



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

## Next General Meeting

**Date:** Tuesday, June 11  
**Time:** 7:30 PM  
**Program:** Climbing in the Alps with Karen Christie

In July of 1999, Karen succumbed to the urgent call of the Alps since it would probably be her last summer living in Europe. Unfortunately, no one she normally climbed with could go that year, so she accepted an offer to go with an acquaintance of an acquaintance... With and without him, she had a great time, and climbed several Gaston Rebuffat classics, including Pyramide du Tacul, the South Face of L'Aiguille du Midi, Point Lachenal, and the Midi-Plan traverse.

**Location:** Peninsula Conservation Center  
 3921 East Bayshore Rd  
 Palo Alto, CA

**Directions:** From 101: Exit at San Antonio Road, Go East to the first traffic light, Turn left and follow Bayshore Rd to the PCC on the corner of Corporation Way. A sign marking the PCC is out front. Park behind.

Deadline for submissions to the next Scree is Sunday 6/23/2002 Meetings are the 2nd Tuesday of each month.

## Wilderness First Aid

To help trip leaders and would-be leaders get the required First Aid certificate, the Chapter sponsors a First Aid class each quarter, based on a nationally recognized first aid text, but with added material and emphasis on wilderness situations with no phone to dial 911. The next First Aid classes will be Saturday, Aug 3 and Sunday, Aug 4 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 get partial refund if a substitute attends (you get to keep the Wilderness First Aid book). For more information, call 650-321-6500.

## 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.

### Thor, Thweetheart?

**Peak:** Thor Peak (12,300), class 2  
**Date:** June 8-9, 2002  
**Leader:** Aaron Schuman ([aaron@climber.org](mailto:aaron@climber.org))

As you hike up the Whitney Trail, and you pass through a meadow called Bighorn Park, you look up in horror at the tremendous sheer southeast wall of Thor Peak. Lucky for you, you decided to join me on the ascent, so we walk around to the back side of the mountain, and scoot up moderate scree and talus to the summit. My permit limits us to 4 people. It's early, so there will be plenty of snow and slush.

### Echo Peaks

**Peak:** Echo Peaks (11,000 - 11,160+) class-3/4/5  
**Dates:** June 16th, 2002  
**Maps:** Tenaya Lake 7.5' or Tuolumne Mdws 15'  
**Leader:** Ron Karpel, [ronny@karpel.org](mailto:ronny@karpel.org) 650-594-0211

**Co-Leader:** Jim Curl, [jhcurl@pacbell.net](mailto:jhcurl@pacbell.net) 415-585-1380  
 This is a restricted trip of the Sierra Club. Participants must be experienced in class-3 and 4 climbing. Late last season I made a day trip to the area, and realized that the 9 Echo Peaks are an attractive day trip destination. We will set ropes for peak #4 which is 4th class. If we have enough skilled climbers, some of us may climb peak #9 which is rated 5.7. The rest of the peaks are 3rd class. Send your Sierra Club member number along with a climbing resume to the leaders.

### Kuna and Koip

**Peak(s):** Kuna Peak 13,002', Class 2  
 Koip Peak 12,962', Class 2  
**Map(s):** Tuolumne Meadows Topo  
**Dates:** July 20-21 (Sat-Sun)  
**Leader(s):** Debbie Benham, 650/964-0558  
[deborah4@pacbell.net](mailto:deborah4@pacbell.net)  
 Chris MacIntosh, 650/325-7841  
[cmaci@attglobal.net](mailto:cmaci@attglobal.net)

Join us for a carcamp in lovely Tuolumne Meadows! Saturday will be a long day as we summit Kuna and Koip Peaks with a total round trip of 16 mi. Sunday, maybe Mammoth Peak, depending on hikers' desires. Non-refundable fee of \$4 holds your spot in Tuolumne Meadows Campground (Fri&Sat nights). Newcomers and Sierra Club members will be given preference and we're limiting total participants to 10. Contact Debbie Benham for further information.

### Kings- Kern Divide Peaks

Peaks: North Guard (13,327 - cl 3+),  
Mt. Ericsson (13,608 cl 3),  
Mt. Stanford (13,963 cl 3), & Junction Peak  
(13,888 - cl. 3)  
Dates: Tues. July 23 thru Sun. July 28, 2002  
Leader: Charles Schafer, 408-354-1545  
mailto:[c\\_g\\_schafer@yahoo.com](mailto:c_g_schafer@yahoo.com)  
Contact: Bob Evans, 408-998-2857  
mailto:[robtwevans@email.msn.com](mailto:robtwevans@email.msn.com)

Tuesday we hike over Kearsarge Pass to East Lake. Wednesday we will shoot for North Guard, and perhaps move our camp. Thursday, Friday and Saturday we will go after Ericsson, Stanford, and Junction, moving our camps as need be. Sunday we'll hike out and drive home.

