

World Wide Web Address: <http://www.sierraclub.org/chapters/lomaprieta/pcs/>

Next General Meeting

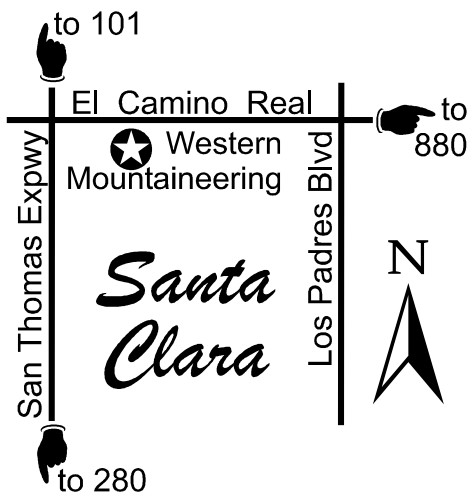
Date: Tuesday, November 10, 1998

Time: 8:00 PM

Program: Everest '98 Environmental Expedition

Mt. Everest is 29,028 FT. In the Spring of 1998, Bob Hoffman returned to Mt. Everest for the 3rd time as organizer and team leader of the Everest '98 Environmental Expedition. The expedition brought down hundreds of pounds of oxygen bottles, fuel canisters and other. It was a successful ascent of Mt Everest South Col.

Location: Western Mountaineering, Santa Clara 2344 El Camino Real, Santa Clara (between San Thomas and Los Padres), parking in the rear. From 101: Exit at San Thomas Expressway, Go South to El Camino Real. Turn left and the Western Mountaineering will be immediately to your right.



Deadline for submissions to the next Scree is Sunday 11/22/98. Meetings are the second Tuesday of each month.

Vote For PCS Officers

The PCS nominating committee offers the following slate of candidates for this year's election. We go on record saying that we did not have to resort to threats like showing embarrassing pictures of them having meals at Niceley's and enjoying it (gaak!), nor bribes, like permits for the Whitney Region in the middle of summer, to have them agree to run for office.

Chair: George Van Gorden / David Ress

Vice Chair/Scheduler: Ron Karpel

Treasurer: Dee Booth.

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*
(Bob Suzuki, Jim Ramaker, Arun Mahajan)

*****Action Alert!***** Draft Wilderness Plan

The U.S. Forest Service has released a draft management plan for the **John Muir, Ansel Adams, Monarch, and Dinkey Lakes** wilderness areas. Once adopted, the plan will guide the management of these areas for decades.

Commercial outfits and livestock interests are aggressively campaigning to gain greater access to these High Sierra wilderness areas. The draft plan allows for large increases in stock animal (horse, mule) use, while adopting stringent restrictions on hikers. For example, the plan would allow 10 stock groups with up to 25 animals per group (250 total). At the same time hiking groups would be restricted to 15 persons with a limit of 50 people per day at most trailheads.

The forest service needs to hear us by November 2. On page two, is my letter that you can use as a sample. Even if you will receive the printed copy of the Scree after November 2, send a letter anyway. They may allow some leeway. If you are receiving the EScree, be sure to send a letter to the forest service immediately. You can cut and past my sample and edit it with your own text.

More information can be found at the High Sierra Hikers Association website or the Inyo National Forest website
http://www.highsierrahikers.org/hiker_alerts.html
<http://www.r5.pswfs.gov/inyo/managmnt/wildplan.htm>

• *Bob Bynum, Scree Editor*

**Robert F. Bynum
761 Towhee Court
Fremont, CA 94539**

October 26, 1998

Mr. James L. Boynton
Forest Supervisor
Sierra National Forest
1600 Tollhouse Road
Clovis, CA 93611

RE: Draft Wilderness Plan for the John Muir, Ansel Adams, Monarch, and Dinkey Lakes wilderness areas

Dear Mr. Boynton:

I want to comment on the "draft wilderness plan for the John Muir, Ansel Adams, Monarch, and Dinkey Lakes wilderness areas." This plan should include the following:

- 1. Upper Limits on all Commercial uses:** No increases should be granted to commercial pack outfits until the Forest Service studies the impacts of current stock use, and enforces measures to protect wilderness resources.
- 2. Needs Assessment for Commercial uses:** To my knowledge, the Forest Service has never conducted such an assessment for these four wilderness areas. Instead, commercial pack outfits are allowed to increase in size while hiker quotas have been steadily reduced. A well-conducted "Needs Assessment" could more fairly allocate use between commercial outfits and the public-at-large.
- 3. "Opening Dates" for Grazing in Meadows:** Opening dates are needed to prevent damage to high-elevation meadows and lakeshores in the early season when soils remain saturated due to snowmelt. Stock users who wish to visit an area prior to the opening date must carry packed-in feed for their animals.
- 4. Keep Stock Animals on Designated Trails:** Numerous scientific studies have documented the potential for severe erosion when stock animals leave maintained trails. Scientists recommend that off-trail travel with stock animals be avoided. "Cross-country" travel with stock animals should not be allowed unless the agency can prove that a route can be opened without damaging wilderness resources.
- 5. More Fair Plan for Issuing Permits:** Commercial Pack outfits should be required to compete with the general public for wilderness permits. Allowing pack outfits to write their own wilderness permits is biased and unfair. It results in overcrowding at wilderness destinations and overuse of the trail system.
- 6. Prohibit Campfires in Certain Subalpine Areas:** The draft plan should restrict campfires at high elevations, as is done in Yosemite and Sequoia-Kings Canyon national parks.
- 7. Noise Standards:** The draft plan needs to include quantifiable noise standards to protect the natural quiet. Military training flights intrude on the quietude of the wilderness experience. This is not an "us" vs. "them" issue because military personnel also enjoy the wilderness. The Forest Service should work with the military on this issue to achieve the important goals of protecting the natural quiet and meeting America's defense needs.

