



Next Meeting

Date: Tuesday, November 11

Time: 8pm

Program: Ruwencori Range

Bill Hauser's Uganda slides from the Ruwencori Mountain Range of 16,000 + ft. See the climb of Mt. Stanley, one of the mountains in the Moon group, with glaciers on the equator.

Location: The North Face

217 Alma Street in Palo Alto, just north of the CalTrain station



Deadline for submissions to the next Scree is Sunday 11/23/97. Meetings are the second Tuesday of each month.

Vote for PCS Officers!

After stressful meetings and tension-filled conversations, notwithstanding bribes and threats, the PCS Nominating Committee offers the following slate of candidates:

Chair: Roger Crawley

ViceChair/Scheduler: Arun Mahajan / Alex Keith

Treasurer: Nancy Fitzsimmons

You need to be present at the meeting to vote. Nominations will also be taken from the floor. We'll announce the new officers following the vote and they'll start immediately!

– PCS Nominating Committee
(Debbie Benham, Debbie Bulger, Bob Suzuki)

New Scree Editor Appointed

Bob Bynum will be replacing me as Editor of this illustrious publication. It's been a lot of fun – I've especially enjoyed helping with the conversion of Scree to a fully online publication with double or triple the circulation we used to have – but it's time for me to make way for new ideas and fresh energy.

Please send all future contributions to Bob (via email or hardcopy) at the address shown on the back of this issue. Remember that anything sent to the PCS email list is a candidate for publication, but sending items directly to the Editor avoids the chance he'll overlook your broadcast. Be nice to Bob, at least for a while, because this job takes some getting used to!

– Steve Eckert

Sunset Clause Approved 26:0

The vote at the last PCS meeting was 26:0 in favor of the following bylaw amendment: "Article IX, Section 2. Amendments or standing rules which modify or clarify these bylaws shall be signed by the Section Chair, attached to a printed and signed copy of the bylaws, and kept on file at the Loma Prieta Chapter offices. Each amendment or standing rule must be accompanied by a record of when the final vote was taken. Those amendments or standing rules not so documented are revoked as of December 1997."

This has been sent to Loma Prieta officials for review/approval by the chapter. The PCS is unanimous in its desire to improve bookkeeping, so I assume the chapter will endorse the bylaw change promptly. This is not an attempt to suspend valid Operating Rules! If you have a record of existing rules or amendments, please contact the PCS Chair by early December so he can review them and include them with the official documents (assuming they can be verified from back issues of Scree).

– Steve Eckert

Of Gabb And Gales

The plan had been to leave Thursday evening to avoid the worst of the traffic. Unfortunately, the BART strike more than compensated for any advantage, so leaving the Bay Area was as bad as ever. Such was the start of the trip to Mt Gabb on September 12-14. We had a permit for eight, but in the end were only three: Chris Kerr, Meri Mitsuyoshi and Peter Maxwell (organizer, leader, car driver and general roustabout). At least car pooling was easy - we all went in one car. This was a good way to put some early miles on our new Subaru Legacy Outback, and to check if everything Paul Hogan says about this car is true or not.

Having successfully negotiated 100 yards of Inyo National Forest rough road, I felt that "Hoges" hadn't been pulling my leg, and we slept in confidence on Dead Man Summit on Thursday night. The plan was to leave Rock Creek trailhead at 9 am, and we made it almost on schedule at 9:10. It was cool - a light frost could be seen on the ground in the shady parts. We were headed for Cox Col, to cross the Sierra crest to get to Lake Italy. The col was about 3000' higher than the trailhead, most of the climb being cross country. The elevation gain to the point where we left the Morgan Pass trail was only 500'.

It was wonderful to be walking and stopping for breaks with not a single mosquito around to bother us. The scenery was browner than in July, but that was a small price to pay for peace.

We had a leisurely lunch at Dade Lake. I was surprised to see the southwestern shores of the lake still covered with snow several feet thick. There were even crevasses in it as large chunks were poised to break off into the lake. This large snowfield extended up the slopes a way as well, so we had to negotiate this first. The large sun cups made the going difficult and it was with some relief that we were finally able to get onto rock.

>From the lake we had 2500' to get to Cox Col, but it was not clear exactly where to head to. Secor talks about "the first notch south of the lowest notch" being the preferred route. The trouble was that this would have put us hard up against Bear Creek Spire, and the snow slopes leading up to this notch were extremely steep. We had neither crampons nor ice axes so headed a little further north, towards a very obvious "U" shaped notch. This proved to be an excellent choice, with only class 2 rock to contend with. The number of footprints seen there showed that many others had come that way also.

