



Next Meeting

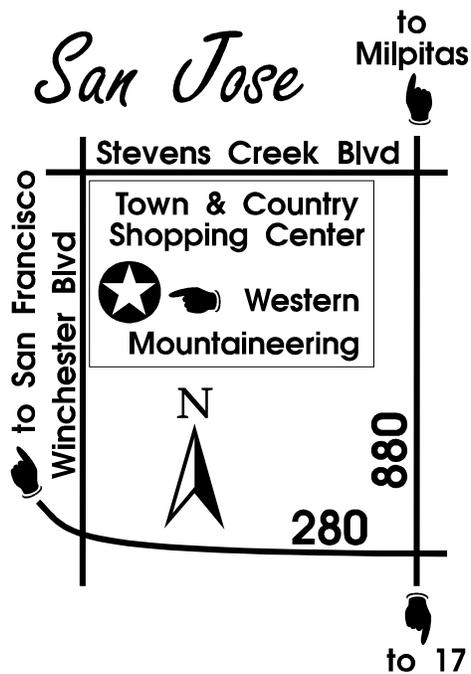
Date: Tuesday 14 May 1996

Time: 8:00 pm

Program: Six Years of Sierra Climbing

From blistering sun to rain and howling winds. From multi-pitch technical routes to easy walk-ups. From icy couloirs to pristine meadows. From crowded trails to seldom-visited summits. This slide show presents an overview of the Sierra Nevada climbing experience. The show is intended to be instructive for those new to the Sierra or to climbing, as well as entertaining for everyone.

– Kelly Maas



Location:

Western Mountaineering
Town & Country Village, San Jose

Backcountry Food Boxes

This list was faxed to the Editor without information as to where it came from or when it was compiled. It should be accurate, but don't trust your life to it!

ABBREVIATIONS:

- ◆ JMT = John Muir Trail
- ◆ PCT = Pacific Crest Trail
- ◆ HST = High Sierra Trail
- ◆ TLT = Twin Lakes Trail

Please send updates, additions, and corrections to the Editor, so the PCS can maintain this as a Web resource, with a copy in the PCS Binder.

Woods Creek

- ◆ Lower Paradise Valley----- 2
- ◆ Middle Paradise Valley----- 1
- ◆ Upper Paradise Valley----- 1
- ◆ Woods Creek crossing / JMT-- 2
- ◆ Arrowhead Lake----- 1
- ◆ Lower Rae Lake ----- 1
- ◆ Middle Rae Lake ----- 2

Copper Creek

- ◆ Lower Tent Meadow----- 1

Bubbs Creek

- ◆ Sphinx Creek----- 2
- ◆ Charlotte Creek ----- 1
- ◆ Junction Meadow (lower) ----- 1
- ◆ Junction Meadow (east creek) - 1
- ◆ Vidette Meadow ----- 2
- ◆ 9900' Elevation / JMT----- 1
- ◆ Center Basin Trail / JMT----- 1
- ◆ East Lake ----- 2

Charlotte & Kearsarge Lakes

- ◆ Charlotte Lake ----- 1
- ◆ Kearsarge Lakes ----- 3

Tyndall / Crabtree Area

- ◆ Tyndall Creek / JMT----- 1
- ◆ Tyndall Creek Frog Ponds ---- 1
- ◆ Wallace Creek / JMT ----- 1
- ◆ Lower Crabtree Meadow ----- 1
- ◆ Crabtree Ranger Station ----- 1

Rock Creek

- ◆ Lower Rock Creek / PCT----- 1
- ◆ Lower Rock Creek Lake ----- 1
- ◆ Lower Soldier Lake----- 1

Kern Canyon

- ◆ Lower Funston Meadow ----- 1
- ◆ Upper Funston Meadow ----- 2
- ◆ Kern Hot Springs ----- 2
- ◆ Junction Meadow ----- 1

Little Five Lakes / Cliff Ck / Chagoopa

- ◆ Moraine Lake----- 1
- ◆ Cliff Creek / Timber Gap Trail 1
- ◆ Pinto Lake----- 1
- ◆ Little Five Lakes ----- 1
- ◆ Big Five Lakes ----- 1
- ◆ Columbine Lake----- 1
- ◆ Big Arroyo Crossing----- 1

Mineral King Area

- ◆ Monarch Lake ----- 2
- ◆ Franklin Lake----- 3

Hockett Plateau

- ◆ Hockett Meadow----- 1
- ◆ Hockett Meadow Cable ----- n/a
- ◆ Rock Camp ----- 1
- ◆ Hidden Camp----- 1
- ◆ Upper Camp ----- 2
- ◆ Horse Creek Cable----- n/a

Lodgepole Backcountry

- ◆ Mehrten Creek / HST----- 1
- ◆ 9 Mile Creek / HST----- 1
- ◆ Bearpaw ----- 4
- ◆ Upper Hamilton Lake ----- 3
- ◆ Emerald Lake----- 2
- ◆ Pear Lake----- 2
- ◆ Clover Creek South / TLT ---- 1
- ◆ JO Pass / TLT ----- 1
- ◆ Twin Lakes----- 2
- ◆ Buck Creek / HST ----- 1

Sugarloaf Valley / Roaring River

- ◆ Ranger Lake ----- 2
- ◆ Seville Lake----- 2
- ◆ Lost Lake----- 1
- ◆ Sugarloaf Meadow----- 1
- ◆ Roaring River Ranger Station- 3
- ◆ Comanche Meadow----- 1

Going Light

OK...you've signed up for an exciting trip, but the leader's told you to be sure to "go light," probably because of some combination of 1) a lot of miles, 2) a lot of cross-country travel, 3) a lot of elevation gain, or 4) a lot of days. Packing light also becomes crucial when you're carrying several pounds of technical gear for a difficult back-country climb.

While Norman Clyde is said to have carried a 90 pound pack, many PCSers routinely carry less than 20 pounds for weekend trips in the summer. By going light, we free ourselves to climb high and fast instead of acting as pack animals. Hopefully it will also extend the service life of my knees. Everyone has their own opinions on the subject, but here's my two cents worth on going light in the mountains.

The fundamentals of going light are simple: eliminate from your pack what is not essential, and reduce the weight of that which is essential. As part of this exercise, you must consider your tolerance for physical discomfort and your desire to be prepared for emergencies. You may also want to check the size of your wallet, though much weight can be saved without spending a wad of money. The process should become easier with experience.

