

**December, 1999 Peak Climbing Section, Loma Prieta Chapter, Sierra Club Vol. 33 No. 12**

World Wide Web Address: <http://www.climber.org/pcs>

## Next General Meeting

**Date:** Tuesday, December 14

**Time:** 7:30 PM

**Program:** Party and Slide Show

Bring your "best" potluck dish. If you need a suggestion for what to bring, follow this guide based on the initial letter of your last name. However, if you have a really special dish you would like share with us that is outside your category, by all means bring it!

A-F: Drinks

G-L: Main course

M-R: Desserts

S-Z: Snacks, Appetizers, Salads

NOTE: Names have been re-arranged for 1999 so you're in a brand new category this year!

**Location: \*\*ATTENTION NEW LOCATON\*\***

The potluck will be in "Cafe Ozone" in Building 40 at SGI. The cafe is reserved for us from 7 pm to 10:30 pm. There's a gif map to the Cafe Ozone on the Web at:

[http://www.sgi.com/company\\_info/maps.html](http://www.sgi.com/company_info/maps.html)

**Dress Code:**

Black Tie and Balaclava Optional

**Directions From Highway 101 Southbound**

Take the US-101 South towards San Jose. Exit at Shoreline Blvd. Turn LEFT at stop light onto N. Shoreline Blvd. Drive approximately 5-6 blocks.

**Directions From Highway 101 Northbound**

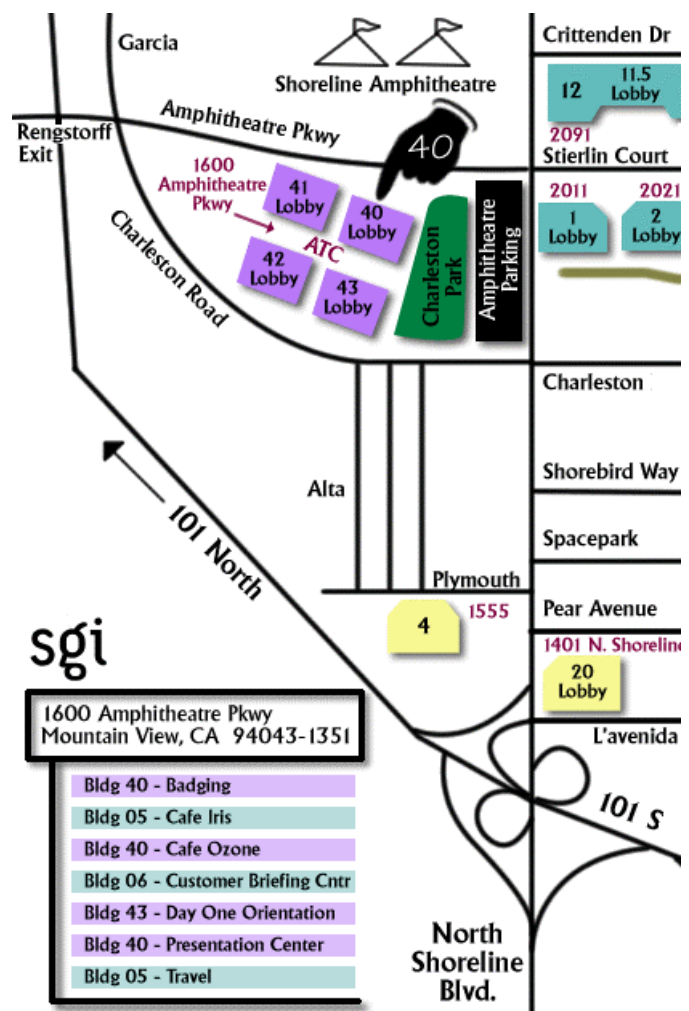
Take the US-101 North towards San Francisco. Exit at Shoreline Blvd. / Middlefield Road. Keep RIGHT at the fork in the ramp. Turn LEFT at stop light onto N. Shoreline Blvd. Drive approximately 5-6 blocks.

Deadline for submissions to the next Scree is Sunday 12/26/99 Meetings are the 2nd Tuesday of each month.

## PCS HOLIDAY PARTY

**To get to Cafe Ozone (Building 40):**

Turn left onto Amphitheatre Parkway (Stierlin Ct. stop light). Building 40 will be on the left side (just past the park). Enter Building 40 at the Lobby entrance and turn left.



