

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

Date: Tuesday, August 13

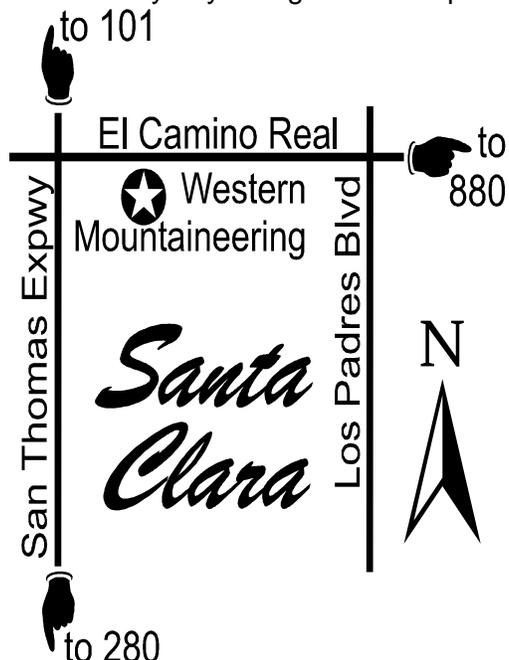
Time: 8:00 PM

Program: Chair's Choice

The slide show will consist of various trips from the PCS Chair

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 8/25/2002 Meetings are the 2nd Tuesday of each month.

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.

Gnarly Adventuring

Trip: Gnarly Adventuring Above Yosemite Valley
California Trip #: 02170A
Dates: August 18-25, 2002
Price: \$615; Dep: \$100
Leaders: Bill Oliver & Will McWhinney

SUMMARY: John Muir came to Yosemite in 1868. He marveled at this wondrous place, exploring its canyons and climbing its peaks. We, too, will marvel, explore, and climb. First we spend four days among the pinnacles and domes of Tuolumne Meadows. Then we backpack from the Valley to Little Yosemite Valley for a three-day finale. Ascents will include Cathedral Peak, Eichorn Pinnacle, Mt. Starr King, and Half Dome (cables). Rock climbing experience required only for optional summit blocks. Non-climbers welcome for non-technical segments.
<http://www.sierraclub.org/outings/national/brochure/02170A.asp>

Sawtooth and Needham

Peaks: Sawtooth Peak (12,343) and Needham Mountain (12,520), Class 2-3
Maps: Mineral King 7.5
Date: September 14-15, 2002
Leader: Dee Booth rdbooth@att.net
Coleader: Stephane Mouradian
smouradian@hotmail.com

This is a class 2/3 trip and Secor writes that there is a "magnificent view from the summit of Sawtooth". Saturday, we will establish camp at Crystal Lake. Sunday, we will head for Needham first, then do the traverse over to Sawtooth Peak and descend back to camp via the South Ridge. The trip is limited to 8 people. This trip is suitable to beginners with backpacking experience. Please contact the leader or coleader to sign up.

The Tableland Traverse

April 6-8, 2002

Difficulty: class 2, ice axe, crampons, skis, snowshoes, snow travel

Six of us met at Lodgepole Saturday April 6 2002 to complete the Tableland Traverse. We were: leader Steve Eckert, Nancy Fitzimons, Tom Driscoll, Joe Budman, Kirsten Mouradian and Stephane Mouradian (coleader and scribe).

The Tableland is a series of flat and wide ridges that define the Kings - Kaweah divide and form a half circle connecting the foot of Mt Silliman to Alta Peak, our two goals for this trip.

The fog was thick and some of us started with wet gear just from sleeping at the trailhead. We left Lodgepole around 7:15AM and followed the Twin Lakes trail across the ridge North of Lodgepole. As the ridge faces South, it was completely free of snow. At the top of the ridge, when the trail makes a 90 degree turn to enter the forest, we left the trail (at waypoint WILMDW) and headed cross country North East while keeping the main ridge on our right side. To the contrary of our plan, the snow cover was very light and the 2 skiers Steve and I had to constantly take our skis on and off, while the snowshoers marched through the bear spots. We were not on top of the bushes and branches as planned, which forced us to make detours. In addition the thick fog persisted until early afternoon and required us to take frequent navigation breaks. As we started paralleling Horse Creek (near waypoint HORSEO), the snow cover became more consistent but the terrain was very steep. At 4:30pm, we reached the little marshy area shown on the map 1.25 miles South East of Mt Silliman (waypoint HORSEC). It had taken us a sobering 9 hours to cover 4 miles and 3200 of gain.

