

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

## Next General Meeting

**Date:** Tuesday, January 8

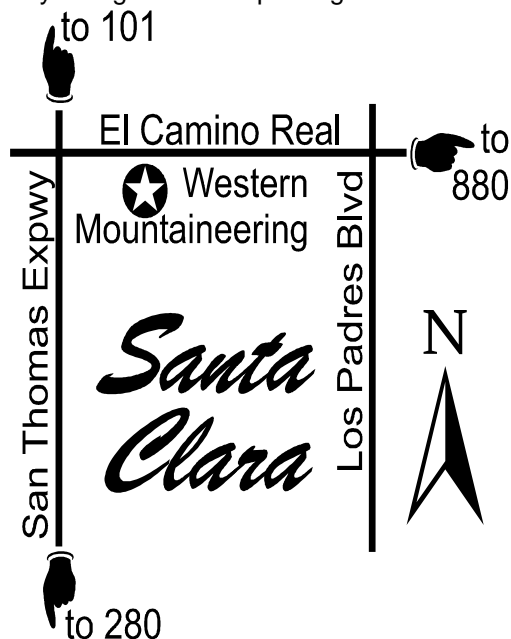
**Time:** 8:00 PM

**Program:** The Andes: The joy of high altitude climbing within easy reach by Paul Wilms

South America has its "Seven Summits", whose undertaking is a very rewarding goal. See Paul's experiences and tips gathered from these climbs. See slides from two of these peaks: Aconcagua (Argentina), and Sajama (Bolivia).

**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 1/27/2002 Meetings are the 2nd Tuesday of each month.

## Rate Increase

### Hardcopy Scree Subscription Rate

The costs of printing and mailing the hardcopy Scree are greater than the current subscription price of \$10.

The costs are currently running about \$12.33 a year per subscriber and are likely to increase over time.

Therefore we are proposing to raise the Scree subscription rate to \$13 with a request as usual, for an additional \$2.00 donation. This will be brought up at the PCS meeting on January 8, 2002 and a formal motion for the fees to be increased to \$13 will be made and there will be a vote.

• Arun Mahajan, Treasurer

## Snow Camping Seminar

### Jan 2002

Does the thought of sleeping on the snow give you chills? Beginners' Snow Camping Seminar prepares you for traveling and camping happily in the snow, and also gives tips for day skiers or snowshoers caught out overnight. Participants must be experienced summer backpackers, as this course will give you winter information, but doesn't teach basic backpacking.

Three evening classes will be held in the Stanford area on Thursday, Jan. 10, Tuesday, Jan. 15 and Thursday, Jan. 17, 2002. There will be one weekend field trip on Jan. 26-27 (with a rain date of Feb. 2-3). The \$40 cost includes books, workshop, and common equipment used on the field trip. Questions? Contact Chris MacIntosh at <[cmaci@attglobal.net](mailto:cmaci@attglobal.net)> or 650/325-7841, or Tom Wolf at <[tom.wolf@stanfordalumni.org](mailto:tom.wolf@stanfordalumni.org)> or 650/961-2682.

To sign up, send a \$40 check, payable to BSCS, to P.O. Box 802, Menlo Park, CA 94026. Include a S.A.S.E., your name(s), phone #, postal address, e-mail, Sierra Club member number. [http://lomaprieta.sierraclub.org/SnowCamping\\_0201.html](http://lomaprieta.sierraclub.org/SnowCamping_0201.html)

## 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, Jan 25 and Sunday, Jan 26 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*

## Rock Climbing Destinations

### Joshua Tree National Park

An article discussing rock climbing at Joshua Tree National Park has been written. It is quite long and probably too long for the normal publication of the Scree. It has been posted at the PCS website and may be accessed at:

<http://lomaprieta.sierraclub.org/pcs/articles/JoshuaTree.asp>

• *Rick Booth*

## Hardware for the Beginning Rock Climber

**First, rock climbing is dangerous. You can die climbing. The choice of gear you use is entirely up to you. Selecting, placing and using this gear is your responsibility. If you are not happy learning on your own how to use rock climbing gear or any gear discussed in this article then get instruction. Got it? Ok.**

There are many levels at which an individual may participate in rock climbing. Most people who develop more than just a casual interest purchase a harness, shoes, and a chalk bag so that they can climb either indoors in a climbing gym or join their friends outdoors. It is possible to stay at this level and have a good deal of fun, however, if the desire to "strike out on your own" hits, then you will need to consider buying your own gear. The new leader will need to purchase a rope, a selection of passive protection such as stoppers, a selection of active protection such as cams of some sort, slings, carabiners, a rack or sling device to carry all the gear, a belay device, and a cleaning tool for prying out stuck stoppers or cams. These days this is an expensive proposition so it has become problematic for the beginner to make a reasonable choice. The choice of gear is complicated by the type of climbing to be encountered but the following discussion is for general climbing on rock in an area that has both face climbing and crack climbing. There are certain climbing areas that don't fit the typical pattern, such as Indian Creek, where the requirement is for about fifteen cams of every size. There are only about two easy routes at Indian Creek and they are 5.9 so this is not considered to be a beginners area. This discussion is aimed at the beginning leader who can follow 5.8 to 5.9 and is willing to start leading at the 5.5 to 5.6 level.

