



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

Date: Tuesday, September 10
Time: 7:30 PM
Program: Sierra Sojourns by Tim Hult

The Kaweahs, Cherry Creek Canyon, Yosemite in Winter and various ramblings in the range of light.

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 9/29/2002 Meetings are the 2nd Tuesday of each month.

PCS Trips

PCS trips must be submitted through the Scheduler (see back cover for details). Trips not received from the Scheduler will be listed as PRIVATE, without recourse.

Sawtooth and Needham

Peaks: Sawtooth Peak (12,343) and Needham Mountain (12,520), Class 2-3

Maps: Mineral King 7.5

Date: September 14-15, 2002

Leader: Dee Booth rdbooth@att.net

Coleader: Stephane Mouradian
smouradian@hotmail.com

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

Earning Our Silver

Silver Peak (11,878') via Margaret Lakes

July 20-21 2002

Peaks: Silver Peak, Cockscomb Peak

Place: California

Difficulty: class 2

This was a private trip to a rather infrequently climbed peak, via a less commonly used approach. Silver Peak is the namesake peak of the Silver Divide separating the South Fork of the San Joaquin River from the Middle/North Forks.

Our point of departure was the Onion Springs Trailhead, which is about five miles up the Onion Springs OHV Road, which is accessed from the Lake Edison road, off the Kaiser Pass Road, which makes this particular trailhead one of the more remote of any in the Sierra Nevada. The Onion Springs OHV road at this time is in reasonably good condition: passable by any 4WD with the clearance of a typical SUV and may be passable in a 2WD with similar clearance (there are only 3 or 4 tricky spots where a normal passenger car could not drive). Nevertheless the drive takes about 40 minutes. The road contours along the 8,000' to 8,200' level for much of the way; this section has generous views south to Mt. Hooper, Florence Lake, Kaiser Ridge, etc. and has some areas suitable for camping by small parties.

Our group of six (scribe and leader Mike McDermitt, co-leader Steve Eckert, Anthony Stegman, David McCracken, John Stewart and Val Prasad) met before 7am on Saturday morning at the Vermilion Valley Resort at the end of Lake Edison, where we enjoyed a fine breakfast before heading out. We then carpoled in 4WDs up the Onion Valley road and reached the trailhead (discernable by a couple of rather small signs) shortly after 8.30am. After a test of cell phones in this deep forest (my AT+T worked, another service did not) we were hiking by about 8.45am.

The trail is good: easy to follow and hike. Trail starts out relatively flat in deep forest, then switchbacks up to a ridge by which time views to the south (Kaiser Ridge, Florence Lake and beyond) and west open up. The two intermittent stream crossings shown on the map actually did have water, to my surprise. At the second crossing (8880', map indicates campground) note a side trail on the far side heading to the right - it is a dead end up to Hedrick Meadow (we avoided it but not everyone does). The correct trail heads leftward at the crossing. The trail reaches ridgetop shortly thereafter and hiking is relatively level until the last set of switchbacks below the unnamed pass (~10,520', really a ridge shoulder not a pass) over a spur of the Silver Divide. Approaching the pass around 11.30am we decided to stop for

lunch just below the pass, where the map indicates 'Arch Rock' is located. After eating lunch we took a look around for Arch Rock. Having seen a picture of it posted at Vermillion Valley Resort I knew it had to be somewhere but it turns out the USGS map is flat-out wrong about the location of Arch Rock. So, we packed up and headed back to trail, topping out at the pass to gain an absolutely awesome view north of the Ritter Range, the San Joaquin river drainage and the mountains along the southern boundary of Yosemite. After pictures we continued on. The trail then heads down then back up to the north side of the ridge we had just crossed. Here we found Arch Rock - about 0.4 miles north and slightly east of where the USGS topo places it. It is a real arch.

After more pictures we headed on. Having a full day to reach camp and with the hot sun and clear skies making the day quite warm, we proceeded at a relatively leisurely pace. The trail is very well switchbacked down to Frog Lake (which we would greatly appreciate on the return). It then meanders to accommodate a complex topography with several 50' to 100' ups and downs to reach a lovely meadow and stream crossing at Coyote Lake. Wildflowers were at or near peak for most of the trip and were in particular profusion on this section from Coyote lake/ meadow up to Fern Lake. At Fern Lake was an increasingly rare sight - tadpoles - and seeing some caught in a drying pool I intervened to pick up a handful and drop them into another pool too deep to dry up before they matured. Finally, we had a last few hundred feet of ascending trail over one last ridgelet to reach our destination, Margaret Lakes. This ridgelet separates two arms of Silver Creek; the trail goes over the south shoulder of Cockscomb Peak (10,719') which is an impressive rugged 'fin' type formation on the ridgelet. We had originally contemplated climbing this peak on the way in but seeing the near-vertical west side there did not seem to be any route easier than 4th class at best, so upon reaching the top of the shoulder we proceeded directly down to Big Margaret Lake. The Margaret Lakes basin is a very picturesque small area of lakes at the head of Silver Creek. There are several nice campsite areas; we selected one on a rise just east of the outlet crossing which picked up a modest breeze and kept mosquitoes at bay until after dinner. Sunset was lovely with a nice alpenglow as well. From our campsite we could see the east side of Cockscomb Peak which though steep is not vertical - mostly scree, to a level knife-edge ridge. The summit is an isolated standing block on the ridge perhaps fifteen high (hard to judge from a distance) that would seem to be 5th class.

