



September, 2003

Peak Climbing Section, Loma Prieta Chapter, Sierra Club

Vol. 37 No. 9

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

Next General Meeting

Date: Tuesday, September 9
Time: 7:30 PM
Program: Denali: Climbing the West Buttress

A slide show, presented by Gautam Patil

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 9/28/2003 Meetings are the 2nd Tuesday of each month.

Wilderness First Aid

To help trip leaders and would-be leaders get the required First Aid certificate, the Chapter sponsors an 8 hr First Aid class each quarter, based on a nationally recognized first aid text, but with added material and emphasis on wilderness situations with no phone to dial 911. The next First Aid classes will be Saturday, Sept 13 and Sunday, Sept 14 at the Peninsula Conservation Center in Palo Alto (from Bayshore/Hwy. 101 at San Antonio, turn toward the Bay; turn left at 1st stoplight, then right at Corporation Way to park behind PCC). Class is 8:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. (1 hour for your bag lunch) and is limited to 12 people. To sign up, call Health Education Services, 650-321-6500, reserve a spot for Sat. or Sun., and authorize a \$45 charge on your credit card—or promise to bring \$45 in cash to class. Cancellations 48 hours in advance without penalty or if a substitute attends. For more information, call 650-321-6500.

Please forward if needed and notify Marg at 408-867-4576

• Marg Ottenberg

Ski Cabin Membership.

A-frame cabin in Tahoe Northwoods development (above Truckee) with 8 beds has an opening this year for one or two more members. Our small (7 members) group has been together for years and are all serious skiers. Our cabin is a cozy retreat with immediate access to XC skiing and near all major downhill resorts in the N. Tahoe area. The driveway is huge, and our location is directly off a road that is ALWAYS plowed. Contact Tim Hult if you are interested - 408-970-0760

Ask Bôté Ânchouré

Mountaineering Q&A from the famous French Alpinist.

Bote Anchour, the famous climber, was, till recently, climbing in the Towers of Tikrit, a region in Iraq. He was there at the behest of his old buddy from the Khyber Pass, Taliban Tony and the well-known metrosexual climber, Yoga Matt.

They climbed several routes but were unable to find the famous route "WMD" ("Women of Much Deduction"). "It is still there, I tell you, I triple guarantee it" was what the ex-information minister for climbing affairs had told them, when they had initially set out. There were many skepticisms from the rest of the Kabul Klymbing Klubb and other hoary climbing world bodies but Bote, Yoga and Tony had gone in regardless. Now, back and relaxing at his summer home in Shorty's Well, Death Valley, Bote sends his insulting answers to stupid questions from the usual crowd of clueless climbing clowns.

Dear Bote:

I have heard so much about rap rings. Where does one get them? And what are they? I have tried many avenues. I went to World Wrapps but they did not have it, although their exotic Burkina-Faso wrap was mean. I tried to ask the rap moguls, Suge Knight, Suge Pyll, Suge Daddy and even Puff Daddy but their bodyguards thought that I was after their jewelry and I barely escaped a Sixpac Shakur like assassination attempt. I am a gym climber and I want to buy more gear. Please advise.

GoodLawd of the Rings, MiddleEarth, Florida

Dear Ringworm,

You need to be put into the wringer, you gym climber. I hear a dead ringer asking me these questions. Rap rings are slang for 'rapelling rings'. They are made of sturdy metal. You put two of them on slings when you have to bail off or get down a route by rappelling. You then pass your rope through this twin ring combo. This makes rope retrieval easier and prevents further wear on the existing slings. You don't seem to have much alpine climbing experience, you bolt clipper. I would be happy to sell you some rap rings, so send me your request on several 100 dinar notes and bother me no more.

Dear Bote:

I live in the flatlands of Ohio near Cleveland and thus have little opportunity for "real" climbing. Recently whilst practicing my big wall ascender technique on a nearby high voltage transmission line I was electrocuted nearly half to death. Can you suggest alternative climbing outlets for someone living in the Midwest?

Sincerely, Shocked in Shaker Heights

Dear AC-DC,

Since you live in the Midwest, there are very few climbing options. You are stuck with climbing power transmission poles, pylons, transformers etc. In short, HVAC forms a large part of your climbing life. I have two pieces of advice for you.

1. Make sure you climb with enough rubber, Lycra and spandex covering you. You might look ugly in spandex but hey, you might live. Make sure that all your metal piercings are insulated as well. Insulated nipple rings make great alternates for rap rings. Also put some chalk on your nuts. I don't know what chalking does but I always give this advice.

2. Make a will and donate all your climbing gear to Taliban Tony of the Kabul Klymbing Klubb or Burkha Betty of the Bagdad Bouldering Badasses just in case you are unable to deal with a dose of several mega-volts.

Say, were you the one that while climbing on some HVAC gear caused a short and thus blew out the grid of the eastern seaboard and Canada, just a few days ago?

Yet one more reason, like Bote, to get off the grid, dude.

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.