[http://www.sgi.com/company\\_info/maps.html](http://www.sgi.com/company_info/maps.html)

## Congratulations New PCS Officers

At the November meeting of the PCS, the annual elections for the PCS offices of Chair, Vice Chair and Treasurer were held. The nominating committee is happy to announce these results:

Chair: Rick Booth, pcs-chair@climber.org  
Vice-Chair: Dee Booth, pcs-scheduler@climber.org  
Treasurer: Bill Kirkpatrick, pcs-treasurer@climber.org

These people take office effective immediately. Rick, Dee and Bill are well known to the PCS members as excellent hikers and mountaineers. Congratulations to the new team! Please provide them with all your cooperation and support in their tasks for the next year.

Also continuing on from last year are appointed publicity committee members:

Chair: Steve Eckert  
Scree Editor: Bob Bynum, pcs-editor@climber.org  
Webmaster: Aaron Schuman, pcs-webmaster@climber.org  
Email Lists: Steve Eckert, pcs-listmaster@climber.org  
Scree Mailing: Paul Vlasveld

Thank you,

• *Nancy Fitzsimmons, Bob Suzuki and Arun Mahajan*  
(*The PCS Nominating Committee*); *Steve Eckert (PCS*  
*Publicity Committee Chair)*

## Wilderness First Aid

Last spring I took the best first aid class I've ever had. It cost over \$100 but it was worth it. It was a weekend class offered at UCSC in Santa Cruz by the **Wilderness Medicine Institute** of Pitkin, Colorado.

I learned more than all the other first aid classes I have had put together.

Besides learning how to treat various problems when no professional help is available, I learned how to report the injury in a medically useful way using the SOAP format. That is Subjective, Objective, Assessment, Plan.

So one might report:

I have a 37 year old male patient whose chief complaint is pain in the lower right leg. Exam found the following: patient found lying face down near cliff, pant leg torn, etc. etc.

As a result I have added some things to my first aid kit including a large syringe for cleaning out serious abrasions with sterile water. Other highlights included moving patients by "beaming them" as in beam me up Scotty, and assessing blood loss.

We practiced with patients (our classmates) who had various injuries or illnesses we had to diagnose and treat without knowing what was wrong other than what we could observe or what the patients could tell us.

I recommend such a class and I intend to take it again to refresh my skills.

• *Debbie Bulger*

Editor's Note: The schedule for the Wilderness Medicine Institute can be found at <http://www.wildernessmed.com/>

## Mt. Whitney Something Like a Race

Eyes fixed, measured breathing, strident stride.  
Ahead a blue shirt and red shorts  
Behind two women wrapped in gortex  
(We are not the same though here almost)  
Whom I have passed but may again pass me;  
They are from another country  
Which also is part of the race;  
And yet all around such country  
That isn't part of it at all,  
But then I must keep my mind on the trail  
Ahead red shorts women behind and the pass  
To which it all leads carrying us along.

And then we are there all at once  
It seems, a knot of smiling fools  
Chugging electrolytes dry fruit and air  
Singing drunkenly to one another  
Of trivialities – pulse, training, how few ahead  
But many behind, pushing boulders uphill  
And absurdities – mythiphus Sisyphus  
Ourselves at all in all of this.

While opening before us and all around us  
Such country

Without circumference beginning or end  
Center everywhere there to then  
Granite to plasma singularity to stars  
And on to infinity and maybe back again  
And I, as if

Having been lulled to self by too many switchbacks,  
Am suddenly hurled into a Bach fugue  
Snuffed out between exposition and development  
Where individual voices fade into divinity;  
Or am heaved like Balboa  
(Though I have not committed natives to the dogs  
Nor stuffed myself with gluttonous visions  
Of rank and gold, I have thus used this path)  
Atop a peak in Darien  
Where purged palsied and hollow  
He stood silent before the Pacific.

Still following my descent  
(And this is the wisdom which keeps us here)  
I may search for gold along the roadside,  
Look occasionally in the rearview mirror,  
Always the dogs are running.

• *George Van Gordon*

## Birth Announcement

Emma Carolyn Kreider was born on October 17, 1999 to proud parents and PCS members Marilyn and Scott Kreider. Emma weighed 7 pounds 0 ounces and measured 20 inches. Emma is currently in training for her first ascent of Mission Peak.

Baby pictures can be found at  
<http://members.aol.com/kreider00/emma.html>

• *Scott Kreider*

## Join The Ski Patrol

I am with the National Ski Patrol, Pinecrest Nordic Ski Patrol. We are located (our patrol area) in the back country of Stanislaus National Forest, which is between Yosemite and Tahoe near the Dodge Ridge Ski Resort.

We are currently recruiting Nordic / back country skiers to volunteer to be trained and become National Ski Patrol Nordic Patrollers.