This is a very scenic area. All four peaks are very special climbs. Trip limited to experienced people. Ice axes, and crampons needed. Rope for North Guard

### Mt. Guyot and Cirque Peak

Peaks: Mt. Guyot (cl. 2; 10,892) & Cirque Pk (cl. 1 - 2; 12,900)  
Date: Fri. June 28 - Mon. June 30, 2002  
Leaders: Charles Schafer  
mailto:[c\\_g\\_schafer@yahoo.com](mailto:c_g_schafer@yahoo.com)  
408 354-1545  
Bob Evans, [robtwevans@email.msn.com](mailto:robtwevans@email.msn.com)  
408 998 2857

Fri. 14 miles from Horseshoe Mdw (9920) over Cottonwood Pass (11,120) to Rock Cr. (9520). Sat. AM bag Guyot (10,892, cl. 2); then camp on summit of Cirque (cl. 1 - 2; 12,900), for the day about 10 miles and 6000 gain. Why camp up there? Hopefully great sunset and sunrise views of Whitney (bring cameragear). Sun. walk out.

### Mt. Langley

Peak: Mt. Langley (14,026 feet) Class 2  
Dates: July 12-14, 2002  
Map: USGS Mt. Langley topo, 7.5'  
Leader: John Wilkinson [jfwilkinson@sbcglobal.net](mailto:jfwilkinson@sbcglobal.net)  
(408) 947-0858

A leisurely trip to climb California's southernmost fourteener. We'll drive down on Friday and do a short backpack in, camping probably at or near one of the Cottonwood Lakes. Saturday we'll dayhike the peak via Old Army Pass, and hike out and drive home on Sunday. This is suitable as a beginner's trip. Most of the route is on trail or use trail.

Limited to 10 people. There is a \$5 charge for the permit, payable at or before the trailhead. Contact John to sign up or for more information.

### Tuolumne

Peak(s): Tuolumne Peak, 10,845', Class 2  
(optional) Ragged Peak 10,912', Class 2/3  
Dates: July 27-28 (Sat-Sun)  
Maps: Tuolumne Meadows  
Leader(s): Debbie Benham, 650/964-0558  
[deborah4@pacbell.net](mailto:deborah4@pacbell.net)  
Jim Ramaker, 408/463-4873  
[ramaker@vnet.ibm.com](mailto:ramaker@vnet.ibm.com)

Another beautiful weekend up at Tuolumne! Saturday, we'll climb Tuolumne Peak. Then, on Sunday, an optional climb of Ragged Peak (class 3 summit knob!). Non-refundable fee of \$4 required to hold your spot in Tuolumne Meadows Campground (Fri&Sat nights).

Limit 10 hikers and newcomers/Sierra Club members given preference. Contact leaders for more information.

### Minarets

Peaks: Minarets Mountaineering Classic, Ansel Adams  
Wilderness, California Trip #: 02154A  
Dates: July 26-August 4, 2002  
Price: \$675; Dep: \$100  
Leaders: Margi Waller & Anne Muzzini; Climbing  
Leaders: Doug Mantle and Tina Bowman

SUMMARY: Experienced mountaineers will retrace the routes of the first explorers of the Minarets. On layover days we'll have opportunities to enjoy either technical (limit of six participants) or non-technical peak climbs. (Prior rock climbing experience is required for technical ascents.) A packer assist will lighten our loads and allow us to combine strenuous days with great food and a few creature comforts at night.

<http://www.sierraclub.org/outings/national/brochure/02154a.asp>

### 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>

## Round Top

### Via the Crescent Moon Couloir

April 7, 2002

I pity the fool who brings his ice tool

Not heeding these wise words of Mr. T, some members of the Ice family, Ron Karpel (Hard-Ice), Maxym Runov (Ice-Cube), Bob Suzuki (Stoic-Ice), Rick Booth (Rock-n-Ice), Scott Kreider (Vanilla-Ice) and Arun Mahajan (Ice-Karim), met up at the Carson Pass Sno-Park on the morning of Sunday, the 7th of April, 2002, loaded to the gills with an assortment of ice climbing and other general climbing gear like tools, slings, harnesses, ropes and pickets. This was to show the casual observer that these Soggy Bottom Boys were serious climbers or had done serious shopping at the last climbing sale at Outlet.Com. The objective was to climb the striking Crescent Moon Couloir on Round Top and to provide levity with background choral blue-ice grass musical accompaniment.

Starting at 10am and struggling mightily to keep up with Ice Cube and Stoic Ice, the rest of us icicles made it to the base of the couloir at the top of a flattish section, above Lake Winnemucca, by 12 pm. Hard-Ice wisely suggested that we put on harnesses as the steep couloir above would make it harder to do so at a later point. Meanwhile, Ice-Cube, melting with impatience, waited for us and we all started going up, unroped. The snow layer was crusty, but we dug into it with firm steps, benefitting no doubt from the previous trail breaking of Ice Cube who had bolted ahead. There is a couloir on the left, also clearly visible from the road, that is at a gentler angle but we wanted to try the actual Crescent Moon couloir, which is on the right. The angle progressively increased, but the snow conditions were perfect and in the deep snow, our ice axes were sinking to the hilt and our feet to the knees but we were getting good purchase. After a short break at the point where the Crescent Moon Couloir showed another fork, we decided to go on, what appeared to be, the steeper, right branch. This time, in an attempt to

