



Next Meeting

Date: Tuesday, October 8

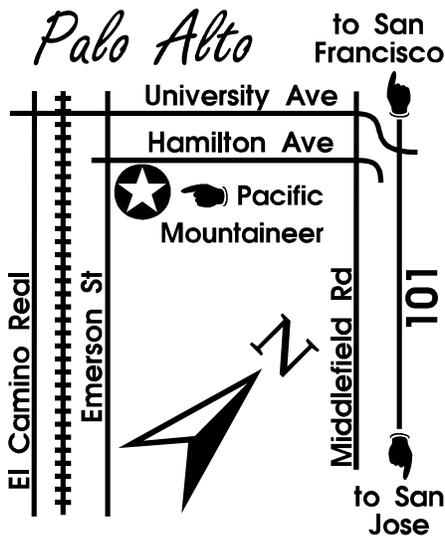
Time: 7:30 pm

Program: The Canadian Rockies, Still Working on the A's

A collection of slides from a four week trip I did in August 92 but the bulk of the slides are from Canada. Besides Andromeda and Assiniboine, we also did some routes in the Bugaboos and the Sawtooths in Idaho (driven south by bad weather).

– Hal Tompkins

Location: Pacific Mountaineer
200 Hamilton Avenue, Palo Alto



BONUS ISSUE!

At the request of the PCS officers, we have decided to splurge with a larger-than-life issue of the Scree in order to accommodate the huge volume of trip reports we've been getting. Don't yell at the Editor if your story has not yet made it into print. We'll clear the backlog over the winter, or my name ain't Editor.

DEET

REI tells me that 3M has stopped production of the Ultrathon insect repellent, but can't say why. Redwood Trading Post (in Redwood City) bought a whole bunch when they heard production was ceasing, and they are selling it cheaper than REI used to. The tube is military green, but it is labeled Ultrathon. Some time ago (on the email broadcast) I asked if anyone had information about safety or any other reason why production might have been stopped. REI Jungle Juice is now down to 17% DEET, and the salesman says any higher percentage should not be applied directly to the skin. Ultrathon is 32%.

– Steve Eckert

I channel surfed into a 60 Minutes bit on DEET bout a month ago. They were focusing on a couple cases where a few individuals had permanent nerve damage apparently from DEET (seizures, etc.). Don't know the whole story, just that 60 Minutes ran a negative piece on DEET.

– Butch Suits

Sounds like I should have bought more 100% a couple of years ago. I'm down to mebbie a five-year supply. Last I knew (several years ago) Eastman Chemical would sell 100% DEET for a reasonable price. I know because I looked it up to see if the retail price was out of line with wholesale: and it was not.

– Robert Ayers

There was an article in Backpacker magazine that high concentrations of DEET on the skin are unhealthy.

– BOB@brisf.com

Just a couple of weeks ago, on one of those hour-long TV news magazines, a segment was aired about recent deaths variously connected to DEET. It may have been "60 Minutes" or "Dateline" or their ilk. I caught parts of it while I was working on my laptop. I suspect that the quasi- documentary style of presentation has contributed, at least in part, to what you're seeing in the stores.

I didn't focus very much on the program because it wasn't a surprise to me. In the mid-80s, Consumer Reports magazine did an article on DEET. They had commissioned studies which found that concentrations higher than 30-33% had no added effectiveness. However, one statement that was made in the article, and almost glossed-over, was that a characteristic of DEET is its effectiveness as a skin-penetrating transport agent! For a few years, this information seemed to influence the DEET concentrations of insect repellents. In the nineties, I've noticed that concentrations have jumped again--until this month.

Below is an article that I found on the web. Some of the problems are suspected to be genetically predisposed but not all of them. Not enough is known yet about how it actually affects the central nervous system. Think bugnets!!

– John A Baltierra

Insect Repellent Hazard

from <http://pharminfo.com/pubs/msb/repellent.html>

Reprinted from Medical Sciences Bulletin, published by Pharmaceutical Information Associates, Ltd., 23-Jul-95

Since 1957, certain insect repellents have contained N,N-diethyl-m-toluamide (DEET). Of the 38% of the US population who use insect repellents, 22% use products containing 15%-20% DEET. The most common repellents are Cutter Insect Repellent (Miles); OFF!, OFF! Skintastic, OFF! for Maximum Protection, Deep Woods OFF!, and Ticks OFF! (SC Johnson); Hot Shot (Spectrum); Muskol (Scholt-Plough); and 6-12 Plus (Sterling Drugs). The lowest concentration of DEET among these products is 4.75% (plus 0.25% DEET isomers) in 6-12 Plus spray; the highest is 95% (plus 5% DEET isomers) in OFF! for Maximum Protection liquid and in Muskol liquid and lotion.

Adults as well as children are at risk for toxicity when using insect repellents, the major toxicity being DEET's effect on the central nervous system. Up to 56% of DEET applied topically penetrates intact human skin and 17% is absorbed into the bloodstream. In one study, 50% of a 1-mL dose of DEET was absorbed through the skin in 6 hours, with peak plasma concentration occurring after one hour. The concentration of DEET in the preparation, the amount of preparation applied, and the condition of the skin (intact, broken, or abraded) can affect systemic absorption. Children have an increased risk because of their higher surface-area-to-body-mass ratio. Occlusive coverings may increase absorption through the skin. Although insect repellents are effective for several hours, activities such as swimming, sweating, and wiping can remove repellent. Frequent reapplication can increase the risk of toxicity.

In one case, a 61-year-old healthy white woman, who had normally used a product containing 14.25% DEET, applied a different product with a stronger concentration, along with sunscreen. Becoming dizzy while working in her garden, she retired to her house, where the symptoms abated. On returning outdoors, however, she experienced presyncope and aphasia and collapsed. Admitted to the emergency department with nausea, vomiting, explosive diarrhea, and orthostatic hypotension, she had a systolic blood pressure varying between 70 and 100 mmHg. Her blood pressure improved with 0.9% saline administered intravenously. Symptoms resolved within several hours and the patient was discharged the next day. This case was one of a limited number of reports of toxicity in adults, and the first in which cardiovascular toxicity was attributed to DEET.

Symptoms reported in other cases have included acute manic psychosis, delusions of grandeur, rapid pressured speech, headache, disorientation, agitation, ataxia, gait disturbance, seizure, and toxic encephalopathy. In several cases, exposure to DEET resulted in anaphylaxis -- which responded to treatment with epinephrine, diphenhydramine, and corticosteroids -- coma, and death. In five cases involving the ingestion of 50 mL DEET in concentrations of 45%-95%, hypotension, seizure, and coma occurred within one hour of exposure. Two of these patients died, whereas three survived with no residual symptoms.

Since DEET in concentrations of 20% to 30% is 90% effective in preventing tick bites, and since a 30% concentration of DEET is not considered to be highly concentrated, when it is necessary to use an insect repellent, preparations containing these lesser concentrations, rather than the higher concentrations, should be used. Even with the lower concentrations, application should be sparing.

(Clem JR et al. Ann Pharmacother 1993; 27: 289-293.)

Mt. Sill

August 2-4, 1996: This past weekend a friend and I climbed Mt Sill. We started our trip from the South Lake trailhead. The hike up to Bishop Pass was on a nice trail, and although there were lots of mosquitoes, our mosquito repellent worked well enough that they didn't bother us too much.

At the top of Bishop Pass, we turned southeast to hike across country toward Thunderbolt Pass. We stayed pretty close to the base of the mtns, so we were climbing over boulders most of the way. Once we got to the top of Thunderbolt Pass, we climbed down into Palisade basin and set up camp. It was mid-afternoon at that point, so we had plenty of time to soak our feet in the stream and check out the scenery.

On Saturday, we headed off toward Potluck Pass. It was easy to get to the top of that pass, a little harder to get down the other side. We had to climb down one pretty long crack, so I got a chance to try out some of my newly-acquired rock climbing skills. Eventually we reached the base of Mt Sill.

Our guide book said that you could take any one of the chutes to the top, so we chose the closest and started climbing. About halfway up we ran into a guy coming down who said that he had reached the top of the chute and couldn't get across to the summit because there was a big gully in the way.

We decided to traverse across two chutes so that we would be sure to reach the summit. Our guide book called Sill a class 2 climb, but we were on class 3 rock most of the way. We reached the summit (14,200 feet!) around 2:30 pm. It was really windy, so we signed the summit register, took a couple of pictures and headed back down. There were a couple of tricky spots on the way down, but we were able to go pretty quickly. It took us about 3 hours to hike back, so we got into camp around 6 pm. It was a long day, but it was a lot fun.

Sunday, we got up around 6 am and hiked out. It took a little under 5 hours to get back to our car. It was a great trip; the weather and the route couldn't have been better. From our camp in Palisade Basin, we were pretty close to the routes to Thunderbolt, Starlight and North Pal, so I'm eager to try one of those on a future trip.

– Kelly King

All Tuckered Out

In 1993 a woman called 911 from the top of Half Dome using her cellular phone. According to dispatch, she reported: "Well, I'm at the top and I'm really tired." The answering ranger asked if she felt sick. "No," she said, "I'm just really tired and I want my friends to drive to the base and pick me up."

The dispatcher explained that she would have to hike down the trail she had ascended. The visitor replied, "But you don't understand, I'm really tired." What happened next? "It turned out we got really lucky," the ranger said, "her phone battery died."

Adventures With Yogi

Below is a group of bear stories that Butch Suits solicited and assembled from PCS mailing list members. A similar collection of other wildlife encounters is coming soon.

Who's Chasing Who?

I was pitching my tent near the shore of May Lake in Yosemite, a supremely naive act in itself. I turned around to discover a large black bear sow nuzzling my pack with her cub close at hand. I yelled. The sow grasped my pack frame firmly in her jaws and ran off into the woods. I lit out after them following a trail of my personal belongings like some modern-day Hansel: here lay a wallet, a little further, my car keys, and so on into the distance.

The bears stopped beside a large tree in the midst of a clearing and began ravaging their booty. I picked up a softball-sized rock and hurled it in their direction. It hit the cub. Panicked, the tiny bear rocketed to the top of the tree like one of those weights men used to pound with mallets at county fairs to impress their girlfriends. "Error," I thought as one very pissed mother lunged toward me, charging. Now the chase had come full circle as I bolted into the forest, back the way I came. When in mid-stride I ventured a furtive glance over my shoulder, I found the bear sauntering languorously back to my pack, where she set upon devouring every last edible item.

How long must we make reparations for the gross indiscretions and bad karma of a young curly-haired blonde named Goldilocks?

