

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

General Meeting

Date: September 11, 2007

Time: 7:30 pm

Where: Sports Basement 'Summit Room'
1177 Kern Ave.
Sunnyvale, CA 94085

Program: New Zealand

Presenter: Kelly Maas

Kelly finally fulfilled a longstanding goal earlier this year by visiting New Zealand. Though marginal weather meant that I did little climbing, we still had the opportunity to see and explore a wonderful country. Highlights included sea kayaking, canyoning, glacier scrambling, climbing in near-winter conditions, and hiking the Milford Track.

Note that this location includes a *shopping spree* before the meeting. For details see Gear Corner.

Directions: This is the old Frys building on Lawrence Expressway.

From 101: Exit south at Lawrence Expressway. Right on Kern Ave. If coming north on Lawrence make a U turn at Oakmead Pkwy, then go right on Kern Ave.

Gear Corner

PCS Shopping Spree

September 11, 2007

Good News – we are having another Shopping Party at the Sports Basement before September's regular monthly meeting. That means free beer, snacks and a 20% discount on anything in the store. The party will be on Tuesday September 11th from 6 – 7:30 p.m. and will be immediately followed by our monthly meeting, from 7:30 – 9 p.m.

To participate just come and identify yourself as a PCS member when you enter the store.

If you haven't been to the Sports Basement before, they have just about everything you need for hiking, biking, running, snowboarding, camping and all things outdoors. Plus their prices are already 30-60% below retail so this will be a very good night to save money on all your sporting needs.

Gear articles on the web

The website for American Alpine Institute has some very neat articles on gear selection for Alpine climbing, wilderness first aid kit content, mountain photography, skis or snowshoes, content of a guide's pack, footwear, foot-care, knots, gloves, avalanches and wet gear. Check it out at http://www.aai.cc/expert_tips.asp.

The PCS website also has a wealth of great information on gear, books, and a variety of other topics, most of which were submitted by climbing guru Rick Booth. Check out <http://lomaprieta.sierraclub.org/pcs/articles/>.

Bivouac Sacks

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

There are some people who say "they will never use a bivy". Like all gear it is a matter of personal choice and comfort. Many Peak Bagging Trips are weekend events where it is necessary to cover high mileage in a short period just to get to Base Camp. Lite and Fast. In these situations a Bivy is certainly something to consider.

There are essentially two distinct types of bivy covers, waterproof four season and water-resistant sleeping bag cover. In snow I often opt for a waterproof bivy in lieu of the weight of a four-season tent. My personal experience is that many people try and get away with a three-season tent in winter conditions. Ninety percent of the time it works. When it doesn't it can be a disaster. With a bivy I know I can survive. I may be stuck in a bag in a snow pit and not be comfortable but I will not be concerned with the wind and snow load and spindrift. In the morning I will be dry. I own an Integral Designs South Col Bivy. The weight is 1 lb. 9 oz. The lightest waterproof bivies are made of Event Fabric. These are available through Integral Designs and Wild Things. I really like the Wild Things Bivy but currently it is not available in a long model. The extra length allows you to store items like water bottles and boots. Bibler also makes excellent bivies. You can often find these bivies in excellent used on Ebay.

http://www.wildthingsgear.com/prod_bivy.html

Integral Design Link

<http://tinyurl.com/2nroq8>

Ultralite Bivies

This is where the real innovation is. There are constantly new fabrics entering the market and as a result they get lighter and lighter.

What are they and what is the advantage of using them???

These basically are a water-resistant cover that goes over your sleeping bag. Many will have a water-proof bottom and a water-resistant top. The ideal packing solution is to use in combination with a lightweight tarp or poncho-tarp for full weather protection. These also work well in snow caves and other shelter situations

where excessive condensation may cause the sleeping bag to get wet. I have backpacked for several years using this system. In the Sierra it rarely rains at night and I mostly just use the bivy. I just put my sleeping pad and sleeping bag inside the bivy. I do not carry a ground cloth. With the right sleeping bag you can come in under three pounds for with full protection for tent/ raingear/ pack cover. The bivy also adds some degree of additional warmth and wind protection.

I currently am using a Six Moon Design Gatewood Cape as my shelter/raingear.

<http://www.sixmoondesigns.com/shop/shopexd.asp?id=45>

The price range of the bivies varies depending on material. At the low end is the Equinox (\$60.)

<http://www.backcountrygear.com/catalog/tentdetail.cfm/EQ3000>

I purchased one of these used several years ago. Really has worked perfectly fine.

On the 'high end' is the Bozeman Mountain Works Vapr Nano

<http://tinyurl.com/2gx6sq>

Below is a link from Backpacking Light with a chart of different bivies and weights.

<http://tinyurl.com/33g5e5>

Happy hiking!!
Frank

Fall Trip Planning Meeting

Tuesday, September 18

Where: Chez Lisa, 4382 Moran Drive, San Jose CA
When: September 18th, 2007, 7:00 PM
Who: Any and all, especially, trip leaders

When you note that the calendar is a bit bare for the fall and winter climbing season, you will realize that it's time for the Fall Trip Planning Meeting!

Bring your trip ideas for 2007 and early 2008. Lisa would like to have on the schedule some winter mountaineering trips, day hikes to remote peaks in the Northern Sierra, and early winter desert peak trips. So bring your friends and ideas, and we'll see you there!

