



Scree

February, 1995

Peak Climbing Section, Sierra Club, Loma Prieta Chapter

Vol. 28, No. 2

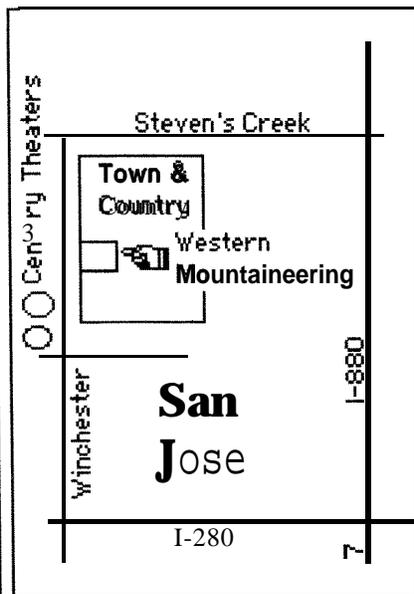
NEXT MEETING

Date: Tuesday, Feb. 14

Time: 8 p.m.

Place: Western Mountaineering
Town & Country
Shopping Center,
San Jose

Program: Visit the Khumbu Himal for a climb of Mera Peak (6476 meters/21,247 feet.) This is the highest of the eighteen trekkers peaks in Nepal, and a place where you can get views of five 8000-meter peaks. You have seen slides of Lukla, but probably have not seen slides of the Hinku valley. Peaks, snow, and rivers are expected, but I'll throw in flowers at no extra cost!



Nepal's Mera Peak

Nepal, sandwiched between India and China, is only half as large as Colorado by area, but being situated along the highest points of the Himalayan range, is twice as tall.

The country is a mecca for mountain scenery, trekking and climbing. Of the countless possibilities, the Nepal Mountaineering Association has designated 104 expedition peaks and 18 "trekkers peaks." Mera Peak (6476 meters/21,247 feet) is the highest of the trekkers peaks and has been a trek we've been considering for several years.

Located in the Khumbu Himal, the peak offers spectacular mountain scenery, including views of five 8000-meter peaks. This October, Deac Lancaster, Norm Henderson, Kris and John Wallack (Colorado Mountain Club members) joined up with Warren Storkman, Steve Eckert, Andy Skumanich and Elaine Holland (Peak Climbing Section members) to trek up the Hinku Valley and climb Mera.

This was Warren's eighth trek in Nepal and so we used the Kathmandu-based company Nepal Himal Treks Ltd. that he had used successfully in the past. It turned out to be an excellent choice, as we had experienced climbing Sherpas as well as a great support team for the trek.

After one heck of a long series of flights, we found ourselves in 80-degree fall weather of Kathmandu. We spent a couple days there while the trekking company arranged our

trekking and climbing permits. That gave us a chance to visit Bodnath, a Buddhist stupa, Pashupatinath, a Hindu temple on the holy Bagmati River, and the Durbar Square of Bhaktapur.

The trek started with a 50-minute flight in a twin-engine Otter to the short gravel landing strip at Lukla. This village, at 9200 feet, is the starting point for all the Everest area treks and has obviously prospered in the past few years. It has all the new

(continues on page 5)

Yosemite to start charging for mail-in wilderness permits

Reserving a Yosemite National Park wilderness permit by mail will cost \$3 per person as of March 1; the park announced recently. Obtaining a permit in person on a first-come, first-served basis will remain free.

To reserve a permit, write a letter postmarked March 1 or later (letters postmarked exactly March 1 have the best chance), stating the dates you plan to enter and exit the wilderness the specific trailheads where you plan to start and end your trip, principal destination, number of people in group and number of stock or pack animals.

Include a check for \$3 per person made payable to the Yosemite Association. Or you can include your credit card number and an expiration date.

UPCOMING TRIPS

Hr. DIABLO

February 11

31,849 feet, Class 1

Leader: Bob Suzuki
(408) 259-0772

Enjoy a 17-mile loop in this beautiful East Bay State Park. This will be co-listed with the Day Hiking Section and is classified 4E (4-5000 feet elevation gain). Heavy rain cancels. Carpool time: 7 a.m. Carpool location: No host, at Cubberly High (Middlefield and Montrose) in Palo Alto. Meeting time at trailhead: 8 a.m. Trailhead location: Rock City, near South Gate.

