



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

## General Meeting



**Date:** Tuesday, July 12th  
**Time:** 6:30-9:00 PM  
**Where:** Serra Park in Sunnyvale  
730 The Dalles Avenue  
(see below for directions)

**Program:** *Annual BBQ and Gear Swap*

The July meeting is our annual BBQ and gear swap! Serra Park has been reserved from 6:30pm to 9:00pm. All family members are welcome. Bring your own food and drink. Alcoholic beverages are permitted. Don't forget a plate, glass, cutlery and (maybe) a big roll of paper towels. Charcoal will be provided. Please bring \$3 to contribute to the park reservation fee and the charcoal. ALSO, bring your extra gear if you wish to participate in the gear swap.

**Directions:** From I-280: turn North on Deanza Blvd in Cupertino; then left on Homestead; then right on Hollenbeck. Serra Park is on your left. From Hwy-85: turn East on Fremont; then South on Hollenbeck. Serra Park is on your right.

## Cross Those Streams Safely By Kelly Maas

The long awaited spring thaw is finally here. Meadows are wet and streams run high at the start of each climbing season, but this is not an average year. The early May snow pack was about 150% to 200% of normal in the High Sierra, and a cool spring delayed the melt off at lower elevations. It's probably safe to predict that the mountains and their approaches will be wetter than usual, and that they'll stay that way for a while.

While we'll soon be trading stories about water logged trails and hoards of mosquitoes, I hope that we won't be hearing about any stream crossings gone bad. That's why I'm writing this - so that people can give some advance thought and planning to these inevitable crossings, and so that everyone returns home safely from their trips.

Let's work our way up to the more dangerous crossings by starting with the easy ones. If you're lucky, you'll find an easy log or rocks that enable you to stay high and dry without much risk. But sometimes the log isn't there or its too risky, so you need to wade. It's tempting to keep your boots dry by taking them off, but that usually works only if you have a nice forgiving creek bottom. More often the rocks are rough or slippery, and the water's quite cold. This makes it pretty tough on the feet, which makes it that much harder to

balance. If you're carrying your boots in your hands, you're bound to dip them in the water as you waver back and forth trying to favor your tender feet. If you've brought wading sandals or water shoes then you're ahead of the game. If not, just take off your socks and remove your insoles, put your boots back on, and now you can walk across with impunity. At the far side, the forward thinking climber will have brought a lightweight synthetic pack towel for drying off. Or, if you're really into going light, a couple of handi-wipes. Take a couple of minutes to let your boots drain before putting them back on.

Rock hopping and log crossings have real appeal because they may allow you to avoid the discomfort and time consumption of wading. But some people have better balance than others, and I have seen someone slip off a log and into a creek. It's OK to scoot across on your but if necessary. For hopping rocks, one or two hiking poles can come in very handy. If you don't have them, look around for a suitable dead tree branch. When wading too, some people are stronger than others, so it's possible that not everyone can make the crossing safely. As in all safety related matters, it's important to consider the weakest member of the party when making key decisions.

Streams really get dangerous when the water is either deep or moving fast. To quote from "Freedom of the Hills", "...the power of swift water is easy to underestimate. It's a relentless force that can push you under and dash you against rocks and logs. A swift stream flowing only shin-deep boils up against the knees. Knee-deep water may boil above the waist and give a disconcerting sensation of buoyancy. Whenever water boils above the knee, it is dangerous, and one false step could have you bouncing in white water from boulder to boulder."

Accidents don't usually happen in the raging streams that are obviously dangerous -- people are usually smart

enough to avoid trying to wade them. The biggest danger probably lies with human judgment, when the water is somewhat high or fast, but people fool themselves into thinking that it's "probably OK" to cross. Remember to maintain a real safety margin, and remember your knees as the red light warning. If the water's too high and you can't find a better crossing up-stream or down-stream, another possibility is to camp and wait until morning, when the snowmelt run-off is at its minimum. Late afternoon and evening is when the water's usually running fastest.

