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## General Meeting

**Date**        **July 10, 2012**  
**Time**        **6:00 – 9:00 pm**  
**Where**        **Wildwood Park**  
                     **Saratoga, CA**

## Annual BBQ and Gear Exchange

The July meeting is our annual BBQ and gear exchange on July 10 at 7:00 at Wildwood Park BBQ area A.

Bring a dish to share, your own specialty, OR choose according to first letter of your last name:

- A-G Main course (think grilled items)
- H-M Appetizer
- N-S Veggie or Fruit side
- T-Z Dessert

BBQ should be hot by 6 pm for families on an early dinner schedule. Bring your own beverage (alcohol is ok), \$3 to cover reservation and BBQ coals, dinnerware, friends, family, and used gear. Bring the kids to climb on the play structures.

Bring whatever gear you find cluttering your garage or closet. Someone may want or need it.

### Directions from 280

Exit at De Anza Blvd; go south for about 5 miles, crossing Hwy 85 about half way to Saratoga. The road changes name at Prospect Rd to Saratoga Sunnyvale Rd. At the village traffic light at the intersection of DeAnza Blvd, Big Basin Way, Saratoga Ave and Saratoga Los Gatos Road, turn right on Big Basin Way and drive part way through downtown Saratoga. Turn right on 4th St, the first through street on the right. The park is at the bottom of the hill on your right. Park in park parking (appears to be mostly hotel parking for Saratoga Inn), or park across the road, or along the road, where-ever parking is allowed. **Google** <http://tinyurl.com/6cpch4>



## Editor's Notes

I love this edition of Scree: lots of trip reports, and they are pretty varied, both in style and content. Thank you, wonderful PCSers! Read on, enjoy, and see you on the trail!  
Judy

## Chair Column

The Climbing Time is Here!

Without that much snow this year, many of you have probably done a lot of climbing already. Anyway we also have a bunch of trips coming up, so join us in the mountains!

And also join us on July 10 in Saratoga's Wildwood Park, where we are again having the summer PCS Barbecue & Picnic, thanks very much to organizers Jim & Louise Wholey!

Of course we can always use more good trips, so if you're hatching any more great climbing plans, get the information to our Scheduler, Terry Cline. Not to mention getting the descriptions of already planned trips to Terry.

Also, we could use some speakers for the rest of the year, especially for our upcoming meeting on August 14.

See you at the Picnic and in the mountains!

Rod McCalley

## Advance Trip Planning Schedule

Check out the excellent trip possibilities coming up this spring, summer, and fall.

<https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/ccc?key=0Ar3ERRQWOQJPDgk2ZW5EVW8xSkRUT3l1SWV1Ry1FWnc#gid=0>

## PCS Trip Calendar

These are required statements.

Note: CST 2087766-40. Registration as a seller of travel does not constitute approval by the State of California.

Note: All Sierra Club trips require you to sign a Liability Waiver.

<http://www.sierraclub.org/outings/chapter/forms/signinwaiver.pdf>

June 30 - July 4 - Sill, Temple Crag, Gayley  
Leader: Lisa Barboza

July 4 - 8 - Morgan & Morgan  
Leader: Aaron Schuman

July 14 - 22 - Meysan Dixon  
Leader: Aaron Schuman

August 4 - 5 - Matterhorn Peak  
Leader: Joe Baker

August 17 - 19 - Rule of Thumb  
Leader: Aaron Schuman

September 14 - 16 - Tehipite Dome  
Leader: Aaron Schuman

September 29 - 30 - Black Hawk  
Leader: Linda Sun

Late September - Early October  
South Warner Wilderness Loop  
Leader: Tim Hult

October 12 - 14 - Senator, You are no Mount Kennedy (part 2)  
Leader: Aaron Schuman

## PCS Trip Details

### **Sill, Temple Crag, Gayley**

Goals: Mt. Sill (14,153'), Temple Crag (12,900'), Mt. Gayley (13,510')  
Location: Big Pine, Eastside of Sierra  
Dates: June 30 - July 4  
Leader: Lisa Barboza  
Difficulty: Class 3 - 4, ice axe, crampons, helmets required

Climbing in the Palisades region. This will be a strenuous 4-5 day trip to climb these 3 peaks. Depending on snow, plan on bringing ice axe, crampons, and bear canisters. We will start at Glacier Lodge and hike in up the South Fork of Big Pine Creek to Lake Elinore, or higher in the scree field near Lake 11,744. Climbers must be in good condition, comfortable on class 4 rock. Day 1, hike in to Lake Elinore or higher, 2500' gain, 6 miles. Day 2, climb Temple Crag via Contact Pass, class 3. Day 3, climb Sill via Glacier Pass, North Col route, class 3-4 and then climb Gayley from Glacier Pass via the class 3 Golden Staircase; 4500' gain, 6 miles. Day 4, hike out.