2007 PCS Trip Calendar

Aug 31 - Sep 3 – Goat, State, Marion
Leader: Lisa Barboza

Sept 7-9 – Giraud
Leader: Charles Shafer

Sept 8 – Mt. Whitney (14,495) **New Date!**
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 31 - Sept 3 – LeConte/Corcoran
Sept 1-3 – Gardner & Cotter
Sept 14-16 – Lover's Leap Climbing (5th class)
October 2007 – Nepal around Annapurna
Mid-January 2008 – Kilimanjaro - Tanzania

PCS Trip Details

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 – New Date!

Peak: Mt. Whitney (14,495)
Date: Sept. 8 **New Date!**
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.

Important PCS Issue

Determination and Documentation of PCS Officer Responsibilities

Introducing a change to PCS Operating Rules

One issue that has received attention from the 2007 PCS officers is the need to document the various roles and responsibilities that they need to fulfill. Every year, the new officers need to grapple with defining the organization's needs pretty much from scratch, and they spend valuable time trying to reinvent the wheel. In order to give incoming officers a foundation that will jumpstart their efforts, the current officers put together what is believed to be a comprehensive list of duties and responsibilities that need to be filled in order to enable the PCS to remain a viable and productive organization. They then parceled out the duties with a view to developing a coherent organization that had enough members to spread out the workload without overburdening any one person (function), yet not create an organization that was so large as to be unmanageable and unresponsive. The full results of this exercise will be presented on our website, with the duties and responsibilities grouped according to the logical committee or function which would be held accountable (an address will be published on the email broadcast when it becomes available).

These duties and responsibilities could easily be allocated in other ways, but this is how the 2007 officers chose to align them. Since there is some conflict with our current operating rules, however, it was decided we should delete our current operating rules (which deal solely with several of the committees) and substitute the committee structure that was developed, along with the purpose of each committee. It is intended that the structure be an advisory one, so flexibility is given for changes in the way that the functions are implemented. No matter how they are structured, though, it is believed that most functions must be addressed in order to keep the PCS moving forward, and their inclusion as an operating rule is an effort to document their existence, serving as a reference point for new administrations who must grapple with their own approach to managing the club.

The proposed operating rule follows:

PCS OPERATING RULE COMMITTEE FUNCTIONS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

For the PCS to function effectively, there are a number of duties and responsibilities that must be filled. To best address these needs, it is believed that those duties can be structured in a logical fashion that groups similar duties based on the overall intent of each duty. The structure that is suggested, and the overall purpose of each suggested entity, follows. This list of committees/functions is intended to be a guideline, spelled out for the sole purpose of listing the functions/duties that need to be addressed by any PCS Leadership Team. If an incoming group of officers believe they can address these functions with a slightly different structure, they may do so. As well, this is not intended to be an exclusive listing of functions, others may be added if so desired.

PCS Steering Committee

The Steering Committee consists of the elected PCS officers and the Chair of each of the standing committees (or their representative), and exists for the purpose of developing overall policies for the PCS, as well as coordinating activities amongst the different functions in order to maximize the overall impact to the organization.

PCS Mountaineering Committee

The Mountaineering Committee shall be comprised of four members, each of which is a qualified leader as well as an active leader and climber. The Chair of the Committee shall be appointed by the PCS Chair. The Vice-Chair/Scheduler shall also be a member of the committee. The other two members shall be appointed by the Mountaineering Committee Chair with the approval of the PCS Chair. The committee is responsible for determining leadership guidelines based on Sierra Club policies and safe climbing practices and promoting leadership amongst the PCS membership.

PCS Training Committee

The Training Committee can consist of as many members as needed to carry on its mission, each of which must be a qualified leader as well as an active leader and climber. The Chair of the Committee shall be appointed by the Vice Chair of the PCS. The other members shall be appointed by the Training Committee Chair with the approval of the PCS Vice Chair. The committee will plan and execute training programs to

promote safe climbing and leadership practices within the PCS.

PCS Publicity Committee

The Publicity Committee is a standing committee which can consist of as many members as needed to carry on its mission. The PCS Chair appoints the PubComm Chair and the PubComm chair in turn selects the rest of the PubComm members with the approval of the PCS Chair. The goal of the PubComm is to maximize awareness of and participation in activities which further the goals of the PCS. As such, the committee is basically the outward looking arm of the PCS, which will be responsible for all PCS publicity.

PCS Social Committee

The Social Committee is a standing committee which can consist of as many members as needed to carry on its mission. The Chair of the Committee shall be appointed by the PCS Chair. The other members shall be appointed by the Social Committee Chair with the approval of the PCS Chair. The purpose of the committee is to promote participation in and member enjoyment of activities within the PCS. As such, the committee is basically the inward looking arm of the PCS, which will be responsible for member satisfaction

Webmaster/Email Broadcast Committee

This committee consists of the Webmaster and person in charge of the PCS email broadcast list. Both positions are appointed by the PCS Chair, and may appoint other committee members as the need arises, with the approval of the PCS Chair. These persons are in charge of providing for all digital communications that are required by the club.

