

November, 2001

Peak Climbing Section, Loma Prieta Chapter, Sierra Club

Vol. 35 No. 11

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

## Next General Meeting

**Date:** Tuesday, November 13

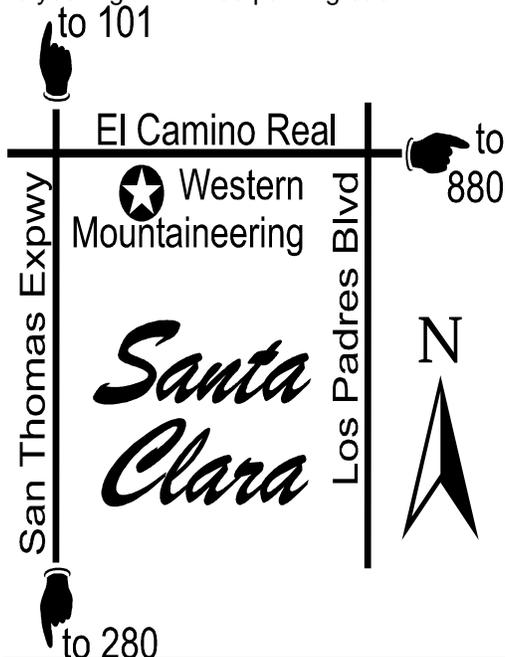
**Time:** 8:00 PM

**Program:** Nepal: An Overview of Two Great Treks

Charles Schafer will present an overview of treks to the Khumbu region & of the Annapurna Circuit. Both treks provide amazing views of some glorious peaks, as well as a glimpse into the lives and lifestyles of the Nepali people.

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

**Directions:** 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. Limited parking back.



Deadline for submissions to the next Scree is Sunday 11/25/2001 Meetings are the 2nd Tuesday of each month.

## New PCS Officers

The nominating committee is pleased to announce the following slate of officers for 2001-2002 They will need to be voted on at the November meeting.

Chair: Ron Karpel  
 Vice chair: Scott Kreider  
 Treasurer: Arun Mahajan

• Peter Maxwell, Landa Robillard, John Wilkinson,  
 Nominating Committee

## 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.

### Mt. Harrington

Peak: Mt. Harrington 11,009, Class 3  
 Dates: October 27-28, Sat-Sun  
 Map: Cedar Grove 7.5 min.  
 Leader: Pat Callery ([haishan1@yahoo.com](mailto:haishan1@yahoo.com))  
 Co-Leader: wanted

Come along to this spectacular peak in western Kings Canyon NP for a late-season adventure, when the days are short and the nights are crisp. A long and steep hike in on Saturday will put us in view of Harrington's 300 foot summit cone, which we'll tackle Sunday morning. Beautiful class 3 rock and spectacular summit views await!

### Mission Peak to Sunol

Peak: Mission Peak 2517 ft  
 Date: Sat, December 1, 7:30 AM  
 Leaders: Arun Mahajan 650/327-8598 (H)  
 408/585-2114 (W)  
[aron@tollbridgetech.com](mailto:aron@tollbridgetech.com)  
 Ron Karpel [ronny@karpel.org](mailto:ronny@karpel.org)

Mission Peak to Sunol –(co-listed with the Day Hiking Section) DHS Rating: 4C (mileage between 15 and 20, and altitude gain, 3000+ ft, round trip). PCS Rating: Class-1. Meet at 7.30am at the Stanford Ave parking lot and trailhead. We will hike to the top of Mission Peak and then drop down and hike to Sunol Park. The strenuous part is hiking back from Sunol towards Mission Peak which is mainly uphill. Rain cancels.

# Ask Bôté Ànchouré.

## Mountaineering and Climbing Q & A from the Famous French Alpinist

Noted French alpinist Bôté Ànchouré has agreed to answer mountaineering and climbing questions from Scree readers when he returns from the mountains. He has just returned from first ascents of Grade-6/5.14 AD (Absurdly Difficult) routes on Shishkaboob, the spire in Farflungoffistan. He climbed and named the routes "The Spy Who Grabbed Me" with noted American climber Ursula Undress and also "For Your Thighs Only" with noted French climber, Rebecca De Hornay. Relaxing in his own private mud bath in his own private Idaho summer home, he graciously answers questions from an enquiring mountaineering community.

**Question #1** Me and my boyfriend, James Pond, we climb regularly in the crags near our home. Recently, I have been noticing a change in his demeanor. He seems to be too much in touch with his feminine self. Previously he hated it when I kicked his ass in climbing, now he applauds me. It is like, he has become sensitive all of a sudden. The other day, he was like, sobbing, at the end of an episode of 'Sienfeld' and I was like, OMiGod. What is going on? Please help.

Concerned Chichi from Chechnya

Dear CheechMarina,

Normally, I would have asked you to take his inner child and kick his ass, but this is a matter of great sensitivity and must be handled with delicacy, just like the final move on 'BlunderBall'. I suggest that you stop sharing your 'Lemon Luna Bars' with him as they are only for women. That may have been the root cause of this strange transformation. Continue to keep a close watch on him and ask him to stay away from your 'Vanity Fair' catalogues.

**Question #2** I have read recently that Viagra may be useful in reducing the susceptibility of an individual to high altitude effects such as edemas and may in fact promote faster high altitude acclimatization. Do you have any news or experience with this?

Uma Knurlmann

Dear Uma,

The great Bôté would never need such a chemical boost as my many lady acquaintances can verify. However, I have a French American friend, Legrand Johnson, who claims to use Viagra while couloir climbing. He says that in addition to providing a faster acclimatization it simplifies the placing of ice screws. Without the Viagra, he has to prop himself away from the ice with one knee and stand on one foot. With the Viagra all he has to do is lean forward somewhat and gets to stand on both feet. This is supposedly a much more restful a stance.

**Question #3** I have spent many years pursuing alpine routes in the California Sierra and the regulatory trend has been to require bear canisters on more and more trail heads. I never have any problems with bears and this requirement is annoying. Are there more bears out there or am I missing something?

