

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

General Meeting

Date: December 11, 2007

Time: 7:00 pm

Where: Caliper Life Sciences
605 Fairchild Drive
Mountain View, CA

Program: Holiday Party with Slide Show

Presenter: Everyone!

Come one, come all to our annual holiday party where we indulge in a potluck dinner, view trip highlights, and generally have a rollicking good time. Family members & friends are welcome - if they dare to be seen with crazy climbers.

Bring a dozen photos and some yummy food dish to share, as well as your own plate, utensils and cup. (Re-usable items will minimize waste.) We'll supply some basic drinks and paper towels, but that's it. If you'd like to bring a special beverage, please do so. Alcohol is OK. The cafeteria at Caliper has a small kitchen area with a couple of microwaves and a sink.

Bring your digital pics on a USB flash drive or a CD-ROM. Old-fashioned slides will also be accommodated.

Directions:

Parking and access to the Caliper cafeteria is on the south side of the building.

From San Jose (Northbound Hwy 101):

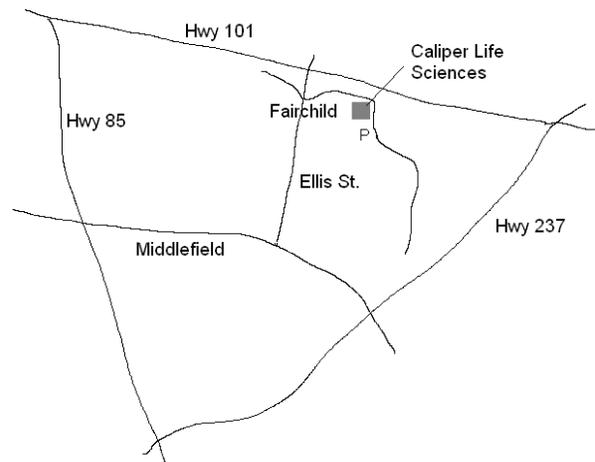
Take the Ellis St exit and turn left, going back under the freeway. Turn left on Fairchild Drive (first street after freeway on-ramp). Go approx. ¼ mile to Caliper building on the right.

From San Francisco (Southbound Hwy 101):

Take Ellis Street exit and turn right onto Ellis Street. Take the very first left (100 ft) on Fairchild Drive. Go approx. ¼ mile to Caliper building on the right.

From Hwy 85 (Northbound):

Take the Moffett Blvd. exit and turn right onto Moffett Blvd. Follow Moffett Blvd. and take Hwy 101 southbound. Exit Ellis and follow the directions shown above.



Editor's Notes

At the November meeting we held our annual elections. In the first hotly contested election in years, Lisa won over Louise for the position of PCS Chair. Our new officers are:

Lisa Barboza, Chair
Rod McCalley, Vice-Chair
Alex Sapozhnikov, Treasurer

We are extremely grateful to this year's officers and committee members for all their work. Note that without volunteers the section would not exist. When you see these folks please extend your thanks.

Kelly Maas, Chair
Lisa Barboza, Vice-Chair
Toinette Hartshorne, Treasurer and Membership
Louise Wholey, Scree Editor
Rick Booth, Web Publisher
Charles Schafer, Mountaineering Committee Chair
Arun Mahajan, Tom Driscoll, Stephane Mouradian, Nominating Committee

Recall that we instituted new operating rules this year. Some positions have been taken:

Webmaster/Email Broadcast, Joe Baker
Scree Publication, Louise Wholey

We have **openings** for several committee chairmen:

Training Committee
Publicity Committee
Social Committee

Let us know what **you** would like to do.

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Message from our new chair



Lisa Barboza

Let me take a moment to let you know how excited I am about serving as your chair for 2008. Climbing is truly my passion, and here's why: - I love the idea that I'm in a wilderness primeval, not under human dominion, and in many ways untouched and removed from the 21st Century. I love the sense of intimacy and humility with the Mountains, and also the challenge of route-finding and being somewhere I've never been.

So I feel challenged for this New Year, another beginning for the PCS. First, we have a wonderful organization with great folks. Last year, we led over 40 official PCS Trips and numerous unofficial ones. Our Leadership Development Program helped us understand how to restructure the committees and lay a foundation for growth. We had a great slate of officers, Scree editor, and webmaster.

But we have some challenges. Our membership is shrinking; we're all getting older. And it's often difficult to find people who are willing to volunteer their time.

So this year, my goal is grow the organization with new members, fill some of our new committees, work to strengthen our climbing skill development, and build a foundation for the future. I'd like to reach out to the community of climbers who share our passion for peak climbing.

I welcome your ideas, suggestions, and I need your help to build up our membership.

Happy Holidays - LISA

Courses

Wilderness First Aid Course

When: Feb 9-10, 2007, 8 AM to 5 PM

Where: Peninsula Conservation Center, Palo Alto

Cost: \$95

Contact: Tom Morse, 650-593-5123, tripbtom@aol.com

The Loma Prieta Chapter is sponsoring a 16-hour wilderness first aid course taught by Bobbie Foster of Foster Calm. The class runs 8 AM to 5 PM each day with a one hour break for lunch. It will include lectures, demonstrations, and practical exercises (both indoors and outdoors, weather permitting). Space is limited to 20 students, and early sign-up is recommended.

Instructor Bobbie Foster has been teaching first aid classes for over a decade. Her class comes highly recommended by the many PCS members who have taken it. The 16-hour class is very appropriate for PCS activities, and is much better than standard first aid courses. It's time and money well spent. If this date does not work for you, other classes may be found on Bobbie's website at <http://www.fostercalm.com>.

Chicks With Picks

For women who would be interested in ice climbing and would like instruction from world class women who ice climb try this:

The Complete Chicks

January 29 - February 2, Ouray, CO

Our most popular clinic: Four days of climbing on the ice including a "Skills Day".

The Chicks Sampler

February 3 - February 6, Ouray, CO

Short but sweet!...A shorter version of the Complete, the Sampler gives you a 3-day "taste" of ice climbing.