Leaders: Lisa Barboza ([lisa.barboza@gd-ais.com](mailto:lisa.barboza@gd-ais.com)) and Bob Wyka

### **Morgan & Morgan**

Goals: Mt Stanford N (12,838'), Mt Morgan N (13,002'), Mt Morgan S (13,748')  
Location: Mammoth Area  
Dates: July 4 - 8  
Leader: Aaron Schuman  
Two mountains with the same name, just ten miles apart, named for two different Morgans: one a sheepherding pioneer, the other a tycoon founder of the Southern Pacific Railroad. We'll backpack up to Davis Lake, climb Mt Stanford N, traverse a tricky ridge to Mt Morgan N, descend the sandy slopes back to Davis Lake, teleport to Francis Lake, climb Mt Morgan S, and return the way we came.  
Leader: Aaron Schuman a.j.Schuman AT gmail DOT com  
Co-leader: Needed  
Difficulty: Class 2 - 3

### **Meysan Dixon**

Goals: Mt. Corcoran (13,714'), Mt LeConte (13,845'), Mt Mallory (13,845'), Mt Irvine (13,780'), Lone Pine Peak (12,943'), Joe Devel Peak (13,327'), Mt Pickering (13,485'), Mt Langley (14,027')  
Location: Above Lone Pine, from Horseshoe Meadow  
Dates: July 14 - 22  
Leader: Aaron Schuman

There are enough tremendously tall and remarkably complex peaks in a small region at the southern end of the Whitney Massif that we can make a base camp and climb all week long. A steep trail leads up from Whitney Portal (7849) to Meysan Lake (10700) in just four miles. From the lake, we will climb many class 2 and 3 peaks until we wish to climb no more. An ice axe may be necessary for self arrest.

Leader: Aaron Schuman a.j.Schuman AT gmail DOT com.

### **Matterhorn Peak**

Goal: Matterhorn Peak (12,279')  
Location: Twin Lakes, Eastside of the Sierras  
Dates: August 4 - 5  
Leader: Joe Baker

We'll meet at the trailhead for Robinson Creek at Mono Village Resort, the west end of Twin Lakes, on Saturday morning. (We are taking this trail, rather than Horse Creek, because we can only reserve for 4 on the Horse Creek trail.) We'll hike up the Robinson Creek trail, and camp on the other side of Mule Pass. That's about 14 miles and around 3500' of gain, so it will be a long, hot day, but all on trail. Next day we'll hike the short distance to Burro Pass, then up Matterhorn, and come back via the Horse Creek trail (8 miles). We should be back at our cars by late afternoon. Permit for 8. Leader Joe Baker. Contact Co-leader Judy Molland ([judy@judymolland.com](mailto:judy@judymolland.com)) for more information.

Difficulty: Class 1 and 2, but strenuous

### **Rule Of Thumb**

Goal: The Thumb (13,346')  
Location: South fork of Big Pine Creek  
Dates: August 17 - 19  
Leader: Aaron Schuman

The Thumb is a digit extended skyward by the mountain range in an ominous gesture of defiance. The enraged appearance of the peak suggests that it may not be climbed, but we shall seek out a class 3 route. Beginning at the ruins of Glacier Lodge (7796') we will pack primarily on trail to our two-night campsite at Upper Brainard Lake (10,800'). We will climb over class 3 Southfork Pass (12,560'), where ice axe and crampons may be necessary. From the pass, the guidebook says the summit route goes class 2, but be prepared for something tougher.

Leader: Aaron Schuman a.j.Schuman AT gmail DOT com.

### **Tehipite Dome**

Goal: Tehipite Dome (7708')  
Location: Wishon Reservoir  
Dates: September 14 - 16  
Leader: Aaron Schuman

Tehipite is the tallest dome in the Sierra Nevada, standing higher by far over the Middle Fork of the Kings River than its famous sibling Half Dome stands over the Merced River. Tehipite would be a California landmark if only it were not so impossibly inaccessible. From an unnamed trailhead south of Wishon Reservoir (6800) in Sierra National Forest, 16 miles of up down up down trail lead us across Crown Creek (7881) to an anonymous point (8400) in Kings Canyon National Park, where we begin 2 miles of cross country travel through forest and brush down to the base of the dome (7500). The summit itself is a class 3 climb, enlivened by an appalling drop of thousands of feet to the river below. Limit 4 participants.

Leader: Aaron Schuman a.j.Schuman AT gmail DOT com.

### **Black Hawk**

Goal: Black Hawk Mountain (10,348')  
Location: West of Sonora Pass  
Dates: September 29 - 30  
Leader: Linda Sun  
Difficulty: Class 2

Start from the Kennedy Meadow Resort, west of Sonora Pass in the Stanislaus National Forest. Sat backpack to camp, 8 miles with 2,900' of gain. Sunday early morning climb the peak, and hike out. Contact Arun for sign ups.

