



**October, 2000 Peak Climbing Section, Loma Prieta Chapter, Sierra Club Vol. 34 No. 10**

Published on the World Wide Web - See Back Page

## Next General Meeting

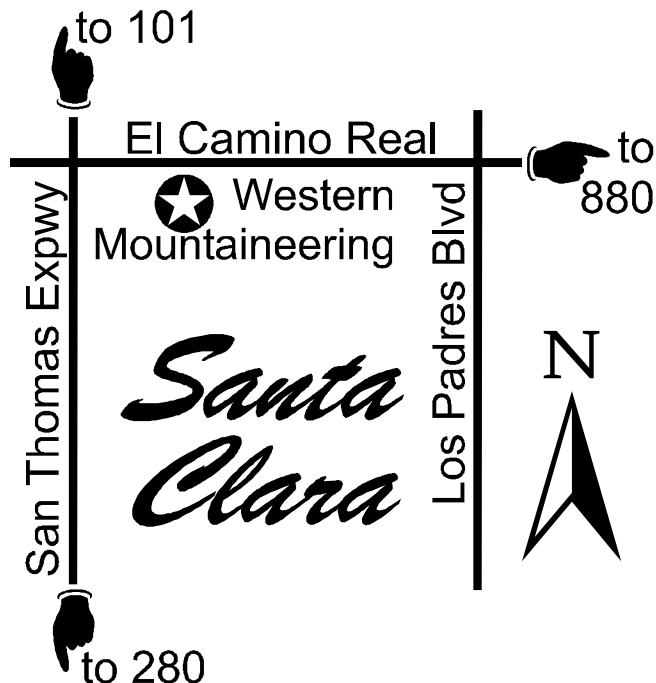
**Date:** Tuesday, October 10

**Time:** 8:00 PM

**Program:** "Climbing Mt Killimanjaro" Slide show by Charles Schaefer. Western Mountaineering. This trip was organized by PCS individuals and included many PCS and DHS member

**Directions:** Western Mountaineering 2344 El Camino Real, Santa Clara (between San Thomas and Los Padres).

From 101: Exit at San Thomas Expressway, Go South to El Camino Real. Turn left and the Western Mountaineering will be immediately to your right.



Deadline for submissions to the next Scree is Sunday 10/29/2000 Meetings are the 2nd Tuesday of each month.

## Christmas Party Location Needed

Over the past several years the Christmas party and meeting has been held at the SGI cafeteria which has been graciously arranged by John Wilkenson who was an SGI employee. This has changed so I need suggestions as to another venue for the party location. It will be hard to beat the nice SGI cafeteria! Please e-mail me with any ideas.

•Rick Booth, PCS Chair, [rwbooth@home.com](mailto:rwbooth@home.com)

## Letter from a Yugoslavian Climber

I am Vladimir Djordjevic from Yugoslavia, Your fellow climber. I am a graduate student of mechanical engineering and also a passionate mountaineer. The situation in my country is a complete disaster with average salaries at \$40. There is no way for me and my fellow climber Milan Popovic to buy some reliable equipment for climbing (For example, we are using an ice axe with a wooden handle, and ropes as old as myself). I am therefore asking you if you have any extra equipment (anything will work: ropes, ice axes, crampons, locks, etc.), which you have used and don't use anymore, to share with us. We would be most grateful to you. This would further enable climbing for the two of us.

Sincerely and gratefully yours, Vladimir D. Djordjevic

My address is:

Vladimir D. Djordjevic

Nikole Pasica 8/4

34000 Kragujevac

Yugoslavia

My email address is: [vladd@ptt.yu](mailto:vladd@ptt.yu)

## PCS Elections

It that time of year again. If you are interested in serving as an officer in the PCS in 2001, then let one of the current officers know.

## 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.

**NO FUTURE TRIPS HAVE BEEN LISTED!**

## CloudRipper

Sunday, June 2, 2000

Arun Mahajan, Scott Kreider, and Stephan Meier set off for the imaginatively named Cloudripper, a 13525 foot peak located south east of South Lake. After enjoying some delicious and very European pastries and croissants at Schatts Bakery in Bishop we set off on South Lake road for Parcher's, a small resort mainly frequented by fishermen. We left the cars shortly after 8 AM, fortunately we saw someone who told us where the trail started, as it was from a descreet unmarked spot off the side of the dirt road in Parcher's, and might have been hard to spot. We followed the trail up a series of switchbacks, crossing a pipeline from South Lake, where we met a solo hiker who had followed the more gradual climb of the pipeline from South Lake to intersect the trail; from this point a sign indicated 3 miles to Green Lake, the trail continued to climb fairly steeply for a bit before flattening out near Brown Lake. We found pleasant alpine meadows on this section which made for fast and easy hiking to Green Lake, where we opted to continue off trail.