As is always the case for me, the final few moments of ascent were really exciting, wondering what vistas would be exposed the other side. As expected, there was a glorious panorama, including a great view of Mt Gabb. Lake Italy, our destination for that day, looked a long way down and a long way away, although in truth it was only 1800' and a few miles.

We had wonderful, easy, sandy slopes to walk down from the col, at least at first. Secor's description was rather vague, about having to turn right (to the northwest) before turning left (to the southwest) to descend to the lake. The temptation is to go southwest too soon, to avoid going "too far out of the way", and we ended up going down some steep, slippery sections that would have been better avoided. It's better to stay in a northwest direction longer, heading into the upper portions of the bowl around Gabb, Abbott and Dade, then descending the much easier slopes from there.

Looking back towards the col one is truly able to appreciate Secor's statement about it being the only reasonable crossing of the Sierra crest in that area. The gentle sandy slopes leading up to

the col were all the more remarkable considering the almost vertical walls leading up to Dade, Abbott and Mills.

Everywhere here was barrenness. There were no trees, or even bushes, and the only green parts were surrounding the lake and the creek feeding it. Not only were there no bears, we didn't see any ground critters either, with the result that we put the food into packs or in tents overnight. This was like backpacking in Australia, not the Sierras, and was a pleasant change.

The ascent day saw a leisurely awakening at 7 am and departing camp at 8:15. No need for alpine starts when you're camped right at the base of the peak. As promised in my trip announcement, we tackled the south face, rather than traverse further to the west to pick up the southwest ridge. This gave us easy class 3 climbing, although there was much loose rock and scree, making the climbing less enjoyable than would otherwise have been the case. We were on the summit by 12:30 and relaxed there for an hour before heading back to camp. I like these mellow trips! Our descent route was more to the west, avoiding the larger talus we had encountered on the way up, and was a breeze.

The wind which had been gusting at the summit picked up intensity during the afternoon, and by the time we were back at camp at 3 pm it was blowing strongly and consistently. It was a cold wind, too, and the only relief was to seek shelter behind some large boulders that were conveniently sited there. Too bad the wind was blowing from the west, as it meant we couldn't be in the sun and out of the wind at the same time. Chris decided sun was more important, and sat reading a book all rugged up in her down jacket.

I ended up relocating my bivy sack to behind one of these boulders to get some shelter. Meri wasn't so fortunate - she put the fly on her tent to avoid the gale roaring through the "no-see-um" netting (also "no-stop-um" for the wind) but then had to suffer with it flapping all night long.

After blowing all night long, the wind had eased a little by early morning, so breakfast at 6 am was tolerable. It rapidly picked up again as the sun rose, though, and increased to gale force later. Standing in the base of the bowl, we could hear it roaring across the peaks 3000' up, and I wondered what the col would be like.

When we got there at 10 am, it was almost impossible to stand up, and gusts came along that easily blew us off our feet. Just down to the east a little we enjoyed being in the lee and had a peaceful snack, but as we descended we became exposed once again. My Australian Akubra hat, which works great in calm conditions, and makes me feel trendy and rugged, became a sail. Despite the chin strap it kept getting blown off, almost choking me in the process, and I had to resort to downclimbing with one hand holding the hat onto my head. This, in turn, produced aching muscles where I'd never had them before.

The wretched wind was so strong that the gusts were picking up water from the surface of Dade Lake and throwing it into the air in great clouds of mist. Quite an impressive display.

We arrived back at the car at 2:30, and I was amused to see another brand new Outback parked next to mine. What's more, it was bought in Palo Alto and had only 500 miles on the clock. Somehow I don't think the choice of parking was accidental.

- Peter Maxwell

Official (PCS) Trips

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

Newcomer Navigation Class

Dates: Nov. 13 (class 7:30-9pm) Thu
Nov. 15 (field trip) Sat
Leader: Noreen Ford 415-568-0329
Co-Leader: Debbie Benham 650-964-0558

Interested in going cross-country in the wilderness? Lost your way and would like to return to camp? Which way is north? Find the answers to these and other questions at our introductory, right-brained, low-tech navigation class. Learn how to use the stars, maps (AAA, Forest Service, topographic), and a compass to find your way, not only to the trailhead and to the top of a peak, but back again in one piece before dark! We'll have an in-town evening session on Thu. Nov. 13, 7:30 - 9 p.m. at Linda Smith's house in Palo Alto. Following that we'll have a hands-on field trip to Henry Coe State Park, Sat. Nov. 15. If interested, please call.