When I was transitioning from backpacker to climber, I saw food and clothing as the areas where I could make the most progress. I was originally told to bring plenty of food because of the thousands of calories I burn when in the mountains. In reality the altitude always reduced my appetite and I'd come home from weekend trips with 2 pounds of uneaten food. I probably carried more than 500 pound-miles of uneaten food before tackling this problem. This involved analyzing what I really ate, plus realizing that underestimating my food requirements a little bit is no big deal. My goal now is to return from a trip with no food in my pack. I usually carry no lunch for the last day if it's just a hike out. Sure, I've burned more calories than I've eaten, but it doesn't affect my performance (which is more dependent on conditioning), and I can make it up at the Sizzler on the way home. There is a limit to this calorie deficit, however. After a few days on the trail, my appetite returns and my food intake goes up.

A good way to save weight on short trips is to leave the stoves at home. This means not taking dried (i.e. lighter) foods, but the net effect is less weight. On multi-day trips, when carrying a lot of food, it is probably lighter to carry dried foods and a stove.

At this point, many readers are probably saying "but what about food for an emergency?" On most trips I don't carry any. I may be complacent because I've never faced such an emergency, the worst of which is probably having a bear destroy your food. This is my thinking: 1) an emergency will not extend a trip by more than a day, 2) no one will be harmed by going for a day without food, and 3) everyone else always has too much food anyway. At least one PCS member frequently carries too little food on purpose, yet has never gone hungry.

A quick side note on being prepared for mountain emergencies - It is far better to avoid subjective hazards by exercising good judgment than to base one's safety on a pack full of "just in case" gear and food. It often holds true in climbing that "speed is safety," implying that being too "prepared" can be as much a liability as an asset. For objective hazards (where good judgment is of no help), I don't carry much more than a first-aid-kit.

Clothing. The key here is that the Sierra has the best weather of any major mountain range in North America (though every rule has its exceptions). For weekend trips in particular, it's usually easy to predict the weather, so I don't bother preparing for unlikely scenarios. Raingear often stays at home, and there's rarely a need for duplicate clothing. Daytime temperatures are usually mild and nights are spent in sleeping bags, so the really warm stuff can usually be left at home as well. Stick to the tried and true layering system, and keep each

layer light. When conditions are at their worst, you wear everything simultaneously. For shells, a very light material can provide a significant amount of protection, and it rarely needs to be waterproof. Linings and zippers and pockets just mean extra weight. Fleece, while bulky, is pretty efficient for its weight. We all get stinky together, so don't bother with a change of shirt on a 2- or 3-day trip.

Sleeping bags are pretty obvious. At about 2 pounds, a good (and generally expensive) summer down bag weighs a fraction of what my first sleeping bag weighed. Cheaper bags are also available that still weigh 3 pounds or less. I was going to advise against Thermarest pads because even the lightest ones weigh more than the heaviest closed-cell foam pad. Certainly the standard model Thermarest is too heavy, but the latest generation (Ultralight II?) is not too bad in the weight department.

Tents are another area to save pounds, and here too remember how good the weather tends to be in the Sierra. Leave it at home if you're not expecting wet weather or insects. If you think some sort of protection is prudent, consider a bivy sac. At 1 to 1-1/2 pounds each, two bivy sacs weigh less than any tent. Sometimes a tent is required, but I won't give any advice here since each person must make his own difficult purchasing trade-offs between weight, cost, and 4-season versus summer.

Once I had cut back in these other areas, I realized I could get by with a smaller and lighter backpack. Here, however, I do not value low weight above all else. A pack must carry my load comfortably, and I will happily choose a heavier pack if it carries better by being well balanced and taking more weight off my shoulders. This becomes less critical, however, with lighter loads. Good luck in picking a good carrying pack at the store. Rent first if you can. A summit pack should weigh less than 2 pounds (1 pound is ideal), but can be eliminated entirely if your main pack is small enough - the main pack can be emptied out at camp, and used as a summit pack.

Though I still carry around a 2 pound ice axe when required, there are new light weight axes that weigh less than a pound. They're not appropriate for serious climbing, but can be just the ticket for crossing a slippery snow slope. I hear that there are also some very light crampons to be had, though I can't comment on their durability.

Iodine tablets or solution are lighter than a filter, but the trade-off lies in not being able to taste the cleanness of the water. Or you can do like Kai and take none of the above and take your chances instead.

At this point we're down to the little things, and it's difficult to make specific recommendations because each person has their own set of goodies. For eating, I carry just a light bowl and spoon. I put my drink in my bowl, so I don't need a mug. Also no latrine trowel - that's what the heel of your boot is for. Well cared-for quality gear rarely breaks, so I don't bother with a repair kit. Arrange your meals so that you don't need more than one pot per stove. In the summer you typically don't need spare head lamp batteries.

An oddly overlooked way of reducing pack weight is to share stoves and tents. This might seem obvious, but I'm amazed at the number of times I've seen multiple individuals on a trip with their own stoves and 2-person tents. Though the trip leader usually coordinates this sort of thing, don't count on it. Don't be afraid to ask around to see who you can team up with.

If at the end of this exercise your pack still exceeds your target weight, try again, remembering that the ounces add up quickly. *QUESTION EVERYTHING!* Don't bring something just out of habit. As you gain more experience, rely more on that experience and less on what other people tell you, but remain open to new ideas.

- Kelly Maas

Notes and Requests

Gear Review on the Web

"Views from the Top", the Northeast hiking and climbing site, has added a new Gear Review section. Users can browse existing reviews and post their own reviews of tents, sleeping bags, packs, boots, and jackets. If everyone would post a few reviews, it will be a great resource for people looking to buy new gear. The main site is at:

<http://www.lexicomm.com/whites/index.html>

or you can go straight to the gear reviews at:

<http://www.lexicomm.com/gear/index.html>

– Darren Almeida <darren@lexicomm.com>

<http://www.lexicomm.com> (508) 835-6047

Scree Defined

From Merriam Webster's Page-a-Day Calendar: Scree

"Strange though this word may look, English-speakers have made good use of it for 200 years. It comes from Scandinavia, where, in Old Norse, the related 'skriþa' meant 'landslide.' Scree, which can range in size from little chips to sizable rocks and boulders, is the product of relentless attacks of snow, frost, rain, and wind against an exposed rock face."