Scree Publication Committee

This committee consists of the Scree Editor, and other members that the Scree Editor deems necessary to carry out their mission. The Scree Editor is appointed by the PCS Chair, and the Editor may appoint other committee members, with the approval of the PCS Chair. The Scree Editor is responsible for putting together the PCS monthly newsletter and assisting with any other news-type stories or articles that might be requested by the Publicity or Social committees.

PCS Nominating Committee

The Nominating Committee is a temporary committee which is formed for the sole purpose of nominating a slate of candidates for new officers for the next year. The Nominating Committee shall be appointed by the PCS Chair, and announced at the October meeting. If any of the Nominating Committee members do not meet the approval of a majority of the members present, the Chair shall call for nominations from the floor to replace the disapproved Committee members.

Trip Reports

Norman Clyde Peak – Twilight Pillar

June 30-July 2, 2007

By Rick Booth

I have climbed many peaks in the Sierras multiple times. One of these is Norman Clyde Peak, which, unfortunately, I have climbed by the miserable fourth class route twice. Years ago I went back and climbed the Twilight Pillar with Dave Ress. That was another bad day out. So, when Linda Sun asked me about climbing Norman Clyde, I made the mistake of shooting my mouth off and saying, “don’t climb that fourth class crap, climb the Pillar.....and I will go with you.” Moron.

I even volunteered to get the permit. So, on June 30, Linda Sun and I headed up the South Fork of Big Pine Creek. We considered camping at the tarn past Finger Lake but settled for the south end of Finger Lake and decided for an early start. By about 5:30 AM Sunday morning we were heading up from Finger Lake. The approach went up through a slot on the western side of the south end of Finger Lake and then onto the sheets of granite slabs above the tarn and then onto the talus. We headed up towards the long ridge that eventually turns into the Firebird Ridge on Clyde. There appeared to be a notch on this ridge that might have allowed for easy access to the ridge but we were suspicious that it might be steeper than it looked and opted to head back to the northwest and get on the ridge early. This was easily achieved. The route along the ridge was more or less uneventful, however, there were one or two moderately difficult exposed down climbs near the aforementioned notch. When we arrived at the notch it appeared that it would have been difficult to come up that way, probably fourth class at the easiest.



Norman Clyde Peak from the north ridge
The Firebird Ridge rises to the right of the prominent snow field
The Twilight Pillar drops straight down from the summit

Linda and I continued past the notch and under the large snow field which seems to live on the east side of the Firebird Ridge permanently. At this point the route heads up granite slabs towards the base of the Pillar. This is decidedly fourth class. The climbing along these slabs goes on for 400 to 500 feet and it was scary. A fall anywhere along this stretch would have resulted in a long slide or tumble to the lip overlooking the glacier followed by an “air ball” straight to the glacier. The thought of this was disconcerting. We decided to switch to our climbing shoes for this section. After several puckering minutes we arrived at a small platform below a right facing dihedral. It had taken us about five hours to get to this starting point.



Twilight Pillar, Norman Clyde Peak
The route starts up and to the left of the little snow field in the center of the picture

We roped up and headed straight up the dihedral. I think Dave may have headed off to the left on some face climbing on the previous trip but I am not sure. In any case, the dihedral had a fixed cam at the base of it so at least someone else considered this to be the start. The dihedral was harder than it looked and went at about 5.8 or 5.8+. This ended on top of a stance to the left of the crack system. The route we took went straight up from there through a crack system and the crux was a move through a small roof. This was about 5.9. This pitch continued on and drifted right around a corner and into the shade. This section was a little easier since it was more broken up. This was followed by two easier pitches which had one or two hard moves but were mostly low fifth class. The last pitch ends just about below the summit register. We dropped the ropes and climbed the last 10 feet of third class to the summit. The four pitches took about four hours. We used a 60M double rope system and pretty much ran the rope to the end. After a quick lunch Linda and I headed down. I had thought that rappelling the route would be an option, however, we decided that the top half of the route was too loose and broken up so the probability of a stuck rope was likely large. Besides the end of the rappels would only drop us back onto the fourth class "death slab" and neither one of us wanted to deal with that thing again. So we headed for the normal descent.



Linda Sun happy to find the summit register!

The normal descent involves heading down the ridge to the northwest. This goes past the juncture where the Firebird Ridge joins this ridge. Just past this juncture, and I mean just past, is a gap with at least one rappel sling which marks the descent down the fourth class North Face. This piece of rock real estate is the most miserable, loose, ugly, never ending, boring, dry (sometimes), insufferable, doo-doo-esque section of half baked granite in the Sierra. Or in California. Or in the world. It is even worse than the Mountaineers Couloir on Mt Whitney, if that is possible. I consider the fact that I have climbed UP this route twice to be a point of personal embarrassment in my so called mountaineering career, such as it is. But I digress.