On Sunday morning, we headed for an obvious gap (waypoint SILIMP) in the ridge South of Mt Silliman and the permanent snowfield shown on the map. The Northside of the gap has a short steep section which discouraged members of our parties. However, the snow was soft enough and Steve and I found it was possible to get good footing by planting our crampons deep into the slope. We followed the contour lines around the cirque toward Silliman and reached the peak about 35 min after leaving the gap. This way seemed definitely easier than trying to hike to class 3 ridge as initially planned. Back at the gap we strapped our skis for a very fast and fun return to camp.

We left camp at noon toward the Tableland. It was bright sunshine but the snow was holding up well. We headed North East and followed the ridge toward the highest point of the Traverse: 11462, waypoint TRAV2. We rested up there, admired the unobstructed view and took turns trying to use up Steve's weekend minutes on his cell phone. On the other side of this high point, the snow was dramatically different and what was supposed to be the fun part of the trip turned out to be the most miserable. While skiers could manage to stay on top of the snow, snowshoers were punching through waist deep randomly and each time it took 3 people to extricate them and their packs. This exhausting exercise took its toll quickly and we set up camp (near waypoint TCAMP) to allow everyone to rest. Although we were considerably higher than anticipated (11,300), we had a quiet and clear night.

Monday morning, the snow was hard and we made good progress along the ridge. Did I mention the incredible sceneries on this trip? As we were running out of time we decided to leave Alta Peak for the next time. Coming to Pear Lake from the North East (near waypoint TRAV8), we found the slope to be very steep and the skiers in the group did a long S to cut the slope. In the future,

snowshoers should probably go the same way to be more comfortable. From Pear Lake we followed the blazed tracks toward Wolverton and Lodgepole. The group stopped at Wolverton and I skied down to Lodgepole to pick up the car. Because I was completing the loop and arriving on the North facing slope, there was still plenty of snow and I was able to ski all the way down to the parking lot.

All in all this was a demanding but very enjoyable trip. As an alternative to our first day, people wishing to do the traverse may have an easier time taking the longer but easier route to Silliman via Silliman Creek and Silliman Lake, then going over the gap we used to rejoin the Tableland.

Thanks to Steve Eckert for this great trip idea.

• *Stephane Mouradian*

Crag Peak & Smith Mountain

May 25-26, 2002

- Peaks: Crag Peak, Smith Mountain
- Difficulty: class 2

The plan for this overnight trip was to leave from Kennedy Meadows (Southern Sierras) to climb Crag on day 1, then take a loop trail out of Beck Meadow and climb Smith (and maybe Jackass) on day 2, then exit at Fish Creek Campground for a 10 mile car shuttle.

Saturday 6am, we met at Kennedy Meadows Campground and two of us drove 20 minutes over to Fish Creek campground to drop off a car for the return shuttle. By 7:20 am, our group of 6 was hiking North on the PCT out of Kennedy Meadows. Weather was perfect; crisp and cool.

We hiked 5 miles to Clover Meadow and took a break, then continued on and stopped just at the end of the meadow to start the climb. By this time it had warmed up considerably and but it was still comfortable for hiking. As suggested by Aaron Schuman's trip report, we were about 1 mile past Crag and were looking at forested slopes which hopefully would keep us out of the brush encountered by others. We stripped our packs from unnecessary items and at 10:30am walked cross-country West toward the trees. The map showed a creek which we were expecting to cross and use to refill our bottles but we only saw dry creek beds. We had minimal brush hiking up to the ridge and headed South toward Crag once we reached the ridge top. As we got closer to the peak, we climbed up the rocky ridge hoping to reach the summit only to find out that the actual summit was yet further south. We finally arrived to the knife edge fin and scooted across toward the summit by 2:30pm. We placed a new register and enjoyed the 360 degree view, while convincing ourselves that the shiny patches in Beck Meadow were indeed water.

For the way down, we followed a small gully immediately before the knife ridge and skirted the rocky ridge. After an easy descent, we were back to our packs around 5:30pm. A group of beginner backpackers stopped by asking if we had found any water. At that time, the closest water point was Beck Meadows, about 2.5 miles North on the PCT. Tired and thirsty, we got there around 7:30pm and immediately started looking for a pond or stream. It turned out what we had seen from Crag was little more than brown algae filled ponds. Clean, clear, water was flowing from a tiny spring flowing in a stream 10 inches wide and about 1 inch deep. Not discouraged, John dug a little hole and demonstrated we could scoop water = cup at a time into a pot while Kirsten and Tony

filtered the water out of the pot into the bottles. And so it went...everyone got rehydrated and was able to cook dinner.

It got cold at night: all our water bottles froze solid and a thick layer of frost was covering everything including the sleeping bags of the star gazers Paul and Tony. Sunday morning, we made the decision to head toward Smith Mountain with the option to skip it should we not find water again. We each guzzled one to two quarts and left Beck meadow at 9:00am. The trail between Beck meadow and Jackass crosses many meadows and makes for very enjoyable hiking. It is a little unclear in some sections but we used Jenkins' 'South Sierra' guide book and map/compass/GPS to keep us on track. Coming to Albanita Meadow, we somehow followed a spur trail which lead to the Southern portion of the meadow, 1 mile south of the intended trail. When arriving to Albanita meadow, make sure you keep going west to North West rather than head south into the southern arm of the meadow. Water was flowing in the creeks along the way and allowed us to remain well (too well?) hydrated.