Another important mantra is to unbuckle your waist belt and sternum strap if there's a chance that you could be swimming in the event of a fall. Condition yourself mentally that it's OK to loose your gear, but it's not OK to loose your life. You must be able to jettison your pack instantly if needed. You've probably heard it before, but I've seen and heard of people not releasing their buckles before starting across. A real planner might even line their pack with plastic bags, just in case.

So far I haven't said anything about using ropes for crossing. While a taught hand line can be helpful, it's rarely practical to set one up. More importantly, clipping into a hand line, or belaying someone from shore must be avoided. This might seem counterintuitive, since we are accustomed to ropes being a source of safety when we're negotiating steep rock or dangerous glaciers. Moving water, however, is a completely different medium. Real life experience shows that when someone in such a position falls, they tend to be held under the water by the rope, unable to get their footing.

If the crossing is risky, it may be a good idea to scout the "run out" down-stream, and position people there to act as possible rescuers if required. They shouldn't necessarily jump into the water for someone in need of help, but they may be able to reach out with a branch or toss a rope -- this being one of the few cases

where a rope may be helpful. But the idea is to prepare in advance. Running after a "swimmer" would do little good.

***I hope that everyone is safe on their climbs and approaches this year, with the worst stories being about frozen and mosquito bitten legs. Be safe out there.***

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## PCS Trips

PCS trips must be submitted through the Scheduler (see back cover for details).

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### Tuolumne Meadows Carcamp

Date: August 6-7 (Fri night-Sun)

Peak: Cloud's Rest, 9926', Class 1

Map: Yosemite National Park

(Tom Harrison Recreation Maps)

Leader(s): Debbie Benham,

Chris MacIntosh, 650-325-7841

[cmaci@sbcglobal.net](mailto:cmaci@sbcglobal.net)

Join us for a lovely time in that most pristine of all alpine meadows! We've reserved campsites at Tuolumne Meadows campground for the weekend. Saturday, we'll hike to Cloud's Rest: the largest and most expansive granite face in Yosemite National Park. Sunday, we'll decide which peak is next! Newcomers and Sierra Club members given preference. \$8 nonrefundable campsite fee holds your spot. **Please contact Chris MacIntosh**☺

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## Bridge to North Guard leads to Harrington

May 28-30 2005

By *Stephane Mouradian*

[[smouradian@hotmail.com](mailto:smouradian@hotmail.com)]

*Private trip participants:*

*Linda Sun, Dee and Rick Booth, leaders Arun Mahajan and Bob Suzuki, Paul Wilms, Balaji Venkataraman, Stephane Mouradian*

This was originally an official PCS trip to North Guard starting from Road's End in Sequoia NP. First there was that sign at the ranger station declaring that the bridge over Sphinx creek was "closed for repair". And when it was finally time

to pick up the permit, the ranger confirmed the bridge was "closed" (as off May 25 2005).

Well, "officially closed": Dave Erskine had mentioned crossing the bridge 2 weeks before and we spoke with a California Conservation Corp worker who reported workers were crossing the bridge every day to work on it. It is just that there was no railing (on a 10 foot wide bridge). With the record runoffs, we were not going to attempt wading the Sphinx or, worse, Bubbs Creek to go to East Lake.

Our leaders decided there was no crossing red tape on an official trip. Should anyone end up in the water, we would be in "deep doodoo" (not "big doodoo", as Rick corrected). Ok, so North Guard was canceled. How about a private trip somewhere else? Alta? Silliman? Harrington? Harrington won.

We picked up a Topo map and finally left the Deer Cove trailhead (4400') at 10:11am. We traversed Wildman Meadow and continued on to Fry Pan Meadow (8000') which we reached at 3:40pm to set camp. Note that Fry Pan meadow can be reached via the Lewis Creek trail. We skipped this option because of the many creek crossings involved. We met several people later who reported getting quite wet while hiking the Lewis Creek Trail. The rest of Saturday was spent sleeping in the sun and enjoying campfire in the evening. I scouted the Grizzly Lakes trail cut off which starts at the North End of the meadow. The trail sign says "unimproved" and literally points to brush but a fairly good trail actually starts behind the brush.