Pack It In With Excelsior

Peaks: Excelsior Mtn (12,446') class 1 / snow
Dates: Dec 6-7 Sat-Sun
snow delays to Dec 13-14 Sat-Sun
Maps: Matterhorn Peak 15 min
Dunderberg Peak 7.5 min
Leader: Steve Eckert 650-508-0500
eckert@netcom.com
Co-Leader: Aaron Schuman H: 650-968-9184
schuman@sgi.com W: 650-933-1901

Join us for a two day snowshoe backpack from Conway Summit to Excelsior Mountain. Details at:

<http://reality.sgi.com/schuman/trips/excelsior.html>

All About Plumbing

Vandever and Sawtooth(N) ; October 18-19, 1997

The forest may have been ablaze, but it was the fire within us that drove us to the heights. We camped Friday night at Atwell's Mill, alongside the Mineral King road. All night we inhaled wood smoke and listened to burning conifers fall over.

There had been six inches of snow the weekend before, so the superintendent believed there was enough moisture to contain a controlled burn. But the intervening week was a warm one, and when we gathered at the trailhead we opted to leave our snowshoes at the cars; the trail was dry. The hike to Vandever Peak was uneventful. The summit held a splendid view of Homer's Nose (which many of us had climbed in April '96) the valley of the Little Kern, and the southern end of the Great Western Divide.

Although Saturday's hike was a long one - 15 miles and 4100 vertical feet - the excellent conditions allowed us to return to the trailhead with plenty of time to spare. Steve Eckert, Patrick Ibbetson, Dave McCracken, Charles Schafer, Suzanne Remien, and I climbed Saturday.

Saturday night, the fire below Atwell's Mill was even hotter. One tremendous, ancient Big Tree crashed down, shaking the ground like an earthquake. I wondered if a ranger would come by and order us to evacuate.

In the morning, with a crew change, we set out for Sawtooth Peak(N). Steve had backpacked on into the Little Kern, Pat went back home, and we were joined by Arun Mahajan and Mike DeLorenzo. We had originally intended to attempt Needham Mountain, but our Saturday team didn't finish with enough time left over to seriously consider a much bigger trip on Sunday. Maybe we'll come back and climb Needham as a two day backpack. Our climb was straightforward but long (12 miles and 4500 vertical feet).

The summit views were a little less spectacular. To the west, we enjoyed watching helicopters bearing huge tanks dumping water on the fire. Some plumbing job! Mineral King Valley had filled with smoke, and we could see the brown haze even above 12000 feet. The vast southern rampart of the Great Western Divide confined the air pollution to the west, so we could still see the Whitney range to the east and the Kaweahs to the north. Arun found a business card stapled to the summit register. In giddy, hypoxic delight, he declared that our agreeable late season trip must be named after the advertised company. I never really understood why it was so apropos, but here is the trip title: All About Plumbing

- Aaron Schuman

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.

Sauntering up San Joaquin

Peak: San Joaquin Mtn (11,600') class 1 / snow
Dates: Nov 22-23 Sat-Sun
Map: Devil's Postpile
Contact: Steve Eckert 650-508-0500
eckert@netcom.com
Co-Contact: Arun Mahajan H: 408-244-7912
arun@sientnet.com W: 408-473-8029

Depending on snowpack, this will be a ridge walk or a snowshoe trip or a crampon climb. We'll enter from Mammoth or June Lake, and may attempt a day hike instead of overnight if the conditions are ideal. Be flexible, be in shape, and be the first on your block to do an easy peak in the winter!

Aconcagua Private Expedition

Peak: Aconcagua (22,841') class 2 / snow
Dates: 26 Dec 97 - 20 Jan 98
Contact: R.J. Calliger 510-651-1876
calliger@infolane.com

Anyone interested? Please take a look at Secor's "Climbing Aconcagua" if you are, then contact me for further details via email. The main challenges to this climb are the altitude (22,841'), and the weather (-10F to -20F plus wind). It is the start of the summer there in December and with the altitude, expect conditions like climbing a 14'er here in late winter or early spring, but colder. Airfare is \$850.

Mount Humphreys

July 20, 1997 - David Harris was the leader and Bob Suzuki was the fearless leader of a trip to the Humphreys Basin on the weekend of July 19. Bob was the only one in the group who had previously climbed the peak. The other participants were Debbie Bulger, Hiep Nguyen, John Bees, Richard Vassar, Rick Leiker and myself. Early Saturday morning (about 7 a.m.) seven of us (all but Hiep) started up the trail from North Lake to Piute Pass. David had told us to meet that evening at the middle lake west of the mountain. Until then we were on our own. Most of the participants planned to day hike either Pilot Knob or Four Gables, two nearby peaks.

