



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

Next General Meeting

Date: Tuesday, November 11

Time: 7:30 PM

Program: "The Hidden" Alps of France. Hikes and climbs in the Ecrins region of France. While most N. American climbers think of Chamonix when they think of the French Alps, there is another, less visited, strikingly beautiful area 100km SE of there that's worth a look. Join Tim Hult as he presents a slide show on climbs and hikes in this area. Also shown will be a selection of some of his best "art" photos from the Sierras this past season

Location: Any Mountain, Cupertino
20640 Homestead Rd.
Cupertino, CA 95014

Directions: From I-280, exit DeAnza Blvd/Sunnyvale-Saratoga Rd. Follow signs toward Sunnyvale. Turn left onto Homestead Rd. Any Mountain is on the left.

Deadline for submissions to the next Scree is Sunday 11/22/2003 Meetings are the 2nd Tuesday of each month.

Wilderness First Aid Classes

Bobbie Foster of FosterCalm is teaching many 16 hr wilderness first aid classes in these next few months. We hope you can join us as a student or as a helper:

- 1) October 18-19 Boulder Creek overnight \$100 contact Bobbie at bobbie@fostercalm.com if you are interested in joining the class or helping teach.
- 2) October 25-26 Palo Alto private class for western sea kayakers ... looking for helpers and may be room in the class contact Bobbie at bobbie@fostercalm.com
- 3) November 8-9 San Francisco. contact BAWT for this class 415-788-3666 x 125 for registration info contact Bobbie at bobbie@fostercalm.com if you are interested in helping. (Cpr class on Nov 5th 6-10pm)
- 4) November 15-16 Berkeley private class for sierra club snow camping group looking for helpers .and may be room in the class

contact contact bobbie at bobbie@fostercalm.com (Cpr class on Nov 14th 6-10pm)

5) November 22-23 Sacramento contact Peak Adventures at 916-278-6321 for registration info contact bobbie at bobbie@fostercalm.com if you are interested in helping.

6) December 6-7 Rancho Cordova private class for the girl scouts looking for helpers and may be room in the class contact contact Bobbie at bobbie@fostercalm.com

Patient Assessment Skills Practice Session 11/10 San Francisco
Free Seminar sponsored by Outdoors Unlimited, UCSF,
San Francisco. 7-10pm

The Key to good care is a good patient assessment ... and the key to a good assessment is PRACTICE join us for an evening of review and practice of this very important skill.

If you are interested call Outdoors Unlimited at 415-420-5553

Annual Election of PCS Officers

The nominating committee is pleased to announce the following slate of candidates for 2003-2004. Election of PCS officers occurs at the November meeting and additional nominations, if any, will also be accepted from the floor, at the meeting.

Elected officials take office right away.

Chair: Pat Callery
Vice chair: Linda Sun
Treasurer: Jeff Fisher

The PCS Nominating Committee

Debbie Benham

Dee Booth

Arun Mahajan

Happy Birthday Bill!

It's a Party! Help celebrate Bill Kirkpatrick's first 60 years on this planet. All PCSers are invited and welcome.

Saturday, November 15, 2003

8 - 11 p.m.

Works/San Jose gallery

30 North 3rd Street, downtown San Jose

Free parking in garage across 3rd Street

No presents please.

RSVP: BigSixOh@hotmail.com 408-244-7607

Thanks to Any Mountain

As another term for the PCS leadership team draws to a close, we would like to thank Any Mountain in Cupertino for being kind hosts for several PCS meetings and offering discounts on their products to the PCS attendees.

Also included below is a small note from the Events and Promotion Team from Any Mountain:

"Your club may want to check out our show on Sunday, November 9 at 7:00 PM in Campbell at The Gaslighter Theater.

Information is listed on-line at

<http://www.anymountain.net/skimovie>

regarding ticket prices, sponsors, venue listings, capacity, etc.

I hope you can check it out! "

So, thank you, Any Mountain!

- *Stephane Mouradian, Chair, PCS*
- *Arun Mahajan, Chair, PCS Pub Comm*

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.

Excelsior Mountain

Peak: Excelsior Mountain
Date: Nov 1 (Sat)
Leader: Aaron Schuman, 650-968-9184(H),
650-943-7532(W), aaron@climber.org

Whorl Mountain

Peak: Whorl Mountain (12029')
Date: November 8-9, 2003 (Sat-Sun)
Difficulty: Class 3
Leader: Pat Callery, haishan1@yahoo.com
(650)255-8169

Keep your fingers crossed for the mountain weather window to provide us one more fine weekend before winter sets in. We'll hike, light & fast, over Horse Creek Pass on Saturday to position ourselves for a climb of the infamous "chockstone" route on Sunday. Return home on Sunday. Participants must be comfortable with exposure on Class 3 rock. Winter storms cancel (or at least change plans).