Looking due South from Green Lake it was apparent that the picnic was over: a seemingly endless boulder field climbed into the distance... Arun observed that it might be possible to scamper up a slightly steeper but much shorter gully to the South East and then follow the ridge around to the South. After a few glances at the vast boulder field to the South, despite uncertainty about the ease of following the ridge, Arun's comparatively short gully was an easy sell, and off we went. Other than a little lose scree in the middle, the chute posed no problems and we gained ~1000 feet rapidly. At this point we were happy to find that Arun's instincts had been good, and that while the ridge was steep on the West side, on the East it opened to a gentle plateau free of boulders, making for easy going... We could now see that the trail would have provided another option to bypass the boulder field as it too made up to the lower limits of the plateau, albeit very indirectly. From the plateau we followed Scott's compass bearing as the summit was not yet visible. After a gradual climb we reached a local maximum and saw the plateau slope downwards for a while, with a peak visible to the South East - Cloudripper? Brief debate ensued, ending with Scott saying "if that is Cloudripper then I'm very confused", and Arun and I pretty much convinced that despite it's very respectable appearance it was indeed but a false summit at 13374 that we needed to bypass. Scott and Arun set off climbing diagonally across what turned out to be table sized boulders while I opted to stay low and walk the plateau and then make a direct climb up the boulders - we both reached the ridge at about 13300 feet just below the false summit at about the same time. From this ridge, the true summit of Cloudripper was visible, while only 200 feet higher, a descent to another plateau was required first, making for a ~500 foot final climb, most of which was on snow. Scott and I opted to use our ice axes, while not strictly necessary given the moderate angle and softness of snow, they provided some extra security, while Arun climbed confidently without one. The final

summit ridge was class 3, though only a few spots were significantly exposed provided you stayed on the left side of the summit ridge, and we had little trouble finding a good route to the summit, which we reached just after 2 PM; a 6 hour trip. From the summit we were rewarded with gorgeous views of 3 drainage basins and their associated lakes, as well as Mt Sill and the Palisades, and countless other peaks that as it was getting a little late in the day we didn't loiter to identify... The weather was perfect, and while this forced us to imagine 'cloudripping' rather than witness it, no one was complaining!

For the return we opted for the most direct route, and yes this gave us the chance to experience the dreaded boulder field that we had skirted... While it started OK, it soon took on the character of a really long and bad movie, as time progressed it seemed to get no closer to ending, all the while one getting more and more sick and tired of it... Finally somehow it did end, at which point we rested and finished off most of our food - and Arun finally got to use an ice axe - to cut a piece of chocolate from a large slab I'd purchased at Trader Joe's... The rest of the return progressed rapidly and we made Green Lake by 5:45 and the cars by 7 PM, making for an 11 hour day.

• *Stephan Meier*

## Mount Thompson "Caillasse"

August, 2000

Short report (useful trip planning info):

Topo: Mount Thompson Quadrangle, 7.5' series trailhead: Sabrina Lake Time of year: early August (00) Conditions: little snow, great weather, some smoke afar from Sequoia fires

Length: 2 days elevation: 13494' Mt Thompson summit, 4400' elevation gain from trailhead, camped at 11484' (Sunset Lake) drive: about 300 mi to trailhead from Sunnyvale, up Tioga Pass (120), down to Bishop (395) equipment: ice-axe summary: camped at Sunset Lake the first night, summited and hiked out on the second day

Summit Route: Easy route finding, but very loose scree in steep North facing chute to the col between Thompson and Powell.

Long report:

"Caillasse" means scree in French. This was a private and bilingual trip, as we conversed in both French and English. And the word "caillasse" kept coming to mind while climbing Mount Thompson.

Peter Maxwell and I hiked in leisurely on Saturday. We set up camp at Sunset Lake, in one of the few rock free sites. On the way, we passed 2 beautiful meadows, above Baboon lakes. Sunday was going to be a long day, and lazing around camp in the afternoon seemed essential. And it was essential.

Up at 5:30am, we were on our way by 6:15am. Back at the car around 7pm. Tired, but safe.

So what happened?

I'll start with detailing the route.

We went around Sunset Lake by the right, then reached the yellowish rocky outcrop that separate two huge grey boulder fields, made of large rocks coming down from Thompson and Powell. We followed that outcrop almost to its end, at the base of Powell, but started traversing the so-called glacier [technically it is one, but it is more like a permanent snow field]. We reached

the bottom of the gnarly chute, in the rightmost couloir to the col. Steep, with ice slabs, loose rock, unconsolidated scree. The alternative was very steep rock. We proceeded with care, close to each other so that rock loosened by one of us would not have time to pick up momentum before hitting the other. At the col, we left the ice axes, and contemplated the chute on the other side. Not very appealing either, but better. We descended it to the bottom of the cliffs: no use trying to cut through the slabs. We then crossed to the bottom of the obvious class 2 couloir to Mount Thompson summit plateau. Another scree filled couloir.... We reached the summit at about 10:45AM: the summit looks like a tall stack of pancakes placed at the top of the plateau. Can you tell I was hungry by then? We came down the same way, filled with anxiety about having to go down the gnarly North facing couloir. It actually was worse than on the way up. I think it was partly due to the fact that the soil had loosened up with the heat. I opted for the "I'll try to stay on my feet while this whole side of the mountain is sliding from under me" approach while Peter gave a go at the class 3 loose rock. The amazing thing is that we did not get hurt. The return to camp was the usual slog. And the return to the car was also the usual interminable slog, with a special class 3 move on a cliff above Baboon Lake - just for fun ;-).