Totally Chick

January 14 - January 18, Ouray, CO

Come early and enjoy the [Ouray Ice Festival](#). This is the ultimate in personal instruction from our world-class guides. 4 days of 4-1 instruction including an option to do backcountry skills.

<http://www.chickswithpicks.net>

Phone: 1-970-626-4424

Email: info@chickswithpicks.net

News

Sierra Avalanche Center

P.O.Box 358
Truckee, CA 96160

Avalanche forecasting for the central Sierra (Tahoe)

<http://www.sierraavalanchecenter.org>

Hotline: 530-587-2158

Mission:

The mission of the Sierra Avalanche Center includes disseminating current snow pack stability information to the general public; providing educational information, knowledge, and understanding of avalanches to recreational users and groups; and facilitating communication in the region to reduce the impact of avalanches on recreation, industry, and transportation through a partnership with the U.S. Forest Service.

Needs:

Money: Funding has been cut. They desperately need help to fund the program and a forecaster. They are a 501.c3 not-for-profit organization.

Workers: They need volunteers to observe snow conditions, to help with events and fundraising, and to do printing and graphics design.

Skiers: They need downhill skiers to buy lift tickets (about half price) through snowbomb.com for these dates:

Dec. 16 Ski for SAC - Mt. Rose

Jan. 6 Ski for Sac - Kirkwood

Jan. 13 Ski for Sac - Northstar

Mar. 2 Ski for SAC - Homewood

Mar. 7 Ski for SAC - Sugar Bowl

Mar. 30 Ski for SAC - Alpine Meadows

All the proceeds from the sale of these tickets go to SAC!

Pacific Crest Trail Association

Like most non-profit organizations the PCTA (Pacific Crest Trail Association) is mostly funded by donations. This year, 2007, the US Forest Service has agreed to match with 3 dollars every dollar donated to the PCTA! This money will help build trails that we use for mountain access. Forms and details are at <http://www.pcta.org>.

Gear Corner

GPS Receivers

Judy Mollard recently queried the membership on GPS receivers. Many thanks to all the people who replied!!!

Amazingly everyone had a slightly different but complementary view of what is significant. Please note that all GPS users also carry maps and compasses!

Kelly's GPS died a few years ago. He says that it is amazing that the basic eTrex form factor hasn't changed for many years. It still seems to be the standard. The eTrex now comes in quite a range, but he would only consider the ones with the high sensitivity chip set - those with HC or HCx in the name. Curiously, the ones that use the microSD card (designated HCx) are specified for a longer battery life than the 24 MByte versions (designated HC). Long battery life is always a good thing.

Scott Kreider likes the eTrex Gecko, a very small GPS. The device weighs only oz, has no map feature, but can get you back to camp in the dark. Some PCS climbers know! They did that on a climb of Polemonium last year!

Stephane likes his Garmin Foretrex 101. While it has no map capability, it is very small and light and has a strap that fits on your wrist. Cost is only \$100. It can easily load up waypoints from maps in the TOPO software. In the field use the gps bearing and distance to the waypoints. Buy it at <https://buy.garmin.com/shop/shop.do?cID=144&pID=260>. Incidentally, if you find one near the Bradley hut, please return it to Stephane.

Arun is very happy with his Garmin eTrex Vista bought in 2001. While it is a bit expensive (300\$+), try to get it as a gift. Some of the considerations in choosing one are: weight, features, ease of use, ease of use with a PC/Mac, compatibility with mapping software, weather-proof, ruggedness, battery life. For sure, there are a lot of good models out there.

Lisa has found that her Vista Cx works quite well, and it's also light (150g with 2 Li-Ion batteries). In dense forest you will get a weak signal but it seems to track OK. She has the 64MB memory card as well and has loaded MapSource, for CA, NV, AZ, and all of New England - and still room for more data.

Louise just bought a new Garmin eTrex Vista HCx. She has been using the Legend for a while but upgraded because Legend has lower sensitivity, less memory expandability, no altitude profiles, and she failed to adequately protect the display window with a case. Both devices are extremely useful for displaying MapSource 15 minute series maps, which makes finding peaks trivial.

Judy and Joe purchased a Garmin eTrex Vista HCx based on the results of this survey.

Jim Wholey shares his experience with numerous GPS devices.

Garmin eTrex Gecko:

This is a small very lightweight unit due to its use of AAA batteries. That makes it very easy to carry in a pocket, but also easy to forget and put through a washing machine (don't do that!) It has limited features (no maps) but was immensely useful in the Palisade basin with a waypoint at our camp and a return from Polemonium Peak after dark.

Garmin eTrex Vista:

This is a great hand held unit with the ability to store topo or road maps. The built in pressure based altimeter and compass makes it worth the incremental increase in price over the Garmin Legend. The HCx model provides a very useful increase in sensitivity so locations can be obtained without clear views of the sky as well as great battery life. I enjoy the unit mounted on my bike. It's possible to download tracks for routes, elevation profiles, hill gradients, and speeds. Unlike a bike specific model, it does not include heart rate or cadence.

Garmin eTrex 396:

This is an expensive semi-portable unit designed for aviation. In addition to all gps based functions it includes an xm satellite receiver that enables current and forecast weather to be included on the moving maps.

Snowshoes

By Frank Martin, PCS Equipment Guru
(sriprank@yahoo.com)

I really don't consider myself an authority on Snowshoes. I do have three pair and usually I find that somewhere during a trip I lament not having the ones I left home.

I am sure there are many reading this who have much more experience than I. However, if you are new to the sport or contemplating purchasing your first pair this information hopefully will assist you.

Snowshoes are rated by the weight of the individual plus any gear that is being carried. So if your intended use is just to day-hike you can use your own weight as a guide. However if you intend to go snow camping with a pack full of winter gear you must add that weight to your body weight.

There are four major brands. Atlas, Tubbs, Redfeather and MSR. Most manufactures are now making models that are specific for women. The first three brands are always on sale or can be found used on Craigslist. The MSR's can sometimes be found on sale.