Konrad Bär

Dear Konrad,

Here in Europe there are no bears so I passed your question on to an American working for the Department of the Interior. He is Bure O'Crat and is the Undersecretary of Bears and Other Mammals (UBOM). His answer is that there are indeed many more bears running amuck in North America. The bears have

splintered into many sub species. The state of Illinois is about run over with chicago bears. California has a bazillion golden bears and more than one or two badnewz bears. The Nasdaq has more bears than can be counted. It is an epidemic. He recommends following the bear canister rules explicitly. The toughest part seems to be to get the bear into the canister. This will usually cost you some of your food or maybe another Madonna CD.

**Question #4** I maintain the e-mail lists for my rock climbing and mountaineering group. They are divided up into mountains-north-class1, mountains-north-class2, and so forth all the way to mountains-south-class5. Another set of lists is outdoor-cooking-cutlery-knife, outdoor-cooking-cutlery-fork, etc. The people using these lists just cannot put the correct message on the right list. They even put knife messages on the fork list! Can you believe it? This makes me so mad I want to remove them all from my lists. The only problem is then nobody would use them. What do you suggest?

Ana Lyre Tentive

Dear Ana,

My guess is you haven't taken a dump in a decade. According to my calculations you should weigh 450 pounds. Drink a gallon of mineral oil and eat a pound of Ex-Lax. If this doesn't make you feel more kindly toward the list miscreants then a quick trip to the proctologist is indicated. Make sure he doesn't keep any nitro, Viagra, or Madonna CDs around.

Questions to Bôté Ànchouré may be forwarded through Rick Booth at [rwbooth@home.com](mailto:rwbooth@home.com) or Arun Mahajan at [arun@tollbridgetech.com](mailto:arun@tollbridgetech.com).

## Mountaineering Destinations: South America Andinismo

### A Primer for Andean Mountaineering,

The vast 6000 mile long range of the Andes cuts through Ecuador, Peru, Bolivia, Chile, and Argentina like the prow of some huge ship. All of our domestic mountain ranges strung out end to end would not amount to half of the Andes. It offers climbing higher and more challenging than anything in the continental states. One range ("Cordillera") after another stretching so far as to offer a whole range of climbing seasons: Our winter for Ecuador, northern Argentina, Chile, and Patagonia, and summer for Bolivia and Peru in the mid latitudes.

Ecuador's "Avenue of the Volcanoes" is a frequent first stop for budding Andinistas. Although tamer than some other ranges in South America, even the normal routes on 19-20,000 ft Cotopaxi, Cayambe and Chimborazo are more committing than anything in the 48 states. The hip and bustling capitol city of Quito offers a variety of services to climbers: cheap climbers hostels (\$5-10 a night) like the Magic Bean or the Crossroads, excellent guide services such as Safari Ecuador and SurTrek, nice huts on most peaks, and an abundance of public and 4X4 transportation (Try [cotopaxi.com](http://cotopaxi.com), [themagicbean.com](http://themagicbean.com), [surtrek.com](http://surtrek.com)). All of this at an altitude (9500ft) that allows you to maintain acclimatization between peaks. The Avenida also contains some harder and less frequently climbed volcanoes such as the peaks of El Altar, Illiniza Sur or Antisana. Ecuador is the obvious choice for a first foray into the Andes.

Chile and Argentina are also good first choices, offering mostly desert peaks such as Aconcogua (the Mt Whitney of South America) or the Atacama giants Pissis and Ojos Del Salado, which are dry 6000m peaks. These venues are more expensive and

generally less accessible, but still charming and a good introduction into high altitude andinismo. Don't include Patagonian peaks in this generalization, they do offer excellent technical rock routes on very scenic and demanding peaks but are cursed with horrid weather.

Bolivia has a fine combination of great weather and big, beautiful mountains. Being the poorest country in South America it is generally inexpensive (Rooms at the Hotel Austria in downtown La Paz are \$1.75!), and the streets of La Paz are at 12,000 ft. Dozens of 17,000 – 21,000 ft peaks to choose from in the Cordillera Real (Potosi, Condoriri, Illumani) and Cordillera Apolobamba make it seem like the place climbers might go in the afterlife. It is a more remote and adventurous place to climb with fewer guide or jeep services (Try Club Andino Boliviana 591-2-324682 or Colibri [acolibri@ceibo.entelnet.bo](mailto:acolibri@ceibo.entelnet.bo)). Bolivia has a sort of warm glow to it that's hard to put into words ("Tranquilo" is a word the locals use), but its reflected in the faces of the people of the altiplano whose wizzened smiles are hard to forget.

Saving Peru for last here and in your Andean climbing career is a good idea; the climbing here is epic in its difficulty, scale, and beauty. The climbers' town of Huaraz is a ramshackle, knockabout sort of town that a grubby mountaineer feels at home in. There are climbers from all over the world strolling the streets, ropes slung across their chests like suits of armor, and the scenery is as beautiful as anywhere on earth. Most of the peaks look unclimbable, "Impossible" I once said looking up at a peak in the Huayhash range until my partner reminded me we had just climbed it. Any summit of a 6000M peak in Peru is an accomplishment that'll brass your buttons for the rest of your life. Some of the more popular peaks such as Alpamayo, Copa, and Huascarán, are within a few hours drive from Huaraz, as well as plenty of 5000m acclimatization peaks such as Ishinca, Churup and Urus Este. The snow never consolidates, and the difficulty rarely relents. When you are ready, see the folks at Casa De Guia (Tel 72-1811), or flag down an Arriero (Muleteer), plenty of climber services are available at moderate prices.

You don't have to speak Spanish to get along in most of the climbing venues, but it will save you some money by allowing you to live and eat with the local people. How good a climber you have to be depends largely on which Andean summits you just after: at a minimum your experience should include glacier travel and you should be able to bag any domestic fourteenner. Generally you do not need inoculations (unless you are going down to the jungle areas), nor do you need a visa for stays of less than 30 days. Even currency exchange is not needed, as your yankee greenbacks are welcomed.

Sure you can accomplish a lot of hard climbing without ever leaving your own backyard (try a winter climb on any 14teener), but staying in your own backyard isn't what being a mountaineer is all about. Staring up at a hanging glacier pinned against a blue-black sky while standing thousands of feet higher than any summit in the 48 states, this is what you had in mind. Aean mountaineering is more than just a peakbagging experience, climbing in the Andes is a vacation from your sanitized American life, or in other words: its not just a climb, its an adventure

For additional beta: Climbing in Bolivia, (The late/great) Yossi Brain. Climbs of the Cordillera Blanca, David Sharman. A climbers guide to Ecuador, Bradt Books. Aconcagua, a climbing guide, RJ Secor. Mountaineering in Patagonia, Alan Kearney. Mountaineering In the Andes, Jill Neate. and Lonely Planet travel books.

