



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

## Next General Meeting

**Date:** Tuesday, December 9  
**Time:** 7:00 PM  
**Program:** Holiday Party and Slide Show

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

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

NOTE: Names have been re-arranged for 2003 to avoid picking on the same people!

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

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

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

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

Deadline for submissions to the next Scree is Sunday 12/28/2003 Meetings are the 2nd Tuesday of each month.

## Thanks from Stephane

I was not be able to attend the PCS election meeting.

Before my duties are handed off to the new team, I would like to thank you for giving me a chance to serve the club. I have been learning a lot through PCS and I am glad I could give back a little and, with the help of other officers, keep the club in as good a shape as I found it.

I would also like to thank the entire team for their support and commitment to the club. (These people all volunteers!)

Andy Macica	Vice Chair/Trips
Tom Driscoll	Treasurer/Members
Arun Mahajan	Pub. Comm. Chair
Bob Bynum	Scree Editor
Roger Dettloff	Webmaster
Steve Eckert	Listmaster
Paul Vlasveld	Mailing
Aaron Schuman	Mtn. Comm. Chair
Charles Schafer	Mtn Comm. Member

Thank you also to our nominating committee Dee Booth, Debbie Benham and Arun Mahajan for being responsive and effective at finding new candidates and organizing the election.

Good luck to the new team.

I am looking forward to seeing you all at our Holiday Party December 9th.

## New PCS Officers

The PCS elections were held during the November PCS meeting (11th Nov, 2004). The following officers were elected:

Pat Callery, Chair  
Linda Sun, Vice Chair  
Jeff Fisher, Treasurer.

They take office right away.

Many thanks to the previous team of Stephane Mouradian (Chair), Andy Macica (Vice Chair) and Tom Driscoll (Treasurer) for doing a stellar job during their term.

• *Debbie Benham, Dee Booth and Arun Mahajan, The PCS Nominating Committee*

# Wilderness First Aid Class

February 7-8, 2004

The Sierra Club requires that outing leaders be trained in first aid (<http://mitchell.sierraclub.org/outings/policy/FirstAid/index.asp>). For simple outings, 6-8 hours of training every three years is considered sufficient. The Loma Prieta Chapter has been offering such classes for some time; they are also available through the American Red Cross. For more challenging outings, a 16 hour Wilderness First Aid or 80 hour Wilderness First Responder class is either recommended or required. The Chapter's first 16 hour WFA class will be taught by Bobbie Foster of Foster Calm in February 2004.

Foster Calm Wilderness First Aid teaches patient assessment and response to such conditions as shock, bleeding, head and spinal injuries, musculoskeletal injuries, wounds, heat, and cold in a non-urban setting.

Bobbie has been involved in outdoor recreation/education for 12 years. As an employee of the University of California at San Francisco Medical School outdoor program "Outdoors Unlimited," she served as the coordinator of the whitewater canoeing program and was a back country skiing leader/instructor, a back packing leader, budgets manager, publicity coordinator, and risk management supervisor. In 1994, she found her true passion in the field of first aid. She served as OU First Aid Coordinator and Lead Instructor from 1994 to 2001, when she set up her own instructional company. Often assisted by her husband Atwood and several graduates of previous classes seeking additional training as volunteers, she teaches a range of classes at various locations (often including OU) throughout northern California. For more information, see <http://www.fostercalm.org>.

The Loma Prieta Chapter WFA class will convene at 8 AM, Saturday, 7 February, 2004, in the Raptor Suite (large, first-floor meeting room) at the Peninsula Conservation Center, 3921 East Bayshore Road, Palo Alto (for a map, see <http://lomaprieta.sierraclub.org/directory.html>). The Saturday class will run until 5 PM with a one-hour break for lunch. The schedule Sunday will be the same except that part of the afternoon will be devoted to 'scenarios' in which students will practice their skills, and there will be a test.

To enroll in the class, complete the application and send it with a check for \$80 payable to "Sierra Club Loma Prieta Chapter" to

Dick Simpson  
3326 Kipling Street  
Palo Alto, CA 94306-3012

To the extent possible, applications will be processed in the order received except that Sierra Club members will receive priority until two weeks before the class. You will be notified of your status when your application has been received. If accepted, the instructor will mail you a packet of materials a couple weeks before the class

If you have questions or must cancel, contact Dick Simpson (see below) as soon as possible. Your refund (if any) will depend on when you cancel and whether there is a qualified replacement available to take your place.

