

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

Next General Meeting

Date: Wednesday, July 14

Time: 7:00 PM

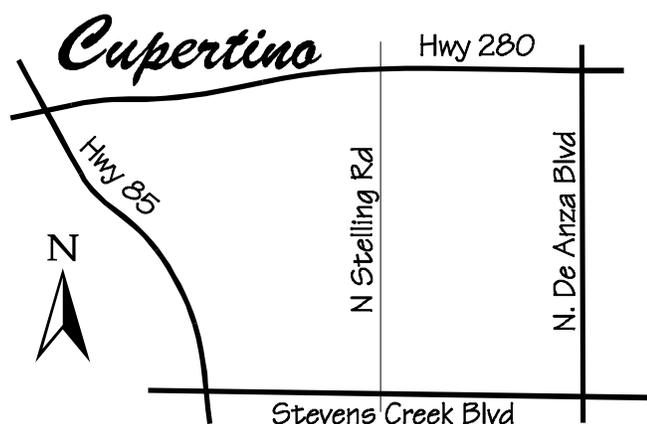
Program: BBQ and Swap Meet

Bring your own main course to BBQ and your own liquid refreshment (alcohol IS allowed) and a side dish to share for the potluck. A \$2.00 donation will cover the picnic area and charcoal.

Bring your summer trip reports and mark your extra equipment for the swap meet with your name and a price.

Location: DeAnza Memorial Park, Cupertino

Directions: Take 85 to Stevens Creek Blvd. Turn left. Turn left at Stelling Road. Turn left at the park entrance. Across from the baseball diamond.



Deadline for submissions to the next Scree is Sunday 7/25/99 Meetings are the second Tuesday of each month.

Attention! Update Draft Wilderness Plan

Attention all peak climbers! If you are concerned about the future of peak climbing in the Sierra, read this article carefully!

Last November, I announced in the Scree that the U. S Forest Service wanted public input on the draft wilderness plan for **Ansel Adams, John Muir, Dinkey Lakes, and Monarch Wilderness** areas. Based on input from over two thousand letters, the Forest Service will revise the **Draft Environmental Impact Statement** instead of finalizing their initial plan. Also they have been seeking further input at public meetings.

On Tuesday, June 15, Gretchen Luepke and I attended one of these meetings in Clovis (A three and a half-hour drive near Fresno) hosted by the **Inyo and Sierra National Forests**. The purpose of this meeting was to update interested parties on the progress of the above mentioned Revised Draft Environmental Impact Statement. An identical meeting occurred in Bishop two days later.

Three basic topics were discussed at the meeting:

First there was a project by Dr. Randy Gimblett entitled "**Evaluation of the Spatial Distribution of Recreation in the John Muir and Ansel Adams Wilderness Areas.**"

To help with the plan revision, the Inyo and Sierra National Forests have hired Dr. Randy Gimblett, of the School of Renewable Natural Resources of the University of Arizona in Tucson. Dr Gimblett will develop field methods for capturing baseline data on the distribution of recreation, through space and time in the John Muir and Ansel Adams Wildernesses. This data will provide information for the Forest Service to examine current use patterns and use levels. At the same time, the Forest Service will be assessing the need for commercial use in these wilderness areas.

At the meeting, Dr. Gimblett demonstrated the software that he will use in this project. With computer graphics, he can simulate in real time the movements of hikers, mountain bikers, and horse riders along a trail and predict how many encounters will occur based on the number of permits issued to each of these different users. Also he can simulate the effects of closing one or more trails. You can actually watch a map with little red, blue, and green dots moving along a trail in real time.

Data collection was the second topic discussed. This summer, the forest service will use a variety of methods to collect data on wilderness usage. These include wilderness trip reports, commercial use tally sheets, ranger diaries and reports, and quota and reservation records.

Commercial services was the third topic discussed. To assess the need for such services, four questions were asked at the meeting. We were given work sheets to provide answers.

- 1) What activities require specialized skills, equipment, or knowledge to safely and responsibly visit these wildernesses?
- 2) What activities will be enhanced by outfitters? How & why?
- 3) What types of commercial activities, services and opportunities are appropriate in these wildernesses? Where, when and why?
- 4) What do you see as the future mix of these activities & why?

Most of the people at the meeting were commercial horse pack outfitters. I think we were the only backpackers present. I mentioned to the forest service that it is difficult for people living in the Bay Area or the Los Angeles Area to attend a weeknight meeting in Clovis or Bishop. They said that they might schedule meetings in the Bay Area in the future. I will keep the PCS posted.

Our input to this process is critical! Please write to the forest service at the address below and give your input. Give your answers to the above four questions. Also when you climb this summer be sure to fill out a Wilderness Trip Report.

Sierra National Forest
1600 Toll House Road
Clovis, CA 93611
Attn: Mike LeFevre

For more detailed information go to
http://www.r5.pswfs.gov/invo/managmnt/wilderness/wpdeis_new_s.html

• *Bob Bynum, Scree Editor*

Wilderness First Aid

To help trip leaders and would-be leaders get the required First Aid certificate, the Chapter sponsors a First Aid class each quarter, based on a nationally recognized first aid text, but with added material and emphasis on wilderness situations with no phone to dial 911. The next First Aid classes will be Saturday, August 21 and Sunday, August 22 at the Peninsula Conservation Center in Palo Alto (from Bayshore/Hwy. 101 at San Antonio, turn toward the Bay; turn left at 1st stoplight, then right at Corporation Way to park behind PCC). Class is 8:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. (1 hour for your bag lunch) and is limited to 12 people. To sign up, send choice of day, and a check for \$38 with a stamped, self-addressed business-sized envelope to: Health Education Services, 200 Waverly, Menlo Park, CA 94025. Cancellations get partial refund if a substitute attends (you get to keep the Wilderness First Aid book). For more information, call 650-321-6500.