Sincerely Yours,

Robert F. Bynum

Vote For Loma Prieta Chapter Excom

It is important to have outings sections represented on the Loma Prieta Chapter EXCOM. There are nine candidates running for five open positions. Four of the candidates running are very active in their respective sections. Here they are:

Steve Sterns, Backpacking Section

Jonathon Eros, Singles Chair

John Cordes, Ski Touring Section

Bob Bynum, PCS & Singles

To cast your vote, go to the ballot on page two of the November issue of the Loma Prieta, our chapter level newspaper. Candidate statements will be on pages 4-6 Typically only about 50 people from the entire chapter vote. Your vote counts!

- Roger Crawley, PCS Chair

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.

North Chalone Peak

Peaks: North Chalone Peak, 3304', Class 1

Date: Saturday, November 7th

Leader: Debbie Benham, h (650)964-0558,
dmbenham@aol.com

CoLeader: Anouchka Gaillard, h (408)737-9770,
anouchka@cup.hp.com

Come and enjoy a lovely, breezy day hiking the trails at Pinnacles National Monument. We start from the west, walk through canyons and caves, up the High Peaks trail, then follow the Chalone Peak trail to our summit. Approximately 16 miles round trip. Meet at Chaparral Ranger Station 9am, West Entrance from Hwy 146. Please bring plenty of water, a headlamp or flashlight for the tunnels, and food. Contact leaders for carpooling information.

Pilot Knob

Peak: Pilot Knob (S); class 2/3

Date: Nov 8 (Sunday)

Leader: Aaron Schuman H 650-968-9184
W 650-943-7532
aaron_schuman@yahoo.com

Details: <http://sj.znet.com/~cynthiam/pilotknob.html>

Day hike through the yuccas and the thistles from Onyx, a dusty crossroads at 2000' on CA-178, to the 6200' summit of Pilot Knob (S).

Mt. Diablo Conditioning Hike

Peak: Mt. Diablo (3,849'), class 1

Date: Saturday, November 14

Leader: David Harris, 650-725-8811,
harrisd@stanford.edu

Come for a desperate ascent of the dread north face of Mt. Diablo. This conditioning hike is a good, moderately paced trip suitable for aspiring peak climbers as well as veterans. No ice axe or crampons required! We'll meet at the end of Mitchell Canyon Road on the north side at 9 am and hike a loop up

Michell Canyon, over the summit, and down Donner Canyon. Expect about 14 miles and 3000' elevation gain. No host carpool leaves McCarthy Ranch shopping center at 8 am. Go east on 237, exit McCarthy Blvd. before 880. Turn left and go over the freeway into the shopping center. Go toward the north end and park by WalMart. Contact the leader for driving directions from other directions.

Henry Coe Red Fern Addition Hike

Date: Nov 21, Sat

Leaders: Landa Robillard, h: 408/378-5311, w: 408/496-5137

Bob Suzuki, h: 408/259-0772, w: 510/657-7555

Distance/gain: 4D+ (about 18 miles, over 4000' gain)

Carpool: 7:30am Cottle & 85 P&R. or meet 8:30am at Gilroy Hot Springs Explore trails and cross-country terrain in the Red Fern Addition of one of our largest state parks. This will be a strenuous hike. Heavy Rain Cancels. Co-listed with the Day Hiking Section.

Out In the Freel World

Peak: Freel Peak; class 2, winter conditions

Dates: Dec 12-13, (Sat, Sun)

Map: Freel Peak 15 min.

Leader: Kelly Maas H 408-279-2054
W 408-944-2078, maas@idt.com

CoLeader: Aaron Schuman H 650-968-9184
W 650-943-7532

aaron_schuman@yahoo.com

Details: <http://sj.znet.com/~cynthiam/freel.html>

Snowshoe from the outskirts of the town of South Lake Tahoe to the 10881' summit of Freel Peak, the highest point in the Tahoe Basin. Saturday we'll backpack close to the mountain and set up our snow camp; Sunday we'll climb to the top for a view of the lake and the forest painted white.

Telescope Peak via Surprise Canyon

Peaks: Telescope Peak

Dates: November 13, 14, 15

Maps: Telescope Peak

Leaders: Bill Kirkpatrick, W (408) 279-3450; H (408) 293-2447, Wmkirk@earthlink.net

Co-Leader: Nancy Fitzsimmons, h 408-957-0983, w 408-495-1761,

Nancy_Fitzsimmons@BayNetworks.COM.

In this trip we will experience the western side of the Panamints. We will form up early on Friday, November 13, in Ballarat, motor up to Chris Wicht Camp and park. Then we backpack up Surprise Canyon on what's left of a miner's road to Panamint City, which is what is left of a miner's camp. On Saturday we will gain the ridge of the Panamints and hike to the top of Telescope. Sunday we walk back to the cars.

Mt Humphreys

August 1, 1998.

Back in August, the four of us, Rick Booth, Dee Booth, Scott Kreider and myself, Arun Mahajan, attempted Mt Humphreys (13986), the peak that is easily noticeable from Bishop as one looks towards the Sierra crest. It is the highest of the bumps you see with a curious cap like dome on the top.

The walk upto Paiute Pass was pleasant and easy with a cool breeze that kept the mosquitoes away and by late afternoon we had found a place to camp at a small lake that is just due west of the larger Humphreys Lake. The alpine glow lit up the sheer walls of Humphreys as we cooked our meals and plotted our assault on this magnificent mountain.

We got rolling at 6.30 am on Saturday, the first of August. After climbing up to a small ridge above camp we came to another small ridge from where we could see the large frozen Humphreys Lake that is right at the base of the summit massif. We hiked down and then traversed the bowl of this frozen lake till we were at the base of a large snowfield that led directly into a couloir that creeps almost stealthily into a cleft in the massif, like a break in it's impregnable walls. There was a lot of snow here and it was very hard in the morning but the angle comfortable to climb and the snow pitted, so we cramponed upto the cleft and then into it till we came to a snowbridge over some boulders. We all walked over it with some trepidation but it held. Across from it, in the rock wall were some slings and a biner where someone had used protection at an earlier time to get across.