Sunday morning we were up around 6am and walking shortly after 7am. We followed the trail to where it reaches the inlet stream to Rainbow Lake then proceeded cross-country approximately up that stream. Shortly we reached an open area with a choice of proceeding up a rock ridge to the right or to our left up steep slopes; choosing the latter as more direct, we gained a level area just above the 10,000' level where the stream arises in a small tarn. After a break, we began ascending, aiming not for the saddle southeast of the peak but directly towards the peak up steep rocky slopes interspersed first with trees and later juniper. Although the footing was not too bad, there was lots of loose rock which forced the group to move somewhat more slowly. Our route ascended to the left (northwest) of a small face that is not noticeable on the map but is clearly visible from the tarn, in one place passing through narrow defilements in a small cliff band that maybe involved a couple of class three moves. For the record, it seemed like there was probably more than one way to get through the cliff band.

Before long, we were above the trees and had nice views to accompany our labor up the steep talus of the last thousand or so feet to the summit of Silver Peak, which we reached at 10am. The

peak register indicated that this peak is not all that popular; we were the second party of the year to summit. An entry by C.R. McPherson of Dunsmuir on August 1 1980 provided more information on Cockscomb Peak: 'A sad day for the Margaret Lakes. At 9.40am today an earthquake centered near Mammoth Lakes area left its mark on Cockscomb Peak. A former high point called Horse fell as a result of the earthquake, and now the high point which is called the Bishop is what is left'. We agreed that the summit block on Cockscomb Peak has a vague resemblance to a bishop's mitre and wondered if there was a rook or a pawn around.

It was now 10.30am. Facing a long hike out involving over 2,000' of gain and seeing that the ridge over to Sharktooth Peak was narrow with steep sides and would be very slow going, we decided to pass on bagging a second peak. We made a loop by descending Silver's northeast chute, which is typical steep and loose but easily negotiable scree, stopping for some lunch near the bottom of the chute. Steve Eckert had left our group at the top of Silver, heading for Sharktooth, and managed to reach the peak and downclimb, rejoining us near Useless Lake. We tramped down steep forested slopes just south of the Useless Lake outlet stream to the trail beside Rainbow Lake and then retraced our footsteps back to camp which we reached around 1.30pm.

After slowly packing, finishing lunch and rewatering we broke camp about an hour later, with Steve Eckert leaving the group for further adventures on Graveyard Peak. The remaining five of us marched up and over Cockscomb shoulder and on past Fern, Coyote and Frog Lakes in heat that was slightly less intense than the prior day due to slight cloud cover. Along the way one member of the group became seriously ill; ultimately the cause was determined to be the fact that this person had omitted most of breakfast and lunch. The 'super Gatorade' powder (aka Ultra Fuel by Twinlabs) I pulled out from deep within my pack, along with John's Ishiban noodles (dry) succeeded, with some forty-five minutes' rest, in creating a revival sufficient to permit us to proceed the 500+ feet up the switchbacks above Frog Lake without undue concern that in addition to carrying our dyscapacitated hiker's pack (just thread two hiking poles through the back and waist straps, no problem), we would also be carrying his body. Happily we reached the summit of the pass above Frog Lake intact and after a ten minute rest all proceeded down the trail, each with his own pack. We managed a speedy pace down the hill on a calm clear evening, taking less than two hours in getting back to the car a few minutes before 8pm. The aforementioned dyscapacitated hiker had apparently effected an excellent recovery and reached the car ahead of all but one of us. Five of us and our five packs then piled into my SUV and drove back to Vermillion Valley Resort, where we stopped for some food before caravanning in our three cars along the Edison Lake and Kaiser Pass Roads to Highway 168 and out to Prather. The gas station at Prather was closed (it being around 11pm) but happily the pumps were on. So after I gassed up we all sped safely home to the Bay Area with another peak gained and another adventure in the books, having 'earned our silver'. Readers should note, however, that Silver Peak was named not after a precious metal but after Silver Creek, named in turn for the silvery appearance of its waters. So rather than banking our silver, we drank it.

• Mike McDermitt

To Climb or Not to Climb

Milestone Basin

July 20, 2002

Should one climb through choking ash to reach a peak one cannot see? How long should one wait before turning back from adverse conditions? We had planned a week-long trip to Milestone Basin for years and were not ready to give in too easily. Especially after savoring the 6000' ascent of Shepherd's Pass, some for the third or fourth time. The group was Nancy Fitzsimmons, Bill Kirkpatrick, John Wilkinson, Chris Prendergast, Tom Driscoll (chronicler), Landa Robillard and Ted Raczek.