Conness

Peak: Mt Conness (12590 ft), East Ridge, class-3
Dates: Sunday, Sept 7th, 2003
Maps: Tioga Pass (7.5 min), Tuolumne Meadows
Leader: Arun Mahajan, arun.mahajan@att.net,(650)327-8598

Start on Sunday morning from Saddlebag Lake to dayhike one of the most striking peaks of the Yosemite high country by the east ridge. This route is mostly class-2 with some class-3 sections. We will stay below the crest of the east ridge to skirt the class-4 (and harder sections).

It is recommended that you drive up on Saturday evening to be ready in time for an early start on Sunday morning.

Meet in front of the boathouse from where the ferry departs, at Saddlebag Lake at 7.15am. Note that we will not be taking the ferry.

Graveyard

Peaks: Graveyard Peak (11,494')
Dates: Sat. Sept. 13 to Sun. Sept. 14, 2003
Difficulty: Class 3
Leader: Kelly Maas 408-378-5311, kellylanda@sbcglobal.net

From Lake Thomas A. Edison it's a short hike to camp at Devil's Bathtub before we climb this Silver Divide peak. The names may sound scary, but the climbing isn't. The peak is primarily class 2, and any class 3 sections are relatively short and easy. Enjoy the onset of autumn in the mountains. Co-leader wanted.

Recess Peak

Peak: Recess Peak (12,813, Class 3)
Date: September 20-21, 2003 (Sat-Sun)
Maps: 7.5' Abbot, Hilgard, Florence Lake
Leader: Pat Callery (haishan1@yahoo.com)

In the deepest recesses of the Mono Recesses lies a peak named, Recess Peak. We will approach this mountain from the west, up beautiful Bear Creek, and tackle its exquisite class 3 southwest ridge. Join us for this late summer adventure in the heart of the Sierra.

Marion & State

Peaks: Two remote and rarely visited peaks:
Dates: Thur - Mon, Sept 25 - Sept 29
Leader: Charles Schafer, c_g_schafer@yahoo.com, Home Phone (408) 354-1545

Cell Phone (408) 829-0381

Co-leader: Bob Evans, robtevans@msn.com,
Week days: (408) 998-2857

Thur 9/25: From Road's End in King's Cnyn (about 5,000 ft), up Copper Creek Trail to Granite Creek (11 mi, 10,080 ft)

Fri 9/26: About 10 mi. and 2,100 ft. el. gain to highest State Lk (10,960)

Sat 9/27: State Pk (12,620) by N.W. chute (cl. 2); then a 3 mile traverse to Marion (12,719), on E. side of ridge (cl. 2).

Sun & Mon. 9/28-29: Out. Pleasant disposition while suffering required.

Post and Isberg Peaks

Peaks: Post Peak (11,009') and Isberg Peak (10,996')
Dates: Fri. Sept. 26 to Sun. Sept. 28, 2003
Difficulty: Class 1-2
Leader: Kelly Maas 408-378-5311, kellylanda@sbcglobal.net

We will approach these easy but seldom bagged southern Yosemite peaks from the south. The approach may be more than 10 miles, but we'll enjoy the wonderful light and crisp air that characterizes September in the Sierra. Beginners welcome. Co-leader wanted.

Mt Goethe

Peaks: Mt Goethe (13,264') via North East Ridge, Class 3 with exposure
Dates: September 27-28
Trailhead: North Lake
Map: 7.5 min Mt Darwin
Leader: Dee Booth rdbooth@att.net (408) 354 7291
Stephane Mouradian smouradian@hotmail.com (650) 551-0392

This 2 day trip will use the more challenging (read enjoyable) route up Goethe. From Goethe Lake, we will ascend to Alpine Col and follow a knife-edge ridge to the summit. Expect some exposure and Class 3.

Day 1 will be 7.5 miles and 2200' from North Lake to camp. Day 2 should be just under a 12 hour day including a 6 hour round trip to the summit and hike out to North Lake.

We have a permit for 8 people with solid class 3 experience. Contact Dee Booth to sign up.

Virginia

Peaks: Virginia Peak (12,001')
Dates: Sat. Oct. 11 to Sun. Oct. 12, 2003
Difficulty: Class 3
Leader: Kelly Maas 408-378-5311, kellylanda@sbcglobal.net

This is a repeat of a trip Gary Pinson led 13 years ago. "Climb Virginia Peak and four or five class 2 peaks! Spent the summer by the pool? If you're an efficient, conditioned alpinist, willing to rise early and hike late, you can redeem your reputation in one easy weekend." Co-leader accepted.

Independence and University

Peaks: University Peak(13,589 ft) cl 2 Independence Peak(11,742 ft) class 3
Dates: Oct 18-19
Maps: Mt Pinchot & Mt Whitney 15 min; or Kearsarge Pk & Mt Williamson 7.5 min
Leaders: Ron Karpel; ronny@karpel.org
Nancy Fitzsimmons; Pkclimber@aol.com

The weather cools, the days shorten, and the end of another climbing draws closer. Come join us and add these peaks to your season's total, without having to drag your backpacking gear anywhere. Saturday we will day hike University, Sunday we will day hike Independence. Potential warm-up on Kearsarge Peak on Friday and maybe finish with Dragon on Monday.