You might also like to link to the new member portion of the Pinecrest Nordic Ski Patrol's web site at:

<http://www.pinecrestnordic.org/join.htm>

• *Matt Brooks Rewmb@aol.com*

## Yosemite Volunteer Work

Excellent climbing \* Great people \* Free entry to Yosemite Park \* Free campsite \* Make a difference

Join an AAC Volunteers in Parks (VIP) project weekend. Join in with fellow climbers. Work together with a highly motivated team. Then, grab your sticky rubber, your harness, and pro and go climbing! Or, bring your backpack and walking stick and take a stroll and see the park.

Hello AAC members and friends,

The Tuolumne Meadows Backcountry Permit Office is finished thanks to the many AAC VIPs who contributed time this summer. Now we go back to maintenance activities for the winter. Projects include campground cleanups, bear box installation, trail maintenance, and various conservation projects.

The project for December 4 is more 1997 flood cleanup work. We will be working at the old Yosemite Lodge, doing deconstruction and lumber salvage. Bring your favorite nail removing tools or use Park Service tools. This is good exercise for building up those forearms.

We will be working on Saturday, December 4 from 9:00 am to about 3:00 pm. The rest of the time is open for climbing, making friends, and enjoying the park. The weather is chilly, especially at night. Bring warm clothes. It might even rain or snow, so pack those parkas and always carry chains at this time of the year.

After we finish our work Saturday there's time to get in a short hike, some bouldering, or a quick climb. All of Sunday is totally open for climbing, hiking, or whatever you like.

Respond by email or call for free gate passes and free campsite for Friday, December 3 through Sunday, December 5.

Need to come earlier or stay later? Let me know asap and I'll try to arrange for the camp space. Please join our team and have some great fun. Send me an e-mail reply and I'll send you the information and passes by return e-mail.

George Gluck is the Crew Leader for this project. Contact me by e-mail([george@alpineclub.org](mailto:george@alpineclub.org)) or leave a message on my voice-mail/pager (800)505-4960.

Please enter your reservation by Thursday, December 2.

Starting November and through March there is one VIP weekend per month.

### Future project dates:

December 3 - Yosemite Valley

January 22 - Yosemite Valley

February 19 - Yosemite Valley

March 18 - Yosemite Valley

April TBD - Yosemite Valley

May TBD - Yosemite Valley

George Gluck

VIP Volunteer

[george@alpineclub.org](mailto:george@alpineclub.org)

(408) 281 - 4453 Home Office

(800) 505 - 4960 Voice-Mail/Pager

• *Debbie Benham*

## Update To Mt Whitney Permit Process

There have been some further changes to the wilderness permit process for the Mt. Whitney zone. Basics remain the same...you must have your application mailed or FAXed in during the month of February and all applications will be pulled at random to fill the quota. Of some interest is the following paragraph from the Inyo N. F. website:

“Permit Pick-up: Permits for the main Mt. Whitney Trail will be mailed to applicants. All other permits must be picked up in person at any of the Inyo National Forest Ranger Stations. Reserved permits must be picked up anytime the day before and no later than 10 am the day of entry. Those reserved permits not picked up by 10 am on the entry date will be reissued and will be free of charge. Summer hours for ranger stations/visitor centers will be posted here by spring.”

(Note that Whitney Trail permits will now be MAILED out...this is different from the policy which had been previously discussed on the list.)

For the full policy, please refer to:

<http://www.r5.pswfs.gov/inyo/vvc/permits.htm>

• *Alan Ritter, jar@storz.com*

## Cobbler Recommendations

Here is a collection of useful information about cobblers in the San Francisco Bay Area that I got from the list readers.

1. Siefert's in Palo Alto, on a street parallel to California Ave

• *Debbie Benham*

2. Armenian cobbler off of Ralston and Alameda in Belmont

• *Ron Karpel*

3. Bootmaker, from Chile, in San Jose at the corner of Meridian and Hamilton

• *Christel Belrichard*

4. Chinese cobbler near downtown Los Gatos

• *Rick Booth*

All these cobblers did good work for the people that recommended them.

• *Arun Mahajan*

## Bear Box Locations

I've just finished a MAJOR overhaul of the "backcountry food storage locker" (aka "bear boxes") file. It's now a database like the Sierra Peaks List, meaning you can browse around the data more easily and there is no chance of inconsistency between parts of the file. Sanity checkers and proofreaders are welcome to have a go at it. Send missing data, or correct mistakes, and I'll add your name to the contributor list! You'll be famous!!!