The route description indicates there may be cairns or ducks marking some of the descent. We made two single rope rappels from the juncture of the Firebird Ridge and the West Ridge. We decided against one double rope rappel based on the endless number of horror stories we had heard about stuck ropes. This worked flawlessly. Linda spied a sequence of cairns that sort of headed off to the west and we followed them. This resulted in a zig zag descent down through the face. This goes on forever. The idea was to drift back towards the east eventually. We did one more rappel after making one attempt to move east too early. The rappel brought us to a shelf system with several large cairns on it heading back to the east. The last cairn was right on the ridge itself and marks the transition across the bottom of the Firebird Ridge. This cairn is higher or further up hill than the others and could be easily missed. It is nice the self righteous "cairn killers" have left these cairns alone. Anyway, heading past this last cairn put us back on the lower section of the Firebird Ridge below the snow field. This area is pretty flat. From there the route back through the lower section of the north ridge was easy and the notch area can be seen from there. We quickly scrambled over to the notch and decided to head down the notch instead of continuing the traverse across the ridge as we had done in the morning. The scramble down the notch was straightforward, however, it ends at a steep cliff. We found a rappel station with about 700 slings on it and decided that was probably the regular route down. This rappel requires two ropes. A single 60M rope won't work, we, uh, tried it. This is supposedly another rope eating rappel but we managed to flick the rope away from the cliff and escaped unscathed. Again. From the base of the rappel we hiked down the talus, scree, and slabs back to Finger Lake, arriving at about 8:40 PM just as the day was drifting into darkness. A headlamp free descent for a change. A little more than 15 hours round trip from Finger Lake.

Monday morning Linda and I packed up and headed for home.

Final Notes:

The Twilight Pillar Route on Norman Clyde is a nice route. It isn't very long and the top two pitches are a little too broken up to be as much fun as the two bottom pitches, however, the location is outstanding and the views exceptional. The approach across the fourth class "death slab" is scary and there is zero room for error. The rock is slabby and the cracks are mostly sealed so even belaying in this section would be problematic. The descent is terrible.

We used a double 60M rope system. The rack was a set of stoppers, double aliens from blue to red and double camalots, #.75, #1, #2 and a single #3. Probably overkill, however, there are no fixed belay stations and even if there were they would not have been spaced for a 60M rope. Lots of regular length slings.

References:

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

How to Lose Weight without Trying

By Louise Wholey

Gemini, Seven Gables, Hooper, Senger,

Sat – Tues, July 14-17

Occasionally people cancel at the last minute despite having been looking forward for months to doing a trip. A broadcast to LOMAP-PCS-ANNOUNCE@LISTS.SIERRACLUB.ORG indicated at the last minute that space was available on a 4-day trip starting July 14 to climb Gemini, Seven Gables, Hooper and Senger by way of Florence Lake. Jim had to work and prefers east side approaches, so I took off with Lisa Barbosa and met Daryn Dodge in Modesto. Scott Sullivan and his wife Elena Sherman from southern California completed our group. We took the ferry across Florence Lake and hiked up to Marie Lakes basin to make camp. Sunday we hiked to Gemini following a well-marked use trail into the next higher lakes basin, then up the right hand ridge to the summit. Daryn, Lisa and I traversed to Seven Gables while Scott and Elena returned to the roadhead, done with peaks in this area.

The summit area of Seven Gables was interesting. Steep walls dropped off in every direction as we scampered up exposed blocks to the final summit block. While Daryn and I were uncoiling the rope, Lisa scrambled up summit block, "just taking a look". Camp was a welcome relief from a long day's effort. The sunset was glorious as the overcast began clearing.

Monday was an easy day – Hooper and Senger. Hooper also has a 4th class summit block. Again Lisa scaled it with no rope, but this time she did not want to descend without one. Daryn and I were more cautious and took belays for the climb.



Hooper Summit Block

Senger was the other way from camp so we relaxed in camp for a while before the climb. Our route was up a very direct mostly steep dirt gully. It was surprisingly stable considering the angle, but it made for a quick ascent. The previous entry bragged about taking less than 4 hours from Hooper so we added Hooper @ 10, Senger @ 1. Upon return to camp Lisa gleefully ripped off all the painful leg bandages that covered her multiple rock rashes.

Tuesday was just for hiking out, but we stopped for a lengthy visit to the Muir Trail Ranch to see their beautifully appointed hot-tubs. We caught a 9 am ferry and were treated royally by Charlie, the lady who owns all of the operations and entertains herself at the store and driving the ferry. As a registered nurse she offered to patch up Lisa's leg, after first requiring her to take a shower! "Ok, doc!"

Mendel, The Hermit, McGee, Huxley, Fiske,

Wed – Mon, July 25-30

Again space suddenly appeared on this trip, but this time both Jim and I snatched it. Terrific thunderstorms brought horrible flying weather on Tuesday so we flew over Wednesday morning. Hailstones still coated the landscape on the approach to Lamarck Col. We met hikers who were leaving the area due to the weather. They had been near the col when the heavens let loose their fury. Our group of Daryn, Bill and Sue Livingston (from SoCal), Jim and I were glad to be hiking a day later.

Our plan was to climb whatever we had not yet climbed in the Evolution Basin. The first climb, done by everyone on Thursday, was Mendel, up the convoluted crumbly east face. Lacking snow, everything that was buried in snow a year ago became visible. At the base of the route Sue sadly recognized Patty Rambert's blue down parka. They had been climbing buddies before Patty's death. We followed the route descriptions from climber.org until we neared the top. We first went out onto the northeast ridge seeking a 3rd class route to the summit. Daryn found a route with a hard move that led to the summit, but he did not desire to descend it and recommended others not follow. We found no other way. Finally Daryn descended the top of the east face and led us back up that way. He said that was not how he remembered the climb from his experience years ago, but we all made it to the register-free summit.

