



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

## Next General Meeting

**Date:** Tuesday, December 10  
**Time:** 7:00 PM  
**Program:** Holiday Party and Slide Show

The December meeting is our annual Holiday Party where we ignore the usual formalities of meetings and indulge in a potluck dinner and other wild, devil-may-care antics. We'll have a slide show, where everyone is invited to bring about a dozen of their best shots. Please bring something for the potluck either from the list below (using the first letter of your last name or the last letter of your first name), or just bring whatever you know how to make! Also, please bring your own utensils and drinking glasses.

- A-F: Main Course
- G-L: Drinks
- M-R: Deserts
- S-Z: Salads, Appetizers, Salads

NOTE: Names have been re-arranged for 2002 to avoid picking on the same people!

**Location** Caliper Technologies  
605 Fairchild Drive  
Mountain View, CA

People should park in the back of the building and entrance to the party will also be through the back double-doors.

**Directions:** From San Jose (Northbound Highway 101): Take the Ellis Street Exit and turn left going back under the freeway. Turn left on Fairchild Drive (first exit after freeway on-ramp). Go approximately .25 miles to the Caliper building on the right.

From San Francisco (Southbound Highway 101): Take Ellis Street exit and turn right onto Ellis Street. Take the first left (100 ft) on Fairchild Drive. Go .25 miles to the Caliper building on the right.

Deadline for submissions to the next Scree is Sunday 12/29/2001 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 an 8 hr First Aid class each quarter, based on a nationally recognized First Aid text with emphasis on wilderness situations with no 911 access. The next First Aid classes will be Saturday, Jan 11 and Sunday, Jan 12 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 \$45 charge on your credit card—or promise to bring \$45 in cash to class. Cancellations 48 hours in advance without penalty or if a substitute. For more information, call 650-321-6500.

• *Marg Ottenberg*

## New Leadership Team

Yesterday, at the PCS meeting, the PCS members elected the following candidates for the new term beginning this month and extending for a year.

Stephane Mouradian, Chair  
Andrew Macica, Vice Chair  
Tom Driscoll, Treasurer.

Thank you all for selecting this outstanding team. Also, our thanks to the outgoing team of Ron Karpel (chair), Scott Kreider (vice chair) and Arun Mahajan (treasurer) for having served out their term so well during the past year.

• *Rick Booth, Nancy Fitzsimmons and Arun Mahajan, The PCS Nominating Committee*

## Snow Camping Seminar

The snow camping seminar for beginners is in hibernation this winter.

Look for us again in January 2003. Meantime, do join one of the easy hut trips, or check out the Bay Chapter's snow camping training at

<http://sanfranciscobay.sierraclub.org/snowcamping/>

• *Chris MacIntosh, [cmaci@attglobal.net](mailto:cmaci@attglobal.net)*

## 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.

### Adams Peak, Mt. Elwell

Peaks: Adams Peak (8197'), Mt. Elwell (7818')

Date: Nov 16-17 (Sat-Sun)

Leader: Mike McDermitt

[http://www.climber.org/WhosWho/Mike\\_McDermitt](http://www.climber.org/WhosWho/Mike_McDermitt)

Coleader: wanted

Our goal is to climb these Class 2 peaks before winter sets in. Adams, located 35 miles north of Lake Tahoe stands relatively high and offers great views of Shasta, Lassen and others. We will find out about the view from Elwell when we get there. Saturday we will climb Adams (2000' gain, 8 miles roundtrip) then drive to car camp near Elwell. Saturday evening enjoy leisurely dinner (bring an tern). Sunday climb Elwell (+2000', 8 miles r/t).

NOTE: Adams is in an area that gets little snow, but this is not a snowshoe or ski trip and therefore significant snowfall will cancel.

## Outgoing Treasurer's Report

\$803.99: Opening balance

-\$20.00 Bank service charges, 2 months only

-\$649.89 Total printing and mailing costs

+\$474 Subscription deposits

\$608.10 Bank balance as of Tuesday, November 12, 2002, last day of the term of Arun Mahajan.

Detailed report for the term starting after the PCS meeting of November 2001 till the PCS meeting of November, 2002

The bank used to charge a \$10.00 service charge and did so for two months but much whining later, they have dropped it. Two checks were issued to Paul Vlasveld for the printing and mailing. The first one was issued by the previous treasurer before my term began but the cashing of the same was done during my term, hence there might be some skew in the amount needed for printing and mailing SCREE hard copies this year juxtaposed with the monies received from subscribers.