As we took crampons off, we pondered the next move that would get us past a huge chockstone that was blocking our way. Humphreys wasn't going to yield easily. Rick found a way over it and effortlessly went up and then setup a belay. There is one tricky move to get over, use the small protrusion for the right foot and then you are up. Then begins the class-2 walk up over some crummy and loose talus and we were glad that there was no party above us. It is easy to knock down rocks here and care must be taken to climb tightly and in small parties. Helmets are recommended in this section.

Then we came upon a large snow field that we partly avoided by staying on the rocks on the right but soon discovered that we would have to traverse left to go behind the big peaklet that blocked the way to the notch (we were attempting the 'standard' northwest face route). Boldly, we went for the snow route. Here the angle was much higher and the snow harder and devoid of features unlike the pitted snow below. This is definitely the no-fall-zone. We cautiously went up, using the pick of the axe to dig in, sometimes even using the axe in an overhand swing to dig the pick in and jug ourselves up. We had to move slowly here, but finally, even this field was climbed and we hit loose scree once again and breathed a little easy. How many more chinks in the armor of this beast had we to find before it fell?

After some more slipping and slithering on scree, we were at the notch. Rick walked over to look down at the steep north couloir. That is one fast way to get to McGee Lakes, he remarked. Here, Rick and Scott put on their Five-Tens. We left our crampons and ice axes behind and climbed straight up the class-3 trough till we came to a wall whereon the class-4 section begins. As usual, Rick climbed up with ease setting up protection as he went. I followed, and then Scott came up, towing the second rope and then Dee came up on the second rope. Yet another defense felled.

Now for the next, as we stared at the arete above us. Yet again Rick breezed up this route and we followed on the rope that he had set up for us and the belay he gave. The top of this pitch is a scenic setting indeed. We tower over the basin that is still so snowbound that it looks like it is still in early spring. Only now it seemed to us that we could achieve the summit, and a few short class-3 moves later we stood at the summit, seven and half hours after we had started from camp. Despite the clear skies, the mild warmth of the sun, the splendor of the vista around us, our elation at bagging the summit was muted as we still had to descend. Nobody was going to hand us Humphreys on a platter.

We down climbed to the top of the arete and rappelled down this pitch. Then we decided to down climb the first pitch instead of rappelling as this is a diagonal route. Rick belayed as we down climbed and then he free climbed down. As I came down to the notch, I saw a marmot run away. I was amused to find a marmot so high but soon that amusement turned to dismay at discovering that the cuff of Rick's boot had been chewed away down to the foam. One of Scott's boot was a few feet away from the other and it's cuff too had been chewed out. Needless to say, Scott and Rick were even less amused. If you see a marmot on Humphreys, throwing up some pieces of leather, let them know. I think they have a contract out on it!

More slithering and slipping later, we came back to the steep snow field which was still hard. The poor runout had us convinced not to down climb it and we choose to descend the rock on the right instead. There is a lot of loose scree on the rock which makes footing a little suspect but this too was finally over and so also the loose class-2 stuff till we were back to the top of the chockstone. Again, Rick set up for a rappel and very soon we were all down, almost to the snowbridge. One final defense to be breached and that would be it!

The snowbridge looked very unstable now. Scott, who was in the front took a leap over it and landed safely on the other side. I too did the same thing, the snow on the other side soft enough for a safe but inelegant landing. Rick and Dee skirted the bridge, stepped down and climbed over on the other side, a safer move. It was only here that the snow was soft enough for us to loosen our guard as we plunge-stepped down and then about half hour later got back to camp, just as the alpine glow left the massive walls of the mountain. It was 8.20, almost a fourteen hour day.

What an awesome peak, and such a hard and challenging climb! There is nothing easy on this peak. It has everything that the Sierra has to offer to mountain climbers, alpine rock climbing, steep snow, sheer walls, terrifying salt-addicted marmots and even the ugly and loose scree and talus that is the bane of all climbers.

Rick did a great job as the lead, setting up perfect anchors and guiding us thru the hard parts.

Sunday, we hiked out to the cars in four hours, oblivious to the mosquitoes and the heat and the almost endless stream of hikers and backpackers that passed us by, with only one over-riding thought in our minds, the Pizza Factory in downtown Bishop!

• Arun Mahajan

Mt. Russell, Fishhook Arete (III 5.8)

Sunday, August 23, 1998

I'd gone in to climb this a couple years ago with David Ress, but the weather played tricks on us. That first morning we awoke to drizzle, so we decided to run up the East Face of Whitney. After nearly being electrocuted at the summit, we hiked down through ankle deep hailstones in the gully to hours of more rain at Iceberg Lake. In uncharacteristic fashion, probably influenced by his wife and friend who were both having no fun, Dave decided it was best to bail the next morning. And so we did -- in perfect weather. I had planned to return this year with Bruce Bousfield, but he had to cancel at the last minute. Disappointment. My Sierra technical alpine climbing score for 1998: Zero.

"What about me?" Dot Reilly was planning on joining us at Iceberg Lake and surprised me with a request to climb the Fishhook. I didn't think she wanted to do it. We looked over the topo from Moynier's book. "Why does it say 5.9 when there are no pitches marked harder than 5.8?" A good question.

Windy and cold as we crossed over the Whitney-Russell Col to approach the climb. A beautiful "J" shaped arete, the Fishhook has the look of a classic. Now we were going to see if it was.

"You might as well just toss that Moynier book away", someone told us later. Well, I like John Moynier's book, if only because it offers inspiration. Hey, it's another list to complete! But, the directions and route topos, well, they aren't always too accurate. Just get used to it.

The Fishhook starts off pretty tame with a rope length of easy stuff that I could solo. That second pitch got us onto the arete proper with some funky 5.8. It didn't help that we were shivering with the damn wind. At this point, the Moynier topo directs you out left onto the face for two pitches. But the party in front of us stayed on the arete and seemed to be having fun. They called it 5.9, Dot called it 5.8 and I thought it might just be 5.7. Whatever. It was fine climbing and certainly not something to avoid. The only caveat was that we had to climb down into the notch (5.7?) instead of traverse into it.

