

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

## General Meeting

**Date:** August 14, 2007  
**Time:** 7:30 pm  
**Where:** Peninsula Conservation Center  
3921 E. Bayshore Rd.  
Palo Alto, CA

**Program:** Adventures in Search and Rescue

**Presenter:** Tzvetie Erohina - Bay Area Mountain Rescue Unit (BAMRU)

When we go to the mountains we usually just want to have a good time, and hope that nothing bad will happen. Even so, it can be comforting to know that search and rescue organizations exist to help out when things go wrong. We actually have a SAR group based right here in the bay area, and Tzvetie Erohina will tell us more about these people who are always at the ready to respond to calls for help. There may also be some good advice on how we can prepare for the unexpected.

BAMRU is a locally based search and rescue organization. Activities include readiness training as well as actual rescue operations. For detail on the organization see their website at <http://www.bamru.org/>.

**Directions:** From 101: Exit at San Antonio Road, go east to the first traffic light, turn left and follow Bayshore Rd to the PCC on the corner of Corporation Way. A sign marking the PCC is out front. Park behind.

## Editor's Notes

**Summer** is here and with it a proliferation of trips are taken by PCS members. Some are official Sierra Club trips while others are private trips with groups of friends getting together. Some trips begin as announcements on the climber.org website, <http://www.climber.org/trips/index.html>. For all cases the objective is the same - to share our great backyard wilderness, the beautiful Sierra Nevada. Here is an index to the **Trip Reports** in this issue.

### Page Trip Report

- 4 Starlight Buttress Route by Rick Booth
- 6 Muah Mtn and Cirque Peak by Louise Wholey
- 7 Mt. Williamson/Tyndall by Louise Wholey
- 8 Mt. Darwin by Louise Wholey
- 8 Mt. Darwin by Jim Wholey
- 10 Mount Silliman by Santa PalChaudhuri
- 11 Red, Gray, and Merced by Lisa Maxwell
- 12 Mt Russell and Thor Peak By Stephane Mouradian
- 13 Mt Langley By Stephane Mouradian

The **Gear Corner** will be back next month with lots of great information on bivouac sacks.

As **winter** approaches the trips schedule grows less dense. Many people participate in Sierra Club Ski Touring Section trips while others do local Day Hiking, ski on their own, or take the winter off for other things. As a strong advocate of winter ski mountaineering, I would like to see more winter activity this year. Please submit your ideas to the Scree Editor (private trips) or the PCS vice-chair (official trips) so that others can enjoy the great winter outdoors with you!

## 2006-2007 PCS Trip Calendar

**Aug 17-19** – Mystery Peak(s) TBD

**Leader:** Kelly Maas

**Aug 18-19** – Sequoia/Kings Canyon Car Camping

**Leader:** Deborah Benham

**Aug 24-28** – Agassiz, Cloudripper, Goode, Winchell

**Leader:** Lisa Barboza

**Aug 31 - Sep 3** – Goat, State, Marion

**Leader:** Lisa Barboza

**Sept 7-9** – Giraud

**Leader:** Charles Shafer

**Sept 15** – Mt. Whitney (14,495)

**Leader:** George Van Gorden

**Sept 21-23** – Virginia, Twin Peaks, (Dunderberg)

**Leader:** Tim Hult

**Sept 22-23** – Tower Peak

**Leader:** Bob Suzuki

**Oct 19-21** – University, Kearsage, Gould (car camp)

**Leader:** Lisa Barboza

**TBD** – Split Mt. (day hike)

**Leader:** Jeff Fisher

## Private Trips Summary

**Important:** 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 Scree editor. Details on these trips follow the trip reports. In this issue.

**Aug 11-19(?)** – Palisades-a-rama

**Aug 19-25** – Wind Rivers

**Aug 31 - Sept 3** – LeConte/Corcoran

**Sept 1-3** – Gardner & Cotter

**Sept 14-16** – Lover's Leap Climbing (5<sup>th</sup> class)

**October 2007** – Nepal around Annapurna

**Mid-January 2008** – Kilimanjaro - Tanzania

## PCS Trip Details

### Sequoia/Kings Canyon Car Camping

Peaks: Alta 11204 (class 1), Silliman 11188 (class 1,2)

Dates: August 18-19, 2007

Maps: Mt Silliman, Lodgepole: 7.5'

Leader: Deborah Benham, deborah05@sbcglobal.net, 650-964-0558

Co-leader: needed

Enjoy the lovely forests and peaks of these national parks! I've reserved two side-by-side campsites at Lodgepole Campground. \$8 nonrefundable fee holds your spot for 2 nights (Fri/Sat). Saturday, we'll hike up Alta Peak; Sunday, we'll summit Mt Silliman (expect a long day). Legendary group appetizers Saturday night.

### Mystery Peak Revealed!

#### Birch Mtn (13665')

Peak: Birch Mtn (13665'), Class 2+

Date: Aug 18-19 (Sat-Sun)

Maps: Maps: Tom Harrison Kings Canyon High Country and USGS 15' Split Mtn and Fish Springs

Leader: Kelly Maas, (408-378-5311, [kellymbase-pcs@yahoo.com](mailto:kellymbase-pcs@yahoo.com))

Co-Leader: Arun Mahajan (650-327-8598, [arun.mahajan@att.net](mailto:arun.mahajan@att.net))

Never heard of Birch Mtn.? Maybe that's because it's overshadowed by it's Palisade neighbors to the north and Split Mtn. to the south. Even so, it's higher than several big peaks such as Mt. Goddard. From the trailhead near Big Pine, we'll follow a trail for 6 miles to Birch Lake at 10,800'. We'll be up early on Sunday to bag the peak via the SW ridge, then scamper out.