give Ice-cube some rest from trail breaking, Ice-Karim decided to go up first and made progress by doing short switch backs. Hard-Ice and Rock-n-ice thought that the angle was 45-degrees here. Looking back down, we were rewarded with a truly spectacular sight of the steep couloir below our feet with a train of climbers coming up and ringed with the snow covered hills and peaks of the Carson Wilderness. At this point, wanting to go up faster, Ice-Cube asked to lead and went almost straight up to a rock head wall. Here the angle was the steepest and he stayed in the furrow between the wall and the main snow slope and in a few moments, was at the top of the notch between the main summit (left) and the surrogate summit (right). We all came up behind, being extra careful here, as the axes sank only till mid-shaft before hitting rock and there were a couple of spots where we had to face in and make a few moves with our boot-toe tips which sank in enough but lesser than that in the couloir below. Definitely a no-fall zone and we were clearly woken up, daylight savings or not! It had taken us an hour and half to get to this point, after having started off for the couloir proper, at 12pm.

The short wall to be climbed en-route to the summit hump was surprisingly devoid of snow and we all had to make a few interesting class-4/5 moves to get to the actual summit. We signed into one of the multiple summit registers and then made our way to the surrogate summit and we were again surprised at the lack of snow as we made our way over the scree and loose stuff to descend via the snowy slopes back to the point where we had left our snow shoes. In an hour or so after that, we were back to the cars at about 4.30 pm.

The snow conditions were perfect this day for a short high angle couloir climb that is the Crescent Moon Couloir. Any higher angle or any worse conditions, we would have had to use a rope and set protection, but this day and with our level of experience, we all felt comfortable without a rope.

It was Julius Caesar, who, after doing a particularly nice couloir climb with his friends, had said, "I came, I thaw, I conquered". While historians will debate this, we should have listened to what Mr. T had said and left that ice tool home.

• *Arun Mahajan and the Ice family of the Soggy Bottom Boys.*

## **Caminos Inka**

### **Hiking the Inca Trail to Machu Picchu**

April 25-28, 2002

"We do not serve Inca Cola on this flight", the air-hostess sniffed. Sadly, I realized that I was now on my way out of Lima, heading back home to California and there would be, for a while, at least, no more Inca Cola, the local soda that I had indulged in, while my companions had, on occasion, gone for the stronger Pisco-Sour during a recent visit to Peru.

After spending a couple of days touring Lima I hooked up with a group of adventurers put together by GAP Adventures of Canada and took the flight to Cuzco, the objective being to hike on the Inca Trail for three days and to terminate at Machu Picchu on the fourth. Our trail guide took us on a bus from Cuzco to the Sacred Valley and then to the fantastic ruins at Pisac and Ollantaytambo where we spent the night. The next day, we got dropped off at one of the standard starting points for the Inca Trail along the Rio Urubamba, known as Kilometer-82. It is near the 5000+ metre peak, Nevado Veronica, that looks positively un-climbable. Our large group of sixteen people and two guides and porters and cook set off after having completed the trail entry formalities. Right away is a crossing of the Urubamba on a swaying suspension bridge. The trail then gains elevation gradually over several kilometers passing the large ruins of Patallacta and then drops down steeply but then again gains gradual elevation till the popular camp-site at Huayllabamba which was our camp for the night (2900 m). This

was an easy day despite the length and we were at camp early for a good rest. The roosters of the small settlement nearby woke us up early on day-2 which was just as well as this was to be the hardest day. We had to go from 2900m to 4200m (13700+ ft) in only about six kms. Our guide taught us to make a quid of coca leaves. This quid placed in the mouth releases it's juice, which apparently helps for the altitude. The porters do it all the time. Some people in the group tried it but coca chewing being an acquired taste, only a few kept it up for long. The trail started off steeply and went past a trail check point and our guide pointed out our first major destination, Abra De Huarmihuanusca, the Dead Woman's Pass, at 4200m, the highest point on our route and it seemed agonizingly far away. The trail then continued to climb up, going through a beautiful forest along a river, past a camping site and then to another large camping site at Llulluchapampa. This campsite is on a small grassy plateau with stunning views of the valley that we had just come up from and the snow capped peaks beyond. After a brief break here, we started off for the final steep section to top out at the pass. Some group members raced to the top, the others, either slowing down due to the altitude or simply stopping to take pictures, came up at a stately pace. The pass was quite cold with low clouds hanging over it but everybody's spirits were high at this accomplishment. The trail dropped down to the other side of the pass, almost as drastically as it had risen. At the first major drop, we had lunch. A few llamas and a pair of alpacas wandering on the grassy mountain side stopped by to within almost touching distance of us. We continued dropping down steeply, 2600 ft in just over a mile, says the map, till camp in the beautiful valley floor of the river Pacamayo. From here we could see the pass where we had come from and how steeply we would have to climb on the morrow, but for a while at least, we rested peacefully to the sounds of the flowing Pacamayo. Day three dawned cloudy and cool as we slogged up the steep trail to the circular shaped ruins of Runcu Raccay and then further up a short ways to the second pass. The gloomy weather continued and we plugged on and at one point the trail dropped steeply and then climbed up a series of steep steps to the elaborate ruins of Sayac Marca. Our guide told us the story of this site and the purpose behind it. The trail then dropped and continued on through a forest over a valley and this was the most beautiful part of the trail. Though we could not have the views in the distance due to the clouds and the occasional rain, the lush greenery and the fierce colours of the tropical vegetation took our breath away. The trail was steep here and although the rise was not as dramatic as on day-2, it was quite sustained and tiring. It passed through a short tunnel that has been made by the Incas, till the third pass that was at 3650m and just on the other side of this pass were the ruins of Phuyu Pata Marca. The Inca Trail is not just any old trail through the mountains. It has fantastic ruins all along the way and every paved stone is steeped in history. If the ruins are thus, then one wonders how impressive the actual structures may have been in the days of the Inca zenith. The trail continued to drop steeply and several places had paved steps and we had to watch our footing here because it had started to rain and this continued till camp and we started to get more and more wet. It is a good idea to have a large poncho over the Gore-tex and the pack as the water gets in everywhere. A long descent that would have been very enjoyable in good weather and on a clearer day finally brought us to the somewhat noisy camp site of Huinay Huayna just as it got dark. There was also a trekkers hostel with somewhat spartan facilities here. The next day, day-4 of the trek, we got up at four am. The air was moist and cool and after gulping down a hurried breakfast we started at a brisk pace, past another Inca Trail checkpoint. The idea was to get to Intipunku, the Sun Gate and to see the sun rise over Machu Picchu from there. It took us about an hour of fast walking before we ascended the rather steep steps that mark the final approach to Intipunku but much to our disappointment the clouds were continually persistent and not only were there no views it was drizzling as well. Making the most of it,