– Bob DeNike

Tag Team

Dave Giese and I had covered fifty miles of Yosemite trails in the course of two ultra-long days. We crawled down the trail to Little Yosemite to find a place to collapse for the night. After cooking our meal, we dutifully locked up the rest of our food in a bear locker and called it a night.

The bear started in on the camp sites a hundred yards away and worked his way around. We could hear campers trying to shoo the critter out of their sites. The bear made his way around our site without a threatening move, then wandered over to the tent containing three people and all of their food. The three came charging out to intimidate the bear, so the bear ran off with the three in pursuit, leaving their tent wide open.

Out of nowhere, a second bear appeared and grabbed the food. It had been a coordinated attack by two intelligent animals, and the humans had fallen for the decoy.

– Bob Gross

Breath of Horror

Back in the summer of 1981 my brother and I spent the night in the Upper Pines Campground in Yosemite Valley. We had arrived late on a Friday night and had crashed into our sleeping bags. We didn't use a tent since we were too tired to put it up. At about 2AM we heard a bear snorting very close by. I wasn't sure if my brother had heard him, but I wasn't about to turn around and ask him. It was one of our first trips backpacking and we had never seen or heard a bear before.

While I lay in the bag on my right side, with my eyes as wide open as they could be, the bear came over closer and closer and finally started snorting and nuzzling my head! I couldn't see him

and I was too terrified to turn or try and scare him away. I'm not sure what he smelled—maybe that distinctive "campground backpacker hair" or possibly a wayward piece of tomato sauce from that evening's last slurped strand of spaghetti. I lay there for what seemed like 15 minutes as the bear decided whether or not he wanted to further sample this interesting new smell.

Luckily one of our neighbors who was obviously more experienced with bears was also being visited by a nosy bruin. He jumped out of his bag, grabbed some pots, and started playing that wonderful symphony heard so often in the Valley. As the bears ran I finally turned to see a huge golden brown bear running no more than 10 feet from us. After an hour of repeating the scenario in my mind I finally fell asleep.

– Mike Rinaldi

Breath of Horror, Part II

About a dozen of us backpacked to the Young Lakes in Yosemite, cooked our dinner, hung our food in the tree, and waited for the typical bears to show up. Dave Giese threw his sleeping bag down on one side of the tree and I chose the other side. If the bears meant to attack our tree, they were going to have to go over us! The rest of our group retired to their tents. An hour or so later, the entire group was awakened by the most blood-curdling scream from Dave. They came running out of their tents to see who had been killed or dismembered.

No problem. Dave had simply been roused from a sound sleep with a bear staring him face to face. Dave unconsciously screamed although he was unscathed. The scream sent the bear packing, but nobody got much sleep that night.

– Bob Gross

Eleventh Essential for Bear Country: Tire Iron

While in the Colorado high country this last fall I had an encounter with a bear that was most exciting. My partner and I were camped for the evening at a campground. We were the only ones there, as it was late in the year and during the middle of the week. Though I am always extremely cautious in the Sierra, I have never even seen sign of bears in Colorado, and therefore was not quite as wary. This particular night I had left the cooler out on the picnic table.

Sometime late in the evening I was awakened by the sound of the cooler crashing to the ground. I instantly knew what was going on and started yelling expletives at the thief. With my headlamp on I opened the tent to see the bruin not more than 10 feet away busily eating my chow. I threw my sneaker at him, hitting him broadside. He darted off, stopped, looked back at me, then walked back to the cooler and resumed eating.

I yelled and jumped about, holding my sleeping bag outstretched as to appear larger than life, all to no avail. I was beginning to get irritated! I called out to my partner, who was safely watching this episode from within the enclosed camper shell of his truck, to help me find something to fight this *&\$@#! with. At this point I was standing no more than 6 feet from the brute and spotted my aluminum lawn chair. "That's it! I'll hit him with the lawn chair!" I thought.

Suddenly my partner hands me a 2-1/2 ft tire iron from within the truck, and I am now ready to do battle with what appears to be the largest bear I've ever seen. I weigh 270 pounds, and this guy was probably 350. I told him that I didn't want to hurt him, but that he was eating MY food, and if he didn't cease that's exactly what I was going to do. Apparently he was used to the idle

threats of puny humans, for he paid no attention. I warned him one more time, then lunged forward and beamed him over the head with the tire iron.

He was last seen hauling *%\$, mowing down bushes and small trees in his attempt to get away from this guy who now felt 10 feet tall. It was positively the biggest adrenaline rush of my life.

– Thomas Leatherman

Ursine Soliloquy

“Rich-Moor is fine, except the foil outer package gives me heartburn. AlpineAire is exceptional, but it makes me so thirsty that I always have to find a stream to drink water right afterward. Backpackers Pantry is good, except that all of their products seem to smell alike—I can't tell the freeze-dried meat from the fruit. Mountain House is a long-time favorite for all bears. Their packages are a little tough, so you have to tear them up a lot with your claws before you gobble them down. Do remember to drink plenty of that stream water afterward.”

“I found a real delicacy last month. I snatched the food out of the tree and ran off. When I got into the woods to unwrap the prize, I found one of a bear's favorite finds: Louis Meyer cold cuts in the new picnic package. It was prepared, as usual, without any fur or bones, so I couldn't tell which animal it came from. I enjoyed sucking out every scrap of meat. And the plastic wrapping wasn't bad either.”

“I discovered the one type of food that I don't like at all. It was just too tangy. The name on the side of the tube said ‘Ben-Gay’.”

– Overheard (and translated) by Bob Gross

Blood, Body Water & Eyewash

Or as it would literally translate into many foreign languages, ‘blood, sweat and tears’. This aptly describes the PCS trip to Red and White (12,850 ft) on the weekend of 17th and 18th August. The group: Chris MacIntosh (leader), Nancy Fitzsimmons, David Lou, Bob Bynum, Chris/John Kerr and Arun Mahajan.

We set off at the McGee Pass trailhead at 9.45 am. The first stream crossing was easy, for the second, we did not cross at the point where the trail crosses it, we walked further on a small use trail and then crossed the stream at a logjam. The last stream had a nice steady log.

The trail is very scenic and well maintained. It has one steep section. We met a ranger along the way and he asked us to watch out for bears as a party camping at McGee Lake had a bear visit them a couple of days ago. We camped west of McGee lake near a small stream. It had taken us about five hours to get to camp.

On Sunday, we started off for Red and White at 6.30 am. We were planning on doing the class-2/3 south-east route. There is a good use trail that leads to a plateau that overlooks a spectacular snow covered bowl ringed by peaks. From here, we headed north-west to the base of the final climb. There were a couple of snow fields on the lower sections of the final climb.

We came to the level of the snow fields by going over a scree slope. From here the rocky slopes began. It was all loose rock interspersed with firm rock. I don't know what kind of rocks they were, (metamorphic?) but they made for really bad climbing terrain. At some places rocks gave way even after one had tested them and at others, they would simply break off at the handholds,

just when one was hauling oneself up. This would initiate small rock falls, which people below did not find amusing.

We continued on still and made good progress. Then a rock that John Kerr had already tested as being firm, fell down. I was directly in its path and just ten feet below, I ducked, but a smaller rock coming down in the wake of the first one got me on the forehead. Unknown to me, the larger rock continued down (accompanied by our cries of ‘rock!’) almost straight at David. Luckily for him, he could ward it off with his hand, causing a gash but not any more damage. Chris MacIntosh bandaged his hand and then we all decided to call off the climb. Meanwhile I had gone up further, and it seemed to me that the summit was not more than 500 feet away.

Downclimbing also provided some tense moments, but due to some good guidance by Chris, we came down without any more accidents. While it was disappointing to turn back from a summit on a perfect day, we realized the wisdom of the decision. There was just too much loose and unstable rock and almost everybody had some sort of a bruise. To summarize, there was blood and we sweated it out and there were some tears at not having obtained the summit, hence the title.

– Arun Mahajan

Additional Comments:

Believe me, when that piece of rock was hurtling towards me, it did not look small at all!

Actually, I figured it out, and I think the rock probably weighs about 10 - 20 lbs, and was coming at me at about 10 - 20 mph. I think I would have sustained some serious damage, had I actually tried to stop it. What was amazing was how easy it was to *deflect* it. It took no effort whatsoever. [Yes, I had judo lessons when I was in college. :-)] The damage to my arm was caused by a *second* rock, about half the size, closely following the first, which caught me by surprise.

One lesson I learned was to treat every rock with respect. Several times during the climb, I saw relatively small pieces of rock being knocked off. The falling rock by itself would not have been serious, but the small rock managed to knock off a much larger piece of rock, causing much more potential danger.

Another lesson I'd like to share concerns first aid. It is my understanding that the current recommendation for treatment of surface wounds is to rinse off the wound with water and some mechanical action, e.g. by squirting the water from a bottle, and then just bandage it up. Application of first aid ointments or iodine solution is not suggested. The thinking is that the principal cause for infection is the embedding of foreign particles in the wound. As long as you take care of that, the wound will actually heal better without the ointments, etc.

– Dave Lou

Editor's Note: There was some discussion of ointments on the email broadcast list! There are some (like Neosporin) that are "antibiotic", which means they will kill the nasties already in the wound. If you use the right ointment, it is probably better than nothing. Check with your doctor or pharmacist before deciding.

Solo Duet

Author's Note: This trip report was filed before I knew about Dave Dykeman's death on Devils Crag (two weeks after my trip). Please do not take offense at my choice of words, but I have chosen not to alter the report in the hope that all of us will think long and hard about the risks and rewards of what we do. If we make our decisions for ourselves, with knowledge of the risks, then we have lived the lives we choose and no one should second guess us. Be safe.

"Black and white was so easy for me
But shades of grey are the colors I see
Now with the wisdom of years, I try to reason things out
And the only people I fear are those who never have doubts"

-- Billy Joel

I had once decided not to climb Black Kaweah and Devil's Crag, hearing of their dangerous exposure, loose rock, and many groups failing due to lack of time. This year, however, Bob Suzuki talked me into Black Kaweah (which we summited) and I had an invitation from Paul Magliocco to climb Devil's Crag as part of a small fast group. Paul has been denied the summit twice before, and this time he had to cancel due to non-climbing problems... but at the last minute I discovered that Ron Hudson had a permit for the same weekend! Ron had no partners, and was nervously considering a solo attempt, so we decided to join forces for a duet on Devil and split for some solo peakbagging after that.