Mt. McAdie, Mt LeConte, and Mt. Corcoran

August 24/27, 2001

Sometime last spring Charles Schafer asked me if I was interested in climbing McAdie, LeConte and Corcoran. I had already climbed McAdie and LeConte so I hemmed and hawed but Charles suggested the Southwest Ridge route on LeConte which is rated 5.6. I decided to go. This trip report describes the various "peculiarities" associated with climbing these three peaks in one trip.

Charles original intent was to obtain a permit for the South Fork of Lone Pine Creek and climb McAdie via Arc Pass and then and drop down to Iridescent Lake for the ascent of Corcoran and LeConte. This plan ran afoul of the Whitney permit system so Charles settled for a permit that allowed us access to Iridescent Lake via New Army Pass. On August 24, 2001, Charles Schafer and I set out from the Cottonwood Trail Head off of the Horseshoe Meadow road.

We loaded up the packs and headed off. We passed Golden Trout Camp, several branches in the trail, and many lakes. We then started up New Army Pass. Huff, puff, pant, pant up the east side we went. Huff, puff, pant, pant down the west side we went. New Army Pass is the sun's anvil. It is drier than Mars on both sides of this pass but especially the west side. Buzzards don't even go there. We chugged on down to a junction at the bottom of the pass and the little sign at the junction had a note taped on it from the local ranger. "Mama bear and cub operating in this area" was the general gist of this note. Great. We headed on over to Soldier Lake and put down our packs to contemplate our situation. It was getting late and our progress wasn't quite good enough. We had hoped to get all the way in to Sky Blue Lake but the day was wearing thin. Besides, the map indicated we needed to drop down about 400 feet in order to pick up Rock Creek where hopefully there was a trail. Now a bear was running around snacking on mountaineers food bags. We didn't have a bear can so we opted to stay at Soldier Lake for the night in order to stash our food in the bear box there.

Charles and I entertained ourselves, such as it was, by looking around for a route up and over this annoying bump which would force us down the 400 feet to Rock Creek. Bingo, we found it. Well, Charles found it. I had wandered off and was examining some ridiculous path. This is a great shortcut up and over into the Rock Creek drainage leading to Sky Blue Lake. Go about three quarters of the way around the west side of the lake on the trail that is there. There is a break in the cliff guarding Soldier Lake at this point. Drift off the trail about 20/30 feet and start looking around for a trail. It is loose but clearly defined all the way up to the top of the cliff. At the top of the cliff the trail seems to head back down towards the use trail heading up Rock Creek. We decided to turn right and skirt along the top of the broad ridge and intersect the trail much higher in elevation to the north. This worked well. We could see a very nice use trail at the bottom of the canyon that parallels Rock Creek. I don't know why it is not marked on the map. We eventually intersected that trail.

After finding the short-cut we returned to our campsite, cranked through dinner, and hopped into our bivy bags. I was fused. The drop down the backside of New Army Pass cost us about 1500 feet which had to be regained on the way out. Did I mention that New Army Pass is drier than Mars? Ok. We didn't make our destination at Sky Blue Lake. The resident bear had designs on my dinner. The muscle tear in my back was killing me. We had just set up camp about 50 feet from a group which consisted of three adults and about six boys aged 12 through 14. Any suggestion from Charles about fanning the trip and I was out of there the next morning.

Charles didn't save me by offering to punt the trip. Along about 8:15 PM the boys abruptly stopped yelling at each other and dead silence fell over Soldier Lake. A miracle. I slept like a rock.

We had decided that the necessary punishment for not reaching Sky Blue Lake on the first day was we had to lug our packs up there on Saturday, drop them at the lake, climb McAdie and then haul everything up and over into the Iridescent Lake area. At 6:45 AM we set out for Sky Blue Lake. I was in somewhat improved humour. Somewhat.

And that is exactly what happened. The south side of Arc Pass is easily accessible from Sky Blue Lake by hiking up past a tarn to the pass. From Arc Pass we headed up the scree and talus to the south summit of McAdie and climbed over it to the gap which separates the south summit from the north summit. Drop down the south summit into this notch. This is ostensibly rated class 3. At the notch go up about 50 feet to a ledge or ramp which heads left. Follow this around to easy class 3 scrambling which takes you to the summit. The description of this route in Secor's text is

a little confusing. There is a ramp which heads left immediately from the notch. Following this particular ramp will give you a view of where you should be which is about 50 feet higher. Go back to the notch, head straight up 50 feet, and then go left.

Mt. McAdie is a mountaineers mountain. The drop from the south summit to the notch is intimidating. I climbed this route 23 years ago and used a rope. I am still a mediocre mountaineer but a far better rock climber and still I wished we had brought the rope on this ascent. As a consequence, the true summit is not easily accessible and does not see millions of ascents. The summit register goes back to the early 70's. The views from the top are great.

