



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

## Next General Meeting

**Date:** Tuesday, December 12  
**Time:** 7:00 PM  
**Program:** Holiday Party and Slide Show

Bring your own slides for a "slide medley". Limit about one dozen slides per person. 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: Snacks, Appetizers, Salads
- G-L: Desserts
- M-R: Drinks
- S-Z: Main Course

NOTE: Names have been re-arranged for 2000 to avoid picking on the same people! Bring your own utensils and drinking glasses/cups.

**Location** Intuit Café, Building 1  
 2535 Garcia Avenue  
 Mountain View

**Directions:** From the South: Exit 101 at Amphitheater Pkwy/ N. Rengstorff Ave. Turn Right on Amphitheater Pkwy. Go left on Garcia. Follow Garcia to Bldg. 1 (left side).

From North-101: Exit 101 at Amphitheater Pkwy/ N. Rengstorff Ave. Right on Amphitheater Pkwy. Go left on Garcia Ave. Follow Garcia to Bldg 1 (left side)

Deadline for submissions to the next Scree is Sunday 12/24/2000 Meetings are the 2nd Tuesday of each month.

## New PCS Officers

The PCS held its annual election on Tuesday, November 14. The new PCS officers are:

PCS Chair: Dee Booth  
 PCS Vice Chair/Scheduler: Nancy Fitzsimmons  
 PCS Treasurer/Secretary: Scott Kreider

•Dee Booth, PCS Chair

## Special Thanks

Thanks to the following people for helping out over the last year:

Special thanks for helping without being asked: **Dee Booth, Nancy Fitzsimmons, Ron Karpel, Sarah Bousfield** and **Arun Mahajan**.

Thanks to **Dee Booth** and **Bill Kirkpatrick** for their efforts as Vice Chair and Treasurer.

Thanks to the following committee volunteers: **Steve Eckert**, PubCommChair; **Aaron Schuman**, Webmaster; **Ron Karpel**, Listmaster; **Bob Bynum**, Scree Editor; **Paul Vlasveld**, Mailings; **Kelly Maas**, Mountaineering Committee Chair; **Bob Suzuki**, MC; **Charles Schaefer**, MC; **Arun Mahajan**, Election Committee Chair; **Debbie Benham**, EC; **Bob Suzuki**, EC.

In addition, several committees were appointed at the section and chapter level that involved PCS members. Thanks to **Bob Bynum** and **Charles Schaefer** for work on the Chapter level investigations of alleged "PCS list violations", **Jim Ramaker**, **Mike McDermitt**, and **Aaron Schuman** for volunteering for a committee to evaluate a harassment complaint.

The Bylaws Rewrite Committee consists of **Dan Tischler**, **Arun Mahajan**, **Ron Karpel**, **Steve Eckert**, **George Van Gordon**, **Kelly Maas**, **Dot Reilly**, **Dee Booth**, **Bob Bynum**, and **Rick Booth**.

Thanks to the following for putting together slide shows which are a big part of our regular meetings: **Jim Curl**, **Kelly Maas** and **Landa Robillard**, **Ron Karpel**, **Charles Schaefer** (twice!), **Dana Isherwood**, **Maxym Runov**, **Bruce Bousfield**, and **Joe Budman**.

Thanks to **Judy Kaufman** at the PCC and **Western Mountaineering** for meeting sites.

The goal for the year was to expand the interests of the PCS out of the "class 3" window. Thanks to **Ron Karpel**, **Bob Suzuki**, **Kelly Mass**, and **Charles Schaefer** for the Pinnacles climbing clinic. Thanks to Kelly and the MC for the leadership training hike. Both these efforts were intended to expand the mountaineering skill set into the technical area and to encourage and educate new leaders.

• *Rick Booth*

## Scree Input Wanted

The Scree is your newsletter. You, the PCS member, determine its content. In the past I have used your trip reports and trip

announcements as material for this newsletter. Also I have summarized gear discussions from email broadcast lists.

We need to have those of you who are leaders lead more official PCS trips. Also we need more of you to become leaders.

If there is anything that any of you want in the Scree, please send it to me or give me your suggestions at the next meeting.

• *Bob Bynum, Scree Editor*

## Advance Trip List

This is the list of trips planned for Spring and Summer. Please do not contact the leaders until the trips are announced in the "Scree" or on the broadcast list.

The trips listed on this page are not officially sponsored Sierra Club trips until they are approved by the PCS trip scheduler and published in Scree. Trips that are not officially sponsored are private trips, and are not protected by the Sierra Club's insurer.