Class Coordinator: Dick Simpson [rsimpson@stanford.edu](mailto:rsimpson@stanford.edu) 650-494-9272

# Wilderness First Aid Class

February 7-8, 2004

## Application

Please complete and return with a check for \$80 payable to "Sierra Club Loma Prieta Chapter" to:

Dick Simpson  
3326 Kipling Street  
Palo Alto, CA 94306-3012

Applications will be handled as nearly as possible on a first-come, first-served basis except that Sierra Club members will receive preference until two weeks before the class.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone (desirable) \_\_\_\_\_

Work Phone (optional) \_\_\_\_\_

E-Mail (if any) \_\_\_\_\_

Sierra Club Membership Number \_\_\_\_\_

Are you less than 18 years old? \_\_\_\_\_

What are your wilderness interests (backpacking, peak climbing, river running, etc.)?

If you are, or have been, a Sierra Club outing leader, please summarize that experience:

If the class is full, would you prefer to be kept on a waiting list or have your application canceled and your check returned immediately (circle one)?

Wait List  Cancel

## Snow Camping Seminar

This Snow Camping Seminar teaches snow camping and survival for day skiers or snowshoers caught overnight. Participants must be experienced summer backpackers since this course teaches winter camping, but not basic backpacking.

Three evening classes, held in the Stanford area, on Tues, 1/13, Thurs 1/15 and Tues 1/20. One weekend field trip on Feb 7-8, 2004. Limited to 40 participants for the evening sessions, and 25 participants on the outing.

\$40 cost includes books, instruction, and some common equipment used on field trip.

To sign up, send \$40 check, payable to BSCS, to P.O. Box 802, Menlo Park, CA 94026. Include your name(s), phone #, email, postal address, Sierra Club member number (if oversubscribed, preference will be given to members). Upon receipt, we will acknowledge and send info and directions.

Questions? Contact Chris MacIntosh at 650/325-7841, [cmaci@attglobal.net](mailto:cmaci@attglobal.net), or Tom Wolf at 650/961-2682, [tom.wolf@stanfordalumni.org](mailto:tom.wolf@stanfordalumni.org).

• *Stephane Mouradian, 2002/2003 PCS Chair*

## 2003 Treasurer's Report

Tom Driscoll, outgoing PCS Treasurer, submitted this report on November 16, 2003.

Our back account finances over the past year are reflected in the table below:

\$608.10 Opening balance  
 -\$503.38 Total printing and mailing costs  
 +\$368.00 Subscription deposits  
 \$472.72 Bank balance as of Tuesday, November 11, 2003

Last day of the term of Tom Driscoll

Aside from donations, the only source of income to the PCS is subscriptions to the newsletter, Scree. The only expenses of the PCS over the past year have been printing and mailing the newsletter. The printing and mailing costs listed above were for the preceding 15 months, whereas the subscription deposits were for the preceding 12 months. The reduced balance of \$135 from last year can be explained by this factor.

The average number of subscribers, measured by counting the number of stamps used, over the past 15 months was 36. The cost per subscriber is then 503.38 per 15 months divided by 36 subscribers times 12 months = \$11.19 per subscriber per year. The \$13 price per year per subscription will cover the cost of printing and mailing the Scree giving a stable balance in the checkbook. There are currently less than 30 subscribers to the printed Scree.