The gear required is a rope which comes in a variety of lengths and diameters, passive protections such as stoppers and hexes, active protection such as camming devices such as Camalots, Friends, or Aliens, a selection of slings of different types, carabiners, some sort of belay device such as a sticht plate, a cleaning tool, and a rack or sling to hang the gear. There are a lot of variations in all these requirements and that is what makes the choices hard but in general you can't go wrong. Just about everything available these days is of high quality and works pretty well.

First, let's start with ropes. A rope will be required under any circumstances since it will be needed even if the only interest is top roping. Ropes are used in three types of systems, the single rope system, the double rope system, and the twin rope systems. In the US the two popular systems are the single rope system and the double rope system. In the single rope system a single 10.2 mm to 11 mm rope is used for the leader. The rope length can vary from 45 meters to 60 meters as standard lengths and some ropes may be available that are even longer. The double rope systems are the same length and are made from two 8 mm to 9 mm ropes. The twin rope system is similar to the double rope system but the application is different. In the twin rope system both ropes are treated like a single rope, that is, they are both clipped through the same carabiner. This is not necessary with the double rope system. The issues here are related to the application. The single rope system is the easiest to use. It is lighter so the leader is dragging less rope up the cliff, it is easier to clip it into the protection, and it is easier for the belayer to work with. All of these are important in an environment where time is critical such as a back country alpine route. The single rope system is about perfect except for three things. The first is rappelling off a route in a storm is a lot faster and easier with two ropes and in fact some routes cannot be rappelled with only one rope at all. The second is the force applied to a piece of protection is higher with the larger single ropes than one rope from the double rope system. The third problem is certain weird routes that wander are a lot easier to protect with less rope drag with a double rope system than a single rope system. In any case, most crag climbing and a lot of alpine routes may be climbed with a single rope. The double rope system will be more difficult for the belayer to feed out and harder to stack the ropes so they don't get knotted together. The double rope system is heavier than the single rope system and is somewhat harder to lead with, however, this system is valuable on alpine climbs when the possibility of retreat is likely. This system is preferred for ice climbing since it loads ice screws the least in the event of a fall.

In all cases the de facto length of rope systems these days is 60 meters. The diameter is a matter of choice. With ropes getting longer manufacturers have gone to skinnier ropes in an effort to reduce the weight. The down side is the smaller diameter ropes will handle fewer extreme falls and will cut more easily on edges. The last choice here is whether the rope should be "dry", that is, waterproof, or not. The dry ropes are nicer to work with in the rain but most waterproofing does not seem to last long. A waterproof rope is worth the extra cost if it can be maintained. A waterlogged non-dry rope is something to behold. A final comment on the twin rope system. It does not seem to be popular in the US and I know of no one who uses it.

For the individual just beginning in rock climbing the single 60 meter rope is the one to choose for getting started. Depending on the interest other ropes and rope systems can be added later. There are many rope manufacturers. These include Blue Water, Maxim, Sterling, PMI, Edelrid, Rivory Joanny, Beal, Mammut, and Edelweiss. Black Diamond ropes seem to be supplied by

other rope manufacturers. A survey of the ropes used by the subscribers to [gear@climber.org](mailto:gear@climber.org) was conducted in mid 2000. These results were compiled and may be found at <http://lomaprieta.sierraclub.org/pcs/articles/ropes.asp>.

The next types of gear that needs to be considered are slings. Slings are more complicated than one might suspect. Slings include the standard loops of webbing but also include "quick draws" and cordalettes. First, slings are used to extend the connection between the piece of protection and the rope. There are two reasons for doing this. If the rope starts to make sharp bends as it follows the leader up the cliff the rope drag tends to increase dramatically. This can be managed by extending the connection between the protection and the rope in an effort to make the rope run in a more straight line. This lesson will have a profound effect on the new leader when it is encountered the first time. Second, even if the rope is running straight it is important to have enough spacing between the protection and the rope so that the protection does not pull out or change position as the leader climbs past it. It is quite disconcerting to see a stopper pop out and slide down the rope when the leader climbs past it.