• *Marg Ottenberg*

Dogs Allowed in Almaden Quicksilver

The Santa Clara County Parks and Recreation Department is opening all trails in Almaden Quicksilver Park to dogs on leash and most trails to bikes and horses. Volunteers are needed to survey activities to count users in 1.5 hour shifts, 2 times a day, twice a week until July 19. After that the survey will be once a week. Contact the department at 408-358-3742 x131 if you are interested.

• *Marg Ottenberg*

Airport X-Rays

Editor's Note: I selected these comments from a thread on the PCS broadcast list because many of us travel on airplanes with camera gear and stoves.

• *Bob Bynum, Scree Editor*

A friend of mine practically runs the baggage system at Denver Int. Airport (supposedly the most modern in the US). I asked him about x-raying luggage and here's what he said:

They do not x-ray ALL luggage. Any thing you carry-on will be x-rayed by the normal X-ray machines at the security stations. As far as checked baggage, about half gets sent through a CTX5000. There are 2 belts. One goes thru the CTX; one doesn't, because the CTX is too slow to send everything thru.

It is pretty much determined by what position you check in at, as the belts are just right behind the agent and he just puts it on whichever belt is directly behind him. The CTX machine will x-ray them, (twice actually). The CTX machine does a fast pass that is harmless, however if it finds something of interest it will do a second high-energy pass on those objects. This has the added bonus of trashing unprocessed film. So make sure you carry film on.

• *Scott Burgess*

While the x-ray at Denver may be done on less than 100% of the checked bags, please note that in Frankfurt all bags are x-rayed at the time you give the bag to the agent just like a carry on. Then they x-ray the carry on bag at the gate also. This was the drill in Santiago also but the machine was behind the counter, out of sight. I guess this is why they ask you to check in so early.

I also had a body search in Frankfurt but they ignored the camera and batteries in my carry on and did not even look into the bag. The extra batteries in my checked duffel caused a complete exam of its contents right there on the floor of the lobby. What a big deal to repack. Several volunteers helped me get it all back together, as it was a full duffel with all my climbing stuff. Yes I made the flight but with small margin.

• *Paul Wilson*

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.

Kings Canyon Peakfest

Peaks: State Peak 12,620
Dougherty Peak, 12,244'
Marion Peak, 12,719'
Kennedy Mtn, 11,433'
Dates: July 3 thru July 10
Contact: Debbie Bulger, 831-457-1036,
dfbulger@cruzio.com

This week-long backpack will take us on a loop. The peaks are mostly second class. After ascending from the trailhead in Kings Canyon, we will proceed north in a counter-clockwise loop, both on and off trail, climbing as we go. If the terrain cooperates, we will cross from Volcanic Lakes to E. Kennedy Lake on our way to Kennedy Mountain.

Hardy, experienced backpackers welcome. Suitable for beginning climbers who are comfortable backpacking 10-15 miles/day with 4000-5000' elevation gain the first day.

Tune My Finger

Peaks: Tunemah Pk (11,894), Finger Pk (12,404)
Dates: July 23-26 Fri-Mon
Leader: Steve Eckert, eckert@climber.org
Co-Leader: Erik Siering

Pack in from Wishon Reservoir through Woodchuck Country to the Blue Canyon headwaters and bag these two fine (or at least remote) peaks. Good views of Black Divide and Enchanted Gorge should make up for the 20-mile pack in and lots of gain on the trail. Co-listed as an official trip with both the PCS (Loma Prieta Chapter) and the SPS (Angeles Chapter).

Middle Palisade

Peak: Middle Palisade, class 3
Dates: July 3-5 (Sat-Mon)
Map: Split Mt. 7.5 minute
Leader: Kelly Maas, (408) 279-2054 (h) or (408) 330-1717 (w) or maas@idt.com
Co-Leader: wanted

Middle Palisade is one of the Palisades, what more need be said? Three days allows plenty of time for this outing, which starts at Glacier Lodge on Big Pine Creek, high above the town of Big Pine. We will climb the easiest route, which is class 3. It will also involve traversing some snow on the Middle Palisade Glacier. Please note that the group size is very limited, so be sure to sign up early.

Mt. Bolton Brown

Peak: Mt. Bolton Brown, Class 2, 13,538'
Dates: August 1-3 (3 days)
Leader: Debbie Benham, h: 650/964-0558
benham4x@aol.com

After reading about Bolton's first ascents, and seeing Lucy Brown's footpath, my curiosity was peaked. This summit hides from viewing via Hwy 395 behind the magnificent eastern Sierra skyline. We'll see! Could be just a pile of old' scree. Trailhead is Birch Lake, out of McMurphy Meadows, off Glacier Lodge Road. Permit for 6. \$3 covers permit fee

Dragon Weekend

Peaks: Dragon Peak (12,955) Class 3 and Kearsarge Peak (12,598) Class 2
Dates: August 7-8 (Sat.-Sun.)
Map: Kearsarge Peak and Mt. Clarence King 7.5'
Leader: Bill Isherwood 925-254-0739 (h) 925-423-5058 (w), isherwood2@llnl.gov

We will meet Saturday morning at 9 AM at the trailhead for Golden Trout Lake on Onion Valley Road out of Independence. A 2000-ft. climb will bring us to a camp near one of the two unnamed lakes just north of Golden Trout Lake. For the ambitious, Kearsarge Peak may be climbed Saturday. Sunday, we will climb Dragon Peak from the col immediately south of the peak. Hike out Sunday afternoon. Send a \$10 deposit (call first) to secure your spot. Trip limited to 8.

Grand Canyon of The Tuolumne

Backpack: Grand Canyon of the Tuolumne, Class 1/2, Yosemite National Park
Dates: August 20-22 (3 days)
Leaders: Debbie Benham, (h) 650/964-0558, email: benham4x@aol.com
Bill Kirkpatrick, (w) 408/279-3450, wmkirk@earthlink.net

Join us for a 'reverse' peak trip through a pristine wilderness canyon in beautiful Yosemite National Park! We will be out three days, walking approximately 23 miles total with roughly 4-5000' elevation loss and gain. We'll start at White Wolf Campground and finish at Lumbert Dome in Tuolumne Meadows, a one-way jaunt up the canyon. \$10 deposit required on sign-up and fully refundable at the trailhead. Permit for 8. Co-listed with Backpacking Section/Loma Prieta Chapter.