Friday, we continued to Evolution Lake, where we split into two groups. Bill and Sue wanted to climb Darwin while Daryn and I

wanted to do The Hermit. Jim started with us but decided that fishing seemed like more fun than trying to keep up with us. We were moving fast to try to beat the cloud build-ups and expected thunderstorms around mid-day. Both groups of climbers were successful by early afternoon. Our climb on The Hermit was handicapped by my being unable to squat Daryn's 175 pounds. I tied figure eights in the climbing rope like etriers for Daryn to walk up the fixed line, which was not easy, but it worked. Upon return to camp Jim presented me with a beautiful collection of golden trout to cook on my alcohol stove.



Golden Trout Cooking

After spending the night there we moved up to Wanda Lake and took off for McGee. The Davis Lakes basin was beautiful but walking was encumbered with boulders. None-the-less that was not the hardest part of the trip. The south chute of Mount McGee was horribly fragile and thus a great hazard to life and limb. Since Jim and Bill had turned back, there were fortunately only 3 of us to keep from clobbering each other. Once up and back down from this monster all we had to do was retrace our steps over the myriad boulders. Camp was a welcome relief.

Sunday was again a two group day as Bill and Susan went for Scylla while the rest mounted Huxley. We were misled following Secor's photo of the route. The left turn near the bottom is bogus; the route goes straight up to the ridge line, with a slight left turn at the very top. Jim was satisfied with one peak, but Daryn and I had our sights also on Fiske. We descended to about 11,700 and dropped down into the valley above Sapphire Lake. After many boulders and ledges we were near the small lakes between the two peaks. From there we ascended the west face of Fiske. Another climber on the same route told us it was the last day for beer at Muir Pass. The route down was decided; go for the beer! A group of 3 from Berkeley had hauled many cases of beer in from Florence Lake to Muir Pass. They do this for a week every year! We flew down from there, gathering our camp stuff at Wanda and descending before dark to Evolution Lake. Jim greeted me with more fish!

Monday we hiked back out over Lamarck Col and flew home for a fine dinner of grass-fed steak and fresh vegetables. While Jim had not planned to include Monday, his work associates were delighted when he actually did return Tuesday. He stayed because he was hesitant to hike through Darwin Canyon solo, with its demanding 3rd class boulder hopping and difficult route-finding.

Thumb, Birch, Disappointment and Fish

Fri – Sun, Aug 3-5

This private unscouted Bob Suzuki trip was expected to include Disappointment Peak, but the route via Birch Lake, intended to be an improvement by avoiding Southfork Pass, turned out to be much longer and more difficult than expected. Peak baggers, Lisa Barbosa, Eddie Sudol, and Alex Sapozhnikov delighted in gaining two summits despite the change of plans, while the others, Bob, Jim and Louise, who had previously climbed Birch, enjoyed relaxing in camp and fishing in a great lake. Busy Lisa has promised a more detailed report, but we may all have to beg her for it!

Palisade Crest

Fri – Sun, Aug 11-13

Planning for this trip started long ago when it first appeared on the www.climber.org trip announcements. This peak is coveted by peak-baggers and is a delightfully challenging peak due to its relatively clean and nicely exposed rock climbing. The approach is past Willow Lake in the southern portion of the Big Pine Creek drainage. The group had fortunately whittled down to a manageable size by the time the trip actually started, Daryn Dodge, Steve Eckert, Samantha Olson, Jim and I.

We were fortunate that Daryn had recently done the access past Willow Lake. Rather than an obvious maintained trail, it was a convoluted use trail, but we found Elinore Lake despite a few wrong route choices. The lake appeared to be devoid of fish, but it produced some of the biggest ones we have had yet. My alcohol was nearly depleted cooking these monsters of the deep and cold.

Saturday was our big day. Most people take 12-14 hours for this climb, if they succeed at all. Others spend the night in one of the many bivouac sites. We had plenty of information from the web about the approach to Scimitar Pass. That was followed by an incredibly exposed and lengthy knife edge traverse to "the gap".



Knife Edge Traverse - Yes, on the Top of it All!

Getting across the gap to the 160 foot 4th class friction pitch that leads to the summit scramble was obscure from the start. We spent much time seeking an easy way, but there was none. We rappelled a couple times and scrambled much. The friction pitch was easy, but Steve's rope became stuck in a crack. After trying for a long time to retrieve it, he cut 10 feet from the middle of it. We tied the

ends together and combined it with the other rope for the long rappel.

On the way back we did find a 3rd class route back up from the gap. Here is how. At first climb across the gap and slightly up. Then, when blocked by steep rock, go straight up to the crest and through a gap in the crest. Then traverse right and up a somewhat crumbly face back to the knife edge. Outbound you have to try to reverse this description. By the end of the day we were happy to reach camp - shortly after dark - for a 14-15 hour climb. No fish tonight!

How to Gain Weight without Trying

By Louise Wholey

One option is to eat the SAD (Standard American Diet) with its lack of micronutrients leading one to over-eat or be faced with constant hunger. The body is smart; it knows what nutrients it needs and will demand you eat until it gets the required vitamins, minerals and phytonutrients. Another better way is to go on a live-aboard dive boat for a week in the Caribbean We went August 18-25 (plus a few days lead-in time on the beach) with Explorer Ventures and had a chance to eat lots of tasty food and photograph some neat sea life.