• *Dee Booth*

<b>DECEMBER</b>		
2-3	Lee Vining Canyon	Ron Karpel
16-17	Mt. Lassen	Maxym Ruynov
<b>JANUARY</b>		
13-14	Pyramid Peak	Palmer Dyal
14	Junipero Serra	Ron Karpel Arun Mahajan
<b>FEBRUARY</b>		
2-5	Koip Peak	Aaron Schuman
2-5	Ouray, CO Ice Climbing	Ron Karpel
27	Snow Camping Seminar	Chris Macintosh, Kelly Maas, Charles Schafer
<b>MARCH</b>		
1	Snow Camping Seminar	Chris Macintosh, Kelly Maas, Charles Schafer, Karen Davis, John Langbein
6	Snow Camping Seminar	Chris Macintosh, Kelly Maas, Charles Schafer, Karen Davis, John Langbein
TBD	Snow Camping Seminar	Chris Macintosh, Kelly Maas, Charles Schafer, Karen Davis, John Langbein
11	Mt. Sizer	Nancy Fitzsimmons
18	Round Top	George Van Gordon, Arun Mahajan

## Annual Snow Camping Seminar

**Class Dates:** Tuesday, February 27, 2001  
Thursday, March 1, 2001  
Tuesday, March 6, 2001.

**Field Trip:** mid-March (exact weekend TBD)

**Contact:** Chris MacIntosh,  
cmaci@atglobal.net,  
650-325-7841, or  
Tom Wolf, twolf@snaptrack.com  
650-961-2682

Annual Snow Camping Seminar will be held later than usual.

This course prepares you for snow camping and gives tips for day skiers or snowshoers caught out overnight. Participants must already be experienced summer backpackers since this course doesn't teach basic backpacking.

Sign up details and form will appear in the February 2001 Loma Prietan.

## PCS Trips

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

**NO FUTURE TRIPS HAVE BEEN LISTED!**

## PCS Committees

The committee chairs for this term are **Kelly Maas**, Mountaineering Committee and **Rick Booth**, Publicity Committee. Thanks to Kelly for continuing as Mountaineering Committee chair and for Rick in taking on the new role as Publicity Chair.

I would also like to thank Steve Eckert for his years of service as publicity chair. The PCS has evolved under his stewardship and I am grateful for his hard work.

• *Dee Booth, PCS Chair*

## 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.

### Christmas in Death Valley

**Peaks:** Opal Mt, Kingston, Brown, Smith, Pahrump, Red Mountain

**Date:** Dec 24-27 or whenever

**Contact:** Debbie Bulger, 831-457-1036

We're doing rock hounding and geology as well as climbing. We Start Dec. 24 by driving to Opal Mt. near Hinckley, then on to Kingston which we plan to climb Dec 26 (possibly with snowshoes).

After a soak at Tecopa hot springs we will go on (4-wheel drive needed) to do Brown, Smith, then go on a geology hike, and later Pahrump.

Possibly Red Mountain on the way home.

As always we remain flexible and adjust to weather, etc.

## Argentina - January 2001

Peaks: A Seven Summit Mountain  
Aconcaqua 6959 m  
Contact: Warren Storkman, 650-493-895

## Denali

Peak: Denali, 20,320 ft.  
Date: May-June 2001  
Contact: Tim Hult 408-970-0760, Timdhult@aol.com

Looking for qualified partners for this major, no nonsense peak. Must have extensive experience in the following: high altitude climbing (18,000 ft +), excellent winter camping skills and equipment, proven ability to get along with partners on a multi-week trip. Ice climbing and crevasse rescue will be taught if required. Prefer those with the ability to ski or willingness to learn how to ski with a pack on - need NOT be an expert! Serious inquires only.

## Mt Sinai and Egypt High Point

April 10, 2000

One of the goals of our (Peg Davis and me) three week trip to Egypt was to get to the Sinai mountain area, do some hiking there, and climb the Egypt highpoint if possible. The rest of the trip was mainly as tourists-budgettravelers. We were not on a commercial tour; we used Lonely Planet's Egypt guide religiously. So I'll give a brief summary of things we did before and after, detail the mountain part, and some time later hopefully write (I or Peg) a more detailed account of the whole trip. We also took a lot of photos, for a slide show in the future.