Because of our late departure, and in true PCS fashion ('I don't climb the list but I would rather climb the list peak'), we decided to skip Jackass and focus on Smith. We dropped our packs at 2pm at the saddle North East of Smith and took about 1 hour to reach the summit. We were looking at a storm over Whitney when we suddenly heard thunder approaching. An isolated storm we had not noticed earlier was coming our way from the South and seemed very close. We estimated it would hit the peak in 15 min. We quickly came down and were back at the saddle around 4:00pm. We then headed down the trail to cover the last 6.5 miles to Fish Creek campground which we reached at 7:30pm. We did not encounter any bad weather and figured we somehow stayed out of the storm's path. At the campground we noticed the trail was wet and campers were standing around campfires warming up after a 20 min hail storm. We were lucky!

We packed the whole group in one car for the short shuttle back to Kennedy Meadows and concluded this great trip at 'The Grumpy Bear's Retreat', the closest restaurant open (6 miles from Kennedy Meadows). The waitress announced the extensive menu: CHICKEN OR RIBS'.

Oh well.

Trip participants: Tony Stegman, Stephane Mouradian (leader), Kirsten Mouradian, John Damaschke (first PCS trip), David McCracken, Paul Magliocco

Trip stats Day 1: 8.3 miles, +2100' gain to hike from Kennedy Meadows to Beck Meadow on the PCT 4 miles, +2000' gain to climb Crag

Day 2: 11.5 miles, + 1100' to loop from Beck Meadow to Fish Creek via Lost Meadow and Albanita Meadow. 1.2 miles, +1000' to climb Smith Mountain

• *Stephane Mouradian*

Tom Terrific

Mt. Tom 13,652 ft

July 5, 2002

The view from Mt. Tom is terrific, especially the sight of Mt. Humphreys thrusting skyward to the south. I only wish I had climbed Mt. Tom two months earlier this dry year.

It is a long hot trudge, and the lack of snow precluded the quick descent others have described. The old tungsten mines, however, are fascinating including abandoned adits, rusting hulks of generators, remnants of an ore tram, and well preserved log buildings.

As Richard Stover and I drove over Tioga Pass, we observed truck after truck of CDF firefighters returning from the just-extinguished Tom's Place fire, which came uncomfortably close to many homes. It appears that the Mt. Tom trailhead area burned last year, and the result for the prickly poppies seems positive. I have never seen such a spectacular display of these large white blooms massed over several acres.

We hiked to Upper Horton Lake on the Fourth of July after getting a permit. Coming directly from sea level made the short backpack all the exercise we wanted for the day. After dark we watched the fireworks far below in Bishop before turning in for the night.

The next day's climb was hot and dusty (bring plenty of water). We took the road to the Tungstar mine and ascended the chute mentioned by Secor. Our knees complained on the descent. Back in camp, we decided to leave Basin for another day, (one with snow) and hiked out early.

This Bishop landmark is more like a desert peak than a Sierra Peak. Check it out while there's still snow on the ground.

• *Debbie Bulger*

Pyramid Peak

July 7-8, 2002

Pyramid Peak near Lake Tahoe is a well known peak that is climbed quite often. However, I believe that most of the ascents are done from the east and south. I think it is rarely done from the west, which is odd because I think it is the easiest way to do it. I recently climbed Pyramid from the west and offer the following description for those who are interested. From the Wrights Lake road start hiking at the Lyons Creek trailhead. It is about 5 easy miles to Sylvia Lake. Where the trail ends at Sylvia Lake head up to the obvious saddle just to the south of the lake - there is another, un-named lake just south of this saddle. This is the hardest part of the climb. There is some steep scree that you must negotiate and some cliffs you need to avoid

- class 2. From the saddle head up the easy west slope to the top of Pyramid

- class 1. A strong party should have no problem doing this as a day hike.

In addition to climbing Pyramid, I also hiked into the cirque to the northwest of Pyramid. There was much snow in this cirque. From the cirque I could see a couple of interesting possibilities. One is a snow chute that could be climbed up to the west ridge - ice ax required. Another is the north face, which could be an interesting rock climb - class 5. I don't know if anyone has climbed this face. Finally, it is possible to climb onto the north ridge of Pyramid from this cirque at several places - class 3-4. In the past I have done this by climbing up to the north of a prominent tower just north of Pyramid and crossing around to the east side of the tower before climbing down - class 3-4 - to easier ground on the northeast face of Pyramid. There is also a steep chute to the south of the prominent tower that can also be climbed to get onto the ridge - class 3-4. For more information on the north ridge see my earlier trip report of the Price to Pyramid traverse.