If I were to buy one pair of snowshoes I would purchase the MSR Lighting Ascents. These will serve you well for general purpose or for climbing. They traverse well and with the added feature of the MSR Televator™ they are the best for climbing steep ridges. Even the older plastic MSR's Denali's are great for climbing. They may look a bit old fashion but they are work well.

An Ultra-Lite Snowshoe is now made by Northern Lites

<http://www.northernlites.com/>

I purchased a used pair last year (Backcountry Rescue) and for certain situations they were great. They climb fairly well and have excellent floatation but don't traverse well at all. They worked well going to Castle Peak and even to Helen Lake but on the trip to Dick's Peak with a steep traverse and soft snow they were useless. Actually worse than useless they were dangerous.

The final pair of show I own are Tubbs Wilderness 36. These are trailblazers. They are heavy and exhausting to use. However in fresh deep snow they will provide floatation and allow others in the Group to follow your tracks. Hopefully at some point someone will 'trade out' and take the lead.

Anyway it looks as if some snow is coming soon. Whoopee!!!

Have fun and be safe and watch out for the signs of Hypothermia.

Frank

Editor's Note: We used GV Snowshoes on a major North Pole excursion. I thought they were comparable to the four major US brands. Despite needing gear for a far longer time, our packs were similar in weight to what a peak bagger would carry because of the sleds used for carrying most of our gear. You may wish to check <http://www.gvsnowshoes.com/>.

PCS Trip Calendar

Dec 8 – Pyramid Peak day hike

Leader: Lisa Barboza

Dec 15 – Mt. Diablo

Leader: Kelly Maas

Dec 16 – Mystery Peak day hike

Leader: Lisa Barboza

Dec 28 – Backcountry Ski Series (#1)

Leader: Louise Wholey

Jan 6 – Juniper Serra

Leader: Lisa Barbosa, Arun Mahajan

Jan 18 – Backcountry Ski Series (#2)

Leader: Louise Wholey

Feb 15 – Backcountry Ski Series (#3)

Leader: Louise Wholey

Mar ? – Backcountry Ski Series (#4)

Leader: Louise Wholey

Apr 11-13 – Mt. Morgan (N)

Leader: Louise Wholey

Apr ? – Sawtooth, Owens

Leader: Charles Schafer

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.

December 8, 2007 – Mt. Inyo

Mid-January 2008 – Kilimanjaro - Tanzania

February 5, 2008 – Copper Canyon Backpack

March ?, 2007 – Mt. Lassen Climb

March ?, 2007 – Round Top

May, 2008 – Nepal – Kailash - Tibet

PCS Trip Details

Pyramid Peak

Peak: Pyramid Peak

Date: Dec 8

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

Co-Leader: needed

Climb Pyramid Peak from Echo Lakes via Lake of the Woods. Trip will be strenuous, covering about 20 miles and 2500+ feet of climbing. Route may change depending upon snow conditions.

Mt. Diablo

Peak: Mt. Diablo, West Side

Date: Dec 15, 8:30 - 4:30

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

Co-Leader: needed

Dayhike of about 18 mi, 4000-5000 foot elevation gain.

Instead of my usual north side route from Mitchell Canyon, I've been talked into trying a new trailhead that's closer to home. We'll bag only the main summit, leaving the other summits untouched. Meet at the Macedo Ranch trailhead at 8:30, or meet at the Fremont Blvd / 680 Park-n-Ride (next to McDonalds) at 7:55 for carpooling. Trailhead directions: from the south bay, go north on 680 to the Diablo Rd exit in Danville and go east. Diablo Rd takes a right turn at a stop light after about 0.7 mi., so be vigilant. After another 0.6 mi., turn left on Green Valley Rd and follow it to the end. If coming from the north, exit 680 at Stone Valley Rd (Alamo) and go east about 3 miles. Turn left on Green Valley Rd and follow it to the end. This is a 30 minute drive from the carpool spot. Note that the parking lot closes at dusk, so there won't be much lollygagging. See ya all there!

Tinker Knob

Peak: Tinker Knob (89490)

Date: Dec 16, Sunday

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

Co-Leader: needed

Day trip to climb Tinker Knob from PCT Trailhead at Donner Summit. Moderately strenuous hike of 14 miles round trip with a short non-technical ascent of the peak.

Junipero Serra

Peak: Junipero Serra (5862), King City

Date: Jan 6, Sunday

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

Co-Leader: needed

This is an annual January Loma Prieta Peak Climbing Section tradition. It's a 12 mile round trip to the summit of the peak. We'll be carpooling from San Jose for this trip as it is a 150 mile drive to the trailhead. This peak is the 2nd highest in the Santa Lucia range. On the summit, we'll find exotic ponderosa pine, white fir, and other plants normally associated with the Sierra. We'll start at the trailhead at 10AM, summit by 2PM and be back at the cars by 4PM. This is a class 1 day hike open to all.

Backcountry Ski Series

Peak: Tamarack Peak, Castle Peak, or Mt. Judah

Date: Dec 28, Jan 18, Feb 15, Mar ?

Leader: Louise Wholey (louisewholey@yahoo.com)

Co-Leader: Jim Wholey

Join us for a day of backcountry skiing in the Tahoe area. Requires advanced skiing skills, avalanche training. Randonee or Telemark skis, climbing skis, avalanche beacon, shovel, and probe required. Location determined each day by snow conditions. We seek powder snow and will climb and descend multiple times. Limit 6.

Mt. Morgan (N)

Peak: Mt. Morgan (N), cl 2, ski mountaineering

Date: Apr 11-13

Leader: Louise Wholey (louisewholey@yahoo.com)

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

This graduation trip is an extension of backcountry skiing – ski mountaineering in the High Sierra. TH is Rock Creek if open, else Hilton creek. Ski to base of peak, snow camp, ski up and down peak, snow camp, ski out. Requires advanced skiing skills, avalanche training. Randonee or Telemark skis, climbing skis, avalanche beacon, shovel, and probe required. Expect a hedonistic experience. Limit 6.

Trip Reports

Polemonium Preface, June 29-30, 2007

By Tom Driscoll

As we sat down to breakfast at the Bishop Schatt's, Arun announced "I have the title for the trip report: Once in a Blue Moon". Peter and I exchanged worried glances, knowing that the trip was now somehow in jeopardy. Didn't Arun know that it is dangerous to write the trip report before the trip starts?