PYRAMID PEAK

Feb. 18-20

9,983 feet, Class 2

Leader: Palmer Dyal
(415) 604-654s (w)
(415) 941-5321 (h)
Co-leader: wanted

This will be a moderately paced, three-mile snowshoe trip to climb a relatively easy peak in the Desolation Wilderness area southwest of Lake Tahoe. The elevation gain is about 1,000 feet per mile and we plan to camp at tree line. By using three days we will have time to build snow caves and view the marvelous scenery. This will be a good trip for beginning winter climbers.

MT. SIZER DEATH MARCH

February 26

Leaders: Steve Eckert

(415) 508-0500

e-mail: eckert@netcom.com

Kelly Maas

(408) 279-20.54

e-mail: maas@idtinc.com.

The Killer Coe Hike rides again! Join the Day Hiking and the Peak Climbing Sections for this fast and steep trip up Mt. Sizer (3216 feet) and as many other steep hills as we can cram into one day. Our scenic route includes rock hopping down a stream that may be full this year, but avoids

The Narrows by climbing Mahoney Ridge. Expect about a 4F trip (20 miles, 6000 feet) with possible adjustments for weather. Carpool at Middlefield and Montrose in Palo Alto 7 a.m., or meet at the Henry Coe park headquarters at 8: 15 a.m.

THREE PEAKS DAY HIKE

March 5

Warren Sorkman

(415) 493-89.59

Steve Eckert

(415) 508-0500

c-mail: cckert@nctcom.com

Mt. Hamilton (4213 feet), Copemius Peak (4360 feet) and the high point of Grant Ranch (3000 feet). Join the DayHiking and the Peak Climbing Sections for this permitted cross country route up peaks on private land. As an entire loop, this trip is a SF (24 miles, 5200 feet), but those with less of an urge to burn calories can skip the northern loop and return to the cars after the high peaks. Carpool at Middlefield and Montrose in Palo Alto 7: 15 a.m., or meet at the Grant Ranch parking fee booth at 8 a.m.

X-C SKIING CABIN TRIP

March 11-12

Leaders: Vreni and Greg Rau

(510) 582-5578

On Saturday we'll ski in the vicinity of Grover Hot Springs, so bring your swimsuits! On Sunday we'll attempt Markleeville Peak or Red Lake Peak. This trip is for intermediate skiers. Co-listed with the Bay Chapter Ski Touring section.

TELEMARK/X-C WEEKEND

Friday night, March 17 to Sunday, March 19

Leader: Bob Suzuki

This is the fourth annual skinny ski outing at the Apres Ski Lodge, Kings Beach, North Lake Tahoe. YOU are also responsible for your own activities on Saturday and Sunday. I

plan on telmarking at Mt. Rose. Space is limited so sign-up now!! Cost: \$45 for two nights lodging, two breakfasts, two lunches and one supper plus \$10 extra/person/ weekend for semiprivate room, if available. Also \$10 for non-members of the Sierra Club. *Non-refundable unless someone replaces you.* One house chore required per weekend. Send check made out to Ron Lingelbach with: Self addressed stamped long envelope; home and work telephone; driver/rider status; # of passengers; time and place of departure to: Ron Lingelbach
1492 Pine Grove Way
San Jose Ca, 95129
408/253-8036 (h) at 9-10 p.m.
e-mail: linge@convex.com

Ahoy cybersurfers Sierra Club now on the Internet

Want to debate the Sierra Club's grazing-rights policy but can't face another long meeting? Too busy to compose a well-reasoned (and correctly spelled) letter to the Loma Prieta? If you're on the Internet, there's hope. Aaron Schuman calls your attention to a new Internet group, alt.org.sierra-club. It's a brand new unmoderated electronic forum devoted to discussion of issues concerning members of the Sierra Club. Happy cybersurfing.

Yikes

Apologies to anyone who ended up at the Pacific Mountaineer on the wrong night because of the editor's bonehead mistake in last month's Scree.

Apologies, also, to George Van Gorden for leaving off the date of his Junipero Serra trip. And to Noreen Ford for getting her phone number wrong in my own damn trip listing.