The NEW bear box location file is still at  
<http://www.climber.org/eckert/BearBoxes.htm>

This time around you can get GPS coordinates for ALL 99 BOXES, but some of them are guesses... please send me an email saying you saw a box, and PRECISELY where it was, whenever you can. Those which have not been verified are displayed in color and accompanied by a warning that the coordinates are suspect.

I've also added elevations for those who don't have Waypoint+ or TOPO! (Either of these software programs can import the text displayed by BearBoxes.htm and transfer it to a GPS, but there is an elevation and a text description of how to find each box even if you don't use the coordinates provided.)

I've also added quite a few notes about places like "Twin Lakes" (where there are ambiguities over which twins are the right ones), and "Pinto Lake" or "Rock Creek Lake" (which are not shown on the USGS topo maps).

Some of the boxes in this database are not listed on the ranger sheets. I directly asked a Yosemite ranger issuing permits for a list of boxes, and he refused. We can collect our own list, eh?

Please help us all by sending me your notes when you find something to be unclear or when you have a better description. I appreciate GPS coordinates (please specify NAD27 or NAD83 when you send), and I'll email you a tiny GIF map so you can mark the spot if you wish.

• *Steve Eckert*

## 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.

### Annual Beginners Snow Camping Seminar

Dates: Eves: Tues., Jan. 11th, Thur. Jan. 13th, Thur. Jan. 20th; Weekend of Jan. 29/30 or Feb. 5/6.

Leaders: Chris MacIntosh, 650-325-7841  
<cmaci@ibm.net>, Tom Wolf, 650-961-2682,  
Charles Schafer 408-354-1545

A planned winter overnight trip in the Sierra can be wonderful or cold and miserable. A forced overnight due to storm, injury or equipment failure presents far more hazards in winter than in summer. For the 27th winter, PCS (and STS) leaders present a snow camping seminar to help backpackers, climbers, and others enjoy winter sports safely and comfortably. Participants learn do's and don'ts of winter planning, clothing, food etc. as well as making emergency and non-emergency shelters in the snow, then put these skills into practice on a weekend trip to the Sierra (traveling by skis or snowshoes. Send \$40 and a SASE to BSCS PO Box 802, Menlo Park, CA 94026-0802 cost includes 3 books and equipment maintenance). Limit of 40.

### Mission Junipero Serra.

Peak: Junipero Serra Peak, 5862 ft, Class 1,  
Co listed with the Day Hiking Section  
and rated 3D by the DHS conventions.  
Date: Sunday, January 16, 2000.  
Maps: Junipero Serra 7.5'  
Leaders: Arun V. Mahajan <arun@tollbridgetech.com,  
(h) 650-327-8598 (w) 408-585-2114  
Ron Karpel <ronny@luxsonor.com  
(w)510771-3231, (h)650-594-0211

Named after Frair Junipero Serra, the founder of the Missions, standing higher than any other in the Monterrey county is this spectacular peak which we will attempt to hike up to. Come with us to get an aerial view of the land that the cowled frair saw when he came to the new world in the 1700s. The walk up is mildly strenuous with an altitude gain of 3900+ ft in 6 miles ONE way but the view is well worth the effort. There is trail all the way to the top.

Carpool suggestions from Bay Area: Meet at the Carl's Jr. that is at the Dunne Avenue exit on 101 in Morgan Hill at 7 am on Sunday, January 16, 2000. We will carpool from there. Non Bay Area People: Contact the leaders for directions to the trailhead.

Pouring rain cancels.

### The Pinnacles Under the Full Moon

Date: Saturday, January 22  
Leader: Aaron Schuman, 650-943-7532

Pinnacles National Monument is home to a collection of sculpted boulders that come to life under the full moon. We'll meet on Saturday for an early meal, then go to the park for an evening walk on the trail under the magical silver moonlight. Details and contact information will be posted in the January issue of Scree.

## The Sierra Club's Fixed Anchor Policy

### Being Debated again!

Editor's Note: Ron Karpel requested that I publish this letter concerning fixed anchors. It was originally published in the Echo and addressed to SPS members.

• *Bob Bynum, Scree Editor*

To the SPS Membership:

Once again we are reviewing a proposed Sierra Club national policy for the use of fixed anchors in Wilderness. I have been active for the last year on a Task Force charged with reviewing the existing Fixed Anchor policy, passed by the Sierra Club board May 1998 and determining if any revisions should be made to the policy. For my part I was pleased with the 1998 policy when it passed, but some of the non-climbing members of the Club were not – so the new policy is an attempt to create further balance while still supporting the use of fixed anchors in wilderness.