Pitch five was supposed to be the crux at 5.8+. Well, it wasn't that hard, wasn't the crux, but was by far the most enjoyable pitch of the climb. Too bad there weren't nine of those pitches stacked up on top of each other. Excellent rock, good pro, exposure, fun moves, the whole deal. And it was finally warming up and getting less windy! The pitch above that also sported a few moves you might want to call 5.8, but it was easier overall. It ended in an awkward chimney (is that an oxymoron?) which you don't have to chimney at all if you don't want to since it has a nice hand crack there.

The last three pitches were listed as 5.5, 5.5 and 4th class on our infamous little topo. Baloney. I couldn't find any way to stay on the arete that wasn't at least 5.8. Maybe I missed something. We waffled off to the right for some sandy walking and still had some 5.7/5.8 to get back up there. The last pitch included a short 5.6 hand crack, but variations were possible, both harder and easier. Trumpets sounded as we pulled onto the summit and entered our names into the hallowed book.

Fortunately, Dot had climbed the South Face of Russell before and knew how to find the devious little class 3 descent. Slogging back over the Col, I looked over my shoulder at our climb. Was it a classic? Oh I don't know. It is very pretty looking, especially from the top of Mt. Whitney. Sure, we'll call it a classic.

• *Jim Curl*

Temple of the Palisades

August 21-23, 1998

Private trip listed with the PCS, 21-23 August 1998: Steve Eckert (scribe), Rich Leiker (co-leader), Doug Ross, Eddie Sudol, Bob Suzuki (leader). Temple Crag (12999), Gayley (13510), Palisade Crest (13520), and Disappointment (13917).

One of the first climbs I did with the Sierra Club (back in the early 80's) was Temple Crag. I remember a pretty easy climb that ended in an exposed traverse to a small summit area. We did it one at a time, roped, and some people chose not to go at all (including one lady who had seen a climber splatter too recently to get her nerve up for the traverse). Fast forward 15 years, after a long break with

bad knees, and now I'm doing 40-50 list peaks per year (some solo). How would the peak seem to me now? More importantly, would I be excited about re-climbing Temple and Gayley en route to Palisade Crest, or would I lose motivation and hang out in camp? Would I turn back short of the summit on Disappointment like I did last year? These were the thoughts going through my head as we trudged up the South Fork trail (near Big Pine) in the warm sun.

As we searched for a use trail west of Willow Lake, the flood of old memories fell prey to the concentration of boulder hopping, and I neglected to mention that we missed Elinore Lake on our way to Gayley many years ago. Yep, you guessed it, we did the same thing this time! Found a wonderful campsite just under the face at 3412m, half a mile north of Elinore. This campsite (see waypoint CAMP) is in a perfect position for Temple Crag, so we bagged it the same day we packed in. Following the drainage that leads to 100m elevation below Contact Pass, we went around a corner into the chute that opens into the southeast face of Temple. If you do this right, it is arguably second class with perhaps one or two third class moves. The face is simple second class, leading you to the dreaded knife edge ridge. Bob and Rich jumped over the 3'-wide 10'-high notch in the ridge, while I edged over to it and stemmed up the notch, and from there it's not very far or very hard to the summit block. Time changes perceptions, and on the way back I simply stepped over the notch that made me rope up so many years ago.

With a late start and long (5400' gain) first day, we didn't start early for Temple Crag the second day! Bob was convinced it was mostly a walkup, with one long pitch of 4th class, so getting our rest seemed the right thing to do. We headed up the drainage toward Gayley, instead of crossing into the Elinore drainage, which added some time but gave us a nice Tour de Bowl, crossing below Sill and Jepson before attaining the ridge that leads to Scimitar "Pass" (the ridge crossing is loosely called a pass, but it is certainly not at the saddle). Now on route, headed south along the ridge, we quickly found staying directly on the crest was more than a simple walk-up.

If you like excitement, stay on the crest (we rappelled once on the way UP). If you want the easier route, stay on the crest from Scimitar Pass until you hit a slabby section about 6' wide with red lichens. Then note the location of an up- and-left-facing gap between two slabs on the ridge 50m south of you, drop to the west, and go back up 100' or so. Go through the gap and then traverse the east side of the ridge to the big notch (see waypoint NOTCH) separating the peak from the hump you've been climbing. It really is easy third class all the way to the notch, if you don't mind the exposure, so if it gets harder you're off route. This notch has a huge chockstone to help you, following which you come to the infamous "160 foot pitch" of 4th class: This smooth slab is criss-crossed with 3" deep cracks that make climbing easy but protecting the climb impossible. Send someone confident up first (like Bob!) and you'll enjoy the climb with regular boots and a top rope belay.

Once again we must ask "what's the difference between 3rd and 4th class?" If it's just exposure, or risk of death, the slab is 4th. If it's the difficulty of climbing, the slab is 3rd. (Bob asked me to note in the report that the approach to the slab was harder than he expected, but the slab itself was easier than expected.) Pal Crest was indeed harder than most expected, and we returned to camp after dark: 12.5 hours for a mere 3500' of gain, with almost no time on top. The good news was that the mosquitoes had gone to bed before we started dinner. The bad news was two late nights in a row.

Sunday morning Rich and I headed down to Willow Lake with our packs while Bob, Doug, and Eddie headed for Gayley. They did fine, except Eddie missed the last Bart train to San Francisco and had to spend the night at the station. Rich and I should have added another day to our schedule! From Willow Lake we made good time after dropping our full packs. even though we were weighed down by a 50m rope, climbing helmets, some pro, ice axes, and crampons. The whole area was strangely devoid of people, but we bumped into several around Finger Lake.