In general, about half a dozen short slings are handy and about three or four long slings are handy. The short length should be about 2 to 3 feet and the long ones about twice as long. The length of the short ones depends on how you want to carry them. Many people carry the free slings around the neck and over one shoulder so the sling should comfortably fit so that it is easy to remove. This can be adjusted incrementally with hand tied slings but be sure to try on commercial sewn slings before buying them. The longer slings should be about twice for the double length slings and about three times as long for a triple. It is handy to have at least one triple length sling even though this length may be obtained by using a few shorter ones. The other carrying option is to carry them on your harness or a separate rack from the gear. In this case they are carried with two carabiners and racked so they are doubled over several times depending on the length. There are several tricks for doing this and an experienced friend can show you how this works.

The second piece of gear in the sling family is the "quick draw". These used to be just very short slings ranging from 4 inches to about a foot but are now usually sewn flat and configured so that the lower carabiner is held tightly so it won't flip upside down. "Quick draws" are used to clip bolts which are permanent anchors in the rock and are usually encountered on face climbs. Most "clip and go" routes (face climbs with just bolts for pro) are about half a rope length so about six quick draws are handy. For routes with more bolts use the slings and rack them so they are folded over. In total, you should have about a dozen combined "quick draws" and slings equipped with two carabiners. The choice of sling manufacturer is up to you. The sewn slings are very strong and some of them have a Kevlar weave. I usually have a bunch of hand tied slings made from the narrow but thick tubular sling material. This is so I can untie them and use them for rappelling. Be careful buying this material. It sometimes is called "super tape" and it gets confused with the narrow but thin stuff and most store clerks don't know the difference and sometimes load up the wrong thickness. The material to choose is about 1/2 to 9/16 inches wide and has a breaking strength that is very close to 1 inch tubular sling material. If it doesn't feel fat or thick it is the wrong stuff. If in doubt, stick with the sewn commercial slings.

The last sling item of use is something called a cordalette. This is used to quickly set up a belay anchor and consists of about 17 feet of 6 or 7 mm perlon tied in a huge loop. Each climber should carry one so only one is necessary for each individual to own one. Finally, if you decide to make your own slings using tubular

webbing then they will have to be tied with a knot. The standard knot is the water knot but if you allow for extra material the slings can be tied with a double fisherman's knot. The double fisherman's knot tends to stay tied and not work loose like a water knot. If you choose the water knot be sure to check your slings each time out!

To go with the slings, stoppers, and cams, you will need a selection of carabiners. These days the quick draws seem to be sold with the carabiners but you will need at least one and usually two for each additional sling. The two will be need if you decide to use the slings in a "quick draw" application. In addition, all the stoppers and cams won't come with carabiners so you will need a selection to rack your gear. If you look at the carabiners sold with a quick draw they look different. One usually has a bent gate. This is the one the rope gets clipped to and is designed that way because it is easier to drop the rope into the carabiner when desperately hanging on. The other carabiner has a straight gate. In general, you can equip the remaining slings with carabiners of this style but the bent gate carabiner won't be quite as useful in this environment. That is because the slings are usually longer than a quick draw and are usually used to extend a piece of protection out to a "substantial" distance. The straight gate carabiners are more useful. That is because there is more area inside the carabiner for all the "stuff" that somehow ends up in there. With this in mind it is handy to have a few of the older style carabiners that are larger. The "D" style is stronger but even the standard ovals are very handy.

One comment about the design of carabiners. Petzl, a French company, makes a line of carabiners without the notch in the main body of the carabiner that the pin in the gate sits in. They have a knob on the main part of the carabiner and this fits into a cut out on the gate. Expensive, but worth it. The reason is the notch on a standard carabiner design catches on anything it can and it makes for slower operation and slower use of the carabiner. Lastly you will need at least two bomber locking carabiners. One is for the belay or rappel device and the other is to clip into the belay anchor. After you get used to it you will end up with more than just two. In the case of locking carabiners, bigger is better. Usually a bunch of ropes, slings, harness and what have you gets put in there simultaneously and it is whole lot easier to work with a big locker.

Next up is passive protection. This consists of stoppers and hexes, although there are other options that are used in certain rare applications. The nice thing about stoppers and hexes is a well set piece is very, very, strong. I once watched a friend of mine pitch off of "Outer Limits" in Yosemite Valley and he pulled out every piece except a giant stopper stuck behind a flake. Scary. In general you will need two complete sets that get as big as about .5 to .6 inches. The biggest stopper size should just overlap the smallest cam size you choose to start with. Fortunately, stoppers are fairly inexpensive and a complete set will run about \$45 to \$80 depending on which manufacturer you choose. Stoppers come in straight tapered and curved variations. The curved versions tend to be much more solid in most applications. This means they will lock in small tapered sections of a crack more solidly. It is difficult to find straight tapered stoppers in spite of the fact this was the original design. The curved stoppers tend to be harder to remove since they lock in more efficiently, however, don't let the difficulty of removal be a consideration. It is important that a stopper be set well in order for it to stay stuck in the crack and they are the cheapest piece on your rack so if it is necessary to abandon one it is not too painful. If you choose to get a complete set you will end up with some big ones and they will be useful in alpine applications or in rappelling in an emergency so they are not wasted. There are also tapered stoppers that are asymmetric.