Leader(s): Linda Sun [pcs@lindasun.com](mailto:pcs@lindasun.com)  
Arun Mahajan [arun.mahajan@att.net](mailto:arun.mahajan@att.net)

### **South Warner Wilderness Loop**

Goal: Circumnavigate Warner Mtn Range  
Location: NE California, about 20 miles from Alturas  
Dates: End September/Beginning October  
Leader: Tim Hult  
Difficulty: Class 1 and 2

South Warner Wilderness Loop "Late September - Early October"

Objective of this 3- 4 day, 40 mile loop trip will be to circumnavigate the Warner Mountain Range in NE CA, about 20+ miles from Alturas. Leader is seeking partners interested in exploring dates for this trip and to discuss logistics. The loop trip begins and ends at Pepperdine trailhead with all travel except optional peaks on class 1 trail (Summit trail to Owl Creek Trail). Potential class 2 Peaks: Eagle Peak (9892 ft), Warrent Peak (9710 ft). contact: [timdhultatsbcglobaldotnet](mailto:timdhultatsbcglobaldotnet) for a discussion of this trip, planning and timing.

### **Senator, You Are No Mount Kennedy (part 2)**

Goal: Kennedy Mtn (11,433')  
Location: Kings Canyon Cedar Grove  
Dates: October 12 - 14  
Leader: Aaron Schuman  
Difficulty: Class 2

From Cedar Grove (5,035'), we'll pack up the Copper Creek trail. We'll set up camp in or

above Upper Tent Meadow (9,189'). Saturday, we'll hike over Granite Pass (10,673') to the north side of the Monarch Divide, traverse up and down through the Volcanic Lakes basin, pass East Kennedy Lake (10,100'), climb Kennedy Mountain (11,433') and return to our camp. Memorial Weekend 2011, this trip was stopped at 11,000 feet by a blizzard. It'll be a different experience as an October outing. Leader: Aaron Schuman a.j.Schuman AT gmail DOT com.

### **Private Trip Calendar**

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.

June 30 - July 4 - Mt. Gayley  
Leader: Arun Mahajan

July 5 - 8 - Mts. Goddard and Reinstein  
Leader: Tim Hult

August 18 - 19 - Mt. Warren, Mt. Goode  
Leader: Matt Blum

August 25 - 26 - Bear Creek Spire  
Leader: Terry Cline

September 1 - 3 - Hooper, Senger, Gemini, Seven Gables  
Leader: Tim Hult

October, 2012 - Nepal  
Leader: Warren Storkman

January, 2013 - Argentina  
Leader: Warren Storkman

### **Private Trip Details**

#### **Mount Gayley**

Goal: Mt. Gayley (13,510')

Location: Big Pine, Eastside of the Sierra

Dates: June 30 - July 2

Leader: Arun Mahajan

Difficulty: Class 3, rock, ice axe, crampons, helmets required.

Gayley is on one end of a spectacular ring of peaks and the most alpine region of the Sierra with 5 peaks over 14000 ft next to it in a circle and the largest glacier in the Sierra in between.

Start from Big Pine on Saturday and then take the North Fork of Big Pine Creek and huff and puff our way to Gayley Camp at the edge of the Palisade Glacier. Sunday: Alpine start to go to Glacier Notch and then the Yellow Brick Road (aka Golden Staircase) route (class 3) to the summit and back to camp. If time and energy permit, pack out to the trailhead the same day. Otherwise, early morning pack out and hike out to the cars on Monday instead. Class 3 climbing; ice-axe and crampons may be needed for the walk to Glacier Notch from Gayley camp.

Participants must have this level of experience.

Organiser(s): Arun Mahajan

([arun.mahajan@att.net](mailto:arun.mahajan@att.net))

Scott Kreider ([scott\\_kreider@yahoo.com](mailto:scott_kreider@yahoo.com))

#### **Mts. Goddard and Reinstein**

Goals: Mt. Goddard (13,568'), Mt. Reinstein (13,586')

Location: Courtright Reservoir

Dates: July 5 - 8

Leader: Tim Hult

Difficulty: Class 2/3 but possible ice axe/crampons

Mts. Goddard and Reinstein from the West, class 2/3, but plan on bringing ice axe and crampons for the higher snow fields early in the season. We will enter from the West, proceed over Hell for Sure Pass, and camp at Martha Lake. Given this is a 5 day hike, the pace will be moderate. Wait list only for this hike. contact: [timdhultatsbcglobal.net](mailto:timdhultatsbcglobal.net)

### **Bear Creek Spire**

Goal: Bear Creek Spire (13,720')

Location: Rock Creek, Eastside of the Sierra

Dates: August 25 - 26

Leader: Terry Cline

Difficulty: Class 4

Saturday we'll hike from Mosquito Flat to a camp at Dade Lake. Sunday we'll climb the northeast buttress of Bear Creek Spire and descend the Ulrichs Route and if time allows climb Mt Dade (class 2) before returning to camp and hiking out. A rope will be carried since some class 4 climbing should be encountered near the summit. To shorten Sunday, we could do Dade on Saturday via the class 2 Hourglass route after setting up camp.