North Lake is about 9,300 feet above sea level; Piute Pass is at 11,423 feet. The trail is gentle, easy to follow and runs for about five miles to the pass. It goes through a grove of aspens and is surrounded by wildflowers. There are a few easy stream crossings and several beautiful lakes along the way. I walked by a pack train and the leader told me that there were "no mosquitoes" in the last two days, but prior to that they were pretty bad. I thought the mosquitoes were bad enough, even then.

Just after noon I hiked across a well trodden snow field to the pass, where Debbie, Bob and Richard were eating a snack and enjoying the view. From there we hiked north away from the trail over easy terrain past Marmot Lake to a flat spot on east of the middle lake (about 11,800 feet), which served as our camp. By then it was after 2 p.m. David and John had arrived before noon and were already on their way to Pilot Knob. Rich went with them and planned to also do Four Gables.

Some set up light tents while the rest laid out rolls and bivy sacks. Bob took off his shirt and lay tanning for about half an hour, after which he and Debbie set off for Four Gables. Richard and I decided to remain at camp. I read a book and napped, baking in the hot sun.

About 6 p.m. David and John returned from Pilot Knob and Hiep showed up wearing sandals. He had just done Mt. Emerson from Piute Pass. Hiep was to climb Humphreys the next day sans rope and with his sandals! He asked me if I was the same Tony that he had met on Orizaba in 1996 and then I remembered him. This was the second time that I had been recognized by someone in the middle of the Sierra that I had only seen once, on Orizaba. Hiep announced that he had "retired" from climbing but that he wanted to join me on my trip to Aconocagua this winter.

Bob returned from Four Gables around 7:30 p.m. and Debbie showed up after dark at about 9:30 p.m. She had hiked with her sunglasses, which made the going tough. Finally at about 10:00, Rich showed up. He had gotten both peaks but lost time finding the true summit of Four Gables.

The next morning we got a late start as planned, about 7:00 a.m. We hiked west over a gentle rise to the shore of the next lake. From there we moved north up a broad slope of loose scree for several hundred feet. A class three move put us up on a ledge system which we traversed north. At this point we were above the darker colored rock that forms a band we could see from camp. We moved up another scree slope to a notch. Until here, the terrain had been mostly class 2 but now the real climbing began.

We put on our harnesses and climbed up a hundred feet or so on a class 3 "trough" as Secor calls it. At this point we roped up and climbed a class 4 section to the right of the trough around an exposed class 4 corner for about 30 feet. Shortly after that we scrambled onto a ridge and then climbed an exposed arete with

excellent hand and foot holds for about 60 feet, belayed by David. From there it was a class 3 scramble to the top. We made good time. I was second-to-last on the summit (David was last because he belayed us) and made it by 11:30 a.m. There was no wind and we had unlimited visibility. We had good views of Darwin, Mendel, Sill, North Palisade and numerous other peaks.

After a long break we descended, doing a full rope length rappels with two ropes tied together. Some in the group down climbed the lower portion of the trough while others used a second rappel. David and Bob did an excellent job moving the large group safely and quickly. The belays and rappels were protected by two solid, independent anchors.

We descended by retracing our footsteps, more or less. I down climbed a short steep section of snow with ice ax and crampons in order to avoid the first hard class 3 move we had made that morning. I returned to camp at 4 p.m. Only Richard, Bob and Debbie were still there; the others had already left.

I stayed for half an hour to eat and pack. I went around the western edge of Marmot Lake to avoid the higher terrain we had crossed on the way in. It sprinkled lightly on me for a few minutes and periodically I heard thunder to the south and west. I was at the pass at 6 p.m. and back to the trailhead at 9 p.m. The others had made it down between 5:30 and 8 p.m.

Thanks to our leaders, David and Bob for the excellent job they did in getting us all up safely to the peak. I rank Humphreys as one of the 10 best peaks I've ever summited and think it's a shame that it's not just a bit taller (it's fourteen feet shy of being a fourteener).

– Tony Cruz

Welcome Back Cotter

"Hey, what am I doing with my butt hanging out when we're supposed to be in a jam crack? And where is that old knotted rope that's supposed to provide a fixed anchor?" Thoughts like this were going through Schafer's mind as he worked his way up Clarence King's technical top end without following any of the guide book routes (see details below). Far from being a bold lead up an uncharted mountain, he just didn't think the documented routes were as easy! Me? I just followed the rope.