• John Zazzara

## 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 Muir

Peak: Mt. Muir (14000)  
Dates: Nov. 10-12  
Leader: George Van Gorden,  
[gvangord@mhu.k12.ca.us](mailto:gvangord@mhu.k12.ca.us)  
Co-leader: Adrienne Van Gorden  
[avangorden@sccs.santacruz.k12.ca.us](mailto:avangorden@sccs.santacruz.k12.ca.us)

The quota period is over and the Whitney trail is ours. We'll go up to Outpost Camp (10300) on Sat. and camp in sight of a frozen waterfall.

If anybody wants to carry a rope and a couple of ice screws ( I'm willing to carry the screws), it would be fun to do a little ice climbing. Sunday we'll get an early start, climb the peak and maybe get back to camp in time to leave that afternoon, otherwise early Monday morning. Anyone wanting to go down on Sunday night would be welcome to do so. Trip is canceled if snow closes the road to Whitney Portal.

### Mt Muir

Peak: Mt. Muir, Class 4, 14,012  
Date: November 17-18, Sat-Sun  
Contact: David Harris 909-607-3623  
[David.Harris@hmc.edu](mailto:David.Harris@hmc.edu)

The ordinary route on Mt. Muir is a short jaunt up the west side from the Mt. Whitney trail. One feels that a mountain with such a name is worthy of a better climb. However, from Trail Camp, the east buttress rises impressively to the summit and called out tempting me to explore its ribs and chutes the last time I passed by on a descent from Whitney.

We'll take advantage of the end of permit season to explore this less-climbed route. On Saturday, we'll hike up to Trail Camp and guard our food from the ferocious marmots. On Sunday, we'll make a rapid ascent up the buttress. It was first climbed by John Mendenhall and rated 4th class, but Mendenhall also called the East Corner of Mt. Banner 4th class, so we might encounter some challenging moves. If all goes well, we'll descend the trail and be out by dark.

If you are interested, you should be comfortable moving quickly on loose 4th class terrain. If you haven't climbed with me, I need a brief climbing bio showing experience on comparable routes.

### Mexican Peaks

Peak: Citlaltepetl, (18,400), Iztaccihuatl (17,340) & more  
Date: Jan 19-28, 2002  
Contact: Bob Evans, [robtwevans@email.msn.com](mailto:robtwevans@email.msn.com)

## Telescope Peak from Death Valley

### A Joint PCS and DHS Trip

September 29, 2001

At 3:00 on Saturday, 29 September, eight adventurers: Rick Daraska, Jeff Fisher (co-leader), Nancy Fitzsimmons, Bob Gross, Linda Roman (from the San Diego area), Maxym Runov, Hal Tompkins, and Richard Vassar (co-leader), gathered at Shorty's Well (-253 ft) under the light of the setting moon to begin a climb of Telescope Peak with a little help (car shuttles, sag wagon, and moral support) from our friends. While we added our names to the sign-in sheet, someone in the group noted that it was 82 deg F which caused many of us to doubt the sanity of our undertaking. WT Henderson named Telescope Peak in April 1861 because of

the wide, clear view from its summit. It is probably the mountain with the greatest sheer rise from base to summit in the continental US. WT Henderson climbed Telescope Peak in 1860 and is also credited with being one of the California Rangers who killed the bandit, Joaquin Murieta.

We started walking up the road to Hanaupah Canyon at 3:05 using headlamps to avoid stepping on dessert critters and tripping on our shoelaces. We kept a steady, moderate pace eventually crossing a small stream as it began to get light at 6:00. After regrouping we continued up the road to its end. We then followed a trail that continues up the canyon until we reached a spot where there is an old mine entrance on the south side of the canyon and a good strong flow of water next to a boulder (see Spring waypoint below) surrounded with plants. Since this was our last chance for water, we stopped here and filled our packs with 5 or 6 liters of water to see us through the rest of the day. It was now 6:55 and 68 deg F and we had completed approximately 10.5 miles of the climb. We left the canyon and began climbing steeply up a south spur ridge via a use trail up to the main east-west ridge which divides the middle and south forks of Hanaupah Canyon. Soon we were in the sun and the rising temperatures were making this start to seem like a real climb. About three-quarters of the way up the spur ridge we followed the use trail as it contoured over to a saddle on the main east-west ridge. We stopped to regroup just below a saddle (see Saddle waypoint below). The temperatures had warmed into the mid-70s and they stayed in a 75 to 80 deg F range for most of the remainder of the ridge climb. There was a light breeze and the temperatures were quite comfortable as long as we remembered to keep drinking.

At this point Jeff and Richard decided to split the group into two with Rick, Nancy, Linda, Maxym, Hal, and Richard in the first group and Jeff and Bob in the second group. We used FRS radios to maintain contact between the two groups with a pre-arranged radio check-in every hour on the hour. The route followed the ridge and initially involved some up and down before the climbing got underway in earnest. From the ridge we could see the summit of Telescope Peak and also the hiking trail from Mahogany Flat as it contours around Rogers Peak on its way to Telescope Peak. The view from where we stood back down into Death Valley 5000+ ft below was spectacular. The ridge walking was quite enjoyable with good footing and a pleasant mixture of chaparral plants and open stands of pine trees. The first group continued to hike at a moderate, steady pace keeping to the planned 1000 ft per hour itinerary. The ridge steepens noticeably as it nears the junction with the trail from Mahogany Flat and we zigzagged to ease the gradient. The first group reached the trail at 12:55 (see Trail Junction waypoint below). At this point Richard turned the first group loose so that everyone could hike the trail (1.5 miles) at their own pace to the summit.