Pressing on, the crampons came into use for the eastern flank of the Palisade Glacier. A major rockslide was the first obstacle - a single rock had made an 8 foot deep trench, and debris was everywhere. We took pictures and congratulated ourselves on being somewhere else when it all came down. Then we hit the bergschrund, passed easily on the right if you don't mind 50+ degree slopes, and started up the 40 degree chute that leads to the ridge east of Balcony. As I found last year, the snow near the top had turned to water ice from melt/freeze cycles. Rich balked and we took to the horribly loose rock to our left.

At the saddle (waypoint SNOTOP), we knew it was going to get late. We talked about a turnaround time, but didn't set one. Traversing over to Balcony I was fighting the demons from last year when I turned back because I had only half a rope and no partner. We quickly found the chute south of Balcony, as described by Secor, and Rich told me later he was hoping I would suggest turning around. It's narrow, it's loose, and it's vertical. There are two chockstones (not one, as Secor says) the upper of which can be climbed around on the right (facing down) and the lower of which is best stemmed. A full length (50m) rope tied off to a sling near the top will get you past all the 4th class, but there is no good place to set protection in the middle of the descent. Near the top is an oddball white stone formation (quartzite?) that takes a sling well, and I had a small ascender for a self-belay on the way back. We rapped down, leaving the rope tied to a sling.

The chute joins a much larger chute, where you turn toward Disappointment on 2nd class footing. There are a surprising number of constructed bivy sites on the 3rd class ledges that make up the southeast face, indicating the few people who climb this thing don't always make it down on time! We worked up to the notch between Balcony and Disappointment, then traversed over to the southwest ridge, and finally ran the ridge to the summit. Not sure if that's the best way, but we wasted no time thinking about it. Just a few feet below 14k at 6pm is nice, but we had a lot of real climbing left to do. We didn't admire the sunset too long.

The 4th class chute is not one for a large group of people. It's hard to take cover, and your rope will knock rocks down on you just from rappelling. There are tempting detours on one side, but they mostly lead you to 5th class dead ends. On the way back, Rich got impatient and forced one of the dead ends to go, passing me, but cries of "oh Schick shaving cream" and worse echoed down the chute, along with some rocks. I felt safe using the ascender for self-belay on a fixed line, and while Rich saved some time climbing unroped I'm sure that waiting for a top belay would have been safer. At that altitude, with no food or water and a cold wind, a simple broken leg could have been fatal. (The web version of this report will have some pictures after I shoot the rest of the roll.)

I thought we should admit the day was too long, and head down the 2nd class (south) side of the ridge where we could get to lower elevation more quickly. We would not be as cold as a forced bivy on the ridge at 13k, and we would have water, but we would have to climb back out the next day. Rich had his sights set on camp or bust, and believed we could sit out the night at the top of the snow

chute (which was at least out of the wind). Rich won, but 15 minutes after we sat down he started to shiver and we decided to attempt the glacier in the dark. It was now 930 pm, and there was no moon. I taped my flashlight to my climbing helmet (OK, I should have had a headlamp, but that's what duct tape is FOR!) and we did battle with the loose rock, the steep snow, the bergschrund, the moraine, and finally stopped to wonder where we were when it warmed up enough to remove a layer. My GPS said our gear cache (ski poles, water filter, etc) was not in the direction we were traveling. Without it, we would have walked on down the drainage with no hope of finding the cache.

We tried to bivy at Finger Lake, but even below 11k it was too cold to sleep for more than an hour. Back on our feet, after midnight, we stayed on the use trail and then the real trail until reaching our packs at 3am. Again, the GPS proved its worth by leading us to within 50m of our gear. even though the area did not "look right" and we almost chose not to believe it. 20 hours of climbing ended with hot chocolate and the softest bed of pine cones I've ever had. Bliss is easy when you abuse yourself first!

• *Steve Eckert*

**The guitar of the noisy teenager at the next campsite makes excellent kindling.
A two-man pup tent does not include two men or a pup.**

English Mountain

October 5, 1998

English Mountain is an 8357' high point on a rocky ridge rising above the dense fir forest near Jackson Reservoir, just north of Truckee. I climbed it from Catfish Lake, gaining about 2000 feet over 2 miles, 2-1/2 hours up and 2 hours down. If I had searched harder, I might have been able to find a starting point closer to the peak and higher up, but the labyrinth of logging roads got a little confusing. Neither the cross country route finding nor the rock scramble on the ridge presented any great obstacles. The summit view took in the jagged Sierra Buttes and some other northern Sierra peaks, like small dark islands in an ocean of green woods.

• *Aaron Schuman*

Counting Sheep

(or how I climbed Cotter instead of Clarence King)

October 9-12

Having a four-day weekend October 9-12 (I get Columbus Day off) I took up Tony Cruz on his offer to climb Clarence King since he had recruited John Zazzara to lead the 5th class summit.

I was excited by the prospect of my first autumn foray into the High Sierra. I was not to be disappointed. When the weather is as good it was this trip the Sierra is the place to be in the Fall. Amazing colors, a deserted wilderness, no bugs, and comfortable hiking weather more than made up for the cooler nights and shorter days.

Our plan was to hike in to Rae Lakes Saturday, climb Clarence King from Sixty-Lake Basin on Sunday, and hike out Monday. The hike in and out of Rae Lakes requires hiking approximately 12 arduous trail miles over two passes:

Kearsarge out of Onion Valley and Glen Pass on the JMT. Tony and I both chose to carry our boots and hike the trail in tennis shoes. However, I chose to hike the icy north side of Glen pass in my boots, Tony did not (our earlier trip to Boundry must have made him cocky). Once over Glen pass on Saturday we did not see a soul the rest of the weekend until descending Kearsarge pass on our way out Monday afternoon..

We awoke Sunday morning to find our leader John had been sick all night. Tony, spotting the contents of a little baggie quickly pointed out that it probably had something to do with the cigar that had been smoked the night before. John thought his cooking had more to do with it. With our fearless leader humbled our plans to do Clarence King that day disintegrated. As we relaxed in camp drinking coffee and making alternate plans John began to feel better. With Fin Dome looming enticingly nearby and a description of a class 3 route in hand we set-off for Sixty-Lake Basin and Fin Dome's west face.