Starting out in Cairo, we spent a day at the Egyptian museum. Crowded, as much of Egypt is, but there are many thousands of antiquities, including the King Tut treasures -- the museum is very worthwhile. Also toured monuments and mosques and walked through a lot of the hustling, bustling, crowded and smoggy city. Next we spent a couple days at the pyramids, on the outskirts of Cairo. Best spot there - the tomb chamber inside Cheops Pyramid. The pyramid is 4500years old and made of about 2 million 2-ton blocks. We migrated on south to Luxor on the train, watching 600 km of Nile Valley scenery from the window. Then a couple days at Luxor and Valley of the Kings area. Got some exercise pending a full day walking between the tombs and monuments, rather than using a taxi or tour bus as the masses of tour groups did. Amazing full-color art on the walls inside the tombs. Then south on the train again to Aswan for more temples and ruins. We next joined nine other travelers on a felucca(traditional sailboat) cruise down the Nile. Very relaxing; although it was as low and hot float all the second day with no breeze. More temples at Kom Ombo and Edfu then a minibus ride to Luxor again. A five-hour ride (\$5 for a luxurybus) put us on the coast at Hurgada which is an overdeveloped beach resort area. Next a fast ferry ride across a rough Red Sea to Sharm-el-Sheik at the southern tip of the Sinai Peninsula. After that a bus ride up the Gulf of Aqaba coast a couple hours to Dahab, which is a very nice Red Sea diving and resort town. Here we had a new room for \$12 which was 50 feet from the water, ate in lounge chairs on the sea front, and snorkeled at the reef 100' from shore. Beautiful and amazing underwater -- coral and fish every color of the rainbow.

Tours to Mt Sinai are organized at Dahab; so I asked a little; bought a decent map, and a guided trip was arranged for us to go up Gebel Katarina which is Egypt's high point at 2642 m or about 8700 feet. Gebel Musa, (Mt Moses) which the world considers to be Mt Sinai from description in the Bible (nobody knows for sure) is the mountaintop that many people (pilgrims, tourists, Egyptians, and hikers) ascend every day and night. It is 2285 m or about 7500 feet

altitude. The star attraction for them is to see the sunrise or sunset from the top. So we took a minivan filled with other travelers and arrived in the St. Katerina (or El Malga) mountain town area at 1 AM after a two hour ride. The others were left at the trailhead start point for their hike to see the sunrise from the summit. We were dropped off at Sheik Musa's office/house. He is a youngish guy who is supposedly the only guide/organizer/official for all treks and hikes in the area. I tried to get the best information I could about hiking there and permits, but who knows what the real regulations are. Everything in Egypt is negotiable. Anyway, "Sheik Moses" has a lucrative monopoly on organized trekking there. We stayed in his dorm used for trekking groups, nice because hotels there are all the expensive tour group motel type. After a few hours sleep we got up, paid our fee and surrendered our passports to Sheik Musa, and were introduced to our guide. The cost was 150 Egyptian pounds (LE), or about 45 US\$ for the day of guiding the two of us. Probably too much considering that is a few weeks income for much of the Egyptian population. But there were two middlemen involved and I didn't feel in a bargaining mood because I had very little good information about the infrequently climbed highpoint.

In Dahab I also had been told that the highpoint was a 12 hour trip and there was rough rock to negotiate. All part of the orchestration to claim the maximum tourist dollars, but such happens frequently in Egypt. And they probably did not have a lot of confidence in the ability of a white-bearded American. When I examined the map the peak appeared to be about 1000 m gain and around 8 km one way. That would normally be only a few hours round trip for a Sierra peakbagger.

We loaded bottled water and lunch in our packs and started at 6 AM, going through the uncrowded town and past its goats, donkeys, camels, and some irrigated tiny orchard trees. It was nice to see some trees and even a little water in the canyon we then followed; most of Egypt is barren. Away from the Nile at Luxor and Aswan there are zero plants; rainfall a tenth of an inch per year or less there. In the canyon we hiked up - Wadi El Arbain - there was an interesting grove of gnarled ancient olive trees encircled by an old, old, wall to keep goats and other animals out. Our guide was fit and knew the route. After 3 km we started up switchbacks to another canyon (Wadi Shagg Musa) and onto a ridge toward the top. We could see Mt. Moses on the opposite side of the first canyon with the trees. There were some green bushes along the trail and gravelly mountainside; occasionally it even snows in the area.

Three hikers including a nun in jogging shoes caught up to us from behind and we found out they were from Poland, and they had hiked over after going up Gebel Musa. Thus we could have done our peak without guide and nobody would have cared. But I didn't know at the time. So we continued up the switchbacks and passed the tired Poles. The rock seemed to be a somewhat crumbly granite; little weathering with the sparse precipitation there. Ahead and above we saw the white walls of a small monastery or chapel we were told is on top. At a saddle along the way we took a rest; the guide had a smoke. He could understand English, but he was very quiet.

Eventually we got to a point 50 meters or so below the monastery, and he indicated he would stay and we could go up the last bit. The monastery on top was locked. We could see lots of barren mountains in the view from the top. The problem was there was another peak, with a small antenna only about 500 m south of the one we were on and it was certainly higher than us - by about 20m-30 m. The antenna with solar cells looked active and maintained. We saw various wire and debris but no closed fence. There was actually a dirt road to its summit; the map did show a track. We had read that the monastery was atop G. Katerina, the high point and shown so on the map. So why was the high point over there? I was ready to walk over there, but we decided to confront our guide that we understood we had paid to take us up the high point of Egypt.