• Tom Driscoll

## Certified Avalanche Safety Class Level I

Date: February 21-22, 2004 (Sat-Sun)

Goal: Certified Avalanche Safety Class Level I

Difficulty: I Rated, snow travel

Location: eastern Sierra Nevada (vicinity of Bishop)

Sponsor: Outdoors Club

Contact: [http://www.climber.org/WhosWho/Ken\\_Murray.html](http://www.climber.org/WhosWho/Ken_Murray.html)

Contact: Kurt Wedberg, [kurtwedberg@hotmail.com](mailto:kurtwedberg@hotmail.com)

Bishop guide Kurt Wedberg (Everest '95), has graciously agreed to teach his popular Avalanche course for the Outdoorsclub. ([www.outdoorsclub.org](http://www.outdoorsclub.org)). He is doing the course for the highly discounted price of \$150 (usual fee, \$245). We want to extend an invitation to our friends at the Peak Climbing Section, to join the Club, and to participate. We already have people coming from NorCal, Carson City, and many from SoCal, so perhaps a convenient carpool can be arranged. Comfort with travel on snowshoes/ backcountry skis is helpful but not required. COURSE DESCRIPTION Level I Avalanche Course This avalanche course is appropriate for all types of winter enthusiasts who enjoy skiing, snowboarding, snowshoeing, and winter mountaineering. This course follows the Level I curriculum endorsed by the American Institute for Avalanche Safety and Research (AIARE) and satisfies requirements for ski patrollers, mountain guides, and all other outdoor professionals. TO

SIGN UP, AND OTHER COURSE DETAILS, GO TO:

<http://www.outdoorsclub.org/Calendar>, click on SoCal, go to Feb, click on the trip listing.

## 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.

There are no PCS trips scheduled for December

## 2004 Winter/Spring Trip List

This is the list of trips planned for Spring and Summer. Please do not contact the leaders until the trips are announced in the "Scree" or on the broadcast list.

DATES	PEAKS	LEADERS
<b>JANUARY</b>		
Sun 11	Junipero Serra	Arun Mahajan
<b>FEBRUARY</b>		
Sat 14-Sun 15	Mt. Diller	Stephane Mouradian
<b>MARCH</b>		
Sat 6-Sun 7	Lone Pine Peak	Aaron Schuman
Sat 13-Sun 14	Mokelumne Peak, 9300+, ski/snowshoe	Pat Gallery
Sun 21	Roundtop	Arun Mahajan
<b>APRIL</b>		
Fri 2-Sun 4	Birch Mtn and Tinemaha Peak	Aaron Schuman

## Split Mtn

September 9-10, 2003

Peaks: Split Mtn

We followed the driving directions from

<http://www.climber.org/DrivingDirections/redlake.html> on the way in but this is a better route [http://www.desertmud.com/hike\\_details/EventID/54](http://www.desertmud.com/hike_details/EventID/54)

(check alternative route) we took this on the way out, you don't need 4x4 for this route for the one on top you will need 4x4 on the way back.

This mountain has the lot of color to it and is different then other peaks.

Started from trailhead: 7:15

Reached Red Lake: 11:15pm.

I had to be back home early on Sunday so didn't have a choice of peaking on Sunday. Chris, Mehran and I decided to go to the peak, Jason and Matt decided to relax and peak Sunday morning. We took the North ridge (east) approach. But instead of going to Split-Prater saddle, we went up a chute before the saddle.

Start from red lake to peak: 12:40pm

Peak: 4:40pm

Start down from peak: 5:00pm

Back to red lake: 8:00pm

Meanwhile, Matt was concerned about getting this truck out from trailhead so while Jason went for a short hike, Matt packed up and went back.

Jason peaked solo on Sunday morning starting at 5 and peaked at 9. Chris and I headed down around 8:15am and reached trailhead by 11:45am. Mehran and Jason came down later in the afternoon.

The trail is pretty much scree and talus and that makes it a tough hike.

Pictures:

<http://www.outdoorsclub.org/PastTrip/PastTripDetail.asp?id=3889+leadername=Sid+Rao>

• *Sid Rao*

## A Night Out on Palisade Crest

September 13-15, 2003

Peaks: Palisade Crest, Gandalf

Difficulty: class 4, helmet, rope used

We set out for Palisade Crest: Charles Schafer, Bob Evans, Ric Rattray, Fi Verplanke, Greg Johnson, and myself, Aaron Schuman. We hiked from the ruins of the old Glacier Lodge up the South Fork trail. Quickly enough, we reached the point where we wanted to leave the trail, just above Willow Lake, and stopped for lunch there.