Sea Horse

Missing Climber Report

Aug 15:

Greetings Friends,

We (NPS and Inyo Co. SAR) are in the initial stages of a major search and rescue operation in the Palisade region of Kings Canyon NP and the John Muir Wilderness. The following information is the individual's description and trip itinerary. If you, or if you know of anyone that has traveled in this area between 7/30/07 - 8/6/07 and may have information concerning this overdue backpacker, please notify Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Park Dispatch. SEKI Dispatch 559 565-3341.

Overdue Backpacker: Hiep (Henry) Nguyen. 39 year old Asian male from Garden Grove, CA. Black hair, Black eyes, Height - 5' 09, Weight, 125 (thin build).

Clothing/Equipment Description: Very little. Possibly green jacket, possibly white broad bill ball cap. No tent, Black pack....

Itinerary: Left the Birch Creek trailhead on 7/30/07 to Birch Lake, climb Birch Mt., possibly Tinemaha Peak. To Lane Pass-Disappointment Peak, to Balcony Peak. Cirque Pass to Knapsack Pass, climb Columbine Peak. Onto Giraud Peak to Isosceles Pass and possibly Isosceles Peak. Winchell Col to Agassiz Col to Bishop Pass and Jigsaw Pass. Climb Aperture Peak, Gendarme Peak, Picture Puzzle Peak. Contact Pass to Scimitar Pass, Palisade Crest (Pos. NW ridge) to Mt. Jepson to Chimney Pass. Back to Birch Creek trailhead. Exit Date of 08/06/07

Subject's vehicle as of 08/15/07 still parked at the Birch Creek trailhead.

Any information that could assist in this search is greatly appreciated.

SEKI Dispatch. 559 565-3341
Inyo Co. Sheriff Dept. 760 878-0323

Thanks all,
Jim Gould
Ranger, Sequoia and Kings Canyon NP.

Aug 17: Hiep's body was found at Isosceles Peak.

Aiguille Extra – East Face Route

July 21-23, 2007

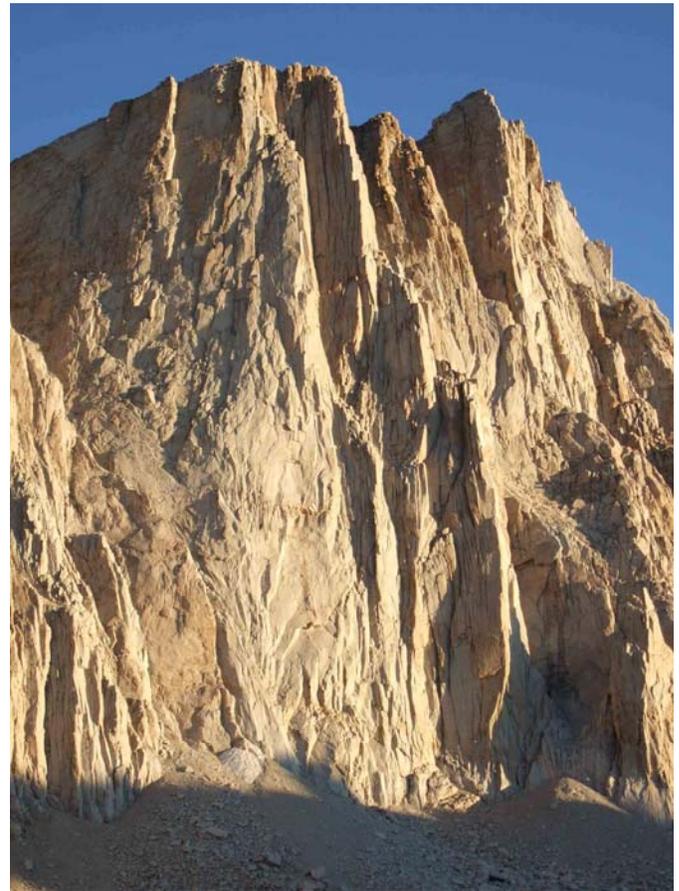
By Rick Booth

The Aiguille Extra. Most Sierra climbers have never heard of the Aiguille Extra. This includes me and I was only informed of its existence by Jim Curl several years ago. So where or what is it? The Aiguille Extra is a tower located on the Muir-Whitney crest just south of The Third Needle. This tower sports a large monolithic face, the East Face and a smaller South Face. The top of the tower doesn't go anywhere, it just ends on the crest. There isn't a summit register, it isn't on a list, and your mom won't bake you brownies if you climb it. It is pretty cool, though.

The Aiguille Extra was apparently climbed first in 1971 by Bill Sumner and Mike Heath. They named this previously un-named tower the interesting and romantic name of the "Aiguille Extra" and named their first ascent route by the dull and uninspired name of "East Face Route". Go figure.

The Aiguille Extra tower is south of and next to The Third Needle tower which sits right at the junction of Pinnacle Ridge and the Whitney Crest. The Pinnacle Ridge essentially seals off the North Fork of Lone Pine Creek from the South Fork, home of the notorious main Whitney Trail. The consequence of this is the Aiguille Extra must be approached from the main Whitney Trail which requires an overnight permit in order to camp somewhere in the vicinity of the base of the tower. This, in turn, requires entering the Whitney Trail lottery for a permit.