The Long and Short of It

A Fall on Mt Dade

July 20, 2003

Some stories are worth sharing for the value that others can draw from your mistakes. So it is with this one.

On July 20, 2003, Christine Desrosier, Kelly Maas and myself set off from treasure lakes to climb Mt. Dade via "The Hourglass" Couloir. Last year's heavy late seasons snows have all but melted in most of the high peaks, and so this couloir has melted back a great deal from top of the col leaving a still definitive, but diminished hourglass shape perhaps 600 - 700 ft long and 100 feet wide ascending Mt. Dade at approximately 40 degrees.

That weekend marked the arrival of the monsoon season in the Sierras with moisture spinning off a minor Hurricane in the Gulf of Mexico causing afternoon thunderstorms. We knew we would have to get up and off the mountain early to beat the rain. Even though we arrived at the bottom of the couloir at 8 am the snow was already getting soggy. Our crampons bit in well, but I noticed some balling up of snow as we zig zagged out way up the slope roped to give Christine an added bit of confidence on unfamiliar ground of steep snow. On reaching the col, Christine elected not to go on, while Kelly and I dashed for the top in fine weather. What fun! The views were terrific and the 2-3rd class boulder hopping was exhilarating.

We returned to the col about 12 pm, strapped on crampons and began our decent. It quickly became apparent that Christine was completely gripped by the steepness of the slope and the long run out with rocks below. Though she had had ice axe practice, and done several big peaks - the latest being in the French Alps 4 weeks before - the fear factor got the best of her. We had a 20m long 8mm rope, harnesses and ice axes. Using the rope and good technique, I put her on a short leash of approximately 10 - 15 feet as we simul-climbed down the couloir together. By now, the sun baked snow was VERY soft and every step meant a load of snow 8 inches thick balling up in my crampons. Most of the time I was able to stomp it off, but sometimes it needed to be whacked off with the ice axe. While I never fell during this maneuver, Christine took numerous tumbles, all of which I caught without trouble. To ease Christine's fear Kelly, climbing unroped, demonstrated the ease with which one could self-arrest. Trouble is, it turned out not to be so easy to arrest in the soft snow. While he did stop, I noted it took him some distance.

No sooner had this little demonstration stopped than Christine fell again, and ended up on her rear with Crampons off the snow, ice axe out, but stopped. I took two steps down the hill to adjust the rope and found the crampons loaded with snow made a perfect sled. Down I went for the first time that day. I immediately rolled onto my stomach and stuck the axe pick in. It slipped through the snow like a knife through mashed potatoes; some resistance, but not enough.

I was almost at a standstill when my weight hit Christine, who had not taken the proper stance to catch my fall. I pulled her off and we began a seesaw tumble down the hill. I continued to try to self arrest, but with her sitting on her rear, the momentum was too much and several times I was pulled end over end, wrapping the rope around my pack which in turn caused a mechanical moment that rolled me onto my back - exactly where I didn't want to be. Every time I thought I had a handle on the situation, and we began to slow, I would get jerked up again. At one point Kelly said I was actually standing for brief moment before being pulled over again. It was a bit like stepping on the car break and nothing happens: you know what to do, you're doing it, and it doesn't

work. You're left wondering why. With a long run out, and a gentle slope before the rocks I wasn't worried about getting hurt that way, but more concerned about snapping a leg when a crampon caught, or getting stabbed by Christine's crampons or ice ax. At one point I looked up to see her headed straight for me - I rolled out of the way, once again having to give up a good self-arrest stance.

There's tons of run out and eventually the slope slackens. It was in this shallower (30 degree?) zone that she finally hit a small depression and came to a stop on her back and head down. I had a pick in and the combination stopped both of us after about 200 feet of a quick decent. I had no injuries except to pride, but Christine picked up a nasty gash on her leg from either a crampon or axe. No major damage.

The lesson? A short rope is fine going up in strong well consolidated snow, but for going down with wet, sloppy snow, and a gripped partner, it would be best to set at least a boot axe belay and lower them to the end of the rope, then climb down yourself. This method would have left much more room for me to stop myself in the soft snow before my weight pulled her off. Don't expect that inexperienced climbers will be able to do the right thing - if they don't appear to be able to handle the situation lower down, they won't be able to higher up.

• *Tim Hult*

T2 or

"Hasta La Vista Baby!"

Tenaya Peak, Tioga Peak

August 9/10, 2003)

So many peaks, so little time. From our summit view, a panorama of Yosemite's high country beckoned us to hurryhurry and climb each and every high peak. All agreed that the best part of both climbs, Tenaya on Saturday and Tioga on Sunday, was the incredibly awesome and perfectly unbroken views from the top. From Tenaya's summit, we saw Matthes Crest, magnificent Tenaya Canyon, Mt Lyell and its glacier, Hoffman and Tuolumne Peak. From Tioga's top, we had a direct view of the Dana Couloir and Dana Plateau, Conness, North Peak, Shepard's Crest, Virginia Peak, and the White Mountain Range.