Leader: Terry Cline, [terry\\_cline@yahoo.com](mailto:terry_cline@yahoo.com)

### **Mt. Warren, Mt. Goode**

Goals: Mt. Warren (12,327'), Mt. Goode (13,085')

Location: Tioga Pass

Dates: August 18 - 19

Leader: Matt Blum

Difficulty: Class 2

Saturday we will climb Mt Warren (12327 ft) from the Warren Fork route (starting near the 9000 ft sign on the Tioga road just east of the Tioga pass). Sunday we will climb Mt Goode (13085 ft) from South Lake going up the SE slope route (with maybe a short diversion to "Mt No Goode" just west of the main peak).

Both peaks give wonderful views and the routes are class 2. We may visit a hot spring Saturday night if people are interested.

Leader: Matt Blum ([mdblum@yahoo.com](mailto:mdblum@yahoo.com))

### **Hooper, Senger, Gemini, Seven Gables**

Goals: Hooper Mt. (12,349'), Senger (12,286'), Gemini (12,088'), Seven Gables (13,080')

Location: Florence Lake

Dates: September 1 - 3

Leader: Tim Hult

Difficulty: Class 2,3,4

We will begin at Florence Lake ferry ride on September 1. Trip is rated at class 3/4 for some of the peaks, and 2 for others. Permit is for 4. Participants must be comfortable with climbing up to class 4 and knowledgeable on use of a rope and proper technique. Contact [timdhultatsbcglobal.net](http://timdhultatsbcglobal.net)

### **Nepal**

Goal: Rara Lake

Dates: October, 2012

Leader: Warren Storkman

If you are interested in Nepal, October 2012, and going to Rara Lake in the remote Mugu District, contact Warren Storkman:

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

No obligation, but I need your email address.

### **Argentina**

Goal: Aconcagua (22,841')

Location: Argentina

Dates: January 2013

Leader: Warren Storkman

If you are interested in visiting Argentina and climbing Aconcagua in 2013, contact Warren at [dstorkman@aol.com](mailto:dstorkman@aol.com) and he will send you an informational letter.

## Trip Reports

### **Mount Dade (13,600')**

**May 26 - 28**

**By Jean Lau**

Among all the peaks in the Mount Abbot Group, Mount Dade is one of them rising at the head of Rock Creek Canyon. The Mosquito Flat trailhead offers short approach routes to those magnificent peaks. This trip lasted 4 days, including 2 nights camping at Gem Lakes area.

Day 1: We started around 3 p.m. 5/25 from the bay area, traffic was light and we reached Yosemite west gate around 6:30 p.m. Shortly after the entrance, we started to see snowflakes falling and a thin layer of snow on the trees and brushes. When we turned into the E. 120 to the Tuolumne Meadows, a park ranger stopped our car and told us "The road to Tioga Pass is temporary closed due to a couple of accidents. We are in the process of clearing the accident and road should be ready in a few of hours". We turned around, drove to Curry Village and had buffet dinner there. A quarter before 9 p.m., we drove back to E. 120 hoping we could continue our trip. Unfortunately, the road was closed for the night and no time of when it would be reopen. There were three options in front of us: (1) Stay somewhere near by Yosemite and hope the road will be open in the morning, (2) Take different route, or (3) Forget it and go home. Finally, we decided to take W.120->49->88->89-395. We ended up staying at Kirkwood for the night and continue the journey the next day. It was a long drive, but we could see the Pass was still closed when we drove along 395 next morning.

Day 2: We arrived at the Mosquito Flat trailhead, had lunch, got our gear ready and started hiking around 1:00 p.m. At the beginning of the trail, there were about 3 inches of snow accumulated by the day before

and overnight, and snowflakes were still dropping along the way. Our original target was to hike to Treasure Lakes as our campsite. However, due to heavy snows, gusty wind and low visibility, we had to stop at Gem Lakes area and settle our tent near Gem Lakes instead. The temperature dropped below freezing overnight.

Day 3: A beautiful sunny and calm day. The sky was blue and the sun was up. We left our campsite at 6:30 a.m. and continued to find the route to Treasure Lakes. Finding Treasures Lakes was easy and actually it was less than 1/2 mile from our campsite. Treasure Lakes were still frozen in the morning. Mt. Dade and it famous Hourglass Couloir was so clear to see from Treasure Lakes. Jean hiked to Treasures Lakes as well and continued to explore around the Treasure Lakes, Gem Lakes and Morgan Pass areas while Bo continued to summit Mt. Dade. Lots of hard work for Bo since he had to break trail by himself on soft snow and even on the ridges there were still plenty of snow. Bo reached the summit around 11:30 a.m. and we met up a campsite around 2:30 p.m., shared our experiences of the day and had Teriyaki Chicken by Mountain House for dinner.

Day 4: Another beautiful day. We packed out and hiked back to the trailhead. On the way back, we passed by several beautiful lakes - Long Lake, Box Lake, Heart Lake, Marsh Lake and Mack Lake. Finally we reached our car at the parking lot. All the scenic views of lakes and peaks we had on this day were not visible when we hiked in due to the snowy weather. We were happy to see that Tioga Pass was open and gave us an easy drive home.