We got only \$474.00 this year from subscribers. Some people paid more and some paid less and some were generous (someone gave \$25.00!). The subscription fee for the SCREE was increased to \$13.00 during my term. The \$474.00 averaged out at \$13.00 per brings the current subscriber base to about 37 people, so the number of subscribers are actually dropping and we ended this term with a smaller amount than we began, by \$200.00, despite the fee increase.

### Printing and Mailing Costs

The printing costs for Jan to August, 2002 were: \$231.87 and the mailing costs were: \$138.31. In January, the SCREE was mailed to 60 people and in August to 43 people. The August mailing and printing costs were: \$43.43, i.e \$1.10 per subscriber, per month and therefore assuming August as the baseline, going forward, the annual cost of mailing and printing per subscriber is \$12.12. We ask for \$13.00. So, even though the balance in the bank has fallen down, so has the subscriber base and the \$13.00 annual charge will suffice.

• Arun Mahajan

## Bôté Ânchouré's Lexicon of Climbing Terms and Expressions:

### A through F

By Arun Mahajan, Jim Curl, Tom Curl and Rick Booth

#### A

**Adz.** What you do in the southern US to get information as in, "Yo, dude, I need to adz you a kwestshun." Also a part of basic math. "I just learnt to Adz and Subtrack".

**AMS** Acute Mountain Sickness. Usually caused by gaining altitude too quickly or by gaining blood-alcohol level too quickly. Also, Ate My Shorts, as in, "Man, that crack really Ate My Shorts!"

**Anorak.** What to bring climbing, as in, "Don't forget your shoes, your harness, anorak.

#### B

**Bare Creek Spire.** Located at Mickey's Beach.

**Bugaboo.** Usually during June and July, when you blow your nose and a big schnot comes out with a mosquito in it.

**Bunghole.** The only equipment not yet forgotten on a climbing trip by a well known PCS member.

**"Belay On".** Signal to climber below that you're still not really anchored properly and you're busy fishing into your pocket for a candy bar.

**Bivy Bag.** Lightweight, waterproof, claustrophobic, and expensive nylon tube that a marmot would not be caught dead in, used to delude climbers into thinking they have a dry place to escape bad weather.

**Buttress.** The wife of a butthead.

**Barometer.** Scientific instrument used to locate mountain taverns.

**Boot-ax Belay.** Highly developed technique for ruining an ice ax, destroying a rope, and shortening a climbing day.

**Bar-tacking.** Sideways veering when approaching or leaving a mountain tavern.

**Blaze.** Unexpected result of overpriming a white gas stove.

#### C

**Chimborazo.** Latest Ronald Reagan movie; this one is a documentary exploring whether there is a difference in his cognitive functioning when he is on the summit of Chimborazo as opposed to when he was running the United States.

**Clydesdale Minaret.** Obscure Minaret located at the Budweiser Brewery in Missouri. First ascent by Allan Ritter.

**Crampon.** Female climbing partner's excuse for laying in the tent all day eating chocolate.

**Cwm.** When you arrive, as in, "you go first, then I will cwm"

**Chopping the Broccoli.** Technique practiced by heavy handed ice climbers. Usually beginners but sometimes practiced by Ukrainians.

**D. Dumbass climbers.** They usually get lost on the way back to their tent in the middle of the night, which they have left to go answer an inopportune call of nature.

**E. EnRon.** This is a failed business. It is also what happens when you go climbing with Ron, as in 'Rick en Ron went ice climbing'.

**Exum Direct.** Classic route on Wyoming's Grand Teton.

**ExLax Direct.** Beeline made for the woods after eating what you thought was your partner's chocolate bar.

**E. Freedom of the Hills.** Isn't it great to be able to pee wherever you want?

**French Technique.** Sorry, but some things Bôté can never reveal.

## Mineral King Trip-let

### Mineral Peak (11,610'), Needham Mountain (12,520'), Sawtooth Peak (12,343')

September 14-15 2002

The Cold Spring Campground at the end of Mineral King Road was surprisingly full, so we all ended up at the walk-in sites and found each other there. We were Dee Booth (leader), Dot Reilly, Linda Sun, Greg Johnson, John se Jerman, Kirsten Mouradian and Stephane Mouradian, scribe and co-leader (using this trip as class 3 check-out.)

The goal was to establish camp at Crystal Lake and climb Mineral Peak on day 1. On day 2, head for the class 3 saddle between Crystal Lake and Amphitheatre Lake and climb Sawtooth and Needham, then pack out the same way we came in. Crystal Lake at 10,800' elevation is a higher place to camp than Monarch (10,400') and it avoids the sandy slog from Sawtooth Pass or from Upper Monarch up to Sawtooth ridge.