The camaraderie present was savored by all and most enjoyed the lively repartee and joke-telling at stops along the route. As a matter of fact, one peak climber commented that his favorite part was the 'Hare Joke' at the top of Tioga Peak (first introduced by Dot Reilly and told by Debbie Benham). Another summarized the climbing weekend as, "It's really all about the vegetables...!" Other hikers were delighted with the delectable appetizers or "five o'clock follies" which included my personal favorite, Tapenade. One group was late for happy hour because they went swimming in Tenaya Lake! Roger, Allen, and Lynne agreed that the swim in the clear, cold water refreshed and revived their tired bodies.

Flora and wildlife were plentiful. Chris MacIntosh provides this list: (1) Tenaya Peak birds: black backed woodpecker (rarely seen), yellow rumped warbler, mountain chickadee, Clarks nutcracker, red tailed hawk. Tenaya Peak flowers included tiger lily sp., Lewis? and seep monkeyflowers, white mariposa lily, cinquefoil, yarrow, golden triteleia, spiraea. (2) On Tioga Peak, in the meadows around Gardisky Lake, w. blue flag iris, wild onion, elephanthead, a couple of species of

buckwheat, and many low alpine, such as a small catchfly, hiker's gentian, and a downy-leaved lupine. White crowned sparrows and American pipits made use of the creek flowing through.

One word of warning: a bear ripped Michael's duffel bag in their search for food. We were all surprised that the curious bear didn't take the bestseller book, "Absolute American: Four Years at West Point." He only jabbed it with his claws.

Many thanks to all who came and made the trip so marvelous. Kudos to Elizabeth who climbed a high point, Tioga Peak.

Participants: Debbie Benham and Chris MacIntosh (leaders and scribes); Leo Alaniz; Roger Dettloff; Tom Driscoll; Nancy Fitzsimmons; Allen Hu; Lynne Pedersen; Nick Pilch; Chris Prendergast; Dot Reilly; Tina Schiffman; Laura Sefchek; Linda Sun and Harry Xue; John Wilkinson; Elizabeth Wilson; and Michael Wong.

• *Debbie Benham*

The Cockscomb

11040 ft

August 10, 2003

Within a couple of hours of having started from the Cathedral Lakes trailhead in Tuolumne Meadows, we were at Budd Lake. We circled the lake from the left and after a short scramble over slabs (some class-3) were on the top of a ridge. We traversed south and then angled east climbing upwards toward the ridge that connects the Cockscomb to the broad fin of Echo Ridge. Again, there were some sections of class-3 before reaching the ridge. After a short walk on the brush covered slope we were at the base of the summit towers of the Cockscomb. Class-3 scrambling over blocky terrain got us to the obvious notch on the north-west. We put on our harnesses and helmets here but did not feel the need to rope up just yet. Staying right of the knife edge and using a finger traverse, we were on a broad ledge. Facing us was a wall with a couple of crack systems. We circled this wall from the right. The route is not obvious but it is there. Circling around, with exposure to the right and at our backs, we came to two small towers. We continued climbing to the left tower, still unroped. The right tower seemed to be of equal height or maybe a little higher and had a small sling. So, we climbed it also. We used rope for this short, mid fifth class block. The short sling at the top went through a piton. From the notch between the two towers, the tower with the sling is short and easy to protect although the summit fin is so small and thin that it is hard to stand upon.

On the way down from the summit slopes we choose a different way down to Budd Lake and ended up making a few hard class-3 moves to eventually get down. This was a seven hour day for us.

The Cockscomb has a spectacular summit and offers moderate technical climbing and also great views of the startling Matthes Crest. We all liked the route on the Cockscomb so much that we decided to come back for another go, maybe with a few more of our friends.

The climbers: Ron Karpel, Scott Kreider and scribe, Arun Mahajan.

A few outstanding photographs taken during the climb by Ron Karpel are here:

<http://www.karpel.org/Ron/Pictures/cockscmb-trip.html>

• *Arun Mahajan*

The Incredible Hulk, Red Dihedral Route

August 9/10/11 2003

The Red Dihedral or Ygdrasil Route on the Incredible Hulk is one of what Peter Croft calls the "Big Four", the others being Dark Star on Temple Crag, the Harding Route on Mt Conness, and the Harding Route on Keeler Needle. Harding got around. These routes are not the hardest routes in the Sierras but they are all at least 5.10, long, and located in interesting and picturesque areas.

Rounding up partners for backcountry rock climbing routes is problematic. All of the climbers I know pretty much fall into two camps. They are either mountaineers with only a modest interest in technical routes or they are die hard crag rats, only interested in a short stroll to a rock climbing route. Since a reasonably difficult backcountry route requires solid rock climbing skills the attempts to find climbing partners has been mostly confined to the group of rock climbing friends. There are two extreme responses to suggestions for this kind of project from this group. The first response is something like this:

"I am thinking of going in to climb the Jingus Direct on Mt Wahoopadu. Is that any kind of trip you might be interested in?"