• *George Sinclair*

Starlight Peak

July 13-14, 2002

"The summit of Starlight Peak, elevation 14,200 feet, offers the bold mountaineer the most exciting summit of all the peaks in the Palisades. In fact, it would be difficult to find an apex more worthy of this distinction anywhere in the Sierra Nevada."

-- Steve Porcella and Cameron Burns, "Climbing California's Fourteeners"

Starlight Peak is one of the hardest peaks in the Sierras by its easiest route, and definitely the hardest of the 15 Sierra 14'ers. On the weekend of July 13-14, our six-man team set out to climb it -- leaders Rick Booth and Ron Karpel, plus Arun Mahajan, Erik Jensen, Charles Schafer, and myself (Jim Ramaker).

We met at the familiar South Lake trailhead at 8:30 a.m. and hiked up the easy and beautiful section of trail past Long, Saddlerock, and Bishop Lakes. After that came the impressively constructed switchbacks up to Bishop Pass (11,900'), and then a short cross-country jaunt to our camp in Upper Dusy Basin at 11,600', where we arrived about 3:30 p.m. Very uncharacteristically for a PCS trip, we then laid around for a couple of hours, taking naps and gazing up at the towering west faces of the Palisades peaks. Weather was iffy -- we'd had light showers at dawn on Highway 395, and clouds most of the day. A shower drifted in from the south around 5 p.m., but it was brief and didn't amount to much. After an early supper, we climbed into our bivy bags shortly after 7 to rest up for the big day on Sunday. (Interestingly, everyone on this trip had bivy bags -- besides the familiar Outdoor Research model, there were examples from Integral Designs, Mountain Hardware, and Bibler.)

True to plan, we were up at 5 a.m. and rolling right at 6. We arrived at Thunderbolt Pass in about an hour and were shocked by the lack of snow. Last year when we did Thunderbolt, its chute (the first one south of Thunderbolt Pass) and the talus fan below it were thick with snow -- a nice snow climb. This year they were completely dry. We identified our intended route, which Porcella and Burns call the "Starlight West Chute," describing it as "the third most prominent chute south of Thunderbolt Pass." Actually it's the fifth chute if you count the smaller ones that turn into vertical chimneys higher up. In any case, the correct chute has a wide opening and a very wide talus fan below it. (A photo on page 222 of Porcella and Burns clearly shows the chutes on this complex face.)

We ditched our crampons and ice axes and started up the chute at about 8. Just as on the Thunderbolt climb, we exited the chute by climbing up loose class-4 ledges on the right into a second, higher chute. After several hundred feet of loose class 2-3, this chute ended in a wide slab inclined at about 30 degrees. Pulling over the top edge of this slab, we were confronted with a big drop into the next chute to the south. But a catwalk traverse with several horizontal cracks led off to the left, until it was joined by the steeply rising floor of this third chute.

I requested a rope on this somewhat exposed traverse, but the holds were so plentiful and solid that it wasn't necessary, and we didn't use one on the way down. Once in this third chute, we immediately came to a 30' waterfall pitch. Late in the year with the waterfall dry, you could probably climb straight up it (class-4). But water was pouring down it, so we tackled a section of class-4 ledges and slabs on the right. These continued up for about 100' and were pretty steep all the way, so we used a rope on the upper part.

Above that, we climbed a long section of class 2-3, easy except for the constant care required to avoid knocking rocks down on one another. The third chute continued for about 800' and ended in a

headwall leading to the summit ridge. We roped up and climbed a short class-4 pitch up and left to double rap slings, though you can avoid this pitch by climbing up and right to a hidden ramp behind a huge boulder, and then downclimbing about 10'. From the double rap slings, we climbed some class-3 and then another roped class-4 pitch up to a nice rap station with four slings. Unfortunately, the ridge top was another 15' above, at the top of an awkward class-4 chimney that required yet another belay.

Finally, around 11:30, we arrived at an airy notch on an exposed blocky ridge that extends out to the west from the main north-south summit ridge. About 50' away stood the notorious "milk bottle" -- steep, slender, and devoid of cracks or visible holds. We clambered up the blocky ridge unroped, got on the true summit ridge, and then Ron set up a belay for the milk bottle. Rick tackled the south side of it in mountain boots, an awkward lead with a bulge at the top that scared even him a bit. The top of the milk bottle has a manky 1/4" bolt, so Rick clipped a top rope to it and we moved to the north side of the milk bottle, which is taller but has a little arete that appeared to offer some holds.