(You'll notice I skipped the part about hiking over Kearsarge Pass, Glenn Pass, and Rae Col on the way to our base camp in Sixty Lakes Basin. It's long, it's only moderately interesting, and there were no bugs until camp.)

Once you get to the summit block there's no doubt about where the REAL crux of the climb is. An awkward move (balanced on a pointy rock that provided much gutter humor) onto the boulder just below the summit reveals where the knotted rope is, and then you've got to trust a one-hand mediocre hold to vault yourself onto the summit block proper. Not a fun one to get down! Others have reported that you can't protect the top, but in fact a rope thrown over the summit can be used to belay off one of the huge boulders below and a 20' sling can be used to set a belay station right on the summit. We did both, climbing on belay and leaving no fixed anchors.

Returning to camp we found the RIGHT way down from the saddle south of C'King... Secor says to use a ledge in cliffs on the east side of the saddle or sand and talus to the south. That's right, but hard to understand because the saddle is on a north/south

ridge! The subsidiary ridge defining the south edge of the bowl east of the saddle is definitely the easier route - traverse from the saddle out onto the ridge until you see a prominent 60' tower where you can either descend a scree chute to the south or continue east on ledges to a small lake.

The next day we headed for Gardiner, which (from the upper reaches of Gardiner Basin) remains second class until you pop up onto the horseshoe ridge between the summits - a most unusual summit ridge, with 4 summits and a 700' chasm in between! There is straightforward but vertical class 3 down to a small saddle, and then easy ramps luring you toward the final summit ridge. The last 2' of elevation gain took 3 belays due to our half length rope and the long traverse. There is extreme exposure on both sides, and an intimidating view of the cliff forming the other half of the horseshoe, which has boulders piled on little projections but is overall nearly vertical.

(Pictures of Gardiner's summit ridge, the downclimb to the notch, and the walls of the horseshoe will be on the PCS website with this trip report.)

I suppose the urge to brag is related to the difficulty of the peak, which explains why we saw a number of entries from people who disdained the use of a rope for Gardiner. Quite a few solo entries also. The holds are pretty good, but you won't get a second chance. Take the rope. It's a great climb, but it's not trivial. We used only slings for protection, aside from one small chock that threatened to work loose anyway.

Somehow we burned up the entire day, returning to the base of Gardiner at around 4:30pm with dark clouds gathering and the wind picking up. Those not working on the SPS list returned to camp, while I sprinted for Cotter after tanking up on water. I took no rest breaks, but still did not quite beat the weather. Just as I got to Cotter's south ridge, snow threatened to slicken the large granite flakes I was on and the wind convinced me to retreat to the east side instead of walking the ridge itself. The storm obscured some, but not all, of the valleys below.

A note to the ultralight packers among us: I had a heavy sweater and thicker gloves in reserve, extra food, plenty of water, and a mylar 3 ounce bivy bag. Without those things, the only sane choice would have been to turn back with the others. The extra two pounds of gear would have saved my bacon if the weather had really gotten nasty, and did not slow me down enough to matter! No one can predict the weather from day to day or hour to hour. You preach at me about a lighter pack, I'll preach back about survival.

Most of Cotter (from the base of Gardiner) is second class, but if you stay on the ridge you'll get into some pretty committed third class. The summit itself is very steep, with good holds. I fished the register out from below the summit boulder with a trekking pole (Beck and Holloway are the names I remember as being the last to sign in, but there's no telling if they're the ones who dropped it.)

As it turned out, the snow quit shortly after I reached the peak and the wind was lashing at the opposite side of the mountain as I descended sand and slabs directly down the east face. I reached camp about 20 minutes after the others, where Bees greeted me with "Welcome Back Cotter" and some reasonable skepticism as to whether I had actually made the summit.

Monday we split up, with Bees warping to the trailhead about 3 hours ahead of us so he could get home to his wife's dinner party that night. Once again, the Onion Valley rangers were true to form: No one checks permits on the way IN, but I've been carded

three times on the way OUT there. It seems we don't care if people get in, but we want to fine them on the way out, eh? They also hung up signs indicating you MUST have a bear canister, but that does not match the official regulations (which just say you have to protect your food).

Oh yes, the hike out is also long and it's only moderately interesting.

– Steve Eckert

Snow Castle In The Sky

Early winter ascent of Mt. Conness (12,590ft) Saturday, October 11. Trip members Robert Greenwalt, Ian Porteous and Craig Taylor.