We met at South Lake and blew over Bishop Pass in about 2.5 hours, making it to our campsite at 10,000' on Rambaud Creek (pronounced "rambo", I think) in about 9.5 hours including lunch and Ron's 1-hour chat with the lady from Chino (while I sat at a stream wondering where the hell he was!). The route up Rambaud is not tough at all, with the best stream crossing at the outlet of Grouse Meadow. If you stay high enough (just under the cliffs) there is a flatter spot where the traverse over to the creek works. On the way in, we did not go high enough and wound up on brush. The other option is to stay in the slabs and rocks by the stream, which is great higher up.

On DC day, we were walking by 6:30 am, and I spent 11 hours doing the peak. (Ron took a full pack to the saddle between DC and Wheel, and headed north toward McDuffie over the summit of Wheel at the end of the day, while I packed down to the Muir trail to camp.) Trying to avoid up-and-down climbing is a mistake on this peak, because the traverses tend to be dangerous and slow. We wound up stowing the route description Ron had along and climbing almost to the top of the white peak that marks the northern end of the ridge traverse to the summit. With few exceptions, we stayed on the ridge crest from here up.

The route is mostly third class moves with fifth class exposure. There are places where the ridge is taller than it is wide (like 20 feet wide 40 feet from the crest). I would not want to be up there in a gusty wind! There are accounts of all the routes and moves, so I'll skip that: The odd things I noticed were SILVERFISH and BEAR SCAT on the summit ridge, above 12000'! This bear had been eating a good berry diet, and there was both old and new to indicate this was not a one-time jaunt.

I took one belay on the way up, but in general the holds were good enough to count on either hand protecting from a double-boot-failure. This was in sharp contrast to peaks like Thunder and Black Kaweah, where any hold might pull out or give way at any moment. On the other hand, most falls would have meant you only feel the first bounce (since it would have been enough to do

you in) and no reason to send a team to pick up the hamburger. Am I exaggerating? Ask someone who's been there.

Ron remarked that the register showed no PCS entries in the last 20 years. Could this be true? I examined the Observation and Giraud registers and came to the same conclusion... but perhaps I missed someone.

The gathering clouds marched toward us as we sat on the summit, and the soft hail started dumping on us about half an hour down. We hid out behind a rock, out of the wind, and watched our lichen-covered route get wet and slick. Not good. Then Ron mentioned that hail tends to produce lightning, and I thought of Paul's weather record on DC... but it cleared in 20 minutes and we continued down without incident. We rappelled about 5 times and generally made good time going down.

On Day 3, I moved my pack up the Muir Trail to the junction with Cataract Creek, bear-bagged my food and dayhiked Observation Peak. My old 15' topo shows a trail, but that's a joke except from 9500 to 9900 (where the miners stacked rocks to get their mules under the cliffs). The chute I had chosen was full of snow, so I had about an hour's detour but the climbing was pretty nominal class 2. On the way down, I used my Leki pole as an ice axe and glissaded the slope that had been too steep to go up. The lip was not quite a cornice, and the slope became manageable after about 150' (with good runoff), so what the heck?

The bucks with females are all down in Deer Meadow (along the Muir Trail), while the ones that got shut out are up Cataract Creek: I've got a picture of 3 with antlers (from about 150' away) to prove it! If you're going up this way, leave the Muir Trail 100 yards downstream from where the map shows the junction, and head straight uphill IN THE TALL TREES until you hit boulders, then traverse along the bottom of the boulder field to the 9000' level next to the creek. Trust me, the avalanche trees below and the brush above make this the only sensible route.

Once back at my pack, I crossed the Muir Trail and headed uphill along the unnamed stream across from Cataract. The left fork heads toward a little lake on the way to Giraud, but nothing here has a name or a trail. This is cross-country Sierra at its finest! (assuming you ignore the really nasty bushwhack for the first 300') I stayed on the left of the stream going up, worried about being able to cross later, and that turned out to be the right choice. The right side gets brushy, while the left side has only occasional high second class slabs to contend with. I ran out of steam and daylight just as I ran into the worst mosquitoes of the trip, and made camp about 10300' in soft duff.

Continuing cross country to Giraud Peak on Day 4, I had the best possible scenery and footing to walk on. No evidence of humans, no cliffs, no scree - just tundra, tarns, and wildflowers. Walking around Lake 11040+, I gave thousands of frogs their daily "jump off the shore to avoid the possible predator" exercises, and continued up to the saddle at 11680+. This saddle has a cliff on the side I wanted to go down, but by going north (up) from the low point I was able to find a traverse route through decomposing granite and pine bushes. A bit of high second class, but there is no need to lose altitude between the saddle and the southeast face of Giraud.

Giraud Peak is climbed a bit more frequently than Devil's Crag or Observation (maybe 4 times a year), but should be climbed more often! The view from the top is stunning: Le Conte Canyon to the west, a frontal view of the entire Palisades to the east, Dusy Basin to the north, and... OK, so the south is just a regular Sierra view. Still, the north face of Giraud is one of the most sustained sheer cliffs that I

have seen. The snow chute (which you can see prominently from Dusy Basin) that leads to near the summit goes over 80 degrees at the top, and next to it is a cliff that terminates in a 1-foot-thick slab standing on end to form the actual summit.

I followed Secor's route out, over the saddle northeast of Giraud, and had only minor problems finding the right chute. It's between the spires, which might be important if you're doing a one-way trip like mine. If you go too far one way, you've got slabs. Too far the other and you've got the sandy third class chute that I wound up going down. If it does not look like easy loose second class, go back to the ridge and find the right chute!

Ron and I bumped into each other on the way out: after three days solo, we were 15 minutes apart at Bishop Pass. (He bagged Wheel, McDuffie, and Black Giant, but that's another report.) Ron made a dash for SoCal traffic, while I had a margarita and carnitas at La Cantina before heading home. Don't order the double if you plan to drive. They mix 'em like you're supposed to, not like lime slushies.

PS: This is a multi-media trip report. Please let me know if you find the image useful or interesting so I'll know whether to bother the next time. There is a GIF image of the topo for this trip, with cross country routes shown, on the PCS web page at <<http://reality.sgi.com/csp/pcs/Reports/1996.8.html#devils>>.

– Steve Eckert

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.

Tenaya Canyon Ascent

Trip: Tenaya Canyon class 3-4, maybe 5
 Dates: Oct 12-13 Sat-Sun
 Contact: David Harris 415-497-5571
 harrisd@leland.stanford.edu
 Co-Contact: Bob Suzuki 510-657-7555
 bsuzuki@aol.com

According to Secor, "This adventurous cross-country route should only be attempted by experienced mountaineers; many tourists are rescued from this canyon each year." We will ascend Tenaya Canyon from Mirror Lake to Tenaya Lake. Finding the optimal route is non-trivial, so we will bring ropes and you should be a comfortable class 5 climber in the event we resort to brute force.

Yosemite Valley Carcamp

Trip: Car Camp in Yosemite Valley
 Dates: Oct 12-13 Sat-Sun
 Contact: Cecil Magliocco 408-358-1168
 cecilm@ix.netcom.com

Enjoy this fall in the valley. A group campsite is reserved so non-climbers are welcome (of all ages). Co-leader wanted to lead one dayhike. A \$5 non-refundable reservation deposit is requested.

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.

Langley

Peak: Mt Langley (14,000') class 2
 Trailhead: Cottonwood Lakes, near Lone Pine
 Dates: Oct 12-14 Sat-Mon
 Leader: George Van Gorden 408-779-2320

Beautiful area, the yellowing aspens, the meadow grass not so verdant and riotous, the frenzy of the long summer nights abating, a good time of the year. The trailhead is at 10,000' and the trail into Cottonwood Lakes is very good, making this probalby the easiest fourteener in the state. We will hike into our camp on Sat and climb the mountain on Sun. It is possible to get back to your car and drive back on Sun night, though you would get home rather late.

Mt. Williamson (14,375')

Via The Bolton Brown (Classic) Route, June 22, 1996: Thanks to Steve Eckert's internet broadcast system I assembled a group of six climbers, none of whom I had ever met before except Dennis Hiipakka, who climbed Pyramid Peak with me two Februarys ago. The others were Eddie Sudol, Martina Fuller, Keith Barnes and the sixth man from Southern California.

We departed between 6:30 and 7 a.m., with Keith and Martina leading the way and Eddie trailing. Near the trailhead we crossed a stream four times. The water was high and it required some acrobatics to keep socks dry while crossing with boots (either that or take them off). After the fourth crossing, Eddie passed me and disappeared up into the endless switchbacks. We rendezvoused at a saddle above these switchbacks at about 10 a.m. Mt. Williamson, Shepherd Canyon and the wall just to the right of the pass came dramatically into view. I arrived well after the others, which caused concern and disapproval by half the group.

At the saddle we met another climber, John, to whom I had spoken on the phone a few weeks ago. He is collecting 14ers and intended to summit both Williamson and Tyndall on this trip. I maintained my position as the caboose but stayed close during the next part of the hike, which requires a 500 foot descent into Shepherd Canyon. When we started to gain elevation again, the sixth man and I fell behind. I was content to hike at my own pace but he pushed himself harder and disappeared into the switchbacks above me.

Between 2 and 3 p.m. both groups arrived at Anvil Camp. Dennis set up his tent at Anvil and insisted that in the morning, he would try Tyndall instead of Williamson. Eddie was still hell-bent on Williamson and equally hell-bent on doing it from Anvil. He and Dennis had made an epic attempt from Anvil in 1995. Unfortunately, they picked the wrong chute. They struggled valiantly and got very high on the mountain. But they did not have enough daylight to summit safely.

I left Dennis and Eddie, heading for the pass after 5 p.m. I met a member of Phyllis' team soon after I started. She wasn't feeling well and decided to return to Anvil camp for the night. I crossed the boulder field at the foot of the pass. Beyond it, much of the trail was still snow-covered and I had to climb up loose scree and talus to the left of it. Near the top, I was forced to take out my ice ax and gingerly

traverse a couple of sections of hard snow. Lucky for me there were plenty of steps, because I had left my crampons in my van.

The sun shone high on the peaks as I stepped onto Shepherd Pass. Beautifully sculptured Tyndall appeared before me, but Williamson was out of view. I passed John's tent and found the sixth man, who had stationed himself many yards away from the others. Keith and Martina were already set for the night next to five members of the other group. They camped next to a frozen lake. I chatted a bit, filled my water bottles, had dinner and crawled into my bivy, half way between the sixth man and the others PCSers. A crescent moon graced the clear and windless night and I slept under it like a baby.