Most of us used rock shoes, but even then it wasn't easy. There are only a couple of positive holds for the entire 20' -- everything else consists of sketchy counterforce and friction moves using the edge of the arete for handholds. No two of us climbed it exactly the same way. Those of us who've climbed both thought that the milk bottle was at least as hard as the summit block on Thunderbolt, which has a series of tiny holds that fall into a repeatable sequence.

The feeling of sitting on top of the milk bottle (none of us managed to fully stand up) is nicely described by Porcella and Burns: "Upon reaching this diminutive point, the climber's senses are besieged by vertigo as well as euphoria. The ridge below, much like one's stomach, seems to drop out from beneath. More than 1000 feet below to the east lies the magnificent Palisade Glacier. To the west lies the incredible expanse of Dusy and Palisade Basins. The view, like the exposure, is nothing less than exhilarating."

After snacks, photos, and the usual perusal of the summit register (which is at the base of the milk bottle), we started down at 1:45. We belayed down the 15' chimney, then rappelled from the four slings. Charles and I then set up a second rap from the double slings, while the others circled around behind the big boulder and started down the 800' chute. While I was rappelling, I felt a jerk and slipped down a few inches. I thought it was just the rope straightening out, but Charles later told me that one of the two rap slings had snapped! The rappel was fairly short and low angle so there was no great danger, but it was a good reminder that existing rap slings are always suspect and need to be carefully checked, and if necessary, backed up.

As we descended the upper chute, big clouds drifted in from the south, and we were grateful they had waited until after we had summited. At the waterfall pitch, we rappelled straight down it using existing slings -- a bit wet but faster than going down the slabs we'd come up. Going back across the catwalk traverse, hailstones started pinging on our climbing helmets, but it was a mild storm -- no wind and no thunder. Now we were at the slab at the top of the second chute with just one more hard section below us -- the loose class-4 ledges at the bottom of that chute.

We descended the chute and found the ducks we'd left to mark our traverse line into the lower chute, but it started raining, so Ron wisely decided to set up another rap instead of downclimbing the rubble-covered ledges. This was a full double-rope rappel, from a single strand of thin spectra cord looped around a large boulder. To the uninitiated, this looked like trusting your life to a shoelace, but the stuff has a breaking strength of 4000 lbs. so no problem.

Some of us (okay, I'm guilty) knocked down some loose rocks while rappelling, so if you rappel this section in a group, be sure to move out of the way as soon as you get off rappel.

At last, right at 5 p.m., we were all safely down on the talus, and the skies were even starting to clear off. What a great climb! Though not an alpine rock climb, it's a classic mountaineering challenge, with class-4 rock, loose crap, route finding challenges, and oh boy that summit block. In early season with some steep snow in the gullies, the climb would probably be even better.

After collecting our snow gear and taking a much needed snack break, we boulder-hopped back to Thunderbolt Pass and then worked our way down the slabs and boulders to our camp, where we arrived about 7 PM. What a great feeling to sit around cooking supper and look up at that towering 2000-foot wall whose top we had just visited. We suddenly realized that we could clearly see the milk bottle -- a tiny pointed tower between two large blocks. As Rick said (paraphrasing here) "You know, you look up there and you think -- there's no way I could climb up to that thing."

After supper, the sky cleared off completely to a crisp alpine night, and we crawled into our sleeping bags to watch the Milky Way and the shooting stars as we drifted off to sleep.

• *Jim Ramaker*

Minarets

July 19 - 21, 2002

...a strange sense of apathy seems to have gripped the crew. This paraphrase from Bram Stoker's *Dracula* could also describe a recent trip to the Minarets. With great intentions we left the Agnew Meadow trailhead at 8:20 am. Our plan was to hike to camp below Ritter Pass in enough time to climb one of the Minarets before dark. The next day our objective was a fourth class chute on the west side of Michael Minaret.

Some gentle prodding was necessary to ward off lethargy and keep the group on pace. At 1:15 pm we arrived at a large, lovely meadow below Waller, Leonard, Turner and Jensen Minarets. It made a fine camp for the next two nights.

After setting up the tents and having something to eat four of us set out at 2:30 PM to climb Leonard Minaret. Leonard is southeast of The Gap, a pass that offers a way to get to the other side of the ridge.

The approach was up steep snowfields punctuated by smooth slabs. The snow was soft but not so soft that we plunged too deeply. We reached The Gap at 4:10 pm and started up the crest of the ridge. It is supposed to be fourth class but we quickly got to what seemed more like fifth class. To avoid it we traversed around to the south sometimes getting into a gully. We were not on any particular route but skillful route finding by Bob and Kelly got us to the summit by 5:30 PM without too much fifth class climbing. Our descent to The Gap went even better.

From The Gap, Bob and I headed for the slopes below Ritter Pass for an easier route to the meadow. Kelly and Arun went the opposite way side hilling along steep snow to get to the ridge running northerly from The Gap and down to camp. We were all back in camp by about 8:30 pm.