The trip started under the ominous threat of a winter storm warning. According to National Weather Service: "WINTER STORM WATCH...SNOW ADVISORY...SNOW LEVEL LOWERING TO 7000 FEET BY DAYBREAK. GUSTY SOUTHWEST TO WEST WINDS 20 TO 40 MPH OVER THE RIDGES." It was one of those rare occasions when the Weather Service nailed it. We arrived at Junction Campground (thx R.J.) at 1am Friday morning much too early or late depending on your point of view but it turned out to be critical to the trip's success.

At dawn it began to snow heavily dropping a foot plus of very light powder causing the closure of Tioga Pass Road. With the closure we were committed, there was no going home. We headed off into a very snowy backcountry despite the incredulous looks from the folks at the Tioga Pass Resort. The rest of the day was spent slogging through fresh snow to our base camp (~11,600 ft) on the East ridge. We setup just under the ridge on the north side with spectacular views across the Conness Lakes basin to North Peak and Conness. Saturday morning we headed for the summit via the east ridge, wanting the snow on the glacier to stabilize a bit and assuming that there would be less snow on the ridge (after sinking several times into 5ft of snow I can say that this was a questionable assumption).

The east ridge is a long series of peaklets and knife blade ridges with some tricky moves when covered with a foot to foot and a half of new snow. After 5 hours of climbing in 24 degree weather with 20 to 30 mph gusts of wind the beauty of seeing the final summit ridge is hard to recapture. Across a large white plateau of snow the summit seemed to float on the far edge, a snow castle connected to the earth by only a thin causeway of rock and ice. Climbing the final summit ridge took another hour, summiting at 2:30pm. Rather than retract our steps we descended onto the glacier and traversed a high line across surprising stable snow pack. We arrived back in base camp at 5pm. Sunday we packed up, glissaded directly, in one steep straight shot, to lower Conness Lake and hiked out from there. On our return to the Bay Area it was a positively balmy 50 degrees. Winter was after all just an illusion and so too was the snow castle in the sky.

– Craig Taylor

Notes and Requests

Proposed Winter Trips

The trips listed below were proposed at the Peak Climbing Section winter trip planning meeting on Tuesday, October 14. This list is intended to prevent trip scheduling conflicts and to help you plan your winter climbing schedule, not to enable people to sign up way in advance.

PLEASE DO NOT CONTACT THE LEADERS TO SIGN UP FOR THESE TRIPS. The time to sign up is after the trip is formally announced in the Scree, with a full description and a designation as a private or official PCS trip.

If you are planning a trip, or if your plans for a trip on this list change, please contact the Trip Scheduler to keep this list up to date.

- Jim Ramaker <pcs_scheduler@kaweah.mti.sgi.com>

DATES	DESTINATION	LEADERS
Dec 13	Tomales Point (Pt. Reyes)	Van Gorden
Dec 20-21	Tinker's Knob, Granite Chief	Eckert, Hult
Jan 2-4	Mt. Morgan, Mt. Stanford (N)	Eckert, Taylor
Jan 10-11	English Peak, Adams Peak	Eckert, Ramaker
Jan 17-19	Pyramid Peak	Dyal
Jan 24-25	Ventana Double Cones (Big Sur)	Kirkpatrick
Feb 1	Junipero Serra Peak (Big Sur)	Mahajan
Feb 7-8	Round Top	Van Gorden
Mar 7-8	Destination TBA	Ress

McKinley Redux

If you've dreamed of spending three weeks freezing your tush off while eating freeze-dried food and hauling 130 lbs up 6000 ft, then Mt. McKinley is the place for you! I'm looking for a qualified partner(s) for another attempt at North America's highest peak. After two trips on the mountain, I'm practically a "guide," so planning and other questions are greatly simplified.

Qualified partners MUST possess high altitude experience above 20,000 ft, multiday expedition experience, have the right cold weather gear or be willing to purchase it, have adequate vacation time, XC ski (or be willing to learn) and not snore. First time want-to-be's will not be considered. Send email or call me at 408-970-0760 home, 408-543-3135 work.

- Tim Hult <tim.hult@lmco.com>

Correcting the USGS

To: MAPS-L@UGA.CC.UGA.EDU

Subject: Re: statement on inaccurate map on NPR interview

Peg: In response to your concern, and for general information, the USGS does have a process for correcting map inaccuracies. Both production Centers (Rollo, MO. & Denver CO.) maintain a folio correction file for the maps in their region. These corrections are then validated and if found to be appropriate, applied during the maintenance and re-publication process. To submit a folio correction one merely needs to contact us at the address located at the bottom of the map....we appreciate your concerns..thanx....Mark

- Mark Eaton <maeaton@USGS.GOV>

Sunrise, Sunset, Sunrise, Sunset, Sunrise, Sunset...