Gazing upon the west face of Fin Dome a class 3 route looked as improbable as our ability to find it. John, feeling much better at this point, decided he wanted to do Cotter. We all agreed to change plans once again and make the attempt, although I think Tony would have preferred to have given Fin Dome a try.

A fine cross-country scramble across Sixty-Lake Basin from Fin Dome brought John and I to a tarn at the base of the southeastern slope of Cotter.

Unfortunately, we left Tony to follow us at his own pace and he was never able to regain sight of us so he chose to return to camp rather than make the summit attempt. John and I didn't even consider a direct ascent up the sandy southeast slope. It did make a great descent route though. We chose instead to swing south and ascend talus up to the south ridge. Dropping just below the west side of the ridge we continued to hop talus all the way to the summit. A short class 3 crack put us on the summit block. From the summit great views can be found of the of the surrounding lake filled basins and nearby mountains including Gardiner, Fin Dome, Dragon, Rixford, Gould, and of course Clarence King.

The summit register indicated very few ascents this year. I had but to turn back one page to find David Harris' and Steve Eckert's separate entries from August of '97. John found Eddie Sudol's entry from 1996. Also of note was an entry from the members of a researcher team taking a break from studying a species of frogs found only at Rae lakes.

On our return hike to Rae Lakes coming down the pass from Sixty Lakes Basin we came suddenly upon a group of four bighorn sheep who quickly ascended a nearby slope. John and I were ecstatic at our good fortune in sighting these rare animals. We continued down the trail discussing the nice class 5 moves of the sheep when to our utter disbelief we encountered two more groups of 5-6 bighorn sheep on each side of the trail. We just sat down and enjoyed the moment.

Back at camp we found our wayward partner relaxed, enjoying a cup of soup and soaking up the ambiance of Rae Lakes. Painted Lady in the light of the setting sun proved her namesake. Although Tony had already come to terms with not bagging a peak this weekend we were able to further torment him with our tales of the bighorn sheep.

As I lay all bundled up and cozy in my sleeping bag I counted the distant thuds of sheep butting heads, four I think, before I finally drifted off to sleep.

• *Greg Johnson*

Lolling on Lola

October 11, 1998

Trip report for the PCS trip to Mt Lola (9148 ft) and Mt Lola North (8844) ft.

The old German movie, Der Blaue Engel (The Blue Angel talks about the dancer Lola Lola who works at the bawdy club, The Blue Angel, and who lures away the high school students of her small town from their school work to see her dance.

So also, seven PCS'ers were lured away from the serious business of watching Sunday morning football by the alpine wiles of Lola Lola (north) on the 11th of October, 1998. (Interestingly enough, Mt Lola is named after Lola Montez, a beauty of varied talents, who had lived in California in the gold rush days).

We all gathered on the cold Sunday morning, about 2 miles from the trailhead, stymied at the sight of the broken bridge that spans a small stream that the dirt road crosses. Ron drove his Outback through the stream and safely over the rocks, and then Kelly made a bold dash with his Golf, making this look more like the Landrover Camel Safari than a PCS trip. But his Golf did fine and without any more incidents we reached the trailhead and started hiking.

The trail gains elevation moderately as it passes thru the forest, crosses a stream, winds by a meadow and then breaks out of the forest on a ridge and a gentle rise from there on takes one to the summit. We summited in under three hours to a great view of the Tahoe peaks like Rose, Freel, Tallac, Sierra Buttes, and English. A short northward ridge walk took us to the surrogate summit of Lola North. Ron took some GPS bearings and we decided to head down cross country from the northern summit, and so, slipping and slithering downhill over the tree shorn muddy slopes, we hit the trail again and another hour of easy trail walking got us back to the trailhead to make it a round trip time of 6 hours.

This was advertised as a beginner/new comer trip, and we got two newcomers to the PCS on this one, Mike and Urvashi, and both hiked very well. This was Urvashi's first Sierra peak.

Trip participants: Ron Karpel (leader), Urvashi Bhagat, Mike McDermitt, George Sinclair, Landa Robillard, Kelly Mass and trip report writer, co-leader, and purveyor of irrelevant and mostly dubious information,

• *Arun Mahajan.*

"Flash !! Kathmandu, Nepal

October 1998

Mt Mera, 6437 meters, was no problem for Bruce and Sarah Bousfield. They were accompanied by Martin Sirk, Dan Tupper, Robert Carney, and Greg Hermansen. A more detailed report in the coming Scree. "

• *Warren Storkman*

The Call of the Muezzin

October 17-18 1998

min-a-ret: n. 1. A tall, slender tower on a mosque, having one or more projecting balconies from which a muezzin summons the people to prayer.

clyde min-a-ret: n. 1. A tall, slender peak south of Ritter/Banner, having steep 3rd to 5th class faces from which a register summons the people to climb.

October is a dicey month for climbing. It can be crisp and wonderful, or it can be snowy and cold. Last month (September) we were snowed off Winchell, but there was an extended period of dry weather that beckoned me back to the high country. Perhaps I should have chosen a peak OTHER than Clyde Minaret, with its northeast facing rock, but I wanted to cap a month of grunge peaks with one last REAL climb.

Problem 1: Road Closed. It never occurred to me that the Devil's Postpile road would be closed at Minaret Summit (just past Mammoth Mtn Lodge) when there was no snow on the ground and no threat of impending storms. It was. We had an extra 3 miles to walk in each direction, and an extra 700' of climb-out at the end. (The road closes mid-October need it or not.)

