

September, 2001

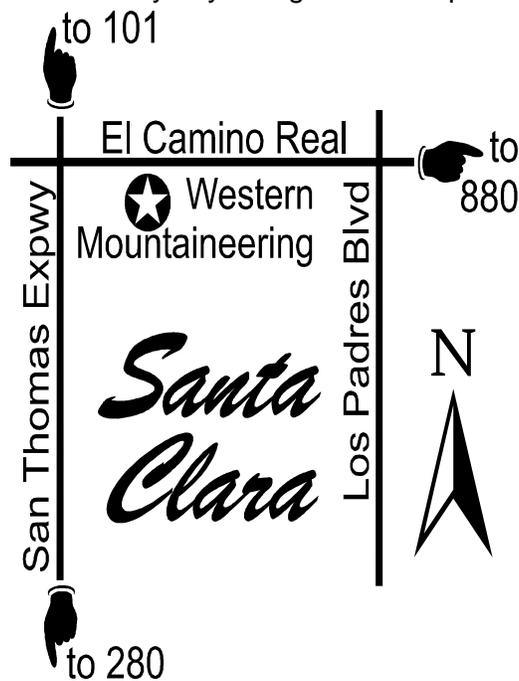
Peak Climbing Section, Loma Prieta Chapter, Sierra Club

Vol. 35 No. 9

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

## Next General Meeting

**Date:** Tuesday, September 11  
**Time:** 8:00 PM  
**Program:** Aconcagua  
 A slide show by Bob Evans and Paul Penno Aconcagua (22,800 feet), led by Warren Storkman in January 2001, presented by Bob Evans and Paul Penno.  
**Location** Western Mountaineering  
**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 9/23/2001 Meetings are the 2nd Tuesday of each month.

## Wilderness First Aid

To help trip leaders and would-be leaders get the required First Aid certificate, the Chapter sponsors a First Aid class each quarter, based on a nationally recognized first aid text, but with added material and emphasis on wilderness situations with no phone to dial 911. The next First Aid classes will be Saturday, Sept 2 and Sunday, Sept 23 at the Peninsula Conservation Center in Palo Alto (from Bayshore/Hwy. 101 at San Antonio, turn toward the Bay; turn left at 1st stoplight, then right at Corporation Way to park behind PCC). Class is 8:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. (1 hour for your bag lunch) and is limited to 12 people. To sign up, call Health Education Services, 650-321-6500, reserve a spot for Sat. or Sun., and authorize a \$40 charge on your credit card—or promise to bring \$40 in cash to class. Cancellations get partial refund if a substitute attends (you get to keep the Wilderness First Aid book). For more information, call 650-321-6500.

• Marg Ottenberg

## Important Change in Outings Rules

There has been a change in the rules for sign-in sheets and liability waivers. These changes were adopted by the Outdoor Activity Governance Committee of the Sierra Club. All participants of official Sierra Club trips including the leaders must sign-in and sign a liability waiver. This now applies to restricted and unrestricted trip. Once the trip is over the sign-in sheet/liability waiver must be sent to the trip scheduler, Nancy Fitzsimmons. A combined sign-in sheet and liability waiver can be found at <http://www.sierraclub.org/outings/national/participantforms/liabilit.pdf>

## 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. Langley

Peak: Mt Langley 14,000 Class 2-3  
 Dates: Sept 1-3 Sat-Mon  
 Leader: Chris Kramar, ckramar@siebel.com  
 510-796-6651

Join us for a climb up Langley over Labor Day weekend. This is a trip suitable for beginning peak climbers who want to climb a Fourteener. Hike up to Cottonwood lakes on Saturday morning,

climb the peak Sunday and return Monday. To sign up, send name, address, contact info and check for \$5 (for permit fee) to, Chris Kramar, 4302 Ribera St. Fremont, CA 94536.

### Mt Henry

Peak: Mt. Henry (12,106, cl. 2)  
Date: September 22 - 23, 2001  
Leader: Charles Schafer, charles@paraform.com, Bob Evans, robtwevans@email.msn.com

Meet Saturday AM at the Maxson Trailhead at Courtright Reservoir (7,920) and hike 16 mi. to Lower Indian Lake (about 10,000). Sunday bag the peak via the west slopes, and out

### Florence Peak

Peak: Florence (12,432') class 2  
Dates: September 29-30 2001  
Map: 7.5 min Mineral King USGS # CA3777  
Leader: Aaron Schuman, aaron\_schuman@yahoo.com  
Co-leader: Stephane Mouradian smouradian@hotmail.com, (650) 551-0392(H)

Come join us for an overnight trip in Sequoia National Park. We will start hiking early Saturday morning from the Mineral King trailhead. Florence peak is the main goal of this trip. If conditions allow, we may decide to climb Vandever (11,947') Saturday and Florence on Sunday.