Sunday, we were walking at 6:40am. The trail quickly led us to a crossing over the East Fork of Grizzly Creek. The trail continues straight along the creek after the crossing but we somehow lost it and got pushed by the terrain too far to the North West. After some minimal bushwhacking we were back close to the East Fork. We reached snow around 9000'. At 9200' we went West over a small ridge East of Grizzly Lakes and got our first good view of the peak. We headed toward the drainage East of Harrington. We followed the drainage as it curves around and parallels the North ridge. Some of us tried a short cut up to the ridge which ended up being steep and not worth the effort. Paul and Linda, the wiser ones, followed the drainage all the way where it gently meets the North ridge. Most of us walked in hiking boots on the fairly solid snow and we only

pulled out ice axes for a short section of ridge just before the rock. We picked an easy class 3 route on solid rock. At one point we squeezed into a moat to skirt a small but exposed snowfield. We reached the 11,004' summit at 1pm and enjoyed a perfect weather lunch. Arun kept us entertained: when someone said, 'I am too tired', Arun replied, "then you are a bicycle", which is not a bad one considering the elevation...

We left the summit at 1:45pm. As the snow had softened, we all wore snowshoes except on the steepest slippery slopes. We crossed the ridge above Grizzly Lakes at 9800' and followed the East Fork. We eventually intersected the Grizzly Lakes trail. This led us to the same trail crossing as in the morning at 8350' on my altimeter (which I had calibrated on the summit). The trail crossing on the map is shown at 8200'. We reached camp at 6pm, a full day! Most of us had wet feet from snow walking in leather boots. The camp fire felt particularly nice that evening, except for the couple burned socks (oops!).

We were marching down the next morning at 7am. Balaji, a strong climber on his first private trip with us, met his own goal of reaching the car by 10am. Well done everyone!

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## Consolation Ridge

Date Climbed: June 4, 2005

By David Harris [David\_Harris@hmc.edu]

*[This report was first printed on Climber.org and is reprinted with permission from the author.]*

Peak 11295 appears to be a modest bump when viewed from the PCT one mile south of Olancha Peak. Carl Heller, who placed the register, suggested naming it Consolation Peak, an alternative for those too tired to reach Olancha. From the east, however, Peak 11295 is the culmination of a 6500' tall, gendarme-studded ridge forming the south wall of Olancha Creek.

Craig Clarence and I (David Money Harris) made a possible first ascent of the east ridge, dubbed Consolation Ridge. We initially intended to explore Olancha Creek, but the waterfall gushing out of a narrow slot at its mouth suggested this was the wrong time of year for canyoneering.

We left the car at Sage Flat at 6 am. I apparently had a mild case of food poisoning and was moving slowly; Craig patiently waited for me and relieved

me of the rope. We followed a trail and dirt road downhill to Falls Creek, then hiked cross-country to the mouth of the canyon where Olancha Creek emerges, filling water bottles about 7:30.

The toe of Consolation Ridge starts at 4800'. The first two thousand feet involve second and third class scrambling up interesting rocky ribs on reasonably good quality granite. At 6800', we surmounted the first gendarme and downclimbed the back side into a notch. A 20' chimney with a short 4th class move led onto the second gendarme. We dropped into a small tunnel and emerged along the southwest side of the second gendarme, then followed sandy slopes on the south side of the ridge to bypass more large obstacles and eventually reach Point 8830 about 11:30.

The next mile of the ridge had numerous large 5th class towers but little total elevation gain. We bypassed the towers along the south side, weaving up and down to pick a path through the vegetation until we could regain the ridge at a prominent 9000' saddle where the ridge begins to rise again.

The rising ridge again had several obstacles that we mostly avoided on the south side. At one point, we made a 12 meter rappel to avoid backtracking and losing 200' of elevation to hike below a tower. If I were to repeat the route, I would leave the climbing gear behind; it would be better to go light and spend a little more time on route finding. The upper part of the ridge is good dark rock with occasional stretches of 3rd class climbing. We topped out on the large flat summit at 3:20 with a total gain of 7300' including the extra climbing around gendarmes.