At first light I awoke and noticed some of the others stirring. Keith came over and politely explained that since I had moved slowly on the previous day, he, Martina and the sixth man intended to join Phyllis' group for the summit try. Also, they had decided not to use a rope. I would be welcomed to join also, provided that I kept up. I declined and met briefly with Martina and the sixth man to verify their plans.

Given the bad vibes I had felt the day before, I was not surprised that half my group split. But I was very surprised and bitterly disappointed that they had decided against the rope. I had already hauled it 6,000 feet up and did not intend to carry it by myself all the way. Without the rope, I did not think I could safely descend what I expected to be an exposed class 4 crux near the summit. I left the rope but loaded my harness into my fanny pack with the futile hope that I would meet another party using a rope.

We walked over the easy ground east of Tyndall and onto the moraine between two frozen lakes in the Williamson Bowl. I trailed as the group continued over a snowy hill and skirted another frozen lake. Beyond that a short stretch of snow, boulders and more snow led to the talus-strewn base of the mountain. The "black stain" marking the start of the correct chute was well in view, although the chute itself was still obscured. I passed by the sixth man who was by now well behind the others and I flopped down on the rocks like a dead frog. There was still a couple of thousand feet to go and I knew this was going to be a hard day.

John and Keith scouted while the rest of the climbers rested. John moved directly to the black stain, encountering water running over large rock steps. Eventually John and Keith worked their way above the black stain into the chute. The others followed and when everyone was above the stain, I lifted myself up and continued. I was never to see the sixth man move from his spot at the base of the mountain. Before I left, he expressed the opinion that there was too much danger of rock fall.

As I approached the stain, I spotted two climbers approaching, one of whom was Eddie Sudol, who had left Anvil at 5:30 and had reached the pass by 7 a.m. I expressed my doubts to Eddie about summiting without a rope and explained that I was moving slowly. Eddie brushed aside all my concerns and said that he would wait for me on the summit until 3:30 p.m. in order to help me down the crux. All I had to do was climb 500 feet an hour and I would easily make it. I still had some doubts but it was always my intention to at least get to the top of the chute and have a look.

Above the black stain we got the first view of the chute. It was several hundred feet high and full of class 2+ talus and scree. I moved slowly but steadily after Eddie and the other climber passed me, pausing frequently to catch my breath. Soon I got to a long stretch of snow. While I was on the snow, John cramponed down to me in triumph. He declared that I was 90% of the way there and that I would have no trouble.

After the snow patch I continued my ascent on more loose scree and talus. A smaller snow patch led me high up the chute, where I inspected possible routes on the left. I found only one crack that appeared non-technical and was disconcerted to see that it bore little resemblance to the photo in my guide book. But I felt some hope at the sight of two ice axes I saw at the base of the crack.

It was hard class 3, but my butt-jamming technique allowed me to rest securely as often as I wished. In a few seconds I made it up to a large boulder wedged into the crack and a couple of moves later I was on the ridge. My unbelieving eyes were greeted by a large, gently sloping summit plateau many football fields in area. To my left was an easy scramble to the highest summit, two or three hundred feet above me.

The next person I saw was Phyllis on her way down. The surprise in her eyes was precious. I was still so stunned by the unexpected ease of the climb that I stupidly asked her if I was on route. One by one I met the others and we congratulated each other in passing.

When I saw Eddie on the summit, I raised both arms in victory. I sat next to him at a quarter to two and took in the inspiring view. Tyndall's awesome East Face was below us to the northwest, while Whitney's regal profile towered over us to the southwest. Mt. Russell was surprisingly unimpressive despite its proximity, because its twin summits did not even rise into the sky from our perspective. The great Western Divide and the Owens Valley were impressive. The north was studded with hundreds of Sierra peaks and the still snowy White Mountain was easily recognizable.

After a long pause we reluctantly left the windless summit. Using deft moves, Eddie lowered himself down the crack and coached me down. I ignored his advice, making it down easily with graceless but effective butt-jams. Eddie encouraged me to meet him at Anvil that afternoon. I told Eddie I would try to meet him at the pass, but I was so content and tired that I lacked any motivation to push myself. I crawled down the chute and stopped often to rest and snooze on the way back.

The sun was almost down when I sighted camp. Pools of water just east of it shone like bright silver. For a moment I thought I was gazing on a small brightly lit town. I gulped some Gatorade and booted to my bivy site before dark. Phyllis asked me how I felt and congratulated me again. Her sole remaining companion was already sleeping; the rest of the climbers in our groups had descended to Anvil. I filled my water bottles and had a big dinner. As I ate I was greeted by the little mouse who had poked into the hole in my food bag the night before to steal a cracker.

Sunday morning at first light I broke camp and was first off the pass. My slow and careful descent on hard snow was the most dangerous part of the weekend for me. Once again I regretted leaving my crampons. At 8:30 or 9 a.m. I met Eddie and Dennis at Anvil. The rest of the PCSers who had camped at Anvil were already gone. Dennis told me about the adventure he and some of the other climbers experienced the day before on Tyndall. It took quite a push and only Dennis and a lady from Phyllis' group succeeded (the one that I saw returning to Anvil Camp as I approached the pass going up).

Eddie, Dennis and I agreed that it had been a great weekend, but we're not done with Williamson yet -- next Spring we'll try it again via the George Creek route.

– Tony Cruz

Third Class, My Ass: Darwin & Mendel

August 16-18, 1996 - Bob Suzuki organized an enjoyable trip to the Evolution area. Participants included David Harris (co-leader), Sam Wilke, Ted Raczek, Gennady Farber, Alex Zelditch, Alex Keith, and Rich Leiker.

The group departed from North Lake at about 8:30 Friday morning to pack over Lamarck Col. We warmed up by accidentally hiking up the Piute Pass trail for ten minutes before discovering that the turnoff to Lamarck lakes was actually at the trailhead, not a short way up the trail as the 7.5 minute topo suggested. The ascent to lower Lamarck lake went smoothly. Alex had learned of a trail to the col on his previous trip; we found the trail slightly more than half way between Lower and Upper Lamarck lakes. The main trail crosses to the right (north) bank of the stream, then switch backs up a short hill. At the top of the hill is an easy stream crossing to the south side of the stream. The col trail picks up at the south side of the stream near the low point of a small saddle, descends the south side of the saddle, then works southeast past a small pond before switch-backing up a steep shoulder several hundred feet. It continues southeast up easy slopes over several false cols to the lake below Lamarck Col. According to a pair of hikers we passed, the trail had been built by a packer to haul gear to the col. The trail makes the col as easy and straightforward as going over many Sierra passes.

By the time we'd reached the col, Gennady was suffering from the altitude and had dropped back with Alex. Gathering storm clouds drove us on and we descended the west side on rocks made slippery by rain and hail. We originally hoped to camp at a high lake at the edge of the Darwin glacier, but decided the spots were more readily available slightly lower at the lake immediately below the col. Gennady and Alex found us in camp as the storm began to clear.

On Saturday, we got a 6:15 start toward Darwin. Secor's route description of the Darwin Glacier and West Ridge was fairly good. A vertical section in the chute below the small notch can be bypassed on any of several routes on the rock to the right; the routes we tried had some interesting class 3 moves complicated by ill-placed patches of ice. An SPS report pointed out that following below the ridge on the right side to the summit plateau is easier than staying on the top of the ridge. After a short walk across the plateau, we saw the unmistakable summit block of Darwin.

The block is slightly detached from the plateau. Facing the block from the edge of the plateau, descend to your right off the plateau, then cross over to the left, descend down a chute and re-ascend another (icy) chute to the far (southeast) side of the summit block. A class 3 crack leads to a ledge immediately below the far side of the block. Climbing the block involves a simple but exposed mantle; only one member of the group felt like using the rope which we had hauled all the way up. A single long sling provided a bomb-proof anchor; don't bother bringing a rack. An experienced party can do the climb safely with no rope; a very short 7 mil rope would suffice to belay those uncomfortable with exposure up the last 5 feet to the summit. The views were outstanding from the top and the climbing was very good. The climb took about 4 hours and the descent to the glacier was another hour.

We descended Darwin and traversed the glacier to the east face of Mendel. At this point, Ted was tired of rock work and decided to return to camp; little did he know what a wise decision he had made. Secor calls the face class 3 and refers to many ledges, but nothing we could find resembled a ledge. The entire face is very loose and several rocks came down that could have caused serious injury to anyone in their path. We met a guy descending from a solo ascent of the Mendel Couloir who directed us right and assured us the route was 3rd class; we foolishly accepted his directions. The climb to the northeast ridge was easy (though loose) 3rd class. However, the ridge itself was very steep and blocky in many places.

We could not find Secor's rumored 3rd class "pleasant climb;" numerous moves were both tricky and exposed, meeting our definition of 4th class. Unfortunately, we had left the rope at the edge of the glacier because we were competent climbers expecting a 3rd class route. Alex Zelditch scampered ahead to scout and chimneyed up something that looked 5th class to those of us watching; the rest of us were unwilling to follow and traversed to the face right beneath the summit. We had the choice of chutes to the left or right. The left is probably the chute with the chockstone referred to by Secor; Rich examined the chockstone and felt it would be possible to climb, but difficult to downclimb. A skinny person may have been able to squeeze through a keyhole beneath the stone. We opted instead for a 4th class move to the right, which reunited us with Alex and gave easy access to the summit.

In the Mendel summit register, somebody had written "Third Class, My Ass," which became the theme of the trip. Views of Evolution Lake and the Evolution Valley were superb from the edge of the plateau. The climb from the glacier was 3-4 hours, due to route finding, tedious 4th class climbing, and general apathy.

We descended the same chimney and continued down steep, sandy slopes of the face, probably taking Secor's "East Face" route, though ledges are an inaccurate description. A 40 pound rock came down from the back of the group; by the time it reached the front 300 feet down the face, it had split in two and was flying 30 feet in the air. Half dropped directly toward Bob's head; he dived under and narrowly avoided the boulder, but began sliding down the scree-covered face toward an eight foot cliff and barely caught himself before going over. The entire climb and descent was very stressful and hazardous. I would recommend helmets and a short, light rope to future parties and have no interest in repeating the climb myself.

On Sunday, David, Alex Keith, Rich, and Ted left camp at 7:15, brought our packs to the lake on the far side of the col, and made a quick ascent of Lamarck Peak (16-30 minutes from lake to summit). The views made the climb worthwhile (once); we returned to the lake and met the rest of the party which had left at 8:00. The hike out was uneventful and we reached the cars by 1:30.