Contact the Co-leader after August 20th to sign up.

### Telescope Peak

Peak: Telescope Peak (11,049 ft) class 2  
Date: Saturday, 29 September 2001  
Leader: Richard Vassar 650-949-4485 richard.vassar@lmco.com  
Co-Leader Jeff Fisher 408-739-1702 han1cannae@aol.com

Day hike Telescope Peak from Shorty's Well (-253 ft) near Badwater (-282 ft, lowest point in the western hemisphere) in Death Valley via Hanaupah Canyon and steep cross-country ridge until we join the Telescope Pk trail 1.5 miles from the summit. We'll leave early to avoid the heat at low elevation. Temperature on the summit should be about 50 deg cooler than Death Valley.

Be prepared for 24 miles (17 miles to Telescope Pk and 7 miles down to Mahogany Flat) and 11,300 ft elevation gain. Car shuttle required. Call leaders for details. Participants must have adequate experience and training. Advanced registration with the leaders is required. Co-listed with Day Hiking Section.

### Cherry Creek Canyon

Destination: Cherry Creek Canyon (5200' to 7600') class 3  
Dates: October 13-14 2001  
Map: Kibbie Lake and Cherry Lake North 7.5 min. quads  
Leader: Kelly Maas, kamaas@accesscom.com, (H) (408) 378-5311  
Co-leader: wanted

Cherry Creek, just outside the western boarder of Yosemite in the Emigrant Wilderness, isn't a peak, but it's a wonderful granite landscape. Kai led this trip 2 years ago, and it was so much fun that I'm doing it again. See <http://www.climber.org/TripReports/1999/cherryCreek.html> for a report on that trip. At this time of year, the creek slows to a trickle, which permits an up-close inspection. There is no trail down the canyon, so this is a real wilderness experience. Be prepared for close to 30 miles, including plenty of cross-country hiking, some high (and low) angle rock and dirt road walking. If anyone is looking to do some co-leading, this is a perfect opportunity.

## Ask Bête Ànchoure.

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

Noted French alpinist Bête Ànchouré has agreed to answer mountaineering and climbing questions from Scree readers when he returns from the mountains. This month he has returned from a successful solo first ascent of a new route in Yosemite Valley. In eleven consecutive days Bête has created a new El Capitan A5 horror show "I always look good in spandex".

**Question #1:** I just recently saw the movie "Vertical Limit" and was quite surprised to see that nitroglycerine was a normal piece of mountaineering equipment. When did climbers start using nitro?

Alfred Nobel

Dear Alfred,

Nitroglycerine was introduced to climbing during the "Golden Years" of rock climbing in Yosemite Valley, California, and was used primarily for the removal of difficult piton placements. It was used here in France quite extensively until a famous accident about 25 years ago. After a failed attempt on "le petit dru", the wife of French climber Lionel Le Bombeur was helping her husband put their equipment away and unknowingly poured the nitro used on the trip down the household drain. Mr and Mrs Le Bombeur survived the resulting blast without major injuries but their pet dog, Chien, spent the rest of his days with a J-trap where his mouth used to be. Perhaps the script writers for the movie received their inspiration from a fairly recent accident on the "Divinals Dome" at Courtright Reservoir in California. Nitro was apparently used in an attempt to free a jammed .5 camalot on the 5.9 fingerlocks classic "I touch myself". The crux is now 30 feet of brutal 10d offwidth protected with at least two 4.5 camalots.

**Question #2:** I have heard of a term called 'rogaining' as being associated with mountaineering. Will rogaining help me prevent hair loss?

Baldingly Yours,

Purina CatChow from Krakow

Dear PottedCatMeat,

You may be from Krakow, but you are no Krakauer. Rogaining is the art of finding your way in the outdoors with a map and compass. You are confusing it with Rogaine which prevents hair loss. As such, these two things are completely different. You should leave mountaineering to mountaineers and concentrate more on your balding pate.

Remember, no pain, Ro Gain.

**Question #3:** On multiday mountain expeditions, occasionally, I feel the need to answer nature's call. Which GPS should I buy that will guide me back to my tent after one of these forays?

La Tarine from Down Under

Dear AnemicEnema,

Your motto seems to be like the one spouted by the great Roman poet, Horace, 'Crappe Diem'. While on a mountain, the great Bête never answers the call of nature since it is a waste of time and energy. However for cases like yours, where I come from (French Basque), they have a special breed of dog that is trained for leading wayward bathroom visitors back to their tents. These dogs are called Lavatory Retrievers. My retriever will treat your GPS as a hydrant if you mention that modern gizmo to him.

**Question #4:** We have noticed recent vicious hate mail activity, mostly on the internet, directed at ducks. The content of this hate mail is focused on the destruction of ducks. These individuals advocate kicking, mutilating, obliterating and otherwise defiling ducks. We strenuously object to this outrageous racist and discriminatory behavior and insist that as a popular public figure you do not practice such activities.