Climbers from first group summited between 13:30 and 14:15. The temperature was 60 deg F with a beautiful clear sky and no wind. In other words---perfect! From the summit there were great views down the length of Death Valley and across to the Grapevine, Funeral, and Black Mountains. On the other side we could gaze the length of Panamint Valley. Because the weather was so nice we had a leisurely rest on the summit as we waited for our friends hiking up from Mahogany Flat to join us. The group hiking from Mahogany Flat included Bob and Gretchen Bynum, TJ Wilcock, Maxym's wife Dara, his sister, Olesya, and his son, Gleb, and Richard's wife, Janet, and his daughter, Rachel. They left Mahogany Flat at 11:00. Janet and Rachel Vassar arrived at 14:50 with extra water and food in their packs in case it was needed. After taking group photos and signing the summit register the first group left the summit and began hiking to Mahogany Flat at 15:15. We passed Bob, TJ, Dara, Olesya, Gleb and finally Jeff

and Bob as they headed up to the summit. Jeff and Bob reached the summit at 15:50 and departed about 15 minutes later. The front-runners from the first group reached Mahogany Flat at 17:30 with the Jeff and Bob finishing by 18:45 (before dark). It was a very successful climb for all concerned! We ended the day with snacks and drinks allowed us replenish our energy and fluids while entertaining each other with tall tales. We would all like to say a very special thanks to Bob Bynum, TJ Wilcock, and Janet Vassar for shuttling cars and/or climbers to and from the trailhead. Thanks also to Bob Gross who prepared and printed customized topographic maps showing our climbing route using Topo! software.

The following is a note to future Death Valley to Telescope Peak climbers. This climb was done in the midst of a heat wave in Death Valley. On the day of our climb the high in Death Valley was 107 deg F. The high on the previous day was 114 deg F (tied the record high temperature for the date). Yet by starting well before sunrise we experienced temperatures between 82 and 60 deg F during our climb. Jeff Fisher has also done this climb in early November 1995 and 1999. In 1995 the temperatures that were 20+ deg cooler than those we experienced in our climb. You should select your day for climbing depending on your tolerance for heat or cold and the amount of daylight you want. Remember that the summit of Telescope Peak is approximately 50 deg cooler than the temperature at Furnace Creek because of the 11000 ft + elevation difference. In my opinion, the ideal time for this climb is probably mid-October. For more information on the daily temperature norms and extremes in Death Valley (i.e. Furnace Creek) go to the website <http://www.wrcc.dri.edu/cgi-bin/cliLIST.pl?cadeat+sca>. Click on "Daily Summary Stats" (next to bottom under "Period of Record Data Tables") for a tabular listing or "Daily Extremes and Averages" (under "Temperature") for a graph. Up to date information on the route and current conditions can be obtained from Death Valley NP Rangers Charlie Callagan at the Furnace Creek Ranger Station 760-786-3244 or Kyle Nelson at the Cow Creek Ranger Station 760-786-3260.

Richard Vassar's trip statistics:

Distance = 26 miles

Time = 14 hours 58 minutes

Elevation gain = 11870 ft.

Maximum elevation = 11048 ft (Telescope Peak)

Minimum elevation = -253 ft. (Shorty's Well)

GPS Waypoints (UTM coordinates, NAD27 datum)

Waypoint, Zone, Easting, Northing, Elevation

Shorty's Well, 11S, (0)510728, 4008789, -253 ft.

Spring, 11S, (0)498264, 4004360, 3680 ft.

Saddle, 11S, (0)497552, 4005240, 5200 ft.

Trail Junction, 11S, (0)492570, 4004099, 9920 ft.

Telescope Peak, 11S, (0)492054, 4002591, 11048 ft.

Mahogany Flat, 11S, (0)493936, 4009264, 8140 ft.

• *Richard Vassar*

## Cherry Creek Canyon

October 13-14 2001

Cherry Creek is located on the northern border of Yosemite Valley in the Emigrant Wilderness. It flows along the base of Kibbie ridge for about 15 miles before feeding the Cherry Lake reservoir. In October, the creek is sometimes described as a garden hose trickle. Hikers can visit its canyon and follow it down for about 12 miles. The Cherry Creek Canyon hike is in the process of becoming a PCS classic. After his second trip 2 years ago, Kelly Maas wanted to return again and motivated another 11 people to follow him on this adventure. We started hiking from Cherry Lake

on Saturday at 8:00am. On this 2 day trip, the first day is spent hiking first on a dirt road, then along a trail that follows Kibbie ridge until Styx pass (about 14 miles and 3500 gain). This ridge trail allows nice views into the Canyon but the 70-80F temperature on the ridge and the mileage made this first day somewhat of a slog. From Styx pass, we cut the trail and headed down into the Canyon for another 1-2 miles. Although this had been a long day, our first glimpse of the upper canyon made us all realized why we had come here in first place. It is wall-to-wall granite, a very scenic and unusual place. 2001 being a dry year, there was no flow in the creek but water was still available in the many pools and pockets shaped into the rock. At 5pm, we found nice patches of sand interspersed among the granite and trees that allowed our rather large group to establish camp comfortably. We had daylight until about 7pm which gave us ample time to set shelters and cook while enjoying this very special place.

It had been a rather cool Friday night at the Cherry Valley campground above Cherry Lake. Although we were 2000 feet higher, the night into the canyon was unexpectedly warm. This was due to the sun-heated granite surrounding us. A clear temperature difference could be felt whenever we moved away from the rocks, which was never more than a few feet.

As Sunday promised to be a long day, we started hiking down the canyon at 7am. Several of us had spotted bear scat and prints in the sand and pretty soon we spotted a black bear on a ledge, easy to make out on the granite background. It quickly disappeared behind the rocks. Hiking down the trail-less canyon, hopping over boulders and slabs was a constant treat and everyone enjoyed it immensely. In some sections the canyon narrowed down to arms width and we used some thin ledges in the steep walls to avoid wading through deep pools. In two sections, we had to backtrack and get out of the canyon because a wall was too steep to be tackled by our group. At 3pm and after 10-12 miles of hiking, we reached a small lake at the confluence of Cherry Creek and its West Fork. We filled our water bottles before leaving the creek for good. We headed west, staying above the south side of the creek, reached a saddle and then followed a little used trail down. From this point (about 5000 elevation), we headed cross-country toward the dirt road which was about 2.5 miles away and 5750 elevation. We followed a bearing of 152 degrees toward a landmark along the road. We encountered a fair amount of impassable prickly brush as we got closer to the road, which made staying on course and keeping the group together a real challenge. With the help of Landa's road sense, we emerged out of the woods at 5:45 pm, about 0.1 mile from our intended target. It got dark quickly as we headed down the dirt road for another 4 miles, comparing our various feet and muscle pains as we marched. We were back at the dam at 8pm, feeling tired but rewarded by an exceptional trip.