I was about to bother Eckert with another request for astronomical data, when I realized that of course I could find this myself... that's what the Net Search button is for. If you're curious, you can compute anything involving the sun or moon for yourself, for any location, by going to

<http://aa.usno.navy.mil/AA>

I'm sort of ashamed at how long it took me to think to look there, since I used to work at usno.navy.mil back before it was called that, but not in the Nautical Almanac office. Anyway, full moon times for 1998 as best I can translate:

Universal Time	Mission Peak Time
jan 12 17:24	jan 12 9:24
feb 11 10:23	feb 11 2:23
mar 13 4:34	mar 12 20:34
apr 11 22:23	apr 11 15:23
may 11 14:29	may 11 7:29
jun 10 4:18	jun 9 21:18
jul 9 16:01	jul 9 9:01
aug 8 2:10	aug 7 19:10
sep 6 11:21	sep 6 4:21
oct 5 20:12	oct 5 13:12
nov 4 5:18	nov 3 21:18
dec 3 15:19	dec 3 7:19

As you might expect, the probability of error in my transcription and time zone translation is much greater than the probability of error in the USNO data.

- David G Hough <hiker@validgh.com>

Items for Sale

97 North Face Lunar Light Tent: 2 person, 3 season, under 5 lbs, full warranty, fully seam sealed, like new, used one night -- \$150 (retail \$245). Boreal Flyers approach shoes: size 9 U.S. mens, smooth soled sticky Fusion rubber, like new, used once to walk around the block -- \$35. Garmont Sticky Weekend approach shoes: size 10.5 U.S. mens, very good condition, used for about a week in the Tetons -- \$30 or \$25 and a pint of good ale. Wanted: Size 10.5 Five Tennies.

- Jim Curl <jimcurl@juno.com> 415-585-1380

Crampon Quest

I'm looking for a decent used pair of strap-on flexible crampons for occasional use with my leather Raichle Mountain Guide boots. Please email me if you have a pair to sell fairly cheap or know of some. Thanks!

- Aaron Grossman <aaron_grossman@hp.com>

Andes and Himalayan Expeditions

I am looking for climbers interested in a summer 1998 trip to the Peruvian Andes. My intention is to focus on some of the more technical routes in the Cordillera Blanca, but I'm open for discussion on other objectives.

I am also interested in joining a Himalayan expedition in 1998. If you are planning a Himalayan expedition and are in need of another team member, please call 415-309-0570 or drop me a line at P.O. Box 8757, Mammoth Lakes, CA 93546.

- Craig Clarence <sharpend@telis.org>

The Win Chell Factor

There was none. No wind-chill factor that day, none at all. On a warm and windless Saturday that rivaled most summer weekends, the six of us from the PCS began our attempt of Mt Winchell in the Palisades. (13775 ft, 4th and 5th Oct 97)

The group consisted of Debbie Benham and Nancy Fitzsimmons (leader and co-leader, respectively) and Kelly Maas, Peter Davids, Ron Karpel and designated scribe, Arun Mahajan. Climbing separately on the same weekend were four other PCS members, Dee and Rick Booth, Dot Riley and Jim Curl. It was as if the PCS had laid siege on Mt Winchell.

Starting at 9.30 from the Glacier Lodge parking lot, we were at Sam Mack Meadow at about 2.30 pm. We were ringed by the towering crest of the Palisades. One couldn't but feel decadently slothful lazing under the warm sun on the rocks in the middle of a brook that gurgled nearby. We strongly cautioned Debbie against leading such hard trips, I mean, really! That evening we paid a call on Jim's party camped near by. They were cooking over a Webber barbecue that they had lugged up to camp. We even saw 2 pints of Cherry Garcia that they had brought up, packed in dry ice and all. A bottle of wine nearby really gave one the feeling of having landed in the middle of an Omar Khayyam quatrain.

At 6.30 am on Sunday morning we got rolling. We worked our way to the top of the ridge in front (s.west) via the rocks near the third snow patch on the left. We walked past the Sam Mack Lake and over boulder fields towards a moraine slope that had many loose boulders and from there onwards, the many-featured impressive bulk of Mt Winchell spurred us on. Some caution is needed on the moraine slopes. Our co-leader, Nancy, got a rather bad injury when some large rocks slid down and fell on the fingers of her hand.