Donald Duck  
Daisy Duck  
The Big Duck  
Daffy Duck  
Mallard Fillmore  
Dr Duck  
Howard the Duck  
Duck L'Orange  
Count Duckula  
Sir Francis Drake

We feel the pain and are also outraged. This must be stopped!

Ima Puffin  
Clair de Loon  
Empress Penguin  
Warren Stork  
Sheryl Crow  
Brad Buzzard

Dear Donald et al.

The destruction of ducks is a purely American phenomenon. Here in Europe there is no real wilderness and everything is marked with signs or red paint. I have observed this hostility toward ducks while visiting your country, however. A psychologist friend has informed me that these hostile individuals are reacting to problems from their youth. In many cases these people grew up sort of funny looking, fat on the bottom and narrow on the top. Other kids made fun of them, calling them "ducky". Even as adults these individuals are reacting to this early treatment by destroying anything resembling a duck, living or not. You can recognize the adults even if they are no longer duck shaped. They have beady little close set eyes and no sense of humour. Also, don't stand too close to these people. They seem to spontaneously kick at things with one or both feet.

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).

• *Rick Booth*

## Mary's Climb

On July 27<sup>th</sup> 2001, 7 year old Mary Chambers became the youngest person to summit Mt. Shasta. By most accounts the youngest climber to date was a boy named Zack at 7 years and 11 months. Mary was 7 years and 7 months.

She climbed the peak with her father, Gary Chambers, an accomplished mountaineer and rock climber. Following a conservative itinerary, they left Bunny Flat on July 24<sup>th</sup> and hiked to Horse Camp where they spent the first night. The second day they made their way up to Helen Lake where they made camp again. The next day they spent the day practicing self-arrest techniques at which Mary became proficient. The following day they summited and returned to Helen Lake for the night. On the 28<sup>th</sup> they walked out.

While on the mountain, Mary attracted the attention of other climbers and rangers. Once back in Shasta City, Mary and Gary

visited The Fifth Season where the shopkeepers had already heard of their accomplishment.

Mary said of her climb up Shasta that she had a "super good time". While climbing her thoughts centered on having a good time and if Zack could do it, so could she.

Recently, Mary has successfully hiked the newly opened Tahoe Rim trail with her parents. The roughly 150-mile trail took them 13 days to complete.

• *Dee Booth*

## Cloudripper

August 1, 2001

We began our trip with the news Thursday that Hwy 120 east of Tioga Pass was closed due to rock slide. Yes, there is Hwy 108 over Sonora Pass which adds at least one hour driving time; another PCS weekend to the east side of the Sierra Nevada! I just prayed that all would drive safely.

Another caveat was that I, humble leader, had a stress fracture in my right shin. Thank the gods that Anouchka Gaillard and David McCracken readily agreed to help if the need arose.

I'll begin at the high point: we all summited safely, made good time, and had gorgeous weather.

As we backtrack in our story, memorable moments from each climber:

David noted that we all met at the trailhead, Big Pine Creek, on time and we continued to make good time throughout the weekend. We moved forward, continuously, and never had to backtrack in our route finding. Linda and Siva found a lovely campsite by Sixth Lake which was well past the 100 feet wilderness regulation rule. Vishal spent the evening at the infamous saddle to Cloudripper within full view of the Perseids; a meteor shower that sparked all night.

Siva thought the climb up and down the saddle from Seventh Lake was awful. One trip report that David read said, "I wouldn't take my mother-in-law up it." Michael enjoyed the camaraderie and assistance that each person gave during the climb, especially the class 3 move at the summit block.

Diane was happy for the hand-over-hand move to the top! Just a bit tricky and I am glad that Vishal showed us the way! Views were magnificent of the Palisade region to the south, a true alpine vista, with Mt Thompson to the north. Anouchka and Michael liked the view of the lakes along Big Pine Creek, each a different hue.

Route finding: follow Arun Mahajan's trip of July 2000 which provides clear descriptions of the plateau, ridge and summit. A footnote: easier to attain the saddle from Seventh Lake rather than Sixth Lake to avoid the boulder field at its base.

All enjoyed each other's company and I wouldn't have it any other way.

Participants: Debbie Benham; Anouchka Gaillard; Vishal Jaiswal; David McCracken; Diane Medrano; Siva Sankaran; Linda Sun; and Michael Wong.

• *Debbie Benham, 8/01.*

# Columbia Finger/ Matthes Crest

August 11/12 2001

It was Dee's birthday and this years requested trip was to climb Matthes Crest. We also decided to take a look at Columbia Finger since there had been some recent interest in this peak. As trips go it started poorly with the closure of 120 past Tioga Pass which meant we ended up sleeping at a turnout with a bunch of other people Friday night. We slept poorly and got a latish start up the Cathedral Lakes Trail at about 8:15 AM.