To Climb, or not to Climb: that is the question:
Whether 't is nobler in the mind to suffer
The slings and arrows of outrageous fortune,
Or to take arms against a sea of troubles...

Hamlet. Act iii. Sc. 1.

These were the questions our band of peak climbers faced as we spotted the start of the McNalley (Sequoia National Forest) fire on Sunday while descending from the northwest ridge of Mt. Tyndall. The mushroom cloud of smoke quickly spread up the Kern River valley and blotted-out the sun. After hauling big packs up Shepherd's Pass we were reluctant to yield to the fates. We moved camp down from the pass towards Milestone Basin on Monday, hoping for better conditions, but were met with ash falling from the sky short of the Kern River.

9 And the streams thereof shall be turned into pitch, and the dust thereof into brimstone, and the land thereof shall become burning pitch.

10 It shall not be quenched night nor day; the smoke thereof shall go up forever: from generation to generation it shall lie waste; none shall pass through it for ever and ever.

Isaiah 34

Still hoping for a miracle, we camped and fished for trout in the lakes along the Kern River on Monday afternoon anticipating a shift in the wind, or quick reaction from firefighters. Tuesday morning gave us a bright blue sky to resume our trek into Milestone Basin. We followed an excellent use trail up Milestone Creek, camping just north of the Creek at a lake with a fine view of Milestone, Midway, and Table. The sky would grow hazy in the afternoon, but clear in the morning. The lakes in Milestone Basin were teeming with tadpoles and the only fish to be caught were a mile down the Creek. We climbed Milestone Peak by the description in Secor, ascending one fork of Milestone Creek and descending the other fork past waterfalls and Alpine Shooting Stars. Our relaxed schedule left plenty of time to swim and fish. The only other party we saw was an Outward Bound group climbing the same peaks.

On Thursday we climbed Midway by the east ridge and moved camp to a lake south of Geneva, climbing it from the east side on Friday morning. We moved camp again Friday afternoon to a point near the John Muir Trail and, not wanting to squash mosquitoes all afternoon at Anvil camp, completed a 17 mile march to the trailhead Saturday. Surprisingly, the snow pack had melted from Shepherd's Pass, leaving the trail completely dry. We only had twenty feet of snow to cross on the way in.

Despite the gloomy outlook on Monday, a little perseverance rewarded us with a fine adventure. And no, one should not climb through choking ash to reach a peak one cannot see. Photos at <http://photos.yahoo.com/driscollta>.

• Tom Driscoll

Three for the Road

Hooper, Senger and Seven Gables

Aug 8-12, 2002

In June of 2002 I met Keith Martin on a backpacking trip through the Grand Canyon of The Tuolumne in Yosemite National Park. Keith was making plans to climb Hooper, Senger, Seven Gables and Gemini in August and invited me to come along. I had been in the area last year but hadn't climbed any of the peaks (I had been to the base of the summit block on Hooper) and was eager to do so so I eagerly accepted Keith's invitation.

Keith Martin, Steve Thaw, Ralph Wright, Eric Wilson and I met at Florence Lake in the early hours of Thursday Aug 9th. At 9:00AM we took the water taxi across the lake - a 10 minute ride and began hiking towards Sallie Keys Lakes approximately 10 miles away. We were treated to beautiful displays of flowers along the way, passing the Muir Trail Ranch and signs pointing to the Baney Hot Springs.

We arrived at the lake in mid-afternoon and set up camp. The lake has a nice sandy beach area with a silty bottom so we waded in the water to cool off and enjoy ourselves. Mosquitoes were negligible and the weather was very pleasant. I washed some clothes and took a brief nap before dinner. Our plan was to get up early the next day and head for Selden Pass and then on to climb Mt. Hooper.

On Friday at 7:00AM we headed up the trail to Selden Pass reaching the pass an hour later. We dropped our packs there, with Ralph deciding to skip Hooper and hang out at the pass instead. Steve Thaw led the way cross country from the pass to the peak. From a distance Hooper is very impressive and the 4th class summit block is easily discernable. We worked our way towards the peak generally following the directions north from Selden Pass in Secor, crossing a variety of terrain, and then slogged our way up the south talus slope to the base of the summit block. Steve found some webbing left behind which he used, along with some webbing we brought, to fashion a foot ladder. With a little coaching from Steve I managed to pull myself up to the top of the summit block and felt great joy at finally reaching the summit. Keith and Eric then followed and we were all on the summit. While some climbers (perhaps many) can climb the summit block without protection I was glad to have it and appreciated Steve's good work in setting up the foot ladder. The descent from Hooper and back to Selden Pass took longer than I expected. We tried not to descend too far below the pass and managed to reach the trail above Marie Lakes only a hundred feet or so below the pass. I was tired by the time we retrieved our packs.