The Mineral King Ranger Station opens at 7am on Saturdays which is convenient since you have to pick up the permit in person, even with a reservation. We left from the Sawtooth Pass trailhead, which is 1/2 mile beyond the ranger station and 1/2 mile before the end of the road. After about 2 miles of uphill hiking, we kept right on the trail to Crystal Lake. It took 3.5 hours to get from the trailhead to Crystal Lake. We set up camp at some established campsites just below the tiny dam. Later on, we found a spur trail just before the dam, which switchbacks around a hump and leads to nice flat spots between Crystal Lake and an unnamed small lake. This would be a less windy and prettier place to camp and camping there would shave 10 min of hiking on summit day. Next time

For Mineral Peak, we walked around the South side of Crystal Lake (that was before we tried the said spur trail), then used a prominent rock/grass ramp leading to the saddle on the east ridge of Mineral Peak. From the saddle we followed the ridge, first on van sized boulders, then smaller boulders to the foot of the peak. From there, it is a very satisfying mostly class 2 scramble on solid rock to the summit. Total climbing time from camp was 1 hour 10 min. We signed the register and rewarded ourselves with a one hour break on top. On the return, we did not quite go all the way to the saddle but came down a talus slope leading to the small

unnamed lake. Then we took the shortcut trail down, which starts on the West side of that lake.

On day 2, we left at a dark and windy 6:05am. Following the spur trail initially, we then took the same ramp as the day before and caught an easy grade trail through the sand leading to the Class 3 Crystal/Amphitheatre Pass. From there, we headed North below the ridge, picking a route through very large boulders and high angle slabs while dropping about 300' as we turned North East toward Needham. From the North edge of the grassy area, we headed for what looked like cliffs below the first saddle West of Needham. These cliffs are actually easy scrambling and they offer a nice alternative to the otherwise very sandy slopes. We did have to cross a sandy band which wore everyone out but enabled us to follow rock (rather than sand) from there all the way to the saddle. The climb to Needham was mixed sand/boulder with some moderate class 3 for the summit block. John actually braved the gusty wind and briefly stood on the summit. We spent about 30 min on the summit.

The traverse over to Sawtooth was accomplished by dropping to about 11,500' in order to clear the cliffs from the ridge. At one point in the traverse, we faced a small ridge perpendicular to our direction of travel but we found a nice sand/rock ramp which allowed us to cross the ridge easily. Once below Sawtooth, we headed through the easy boulders just below the East skyline. Unfortunately the best approach to the summit block is from the south ridge, so everyone but John had to downclimb about 40' and go around to the South in order to reach the summit. John found a way through some kind of cave under the summit block but this required very awkward moves beyond the rating of this trip. The summit block is easy class 3 and we spent about 30 min up there.

The initial plan for the way down was to follow Sawtooth's South ridge back to our original saddle. This ridge is class 2 if you go as far as the saddle between Monarch and Amphitheatre but we determined it was at least class 4 beyond that point. Instead, we came down hugging the bottom of the ridge on the Amphitheatre side (the East side.) This worked well. We found some easy gullies in between the high angle slabs that brought us to the saddle. This brought us about 1/3 miles North and below our initial Class 3 saddle, which was negotiated the same way as in the morning.

Back at camp, we packed in 30 min and headed about 4 miles and 3000' down. We reached the cars at 6:40pm. Everyone was pretty worn out by the 12.5 hour day but happy we had safely reached all our objectives for this trip. We had a cohesive group and every member held their own in spite of the long day.

I would definitely recommend doing this trip as an overnight versus trying the whole thing in one day hike; not only because of the length of the trip but also because sleeping in altitude helps prevent potential problems with altitude sickness.

Stephane Mouradian

Dee Booth assiduously recorded all our times during the trip and I combined her notes with data from TOPO:

Day 1: Trailhead to Crystal lake (trail): 3.8 miles, +3300' 3H30min.

Crystal Lake to Mineral Peak: 0.6 miles, + 700', 1H10min

Day 2: Crystal Lake to Needham Mountain via Crystal/Amphitheatre pass, 1.8 mi, +2000' 3H35min.