We went back to him and asked why he didn't take us over there. His sketchy answers were full of "unh unh" and "bad" and I continued to press him for the reason. I even offered him an extra 10 LE to take us but he didn't budge. He then indicated bombs and not allowable to go (Egyptians don't like say no). We asked if he had been up there before and he said yes. So by my peak bagger mentality, I was ticked off and felt wronged by not being told that it was not allowable for us to go on top the high point of Egypt. Then I decided to give my fuming and sulking a little time and thought while having lunch. It seemed he couldn't see us, and that he would still be waiting while we walked over there anyway on our own, a 10 minute hike. So we started walking, but noticed other metal debris and even maybe a piece of an airplane. And barbed wires thrown around - the concertina type. But when I saw shell casings we developed a uncomfortable feeling that we were walking on no mans land. I was not peak crazed or enough of a mountain purist to continue against this risk.

So, we turned around and agreed with him that he was right, and that we did not want to get blown up or go into a forbidden zone. It had been a war zone; a strategic location previously, but the monastery and trail area was apparently not involved and spared. And there had been a story about some hikers getting blown up by buried explosives. With the army presence and many tourist police at all the main attractions, Egypt is trying its best to prevent terrorist attacks and protect visitors. We went to the highest accessible point in Egypt, anyway. After 1 1/2 hours on top, the hike back was easy downhill, and we got back to Sheik Musa to pick up our passports at about 1:30. It felt so nice in the mountain area because it was not hot or smoky. The temperature was just right; 50's at night and 70's day.

In fact, we felt so good and eager for hiking we decided to do G. Musa too that day. We walked through the town and down the highway the two miles to the St. Katherines Monastery, past a graveyard and various construction. Egypt is building a lot of infrastructure - roads, utilities, bridges. Also though, various projects seem to be just forgotten; money ran out or some lawsuit came about. and sit unfinished. We passed a graveyard and continued past the medieval fortress walls of the monastery. The monastery is about 1000 years old and only about 20 monks live there. It is open to the public only in the morning, so we weren't able to go in. We started up the 5 km, 650 m gain climb at about 3 PM. Not many people were around at the bottom; the camels and their drivers were taking naps. After being refused to patronize their services, some drivers with camel follow groups up the mountain anyway. I wasn't sure whether to consider them like vultures in wait for a straggler or protectors for wasted tourists.

Anyway, this mountain, with a trail well worn into the rock had lots of people, including tea shops all the way to the top. The trail is gradual at first and steepens up to a saddle where we could see below a Bedouin encampment. The guides and camel drivers here were Bedouins, many with the characteristic headdress. There were bright colored tents apparently put up for summer quarters. The trail traversed under a cliff to another saddle where about four ancient cypresses, tall and narrow, grow. There is a camping area here for backpackers. Steep rocky stairs the last 300'. The view from the top was good. Lots of mountains around. A locked chapel and various tea shops on top. Little flat area. Most people stay part of the night to see the sunset or sunrise; it is a religious experience. We wanted to get back to town before dark. Lots of people -- about 200 people near the top as we went down. We asked and found the 3000? step staircase and took it. It was built by a monk centuries ago as penance, the story goes. We didn't notice its location while going up; it is hidden in a steep gully. Only an hour back down for us and we walked back to the village as it got dark. Tired after 16 miles and 5000' gain, we bought and ate a meal and went to bed for an early start for the bus to Cairo in the morning.

Our remaining two days in Cairo we spent seeing more of the tiny alleys with little shops that are the mainstay of the people's economy. Like a worker beating metal from a forge into tools. Peg and I spent time marveling and bargaining for souvenirs at the Khan el-Khalily bazaar. Went inside a new big mosque; a quiet refuge inside the big city. Saw more Egyptian Museum. Then goodbye Egypt. It was great place to visit; so different from life here in the U.S., at least by seeing it as a budget traveler. Yet everything you need is there, it is safe; transportation, food and lodging are very cheap, and the people are mostly polite and well behaved. And all the culture and history. They love the visitors and the money they bring.

• Ron Hudson

## Mount Rainier

### How Much is Judgment Worth?

Preface: I heard this story around the campfire at Ron Hudson's SPS List Finish, and asked Dave to send me the text so I could post it. We talked a bit about continuing to travel two-on-a-rope even after proving with the first fall that arrests weren't working, and I suggested driving in a picket or two and running the rope thru a biner on it to limit the fall on future trips. This is not as safe as a belay, way safer than not setting pro at all. We also kicked around non-standard self-arrest techniques that give you more grip in corn or powder snow. A GPS would have been more useful than wands, because they would have known how close they were to the route, and that could have gotten them out days earlier. Note that radios and cell phones cannot always get you rescued, because sometimes the conditions are too nasty to risk other lives!