– Butch Suits

Rolling the Dice

7 people died on in a single storm on K2 last year, 6 died on Denali (McKinley), 4 died on Ranier, etc. "Climbers like to believe they are in control," says Michael Kennedy, editor of Climbing Magazine. "But sometimes it comes down to a roll of the dice." "I've been practicing this day for nearly ten years," said James Ballard, Alison Hargreaves's husband, when he learned of her death [on K2, in Pakistan].

– Warren Storkman, from *National Geographic*

China Expedition Members Wanted

Western China, Muztagata (7546m / 24,700ft.), August 2nd through September 6th. \$4800 land costs only. Two more persons needed.

– Warren Storkman 415-493-8959 <Dstorkman@aol.com>

Climbing Gym In San Carlos Seeks Investors

Investors needed for construction of indoor rock climbing gym in mid-peninsula area.

– Steve Brewer 415-674-8508

1631 Golden Gate Ave, San Francisco CA 94115

I think animal testing is a terrible idea; they get all nervous and give the wrong answers.

-- A Bit of Fry and Laurie

Permit Info on the Web

The 1996 Inyo National Forest permit procedures are now on the web, at

<http://reality.sgi.com/csp/pcs/inyo.html>

This page includes a map of the Whitney special permit zone and a sample permit application. You can also find this page from the Peak Climbing Section home page,

<http://reality.sgi.com/csp/pcs>

Good luck getting those permits. Let's climb!

– Aaron Schuman

Private Peruvian Exploration Trip

Explore Machu Picchu, and the Cordella Balanc in August. Exact departure dates are TBD as is the duration of our trip (2 - 3 weeks), but at a minimum, I plan to visit both Machu Picchu and the Cordillera Blanca or the Huayhuash "one of the most spectacular mountain circuits in the world." If there is sufficient interest, we will climb a peak, or trek any of a number of trails. Interested? This is a private, non-guided, led or otherwise commercial trip (i.e. I'm going, not "organizing" or "leading". If you would like to go, I'd like to have you along). Participants should be prepared to hike long miles at high altitude (up to 16,000 ft.) on a daily basis.

– Tim Hult 408-970-0760

Publicity Committee

The charter for the Publicity Committee was voted into effect at the April meeting, by a landslide. Here are the current members of the Committee, whose contributions to the PCS may not have been fully recognized in the past:

- ◆ Steve Eckert (chair): Scree editor & email list operator
- ◆ Aaron Schuman: PCS World Wide Web publisher
- ◆ Warren & Dixie Storkman: printing, stapling, mailing
- ◆ Paul Vlasveld: roster database, mailing labels

At a recent officer's meeting, we decided to solicit people to fill the following positions. Contact Eckert if you are interested in providing any of these services:

- ◆ Greeter: Answer questions of prospective and new members, talk to people who show up at our meetings. This could be a rotating duty among several people, operating as a Welcome Wagon.
- ◆ Orientation Show: New Sierra Club members are invited periodically to attend orientation meetings where the PCS and other groups show a few slides and describe our activities. This happens every few months, and slides were collected from PCSers last year - we need one or more people who can be called on to present them and recruit new PCS members.
- ◆ Flyers: In the past, the PCS has passed out publicity flyers at Club events. In addition, we could place flyers at local mountaineering equipment stores (REI, Marmot, Western, Sunrise, Pacific, etc) and at local universities (activities office, outdoor club, etc). This is a way to attract new members to both the PCS and to the Sierra Club.

– Steve Eckert

Issue of the Month

A continuing lack of responses (only 12 this month, out of over 200 members) means we won't be continuing this column. It was

presented as an experiment, and we learned something! Several of the suggestions for improvement have been taken seriously. Tim Hult is looking into a training course syllabus (which we need to get approved for insurance), the PubComm is looking for people to recruit younger members, and we will attempt to emphasize *news* over *discussion* in the Scree.

– Editor

Who Are We And What Do We Want

1. Do you attend PCS meetings?
 - ◆ 7 - Yes / sometimes
 - ◆ 5 - No / not usually
2. If no, why not?
 - ◆ 1 - Live too far away, but would like to come.
 - ◆ 7 - Busy on Tuesday nights.
 - ◆ 1 - Meetings are too much rigmarole, don't like them.
 - ◆ 1 - Hey, I trust the officers to do the right things
 - ◆ 1 - Programs not interesting enough
3. Why do you subscribe to Scree/EScree?
 - ◆ 11 - Want to keep abreast of PCS happenings.
 - ◆ 12 - Want to find out about upcoming trips.
 - ◆ 8 - Like to read about mountaineering in general.
 - ◆ 2 - Other: want to observe the process (???)
4. Is there anything that you would care to comment about that you think would improve the PCS? (selected responses)
 - ◆ I think the single most important thing is that the RCS and the PCS in the past did have some form of training. It's not clear that the PCS should hold formalized training: the liability is significant.
 - ◆ I've had too many trips of late with inexperienced people claiming to know more.
 - ◆ Conduct leader training to encourage and support leaders. By this I don't mean technical climbing training, but training in skills to organize a lead a group of people on a trip, and to work with them in a leadership/admin role in the Section.
 - ◆ I'd like to see more younger members, but there don't seem to be many people my age (20's) who are serious about mountaineering.
 - ◆ Keep designating "new member contact" persons at meetings so that newcomers are welcomed.
 - ◆ I would like to see the PCS offer more trips at different skill level, both at the low and at the high end, where the leaders are specifically willing to take along inexperienced people.
 - ◆ This is a loaded question! You tell me what prompts you to "improve" on what! Perhaps, the PCS is okay as is.
 - ◆ Co-list trips with less aggressive sections - local groups, singles, singleaires, backpacking, even church or community groups - show them what it's like to climb a mountain!
 - ◆ I haven't heard of any advantages of that over just receiving the EScree. What are the benefits of being a "member"?
 - ◆ Find ways to integrate the Section with other aspects of the Sierra Club. E.g. conservation of areas of the Sierra such as Desolation and Castle Valley.

It Goes Both Ways

I've been reading quite religiously all the posts regarding male/female climbing partner relationships. While men will be men (and women will be women) the crags are not a single's bar. When I am up on a route there is too much going on to complicate things with interpersonal dynamics and cheesy pick-up lines. I save that for when I am well away from the crag (usually dinner afterwards).