We descended to Bishop for lunch at a BBQ place on the west side of the main road about a block south of the North Lake road. The restaurant was new to most of us and the food was good (though our standards after three days may be low). Alex Keith plans to write a PCS restaurant guide for the Eastern Sierra; send him (akeith@crc.ricoh.com) your favorite and least favorite restaurants.

- David Harris

Notes and Requests

9mm Half Rope For Sale

After traumatic experiences on Mendel and Thunder this summer, I picked up a 9 mil rope at REI to carry on 4th class trips in the future. It should be much less likely to cut than a 7 mil rope, especially in the event of a pendulum or rockfall. I'm cutting it in two and carrying 80 feet (1.3 kg). I'd be happy to sell the other half for \$65 to anybody else looking for a short rope. Call 415-497-5571.

– David Harris <harrisd@leland.stanford.edu>

Everest Tragedy Online

If you have a web browser, check out <<http://www.mountainzone.com>> or more specifically <<http://www.mountainzone.com/climbing/index.html>>. There are letters from guides who were on the mountain during this year's ill-fated summit attempt that killed guide Scott Fischer and others. Blunt comments are given on the performance of the guides and the ways in which those on the climb contributed to the problems. This is not slick journalism, but it's another set of viewpoints.

– Steve Eckert <eckert@netcom.com>

For those of you in this group who want to read the ultimate trip report, point your web browser at <<http://outside.starwave.com:80/magazine/0996/9609feev.html>>. This is an amazing story, and hopefully everybody can learn something by reading it. Read it, it's worth it... Here's the opening of "Into Thin Air":

Everest deals with trespassers harshly: the dead vanish beneath the snows. While the living struggle to explain what happened. And why. A survivor of the mountain's worst disaster examines the business of Mount Everest and the steep price of ambition.

– Steve Parker <Steven_Parker@stortek.com>

The Jugglers on Peaks Club

The Jugglers on Peaks Club (JOPC) was founded in 1972 or 73 and at one time boasted active members in various states of the US, Australia, and some other countries. After 1980, only sporadic ascents have been made, and the active membership fell off (ha ha) to about nil. Still, everytime I manage to climb something, I always juggle on top, and have juggled on over 300 mountain summits in Alaska, California, Colorado, Nevada, Washington, Australia, Canada, England, Germany, Indonesia, Japan, Korea, Mexico, New Zealand, Wales, and probably a few other places I forgot. How to join All you have to do is climb some peak, and juggle at least 50 throws of any valid juggling pattern (more objects in motion than the number of hands in use is the JOPC definition of "valid".) Then you are automatically a member for life. Once you have climbed over 50 peaks, you need to juggle one throw for each peak. You get extra style points for: Juggling more than three objects, Juggling something other than rocks/snowballs/juggling balls, Very precarious summits, Adverse weather conditions, Difficult climbing, Remote location etc.

– Nathan Hoover <nathan@hal.com>

Adventures with Electricity Series

I am seeking new stories from list members on "Adventures with Electricity" (or other interesting encounters with awesome weather phenomena in the mountains). The idea is for you to send me a concise paragraph or two of your experiences. I'll assemble them and prepare them for Scree--this is an easy way to share the labor of creating entertaining articles. Anyone care to resurrect the old PCS story about smoking underwear (induced by static electricity, as I recall)?

– Butch Suits <bsuits@lmsc.lockheed.com>

Post/Pre Trip Restaurants?

I would like to compile a list of restaurants that people like to eat at before or after a peak trip. There are many of us who have their favorite eatery in Lone Pine they like to visit after a hard climb or a place in Oakdale to have dinner before living off freeze dried beef stew. If you have a favorite restaurant, send it to me and I'll compile a list and send it back out. The more information you give me, the better. For example, the name of the place, where it's at, is it pricey (\$14.00 dinner), moderate (\$9.00 dinner) or freeze dried beef stew and what you might recommend. If there's a restaurant you recommend staying away from, that would good to know also. I understand that for some of you, this is privileged information, not to be distributed to just anyone. I therefore guarantee that this information will only be distributed to a very select section of the general population. Thanks in advance.

– Alex Keith <akeith@CRC.RICOH.COM>

Hot Times at High Camp Tonight

I have been looking for this camp pressure cooker that a lot of us have seen on the road/trail but never in the stores. The smallest pressure cooker I can find in the stores is 4qt which is too huge for backpacking. A 2 qt would be about right for those month long trips melting snow for water... Does anyone have any leads? Work phone 415-476-3577.

– Phoebe Couch <Phoebe.Couch@library.ucsf.edu>

Books On Ultra-Light Backpacking

Can anyone recommend a good book on ultra-light backpacking techniques? I have heard that someone who writes on hiking the Pacific Crest Trail has good info on this topic, but have lost the reference. Thanks.

Can anyone recommend a library on the Peninsula or South Bay with a good selection of recent books on backpacking? Santa Cruz and San Jose are worthless, with most selections from the early Seventies.

P. S. When you use a library, request they order titles you like, but don't really need to own (or can't afford to buy). Librarians respond to expressed interest.

– John Cowan <jfcowan@sj.znet.com>

"The race is not always to the swift, but to those who keep on running."

Shangri-La in the Sierra

Royce, Merriam, Four Gables, and Stanford (N) 2-4 August 96.

This was a very enjoyable mid-summer trip with near-perfect conditions. We Started at Pine Creek (7500') 7am Fri and got to "Royce Pass" (above Honeymoon Lk) 11,700' at 1pm. Nice there by the lake, but it is a better take-off point for pks and more vegetation down at the lowest of the 4 Royce Lks. It was still early and we felt good, so we ate, parked our packs there and took off toward the Royce-Merriam Col at 230pm.

Sue and Virginia, very strong hikers from San Diego, were new to ice ax use so I gave them a class - the usual self belay, grips, head first, glissading, etc. They were model students, and snow conditions were ideal for practice. Temperature in the 70's. Then up to the col at 12,400'. Some steepness to the snow, but not dangerous in the soft conditions. From the col we all did the easy 900' (class 2) to the top of Royce, and back to the col. John McCully, our 4th group member, opted to head back for a nap while we three did the 700' up the talus to Merriam's summit. Glissaded back from the col; got to camp at 7 pm. I visited with Pat Orris from SCMA who happened to be next to our camp; she and Tom the next day were to climb the 5.10 multipitch route up Merriam's spectacular N buttress.

Wind came up at night but blew away the clouds and humidity that had lingered in the Sierra the last 2 weeks. 39 deg F in the morning -- because of the dry cooler air associated with the weak cold front that moved in. We felt good so went for 4 Gables -- about 5 miles x-country on the other side of Pine Creek Pass. Figured Steelhead Lk best camp spot for the Pk. What a view in the Pass area! Extremely green, water all over, hardly a dried leaf or blade of brown grass. Flowers at height of bloom; polemonium blooming near the top of Merriam. The 120% of normal winter season, and the 180% previous season left snow still feeding the creeks. Recent rain also helped. So we moved across this paradise and deposited our packs at Steelhead Lk. At 10am we went toward the W ridge of 4 Gables to find a good chute to the summit plateau. Secor mentions no summit route from the W in his book. From the E end of the Lk we could see a chute that looked sandy all the way up. It went with no problem-class 2.

4 Gables is impressive from the other side at Horton Lks. But from the west it doesn't look like a mountain. There are higher summits on either side of its ridge. But we used the map and did find the register on the nondescript elevated area at the side of the plateau. The register (3x5 notebook) was started in 1988 but is only 10% full. Windy on top--one of the few times on the trip we weren't wearing shorts and t-shirt. Beautiful with the green and all the Lks above French Canyon and Piute Canyons.

Got back to packs at 230pm so decided to hike out. That way I could get still another (the last in the area) peak I needed for the sacred List. At the cars at 7pm, ate pizza in Bishop, and camped at the campground near the "town" of Tom's Place.

At 7000' it was cool for sleeping, yet warm enough in the morning for easy rising. Up at 6 and started the hike to Mt Stanford (N) at 730am from the 9280 level on the Rock Creek road. My old map didn't show the cutoff trail about 1/2 mile farther up the road; it didn't matter because it took us only 20 minutes to hike up the steep slope and meet the Hilton Lks trail.

Then onto Hilton Lks. A lot of forest around there. Talked to a fisherman who offered us "grease pie"?? on our way back. We continued on up the drainage through the life zones from forest to beautiful alpine meadows, alpine fell fields and talus piles. Went through the col as in RJ's book, but not at its N edge as he says. Arrived at noon on Stanford's summit; weather perfect -- bright sun, good view, warm. The register was in a good ammo box but

on the wrong summit bump. We put it back on the highest one. Back to the car at 4pm, with stopping for apples from the fisherman, and I took a dip in the lake. We made haste back to LA; stopped quickly at Schat's (and Carl's across the street), and my favorite Fosters Freeze at Rosamond. Got to SF Valley at 9 pm.

I will remember the perfect midsummer Shangri-La conditions on this trip. And John's extensive narratives of his social and international exploits while we all were strolling across the fell fields and enjoying the beauty!

– Ron Hudson

Royce and Merriam

Royce Peak (13253) and Merriam Peak (13077) are two medium-sized mid-Sierra peaks south of Mt. Abbot and about five miles northwest of Mt. Humphreys. To climb them, Roger Crawley and Bob Suzuki combined their permits and assembled a PCS horde of 14 people. Besides Bob and Roger, the group included Alex Keith, Arun Mahajan, Peyma Oskoui, Dan Tischler, Nancy Fitzsimmons, John Wilkinson, Larry Hester, Helena & Rick Verrow, Bob Bynum, Jeff West, and me (Jim Ramaker).

We hiked out from the Pine Creek trailhead (7400 feet) at 9 a.m. on Sat. Aug. 24. For the first couple of miles, the trail winds up the canyon walls above a large tungsten mill, and right from the start you're surrounded by cliffs and peaks -- no boring, sun-baked, sagebrush slog as at other east side trailheads like Big Pine Creek or Shepherd Pass.

The trail climbs up through the woods and past the two Pine Creek lakes. A striking, unnamed, black-and-white striped peak rises from the lower lake at 9900 feet to its summit at 12,600. It appears to offer adventurous class 3 routes from the lake and would make a great dayhike. We had lunch near the upper lake and hiked two more miles uphill through a beautiful timberline area to Pine Creek Pass at 11,100 feet. From the pass we turned right and strolled due west up onto a vast barren plateau, which offered easy walking on slabs, grass, and sand. Cresting a slight rise, we spotted our two peaks, rising steeply out of the flat terrain with one of the Royce Lakes symmetrically arranged directly below the saddle between them. We got to the lake at 3 p.m. -- a pretty good performance for 8 miles and 4300 feet of climbing.