After retrieving our packs we headed down towards Marie Lakes where we planned to set up camp for our next adventure - Seven Gables. The group discussed camping at Medley or Sandpiper Lake instead to gain easier access to Seven Gables and Gemini. That would have meant 4 or 5 miles of additional hiking (less going cross country) and we were all tired. At the same time we discussed how we would manage to climb both Seven Gables and Gemini and decided that we would climb only one. So the consensus was we would camp at the north end of Marie Lakes and climb the west ridge route of Seven Gables on Sat. We hiked the use trail around the lake and camped on the northwest side. Steve regaled us with tales of mountain adventures and lost loves while we enjoyed the beautiful scenery.

On Sat morning we awoke early and headed out at 7:00AM. It was nice and cool and the sun was rising behind Seven Gables so we were in shade much of the morning. The difficult part of the climb comes early - the lake basins and brushy cliffs at the base of the peak. Steve and Eric decided not to climb Seven Gables and

explored the lakes basins that day instead, so Keith led Ralph and myself. We contoured around the lakes basin avoiding unnecessary elevation loss and soon found ourselves in the brushy cliff area.

We picked our way up through this, avoiding the impenetrable brush described by Secor. We met up with two other climbers, one of whom turned out to be an acquaintance of Keith - he and his nephew were also climbing Seven Gables. Both groups took slightly different routes through the brush but reached the talus slopes at the same time so we all climbed together after that. The talus and sandy slopes were not difficult to negotiate and we soon found ourselves at the base of the summit area. We contoured a bit to the southeast to find easier climbing and were soon at the summit. We found the register at the north point which we assumed was the high point, though Secor says the south point is the high point. Whatever. We all sidled up to the top, signed the register and chatted for the next hour. The descent was easy with stable sand and talus and we soon found ourselves back at camp. Start to finish the climb of Seven Gables took seven hours. That evening we met a father-daughter couple backpacking in the area. The father turned out to be an acquaintance of Steve. His daughter was very charming and was another bright spot in our day.

On Sunday we cleared camp and hiked back over Selden Pass. We decided to head for Sallie Keys Lakes where we would drop our packs and climb Senger. Steve didn't join us because he was heading back to Florence Lake to catch the water taxi and go home that evening. It took us a couple of hours to hike from Marie Lakes to Sallie Keys. Approximately 9:30AM we began our climb of Senger. We hiked up forested talus slopes avoiding boulder hopping as we went. It was very pleasant climbing and we made good time. Soon we were at the final steep section below the summit plateau. The talus here is very stable, with good foot and hand holds so we easily worked our way to the summit area. After crossing 50 yards or so we were at the small high point looking down towards Marie Lakes, with Seven Gables, Hilgard, Gabb, and Abbot beyond. After spending 30 minutes or so on the summit we headed down. The descent was very easy - some sandy slopes and some forested talus slopes. We passed by an oasis with beautiful yellow flowers blooming. The water seemed to bubble up from the ground - there was no obvious source. It was quite a contrast to the bare, dry slopes surrounding it. We were soon back at the lake and our packs. Our plan was to continue to hike down the trail towards Florence Lake and find a suitable campsite.

We hiked 5 miles or so to a spot along the South Fork of the San Joaquin River across from the Blaney Hot Springs. It was a beautiful spot. To get to the hot springs you have to ford the river which is a foot deep with a rocky bottom. I wouldn't recommend crossing in bare feet. I didn't bring my Tevas so I stayed in camp. Keith brought his so he crossed the river and went for a soak before dinner. During the night a bear paid us a visit and sampled some powdered milk left out. I imagine we'll soon see the bear in those milk commercials.

The next morning Monday we hiked the remaining five miles back to Florence Lake arriving in time for the 11:00AM boat. The drive over Kaiser Pass was more adventurous in the daytime - lots of trucks, cars, trailers. Everyone was considerate. The crossing went smoothly, with Keith leading. I even made it to Madera following the directions in climber.org without getting lost. All in all the peak climbing trip was very enjoyable and we all achieved our personal goals.

• *Tony Stegman*

The Cowboy Climbs Humphreys His Way!

August 10, 2002

On August 10th, 6 of us met at the North Lake trailhead at 9 am to climb Mt Humphreys. Most of us had wanted to climb this Peak for the last 5 years, but something or the other had always prevented us from doing so. The group consisted of: Ron Karpel, Jim Ramaker, Landa Robillard, Tom Driscoll, Nancy Fitzsimmons and Arun Mahajan (the "cowboy").

The hike up to Piute Pass was gentle and easy to follow. We had nice weather, lots of wild flowers and the conversation was pretty entertaining (politics, accounting scandals and Alan Greenspan). We took our time and got to the big lake below the base of the summit of Humphreys around 3pm. We were greeted by some friends: Debbie Benham, Dot Reilly, John and Chris Kerr and Dave Erskine. They had climbed Humphreys on Saturday and were back at camp relaxing. We had a nice visit with them and begged Debbie for some of her famous jokes.