Ladies, if a male climbing partner is risking your life, whether it be trying to impress you or treating you like a member of the (ahem) "weaker" sex when he should be concentrating on safety, confront him or find a different climbing partner. While it is annoying to have a climbing partner who appears to be sexist or horny (or both) it is equally annoying to have a female climbing partner who is coy, projecting the attitude of "you're a guy and I don't completely trust your motives."

Let me give an example. I had the pleasure of taking one very cool lady climbing. (Actually I have the pleasure of taking cool ladies climbing quite frequently :). For the record, I was treating her in the same manner as I treat all my climbing partners - male or female. We get to the first belay ledge (your usual cozy affair) and I start to sense this, ah, uneasiness on her part. I attributed it to the fact we are eighty feet off the ground and maybe she is a bit nervous about the prospect of being left alone on this ledge. This led to my being concerned about safety for both of us. I don't want her wiggling out on the ledge while I'm leading.

So we sit and talk for a bit. I explain in great detail how the anchors are working, what to expect next, etc., in hopes that this will alleviate any fears. I still sense this uneasiness. I ask if she would like to rappel down now. She says no, she's fine. Still I don't sense she is completely relaxed.

After finishing the second pitch (she followed me a like a pro) I felt that maybe she might have interpreted my remarks as being sexist. After all I was basically treating her like a child, coddling her through the experience, and she turned out to have no problem at all. I was very ashamed and apologized at the top. We had a great day after that (although I still sensed she was not entirely comfortable with some of the belays).

After climbing with her other times and interacting with her on a non-climbing basis I come to learn that she is one of these ladies who feels that every guy out there is trying to come on to her (actually, her best friend told me this). This feeling of uneasiness I was sensing was because she was nervous about being on a small belay ledge WITH ME. She was (probably) thinking things like "here I am trapped on this ledge. What is this guy going to do?". This attitude led to my lack of confidence in her ability.

Now, while there do exist sexist guys out there, women sometimes elicit less than "enlightened" responses from their male partners by giving off a "suspicious aura." This lack of trust and confidence in one's partner works both ways. I NEVER let a partner lead when I have any question of confidence or abilities.

So in conclusion, let's trust each other. Let's climb together. Let's share a beer afterwards. But let's leave this singles scene bullshit back at the car, bar, tent, etc. To sexist guys who think that women are inferior, can't lead, and need to be treated like two year olds or Suzi dolls, how can you trust them with your life when they are giving you a belay? And to prissy ladies who feel every off color joke is a personal attack on their women-hood, who worry about their male partner's motives, and who treat every polite gesture as a come-on, how can you trust your life to the partner you are suspicious of?

The soap box is vacant. We now return you to the regularly scheduled program.

– Kenton White <jwhite@sasabe.acms.arizona.edu>

NOTE: This article was heavily edited to shorten and remove offensive words, but the intent was hopefully preserved - Editor.

Official (PCS) Trips

PCS trips must be submitted through the Scheduler (see back cover for details). Trips not submitted to the Scheduler will be listed as PRIVATE, without recourse.

Take a Whack at Tallac

Peak: Mount Tallac class 1 - 9,735'
Maps: Fallen Leaf Lake 15', Emerald Bay 7.5' quad
Dates: May 18-19 Sat-Sun
Leader: Aaron Schuman (please contact co-leader)
Co-Leader: Arun Mahajan 408-764-7661
amahajan@BayNetworks.com

Join us for an early season trip to the Desolation Wilderness. Starting from Fallen Leaf Lake (6377 feet), we'll hike through Glen Alpine and camp at Gilmore Lake (8320 feet), then climb to the summit of Mount Tallac (9735 feet). There should be a splendid view of Lake Tahoe from the peak. This trip is suitable for beginning peak climbers with prior backpacking experience.

20th Annual Mount Shasta Climb

Peak: Mt Shasta snow/class 2 - 14,161'
Dates: May 25-27 Memorial Day Weekend
Leader: Bob Gross 408-241-6149
75013.1420@compuserve.com

OK, it's time to get out of the easy chair and prove that you aren't over the hill. This is an event for climbers and skiers to ascend and descend Northern California's premier volcano by the standard route (Avalanche Gulch). Ice axe and crampons required, and possibly skis or snowshoes. We will be camped on snow at least one night at 10,400' to prepare for an early-morning trip to the summit. Very strenuous. Co-listed with Ski Touring and Sierra Singles.

Visualize Whorled Mountaineers

Peaks: Whorl (12,029'), Matterhorn (12,264') class 3
Dates: June 8-10 Sat-Mon
Maps: Matterhorn Peak 15' quadrangle or
Twin Lk, Dunderberg Pk & Matterhorn Pk 7.5'
Leader: Aaron Schuman H 415-933-1901
schuman@sgi.com W 415-968-9184
Co-leader: Steve Eckert H/W 415-508-0500
eckert@netcom.com

Test your advanced mountaineering skills on the two most savage crags of the rugged Sawtooth Range. We'll start from Twin Lakes (7,092'), just west of Bridgeport, immediately take on the waterfall leading to the hanging Horse Creek valley, camping by a frozen tarn at 10,500'. Sunday at dawn we'll surmount the cornice of 10,700' Horse Creek Pass, sidehilling to the Whorl Mountain. We'll search for the class 3 route Roper claims to have found, but we'll be prepared to belay the original class 4 route if necessary. Monday we'll set out from the same high camp, gaining Matterhorn Peak from the pass, then pack out. Competence on steep snow and rock are required of all participants.

Taboose Pass Peak Fest

Peaks: Arrow, Pinchot, Wynne, Striped, Goodale
Dates: June 30-July 6 Sun-Sat
Leader: Debbie Bulger 408-457-1036

This week-long backpack and peak fest will take us to the top of Taboose Pass where peaks abound. We'll take two days to get to our first base camp above Bench Lake from where we shoot to Arrow (class 2, 12,958'). Secor calls the view of Arrow from the Bench Lake Trail one of the classic views in the Sierra. Next we head back to Lake Marjorie to score Pinchot (class 2, 13,495') and Wynne (class 3 13,179'). Then it's back to the pass to skunk Goodale (class 2, 12,790') and Striped (class 2, 13,120'). On the way we'll take time to smell the flowers and enjoy the views. A \$5 check reserves your place. Check with leader to be sure there is room.