We followed a use trail up the main drainage from the Jepson Glacier. The trail was sketchy in places, but we were confident in our plan to stay near the creek bottom until we turned left at the second major inflowing stream. When we made the turn along the small stream draining Elinore Lake, we followed the directions in Secor's guide. The directions were accurate but we were still a bit confused. Secor advises staying west of the stream, but east of a trench. Another way to say it is that there are two closely separated channels in the mountainside coming down from Elinore Lake. The east channel carries the water that flows down from the outflow of the lake, and the west channel is not as well watered. We stayed between them, but close to the drier west channel. We reached the lake around 4:00 p.m. and found good campsites on the northwest side.

We studied the route description, the map and the mountain. It was hard to recognize the ramp up to the crest in full daylight, but as shadows began to fall, the ramp stood out more distinctly. We could see almost the entire route from camp.

In the morning we headed up a talus slope to a point we named the 'O-Chute' ('O' because the chute is open, and abbreviated so that it would fit the six character limit of a waypoint name). We crossed behind a knob, and gained 400 vertical feet out of view of the lake. At the base of the glacier we filled our bottles with the abundant meltwater. We continued up the ramp. It got steeper, sandier and looser as we approached Scimitar Pass. We reached the pass at about 11:00 a.m. Future climbers of this route should remember that Scimitar Pass is nowhere near the low point of the Pacific Crest in this area. It is only designated a pass because it is climbable from the east, and most approaches to the Crest in this area end in tall, sheer cliffs.

We climbed easy class 2 and 3 rocks from the pass to the local high point of the Crest. The traverse became increasingly difficult. There were step-across gaps exposed to the risk of long falls on both sides. It was very gusty, and we worried about losing our balance in a sudden gust. Bob asked for a rope at one point,

and we wasted way too much time flaking out the rope for a single move. At 2:00 p.m., we were just above the sharply cut notch just north of the highest tower (the 'Gandalf Tower') of Palisade Crest. Four of us decided to turn around. We didn't think we were going to reach the summit and get back to camp by nightfall. Charles and Bob were determined to succeed, and so they continued on. We gave them both ropes and all of the protection pieces, and wished them luck.

We retraced our steps and returned to camp by sundown, at around 7:30 p.m. We each made our best guess as to what time they would be back in camp. I made the latest guess, midnight. We turned in at around 9:00 p.m. At 1:30 a.m., I woke up. I checked Bob's tent and Charles' bivy. They had not returned. Everybody else was awake too. I shined my headlamp at the mountain, tracing out the route, hoping to see Charles and Bob shine their lights back at me. But the mountain was dark.

We arose with the sun, and the tents were still vacant. We began preparing emergency plans: who would search the mountain, who would go down and ask the ranger for help, what high points we thought would give cell phone reception.

At 8:00 a.m., we saw Bob approach the lake alone. Though we were happy to see Bob, it was unsettling to see him without his climbing partner. I hiked down to the lake to meet him. Bob said that Charles was just behind him, and in fact, at 8:30 a.m., Charles emerged from the talus, snapping photos.

Charles successfully summited at 4:00 p.m., and he belayed Bob up to the top shortly afterward. The two of them rappelled down to the notch, but the double rope system tangled when they tried to retrieve it. Charles had to reascend the class 4 section to free the rope. They got off the difficult class 3 part just as they used up the last of the daylight. It was too dark to continue, even with headlamps, and so they waited two chilly hours for the moonrise at about 10:00 p.m. They continued down, very slowly, alternately hiking and resting. At 3:00 a.m., out of the wind, behind the O-Chute, they decided to call it a night and wait for dawn.

Back at camp, we swapped gear and rearranged our carpools. Charles and Bob would sleep for a while, then hike out and drive home together. The rest of us would hike down immediately and get home in the evening. We weren't worried about Charles and Bob getting out by themselves over relatively easy terrain. Charles would phone in the morning.

What would we do differently next time, to ensure that the whole group could reach the summit and return to camp in the daylight? Know the route in advance. Go earlier in the summer, when the days are longer. Move quickly on summit day. Make difficult turn-around decisions early. Carry walkie-talkies if there is even the possibility of dividing the group. I saw some rappel slings halfway up the class 4, and I wondered about avoiding the overhead of the double rappel, but Charles still thinks that two ropes were the right gear for the climb.