These have application in a lot of granite cracks, especially in piton scars, and there are those who swear by them. Some of the manufacturers are DMM, which makes Wallnuts and Peenuts, Black Diamond, Wild Country, HB, and ABC. There are others. The Peenuts have a peculiar taper on the bottom and are useful in piton scars and HB makes the asymmetric stoppers that work well in a wide range of granite cracks. Most people will run into Hexes somewhere along the line. Prior to camming devices these filled the wide end of the protection spectrum. They are fairly hard to work with and are not recommended for the beginner.

The last big item of protection and easily the most expensive are the camming devices. These have become the de facto standard for most climbing and there is always some manufacturer trying to make a very narrow camming device in order to move further down the crack sizes into the area usually protected with stoppers. These devices are expensive and will run about \$35 to over \$100 for some truly huge stuff. The average is about \$50. These prices are per device! Since the camming pro will be the most expensive item on the rack and the choice of manufacturers is large most people agonize over the choices. The most important criteria for choosing cams is how easy they are for you to place them. The emphasis is on "you".

The first part of the problem is to choose the correct piece to fit the crack. This takes experience and surprisingly this ability to eyeball the crack and get the correct piece on the first shot is hard to do and is lost quickly without regular leading. There are certain keys to finding the right piece. It is very handy to have things color coded. Next, it must fit your hand conveniently and it must be easy to "pull the trigger" and contract the cams. This is a function of your hand size and strength. Next, it must have the widest range of use in terms of crack size and depth. This means the camming device must have decent range and it must be long enough to place into cracks that are flaring on the outside and the device needs to be placed deeper in the crack. How do you choose the right devices? If you can, lead an easy route with a friends rack and try out his or her choices. Go to the local climbing store and try all the devices and pull the trigger on them. Remember, these devices must be easy to locate and place. The breaking strength? All of them are strong and the breaking strengths are about the same. The price? The price will vary depending on how astute a buyer you are but the prices are about the same also. With all this said most climbers seem to use Aliens for the smaller sizes and Camalots for the larger sizes. The best sizes to have of the Aliens are the Green, Yellow, and Red. This will overlap somewhat with the .5 to .6 inch size stoppers but the overlap is worth it. It is very often a lot easier to slam an Alien than it is to wiggle a stopper into some weirdo crack. The two sizes smaller are handy also. These are the Blue and Black. My personal choice is to use duplicates of the Green, Yellow and Red and one of the Blue. I then switch to the .5 Camalot and go larger. The .5 Camalot and the Red Alien overlap somewhat. I have duplicates of the Camalots up to #3 and one of the #4. You can do a decent amount of climbing without the duplication but in the long run it is convenient to double up on everything. It is a matter of how far you want to "run it out" and beginners aren't too keen on this. When it comes to how to double the cams, I usually go with a cam that covers about the same size but is made by a different manufacturer. This leads to a hodge-podge type rack but the slight variation in manufacturers designs mean the range of cracks covered is a little wider. I duplicate the Aliens, though. It turns out they have about the longest stem and are the easiest to place in the back of flaring cracks. They also fit my hand well since I have small hands. Stay away from the older Camalot Juniors. The sling is sewn flat making it very difficult to add a sling without clipping into the carabiner, which is a weaker

connection. These older Camalots have two parallel wires. The newer small size Camalots are single stemmed and work a lot better. There are other manufactures of camming devices. These include Wild Country (friends), HB, DMM, and Metolius. The Camalots tend to be heavier than the other styles.

The new climber will need a gear sling to hang all this shiny new stuff on, a belay device, and a cleaning tool. There are several choices for gear slings and Metolius makes a version with multiple little loops on it, which is supposed to help organize the pile of gear. I am not sure how successful this is. The belay devices are either the endless variations on the sticht plate or the figure eight. The sticht plate variations are the two hole devices and the popular one is Black Diamond's ATC (for air traffic controller). I don't particularly like these things but HB makes a good one with an aluminum keeper wire, solid aluminum rod in this case, that does not get stuck in the ropes when rappelling. This is about the only one of this type I would consider. There are the old sticht plates themselves around. The one with the spring should be thrown as far away from you as you can. The figure eight is an interesting device and was designed to be "fool proof". I don't know if this is true but the figure eights tend to turn your ropes into telephone cords and I have avoided them once this became clear.

Lastly, there are the GriGri's and other esoteric belay devices. These are great for belaying your buddies while they are floundering on the 5.13 top rope problems but are slow to operate and heavy and are not recommended for general application. To round out your rack you will need a cleaning tool. This is a short piece of steel used to pry the reluctant stopper or nut from the crack it was wedged into. There are a lot of choices here and some even come with an end that allows pulling the trigger on a Friend if it has walked into the crack out of reach. I have no preference and have used a Leeper thing for years. People tend to drop these things and you can sometimes score a tool at the bottom of popular crack climbs.