we trudged down the trail and reached our final destination, Machu Picchu. The moment it self was anti-climactic since the main site was in the clouds and we could only make out the faint outlines of the famous ruins. We rested and waited for the group to accumulate and then our guide started to show us the various architectural aspects of the ruins. About that time, Inti, the sun, finally began to make its presence felt and the clouds slowly started to lift to reveal that we were in the midst of dome like peaks that dropped down steeply all around us. Finally Huyana Picchu was also revealed and we saw Machu Picchu in its true form, the stuff that post cards are made of. After touring most of the ruins, a few of us scooted to the Sacred Rock to make the short hike to the top of Huyana Picchu, the peak that is seen in all the stock shots of Machu Picchu. It is a short but steep hike to the top and it took us about an hour to go up. By now the sun was up and we got a very impressive view of the lay of Machu Picchu from the summit. The bus ride from Machu Picchu to the town of Aguas Calientes was a straight drop down the hill via a switch-backing road. A little kid, dressed to represent the Inca runners, the Chasqui, started running with the bus and cut through the switch backs with such precision that every time we were at the center of a switch back he would be waiting for us, yelling good-bye, alternately in English, Spanish and Quechua and then he would take off again, cutting fast through the switch backs to meet us at the next. We tipped him well for his efforts! A long train ride to Ollantaytambo from Aguas Calientes after lunch and then a bus ride from Ollantaytambo to Cuzco completed the trip. Beginning from Km-82 and ending at Machu Picchu, I approximated from the maps, involved 45km of hiking and up to 8000 ft of elevation gain and between 6000ft to 6500 ft of elevation loss.

A golden moon, nearly full, rose over Cuzco as we drove back from Ollantaytambo, but still could not dim the Southern Cross, up in the sky. I knew that very soon I would have to say good-bye to all my exceptional companions and our great guide and there was a lump in my throat. I will carry the imprint of the fast flowing Urubamba in my mind, on whose banks the immense flower stalks of the agave rise up and then dip down with the weight of their bloom, as if to sip from the river, but I fancy that the Urubamba is singing to them the story of a civilization and the bigotry and greed that drove its conquest and perhaps even the tale of the brave commoner, Ollanta and his doomed love for the daughter of the king, Pachacutec Inka.

• *Arun Mahajan*

## **Mt. Williamson**

### **Third Time's the Charm or George Creek close and personal**

May 3-5, 2002

Both Dewey and Myself had attempted Mt. Williamson two times before. For me the first attempt came on May of 1997. During that trip I decided to turn around at 13000' at the ridge above the horns. It was 3:30pm by the time our slow group reached this point and it seemed too late to make the summit and return safely during daylight. Two other members of the group did summit but were stranded at the horns and spent an uncomfortable bivy. The second attempt came two years ago. This time upon reaching the ridge above the Horns I was almost literally blown off. A quick retreat sent me back to camp empty handed. Dewey's first attempt came two years ago. But he never went beyond the basecamp since he was still recovering from a serious knee injury he suffered skiing just 2 months earlier. It was very surprising he managed to get to base camp. Dewey's second attempt last year was also turned back by bad weather as he attempted it from the Shepard Pass approach. Needless to say we both wanted this peak.

This year the weather forecast seemed better. We drove into LonePine Thursday night at 10pm and crashed at the first camp ground about 1 mile up Whitney Portal road. The next morning we jammed out of there and were at the trailhead at 8:30 AM. Following the same strategy for Creek crossings we used two years ago we quickly looked for a stream crossing within 200-300 meters of the trailhead. This worked well for us two years ago. Being a bit anxious to get across I slipped on a mossy rock and fell into George's Creek. I was about 3/4 submerged but luckily the pack did not completely go under. I managed to grab a root and pull myself out after a bit of struggling. I was completely soaked throughout but a check of the sleeping bag showed that it was completely dry. I changed into my dry extra top and underwear. After wringing out the rest of my clothes we continued up the now familiar route on the south side of the creek. I was thinking this was a bad omen but the day was warm and my pants, socks and shoes quickly dried.