Merced Peak

Peak: Merced Peak, Class 2, 11,726', Yosemite National Park
Dates: August 27-29 (3 days)
Leader(s): Debbie Benham, h: 650/964-0558, benham4x@aol.com
Anouchka Gaillard, h: 408/737-9770, anouchka@cup.hp.com

A long hike in to another classic of the Clark Range set in lovely Yosemite National Park! Approximately 16 miles (one way) to the summit with 4,000' gain/loss over three days. We'll climb the northeast ridge after leaving the Red Peak Pass Trail near Upper Ottoway Lake. Hearty and fit newcomers are welcome, and must be able to carry full pack a long way on trail! Deposit of \$10 required for sign-up which is refundable minus \$3, charge for permit. 10 on permit.

Mt. Langley

Peak: Mt. Langley (14,042), Class 1
Dates: August 28-29 (Sat.-Sun.)
Maps: Mt. Langley and Cirque Peak 7.5'
Leader: Bill Isherwood, 925-254-0739 (h) 925-423-5058 (w), isherwood2@llnl.gov

This is the southernmost 14,000-foot peak in the High Sierra. Clarence King and Paul Pinson climbed it in 1871, believing that they were making the first ascent of Mt. Whitney. They found a cairn with an arrow on the summit.

We will meet Saturday morning at the Cottonwood Lakes trailhead (driving instructions from Lone Pine are available) at 10 AM. We will camp at Long Lake (11,135) on Saturday and climb the South Slope to the summit via the New Army Pass trail on Sunday. Drive home Sunday night. Join us for a leisurely climb with time to enjoy the scenery. There is a \$10 sign-up fee, refundable at the trailhead, less the cost of the permit. Send check to Bill Isherwood, 37 La Encinal, and Orinda, CA 94563. Space is limited to 8.

Mt. Goddard

Peak: Mt Goddard, Class 2, 13,568'
Dates: September 3-6 (4 days)
Leader: Debbie Benham, h: 650/964-0558, benham4x@aol.com
Co-Leader: Nancy Fitzsimmons, h: 408/957-9683, pkclimber@aol.com

Yosemite: Petit, Piute, and Volunteer

Peaks: Petit, Piute, and Volunteer Class 2
Dates: Sep 4-6 (Sat-Mon) Labor Day weekend
Leader: Steve Eckert <eckert@climber.org

Annual Tuolumne Group Camp

Peaks: (Need volunteer to lead day trips)
Dates: September 18-19
Leader: Cecil Ann (408) 395-4525 cecilann@earthlink.net

Join us Friday night through Sunday for the annual PCS group camping trip.

Mt. Clark & Starr King

Date: Sept. 24-26

Peaks: Mt. Clark and Starr King

Contact: George Sinclair 650-941-2160; geosinc@aol.com

Description: One peak, and perhaps both will require the use of rope. Interested people should have some experience doing class 3 and know how to rappel.

Mt. Dubois

Peak: Mount Dubois, 13,559', Class 2

Dates: September 25-27, 1999

Map: Boundary Peak 7.5'

Leaders: Bill Kirkpatrick H (408) 293-2447

Wmkirk@earthlink.net

Ahmad Zandi H (408) 255-4233

Zandi@zandi.com

If you've wondered about the White Mountains, join us on this climb of the second-highest peak in the range.

Kern Peak

Peak: Kern Peak (11510) LIST FINISH!

Dates: Oct 2-3 Sat-Sun

Leader: Steve Eckert <eckert@climber.org>

Co-Leader: Erik Siering

Cherry Creek Canyon

Peak: None - Cherry Creek Canyon

Date: October 9-10

Leader: Kai Wiedman (650) 347-5234

Spanish Needle in the Haystack

April 25, 1999

The year is 1969. A climber from Ridgecrest teams up with a group of his friends and they try to climb Spanish Needle. Near the summit, upon discovering the need for a rope and having none, he passes up on the summit attempt. Since that abortive attempt, he has always wanted to bag this peak.

It is the 25th of April, 1999 and thirty years have gone by. The same climber from Ridgecrest teams up with a different group of friends to try his luck on the Spanish Needle once again.

This climber is Don Peterson and this group of friends includes Dee Booth, Scott Tillman and Arun Mahajan.

They ride in Don's 4WD on the jeep road that starts a few yards PRIOR to coming to the fork on the Canebrake Road whose left arm leads on to the Long Valley. After 1.8 miles, the jeep road is blocked off and they start walking on it as it gets faint in spots and eventually ends and there is a faint trail that starts to their right at this point which climbs steeply and soon drops them onto the PCT. They take a left (north) on the PCT and within half a mile are at a broad open saddle.

Faithfully following the description from Jenkins's excellent book and the couple of trip reports and trusting their compass skills they drop down on the east of the saddle and traverse south across the slopes strewn with loose boulders. This section is rather tedious as they head towards the most prominent of the summits that they see to their right. They climb up the slopes to

top out on the crest. They head towards the highest point by going up and then down over a series of humps. They find this to be easy class-3 and there is no snow.

Finally, they face the summit hump. On their left is the exposed slab mentioned in Jenkins. Scott traverses a snowfield and then climbs a few blocky ledges to the exposed slab. It is low angle but severely exposed and there is some snow on it and the snow melt has made it slick. He is concerned about the downclimbing on this slab. While he is on it, the others try out the narrow gully to the right of the slab. It seems to be class-4 at least but the rock is solid and there is lesser exposure so they all climb this gully instead. Everybody is comfortable in climbing this unroped, and then, from the top of this gully they traverse right and then up over a friction slab and then over and around some large boulders to the summit.