Trip participants: Kelly Maas, leader, Landa Robillard, Dot Reilly, Chris and John Kerr, Alex Sapozhnikov, Heather Kirkby, Austin Meinert, Kirsten and Stephane Mouradian, co-leader and scribe. Although not officially signed up on this trip, Tim Hult and Andy Skumanich met us at the trailhead and hiked along with our group for most of the trip.

• *Stephane Mouradian*

## Dicks Peak (9974 ft)

## Mt Tallac (9735 ft)

October 21, 2001.

On Sunday morning, 8.05 am, Stephan Meier and I, Arun Mahajan, started hiking from the trailhead at the end of the Fallen Leaf Lake, at the Lily Lake trailhead. We were on unpaved road for a short while and after 1.7 miles, reached the first junction where we turned right and walked on trail for 1.6 miles to the next junction where we turned right again for 0.3 miles till yet another junction, this time, with the PCT. We stayed on the PCT for 0.6 miles and here the PCT turns left (the right branch goes to Gilmour Lake). We stayed on the PCT which climbs a little sharply and in 2.9 miles, were at the top of Dick's Pass (7.1 miles, total). Dicks Peak is to the left (south-west) and a use trail traverses a dark peaklet till a saddle and then rises quite steeply towards the summit and there is some loose stuff here. We were at the top of Dicks Peak at 11.40 am. We spent a long time at the windy summit. There was nobody else there and we looked at Jack's Peak but based on Ron Karpel's report of the weekend prior and his description of the scree, decided to punt and went back to the pass. Here we took a look at the map once again and Tallac seemed to be only a 3.8 mile round-trip, side jaunt from the point on the trail where there was a turn-off to Lake Gilmour, so we made a speedy descent on the trail and near Lake Gilmour, took off towards Tallac. It was 2 pm then. We were on the top of Tallac, where we met several parties, at 2.50pm. Back to Lake Gilmour after a short summit halt, at 4 pm and after a break and the seemingly endless hike back, at the cars at 5.35pm.

Distances: RT to Dicks Pass: 14.2 miles. Tallac side trip: 3.8 miles. RT to Dicks Peak from Dicks Pass, approximately 2 miles, making this a 20 mile day with maybe about 4500ft of gain. We were hiking for 9.5 hours. These distances are based on the excellent 'Tom Harrison' map of the Desolation Wilderness.

Both the peaks are fairly straight forward with a little bit of loose and steep stuff near the summit of Dicks Peak and make for an enjoyable excursion. Stephan had been turned around from Tallac in previous winter ski-ascents due to avalanche danger and as he put it, he nailed the peak this time when it was at it's weakest.

• *Arun Mahajan*

## Rockhouse, Taylor, Sirretta

Most of us arrived at our designated camping spot next to Big Meadow in the Southern Sierra wilderness much too late to get a good night's sleep. Nevertheless we were up at 5:30 am and ready to go at 6:30 am. We drove down the road to the south Manter Meadow trailhead and at 7:00 am we headed off for the 7 mile approach to Rockhouse. The trail is good until about the time the creek turns south, the trail continues east. Losing the trail we headed up a gully and over a ridge at which point we could see the trail heading up to the saddle before Rockhouse. Our route had more ups and downs than the trail but may have been more direct.

We approached Rockhouse from the east side of the summit. There is a nice weakness in the face which is easily third class and offers some very nice scrambling. We were on the summit at 11:40 am. After some joking around, picture taking and lunch we headed down a ramp on the north side of the peak. We went around the west side between the two domes and descended. We found the trail and were able to follow it back to the cars which we reached at 4:30 pm.

We found a very nice campsite near the Sirretta trailhead which accommodated all our cars and Wayne and Sue's homemade RV. This area is a fire safe area so we could not have a campfire since we had not gotten a permit. Despite that we gathered around our respective stoves, made dinner and shared snacks. Being hearty climbers we were all off to sleep at about 8:00 pm.

Sunday started at 6:00 am and we took off from the same trailhead at 7:20 am. Our first destination, and as it turned out our only destination, was Taylor Dome. We took the Taylor Meadow turnoff a short way down the south Manter Meadow trail. After a short hike we reached the ridge leading to Taylor Dome. We decided to try going over to the south side of the ridge and traversing on that side. This turned out to be slippery sidehilling on sand covered granite slabs on a rather steep slope. This is not the recommended route. Traversing on the north side of the ridge is slightly shorter.

At the end of the ridge we headed up a steep hillside which put us a bit too far east from the summit which is recognized by a cross on the top. A short backtrack lead us up to a plateau below the rocky summit. From this direction the best approach is to scramble up to a small gap in the summit block then turn left and another easy scramble to the top. We were on the summit at 9:00 am.

Our descent took us down the north side of the peak to a gully. Bob made a beeline for the Rockhouse trail instead of going back to the Taylor trail. This we followed back to the cars which we reached at 10:40 am. A resounding lack of motivation to climb Sirretta caused us to decide to call it a trip and go home.

The group's participants were co-leaders Bob Suzuki and Dee Booth, Chris Franchuk, Jim Ramaker, Arun Mahajan, Sue Gygax, Wayne Martin and David Underwood.

• Dee Booth

## Climbing All 15 California Fourteeners

**5 days, 23 hours, and 41 minutes**

by Josh Swartz

*This account is the slightly edited text from the .html of the record by Josh Swartz. The url to this record at [SummitPost.com](http://SummitPost.com) was posted by Allan Ritter. I contacted Josh and this account is created with his permission. It is a remarkable story. My favorite is the description of day number....but then that would spoil it! Rick Booth*

### 1) Introduction:

In 1998, the well-known speed climber Hans Florine, his friend Russ McBride, and a climber named Tony (I don't know his last name) bagged all 15 CA Fourteeners in 9 days, 10 hours, and 50 minutes "car-to-car time". Last September, MountainZone.com ran a feature on the Hans Florine's solo attempt to climb 14 of the 15 California Fourteeners in 6 days. Hans wasn't able to complete his quest. During those few days, I followed Hans's exploits from my cubicle and wished I could be out there "cruising the Sierra" too. In early August, 2001 I got my chance. Below is an account of how I climbed all 15 CA 14ers in 5 days, 23 hours, and 41 minutes "car-to-car time." All of my climbing was done solo/ropeless, and I was completely self-

supported. To my knowledge, this is the new record. If anyone has done it faster, please stand up!