Ansel Adams

Peak: Mt Ansel Adams class 3 - 12,760'
Map: Mt Lyell 7.5 min topo
Dates: July 4-7 Thur-Sun
Leader: Kai Wiedman 415-347-5234
Co-Leader: Phyllis Olrich 415-322-0323

Steve Roper calls this peak a spectacular sight from the Lyell Fork of the Merced. The real attraction of this area lies in the remote, sublime beauty of these peaks, lakes and views. Some of the most spectacular scenery in the Park is found in this area with its fast sweeping panoramas. Our trip will take us 22 miles into this ragged and remote landscape. Come join us for this once in a lifetime experience.

Will You Sing, Gale?

Peak: Gale, Sing class 2
Dates: Jul 20-21 Sat-Sun
Map: Merced Peak 15 min Quad
Leader: Warren Storkman 415-493-8959
dStorkman@aol.com

We go over Chiquito Pass in Southern Yosemite Park. Call leader for more information.

Deserting the Sierra

Corkscrew Peak (5804'), Thimble Peak (6381'), Feb 1996.

If it's winter and you still want to climb peaks and you're not into ski mountaineering, what do you do? Check out the desert.

I've climbed about 30 desert peaks and decided it was about time that I went on an official DPS (Desert Peak Section) climb. The DPS is part of the Los Angeles Chapter. They publish a newsletter and list of desert peaks.

Corkscrew and Thimble are in Death Valley, usually quite pleasant in February. The drive to Stovepipe Wells is long, but the almond blossoms in the Central Valley were gorgeous. Campsites are \$6/night in Stovepipe Wells. RV's reign, but the back row is reserved for tents.

I met the DPSers at 7:30 a.m. on the Daylight Pass road. Corkscrew itself is a fun, straightforward climb of 3300' gain. After climbing up the bank next to the highway, we followed the gentle wash for two miles to the base of the peak. As the wash narrowed, we had to climb a couple of easy dry waterfalls. Then we headed for a notch in the skyline ridge to the left of a reddish pinnacle (sorta reminded me of redbanks on Shasta-it was cold enough!)

Corkscrew has a twisty appearance, hence its name. Near the summit I noticed some fuzzy, cabbage-like, gray-green plants that were as soft as the inside of a kitten's ear. Can anyone identify them? I have never seen them before. That evening, the promised world class happy hour never materialized because of the fierce winds and bitter cold. We opted for dinner in Beatty, Nevada followed by a hot springs soak. Somebody has to do it.

The next day began with a wonderful tour of the abandoned mining town of Rhyolite, home of the unusual "bottle house" constructed of bottles (mostly beer) embedded in adobe. An idea for you heavy drinkers out there.

As the temperature dropped, we proceeded in 4x4's to Titus Canyon. This interesting road (especially for geologists) can also be negotiated in high clearance 2 wheel drive vehicles. The trailhead for Thimble begins at the top of the pass on the Titus Canyon road.

We had seen Thimble from Corkscrew the day before. It is a picturesque black and white striped peak that appears to be 5th class. As one climbs, the second class route becomes apparent. Since Thimble isn't on any list, it is less frequently climbed than "official" peaks. Personally, I enjoyed it more than Corkscrew. Elevation gain is about 1800' including an unavoidable drop and gain of 400' each way.

The climb of Thimble took only about three hours. Afterwards, we continued the Titus Canyon drive stopping briefly at another abandoned mining town--Leadfield--a monument to false advertising. The hills were salted with gold, house lots were sold, promises made, and the developers skeedaddled with a suitcase of dough. The post office closed down in six months.

As the LA group headed home, I returned to Stovepipe Wells. As the sun set, there was a spectacular double rainbow that stretched across the desert. The next morning the mountains all around were covered with snow making for an exciting drive home. Trip leaders, Greg and Mirna Roach, did a wonderful job.

– Debbie Bulger

Unofficial (Private) Trips

Private trips may be submitted directly to the Scree Editor, but are not insured, sponsored, or supervised by the Sierra Club. They are listed here because they may be of interest to PCS members, not because they are endorsed by the PCS.

Crevasse Rescue Practice

Peak: Oak Trees, Rancho San Antonio Park
Date: May 18 Sat
Contact: Kelly Maas 408-279-2054
maas@idt.com

If you're planning a trip to the Cascades or Alaska, or just don't have anything to do on May 18th, come on out for an afternoon of simulated crevasse rescue practice. It's one thing to read about it, but quite another to actually do it. Topics include prusiking (or jumaring if you prefer) and pulley systems. Bring a full pack too for a really authentic experience. Suggested pre-reading is Selters' "Glacier Travel and Crevasse Rescue" or at least "Freedom of the Hills." Call or email for details. *Be sure to contact me in advance for the time and necessary equipment.*

Tired Of Having To Follow?

Date: May 21 (class 7:30pm - 9:00pm) Tue
Date: June 1-2 (field trip) Sat-Sun
Contact: Noreen Ford 415-344-4393
Contact: Phyllis Olrich 415-322-0323

Here's your big chance at independence! We're offering a beginning, right-brained, "dip your toe in" introduction to navigation. We will show you how to use the stars, maps (AAA, Forest Service, topographic), and a compass to find your way, not only to the trailhead and to the top of a peak, but back again in one piece before dark! This is not a high tech, analytical theory-based seminar. We'll have an in-town evening session on Tuesday, May 21, from 7:30 to 9pm at Phyllis Olrich's home. Following, we'll have a hands-on, field trip to the Emigrant Wilderness area the weekend of June 1-2. If interested, please call.

Cherry Creek Canyon

Dates: May 25-27 Memorial Day weekend
Contact: Kate Ingvaldstad kate@cdepot.net

This area gets my personal vote for being one of the most scenic and undiscovered spots in the western Sierra. Do not be fooled by the low elevation (5,000 - 7,500', Class 3). This is a very tough trail-less area. This year I hope to see more of the upper canyon beyond Styx Pass. The trailhead is a relatively short drive from the Bay Area.

Tower Peak and Ice Axe Practice

Peak: Tower Peak snow/class 3 - 11,755'
Dates: May 25-27 Memorial Day Weekend
Contact: Kelly Maas 408-279-2054
maas@idt.com

Come climb Tower Peak in northern Yosemite and practice ice axe and crampon skills. Participants should be familiar with class 3 rock, but ice axe and crampon experience is not required. If you're a prospective leader, I'm still looking for an assistant.