Finally, here are a few notes on maintenance of all this expensive equipment. Be sure to watch your rope. Minor abrasion of the sheath is ok since that is what the sheath is for. If it separates or the core can be seen through the sheath then the rope has had it. The number of serious falls on the rope should be known. If the rope loads up with fine dirt and starts to turn your hands black when using it then wash it. I don't use any detergent. The rope can be dried outdoors in the sun. Watch the knots on all hand tied slings. Watch the wear and tear on slings in general and replace them if they look dinged or it has been a few years. It is cheap insurance. Watch the wires on stoppers. Severely bent ones should be examined carefully for breaks in the wire strands. Monitor the action of the cams. They should be easy to operate and will start to get sluggish when loaded up with grime. Cams can be cleaned out with a water based cleaner and then lubricated. I use something called "Rusty Duck" which is used by gun owners for lubricating guns. Maybe "politically incorrect" but I have yet to find anything that works as well. Stay away from oils. They spread thin and then attract dirt and grime. Be very, very, careful lubricating cams. It is important to keep the various chemicals away from the slings attached to the cams.

So you have decided to buy a bunch of gear. Where do you buy this stuff and is there a way to get a discount? Well, there seem to be some options here for those with access to the internet. Try the following:

[www.rei-outlet.com](http://www.rei-outlet.com)

www.sierratradingpost.com. Everything is discounted. If you need it this is a great company. Outstanding returns policy. I have bought several ropes from this place.

www.mgear.com. Mostly retail but outstanding specials and sales. Spokane, Washington based, no CA sales tax.  
www.northernmountain.com. Mostly retail but amazing discounts on certain massively expensive items like tents, sleeping bags, etc. CA based and somewhat clunky returns policy.

The following two overseas websites have mountaineering and climbing gear at very good prices. Dee has bought a rope and other friends have used the barrabes site without any problems.

<http://www.telemark-pyrenees.com/>

<http://www.barrabes.es/barrabes/default.asp>

The best place I have found for cams is in Moab, Utah. Try Pagan Mountaineering, 88 E. Center Street, Moab, Utah, 84532. Call 435-259-1117 and ask for Larry Harpe or Brian Jonas. This is a climbing store built by climbers and you should get a good price and no California sales tax.

Caveat emptor.

• *Rick and Dee Booth*

## 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.

### Mission Peak to Sunol

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

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

### Junipero Serra Peak

Peak: Junipero Serra  
Date: January 13th, 2002  
Leaders: Arun Mahajan 650/327-8598 (H) or 408/585-2114 (W), [aron@tollbridgetech.com](mailto:aron@tollbridgetech.com)  
Ron Karpel [ronny@karpel.org](mailto:ronny@karpel.org).

Co-listed with the Day Hiking Section. PCS rating: Class-1, DHS rating: 3D. This peak is the highest in Monterrey county. The walk up is mildly strenuous with an altitude gain of 3900+ ft in 6 miles, one way, but the view is well worth the effort. There may be snow on the summit, so please dress properly and wear proper hiking boots. Pouring rain cancels. Carpool: Carl's Jr. at Dunne Ave exit from 101 in Morgan Hill at 7:00 a.m. or call leader for trailhead information.

Note: There is a need to have a parking permit, per car, to park at the trailhead. The leaders will be getting information about the same, as the day of the trip nears.

## Devil's Peak

July 21, 2001

LI climbed Devils Peak, which is located near Soda Springs off of Interstate 80. Since I don't recall ever seeing a trip report to this peak before I will provide one now. For this region of the Sierra, this is a rather impressive looking mountain. The summit is composed of some type of dark metamorphic rock, which forms a sheer 200-foot cliff on its eastern side, and a somewhat smaller cliff on the other sides. The only non-technical route on the mountain appears to be a class 3 route up the south side. A possible class 4 route may exist on the north or northwest side, but I did not have time to scout out these routes. The mountain seems to be surrounded by thick brush. I was unable to find a path up to the south side of the mountain that did not involve serious brush. There are various ways one can go to get to the south side of Devils Peak. I will briefly describe the way I went:

I started from a parking area located a short distance above the dam that separates the Cascade Lakes. I walked down across the dam and followed the trail from there. A short distance after leaving the dam, I came across a trail sign. I followed the path marked as the Palisades Trail. About a half-mile later I left the trail at a rocky area and headed directly towards the mountain. On the way I had to drop down towards a meadow, with a dirt road running along its far side. Devils Peak is directly above this road. After crossing the road I worked my way up to the south side of the peak, attempting to stay out of the brush as much as possible. Unfortunately, I was unable to completely avoid it. When I reached the cliffs the route to the summit was obvious. From the parking area to the summit it took me about 90 minutes. A good dirt road leads to the parking area, which is located off of Pahatsi Road. For more information on this mountain see Pete Yamagata's booklet on Northern Sierra Peaks.