(con't from page 1)

building and bustle that I imagine in the frontier towns of the old west. Lukla lies high on the shoulder of the Dudh Kosi river valley, while Mera Peak is situated at the end of the Hinku valley, one drainage to the east of the Dudh Kosi. Rather than cross the 15,000-foot pass separating the two valleys immediately, we planned a side trip to Namche Bazaar, heart of the Sherpa culture, at 12,000 feet for acclimatization and views of Everest, Lhotse and Ama Dablam

After the four-day sojourn, we started again from Lukla but this time to the east to cross the Sebuk Danda (danda = ridge). On the way up, we camped in a small clearing in the fir and rhododendron forest called

Chutang (11,300 feet). Over the 15,000-foot Zatrwa La (la = pass), we camped above timberline on a relatively flat meadow called Tuli Karka (14,436 feet).

Two days of hiking took us down through forested valley and back up above timberline again to Tangnag

(14,291 feet). This camp was surrounded by glaciated 20,000-foot peaks. There were groups from Australia, Belgium, England and Canada.

The Hinku valley was not quite the remote place described in O'Connor's 1988 guide. The next three days took us to Dig Karka, Kare, and finally to base camp at Mera La (17,800 feet). This was a snow camp on a glacial shelf that had great views west to the Charpati Himal. From Mera La we could see the Mera Glacier ramping up the 3600 feet to the summit.

The glacier walk up to high camp (19,000 feet) made for a short day and allowed us to enjoy the views and the warmth of the rocky campsite. While the valley was covered in the daily cold gray fog, we sat in full sunlight on a patch of rock in a sea of glacier.

Our summit day was mild and clear. The entire climb was on low angle snow/glacier. The difficulty was in breathing, not in any technical climbing.

We summited along with an Australian party and an English party. It seemed almost like an alpine summit with the diverse groups and prayer flag-laden wands. The views from the top were spectacular. We could see Cho Oyu, Everest, Lhotse, Makalu and in the distance Kanchenjunga.

The trek took us 20 days from Kathmandu to Kathmandu. We had a couple of extra days built in to the 22-day plan to allow for bad weather, but didn't need the extra days. Four of us used the extra time to visit the Chitwan Jungle after the trek.

References: By far the best resource is *The Trekking Peaks of Nepal* by Bill O'Connor. The best map of the area is Sorong/Hinku 1:50000, Schneider Series.

— John Wallack

reprinted from *Thin Air*, the newsletter of the Colorado Mountain Club

Spring/summer planning meeting

It's time for all leaders and prospective leaders to get their summer trips planned and on the PCS trip schedule. Permit applications must be postmarked March 1 for the best chance of obtaining permits.

There will be a trip planning meeting as detailed below to establish a PCS summer trip schedule. All leaders and prospective leaders are encouraged to attend. **Free pizza will be provided. Bring your own beverages.**

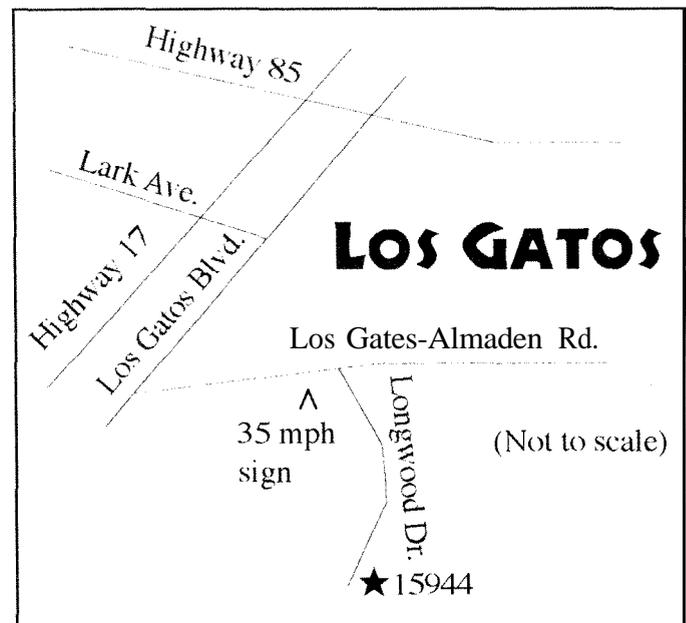
Date: Tuesday, Feb 21 1995

Time: 7 p.m.

Place: The Magliocco's
15944 Longwood Drive
Los Gatos CA 95032
(408) 358-1168

Bring: List of trips you would like to lead. Your own beverage.

