Good thing he wasn't wearing lycra.)

We reached the car at 3:30. Should we have gone for the peak after all? Perhaps, but we weren't home free yet. When Bill turned the key in his Chevy, the engine remained in hibernation: dead battery. Our dream of soaking tired muscles in Buckeye

## PCS Leader Hotline

Have you thought of leading a PCS trip, but were just not sure where to start? Do you have question about peaks to climb, routes, difficulty and class of climb, permit applications...? The following leaders are available to answer any questions you may have about mountaineering and leading

LEADER	AREA	TELEPHONE
<b>Kai</b> Wiedman	San Mateo	415/347-5234
Vrenni Rau	Castro Valley	510/582-5578
Kelly Maas	San Jose	408/279-2054
Debbie Bulger	Santa Cruz	408/457-1036
Warren Sorkman	Palo Alto	415/493-8959

Hot Spring evaporated; instead we wondered how we could get a jump in this remote area?

I hiked 1 mile to the Hot Spring overlook in case someone with a vehicle happened to be there. Rounding the bend, I rejoiced at the sight of an old couple just returning to their camper from the spring. They eyed me suspiciously. When I appealed for help, the man drawled laconically, "It'd take us a couple hours just to pack up the truck" I didn't believe him, but saw that the camper was leveled on blocks for an extended stay. They weren't going to move it.

We had an alternative. We had abandoned Whitney's tiny Honda 2 miles away on the far side of the snow patches. He fetched it and made it through the icy gauntlet, the Honda's undercarriage creaking and scraping. We successfully jumped the Chevy. We grabbed a burger in town, then started the long drive home. Above, the massive shoulders of Eagle Peak anchored the twilight sky.

*Butch Suits*

## FREE Permit

**Bubbs Creek  
(Kings Canyon NP)  
4 people  
July 15 (Friday) entry  
Contact Kelly Maas  
(408) 279-2054**

## Planet Granite

**"Planet Granite" will be opening a climbing gym in Santa Clara sometime this fall. I have a number to contact and would be willing to leverage all the potential memberships within both the RCS/PCX communities to see if we can negotiate a better deal as a group with this new climbing gym. If you are interested please contact Tim at 970-0760, leave your name, number, address and price range for a year membership.**

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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 second to the last Friday of the month: email, 3 1/2\* diskettes (Mac preferred), fax, or U.S. mail okay. Photos welcome.



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Dated Material!