We headed down the scree from the south summit and picked up our packs at Sky Blue Lake. From the packs location we went up over the pedestal at the foot of the "Mitre" to Iridescent Lake. This transition is accomplished by climbing up through a class 3 break at the north end of the cliff guarding the pedestal. This break is easily visible from the Sky Blue Lake environs. It looks more intimidating than it is and many others have gone this way based on the quantity of foot prints in the area.

The next day we headed up to climb Corcoran and LeConte via the Southwest Ridge. Our first problem was to get up to the North Notch from the west. The route description indicates that the chute leading to the notch branches twice and a chockstone was to be encountered. We headed up a chute that looked like it was going toward the North Notch. This thing was as loose as it gets. There were "blast points", to borrow a term from "Star Wars", all over the rocks. These are those nice, encouraging, white powdery marks on the rocks, like where another (big) rock had come down from above and bashed into the rock. Ugh. Charles and I kept to the right at every opportunity. We encountered a chockstone and I took a peek under it. No daylight so going under was out of the question. Going up and left around the chockstone requires one or two fifth class moves. Above the chockstone the chute is crammed with rubble. Superman couldn't tunnel under that chockstone. Up we went. I was expecting to end up at the North Notch and kept looking to the right for the ledge that would take me to the chute leading to the top. In short order there was nothing at all going right and I soon determined that I was on the summit of Mt. Corcoran. That's because I nearly stepped on the summit register. How this route is supposed to work escapes me.

While Charles and I were on the summit we saw David Harris, Dee Booth, Scott Kreider, Arun Mahajan, and Ron Karpel working their way through the inobvious third class route coming from Mt LeConte. We dropped down the couloir and found the ramp leading to the North Notch, it is marked by a duck, and met the group in the notch. It was a huge kick to meet my wife up in the mountains like that. We chatted with the PCS group for a few minutes and they headed off for Corcoran and we headed up the ridge to LeConte.

The ridge line from LeConte to Corcoran runs approximately north-south. This ridge consists of a series of insufferable fins which run east west. The last of these fins is separated somewhat from the rest by a notch and is somewhat higher. The "namers of mountains" have decided that this one gets its own name. This one is Corcoran. At any rate we headed up the first fin from the North Notch heading towards LeConte. This went up to a shallow notch of about 10 feet and then up the next fin steeply. This section goes at third class with the exception of one sort of exposed fifth class move after the shallow notch. We dropped down the backside of this pair of fins and encountered the next one. It is a reddish thing and a cursory glance indicated climbing it would be tough. It looked like we could sneak around the west side. This goes as exposed fourth class. This brought us to the next fin. It looks like there is no way to work around either side

of this fin. It was third class to the top of this one but the descent looked very difficult since this side is slightly overhanging at the top and there are a lot of loose blocks on the ledges. We rappelled from a chockstone stuffed into a crack at the top of this fin. At the bottom of the rappel there is a couloir heading up from the west. This looked to be the West Couloir which is another ascent/descent route on LeConte and could be used as an escape route. This brought us to another fin with a crack in it. We climbed the crack and this goes at about 5.6. This was the first time we used the rope except for the rappel. At the top of this fin is a wide section with a few more fins to the east but we passed them on the second class talus to the west until we hit the final head wall on LeConte. We ran into David, Dee, Arun, Scott, and Ron here again as they headed off to find the Northwest Chute. This head wall has a lot of cracks in it. Right at the top of the scree there is a triangular shaped flake system that leads up to some steep looking cracks. To the left of this about 20 feet away is another system which looked easier but heads for an alcove that looked hard to get out of. Down a little further to the left (west) is another break with several cracks in it. This is in a white section of rock. We went up there. It was about 5.7. This is about 180 feet and we had to set a belay just before the top to finish the last fifteen feet or so of this route. I have no idea if this is the correct route. It was a little grainy but most alpine routes don't see many ascents and are all pretty much grainy. The top of this is class three. We headed over to the north. The big pinnacle that can be seen from the top of the pitch is not the summit. We climbed the true summit from the south side. This goes about class 4.

From the summit we headed down the Northwest chute towards the north end of Iridescent Lake. We encountered the infamous "waterfall pitch" which I downclimbed and Charles rappelled. That thing is hard. We jetted down the chute towards the lake. By sticking to the right side it can be "scree skied" for a goodly distance. We arrived back at camp in time to pack up and head down to the big meadow below Sky Blue Lake. The next day we hiked out and drove home.