I'm posting this on the gear list because it's as much about survival techniques as it is about making the summit. I'm not sure I would have done as well after getting in trouble, but then again I might not have continued climbing into the storm. Enjoy, learn, climb safe. Dave has done us all a favor by documenting his mistakes - way more useful than glossing things over, and I wish others would do the same (yes, Bob and Rich, I'm talking about Spanish Needle!).

Also, if you make the paper, remember to take the clipping so you get sympathy and don't have to pay the extra days on your rental car!

• Steve Eckert

June 3, 2000

Our trip started on June 3, 2000, with a frantic rush to the Reno airport, almost missing our flight. Judy Rittenhouse and I arrived in Seattle at around 10:00 PM, and picked up our rental car. We set off toward the mountain with high hopes, knowing the weather was predicted was to be good for the next several days and having seen clear skies surrounding the mountain from the air. We stopped about 2:00 am in a roadside park and slept until morning.

Sunday, June 4, we got a 4-day permit for climbing Mount Rainier. Our plan was to climb the Kautz Route, taking advantage of the good weather. We set off and hiked upwards, following the Disappointment Cleaver Route (main trail) until our cutoff towards the Nisqually Fan at around 6,200 feet of elevation. We dropped 500 feet down to the glacier and crossed the glacier. On the far side, we encountered a large guided group doing crevasse rescue practice and saw our first large crevasses. We then proceeded up the Wilson Gully, which was full of recent avalanche debris and overhung by a large cornice. We continued up the route to about 8,800 feet of elevation and camped at one of the established campsites a few hundred feet below Turtle Rock.

Monday, June 5, we headed up at about 4:30 am, planning on summiting. By the time we approached Camp Hazard at 11,200 feet of elevation, the weather started to worsen, with fog rolling in. We decided to retreat and regroup, since we had allowed for inclement weather in our schedule.

Tuesday, June 6, the weather was still foggy, whited-out, and not looking good. Our food and fuel situation for a longer stay was not good, and our permit would expire the next day, so we opted to go down for a permit extension and re-supply. We spent the night at Lou Whittaker's Bunkhouse, drying out our gear and relaxing for only \$25/person. We purchased additional fuel and food and made ready to head back up.

Wednesday, June 7, we set up a new schedule for an additional 5-day stay, through Sunday, when our flight would leave. The plan was to hike up leisurely over two days, since the weather was not due to break again until Friday. We hiked up to about 7,000 feet of elevation and set up a nice sheltered camp in the snow.

Thursday, June 8, we got a late start, knowing we had a short hike and worked our way up through zero visibility conditions and fresh, untracked snow to Turtle Rock at 9,300 feet of elevation. As we arrived at Turtle Rock, we passed through the cloud layer and conditions cleared. The summit became visible in all its splendor. Excitement coursed through me, for I knew we could climb and summit the next day. We pushed on in clear conditions, although blowing fog occasionally obscured our visibility, so we used compass bearings as a backup for the final climb up to 10,200 feet of elevation, where we finally established camp about halfway up the Turtle. Our camp, suggested by a climbing ranger, was in the lee of a boulder and nicely sheltered.

Friday, June 9, we got up at 3:00, for a planned 4:00 departure. It was after 5:00 am by the time we got started. We were roped up leaving camp, intending on staying that way the whole day. We climbed up towards the Kautz Ice Falls and Camp Hazard. It took us around 1 1/2 hours to make the 1,000 foot ascent. We quickly headed down the narrow gully (which resembles a bowling alley for climbers) under the icefalls to the 600-foot "technical" section. These pitches proved to be very arduous, since a 2-3 inch coating of hard crust covered hip deep powder. By lying on the snow and crawling upwards, I could sometimes make as many as ten moves before breaking through the crust again. About halfway up, we were able to traverse over to the left side, which was solid ice coated with either rime or snow. Climbing proved easier here for the most part. I set a couple of screws on steeper sections. Finally we hit the top of the section. The relatively flat Kautz Glacier lay in front of us. I could see some clouds starting to swirl around and decided to wand the route across the glacier as well as use compass bearings. I set wands about every 200-250 feet as we crossed, in order to conserve my small supply (~30). We encountered several crevasses, which were crossed uneventfully. When we attained the ridge on the other side of the glacier, we encountered our first heavy winds at around 13,000 feet of elevation. This was at the small ridge where the Kautz Route variation, Wilson Headwall and Fuhrer Finger all join to head for the summit. By now it was obvious that the weather was deteriorating. Judy suggested that we turn back, but with the summit so close (1,400 feet), we continued to push on. I continued to wand the route and take compass bearings as we ascended. By the time we reached the crater rim, it was a complete whiteout and I had run out of wands. Judy again suggested turning back, but the summit loomed so close! We continued on, following the rim, leaving a couple of pickets as wands. Close to an hour later, we reached the summit, having post-holed around the rim. After briefly looking at the forlorn lump of snow on the summit in near zero visibility, we headed down.