Needham Mountain to Sawtooth: 1mi, +1000' -1100' 2H20min

Sawtooth to Crystal Lake: 1.4 mi, + 300' 1800',  
2H30min

Crystal Lake to Trailhead (trail): 3.8 mi, +300' 3300',  
2H25min

• *Stephane Mouradian*

## Nevada Peaks

**Charleston Peak, 11,915**

**Griffith Peak, 11,072, Mummy Mt, 11,528**

**Waucoba Mt. 11,123**

September 21-29, 2002

September is the ideal month to climb 11,000 ft. desert peaks that may be too hot during the summer and are snowed in during the winter and spring. This year Richard Stover and I set off for the Spring Mountains just north of Las Vegas. Back in 1989 I would drive to Las Vegas in one long day-not anymore. We spent the first night acclimating at the free Grandview Campground, a dry camp at about 8,500 ft. in the White Mountains. The next morning we tagged along with a college botany class, leisurely hiked the Methuselah Trail of ancient bristlecone pines in the Schulman Grove at 10,000 ft., and visited the small museum there. Then, on to the Spring Mountains which we reached at dark after stopping along Highway 95 to view the distinctive profile of Mummy.

Rising early, we left the South Loop Trailhead at daybreak and climbed through glorious red and yellow aspen leaves among the Doug fir. Yes red. I never realized that aspens come in red, and that they spread by underground roots. One cloned group of aspens in Utah covers over 100 acres. (Can you tell I picked up a book about aspens at the ranger station?)

Charleston has a trail to the summit, but no water this year on the route we selected. Until you reach the crest of the ridge, it feels more like a Sierra or Colorado peak than a desert peak. It is full of interesting things to observe: the pattern of an old fire that must have swept up the other side of the ridge, marine fossils, and what we were later told was the wreckage of a large spy plane that crashed in the 1940s. Be sure to leave ample time to explore these points of interest.

On the way down we stayed on the top of the ridge instead of descending on the trail. Special treasures await the curious. As a bonus, we climbed Griffith on the way down. All in all, the day's hike was about 19 miles with about 4900 ft. elevation gain.

We played tourist the next day, sleeping late, going out for breakfast and hiking the short trail to Cathedral Rock. From our table in the restaurant, we could see itty-bitty Calliope and Broad-tailed hummingbirds feeding on the other side of the plate glass window.

Mummy Mountain is more fun than Charleston, and much less visited. We left the North Loop trail to climb cross country too far past the last switchback and had a short traverse on the ridge with one or two airy steps. Richard walked into a protruding bristlecone branch and bloodied his leg, so we took a break to patch him up.

From the saddle, Mummy looks like a fortress. The key is the break in the rock wall. We ascended and descended the narrow, rocky chute one at a time to avoid being hit by loose rocks. There was no DPS register, only a book placed by someone from the Naval Air Weapons Station. The broad summit sported gnarled pines with immature blue cones.

That night we took unpaved back roads towards California's Inyo Mountains and were rewarded by seeing a herd of wild horses walking toward us. We stopped the truck and snapped lots of photos as they warily passed very close.

On the approach to Waucoba the high point of the Inyos, we were glad to have 4WD. Waucoba presents a challenge to stay out of the brush. We were pretty much successful. The view of the Sierra is wonderful. Back at the truck, it started to sprinkle and we decided to forgo exploring the old cabins in "the narrows" on the drive out lest we be swept away by a flash flood. It was raining on the peaks all around. Winter had finally come to the mountains.

• *Debbie Bulger*

## San Joaquin Peak

October 27, 2002

Nancy's ice axe rang like a tuning fork as she drove the pick deep into the hard glaze on the great south wall of San Joaquin Mountain. Tom, her belayer, expertly dodged a falling shard of ice. Waiting on a ledge, Bob's attention was diverted by the roar of a massive dry powder avalanche on the opposite wall of the canyon.

It wasn't like that at all for us on Sunday, October 27, but we did make the first snowy climb of the season. Our party consisted of Nancy Fitzsimmons, Tom Driscoll, Greg Johnson, Bob Bynum, David Altmar, Dave McCracken, Sue Leeder, the entire Runov family (Maxym, Dara and toddler Glip), plus leaders Charles Schafer and me.

We drove up from Mammoth Lakes to the Minaret Summit trailhead, and at 7:00 a.m., started walking up the 4WD road to Deadman Pass, crunching on a half-inch of snow. At the end of the road, Glip felt chilled by the wind, so he abandoned the first summit bid of his young life. Maxym and Dara accompanied Glip back to the trailhead.

We proceeded up a use trail along the south ridge, in snow that gradually deepened as we ascended. The ridge afforded us unending views of the Minarets, Mount Ritter and Banner Peak, just across the canyon of the San Joaquin River. The fresh snow heightened the visual contrast between the ridges and the folds of the mountains around us, painting for us one dazzling vista after another.