It has taken them 5 hours. They gaze over to the high Sierra to the north and the surprisingly snow covered Telescope Peak to their east.

The gully looks hard to down climb. Don has brought along a 7mm rope and Scott, who is an experienced rock climber, shows everybody the dulfersitz (ouch) and they rappel down thusly. The subsequent traverse back to the saddle seems to be more tedious than before, perhaps everybody is a little worn out. But even this is over and after 2.5 hours of having left the summit, they are back at the saddle and about an hour and half later, they are at the cars.

To the others it is yet another peak attained, but to Don, it is the fulfillment of a tryst made thirty years ago with the Spanish Needle and now, when he sees it from Ridgecrest, he will have no regrets.

• *Arun Mahajan*

As the Clouds Roll in Mount Silliman

May 1-2 1999 Web version of this report is at:
http://home.earthlink.net/~karpel/Silliman_99.html

We were supposed to climb Mt. Shasta that weekend, but got an unfavorable weather forecast, so we decided to climb Mt. Silliman instead. We thought Shasta, Silliman, what's the difference?

Reading through the many trip reports for Silliman and talking to people about it, it becomes clear that Silliman is not as easy as one would expect. Although, the statistics of 4,500 ft. and 10 mile round trip imply a relatively easy mountain that could be climbed as a day hike, in winter or early spring things can be quite different. The route is covered with snow that makes progress difficult. Worst, the weather pattern seem to be clear in the morning, but getting cloudy and stormy in the afternoon. Many trips to Silliman end with a statement such as: "We made it about 80% of the way to the summit, but alas we did not beat the clouds closing in on an otherwise perfect weather morning." (Rich Calliger)

Our plan was to make this into a 2-day trip, and attempt the summit early on Sunday before the clouds have a chance to play their dirty trick. We started Saturday morning under bright blue sky on the Twins Lake trail. The trail was free of snow until it bends north at the end of the long ascent. From there it was mostly firm snow 2-4 feet deep. The trail was marked by an

indentation in the snow, but we managed to lose it at one of the creek crossings. We left the main trail at Silliman Creek and followed the drainage high on the right bank. The use trail was not visible as was the main trail to Twin Lakes, and snowshoes were needed to avoid post-holing. We set up camp in a nice flat area on the north side of the creek just after it makes the sharp bend to the east.

The bright blue sky that greeted us when we started the hike quickly turned into a complete overcast. By 10 AM the clouds hovered at around 8,500 ft and would have made summiting impossible. This served as a warning for the following day, the summit day.

We finally got rolling at 6:30 on Sunday. The clouds were already forming on the west. We started climbing the steep slopes of the canyon heading to Silliman Lake, and so were the clouds. It was a race against the clouds, so we allowed ourselves only short breaks as we were climbing. After staying on the right, we crossed the creek on broad snow bridges well below the lake and continued on the left where there was an open couloir about 25% which made the climbing reasonable.

Once we reached the top of the couloir we could see the summit and continued on the left side of the bowl towards the tree area, which covers the southwest slopes of Silliman. We reached the summit a little after 9:00. The clouds, having lost the race, were getting closer by the minutes. We can see them as a wall rolling towards us. There was not much time for celebration. We took a few photos, signed the register, and headed down. By 9:45 the clouds reached the summit, and a few minutes later the summit was out of view.

A series of long glissades got us back to camp in about an hour, and we took our time heading out. I got back home by 9:00 PM, not a common thing on PCS trips.

Participants: Ahmad Zandi, Nancy Fitzsimmons, Scott Kreider, Stephan Meier, Stephane and Kirsten Mouradian, Ted Raczek, and scribe Ron Karpel.

• Ron Karpel

Tower Peak on Skis

May 15-17, 1999

The bear went over the mountain. By doing this, he showed us an excellent ski slope. His tracks were a pleasure to find; not so the snowmobile tracks we discovered in the same area, crossing from Hoover Wilderness into Yosemite National Park. But why were tracking wildlife along Yosemite's remote northern border?

It was mostly because of the way Tower Peak forms a striking profile from Highway 108. Many times while driving past Leavitt Meadows I had risked ending up in a ditch to get a good look at this mountain--distant, yet perfectly framed at the end of the Meadows, isolated and symmetrical--the only Crest peak visible from that viewpoint.

On a sunny Saturday Lin Murphy, John Langbein and I set off from Twin Lakes up Robinson Creek, skis on our backpacks for the first four miles. (At the trailhead, we had bumped into Jim Curl and some other Sierra Club climbers who were going up to climb the Doodad.) We passed Little Slide Canyon; its snowy slopes and jagged granite pinnacles said "come ski, come climb," but that was not the way to Tower Peak. We took the last turn in the valley up past Barney Lake instead. Before heading up I scoped out the high pass at the west end of Robinson valley. It had what looked like skiable snow: perhaps it would provide an

interesting shortcut on our return trip (Oh, what fools these mortals be).

We hit snow at about 8,000 feet but had to take our skis off again to get around the lake, which was beginning to thaw. At the head of the canyon, Crown Point, broad and majestic, dominated the view. The scenery was already grand; would Tower Peak be worth the extra miles? We passed a collection of backpacks beyond the lake. The owners were apparently out on a day trip. Despite the mid-day sun, the temperature was surprisingly chilly, and the snow was firm underneath, remaining frozen in shaded areas.

We skied up a narrow side canyon for a few miles. Abruptly it opened out into the broad frozen expanse of Peeler Lake. Here at 9600 feet we traveled back in time to mid-winter: arctic blasts of wind encouraged us to keep moving after we fetched water from a pool at the outlet. We traversed the immaculately white Kerrick Meadow, then slogged up our final pass in late afternoon, fatigue gnawing at our limbs. A cold wind blew at the top.

It was not a pleasant place to camp, so we skied down into the lovely valley at the base of Hawksbeak Peak. A strange melted out track went straight up a nearby slope. Snowmobiles? In Yosemite National Park?