We retraced our route around the rim, noting that our footprints were already filled in. Finally, after hiking for what seemed

forever, we got back to our point of arrival on the summit rim. We set off down the slope, holding our compass bearing and following the wands. The system worked well and we were able to stay on course. About 3/4 of the way back to the ridge where the various routes met, we encountered our first problem. As I descended the steep wall (40 slope) of an old crevasse (which was now wide and open), I was unable to see the vertical drop over a smaller remaining crevasse, causing me to fall the last 10 feet or so. Judy was yanked off the steep icy wall, with no possibility of arresting and fell over 50 feet to land flat on her back beside me, gasping for breath. After regaining our wits and making sure Judy was ok, we decided to continue on. I headed on down, still following our wands. I knew I had skipped a small section (no wands), where I needed to turn right. I missed this turn and unbeknownst to me continued lower into the crevasses in the upper end of the Wilson Headwall. Shortly thereafter, due to near zero visibility and fogged glasses, I literally walked into a large overhanging crevasse. "Falling", I shouted, as I attempted to sink in my axe to prevent going over the edge. I continued to fall for a long time, bouncing many times along the way. As the fall continued I was certain Judy was plunging into the crevasse too. Judy, meanwhile, was digging into the fresh powder with little success in making a self-arrest. The crevasse was about 15 feet higher on the uphill side than the lower and Judy plunged over the edge and was catapulted to the other side of the crevasse, where she quickly arrested and set an anchor. Once Judy had come to a halt, I too stopped falling, after about 65 feet of total fall distance. I brushed myself off, checked everything out, and prepared to climb out, assuming Judy had an anchor set. I climbed to the surface. At about halfway, I heard Judy asking if I was ok. I replied affirmatively. Once I got out, we decided that with our current location unknown precisely and the blowing storm and zero visibility, we should bivvy. We dug a snow cave near the side of the crevasse. Once we climbed in, we sealed the entrance, allowing the storm to add insulation over us. We each had almost a quart of water left and most all of the day's food, with some extra. We had brought a single insulite pad as emergency gear and each had a space blanket with us. We removed our boots, but kept on the vapor barrier systems and socks. One of the packs was used as a common foot bag to provide insulation from the snow. The rope and the insulite pad provided our main insulation from the snow. The other pack was used to seal the entrance. The night was cold, but we remained functionally warm, with occasional shivering in near freezing temperatures.

Saturday, June 10, we dug out of the cave at around 8:30 am, planning on continuing. The weather was still bad, but we could see a rocky ridge adjacent to the crevasse field we were ensconced in. We roped up and headed over, thinking it was the ridge we had missed the previous day. After carefully checking it out and hiking around in the cold and blowing snow conditions for several hours, we decided to dig another snow cave, since our location was still unknown. We settled in for another night, after checking the weather again in the afternoon and seeing no improvement.

Sunday, June 11, we checked the weather again, morning and afternoon, with no improvement. Our water supplies were reduced to snow melted with body heat inside our jackets, and we began rationing food, considering the possible 4-day stay until the next predicted weather break.

Monday, June 12, we checked the weather in the morning, and noted no improvement. The afternoon check yielded clearing and reasonably good visibility, with continued high winds. We decided that starting out late in our debilitated condition and with the high avalanche danger of the recent snows was not prudent, and settled in for another night. We were, however, able to ascertain our exact location and plan our descent. We were less than 100 feet off route.

Tuesday, June 13, we got up early and broke camp just after 7:00 am, heading down to our base camp at 10,200 feet of elevation. Our movements were slow due to lack of food and water. Serious concern about avalanches weighed heavily on our minds. After about 7 1/2 hours of traveling we reached the tent. Salvation! , I thought. The tent, however, hadn't survived the storms. The poles were broken and the sleeping bags in a puddle of water and snow. As we attempted to clean up camp, we noted climbers below, camping at Turtle Rock. After trying to revive the tent in the 50 mph winds and having yet another pole snap, we decided to pack up and head down to the lower camp. The fierce winds and the snow conditions, prone to small slabs and giant snowballs heading down, made travel difficult. Finally, we arrived at 9,300 feet of elevation. I chatted with the climbers, a group escorting Peter Rieke, a paraplegic, attempting to summit Rainier (3rd attempt) using a hand cranked snow pod. We dug a snow platform in a sheltered lee of Turtle Rock and set up camp, feeling pretty good at having survived. The tent was repaired with duct tape and bits of wands, i.e. it was barely functional. High winds continued to plague us through the night and we were still cold, having managed to only partially dry out one sleeping bag, with the other still sodden. We asked the Reike's team to use their radio to notify the NPS of our safety.