We lunched on the summit at 11:30. As we browsed the summit register, we were surprised to see how many visitors there were to the mountain. They certainly weren't attracted by the mountaineering challenge, because it is just a stroll in the park. I think the popularity stems from views of the nearby Minarets, which are among the most rugged crags in the Sierra Nevada. Bob asked me in astonishment if the Minarets are as hard to climb as they look. I assured him that they are, and that they offer no shortcuts. Even though he could see them with his own eyes, he still found it hard to grasp that mountains could be as vertical as that.

Certainly our own mountain was nothing like vertical, and as we descended, we gradually moved from the ankle deep snows of the summit to the bare soil near the trailhead.

• *Aaron Schuman*

# Telescope Peak from Death Valley

## Up and back in a day, don't try this at home!

November 3, 2002

This report should be read as a follow up to Richard Vassar's fine report from October 2001. He lists GPS waypoints and elevations. We studied his report in planning ours but missed one critical point and had a much more interesting day (and night) as a result.

Our original plan was to start at Shorty's Well off the West Side Road in Death Valley and finish at Mahogany Flats but our sag support fell through at the last minute. Let me say that this is BY FAR the preferred way to do this route. In case you have never experienced 10,000 feet of descending after a 10,000 foot ascent, let me save you the trouble. It hurts, a lot!

Since we were stuck with a round trip hike, we elected to drive up Hanapauh Canyon road for 5 miles to set up our camp and shorten the route to around 20 miles. It turns out that after the road drops into the canyon at about 6 miles there are some excellent campsites. The road stops about two miles short of the spring so any car camp will be dry.

We started our hike about 4:15 am and walked up the road and then through the wash on minor use trails to the spring which is 10.5 miles from Shorty's Well. This was about 5.5 miles for us and took 1:45. The mine above the spring is quite deep and was interesting to poke around (carefully).

It was at this point that we made our critical mistake. To have a class 2 climb, you must cross the canyon and find your way up the north side of the canyon to the East/ West ridge that separates Southern Hanapauh Canyon from Middle Hanapauh Canyon. It looks very steep and brush covered but is still easier than what we faced.

The next time we try this, we will probably leave the road at about the 6-mile mark and start up this ridge right at the canyon mouth. This is how we came back down and even in the dark it was better than coming down to the spring.

Once we left the spring, we continued climbing the mine road on the south side of the canyon to its end at 6000 feet. There are two mine entrances here and it was interesting looking at all the artifacts. It boggles the mind that someone would go to the trouble to cut a road up this extremely steep ridge.

From there our route was nothing but up. We tried to stay on a ridge that headed basically west and defined the southern side of Southern Hanapauh Canyon. Because the ridge was sharp and capped with many Pinion Pines and Junipers we mostly contoured along the northern side of the ridge.

The rock and shale were so loose that we could not even rely on the larger rocks to be stable. If you decide to try this route, bring a helmet. We had to leave a good distance between ourselves to avoid getting pelted by falling rocks. At about 7500 feet we really began to think our route would end in futility as we were approaching another ridge that looked like the east face of Whitney. But we were able to traverse to the north of the buttresses and get around behind them to continue our climb.

Finally, at about 9500 feet we could see our way clear to the peak. The route we were on actually took us right to the top of Telescope Peak without ever hitting the trail from Mahogany Flats. From this point up the slope was covered with low brush and we had no more of the hand over hand climbing that had been the norm since

we left the mine. We followed the small ridge that heads east to the peak.

We summited at 2:20 pm with about 30 minutes of dinking around in the mines. While it was not a crystal clear day we could still see about half of California and Nevada! Someone had drawn a peak guide for the Eastern Sierra's and we could easily spot the peaks from Langley to Williamson.

As difficult as our climb had been, we would have easily been done before dark if we had a vehicle waiting for us at Mahogany Flats. As it was we nearly shredded our feet on the descent and still had a good 5 miles to go after dark. We did not retrace our steps on the descent. We followed the trail down to the broad slope that drops to the aforementioned East / West ridge to head back down.

This is very nice walking, with ample evidence of Big Horn Sheep in among the trees. Unfortunately we were not lucky enough to see any. We had reached the saddle above the spring just before dark and, not knowing where any use trail might be, decided to stay on the ridge and take our chances following it all the way to the desert floor.

This was really quite an easy walk until the final descent. That portion took us about 1-2 hours and was nothing short of miserable. With the steepness, looseness and abundant cactus we were not having any more fun. Finally, the face degenerated into a series of gullies that all seemed to be either avalanche shoots or waterfalls. We traversed until we found one that was walkable and finally made the desert floor.

