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General Meeting

Date April 9, 2013

Time 7:30 pm – 9:30 pm

Where PCC
3921 E. Bayshore Road
Palo Alto, CA

Program Climbing Rock and
Climbing Elephants in
Thailand

Presenter Emilie Cortes

In January, Emilie Cortes traveled to Thailand to explore the northern and southern regions of the country. She spent two weeks with a group in the north, which is known for being more lush and mountainous with a rich elephant culture. Emilie spent four days living with elephants and was given the largest elephant to train with once they found out she was a climber (despite being the smallest person in the group!). She then traveled alone to the south to experience tropical beaches and spectacular sandstone cliffs that draw rock climbers and deep water soloists from around the globe. Emilie moved to Oregon at

the end of last year, so don't miss this chance to see another one of her talks!



Directions from 101

Exit at San Antonio Road, go east to the first traffic light, turn left and follow Bayshore Rd to the PCC on the corner of Corporation Way. A sign marking the PCC is out front. Park and enter in the back of the building.

Google <http://tinyurl.com/28ng>

Editor's Notes

Happy Spring! And please get your trip descriptions to me so we can fill up our trip roster! Judy

Chair Column

We're in the "elbow" season of spring now, prime time for Sierra snow climbs in this low-snow year, with the summer season just around the corner. We've had a few new faces show up at recent meetings. Welcome! Now is the time to sign up for trips, as they fill up fast.

Trip leaders, please send Judy your trip descriptions as soon as possible if you've not already done so. It will help prospective participants plan and will help ensure you have a full team. And when you return let Rod or myself know how it went. Consider writing a trip report for the Scree so we can all share in the glow of your accomplishment.

I'm looking forward to this month's presentation by past Chair Emilie Cortes. It should be a fun look at an international destination most of us don't get a chance to experience.

Climb on,
Terry

Preliminary Trip List For Summer

Preliminary Trip List (details subject to later revision, or possible immediate correction by those on the above e-mail list):

April 26-28, Lisa Barboza -- Basin Mtn.
May 10-12, Lisa Barboza -- Kern Pk.
May 18 or 25, Aaron Schuman -- ?
June 8, Lisa Barboza -- Mt. Brewer, South Guard
June 11-13, Lisa Barboza -- Mt. Izaak Walton, Recess Peak
June 13-15, Bob Summers -- Backpack loop from Tenaya Lake, over Clouds Rest

June 14-16, Lisa Barboza & Aaron Schuman -- Silver Peak
June 21-24, Lisa Barboza -- Mt. Mills, Bear Creek Spire
June 28-July 5, Lisa Barboza -- Mt. Julius Caesar, Mt. Hilgard, Mt. Gabb; & Foerster Pk.
June 29-July 7, Aaron Schuman -- Kaweahs from Mineral King (& Eisen, Lippincott, +?)
July 8-14, Bob Summers -- Mt. McAdie (+?), from New Army Pass to N. Fk. Lone Pine Ck.
July 20, Kelly Maas -- Mt. Acrodetes, from Baxter Pass
July 22-August 2, Bob Summers -- Evolution region from Courtright (in over Hell-for-Sure Pass)
July 28-31, Lisa Barboza -- Triple Divide Pk. (Seq.), Lion Rock, Mt. Stewart
August 1-3, Rod McCalley -- Cirque Peak (& 70th Birthday Party)
August 9-11, Lisa Barboza -- Mt. Winchell, from Big Pine Ck.
August 9-12, Kelly Maas -- Center Basin, from Onion Valley
August 16-18, Lisa Barboza & Aaron Schuman -- Mt. Giraud, via Bishop Pass
August 19-30, Bob Summers -- Peaks of (and north of) the Kings-Kern Divide
August 24, Kelly Maas -- Tenaya Canyon descent
August 30-Sept. 2, Lisa Barboza -- Deerhorn and E. & W. Vidette, from Cedar Grove
Sept. 6-8, Lisa Barboza, Rick Booth, & Linda Sun -- Mt. Humphreys (E. arete)
Sept. 12-15, Bob Summers -- Muir Gorge of the Tuolumne River
Sept. 14, Lisa Barboza & Daryn Dodge -- North Peak (& LIST-FINISH Party, Saddlebag Lk.)
Sept. 21, Aaron Schuman -- ?
Sept. 23-29, Bob Summers -- Spiller & Whorl Mtns (+?), from Virginia Lakes

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.