Lassen

Peak: Mt Lassen snow/class 2 - 10,000'
Dates: May 3-5 Fri-Sun
Contact: King Kelly kelly.king@bglobal.com

We will climb Mt Lassen- the beautiful 10,000 volcano which last erupted sometime in 1851. It has been over 12 years since I have been in the area and I recall excellent beauty in the contrasts of the peak (as it stands pretty much alone with Shasta in the far-away distance.) I think this was a moderate climb - a little strenuous but not too bad - with very pretty views! This is probably (low) Class 2. Snowshoes for sure, crampons and ice-axe optional. Be prepared for semi-winter conditions, but any weather could happen of course. Lassen Volcanic National Park is in north central California. Mt. Lassen is the southern most peak in the chain of volcanoes that ride the Cascade Mountain Range up into Canada, and include Crater lake, and Mt. St. Helens, and Mt. Rainier. The park is medium-ish height in the Cascades, with the valleys at 5,000'.

Avalanche Pass Area

Peaks: Palmer Mtn (11,250'), Sphinx Crest (11,256')
Maps: Marion Pk, Mt Whitney 15 min quads
Dates: June 8-9 Sat-Sun
Contact: Siamak Navid H 415-361-8548
sia@vid.hp.com W 408-553-3850

The plan is to go up Sphinx Creek trail in Cedar Grove and try the peaks around Avalanche Pass. Possibilities are Palmer Mtn and Sphinx Crest. NOTE: These peaks are not in the guidebooks and are not classified, so there is a good chance that they are harder than we expect. We will not attempt anything harder than class 3.

Celebrate Solstice on Mt. Williamson

Peak: Williamson, Tyndall class 3 - 14,375'
Map: Mt Williamson 7.5 topo
Dates: June 21-23 Fri-Sun
Contact: Phyllis Olrich 415-322-0323
phylliso@forsythe.stanford.edu

Pending receipt of a permit for six, we'll hike up and over Shepherd Pass on Friday to camp in the Williamson Bowl. We'll have all day Saturday to navigate our way up the "confusing maze of chutes" that make up the Bolton Brown Route. Sunday we hike out with an optional climb of Tyndall (14,018') on the way. This will be a long, gruelling trip, but should prove very rewarding if we make the summit of this, the second highest peak in the Sierras.

U-notch to North Palisade

Peak: North Palisade class 5 - 14,242'
Dates: July 4-7 Thur-Sun
Contact: Peter Maxwell 408-737 9770

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 U-notch route from the east, involving a 700' 40-degree snow/ice climb. This will be a difficult climb, and suitable for experienced climbers only. The number of people on the trip will be contingent on class 5 leaders being available.

Great Western & Kings-Kern Divides

Peaks: Ericsson, Stanford, Table, Midway, etc.
Maps: Mt Brewer and Sphinx Lakes quads
Dates: July 20-27 Sat-Sat
Contact: Andrew Hassell 415-493-3342
hassella@math.Stanford.EDU

Unofficial trip to the the heart of King's Canyon and Sequoia National Parks, July 20-27. Eight day backpacking and peak climbing (class 3 max) trip starting from Bubb's Creek on the western side. We will climb some of the following: Mt Ericsson (13608 ft), Mt Stanford (13963 ft), Table Mtn (13630 ft), Midway Mtn (13666 ft), Milestone Mtn (13641 ft) and Triple Divide Peak (12634 ft).

Great Western and Kings-Kern Divide Climb-o-Rama

Peaks: Milestone, etc, etc class 3 & 4 - 13,000'+
Dates: July 27 - Aug 4 Sat-Sun (week)
Contact: Kelly Maas 408-279-2054
maas@idt.com

After slogging over Shepherd Pass, we'll spend a week climbing the 13000' peaks at the headwaters of the Kern River. Priority peaks include Milestone, Table, Thunder and Midway. We'll fit in as many more as we can, choosing from Genvra, Jordan, Ericsson, Stanford, etc. Most peaks are class 3, but some are class 2, and some have class 4 summit blocks. My earlier announcement was only a survey, but showed that this trip will be over-subscribed. Contact me if interested, even if you did so earlier. Note that Andrew Hassell also has a trip to approx the same area.

Advance Schedule

Please do not contact the leaders to sign up for trips listed here. Leaders are asked not to accept signups until the trip is formally announced with OFFICIAL/PRIVATE TRIP designation from the PCS Scheduler. Trips in the next month should be announced already, and this list covers un-announced trips for a few more months to help you plan ahead. If you are planning a trip, if you change your trip, or if you can't get a permit, please contact the Editor to keep this list up to date. Names will be listed unless you request that only the peak be listed:

JUNE

29-30 Mt. Agassiz Debbie Benham
29-30 Grand Canyon of the Tuolumne Charles Schafer

JULY

4-7 Red & Black Kaweah Paul Magliocco
12-14 Mt. Winchell (C3) Debbie Benham & Joe Coha
13-14 Virginia & Twin Peaks (C3) (name withheld)
20-21 Mt. Julius Ceasar (name withheld)
27-28 Mts. Mills and Abbot (C3) John Ingvoldstad

AUGUST

3-4 Mts. Morrison & Laurel (name withheld)
17-18 Mt. Russell John Ingvoldstad
17-19 Mts. Darwin & Mendel Bob Suzuki & Charles Schafer
22-25 Devils Crags & Wheel Cecil and Paul Magliocco
29-2 Thunder, Deerhorn, etc Cecil Magliocco & David Ress
31-2 North Pal (U-notch) or Gabb/Hilgard Peter Maxwell
31-2 Mokelumne River Canyon John Ingvoldstad

Sunny Days on Lookout and Bull Run

I skied down Lookout Peak into the setting sun. Ahead of me, Karen Davis turned carefully on the hardpack, her silhouette knee deep in a ground blizzard. Like liquid nitrogen, the whirling crystals traced the furious pattern of the north wind, glowing yellow with the sun's dying rays.

This beautiful sight highlighted a three-day ski trip into the northern Sierra. Karen, John Langbein, Eric Simpson, and Lin Murphy accompanied me on an unscouted trip toward the Dardanelles, a prominent row of volcanic cliffs southeast of Bear Valley.