This year "I won the lottery", no doubt due to a life of clean living, and received a permit for the main Whitney Trail. On Saturday, July 21, Team Weasel, Misa Giesey and I, headed up the Whitney Trail. Our packs were heavy and we weren't quite sure we would make it to Trail Camp so we targeted the midway point of Outpost Camp for the first day. We arrived there about 2 PM and decided not to waste any more time and headed on up to Trail Camp, arriving there about 5:30 PM. Trail Camp is the main camping area for those who are climbing Mt Whitney by the trail. Trail Camp is a trash and poop strewn dump, inhabited by overfed amateurs, posers, ground squirrels, and half the Sierras known population of ultra aggressive marmots. The other half lives on the other side of Pinnacle Ridge at Iceberg Lake. We decided to try and camp here instead of gambling on a site up at a tarn in the talus on the way to the base of the East Face Route. Besides, this would put our gear right on the path for the hike out. There are, however, two advantages to camping up higher. One, the site would be closer to the start of the route, and two, the water would be a lot cleaner.



South (to the left) and East Face of the Aiguille Extra

The route starts on the stepped platform just in the sun right of center and ascends the middle (smaller) shadowed dihedral continuing up into the prominent dihedral near the center of the photo

Sunday morning Misa and I headed up toward the Aiguille Extra, which is quite visible from Trail Camp, at about 5:40 AM and started climbing about 8:30 AM. The start was easy to find and we moved up onto the little platform below the first crack to belay. The first 10a pitch and the following 5.9 offwidth can be linked with a 60 meter rope. The offwidth isn't so much an offwidth as it is wide and flaring with enough face holds to the left to climb on so no "offwidthing" is needed to climb it. There is enough pro of odd sizes here and there that nothing over a #3 camalot was needed. The next pitch for us was about 180 feet of 5.8 with a section of liebacking in a vegetated and slightly crumbly corner. This put us essentially at the end of pitch 3 as described in the Moynier topo. The next pitch was more crumbly 5.8 which linked to the so called fourth class section, which was more like 5.7. This ended in the middle of the fourth class section and a second pitch of fourth class screwing around was needed to get over to the real dihedral. There looks like to be a dihedral heading up in about the middle of the fourth class junk but this is a "red herring" and off route. Keep going to a big dihedral which should be readily visible. A shortish (100 feet) 5.7 pitch ends at a belay spot just below the roof in the real dihedral system. The following 10a pitch climbs furrows or flared cracks up to just below the roof which is followed by a step down to the left and then a stem over to the corner to the left. The escape over the roof can be protected by a yellow alien and a green alien and probably other stuff. The crack above the roof in the dihedral shoots up about another 50 feet in a 5.8 chimney/wide crack system and ends just below what looks to be a second roof.

This doesn't protect very well except with wide gear like #3.5 and #4 camalots, old style. It is this crack system that can use big gear. This is followed by a second long pitch of this 5.8 wide crack/chimney junk which also doesn't protect very well except with wide gear. This is followed by about 30 feet of more of the same and then two tricky chockstones which need to be passed. This is the loose 5.8 stuff mentioned in the Moynier topo. And it is loose..... From the belay below the chockstones the following fourth class pitch can be linked. At the end of this pitch is an alcove area marking the end of the fourth class. At about this time it was close to 9 PM and dark. The topo indicates two more pitches, one 5.8 and one 10a to get to the summit. We think these were visible just to the left. It looked like the 5.8 went up a clean looking curving hand crack. However, we decided to try and just head straight up and get out of there, given we now had to climb with our headlamps. Misa guessed correctly we could just top out by going straight up the broken stuff behind the alcove. Misa lead up through this broken section and stopped about 20 feet below the summit because of rope drag. A 60M rope is plenty long enough to make it to the top if the rope drag can be avoided. In any case, it was a little windy on top and belaying just below the summit provided some shielding from the wind. We topped out at about 10 PM and after finishing our water and some snacks we headed down.



Aiguille Extra, Start of the East Face Route

The start goes up the system in the shadow left of the center of the picture

The descent was long but easy. We just headed straight downhill until we crossed the Mt Whitney super highway and turned left. This annoyingly long hike back to Trail Camp took about three hours and we dropped back into our bivy site, which was kind of

hard to find, at about 1:30 AM. We were back in our bivy sacks at 2 AM, 22 hours bivy sack to bivy sack. A long day.



“So, where’s MY breakfast?”

Uninvited “guest” at Monday breakfast

Final Notes:

This is a terrific route. It is a little crumbly, as should be expected with any back country route in the Sierras, and by the looks of it doesn't get climbed all that often. It is mostly unrelenting wide 5.8. The ratings are surprisingly correct, with the exception of the middle fourth class pitch which is more like 5.7. The two 10a pitches we climbed the leader thought were rated about right but the follower thought were harder. The follower carried a pack and had the problem of having to remove gear before finding decent jams so it is probably just perception. Misa and I swung leads, I got the bottom 10a pitch and the offwidth and she got the middle 10a pitch and we both thought the 10a pitch we lead was rated about right. I nearly fell off following the second one, though. Misa lead the last four 5.8 pitches after my hands started cramping and got us out of trouble at the top by leading the last pitch with her headlamp.