Sunday morning we got rolling at 6.00 am sharp! We headed up the south-west slope via a left sloping ramp that linked to more left sloping ramps that got progressively steeper, to the prominent notch in the ridge, slipping and sliding on the scree. We climbed the northwest face over some fun third class terrain. Arun (cowboy) led the fourth-class section in his cowboy (er, approach) boots, lassoing some old pitons and horns along the route, therefore proving that mountain climbing was only an extension of his calf-roping skills. One easy pitch and we were up on top! (There were a few tough moves: was this really fourth class? We felt that Arun had accidentally, or otherwise, taken a harder line) Ron and Jim followed and reached the top by 9:30 while Arun was belaying us and therefore we took a bit more time, with the last one (the cowboy) summiting by 10:30. After the roped pitch, which is easily spotted by a couple of strong looking slings with a couple of rap-rings, there was an exposed move over a down-sloping rock. Ron, with the help of Jim, set up a line for the rest of us to clip into, if needed, for this section. On the way back, we rappelled the roped pitch section on two 60 meter ropes (climbing ropes, no lariats!). Ron sacrificed a couple of his personal slings to strengthen the existing ones (thanks, Ron!). We scuffed down through the scree, arriving at camp by 1 pm, a 7 hour round-trip. We packed-up and hiked-out (not even cowboy had a horse) arriving at the trailhead by 5:45 pm.

Thanks to everyone for a great weekend, it was a pleasure to go up this beautiful peak with such a good group. Photos at <http://photos.yahoo.com/peakclimber2001>.

• *Nancy Fitzsimmons*

Mount Pinchot, 13,495' Colosseum Mountain, 12,450'

August 10-11, 2002

Hail of a good time

Smart hikers start their ascent of Sawmill Pass at dusk or after sundown and continue at least to the first water by Sawmill Creek. This enables one not only to sleep higher than 4600' but also to avoid the desert part of the climb when the sun is out. Richard Stover and I began the climb at about 5:30 a.m. It is a botanical wonder.

Hikers can experience a progression of plant communities as they ascend over 6700' to the pass. The diversity of trees is amazing. At first there are only a few widely scattered Jeffrey Pines. As I topped the ridge projecting from Sawmill Point and descended to the Sawmill Creek drainage, I was startled by the presence of California black oaks. Next to the creek there are water birch, willow and a few towering black cottonwood. Upslope from the creek Jeffrey Pines were now abundant. (An illustration of the progression of trees as one gains elevation is on pages 41 and 42 of *Discovering Sierra Trees*, by Stephen F. Arno).

As one gains altitude, additional species appear, and some drop out. On dry slopes, aromatic Mountain Mahogany thickets provide forage for deer. Douglas Fir and aspen show their faces by the creek as does the delicate Elderberry, a favorite source of fire drills for the Native Americans. Above Sawmill Meadow red fir, white fir and lodgepole pine grow and the Jeffrey Pine stop. Beyond Mule Lake foxtail pines join the lodgepoles in a beautiful forest which finally gives way to prostrate whitebark pine as the trail nears the pass.

Sawmill Pass itself is a surprise, arriving sooner than expected, as I mistakenly thought it was the saddle by Stocking Lake. From the pass it is an easy descent to the John Muir Trail past Woods Lake. A short stretch brought me to the lovely valley between Mt. Perkins and Mt. Wynne.

This enchanted spot is visited frequently by Bighorn sheep, or Long Horned sheep, as Richard called them. (You have to remember that he grew up in Texas). There were sheep tracks on the ground, sheep scat by the young green plants around "Frog Lake" and even hollowed out bedding areas under the thickets of whitebark pines. We saw no sheep; but I suspect they saw us.

As we arrived at our base camp, two Fish and Game surveyors were getting ready to leave. They had come in the day before to survey lakes for threatened mountain yellow legged frogs. And indeed they found the quiet amphibians in the lake below Mt. Perkins. Quiet, the F & G folks told us, because yellow legged frogs lack vocal chords and do not call out as do their endangered cousins the red legged frog. Some of you know that Fish and Game has decided not to stock lakes that contain these rare creatures, because the trout eat the frog eggs, and that's why their numbers have dwindled.

The next morning we rose at 5:30 to climb Mt. Pinchot. Gifford Pinchot is not a very popular fellow in the Sierra Club. He was the founding chief of the Forest Service, and the man who approved the flooding of Hetch Hetchy Valley despite John Muir's protests. But the mountain named after this career forester has a fantastic view. We climbed the east ridge which can get a little airy in spots but is not difficult. One drops to one side of the ridge or the other at such places. At almost 13,500' the view from the summit stretches forever. Especially notable are the views of Clarence King, Split Mountain, Ruskin, Arrow, Pyramid, and Marion. And a good chunk of the Owens Valley to boot.