"Climbing that stuff is for the terminally dumb."

End of conversation. At least it is quick and to the point. The second type of response goes like this:

"I am thinking of going in to climb the Jingus Direct on Mt Wahoopadu. Is that any kind of trip you might be interested in?"

"Dude! I saw a picture of that route in the climbing magazine and it is so cool looking! I am so there! When do we start?"

"Well, ah, ok. You know we have to hike in about eight miles, up 4000 feet, and camp at 12000 feet for a few nights."

"No problem, dude. I camp at Joshua Tree all the time and my grandfather took me back packing once. Just give me a list of what I need to bring."

Uh, oh.

"Ah, ok, your pack is going to weigh about fifty pounds. We have to bring in food, sleeping bag, and a couple of ropes"

"Ok, I am still there, dude! Fifty pounds, huh? What does that feel like?"

"Kinda heavy. We also have to be prepared for rain so we have to get up early, like when it is cold and dark, and be ready to move at first light."

"Really? You mean this could take all day? Man, I don't know. Are you sure?"

"Yep. And pulling 5.10 at 14000 feet isn't quite the same as at 4000 feet at Josh. There isn't any air up there."

"Aaaahhhhhh....I just happened to remember I might have a date for the Owens Gorge with some chick who can crank 5.12 in the gym that weekend. Let me get back to you on this...."

That is about it. I am fortunate that my wife Dee is interested in these kinds of projects and has been my partner on many trips. I am also fortunate to have a small group of friends who are both capable and enthusiastic about alpine routes. For the Red Dihedral trip this consisted of Alexey Zelditch, a quick

learning and very talented rock climber, Jim Curl, whom I have teamed up with for several other projects, and my oldest rock climbing pal for many, many years, Allan Peery, who had not been back packing in twenty years but for some unfathomable reason just had to climb the Red Dihedral.

We headed out of the Twin Lakes parking lot about 1 PM on Saturday, August 9. We were anticipating a fairly short hike into the base of the route where we were going to bivvy. The first part of the hike is fast on the flat Barney Lake trail. After a couple of miles we were supposed to leave the trail and cross a bog and then head up Little Slide Canyon. Based on some information at the SuperTopo web site we thought we could leave the trail early and head up around the corner into Little Slide Canyon. Alexey and I tried this. We were separated from Al and Jim in the bog and managed to thrash our way through the bog and over to the other side. This required wading through a bunch of water with our sandals on. On the other side of Robinson Creek we were forced up higher and higher due to the bushwhacking. It was awful. We ended up having to contour around for a long ways before dropping into Little Slide Canyon. We had left the main trail far too early. It turns out the standard cutoff near the Toyabe-Hoover Wilderness sign is fairly dry this late in the season and Jim Curl found a separate crossing, marked by a cairn under a pine tree near the trail, that is also dry and heads up the hill on the opposite bank to join the main trail. In any case, we eventually all ended up at the bivvy area, which is below Maltby Lake and right at the end of the talus fan at the base of The Incredible Hulk. There is a small stream flowing through this area, which seems to be coming off the snowfields up higher. It is not part of the Maltby Lake outlet.

We agreed to get up at about 6:00 AM to get going. About 5:30 AM I started hearing a lot of sniffing, snuffling, and schnarfeling down around the foot end of my bivvy bag. In the gray area between sleep and wakefulness I evaluated the options: bear, marmot, gang of squirrels, or possibly even an off route beaver from the bogs at the entrance to Little Slide Canyon. I popped straight away awake and sat up. It was the dog from the campsite just up from us. The dog took one look at me and leapt forward and planted a huge kiss square on my face. The dog backed up, tail wagging ferociously and eyed me intently, no doubt overjoyed at the thought that there might be someone to play with. Well, that wasn't me and the dog lost interest and wandered off. For the life of me I have no idea what in doggie consciousness was so interesting about that corner of my bivvy bag. About 7:30 we headed up the talus.

The route starts at the end of a third class ramp. Jim and Al started climbing about 9 AM and Alexey and I started up around 9:30. The first pitch is easy 5.7 or 5.8. The second and third pitches were linked and went about 200 feet long at 5.9 with some scary sections with minimal pro. The crux Red Dihedral pitch is the fourth pitch. This is about 100 feet of nonstop no rest 5.9 hand jamming up to the crux. Fortunately, there is a rest before the crux, which is created by chimneying with your back to the right side of the dihedral. The crux itself requires a couple of finger locks and a move up and to the right to the belay. The belay has some loose blocks. The rest of the route pretty much heads straight up. Pitches 5 and 6 were linked. Pitch seven has a nice hand crack on it, which is much shorter than the dihedral below. Pitches 8 through 10 were linked in two pitches. We got lost somewhere up there and had to move back to the right. Pitch 10 ends in the notch on the ridgeline. From this notch it is a third class stroll to the south (right) over to the base of an ugly 5.8 crack system. Fortunately this is short but ends at a dirt covered ledge which leads to the last pitch up a short and loose 5.6 chimney with a "squeeze hole" at the top. The exit from the hole

is a belly flop. I lead this pitch and belayed Alexey up through the hole. Once he had squeezed his way through the hole we both looked at each other and said the same thing. "How on earth did Big Al get through that hole?" It was good for a laugh. The summit is a short third class stroll from the squeeze hole.