As clouds darkened overhead, we talked to some other people camped there, rested, and thought about setting up our tents. Around four, our laziness turned into frenzied action as a light shower quickly built into a powerful rainstorm, with plenty of wind and hail but luckily no lightning in our exposed location. We rushed to get our tents up, and learned the value of being well-versed in setting up your tent in wind and rain. We had varying degrees of success, and by the time we got inside our tents with our soaking wet raingear, most of the tent interiors were pretty soggy.

Some of us had gotten cold in the wind and rain, and our damp sleeping bags offered scant warmth. It was a sobering exercise in camping technique -- if this little storm had made some of us seriously damp and cold, what would a real downpour have done? In summary -- practice setting up your tent till you can do it blindfolded, set it up if possible as soon as the sky looks threatening, and bring a sponge to mop up the tent floor before laying your sleeping bag out.

The mountain gods were merciful this time -- the sky cleared off around 6:30 and a fresh breeze did wonders for drying our sleeping bags, even though the sun had dipped behind the peaks in the west. We were able to cook dinner outside, and were further rewarded with an astonishing sunset, as the sinking sun painted the lingering storm clouds a fiery pink and the distant ranges behind us to the east a golden yellow. We were all toasty warm as we got back into our tents and sleeping bags and listened to the patter of the next rain shower on our nylon roofs.

We woke before dawn to a deep starry sky, and set off about 7 for the saddle between the peaks. The snow leading up to the saddle was very low-angle but frozen, so Bob told us to pick up sharp rocks to use as ice daggers. What we go through to stay within the lawyers' definition of a non-technical climb! Bob found some class-2 rock that avoided a short stretch of steeper snow, and our huge cheery group was soon relaxing on the saddle.

From there we wandered up the class-2 slope to Royce, with the lead dogs taking 45 minutes for the 1100-foot climb from the saddle. Roger and Bob deserve praise for a summit success rate of 107% -- we dragged one of the non-PCS campers at the lake along with us. Luckily he was a cooperative fellow, and agreed to take summit photos of all 14 of us with about 12 different cameras. Absurd yes, but there aren't many (any?) PCS summit photos with 14 climbers in them, and everyone wanted one.

The weather was clear, and we had great views of Humphreys, Goddard, the Abbot group, and the Palisades. We could even see Banner and Ritter in the forest-fire haze far to the northwest. One thing about this area -- it seemed that wherever we were, even in valleys or behind ridges, the soaring bulk of Mt. Humphreys was never out of sight. What a peak!

A pleasant boulder and scree descent brought us back to the saddle around 10 a.m., and six stalwarts then attacked the class-2 slope of Merriam. It was steeper than Royce but with nice solid rock, and this time the lead dogs made the trip in about 35 minutes. From the summit, we looked down a class-3 gully on the east face, hidden from view from our camp. It offers a shorter and sportier way to the summit from the lake. We rested on top, and yodeled to the other eight members of our party, now just arriving back at camp on the vast plateau below. All good things must end, and someone finally said it was time to go. In an hour we were back in camp, now facing the dreaded PCS Sunday of being tired from a morning of climbing, with a long hike out and an even longer drive home standing between us and civilization.

But such thoughts soon drifted away in the magnificence of our surroundings, the resilience of the human body once on the trail, and the pleasant vulgarity of PCS conversation. We wandered across the plateau and down past the lakes, arriving at the cars at 5:30 after a refreshing late afternoon rain shower. Despite the long drive awaiting us, ten of us gathered for dinner at a restaurant in Mammoth lakes -- we just didn't want this fun trip to end.

– Jim Ramaker

Additional Comments:

I would like to compliment Jim Ramaker for such an articulate, accurate, and creatively written trip report. His recollection of details and vivid verbal imagery are great! I could not have done a better job. I admire people who are good creative writers because I often struggle with writing myself. His description of the "frenzied action as a light shower quickly built into a powerful rainstorm, with plenty of wind and hail" really

described the situation perfectly and invoked the feeling of actually being there.

I learned several lessons from that experience. First of all, don't delay in putting on rain gear and warm clothing when it starts to rain in the mountains. Second, always carry gloves and keep them in the pockets of your rain gear so that you don't have to dig through the pack to find them. Third, make sure that the tent is not inside out before starting the trip. Fourth, brief your tent mates on the tent set-up procedure. If time permits, tent mates should practice setting up the tent they intend to use prior to the trip.

Also I enjoyed the description of the sunset, the climb, and the camaraderie we all felt at the Grumpy's after wards. I agree with the statement about "we just didn't want this fun trip to end". Jeff West introduced me to Grumpy's and I now look forward to going there after each PCS trip. This past weekend, Gretchen and I went to the PCS car camp. We set up our tent early on Friday and then drove over to Mammoth Lakes and had dinner at Grumpy's. It was like reliving a part of the Royce, Red and White, and Bloody Mountain trips. I look forward to more enjoyable trips with PCS. This is a great group of people.

– Bob Bynum

Climborama

It was a climborama to the Great Western Divide; twelve climbers, in Sequoia for eight days, attempting fourteen mountains, made seventy three person-peaks.

The team: leader Kelly Maas, co-leaders Bob Suzuki and me (Aaron Schuman), intrepid mountaineers Debbie Benham, Debbie Bulger, David Harris, John Bees, Steve Eckert, Charles Schafer, Andy Skumanich, Craig Clarence and Steve Shields.

The days: July 28th through August 4th, 1996.

The peaks: Milestone, Midway, Table, Thunder, Jordan, Geneva, Ericsson, Stanford, Caltech, Junction, Keith, Tyndall, Trojan and Barnard.

Space doesn't permit a detailed report of every attempt on every summit, but I'd like to present a few vignettes:

Milestone Mountain is the most photogenic peak on the Great Western Divide. It looks unclimbable, but dedicated mountaineers can find a safe, moderate ascent. Eleven of the twelve of us visited the top.

Midway Mountain is the highest point on the Great Western Divide, and yet was the easiest summit of our trip. Everybody who climbed Midway did it either as a traverse from Milestone or as a traverse to Milestone.

Table Mountain had some inobvious route finding on the face, and some dangerously loose rock. Although the guide books call it class 3, Steve Eckert took a belay, and someone else barely avoided taking a fall. Secor recommends carrying a rope, and I can see the value of his advice. In spite of the difficulties, Table is a rewarding peak with an incredible summit. One group combined Table on the same long day with Milestone and Midway, and another party made Table a day unto itself.

Thunder Mountain and Mount Jordan each have a class 4 summit block. We knew this before the trip, but we still elected to carry two 7 mm ropes. We believed they would be sufficient for a single exposed move on each peak, and we wanted to limit the weight we carried in. But several climbers were uncomfortable with the exposure given the kind of protection we had available

to us. On Thunder, one group roped not only for the summit block, but for traversing the last two hundred feet of the face leading up to the summit. Half of that group stopped before the traverse, concerned that a 7 mm rope is insufficient for a possible pendulum fall. We agreed that Mount Jordan was underrated; it is a fine climb and a worthy destination.

The group who visited Mount Stanford thought it was the most daring ascent they could imagine.

Two parties climbed Mount Ericsson from different directions; Debbie and Debbie from Harrison Pass, and Steve and David up the long class 4 south ridge.

Twelve is a lot of experienced people to keep together on one extended trip. Our intention was to camp together every night and climb in smaller groups during the day, but there were too many different levels of skill and stamina, and everybody wanted to climb peaks they personally hadn't climbed before. We ended up staying together most nights and collecting rumors about who had seen whom on what mountain earlier in the day.

One evening's meeting, planning the next day's climbs, was suddenly dispersed by the moon rising over Mount Whitney. It sent everybody running for the ideal camera angle. And it was just one astonishing view among so many, in a gorgeous and rarely visited part of the Sierra Nevada.

Charles speaks for all of us when he says, "In spite of the mosquitoes and slogging for 4+ days with a full pack, that this was probably the best trip I've been on. The mountains were great and the companionship even better."

We had two uncomfortably close calls, and we should let them stir our safety consciousness. Kelly observes, "Better to not summit than to hurt or kill yourself. Know your abilities and climb within them."

Look at the Great Western Divide through our eyes! [If you have a web browser, these pictures are on the PCS web pages:] The mosquitoes were so dense that we were obliged to wear bug veils <<http://reality.sgi.com/csp/pcs/MultiMedia/bugveils.gif>>. Our grueling ascent of Thunder Mountain left Bob Suzuki exhausted <<http://reality.sgi.com/csp/pcs/MultiMedia/exhausted.gif>>. Don't underestimate the class four summit of Mount Jordan <<http://reality.sgi.com/csp/pcs/MultiMedia/jordan.gif>>. Stunning vistas were all around us. We saw Milestone Mountain bathed in the rosy light of dawn as the moon set <<http://reality.sgi.com/csp/pcs/MultiMedia/moonset.gif>>.

– Aaron Schuman

Q: Why do mountain climbers rope themselves together?

A: To prevent the sensible ones from going home.

Brewer by Bubbs

Mt. Brewer (13,577') August 2 - 4, 1996: Ah, solitude! My family decamped to Washington, a rare 3-day weekend, no obligations which can't be procrastinated, a permit for one up Bubbs Creek, and an itinerary honed from months of intemperate drooling over 7.5 minute quad maps.

I awoke on Friday 8/2 to the thudding hooves of cows eyeing me curiously as I slept next to my Toyota along the Converse Basin USFS Road: at 5:15, I couldn't have set a more apt time on an alarm clock. When I realized I'd forgotten to fill my water bottles

for a.m. coffee, I zipped over to the Road's End permit station to fuel up before setting off. The few of us already there stoically avoided the bad vibes of an anxious twentysomething guy who desperately wanted to get his permit before those of us who arrived ahead of him. "I already know where I'm going, can I just get mine right now?" Do people get this way from commuting on freeways too much? The ranger made him wait his turn, to the quiet satisfaction of us all. In no time I was walking eagerly up Bubbs to the Sphinx Creek junction.

A couple of years ago a friend told me Sphinx Creek was a less interesting trail than Copper Creek, an observation that I now disagree with emphatically. Sphinx is wonderful. Once I'd established my pack-mule pace, it seemed every turn in the switchbacks yielded a vaster, grander view. Through experience I've learned that before solo trips the choice of music one listens to on the long drive to the Sierra can help or hinder a long slog like Sphinx Creek. I was wise to have picked some very buoyant Italian arias by Cecilia Bartoli, and I fought the impulse to burst out singing with each new vista. The abundant mosquitoes disappeared (!) at roughly 9500' in this drainage, to my further joy. By 4:30 I pitched my tent in a cozy meadow at 10,200' above the 2nd Sphinx Lake, ate an early supper, and was asleep by 7:45.