The evening was a cold but windless. John's sweet-and-sour chicken and rice fortified us for the night. To pass the time, Lin and I discussed Wagner's Ring operas, which we are attending later this year. John endured this highbrow chatter stoically.

The next morning we slept in. It seemed to be a silent, consensual conspiracy among the three of us. My rationalization was that our bodies needed the extra hours after the long day of skiing--besides, we were within 4 miles of Tower.

When the sun hit the tent we finally stirred. Despite our late start, I nursed grandiose schemes of both climbing Tower and skiing all the way around it. We crossed a gentle pass south of Hawksbeak Peak into the Walker River drainage, skirting the north side of the Sierra Crest. Happily, the cold weather had given way to a mild spring day. As we descended, the soaring granite buttresses of Hawksbeak made us feel like Lilliputians. More curving tracks in the valley confirmed that snowmobile yahoos had been violating the wilderness.

Ahead, Tower Peak swung into view. We were pleased to see that a series of snow bowls would allow us to ski to the base of the steep granite for which it is named. En route to these bowls we crossed bear tracks descending in lazy arcs from the Sierra crest. This mountaineer had built-in crampons but I don't think he (she?) needed them. He had been smart enough to descend the slope when the snow was soft, plunge-stepping on all fours.

At the steepest part of our ascent we had to sidestep carefully to get our skins to grip. At last we pulled up onto the northwest ridge, with views down into Mary Lake and north to the distant green-brown swath of Leavitt Meadows. The ridge was gentle enough to ski up, but the snow was rock hard.

Ahead we saw the cleft in Tower's armor: a steep, recessed snow gully pocked with outcrops. If that snow were also rock hard, we would be in trouble, for we did not have crampons (or sharp claws). At least one member of our party expressed pessimism. I wanted a closer look. "Horsewhipped up another peak by Butch," was the tongue-in-cheek response.

The rocky intervening ridge was a fun scramble. Inevitably, though we had to test the 40-degree snow in the gully. No problem--it was easy to kick steps in it, and the occasional outcrops also afforded good hand and footholds. Soon we were

clambering up an airy tilted slab to the summit rocks. To the east, steep rock fell away to lower crags. To the south, long snow-covered canyons stretched down toward the direction of Hetch Hetchy Reservoir; one contained the slender snow-covered expanse of Tilden Lake.

After backing down the gully, we reclaimed our skis. It was 3:00, a bit late to continue our ski around Tower. After all, we had only done about one-third of the circuit. The good news was we looked forward to a 2000-foot ski descent on nice corn snow. At the jumping off point below the ridge the snow was still crusty, but soon we were plowing S-turns down the big bowl below. At the bottom, John and I skinned up the smaller slope that the bear had descended from the crest. That too was a fine run.

The next morning, I suggested we ski Hawksbeak Peak before heading home.

Its east-facing slopes, already softening in the morning sun, would ready to carve by the time we packed up camp. The snow cover at the top looked sparse, but as we approached I was delighted to see corridors of snow between the scrub pines leading nearly to the summit. A short scramble led to the top, and a nice cruising descent brought us back to camp in 15 minutes. Ah, wilderness. I convinced the others to try my "shortcut" back to Robinson valley. We descended easily to Buckeye Pass, then began a 2-mile traverse to the pass between Hunewill Peak and Cirque Mountain. This was a scenic route, but tedious, with lots of shallow gullies to contour around--probably more like 3 miles. In retrospect, a descent-ascent would have been more efficient than contouring. Moreover, the slope right before the pass became very steep--treacherous for traversing on skis. "I don't want to slide into a tree," John remarked as he packed his skis. He was right: kicking steps in this terrain was faster and more secure. Examining the map, I was sobered by the bunched up contour lines awaiting us on our descent--even steeper, I now realized than what we were now climbing. I began to feel I had made a big mistake: John had been rehabbing a broken hip for over a year and had expressly told me he wanted to avoid dangerous slopes ("you fall, you die" slopes as he called them).

But we had come too far to back off without checking it out. The only problem: we had to descend part-way down from the pass before we could check out the steep 400-foot section. It was 4:00.

With the tension mounting we skied down to the hanging valley. At the outlet we could see the blue waters of Twin Lakes at the end of the valley below, only about 4 miles away. We skied up to the big drop. Cliffs lay below us, but snowy ramps led to the right. We could see easier ground about 300 feet down. Could we find a way through? If we had to turn around here, the route out was 11 miles--requiring either a death march or another night out, without food.

Below a row of trees I saw a short, steep chute go through the cliffs. The runout looked reasonable. At 45 degrees, it was one of the steepest slopes I've ever skied--sideslipping that is. We also discovered an old set of steps kicked into the snow, which John used to descend. Was another bear showing us the way to go?

Relieved, we telemarked down the lower slopes, dodging islands of underbrush. Our luck held as a well-placed snowpatch allowed us to cross over the creek and access a long avalanche gully, a big ribbon of snow that deposited us to within a few hundred feet of Barney Lake's outlet. A few minutes of willow bashing brought us to the trail to Twin Lakes.

• *Butch Suits*

Icy Clearly Now The Rain Is Gone

A short film by Brian Wachter

May 29, 1999

The location:

Mt. Shasta's Bolam Ridge, Bolam Glacier, Hotlum-Bolam Ridge, and Hotlum Glacier

The cast:

George Van Gordon, Alex Keith, Bill Kirkpatrick, Arun Mahajan, Mike Rielly, David Shaw and Brian Wachter

The story:

It's Saturday morning, May 29. Shasta's bulk is shrouded in gray. Its namesake village begins to fill

with alpine aspirants, including our entire cast but for Alex and Arun. A light rain is falling.

George: "I don't like this weather. Let's do the West Face."

David: "Well, if we're only going to Horse Camp today, we certainly have plenty of time to wait it out."

The cast is milling about the premises of the local mountain retailer when Alex and Arun enter.

Alex: "If the weather doesn't get any better we won't be climbing any route, so we might as well go for the glacier."

The rest of the cast nods.