As the clouds were building rapidly, we started down the steep south face. As we reached the base, it started hailing and we sought shelter under some overhanging rocks. Then finally, back to camp in the light rain which continued for much of the night.

It was too tempting to sleep in the next day, and it started raining at 11:00 a.m. So instead of climbing we set up a covered eating/cooking area and hiked around enjoying the frogs, sheep sign, alpine wildflowers and speculated on routes on Perkins. Many of the flowers were new to me such as Eschscholtz's buttercup. It continued to rain and hail intermittently all day. Needless to say, we found the obligatory balloon, this one from a "Caring Community."

We left camp at 6:00 a.m. the next morning to climb the east ridge of Wynne, but alas, it started to hail at 9:30 a.m. when we were almost on top. Faster climbers would have made the summit. We rapidly descended the east face. It rained and hailed quite strongly until afternoon at which time we decided to move camp to about a mile below Woods Lake.

Finally the weather had cleared, and the next morning we strolled up the west ridge of Colosseum. This route has got to be one of the most enjoyable easy climbs in the Sierra. I highly recommend it. From the summit we could see our truck almost 7000 feet below. Rather than climb Cedric Wright, we decided to save it for another day and spent the afternoon exploring remote lakes and lots of sheep sign.

From our camp it was a quick descent to the trailhead the next day.

•Debbie Bulger

Bear Creek Spire

North Arête Route

August 11, 2002

It is August and August means Dee's birthday and Dee's birthday means the annual technical alpine climb. This year's target was the North Arête on Bear Creek Spire, another classic Sierra climb, or so it is indicated in the two versions of the 100 Sierra Classic climbs. We were not disappointed.

On Saturday, August 10 we headed up the Rock Creek Road from Tom's Place towards the trailhead. The trailhead is at the absolute end of this road but offers a limited amount of parking considering the number of people interested in this trailhead. Arriving about 8:30 AM we were fortunate to find one of the few remaining parking spots and the rest were filled within five minutes of our arrival. We packed up our packs and headed out the Little Lakes Valley towards Morgan Pass. Our destination was Dade Lake.

For the first two miles or so the trail goes up and down and up and down and up and down. By the time we had hiked to Long Lake we had achieved a whopping 262 feet in elevation gain. At the western end of Long Lake a very obvious trail breaks to the right from the main trail to Morgan Pass. This is the trail to Treasure Lakes, which is the route we chose to get to Dade Lake. This well used trail breaks again within about 100 yards and the right fork continues around the lake as the fisherman's trail. The left fork starts up hill and is the path to Treasure Lakes. This trail meanders through a boggy area or two and continues up hill following the outlet from the Treasure Lakes. Much of the up hill progress requires talus and boulder hopping. These rocks seem to be fairly stable so it passed quickly. Once at the first Treasure Lake we continued past it to the most western and southern Treasure Lake. Dade Lake is just up above the bench above the western end of this lake. Unfortunately getting up on this bench requires chugging up about 400 feet in elevation in more, somewhat looser, talus and scree. Once above this it is a short stroll to Dade Lake. This is an extremely clear and scenic lake. Bear Creek Spire and the North Arête are plainly visible above the lake. There are several nice bivy spots here and we occupied one being abandoned by two young fellows from Mammoth Lakes.

The next morning we were rolling by 5:15 AM using headlamps to navigate around to the other side of the lake. We continued up through wet slabs and talus heading for the permanent ice field which guards the approach to the North Arête. There is a tongue of rocks and rubble piled up on the ice field directly below the start of the route this year. Unfortunately it stops about thirty or

so feet from the rock itself. We roped up at the top of the scree pile and gingerly headed across the ice in climbing shoes. This was a dicy proposition but by standing on the flat spots or the embedded rocks and grabbing little air holes in the ice we made it to the rocks itself. We had packed ice axes and crampons in for the climb but had left them in camp based on the advice given us by the guys from Mammoth Lakes.

The first pitch ended on an obvious shelf at the base of the first 5.8 crack. For some reason the Moynier topo indicates the end of the first pitch is at the top of the next 5.8 pitch. Our first pitch ended at the base of the 5.8 crack with no rope left. Moynier must use one hell of a long rope in the backcountry. We ran up the 5.8 crack without any trouble. The second pitch is supposed to move right somewhat and then up. I first went way right and then came back some and climbed some flakes. This was supposed to be 5.7 but felt harder than the first crack. Our guess is we missed the 5.7 somehow. This put us to the right somewhat and the start of easier climbing. We moved up easily to the shelf area in the vicinity of the second crux 5.8 pitch, however, we needed one more pitch than the topo to do so. The second crux pitch is described as a crack that turns into a chimney that turns into an offwidth. We had heard that it was hard to find and located to the left. After going as far left as I could go without doing anything heroic it appeared that this crack system was the widish slot with a couple of fins hanging down in it. This slot is located the furthest to the left as one can reasonably get. We went up this and sure enough there was one or two chimney moves involved and up a little higher a couple of armbars in the right offwidth slot behind one of the fins. Dee stemmed the whole thing. While it may be argued that the first 5.8 crack is overrated, this section was pretty solidly rated at 5.8. We escaped the crack using a short hand crack on the left to a shelf and headed up to the top of the tower on its left side. It appeared that it might be possible to go further up the slot but it was not obvious how to exit back out to the left at the top. The remainder of the route more or less follows the arête itself or a little to the left. The Secor guide indicates there is a keyhole, which can be passed through on the ridge and sure enough once past a gendarme the keyhole is used to move back to the left side of the arête. Past the keyhole the Northeast Ridge joins the North Arête and it is mostly fourth class or low fifth class climbing to the summit area. The final summit area can be ascended via the fourth class crack which is part of the Ulrichs Route (or Cox Col route) or it can be ascended by getting up on the arête again and walking to the summit area.