Under sunny skies we trudged up Highway 4, dodging snowmobiles and playing tag with another group of Sierra Club skiers who were heading north to Carson Pass. At Pacific Grade summit we said goodbye to them--and to the snowmobiles' infernal buzzing and fumes--and plunged into untracked snow in the upper basin of Pacific Creek. We camped at the broad, wooded saddle between Henry and Lookout Peaks. It was only 4:00, and the latter mountain, the tallest in the area, beckoned with the promise of unobstructed views.

John, Karen, and I shed our packs and headed up. Above timberline, the winds howled and the soft snow hardened. A short scramble up the summit rocks led to great views of the Ebbetts Pass area and a long stretch of the rumpled, white Sierra crest. On the descent the sunset was lovely, but the snow was not easy to ski - ice, wind-sculpted sastrugi, breakable crust - you name it.

Next morning we skied south into the huge drainage of Highland Creek. Fears of an icy descent evaporated as we encountered soft snow among the trees. Steadily we glided through the snowy forest, soothed by the regularity of the snow-blanketed trunks, charmed by the unending variety of nature's details. Corridors among the trees opened and let us in, revealing their hidden, pristine beauty. Near Hiram Meadow our progress slowed as the creek narrowed to a gorge. Here we skied a convoluted course along the west bluffs.

At the base of the Dardanelles, a sobering discovery: Highland Creek barred our path, looking more like a river than anything. We could wade it, but it was now clear that our planned itinerary would be almost impossible to do in 3 days. We abandoned the Dardanelles and headed back up into the high country.

We chose a spectacular campsite on an open hummock at 8000 feet. The elusive Dardanelles filled the southern horizon. John, Karen, and I tested the corn snow below camp and enjoyed a fun descent of about 500 feet. Later, huddled around our hissing stoves, we compared the quirks of ski partners past and present, and I amused my friends with bird call mnemonics. Their favorite was the olive-sided flycatcher, whose 3-syllable song sounds like the expression: "Quick, three beers!"

On the third day, we skied north toward Bull Run Peak and dropped our packs at the base of the best ski slope--the southwest side. This slope also promised a possible route through the volcanic cliffs that ring the peak's summit. We climbed with care--the final snow slopes were steep and just starting to soften. Almost magically, a class 3 route through the cliffs rewarded our probings, and soon we scrambled across two pleasantly exposed narrow sections of the south ridge and on to the flat summit. Views from the top encompassed Round Top and Freel Peak to the north all the way south to the Three Chimneys and the distant fang of Tower Peak. On the descent I lost several style points when I accidentally trundled a boulder from the cliff. It bounded down the slope 50 feet to the right of Karen.

From this mountain, our route back to the cars was not trivial. We skied over the top of a neighboring peak, then down steep bowls to Bull Run Lake. A lovely swooping descent along the headwaters of the Stanislaus River brought us to several more miles of scenic yet laborious skiing along its more gently sloping pitches.

We spent 20 minutes trying to find a crossing over one tributary creek. I've never seen such steep banks: thought the channel was only about 5 feet wide, the snow rose vertically on both sides for about 10 feet, impossible to descend or jump across. Similarly, a 30-foot log bridge we had seen earlier was layered with a rib of snow 8 feet thick! Lin stepped across a dicey snowbridge, which promptly collapsed as she dug her edges into the opposite bank--a close call. Upstream the rest of us found a sturdy bridge and we joined her on the other side.

Exhaustion crept in as we drove our grimy, sluggish bodies toward the setting sun. We left the roaring waters of the Stanislaus and headed for a pass southeast of Lake Alpine. Snowshoe tracks led us to the road, and, bone tired, we reached our cars at dusk.

– *Butch Suits*

Announcing the SuperScreamer (tm)

I'm happy to report that my newest quickdraw, the SuperScreamer, is now on the market. The new device is similar to older Screamer designs, except that it actually screams.

Sophisticated optical sensors monitor rope movement, or lack thereof, through the bottom portion of each unit. Long periods of inactivity trigger a "whimper" response, whereupon the device starts asking for beta and complaining about the lack of protection. Pauses followed by several feet of fairly rapid rope movement cause the device to relax, fart, and babble hysterically for a minute or so. And of course, sudden downward travel of the rope through the device elicits the trademark response, upon which the SuperScreamer emits a bloodcurdling shriek with amplitude proportional to the amount of rope movement since the most recent relax/fart/babble sequence.

I'm quite proud of this new innovation, which promises to be much better received than my previous quickdraw design, the Howler. For those of you did not have an opportunity to use one of these before it was discontinued, it incorporated piezoelectric load sensors and made dog noises. Its initial success proved to be its own demise, as sport climbers happy with their first unit soon acquired entire racks of them.

A design flaw caused the Howlers to misbehave in groups of three or more, to the point where each short fall on the part of the climber would result in a cacophony of wild barking and howling. Problematic as this was at isolated crags, it became truly unbearable in several crowded areas, where the barking of one climbers rack would echo down canyons and be heard by another set of Howlers, who would instantly launch into a chorus of their own. This, plus the incessant whining of Howlers which were left in place on pinkpoint projects, eventually led to a recall of the units. Dealer inquiries invited.

– *Eric Hirst <eric@u.washington.edu>*

Whitney and Russell

On August 3 of 1995, with the snow finally melting and a clear sky beckoning us, Elaine Holland and I hiked into the Whitney region on a 4-day climbing trip. I was looking forward to this trip not only as a chance to climb Mt. Russell and the East Face of Whitney, but as simply an opportunity to get into the high country again, since it had been three months since my last visit to the high Sierra. It turned out to be one of my most enjoyable outings ever.

To summarize, nothing went wrong - but not entirely by accident. Our concerns about route finding, both on the approach and on the East Face route, resulted in us bringing photocopies of route descriptions from at least six different sources. As a result, route finding was not a problem. For the approach up the North Fork of Lone Pine Creek, we went with the majority opinion and turned off at the second creek crossing, then avoided all lower stream crossings by staying on the north side of the creek. The use trail was good and we didn't have any troubles getting up the thin ledges. Likewise, between lower and upper Boy Scout Lakes, we progressed uneventfully through the brush to the "wet slabs," then crossed the creek at a higher point. Our moderate pace left us a bit below Iceberg Lake as we ran out of energy that first day. Here we found an unlikely spot to lay down our bivy sacs, with water running down the nearby cliff. It provided us with perfect views of Keeler Needle and Whitney's east face.