## Mount Langley (14,032')

May 26 - 28

By Arun Mahajan

Independent of the storm that had hit most of the northern/central Sierra and had caused closures of the Tioga Pass, Julius and I had decided to climb Langley and drive the southern route to get to Lone Pine. We had a trip to the Cascades planned with tickets to Seattle and all but the northwest weather had been fickle and we had to cancel that trip and settle for something that was local, high and easy to get permits for. I had been to Langley twice already, once as a dayhike, seven years earlier, and the second time as a two day trip, eleven years earlier. Julius was leery of bringing it up as an option. However a moderate peak during a possibly lingering storm was all that I was up for and did not mind it at all.

Luckily for us, Langley permits were available and we set off at about 10am from the Cottonwood Lakes / Horseshoe Meadows trailhead. It was cool and the pleasant trail and even grade meant that we were at High Lake (just a bit beyond Long Lake) in about three hours.



Julius at Long Lake

After a quick lunch and setting up the tent we looked at the time, 2pm, and it was very, very tempting to go for the summit right away given the length of the days. However, we both admitted later that if either had brought up staying back and lazing at camp instead, we would have taken it!

Well, up the pass in over an hour with a bit of exciting 10 feet or so of a snow head wall to climb and we were staring at the rather depressing sight of the actual summit block of Langley far far away.



Langley far away from the pass

This place, a lonely plateau, is not without its beauty. Whitney towers in the north and there is a bit of a drop from the New Army Pass and then a climb again as one passes the point where the Old Army Pass tops out. It was cold and windy with periods of warm sun as we kept slogging up, progressively getting slower. As we were near the final climbing before the flat summit area, we were startled to see a large hare jump out in front of us and then dart off. We would have not been surprised by seeing a marmot but a hare was something odd, at this altitude.

Later on, Julius pointed me to a section in Porcella and Burns's book on the California 14-ers about Orlando Bartholomew's similar encounter with a hare while climbing Langley in the winter (first time, in 1928) and also Warren Harding's sighting of one near the summit of Williamson, also during a winter ascent. While we were not doing a winter ascent, we certainly were in good company. We tagged the summit at about 5.45, three and half hours after having left camp, a very stately pace and bolted back.



Julius at the Summit

After the hateful up-climb back to the New Army Pass and a watchful down-climb of that small headwall, we were back on the trail just as the sun went behind a ridge and when we finally staggered into camp at about 9, we had already been using headlamps for the last 20 mins or so.



β

Photo-4: Downclimbing the headwall

Nonetheless, it was sweet to wake up late on Sunday morning, chat with a group who had camped near by and were planning to climb Langley that day and then hike out at a leisurely pace.

### **Mount Langley (14,032')**

**June 9 - 11**

**By Terry Cline**

I needed to go to San Diego on business for 4-5 days the first week of June. Naturally, driving down the east side of the Sierra the weekend before appealed more than driving

I-5. Having made that decision, it was obvious I needed to stop off and go into the mountains on the way. Thus was hatched the plan to climb Mt Langley, which I had never gotten around to since I'm not in love with sand slogs. But then it is a 14'er and I needed the workout at altitude.

So Friday afternoon I headed out for Lone Pine via Tioga Pass and Bishop. Rather uneventful. The campgrounds in Yosemite along Hwy 120 were still not open for the season, surprising given how long the snow has been gone this year and the road has been open. I arrived at the Whoa Nellie Deli about the right time for dinner and took a break.

I was too late in Bishop to pick up a Wilderness Permit and couldn't go to the Horseshoe Meadows trailhead because I then needed to join the lottery at the Lone Pine ranger station the next morning. What to do? I mulled it over having dessert at the Looney Bean in Bishop and decided to find a spot in a campground up the Glacier Lodge Road above Big Pine. Plenty of spots were available in the Sage Campground not quite all the way up, and at least I'd sleep at a useful altitude for acclimatization. This way I could also get a decent breakfast before going to the ranger station for a permit.

After waiting for the ranger station to open and then getting a middle number in the lottery, I got a permit and headed for the Cottonwood Lakes trailhead near the end of the rather spectacular Horseshoe Meadows Road thousands of feet above Lone Pine. The ranger recommended crampons for Old Army Pass, which I thought might be a little more sporting than New Army Pass and a bit shorter way up Langley. In the end, I took an even more sporting way up.

On the trail by 10 am, the leisurely hike into the Cottonwood Lakes went by quickly.

Unfortunately, one has to lose altitude before climbing up to the lakes, making for an annoying uphill on the hike out. I met a guy

coming out who had climbed Langley that morning by Old Army Pass. He said he scared himself silly at the top traversing the steep snow with MicroSpikes instead of standard crampons, congratulating me for having the Grivels attached to my pack.

Later, at the trail junction that branches up to Muir Lake, I met three folks coming down who gave me a good recommendation on a wind-sheltered campsite near the end of Cottonwood Lake 3 (mistakenly called 4 on some maps), just where I was going for the night. They were right. It was a great campsite. Despite the name of the drainage, I didn't see any cottonwoods, but there were lots of lodgepoles and white bark pines up to my tree-lined camp.