We headed up past the Cathedral Lakes and left the trail at the meadow that holds the creek that feeds Echo Lake which sits just below the West Face of Matthes Crest. We dropped the packs behind a large boulder and racked up with the intention of hiking up and climbing Columbia Finger. The Cathedral Lakes trail continues on towards Sunrise High Sierra camp and essentially goes right under the east facing side of Columbia Finger. It is an easy stroll from the trail to the East Face of Columbia. Our goal was the Southeast Face route, ostensibly 5.4 and A1. The route description indicates it starts about 150 feet right of the South buttress. Hmm. There is a big open book facing right about 100 \*yards\* from the South buttress. It is directly below a big visor that sticks out on the South buttress very near the top of the buttress. We decided to head up there. A short fifty foot slabby pitch put us at the start of the book. The book itself is essentially laybacking and wide jamming helped out by some stemming. I bypassed one section by climbing on the knobs on the face to the right. Some of them broke off which was disconcerting. At the end of the book the pitch goes right requiring a delicate face move around a bulge and up to a decent ledge. This pitch is about 5.8. The next pitch is mostly fourth class with one or two sections of about 5.4 to pull up onto ledges. This ended on top of the aforementioned visor. It is third class to the summit from there. I looked all over for what might be the route described in Secor's book. I am pretty sure we were not on the route. There is some mention of Bruce Bidner and Em Holland freeing the supposed A1 section at about 5.9 stemming in a Rock Rendezvous newsletter. We didn't see anything that needed A1, a shoulder stand, or wide 5.9 stemming. We went looking to find this stuff but have no idea where it is. At any rate, anyone with 5.8 wide crack skills can get up the route we took. We used a #4 Camalot and a #3 Big Bro for the wide crack and the usual assortment of gear. It was fun. The summit of Columbia Finger has some nice views of the region. There is a pvc tube at the top with paper but no pencil so if you insist on signing stuff BYOP. We down climbed the third class route to the ridge and headed for our stashed packs.

We headed down the meadow towards Echo Lake for a few hundred yards and camped in the trees on the west side towards Matthes Crest. The little stream that feeds Echo Lake is barely running as of the date of our trip. It looks like Echo Lake is full of water so a late season climb from this area should still be possible.

We got an alpine start Sunday morning for the Matthes Crest climb. Well, sort of. My wayward sunglasses cost us about fifteen minutes tearing everything apart looking for them. They were safely stashed in one of my climbing shoes so I wouldn't forget them. The hike to the start of the south end of Matthes Crest goes around the base of the long slabs from Echo Peaks and heads up hill towards a bunch of trees right at the base of the south end of Matthes Crest. There is an interesting looking big fin to the south on the other side of this gap. Judging by the trip reports there seems to be some minor confusion as to the starting point for the route itself. Go to the little bunch of trees right at the base of the

south end of Matthes Crest. Standing at these trees there are a bunch of continuous cracks to your right. They appear to get overhanging about 150 feet up. Don't go there. Just about ten feet to the left of the little bunch of trees there is a crack system that comes down and then stops about 10 feet from the ground. This is it. The crux is right there and is about 5.5 getting through the little slabby face to get into the bottom of the crack. This cruises up on good cracks and the standard Tuolumne knobs. We ran the 60 meter rope out to the end and set a belay. The second pitch is 5.0a maximum and really should be considered fourth class. Running the rope again put us right on the ridge line so two pitches of 200 feet got us up on the ridge. Most parties who have trouble here seem to get sucked into the cracks to the right. Indeed, a party of three after us started up there only to bail out and then follow us up.

Once on the ridge it is exposed third and fourth class. After our blazing start up the fifth class stuff we sort of bogged down up on the ridge itself. We ended up getting the rope out off and on and this was slow. I also headed down on third class ledges too soon thinking we had reached the South Summit. Two climbers from Colorado came whizzing past us simulclimbing. Dee and I looked at each other and said "that's for us" and finished the ridge simulclimbing. This was made simpler by using our FRS radios since the leader is very often out of sight of the follower. We took off after the Colorado rocketships and arrived at the base of the last pitch just as the second was starting up so the simulclimbing made a big improvement in our speed. There is a great 20 foot long ledge that starts in the notch and heads out onto the West face of the summit pillar. The last pitch essentially climbs the crack that starts up from the left (northern) end of the ledge, however, getting into the crack is easier by going up the sequence of ledges just above the main ledge and then going left into the crack. The crack is about 5.7 and is about fifteen to twenty feet long before it gets easier. This last summit pitch is about 80 to 100 feet long.

We rapped off the summit instead of continuing down the ridge. The second rappel is from a juniper and is about 180 feet right to the scree but the bottom of this rappel is so low angle that it could be down climbed easily. The summit register container has neither pencil nor register. If you insist, BYO paper and pencil!