By God's grace we were only about 100 yards from the road and thus were back at the car by 9:00 pm. Our overall time on the trail (or lack thereof) was 16:40 which is well beyond enjoyable. Did I mention we had gone through 6 to 7 liters of water each, and were dry for the last hour?

I write this mainly to help others avoid having a trip so close to the ragged edge! Had we carried 2 gallons of water each, we would probably bivouacked for the night. But being both cold and thirsty seemed more miserable than continuing on in our depleted state. Besides, eating powdered chicken noodle soup without the water wasn't that attractive.

Lessons learned:

- 1) Don't try an up and back trip unless your base camp is as far up Hanapauh Canyon road as possible. I would also not do it again unless we took the East / West ridge route both ways. This other route is just too slow.
- 2) Don't try this trip after the time change, daylight is just too limited.
- 3) Carry more water than you think humanly possible. We had a very cool pleasant day but there is NO humidity out there.
- 4) If you decide to follow the mine road as we did, go out at Mahogany Flat.

All this said it was a great adventure. The desert offers unique beauty and unmatched solitude. We would much rather repeat this trip than fight the crowds on Whitney!

• Jeff Cannon, *Atascadero* ([canfam@pacbell.net](mailto:canfam@pacbell.net)), Steve Brookshire, *Santa Maria*

# Kilimanjaro

## The Everyman's Everest

It has often been said that Mt. Kilimanjaro is the "everyman's Everest." The expectation is that anyone in reasonably good shape can climb to the summit at 19,340' above sea level. Being an average hiker/camper I decided to test this theory myself. Climbing Kilimanjaro, the highest point on the African continent, presents two major problems; getting all the way to Tanzania, Africa to even start the climb, and then actually getting to the top once you're there.

## Getting There:

For the average American, getting to Africa is a monumental effort. Flights are expensive, it takes 2 full travel days, and the guide services available cost a holy fortune! Having said that, it is possible; and you don't have to save for 20 years to do it.

My first task was to find a guide service that would not break my bank account. The Tanzanian Park Service, who manage Kilimanjaro National Park, require that all climbers have a guide, and at least one porter to carry gear. So I couldn't go it alone even if I wanted to.

After a bit of looking I did find a number of companies that offered low priced climbs, and even safaris. The major difference between these companies and the more expensive ones was that I would travel alone to the local hotel. Since I wasn't paying for a guide to travel with me from the states, the prices were much closer to my budget. I eventually went with Kilimanjaro Adventures. They are located in San Jose and provided me with a lot of details that made it easier to know what to expect, as well as when the best time to climb was.

I also liked that they have a "gear donation" program to help the Tanzanian porters and guides. They collect used winter clothes and gear and give it to the porters and guides to make sure they are safe and warm on the mountain, where temperatures frequently drop below freezing. By bringing a load of gear with me to donate, I found it easier to get some sponsorship to help offset the cost.

The next step was to get to Africa. Airfare to Africa can be very expensive. However, I was able to find tickets to Nairobi, Kenya for only \$1300 on KLM. Many people fly into Kenya since the airfare is much cheaper than flying directly into Kilimanjaro Airport in Tanzania. However, since I flew in and out of Kenya I also had to buy a multiple entry Visa, as well as pay for a shuttle bus from Nairobi to Kilimanjaro. This added another \$175 to the cost and would not be needed if I flew directly into Kilimanjaro.

After my arrival in Moshi, the town at the base of Kilimanjaro, I took a day to recover at the hotel. The hotel was outside the city and private. That meant the only people staying there were either climbing the mountain or going on a safari. This made things considerably safer and more relaxed. After my rest day I took a 4-day safari to Lake Manyara, the Serengeti, and Ngorongoro Crater. Since I was traveling all the way from the US, I wasn't going to leave Africa without seeing lions; and did I see lions! The other advantage of taking my safari first was it gave me time to recover from jet lag, and adjust to the higher altitude. The Ngorongoro Crater rim is at 7,200'.

## Climbing the Mountain:

After a week of travel and safari it was finally time to climb the mountain. I had chosen the Machame Route, sometimes referred to as the "Whiskey Route" for its "intoxicating views." I also opted to pay for an additional day on the mountain to adjust to the altitude. Living at sea level in the bay area is a big disadvantage.