On Saturday morning we started walking at 6:00 am heading up to Ritter Pass to get to the other side of the ridge. The west side of Ritter Pass is rated class 2 but it is very loose. Farther down the slope the loose sand and rock become slightly larger rocks that are no more stable than the ground above. As soon as the hill leveled off, we stopped for a break. Again, lethargy seemed to take hold and we ended up sitting there for about an hour telling stories,

laughing and not doing anything to further our progress up Michael Minaret. Finally we got moving and made it to the base of Michael where we could see the three ascent routes. We sat again to ponder which we would take on. There was a party of two or three in the Eichorn chute and there was enough rockfall from these people that we decided not to take that route. Again in the grip of lethargy, some of us began looking for a good spot for a nap.

An hour and a half later after discussing many things and naming a large, pointed boulder the Mahajan Minaret after the venerable PCS treasurer, we decided to climb Adams Minaret. It was noon.

To reach Adams we climbed up another loose, rock strewn slope. Helmets were a must here since it seemed impossible not to kick rocks down.

From the notch at the top of this slope it is a pleasant but short third class climb. At 2:05 we sat on the summit of Adams. We spent a short while on the summit and descended the east side of the slope we'd come up. This put us in a glaciated gully with an icy tarn at the bottom.

Skirting a second gully we arrived at the South Notch that put us back on the east side of the ridge. This side of the South Notch is a nasty, slippery slope but fortunately there was more snow than sand. Our reward was the beautiful meadow that Cecile Lake sits in. We descended to the meadow and picked up a use trail that runs along the east side of Cecile Lake following it to Iceberg Lake. At the outlet from Iceberg we crossed and returned to camp. We arrived at 7:40 PM after having made an entire circuit.

It was a most unusual trip but the camaraderie made it worthwhile. Michael will just have to wait.

Participants: Bob Suzuki, Dee Booth, Arun Mahajan, Kelly Maas, Dot Reilly, Jim Curl.

• *Dee Booth*

Koip Peak & Mt Hoffmann

July 20 & 21, 2002

By Friday evening we had all arrived at our two campsites at the Tuolumne Meadows Campground in Yosemite N.P. Being a warm and bright moonlit night, many of us stayed up to introduce ourselves and share stories of our past adventures. However we soon grew tired from the day's long commute and headed off to sleep. Our official Sierra Club Loma Prieta Chapter PCS trip was led by Debbie Benham and Chris MacIntosh with participants Leo Alaniz, Steve Shun, Steven Franchuk, Wolfgang Schweigkofler, Song Bac Toh and myself, Chris Franchuk.

Saturday morning, we started up the Mono Pass Trail from Hwy 120 and quickly met a Yosemite Ranger led nature hiking group discussing the landscape since the Ice Age. After a brief stop, we continued on, passing the remains of an old log cabin, and soon reached a junction with the Spillway Lake trail. The posted trail sign here states incorrectly that it is 3.4 miles from Hwy 120 (this junction is actually a little over 2 miles in). We continued on the steadily climbing trail, eventually reaching the open meadows just west of Mono Pass. The Parker Pass trail junction is easy to miss here, but if you look to the south the trail is easily spotted on the far side of the meadows. The previous trail sign should be posted here since this junction is 3.4 miles from Hwy 120. Here and throughout the trip, Chris MacIntosh did a great job pointing out and identifying the wildflowers that were abundant everywhere. We crossed the meadow, picked up the trail and continued on to Parker Pass, about 5.5 miles in. From the broad expanse of Parker Pass the trail drops slightly into the Ansel Adams Wilderness and

passes numerous creeks, waterfalls and tarns to the base of Parker Peak. We stopped here to have lunch, taking in the view of Mono Lake through Parker Creek Canyon and looking at our next obstacle - a 1400 foot climb to Koip Peak Pass via Parker Peak's steep North ridge. Suffering from the altitude, Steven decided to stay and wait while the rest of us continued on. As we climbed, the views towards Mono Lake and into Parker Creek Canyon improved while the weather grew more threatening with billowing clouds. Fortunately the trail was remarkably stable and in good condition and thunderstorms never developed. Once the switchbacks ended, the trail turns southwest and makes a final steady ascent to the pass. Note that this section passes above broken cliffs and can be dangerous if covered in snow. Fortunately for us, no snow was present and we eventually reached Koip Peak Pass, turned west and began the final climb over stable scree slopes to the summit of Koip Peak. The one-way trip total was around 9 miles and 3300 feet net elevation gain from the trailhead. Debbie felt the hardest part of the climb was the steep switchbacks up to Koip Pass, "It's bleep-bleep (unpublishable)!!" The rest of us agreed.