Final Notes: Overall this was a very good trip. The Rock Creek drainage is a beautiful alpine meadow area. Insofar as the logistics go in terms of climbing these peaks I have the following observations. Going up and over New Army Pass into the Rock Creek drainage is a pretty long hike except for bullets which I am not. The key problem seems to be that McAdie does not quite fit with LeConte and Corcoran from this side. I would recommend day hiking McAdie from Whitney Portal. Indeed, a few days earlier an entry in the register by Elizabeth Wenk indicated she had done just that. She was ostensibly in search of big horn sheep scat which she apparently found, all of which was duly recorded in the register. As for LeConte and Corcoran I think approaching via Meysan Lakes would be easier. The third class traverse around the back of LeConte can be used to get to the start of the Southwest Ridge. It took the PCS group about an hour and forty five minutes to get over to the notch from LeConte and that required a fair amount of route finding so it is not prohibitively long from LeConte to the start of the Southwest Ridge. From the notch Corcoran can be climbed and then go back up the ridge. The Southwest Ridge goes quickly since it is mostly third class. We climbed just two fifth class pitches. I over racked for this route, as usual, and it needs only a single selection of cams up to one #3 camalot and a few stoppers. Cams worked better on the grainy white section. We used a single 50 meter rope.

I am not sure why the Southwest Ridge of LeConte made it into the Sierra Classics book. Perhaps Moynier and Fiddler had 99 routes and needed one more to make an even 100. This route pales in comparison to Matthes Crest and the North Ridge of Conness, to name a few.

Guide books and further reading:

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

Sierra Classics, 100 Best Climbs in the High Sierra, John Moynier and Claude Fiddler, Chockstone Press, 1993, ISBN 0-934641-60-9. May be out of print. Worthless.

• Rick Booth

Huayna Picchu

8,860' Cuzco Province, Peru

Huayna Picchu (8,860') is the pinnacle to the south of Machu Picchu, the famous archaeological site in Peru, visible in the background of the traditional postcard view of Machu Picchu. "Machu Picchu" means "Old Mountain" or "Old Peak" in the local dialect, while "Huayna Picchu" is "New" or "Young Peak."

We spent the last week of March touring Peru, with Machu Picchu the planned highlight of the trip. Our itinerary overnights at Aguas Calientes, the town near Machu Picchu along the Urubamba River (one of the tributaries of the Amazon). The overnight allowed an early start the second morning, avoiding the hordes of tourists who invade after the late-morning arrival of the daily train from the city of Cuzco. Taking the 6:30 a.m. bus from Aguas Calientes allows starting the climb up Huayna Picchu at the 7:00 a.m. opening of the trail. Jaime, our tour guide, played up the difficulty of the climb and encouraged extreme caution, stating that it was done purely at the individual's choosing and responsibility.

Nominally, you are required to sign in and out of the trail (so they can figure out when to call next-of-kin, I suppose) but when I started at 7:10 a.m., there was no one to be found around the trailhead hut, and I left a business card, with my start time written on it, stuck between two boards of the counter at the hut.

The trail starts at an altitude of about 7,875', then drops down a hundred or so feet before crossing a knife-edge ridge between Machu Picchu and Huayna Picchu. About halfway between the trailhead and ridge, I met a British family who had been spooked by the exposure on the ridge and had turned back after only ten minutes or so. While the slopes are steep and the drop to the Urubamba River is close to 1,300', the trail along the ridge is neither difficult nor threatening. The trail follows a mixture of original Inca trails and steps and modern additions to make the climb easier. From the base of Huayna Picchu, it climbs 1,000' in a series of switchbacks and steeply pitched rock steps. Most of the steeper sections are provided with hand rails of either braided nylon rope or steel cable, making the climb mostly a matter of hoofing it up long, tall staircases with lots of air behind and beneath you. That morning, clouds intermittently blew over, dropping an occasional drizzle and leaving behind condensate even when they were not heavy enough to have precipitation falling from them. The stone steps become slick enough with the moisture to deserve care and respect, since a fall nearly anywhere would be painful and at several spots, could be fatal.

Near the summit, there is a grotto formed by several boulders that requires a bit of hands-and-knees crawling, wedged between the two immense boulders that form the grotto. Incan-carved steps lead you up and into a small opening among the jumble of boulders at the summit. The scramble to the summit, proper, requires a couple of easy third-class moves onto and along a granite block with a 20-degree slope and hundreds of feet of air below its downhill edge. The summit boulder itself has been carved out with a small level platform, probably used as an observation post by the Incas. This makes an ideal spot for a

summit photo, and I traded photo duties with three other climbers, variously from Singapore, Germany and Britain, before burning several more frames of film (and megabytes of flash in the digital camera) photographing Machu Picchu from the higher vantage point. That day, mists and clouds alternately blew over the site and cleared in the morning sun, creating an appropriately mysterious atmosphere over the vista.