### Agassiz, Cloudripper, Goode, Winchell

Peak: Agassiz, Cloudripper, Goode, Winchell

Date: August 24-28, 2007

Leader: Lisa Barboza (pcs-vice@att.net)

Co-Leader: needed

From South Lake TH above Bishop, we'll climb over Bishop Pass to the Dusy Basin, make camp in an agreeable spot. Day hike Agassiz, Goode, Winchell, and climb Cloudripper on the way to the cars. This is a 4 day, beginner trip. Participants must be in good condition and fit, ready for a Fast and Light outing.

## Goat/State/Marion

Peak: Goat/State/Marion  
Date: Sept 1-3 (Sat-Mon, Labor Day weekend)  
Leader: Lisa Barboza (pcs-vice@att.net)  
Co-Leader: needed

Hike in from Road's End to these remote peaks. Hike in over Granite Pass (11 miles, 6000 ft). These are CL2 peaks ranging from 12,200 to 12,700 feet in height. This is a Fast and Light intermediate trip with a lot of distance and elevation. Send conditioning and qualifications to leader.

## Giraud Peak

Peaks: Giraud Peak (12,608, class 2)  
Dates: September 7-9 (Fri. - Sun.)  
Map: North Palisade & Mt. Thompson 7.5's  
Leader: Charles Schafer (c\_g\_schafer@yahoo.com 408-354-1545)  
Co-Leader: wanted

Friday we'll climb up and over Bishop Pass, then camp at the lakes on the other side. Saturday we'll follow a ridge leading to the saddle east of the peak then climb the rest of the way via the southeast slope. Sunday we'll climb back up and over the pass and head on out.

This area of the Sierra is really scenic, what with the lakes on the way up to the pass and the west side of the Palisades glowing in the setting sun after going over the pass. This trip will be slow paced, and is suitable for relatively inexperienced climbers who are in reasonably good shape.

## Mt. Whitney

Peak: Mt. Whitney (14,495)  
Date: Sept. 15  
Leader: George Van Gorden, VanGordenG321@aol.com  
Co-Leader: Wanted

We will climb Whitney using the mountaineer's route. We will start from the Whitney Portal near Lone Pine, CA by 6:30 AM and plan to be back to the car before dark. We will come down the regular trail. Because of the low snowfall last winter, the couloir should be ice free. I would like to have a co-leader. The couloir may have some short Class 3 sections. Our pace will be brisk. Please send qualifications and interest to George.

## Virginia and Twin Peaks

Peak: Virginia and Twin Peaks, possibly also Dunderberg  
Dates: Sept 21-23, 2007  
Leader: Tim Hult (408-838-8337 cell)  
Co-Leader Wanted

The trailhead we will use is the Green River Trail. Both peaks are class 2 - 3 with a traverse between the two.

## Tower Peak (11,755')

Peak: Tower Peak (11,755')  
Dates: Sept 22-23 (Sat-Mon, 2 or 3 days)  
Maps: Tower Peak topo  
Leader: Bob Suzuki (SuzukiR@sd-star.com)  
Co-leader: Louise Wholey (louisewholey@yahoo.com)

Cooler temps and starting fall colors may await us during this northern Sierra visit. A long backpack along the lovely West Walker River will eventually lead us to our camp along Kirkwood Creek. Sunday morning's climb will include the enjoyable class 3 granitic staircase in the northwest chute of Tower Peak. Expect to finish this trip in 2 days.

## Split Mountain day hike

Peak: Split Mountain 14058  
Dates: TBD  
Maps: Split Mtn  
Leader: Jeff Fisher (jeff\_fisher\_5252@sbcglobal.net, 408-733-1299)  
Co-leader: needed

This is a strenuous day trip from low on the valley floor to over 14000 feet. Participants must be well-acclimatized, fit, and very strong, as well as able to climb class 3 quickly.

## Trip Reports

### Starlight Peak, Starlight Buttress Route, June 16/17/18 2007

By Rick Booth

This year's trip to the Palisades Glacier was a grudge match left over from last year. Last year, Matt Laue got altitude sickness, Linda Sun helped him out, and Dee Booth and I got flattened on an attempt to climb the Starlight Buttress directly. It was zeros all the way around.

One of the problems with last year's trip was the bergschrund protecting the couloir to the left of the buttress. The 'schrund was impassable with a big overhanging cornice that was not going to be climbed by us ordinary types. I scheduled this year's trip a few weeks earlier with the hope that a snow bridge would be formed over the 'schrund. I didn't count on this winter being one of the driest on record. This caused consternation to all of us and we hemmed and hawed over going, anticipating the dry snow year leaving a gaping hole at the 'schrund that would be impassable.

For reasons beyond my understanding we decided to make an attempt. This year's group of optimists included the aforementioned Matt Laue, Linda Sun, and Dee Booth, and I added Dan Clawson and Bob Suzuki since I had a permit for six. Oh, yeah, I went, too.

Saturday morning, June 16, we met at the Big Pine Creek hiker parking lot, packed and yakked, and eventually started up the North Fork of Big Pine Creek Trail, heading for the glacier and Gayley Camp. Well, we didn't quite make it to Gayley Camp. Concerned about the possibility the water drip may not be flowing at Gayley Camp we settled for bivouacking just below the moraine at about 12,000 feet or so on the rocky slabs leading up to the moraine where water was available. That worked out just as well.

At 4 AM Sunday morning we all more or less got started. By 5 AM Team Bullet, Bob Suzuki and Dan Clawson, were moving up towards the glacier. The rest of us, Matt Laue and Linda Sun, and Rick and Dee Booth were off about 15 minutes later. Once up on the moraine and heading out on the rocky talus that points right at Starlight it became clear that there might be a snow bridge across the 'schrund next to the buttress after all. This amazed all of us.