Cut to a flat, small pebble beach at the foot of the still-shrouded upper mass of Shasta. Low-lying hills, fields and pocket lakes are visible downhill.

Brian: "This place is awesome!"

The cast sets up tents, pausing every so often to look up quizzically at the cloud seemingly permanently planted upon Shasta.

Bill: "I struggled too much today getting up here. I'm gonna stay in camp tomorrow."

Cut to first light.

George: "Let's climb it!"

The cast slowly emerges from its tents, some at first testing the dawn by popping just a head out through a fly.

The full moon looms like a lantern over the glowing western cone of the now majestically naked volcano.

Slowly, the six remaining cast members straggle out of camp and up the snow ramp that feeds the neat row of morainal steppes beneath the mountain's Hotlum glacier. The distinguishing feature of the great north aspect of Shasta in this late spring incarnation is its lack of distinguishing features; its glaciers are smooth and snowy, its ridges low and round and its face uniformly higher in angle as it rises.

Thus, as our now-rope cast traverses beneath the Hotlum-Bolam ridge and above the lower bergschrund of the Bolam Glacier onto the glacier itself, the most promising line of ascent is elusive. Additionally, we can see by the way their boots remain on the surface of the snow with each step that the unsettled weather, while gone, has left a firm legacy.

Alex: "I'm not feeling very strong. I'm going down."

Now a single rope team of five, they keep traversing to the far side of the glacier and onto its western ridge. As it steepens, its icy surface forces their feet increasingly downward, which causes them to have to step sideways as they go up. Small rocks begin to pock the icy skin of the ridge.

Brian: "I don't like it up there...let's traverse over to the other ridge."

The cast begins, more slowly now at 13,000 feet, to move back across the face, with George and Mike out in front, climbing steadily. They thread upward between the rocks of the Hotlum-Bolam ridgeline, stopping to rest and regroup at the base of the mighty rock buttress guarding the summit ramparts at 13,600 feet.

George disappears around its corner to reconnoiter the final few hundred feet of the route, reappearing minutes later:

George: "It doesn't look good. There's another party up there belaying a guy up right now. It's icy."

The cast discusses the climactic scene. A final, fearless push? Or a gracious retreat? Unprepared for the final technical challenge of what has become an ice climb, they gingerly descend the hardened surface of the North side, moving first onto Hotlum's face, then back to the west. Cheap motels and in-room pizza--longed-for luxuries--await.

• *Brian Wachter*

Mt Starr King (9092 ft)

Sunday, June 13, 1999

On Sunday, 13th June 99, Scott Tillman and I, Arun Mahajan, went up Mt Starr King in Yosemite. This is a brief description of the conditions and the route we took.

It is straight forward hiking on trail from the Mono Meadows trailhead on the Glacier Point Road till the Illoutte Creek. The water in the creek is fast flowing and deep at places and it took us a long time to find a way across. A fallen tree about a quarter of a mile upstream served as a good bridge. We caught the trail after the stream crossing and left it after walking a mile, to go cross-country toward the three obvious domes that make up the Mt Starr King peak.

We crossed another trail and then a small stream and then headed up via brush and friction slabs to the notch between the right and the center domes. Once at the notch, we frictioned our way up to the top of the central dome. It is low angle and presented no problems. We then dropped into the notch between the true summit dome and the center dome and were confronting the southeast route mentioned in Secor and the other PCS trip reports.

We frictioned up an obvious groove in the rock and at the head of the groove, set up for climbing. Scott led, going left first, as if intending to go towards a chockstone that has a few slings around it, but then veered right on a crack (which has a rather old sling in it) to the point where the crack ended in a horn.

The point where the horn ended, proved to be a comfortable belay station and we could set up good anchors. The next pitch gave no problems either to Scott. It ends at a rock that has a few slings and a rappel ring. We got off the rope here and walked up to the summit. We were happy to note that we were the first party to sign in this year.

We had 2 ropes, a 50M and a 60M, but we found out to our concern that this was not sufficient, with a two-rope rappel, to reach the chockstone with the slings for the next rappel.

So we rappelled to the horn, which was our first belay point on the way up. The horn provided a good rappel point for the lower rappel back to the notch.

More friction down climbing and an exciting stream crossing got us to the Mono Meadows where we found a small bear with a light brown coat staring at us, with its head cocked on one side. It was just across the bog from us. After a few minutes of staring, it proceeded with its foraging.

But it was right on the trail, so we simply walked toward it.

This time it loped off into the woods, just as I was regretting having run out of film to take a quick picture.

No snow on the route at all. Texas or something similar would help in the stream wading. Various people have different opinions of the rating of the route. Scott Tillman felt that it was 5.5 or 5.6.

• *Arun Mahajan*

Unofficial 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.

Broad Peak Expedition!

Peak: Broad Peak 26,400 ft
Dates: June-July 1999
Contact: Tom Masterson
masterst@ucsu.colorado.edu
phone, fax (303) 499-6363
address: 250 31st Street, Boulder, Colorado
U.S.A. 80303

We are a Boulder based group seeking to add 3-4 more members to our June-July 1999 expedition to attempt the standard route on Broad Peak.

This is a non-commercial, non-guided, non-profit expedition! Price-wise, it is a great deal: Land costs should be about \$3800, plus airfare of 1200-1500. We want to put together a Colorado-based team, so that we can climb together this winter & spring, get to know each other and get used to climbing with each other. Experience climbing over 20,000 ft very helpful. For more information call Tom Masterson at 303 499-6363 or Mike Marsh at 303 499 3395.

Arrow Peak

Peak: Arrow Peak, Northeast Ridge, Class 3
Dates: July 3-5
Contacts: Kai Wiedman (650)347-5234.
Cecil Ann, cecilann@earthlink.net

John Moynier says Arrow Peak is a beautiful, symmetrical mountain when viewed from nearby Bench Lake. Kelly Mass calls it the best 3rd class climb he has done in the Sierra. The Northeast Ridge is an ever narrowing, hideously exposed, knife-edge. We will go light and fast as we leave the desert floor to climb to Taboose Pass with its breathtaking views. From here, our adventure takes us to our camp at Bench Lake with its classic view of Arrow Peak.