• *George Sinclair*

## Goethe

### Via a Knife-Edge Ridge

September 28-29, 2001

Mt Goethe (13264') can be climbed by a mostly hands-in-pockets route from the south. The trouble is, this involves either a long trip over Lamarck Col, or a long detour from Alpine Col, neither of which being very attractive for a weekend trip. Instead, Peter Maxwell (scribe), Dee Booth and Scott Kreider tackled the peak via the "class 3/4 northeast ridge", leading up directly from Alpine Col. This alpine adventure took place on September 29/30, just in time for Scott to use his National Parks Pass which expired on September 30.

An added attraction were the vivid fall colors of the aspens in the North Lake region. The lower parts of the Piute Pass trail were through a wonderland of gold/yellow leaves. The contrast of the intense blue sky, the green of the pines, the multiple reds of Piute Craggs and the yellow of the turned trees made a kaleidoscope of colors that was stunning in its beauty.

At the ranger station in Bishop I got the bear lecture and was told there was one in Humphrys Basin, surviving on YOUR food. I'll bet it didn't come up to Goethe Lake, which is totally treeless and surrounded for the most part by large boulders. We didn't even see any small critters up there and hung our food from a convenient boulder as a mere precaution, rather than thinking it was really necessary.

We got off to a leisurely start on Saturday morning at 9:30 in perfect fall weather. After a stop for lunch shortly after Piute Pass we arrived at Goethe Lake at 3:30 pm. There is a good trail from the pass to Muriel Lake, but from there it's cross country. The worst part was getting around the west side of Goethe Lake to the only flat area suitable for camping. From the lake just before Goethe to this camp site was boulder hopping and took us almost an hour. Bad as it was, the east side would have been even worse.

The camp site is right at the base of the wide gully leading up to Alpine Col, so is very well placed for the climb. It's also quite large, and could accommodate a reasonable number of people without problems. The peak is hidden from the campsite and we were wondering just what the ridge leading to it was really like. It looked quite a long way on the map.

As soon as the sun went behind the higher peaks the temperature let us know that this was definitely no longer summer. The wind which gusted from time to time didn't help the situation either. Around 7 pm it was 46 degrees and nobody was keen on staying out of cozy sleeping bags so we bid each other goodnight and settled down to a wonderfully long sleep.

Sunday morning it was up in the dark at 5:40 am and we were walking an hour later. We were at Alpine Col by 7:30 to get our first decent look at the ridge. It rises up to a high spire which is unnecessary to climb so the best thing is to traverse left and up to pick up the ridge well beyond this spire. We ended rejoining it too soon and had to descend somewhat to bypass very difficult walls.

The next section of ridge is superb, being very narrow and with considerable exposure in places. It reminded Dee and I of the ridge encountered while climbing Palisade Crest. There were a few ups and downs but the best way was always right over the top. There comes a point however when continuing along the top would be a lot more difficult and we had to start traversing again on the left (south) side. The peak was in sight at this point so the traverse became the route to the summit, without getting back on the ridge top again.

We were on the summit at 9:30, a total of 3 hours of climb. We decided that we wouldn't rate the ridge as class 4 in any way since the exposed parts were on easy terrain and the more difficult parts were regular class 3. This is about as good as it gets!

We hung around on the summit for half an hour, and were inspired by Aaron Schuman's quote from Faust in the register. On the return we learned from our mistake on the ascent and started angling down to Alpine Col from the last saddle before the ridge started its ascent to the aforementioned spire. The descent took longer than it should have because 10 minutes or so after our last break stop I realized I didn't have my camera with me. Shock, horror - I'd left it on the ground "back up there somewhere".

Dee was somewhat below us so Scott and I climbed back up, trying to retrace our path. We went up to a point that we knew was higher than our break stop and then searched carefully. Thanks to Scott recognizing an oddly-colored rock, and a good deal of good luck, I walked straight to the camera and reclaimed it, much to my immense relief.

We arrived back at camp at 12:45, making a 2 3/4 hour descent, although without the camera misadventure this would have been nearer 2 1/4 to 2 1/2 hours. Eating lunch and packing up took us until 1:30, at which time we started the laborious task of the boulder hopping back around the lake. I had been dreading this, and as my tired legs took me and my pack up one boulder, down onto the next, up onto the next, I knew my dread was real.

However, all bad things come to an end, and it wasn't long before we were on much more pleasant terrain. The weather had become rather overcast by this time, which was actually an advantage as it gave us respite from the sun, which still had plenty of strength.