The North Palisade and Starlight Peak.  
Starlight Buttress is just right of the middle snow couloir.

We all eventually ended up at the bergschrund and there was a gap to the right next to the rock that allowed all of us to congregate on a rock shelf. The plan was to go up the couloir in the snow for about a rope pitch or about 150 feet and then get on the rock well past the steep section.

We decide to climb this section in three groups. Dan lead up the snow pitch, belayed Bob up, who then belayed Matt up who then re-established the anchor allowing Team Bullet to take off. They did, not to be seen again until back at camp. Anyway, Linda belayed me up the snow and I re-set the anchor and belayed Dee up which allowed Matt and Linda to start climbing. In any case we were past the steep rock climbing which had slowed Dee and me down the previous year. The snow climb was not trivial, however. The ice was fractured and there were a few spots where popping through into a small crevasse were very distinct possibilities. Dan did a great job plowing through this section.

We all dumped our ice axes and big boots after the snow pitch, planning on rappelling down to this point instead of traversing over to North Pal. The next two pitches were fun rock climbing pitches at about 5.5 to 5.6 in difficulty. The third pitch was about third class. Dee and I decided that the next pile of terrain didn't look too hard and decided to coil the rope and third class as much as we could. We tried to follow Linda and Matt. They had apparently headed up and left of a tower/gendarme and we did the same. We then headed toward the right onto the skyline and ended up at an impasse where we roped up for one last pitch which got us to the base of the summit "Milk Bottle".

Matt led up the "Milk Bottle" and established a top rope off of the sling wrapped around the top and Linda and Dee climbed the thing. I declined, having done it before, and time was getting late. After a little lunch and pictures we headed down.



Matt Laue on the "Milk Bottle"

We stuck to the south west side of the crest until we got just above the couloir that guards the left side of Starlight Butte. This eliminated re-climbing the belayed pitch at the end to the base of the "Milk Bottle" and required us to down climb past two rappel stations which was a little disconcerting; however, it was mostly third class with one or two exposed fourth class moves. Not bad at all. Here we encountered a party of six who were climbing up from the Dusy Basin side. From here we headed down the previous third class junk. We did one rappel from a pile of slings for the last section of fourth class and then rappelled into the couloir to another block with slings around it. From there we rappelled the couloir which was wet with running water. This brought us to the place where we left our boots and ice axes. One more rappel across the bergshund and we were on the glacier. A stroll across the glacier and moraine and we were back at our campsite. Monday morning we packed up and headed for home.

#### Final Notes:

We used double 60 meter rope systems. This was unnecessary for the climb but was handy for the rappels. We way over racked for this route but were anticipating at worst case having to climb the butte directly which is about 5.9.



The end of the day.  
Linda Sun waiting to rappel the bergshund.

For the route we took, which was to circumvent the hard rock climbing by climbing the couloir, a modest rack of single anything up to maybe #2 Camalot would be fine along with some slings which can be used for the rappels. We ran it out pretty far on the easy 5.5/5.6 pitches. We did a total of four rappels.

This is a fairly nice route. It would be a lot more fun if it had stayed at moderate fifth class all the way up. We could have done without the third class section since it is loose and gravelly. The best feature of this route is it allows the climber to ascend Starlight from the Palisades Glacier, however, it is not a particularly interesting route.



Bob Suzuki, Linda Sun, Dee Booth, Matt Laue and Dan Clawson enjoy a last laugh before hiking out on Monday.

## Muah Mtn and Cirque Peak, June 16-17, 2007

By Louise Wholey

What are these peaks? They are a couple of peaks south of Mt. Whitney that are handy for day hikes on rest and recovery days. Why do them? They are on the *list*.

The official group of Natalie Guishar, Lisa Barbosa, Brian Roach, and Jim and Louise Wholey chose to do Muah on Saturday while 3 others, Richard Gigax, Greg Peterson and Remy Goglio, unofficially went for Mt. Langley. We started off on a use trail from Horseshoe Meadow walk-in camping to the Mulky Pass trail, crossing the nearly dry creeks from Horseshoe Meadow and Round Valley. We followed a sandy trail on east side of meadow to the actual trail where we went left ascending into the forest. We zigzagged to the pass (2 mi, 10,380) and went left on the PCT's well-defined path into a canyon and out around a ridge. At 3.5 miles (9980), we found a rock sign for a path to Dutch Meadow spring. The PCT turns abruptly SE and descends on left side of broad ridge. We reached a saddle (9670) between Mulkey and Diaz creeks at a bit less than 5 mi. and found a cairn with a well-defined use trail leaving the PCT.

We made the left turn on the cow path toward Diaz Creek and followed it along the meadow looking for but not finding a duck marking a use trail 100 feet west of canyon's creek. We ended up staying in the meadow beyond the creek gully, then climbed steeply up the side of the peak diagonal only slightly left toward the summit. We bypassed the rock outcroppings on the north side of the peak reaching the summit quickly and easily. This last part is perhaps 1.5 mi. Many jokes prevailed about "Nap time?" (my daughter Mary's nickname on the PCT - not accepted by her) as we spent a long time enjoying the summit.

At first we had ambitious plans about descending the west side of the peak and hiking over to the PCT below Shark's Nose, but thoughts of the comfort of camp and a bottle of wine interfered with our determination. After all, wasn't it nap time? We ended up finding the use trail near the willow-choked creek in the steep shallow gully. We crossed the creek at grassy clearing and continued on use path down the gully and back to the PCT. We decided on the way back to follow the neat sign to Dutch Meadow and maybe get water, but when we arrived, we found so many skeletons we were totally unwilling to drink any water. We brought the skeletons to the PCT as, perhaps, a warning that the water might have some problems, not that PCT hikers generally care.