We motored down the scree and back up the Echo Lake creek to our campsite, packed up and hiked out. Weather was perfect both days. Happy Birthday, Dee!

Final Notes: Tresidder Peak is right there on the other end of the ridge from Columbia Finger. It is fourth class by the easiest route, ostensibly, and looks cool. Using speedier climbing or an earlier hike in it would be possible to climb both Columbia and Tresidder on the hike in and then Matthes Crest on the next day. This would be a "three stone weekend" of technical routes on Sierra peaks. Matthes Crest is not to be missed. For the avid Sierra technical mountaineer this peak is about as much fun as it gets. It is well within the reach of both experienced and fairly new technical alpine climbers.

• *Rick and Dee Booth*

## Boundary Peak (13143 ft)

## Montgomery Peak (13441 ft)

August 12, 2001

Boundary Peak is the high point of Nevada and is in the same range as White Mountain and sharing the ridge with it is Montgomery, it's higher neighbour. The state line goes between these peaks and Boundary ends up in Nevada and being the state high point, is more popular than Montgomery.

Access: Take 120 from 395, eastward, to Benton where 120 ends at Highway 6. Go on 6 North (left) for 9.2 miles having crossed the Nevada state line in the process. On your left will be a old ranch with a sign 'JR' (Janie's Ranch). Across from it is an unsigned dirt road, the Queen's Canyon Rd. Make a right turn on to it and drive for 6.1 miles. My Subaru had no problems. At his point are remnants of an old mine, a mine shaft and to small hut like structures. There is also evidence of previous camping and several wire mesh cones on the ground. I car-camped there for the night of 11th Aug and dayhiked both these peaks on the 12th. GPS coordinates for TH and camp: N 37 53.358, W 118 19.058

Route description: From this spot, walk up the switchbacks on the 4WD road till a saddle, the Queen's Saddle at, N 37 52.911, W 118 18.885. This is the so called 'north side' approach. Look to the right, south-westerly and you will see a peaklet that seems to be at the end of a ridge. You have to get to a saddle, approximately in the vicinity of this peaklet on this ridge. There is a use trail which I found on the way down, but not up that leads from the Queen's Saddle to this ridge top. Once on this ridge top saddle at, 10821ft, N 37 52.409, W 118 19.387, the route is obvious as Boundary is visible with it's surrogate peak. It is a beautiful mountain and not as much a scree pile as it looks. Continue on a decent trail, south-westerly, staying to the left of a peaklet till another saddle from where there is a steep scree climb on a switchbacked trail to the top of the surrogate peak. The summit is still far away but the route is an easy class-2/3 scramble although quite steep. The summit has a large cairn. Now, Montgomery is visible also. It is a short drop from Boundary to a notch between them and then a sharp rise. The route is class-3 but goes much quicker than one would initially think. It vaguely reminded me of sections of the Nevhave Ridge since it has several gendarmes that could be climbed or skirted. I mostly skirted from the left, going towards Montgomery from Boundary.

My times: Start: 6.15am, Boundary at 10.20 (4hrs, 5 mins). Start for Montgomery: 10.35am, summit of Montgomery, 11.25 (55 mins). Back to Boundary, summit dawdle there. Back to the car at 3.20pm. Total time, round trip, including both summits, 9hrs, 5 mins.

Notes: I was helped by trip reports on the PCS page by Dinesh Desai and Tony Cruz and a route description from the '50 State Summits' by Paul Zumwalt. Paul's book describes a different approach which has been debated a little in Tony's trip report amongst members of the PCS mailing lists. This debate also provides good information. In speaking to the few people that I met at the summit and who had all done Paul's route, the 'east side' approach from Highway 264, I found out that it had taken them an average of 4 hrs of hiking from the car as well. So, it appears to be a wash, though the driving by Dinesh's approach is shorter and his route description is dead on. This route does require you to climb the surrogate peak but that also breaks up the climb in two segments as opposed to doing the whole thing in a continuous fashion from the Trail Canyon, Paul's approach. I noticed that the people from the east-side route came up to Boundary in approximately the region of the surrogate peak on my route.

Boundary and Montgomery are worth a visit for their remoteness and solitude. I did meet some people at Boundary but none, bar one, ventured towards Montgomery. My trailhead camp site and route had nobody on them except a wild horse on the ridge who did not panic even though I was only a few hundred feet from it. On the way out, a large fire on 120 caused it's closure and traffic was re-routed to go via a road that drops near Crowley Lake on 395.

The GPS coordinates mentioned in this report were taken with my GPS set to the WGS-84 (World Geodetic Survey, 1984) datum. Thanks to Dee Booth for pointing out the omission of the datum in the original report.