We used a double 60 meter rope system, one set of stoppers, double aliens blue to red, double camalots #.75 to #3 with triple #2, a single C4 #4, #5 and an old style #5. The old style #5 wasn't used at all which was a huge bummer since it weighs a ton. If I had to do it over again I would go with two C4 #4s or maybe an old style #3.5 and #4. Maybe add a C4 #5. There are not a lot of handy obvious belay spots and a couple of our belay spots were "hanging". There was zero information available about this route that appeared during several internet searches.

References:

[Climbing California's High Sierra: The Classic Climbs on Rock and Ice](#), Second Edition, John Moynier and Claude Fiddler, The Globe Pequot Press (Falcon Guides), 2002, ISBN 0-7627-1085-3. The only information available. It isn't in the first edition. Topo.

Donner Pass Peaks

August 4–5, 2007

By Judy Molland

What a great trip! On the first weekend in August, nine of us, Fran Allen, Deborah Benham, Mary Cheng, Craig Deidrick, Sassan Hazeghi, Allen Hu, Chris MacIntosh, Judy Molland and Andrea Snadden spent two days exploring the Donner Pass Peaks. Thanks to Chris's membership, we were able to lodge in comfort and style at the Southbay Ski Club Cabin. (And before any of you seasoned PCSer's start pouring scorn, I have to say there's nothing wrong with taking a trip that involves sleeping in a bed once in a while.)



On Saturday our first goal was Castle Peak, 9103', a gain of about 2000' from the trailhead. After a short drive, we arrived at the Pacific Crest Trail parking area just off I-80 at the Boreal Ridge Road exit and watched in amusement as Craig strode out ahead of us, headset attached, listening to a Dodgers/A's baseball game on his satellite radio. But it was a splendid, clear day, and we all enjoyed following the trail that made a gradual ascent to Castle Peak. Just a few of us made it to the actual peak (there are three peaks of almost identical height), and had the extra fun of a 3rd class scramble to the summit. The view was spectacular: Lassen to the north and the Carson range to the east were especially notable.



With lunch over, our second peak of the day was Basin Peak, 9017', (what kind of name for a peak is that?), which involved following a

trail from Castle Peak along the north ridge for about 1.75 miles. The flower display en route was impressive, especially the mule ears. And once we arrived at Basin Peak, Debbie's joke telling was equally impressive, although Chris had heard them all several times before and so was less than enthusiastic. After a brief stay, we headed cross-country to join up with the PCT, stopping by the Peter Grubb Hut to check it out on the way down, and briefly losing Sassan, who was too engrossed with his camera to notice that he was alone. In all we covered about 12 miles.

Our excellent day was followed immediately by Mary's delectable dip, quantities of wine and beer, and later by Chris's amazing dinner including yummy Ideda's blackberry pie with ice cream. The intellectual high point of the day had to be the challenging game of Crazy Eights that absorbed the attention of several of our group for some time!

Sunday morning involved lots of cleaning up before we left, but we were all good guests and did our chores with nary a complaint. Then we set out for the trailhead to Mt. Judah, about a four mile drive from our cabin. It was another clear, sunny day, affording us wide, sweeping views as we began our ascent. We followed a good trail that switchbacked up the side of the mountain, and once again the flower display was great, especially considering it has been such a dry year. On this day we were treated in particular to a nice display of blue gentians on the east flank of Mt. Judah. The view from the peak, 8243', was another wonder, with Castle Peak and Mr. Lola to the north, Sugar Bowl and Lake Van Norden to the west, and Donner Lake to the east. However, we dallied only a few minutes, since it was windy to the point of being difficult to stand in one place. Instead, we made our way toward Donner Peak by descending through mixed forest to a saddle between Judah and Donner, before following a good trail up to the multispired summit of Donner Peak. On the way we passed signs informing us that this was part of the emigrant trail and well, it's just hard to imagine how those wagons were able to make it up such a steep, rocky hillside.

At the peak, some of us again took advantage of the opportunity to do a little third class maneuvering, and climb to the actual summit, before descending to join the rest of the group for lunch. "The rest of the group" included a couple of chipmunks who constantly demanded to be fed, and were not at all discouraged by the rocks hurled in their direction.

By two, we were back at the trailhead and jumping in our cars early to avoid the rush. Or so we thought. At three we were sitting in traffic approaching Sacramento, wondering who on earth all these other drivers could be.

An excellent weekend, with a great group of participants!

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 31 - Sept 3 – LeConte/Corcoran

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

Alternate: Jim Ramaker (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, 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, 408.733.1299)

Alternate: Natalie Guishar

(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)

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 incase of bed 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)

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

Reminder

Don't forget the **Fall Trip Planning Meeting** at Lisa's at 7 pm on September 18. Everyone is welcome! Bring ideas for climbs you want to do or lead.

Elected Officials

Chair:

Kelly Maas / kellymbase-pcs@yahoo.com
1165 Smith Ave. Unit D, Campbell, CA 95008
408-378-5311

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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/>

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, September 24th. Meetings are the second Tuesday of each month.



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