After arriving at Mulky Pass, we found it necessary to have yet another nap. But afterward we became very ambitious and chose to hike on the PCT rather than descending. That lasted all of 0.8 miles when we turned to the right down the Trail Pass trail to camp. After all, what would they think if the Langley folks arrived at camp before us? Besides this was a beginners trip, except the beginners did not come. Our naps were more comfortable in camp as people flaked out sleeping or reading, waiting for dinner to open that bottle of wine.

Dinner was quite a feast, steaks for the meat eaters grilled over an open fire (well, really brickets in the fire pit), and many assorted vegetables, onions red bell peppers, summer squash and Swiss chard, all in a tiny fry pan Louise brought for the fish that Jim did not catch. We enjoyed the wine and sang praises to the weather Gods who had not only given us clear cool weather but had provided super clear visibility. Lisa identified all the birds in camp as well as on the trail as they issued their varied calls. We watched a bluebird, not nearly as brilliantly blue as the one in Diaz Meadow, but still very neat. We took bets on when the Langley group would return, which was turned out to be slightly before dark at about 8:30. We had to open another bottle of wine to celebrate their success, though their appetites were somewhat suppressed by their day's effort.

Sunday morning arrived. "Good morning, campers!" Lisa certainly did not want any of us to miss a chance to enjoy the first light of the day. After dragging ourselves out of the bag, stuffing our gear in the car, and draining a welcome cup of coffee, we were off to climb Cirque via the Cottonwood Pass trail. Remy joined us while the rest of the Langley bunch were happy to stay in camp. It is a very pretty 3.8 mile trail that links to the PCT at the pass. We followed the PCT past Chicken Spring Lake (11235) and continued up and over the ridge bordering the lake. Memories of a very tough Memorial Day 2005 ski tour rushed through my head. I bored everybody telling about it as we continued along the PCT until the summit came into view at least a couple of miles beyond the lake. We scampered easily up the slopes to the top. This route is a quick 7 miles each way.

## Mt. Williamson/Tyndall, July 4-6, 2007

By Louise Wholey

Mt. Williamson is one of the most obvious and impressive peaks on the Eastern escarpment above Independence and ranks as the second highest mountain in California.



**Mt. Williamson**

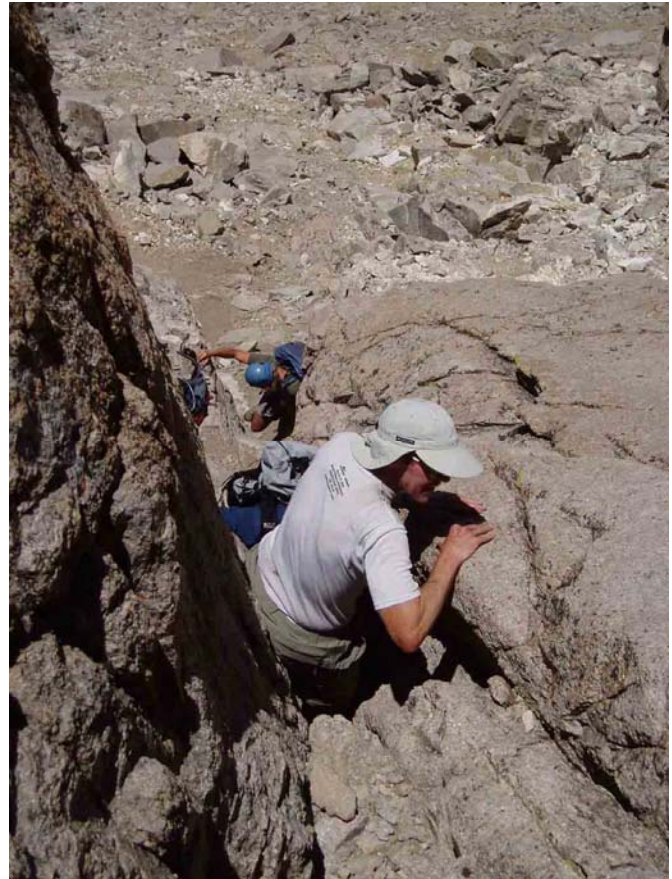
Lisa Barbosa, Brian Roach, Chris Franchuk, and Jim and Louise Wholey joined spirited leader Jeff Fisher early Friday morning at the Shepherd Pass trailhead. Louise had spent the day in Bishop July 3 to be sure to get the necessary walk-in permits.

The hike up Shepherd Pass is a significant undertaking, 11 miles and 6500 feet, including re-climbing the 500 foot drop half way up. Lunch was at Anvil Camp with mid-afternoon arrival at camp at a small lake in a stark landscape just below the ridge separating us from the Williamson Bowl. Some people that were missing from their tent when we went to sleep returned well after dark. Hmm! Perhaps the west face is hard.

We chose an early start (there is no other kind for Lisa) at 6 am. Crossing Williamson Bowl was anything but quick and easy as one might expect looking at a map. It took two hours of ledge climbing and boulder hopping to reach the area below the water stain, but the climb went smoothly, putting us on top around 10:30 AM. The chimney was straightforward. Planet Granite regulars scaled it easily both up and down.

We discussed climbing Junction peak the next day, but the weather in the morning did not look good. We all trooped up the NW ridge of Tyndall and then wished we had used the north rib directly from camp. There were surprising difficulties between the top of the ridge and the summit. We did not find an easy way.

In the afternoon we hiked back to our cars through a quick but violent thunderstorm.