We arrived back at the car at 6 pm and after gassing up in Bishop and getting fast food takeouts, were on the road home at 7:15 pm. The drive back was incredible - I have never seen the Tioga road so deserted and passed only 4 cars all the way to the Big Oak Flat entrance station. We made it back in slightly less than 5 hours, a record for me.

The final big unsolved mystery of the trip is why is there a sign by the North Lake campground pointing to "Piute Pass, Lamarck Lakes" and if you follow this sign you end up back on the road in 25 yards? The real trailhead is further up the road, at its end, where there is no sign at all.

If you're interested in looking at some photos of the trip, you can see them at <http://hyperphoto.photoloft.com/view/Album.asp?s=cano&u=1622673&a=1154076> There will eventually be a version on climber.org, but the above url is a convenient temporary location.

• Peter Maxwell

## Mt. Harrington

Oct 27-28, 2001

Pat Callery, Vishal Jaiswal and myself met in Sunnyvale at John Wang's apartment Friday evening and headed for King's Canyon approximately 8:00PM. Our plan was to meet up with Bob Evans at Road's End in King's Canyon Nat'l Park early Saturday morning. The four of us arrived at King's Canyon at approximately 1:00AM and decided to find a place to sleep at higher elevation since the trailhead at Lewis Creek was only 4400 feet. Pat found a quiet place off of Hwy 180 at approx. 7000 feet where we bedded down. It was surprisingly warm that evening and we awoke at 6:00AM and organized ourselves. At 6:30AM we headed east to Road's End and met Bob there a bit after 7:00AM. By 8:15AM the five of us began hiking up the Lewis Creek trail towards Grizzly Lakes. We decided at the start that we would return via the Deer Cove trail so a car shuttle was arranged to avoid the extra mile hike from Deer Cove to Lewis Creek at the end of the trip.

The Lewis Creek trail is fairly steep with an overall elevation gain of 5400 feet over 9 miles to Grizzly Lakes. At this time of year water is hard to come by, though the trail wasn't totally free of water sources. We all hiked at our own pace and waited at trail junctions for everyone to regroup. Parts of the trail (most it seemed) were very sandy so we left a cloud of dust as we trudged on. There were some fall colors as the foliage began to change, though nothing as dramatic as New England or the eastern Sierra. Just past Frypan Meadow Vishal met up with a lone hiker named Paul Wilms. Originally from Belgium Paul is a very experienced hiker/climber and he and Vishal decided to try to climb Harrington on Saturday, rather than camping at Grizzly Lakes and climbing Harrington on Sunday with the rest of us. After doing some reconnaissance Paul and Vishal decided against climbing Harrington Saturday since it was getting late and the peak was still a distance away. We invited Paul to camp with us so our merry group of six hiked on. Grizzly Lakes is not much of a lake in the Fall. The water level is very shallow with a lot of sediment. Over night the surface of the lake froze. Bob Evan's filter clogged as he filtered drinking water. We managed to find a nice camping spot close to the "lake". Only two of us brought tents while the others slept under the stars ( there was some concern that it might rain). After a lot of clouds passed through the sky cleared with a nearly full moon and many stars brightening the evening. It was completely quiet - no wind, no scampering of bears, no buzzing of flies.

On Sunday morning we woke at 7:00AM per our plan. By 8:00AM we were headed towards Harrington. It's a fairly steep hike to the base of the peak. We all took our own path. Pat, Bob

and I decided to go straight up, while Vishal and Paul took an easier route to the east and John split the difference. I struggled a bit getting up one sheer wall but with assistance from Pat I managed to get over the hurdle. We all met up at the base of the peak, just below the final 300 foot Class 3 section. I decided to wait there while the rest of the group climbed the peak. I've become a lot more comfortable on rock, but I'm still a bit shaky. In retrospect I regret not climbing the peak since the hand and foot holds were described by all as terrific. As I hung out I watched a fire burning to the northeast. Apparently it was a controlled burn but the amount of smoke generated was quite a bit.

The gang of five loitered on the summit of Harrington for a while enjoying the views of the Grand Dike, Silver Spur, and the Palisades in the distance, and then made their way down one by one. They were the first group to sign the register since October of the previous year. Why more climbers don't bag this beautiful peak is a mystery to me. Paul and Vishal lingered longer enjoying the warm sunshine and the views. They made a plan to climb Kennedy Mountain on Monday so weren't in any hurry to get back to camp. The rest of us arrived back in camp and refueled, rested and broke camp. An hour after arriving the four of us headed down the dusty trail. Going downhill is tougher on the legs than going uphill, so I longed for an M.C. Escher-type experience where I could get back to the trailhead without going downhill. Dream on! Near Frypan Meadow we took a right turn and headed down the Deer Cove trail as we had planned. It was as steep and dusty as Lewis Creek but the views were better. Further down the trail we had a nice view of Harrington as well as a rock formation called the Grand Dike. In addition, there was more colorful foliage. We made good time hiking out - Bob and Pat turned on the afterburners while John and I hiked at a more moderate pace. It took all of us less than 4 hours to hike out.