### 2) Day By Day Account:

#### Day 1

Date: August 1, 2001

Climbing Time: 3:51am - 9:49pm

Elevation Gain: ~11,000 ft

Mileage: ~22 miles

Mountains Climbed:

**Thunderbolt Peak (14,003 ft)**

**Starlight Peak (14,200 ft)**

**North Palisade (14,242 ft)**

**Polemonium Peak (14,200 ft)**

**Mount Sill (14,162 ft)**

**Middle Palisade (14,040 ft).**

Gear:

Five-Ten Guide Almighty Approach Shoes, Black Diamond Bullet Pack, MSR 4 Liter Hydration System, chalk bag, headlamp, hat, and gloves.

Notes:

I started hiking from Glacier Lodge up the North Fork of Big Pine Creek. The first peak on my itinerary was Thunderbolt. I circumvented the bergschrund on the Palisade Glacier by traversing to the right of it. Then I headed left on Class 4 rock to the right hand Underhill Couloir. This led up to the notch between Thunderbolt and Starlight via some 4th class climbing. The couloir was snow free. From the notch, I climbed up Class 4 rock until I arrived at the summit block of Thunderbolt (8:16am). The register was not on the true summit. After I signed it, I threw it in my pack and climbed the 5.9 east side of the summit block. This is really just a 15 ft boulder problem (albeit at 14K ft and with a bad landing). I attached the register to the bolts on the true summit. Hopefully it will remain there. I then down-climbed back to the notch between Thunderbolt and Starlight.

From the notch, I cruised up the Class 4 ridge crest to the base of the 5.4 summit pinnacle of Starlight. I signed the register, then tagged the true summit (9:04am). I then headed over to North Palisade on Class 4 and easy Class 5 rock. This short traverse involves some fairly difficult routefinding to keep the technical climbing difficulty down. I arrived at the summit of North Palisade at 9:32am.

From the summit, I headed down Class 3 rock to the top of ~200 ft 5.2ish section. I downclimbed this to the notch between Polemonium and North Palisade. From the notch, I headed up and right on rock that was never harder than Class 4, then traversed left along a ridge to the summit of Polemonium (10:20am).

After descending about 50 ft of Class 4 rock from the summit of Polemonium, the terrain eased to Class 2/3 and remained easy all the way to the summit of Sill (11:06am). I descended the East Couloir of Sill. This descent was more treacherous than I expected. This was due to a lot of loose rock on fairly steep terrain. The East Couloir is supposedly Class 3, but I it's more like Class 4. I would not want to be on this route with another party (or even another person for that matter). The lower party/person would surely be pummeled with rocks. Maybe it's better early in the season when there's more snow. At the bottom of the East Couloir, I had to climb down into the bergschrund on the Sill Glacier, then up and out the other side. Fortunately, this was pretty easy.

I had just traversed five peaks in less than three hours and was feeling very good. I only had one more peak scheduled for the day: Middle Palisade. Little did I know that my day wasn't even half way over.

The trek over to Middle Palisade was horrendous. I can't overemphasize how much this portion of the day sucked. I

started scrambling southeast toward Middle Palisade over very unfriendly talus fields. After a while, I reached a ~200 ft cliff that I had to downclimb. There was probably an easy way down, but I couldn't find it. A little while later, I got to the base of the ridge I had to go over to get to the base of Middle Palisade (I think this is called Firebird Ridge). I climbed a fairly direct route to the top of the ridge (~5.4). There's probably a Class 3/4 way up, but I didn't bother looking for it. Sometimes it's just easier to just go straight up and climb the rock that get's dealt to you. From the top of the ridge, I descended Class 3 and 4 rock to the Middle Palisade Glacier.

My plan was to climb the Class 3 East Face of Middle Palisade. In order to avoid some snow at the base of the route, I headed straight up to the right of the real start of the route. After a couple hundred feet I joined the real route and followed it to the summit (5:03pm). This route is textbook Class 3 and is a lot of fun.

I descended the East Face. When I reached the base of the glacier, I was faced with the task of finding my way down the South Fork of Big Pine Creek. I had never been up this way before, and I didn't see any trails. The guidebook was useless (as usual) and the topo didn't reveal anything noteworthy. So, I headed directly down to Finger Lake. This turned out to be a mistake. I'll spare you the details, but it suffices to say that after a few hours of scrambling, bush whacking, going back uphill in order to avoid swimming in the lake, and crossing back and forth across a steep stream, I found the South Fork trail. It was getting dark, so I took out my headlamp. It must have twisted on during the day because the batteries were completely dead. So, I stumbled down the trail to my car in the dark.

#### Day 2

Date: August 2, 2001

Climbing Time: 8:01am - 6:06pm

Elevation Gain: 7,490 ft (+ ~800 ft on dirt road)

Mileage: ~18 miles + ~9 miles on dirt road

Mountains Climbed:

**Split Mountain (14,058 ft)**

Gear:

Same as day 1, except no chalk bag and Adidas running shoes instead of Guide Almighties

Notes:

Because my '91 Mazda 626 is not exactly a "high clearance vehicle" (it barely makes it over speedbumps), I had to park it about 4.5 miles from the trailhead. In anticipation of this, I had borrowed Ryle's mountain bike. I rode the bike about halfway to the trailhead until the road became very sandy and continuously uphill. It was rideable, but it required a lot more energy than walking (and wasn't much faster). So, in order to conserve energy, I pushed the bike the rest of the way to the trailhead. It was 9:10am and probably about 95 degrees when I finally reached the trailhead (elevation 6,568 ft).

I stashed the bike in the bushes and started up the steep, sandy, overgrown trail to Red Mountain Lake. From the lake I hiked up endless Class 2/3 talus (very loose in spots) to the Prater-Split Saddle. From there it was a quick jaunt to the summit (1:50pm). The descent was uneventful.