**The Chimney**

Our eyes were peeled on the intense smoke from the lightning-started Inyo fire. Our car was ok, but some backcountry users were in the hazard zone.



The Winnedumah Hotel put the two couples up for the night while Jeff and Chris headed for Langley after showers. The town was very busy with people unable to continue their journey to Bishop and points north. Highway 395 was closed with a wall of flame. Frank, the owner of the Winnedumah, had almost left for Mexico that morning. We were so glad he did not, but he was not so sure. He filled all

the rooms and also the floor of the lobby and an upstairs hallway. He even made us quite welcome steak dinners after the chaos settled a bit!

## Mt. Darwin, June 29- July 1, 2007

By Louise Wholey

Our group of 7, Bob Suzuki, Jim Ramaker, Lisa Barbosa, Brian Roach, Eddie Sudol and Jim and Louise Wholey met early Friday morning at the North Lake trailhead to hike over Lamarck Col to Darwin Canyon. Camp was at the uppermost lake, which was devoid of fish, according to Jim. Friendly marmots joined us for dinner. Ferdie, behind Jim's left shoulder, watched as we celebrated Lisa's birthday.



We were quite happy that Ferdie and Kefir left our stuff alone while we climbed Darwin the next day.

The climb was up the glacier toward the small notch. People said the route was harder than normal due to low snow. See Jim's report of details. At the crest, there was still significant class 3 climbing to reach the summit plateau.

Then the isolated summit block was climbed by descending to a snow gully and climbing up to the exposed backside of the block (class 3).

Time was too short that day for the climb of Mendel, so we retreated to camp for some R&R while Jim fished the next lower lake – with no success. Lamarck was an easy target on the way out. Louise stayed an extra day to climb Goethe, enjoying the gorgeous wildflowers on the climb up from the Darwin Bench to the lakes below Goethe.

## Mt. Darwin, June 29- July 1, 2007

By Jim Wholey

I thought you might like to see some pictures of another one of our weekend trips.

This is Mt Darwin, in the central part of the Sierra:



There was some rock climbing involved:





As well as some snow:



The summit area has a good size plateau, but the actual high point is this block a bit off to the side:



Here is a shot of Louise doing the final move to the high point:



Just don't do anything dumb, like fly an airplane too close to this peak:



# Mount Silliman, July 21-22, 2007

By Santa PalChaudhuri

Mount Silliman is a 11188 ft peak in the Sierra mountains within Sequoia NP. A group of 8 from the Loma Prieta chapter of Sierra Club hiked it in 2 days on a beautiful July weekend. It was the first Sierra Peak climbing for me, but most of the team were avid and experienced mountaineers - Linda, Harry, Joerg, Chris, John, Amit and Arun Mahajan, leader.

We left San Jose Bay Area at around 6 pm, reaching our roadside camping spot in the Sierra Forest near waypoint ROWL01 (about 8 miles south from The Wye) around 11 pm. Slept under the starry nights in a sleeping bag only - another first for me. We got up at 6 am, drove to Wuksachi Lodge down the road, where we had a sumptuous buffet breakfast. We met up at the Twin Lakes trailhead (altitude of 6700 ft) near Lodgepole, and started the hike at 9 am. The initial hike for about 1 hour (2-mile) was along a well-designated easy twin-lakes trail. We reached Silliman creek at about 10:15 am and left the main trail to walk along the right of the Silliman creek on a little trail. It was a quite easy trail to follow for the next hour or so, albeit we had to keep a lookout not to loose the trail. At 11 am after a steadily rising hike, we reached the slabs. The slabs is an imposing granite slope for over a mile. The left side of the slabs were steeper will no cracks or vegetation, but the right side had an easier hike up shielded by trees, shrubs and cracks.



We choose to go up the right side half-way, and then switched to climbing straight along the slabs. It was a bit tiring, specially with the heavy backpacks on us. We noticed that one group choose to set camp before the slab climbing, so as to not carry up the fully loaded backpacks. At the top of the slabs, we veered right to reach the Silliman Lake - our camping spot for the night - around 1:30 pm. It was at an altitude of 10000 ft, so we had gained about 3300 ft in a 5 mile hike.



The lake has a lovely grassy meadow for camping, where we promptly set up camp. The alpine lake looked inviting after the hot hike, and many of us jumped in for a refreshing swim. We spent the rest of the afternoon lazing around and chatting till dinner time at 6. I had got a Mountain House noodles from REI, and one had to pour hot water and the dish was done in 10 minutes. The sunset was spectacular, lighting up the sierra rock with a golden hue.



Next day, we woke up at 6, and started climbing the peak promptly at 7. It was a 1200 ft climb in a steep 1 mile hike, but there was class II trails to climb up. We reached the peak at about 8:15, and was greeted with a spectacular 360 degree view of the ranges all around.



The central valley plains was visible at a distance too, though covered with smog. The peak had a USGS marker designating it as one of the 240 or so Sierra peaks.



It also had a register for all the peak climbers to sign and mark their presence. We started back at 9 and was back at the campsite in an hour. Thereafter we broke camp, and started the hike back to the trailhead about 10:30 am, reaching it in 3 hours flat. The climb down the slabs was a bit tricky, but the vibram soles on my boots were very effective in sticking onto the granite. There are quite a few hike down along the left-side through the trees, which seemed easier to climb down.

It was a lovely short hike and a terrific introduction to backpacking for me, finally graduating from car-camping and day hiking.

## **EASY AND LIGHT, Red, Gray, and Merced July 19-22, 2007**

**By Lisa Maxwell**

We explored the beauties of the Illilouette Creek drainage, covering 16 miles per day and climbed 3 peaks as well. A large fire in August of 2004 left scars and burned forests. But life came back and carpeted the now-open forests with meadows, shrubs, wildflowers, and young trees. The wildlife was fantastic and we saw a sow and her two (very playful) cubs.