On Saturday, summit day, I headed up past the upper three lakes toward the 2nd class notch described in Secor, passing a sleepy-looking group of guys at the lake above me. By 10 I was at the pass, overlooking Brewer Creek and looking across to the Kings-Kaweah Divide and Glacier Ridge. The highest basin in Brewer Creek is very interesting, including a small slot canyon suitable for jumping across and impressing bystanders. The gnatcatchers flying about seemed nonplused by my daring acrobatics. From the deep gemlike lakes at the SW base of Brewer, the final assault is an exciting bit of routefinding, particularly along the SW semi-buttruss to the summit at the NE end of the hogback. The wind that blew so fiercely on the way up was gone at the top, and I enjoyed an hour of eating and relaxing, peacefully regarding all that was beneath me. My favorite entry in the register: "Puked the whole way up, but I made it!" Back at camp in time for another early bedtime, I was scared half to death when a grouse burst through my meadow just as I was dozing off, shattering the quiet as well as my nerves.

Day three involved a meandering descent on- and off-trail back to the car, featuring an ill-advised crossing of an aspen grove on Sphinx. I'd been too lazy to scout a bouldering route & failed to notice the stream had braided through ribs of granite. Bad idea! I made it across, bugged & scratched, but with ankles intact. At the bottom, a rejuvenating skinny-dip in the Kings put me in a suitable frame of mind for the long drive back to the belly of the beast. Counting the days 'til I'm back up there...

– Douglas Smith

Cascade Volcanoes, '96

July 20: Hoping to someday climb all the Cascade Volcanoes, I was joined by Mike Rinaldi and Brian Higgins for a whirlwind tour of the Pacific Northwest. We all piled into my van and headed up north with the intent of climbing Mt Hood, Mt Adams and Mt St Helens. Work responsibilities cut our original 5 day trip down to 4 days, so we had to really move fast. Driving passed Mt Shasta and sharing our climbing stories helped set the positive mood that prevailed throughout the trip. With Mt Hood looming in the distance we all agreed it was just as impressive in person as in the pictures. We debated the severity of the potential rockfall danger verses starting

times, and after one member expressed a preference to getting hit by rockfall than to getting up at 1:00 am, we agreed to "late" start of 5:00 am.

July 21: We woke to an early morning fog, but on the way to the trailhead we emerged above it, and from that moment on we had fantastic weather the entire trip. The trailhead for the "easy" south route up Mt Hood starts at the Timberline Lodge, and less than 30 minutes later we were in crampons headed up the side of a ski lift that was very busy with skiers in mid July! At about 8000' we came upon an impressive looking base camp with four identical North Face Mountain-24's dug into the snow. We were soon met by noxious rotten egg smell from two large fumaroles which I gave as wide a berth as possible. Our late start did prove to be a concern, as the sun had already risen high enough to shine directly on the preferred chute, loosening rocks and snow that were beginning to fall above us. Playing it safe we choose the alternate route, which had less rock overhead. The route was impressively steep, testing, but not exceeding our technical ability. A large bergshrund beneath us kept everyone's attention focused and we were on the 11,237' summit four hours after starting. Clear skies provided great views of Mt Jefferson, the Three Sisters and Broken Top to the south, and Mt Adams and Mt Rainier to the north and Mt St Helens to the west. The climb down was uneventful except for the snowboard competition and the fact there were about a 1000 people on the ski sloops! As we crossed the Columbia River and entered Washington our views of Mt Adams confirmed what we already knew, at 12,276', Mt Adams was taller than and more massive than the steeply shouldered Mt Hood.

July 22: Our great weather continued, and after driving the final 3 potholed miles up to the trailhead at about 5 mph, we hit the trail for a very "late" start of 6:30 am. Again we choose the easy route on the south side from Cold Springs. Soft snow made crampons optional early on, but a steep 1,800' wall above the "Lunch Counter" brought out the crampons and ice axes. As we labored up, we passed many people, our previous days acclimation starting to show. We summited at 12:30 and again had fantastic views of all the before mentioned peaks and now Mt Hood also. After lunch and the mandatory summit photos we put on rain pants and started the best "butt" glissading I've ever done. 1,800' down in about 5 minutes! Previous climbers had established deep grooves, much like a bobsled run, after initially checking my speed with my ice axe, I eventually just went full speed because of the adequate runout on the Lunch Counter. We eked out every last bit of glissading we could and got down in a remarkably fast time. Everything had been going too smooth, we were destined to have some problem just to keep us honest. After finishing a leisurely dinner half way to Mt St Helens, we planned to arrive at the "Climbers Bivouac" around 10:00 pm, when much to our surprise a washed out bridge closed the road with about 10 miles to go. Scrambling to get the maps out, our hearts sank when we realized we would have to backtrack and drive almost 200 miles to get to the trailhead. Having waken up that morning at 4:30 none of us we eager to drive much further, but somehow we managed to stay awake and arrived at the trailhead at 2:30 in the morning.

July 23: We didn't dare sleep in too long because we because we had to drive home after climbing, so about 7:00 we forced ourselves to get up and get ready. The climb up Mt St Helens is pretty easy, a nearly level hike through a forest, boulder hop up most of Monitor ridge, and then slog through pumice to the top at 8,365'. We managed the summit in 2.5 hours and again enjoyed the perfect weather so unusual to the Pacific Northwest. The crater is amazing, the volume of mountain blown out, that created the cavity is awesome. The lave dome is still smoldering and growing, and rockfall inside the crater is

constant. In the distance we could see Spirit Lake, still littered with fallen trees 16 years later.

After plunge stepping our way down the pumice slopes, we loaded up and reluctantly headed home. We could see all the peaks we had climbed while looking out the van windows. Three mountains in three days, with perfect weather and company, I can't remember a better trip.

– Dewey DuMond

Charleston and Death Valley

July 4th Holiday, 1996: Being somewhat bored of trying to get up Mt Williamson from George Creek (Yes Tony, please sign me up next spring. I want to go again- we should take 5 days and not return until we do that route even if it storms on us (a little) !!) I instead went sado-masochistically solo to Death valley (well., not really solo, I took 25 gals of water plus a 4WD as company) July 3-9th.

After temps as high as 121 and 95 at 4 AM I abandoned the attempts at any peaks and scooted over to I15 and the Spring Mountain Area & the other wilderness areas northwest of Las Vegas.

Being totally fried by the heat I assumed not too many people would be at Mnt Charleston, being a relatively minor peak but in a gorgeous desert setting (11500 and change.)

Amid some remaining snow pack (Yes!) there were several 6' deep patches several hundred yards long on the north slope. Amazing considering that the valley floor temps reached 110 deg that day. Slogging up to the summit took about 5 hrs from the 6500 foot trailhead. The ice axe and crampons proved to be dead weight but worked well to hold the tent down during some medium breezes when a small low pressure area came in Sat.

I spent 2 days camped out near the summit watching all the gaudy lights and a fireworks near LV (awesome in firepower, dollars per bang and sheer tenacity of gaudiness) as well as spectacular desert views as wells as quite clear sunrises and sunsets.

Various minor trails afforded some relaxing waterfall time from the moderate runoff still occurring. The juxtaposition of 100+ floor temps plus 65 deg temps at altitude afforded a very relaxing atmosphere. The "holiday hordes" were not present although I estimate I saw 20-30 people at lower elevations. From this point of view it was a successful trip!

The area here was a little different than the Sierra but I would not recommend going out of your way to see it...there was nothing special of note.. just a little solitude and a few high waterfalls you could actually sit nearby, enjoy and hold a nice conversation and get a little occasional spray to keep cool.

– Rich Calliger

Longs Peak, Trip#1

I've always wanted to climb Longs Peak, and this year I got my chance. My oldest son had his Boy Scout camp in Colorado this year. After dropping him off at Camp Ben Delatour, northwest of Fort Collins, the rest of our family headed to Estes Park, an ideal location from which to climb Longs Peak if, like my wife, you insist on staying in a motel.

On Wednesday, July 17, I visited the Longs Peak Ranger Station. The climbing ranger advised me that I should start climbing no later than 3:00 a.m. because of frequent lightning storms that envelop the mountain anytime from noon on. The ranger station also has a model

of the mountain (which the ranger used to show me the "Keyhole" route) and a few photographs of the route.

The following morning, July 18, I began hiking at 3:40 a.m. from the Longs Peak Ranger Station (approximate elevation 9,400 feet). Timberline on Longs Peak is very low for some reason, probably around 10,800 feet. As a result, I had the opportunity to watch the pre-sunrise from above timberline. The brilliant reds and purples were breathtaking. I attained the Boulderfield at about 6:15 a.m.

The Boulderfield is at 12,750 feet and is about 5 miles from the trailhead at Longs Peak Ranger Station. As the name implies, it is a huge field of boulders that leads up to the famous " Keyhole." Along the south side of the Keyhole is the Agnes Vaille shelter, built to honor a woman who lost her life on an attempted winter ascent of Longs Peak.

After a quick breakfast of moon pies and other highly nutritious food I boulder-hopped up to and through the Keyhole. The weather was holding magnificently, with cobalt blue skies and not even a whisper of wind.

The Keyhole brought me to the Ledges, which led me to the Trough. The route is marked with prominent bull's eyes (yes, bull's eyes) painted on the rock. There is some slight exposure on the Ledges even when they are dry and snow-free. The reddish rock is very smooth, and I would be a bit worried if it were wet or snowy.

So far all the climbing was second class. At the top of the Trough there is a third class move past a chockstone. This brought me to the Narrows, where the maximum exposure is encountered immediately after passing the chockstone. Then the route becomes easier and less exposed, all the way to the Homestretch. The Homestretch consists of easy third class climbing up a series of slabs. The rock was so smooth it looked wet even when it was perfectly dry.

I summited at the ridiculously early hour of 8:30 a.m. (At this point I felt I had been sold a bill of goods by the rangers. I could have gotten another couple hours of sleep and still summited before 11:00 a.m.! More on this later, though). The summit (14,255) is a flat area the size of a football field. The weather continued to hold, with absolutely no wind and temperatures that allowed people to sit around in shirtsleeves. There were only 3 other people on top. (Three climbers passed me on their way down as I was ascending -- Longs Peak is a freeway in the summer at all hours of the day or night). After spending half an hour eating pop-tarts (by then I was all out of moon pies), I began my descent.