Once in a Blue Moon

With additions by Arun and Scott and pictures by Peter

That authoritative source, Wikipedia says: "... a *blue moon* is the second of two full moons to occur in the same calendar month. Calendar blue moons occur infrequently, and the saying *once in a blue moon* is used to describe a rare event." So what rare event would transpire on this trip to justify the title? The blue moon would arrive the next day, June 30.

If your trip goes into the National Park, you have to listen to the back-country ranger talk. No more night box to get your permit early. We stood in line with fellow PCSer's Bob Suzuki, Jim Ramaker, and Eddie Sudol who were climbing elsewhere that weekend. We didn't get to the South Lake trail-head until around 9:30 am. After re-packing the climbing gear we started hiking at 10:30 am, but reached Bishop Pass a few hours later. We didn't drop down from the pass on-trail enough and had a bit of boulder-hopping up to Thunderbolt Pass. We should have kept right at this point to avoid the worst ledges going down to Barrett Lakes.

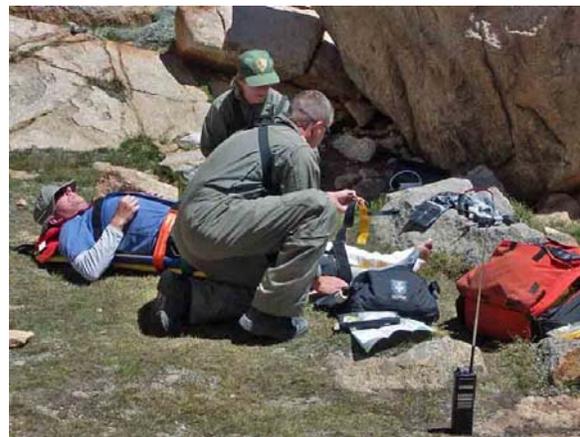
While scrambling down from Thunderbolt Pass, I came to a ledge that was too far to step off. I sat down on the ledge and scooted over the edge to a rock 4 feet below. My pack caught on the edge and pushed me off course. I landed stiffly about three feet lower than intended and must have hit a slanted rock. My ankle twisted over painfully. I reached two fingers inside my left boot to see what damage I had done and could feel the bones moving as I pressed (they call it Crepitus and that's what it feels like). I knew then that I wouldn't be climbing the next day. I tried putting weight on that foot after a few minutes, but the ankle was unstable. Using his wilderness first-aid training, Scott wrapped my ankle and I took two aspirin. We were only 50 yards from our intended camp and the quickest way to get there was to "crab-crawl" down out of the boulder field while Arun and Scott carried my pack.

Arun & Scott hiked-out to get help at day-break and arrived at the trail-head 5 hours later. The nearest land-line was at Parcher's Resort, but a call to 9-1-1 did not bring any help given the question of county jurisdiction. A stop at the Bishop ranger station quickly got the right agency on the phone, the SAR unit of the National Parks Service and instant response. (It happens that the phone number is on the back of the permit, if one has cell coverage)

So, there isn't too much to do while you're waiting for rescue. Fortunately, the camp was infested with fat marmots and I had to defend our stuff from the invaders. Shortly after 1 pm we heard the thwump-thwump of helicopter blades; they circled the area a few times and Keith Brison set down in an impossibly small spot. After a quick check by EMTs Debbie Brenchly and Derek Dalrymple, they bundled me into the helicopter while Peter packed up our gear. They hauled all the packs down to Bishop as well. Peter and Ranger Dave hiked-out over Thunderbolt Pass and Carrie Vernon gave me a safety-briefing: if we crash and you're the only person alive, pull the red handle. The flight to the Bishop emergency room only took a few minutes and the price was right – free! If you're going to break your leg in the back-country, do it in Sequoia- King's Canyon National Park.



Helicopter landing at Barrett Lakes



First Aid



Carry to the helicopter

Arun adds:

While we did manage to possibly get connected to the right folks for initiating a rescue by calling 911, we had to deal with a few issues such as calling from a pay phone and not being sure that we would get a call back, lack of cell coverage, even at the trailhead and that it took a little while and some patient explaining by Scott to finally convey to the people at the other end of the phone about the injury and the location. So, we drove down to the ranger's at Bishop. They understood exactly what had happened and gave us access to their phone and the number to call. Scott again manned the phone and the NPS SAR person, Barbara, quickly got all the relevant details from Scott. Luckily, he had taken GPS coordinates of Tom's location. There are no words to describe how much reassurance we got from her confident approach to the problem. The rangers offered us a conference room to sit while we waited for the phone call from Barbara. Soon, perhaps a couple of hours later, we got a call. We were thinking that she would be calling, asking for more information but much to our pleasant surprise, she said that the SAR people were already with Tom! We drove to the airport and soon enough heard their chopper and saw them drop Tom off along with a lot of our backpacking gear. Tom and the gear were loaded onto a waiting truck, which we followed to the Bishop county hospital on Line Street. There we waited 'til Tom got checked out by the doctors and they put his foot in an impressive looking cast. Some of our gear was left in the copter by mistake and they were good enough to mail it all to me at my home! As mentioned before, none of us had words enough to thank them for all this service. This was really beyond the call of duty and to think that they have to fight for funding!

My injury was diagnosed as a Maisonneuve fracture; a grade 3, high-ankle sprain with fractured and dislocated fibula (I didn't rely on Wikipedia for the medical information). A couple of screws and 4 months in a hard cast have healed the damage; another 3 months of physical therapy yet to go. I want to thank Arun, Scott, Peter, Leighton, Kai, Dan, Bob, Joerg, Aaron, Kelly, Stephane, Mitch, Tigger, Pooh-bear, Debbie, Landa, Marilyn, Kirsten, Cynthia, Natasha, Joan, Linda S., Linda S., Chris, and especially Francoise for bringing me food, doing chores, and cheering me up over the past 5 months.

Mark your calendar for the next Blue Moon on December 31, 2009. No worries.