The return trail involves one more third-class move, where a boulder bisects the trail. Its projecting corner is easily straddled by holding onto the edge of the block and swinging a foot around to the other side, where the trail resumes. Again, the exposure would cause an acrophobe to have palpitations, but with solid granite to lean on, it is a minor thrill to the initiated. Shortly thereafter, you run into the crux pitch of the descent where a series of very narrow and steep stone steps take you down from an Inca storehouse to rejoin the trail back toward the ridge and trailhead. That pitch of 40 or 50 feet is tenuous and unprotected, and side-stepping down six-inch-wide steps slick with the cloud condensation is easily the most "interesting" part of the climb. From that point, the trail follows the now-familiar path back to the trailhead hut. I reached the summit at about 8:05, so just under one hour for the climb. The climb down took a bit longer, perhaps an hour-and-a-half, with multiple photo stops and conversations with folks on their way up, wondering about how tough the climb was and how much farther they had to go.

Not a technically-challenging climb, by any means, but well worth the effort both for the views back to Machu Picchu and down to the Urubamba river as it makes a U-turn around the base of Huayna Picchu.

• Alan Ritter

<http://www.mtritter.org>

Mt Goethe via Alpine Col

September 27-28 2003

This trip was co-lead by Dee Booth and Stephane Mouradian. The other five participants were Rick Booth, Roger Detloff, Arun Mahajan, Jim Edmondson, Linda Sun. This trip was following the route described in 2001 by Peter Maxwell in his trip report "Goethe via a knife edge ridge".

We left the trail head at 8am and arrived on the North side of Goethe Lake at 12:50pm. This side of the lake offers plenty of quality camping sites. As it was still early, we decided to drop our packs and try for the peak. We left at 1:20pm and took one hour to go around the bouldery West side of Goethe Lake. We started heading up toward Alpine Col but around 2:45pm, we realized we would not be back before 9pm, should we continue. We decided to save the summit for the next day as originally planned. For the return around Goethe lake, we went around the East side which is shorter from the Alpine Col chute. This did not save time and still took one hour as the boulders tend to be larger than on the West side. Dee and Rick scouted a route high above the lake but ended up having to drop down to lake.

On Sunday morning, we left camp at 5:30 am and went around the West side of Goethe by headlamp, which was not difficult. The temperature was above freezing and higher than it had been at the trailhead the day before. We headed up toward Alpine Col by staying on the right side of the chute. We found a fairly easy way along some slabs and reached Alpine Col at 7:25pm. From this point, we traversed upward and aimed toward a prominent saddle on the ridge. From this point, we mostly followed the class 3 ridge, sometimes dropping either left or right to avoid impassable sections. As described by Peter, the ridge is so narrow in one section that one can literally have one foot on each side of the

ridge. At one point, the ridge culminate in some spires which I mistakenly climb as I thought they might be the summit. The real summit is actually another 20 min further and it looks like a fairly round bump from the distance. We reached it at 9:55.

For the way down, we debated coming down the class 2 route and staying above lake 11910 before reascending Alpine Col from the East side. We ended up staying below the ridge and used a scree/rock chute to come down from the ridge early rather than retrace our steps. There is always a risk to come down a different route without having scouted it first. Our scree/rock chute was not pleasant and I would recommend the next party to just follow the ridge to the Col. We did come down the Col the same way we went up at least. We were back to camp at 2:25pm and left camp at 3:10pm. (Dee recorded all the times by the way) We reached the trailhead at 6:45pm.

On a final note, it is possible to do the summit on the first day you hike in and this is how one could do it: It is a 6 hour hike to the South side of Goethe Lake and a 6 hour + round trip to the summit. This means one would have to leave the trailhead at 6am or earlier and could expect to get back to camp after summiting just before dark. It would be a long first day, especially considering a potentially short night before due to the drive. On the other hand, getting back home at 1:30am Sunday night is not perfect either:)

• *Stephane Mouradian*

Crystal Crag, North Arête and Cockscomb

October 4-5, 2003

The number of alpine climbs that may be done as one day projects are somewhat limited. Both the Cockscomb in the Tuolumne and Crystal Crag near the town of Mammoth Lakes can be easily climbed in one day per climb. There are those individuals who can, no doubt, climb them both in one day but that isn't us.

Saturday morning, October 4, Dee and I headed out from the George Lake parking area on the trail to Crystal Lake. The Crystal Crag is directly behind Crystal Lake and is easily visible from the parking at George Lake. The Crystal Lake Trail is really the Deer Lake trail and there is a side trail off the main trail that cuts over to Crystal Lake. Going around the left side of the lake brings the hiker to a sign leaning against a tree warning of the dangers of climbing Crystal Crag. A climbers trail heads up towards the crag a few feet past this sign.

The North Arête Route starts in a small chimney in the back of a corner and is not the prominent dihedral which will be to the left. There is an excellent picture in Croft's book which clearly shows the route. The main climbing is about 5.6 but most of the route is fourth class. For the first pitch, head up the small chimney (5.6) and then up a broken face (fourth class). The second pitch appears to have choice of two chimney systems. We headed up the left side and stayed closer to the edge of the arete. It looks like there is a second chimney to the right. In either case this ends below a huge section of white quartz, hence the name Crystal Crag. This is way cool to climb through but it is very, very, loose. A short half pitch of this put us on the ridge. A couple hundred feet of mixed third and fourth class climbing, with the occasional fifth class move thrown in, brought us to the summit.