The following is the new proposed Sierra Club Policy. Now is the time for you to review and comment on the proposed policy. The deadline for comments is December 1, 1999. Comments can be sent by mail or e-mail to the following address:

Ken Cline (Chair of Sierra Club Fixed Anchor Task Force)  
31 LedgeLawn Ave.  
Bar Harbor, ME 04609 (207)288-5015 (Ext. 264)  
E-MAIL: [ken.cline@sierraclub.org](mailto:ken.cline@sierraclub.org), [ksc@ecology.coa.edu](mailto:ksc@ecology.coa.edu)

I suggest that if you elect to comment that your comments include a request for Section 2 to be revised. Problems with the language, from climber's perspective arose after the draft policy was issued, so we will need to request revisions be made before the final draft is sent to the Sierra Club board. My suggestion on Section 2 is to revise the text. The suggested revised text is as follows:

*Climbing, including the use of fixed anchors, is an historic and appropriate use of Wilderness and is consistent with the purposes of the Wilderness Act. However, fixed anchors that cannot be placed or removed without altering the environment were not specifically addressed during the passage of the Wilderness Act. These should be regulated as imprints of human usage of Wilderness. Within designated Wilderness areas, or areas otherwise protected for their wilderness values, climbing including the use of fixed anchors, should be subject to the same standards as all other activities to ensure preservation of the wilderness character of these lands.*

The purpose of this text revision is to eliminate the word "installations". My new research has concluded that recommending fixed anchors be treated as "installations" under the Wilderness Act is not a workable idea, when dealing with the various governmental agencies like the Forest Service or the BLM. The Access Fund completed a thorough legal analysis of the Wilderness Act and what kinds of uses are generally permissible or prohibited in wilderness. The term "installations" has been used to define a variety of things, none of which are similar, in scope of impact or in application, to fixed anchors. Dams, livestock corrals, cabins -- these things are installations. For the Sierra Club to define fixed anchors as "installations" the Club could be setting themselves for conflict with the Forest service, National Parks, etc. which administer wilderness areas. We could find ourselves in a position where we have to convince the agencies that the use of fixed anchors should be allowed, instead of providing them with guidance which establishes that fixed anchors are required, on an occasional and emergency basis.

Climbing and fixed anchor use should be treated as other "appropriate and welcome" uses of wilderness such as overnight backcountry camping. It should be treated as generally legal and permissible. Here's an analogy: wilderness managers often impose restrictions, such as a mandatory permit, on camping in wilderness. As a practical matter, then, camping is not allowed without this permit. But there's no law or regulation prohibiting camping. In fact camping is generally allowed, subject to site-specific restrictions. The same should be true for wilderness climbing and fixed anchor use. We will have to fight endless, intractable battles with line officers and field personnel who know little to nothing about climbing if we endorse a position that fixed anchors should be treated as something which is generally illegal under the Wilderness Act. Defining the fixed anchors as installations will make fixed anchors generally illegal.

The phrase "imprints of man's work [which are] substantially unnoticeable..." is far more appropriate a definition for fixed anchors. The Act provides plenty of guidance directing management on this issue without being specific to this use.

Thank you for your interest and consideration of the Proposed Policy. Contact Barbee Tidball (562) 424-1556 or e-mail: lbtidball@earthlink.net, if you have any questions, or would like more detailed information.

• Barbee Tidball, SPS Conservation Chair

## Policy Background

Mountain climbing and wilderness protection have been at the heart of the Sierra Club since its birth over 100 years ago. Most of the early (and many present) Club leaders were active climbers and the climbing community (both inside and outside the Club) has been a vital champion of wilderness. Although climbers continue to be strong advocates for wilderness, recent developments in the recreational use of wilderness and in the sport of climbing threaten to fray the close-knit relationship of climbers and wilderness advocates.

Overall recreational use of wilderness and the impacts of this use have increased dramatically in recent years. Still besieged by threats from extractive industries, wilderness increasingly faces new threats from growing recreational uses (including climbing). The advent of "sport climbing" and the wider popularity of climbing generally means that the sport is not as dominated by traditional climbers who are also ardent conservationists.

Wilderness can be and has been negatively impacted by some climbing activities. Of particular concern to wilderness advocates (and many climbers) is the proliferation of the use fixed anchors in Wilderness Areas. The term fixed anchor is a generic term that refers to protection devices not removed at the completion of a climb. Fixed anchors include such hardware as bolts, bolt hangers, pitons, and nylon webbing slings. Bolts, which are permanent pieces of protection driven into a hole that is drilled in a rock, are of particular concern. The Wilderness Act prohibits the use of power equipment, including climber's drills, for the placement of bolts in Wilderness. The Wilderness Act, however, does not explicitly address climbing activities or equipment that does not involve power tools.