A few words about fauna and flora for the avid nature lover in you: I only saw chipmunks, and mule waste all over the lower part of trail. And a handful of backpacking bipedes, including a kiwi. Not a trace of bear. There were more flowers than I expected, in the blue and yellow tones.

The drive home was probably the most dangerous part of the day. We saw a bear who was crossing highway 120 in front of our car after doing his/her [could not tell - I was driving pretty fast] shopping at the Mono Pass trailhead. A lot of trucks and cars on 580, even this late in the night.

After complaining so much about scree, I know that I will experience "caillasse" amnesia, a well-known phenomenon of the brain forgetting the bad, and remembering the good. It was a great climb.

• *Anouchka Gaillard*

## The Kaweahs

### Jim and Dot's Summer Vacation

August 27-September 4, 2000

"It's summertime and the living is easy"

Primary Objectives: Eagle Scout Peak, North Face Grade III 5.7; Black Kaweah, Southwest Face, Class 4; Mt. Stewart, North Face, Grade III, 5.6.

Secondary Objectives: Hamilton Dome, North Arete, Grade II, 5.7; Lion Rock, South Ridge, Class 4; Mt. Kaweah, South Slopes, Class 1.

Climbing Gear: 2-8.5 mm x 50 m ropes (dynamic, NOT static); 2 Alpine Bod harnesses; 2 helmets; 1 pair Boreal Aces; 1 pair Boreal Zephyrs; slings; alpine climbing rack; Estimated total weight 20-25 pounds.

Short report: We got skunked! We carried 20-25 pounds of technical gear 21 miles into and out of the backcountry, and did not use any of it.

Long report:

Day 1 (Sunday, August 27) - After the obligatory bear lecture by the Sequoia Park Ranger and renting 2 nearly useless Garcia bear

canisters, we drive to the Crescent Meadow trailhead. As we are packing up to head in to Bearpaw Meadow, 3 guys come out from an attempt on Black Kaweah. They tell us that they had perfect weather, except for summit day. Jim and I then realize that neither one of us has bothered to check the weather predictions for the coming week, not that we would have believed them anyway. As Jim says, it never rains in California. There are a few clouds as we hike in, but nothing threatening. A few people with daypacks are heading out as we head in. They mostly look like clients of the High Sierra Camp at Bearpaw. The campground at Bearpaw meadow is deserted. We are visited later that evening by two curious bear cubs, but they soon leave.

Day 2 - We leave Bearpaw and head up to Hamilton Lakes and beyond. Have I mentioned how heavy the packs are? In addition to all of the climbing gear, we are carrying 9 days of food and personal gear and those two dang bear canisters. Our food doesn't even begin to fit into the bear canisters. Jim originally wanted to carry just bivy bags, but I insisted on a tent. It rained 7 days out of 8 on our last long Sierra trip. As we are hiking towards Hamilton Lakes, we check out Hamilton Dome - it is a very appealing looking arete, but it looks like the crux of the climb may be getting to the arete. Maybe we will try it on the way out. We get to Upper Hamilton Lake in time for lunch. There is a trail crew stationed there. They seem to be trundling some big rocks on the trail high above the lake. As we are eating lunch, a backpacker stops to talk to us. He says that the weather people are predicting a 30% chance of rain today and tomorrow, then clearing out to beautiful weather. We notice clouds gathering over Kaweah Gap. By the time we finish lunch and are ready to head up to Kaweah Gap, the clouds have darkened and there is the sound of distant thunder. Jim gives it a 1 to million chance of raining that day. As we climb up out of Upper Hamilton Lake, the clouds darken and the thunder is more frequent. I am hoping that we make it to Precipice Lake, a little below Kaweah Gap, before the rain hits us. The section of trail from Hamilton Lake to Precipice Lake is quite spectacular. It includes a short tunnel through rock. It is hard to piece it all together when looking at it from below - it looks like the trail must go across shear cliffs. Just as we reach the small lake below Precipice, we pass two backpackers coming down from Kaweah Gap. They report that it has been raining and lightening and thundering for quite a while in Nine Lakes Basin. When we tell them that we are headed to Nine Lakes Basin, one of them warns us that the finger of God will smite us. By the time we reach Precipice Lake, it is raining. The temperature has probably dropped 20 degrees. We decide to set up camp there. We find a good spot that puts us close to the base of the North Face climb that we covet on Eagle Scout Peak.

Day 3 - It rains all day. The clouds are low, enveloping us in a fog. We might as well be in San Francisco. We spend the day reading and resting our sore muscles.