After cleaning up and changing clothes at the trailhead we all decided to meet at the Woolgrowers Basque restaurant in Los Banos for dinner. We were all very hungry so it was a struggle to wait until Los Banos to eat. The wait was worth it, however. The food at the restaurant was as plentiful as it was delicious, all for a modest price. We were soon back in Sunnyvale going our separate ways and looking forward to another successful Sierra peak climb.

• *Tony Stegman*

## Palm Springs to Mt. San Jacinto

November 16, 2001

On November 16, seven adventurers, Richard Vassar, Jeff Fisher, Maxym Runov, Nancy Fitzsimmons, Rick Daraska, Bernd Meyer and Cindy Outlaw, met in Palm Springs to do the "Cactus to Clouds" hike. This hike is from Palm Springs (523 ft) to the top of Mt. San Jacinto (10,804 ft). The nice thing about this hike is, that although it is 22 miles and 10,800 feet of elevation gain, you do get to take a tram most of the way down, which is a nice treat after a long day.

Five of us were participants in the Death Valley to Telescope Peak hike on September 29 and decided to try another classic base to summit hike. Cindy Outlaw lives in San Diego and has done the hike so many times that part of the hike is named after her (Outlaw trail).

Logistics:

We met at 5:30 AM on November 17 at the western end of Ramon Road and started hiking in the dark. We were treated to a beautiful sunrise from the trail. There were lots of other people hiking from or the Palm Springs to the tram station. In fact, we

passed a group of more than 20 hikers from the Los Angeles Chapter of the Sierra Club, who were hiking to the tram station and had started at the Desert Museum (alternate trailhead).

The trail is an unending succession of upward-reaching switchbacks like the 97 switchbacks on Mt. Whitney. From the start we broke up into 2 groups. The first group made it to the Long Valley and the tram station between 5 and 5 1/2 hours and the second group made it in 6 hours (11:30). After an hour lunch in a nice warm tram station restaurant we headed towards the summit after stopping at the Long Valley Ranger Station to get a self issue wilderness permit. On the way up we took a couple of breaks then made it to the summit between 2:30 and 3:00 PM. Most of the day we had warm weather, however, it was about 48 degrees on the summit. We took a short break and then headed back to the tram station where we ended our hike between 4:45 and 5:30 PM just as it was getting dark. We had a beer to celebrate the successful day then we took the tram down in the dark, with a spectacular view of the glittering lights of Palm Springs, which was fun.

After a nice dinner we decided to get up at 1 AM and drive to Joshua Tree (about 40 miles from Palm Springs) to watch the Leonid meteor shower. It was spectacular. Meteors were falling every second. It was a great way to end a fun weekend.

Thanks to Jeff for suggesting that we climb this classic peak this year.

• *Nancy Fitzsimmons*

## 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.

### Mexican Peaks

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

### Nepal – Tibet

Peak: Kala Pattar, Island Peak  
Date: May 2002  
Contact: Warren Storkman, [dstorkman@aol.com](mailto:dstorkman@aol.com) 650-493-8959

Climb Kala Patter and Island Peak plus optional 8 day Tibet trip

## Elected Officials

### Chair:

Ron Karpel / [ronny@karpel.org](mailto:ronny@karpel.org)  
650-594-0211 home  
903 Avon Street, Belmont, CA 94002

### Vice Chair and Trip Scheduler:

Scott Kreider / [pcs-scheduler@climber.org](mailto:pcs-scheduler@climber.org)  
408-737-8709 home  
1007 S Wolfe Road #5, Sunnyvale, CA 94086

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

Arun Mahajan / [pcs-treasurer@climber.org](mailto:pcs-treasurer@climber.org)  
650-327-8598 home  
1745 Alma Street, Palo Alto, CA 94301

## Publicity Committee Positions

### Scree Editor:

Bob Bynum / [pcs-editor@climber.org](mailto:pcs-editor@climber.org)  
510-659-1413 home

### PCS World Wide Web Publisher:

Jim Curl / [pcs\\_webmaster@yahoo.com](mailto:pcs_webmaster@yahoo.com)  
415-585-1380  
San Francisco, CA

### Publicity Chair:

Rick Booth / [rwbooth@attbi.com](mailto:rwbooth@attbi.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](mailto:lomap-pcs-announce@lists.sierraclub.org)) or one of the email lists the PCS feeds (either the [sierra-nevada@climber.org](mailto:sierra-nevada@climber.org) discussion list or the [california-news@climber.org](mailto: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](mailto:listserv@lists.sierraclub.org)", or send anything to "[info@climber.org](mailto: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 1/27/2002. Meetings are the second Tuesday of each month.**



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