Problem 2: Short Days. The Winter Solstice draws near, daylight "savings" draws near, and camp seems to drift farther away. We actually had a very nice hike in, except we lost the use trail above Ediza Lake and wound up looking down on Iceberg Lake instead of going past the outlet. Yep, it has icebergs in it (at least this year) and very large very icy snowfields on both sides. It also loses the sun by 4pm. We found a great campsite under some small trees and were in the sack shortly right about dark. It was actually warmer here than at the trailhead, but still in the 20s overnight.

Problem 3: Old Snow vs. New Snow. We had to crampon around Iceberg Lake, and we had to crampon up 45 degree ice at the base of the 3rd class rock (or do a mixed moat/rock scramble with crampons). I chose the open slopes, traversing into the center of the ice field to avoid TWO FEET of fresh and poorly consolidated sugar snow. The old snow is now completely iced, and an ice hammer would have been more comforting than my ice axe (despite recent sharpening). The others did a mixed bag of routes, but we converged on the narrow point of the snowfield where we planned to pick up the ledge to Secor's "Rock Route". (By the way, climbing straight up from Cecile's outlet to the ledge is class 2-3 and solid - I see no reason to use the "red rock" area which has been reported to be loose.)

Problem 4: I Want, Therefore I Will (damn the torpedoes, full speed ahead). We were not climbing fast enough to get the peak, return to camp, and pack out before dark. I should have turned back all or part of the group at the top of the glacier. Jeff pointed out that this was the wrong time of year to climb after looking at his watch and the snow-littered third class above us, but David and I wanted the peak badly and Patt was feeling strong. We went up.

Problem 5: New Snow on Rock. The easy (Rock) route was covered with snow from the end of "the ledge". The Starr route had less snow, but it still obscured some of the moves. We got to the "prominent gendarme" where the Starr and Rock routes converge with two belays, but lost time trying to free the rope from a freak snag: The end of the rope dropped into a one-inch crack and would not come out. We cut off a couple of feet after sending Patt

down to yank on it for a while. First time I've ever had to cut a rope during a climb! Above the gendarme the snow got positively deep, and we wished for gaiters.

Problem 6: The Sun. It was now mid afternoon, we were still climbing, we had been in the shade since leaving the glacier, we were mid-calf in snow on third class rock, and some people didn't have warm gloves that were suitable for climbing. Looking at the sunlit valley below didn't help, but no one was critically cold so we pressed on.

The Reward: The summit ridge was warm, sunny, and short, topping out at 3:30 pm. We signed in and headed right back down after a bite to eat and some discussion of whether to downclimb or rappel.

Problem 7: The Downclimb. A few moves down on snowy rock with some loose stuff underneath convinced us we would mostly rap the class 3-4 slope. Ugh. This was very slow, but we did make use of old slings when we could. Even though we had limited the group to four people, getting on and off the rope took too much time and it was dusk. Somewhere above the gendarme I heard a noise above me and watched in horror as an 8" rock came spinning over the edge right at me, knocked loose from under the snow by the rope. Being on rappel I had few choices - I tried to lift my foot to block it, but was not fast enough to prevent a solid hit on my shin. I twisted on the rope for a few minutes before I could see/think/move again, and we continued down.

Problem 8: The Dark. We reached the top of the ice field just after full darkness hit. Downclimbing loose 3rd class to the moat without being able to see the holds seemed suicidal (a slip would drop you onto the ice for a fast ride into a bergschrund). Downclimbing 45 degree ice without being able to see the fresh snow plates on top seemed suicidal (same runout). A bivy with the possibility of single digit temperatures and no flat place to sit seemed suicidal. We were out of water. We had only my single-cell AAA mini-mag flashlight among us, having left our headlamps in camp in the foolish confidence that we would be back early. Patt and I chose the ice, Jeff and David did a mix of ice and rock. Both Patt and David walked out of their crampons, but eventually we all got into the moat and away from the exposure. Stemming between rock and ice, we got above the soft snow and headed down.

Problem 9: Splitting up. Should we stick together, moving at less than half the pace the faster people could, or should we try to get someone out to the trailhead? Should the fast people go get flashlights or sleeping bags and return? Several of us had significant others in town with specific instructions on when to call for a rescue. It was becoming mathematically impossible to reach the trailhead before a search was started... but we were all fine. We didn't need a search and rescue, we needed a cell phone to call it off! Reluctantly we all agreed that Patt and I would hike all the way to the cars while Jeff and David could spend another night at Iceberg and hike out the next day. I pumped water for everyone at Cecile Lake, then we split up. Patt and I reached camp just after midnight, packing quickly and heading down, while Jeff and David reached camp around 2am. No injuries, just lots of time moving carefully over boulders by starlight alone. (Don't try this at home, kids! Take a flashlight!)

Problem 10: Fatigue. Patt and I took only short breaks and tried to move as fast as we could. We both felt that we should eat and drink, but got cold quickly whenever we stopped. It was hard to stay focused and alert following the bobbing light of a

headlamp down the trail, but we both felt surprisingly strong in spite of being tired. Arriving at Agnew Meadow around 5am, we allowed ourselves the luxury of a half hour nap before cruising up the 3 miles of pavement in about 70 minutes.

The End: We called all the people who were worried about us around 7am, averting any SAR false alarms, had breakfast at Schatt's and took turns driving and sleeping on the way home. Jeff and David got up late, hiking out from 11am to 7pm, and drove to LA where Jeff caught a plane home to the Bay Area. An epic that didn't have to be, but a memorable 23 hour day nonetheless. Many thanks to Patt Callery, Jeff Fisher, and David Underwood for their tenacity, their skills, and their companionship.

• *Steve Eckert*

Rockhouse Jail

October 17-18, 1998

Northern Californians rarely see the Domelands Wilderness, its sparse pine forest interspersed with dry arroyos of yucca and prickly pear, dotted with dozens of blocky granite domes. But it was mid October, and threat early snowfall was already closing northern passes through the high Sierra, so we set out to see some more southerly country.