Trailhead: Mono Meadows. Camp: Upper Ottoway Lake, Yosemite National Park Climbers: Lisa Barboza, David Frederick, Rod McCalley, Alex Sapozhnikov.

Abstract:

Day 1: Mono Meadows TH 7200' to Upper Ottoway Lake 10,400 – 15.7 miles and 3200 feet.

Day 2: Upper Ottoway Lake – Red Peak, Gray Peak, back to camp.

Day 3: Upper Ottoway Lake – Merced Peak. Hike out 15.7 miles to Mono Meadows TH

July 19, 2007

We camped overnight at the Mono Meadows Trailhead on Glacier Point Road in Yosemite. The views of Half Dome are amazing from the Point and I highly recommend a stop there if you do this trip. We braved the crowds of tourists who knew not what they saw.

Day 1- July 20, 2007:

We walked away from the cars at 7:30 AM and proceeded on our long hike in to Upper Ottoway Lake. On the way in, you go through the Illouette Creek drainage, gentle uphill slope through forests of Jeffrey and red fir, lodgepole pine. There have been several fires here over the years and some of the forests have become meadows of dead snags with an incredible carpet of wildflowers. These wildflowers were some of the best I'd seen all summer. The bog orchids were plentiful and many fantastic displays are there to greet the eye. At a leisurely pace, we arrived at Lower Ottoway Lake at 4:00 PM, met Rod McCalley who was joining us after hiking in over Chicquito Pass (small radios made the joining up easier), and arrived at our Upper Ottoway Lake camp at 5:30 PM. Campsites at Upper Ottoway are hard to find, but we were able to find some gravel sites on the west side of the lake that weren't exposed and where we wouldn't trample the wildflowers. Even though this is in the heart of Yosemite, not too many hikers come by here and we had the place to ourselves.

Day 2-July 21st, 2007 – RED & GRAY:

We started at 6:00 AM. Secor says to go to Red Peak Pass, climb Red from there. This route avoids much of the scree, but does involve some exposed 3rd Class moves. It actually does go, but you have to drop onto the North side of the Pass to actually find the route. Just on the north side, drop down about 50 feet and you'll find a route on clean granite that leads to a notch below Red Peak.

Climbing Red 11,699: Our Route: But we didn't take that route. We followed Steve Eckert's excellent trip report as follows: Go up the trail to Red Peak Pass about ¼ mile. On your left, you will see a low granite bench, about 10 feet high and 30 feet long, and just to the right of that, a pile of red talus. Leave the trail at that point and climb the talus to the peak. Oh, sounds so simple – but what talus it was. This talus consists of "Shoobox size" all the way to suitcase size rocks that are very unstable. We speculated that the instability is the result of the way the rock has fractured, into roughly triangular or trapezoidal pieces, making them very unstable. At any rate (slow) we reached the summit of Red at 8:15 AM to a great view of Gray and Clark, and Echo Peaks to the north. The weather was fantastic! From there, it's a downclimb to a small pass just northwest of Red Peak.

It's easiest to stay on the ridge almost to the pass, and then drop down as the rock is less unstable. From the small pass, drop back down to the lake at 10,470 and you're just about at the elevation where you started.

Climbing Gray 11,573: The route up Gray has several slabs to choose from. The Southeastern slabs (a bit steep) are followed by second set of slabs (a friction climb with lots of handholds) that run halfway up to the summit. We chose a route in between these slabs up a sandy set of rocks and sand gullies, but it would have been better if we had chosen the second set of slabs, as we had to cross these anyway and they proved to be easy climbing, if a bit exposed. But there are plentiful defects running across the slabs and handholds as well. It was good friction climbing practice for some of us. The 'true' summit of Gray is the northwest summit and that is where the all-important register is to be found. Another party had climbed the marked map summit (on all of topo maps). It would appear that this peak isn't climbed too often; but that's because most climbers miss the register summit.

Back to camp: - One could go back to camp the way they came, traversing about 200 feet below Red and down the scree slope on the south side of Red. But it was getting late and we wanted a quicker route back. The best way to return to Upper Ottoway is to go to the pass ('Reddy Pass') due north of Red Peak. Climb to the pass over easy slabs, and drop down to other side to a small lake at the foot of a glacier. From there, it's about .5 mile and a drop of 300 feet to the trail. Head due east until you intersect the trail up the north side of Red Peak Pass. We quickly gained the trail and all hands made it back to camp by nightfall.

Day 3-July 22nd, 2007:

Climb Merced, Campsite to TH

With a 6:15 AM start, Alex and I started our climb. Climb the easy slabs to the small pass NNW of Merced Peak, about 1 mile of climbing and 800 feet higher than the lake. We stayed to the south of the creek, there are some small cliffs to go around and it's best to stay about 100 feet above the drainage on the south side where there are no obstacles. From the small pass, you have your choice of slabs, CL2 climbing and we were at the summit by 8:00 AM. We could easily see our camp and we waved to Rod and David. We were back at camp by 10:00 AM, and started our hike out.

The hike out: Down the Illilouette drainage - Great views of Starr King and the lesser domes, incredible gardens of wildflowers - and a lot faster than we thought - We left Lower Ottoway Lake at 12:50 PM, and we reached the cars by 8:30 PM and started the long drive home to the Bay Area.

All in all, a successful weekend trip and a good time was had by all.