Our scary story has a happy ending. Everybody got out safely. No rescue was required. And two bold members of our party even got to the top of this challenging peak.

Bob Evans remarks:

We moved quickly enough, until I began uncoiling the rope. Our late return was due the following: I slowly flaked the rope; I failed to free the ropes before beginning my rappel; I made a class 3 route finding error after the rappel, stranding myself on a knife edge until I managed to turn around; I

needed aid climbing back up a 15 foot class four dihedral, located about 50 feet north of the notch, where a long webbing is tied around a boulder as an anchor (we rappelled down this part on the way to the peak); I made one class 2 route finding error when, against Charles' instructions, I descended a few hundred feet past Scimitar Pass. These flubs cost about 1 hour. With that extra hour, Charles and I could have found the pass before dark. If we had found it before dark, we would not have waited 2 hours for moon rise, and we would not have bivied. We probably could have returned to camp at midnight.

• *Aaron Schuman*

## **Mt Russell East Ridge/SW face and Mt. Whitney**

October 25-26, 2003

Peaks: Russell, Whitney

Difficulty: class 3

Participants: Sid Rao, Scott Swaney, Jason Richet, Rudy McEntire, Raymeister 5 of us started from UBS at 4:45am on Sunday. Reached Russell-Carrillon saddle at 6:45. This was a scree slog but we were treated with some great sunrise views. Started along the 1/2 mile east ridge at around 7:10 and reached the west peak by 9:15. The views were spectacular. On the way we stopped and shoved some boulders down, it made heart stopping sounds going down 2000' and crashing into the lake. Started down at about 9:45 via SW face. The top 50 ft, from ridge is easy class 4 (or maybe hard class 3, REFER photo marked 'Downclimbing') and then its scree. Stick to the sides going down on this field since its very loose. Rudy almost got caught in a rock avalanche. This route dropped us near the notch on NE side 1000' above Iceberg lake. Whitney was about 2.5 hr RT from here. It was 11:00, Scott, Rudy and Jason decided to go to Whitney. You can come down about 300' (no need to come all the way down to Iceberg) and then traverse towards the mountaineers route, from there the peak is about an hr. Ray decided to go back to camp. I had to be back at trailhead by 2pm so Ray and I started towards UBS at 11:30. Others were on Whitney by 12:45. I ran back to UBS packed up and ran down to trailhead reaching at 2pm and reached home just in time to catch my 11:30pm red-eye.

Timeline

Russell RT from UBS: ~6:30hrs going up East arete down SW face. Includes all stops, can shave off 1hr from this with fewer stops

Russell + Whitney: add 2-2.5hrs to above

Russell + Whitney + Muir: if you have more time, add 2-2.5 hrs to above.

Can do the whole thing in daylight on a long summer day.

Weather was perfect, it was surprisingly calm and not too cold at UBS. Windy and cold along the ridge.

• *Sid Rao*

## **Mt Starr**

**12830 ft**

October 26, 2003

This is an easy walk-up via the west slopes. One way to do this peak is to start from the Mosquito Flat trailhead and walk on trail towards Mono Pass. The trail climbs gently till the point on a small sandy plain where the Ruby Lake turnoff (signed) goes left. The Mono Pass trail goes right and then climbs somewhat steeply and then turns right and after a short dip, comes to another, larger, sandy plain. A duck there marks the top of Mono Pass along with a 'no fires' sign. Sunset Lake is visible straight ahead and Mt Starr is on the right. There are a couple of faint use trails that go to the ridge line of Starr. The actual summit is a rocky knob and it has an ammo-box with a register. It is a popular peak and the register was quite new, the day I did it. From the summit, the trailhead is visible to the east and it seems possible to descend directly that way. I did not. There are great views of the south-west ridge of Morgan(south) and the Little Lakes Valley and Bear Creek Spire from the top. The round trip took a little over 5 hrs for me, going at my moderate pace.