I was in a group of 6 other climbers: a family from Canada (father, son and daughter), a German couple, and a trekker from Denmark. Our guides met us at the hotel and we took a bus to the start of the climb in the town of Machame (hence the name) at 4,888'. When we arrived there were hundreds of men standing around waiting for work. This is where we met up with our porters. After a few minutes of organizing, we began the journey.

On our first day we hiked through a dense rainforest. The path was a bit slippery from previous rains, and there were piles of exposed roots to be navigated. The first few hours were somewhat easy, with a light incline and a very open path. After 3 hours the path narrowed, and the pitch more than doubled.

I reached the Machame Camp by 5:30pm and was greeted by a sign that said "Reception" as I came out of the forest. At each camp I had to sign in and register with my passport to ensure a valid tracking of climbers.

As I entered the camp I found the porters had already set up my tent, and my pack was inside. By the time I laid out my sleeping bag the cook had brought hot tea, popcorn and biscuits for me. Next he brought some hot water so I could wash up. Now this was camping!

As the days passed they were all basically the same. Each morning I would wake to a pail of hot water for washing. Next they would provide a hot breakfast of eggs, porridge, sausage, toast and fresh fruit. Even after 7 days I was still eating real eggs and fresh fruit. I couldn't believe someone would carry such heavy items for 7 days. But they did. And I loved it.

After breakfast I would pack my personal items and sleeping bag in my backpack and leave it all inside my tent. As soon as I started hiking each day the porters would break down my tent, pack it up and hike to the next camp. Every day they would fly past me on the trail doing the distance in about half the time I could. By the time I got to the next campsite my tent would be set up, and hot water, tea and snacks would be waiting for me.

Each morning as I woke around 6:30am the temperature was around freezing inside my tent. Once the sun would come out it would quickly climb to the 60s or 70s. Each day I'd start hiking in light pants and a tee shirt. But by 11am the clouds would roll in blocking the sun and plunging the temperature back down to the 30s. By the time I'd enter camp in the afternoon the sun would briefly come out and the temperature would rise to the 50s. Then it would set and send temperatures plunging again. Between the strenuous hiking and constant temperature changes, a nice hot cup of tea and biscuits were absolute heaven as the end of the day!

## The Summit:

After 5 days of hiking about 8-10 miles a day and rising from 4,888' at Machame village to the high camp, Barafu, at 14,928' I was feeling surprisingly well. Each day hiked through heather, moorland, alpine meadow, and finally the rocky trail to Barafu. I had managed to avoid any altitude sickness by drinking copious amounts of water every day. I never left my tent without drinking at least 1 liter of water. I would drink at least 2 liters during the day's hiking, as well as tea at each meal. I was tired, but feeling pretty good.

Almost everyone in our group was feeling the effects of the altitude. All but one had started to take the drug Diamox to help them adjust. The only person who wasn't taking Diamox, aside from me, was the German, who had previously climbed Denali as well as a few other 20,000'+ peaks. I guess he had enough experience.

For me, this was my first major summit. I had climbed a few 13,000 and 14,000 peaks in California, but Kilimanjaro was a whole new level for me. I was not an experienced trekker; I was a

“week-end warrior”, closer to the “everyman” really. However, feeling pretty good at almost 15,000’ I opted not to take the Diamox.

We started our summit ascent from Barafu camp at 11:30pm. Some groups start as late as 1am, but I wanted to make sure I had plenty of time. The plan was to summit by 6am, and then return to camp for a late breakfast and rest before continuing down to the final camp at about 10,100’ and 14 miles. This was going to be a long day!

After 4 hours I began to realize that mountain climbing isn’t quite as exciting as I had thought. For 4 hours all we did was shuffle along a dirt incline in almost complete darkness. The only thing I could see is what my headlamp illuminated. After 4 hours of staring at a 4-foot circle of light on a dirt path I was tired, cold, and getting really bored.

However, as I entered my 5<sup>th</sup> hour of climbing I began to slowly lose track of time. In fact, I began to lose track of everything. More and more frequently my legs would turn to jelly and I’d stumble onto my trekking poles, or sprawl onto the dirt and rocks. I began to feel dizzy, and had a hard time making my body move the way I wanted it to. The dizzier I got, the slower I had to walk. As I slowed down, the cold and wind began to creep into my muscles. My legs began to shake uncontrollably and I found them almost useless as I tried to press on.

By the time I reached 17,900’, just below Stella Point, my legs buckled and my body crumbled to the ground. For the last 500 yards I had fallen almost every 50 yards; even with considerable assistance from my guide. It was getting useless fast. I simply could not make my body do what I wanted it to. My mind could not focus, and I couldn’t keep track of the ground (except when I was lying on it).