We managed to camp at the 9500' shelf by 4 PM. We were both exhausted and took a nap before dinner. That evening at 6pm we had light snow flurries. We worried about the weather on summit day. Our record on this peak had not been too good up to then. The next morning we started at 8:00 AM. The sky was clear and the wind calm. We made good time and before long were at the base of the "The Great Horn Climb". There were very small slivers of snow on each of the chutes. They were too small to use crampons so we humped up the talus and scree. Yuk! We eventually reached the top just before noon. We took a short break and continued toward the bowl. We were both very tired and were considering the building clouds north and south of us. Fortunately no thunder was heard. The bowl before the final ramp to the summit was full of snow as was the ramp. We had both bought new 10 point Black Diamond crampons that are designed to be worn with flexible soled boots. They worked great for us on the not too hard Sierra snow. We quickly managed the ramp. We were both exhausted when we reached the top. We didn't spend too much time at the summit since we were getting snow flurries again and it was rather chilly. The last 100' of elevation had snow and exposed rock. We postholed a bit but generally managed to slog to the top. The summit had a substantial cornice and the register was buried somewhere below. We dug a bit around a rock but couldn't find it so maybe we'll have to do it again to get our names enshrined.

The climb/hike down was uneventful although I did get a bit too much sun on the snow bowl. We reached camp at about 6:30pm. A 10 hour summit day well worth the effort. We both decided we would never again march up George Creek. I always manage to give the Williamson Mt. God my share of scraped, torn, scratched flesh. This trip was no different. The bushwhacking is not too bad but there must be at least 5 different types of thorned plants along the route. We did discover that there was a fairly open path on the north side of the Creek near the bottom. In fact we would recommend that any future George Creek hikers stay to the north side until you are forced to cross the Creek. This happens about 1/2 mile from the TH not the 200-300 meters we originally thought. After that point only cross back to the north side to avoid the southern cliffs and then cross back south ASAP. This seems to change every year. As I remember during our 1997 trip the growth along the Creek on the north side made bushwaching intolerable. But this year we noticed (on the way down) that the growth was contained nearer to the creek. This allowed the sandy trail away from the creek and just below the north Cliff/ramps to give very easy passage. On a wet year this may not be true.

• *Mike Rinaldi & Dewey Dumond*

## **North Peak**

May 11, 2002

I left work Friday afternoon and battled the traffic out to LiveNoMore and the Altamont Pass. From there it was relatively smooth sailing through the central valley, where I was greeted by a nice roadside CalTrans sign proclaiming: "SONORA PASS OPEN". Picked up a pizza in Sonora and drove over the pass in the dark. Snow squalls turned to an actual dump as I neared the top of the pass. Driving slowly, and dodging deer, rabbits and other various mountain varmints pleased at the advent of spring, I made it down to Lee Vining in one piece. I drove up Highway 120, back into the clouds and snow, and pulled over at the closed Yosemite park entrance. Curling up in the back of my car, I drifted into sleep.

The next morning at 5:30am, the temperature was a balmy 21 degrees and it was still snowing lightly. I drove down to the Saddlebag Lake road, ate a bagel and packed my gear. At around 6:30, I set off. After a bushwack and ford across Lee Vining creek, I made it up to the dam across Saddlebag Lake. The snow had abated by now. The views back to Mt. Dana were incredible, as the storm clouds were breaking up into blue sky. The lake was frozen solid, so I skated out to the middle of the lake and then headed up towards the cirque between Conness and North Peak. From there, I headed up the south slopes of North Peak. Trading skis & skins for crampons & axe, I kicked steps straight up the face. Looking back at the Conness glacier from the south slopes of North Peak is very impressive.

Once on top, I was rewarded with a 360 degree panorama of Yosemite NP, the Northern Sierra and the great state of Nevada. Although it isn't the highest peak in the area, the views from the top of North Peak are tough to beat -- from Banner and Ritter in the south, all the way up north to Sonora Pass and beyond. I snapped a few photos, peered down the summit couloir, and made my way back down. I was planning on skiing the SE face direct, but my pace up the mountain was fairly slow that I felt it was too late for safe avy conditions. I skied further west and dropped down the still steep slopes from the saddle between North and Conness. The corn was superb! Looking for more adventure, but hoping to avoid the sunbaked south faces, I skinned back up and headed for the toe of the shaded Conness Glacier. At the bottom of the Y-couloir, I skied the nice north-facing bowl back to the lakes. Again, perfect corn.

A long tour out brought me back to Tioga Pass and my car. After a nice dinner at the Tioga Gas Mart (trust me, none other than the New York Times called this a "shockingly gourmet oasis"), I drove up to the base of Sonora Pass and passed out in the back of the car. The next morning, I woke early and skied some of the roadside attractions from the top of the pass. The skiing is perfect right now.