As a result of discussions occurring in the California/Nevada Regional Conservation Committee, the Wild Planet Strategy Team (WPST) began to study the issue of fixed anchors use in Wilderness in early 1997. Over an eighteen month period, the WPST, in consultation with Sierra Club members and entities, developed a draft Club policy. This draft policy was circulated Club-wide to Chapters and Groups and eventually approved, as modified in response to member comments, by the Conservation Governance Committee and the Board of Directors. The Board approved this policy at its May 9-10, 1998 meeting.

Subsequently, questions were raised at the Council of Club Leaders by Club members who felt that the Club's new fixed anchor policy was not sufficiently protective of wilderness. In September 1998, the Council of Club Leaders passed a resolution asking the Board of Directors to reconsider the Fixed Anchor Policy. The Board of Directors responded by directing the Conservation Governance Committee to appoint a Task Force to reexamine the issue. In January 1999, the Conservation Governance Committee appointed a Fixed Anchor Task Force (FATF) whose charge was to study the issue and to make recommendations to the Conservation Governance Committee. The FATF's membership was composed of Club members who represented a wide variety of perspectives on the fixed anchor question. Barbee Tidball represented the SPS. The following draft revised policy is the result of the FATF's work over the past seven months.

In the initial policy discussion, some Sierra Club members questioned the need for a Sierra Club policy on as specific of a topic as fixed anchors. The issue has since become part of a broader public debate for federal wilderness managers and other conservation groups. Most notably in May of 1998, the United States Forest Service proposed banning the placement of new fixed anchors in National Forest Wilderness Areas. Following a storm of controversy, the Forest Service withdrew the ban and proposed

setting new regulations through a negotiated rulemaking process that would involve both conservation and climbing interests. The Sierra Club has been invited to participate in this rulemaking process (Jeff Widen, a climber and Club member from Colorado will represent the Club.). Your comments on the following proposed revised policy on the use of fixed anchors in wilderness will help guide the Sierra Club as it participates in the rulemaking process and guide the Club and its members on similar climbing issues nationwide.

#### **DRAFT FIXED ANCHOR POLICY 9/20/99**

1. Preserving and protecting wilderness values for future generations is the primary purpose of Wilderness. All other uses are subject to this primary purpose. All management actions should enhance, rather than degrade, wilderness values as defined by the Wilderness Act of 1964.
2. Climbing, including the use of fixed anchors, is an historic and appropriate use of Wilderness and is consistent with the purposes of the Wilderness Act. However, fixed anchors that cannot be placed or removed without altering the environment were not specifically addressed during the passage of the Wilderness Act. These should be regulated as installations in Wilderness; their use in Wilderness may be authorized under Section 4 (c) of the Wilderness Act which provides that installations can be allowed where "necessary to meet minimum requirements for the administration of the area for the purpose of this Act." Within designated Wilderness areas, or areas otherwise protected for their wilderness values, climbing including the use of fixed anchors, should be subject to the same standards as all other activities to ensure preservation of the wilderness character of these lands.
3. Climbing, including the use of fixed anchors, should be addressed in wilderness management plans, subject to public review, and managed as necessary to protect Wilderness resources. The full range of management options, including but not limited to resource monitoring, voluntary use limits, restrictions, permitting, area-specific prohibitions, and the establishment of Limits of Acceptable Change criteria for specific areas, should be considered and implemented as necessary to protect wilderness character when regulating climbing and the use of fixed anchors. Where climbing occurs, all relevant management plans, informational signs and wilderness permits should address guidelines for climbing and the use of fixed anchors.
4. Site-specific wilderness management plans should include certain minimum requirements for climbing. Climbing should not occur where fragile, rare, threatened, or endangered plant or animal species may be impacted, where human presence may interfere with essential wildlife behavioral patterns, where recreational activities may interfere with religious or cultural values, or where it would compromise the scenic resource. Fixed anchors should not be used where there is a removable equipment alternative. To minimize visual impacts, slings and other removable equipment should be removed whenever and wherever possible. The use of power drills is prohibited in wilderness areas. Any alteration of rock or removal of vegetation should be prohibited, except as minimally necessary for the placement of fixed anchors.

## **Mission Peak with a Mission**

### **Marriage of Rich Leiker & Maggie Hudson**

On Wednesday October 20<sup>th</sup>, at around 3pm, 45 people set off from Stanford Avenue in Fremont to hike Mission Peak. For some of them it was their first time; for many of them it was a hike they had made on numerous occasions, too many to count. But for two of them it was a journey that would signify the beginning of a new life together. For the purpose of this hike was not to bag another peak, but to witness the joining in matrimony of Maggie Hudson and Rich Leiker.