The descent starts by heading east away from the main West Face for about 20 feet and then heading south. This is fairly steep and loose third class down climbing. This gets to a rappel station above the couloir that cuts the South Ridge. The reference guide from SuperTopo indicated a 60 meter rope can be used to rappel into the couloir but it sure looks improbable. Maybe a 600 meter rope but not 60. Anyway, 60 meters does, in fact, work fine and we were soon in the scree filled couloir. The descent down the couloir is straightforward except for one point where it heads to the left through an improbable looking slot. This drops into the main couloir and down to the base of the route where we had stashed our shoes. After that it was the usual scree and talus thrash back to camp. Al and Jim spent about eight and a half hours on the route and Alexey and I took about nine and a half hours. We hiked out the next day in the morning and avoided just about all of the thrashing we had encountered on the way in. This time of year the bog near the beaver dams is shallow enough that it is not a very big problem.

We did this route in 9 pitches, linking as many pitches as was reasonable with 60 meter ropes. The last pitch up the ugly 5.8 crack and chimney was broken into two pitches because of the rope drag. There were six pitches of 5.9 or harder, two of about 5.8, and one (the last) which was about 5.6. With the exception of the Red Dihedral itself there are no long sustained sections but there is quite a bit of 5.9 climbing and several of the pitches went a full 200 feet. We took a double rack of cams from the smallest Alien up to the #2 Camalot plus one #4 Friend (or #3 Camalot) that is useful at the belay at the end of the Red Dihedral itself. We went with triple cams in the hand sizes. For a big scary cat like me that allowed for one piece about every 8 to 12 feet in the dihedral. A set of stoppers is handy up to the big ones. A large "God stopper" (you know, the one at the bottom that is supposed to hold when everything above fails so you don't see God) can be placed at the bottom of the Red Dihedral from the top of the little tower at the base of the crack. A bomber smallish stopper, along with a green Alien, can be placed at the top of the Dihedral to protect the finger locking. Further up, the bottom of the 5.9/10a hand crack can be protected with two solid smallish stoppers. A couple of long slings were also handy.

This is a great route in nice area. There is a lot of other rock climbing in this area so it is possible to make many trips to this region. Thanks to Al Peery and Jim Curl for coming on this trip. Special thanks to Alexey Zelditch for partnering with me on the route and putting up with my concerns about finishing the route before dark. The weather was fabulous and not as windy as expected. Our only regret was not bringing enough beer!

Final Notes:

Probably the hardest part of this route is figuring out how to get into Little Slide Canyon. Alexey and I left the main Barney Lake trail far too early and ended up contouring around and hit the cliff band part way up Little Slide Canyon up high and to the east. This meant we took the high scree trail through the cliff bands as indicated by SuperTopo. This is easy but dropped us into a flat willow choked area which we had to skirt around on the outside as best as possible and then thrash through some of the willows. After this thrash it was a little up hill to the bivvy spots at the base of the talus fan. There are two ways

to cross Robinson Creek. The first is the "standard" way. Go to the Toyabe-Hoover Wilderness Sign and turn left. This is dry for a while but turns into a bog with various beaver dams (rock on, beavers) here and there. The bog can be traversed on fallen logs and a circuitous trail. The crossing of Robinson Creek can be done on a small log or wading through a shallow section. On the other side there is a well defined switch back trail leading up through the forest. Jim Curl went a slightly different way. He used the trail marked by the cairn under the tree, which is about 100 yards before the wilderness sign. This is essentially a second option for avoiding the bogs and crossing Robinson Creek. This second option crosses Robinson Creek and goes up hill for a ways and then heads west to join the normal trail. Further up the canyon there are two options. The trail is indicated as heading up through a gap in the cliff band. This is supposedly third class in some sections. Al, Alexey, and I came down through there and it works fairly well. Jim went up and came down the outlet from Maltby Lake, which is the scree and talus to the right (west) of the cliff band and reports that this is straightforward also. In any case, there are at least two decent options for getting in and up Little Slide Canyon without the need for bushwhacking in from about Tonopah, NV like Alexey and I did.

• *Rick Booth*

References:

Bridgeport Ranger Station: (760) 932-7070 for permits.

www.supertopo.com This web site has a free topo of the Red Dihedral Route. In addition, there is a message board for more information on the route and its access. This topo is quite accurate and has both pitch linking and gear suggestions.