• *Richard Steele*

## 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.

### Snow climbing practice

**Peaks:** Leavitt Peak (11,569'), Sonora Peak (11,459'), maybe Stanislaus Peak (11,233')  
**Date:** June 8-9 (Sat-Sun)  
**Difficulty:** class 2, ice axe, crampons  
**Maps:** Sonora Pass 7.5" topo  
**Contacts:** Charles Schafer, H(408) 354-1545, [c\\_g\\_schafer@yahoo.com](mailto:c_g_schafer@yahoo.com), Kelly Maas, H(408) 378-5311, [kellylanda@earthlink.net](mailto:kellylanda@earthlink.net)

This private trip is intended for people who want to practice and improve their snow climbing skills. These peaks are technically easy climbs, so we can spend plenty of time practicing with ice axe and crampons in a setting that is not too intimidating. Previous snow climbing experience is not required, but note that this is not a course. Participants are expected to study ice axe and crampon use in advance. We'll car camp in a campground along Hwy 108, and climb at least one peak each day.

### The Kaweahs Area

**Peaks:** Eisen, Lippincott, Lion Rock, the Kaweahs, Picket Guard, and others  
**Dates:** 6/29 - 7/7 (Sat-Sun)  
**Difficulty:** class 1-4  
**Maps:** Mineral King, Triple Divide Peak, and Mt Kaweah topos  
**Contacts:** Jim Ramaker, [ramaker@vnet.ibm.com](mailto:ramaker@vnet.ibm.com), Bob Suzuki, [SuzukiR@sd-star.com](mailto:SuzukiR@sd-star.com)

Starting from Mineral King (marmots!) we'll try to pack to Big Arroyo the first day. There'll be a lot of accessible peaks to keep us busy for the week! We'll collect names of interested climbers and decide on participants by the end of April. Class 3-4, ice axe, crampons and rope experience required, harness and helmet for Black Kaweah.

### Ionian Basin

**Peaks:** Over Echo Col and into the Ionian Basin (Goddard Quad) with climbs of Charybdis, Goddard, Black Giant, etc.  
**Date:** Jun 29 - Jul 7 (Sat-Sun)  
**Difficulty:** class 3, crampons, rope used, snow travel, This trip has many options. I plan to take the most direct, easiest routes up all peaks, but this may involve snow this early in the year.  
**Location:** eastern Sierra Nevada  
**Contact:** Tim Hult, [timdhult@aol.com](mailto:timdhult@aol.com), 408-970-0760

This trip to the heart of the Sierras will be what you make it to be. My objective is simple, to climb a number of peaks in and around this area with up to 5 other participants, and to have a good time doing so. Once the group is formed, we can decide what peaks we want to do, and if anyone wants to hang out at base camp for a day and fish, that's fine too. We start at Treasure lakes, and go over Echo col for the direct route into the Goddard area. While the permit begins the July 4th week early, you may leave the trip early if you wish as well. Participants should be strong hikers and competent third class climbers with some experience on snow, but only if the early season conditions require it.

## Matterhorn and Whorl

Peaks: Matterhorn, Whorl, Class 3-4  
Dates: July 4-7  
Leader: Chris Kramar, [ckramar@urgrad.rochester.edu](mailto:ckramar@urgrad.rochester.edu)  
510-796-6651

Join us for a climb up to the Matterhorn Peak and Whorl Mountain area just north of Yosemite NP. We will drive up Wednesday night and make the hike in on Thursday. From there, we will attempt Matterhorn and Whorl over the next few days. There still could be a lot of snow and ice at Whorl this time of year, so it might require use of ice axe, crampons, harness and ropes. You must have prior experience in the proper use of any equipment you wish to use. I have an 8-person permit. To sign up, send name, address, contact info including email, and check for \$3 (for permit fee) to, Chris Kramar, 4302 Ribera St. Fremont, CA 94536.

## Carson Pass

May 11, 2002

On Saturday May 11, I went up to Carson Pass for the day and climbed a couple of the mountains on the north side of the pass. Although it still looked as though there was lots of snow around Round Top on the south side of the pass, there was not nearly as much snow left on the north side. I was only able to ski for a short ways before encountering exposed rock on the ridge. After placing my skis behind some rocks I continued on up the ridge. It is possible to stay on skis longer by curving around to the west of the peak, but this is a much less direct route. It took me about two hours to get to the top of Red Lake Peak. The final summit rocks involved some challenging class 3 climbing on knobby volcanic rock. A coffee-can register was found on top. Looking at the register I found that a man from Minden climbs the mountain almost every week. His name appears in the register many times. From Red Lake Peak it took me about 60 minutes to traverse over to Stevens Peak. Most of this traverse along this very windy ridge was on rock. Although there was a slightly icy spot getting down the ridge from Red Lake Peak (ice axe is needed here). There are no class 3 rocks on Stevens Peak, but there is a good view of Lake Tahoe. I returned to my car at Carson Pass in about two hours after leaving Stevens Peak. There is some important history associated with this area. Back in 1844 Fremont made what was the first recorded ascent of a Sierra mountain. He climbed to the top of either Stevens Peak or Red Lake Peak. Farquhar believes it was Red Lake Peak, while others think it may have been Stevens Peak.