April 19 - 21: Lost Coast Backpack
Leader: Kelly Maas

August 31 - Sept 9: Kilimanjaro, Tanzania
Leader: Emilie Cortes

November 7 - 23: Annapurna Base Camp, Nepal
Leader: Emilie Cortes

Private Trip Details

Lost Coast Backpack

Goals: Enjoy!

Location: Lost Coast

Dates: April 19 - 21

Leader: Kelly Maas

Difficulty: Class 1

Enjoy a 3-day, 2-night backpack in the King Range National Conservation Area. We'll go north-to-south from Mattole to Black Sands Beach near Shelter Cove. A long car shuttle will be involved. Total distance is roughly 25 miles. We will need to time things carefully to avoid high tide at two key locations. Stream crossings will be required. Leader: Kelly Maas (408) 378-5311 kellymbase-pcs@yahoo.com

Mt. Kilimanjaro, Tanzania

Goals: Kilimanjaro (19,341')

Location: Tanzania

Dates: August 31 - Sept 9

Leader: Emilie Cortes

Difficulty: Class 1

This is an all female expedition to the roof of Africa with Emilie's new company, Call of the Wild Adventures, Inc. Emilie will be guiding this trip personally. Kilimanjaro is one of the seven summits and stands at 19,340ft. We will

ascend via the Machame route over 7 days total. The Machame (aka "Whiskey Route") is a bit more challenging due to its rolling nature and scramble up the Barranca Headwall, but has a better summit success rate. Climbers typically try to ascend over 5, 6, or 7 days. The more days you take, the better your chances, so why fly all that way not summit because you tried to save a day of vacation? While this peak is "just hiking," you will need to train in order to handle 7 days of trekking without rest days and to prepare your body to acclimatize as best it can. This trip is scheduled over the Labor Day holiday weekend to help those who are vacation constrained. There are additional optional extensions to do a camping safari and a trip to the island of Zanzibar. Cost is \$3995 (compare to other outfitters!) with a 10% discount for current PCS members. Contact Emilie Cortes at 415-260-3618, emilie@callwild.com, or sign up at <http://www.callwild.com/trip.php?id=64>.

Annapurna Base Camp

Goals: Annapurna Base Camp (13,550')

Location: Nepal

Dates: November 7 - 23

Leader: Emilie Cortes

Difficulty: Class 1

This is an all female expedition to the famous Annapurna Base Camp in the Annapurna Sanctuary. Emilie will be guiding this trip personally.

This challenging trek is one of the most popular in Nepal and for good reason! Annapurna Base Camp (ABC) is surrounded by a cirque of awe-inspiring peaks, including the awesome south face of Annapurna I (8,091m), in a natural amphitheatre which is quite simply mind-blowing. Our trek starts from Pokhara with a short drive to the road head. A short diversion up to Poon Hill (3,190m) offers us a chance to obtain great views of Himalayan giant - Dhaulagiri (8,167m). The sunrise views from here are legendary.

As we climb through ancient oak and rhododendron forest, across sparkling streams and past waterfalls, the world of snow and ice starts to unfold above us. This combination of villages and terraced fields of millet and rice, coupled by the majestic splendor of Machapuchare (6,993m), Annapurna I and Himchuli (6,441m) make this an extremely rewarding trek. Climbing up the Modhi Khola valley towards the sanctuary, we are teased with views of towering peaks and dizzyingly high rock walls with waterfalls tumbling down into the roar of the river below.

We ascend to Machapuchare Base Camp (3,700m) on the lateral moraine of Annapurana South glacier. The steady climb up to ABC reveals the full splendor of this natural amphitheatre. When we reach our destination, we are spoiled with a 360-degree views of Himalayan peaks, the 'Throne of the Mountain Gods'.