The descent is done by continuing down the South Ridge. After about 100 feet a notch is encountered and we headed down that. It was mixed third and second class. It looks like it may be easier to go even further down the ridge and then head west on easier terrain but we don't know this for sure. It seemed there were

footprints further south that we did not encounter on our version of the down climb.

This is a fun route. It is not very hard and the whole climb and hike in and out was done in under eight hours. The North Arête does not get any sun this time of year and it was cold until we got up on the top of the ridge. To find the trailhead go through the town of Mammoth Lakes and straight out on the Mary Lake Road. Do not take the right turn towards the main ski area. Follow the signs to George Lake or George Lake Campground. The trailhead is marked Crystal Lake, not Deer Lake as indicated in Croft's book. We used a single 60 meter rope and a few cams, smallish aliens to about #2 camalot.

The next day, Sunday, we headed out to climb the Cockscomb in the Tuolumne. This is approached by hiking out the Cathedral Lakes trail which starts a little west of the Tuolumne campground. The Budd Lake trail cuts off to the left from this trail. There are several choices and the best choice is the second cut off which looks very well used. This is followed up to Budd Lake. The stream is crossed to the left near a duck after about 45 minutes to one hour of hiking. The trail heads up to Budd Lake. We headed up the broken junk to the left of Budd Lake to get on the bench above Budd Lake. This required going up and then down since there is a huge gulch that breaks this obvious broken area. The best way to get up is to go towards the end of Budd Lake around the left and then zig zag back and forth across the improbable looking slabs at the end of Budd Lake.

From the bench above Budd Lake we headed up towards a notch on the skyline that appeared to be at the end of a long rightward slanting weakness. At the top of the notch it is a short stroll up sand and manzanita to the base of the West Face of the Cockscomb. We had intended to head around and climb the East Face but decided we didn't have enough time. The PCS group of Ron Karpel, Arun Mahajan, Firoozeh Verplanke, Linda Sun, Landa Robillaird, Nancy Fitzsimmons, Tom Driscoll and Jim Ramaker were on the fourth class North Arête. Dee and I headed up the west face directly. This was third plus class except for the down climb to the notch at the base of the third/fourth class summit tower.

This is another fun route in one of our favorite parts of the Sierra. It took about 7 and half hours round trip. The West Face needed a few medium cams and about 50 feet of rope. Bold people can handle the down climb without the gear or climb up and down the North Arête.

References:

The Good, the Great, and the Awesome, Peter Croft, Maximus Press, 2002, ISBN 0-9676116-4-4. Good photo of the route.
The High Sierra, Peaks, Passes, and Trails, Second Edition, R.J. Secor, The Mountaineers, 1999, ISBN 0-89886-625-1

• *Rick and Dee Booth*

Mt. Julius Caesar 13,200 ft.

“The Fault, Dear Brutus, is not in our Stars”

Julius Casear

October 6-7, 2003

After a long, unsatisfactory breakfast in Mammoth we headed up to the Pine Creek trailhead. The trip participants were Kai Wiedman, Taz (Mumtaz Shamsee) and myself.

The trail started with switchbacks ascending behind an old tungsten mine and we saw evidence of earlier mining from the trail. We had about four thousand feet to climb that day, but thankfully, it was cool enough to be tolerable.

After a while, the trail junction signs indicated either Pine Creek Pass or Italy Pass, so we took the latter, hoping to camp at one of the lakes below the pass. We veered off the trail as it headed to Honeymoon Lake and headed toward Granite Park, following some well-placed ducks along the way.

Upon arriving at a nice-looking lake with good sites, we decided to make our camp. After we settled in, we checked the map again and, not being well-acclimatized, we came down with a serious case of denial. We had the 7.5-minute topo for the area, which didn't show the route we'd taken so far and most of it was forested. Yep, the map showed Julius Caesar jutting right up from Italy Pass and we were at one of the lower lakes near the edge. But why were there so many trees at 11,700 ft? Why did it seem so warm? Was it an anomaly - a twilight zone in the Sierra?

We left nice and early for the pass, heading up over clean granite slabs. Why did Italy pass seem so close? We must be pretty fast. Why was there a huge mountain jutting out behind Julius Caesar? No, more than one! The irony of the thing was that we were hardy-har-harring over following a PCS leader years ago who climbed the wrong mountain. As we rose higher and the landscape unfolded we realized where we really were heading - Royce Lakes Basin, with Royce, Merriam, and Feather greeting us with an impressive view. Humbling. Are we too old for this? Taz was bravely trying to trust us, but didn't look too sure.