• *George Sinclair*

## Granite Chief

May 11, 2002

Last Sunday I got a leave of absence from father duty for the day and decided to go ski up a mountain. Being that Squaw Valley is only 90 minutes from my home, I decided to try Granite Chief. Although I have been skiing at Squaw Valley for about 25 years now, I have never been to the top of Granite Chief, even though a chair lift goes just a few hundred feet below the top of it. I decided that it would just be too easy to hike from the chair lift to the summit. Therefore I decided to climb it from the Squaw Valley parking lot, avoid paying the \$56 for a lift ticket, and have an opportunity to explore Squaw Creek canyon.

I quickly found the start of the trail next to the firehouse and began hiking up it at about 9:20 am. The sign next to the firehouse said it was 5 miles to Granite Chief and 7 miles to Tinkers Knob. There was no snow near the parking lot, and the trail remained mostly snow-free for about the first mile. Due to the lack of snow, I started out wearing my hiking boots and carrying my T3 ski boots.

After I climbed about 1,000 feet I switched to my ski boots. By this time I had lost sight of the trail and just worked my way up the canyon that Squaw Creek flows down as best I could. High above me, on the south side of the canyon, I could see the Squaw Valley tram. After skiing a short distance I encountered a creek that was somewhat difficult to cross. However, after finding a log I could walk across, I was able to continue skiing up the canyon. Eventually I put my skins on and followed a snow-covered service road that led up towards Shirley Lake.

Before long I found myself near the Shirley Lake ski lift. Worried that I might get hassled by the Squaw Valley Ski Patrol, I endeavored to stay in the trees at the north end of the canyon. This tactic seemed to work, and I was able to stay away from the downhill skiers at Squaw for the entire climb. Eventually I reached the ridge on the northeast side of Granite Chief. The wind was vicious on the ridge, which I followed upwards towards the summit. The final 300 feet was too steep to ski, so I strapped my skis onto my pack and walked the last stretch to the top which I reached at about 12:45. The views from the top are great. Although it is now mid-April, I could see snow covered mountains everywhere I looked, and a number of them contained impressive cornices. To the east I could see a good portion of Lake Tahoe.

After spending about 20 minutes on top, trying to get out of the wind, I headed down the southeastern ridge. After descending about 300 feet I put my skis back on and surreptitiously crossed into the Squaw Valley ski area and worked my way up to Emigrant Peak. Due to the high winds the Emigrant chair lift, which is close to the top of the peak, was not running. From the top of Emigrant Peak I had a good view looking back towards Granite Chief. A very large cornice hung off the eastern edge of the peak. As I worked my way down across the rocks to where I had left my skis, a ski patrol person drove up to me on a snowmobile. He inquired if I was skiing the PCT, and then warned me not to go into the ski area. After he left, and is no longer in sight, I ignore his warning and ski down into the Squaw Valley resort, which had been my plan from the start. I'm not exactly sure what legal right they have to exclude me from the area anyway, since it is my understanding that much of it is Forest Service land.

After a brief stop at the Gold Coast Lodge, I continued on down the Mountain Run to the parking area where I had left my car. Although this is a ski run I have done many times over the years, it is the first time I have done it on cross-country skis. The snow conditions were good, and I was very happy with how my relatively new Fisher Europa 109s handled. I was able to push them in and out of parallel turns almost as easily as I can on my downhill skis. It only takes me about 15 minutes to go from Gold Coast down to the bottom. I reached my car at about 2:30, and by 4:00 I am back at my house in Roseville enjoying a cold one.

• *George Sinclair*

## Pyramid Peak

May 2002

On a clear and cool early May Saturday morning, Bob Suzuki and I woke up from our car-camp at the Echo Lake Snow-Park having driven up from San Jose the night before. There we met Charles Schafer (Leader) and Bob Evans, both having spent the night at the Sno-Park lot. This trip originally was intended to climb Moses Mtn and North Maggie Mtn in the Southern Sierra, but a late season Forest Service Road closure forced a change in plans. With a short trip planned for that day and forecasted good weather we decided to get a hot breakfast in the town of Meyers off Hwy 50 prior to beginning our trek. Around 9 AM the 4 of us headed down the Lower Echo Lake Resort access road reaching the lake in about > of a mile traveling over hard crusted snow. After crossing the lake's dam, we joined up with the Pacific Crest Trail, which traverses west above the lake's North shore and private lakeshore

summer homes. Nearing Upper Echo Lake we lost the trail under the snow, but our intended route was fairly easy to find. With clear blue skies and no wind, it was a beautiful day so we traveled slowly taking frequent breaks to enjoy the scenery. After a long break near Tamarack Lake we strapped on our snowshoes (Charles had already been traveling used skies) to ease travel in the quickly softening snow. After a short climb to Haypress Meadows we topped a ridge and gained our first views of our goal - Pyramid Peak rising over Desolation Valley. Everything was cloaked in a smooth white blanket of snow including the valley lakes which were completely frozen over. A steep descent down to the north shore of the Lake of the Woods completed our first day's travel, where we set up camp.