Cost is \$3295 with a 10% discount for current PCS members. Contact Emilie Cortes at 415-260-3618, emilie@callwild.com, or sign up at <http://www.callwild.com/trip.php?id=66>.

Trip Reports

Evolutions Tour September, 2012 By Terry Cline

In early September Robert Summers and I spent six and a half days touring the Evolution Basin going in from Lake Sabrina and coming out at North Lake. Originally this trip was to be a trip down the Muir Gorge out of Tuolumne Meadows, but the other participant had injured a leg during a trip that she and Robert had taken through the Kern Divide a couple of weeks prior. So he proposed a mostly cross-country loop up and over the crest to visit Evolution Basin and climb a few peaks along the way. I had long wanted to visit the Basin so the trip was on.

I picked up Robert about 11 am on Sunday and we headed to the nearest grocery store to do meal planning on the fly and headed out of town, arriving at the Lee Vining Ranger Station just in time to get a wilderness permit before closing. Since it seemed a little early to be eating dinner at the Whoa Nellie Deli, we headed south and stopped in Mammoth Lakes to eat at the Smokehouse before heading through Bishop up to the Buttermilk Road to find a place to stealth camp.

Monday morning we headed up to the trailhead at Lake Sabrina and organized the packs before depositing the car down near the junction with the road up to North Lake, praying we'd be able to hitch a ride back down to the car when we came out at North Lake. Then we headed out on the meandering up and down trail to Hungry Packer Lake, which we left in the vicinity of Sailor Lake and camped on a shelf above Moonlight Lake.



Moonlight Lake

Tuesday started early as we moved camp up to the outlet of Echo Lake and headed off to climb Mt Wallace. From Echo Lake to the Haeckel-Wallace Col we patiently endured the talus hopping punctuated by the final 500 or so feet of loose scree and sand to the Col. When viewing Wallace from the bench below the Col, I had always thought it would be a straightforward slog up the ridge to the summit. Not so fast! The Col turns out to be pretty narrow and surrounded by pinnacles, but there are escapes around to the east that

are not too difficult. So we did a rising traverse scrambling over a few ridges separating loose gullies that descend to the bench below. It was mostly class 2, but one can easily get on more difficult terrain if not careful about route-finding.

The summit was soon reached under a glorious clear sky and little wind. No one mentions that the true summit is a short boulder problem of about 5.8 difficulty. It was good to see many names of friends and acquaintances in the summit register. It was also interesting to see names of those en route to completing the Evolution Traverse pioneered by Peter Croft, including a poignant entry by Gil Weiss who with Ben Horne died this July in Peru descending from a difficult climb in the Cordillera Blanca. Along with Brad Wilson, they had done the full Palisade Traverse at the beginning of June from Bishop Pass to Southfork Pass in a very fast time (<http://pullharder.org/2012/07/02/full-palisade-traverse-casualty/>). Burly.

The summit views were amazing -- and unusual; the Palisade summits poked up through thick billowy clouds with no other clouds in sight around the entire Sierra. We understood later in the day what that portended. From the summit we dropped directly through a tunnel down to the steep scree gully that went in a direct line from the summit down to the talus bench. Ascending this way would be too horrible to contemplate, but scree surfing it down, while nerve racking, was a pretty quick way to descend.

We arrived back in camp in time to be greeted by rain and hail that lasted for an hour and a half. Robert set up the tarp tent and stayed dry napping. I dove into the boulder cave we had chose to place our kitchen by; it had obviously been used for this purpose before, but was claustrophobic. The weather cleared thankfully in time for us to cook dinner just before dark descended.

The next morning we were off early to go find Echo Col in the cirque above the lake,

somewhere between Mt Powell and the Clyde Spires. The lake is surrounded by cliffs, so the first challenge was to find a way around.