The descent from the summit area can be done by down climbing the fourth class crack or rappelling. There was a pair of fixed slings near the summit block. The remainder of the descent can be done by going down Cox Col but this is a very steep and loose looking class 3 descent. It is vastly easier to walk about 200 to 300 feet past Cox Col to the north along the ridge and then drop down. Judging by the well-worn path in this direction this appears to be the popular descent. The rest of the descent requires negotiating through the few snowfields and slabs back down to the main drainage above Dade Lake.

We spent the night camped at Dade Lake and were treated to the beginning hours of the Perseid meteor shower. The next morning we headed back to the trailhead. The two guys from Mammoth Lakes indicated the trail out might be easier by heading down toward Morgan Pass. We opted to hike along the bench towards the eastern Treasure Lake as much as possible and then drop down at the eastern end of the bench. This was judged to be easier than dealing with the scree. At first it appeared this would be solid boulder hopping but by staying to the north side of the bench the terrain turned into easy hiking after a few hundred yards. Judging by the footprints this appears to be the preferred route in and out

of Dade Lake, at least via the Treasure Lakes. This dropped us down right near the outlet from the eastern most Treasure Lake. The rest of the hike out retraced our earlier steps.

This is an excellent route and a good benchmark for the grade of alpine 5.8. The first 5.8 pitch is somewhat soft but the chimney and offwidth pitch is solid. It is not as aesthetic as the Fishhook (or J Hook) Arête on Russell but it is considerably easier to get to. This is a very picturesque region of the Sierra and the views down Little Lakes Valley are terrific. The descent is straightforward.

Logistics.

This is a mandatory bear canister area, however, the only critters we ran into were ptarmigans and pikas. If you pick up your permit in person the ranger will insist that you bring a canister. The best parking is at the very end of the Rock Creek road. This is an extremely popular day hiking and fishing area so this lot fills up early. A sign indicates overflow parking a ways down the road. The next parking appears to be at a picnic area and while it was full of vehicles it is not known if there is any overnight parking there. Even further down the road was a dirt parking area with a sign that indicated "overflow parking". Presumably this is acceptable for overnight parking. The trailhead is high for the Sierras, about 10,200 feet, so those with altitude issues may need to be careful. The hike in is only about four miles and the elevation gain is about 1400 feet to Dade Lake at 11,600 feet. The hike in through Treasure Lakes will require boulder hopping. There may be an easier access from near the Morgan Pass area past the Gem Lakes and then up past another unnamed lake below Dade Lake. There are good bivy sites at Dade Lake and there are at least two sites up higher above the talus towards the route. There is water there. These sites would shorten the morning hike to the North Arête by about 20 minutes. For gear we used a double 50 meter rope system. A longer rope would probably be unnecessary. The rest of the gear was double Camalots from #.5 to #2, single green, yellow, and red Alien, a single #3 Camalot, and some small stoppers. We brought a selection of slings, which included two long ones.

References.

The High Sierra, Peaks, Passes, and Trails, Second Edition, R.J. Secor, The Mountaineers, 1999, ISBN 0-89886-625-1

Climbing California's High Sierra: The Classic Climbs on Rock and Ice, Second Edition, John Moynier and Claude Fiddler, The Globe Pequot Press (Falcon Guides), 2002, ISBN 0-7627-1085-3

• *Rick and Dee Booth*

Hut Work Partys

Hut and Work Party Enthusiasts:

Each year the Sierra Club schedules work parties to prepare its backcountry huts in the Donner/Tahoe area for the coming winter season of cross-country skiing and snowshoeing. Although it's still warm and sunny, we've now got dates for you to pencil in on your calendars.

This year, as always, stocking the cabins with firewood is the top priority. As you may remember, an early ban on chain saws because of high fire danger made our work harder last year. The Forest Service didn't waste any time in 2002; this year's ban went into effect on July 12. Unless there is significant rain, we will be limited to muscle power at all of the huts this year. The Manager at Clair Tappaan is looking into purchasing cut and split firewood for delivery to Bradley and Ludlow (which have road access); but Peter Grubb and Benson Huts have fewer options. This will be a year in which inviting your friends, relatives, and fellow travelers becomes more important than ever. Don't hesitate to forward this message to anyone you think might be interested. Sign up information is below.