• Arun Mahajan

## Mt Russell-Mithral Dihedral

August 17, 2001

The drive to the Whitney Portal trailhead was long as usual. This time route 120 was closed through the Tuolumne because of rock fall on the Tioga road but going through the Tuolumne is only marginally faster to get to Lone Pine than driving south through Bakersfield and Tehachapi. Thursday morning, August 16, Jim Curl and I headed up the North Fork of Lone Pine Creek trail. The hike was leisurely and we amused ourselves by telling each other of the numerous ways we have screwed up the hike up this canyon. These days the trail is so well worn it would be difficult to repeat these moronic mistakes. Indeed, with the popularity of the East Face routes and the availability of guides in the area the trail is very well used.

Friday morning we headed up towards the Whitney-Russell col and hiked over to the Southwest side of Mt Russell. Our goal was to climb the Mithral Dihedral. This route starts about 150 feet left of the base of the Fish Hook Arete. The upper difficult pitches are dead obvious standing under the route so not even I could screw up the start to this route. Jim and I roped up and Jim lead off on the first pitch through a broken area vaguely in line with the upper dihedral. This goes about 5.6/5.7 and ends at a small platform on the right after about 150 feet. For the second pitch there were two options. The first would require downclimbing off the platform a few feet in order to get back into the dihedral or go straight up the cracks just above the belay. The first choice guaranteed a bunch of rope drag so I went up the cracks and after 80 feet or so moved back into the dihedral and went up to the absolute very bottom of the 5.9 dihedral. This pitch was about 5.7/5.8. This put us at the top of the little sloping ramp indicated in the Sierra Classics topo. There is a lower belay spot that may have been more comfortable but it appeared to be two loose rocks sort of wedged in together. There is a rappel sling around one but the block appeared so loose I didn't even touch either block moving around them. Scary. Sitting at the base of the dihedral is a tad uncomfortable.

The next pitch is the crux of the climb and essentially goes straight up the dihedral. This is a spectacular pitch in an outstanding alpine location. Jim lead up the pitch, through the squeeze chimney, and past the chimney about 20 to 30 feet set a hanging belay. This pitch was about 140 to 150 feet. If the belay at the bottom of the dihedral was unpleasant this one was worse. This pitch is no harder than 5.9 but is about as continuous a pitch as I have seen in a long time. The only rest comes when wedged into the squeeze chimney. There is a small crack on the right hand wall of the chimney that will take small cams and the occasional stopper but it is a straight sided crack and has a bunch of lichen in it. Using this crack does help immensely in getting up the squeeze chimney. The next pitch is also 5.9 but is a little less demanding because there are the occasional rests on this section. The crux is the exit from the crack and involves a wild move to the right to

move through a broken area to a platform. This is also about 140 to 150 feet. It is important for the hanging belay to be set far enough past the squeeze chimney in order to make it to the ledge otherwise a second hanging belay would likely be needed if the ropes are 50 meters.

We parked ourselves on the ledge and had some lunch. The supposed fourth class section above this ledge started out at about 5.7. This is the "bonus pitch". We probably didn't find the easier fourth class stuff because the rest of the climbing until just below the summit involved some hard sections here and there. Oh well. Jim and I hung around the summit and chatted with a couple from the CMC who had come up the Fish Hook. In fact, there had been two teams on the Fish Hook that day. We headed down the ridge towards the South Face downclimb. It is fairly easy to find and appears to have two starts spaced about 20 feet apart. The start that Dee and I took last year is on a shallow low place on the ridge before a gendarme/tower and there is a small cairn marking the start but you can only see it if you peer over the edge. The other start is to the right and avoids the somewhat steepish fourth class part of the down climb. We headed down the scree and over the Whitney-Russell col.

The next day we hiked out. The weather was perfect and it would have been nice to stay and climb more but I was nursing a muscle tear in my back and I was already doing serious damage to the worlds ibuprofen supply.

Final Notes: This is a great route. If it was on a local crag easily reached from the road it would see lots of ascents. We used a double 50 meter rope system. It is unlikely that a 60 meter rope would have made the route go faster or easier. We also brought a double rack of cams up to size #3 camalot. This seemed like a lot but the combination of both belays needing pro and the long pitches resulted in a pretty depleted gear sling once the second belay had been set. There is no need for anything bigger than the #3 camalot. The rack also included a bunch of stoppers. It seemed we didn't use the very small ones at all.

Guide books and further reading:

Climbing California's Fourteeners, Stephen F. Porcella and Cameron M. Burns, The Mountaineers, 1998, ISBN 0-89886-555-7. This describes about all of the routes on Russell and has a pretty good description of the route including a picture. There is no topo. There is an earlier (much thinner) version of this book which will only contain the East Ridge Route (brought to you by the letter P).

Sierra Classics, 100 Best Climbs in the High Sierra, John Moynier and Claude Fiddler, Chockstone Press, 1993, ISBN 0-934641-60-9. May be out of print. This book contains a reasonable topo but the rest of the route description is poor.