Directions: If heading south on Highway 17, exit at Lark Avenue and cross back over the freeway to Los Gatos Blvd. If taking Highway 85, exit at Los Gatos Blvd/Bascom Ave. and head south. After passing Lark



Ave while on Los Gatos Blvd., Los Gatos-Almaden Road is the third traffic signal. While on Los Gatos-Almaden Road, there will be a black 35 mile-per-hour sign with white numbers about 25 feet before you get to Longwood Drive. Then you see the sign, slow down quickly. It is easy to drive right past the street. Go about 0.5 miles down Longwood Drive to get to

the house

A journey to a galaxy far, far away

I PREFER THE outdoors. That's the foundation on which my climbing interests are based. Hence my lack of enthusiasm for climbing gyms. Friends have even gotten the impression that I thoroughly disapprove of gyms and would never go near one. The truth is that I've been meaning to try one out-it's just been low on my priority list.

Recently the opportunity presented itself. When a major storm changed our ice climbing trip to a ski trip they canceled it altogether, I had a choice: Either climb indoors or plant myself on my couch and watch the Niners slaughter some Bears. My aversion to animal cruelty and my desire to explore strange new worlds and new civilizations led me to Planet Granite in Santa Clara. My belay slave on this stormy afternoon would be the infamous Swedish climber, Tim Hult.

Let me start by saying that the experience was positive. Also, that I have no other climbing gym experiences against which to compare it. The only requirement, beyond forking over \$13 for the day, is to show that you can belay and tie in. Sounds easy enough, but both Tim and I required modifications to our belaying techniques. I wonder how many belayers are diligent about never taking their brake hand off the rope. We took ours off each time we fed rope.

As KOMA played on the speakers, we looked around. The far corner houses some dumbbells, a rowing machine, and about five other weight machines. Next to that is the bouldering area. Except for one relatively vertical wall, it's all slightly to radically overhanging. This is unfortunate since the gravity on Planet Granite is the same as back on Earth

Our first destination, since it occupied most of our field of view, was the roped climbing area. We were pleased to find the area uncrowded, unlike most of Yosemite Valley. And unlike Earth, the surface of Planet Granite is covered with waste rubber from a Teva factory. After tripping over this stuff a few times we were eager for the security of vertical "rock." Security is indeed the case, as everything was set up for top roping when we were there - no lead climbing. The ropes are in place and ready to go. Just walk up, the climber ties in, the belayer clips in, and you're off. Planet Granite uses the Grigri, which is a very nice nice belay device that I'd never used before. It's idiot-proof, which made it perfect for us.

The "rock," I'm pleased to report, appears to be state-of-the-art or close to it. Not quite like on Earth, but better than we had expected. At least the structures don't look like the angled plywood found at most gyms. Some of the rock is up against the walls, but there are also several free-standing structures. There's even an arch bridging two of them, as well as a couple of cracks.

We scanned the route descriptions at the base of each rock and found a 5.7 for our warm-up. Like most of the climbs we did, it was misrated. They must use fuzzy logic to rate routes on Planet Granite. Another observation is that the rock is more vertical than what I'm used to. This meant that two hours of leisurely climbing left us so pumped that we couldn't hang onto much of anything. Also, the climbs are much shorter

than most climbs on Earth- about 25 feet at most. This made the easier climbs very boring, but was a good thing when we were struggling up something really heinous. It was also a good match for our short attention spans.

A unique aspect of climbing at this place is that one does not have much need for footwork. Or climbing shoes, for that matter. The same holds that our hands struggled to grasp made for bomber foot holds. That's very different from most climbing I've done.

In the end we had a lot of fun, and intend to return soon. It's a great way to get or stay in shape if the weather back on Earth prevents you from getting out. But once the rain stops and the days get longer, I'm headed outside again.

One last warning. If you haven't already gotten the message, it's this: Gym climbing is not the same as climbing on real rock. Captain Kirk found this out while free-soloing in Yosemite.

Some of the physical aspects of the climbing are different, but the most important differences are mental. On Planet Granite and other planets like it, almost nothing can go wrong. There is no consequence to a fall. The climber and belayer can always hear one another. There is no rappelling, anchor setting, and no decision-making required. There is no exposure. Whether this is good or bad is a matter of personal taste. What's important is that anyone who begins their climbing career in such a place should be as cautious as any neophyte when venturing onto real rock for the first several times. Go with someone who's experienced on Earth rock, and be careful.

— Kelly Maas



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 FCS climbers.