There will be other projects that give everyone a chance to participate - from cleaning windows to posting new signs; not everyone has to saw wood. A special project at Peter Grubb Hut will be to start construction of a new outhouse. We are also hoping to install solar electric lighting at Peter Grubb. Both of these projects can move forward, albeit more slowly because of the fire restrictions.

For those less familiar with work parties ... The usual format is to drive to the Club's Clair Tappaan Lodge at Donner Summit for Friday overnight and breakfast Saturday morning; both are available at no cost to volunteers heading out for that weekend's work party. Bradley and Ludlow Huts can be reached via forest roads (vehicles will need average or better clearance but 4WD is not required); Peter Grubb and Benson require a short backpack. The Club provides food, tools, and supplies; you will need overnight camping gear, a healthy attitude toward manual labor, and a desire for fresh mountain air mixed with fall colors and (maybe) a touch of frost in the morning.

No previous work party experience is required. In fact, many participants don't even ski or snowshoe; they just like the idea of getting outdoors and contributing to a good cause.

The schedule is listed below. For more information or to sign up, contact one of the leaders.

Sept 7- 8: Benson Hut -- contact

Ed Schreiber

707-253-0293, or

ELSchreiber@solanocounty.com

Sept 14-15: Peter Grubb Hut -- contact

Debbie Benham

650-964-0558, or

deborah4@pacbell.net or

Herb Steierman

408-773-7013, or

herb.s@ix.netcom.com

Sept 21-22: Peter Grubb Hut -- contact

Dick Simpson

650-494-9272, or

rsimpson@magellan.stanford.edu

Sept 28-29: Peter Grubb Hut-- contact

Dick Simpson

650-494-9272, or

rsimpson@magellan.stanford.edu

Oct 5- 6: Ludlow Hut-- contact

Dick Simpson

650-494-9272, or

rsimpson@magellan.stanford.edu

Oct 12-13: Bradley Hut-- contact

Dick Simpson

650-494-9272, or

rsimpson@magellan.stanford.edu

Oct 19-20: To be determined-- contact

Dick Simpson

650-494-9272, or

rsimpson@magellan.stanford.edu

Oct 26-27: To be determined-- contact

Dick Simpson

650-494-9272, or

rsimpson@magellan.stanford.edu

The last two work parties are real; the destinations will be determined based on need and conditions (such as whether chain saw restrictions are still in effect).

• *Debbie Benham*

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 Volcanos

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

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

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

North Palisades

Peaks: North and Middle Palisade, Mt. Sill & some other minor peaks

Difficulty: Class 3 & 4, ice axe, crampons, helmet

Date: Sep 8-14 (Sun-Sat)

Contact: Ozgur Yazlali

Although the dates are flexible, this will be a mountaineering trip in the North Palisades for about a week in September. Mountaineering and backpacking experience is required. Frequent use of ice axe and helmets, and occasional use of crampons are anticipated. If interested in the trip please e-mail me at oyazlali@stanford.edu for the details.

14er Record Broken

Jack McBroom, 46, Hemet California school teacher, just obliterated the record for climbing all of California's 14,000 foot mountains. There are fifteen of them. He did it in 4 days 11 hours and 19 minutes. Starting on August 10th at 02:10 for South Lake above Bishop and finishing at Mt. Shasta in northern California on August 14th at 13:20 (1:29 pm). Hans Florine, the famous speed climber, was the first to set the record in 1998 in 9 days 10 hours 50 minutes. Last August of 2001 Josh Swartz, 25 years old, did it in just under six days, 5 days 23 hours and 41 minutes.

McBroom is also an ultra runner. Did the Bad Water to Mt. Whitney. He did the Ego Challenge last year in New Zealand. Jack thinks he might go under four days next summer. His phone number is 909-927-1252 email at Wallspeck@aol.com.

• *Paul McGuffin, Green Valley, AZ*

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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/>

Subscriptions and Email List Info

Hard copy subscriptions are \$13. Subscription applications and checks payable to "PCS" should be mailed to the Treasurer so they arrive before the last Tuesday of the expiration month. If you are on the official email list (lomap-pcs-announce@lists.sierraclub.org) or one of the email lists the PCS feeds (either the sierra-nevada@climber.org discussion list or the california-news@climber.org read-only list), you have a free **EScree** subscription. For email list details, send "info lomap-pcs-announce" to "listserv@lists.sierraclub.org", or send anything to "info@climber.org". **EScree** subscribers should send a subscription form to the Treasurer to become voting PCS members at no charge. The **Scree** is on the web as both plain text and fully formatted Adobe Acrobat/PDF.

Rock Climbing Classifications

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

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

Deadline for submissions to the next Scree is Sunday 9/29/2002. Meetings are the second Tuesday of each month.



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