After a half hour break, we descended to the PCT, then took the faint old trail toward Bear Trap Meadow to avoid the roundabout PCT. In the meadow we saw an enormous fresh bear print with distinct claw marks! We foolishly cut cross country toward Olancha Pass, beating through manzanita for a mile; the trail would have been a better choice. Finally, we descended the gratuitously flat switchbacks of the Olancha Pass Trail to the car at Sage Flat, arriving by 8:10.

I've admired this ridge for many years from 395 and it was fun to explore. It would have been more enjoyable without the weight of a rope or axe or bivy gear, all of which were unnecessary. We each carried a gallon of water and would have appreciated more on the hot route. The rock is mostly solid and the brush is no worse than one would expect on a cross-country route in this region. The ridge would almost certainly go at 3rd class with a little more

route finding. The views of the east face of Olancha are magnificent.

The summit register mentioned ascents by Falls Creek and by the NE ridge of Olancha Peak, as well as from the PCT.

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## **Mt Dade (13,600+ ft) via the Hourglass Couloir**

**June 11-12, 2005**

**By Arun Mahajan** [arun.mahajan@att.net]

*This was a Sierra Club sponsored trip led by Dee Booth and scribe, Arun Mahajan and the other participants were, Balaji Venkataraman, Lisa Barboza and David Altmar.*

### **Conditions on 11/12 June 05:**

1. Sonora Pass is open.
2. The road to Mosquito Flat trailhead, while possibly driveable, was gated shut about a mile and half before the trailhead.
3. There is continuous snow cover in the Little Lakes Valley area from 10,000 feet onwards.
4. Snow shoes were not needed at all the places where we went at the time of the day that we were there.
5. Also, at the time we were on the Hourglass Couloir, the snow conditions were almost ideal. Lots of snow. Despite the high angle, comfortable to kick steps and traverse (using axe and crampons) for the group experience level.
6. Treasure Lakes mostly frozen, Long Lake had lots of ice cover but thinning
7. Rippled and brittle sugary snow in several places right near the summit of Dade on the south and south-east sides
8. The drainage from Treasure Lakes to Long Lake, usually a walk/hop on large boulders, now completely snow covered making the climb more uniform but sun cups were forming already.

We were walking at 9am in good weather and were at the Treasure Lakes, our campsite, a little after noon. After stashing sleeping gear away and putting excess food in bear cannisters, we were walking towards the beautiful Hourglass

Couloir on softening snow but snowshoes were not needed. We overtook a party of two (David/Samantha) but then they remained with us throughout the climb. We took axes out and put on crampons at the base of the couloir which, with so much snow and a 1000-ft rise looked quite intimidating. It is likely that several people have been up it already this year but the snow looked untraveled. We started our climb by doing several zig-zag traverses, with Dee doing most of the leading and breaking steps and by 3pm had topped out to the lowest point of the yoke-like top. After a brief rest, we started off towards the summit. After crossing a large snowfield, a never ending talus field and a final steep snowfield, we summited at about 4.30pm. We had fantastic views all around but the clouds started to blow in towards us, so after a few summit photos, we departed at about 4.50pm or so and were quickly down to the top of the couloir. Luckily for us, despite the cool winds and the passing clouds, the snow had not hardened in the couloir and after dropping a few hundred feet by the same careful zig-zag traversal, several of the group enjoyed an express glissade descent.

We were back to the Treasure Lakes at 6.30pm. Tent and bivy spots were scarce but we made do. We were all feeling the effects of altitude in varying degrees since we had gone to the top of a 13600+ ft peak right from the trailhead but we went to bed, content that we had only a short hike to do to get out in the morning. On Sunday morning, after a relatively late start (7.30am), we walked out in the still-firm snow to be back at the cars at 9.45 and got home at the shockingly early hour of 5 pm! It was a pleasure to climb an excellent peak via a great route with a very capable group of participants.

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### **Private Trips**

Private trips are not insured, sponsored, or supervised by the Sierra Club. They are listed here because they may be of interest to PCS members. Private trips may be submitted directly to the editor.