#### Day 3

Date: August 3, 2001

Climbing Time: 6:55am - 10:53am

Elevation Gain: ~3,000 ft

Mileage: 13 miles

Mountains Climbed:

**White Mountain Peak (14,246 ft)**

Gear: Same as day 2

Notes:

I was beat after two days of adventures, so I decided to take a "rest" day. I had a pretty bad sunburn from my Split ascent. This probably contributed to my lack of energy. I strolled up and down White at a leisurely pace. I spent the rest of the day relaxing.

#### Day 4

Date: August 4, 2001

Climbing Time: 3:02am - 1:03pm

Elevation Gain: ~8,500 ft

Mileage: 21 miles

Mountains Climbed:

**Mount Muir (14,015 ft)**

**Mount Whitney (14,494 ft)**

**Mount Russell (14,086 ft)**

Gear: Same as day 1, except no chalk bag

Notes:

I started at the overflow hiker parking area at Whitney Portal in the early morning darkness. Just before I reached the trailhead I noticed a bear having his way with an overflowing "bear proof" trash can. I glanced up in disgust and continued on. I plodded up the Whitney Trail, passing about 50 people on the way to Trail Crest (elevation 13,600 ft).

The moon was so bright that I almost needed sunglasses. As I hiked the trail, I had the great fortune of hearing the incessant ringing of what seemed to be dozens of "bear bells." I passed one group of six people who sounded more like a line of tamborine dancers than hikers. I really don't think bear bells are necessary.

I finally reached the turnoff for Mount Muir and scrambled up the Class 3 rock to the summit. It felt more like Class 4 to me. I reached the summit and signed the register (the register needs to be replaced...it's beyond full), then downclimbed to the Whitney Trail.

A short hike to the summit of Whitney followed. I reached the summit at 7:40am, then I began to descend the North Face. According to the guidebook, this is Class 3, and there are many possible routes. I don't think I went far enough west before descending because I encountered some fairly serious downclimbing. At one point I reached a very hard and steep snow field (~200 ft). Not having an ice-axe, crampons, or a rope, I puzzled over what to do for a while. One slip and it'd be curtains. I could have climbed back up a few hundred feet and taken a different route down, but I really didn't want to do that. After a few minutes, I noticed that the snow/ice had a bunch of widely spaced 1/2"-2" diameter / 1"-3" deep holes in it. Each of these holes contained a small rock. The rocks had fallen on the soft afternoon snow during previous days and formed the holes, which were now frozen. I finally decided to downclimb the section "rock style." I used the holes as if they were limestone finger pockets. It was actually quite fun, although it was a little scary. I then continued the descent to the small lake at the low point between Whitney and Russell. Descending the North Face of Whitney took a lot longer than I expected. It was now 9:30.

I motored up the South Face of Russell (Class 3) and got to the summit at 10:16am (I think I mistakenly wrote 9:16 in the register). I then descended the South Face, climbed up and over the Whitney-Russell saddle, and began the trek down the North Fork of Lone Pine Creek. I arrived at my car a little after 1pm. There was a lot of day left, so I thought about bagging Langley, but I decided it would be a better idea to rest up for Tyndall and Williamson.

#### Day 5

Date: August 5, 2001

Climbing Time: 3:09am - 6:20pm

Elevation Gain: ~13,000 ft

Mileage: ~30 miles

Mountains Climbed:

**Mount Tyndall (14,015 ft)**

**Mount Williamson (14,375 ft)**

Gear: Same as day 2, except I used my larger pack and I brought my Guide Almighties (but never used them)

Notes:

I left the Symmes Creek Trailhead (elevation ~5,600 ft) at 3:09am and started the long hike up to Shepherd's Pass. Eleven miles later I reached the pass. From the pass I headed toward the Class 3 North Rib of Tyndall. At 9:15 I reached the summit then headed back down the North Rib and across Williamson Bowl toward Williamson.

I headed up the Class 3 West Face of Williamson, reaching the summit at 12:21pm. The last entry in the register was on July 16 by a ranger. The second to last was by Jay (summitpost handle = Guilty). I then headed back down the West Face, across Williamson Bowl, over Shepherd's Pass, and down to my car (6:20pm).

### Day 6

Date: August 6-7, 2001

Climbing Time: 3:06am - 9:51am and 8:19pm - 3:32am

Elevation Gain: ~11,000 ft

Mileage: ~35 miles

Mountains Climbed:

**Mount Langley (14,042 ft)**

**Mount Shasta (14,162 ft)**

Gear: Same as day 2 for Langley; for Shasta I also brought an ice-axe, crampons, and boots.

Notes:

I left the Cottonwood Lakes trailhead at 3:06am and had an uneventful Class 2 hike up the South Slopes via Old Army Pass. Near the top, I became very frustrated with the sand, so I left the main trail climbed up some Class 4 rock (off-route) to the summit. I then hiked back down to my car, arriving at 9:51am.

Almost done! Only Shasta left. But, unfortunately Shasta is a long distance away from the Sierras. There's really no direct driving route. The drive took me 9 hours.

I started at Shasta's "Bunny Flat" at 8:19 pm. It was not quite dark, and I was feeling pretty good. I busted up the trail to Horse Camp, getting there in 28 minutes. Then I took out my headlamp and continued up Avalanche Gulch. To my dismay, Shasta is very dry this year. There is very little snow. This made for some very frustrating hiking up loose ash, cinder, and talus. The darkness made the hiking even more frustrating. I finally reached the Red Banks, slogged up Misery Hill, and arrived at the summit at 12:34am. I was pretty disappointed with my slow time, but the conditions were horrible, so I guess it's ok. I then began the descent, which also took a lot longer than I had hoped. The ash/cinder/rock conglomeration in Avalanche Gulch was now frozen solid. Going down this was a hassle. I tried glissading a bit on the last remnants of snow, but that didn't really work too well. Finally, I tagged my car at 3:32am. Four minutes later I was asleep. The clock stopped at 5 days, 23 hours, and 41 minutes!

### 3) Statistics:

Total elevation gained: ~54,000+ ft (I'm sure this is wildly inaccurate...if anyone wants to study the topos to get a more accurate number, go for it!).