After a relatively warm night, I was off right after first light to see what I'd find going up to the pass above lake 4. Lots of loose rock and unmaintained trail was easy to lose as it wandered up into the cliffs. I couldn't see if there was any snow up where the pass was supposed to be, but there was a nice snow-filled couloir right in front of me and probably just right (north) of where I thought the pass should be. Well, heck, it looks a little steep but something I can climb. So why not take the direct route? Besides, it looks like there are some melted out tracks going up it. So I climbed up the talus to the start and put on my crampons. I still had my slope gauge in my pack from the winter skiing, so I measured it at the bottom as just under 40 degrees at the bottom. Misleading. The slope curves up to near the exit continuously, so it was more like 50 degrees or more up high, a few inches of corn over ice most of the way. Held my attention; piolet traction with piods troisieme most of the way. Turns out the melted out tracks were probably from rockfall. Oh well, none came my way while I was in there.



Just below the exit, a guy on his way back down to the pass walked by above me and shouted a good morning. I waved with my free hand and went back to focusing. Shortly after, I exited onto the flat plateau almost in front of the "Welcome to Sequoia NP" sign. No firearms, no dogs. Luckily I hadn't brought any. From here it is a slog up sand to the summit with occasional scrambling, depending which way you go. A couple coming down stopped to talk (this is turning out to be a rather social solo) and said there were three young women ahead of me who came up New Army Pass. Naturally, I determined to catch them.

I caught the girls just as they were coming off the summit. They dubbed themselves the "Mountain Sisters of SB", Santa Barbara. They seemed like a fun group, and I wondered if they played rugby like my daughter did at UCSB. Rugby players know how to party. They offered to take my picture with my camera. So I have a rare photo of myself in the mountains with the Great Western Divide in the background.

As we bid adieu, I was caught by two guys coming up behind me. They were from the Las Vegas area and had decided at a party the night before to drive over through the night and climb Langley. They had watched me climb the couloir from below and didn't want any part of that, so took the trail to the pass, finding only a little snow near the top that added some excitement to the exit.

We had a nice time getting to know each other while eating lunch on the summit. Beautiful clear day and wonderful views. Not wanting to downclimb the couloir, I tagged along with my new friends so they could show me the start of the trail down from the pass. Not obvious: it was covered by a small very steep soft snow field one traverses above a significant drop-off. Easy post-holing though, not sure what the MicroSpikes guy had been so freaked out about. After that only a couple of short snow covered sections and generally a decent unmaintained trail weaving through a loose cliff band. Down at the lake we said our goodbyes as they charged ahead, still facing another eight miles to get out to the car and a long drive home.

I went back to camp and enjoyed the rest of the day relaxing and reveling in the silence only the mountains provide. At sunset, the sky turned hazy and the air smoky, the wind carrying smoke up canyon from an apparent forest fire somewhere. I never found out where it was. In a couple of hours it cleared and I enjoyed another star filled night.

At daylight the next morning, I broke camp and began the hike out. Lunch at the Mt Whitney Cafe (great burgers), where the walls are covered with wonderful autographed photos of stars of cowboy movies from a bygone era (filmed in the nearby Alabama Hills). Reminder to self, I'll have to take in the film festival sometime that Lone Pine hosts every October.

Then the long boring drive to San Diego...

Postscript: for the technically inclined, there are two more couloirs to the right of the one I climbed that are more difficult. The first narrowly snakes up the cliff to right of mine and could be a nice ice climb in late season. Further right is more of a deep chimney that might make a nice rock climb for those that don't mind being enclosed by the mountain most of the way. Five to six hundred feet high each.

## **Off The Beaten Path: The Petit Griffon, 5.8**

**June 10**

**By Rick Booth**

The Sierra Nevada is full of great peaks, not so great peaks, piles of junk, dirt piles, ant hills, bumps, and stuff that just sticks up some place. The Petit Griffon is one of those places in the Sierra that just sticks up some place. This trip report describes an ascent of the Petit Griffon on June 10, 2012 by Linda Sun, Vicky Wong and Rick Booth, a.k.a. Team YakTrax.

The Petit Griffon is located on a low spot on the ridge that connects Mt Abbot and Mt Mills, neither peak to be confused with any of the great peaks of the Sierra. Secor describes two routes on the Petit Griffon, one 5.9, and one 5.7. Linda Sun suggested we climb one of these routes and we all decided that that would be fun. This turned out to be one of Linda's better ideas.

On June 9 we drove over to the Sierra East Side and by early afternoon we were hiking into Mills Lake from the Mosquito Flat trailhead. After about three hours or so we ended up at Mills Lake and set up camp. There was very little snow on the way in. From the campsite at the lake, The Petit Griffon was clearly visible in the notch between Abbot and Mills. Also clearly visible was the steep snowfield that led up to the notch. Each of us was armed only with an ice axe and YakTrax for the snow and this caused us some concern about being able to get up the snow in the morning. We decided to sleep in until the sun woke us up, which would mean the sun would have been on the couloir for hours by the time we would get to it and hopefully, it would be soft enough that we could get up it. Besides, neither Vicky nor I are morning people and any excuse to avoid an alpine start is to be embraced with open arms!