The High Sierra, Peaks, Passes, and Trails, Second Edition, R.J. Secor, The Mountaineers, 1999, ISBN 0-89886-625-1. No topo and a fairly poor photo. This book contains a reasonably decent, if concise, route description, however the rating is wrong. The rating is listed as 5.10b and it is really only 5.9. Hard 5.9.

• Rick Booth

## On top of the Whorl

August 17-18, 2001

After reading George Sinclair's recent report on Whorl Mountain and the subsequent followups, Arun Mahajan and Peter Maxwell (scribe) thought they'd "give it a whorl" over the weekend of August 17/18. We didn't take any rope or other climbing gear, based on George's report of being able to successfully tunnel behind the famous chockstone. This made for nicely lighter packs, always a favorite for me.

While getting the permit at the Bridgeport ranger station, the ranger commented that typically August is a very busy month and they'd been filling quotas on almost every day. He said that July is the time to go. We were fortunate in that we were the only two for that day's quota of nine.

When I was paying for the parking at Mono Village the guy asked where we were going, and when I said Horse Creek he gave us the wonderful news that there was an "endurance horse ride" group coming down there at the moment, with 150 horses to contend with. What a way to start a wilderness experience. We were envisaging the worst (insert your own imagination here) but were pleasantly surprised to meet only 8 horses in two groups, the majority apparently having already finished.

In truth, we may have missed some in our unconventional way up the cascades near the start. Missing a crucial hairpin bend, we bashed almost all the way up alongside the creek, in increasingly steep terrain. When we finally emerged onto the trail again we were met by a ranger who was puzzled by our route and said "You can stay on the trail, you know".

After starting our hike at 9 am, we finally arrived at the saddle separating the Horse Creek and Spiller Creek drainages at 3 pm. We camped not far from the nice tarn there, which is a perfect base for doing Matterhorn but somewhat further from Whorl. A better placed campsite is to be found by walking south further to reach another tarn. By this time there was a very strong wind blowing and we tried to find shelter behind various boulders, eventually ending up using a pre-constructed wind shelter. We contributed our bit for future users by extending the wall in both directions.

The wind dropped a bit during the night, enough to let smoke from the Yosemite fires invade the area. All night long I could smell smoke and my clothes smelt like I had spent the weekend gardening and burning clippings, rather than climbing.

Arun and I argued about what time we should get up the next morning (he wanted to get up earlier and I wanted to sleep in), and we compromised to end up with a departure time of 7 am. We started to gradually climb as we headed for the area of the saddle between the middle and south summits. In retrospect, we'd have been better off staying level, walking beyond the next tarn and then not start climbing until reaching the second class gully, which is very broad at the base. The obvious orange area high up is a good reference since this gully is a bit further south.

By the time we picked up the class 2 gully we'd already ascended quite a bit and it wasn't at all obvious we were in the right gully. We thought we might have traversed too far south and just plugged on to see what we would find. After going almost all the way to the top, there was an obvious notch on the right to get to the next gully, which we could ascend further, again until almost the top where there was yet another obvious notch. Climbing over this, much to our amazement there was the chockstone in the next gully.

So far we'd done nothing more difficult than easy, non-exposed class 3. The only tricky part of the whole climb was the short traverse over the rib into the chockstone gully. This is at the

same height as the notch we had just come through, and although not difficult, it's certainly more exposed and requires some care.

The only snow near the chockstone was a small patch on the ground underneath it. Having read the stories of tunneling and worming one's way through, when I looked up and saw a small hole I figured that was the way. There was only enough room for a body and we had to pass our packs through, and then worm our way through on our backs, walking the feet up the wall just opposite. On the way down we found a much larger opening, easily enough room for a person and pack, and no difficult worming either. From below, having found the small hole, you have to look up and to the left to find the larger one.

The class 1 sidewalk shortly afterwards is truly amazing. The guard rail referred to by Eric Beck is where a nice 3' wall separates you from the dropoff. At 10:15 am we were on the summit. Unfortunately, the smoke had not dissipated so views were severely restricted, which was all the more frustrating because 2 hours later the wind had picked up enough to clear it all out.

We left the summit at 10:35 and were back in camp by 12:35. Jim Ramaker had written that it was possible to ascend the chockstone gully all the way from below, so we decided to descend it to see what it was like. This avoided all the class 3 traversing, but our conclusion is that whereas it's a great descent route, all the loose scree would make it a frustrating ascent. For those who want to try it, the start of this gully is immediately to the left (south) of the obvious orange area referred to earlier.

After having lunch, we left at 1:15 and were back at the car a bit after 5:00 and home before 11 pm. Whorl is a complex mountain, and it's incredible how relatively uncomplicated the ascent can be. The best time to do this peak is late season when the chockstone should be clear of snow, and no ropes would be necessary. However, if the chockstone is blocked then you're in for a class 4/5 climb around it.