Well, that was discouraging, because our timing had been perfect for the two-day trip. Now, we guessed when we'd get home and it didn't look pretty. Kai hung his head dejectedly. Clearly, his enthusiasm waned. But it was still so early and I couldn't stand quitting at a little hitch in the plan. So we sucked it up and decided to go for it anyway. We headed down and over to the next drainage where we should have been since leaving the trail. Now things started making sense. Yea, there's the lake where we should have camped and, hey, there's the real Italy Pass and Julius Caesar. And hooray, we really were in Granite Park!

The route just off Italy Pass presented itself right in front of our noses, but we'd heard it was loose and not fun, even scary according to some of the reports Taz had read on the net. That didn't matter to us, though because there was no way Kai was going to go up the shortest, closest route where climbers who notch their belts go. He was in it for quality, not quantity. So instead, we headed toward the West Ridge, a classic third-class route, according to Roper and Secor.

It seemed like only 20 minutes before we got to the base of our route and started up. We were never disappointed, as the boulders got bigger. There was no shortage of solid handholds and the views on either side were spectacular. Actually, the view from the summit was incredible as the great west face of Bear Creek Spire loomed like a fortress before us.

Our return trip was uneventful except for the dinner stop at Grumpys. And yes, we got home way too late.

• Cecil Anison

Knudtson Couloir Mt. Thompson

October 11, 2003

On October 11, 2003, Steve Aho and I climbed the Knudtson Couloir on Mt. Thompson. We left the South Lake trailhead at 5:30 AM Saturday and returning 12:45 AM Sunday. (I was a bit surprised that Steve was up for this trip because the previous weekend he had gone up the Harrington Couloir, which is just a couple hundred yards or so west of the Knudtson, with a party of three in a trip that ended up being 22 hours car to car!)

The Knudtson is in good condition with bubbly dirty-whitish ice in its bottom part and with a narrow finger of beautiful hard clear (but brittle) ice above. We simul-climbed about 600 feet to the 'shrund. We climbed right up over the 'schrund for about 20 feet of vertical, although this looked like it could be passed on the left. From there, four pitches took us to the top and simul-climbed an additional 100 ft or so near the top. In the interest of saving time, Steve led throughout. The ice finger goes over a little cliff that must be surmounted. The upper 100 feet or so of the couloir is melted out but is easy 3rd class with lots of loose rock.

Even though we did not have any parties above us, we experienced some rockfall. One of the rocks struck me squarely on the forehead of my helmet. The ice of the upper couloir dinner-plated in places, often in the pattern of a bulls-eye.

From the top of the couloir it is an easy walk to the summit block of Thompson (13,494 ft.). After signing the summit register, we took the very loose and exposed 3rd class N. Ridge down to its saddle with peak 13,240 (approx.) and then traversed over onto the E. Ridge of peak 13,240 and followed that down in order to avoid moraine-hopping.

We had a full moon on both the approach and descent and this made it a lot more pleasant and scenic than it could have been. The approach and descent (and especially the descent of Thompson's N. Ridge) are clearly the crux of the route.

I would not recommend attempting to descend via Thompson's north ridge unless you are comfortable on steep very loose rock with difficult route finding.

Sunday, we slept in and then spent a leisurely day sport-climbing in the Alabama Hills.

A picture of Knudtson can be found on the Internet here:

http://www.summitpost.com/mountains/photo_link.pl?photo_id=42402&object_id=1836&type=mountain&mountain_id=1836&route_id=1594

• Chris Jain

Steve Aho adds:

It was a beautiful winding narrow silver ribbon of pure water ice! Steepest right in the middle, and about 75* and 20 to 30 feet high at the shrund. the bergshrund gets higher the further right you go. We went for it to add a little spice to the climb. You can mostly avoid the shrund by climbing directly below the couloir staying left. We crossed about 60' right of that point. In many places you could clearly see the rock several inches below the ice, like looking through a lens.

I really enjoyed the climb and recommend it! Also, the Harrington couloir is in perfect shape - highly recommend!! Ice

all the way to the top! Eric Burt, Matt Morrison and I climbed it 2 weeks before Chris and I did the Knudtson.

We started hiking from South Lake at 4:30am. Mt. Gilbert was looking very thin (completely bare in the middle). I wasn't feeling great, and though it looked like it would go, I was reluctant to commit. Harrington couloir on Thompson was looking good, so I lobbied for that. 900' WI2 to WI3. I let Eric and Matt lead most of it. We had started late, and due to conditions, the pitches were going too slow. I was getting anxious near the end and cruised the last 70* pitch w/ only one screw; getting everyone up at 5:30p! Decided to go for the summit and down the notorious 3rd class N ridge. But this exactly go fast either. We summited at 6:45p. By the time we got our helmets, head lights and harnesses on it was 7 and getting dark fast! But we went for it and took our time finding the right way. No moon, fading light in the west, and an inky black abyss to the east. The tiny sliver of a moon was busy chasing the sun down into the ocean. But we found a way 3rd class. Did one rap at a spot we weren't sure about, and made it back to the car at 2:30p. 22hrs. Personal longest day record for each of us.