Some more tedious climbing brought us to the base of the two chutes mentioned in Secor's description of the east arete route. We followed the right chute towards the arete's crest. As we were going up, we saw Jim Curl doing some free climbing on the arete itself. Kelly, from our party also joined him and while mere mortals like us worked our way up to the knife edge from the right gully, these two topped out the arete onto the knife edge with great ease. I found that it was safer to reach the knife edge by staying closer to the arete (right of the right gully, instead of the left). The knife edge is not very long and we stayed a little below it on the left and there are enough holds and the rock has good friction. Again, from the knife edge, one can continue up the gully towards the summit, but we traversed across and went up the ridge instead. Kelly had nimbly gone ahead almost to the summit by following this ridge and he graciously came down towards us as we stood at the start of the ridge, to show us the precise steps he took to get on the top. Within minutes after this we all were basking in the pride that one gets after bagging a summit that needs so much hard work. There are a few exposed spots on that gully and care and concentration is needed. Some careful down climbing on the exposed parts of the gully and again the tedious descend on the moraine to Sam Make Lake and the easy descend via the now-soft snowy slopes got us back to camp at 2.30 pm.

Normally one cannot arrange for the weather. But in this trip, our leader Debbie had done just that, and so to thank her, we stopped at a restaurant in Bishop and held up our glasses in toast to her, for having led another great PCS trip from the front, and for having nullified the Win-chell factor.

– Arun Mahajan

Climbing the Cornice

August 1997 - Canted at 45 degrees and undercut, the cornice was only an inch or two thick at the lip where we held on to keep our feet from slipping, sending us rudely down a steep two hundred foot slope.

"This is pretty wild, Bob. Do you think it'll break?"

I kept my death lock on the lip and twisted around to smile at Bob -- only to find him casually walking behind me, practically with his hands in his pockets. How does he do that?

It was a beautiful summer day in the Tuolomne backcountry. The cornice we were on had not been recently crafted by wind, nor did it consist of snow or ice. Glaciers had long ago sculpted the rock that comprises the Matthes Crest.

Hidden from many viewpoints by the Cockscomb and the Echo Ridge, the Matthes Crest is a phenomenal piece of granite art. An improbable fin a mile long, it is easy to see why it is purported to be Peter Croft's playground. Indeed, the summit register is peppered with entries such as this: "Traversing first south to north, now north to south -- Peter Croft".

When Bob Suzuki and I asked friends about the route, we were warned of its length. Backpack in the night before, suggested some. Plan to bivouac on top, counseled others. Disliking the idea of carrying sleeping bags and extra food, we ignored the naysayers and instead decided on a day climb.

"Maybe hiking in the night before isn't such a bad idea", suggested Bob at 4:00am as we began our walk.

A chilly morning wind had us huddling at the southern terminus for an hour, trying to wring warmth from the feeble dawn sunlight. I would have happily headed back out had Bob suggested it. Instead, at 7:30am he directed us into the shade. With teeth chattering, I led the first easy pitch.

A second pitch brought us to the crest and some badly needed sunshine. After one more unnecessary pitch we untied and put away the rope. For the next hour and a half we delighted in the class 3-4 scrambling, often along an incredible, exposed knife edge. Interspersed was easy walking.

Sand and pebbles bounced off my helmet as Bob skittered in his sticky soled approach shoes up the west side of the summit tower. It didn't look like we'd found the most traveled path. After about 80 feet, the rope drag was too much and a shorter and easier pitch led us to the summit. As I pulled onto the top, I sung out the National Geographic theme in Kai Wiedman tradition. It was only 10:30am. "Should we bivouac here, Bob?"

For some reason, the description in Secor ends at the summit, suggesting two long rappels to the ground. But the northern half of the crest is not to be missed -- an airy gap requiring a wide stem to bridge, hand traverses and straddling on knife edges and challenging down climbing -- it required as much ropework and took us as long as the southern section had. And although easy, the "cornice" was an especially unforgettable (and unprotectable) 150 feet or so.

After the six hour traverse, we were back at the cars early. Bob and I agreed that a day trip was the best approach. What would we do different? Sleep in and start later.

– Jim Curl

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

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Rock Climbing Classifications

The following trip classifications are to assist you in choosing trips for which you are qualified. No simple rating system can anticipate all possible conditions.

- Class 1: Walking on a trail.
- Class 2: Walking cross-country, using hands for balance.
- Class 3: Requires use of hands for climbing, rope may be used.
- Class 4: Requires rope belays.
- Class 5: Technical rock climbing.

In Upcoming Issues:

Deadline for submissions to the next Scree is Sunday 11/23/97. Meetings are the second Tuesday of each month.



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

First Class Mail - Dated Material