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

The Good, the Great, and the Awesome, Peter Croft, Maximus Press, 2002, ISBN 0-9676116-4-4

Good photo of the route and a pretty good topo of the linked route. Nice photo of a climber heading up to the base of the "splitter crack".

Bear Creek Spire

Saturday August 9, 2003

Twenty nine years after making my first ascent of this spectacular mountain, I finally returned to make my second ascent. This time, instead of following the easy route from Dade Lake, we did the "classic" Northeast Ridge first climbed by Norman Clyde in 1932. My climbing partner was Gabe Amador.

From the parking lot, it took us only about 2.5 hours to reach Treasure Lakes. After a quick lunch, we dropped our packs at one of the lakes, and headed up towards the mountain. Eventually we reached the lower part of the ridge at about 2:00 in the afternoon. Until about 300-400 feet from the top, the climbing on the ridge was not harder than class 3. The class 3 climbing ends at a particularly steep section. We uncoiled our rope here. After the steep section there is a little more class 3, and then it gets steep again just below the summit rocks. The final section seemed to be pretty sustained and rather exposed class 4 climbing. There are many route possibilities here. Eventually we reached the top at about 6:00.

After a short rappel (there are rappel slings), we hiked down to Cox Col (follow use-trail). Below Cox Col we encountered some hard snow where we used our ice axes. We eventually made it back to Treasure Lakes just as it got dark. The following morning we hiked out.

The only gear we used on this climb was a 120-foot 9mm rope, some slings, and ice axes (for the descent). I brought along a few nuts, but never used them.

Incidentally my first ascent of Bear Creek Spire was on a joint RCS-PCS trip that included Bill Hooker, Margaret Young, Vera Watson, and Steve Brewer. All except Steve are no longer with us. Margaret died from cancer over 20 years ago; Bill died in an avalanche on Mt. Huandoy in Peru a few months after the climb; and Vera died while attempting Annapurna.

• *George Sinclair*

Mt. Stanford (South)

East Face

August 8 - 10, 2003

Participants: Charles Schafer, Bob Evans, Jeff West, Dee Booth (author)

We all carpooled together and arrived at the Onion Valley trailhead at about 8:00 am. By 8:30 am we were walking up the trail to Kearsarge Pass. Our route took us along both sides of the Kearsarge Pinnacles, through Vidette Meadows and up to Wheel Barrow Camp at about 11,200 feet, on the west side of the JMT, in the last grove of small trees, just below Forrester Pass. It is about 11 miles in and we arrived there at 6:00 pm.

This is a lovely, large meadow with a stream meandering through it. Apparently the bears consider it idyllic also since we were visited by one at about 10:00 pm. It rattled some pots and, in return, we threw rocks. Grudgingly, it left.

The next morning at 7:00 am we left camp and walked south up a low angle hill onto the moraine just below a rock structure that resembles a nuclear reactor. An error in reading the map had us staring perplexed at what was not Mt. Stanford trying to determine where the east arete was. Charles figured out that Mt. Stanford was really west of where we were across an undulating boulder field and up to another moraine. At 9:00 am we were heading up the broad chute or face south of the east arete as described in Secor's guide.

At the bottom the route is primarily loose talus and sand with some areas of solid rock, closer to the top the rock is more solid and the climbing quite enjoyable. The chute is very wide so most routes up it go well until you approach the top where the chute subdivides into two gullies. We had to move in to the left gully when the climbing appeared to exceed third class.

A few hundred feet below the summit we crossed a sandy slope and over to the north side of the east arete and continued up. At 2:25 pm we reached the summit which affords a nice view of Milestone, Midway, Table and Thunder to the southwest and the Palisades on the northern skyline. Surprisingly, we were the first party to sign the register in 2003.

On the return trip we did not cross the moraine as we had on the way in. Bob suggested we take a gully running north from the base of the chute and follow the ridge east back to where we could easily walk back down to the meadow. Walking in the snow filled gully was easier than walking on the moraine. This is a good route to take on the way in as well since it avoids crossing the boulder field and moraine.

On the way out we met two rangers who inquired about bear activity. Bears are a big problem in this area so if you go, take a bear canister.

• *Dee Booth*

Afoot On Abbot

August 15, 2003

On the night of Friday August 15, 2003, I drove up to the Mosquito Flat trailhead from the San Fernando Valley. I set up my bivy in the back of my vehicle and, as is my habit, I did little reading before going to sleep. I had brought my most recent copy of *Rock and Ice* which had the story of Aron Ralston. He was the guy who was hiking solo in the Canyonlands when scrambling around an 800 pound boulder it rotated loose and pinned his hand. Although his hand went numb within an hour I could not imagine what he had to go through for three days until he made his fateful decision to free himself by amputating his arm.

I awoke Saturday morning to find my partner, Thomas Johansson, parked a few spaces away getting his gear together. Tom and I had met previously in May on an SPS climb of Olancho. We tentatively made plans to do a trip in August. We decided on Abbot and Dade.