Day 4 - About 38 hours after it started to rain, it stops. The rock on Eagle Scout Peak is too wet to climb, and the weather too uncertain for a committing climb. We decide to go over to Nine Lakes Basin and check out the 4th class route on Lion Rock, described as two class 4 moves. There are a scattering of stratus clouds in the sky over Kaweah Gap as we head out. The hike to Lion Rock takes a little longer than expected, and we got a late start due to the early morning rain. We start up the ridge of Lion Rock, aware that clouds are building over Black Kaweah and Kaweah Gap. The skies are still clear over Lion Rock. We reach a point on the ridge that looks like exposed 4th class, and look for ways around it. We aren't sure that we are on route - we can imagine ways that this route may go, but there are some blind

corners and gaps. We do have the rope and rack and harnesses. In the meantime, the summits of Black Kaweah and Mt. Stewart have disappeared into clouds and more and more clouds are swirling around Lion Rock. We debate whether to go for it or to back off. We finally decide to back off, cursing the weather, cursing Secor's route description, but vowing to return. We can imagine the story in *Accidents in North American Mountaineering*: 2 climbers off to a late start, off route, continued under deteriorating weather conditions. Slung out in screamer suits (whatever the hell that means). Actually, we would be lucky if anyone found us for quite a while. We haven't seen anyone in over 24 hours. As we descend, the clouds abate revealing blue sky. Then they build again. We realize that one maxim of mountaineering is that the further you descend, the better the weather appears. Another maxim is that the further you descend, the easier the route that you didn't do appears. The clouds continue to build, but it doesn't rain.

Day 5 - We had been prepared to attempt the North Face of Eagle Scout, but woke to winds and colder temperatures. Being either optimistic or chicken-hearted, we decide that this is a good sign and the weather is improving. We decide to hike down towards Mt. Kaweah today, and give the weather another day to settle down. As we are hiking through Nine Lakes Basin, we realize that climbing Mt. Kaweah will mean an 18 mile and close to a 6000 foot day. We continue, hoping that it doesn't tire us out too much for a climb the next day. It feels like a late autumn day instead of an August day. As we are climbing up the south slopes of Mt. Kaweah, we can see the clouds building to the north of us, over Kaweah Gap. There is also a lot of low fog blowing over Kaweah Gap. From the summit of Mt. Kaweah, we see that there are clouds over both the East and West crests of the Sierra. Mt. Kaweah seems to be the only area in sunshine and free of clouds. The storms are more widespread than we had realized. We quickly scan the entries in the register. One signee laments missing RJ Secor by six days! We race back towards Kaweah Gap, trying to beat the dark and the rain. We reach the top of Kaweah Gap just as it gets dark enough to need headlamps. The fog is thick and the reflection of the light off of it is disorienting, but we make it back to our tent. It is late and we are tired. We realize that we may have ruined our opportunity to climb the next day.

Day 6 - We wake up to a fog enveloping our tent. We can't see the trail, the Gap, 5 feet in front of us. As I get out of the tent, I tell Jim that it is snowing. He doesn't believe me; then he thinks that it is funny. Four hours later when he is digging the tent out from 5 inches of snow, he isn't laughing any more. It snows until about 4:30. Then it gets cold. It has been an eerily quite storm - very little wind. The world around us is transformed. There is snow on the north face of Eagle Scout Peak, there is snow on the trail. Another day spent reading and playing cards and wondering why we hauled 25 pounds of technical climbing gear 21 miles into the backcountry.

Day 7 - The temperatures have dropped a lot overnight, transforming our world into an icy one. The talus is glazed with treacherous ice. Our friendly world has become a little bit more threatening. It is sobering to realize how quickly things can change. The good news is that the skies over us are sunny. The bad news is that fog and clouds are already streaming up from below. We hope that the sun lasts long enough to melt the ice and free us from our camp site. Fortunately, the fog stalls over Hamilton Lake. The ice melts and the tent dries out before we pack up to head out. Originally, we had planned two more nights at Precipice Lake, to squeeze out every climb we possibly could. But now we are running from the fog and the uncertain weather.

We head down through the fog to Upper Hamilton Lake. There are 4 or 5 tents set up there, and people, and noise. We have had Precipice Lake to ourselves. The fog rolls in and out most of the evening and into the night at Hamilton Lake. One minute you can see Eagle Scout Peak, the next it is gone. Occasionally it pokes out above the clouds and looks a bit like a Himalayan peak. We are 7 days into a 9-day trip, and our food just barely fits into the Garcia bear canisters. Jim amuses himself by calculating how many calories he needs a day, and then multiplying that by 9 days. He figures that the only way he could fit the appropriate number of calories into the bear canister is by buying 45 packages of Walkers shortbread, pulverizing the shortbread, then pouring it into the canister. He wonders if it would be tasty reconstituted as porridge. I make a mental note to do the food planning for our next long trip.

Day 8 - The fog finally dissipates by 4 am. We wake to beautiful blue skies and feel the anguished pain of having run away too early. It looks like a beautiful day to climb, and we are retreating. We load up our packs and head down the trail. We want to get out and home by midnight. The packs are still heavy and the trail undulates. We regret having given up too soon. Then we reach Bearpaw meadow and are enveloped in a cold fog. The clouds are streaming up to Hamilton Lake and Kaweah Gap; they are just a little later today. We feel better about our decision. By the time we reach the trailhead, the fog is thick. There are families having the ritual Labor Day weekend BBQ at Crescent Meadows. Everyone is bundled up in fleece and down. We get back to San Francisco about 11:30 PM. And there is no fog.

Day 9 - Misery loves company. We are delighted to read in old newspapers that Donner Summit got 5 inches of snow on Friday or Saturday, there was snow in Tuolumne on Friday, and the predictions for the mountains include cold and wet conditions. We had been feeling that just maybe the backpacker who predicted the finger of God smiting us had been right. But now we realize that it isn't personal. We will probably go back - the climbs looked mighty tempting. But there are days when I begin to think that sport climbing may not be all that bad.