As I lay on the cold rocks my legs continued to shake uncontrollably as my rest allowed even more hypothermia into my system. My foggy brain was coming to the realization that I was suffering from the altitude and cold. But I could not tell just how badly. I wondered if this was normal and would pass, was I just too tired and needed a break, or was this more serious and I needed to go down.

In the end, I decided to descend. It was not an easy decision, and one I have second-guessed many times since. By the time I got back to Barafu camp the warm sun was up and I was beginning to feel better with the lower altitude. Unable to keep any food down I just crawled into my sleeping bag and crashed for a few hours before beginning my descent down to our final camp, Rau. As I hiked the final miles down to Rau I was in a funk, frustrated that I had not reached the summit.

On our final day as we hiked off the mountain my mind was still fixated on the summit and my lack of success. But I slowly began to realize my obsession with the summit was causing me to miss another gorgeous day on the mountain. The sun was shining and the wildlife and trees were breathtaking as we entered the rainforest again. I realized I had 6 wonderful days on this mountain. Granted, I did not achieve the physical goal I had set for myself, Uhuru peak. I had achieved a great deal more. I was truly able to experience all the eco-zones, moods and feelings that Kilimanjaro had to offer. I had also learned a great deal about the mountain, my companions, and myself.

As I’ve begun to make peace with myself for not making the summit, I’ve recalled something a guide on Mt. Shasta told me; “the summit isn’t the top of the mountain, it’s getting back to your car safely.” I did make it back safely to the car, and my home. But I will be back. And I will reach the top of Kilimanjaro some day.

• Daniel Dorr

## 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 Lassen

Peak: Lassen, 10,457’  
Dates: December 14-15 2002  
Map: USGS 7.5 min Lassen Peak  
Contacts: Stephane Mouradian,  
[smouradian@hotmail.com](mailto:smouradian@hotmail.com)  
H (650) 551-0392  
Steve Eckert, [eckert@climber.org](mailto:eckert@climber.org)

In good weather, this trip offers glorious views of snowed in Lassen wilderness and a chance to ski or snowshoe away from the crowds. We will be leaving Saturday early morning from the end of the plowed road near the entrance Station. We will ski or snowshoe up the road 7 miles (+2000’) to the base of the Lassen ridge and we will snow camp. On Sunday we will start up the ridge and switch to crampons to reach the summit (1.2 miles, 2000’). We will then return to camp, pack up and head down the road for an easy trip down.

In previous attempts, strong winds prevented the group from reaching the summit.

Trip members should have experience with winter conditions, including snow camping and use of ice axe and crampons.

If you decide to ski, you will need some backcountry skis with skins and be comfortable breaking tracks. Contact Steve Eckert to sign up.

### Nepal - Tibet

Goal: Kala Pata (18200’/5545m), Mera Peak (21100’/6437m), Tibet  
Date: Apr 12 - May 12 (Sat-Mon)  
Difficulty: Peak Climbing - mixed  
Location: Nepal - Tibet  
Contact: Warren Storkman [dstorkman@aol.com](mailto:dstorkman@aol.com)  
650-493-8959

April 2003 - Nepal Two trips running simultaneously, both will be in the Khumba area. One group will climb Mera Peak 21,100 ft (6437 meters) then cross Amphu Lapcha and do Island Peak (Imjatse) 20,300 ft (6189 Meters) returning through Namche. The other trekking and climbing group will trek to Lobuche 16,200 ft. with options of Everest Base camp or walk up Kala Pata 18,200 ft. (5545 meters) Then over to do Island Peak (Imjatse) – with a layover day for the trekkers.

May Option - Tibet: There will be a two day lay over in KTM (Kathmandu) after trek / climb before going to Tibet. We fly to Lasha and motor back to Nepal. This is 8 days - 7 nights of hotels.

Will include full board. (no camping) My wife will arrive in KTM with some trekkers wives, and others, for Tibet trip. As in the past I do not ask for any of your money. You pay the provider.

## Elected Officials

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## Rock Climbing Classifications

The following trip classifications are to assist you in choosing trips for which you are qualified. No simple rating system can anticipate all possible conditions.

- Class 1: Walking on a trail.
- Class 2: Walking cross-country, using hands for balance.
- Class 3: Requires use of hands for climbing, rope may be used.
- Class 4: Requires rope belays.
- Class 5: Technical rock climbing.

**Deadline for submissions to the next Scree is Sunday 12/29/2002. Meetings are the second Tuesday of each month.**



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

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