Total mileage: ~140+ miles, plus a few miles of mountain biking on the way to the Split trailhead. (I'm sure this number is also wildly inaccurate...).

Hardest Climbing Move: 5.9 (YDS).

Number of times I was rained on: 0 (the weather was perfect the whole time)

Number of servings of GU ingested: 20

Number of liters of liquid consumed: ~50

Favorite CA 14er: Starlight Peak -- the summit pinnacle is awesome

Least favorite CA 14er: Split Mountain -- the trail up to Red Mountain Lake sucks

Subjective ranking of the days (hardest to easiest): 1, 6, 5, 4, 2, 3

### 4) The Future:

It would be nice to see more CA 14er speed record attempts. My time can and will be broken. If you're thinking about attempting it, here are some tidbits of advice:

a) Make sure you FULLY acclimatize before you start. The day before I started, I drove from sea level (San Jose, CA) to Mount Hoffman in Yosemite. I made a quick jaunt up this little peak (elevation 10,850 ft). This was probably not sufficient. Although I felt ok on the first day of my 14er tour, I'm sure I would have been able to go faster if I had acclimatized more before hand.

b) Drink LOTS of water. Of course you know that drinking lots of water is essential, but I can't overstate how important this is during an ultra-endurance session. Some days I drank upwards of three gallons. A couple of months ago I bought one of those "hydration systems." I used to think that such things were silly gimmicks, but boy was I wrong. When I hike, I take a sip of water just about every two or three minutes. It's convenient, you don't have to stop, and it helps you remain very well hydrated.

c) GU is not a gimmick! I love this stuff. Power Gel is good too. There's nothing better for quick energy.

d) Get a high clearance vehicle. This is really only necessary for Split Mountain. I had to use a mountain bike to get to the trailhead. Riding through the hot, sandy desert just to get to the trail was not fun.

e) Trick a friend into chauffeuring you around. This would have been very helpful for the long drive from the Sierras to Shasta.

f) If you're not completely comfortable free-soloing 4th and easy 5th class rock, stay home.

g) After you beat the current record, write up a trip report and we'll post it for all to see on SummitPost.com.

### 5) Who Am I?

I've received a couple requests for a "Who Am I?" section for this trip report. Am I a runner? A peak-bagger? A technical climber? An adventure racer? How do I get so much time off work?

I don't really know how to answer. I haven't really honed my skill in any one area. I do a fair amount of rock climbing (bouldering, sport, trad). I also bag quite a few peaks each year, but I'm not really an obsessive peak-bagger (I don't keep lists). I'm really just a 25 year old guy who likes to suffer and enjoys a challenge. I've never done an adventure race, but I'd love to (anyone want to sponsor me? ;-)

One of my favorite activities is moving fast in the mountains. Moderate alpine rock is currently my preferred medium, but you'll sometimes find me on snow and ice or running on trails. I think backcountry camping is really boring, so if the guidebook says you can do it in three days or less, I'll often try to do it in a day. For more info on some of the peaks I've climbed, see my SummitPost profile page.

Outside of climbing, I'm webmaster of a lame little website called SummitPost.com. I used to be a programmer for a Silicon Valley genomics company, but I quit last month when I came to the realization that the field of genomics is pseudoscience (at best). That's the reason I have so much free time. I once dabbled in Crypto/Data-Security and Applied Math grad school, but those days are now just bad memories.

# Gear Review:

## Bearikade Food Container

Visiting the backcountry has a variety of problems that must be dealt with. In many cases permits are required. In some areas it is becoming a requirement to pack out ones poop. In many areas it is necessary to have a bear canister for food storage. Sometimes they are just recommended but in other cases such as entering through Kings Canyon they are mandatory. Are there more bears out there? I don't know. I do know that the bureaucrats that run the various agencies responsible for most of the public lands think there are more bears running around in the backcountry. I personally have not seen any bears outside of the very populous campgrounds such as Yosemite Valley, Tuolumne campground and Sequoia campgrounds. It seems to me that a smart bear would go where the concentration of dumb humans is highest and the pickings are easy, but then, I don't work as either a bureaucrat or bear.

So there you are. The trip is ready to go and the permit has arrived and it says you must have a bear canister for food storage. These canisters can be rented at many outdoor shops and at the trailhead in Kings Canyon. After a while this can get to be a time consuming project in its own right. There are two alternatives to renting the canister. One is to go without one if you can get away with it, however, it really isn't in the bears' best interest to be running off with your food. The other option is to buy one.

There are not a lot of easy options here. The popular plastic container made by Garcia Machine is inexpensive but is heavy as lead (2 pounds 11 ounces). It has other problems such as a too small access hole and is not watertight. When Dee and I decided to buy a container we chose the Bearikade Weekender. This particular container weighs 1 pound 13 ounces and saves almost a pound over the plastic container. This container also has a great access hatch on top that essentially allows full access to the interior of the can. The top has an o-ring seal and the claim is that this is waterproof although we have yet to test this feature. The top attaches with three twist screws that can be turned with a coin. A quarter works best but other coins and the back of a knife blade also work. According to the Wild Ideas web site the container is constructed from carbon fiber composite and 6061 T-6 aluminum. I have worked with the aluminum before and it is about as good a material as it gets. The volume of the container is 650 cubic inches which is about the same as the plastic container. In spite of the Weekender name it seems to be able to hold food for two for about three days of travel. The Bearikade container isn't perfect because it does add extra weight to your pack, however, it appears to be the lightest and best made option available at this time. The one downside is the cost. This container is up there in the price department. The Weekender version costs \$195.

There are other uses for the container. If you buy one and are resigned to using it then it is useful to think of other uses for it. Tired of sitting on a rock and spending the weekend with a gargoye shaped dent in your butt? Park your buns on the top of the canister. Better yet, cut out a chunk of blue foam and put it on top of the canister. You will be smiling and your climbing buddy will be frowning.

Where do you get one? They are not available in stores so you have to order them from Wild Ideas in Santa Barbara, California. The phone number is 805-693-0550 or the canister can be ordered over the internet at <http://www.wild-ideas.net/>. If you are convinced you want a canister and can swing the cost the

Bearikade canister should work. There is a larger version available called the Expedition.

•Rick Booth

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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 11/25/2001. Meetings are the second Tuesday of each month.**



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