Castle Mountain, Colorado

Peak: Castle Mountain, 14,265
Dates: July 3-5 (Sat-Mon)
Contact: Bill Isherwood, 925-254-0739 (h)925-423-5058 (w)isherwood2@llnl.gov

This is a class 2 climb up one of Colorado's beautiful 14'ers. The plan would be to fly to Denver Friday evening, drive to the base of the climb Saturday, make the climb on Sunday and stay overnight in the Aspen area, returning to the Denver airport on Monday for return home. Contact leader for coordination of travel plans.

Tower Peak

Peaks: Tower Peak (Class 3)
Dates: July 3 thru 5 Sat thru Mon (3 days)
Maps: Tower Peak & Pickel Meadow 7.5'
Contact: Charles Schafer (408) 324-6003 (w)
cgschafer@lucent.com

This trip will expose us to some new and different views of the area just north of Yosemite. Tower Peak is said to be the northernmost Sentinel of the High Sierra, in that the character of the range changes at about this point. It is the tallest peak in the neighborhood, so the views from the summit should be great. It is also rated as one of the Sierra classics, so it should be a very satisfying, although not too difficult, climb. It is a long hike to get to it (about 15 miles), which is why the trip is scheduled for three days.

This should be a great trip, but you'll need a bit of class 3 climbing experience to join us. Ice axe may be required.

Taboose: Climb-O-Rama '99

Peaks: Wynne, Pinchot, Pyramid, Striped, Goodale, Cardinal, Ruskin, Pinchot, Marion, State, Prater, and Observation
Dates: July 3-11 (Sat-Sun, July 4th week)
Contacts: Steve Eckert, eckert@climber.org
Bob Suzuki, bobszk@BIGFOOT.COM

We're planning another Climb-O-Rama for peakbaggers who just can't live with only one peak per day. This year's trip features fewer campsites (we hope to spend two nights in the same place several times) and more seldom visited peaks (probably including some first ascents of the year) and you get at least one peak every day, but the first one.

It's a 9 day trip but all the peaks except Observation fit into an 8 day schedule (spare day for weather!) with no day over 12 miles and only one day over 5000'. You can skip a peak now and then to relax, or skip entire days by leaving the group and joining us later. Send \$10 (payable to Steve Eckert and refunded less permit fees if you show up at the trailhead) with any requests you have for peaks we forgot (be prepared to lead or solo). Tell us as much as you can about your skill and conditioning. We'll collect names and decide in a month or so about the exact schedule and trip roster. In addition, we'll need a signed copy of this liability waiver: <http://www.climber.org/eckert/LiabilityWaiver.pdf>

Editor's Note: This trip is full. However, a waiting list is being kept so send in your name anyway.

Middle Palisade

Peak: Middle Palisade (14,040 feet)
Dates: July 16 - 18, (Friday - Sunday)
Contact: Sam Wilkie, 650-941-1794
sam.wilkie@intel.com

We will hike in to the Middle Palisade glacier area on Friday. On Saturday, we will take the NorthEast face, a class 3 route, to the summit.

This is not a technical route, but does involve some snow travel and requires climbers to be in good physical condition.

Conness, Dana, & Gibbs

Peaks: Conness, Dana, Gibbs
Date: July 17, 18
Contact: Tony Cruz 408.731.1915

These three peaks are in the vicinity of Tioga Pass. Conness is class 3, the others class 2. We will day hike Conness on Sat and Dana Gibbs on Sunday.

Mt Sill

Peak: Mt Sill 14,162' Class 3,
Map, USGS Mt Goddard 15
Dates: July 17, 18, 19, 1999
Contact: Bill Kirkpatrick, wmkirk@earthlink.net (408)
279-3450. H(408)
293-2447

Co-contact: Ahmad Zandi, ahmad@zandi.com (408) 616-5783 H (408) 255-4233

Secor says that Mt Sill ".has the best view from any summit in the Sierra." We will climb from the southwest ridge. Leaving from South Lake, we will backpack about 10 miles over Bishop Pass and Thunderbolt Pass to camp in the Palisade Basin. To gain the summit we will have to cross difficult terrain and climb about 4,000 feet. Use of ice axes and crampons may be required. This trip will be a lot of grunt work, but worth the effort. Permit for six.

Ragged & Conness

Peak: Ragged Peak (10,912'), Mt. Conness (12,590')
Map: Tuolumne Meadows 15' topo, Class: 2-3
Dates: July 24-25 (Sat-Sun)
Contact: Bob Suzuki, w: 510-657-7555 >8pm: 408-259-0772; bobszk@bigfoot.com
Bonnie Ruesch w: 408-795-1393 h: 408-997-8323, BonnitaR@aol.com

Enjoy a moderate backpack hike from Tuolumne Meadows to our basecamp at lower Young Lake; we'll bag Ragged Peak on the way in. Sunday morning's ascent will reward us with scenic vistas from the summit of Mt Conness. Expect mosquitoes and bears. Ice axe maybe useful.

Note: Trip is full, but we will maintain a wait list.

Lucky Sevens: Mt. Ritter Annual Pilgrimage

Peaks: Mt. Ritter (13,150'), Banner Peak (12,900')
Dates: July 26-31, 1999
Contact: Alan Ritter
jar@storz.com
(314) 225-7600, x5362

(7:30 a.m. 5:30 p.m. CST

Reference: <http://www.climber.org/pcs/Feature/Ritter1998/>

Not being one to give up easily, I will make a lucky seventh attempt at my namesake peak this summer. Trailhead date is Monday, 26 July, at Agnew Meadows. We will hike in via the Shadow Creek trail and camp near/above Ediza Lake (9,200'). From there, the climb will follow the same route as last year (sans route-finding error!), via the Southeast Glacier and on to the summit of Ritter. Summit day will involve about 3,500' of gain, almost all class 2, perhaps a little low class 3 snow, depending on conditions. Ice axe and crampons will be required. Time, weather, and energy permitting, we will attempt neighboring Banner Peak (12,900') one of the following days. Plan to return to Mammoth on Friday, 30 July or Saturday, 31 July.