Thirot Shivling (5324m / 17460+ ft), Alpine PD-

September 12 to October 9, 2007

By Arun Mahajan

**Gangstang (6162m / 20220+ft), Alpine D- with pitches of
Scottish grade III/IV**

Part-1

I was lucky to be accepted to join a British expedition to the Indian Himalaya in the state Himachal Pradesh (HP) which lies south of Kashmir and also has Tibet on its north-east borders. The plan was to do some exploring in the valley accessed via the Thirot Nala, a drainage of one of the streams that eventually meet up and create the river, Chenab. This lies in one of the least populated districts of HP, Lahul-Spiti.

14th September: We all met in New Delhi at the YWCA hostel, a popular place amongst climbers and were soon introduced to the cook/sirdar, Navin and his staff of high altitude porters, HAPs, Ajay and Govind. The other HAP, Tenzing, a native of Spiti, was to join us later. We all helped in sorting gear and in getting the food/equipment barrels ready to be loaded onto a small truck. This truck was then dispatched and would only meet us next at the road-head.

Martin Moran, an accomplished guide from the UK was our leader. The group consisted of, James Edwards: co-leader and guide, David Geddes, Frank Johnstone, Peter Ashworth, Allan Clapperton, and John Leedale (all from the UK). Gustavo Fierro-Carrion, a native Ecuadorian and me, Arun Mahajan, the only two climbers from the USA, completed the group.

We went to the Delhi office of the Indian Mountaineering Foundation (IMF) to be briefed about this region and were then assigned a liaison officer (LO), Luder Sain, who was to be with us till the end of the trip and who subsequently proved to be as strong a climber as the rest of us.

An overnight sleeper train from Delhi got us to Kalka where we changed trains to a narrow gauge 'toy' train. This train terminates at Simla and is a quaint reminder of the luxurious days of the British Raj. The train huffs and puffs its way to Simla via an amazing number of tunnels and bridges and is a feat of engineering. Simla, the summer capital of the British when they ruled India and now the capital of HP, is a beautiful city. We spent the rest of the afternoon and evening there, even taking in a hike to a hilltop temple, the rarified air no doubt helping in getting us acclimated. An exciting jeep journey the next day took us to the higher hills and the hill station town of Manali along the Beas River. The next day, we went via jeeps once again and this time over the Rohtang Pass (13k ft) to the town of Thirot. The Rohtang pass is shut down by mid-November thereby effectively cutting off Lahul-Spiti from the rest of the state. One gets the feeling that this is the marker between the

high Himalaya and the foothills. From Thiroth we turned off towards the small village of Nainghar. This time, we had some hairy cliff-side driving to contend with, with the fast flowing Chandrabhaga underneath. A large yellow lorry lay overturned several hundred feet below with the river swirling around it, a reminder that accidents do happen on this road, despite the skill of the drivers. The Chandrabhaga is also called the Chenab and with the Beas, Ravi, Jhelum and the Sutlej forms the five great rivers that drain into the state of Punjab making it one of the most fertile regions of India.



The team at Manali

2 nights at Nainghar village (3400m).

Only a few families live in Nainghar and it also has a small school. This place is a bit known since it has a remote hill side temple to Shiva set under a spectacular fin like pillar, adjacent to a large turquoise glacial tarn. This pillar has, at its apex, a snake-hood like rock right on top making the faithful think that it looks like a Shiva 'lingam' that is guarded by the hood of a cobra. Nainghar is in a valley formed by the drainage of the Thiroth rivulet that emanates from the glaciers at the head. Towards the head of the valley and to the right is the towering 6000m+ peak of Nainghar Choti (NC), one of our destinations, that has never been climbed despite two attempts. We spent that night at Nainghar and the next day and night as well. This helped us in getting acclimated. On the next day, several of us hiked towards the head of the valley, in the direction of the proposed base camp and some others hiked on the nearby hillsides. The view looking down the valley from Nainghar is excellent with a few 6000m peaks, snow covered and glaciated, visible in the distance.

19th September: The porters come. Trek to BC (4300m / 14,104ft).

We were woken up by the cheerful sounds of the porters who were transported from the closest large town, Keylong, in the back of an open bed truck and we were on our way. There is a well marked trail, no doubt used by pilgrims going to the Shiva temple that follows the Thiroth nala upstream. A part of the north face of NC could be seen and it looked intimidating. At a certain point on the trail, the ridges coming down from NC parted and a startling snow

and rock peak came into view, Gangstang. It was like seeing the Matterhorn or Ama Dablam for the first time. This peak imposed itself into our consciousness. The triangular north face with a thick layer of snow over black rock soared at an almost vertical angle into the sky. That route was definitely for the big boys of mountaineering. A long ridge with corniced snow trailed off south/south-west exposing a long west face below it and the steep west ridge dropped off precipitously from the summit and then rose up partly to terminate into an open rock pillar, the Thiroth Shivling. It was all quite the show of rock, ice and snow. We walked past NC and climbed up a boulder field into a valley that had a small plain adjacent to the Thiroth. This was our wonderful BC (base camp) with a rock walled cliff-side on the left, two glaciated 5000m peaks at the head, the Thiroth draining from the glaciers and a moraine ridge on the right with the north face of Gangstang right behind. I too pitched my tent there and from the open flaps of my tent door, I could see the north face of Gangstang. It had taken us five hours to hike 900m to BC from the roadhead at Nainghar.



Gangstang and Thiroth Shivling from BC

BC days. Hike to Shiva shrine. Govind caches tents.

The next day was cloudy, nonetheless some of us, led by James, took a trip to the Shiva shrine underneath Thiroth Shivling with Govind, our HAP, carrying a small cache that included at least one high-altitude tent. We were thwarted in our main objective, sighting a route up Nainghar Choti by low clouds and occasional rain. We still made it to the ridge overlooking the tarn under the Shivling where prayer flags and metal tridents marked the rugged Shiva shrine. A couple of small idols of Shiva and his consort stood propped up between the talus slopes, surrounded by prayer flags. There were small signs of worship all around. Meanwhile, Martin had led another group in the opposite direction to scope-out other 'training' climbs. Later that night we compared notes and pictures from our digital cameras, studied maps and discussed what we had seen and if indeed NC was climbable.