Vicky and Linda at Mills Lake campsite. Petit Griffon in distant notch. Photo: Rick Booth

Saturday night was cold but windless. Once the sun was up, we were up and after a while we were moving. We stayed high on the rock and dirt around the northwest side of the lake and hit the snow just as we could get a clear view of the entire snowfield up to the couloir and the entire couloir itself. We put on our YakTrax and started hiking across the snow. Vicky and Linda had regular lightweight mountaineering boots with sort of decent lugs on the bottom. I had approach shoes, wool socks, and cold feet. It is likely that without the YakTrax I would not have gone anywhere.



The Petit Griffon. Photo: Rick Booth

Sure enough, we made our way up the couloir. It was just soft enough to make decent steps in most spots but not so soft it didn't support our weight. One of Linda's YakTrax flew off a couple of times. I rescued

it the first time but the second time it sailed past us. Near the top the snow became difficult since it was pretty steep at that point and still icy because it had not received a lot of sun. We headed to the right to the rocks, which were incredibly loose and junky. This had to work and it did. We sort of went high to the right and then dropped down into the obvious notch just north of The Petit Griffon.



Two thirds of Tema YakTrax chugging up the couloir.

Photo: Linda Sun

It was a little windy and cold in the notch. There we dropped our packs, and I put my socks and approach shoes out in the sun, hoping they would dry out. I also put on my climbing shoes and walked out into the sun and the wind, hoping the dry shoes and sun would warm my feet. This is the first time in my so-called climbing career I have put on climbing shoes in an effort to warm up my feet.

Supposedly the 5.9 route is on the north to northeast side which means we passed it on our left as we headed to the notch. The 5.7 route is apparently on the south to southwest side which meant it was further around to the right. With our butts parked in the notch we were just about due north of the pinnacle. We decided to go straight up. Linda wanted to lead the route, since the whole project was her idea, so she roped up and headed straight up. We were thinking that maybe behind one of the huge flakes above us there would be some easy climbing. Wrong. Behind the

huge flake above us was a 15-foot-long right-slanting sealed groove that was poorly protected. Vicky and I were cursing fiercely as we simulclimbed up this thing which I thought was about 5.7+ to 5.8. The pitch was about 80 feet long and ended on a loose ledge that had a brand new looking rappel anchor slung around a horn at the back of it. Linda belayed Vicky and me up to this ledge.

Determined to complete the project, Linda then headed straight up the column behind us. She disappeared to the right for a bit and then reappeared above us. Then she disappeared to the right and reappeared at the same place. This was repeated a couple of times. Finally, she went straight up and got to point where she could peer into the bottom of a wide crack.

“Oh, no!” she said (or something like that). “This is going to take a #4 Camalot!”

Vicky and I looked at each other. One of us said “Whew, the #4 Camalot is in a duffle bag back in the trunk of the car!” Something else was going to have to work. Eventually, Linda moved down and to the right and found a terrific 5.7 hand crack that went up to a ledge and then a hand and stem move or two to the top of the summit block. It was a nice piece of climbing.



Linda above the first belay checking out the evil 4" slot. Photo: Vicky Wong

Linda belayed us up to the top where we signed the register, which was in a nice plastic waterproof case, for some reason, and checked out the view.



Linda celebrating at the top. Photo: Vicky Wong



Vicky setting up to rappel from the summit block. Photo: Linda Sun

By the time we were ready to go down, the sun had hit the snow at the top of the couloir and it appeared soft enough to go down. This would avoid dealing with the nasty loose rock on the side of the couloir. Donning my now

dry socks, approach shoes, and YakTrax, I proceeded to heel plunge my way down the top of the couloir. With the exception of one or two “banana peel” moves caused by hitting some ice, it worked. About half way down, we sat on our butts and glissaded to the snowfield at the bottom.

The rest of the trip was uneventful. We hiked back to camp and packed up. At a few minutes before 7 PM we were at the car. We drove back to the Livermore Airport where the other cars were parked and said our goodbyes. I was home in south San Jose by 1 AM.

### Final Notes:

This is an obscure summit that generally sees one ascent a season. It isn't higher than Mills or Abbot. It isn't on any list. It is, however, one of the coolest Sierra trips I have been on.

The YakTrax and approach shoes combination is an experiment of mine. I climbed Darwin and Mendel last year using them. Frankly, they are marginal, in terms of dealing with steep snow. Crampons and boots would work better, but, as we all know, are considerably heavier. It depends on your willingness to be creative and not be bothered by having to do self arrests. Luck helps, too!