From our camp we had a clear view southwest over the frozen lake towards Pyramid Peak. Here we discussed tomorrow's climb, and we enjoyed the usual PCS chatter about our past and future climbing trips and gear. We marveled over the fact that we had not seen a single person that day. Seeing that the north end of the lake was under 3 feet of drift snow and ice, we discussed whether anyone had ever slept overnight on a frozen lake. After an unspectacular sunset, Bob S. surprised us by heading out onto the lake with his gear to spend the night "on" the lake!

At 7:45 AM Sunday, under a cloudless sky, we headed out towards Pyramid Peak. With snowshoes & ski's we safely crossed the frozen surface of the Lake of the Woods and headed southwest towards Desolation Lake. Crossing it we turned west and worked our way slowly in and out of small gullies to the base of a small cliff south of Pyramid Lake. We worked our way up a small chute to the top and continued west up the increasing slope. Not seeing any avalanche danger we decided to take the peak head on up the east slope instead of the south ridge as originally planned. Bob E. lead the way kicking steps in the softening snow. Some of us wore crampons (which were not really necessary) and we each used either ski poles or ice axes during the ascent up the 40-degree slope. We reached the top around 1:00 PM, well behind our intended schedule. The clear skies provided good views all around, from Round Top to the south, all the way to Mt Rose in the northeast. While on top we were greeted by a lone dog and moments later her owner coming up the south ridge. After a brief chat, Bob E. and Charles headed down the south ridge. With ice axes, Bob S. and I had a thrilling, albeit quick, 1100 ft glissaded down the east slope. After joining up, we decided to try a more direct route back to avoid the many gullies we encountered earlier. Heading to Pyramid Lake, we crossed its southern shore and took a northeast route up an open slope to a low point on the ridge, southwest of Channel Lake. Working our way down, we then headed east back to the Lake of the Woods and across it to camp. This proved to be easier than our route that morning.

After a quick repacking, we donned our backpacks at 4 PM and headed out. We met a lone skier near Haypress Meadows. He was only the second person we met all weekend, although we did see a climbing party headed for Pyramid Peak's south ridge while on top. We crossed Lower Echo Lakes dam just after sunset and made it back to our vehicles just as darkness fell upon us. It turned out to be a far longer day than we had anticipated. But great weather, an uncrowded, beautiful snow covered location and good traveling companions made the long weekend worth it.

• *Chris Franchuk*

## Half Dome Via the Snake Dike

May 18, 2002

Ron Karpel and Rick Booth had arranged a PCS weekend trip to the Yosemite Valley and one of the objectives for me and Ron was to do the Snake Dike route on Half Dome while others had plans to do other routes in the valley. The Snake Dike SuperTopo route description calls this route the easiest technical climbing route to the top of Half Dome but all my friends who have done it before had recommended it highly as an exhilarating rock climb and a must-do.

While others in our group slept, Ron, David and Anne Canright and I, woke up and crept away from the Lower Pines campground towards the Mist Trail and as has been well described in other trip reports and using the descriptions from friends and led by Ron, we made our way to the base of the climb to get there at about 9.45am after a 5am start. There were a surprisingly large number of people there, all waiting in line for their turn. There were two 5-person parties and three two-person parties and so we waited our turn and only after four hours, 1.30pm or so, did we rope up. Ron led the first pitch (5.7) going left towards a small pine tree that was a good place to put a sling around and then climbed the somewhat slick friction slab to the left end of a roof and using its left edge, made it to the alcove that is a belay stance for a 50m rope. We had 60m double-ropes, so he moved up a little further to set up the first belay at two bolts. He brought me up but then we had to wait till the logjam above cleared. This waiting at every pitch was the most painful part of the climbing. Finally, the upper party moved so I took the short second pitch (5.7 friction, what else?) which involved walking on a thin ledge (small cam goes here, at the feet) to a small but sketchy traverse to a secondary dike that goes off route if you stick to it long. It got a little easier till a horn (small cam under) to a small roof (small cam again) and a quick high step over this got me to the next 2 bolt anchor. Phew! Ron came up and then led the third pitch (5.7 friction) which has a small run out climb to a bolt and then a traverse left on a rather smooth friction slab to a 2 bolt point to meet the Snake dike, proper. A relatively easy (5.4) climb to a bolt and then a long run out section on the dike got him to the end of the third pitch. I think that the first and third pitches offer the most pucker-factor of all the eight. The fourth pitch, which I took, was technically easier but I found myself concentrating fully on my foot placements as it is a 140 foot pitch with only one 2-bolt point, somewhere at the 60 ft mark from the anchor below. The climbing is of about the same level (5.4) on an average for the next four pitches, which we alternately led and even though the run out is still there, Ron made a few improvisations like slinging the small horns on the dike and was able to protect it, moves that I copied when on lead myself. David and Anne kept pace with us and just as we would leave a pitch, they would appear and within a few minutes of us un-roping at the top of the climb, they topped out as well.

A much needed break later, we slogged up the low angled friction slabs till the top. There was nobody there at this late hour. After a few photos, we headed down the cables, which had been, thankfully, raised. There we had another food and water break and we were hiking by 7.30pm from the cable base. It got dark and we got slower and slower. Finally, this never ending hike was also over and we were back at camp at 11.15pm, tired, but content.

• *Arun Mahajan*

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**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/>

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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 6/23/2002. Meetings are the second Tuesday of each month.**



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

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

**First Class Mail - Dated Material**