It rained and snowed the next day and we all stayed at camp, venturing out only to get Navin's excellent meals.

22, 23 and 24th September: Attempt on unclimbed peak. Hike to ABC (4910m).

While the weather continued to threaten, it had at least stopped raining and snowing so we all saddled up our packs with plans to attempt one or both of the twin 5000m peaks at the head of the valley. A hard hike on a steep boulder/talus mountainside got us to the base of a glacier where we pitched tents to make a sort of advanced base camp. It had taken us about four hours with full packs to get here. It started to snow and got cold and the weather closed in, so we scurried back into our tents.

We woke up the next day at 2.30am but it was completely socked in, so (thankfully, I thought!) we slept in. Finally, we decided to go for a stroll anyway and so, we geared up and roped, started climbing on the glacier. While the loop we did gave us no views, it gave us some more acclimatization and we got to about 5210m before coming back to camp for the night.

The next day, we woke up again at about 3.30 but the weather had other plans. We decided to call off this peak climb and packed up and started walking down to BC. It was raining and also snowing. Coming down on that boulder field was miserable as we slipped and slid several times on the thin layer of slick snow.

At about 9pm in the night, at BC, when I had finally fallen asleep, I was woken up by some cheerful hollering. A hand was thrust into my tent with some very nice and also very sweet and sticky pastries. It was Navin and the HAPS. They had been sitting in their tent, huddled over a short-wave radio, catching the scores of an international cricket tournament being broadcasted from South Africa. It turned out that India had won that championship, defeating arch rivals, Australia and more importantly, Pakistan, in the process!

25th September: Sunshine! A climb of Gangstang proposed.

We woke to one of the best days of this trip. The last night's snow gleamed on the rocks and the Thiroth sparkled in the sun. Over breakfast, seeing that we were losing days with no more intelligence on possible routes on NC, Martin proposed that we do Gangstang as a consolation and that we do it via the unclimbed west face, via a couloir that he had spotted while hiking a couple of days ago.

We all chipped in on getting ready, preparing lunch and dinner packets and getting our gear sorted out and organized for the peak attempt.

Chapters in part-2 (next month)

- **26th September: Hike to ABC (4850m)**
- **Sorting out the couloir. Rope fixed on lower pitch.**
- **Climb of the Thiroth Shivling (5324m) . First 'summit' of the trip.**
- **Couloir climbed to ridge top (5600m) and high camp. Knackered!**
- **Summit! Back to HC. Knackered again.**
- **HC to ABC and some come back to BC. Knackered yet again. The operating word.**
- **BC days.**
- **30 porters come. Hike out to Nainghar. Navin's food for the last time.**
- **Jeep over Rohtang to Manali. Now the Rohtang is in snow.**
- **Manali to Chandigarh and then by train to Dehli.**
- **Final good byes and back home.**

Pinnacles, November 3-4, 2007

By Jeff Fisher

This was a climbing hiking and/or biking weekend at the Pinnacles.

A total of 21 people made it down to the Pinnacles for the weekend. Hal Tompkins, Joan Marshall, their friends Bill and Paola, John and Chris Kerr, Stephane and Kirsten Mouradian, David Chang, Stan Huncilman, Alan French, Gavin Dersh-Fisher and myself for a total of thirteen spent the night. Eight came down for the day including Rick Booth, Vickie Wong, Mike Snadden, Judy Molland, Joe Baker, Steve Landes, Arun Mahajan and Cecil Aniston came down just for the day. Scott, Marilyn and Emma Kreider got lost and ended up at Castle Rock on Sunday.

Most everyone climbed on Saturday, the temperature must have gotten into the 80's. Most people stuck to 5.6 & 5.7 routes and then trying Stupendous Man 5.10 Rick, Vickie, Hal, Joan and friends wandered off and did some 5.10 and 5.11 routes, but managed to wander far enough off that the rest of us didn't look bad. A good time was had by all and the campfire that night felt very good in the cold air. And there were no jokes of poor taste to be heard.

Honorable mention went to David Chang, who had never climbed outdoors before, for doing so well. He even made it up Stupendous Man

Bloody, Baldwin, November 3-4, 2007

By Louise Wholey

The SPS peak list, whether one wants to climb them all or not, provides some interesting ideas of where to go on trips. This fall I planned a variety of one and two day trips into the eastern Sierra – just in case significant snowfall would be delayed. Jim's choice for this weekend was an overnight trip into Convict Canyon. At the trailhead the Convict Lake Campground was closed and there was no handy place nearby to drop our sleeping bags, but luckily we found a very nice room at McGee Creek Lodge down Hwy 395.

We rose at 6 am and got on the trail by 7:30 am. The canyon is spectacular with its steep multi-colored walls of rock.



Convict Canyon

Our intended campsite was at Mildred Lake, but thinking it was a mud puddle we walked right past it. Seeing a trail traversing up the hillside on the opposite side of the valley was a clue that we were going too far. After a GPS check we returned to a spot near the lake to set up camp then headed up that trail following it for about 3 miles to Edith Lake. From there we found an unexpected trail leading up to the basin below the east face of Bloody Mountain. We left the trail and climbed through the rock band onto the steep scree slope for the last 1500 feet to the top. This was classic: step up two feet and slide down one foot on each step. I arrived first and filled out the register while Jim finished the agonizing climb.

Clearly the cliff band would make the descent harder, so we opted for the trail leading down to the north. We followed it until a steep scree gully descended toward the southeast to the basin where we started. A quick trail hike took us back to camp at about 5:30, just after dark. A welcome dinner of home-dehydrated beef and peppers nourished us enough to tackle another climb, Baldwin, on Sunday.

Baldwin looked very hard with its impressive west wall of smooth rock. The first obstacle was a ridge of steep rock separating us from the mountain. We again walked up the valley beyond Mildred Lake then turned up at a small stream where the valley began to widen. We found a reasonable route over the ridge and encountered a trail (surprise!) on the other side. The trail eventually followed the northwest ridge most of the way to the summit. When the climbing turned to class 3, we traversed to the south on a very neat

traverse above the west wall of the peak. The climbing became very gradual class 1 the rest of the way to the summit.