• *Arun Mahajan*

## **Hall Canyon Descent**

November 18-20, 2003

Peaks: Hall Canyon, Panamint Mountains, Death Valley

Difficulty: Many rappels, class 5, helmet, rope used

This canyon seemed interesting from Steve Smith's report of his probable first descent of Hall Canyon in October 1994. Searching the Web, we also found a report by Randi Poer of a descent in March 2003. We thought the trail shown on the 1953 15' topo map should be a good way of getting to the Hall cabin at 4560 feet. John McCully, who climbed Telescope Peak via this trail, and Steve, provided us some info about it. The trail is not shown on the modern 7.5' topo (Jail Canyon) for the area. The trip unknowns included brush, access via a little-known trail, likely only two previous descents, enough(?) anchors, 14 rappels, and a remote and isolated canyon. And we were a party of only two. So, we had some anticipation and worry that we would have enough equipment and clothing. And how to get out if an accident happened. Unknowns, potential thrill, physical exercise, wild places, and doubt about the outcome Hot Dog! Just the ingredients of adventure I am always looking for!

Hall Canyon runs west from Telescope Peak in Death Valley National Park. The 3000' up from the Panamint Valley floor is steep canyon for the rappels; then it levels out, above the 4500' level with a cabin and historically a road to that point via Jail Canyon. The road (now closed and disused) was reportedly for grazing and prospecting/mining access, and then 4WDers before it became a wilderness area. Rich took good notes, and a chronological listing of the hike and rappels follows this narrative.

We drove on four miles of 2WD gravel road from the highway and parked our car at the gate to the Indian Valley Ranch (Indian Reservation) in Panamint Valley. In the morning we shouldered our packs and walked up the floodplain about 1.5 miles to the canyon mouth. We stayed away from the ranch area, which had buildings, trailers, meadow, and trees. We saw

no people but did not know if anybody was there. We stayed on the north side entering the canyon, then followed the stream and old pipeline remnants. A metal pipeline with intake a few hundred yards up diverts most of the ample flow to the lush area of the ranch grounds.

We found the old trail and hiked up it at the location shown on the map, about half a mile from the mouth. Starting at 1780', it switchbacked up on a mostly distinct narrow track to about 4800'. There were good views of the Panamint Valley, Argus Range, and even the Sierras. There was even cell phone coverage up high before we dropped into the canyon. From 4800', the trail went down, a bit back up, traversing, and then dropping to the cabin and lush spring area (with a good flow of water). The trail was, overall, pretty good. It is more or less maintained due to use by animals bighorns, burros and deer(?). It is possible to be diverted by spurious animal trails, and it may be ill defined up the main ridge, but secure rocks there make the route there like climbing a staircase.

We found a good campsite on huge boulder on the hillside south of the cabin -- with good view -- and hung out for the afternoon, relaxing after the 4000' gain backpack, which took us about five hours. Our packs were not light (40-45pounds), since we had climbing gear that included a full rack, rappel ropes and extra rope and slings. The cabin was pretty messy; the plastic windows were blown out and rodent pellets were all over the place. Five burros were in the area, but they were pretty wary and stayed at a good distance from us.

The trek down canyon to the first rappel the next morning was about one mile, but took 2 1/2 hours. The vegetation that day and the next morning was quite thick in places involving climbing on, over, under and through to make progress. I have seen worse, like the stickery chaparral type of coastal southern California. In the canyon it was willows, horsetail, reeds, vines, sage, and other riparian species matted up to 10 feet in thickness. We were also able to climb on boulders at the side at times. Sometimes my attention would lapse and a vine would grab my foot to trip me onto the soft mat. We also would climb onto thin branches to avoid the voids underneath.

There was substantial flow of water down the entire canyon below the spring; typically one or two feet wide. During the entire descent, we often walked in water, but didn't get very wet. I did step into a couple holes and got wet up to crotch level. Going through the vegetation worked up a sweat, so cooling off from being wet was about right in the daytime temperatures in the 60s. Wet suits were certainly not necessary. Rich wore neoprene socks under light hiking boots and I wore regular running shoes.

The rappels were very enjoyable, and we mostly avoided being wet in them and in pools beneath except for our feet and lower legs. Beautiful displays of ferns and nice channels formed in the rock and from travertine deposits in the canyon. We saw a few birds; one a water ouzel. Crickets at night. Some lizards. Bighorn sheep scat in a number of places. I was visited by mice at both campsites.