• Peter Maxwell

## 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.

### Lone Pine Peak

Peak: Lone Pine (just under 13000)  
Dates: Sept. 15  
Leader: George Van Gorden, 408 779 2320, gvangord@mhu.k12.ca.us

Co-Leader: Bill Kirkpatrick, wmkirk@earthlink.net

Up to the Whitney Portal without the hassle and exhaustion of Whitney.

We will meet at the Meysan Lake trail early Saturday, hike for all we're worth (which at least for me won't be that much) up to the second

Meysan Lake which is situated in a spectacular bowl, scramble up a bit of talus onto a sublime plateau overlooking the Owens Valley and the beautiful metropolis of Lone Pine, and then ascend the few remaining feet to the summit. We should get back to our cars by nightfall.

### Winchell: A Chute Less Traveled

Peak: Mount Winchell, Class 4-5, 13,775'  
Date: September 22-23, Sat-Sun  
Contact: David Harris 909-607-3623  
David\_Harris@hmc.edu

Mount Winchell is usually climbed by the classic East Arete. But Secor says the West Chute of Mt. Winchell goes at "Class

4-5" from the Dusy Basin and was first climbed by none less than Eichorn, Dawson, and Olmstead in 1930!

Let's go find out what the route is really rated. On Saturday we'll pack in over Bishop Pass to the base of the route, with an optional excursion up Agassiz.

On Sunday we'll start early and find our way up the "difficult chimneys" to the summit. I'm looking to put together two two-person rope teams.

You should be comfortable on 5th class terrain at high altitude. If you haven't climbed with me, please include your climbing resume and a reference.

### Mt Kilimanjaro

Peak: Mt. Kilimanjaro 19,400 ft.  
Date: January 2002  
Contact: Warren Storkman, 650-493-8959, dstorkman@aol.com

Six nights on Kilimanjaro - plus four nights at the Marangu Hotel under \$800.00. Safari after trek, optional

## Hut Work Parties

Editor's Note: Although these work parties are not peak climbing trips, they are listed here because many people in the PCS are also active in the Ski Touring Section. This gives us the opportunity to help another section.

### Benson Hut

Date: Sep 8-9 Sat-Sun  
Leaders: Carol Vellutini (707-546-6308) and Ed Schreiber (707-253-0293).

Maintenance weekend at backcountry hut on Pacific Crest Trail south of Donner Summit. Stay at Club's Clair Tappaan Lodge in Norden Fri night, overnight at the hut Sat, return Sun. Tools, food, supplies provided; you bring simple backpack gear.

### Peter Grubb

Date: Sep 22-23, Sat-Sun  
Leader: Debbie Benham (650-964-0558)

Prepare classic backcountry hut near Donner Summit for use by cross-country skiers and snowshoers next winter. Stay at Club's Clair Tappaan Lodge Fri night, overnight at the hut, return Sun. Tools, food, supplies provided; you bring simple backpack gear.

### Bradley Hut

Date: Oct 13-14, Sat-Sun  
Leader: Dick Simpson 650-494-9272  
rsimpson@magellan.stanford.edu

Maintenance at backcountry hut near Squaw Valley. Stay at Club's Clair Tappaan Lodge in Norden Fri night, overnight at the hut Sat, return Sun. Tools, food, supplies provided; you bring simple backpack gear.

### Truckee River Day

Date: Oct 14, Sun  
Leaders: Dick Simpson 650-494-9272  
rsimpson@magellan.stanford.edu  
Harvey Ceaser 925-937-1406  
ceaser3@Juno.com

Help restore Truckee River drainage with hundreds of other volunteers. Specific projects to be determined as date approaches. Organized jointly with Bradley Hut work party (above)..

## Elected Officials

### Chair:

Dee Booth / rdbooth@worldnet.att.net  
408-354-7291 home  
237 San Mateo Avenue, Los Gatos, CA 95030

### Vice Chair and Trip Scheduler:

Nancy Fitzsimmons / pkclimber@aol.com  
408-957-9683 home  
1025 Abbott Avenue, Milpitas, CA 95035

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

Scott Kreider / pcs-treasurer@climber.org  
408-737-8709 home  
1007 S Wolfe Road #5, Sunnyvale, CA 94086

## Publicity Committee Positions

### Scree Editor:

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

### PCS World Wide Web Publisher:

Jim Curl / pcs\_webmaster@yahoo.com  
415-585-1380  
San Francisco, CA

### Publicity Chair:

Rick Booth / rwbooth@home.com  
408-354-7291 home  
237 San Mateo Avenue, Los Gatos, CA 95030

**Scree** is the monthly journal of the Peak Climbing Section of the Sierra Club, Loma Prieta Chapter.

Our official website is <http://lomaprieta.sierraclub.org/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 9/23/2001. 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**