• *Dot Reilly*

## **Matterhorn Peak & Excelsior Mtn**

August 19 & 20, 2000

On Saturday I hiked Excelsior Mountain (12,446') from Virginia Lakes (9,600'). It is a straightforward hike, following a good trail to a 'pass' at about 11,000' where the trail starts dropping down into the Green Creek drainage. From that point, the route goes continues toward the Sierra crest cross-country. One can either go over top of, or count our up and around the north side of, a large two-humped red hill that is the one clearly unpleasant part of the hike (no alternatives, the ridge drops off on either side). I did the contour going up and the over-the-top coming back, which may be the best combination since the backside is totally firm and a lot less high. Once over this hill, I hiked up towards the crest aiming for the lowest point in the ridge along the right side of the snowfield. Once over the crest, an easy traverse south took me to the peak, which had fine views of most of the peaks of Yosemite from Lyell to Tower. Register was about 2/3 full, many hikers this year. Signing in, I took the opportunity to answer the question Joe Budman asked when he signed in April 30. Award for best register entry, serious category, won by "Live with intent, don't settle for content". Award for best entry, non-serious, won by "Life On The East Side Is Good". Having absolutely no

acclimatization, I took the hike slowly, taking about 4 1/4 hours up; after 45 min. on top, got back to the trailhead in 2 hrs. It looks like about 6 miles each way.

Feeling somewhat acclimatized, on Sunday I climbed Matterhorn Peak (12,264'), from Twin Lakes, ascending via the East Couloir, returning via Horse Creek Pass. Started at 7.30am carrying a new register book. Reaching the signed intersection with the Cattle Mountain trail at 8.45, I realized that the day's agenda would probably demand more than the 8-10 hours I had assumed. The trail went fine up to the first big 'bowl' at around 9,000'. There are trails all over this area. I followed someone up a trail on the left side that was slow going through loose steep scree; then halfway up the 'real' trail on the right side on firm dirt became apparent, so I sidehilled across to it. Above the bowl where the terrain leveled out, I followed a steep use trail up and to the right for several hundred feet, ending atop a ridge just above a pond. The now faint use trail continued logically given the terrain along the ridge towards Matterhorn, and I followed it to the bowl below the peak, reaching this point at about 12noon, where I stopped for lunch. Around 12.30, I pulled out my ice axe and started heading across the bowl, catching up with two climbers who I teamed up with rather than risking rockfall in the couloir. John had done North Palisade; he was taking George on his first peak climb of any kind ever. George did quite well although the going was slow. The east couloir is mostly snow free at this point, unfortunately without snow it is a lot of loose rock and scree. There were maybe a dozen people, all told, on various parts of the peak that day. We finally summited at about 3.00pm, to outstanding views. There are literally about three dozen listed peaks visible from the summit. I placed the register book into the ammo box along with pen and pencil, and signed in. The award for the most creative item placed in a summit box: rubber ducky. Realizing that I am not entirely versed in Sierra Club rules, I did not remove said item. Around 3.30 we headed back down. The climb and hike down to Horse Creek Pass and out was long, slow and uneventful. After confirming that they had headlamps, at about 6pm I left the other two upon reaching a point where I could show them where they were headed (they were mapless), then turned on the jets. Back at the car at 7.45pm, 12 1/4 hrs, about 5,300' gain. Thankfully the Bridgeport Market and deli was open; with a turkey sub and a quart of Coke, the drive home was uneventful.

• *Mike Mc Dermitt*

## White Mountain

14250 ft, 3 September 2000.

It did not look likely that anybody would be in the mountains this Labor Day weekend as we slept in the car at Camp-9 with the cold wind rocking it and the rain pattering on the windshield. Dawn looked even worse but we still decided to race to the Lake Sabrina trailhead to meet up with Kai Weidman and Cecil Anison to do the scheduled trip to Mt Goddard. The sky was remarkably clear at Mammoth and points south but it was still cold at Lake Sabrina and Cecil and Kai had heard from the locals that the weather would continue to be unsettled. So, changing gears, we decided to head up White Mountain. Cecil had hiked it before and Hal had ski-traversed from halfway between Boundary Peak and White, all the way up to White.

Up Highway 168, closed 30 miles up from Big Pine due to the danger of flash floods to the Grandview Campground at approx 8000 ft where fortuitously, a SUV leaving a camping spot made one available to us and then a 4.5 mile hike in Schulman Grove

among the venerable Bristlecone Pines exuding a youthful fragrance that belied their millennial geriatrics with a backdrop of the Sierra crest, completed the Saturday.

Sunday morning and the unpaved 16 mile stretch from Schulman Grove to the now opened gate on the White Mtn road gave no problems to my car and I am sure Mike's Landrover treated it with even more disdain. Since the Barcroft Lab that is two miles up the road from the gate has an open house on the Sunday of Labour Day and gets enough visitors that clog up it's limited parking, all White Mountain bound hikers were asked to park their vehicles at the gate and to either hike from there itself or to take a shuttle bus that runs every half hour till 5 pm by the two uniformed volunteers who sat shivering in the cold wind, bravely manning their posts. Like hardcore mountaineers, sneering at the people who were hiking like hicks, the six of us choose to ride up in the shuttle to the

Barcroft Lab, Kai Weidman (leader), Cecil Anison (leader), Hal Tompkins, Noriko Sekikawa, Mike McDermitt and myself, Arun Mahajan.