Wednesday, June 14, I woke up with numb feet and unable to walk. Frostbite, insidiously had invaded my socks during our bivies, but remained undetected until my feet had re-warmed. We again contacted the NPS, asking for evacuation help. No help was available due to avalanche danger, high winds and low visibility. The adjacent climbing team had a nurse available to help evaluate my condition heading up that day. I anxiously awaited her arrival. Upon examination, she indicated that I was capable of walking out. I felt relieved that my feet's condition was no worse than that. We settled in for another cold night with high winds in a marginal tent.

Thursday, June 15, we got up at 5 am and packed. The paraplegic climbing team had agreed to carry out part of our load (~10 lbs), while we retained enough gear for technical protection and a possible additional overnight. We needed to hurry down before avalanche danger became too high. Hiking was painful but possible and we made good time down to the Wilson Gully. There, post-holing slowed progress considerably. At the lower part, wracked by avalanches the previous day, standing glissades made the descent fairly quick. We roped up and crossed back over the Nisqually Fan, meeting several rangers on the far side. The rangers helped us down by taking our loads for the last three fourths of a mile of the hike back to the trailhead.

We had survived. Poor judgment cost us dearly, but competent mountaineering skills (and some Luck) brought us back alive (barely). Skills and technical competence are requirements for mountaineering, but nothing will ever substitute for good judgment.

• *David German*

## **Mt. Goddard**

September 7-9, 2000

The SPS trip I was scheduled to go on had been canceled. Since I had already planned to take a day off from work, I had a choice to make: stay home (and work on the house), or plan another trip. After agonizing over the decision for several seconds, I decided on a solo attempt of Mt. Goddard from the west side.

The good news about a west side entry is that permits are not a problem(at least in this area). The woodchuck trailhead (where I left from)has no quota, and getting a permit requires nothing more than calling the ranger station and then picking up your permit in

the night drop box. The bad news is that accessing the trailhead requires hours of driving (ok only an hour and a half) on winding mountain roads - a lot different than 75-80 MPH on highway 395.

I left the nearly deserted trailhead (one other truck) at 6:30 Thursday morning on a route that would take me above wish on reservoir, up the woodchuck creek drainage, through crown pass, around scenic halfmoon lake, and eventually down to the north fork of the kings river where I made camp at 3:30 near some slabs along the river at ~9,500 ft. While the hike in was long (18+ miles), the trails were in good shape, the weather was perfect, and the elevation gain was administered gradually. My goal was to pick a campsite that would get me close enough to Mt. Goddard so that I could climb it in one long day - but not too close, otherwise I'd be hauling my backpack in (and out) farther than I needed to. In retrospect, I came close to that goal - faster hikers may be able to get away with staying a little farther away.

I was off the next morning at 6:30 again. From camp I angled northeast up into blackcap basin and through Lightning Corral Meadow using the high point on the ridge northwest of Ambition Lake to help guide me. After locating Ambition Lake, I went around it's south side and up a nice ramp northeast of the lake to Valor lake. You can get around Valor Lake on either side - the east side is shorter, but requires passing through a boulder field - the west side (which I took on the way back)is a little longer but is over easier terrain. Once around the lake, any one of several ramps will get you up to Valor Pass.

Descending from Valor Pass was a little tricky as I was trying to minimize the elevation loss while traversing over to the large gap above and east of Martha Lake. The most direct route was interrupted by several 30-40 ft cliffs which forced me to take more of a circuitous route than I'd hoped (some class 3 climbing required). Also, as I neared the point where the route turns east (north of peak 12,432), I ran into several other cliffs which slowed me down. Others may find it easier to simply descend to about 11,000 ft, follow the easier terrain on the east side of the lake, and then ascend to the gap.

As I approached the small lake at ~12,000 ft, the climbing became much more loose and crummy. I found the going a little easier (although not much) by staying north of the lake and on top of the various piles of rubble. At this point, I found some very interesting rock that had fractured off from a band up on the south side of Mt. Goddard. It was a "pinkish purple" color and very heavy. I continued heading northeast until I could see the large lake at 12,240 ft. at this point I could also see the chute that would get me up to the south ridge - it didn't look like much fun (loose) so I continued traversing the east slope hoping to find a more enjoyable route. On the way, I found what appeared to be a small piece (3'x4') of fuselage from a private airplane- no other wreckage was visible. After passing several other chutes, I found one that looked o.k. and started up it. It soon became disappointingly loose so I exited onto the left rib of the gully (southside) and followed it (class 3) up to the south ridge. From here, it was class 1 with a couple of easy class 3 moves to the summit, which I plopped onto at 12:30. After some lunch and soaking in the panoramic view, I headed back down. The return to camp was uneventful and I chugged back into camp at 5:00 ready for some hot tea.