The sun broke through the horizon with a tinkling sound like shattering ice. It was 18 F, or -8 C, at our camp at 7800 feet at Big Meadow. I counted the party that had assembled during the night: David Harris, Kelly Maas, John Hossack, Charles Schafer, Debbie Bulger and myself. We warmed our bones with oatmeal and tea. (I ate instant grits that I had brought back from a recent trip to Georgia, much to the amusement of my Yankee companions.)

We set out on the trail to Manter Meadow, with Taylor Dome as our morning's destination. With Steve E.'s help, I had prepared maps of our route from the Wildflower Topo CDROM cartographic database. Each map was zoomed in very close to the area we would hike through, to show us the maximum level of detail. This was my first experience using computerized mapping for the backcountry. On every trip I strive to learn something new about the mountains, and on this trip I can summarize the lesson in a single phrase: Use Multiple Scales.

We quickly discovered that the terrain didn't match our maps very well. We struggled to correlate this ridge we could see to that region of contour lines on the printed page, but something was awry. It didn't help us at all that neither of our destinations this weekend are named on any map. We traveled off trail to where our mountain ought to be, but there was no mountain. Maybe it was down the next canyon and up the rise after that. To our amazement, at the bottom of the canyon we found a well maintained trail that shouldn't have been there at all.

The discovery of the trail was the turning point that finally forced us to challenge our paradigm of where we were. David produced a map of the Domelands, printed by the US Forest Service, and with its considerably zoomed out view, we could see that there were two parallel trails from Big Meadow to Manter Meadow, about one and one half miles apart. All of the features that we couldn't interpret made perfect sense when seen from the North Manter trail; because our zoomed in maps showed only the South Manter trail, we mistakenly thought that was where we were.

Properly oriented at last, we quickly reached the summit block, a knob of two hundred feet of unbroken high quality granite slabs, and scrambled to the 8802' top of Taylor Dome. Our return, down the South Manter trail, went much more quickly than our entry. We finished with a hike up the Big Meadow road from the south trailhead to the north, and returned to our camp by 3:00 pm.

We had intended to finish our climb of Taylor Dome by midday, and climb Sirretta Peak in the afternoon, but my routefinding mistake set us back a few hours. It was too late to start another mountain. We loafed, ate, and moved camp to the south trailhead for Sunday's adventure.

We began our hike to Rockhouse Peak with a crew rotation. Debbie returned home Sunday morning, and Greg Johnson arrived to round out our group.

Peter Jenkins, in his book *Self Propelled in the Southern Sierra*, recommends climbing Rockhouse Peak from the east side, with a ford across the South Fork of the Kern River. Our route, from Big Meadow, was longer than his, but involved no ford.

Although Sunday's walk was three times as long as Saturday's, we did it in about the same amount of time. What a difference it makes to have a correct concept of the lay of the land!

When we sat on top of the smooth granite slabs that form 8383' Rockhouse Peak, the whole of the Domelands unfolded before us, row after row of rounded rocky tops breaking through the dry southern forest, from Lake Isabella all the way to Mineral King and Mount Langley. It was there that we got the sweet taste of California mountaineering as it is done far down south.

• *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.

Mount Whitney

Peak: Mount Whitney (14,494) Class 2-3, Ice Axe & crampons
Dates: December 20-23 (Sun-Wed)
Contact: George Van Gordon

This will be a three day trip up Mt. Whitney via Whitney Portal. We will drive up as far as we can and then park. Call leader for details.

Tehipite Dome, Spanish Mtn

Peaks: Tehipite Dome, Spanish Mtn 3/2
Dates: Nov 14/15
Contacts: Tony Cruz, cruz@idt.com, Pat Ibbetson

Wheeler Peak

Peaks: Wheeler Peak, Arc Dome, 1/2
Dates: Nov 21/22/23/24
Contacts: Tony Cruz, Pat Ibbetson

Shasta

Peaks: Shasta (via Cold Creek), Class 3
Dates: Dec 5/6
Contact: Tony Cruz, Dennis Hiipakka

Mt Baldy

Peaks: Mt. Baldy/Gorgonio
Dates: Jan 22, 23, 24
Contact: Tony Cruz

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

Elected Officials

Chair:

Roger Crawley /rcrawl@earthlink.net
650-321-8602 home
761 Nash Avenue, Menlo Park, CA 94025

Vice Chair and Trip Scheduler:

Arun Mahajan / arun@tollbridgetech.com
650 327-8598 home
1745 Alma Street, Palo Alto, Ca 94301.

Treasurer and Membership Roster (address changes):

Nancy Fitzsimmons/Nancy_Fitzsimmons@BayNetworks.com
408-957-9683 home
1025 Abbott Avenue, Milpitas, CA 95035

Appointed Positions

Scree Editor:

Bob Bynum / rfbynum@aol.com
510-659-1413 home
761 Towhee Court, Fremont CA 94539-7421

PCS World Wide Web Publisher:

Aaron Schuman / aaron_schuman@yahoo.com
650-943-7532 <http://www.sierraclub.org/chapters/lomaprieta/pcs/>
223 Horizon Avenue, Mountain View, CA 94043-4718

Publicity Chair

Steve Eckert list_owner@juno.com 650-508-0500

Subscriptions and Email List Info

Hard copy subscriptions are \$10. Subscription applications and checks payable to "PCS" should be mailed to the Treasurer so they arrive before the last Tuesday of the expiration month. If you are on the PCS email list (discussion version or lower-volume news version), you have a free **EScree** subscription. For broadcast info, send Email to <listserv@lists.sierraclub.org> with the one-line message "INFO lomap-peak-climbing" or contact a human at <list_owner@juno.com>. EScree subscribers should send a subscription form to the Treasurer to become voting PCS members at no charge. All subscribers are requested to send a donation of \$2/year to cover operating expenses *other* than printing the Scree. The Scree is on the PCS web site (as both plain text and Adobe Acrobat/PDF at <<http://www.sierraclub.org/chapters/lomaprieta/pcs/Scree/Scree.html>>).

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.

Deadline for submissions to the next Scree is Sunday 11/22/98. 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