We used a half rack and a double rope system since there were three of us. The rack consisted of aliens from the smallest, black to red, and a .75, 1, 2, and 3 Camalot plus some stoppers. This was overkill. The smallest needed was the green alien. Also, for a team of two, a single rope would be fine since each rappel is less than 100 feet, unless you want to rappel directly to the notch in one rap. There are quite a few flakes sticking out all over the place and the risk of getting the rope stuck is pretty large. This route is apparently done as a day hike round trip. It is pretty nice to camp at Mills Lake, however. There are decent sites on the north side or right side as you hike in.

### References:

- a. The High Sierra Peaks-Passes-Trails, third edition, R.J. Secor, The Mountaineers Press, 2009
- b. Summitpost.com
- c. Mountainproject.com

### Vogelsang (11, 510') and Fletcher (11,408')

June 16 - 17

By Judy Molland

Participants: Judy Molland, Joe Baker, Toinette Hartshone, Eddie Sudol, Bo Meng, Jean Lau

At 8:00 am on a beautiful Saturday morning, our group stood in line at the Wilderness Permit station in Tuolumne Meadows listening to the required speech on wilderness safety before setting off up the trail towards Vogelsang Lake. It's around eight miles, with about 1500 feet of gain, so very pleasant.

Not so pleasant were the few mosquitoes that were awaiting our arrival at the lake, but Joe and I were thrilled to see the snow in the gully leading up to Vogelsang had melted quite a bit since last weekend, and would make our ascent much easier. (We had changed this to a private trip, so that we could use ice axes here.)

We set off around 2 pm to climb Vogelsang, about another 1500' of gain from our lakeside camp. At first we followed the trail around the lake, across the valley, and then headed up towards our snow-and-rock-covered gully.



This is the gully that descends from the spot where the ridge joins the peak, and brought us to the left side of the peak. With some of us using ice axes, and others poles, we had fun climbing the gully, and reached the peak in about an hour and a half. The views were stupendous!



Returning to camp, we were greeted by zillions of mosquitoes. Joe and Toinette broke out their mosquito nets, Bo and Jean disappeared into their tent, and I dived into my bivy sack, zipped it up, and stayed there, only emerging to eat dinner very quickly. Eddie braved the mosquito attack.

Next morning we set off at 7 am to climb Fletcher. We hiked over to the west-facing side. It looked pretty bad from below: blocky and loose, but turned out to be a fun climb, and actually not loose at all. Joe led the way pretty much straight up, and we made it easily to the summit. Well, we might have! There are several possible summits, and we climbed two of them.



We also encountered PCS members Artur and Merry at one of the summits! (On the Friday evening drive to Yosemite, we had stopped at Subway in Oakdale, where another PCS group was also dining: Linda Sun, Andrea Snadden, Rick Scott, Vicky Wong!)

We retraced our steps back to camp, packed up and headed out on a very hot Sunday morning. Excellent weekend except for the mosquitoes: be sure to take nets and jungle juice if you're headed that way.

### **Here Be Dragon (12,955')**

**June 17**

**By Aaron Schuman**

And Beowulf advanced into the wilderness to meet his Dragon:

On the hot, dry weekend of June 17, 2012, Ron Karpel, Aaron Schuman, Chris Prendergast, Greg Johnson and Debbie Benham set out from Onion Valley on a marginally maintained trail to the unnamed lake north of Golden Trout Lake. A gorgeous setting, crystalline and surrounded by talus walls, we had it all to ourselves.

Sunday morning, we headed up the mountain in the solstice daylight at 5:30 a.m. Debbie stayed behind at the lake to practice yoga and to speak with the birds in their own language. At the top of the cirque there is a col capped by a chockstone. Some climbers bypass that stone to the right, but we crawled underneath it and handed up our daypacks one to the other. Now on the west side of the south ridge, we bypassed the prominent gendarme, overtopped a false summit, and came to the infamous exposed ledge.

The ledge provides a short traverse across a bare face to the summit area. Not every party protects this move with a rope. But our group chose to protect, because although the traverse is easy, the consequences of a slip would be serious. Ron's twenty-meter rope

was plenty long. He built an anchor with one small cam, one chock, and a long sling. The toeholds in the ledge are solid. Although there are not many handholds, the wall is less than vertical, and we could lean right on it with both hands. Not every member of our party clipped on to the rope.

At 9:30 a.m. we were together on the 12955-foot summit of Dragon Peak, gazing out through the unusually transparent air to Sierra peaks near and distant.



Chris Prendergast confidently completing the traverse.  
Photo: Greg Johnson

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Our official website is

<http://www.peakclimbing.org>. Joining the PCS

is easy. Go to

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### PCS Announcement Listserv

If you join the PCS Announcement Listserv you will receive announcements and updates of trips and meetings. Use the

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### 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: Climbing using hands for balance.

Class 3: Climbing requires the use of hands, maybe a rope.

Class 4: Requires rope belays.

Class 5: Technical rock climbing.

Trips may also be rated by level of exertion: easy, moderate, strenuous, or extreme.

**Deadline for submissions to the next Scree is Friday, July 27. Meetings are held on the second Tuesday of each month.**