Old trip reports said there was a ledge system that could take one around the east side to where a large snow-filled gully emptied out of the northeast side of Mt Powell. Well, it was late season so the snow was reduced to a few patches whose melt formed a small stream dropping into the lake. From our camp, there looked like a faint diagonally traversing ledge system that could get us to where we could cross the stream above the drop-off. We headed for it. Fortunately, we soon found a sequence of cairns leading us up. Only moderately exposed and slightly loose, this ramp after a couple of switchbacks to higher ledges deposited us at the desired stream crossing, iced over from the low overnight temperatures. There we were greeted by about half a mile of huge talus blocks to the back of the cirque up to the base of the slabs leading up to the Col. Old trip reports describe this all as easy snow walking and an easy snow climb to the Col, but there was no snow, and even the map shows a no-longer existing glacier here.

Instead tedium ensued till we reached the supposedly class 2 slabs. Here it was not obvious how to reach what must be the Col (also appropriately named the Black Notch) in an area of black rock surrounded by tan. So we took it head-on and wove our way up a network of ledges connecting the slabs: mostly class 2 with some demonstrably much harder short sections.

We soon arrived at the notch with a short steep chimney at the top. Here various reports recommend lowering packs down the other side over a steep class 3 chute. With my more streamlined alpine pack, I was able to climb down pretty easily to a place where Robert was able to pass his old-school frame pack down to me. Interesting and fun. The next couple of hours were not so much: loose scree followed by talus boulder hopping interspersed by occasional slabs till we reached lake 11428. The outlet of the lake being cliffs on both sides for a half a mile or

more, we headed down around the west side till we couldn't go anymore and then traversed monster slabs west to a drainage that led back south into the upper LeConte Canyon, where we hooked up with the John Muir Trail just east of the Black Divide.

From there we hiked the trail up to Helen Lake below Mts Warlow and Fiske. Originally we had planned to climb one or both of these the next day, but seeing what crud heaps they were dissuaded us. Instead Mt Solomons above Muir Pass became the next objective.

We found a nice camp spot above the southeast shore of the lake away from the trail and lake. It was pleasant until about midnight when a wind storm arrived and blew down the tarp. The rest of the night was uncomfortable, cold, and breezy.

The next morning we hiked up to Muir Pass and its iconic stone hut. Robert browsed the notes left by the many who had passed through, including a curious note from a group calling themselves the "Soiled Doves of the Black Notch". Hmmm, the Black Notch is an alternate name for Echo Col. We weren't the first to think of this route.

We stashed the packs and headed off to circle around and over the lower north ridge of Mt Solomons to its west ridge; that seemed to be the line of least resistance in a sea of talus.

About half way up, I decided my legs just didn't have it that day and turned around to wait at the hut. I had a nice time while I waited chatting with the multitudes coming up the pass from the north on the JMT. In due course, Robert reappeared. The summit was reached not far from where I'd bailed and the talus became less higher up. The Soiled Doves of the Black Notch had also visited the summit. This was not to be the last sign of them we encountered.

We headed down the trail to a camp at Sapphire Lake, one of our coldest. The water bottles froze overnight. Along the way, the trail gossip communication line was active with news of an accident somewhere over the

divide above Davis Lake below Mt Goddard. We got a different version with each party we met, some hurrying over the pass and 8 miles down to the LeConte Canyon Ranger Station to get help. Apparently a solo hiker had broken an ankle or worse and was unable to get out. I hoped he would end up ok, but there was nothing we could do to help. Interesting how a micro society develops among strangers out in the backcountry.

We briefly considered climbing Mt Huxley via the historic Clyde route, but had heard that the "3rd class headwall" was really more like exposed 5.6. Not carrying a rope and seeing the loose gully leading to it, this no longer appealed, so we settled for more hiking. We headed on down the JMT to the end of the Evolution Basin to where it drops into Evolution Valley. There we headed up a climber's use-trail to Darwin Bench. Along the way, we were lorded over by The Hermit, an interesting looking climb to put on the bucket list. The highlight was beautiful Evolution Lake, where we stopped for a early lunch break and some non-productive fly fishing.



Evolution Lake, The Hermit above

About two-thirds the way up to Darwin Bench, we met a couple of fishermen day hiking from their camp in Darwin Canyon down to Evolution Lake to have a look around. They were making lunch in the shade and were very friendly, so we had a nice long break sharing experiences. They pointed us to some potential good camp spots up in the

canyon where their third partner was taking a day off in camp. Thanking them, we headed up to the bench and into the canyon to look for the night's camp.