On the descent we used more of the trail, but, not wanting to add a couple of miles, we turned back down the creek we had ascended. This took us into far more difficult terrain than we expected. The trail would have descended easily into the Mildred Lake valley at its southern end. Finally back to camp we quickly packed our gear for the 3000 foot descent down Convict Canyon. It was 4:30 pm and very cold when we reached our car. Baldwin had taken about 6 hours and the descent about 2.5.

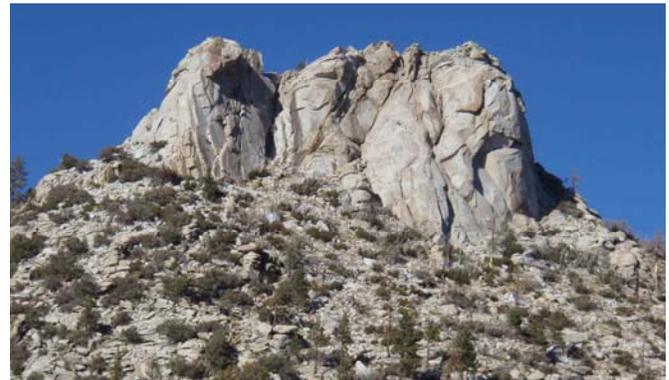
Rockhouse Peak, November 9-11, 2007

By Louise Wholey

Lisa Barboza (leader), Alex Sapozhnikov, Chiao (Mary) Cheng, Timothy Hult, and Louise Wholey (scribe) departed early Friday afternoon to climb some peaks in the southern Sierra. We stayed together for the drive and dined Friday night at the Paradise Cove restaurant, <http://www.kernrivervalley.com/paradisecove/>. We then returned to Hwy 155 passing through Kernville and onto the back roads to Big Meadow. We camped quite near the trail to Rockhouse Peak, our first target.

Saturday dawned clear, very cold (19°F), and beautiful, with deep blue sky all the way down to the horizon. Rising early, 5:30 am, would have been useful except that we drove the wrong way around Big Meadow looking for the trailhead. It was nearly 8 am by the time we started hiking on the 7 mile trail to the peak. Shortly after we started, we encountered a bear hunter, well equipped with firearms: a small caliber rifle, and a large hand gun strapped to his chest. He was friendly and talkative. He said he would not shoot us but we were glad when he took a different trail.

Our trail became obscure after Little Manter Meadow. Most of the way to the saddle it followed the south side of the creek drainage, a route well-used by the local bears, judging by the footprints. From the saddle which was marked by a large cairn, we proceeded up somewhat brushy slopes to the east side of the peak. The final rock climb on that side was delightful class 3. We took good care of the Day Hiking Section's participant, Mary, as this was her first rock climbing. She did great!



Rockhouse Peak

The return went smoothly. We enjoyed checking out a remote fire station at Manter Meadow and managed to reach our car by 5 pm without using lights - but it was getting pretty dark. We had a fine dinner party at our campsite and turned in thinking about the fire chief's forecast of snow during the night. Rain greeted us at daybreak, marking the end of our excursion into the lovely Domelands Wilderness. Taylor Dome and Sirretta Peak await another day.

Disaster Peak 10047, November 18, 2007

“DISASTER, Narrowly Averted”

By Lisa Barboza

Abstract: November 18th, 2007

Day 1: Iceberg Meadow TH to Summit: 4.9 miles and 3500 feet, 4.9 miles back.

Obsessed Peak bagging and the desire to continue climbing every weekend through the fall and winter was eased by a lack of snow. So we left Santa Clara CA at 5:00 AM, arrived at the TH at 8:30 AM, summited by 12:15 and were back at the cars at 3:22 PM, and made it back to the Bay Area in time for dinner! Intrepid Peak baggers (dare I say?) Louise Wholey and yours truly made the trek, and detailed directions are shown below.

Detailed directions to TH: Proceed up HWY 108 from Sonora, CA. 2.5 miles before Dardanelles, turn left on the Clark Fork (of the Stanislaus) Road, 7N83. Go down that road to the end, heading for the Iceberg Meadow Trailhead. [Waypoint ICEBRG,\(38,25.056---119,44.989\), 6309 feet](#) elevation. All waypoints in this report are in this format: GPS Data Format Decimal Degrees.Minutes NAD83 ElevFeet. You will find yourself, at the trailhead, in a fine meadow, with the Clark Fork of the Stanislaus just to your south. Find the trailhead sign, and head up from there. Above you, you will see the rearing head of the Iceberg crag, a granitic formation and quite impressive.

There's a good trail that heads up Disaster Creek to the north. Follow this trail until you get to the following [Waypoint: ICETRL,\(38,25.922---119,44.997\),7326 feet](#) elevation. At this point, you'll see a very faint trail heading off to the right (northeast). We marked it with a large duck and it's just after a wet portion of meadow where the trail is wet for about 100 feet. This trail leads to a creek and that's the best way up the mountain. The Topo Maps show the trail turning off in another mile but that trail is very faint, goes through the forest and is seldom used. I don't recommend this, but if you want to stay on the main trail (note that the trail to the summit is very faint) here's the [Waypoint ICETRN,38,26.916,--119,45.810,7718 feet](#).

But, it's best to take this cutoff and this is in fact the way we came DOWN, so it's a proven route. Follow this trail to the summit. The summit itself will wind through forest for much of the way, the trail will be hard to follow at times and you'll have to keep an eye out for the tell-tale subtle grading of the trail. We couldn't believe that this was marked as a stock trail on the Topo maps, and it's clearly been out of use for a long time by stock. The trail, such as it is, will

eventually give to a sagebrush covered sandy hillside with volcanic decomposed sand, with a southwestern exposure (hence hot in the summer). You'll follow this trail to a rock outcrop, [Waypoint LTR03,38,26.605---119,44.909,8719 feet](#).