I must have passed 50 - 60 climbers on the way down, including a man who looked to be in his seventies and a couple of fourteen year olds. Forget about a wilderness experience on Longs Peak. It was a freeway. At around 11:15 a.m. the clouds closed in and it started hailing. By then I was below the Boulderfield and was beginning to feel better about starting so early. I reached the Ranger Station and the end of the trail at 1:20 p.m. When I looked back I saw that Longs Peak was completely enveloped in nasty thunderheads. It was raining to beat the band, and I hastily ducked into my car.

This climb is a lot of fun, and I recommend it if you are ever in the Estes Park area. Anyone who is interested in climbing the peak is invited to call me for more information. The total distance to the summit via the Keyhole Route from Longs Peak Ranger Station is 8 miles one way, 16 miles round trip, with about 4,800 feet of elevation gain.

– Mark Wallace

Longs Peak, Trip#2

Ascent of Longs Peak, Colorado (14,255 feet) August 4, 1996: Longs Peak is the highest peak in Rocky Mountain National Park and the 13th highest in Colorado. It has a non-technical route (class 2-3) called the Keyhole Route and several class 4 and technical routes. It has perhaps the biggest wall climb in the Rockies on a 1,500 foot face called the Diamond.

I drove about an hour west on Highway 36 from Boulder on Sunday, August 4. I reached the trailhead at about 7:30 a.m. and began hiking with a light pack and sneakers. The trail switches back gently through a dense forest which leads up to a broad expanse of tundra, where one gets good views of the Diamond and Mt. Meeker, which is next to Longs and is almost a 14er itself. From the tundra I continued on gentle switchbacks toward the Boulder Field, which is a large flat area south of the peak with excellent panoramic views. Above the boulder field is a long ridge with a rocky notch that looks remarkably like a keyhole. Just before the Keyhole is a rock hut similar in size and appearance to the hut on Muir Pass.

I reached the Keyhole at about 11:30 a.m. There the route became exposed and the views of the tundra, lakes and snow fields below were reminiscent of Sierra scenery. I followed a long class 2 traverse to the right of the keyhole, following red and yellow bullseyes which were painted on the rocks to mark the route. These markers are reminiscent of the system used in the Alps to mark trails. After about 20 minutes I arrived at a long, steep chute with solid rock. After another 20 minutes, I reached the top of the chute at about 13,500 feet. Another short and exposed ridge led to an inclined summit slab about 250 feet high which led to the summit plateau.

The summit plateau was wide and flat like that on Mt. Whitney and the view was similar. On the way down, it snowed lightly for 30 minutes but cleared up. I found an abandoned snow picket in mint condition, which I added to my collection. I returned to the trailhead at 6 p.m. It had been a lovely dayhike, 15 miles round trip. This was my fifth 14er in 1996 and second 14er in Colorado so far (only 51 to go!).

If you're ever in Denver and have an extra day, I highly recommend Longs Peak, which is only 2 hours from the city and can be easily dayhiked in good weather. Earlier in my Colorado visit, I DROVE to the top of Pikes Peak, which is perhaps the most famous mountain in the state. It is an hour's drive south of Denver, near Colorado Springs. On the same day I toured the Cave of the Winds and the Garden of the Gods, both just north of Pikes Peak.

– Tony Cruz

Williamson and Tyndall

Three friends and I attempted the summits of Mt Williamson and Mt Tyndall over 4th of July weekend. We drove through Yosemite on Wednesday night and camped on the east side. After breakfast at Whiskey Creek (great place) in Big Pine, we reached the trailhead around 10 am on Thursday.

We set off at a pretty good pace, reaching the top of the switchbacks in time for lunch. Then we hiked down and back up to Anvil camp. My partner and I had decided not to bring a tent so we were stuck fending off the little biting flies until dark. The mosquitoes weren't too bad, and we were able to get a good night's sleep. But when the sun came up, the flies were back so we hurried to get out of Anvil camp and up to Shepherd's Pass.

The snow field right below Shepherd's Pass was a little soft but not too bad, so we used crampons to climb up the last 200 feet. By 11:30, we had set up camp a little shy of the Williamson bowl. After lunch, three of us set off to climb Tyndall. Basically, this consisted of hiking up a huge field of boulders.

It took my partner and I about 2 hours to get to the summit ridge. At this point, we weren't exactly sure where to go. We ended up climbing down through a notch into a steep gully. From that point, it was obvious that we would have to climb another 500 feet down and then back up in order to gain the summit. We decided that we would be better off saving our energy for Williamson so, with some difficulty, we climbed back up onto the summit ridge then down off the mountain.

When we got back to camp, we consulted our guide book and discovered that we should have just turned to the right when we first reached the ridge and scrambled across to the summit. Oh well, Tyndall will still be there for the next time.

We got up around 6 am on Saturday morning and headed off toward Williamson. It took us about 90 minutes to hike over to the base of the mountain. We climbed up over lots of boulders, staying a bit to the right of the main gully. We didn't bring crampons or ice axes, so we stayed off the snow. The climbing wasn't too difficult, although I did feel like I was hanging out over nothing a few times. We had to wait our turn to climb up into the chimney. I was a little nervous because I had no actual rock climbing experience, but it turned out to be pretty easy. I think I used the "scoot-on-your-butt" method that Tony Cruz described. After that, we climbed over a few more boulders and we were on the summit - with about 20 other people including some from the PCS.

One of the members of my group was feeling poorly, so we headed right back down. It ended up taking us 4 and a half hours from camp to summit and 3 and a half hours to get back. On Sunday, we packed up and hiked out. It took us a lot longer to get out than we thought it would - 5 hours from camp to the trailhead. We were back at the car by about noon.

– Kelly King

Shasta Via Avalanche Gulch

On Friday June 14, Rich Calliger, Kelly King, and myself (Mike Rinaldi) set off to climb Mt. Shasta. To the puzzlement of both Rich and I, completely unplanned and undiscussed, we ended up arriving almost the same minute, from different exits, at the Shasta Ranger station. Rich later said that it put to shame some of his previous "Ready-to-leave-the-Ranger-Station-at-7AM-sharp" drills that never happened after repeated planning calls and discussions prior to leaving. We quickly signed in and spent some time in the 5th Season Shop. We drooled at all the neat stuff but quickly hauled ourselves out of there before the VISA card could magically leave its hiding place in our respective wallets and wreak havoc on our budgets.

When we reached Bunny Flat we met Kelly who was already halfway packed and ready to go. We started toward Horse Camp with a good pace but later I needed to slow to take care of my first hot spot developing on my heel. New boots really su...! The slog up to Lake Helen was uneventful other than the constant task of trying to decide if/when/where to cache our "just in case" snowshoes. The "case" never happened so we lugged the weight with us all the way up. The snow was becoming softer as the day grew older. By the time we got to 9000' our kick-stepping was turning to quasi-postholing. Lake Helen was busy with about 14 other tents. We found two side by side pits and set camp. We settled to sleep at about 8:30 anticipating an Alpine start for the summit on Saturday.

Rich adds,Having done almost exclusively full or 3/4 moon trips in the last 10-11 trips, this was the first peak I did in over 8 months with a new moon. Half a sleep most of the night due to continual light wind gusts, we awoke to a short but particularly strong blast of wind at about midnight. we sat upright, looked outside the tent, and enjoyed the special splendor of an absolutely spectacular Milky Way. Only at altitude does one really see (10,400) well at night. Not one cloud in the sky spoiled the view...the massive splash across the hemisphere and seemingly infinite depth of stars took our breath away (no pun intended) and all we could say for 5 minutes was "Oh my God look at that" "Wow" and other meaningful and intelligent things!...

As we started out pretty strong at about 7AM Saturday morning it was apparent that Rich's ankle would not hold out to the summit...So he enjoyed some very fast glissading back to Helen Lake on the still frozen/snow and ice...unlike the mushy snow we tried glissading in later from Helen Lake back down to Horse camp. Rich remained at camp throughout the morning making new friends. As people ascended they commented on his laying in the morning sun icing his ankle while Kelly and myself continued to the summit. Being the first time I've attempted Shasta I really didn't realize how fortunate we were with the weather. It was gorgeous. A slight cool breeze blew part of the time but mostly it was glorious. We scampered (can you do that with crampons??) up the Red Banks and up Misery Hill toward our goal. On the way up Kelly and myself met a couple of guys who had been up there for the sunrise. Apparently they had left Bunny Flat at about midnight and headlamped it all the way up to meet old Sol. Sounds like a future trip (with moon). Any takers?

The summit was clear and surprisingly warm (35-40 deg). Clouds were beginning to develop and surround the base of the mountain but it seemed like we would have plenty of time to get back to camp. Up at the summit we met a fellow climber who was interested in taking our picture (there were about 8-10 of us up there at the time). He said he was just completing a guide book on Shasta and wanted a summit picture for the back cover. Not being the camera shy types and seeing this as an opportunity to be forever enshrined we wasted no time in striking a pose. Hopefully hollywood is not long behind. Well, maybe "Rock and Ice". So keep an eye out for yet another Shasta guide book, coming soon to a bookstore near you.

We decided not to do any glissading on the way down mainly because we were afraid of impaling ourselves with our crampons. The snow was soft and the hike down was fast and hot!! Whew! Once at Lake Helen we quickly took down camp since we were worried that the thickening clouds did not bode well for our trip back to Bunny Flat. As it turned out the clouds just as quickly dissipated and left us with a warm/hot hike. We took every opportunity to glissade down the soft mushy snow. I was soaked by the time we reached Horse Camp. Where is GoreTex when you need it. Since most of us needed to be back in the Bay Area by Sunday we said quick goodbyes and shoved off for the Area by the Bay. Later we learned that Rich remained at Mt. Shasta city Saturday night for yet another peak at that spectacular Milky Way.

As my first experience climbing a real mountain I couldn't have been luckier to be with such great folks and blessed with spectacular weather!! If this is what its like to be a PCSer I guess I'm addicted.

– Michael A. Rinaldi

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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)

Foreign Reports: Ojos del Salado, Aconcagua, Mont Blanc

Distant Reports: Elbert, Ranier, Marcus Baker

Trip Reports: Florence, Tyndall, Onion Valley,

Virginia/Twin, Vogelsang

Furry Friends Stories and Trangia Stove update

Deadline for submissions to the next Scree is Sunday 10/27/96. Meetings are the second Tuesday of each month.

Peak Climbing Section, 789 Daffodil Way, San Jose CA 95117



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

First Class Mail - Dated Material