The views from the top were great, extending from Tower Peak in the northwest to the Silver Divide in the southeast. This was everyone's first ascent of Koip Peak and for Song it was his first ever Sierra peak! We briefly celebrated our accomplishment, not lingering too long before heading back down. We intended to continue on to Kuna Peak but our late arrival precluded that. Kuna Peak is class 2 from Koip Peak, but does require some route finding over broken terrain. We kept in contact with Steven throughout the climb using a pair of Motorola Talkabout 200 radios that worked quite well. We met him near Parker Pass and made it back to the trailhead just after sunset.

On Sunday, with the official PCS trip completed, Leo headed home while the rest of us decided to hike up to May Lake and possibly climb Mt Hoffmann - after a long climb up Koip Peak the day before, we intended to make Sunday far more relaxed. We arrived at May Lake via the 1.2-mile trail from Old Tioga Road, where Debbie, Chris M. and Song spent a relaxing time at May Lake enjoying the scenery, reading and identifying woodpeckers, nuthatches, and jays. Wolfgang, Steve, Steven and myself decided to continue and hike up Mt Hoffmann using the popular use trail. We made it to the summit in 1.5 hours and enjoyed the all round views of the Yosemite landscape from its centrally located position in the park. Wolfgang and I took a detour from the summit to explore Mt Hoffmann's central (easy class 3) and eastern summit blocks before heading back and meeting everyone at the lake. We hiked back to the vehicles together and had an enjoyable post climb meal at La Cascada Mexican Restaurant in Oakdale before heading home (note that Ferrarese's in Oakdale now closes at 4 PM on Sundays).

• *Chris Franchuk*

Tuolumne Peak

July 27-28, 2002

Another beautiful weekend up in Tuolumne Meadows! Some haze from controlled fires, but, all in all, magnificent views from the summit of Tuolumne Peak. Last year at this same time, I advertised a hike up this very same peak, but, as fate would have it, I developed shin fractures and was not able to climb. So, once again, I set out to summit Tuolumne Peak with wonderful results.

Actually, this is the first time in a long time that the four days prior to the hike, about half the folks cancelled! But, it just worked out -- someone would cancel, and the next day, someone would call and want to come along. We started out about 9am from Murphy Creek trailhead following the signs for Young Lakes. Allen Hu lead our eager group through the forest; up the switchbacks; and finally resting at some tarns just below the saddle on the ridgeline to Tuolumne Peak. On the way, fields and fields of wildflowers greeted us: alpine goldenrod, lupine, Mariposa lily, alpine monkey flower, and shooting star. As we headed crosscountry, I was reminded by Allen and Leo, who had both done this peak, to 'stay left'. Glad they mentioned it! If they hadn't, I would have gone to the high peaked thing to the right. Anyway, Vishal was first on the summit (that young whippersnapper), jumping from rock to rock to get there:-) Seemed to take a long time to return to our cars and Anna remarked, "I don't remember all of this"! Funny how things look different when just changing direction! We figured out about 15-16 miles with an elevation gain of 2400'.

Back at Tuolumne Meadows campground, we had wonderful appetizers and ate 'til stuffed. From wood purchased at the store, Julius started a fire and even cooked his dinner of sausages over the flames! Lots of stories to tell around the campfire and some quite adventurous (thank you Dana!).

The next day, Allen Hu, lead some of the gang up Mt Hoffman while a couple of us stayed behind and wrestled with the Jay's and chipmunks at May Lake. Those who summited Hoffman said it was still hazy but not too bad. Another glorious day. Just before leaving May Lake, we drank some of the High Sierra Camp's fresh lemonade -- delicious.

Thanks to all who came and special thanks to Allen Hu for being the lead on both peaks. I enjoyed everyone's company and what more could you ask for?

Participants: Leo Alaniz, David Altmar, Debbie Benham, Vince Coito, Julius and Anna Gawlas, Allen Hu, Dana Isherwood, Carmen Izquierdo, and Vishal Jaiswal.

• *Debbie Benham*

Red and White

July 27-28, 2002

Red and White Mountain (12816') is a peak which is notorious for loose rock on some routes, and has been known to have turned parties back because of it. The best route to avoid the worst of it is the class 3 northeast ridge, which appears in the book "100 Classic Climbs". Such a billing is hard to resist, so on the weekend of July 20/21 Sandy Sans and myself (Peter Maxwell) set out to bag it. What a team: both ex-chairpersons of the PCS and both domesticated with loving wives and children. The rest of our families came up with us and spent the weekend camping at the McGee Creek campground.