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**Date(s):** July 16-23, 2005

**The Clark Range and Beyond: Gray, Red, Merced, Triple Divide, Ansel Adams, Electra, Foerster, and Davis**

Contact(s): Bob Suzuki, [suzukiR@sd-star.com](mailto:suzukiR@sd-star.com)

Jim Ramaker, [ramaker@us.ibm.com](mailto:ramaker@us.ibm.com)

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Date: August 12-28, 2005

**Huayna Potosi (19,974') and Nevado Illimani (21,200')**

Near La Paz, Boliva

Contact: Dan Tupper, 408-742-8693,

[Dan.tupper@lmco.com](mailto:Dan.tupper@lmco.com)

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Date: October 1, 2005 (15 day trek)

**Trek/Climb in the Mt Everest area, Nepal**

Contact: Warren Storkman, 650-493-8959,

[dstorkman@aol.com](mailto:dstorkman@aol.com)

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Date: January 14, 2006

**Kilimanjaro, Tanzania [optional safari following]**

Contact: Warren Storkman, 650-493-8959,

[dstorkman@aol.com](mailto:dstorkman@aol.com)

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Date: May 2006

**Mt Kailas in Tibet, or, Meno Nani (7728m) in Tibet**

Contact: Warren Storkman, 650-493-8959

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## **Liberty Ridge, Mt Rainier**

### **Part 1 of 2**

Date Climbed: May 13, 2005

By: Scott Edlin [[edlins@yahoo.com](mailto:edlins@yahoo.com)]

*[This trip report was first published on SummitPost.org and is reprinted with permission from the author]*

***“FALLING!!” The word exploded from my core with a will of its own by habit or instinct. “ARREST!! ARREST!! ARREST!!” immediately followed as I became conscious of the fact that I was now accelerating downhill with a significant portion of the slope.***

Wednesday morning, shortly before sunrise Jim's alarm went off and he, I, John, and Jessica jumped up to grab our Hampden Inn complimentary breakfast before throwing our packs into the rental Chevy and hitting the road. I had worked out all the spreadsheets and considered all of the gear over and over, and still ended up with an approach pack weighing

about 53 lbs. The drive from Seatac to White River Campground went quickly and I felt ready for what would be the greatest challenge of my climbing career. We filled out the requisite forms, shouldered our obscenely heavy packs, and departed on the Glacier Basin Trail at 8 AM sharp. The hike through the old-growth forest up to Glacier Basin was a wonderful experience for someone accustomed to the more arid climate of the Rocky Mountains' front range. Just as we reached the end of the trees we stumbled upon an area of total devastation. Dozens of large evergreens lay in splinters in a large area across the trail, still green and smelling freshly cut. A quick glance across the valley revealed the slide path which had run nearly 3000 feet off of Mount Ruth. We snowshoed quickly across the debris field and made our way towards St. Elmo's Pass.

The climb to the pass was to foreshadow the trip: post holing in knee-deep slush setting off multiple small slough slides. After crossing the pass at about 1:30 PM, we roped up and began to traverse the Winthrop Glacier. The strange landscape passed by more or less uneventfully and after several hours we were climbing onto Curtis Ridge. We contoured around the seemingly endless ridge on ever-softening snow slopes as the day wore on. As we passed under a small cliff we set off about seven slough slides over about one hundred yards of hiking. Finally at 5:20 PM, after almost nine and a half hours, we reached the edge of the Curtis Ridge, set up camp, and contemplated our future. The ridge was in profile lighting in the evening and we counted the fracture lines (at least four) on the ridge as portions of the Willis and Liberty Walls collapsed in the evening warmth. John, Jim and I discussed how we felt about taking on the challenge. I felt like I was staring down the twin barrels of a twelve gauge. The phrase “crumbling deathtrap” came to mind and it was about this time that the chorus of Social Distortion's “Reach For The Sky” popped into my head. It was just the chorus, and it was stuck in my head for the next three days.