AMT LANGLEY

February 18-21
14,000 ft., Class 3 snow climb
(Organizer George Van Gorden
(408) 779-2320

Give yourself a winter vacation. Get away from all the stress and hassle of work and family life and get into the stress and hassle and trepidation of winter climbing instead. You'll be glad to get back to the office. This climb is a moderately serious undertaking and winter camping experience is required; some experience with ice axe and crampons is desirable. Snowshoes will be necessary on the approach. If the weather is too crazy, we will climb a lesser mountain in the area: Mt. Inyo, east of Lone Pine, or Telescope Peak, west of Death Valley.

MT. SHASTA

February 18-20
14,162 ft. Class 3
(Organizer: Tim Hult
(408) 970-0760

This President's Weekend trip, to Shasta's Sargent's Ridge, is for experienced alpine climbers - not those who think it might be "fun" to "try" this landmark peak. To qualify, you must have snow camping and snow/ice climbing skills, plus all the proper gear necessary to stay alive at -10 degrees in gale force winds at 14,000 feet. We will be using snow shoes / skis to access the ridge, so proficiency with either of these is a must. Participants should be flexible in their planning as the exact date will depend on snow conditions, group flexibility and the weather. This climb is the perfect "warmup" for Denali or the Himalayas.

Mr. RALSTON

March 5-6
Organizer: Eugene Miya
(415) 961-6772 (w)

This is a skiing and snow camping trip to a significant but easily reached peak in the Desolation Wilderness near Lake Tahoe. It is being organized with the ski touring section. Beginning snow campers welcome.

MT. SHASTA

March 18-19
14,162 ft, Class 3+
Green Butte Ridge
Organizer: Kai Wiedman
(415) 347-5234

The symmetry of the Green Butte Ridge has attracted mountaineers for years. It soars skyward to meet Sargents Ridge just below Thumb Rock. The Green Butte can be a quick and safe winter approach to the upper reaches of Sargents. Come join us for this airy, challenging and scenic climb. Participants should be in good condition, for our summit day will gain 4,700 feet.

MAY BE THREE PEAKS

Warren Storkman and Steve Eckert will be doing Three Sisters as a day hike, followed by Spanish Mtn and Tehipite Dome as an overnight backpack on May 19-21. The Friday day hike is optional, but visits a seldom-climbed area. All three peaks are on the SPS list, and all are Class 1 except a short portion of Tehipite that is Class 3. Mark your calendars and watch Scree for more information.

SIERRA SOLITUDE

The Fourth of July Weekend is usually crowded, but this year Warren Storkman and Steve Eckert will be taking you to the most remote place in the Sierra: Over Hell-For-Sure Pass, across the Ionian Basin, down the

Enchanted Gorge, over the Black Divide, and exiting over Bishop Pass. This one-way crossing goes past many desirable peaks, but if you don't have an entire week, join us for a three-day climb of Mt Goddard and you can make it back to work on Tuesday! We will probably hire mules to ferry food up to Martha Lake, so pack weight will be less of a problem. Mark your calendars and watch Scree for more information.

CLASSIFIEDS

WILL TRADE: Used black and purple pile pants (med.) for large size. Also red "CB Thermotech" lined ski pants (size 32) for larger sized ski pants or for large breathable/waterproof type rain pants. Jim Schollard, (408) 439-0708.

FOR SALE: hloonstone Polaris Mummy Bag (0 degrees, 6-foot long, left zipper) polarguard fill. Excellent condition! Make offer. Jim Schollard, (408) 4394708.

PARTNFR(S) WANTED: For African journey. Photo safari/camping/climb Kilimanjaro. Sometime this spring/early summer. Interested? Phone Tim Hult (408) 970-0760

FOR SALE: REI Mountain Hut tent. Three-season dome with room for three adults. Weight: 7.5 pounds. Getting on in years but still has a few good seasons left. Perfect for families. \$35. John Flinn h: (415) 968-2050, w: (415) 777-8705. e: jflirm@aol.com.

FOR SALE: "New" Five Tennies, size 10, excellent condition. Only worn for about three hours (when I discovered they were too small!). Paid \$80, will entertain any reasonable offer. Jim Curl w: (408)452-6.5-57, h: (408)371-4741.

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For change of address, contact Paul Vlasveld, 789 Daffodil Way, San Jose, CA 95117; (408) 247-6472 (h), (408) 257-7910 x3613 (w)

PCS meetings are held the second Tuesday of each month. See Scree for 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.

Deadline for March issue: Wednesday, March 1



Please recycle



Peak Climbing Section
789 Daffodil Way
San Jose, CA 95117



"Vy can't ve chust climb?" -- John Salathe

First Class Mail