We rappelled with our 40-pound packs on. We did not belay the rappels. Gear was added to make a redundant anchor where there were not two secure ones present. It was nice that the March '03 party had added a lot of new slings and a few bolts. A number of the nine year-old slings were there in use. A few pitons did not ring soundly when knocked with a rock, so we pounded them in better and/or added another anchor. We took plenty of gear that we did not use, but having the extra stuff was good security. We moved pretty fast except where I led the traverse to avoid rappelling into the narrow wet slot. There it was marginal friction

moves with the pack on and wearing wet trail shoes! By the end of the trip with all the rappels we were coiling the ropes in only a minute, so we got pretty efficient. I liked the sense of being in a place that probably few people have ever visited. Even the upper canyon by the cabin probably gets few visits now, as in the Inyo Mountains, because of the thousands of feet necessary to hike up to get there. I would do this kind of trip again for sure.

## Chronology

Tue, November 18

8:00 am Left car at gate to Indian Ranch (1070 feet on map). Start of north side trail to Hall cabin (1780 feet) where canyon turns from SE to NE (0.3 mi. upstream from canyon mouth).

10:15 Rest break (2700 feet).

11:45 Rest break with view of upper canyon (4200 feet).

1:20 Reached Hall cabin and spring (4560 ft on map).

Wed, November 19

6:40 am Start from near cabin (4560 feet).

7:55 1st cottonwood tree and end of vertical canyon walls.

8:05 Canyon opens up. Looks like you could climb out sides.

8:10 200 yards of canyon in straight line pointing west. Canyon turns

8:25 Huge room-size boulder overlooking first rappel. We down- climbed south side of canyon to rappel.

9:10 RAPPEL 1 / 50 feet (3730 feet) (anchor- 1 sling around boulder next to BLM sign). No brush or water. Could have down-climbed around the south side, which would have been easier if you started higher than BLM sign.

RAPPEL 2 / 45 feet (anchor 2 existing pitons and sling) Rappel consisted of 2 stages. There was a ledge 30 feet down. You had to rappel in water all the way, but only your feet got wet. No brush. Small pool at bottom.

10:12 RAPPEL 3 / 70 feet (anchor 1 bolt and a sling around a tree).

There was a deep slot to the north. We stayed south of it having to go through heavy brush. Easy to stay away from slot but it was hard to manage rope in brush. We used 2 ropes but only 1 was necessary.

10:38 RAPPEL 4 / 100 feet (anchor 1 piton and 1 bolt). 2 rope rappel consisted of 2 stages. 1st was 20 feet through a hole to a ledge. No brush or water.

RAPPEL 5 / 25 feet (anchor 2 pitons way back from edge on north wall of canyon with a long sling). Slings went through lots of brush.

11:17 RAPPEL 6 / 120 feet (anchor 2 bolts (1 new) at top of waterfall). This led to a (dangerous?) slot on the south side and was very wet. We used the above anchor to belay from, and climbed 70 feet north (2 pieces of pro) traversing to a big ledge with a single piton. We added a hex and extra slings for the anchor. 2 rope rappel from here was on a smooth 50-degree slope, which was brush free and dry.

12:30 Lunch just before rappel 7

RAPPEL 7 / 70 feet (anchor 2 slings around a boulder)

1:26 pm RAPPEL 8 / 100 feet (anchor - 3 pitons on north side of canyon). We used all 3 by adding a sling. 2 rope rappel.

2:10 RAPPEL 9 / 120 feet (anchor 2 slings around a small boulder)

Boulder rocked a bit, but seemed secure enough and was located on top of a room-sized boulder near middle of canyon. Anchor was hard to find at first because we went too low. We added 3rd sling around another boulder as backup. 2 rope rappel. Ropes got very tangled in brush as we threw them down.

2:40 RAPPEL 10 / 50 feet (anchor 1 loose piton and one very small boulder on north wall). We did not rappel. We walked past the old anchor and lots of barrel cactus before climbing down an easy gully 100 feet down-canyon on north side.

3:03 RAPPEL 11 / 140 feet (anchor 2 pitons on south side of canyon). 2 rope rappel was low angle and some of it could have been down-climbed. No brush or water.