## **Mt Russell 14,088', Thor Peak 12,300', and the Mobil Station 0', June 30 - July 1 2007**

**By Stephane Mouradian**

We had six people on this PCS trip. As of this date, only six can be reserved in advance for the North Fork of Lone Pine creek (four additional spots are available on a first come first served basis) Our group included: Derek Palmer, Mike Snadden, Alex Sapozhnikov, Kelly Maas (co-leader), Gery Peterson, Stephane Mouradian (leader and scribe). Derek arrived to the east side a couple days early to get used to the elevation and bag Mt Carillon as a "warm up" (!). The other 5 packed up in Mike's Honda CRV, which was plenty roomy (even for the long drive) and reduced the trip's carbon footprint.

It was Mike's first PCS trip and first East Side trip so we felt compelled to stop at the Whoa Nellie Deli, Mobil Station to make sure Mike would get the full experience of what an East Side trip ought to be. On Saturday, we first weighed our bags at the Whitney Portal scale for fun. There was quite a difference in weight from Kelly's 25 lbs pack to Alex's 40 lbs pack, which got us all hopeful we would be invited to Alex's 10 course dinner...

The trail up the N. Fork is great and we got to Upper Boy Scout around lunch time. We talked to a couple climbers who were just back from Russell's East Ridge. They told us they had to turn back because they had reached the limit of their comfort zone. We tried not to let this spook us; but we had a good understanding in the group that anyone should be free to stop and wait if they reached their limit on the climb.

Since it was early, Kelly managed to convince, Mike and Stephane, to check out nearby Thor Peak. From UBS, we gained the small lake NW of Thor and went up the drainage for ~200 yards until we could see a way to climb the ridge referred to as "pinnacle ridge" on the 7.5' topo. Pinnacle ridge is west of Thor. We found an access to the ridge via a wide chimney which required an easy class 3 move at the start. The chimney is located near the "R" in "Pinnacle Ridge" on the above mentioned map. Once on the ridge, we headed east for Thor. The ridge started as an easy walk but eventually turned into a class 4 affair 100 yards before the summit. Kelly and Mike persevered and reached the summit. Stephane down-climbed and went to explore the couloir on the right (east) side of Thor. This ended up being an easy class 2 walk to the summit and our choice for the return trip. We got back to camp at 6pm, our afternoon stroll had turned out more exciting than we thought ☺

On Sunday, we left camp at 5:50am for Russell. We chose the scree slope and followed a well traveled trail which was fairly easy walking. We gained the foot of the ridge, and following the recommendation of previous trip leaders, I (Stephane) went up the ridge directly without spending too

much time looking over “how bad” the exposure was. We made good time on the ridge, staying mostly on the right side. Tulaynio Lake below us was still frozen. We quickly reached the crux where one has to walk on a short 3-4 feet wide catwalk. This did not feel that bad because it is short and plenty wide. Our entire group of 6 held their own and everyone reached the top around 9:50am, which made me look good ( ) since I had told them it would take us ~4 hours to the top. The ridge descent felt easier than the way up. Overall, the exposure was not as bad as people say. This group rated the exposure as “medium”.

We had a quick walk down to UBS, followed by the steep 2.5 mile/3000’ descent to Whitney Portal. By the way, the “ledges” part of the trail has actually a fairly exposed section where the one foot wide trail is right next to a dropping slab. Walk slowly there when you have a full pack.

Guess where we stopped for dinner on the way home?

Trip stats:

Saturday: started Whitney Portal; 8:45am, reached UBS 12:00. Left for Thor at 2pm and returned at 6pm  
Sunday: left UBS 5:50am, top of Scree slope 7:30am, summit 9:50am, returned to UBS 12:30

## Mt Langley 14,026’ on 07/07/07

### By Stephane Mouradian

Four of us summited Mt Langley in early July. Our group include: Landa Robillard, Bonnie Ruesh, Kirsten and Stephane Mouradian (Leader and scribe).

We did this trip as an overnight. It was 108F in Lone Pine, so we started a little earlier on the first day. There had been some conflicting reports on whether Old Army pass was free of snow or not, including on the Ranger Station recording (which said it was snow covered). We went to the Cottonwood lakes to take a look. There was a main couloir straight up to the pass and this couloir was choked up with steep ice. Fortunately this was not the rout we needed to take. The trail goes left and snakes up and traverses the left side of the canyon. The trail is very good and it was 100% clear of snow.

We camped just at the foot of the pass (Cottonwood Lake 4 or 5 depending on the map). The next morning, we started at 6am and it took us 45 min. to get to the pass. We followed a good trail to the summit which we reached at 9:30am. We were the first to summit that day and proudly wrote the date in the summit register: 07/07/07; an easy date to remember my last fourteener. ☺

One striking feature from the summit was the raging fire in Big Pine Canyon, which looked huge from the summit. We had started our trip the day before and no idea about the fire. On the way down, we ran into Jeff Fisher and Chris Franchuck on their way up, working on Jeff’s goal to climb all the fourteeners in one year. They warned us about the closure of Hwy 395 N of Lone Pine due to the fire. We got back to camp at 11:30, packed up and were back at the cars at 3:30pm. The last part of that trail seems to last forever and actually climbs up slightly to the Parking lot. Kirsten kept the pace up hoping 395 would be reopened and allow for a yummy dinner at Shat’s or (yes) the M. station. Alas, the road was closed and we had to go though much less exciting Bakersfield.