Since I wanted to get home for dinner, I left the next morning at 4:30and was treated to a beautiful sunrise as I hiked out of the canyon. As I approached the spur trail to Chimney Lake, I ran into the first humans on the trip (I'd had plenty of visits from deer, squirrels and sage grouse in my camp) - 2 guys who were heading in for a week long trip. These were the only other people I saw the on the whole trip - are refreshing change from some of the more crowded trailheads. I eventually reached my truck at 1:30, and was back home in time for dinner.

• *Ron Norton*

## Mt Thompson

### North Couloir

Alois Smrz and I climbed the North Couloir (or Moynier Couloir) of Mt. Thompson on October 1, 2000 in superb conditions. This gully is the furthest right of the four on the north face of Thompson.

This is a serious mixed climb. We soloed the first four or so pitches on beautiful, hard firm and ice. From here, the couloir pinches down to ten to fifteen feet width on steep, hard, glassy water ice. We roped up here, and Alois took the first pitch of ice. After two screws and a stopper, he began putting in a belay anchor but made the critical mistake of removing his wrist from one of his ice tool leashes. I heard brief profanity and saw his tool start falling. Amazingly, the tool hooked the hanger or biner on his last ice screw and stayed. However, it was not to stay long. Unable to lower to it or downclimb to it, I would have to try and recover it following the pitch.

I followed the pitch, collected the gear from Alois, and led the second and last pitch of water ice. Reaching the large crux chockstone, I looked under - considering the 'tunneling' advice from John Moynier himself - only to find tunneling impossible. We would have to bail from the ice and climb rock. I put a two-screw belay here.

Alois would have to follow my lead with a single ice tool. He reached me, we swapped gear and off he went on exposed but moderate fifth class moves, exiting the couloir to the left. A pitch and a half later we were on the summit plateau, greeted by warmth and sun after spending a few hours in the shade and cold of the icy couloir (it really wasn't that cold as long as you were moving

Twenty minutes or so later we were at the summit proper, observing the minor number of entries since its placement by PCS'ers in July.

From here we had to consider the descent. Alois could not consider a downclimb of the Harrington Couloir on Thompson (which he'd done before) due to the loss of his second ice tool, so we agreed to descend the North Ridge. High-end or crazed climbers solo the whole North Couloir and the North Ridge descent; Boy, I'd like to see their balls.

Looking off the extreme end of the summit plateau does not engender one with marvelous feelings. There is approximately 1/4 mile of knife edge to reach what appeared (on the approach) to be a class two talus and scree gully. We agreed that we would belay the dangerous downclimbing, placing pro where necessary. I would end up 'leading' all the roped downclimbing.

Thinking that we could descend this questionable gully faster than belaying across the ridge, we began descending it despite my uneasy feelings about it. Two pitches of belayed downclimbing brought us to our first rappel of about 80 feet. Fortunately, someone had been here before, and we found two fixed slings which we equalized, then rapped on. A short amount of unroped descent on scree brought us to another rap - another full length at 80 or more feet. Not sure how to get down this one, at the last moment, my eye caught a single, large green sling (new) on the largest boulder in the center of the rubble filled gully.

Two more pitches of belayed downclimbing opened to even greater views. Our gully hooked to the right, and rounding a corner of the rib, I could see easy, scree-covered ledges and slabs that led to the high end of the Thompson Glacier.

At the last belay, as I brought Alois to me, I was able to scan the North Couloir. Alois reached me and we unroped. A few minutes of travel brought us to the glacier's edge. Alois and I hugged.

We reached our camp at sunset, packed up, hiked and scrambled out in total darkness - reaching the parking lot at 930pm. We still had the drive home to LA in front of us. We were not to enjoy the beer in the cooler.

I finally put my head to pillow in Long Beach at 330am - just two hours before the work wakeup.

• *Michael Gordon*

## Granite Chief

April 30, 2000.

This is a short note on a trip that Rick Booth, Dee Booth, and I did to Granite Chief which is close to Squaw Valley.

We started at 7.30 am on Sunday, 30th April. After about a mile or so the trail vanished in the snow. We identified Granite Chief and then decided on a line to it. This line took us near the ski area boundary and then to the right hand ridge line of Granite Chief. Once at the saddle, we had a small amount of somewhat steep snow climbing, but the snow was not icy or excessively deep. We didn't use crampons or snowshoes, but used ice axes. We were at the summit in four hours. We basically retraced our steps and returned to the cars in less than three hours making it a seven hour day in all including a lazy lunch break at the top.

• *Arun Mahajan*

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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 12/24/2000. Meetings are the second Tuesday of each month.**



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