When we first mentioned the idea of getting married on Mission Peak it was said in jest. But the more we thought about it the better it seemed. What more fitting place for two PCS members to wed than on top of a peak? But the Sierras seemed impractical and would limit the number of guests, ruling out some of our non-backpacking friends. So Mission Peak was the perfect choice.

It was a warm sunny day when we set out on the hike, around 85° at the parking lot. Just the day before the park had been closed due to fire danger; a near disaster for us. But on the day everything turned out just fine. It was a very enjoyable hike and everyone made it to the summit.

Once the group was assembled on top, the bride set out down the "aisle" to the sounds of "Here Comes the Bride", assisted by Tennessee Harris and bridesmaid Landa Robillard. The bride joined the groom standing on a sheet of plastic that had been laid out for the occasion, and the ceremony began, ably performed by friend and fellow PCS member Ron Karpel. Poems were read by Tennessee Harris and Vicky Thielman; the bride and groom exchanged vows; the best man, John Ediger, was ready with the rings; and finally Ron said the immortal words "You may now kiss the bride". At this point the groom was much relieved, the bride was a little emotional, and all that was left to do was celebrate. Which we did!

The whole thing was captured on film by Charles Schafer and on video by Gary Whitman. Thanks to them, to everyone else who helped us on the day, and to all of you who came along to celebrate with us. Our thanks also go to Bob Suzuki for the generous use of his home for the reception. Everyone contributed to making our day perfect; the one peak climb that we will remember for the rest of our lives.

• *Maggie Hudson*

## **Scoping Out Telescope**

### **A Great Trip In Spite of a Few Glitches**

November 12-14, 1999

On the Saturday, November 13, Jeff Fisher led a hike from Shorty's Well in Death Valley to the summit of Telescope Peak via Hanaupah Canyon. This was an official PCS and DHS trip. Participants were Jeff Fisher, Craig Taylor, Hal Tompkins, Tony Walsh of San Diego, and myself. Jeff and Craig hiked all the way from Death Valley to the summit. I hiked to the summit from Mahogany Flat to provide a car shuttle. This was a great trip. I really enjoyed the drive to Death Valley, Jeff Fisher's companionship, the solitude of camping at Shorty's Well and the climb of telescope peak from Mahogany Flat. However, there were a few glitches that occurred.

Typically when I go on a trip, I know weeks in advance and plan carefully. On this trip however I wasn't sure until the last minute. Jeff had been trying to talk me into going but I kept waffling. I wanted to go, but with Gretchen and my recent wedding we were still trying to get settled in. Jeff had wanted to take off on Thursday night. On my way home Thursday evening the alternator failed in

my car and it died less than a mile from home. I called Jeff and told him that the trip was out for me because I had to take care of the car.

Jeff talked me into going anyway and Gretchen helped me jump the car so I was able to limp it home. Due to this additional delay, Jeff and I left on Friday morning. We had originally planned to leave on Thursday night.

Hal departed on his own Thursday night with the understanding that Jeff would meet him at Mahogany Flat at 5:00 PM the following Friday afternoon. From there, they would drive down to Shorty's Well leaving Hal's car at Mahogany for shuttle purposes. At the time Hal left, my participation wasn't definite.

Craig Taylor had a different situation. He couldn't leave until Friday afternoon. He came up with a novel solution. He flew into Las Vegas and rented a car. Craig planned to arrive at Shorty's Well late Friday night.

Jeff and I left my house at 6:25 AM Friday morning. Our drive took us down I-5, over to Bakersfield, down 58 to Tehachapi, and then up 14 towards Ridgecrest. In Randsburg, we stopped for lunch and then went on a fifteen-minute mini-climb up a small local peak. From there we had a spectacular view of the Mojave Desert, China Lake, the Argus Range, and the Panamint Range.

Randsburg is half way between a ghost town and a tourist attraction. It is a gold mining town that dates from the 1800s, but they still mine gold with modern methods. However, most of the 1800s town is still in existence with old mine shafts, a bed and breakfast, and an opera house. The Opera House Café cuisine can be described as typical Eastern Sierra greasy spoon. They have room for improvement. Jeff wanted a tuna melt sandwich and they said they couldn't do it. However, they did have cheese-melt sandwiches and tuna sandwiches. Go figure this one out!

From Randsburg, we drove on to Death Valley via a variety of county roads that went through Trona and connected to Highway 190 and took us by Stovepipe Wells Village.