Trip stats:

Sat summit day: left camp 6am. Top of old Army pass: 6:45am, summited 9:30am, back to camp at 11: 30, arrived at Cottonwood Lakes parking lot 3:30pm

## Private Trips

**Note:** 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.

### Aug 11-19(?) – Palisades-a-rama

**Contact:** Jeff Fisher ([jeff\\_fisher\\_5252@sbcglobal.net](mailto:jeff_fisher_5252@sbcglobal.net), 650-207-9632)

**Alternate:** 5<sup>th</sup> Class lead climber wanted to help lead.

Peaks: Thunderbolt, Starlite, North Palisade., Polemonium, and Sill, all over 14000 feet

Fun is to be had by all. Class 2, 3, 4 with 2 fifth class summit blocks. If interested in some but not all the peaks let me know. Helmets required on the Thunderbolt and Starlite, climbing shoes recommended. I will drive up early to get a non-reservable permit. The hope is to finish before the 19th; the option is to go home early or hit some other peaks.

### Aug 19-25 – Wind Rivers

**Contact:** Bob Suzuki (SuzukiR@sd-star.com)

**Alternate:** Steve Eckert ([http://www.climber.org/WhosWho/Steve\\_Eckert.html](http://www.climber.org/WhosWho/Steve_Eckert.html))

Class 3-4, ice ax, crampons, rope used. Sun-Sat, 7 days.

Gannett, Fremont, Arrowhead, Lester, Ellingwood, Stroud ...

Maps: Bridger Teton N. F.: Pinedale R.; Wind River Range, north half

More than just a dash up Titcomb Basin to bag the state highpoint of Gannett, we’ll hike a loop over Knapsack Pass and climb a mixed bag of peaks with an eye toward variety and views (not just the highest ones around). The scenery

should be great and greatly varied. Most of the backpacking will be on trail and the gain with full packs will be moderate. Some peaks will be rock, some snow, probably some with steep ice sections. Rope, tools, recent climbing resume, and confidence required. Leaders will be driving from San Francisco, Participants from other areas welcome. See <http://www.climber.org/trips/#706>.

### **Aug 31 - Sept 3 – LeConte/Corcoran**

**Contact:** Bob Suzuki ([SuzukiR@sd-star.com](mailto:SuzukiR@sd-star.com))

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

Class 3-4. Fri-Mon. Mount Whitney, Mt Langley topos

McAdie (13,799'), LeConte (13,930'), Corcoran (13,714+'), Lone Pine (12,943')

These 4 high peaks south of Mt. Whitney should provide adequate exercise for the long Labor Day weekend. Our base camp will be at Meysan Lakes. Permit for 7.

### **Sept 1-3 – Gardiner (12907') & Cotter (12721')**

**Contact:** Kelly Maas ([kellymbase-pcs@yahoo.com](mailto:kellymbase-pcs@yahoo.com), 408-378-5311)

Class 3-4. Sat-Mon. From Onion Valley we cross Kearsarge Pass, Glen Pass and Rae Col on our way to Sixty Lakes Basin - a long day. From there we can gaze up at Mt. Clarence King. The next day we climb the classic exposed class 4 ridge on Gardiner. A rope will be used. This is followed by an easier run up Cotter (class 2-3) before returning to camp. For the really fast and strong people, Fin Dome (class 3-4) is also a possibility. The 3rd day is reserved for hiking out and driving home. Assistant wanted.

### **Sept 14-16 – Lover's Leap Climbing**

**Contact:** Jeff Fischer

([jeff\\_fischer\\_5252@sbcglobal.net](mailto:jeff_fischer_5252@sbcglobal.net), 408.733.1299)

**Alternate:** Natalie Guishar  
([natalie.guishar@yahoo.com](mailto:natalie.guishar@yahoo.com))

Beautiful and classic Class 5 climbing up vertical granite walls with many cracks, ledges, knobs and faces. At elevation of 6-7000 feet, expect temperatures in the 60s to 70s. Group campsite is free but try to arrive early Friday to claim (squat on) a site. See details on climbing & location at <http://www.supertopo.com/climbingareas/southlaketahoe.html>

### **October 2007 – Nepal around Annapurna**

**Contact:** Warren Storkman (650-493-8959, [dstorkman@aol.com](mailto:dstorkman@aol.com))

This itinerary is for Oct 2007 to climb the highest trekking peak in Nepal, Mera Peak.

This walk up peak will allow you to bag over 21,000 ft.

Those who know me - know I do not handle your funds nor do you have to send any deposit.

US \$ 1520 per person

#### **ITINERARY FOR MERA PEAK**

- Day 1 Fly to Lukla/ Phakding overnight camp
- Day 2 Phakding to Namche overnight camp

- Day 3 Namche Day hike to Khumjung / Kunde
- Day 4 Namche to Phakding overnight camp
- Day 5 Phakding to Thukdingma overnight camp
- Day 6 Thukdingma trek to Tsetre overnight camp
- Day 7 Tsetre trek to Thaksindingma
- Day 8 Thaksindingma to Thagnak
- Day 9 Thagnak rest day for acclimatization
- Day 10 Thagnak trek to Khare
- Day 11 Khare trek to Mera Base Camp camp
- Day 12 Extra day in case of bad weather

Day 13 High camp and make preparation for the next day to get to the summit. Day 14 Climb Mera summit look views of Pumori (7161m), Lhotse (8516m) Makalu (8463m), Lobuche (6145m), Cho Oyu (8201m) are spectacular from the summit. We retrace to Base Camp.

Day 15-17 Mera Peak Base Camp - Lukla. We follow the same route and come back to Lukla.

Day 18 Lukla - Kathmandu flight out

### **Mid-January 2008 – Kilimanjaro - Tanzania**

**Contact:** Warren Storkman (650-493-8959, [dstorkman@aol.com](mailto:dstorkman@aol.com))

Climb Kilimanjaro in Tanzania. Take an optional safari. Inquiries are welcome.

## Elected Officials

### Chair:

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## Publicity Committee Positions

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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/)

## Email List Info

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.

## 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 Monday, August 27th. Meetings are the second Tuesday of each month.



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