Disaster Peak

From there, there won't be trail but head up to Disaster Peak, [Waypoint DISSTR \(38,26.925---119,44.018\),10047 feet](#). You'll ascend a bit of a crest, with some reddish rocks above a small dry meadow, and staying below point 9251 which is a prominent peaklet above you. Once you see the peak, you'll note that it's composed of basalt and columnar formations similar to Devil's Postpile. The fun way up it (very low CL3) is the western slope (this doesn't merit the word "face"), and the easy way down is the east slope. All in all, it took us 6 hours round trip to climb this peak.

The weather: - It was 26F when we started, warmed up to about 55F in the sunshine and we had a great time.

Warren, Gibbs, November 24-25, 2007

By Louise Wholey

Thanksgiving weekend is normally a great time to start skiing, but not this year. We took off Friday for the still-open Tioga Pass to climb Mts. Gibbs and Warren. Few, if any, people were hiking there despite the special privilege offered by Mother Nature to do so this year. Cars regularly whizzed over the pass after answering to the money-collecting ranger.

Friday we chose to take a hotel (Murphy's) in Lee Vining and dinner at Convict Lake (yum!). Our choice of warm housing was easily justified Saturday morning with a temperature of 12°F. At the 9000 foot high Warren Creek trailhead it had warmed to 16°F for our 7:40 am departure. Brrr! We followed the [climber.org](#) trip description by Steve Eckert (1997), leaving the trail at the first creek and climbing up the ridge to an old lake bed. At that point I chose to go around the peak at about 11,900 on the right, then drop down 100 feet into the basin beyond it, and cross to the base of Mt. Warren. We summited around noon for about a 4 hour climb.



Mono Lake from Mt. Warren

The return was mostly the same route except we descended to and crossed the creek to a use trail on the far side rather than descend the ridge on which we had started. This was a bad idea. The use trail petered out far too soon, leaving us with very ugly bush-wacking down the creek bed. The descent took about 3.5 hours.

Sunday was supposed to be a short climb up Mt. Gibbs, but climbing 3000 feet over about 6 miles at high altitude just does not seem to be easy. We started from the first pull-out south of the Tioga Pass entry. A trail took us about a mile in to the base of the long west ridge. We climbed steeply through the trees to the open ridge at 11000 feet, feeling fortunate that Friday's fierce cold wind had diminished. The summit kept moving east almost as fast as we climbed toward the east, but finally we nailed it down and stood on top. No registered appeared. The round trip took just over 6 hours.

Mokelumne Peak, December 2, 2007

By Louise Wholey

Despite a bogus report of 2 feet of new snow in the Sierra (don't we wish!) and an early morning weather forecast for snow flurries in the mountains and showers elsewhere, Lisa and Louise departed at 5:20 am after just 4 hours of sleep. We drove up Hwy 88 to the Lower Bear River Reservoir turnoff where well-marked paved and good gravel roads lead 13 miles from the highway to the Tanglefoot Trailhead. The first road passes the reservoir and climbs into the forest. A left turn after about 4 miles put you on Forest Service road 8N14. Signs along the way include mention of the Cole Creek campground. At the end of road 8N14, road 8N14D goes right and 814NE goes left. The trailhead is ¼ mile up the left fork, a somewhat rough but passable road.

We left the trailhead at 9:10 and turned right after about a mile at the junction with the Shriner Lake trail. We followed this well-used trail for about 6 miles to a location about 1.5 miles due west of the peak at about 8100 feet with GPS coordinates N 38.54 W 120.12. At that point we found a cairn but not much of a side trail. The area had mostly large trees with some patches of low-lying brush. We traversed to the east below peak 8626 and followed the ridge line to the summit. Strong cold winds made us very happy that most of this route lay among many beautiful large fir and pine trees. The only rock scrambling was in the last few hundred feet. We summited around 1 pm and were back to the cars around 4:30, feeling very victorious for still being able to climb peaks this late in the season.

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.

Dec 8 – Mt. Inyo

Contact: George Van Gorden

(vangordeng321@AOL.com)

Alternate: Bill Kirkpatrick (wmkirk@earthlink.net)

We will meet in Lone Pine fairly early on Sat. morning. We will caravan to the trailhead at 4500 feet or 5500 feet if we have four-wheel drive. We will be climbing by first light and plan to summit by 1PM. This is a desert mountain, and there won't be any water. We will plan to be back to our cars before dark. If we start from the 4500 trailhead, round trip will be about 10 miles, 8 miles from the four-wheel trailhead. Snow is possible on the upper part of the climb and so we will bring ice axes.

Mid-January 2008 – Kilimanjaro - Tanzania

Contact: Warren Storkman (650-493-8959,

dstorkman@aol.com)

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

February 5, 2008 – Copper Canyon Backpack

Contact: Liz Harvey 925-323-4202

(meharvey03@yahoo.com)

For experienced backpackers with the time, energy, and sense of adventure. Come explore part of the world's largest canyon system and its unique culture.

Minimum 1 week to and from Creel. Backpack from Batopilas up to Urique 4 days. Day hikes can also be arranged. Pack animals available. You pay providers directly.

I return yearly because I love it there. For more details please call or email me.

March ?, 2008 – Mt. Lassen Climb

Contact: Stephane Mouradian

(smouradian@hotmail.com)

Overnight snow camp, ski or snowshoe. Crampons and ice axe required.

March ?, 2008 – Round Top

Contact: Arun Mahajan (arun.mahajan@att.net)

Annual day trip from Carson Pass on skis or snowshoes. Crampons and ice axe required.

May, 2008 – Nepal – Kailash - Tibet

Contact: Warren Storkman (650-493-8959,

dstorkman@aol.com)

We're off again for one of Warren's great trips!

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Email List Info

If you are on the official email list (lomap-pcs-announce@lists.sierraclub.org) or the email list the PCS feeds (pcs-issues@climber.org), you have a free EScree subscription. For email list details, send "info lomap-pcs-announce" to "listserv@lists.sierraclub.org", or send anything to "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, November 26th. Meetings are the second Tuesday of each month.



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