9.40 am, fortified by the free cookies generously provided by the Barcroft staff, a cold wind making us wear multiple layers, we set off on the road. Hal took off, his lungs acclimated by his recent stint in the Peruvian Andes, fuelling his rocket like speed, while we followed at a more stately pace. White had received a nice dusting of snow and presented an imposing sight and despite the cold cold wind, amidst several parties of hikers, we summited a little before 12.20 pm to the sight of a rather solid looking hut and dutifully signed the register and departed soon after, the cold making it inhospitable to linger long. Back at the lab to check out the highly singular Barcroft Lab avoiding the doleful gaze of the research sheep and then to take the ride back in the shuttle bus.

A small walk in the Patriarch Grove, a few miles down the White Mtn Road, on the way back to Grandview to see the Methusaleh, the largest Bristlecone Pine tree, completed this scenic but not unduly taxing PCS trip.

Trip stats: 10 miles RT from the Barcroft Lab to the summit of White Mountain in under 5 hrs. Due to the drastic altitude gain and the cold wind that whips up, despite being entirely class-1, lots of warm and wind proof layers are recommended while doing this high and wonderfully scenic mountain.

• *Arun Mahajan*

## Climbing - A Real Pal

September 16-18, 2000

North Palisade, 14242', class 4 Clyde Variation

Lead by Steve Eckert, Organized by Chris Franchuk

Participants: David Shaw, John Cheslick, Jeff Fisher, Michael Rinaldi, Linda Roman

NOTE: An HTML version of this report, with waypoints, is at <http://www.climber.org/eckert/recent/index.html> including some pictures. It will be there only until it gets into <http://www.climber.org/TripReports/>

Those who read my too-common or too-long trip reports know that I do mostly "mountaineering" climbs, not technical climbs. This was a "make a wish" climb for someone who asked me how they could ever get accepted on a fourth class climb when there was always a prerequisite of having been on someone ELSE'S fourth class climb: The answer was "let's go try it and you can turn around if you don't feel comfortable". We got 6 out of 7 to the top, no injuries and no headlamps required, on a route none

of us had ever done before. That's a success all around! [The one person who did not summit was smart enough to know his limits and stop before the rest of us detected serious trouble - the mountain will be there next year, and so will he.]

I'll skip the boring stuff about hiking to Thunderbolt Pass - everyone agreed that our compromise route stayed low enough to avoid the boulders and high enough to avoid wasting time in the tundra. We camped at the upper reaches of the Barrett Lakes drainage (waypoint HICAMP), and 12000' for the first night in convinced everyone to sit around talking instead of going for an afternoon walk. The wind was howling at Bishop Pass, making us stagger a bit, but decreased long before the alpenglow lit up the ridge.

We left camp about 6am on summit day. After being treated to a stunning Palisades sunset, the not-too-shabby western sierra sunrise was good enough to snap a few pictures but not good enough to linger. We turned our attention to the western approach toward the U-Notch and climbed in the shadows as the sun warmed the other side of the ridge.

I had followed John Kerr across "the catwalk" and up the LeConte route back in 1993, but I was wearing plastic boots at the time (which helped kick steps in the snow right over the chockstones, but which didn't feel good on the highly exposed and downsloping wet friction slabs of the catwalk). This time I hoped to do something different, but several participants wanted the easiest route and thought LeConte fit the bill. Lucky for me, looking at those friction slabs convinced everyone we should go for the Clyde Variation instead. (It also helped that two women camped near us said the chockstones on LeConte were very hard 4th class indeed, probably 5th class.)

I haven't read a report on the Clyde Variation, so I'll go into a bit too much detail. It's a great route if you are confident, but take a rope to rap off. The holds are great, the rock is solid (once you are out of the main U-Notch chute) unlike the LeConte chute, and it's got better views all around. Much better aesthetics!

Secor says the Clyde Variation starts 120' below the U-Notch on the west... I'd say it's more like 50' vertical. He also says it's 40' of easy 4th class, but we must have been having a bad day: The first 20 or 30 feet (up to a 2" rap sling and a nice ledge) is really class 3 but most people wanted a belay anyway. The next bit, unless none of us saw the easy way, is actually hard class 4 for another 30 or 40 feet (I put in a cam and a sling for pro on the way) up to a large ledge that goes west around a corner. This ledge is above the level of the U-Notch but just a bit, and was our first sunny spot of the day.

Going around the corner was more excitement than some wanted, even though it amounted to very exposed class 2. We got out the rope again, and I started checking my watch. The ledge, according to Secor, leads to a 3rd class chute: Mark that "hard 3rd class", note that it's very steep, convince your head to ignore the cliff at the bottom, and you won't need a rope. I climbed without a belay, dragging the rope almost full length to a good belay spot and brought people around the corner.