The hike up Abbot is just as described in *Secor*. I brought pages from the first edition and Tom from the second. The pictures from both editions provide a very complete picture of our route. We hiked up the trail from the Mosquito Flat trailhead to Ruby Lake. From Ruby Lake we travel up Little Lakes Valley passing below Ruby Peak and Mills peak. Crossing the boulder fields, Tom comments on how loose the boulders are. At the top of the valley we follow a moraine to the base of the North Couloir. The lower portion of the glacier is melting ice with little streams forming veins on the surface. As the angle steepens the ice is in perfect condition for kicking steps with crampons. After exiting the couloir we climb right up the loose class three slope until we gain the ridge. We follow the ridge to the summit where we enjoy a late lunch and the views of Ruby, Mills, Gabb, Dade, Bear Creek Spire, and Morgan. I make note of a 1992 entry in the summit register of Peter Croft doing one of his solo traverses. I think he started at Ruby and was on his way to Bear Creek Spire. We spend about 45 minutes on the summit before heading back.

Once we are off the glacier we head down the moraine. We are making good time until I step on a loose rock which dislodges a small boulder that rolls on to my foot. Oh shit! I immediately try to lift the boulder. It doesn't budge. Tom rushes to help. We still can't move it. Tom uses other rocks as levers. He succeeds temporarily in relieving the pressure. I try to pull free. My heel is jammed. Damn! Tom begins the task excavating the rocks out from behind my heel. I begin to wonder how long it will take for my foot to go numb.

There was a time when I used to solo Sierra peaks. Back in 1997, when I first discovered the PCS, trip leaders would want a resume of experience. I had done a lot of hiking, some backpacking, a little rock climbing and plenty of third class scrambling in places like Joshua Tree and the Pinnacles. However, with the exception of Half Dome I hadn't done any peaks to speak of. I decided to go solo and add a few peaks to my resume. Although I found a partner to do Morrison the rest of the peaks I did that summer were solo trips of relatively easy mountains like Dana, Gibbs, Conness, Aggasiz, and a failed attempt on Johnson. I was prepared for most eventualities but the talus and boulder fields seemed to pose the greatest risk. What would happen if I took a fall and broke something? What would happen if I dislodged a rock and a boulder rolled onto my foot or leg pinning me without any way of freeing myself?

This day I have a partner. Tom has cleared the rocks from behind my heel. Again he tries to use other rocks as levers but to no avail. Finally, he grabs his Grivel ultra light ice-axe and uses it as a pry bar. It works and I am able to get my foot out from under

the boulder. I sit back in relief and enjoy the endorphin rush as the pain in my foot subsides.

Amazingly, I am able to walk. No broken or fractured bones. Tom gives me his poles and we scramble down to a nearby pool of glacier melt. We had seen these pools earlier. It looked like a rock quarry except that the wall is exposed ice. I soak my foot in the ice-cold water to reduce swelling and pop an Advil.

Even though I can walk, Tom refuses to let me carry my pack.

It's dark when we get back to the trailhead. We eat dinner next to our cars using the table and chairs Tom has brought. Over dinner we decide to put our plans for Dade on hold and head home Sunday morning.

End Note:

There is no real comparison between my situation and Aron Ralston's. However, I was facing the possibility of having to walk out on only one good leg or of having to spend a long night alone while my partner went for help. Fortunately, neither scenario occurred. Unfortunately, it is little easier for me now to imagine what Aron Ralston went through.

• *Gregory L. Johnson*

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.

Beyond the Pale

Date: Sep 13-15 (Sat-Mon)
Goal: Palisade Crest 13,553'
Difficulty: class 4, helmet, rope used
Location: eastern Sierra Nevada (Big Pine 15' map)
Contact: Charles Schafer, c_g_schafer@yahoo.com, 408-354-1545
Aaron Schuman,
climber.org/WhosWho/Aaron_Schuman.html

Webster's dictionary defines a palisade as a wall of large pointed stakes set in the ground for fortification. One of those intimidating posts is a pale. The Palisades are the best defended ridge in the Sierra Nevada. We will besiege the Palisade Crest, a particularly steep and jagged medieval battlement, and if we are fortunate, we will catapult ourselves up to the very crenels. Endurance, sangfroid, teamwork, and skill in roped climbing are essential for success on this trip. Limit 6 people.

Kilimanjaro

Peak: Kilimanjaro
Date: January, 2004
Contact: Warren Storkman
4180 Mackay Court
Palo Alto, CA 94306
Phone: 650-493-8959, FAX: 650-493-8975
dstorkman@aol.com

Kilimanjaro is shaping up for middle of January 2004. Considering the Western Breach route

Clothes needed - all genders for Kilimanjaro porters

7 day cost:

Park fee	\$480.00
Forest fee	\$20.00
Fully equipped package	<u>\$670.00</u>
Total	\$1170.00

3 nights hotel \$30.00 a night includes breakfast and dinner. More to come later in the year. Open to all.

Can try this website for first information on Kilimanjaro climb
<http://home.pacifier.com/~intersec/tkutsch/kili.html>

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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 9/28/2003. 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