With more perfect weather the next day, we made a non-alpine 8 AM start from camp. As we roped up at the base of the East Face route at 10:30, we could see no one either above us or below. With Elaine feeling the altitude a bit, I started on the Tower Traverse, and we swapped leads from there. The Fresh Air Traverse was easily identified by using the photo from "50 Classic Climbs." We were surprised when the crux of the climb appeared in the form of a 5.6 crack at the top of the Grand Staircase. Only Moynier and Fiddler's book "Sierra Classics" correctly mentions this fact.

Our relaxed pace put us on the summit at 4:30. The few people already there soon departed, leaving us alone with incredible views in all directions. The only distractions that day were a couple of aircraft - a small private plane that buzzed the summit repeatedly, and a fighter that made one very low and very fast pass. While the East Face is a good climb and we had a good time on it, I wouldn't call it great. The main things to recommend it are its setting and history.

The Mountaineers Route made for a fine descent, with snow on the lower 2/3 that was just the ticket for plunge stepping and boot skiing. The total descent to camp took about 2 hr.

We left for the East Ridge of Russell the next morning at 10:20 after first relocating camp to Upper Boy Scout Lake. Mother Nature repeated the previous day's perfect weather for us as we scrambled up the never-ending scree slope that takes one to the plateau near Russell. Though we walked across small stretches of thin snow, we could have easily avoided them and made the ascent of Russell without setting foot on snow!! For anyone who hasn't been on the East Ridge of Russell, I highly recommend it. But it's not for the timid. The climbing is very real class 3 in places - and can you spell e-x-p-o-s-u-r-e? I enjoyed the climb even more than Whitney's East Face, while Elaine euphemistically called it "stimulating," as she is unaccustomed to mountaineering unroped.

Once back at the Russell-Carillon saddle, Elaine decided to call it a day while I scrambled up Mt. Carillon. There is nothing remarkable about this peak, but it was so close (13 minutes from the saddle) I couldn't resist. At the top I realized I was out of film. The descent of the scree slope was a breeze and we returned to camp 7 hr. after departing. Once again, headlamps were used only for after-dinner reading and writing.

Still in a daze from our tremendously successful climbs, we left camp the next morning at 8:30, stumbled leisurely down the use trail, and found ourselves back at Whitney Portal at the delightful hour of 11:00. An equally leisurely drive got us home at the very un-PCS-like hour of 8:30. After hearing of the late return suffered by those on Temple Crag that day, I consider it well worth while to grant yourself an extra day when doing climbs on the east side.

– Kelly Maas

On le'mark for Telescope

On Sunday, 18th Feb 96, 4 PCSers climbed Telescope Peak in the Death Valley instead of the scheduled Mt Lamark, and this is the report of that climb. Leader: George Van Gorden. Team members: Adrienne, Scott Kreider, Arun Mahajan

We were scheduled to climb Mt LaMark (13,417 ft) in the eastern Sierra over 3 days (17, 18, 19th Feb) but the weather forecast of an impending storm made the leader plan for an alternate mountain. There were a couple of no-shows as a result and that left the four of us. So we met at Bakersfield, early morning on Saturday, the 17th. George had suggested Telescope Peak as an option earlier, and the other's agreed, given the expected bad weather.

We drove to Death Valley. Sections of the road leading to the Charcoal Kilns are not too good, but the road from the Kilns to the Mahogany Flats campground is atrocious, given that both the cars were generic sedans. We clattered along to the campground, there is no water there, so if you do go there, bring some. We got water from the town of Ridgecrest, there might be a spigot at the ranger station before the Kilns, but I am not sure and we did not stop at the town/hamlet of Trona. The campground is at 8153 ft, so the elevation gain for the peak is just about 3000 ft from there. We set camp.

George and daughter, Adrienne took a small hike to a foreground hill. It was cold when the wind came, but we were not uncomfortable. We had glorious views of the Death Valley (Badwater section), especially when the ebbing sun touched the tops of the peaks there.

We started the climb at 7.30 am on Sunday. It was cool, but we warmed up soon. There were very little patches of snow, more so on the sheltered side of the mountain that faces Badwater. We came to the ridge of the hill in front and got our first view of the stately summit of Telescope Peak. The trail was snow free and it climbs up to the top of the ridge skirting the peak that has a radio-tower. It was here that the vistas opened up. We could see the Sierras, and even the White Mountains (but not any more north). The Sierras seemed devoid of storms.

We plodded along the trail and hit snow in patches. Me and Scott, we were in sneakers (not having brought our leather boots along) but we carried our plastic boots and crampons and ice-axes anyway. We hit snow at some places along the trail. I switched to plastic boots close to the summit, but they were not needed. Leather boots would have sufficed. The wind had died down a bit on the summit, and the sun beat down upon us warmly. It was very pleasant there.

The views were excellent, with the Sierras on one side in contrast to the Death Valley, with its strange peaks which look as if the earth had just spewed them out, on the other side. The summit was almost entirely bereft of snow. We reached the summit by noon. We started down at 12.30. We met a few people on the trail and on the summit. Scott and Adrienne met 2 people from the LA chapter who had come up from the Hanaupah Canyon. We were back down at the beginning of the trailhead at 3.30 pm. It is a fairly arduous 14 mile hike from the Mahogany Flats to the summit, and it took us 4.5 hr. to the top and 3 hr. down and we had a 30 min summit dawdle.

It was a pleasant trip and we had good weather and it was not too cold. Even though from Telescope, it seemed that the weather was good in the Sierras, we were glad that we did this beautiful peak, instead of Lamark, as the potential for bad weather was always there. We were all hoping that the sun was shining as warmly upon the other PCS trip to Shasta the same weekend, as it was upon us at Telescope.

– Arun Mahajan

Scree is the monthly journal of the Peak Climbing Section of the Sierra Club, Loma Prieta Chapter.

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Rock Climbing Classifications

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.

Class 4: Requires rope belays.

Class 5: Technical rock climbing.

In Upcoming Issues:

(if you sent something that is not here, please send it again)

At Rest Above the Atacama (death on Ojos del Salado)

Trip Reports: Roundtop, Homer, Shasta, Williamson

World's 60 Highest Mountains

Searching for Small Worlds to Conquer

Deadline for submissions to the next Scree is 5/26/96. Meetings are the second Tuesday of each month.

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