3:30 RAPPEL 12 / 70 feet (anchor - 2 pitons with bright orange perlon on north side of canyon). There was another old bolt nearby which preceded Steve Smith's descent in 1994.. It looked possible to down-climb south side.

RAPPEL 13 / 45 feet (anchor 2 pitons on south side of canyon). Lots of ferns and some water flow. We handed packs down before down-climbing to anchor.

4:32 RAPPEL 14 / 100 feet (anchor 2 pitons on north side of waterfall). We stayed out of water while rappelling steep cliff. No brush. This rappel was not described in the write-ups of the previous two ascents. We thought that it was the 14th rappel and that we were finished. With little daylight we hurried downstream thinking we could finish walking out the canyon at night.

5:10 pm We reached a steep cliff requiring a rappel, and it was practically dark. We didn't see an anchor. We camped at flat spot just upstream.

Thur, November 20

6:45 am RAPPEL 15 / 80 feet (anchor 1 bolt and 1 piton on south side of waterfall). Used 2 ropes but 1 would work because 2 ends of one rope were on bottom at retrieval. Steepest rappel in canyon. No brush or water. Small pool at bottom with constructed rock wall around it. Nice waterfall in slot and luxurious growth of ferns.

7:45 am Passed entrance to north side trail

8:50 am Reached car at Indian Ranch gate.

• *Ron Hudson and Rich Henke*

## Monument Mountain

### Joshua Tree NP

November 22, 2003

Peaks: Monument Mountain

I'm mainly submitting this report as I was able to find nothing online about this peak.

Steve Cole and I mounted 4834' Monument on Saturday, 22 November 2003, in a brisk one hour and thirty-two minutes. You can find detailed planning info in Patty Furbush's 'On Foot in Joshua Tree' and Andy Zdon's 'Desert Summits'. Monument Mountain is the highest point in the Hexie Mountains.

Monument Mountain is accessed most easily via the Cottonwood entrance of Joshua Tree, and the five miles of good but slow dirt on Pinkham Canyon road. It's a straightforward trail-less saunter

of the south ridge, traveling approximately three horizontal yet gently rising miles of the long ridge before hitting the steep-ish summit cone. Furbush calls it 1500+ elevation gain, but my Avocet told me closer to 1800. We successfully dismantled many unnecessary and objectionable cairns along the way. If you can't figure out which way to go on a semi-narrow ridge.

We were blown about by strong gusts of wind on the ascent, at times losing balance. The windchill was rather arctic, calling for my balaclava! on the whole stroll. Monument's summit register was placed in 1994, yet the pocket-sized notebook was only half-full. Since Monument is not on any lists, the list-types don't get up there (but they should). Mark Adrian had an entry from 1995, I think. The register was also hands-down the most entertaining register I've ever perused, and others within it also agreed. It also seems - according to our experience and to previous entries - that Monument is typically quite windy, so go prepared. Surprisingly, I counted many more ascents from out-of-staters and out-of-country'ers than I did from CA residents. I surmise that it may have something to do with Monument's proximity to the visitor center, the commanding view, the lack of 'listing', and the ease with which one may summit. Many entries were from east coast visitors, in addition to Germany, Ireland, and England. I would approximate that Monument only sees about one dozen parties per year. There was one entry about one week before us, and then none preceding until March 2003.

For the view and ease alone, Monument should be on your 'list'. If you've got a 4WD, I would also suggest that you complete the additional fifteen miles of the Pinkham Canyon descent to I10. You can find details in Tony Huegel's 'California Desert Byways', but beware that he calls it easy to moderate. For the most part, the whole thing is, but the 2003 monsoon season really tore up the second half of the twenty-mile journey. There is one definite high-clearance and 4WD mandatory section, where I earned my first (very minor) body damage on my 2002 Toyota Tacoma while negotiating the second tricky crux (the two cruxes are about fifty feet apart).

<http://mgordonphotography.com/sierra/sierra.htm>

• *Michael Gordon*

## 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.

There are no private trips for December.

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## Rock Climbing Classifications

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

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

**Deadline for submissions to the next Scree is Sunday 12/28/2003. 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**