We noted the headwall above and angled a bit to the right as the chute turned into more of a face, and soon the rope came out again. One person called it quits here, and we discussed turnaround times since it was already 1pm. This time I took a belay to go around yet another corner: Our chute had intersected the "chimney variation" at the southern end of the southeast arete, and you had to wave your butt over 300' of air to get around the end of the arete, looking down the chimney at the Palisade Glacier. Once over to the east side, a short friction slab

lead to a small saddle and easy class 2-3 into the same bowl the LeConte route leads to.

From the bowl we followed a light rock seam up and left, then cut back under the peak and wriggled through the keyhole to the final summit block: Two awkward but not highly exposed moves and we were on top! Several used a rope on the way down, but none needed a rope above the arete/chimney corner.

This was the toughest peak several participants had done, but everyone accounted well for themselves. I had a lot of competent help handling the rope and spotting other climbers, and it was fun to give back on a peak where I had once been the tentative guy asking for a top rope. (Summit and rappel photos are also at the URL above.)

We hurried back down, realizing that for the return we could rap off the arete near the small saddle instead of going back around the corner. Basically we slid down a straight line from there to where we left the main U-Notch chute, with two long and one short rappels on a single 50m rope. Back in camp by 7pm, we basked in our accomplishment and sat around talking until after 9pm since the night was warm and calm.

• *Steve Eckert*

## Tenth Annual Family Camp

September 23-24, 2000

Trip participants: Kai Wiedman, Cecil Anison, her children Joseph, Joanna, and their friend Austin; Jim Ramaker and his friends, Joe Clay, Tim Halloran, Michelle Valdez; John Cordes and April Cordes; Scott Kreider, Marilyn Kreider, and their infant daughter; Bob Bynum, and Gretchen Luepke Bynum.

The tenth annual family camp was a great success with fun for people of different ages and hiking abilities. This year we all camped out in the North Pines campground in Yosemite Valley. Some people went on strenuous peak climbs while others took leisurely strolls in the valley or just hung around camp.

Gretchen and I were able to leave home at around noon and after a pleasant lunch in the Knight's Ferry we arrived in Yosemite Valley at 5:00 PM. After setting up the tent, we took the shuttle bus over to the LeConte Memorial where we viewed a Yosemite backpacking slide show by Kent Gill. Kent was the president of the Sierra Club 1974-1975. It was very interesting to get the perspective of a Sierra Club former president on a variety of issues. Kent has been an avid backpacker for many years and has been active in conservation causes. After the show, we went to bed relatively early and noticed the arrival of John and April Cordes around midnight.

On Saturday morning, we were surprised that Cecil and Kai had not yet arrived. Jim Ramaker and his crew pulled in as we were making breakfast. They had arrived late and had spent the night at another campsite. For the day all of us except Gretchen decided to hike from the Tuolumne Lodge parking lot and head in the direction of Ragged Peak. Gretchen wanted to hang around in the valley. John, April, and I rode up together and Jim took his group.

Somehow at the trailhead we missed Jim's group so John and I went on a hike while April and their dog Britches stayed near Tuolumne.

It was a perfect day for a climb. There were no clouds in the sky and a very slight breeze. John and I headed up the Young Lakes trail and turned towards Dog Lake. We hiked around Dog Lake and then bush whacked our way through a forest and finally up a peak whose name I am not sure of. John said that it wasn't Ragged Peak, but a smaller peak above 10,000 Ft. We summited at about 2:00 PM. The temperature was 50 degrees with a slight wind. Due to sleeping in the valley and I was not at all acclimatized to the high altitude and really felt out of shape.

Upon our descent, we intersected the Young Lakes trail and then ran into Jim's group sitting out in a meadow. They had seen us at the trailhead, but somehow we didn't see them. During the day they had climbed Lempert Dome and then hiked up to the meadow. We all hiked back to the trailhead together.

When we arrived back in Yosemite Valley, we cooked dinner and found out what everybody else had been doing. Kai, Cecil and her children had arrived around noon. During the day they along with Gretchen took a walk to the Indian Caves area. Scott and Marilyn had also arrived on Saturday. After dark, we built a fire, roasted marshmallows, and then celebrated Kai's birthday with a cake that Cecil had brought

On Sunday we again split into several groups. John Cordes and April said they were going to do a trail from Foresta to El Capitan. Scott and Marilyn headed for home. Two of Jim's friends went for a hike to Mirror Lake. Kai, Cecil and the children parked at Sentinel Beach and then hiked over to the rock area near the Yosemite Falls trailhead to do some rock scrambling. Gretchen, Jim, and I met them over there. All of us had fun doing some scrambling on the rocks, but it was especially fun for Cecil's children.

Later that afternoon Gretchen and I rode the shuttle bus to see its complete route. We got off at the Ahwahnee Hotel and on the spur of the moment decided to partake in the Sunday brunch. This was a very elegant dining experience that I highly recommend.

After brunch, we walked back to our car at the Yosemite Lodge. On the way we spent some time at the visitor's center and the Ansel Adams Gallery. I highly recommend both of these. At the visitor's center there are many informative exhibits about the Yosemite geology and history. These exhibits will make us appreciate the peaks we are climbing.

We spent the last hour in the park watching the sun set on half dome from the side of North Drive. This completed a most memorable weekend in Yosemite.