We set off a little after 9 am on Saturday morning and after 7 miles and 3100' elevation gain, were at Little McGee Lake by 3 pm, leaving lots of time to enjoy the surroundings. Camp sites at this lake are extremely limited, and we found about the only flat area, barely off the trail. We couldn't help commenting on the trail as it continued up to McGee Pass: desolate, barren and uninspiring, switchbacking through treeless wastelands of loose rock. This trail is popular with packers, though, and we saw several mule trains on our journey.

Shortly after our arrival another group of three appeared, en route to further up the trail, intending to stop at the next lake and climb Red Slate the next day. Some time later one came back, stating that in his opinion there was nowhere to camp up there and he was going back to Big McGee Lake. The other two had apparently decided to put their bivvy bags right on the trail, so it would not be a good idea to plan any trip intending to camp beyond our lake.

Mosquitoes were not at all bothersome, it seeming as if the population had decreased a lot from quite recently. They were barely more than a mild annoyance and at the lake were hardly present at all. We were also lucky with the weather, because earlier in the week there had been substantial thunderstorms. Chatting with the ranger who came by, he said he'd never seen such weather, with steady hail occurring every hour or two throughout the entire day. It did cloud over and threaten, but nothing came of it.

We were up at 5 am the next morning to a balmy 46 degrees, and were hiking at 6:10 am, to summit at 8:30 am. This had to be a record for the earliest Sierra summiting for both of us. Sandy captured the moment well when he said "Heck, on some mornings I'm not even out of bed at 8:30!".

The route we followed is well described in Secor, and can be summarized in Roper style, "Head southwest, gain the ridge, follow it to the summit". At all times it was obvious where to go and the class 3 sections are quite easy with very little exposure. The knife edge ridge is really fun and has some good exposure on the east side in parts, but there was never the feeling of teetering on a narrow catwalk, since the west side is not as steep.

Although the ridge itself is solid, elsewhere the route is definitely not devoid of loose rock and where possible we climbed on parallel paths to eliminate the possibility of one of us being in the other's firing line. Careful placement of hands and feet is all that's really needed, but larger parties would still need to stay close together.

After bypassing the "false summit" the route says to climb a steep gully on the south side of the ridge to the summit, but the jumble of rocks we found didn't provide anything which looked like this. Instead, it was a matter of picking our way up through the maze. On the descent we followed the ridge line much more closely which, although steep, is a decent route to use.

The peak is not climbed all that often, and we were the first up since May. The register went back to 1981 and the book was nowhere near full. From the summit there was a nice view of Lake Thomas Edison and other peaks of the Silver Divide. After lounging around for 45 minutes or so we reluctantly left, to return to camp at 11:30. We were on our way about 30 minutes later and made it back to the car around 4:15.

Our adventures weren't over, though. We thought we'd be back home at a reasonable hour, but at the Don Pedro Reservoir Sandy noticed the car's temperature gauge had maxed out - the thermostat had broken and we were stuck. The rest of the journey was spent in the cab of the tow truck that had to be dispatched.

• 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.

Sierra Mountaineers Challenge 2002

Peaks: 10 Mountaineers Peaks: Whorl, Cathedral, Clyde Minaret, Bear Creek Spire, Thunderbolt, Middle Pal, University, Russell, LeConte, McAdie

Date: Aug 17-26 (Sat-Mon)

Difficulty: class 3, class 4, class 5

Location: eastern Sierra Nevada

Contact: Bob Burd, snwbord@hotmail.com

10 days of strenuous dayhikes to 10 of the Mountaineers Peaks accessible from the east side. Don't feel like carrying a heavy backpack and spending several days to climb one of these coveted peaks? Perhaps consider going fast and light, and enjoying a hot shower and a burger at Jacks when you're done. Come out for one or all of them, details at:

<http://www.snwburd.com/bob/challenge>

Middle Palisade

Peak: Middle Palisade (14,040'), class 3/4
via: South Fork Big Pine Creek

Dates: Aug 17-18

Distance: 7 miles

Elevation Gain: ~6300'

Equipment: Helmet, possibly ice axe, crampons, rope?

Cost: permit (\$20 for group) + gas

Group limit: 4

Contact: John se Jerman, jackyblack@yahoo.com

Exposed class 3/4 rock and snow on California's most difficult 14,000'ers not requiring a rope. You should own a helmet, ice axe and crampons, and not be afraid of using them.

If interested, please email me asap and include your favourite/mobile phone numbers, mountaineering/Mid Pal experience, where from and in what kind of vehicle you'd be leaving from and your equipment. Sorry if it takes me up to a week to reply,

Mexican Volcanos

Peaks: Citlaltepētāl, (Orizaba, 18,400), Iztaccihuatl (17,340) & 2 more.

Date: Nov. 22, 02 - Dec. 3, 02 (Fri - Tues, 12 days)

Contact: Bob Evans, robtwevans@email.msn.com

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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 8/25/2002. Meetings are the second Tuesday of each month.



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

First Class Mail - Dated Material