I have pics and beta for this area. Email if you would like info. The Smrz couloir is a rock climb. The Moynier couloir didn't look too good from what we could see. 2 guys from Pasadena climbed the Gilbert couloir the same day Chris and I were on Thompson. Their truck was gone when we got back, so I guess they made it.

Southern Sierra in Fall

October 17-18, 2003

On Friday, October 17, my climbing partner, Judy Molland, and I drove up to Big Meadow in the Southern Sierra. The route was easy to follow as we took 155 to Kernville, then Mtn. Route 99 to the Sherman Pass road and finally got on the Cherry Hill road, which leads to Big Meadow. The Cherry Hill Road is paved at first but deteriorates to a very wash-boarded surface as it continues to wind its way through the Southern Sierra. We drove onto the south fork of the Big Meadow road and arrived at Big Meadow trail 34E15 at about 2:30 in the afternoon. We set off to climb Taylor Dome by 3. The trail is a rather faint, but negotiable, one which is very well described in J.C. Jenkins book, Exploring the Southern Sierra: East Side. After a brief stroll on the trail we reached a small pass and saw the striking twin summits of Taylor Dome to the East. We left the trail at a boulder-heap near the trail and traversed along the south side of the ridge to the base of Taylor Dome. From here it is a simple ascent up a sandy and Manzanita ridden hillside to the summit. The summit is an easy, but exposed, 30-foot section of 3rd class rock. The view from the summit is quite nice with far reaching panoramic view. We spent quite a while on top reading the register, which dated back to 1962, and enjoying the surroundings. We then went back down towards the trail with hopes of being back at the car to enjoy dinner before it got too dark. Unfortunately it didn't work out quite so well. The faint trail turned invisible and in the Domelands there are quite a few boulder-heaps. We wandered around for some time until we found a trail. After following this trail for about half an hour we decided that, although this trail was going the right way, it was most definitely not the trail we wanted. In fact it wasn't even a trail that was on our map. By this time it was getting dark and although we probably could have gone x-c back to the car we decided that instead of running the risk of getting totally lost we'd just follow this trail around. Luckily we were prepared with jackets and headlamps so the dark didn't present much of a threat. After a short walk we found a sign that lead us to Manter Meadow and then back to the cars via a very large loop.

Finally after walking through the dark for two hours we returned to the car a bit tired and quite hungry. We decided to call it a night and hit the hay.

We got up to a very cold Saturday morning and frigidly got prepared for this days adventure. Because I stupidly left my camelback at home, one camelback and one bottle would not be enough water for a 12+-mile hike to Rockhouse Peak, our intended goal. We instead decided to go up Sirretta Peak, which is less than 8 miles round trip. We left by mid morning and followed the Cannell trail (33E32) for about half a mile until it forked. The Cannell trail is a popular dirt bike and motorcycle route that goes to Cannell and Mosquito meadow. This part of the trail has been obviously reinforced with cinder blocks to prevent erosion. Unfortunately it takes away greatly from the aesthetic value of the surrounding and the sound of motorcycles engines is not what one usually assimilates with a peaceful trail. Fortunately after half a mile we broke off onto the Sirretta trail (34E12), where motorcycles are not allowed and peace is once again restored. We followed the trail as it gradually worked its way up to Sirretta Pass. Near the top of the Pass there is a very well ducted route that goes around the backside of Sirretta Peak and then follows a plateau to the summit blocks. However it is not necessary to go this route to the summit as one can go up the eastern slopes of the mountain and reach the summit much quicker. We did this and reached the peak in a little over two hours from the trailhead. The views from the top are quite spectacular since Sirretta is the highest peak for quite a ways around. We sat on top for rather a long while and marveled our surroundings and at the three feet high by three feet wide cairn that stands on top of the peak. After enjoying our lunch we went back down through the Chinquapin and Manzanita that litter the eastern side of Sirretta. This time we found the trail and hiked out by 2. After returning we meandered around Big Meadow for a while enjoying what had turned out to be a beautiful day. Soon though we drove out and went home after an interesting, but very enjoyable trip to the Southern Sierra.

• Will MollandSimms

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.

Telescope Peak

Peak: Death Valley/Telescope Peak
Date: November 7-9, 2003 (Fri-Sun)
Difficulty: Class 1-2
Leader: Jeff Fisher , han1cannae@msn.com, (650) 364-5065
Co-leader: Wanted

We can reach the summit 2 ways 1) from the valley (-250 ft) to the peak (11,050 ft) and out to Mahogany flat, 22 miles or 2) from Mahogany Flat at 7,600 ft (14 mile round trip). We could arrive early to check out other parts of the Valley. Co-listed with the Day Hikers and the singles.

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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 11/23/2003. 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