***I never heard a “whoompf”, and didn't see the fracture line shoot across the slope six feet above me as I was setting myself for a short break. There was no sudden sense of motion, just a visual realization that I was accelerating, along with the slope under me which slowly and surrealistically morphed from a smooth slab to a jumbled mess.***

Thursday morning we started way too late, waking up at 3 AM and leaving camp around 5:15 AM. We were roped up and had scouted a path up the Carbon Glacier on the east side of the toe of the ridge. There was a faint boot track, but we couldn't see how it connected to the ridge. We figured by the time we got up the Carbon we'd have enough light to spot a route. After walking around many and through a few crevasses we arrived at a spot at the base of the east side of the ridge where the boot track disappeared into a rock and snow slide covered slope. We split into two rope teams and started up the slope. The rockfall was fairly continuous, the snow was deep and slushy, and I punched waist deep into a crevasse on the way up. Finally, we were on the ridge proper. The grueling nature of the climb to Thumb Rock is testament to my lack of memory of it. I was roped to Jim, and John and Jessica followed on our second rope. We hit one spot where there was some hidden ice under the snow that Jim slipped on. I was able to arrest him fairly easily in the soft and deep snow. After passing the obstacle I put my head down, found my rhythm, and at 2:15 collapsed at the Thumb and passed out for ten minutes. Our second approach day had taken another nine hours.

The sun beat down on us throughout the afternoon and evening and the shade of the Thumb was briefly braved at the risk of large rocks dropping from above. At one point an incredible noise alerted us to a massive avalanche ripping down the Liberty Wall all the way to the Carbon Glacier. We decided on a midnight wakeup to finally get an adequately early start. For our summit bid, we would forego the hot breakfast and try to get moving as quickly as possible. Above the Thumb lay our three options. The snow slope to the right was cut by a fracture line perhaps a day or two old. The center path was poorly covered and looked like a crumbly horrible scramble. The left snow slope bore the blown remnants of a boot track, so we decided on the left route. As I drifted off to sleep I wondered how long our summit day would be and if the weather would hold for us. Once we ascended above the Thumb, retreat became a very unattractive option. That night I dreamed of a strange woman I sought just out of reach..

***As I was yelling for a team arrest, I made my best attempt at my own. Fractions of a second passed by as I levered the pick of***

***my axe deep towards the sliding layer. I felt friction, and I cranked it in.***

I stirred as Thursday became Friday. The thought had occurred to me when I was marking the trip on my calendar months earlier that our summit day was on Friday, May 13th. I'm not superstitious, nor am I a numerologist, but this trivial fact did not escape my notice. We pulled down the tents, roped two by two, and set off left and up in snowshoes. The route quickly became a steep traverse in the predawn darkness, and wishing for the improved stability of crampons I placed my first picket several hundred feet up. If we had light to show the 1500 foot drop to the bottom of the Willis Wall I might have placed a few more. It's funny how climbing in the dark can give the feeling of greater security by reducing distracting exposure. After clearing the traverse, we climbed back to the ridge and traded our snowshoes for crampons. Once again, we put our heads down and climbed higher and higher. Jim, John and I traded leads as we gained and surmounted the snowfield near the Black Pyramid. Above this, the slope mellowed out enough for a good break and we spotted the boot track again. We followed it near an ice cliff on the left that must have been 60 or 70 feet tall. Leading on, I hit an area of waist to chest-deep soft sugar snow which made progress nearly impossible. After I gave up on my route, John found a slightly more stable route through the mess and we were soon rounding the corner to behold the bergschrund. As John brought us up to the ice we noticed a jumbled mess of unattractive snow and ice to the right side, probably fifty feet tall or higher. The ice became clean and lower angle off to the left. We joined the ropes and picked a probably line about twelve feet high, at around 65 degrees, and I ...

**...to be continued**

## Elected Officials

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**Scree** is the monthly journal of the Peak Climbing Section of the Sierra Club, Loma Prieta Chapter.

Our official website is [http:// lomaprieta.sierraclub.org/pcs/](http://lomaprieta.sierraclub.org/pcs/)

## Subscriptions and Email List Info

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

## Rock Climbing Classifications

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

Class 1: Walking on a trail.

Class 2: Walking cross-country, using hands for balance.

Class 3: Requires use of hands for climbing, rope may be used.

Class 4: Requires rope belays.

Class 5: Technical rock climbing.

Deadline for submissions to the next Scree is Wed, July 27. 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**