Since I was now along on the trip, Jeff had decided to change his original plans. Rather than meet Hal at Mahogany Flats at 5:00PM, he decided to have everybody meet at Furnace Creek at 4:00PM. While in Bakersfield, Jeff called Tony Walsh's wife and told her about this plan. Tony was enroute from San Diego, but had instructions to check in for messages. Also Jeff called Hal Tompkin's voicemail leaving a message about this change in plans.

We arrived in Furnace Creek at shortly before 4:00PM. After waiting for about 20 minutes for Tony to arrive, Jeff called and was informed that Tony's car had overheated and he had returned to San Diego. Then Jeff called Lisa to see if Hal had recovered his messages. There was no word from Hal.

Jeff and I now had a problem. If we drove up to Mahogany Flat to get word to Hal, we would arrive at around 6:00 PM, one hour after we said we would. We decided against this figuring that Hal would come looking for us and we would miss each other. Jeff and I decided to eat dinner at the 49'er Café and head out for Shorty's Well. I highly recommend the food at the 49'er Café. It is reasonably priced and is not greasy. We had fresh trout.

Spending the night at Shorty's Well was a great experience all by itself. It was dead quite at night. There was not a sound to be heard - not a coyote howling; not a bird chirping; not a creature stirring. This is one place where a person can still get away from everything. I slept outside, in a sleeping bag, and

on top of the Theremarest. It is amazing what can be seen when you sleep outside and stare up at the sky for several hours. You can see the constellations change position in the sky. You can see numerous and sometimes spectacular shooting stars. You can even see satellites!

At about 10:00 PM, the silence was broken by Craig's arrival. Jeff was glad that at least one other person on the trip had arrived. We all went to sleep a short time later.

Jeff and Craig began hiking at about 4:20 AM on Saturday morning. I slept in until 6:00 AM. I then packed up and using Craig's rental car drove up to Mahogany Flat. On the way, I stopped at the 49'er Café and ate breakfast.

I began hiking from Mahogany Flat at 10:35 AM. The elevation at the trailhead is 8133 ft and the summit of Telescope Peak is 11,049 ft. I was thinking that the relief of 2,916 ft is a little greater than Mission Peak's 2,400 ft. Since I can do Mission Peak in a little more than an hour, I figured that it would take about two hours to reach the summit. What I had forgotten to take into account was my lack of high altitude acclimatization. I had not been at high altitude since climbing Mt Whitney in August plus I had spent the previous night below sea level. My time to the summit was three hours and fifty minutes, arriving at 2:25PM.

On the way to the top, I met Hal coming down. He had spent the night at Mahogany Flat and then climbed the Telescope Peak by himself. I told him why we hadn't come to Mahogany Flat the previous afternoon. He had not checked his voicemail the previous day and decided to wait for us. He and I had a very pleasant conversation and he was glad to meet me. Although he was disappointed at not climbing from Death Valley, he was glad to find out what had happened.

Jeff Fisher has told me that he regrets the miscommunication with Hal. However, in this writer's opinion, people need to check their voice mail frequently when they go on trips and have plans to meet other people at a particular location. As this situation illustrated, plans can change at the last minute.

This hike was a great hike. It was a really good workout, but not as strenuous as some other peak climbs. The weather was perfect. The temperature was around 60 degrees most of the day and there was a very slight breeze. Visibility was a little hazy, but views of Death Valley were spectacular.

Close to the top, Craig and Jeff caught up and passed me reaching the summit at 2:15PM. They had been on the trail almost ten hours. Jeff and Craig had a good hike also. Jeff said that Craig is a strong hiker. On the summit we took the obligatory summit group shot and signed the register.

We left the summit at 2:47 PM. It took us two hours and fifteen minutes to descend to Mahogany Flats putting us back at the car just as it was getting dark. We then drove back down to Furnace Creek and ate dinner at the 49'er Café. After dinner, Craig drove us back out to Shorty's Well to recover Jeff's truck. Craig headed back to the Las Vegas Airport to return home. Jeff and I drove back to Furnace Creek where we both showered up at the ranch. We then started to drive home only to discover that we had a flat tire.

Getting the flat off and the spare on was a lot more work than we anticipated. We started to drive home at 11:00 PM, but Jeff was too tired to drive. We spent the night at a roadside campground near Stovepipe Wells.

On Sunday morning we started driving at about 6:30 AM and arrived home in mid afternoon concluding a great trip.

• Bob Bynum

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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.

**Deadline for submissions to the next Scree is Sunday 12/26/99. 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**