Palisade Crest

Peak: Palisade Crest 13520', Class 4
Dates: July 30- Aug 1
Contact: Peter Maxwell (408) 737 9770

We'll start off hiking the South Fork of Big Pine Creek, heading to camp at Elinore Lake. The route up the peak will be the Northwest Ridge, which leads off from Scimitar Pass. This is a class 4 peak for experienced climbers only. The trip is private and participants should be known to the organizer, or be able to be vouched for by someone known to the organizer.

Bear Creek Spire

Peak: Bear Creek Spire (13,713 ft.), Northeast Ridge, Class 4
Dates: Sat. July 31 - Sun. Aug. 1
Maps: Mt. Morgan, Mt. Abbott, Mt. Hilgard
Contacts: Bob Suzuki, bobszk@bigfoot.com, W 408-259-0772, H 510-657-7555,
Jim Ramaker, ramaker@vnet.ibm.com, W 408463-4873, H 408-224-8553

People who climb this route rave about the exhilarating climbing, great rock, and spectacular setting. We have room for one or two more rope teams -- let us know if you're interested.

Colby Pass Cleanout

Peaks: Glacier Ridge (12416) Kern Point (12789)
Picket Guard (12302) Whaleback (11726)
Dates: July 30 - August 3 (Sat-Tue)
Contact: Steve Eckert, eckert@climber.org

I'll be joining RJ Secor for part of his CMC trip, entering on my own permit a week after he starts and exiting before he does. Expect some high mileage days, and a bit of class 4 near the summit of Glacier Ridge. Whaleback is class 3, the others are class 2 with trail approaches to all of them. Since we're joining another group mid-trip, schedules may change and everyone should be comfortable without a formal leader.

McDuffie, Black Giant, Charybdis, Fiske, etc.

Peaks: McDuffie, Black Giant, Charybdis, Fiske, Huxley, etc. (Class 3)
Dates: August 7 thru 15 Sat thru Sun (9 days)
Maps: North Palisade, Mt. Thompson & Mt. Goddard 7.5'
Contact: Charles Schafer (408) 324-6003 (w) cgschafer@lucent.com
Co-Contact: Bob Suzuki(510) 657-7555 (w) bobszk@bigfoot .com

If you've ever climbed to the top of Bishop Pass, looked off into the interior of the Sierra, and thought that those magnificent peaks on the horizon looked awfully appealing; then this trip is for you. . We will hike in over Echo Col on Saturday and set up camp near Helen Lake (at Muir Pass).

Secor says McDuffie, Black Giant & Charybdis are easily day hiked from there, so we want to give them a try. There are also a number of other peaks in that area that are worth climbing, and between Bob and I we'll go after most of them. Towards the end of the trip we will move south and climb Wheel, and perhaps others in that neighborhood. Saturday and Sunday we will hike out over Bishop Pass.

This should be a lot of fun, but it is a pretty ambitious trip so we are looking for experienced class 3 climbers to join us. Ice axes and possibly crampons will be required.

School's Out

Peaks: Recess, Gabb, and Hilgard
Dates: Aug 13-16 (Fri-Mon)
Contact: Steve Eckert, eckert@climber.org

A somewhat mellow west-side trip starting near Lake Edison. The permit is full, but there is a short wait list if you want to get in line. You could also get another permit and join us!

Agassiz & Winchell

Peaks: Agassiz (13,893'), Winchell (13,775') class 2,3
Maps: Big Pine, Mt Goddard 15' topo
Dates: August 28-29 (Sat-Sun)
Contact: Bob Suzuki, w: 510-657-7555, >8pm: 408-259-0772, bobszk@bigfoot.com
Nancy Fitzsimmons, w: 408-764-1761, h: 408-957-9683, Pkclimber@aol.com

Last fall our attempt to climb these 2 magnificent peaks in the Palisades never got beyond Sam Mack Meadow. Constant snow almost from the trailhead encouraged us to save these high peaks for another weekend. We'll try again this August.

A fast hike in to basecamp will be followed by an assault on Agassiz via the class 2 south ridge. Sunday won't be easier. We'll enjoy the classic east arete of Winchell, then backpack out to the cars for a late return to the BA, hopefully, with fond memories of two successful climbs.

Clarence King & Gardiner

Peaks: Clarence King and Gardiner.
Dates: Sept 3-6
Contact: Rick Booth at 408-354-7291 or rick_booth@worldnet.att.net
Dee Booth, rdbooth@worldnet.att.net

Pack in from Onion Valley over Kearsarge Pass Estimated distance is 10 miles.

Requirements: Both peaks require rope and modest rock climbing skills. You should know my wife or me or know someone who knows us. This is a private trip.

Capitol Peak, Colorado

Peak: Capitol Peak, Colorado (14,130'), Class 3-4
Dates: Sept 4-6 (Sat-Mon)
Contact: Bill Isherwood, 925-254-0739 (h)925-423-5058 (w)isherwood2@llnl.gov

Exposed knife-edge ridge. Roped climbing experience required.

Needsaw, Hamtooth

Peaks: Needham (12467), Sawtooth (12343) class 2
Dates: Sep 18-19 (Sat-Sun)
Contact: Steve Eckert <eckert@climber.org>

Nepal October 1999

Peak: Chulu West, 20,500Ft
Date: October 1999
Contact: Warren Storkman
Phone 650-493-8959
dstorkman@AOL.com

The Coming Millennium Celebration

Peak: Kilimanjaro 19,340 Uhuru Peak.
Date: Jan 12, 2000
Contact: Warren Storkman

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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 7/25/99. Meetings are the second Tuesday of each month.



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