• *Bob Bynum*

## 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.

### Mt. Ritter

Peak: Mt. Ritter (4006m, class 3)  
Date: Sept. 30-Oct. 1 (Sat-Sun)  
Contact: David Harris David\_Harris@hmc.edu 909-607-3623

Enjoy post-Labor Day climbing on the foreboding North Face of Mt. Ritter. On Saturday we'll pack in to the Ediza Lake area. On Sunday we'll scale the Ritter-Banner Saddle, then ascend John Muir's famous North Face route of Ritter. A descent of the Southeast Glacier should round out our mountaineering adventure. Ice axe and comfort with exposed 3rd class climbing required.

For more information, see Muir's trip report:

[http://www.sierraclub.org/john\\_muir\\_exhibit/writings/mount\\_ritter.html](http://www.sierraclub.org/john_muir_exhibit/writings/mount_ritter.html)

### Langley the Easy Way

Peak: Langley (14,043) and Cirque Peaks  
Date: October 20-22 (Fri-Sun)  
Contact: Nancy Fitzsimmons, 408-957-9683  
Pkclimber@aol.com  
Adrienne Van Gorden 408-779-2320  
avangorden@scs.santacruz.k12.ca.us

This will be done as a backpack trip not as a dayhike so the plan is to meet Friday morning and set up camp at one of the Cottonwood lakes. We will get an early start Saturday and climb Langley with an optional climb up Cirque Peak (class 1).

Sunday we will hike out and drive home. Stormy weather cancels.

### Moses/Maggie/Homer/Vandever from Mountain Home

Peaks: North Maggie (10235), Moses (9331), etc  
Dates: October 27-29 (Fri-Sun)  
Contact: Steve Eckert, eckert@climber.org  
Contact: Aaron Schuman, aaron\_schuman@yahoo.com

Mountain Home State Forest is stunning in the fall: Colors, big trees, no people, and a quick exit if you're snowed on like I was on my first visit. Most people go only a few miles in, to bag Moses (3<sup>rd</sup> class) and Maggie (brush and boulders), entering at an even brushier and nastier trailhead for Homer's Nose. I happen to know that the east side of Maggie is beautiful, and I'm hoping the east side of Homer is also... but mostly I'm hoping to visit a drainage I haven't been in before. Aaron is concentrating on Moses and Maggie, so we may split up on Saturday but will camp together (at Summit Lake) both nights. From camp you can explore the upper Kaweah River's south fork, climb Vandever, or stroll up to Soda Butte for a view of the Little Kern Valley. Join us no matter what your skill level, as long as you're comfortable navigating on your own if you don't like our pace or agenda!

### Khumbu region of Nepal

Peak: Island Pek or Mera Peak  
Date: Oct-Nov 2000  
Contact: Tim Hult 408-970-0760, Timdhult@aol.com

Four week trip into a spectacular and storied region of the Himalaya. These are "minimal" trekking peaks open to qualified class 3 peak baggers with snow experience. Views of Everest and all those places you've heard about. Experience and compatibility with groups on long "wilderness" trips a must.

## Elected Officials

### Chair:

Rick Booth / pcs-chair@climber.org  
408-354-7291 home  
237 San Mateo Avenue, Los Gatos, CA 95030

### Vice Chair and Trip Scheduler:

Dee Booth / pcs-scheduler@climber.org  
408-354-7291 home  
237 San Mateo Avenue, Los Gatos, CA 95030

### Treasurer and Membership Roster (address changes):

Bill Kirkpatrick / pcs-treasurer@climber.org  
408-293-2447 home  
435 N. Second St. #217, San Jose CA 95112

## Publicity Committee Positions

### Scree Editor:

Bob Bynum / pcs-editor@climber.org  
510-659-1413 home

### PCS World Wide Web Publisher:

Aaron Schuman / pcs-webmaster@climber.org  
650-943-7532 home  
223 Horizon Avenue, Mountain View, CA 94043-4718

### Publicity Chair:

Steve Eckert / pcs-pub-chair@climber.org  
650-508-0500 home  
1814 Oak Knoll Drive, Belmont, CA 94002-1753

**Scree** is the monthly journal of the Peak Climbing Section of the Sierra Club, Loma Prieta Chapter. Our mirror website is <http://www.climber.org/pcs/> and our official website is <http://www.sierraclub.org/chapters/lomaprieta/pcs/>

## Subscriptions and Email List Info

Hard copy subscriptions are \$10. Subscription applications and checks payable to "PCS" should be mailed to the Treasurer so they arrive before the last Tuesday of the expiration month. If you are on the official email list (lomap-pcs-announce@lists.sierraclub.org) or one of the email lists the PCS feeds (either the sierra-nevada@climber.org discussion list or the california-news@climber.org read-only list), you have a free **EScree** subscription. For email list details, send "info lomap-pcs-announce" to "listserv@lists.sierraclub.org", or send anything to "info@climber.org". **EScree** subscribers should send a subscription form to the Treasurer to become voting PCS members at no charge. The **Scree** is on the web as both plain text and fully formatted Adobe Acrobat/PDF.

## 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 10/29/2000. Meetings are the second Tuesday of each month.**



Peak Climbing Section, 789 Daffodil Way, San Jose CA 95117

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

**First Class Mail - Dated Material**