Darwin Bench, looking west over Evolution Valley

Moving up from the bench into Darwin Canyon, we found a nice campsite in low trees between the second and third lakes.

The next morning we headed up canyon to the grind up to Lamarck Col, stopping a third of the way to check out the little meadow on the east margin that Robert had camped at when climbing Darwin some years ago. It's easier to traverse into Darwin Glacier's cirque from here than dropping down to the last lake in the canyon and saves some tedious boulder hopping.

Looking across the canyon to north side of Mt Mendel, both ice climbs were dry, a little residual dirty ice leading to Ice Nine and a completely snow- and ice-free Mendel Couloir.

Last year only a couple of weeks earlier in the season they both were in full-on prime condition as we met a couple coming down from the col day-hiking Ice Nine. How the snows can change season to season. At the Lamarck Col, I was amazed to see the difference in conditions from last year.

Instead of waist deep suncups on the north side that we had diagonaled up to exit on the right, there was almost no snow but a short section of water ice below a class 2 trail of rubble. Fortunately we could traverse over the top of the ice and then down its edge in talus.

But first there was Mt Lamarck to climb. We set off with a group of Seattle climbers who had arrived at the col at about the same time. After traversing around the towers along the col, they pushed ahead taking the map literally and heading to the unnamed peak to the northwest that inexplicably is not named Mt Lamarck though being at or above the same elevation. Not finding a summit register they caught up with us at the summit of the official Mt Lamarck where we had a good time swapping lies about our climbing in the Cascades (I climbed there for about 7 years while living in Idaho). The summit register on Lamarck contained an entry from the Soiled Doves of the Black Notch; we meet again in spirit.

One of the Seattle guys thought he had left his camera back at the false summit and frantically retraced his steps. Catching us again later back at the col, he discovered it was just in another pocket of his pack and wasn't dropped at all. Embarrassing -- and exhausting. They had a plane to catch in San Francisco early next day, so they ran down the col and planned to drop directly down to Grass Lake to get to the North Lake trailhead. Not a good idea, cliffs and talus abound.

Below the col we met a couple of friends of Robert on their way in to climb the Northeast Ridge of Mendel. We yakked for at least an hour, killing our hope of hiking out before dark or at least finding a campsite near water. We headed down anyway. We had no water and I was beginning to run out of leg when just before getting to the exposed traverse below the ridge that leads to the drop down to Lamarck Lakes we heard a call from below in a meadowy area just above the drop over the cliffs to Grass Lake. It was our fishermen friends who had established a camp there near a little seam of water from the remnants of snowfields above. They invited us to join them. It was just about dark, so we did. A convivial little party ensued after setting up camp.

The next morning we climbed back up to the use-trail and over the ridge to traverse over to the ridge that looks down on upper Lamarck Lake. There we got confused, went down to the outlet creek, didn't like the looks of the canyon below, backtracked and found a faint trail descending the other side of the ridge. This led to a fainter and fainter, but clearly engineered, trail down into the Grass Lake drainage, eventually through woods. After a couple creek crossings, we found ourselves at Grass Lake; actually, a pretty good way to go out despite the several hundred foot climb on good trail from the lake back up to the Lamarck Lakes trail that goes down to the trailhead. It might even be a good way to go up to Lamarck Col, but likely steeper in sections than the usual way. Neither of us had ever heard of this trail and it's not on any maps.

We soon arrived at the North Lake trailhead. Our next challenge was retrieving the car at the road junction a good 1500' below. While we were pondering this and swapping lies with a couple of climbers who were organizing gear for a trip into Darwin Canyon, a backpacker showed up coming down from Piute Pass. He had done an even longer loop than we, but all on trail. He'd left his truck at South Lake, went over Bishop Pass, down to the JMT, up it all the way to the Muir Ranch trail and then up the Piute Trail over the pass and down to North Lake. We struck a deal. He'd go down to get our car if we'd give him a ride to South Lake to get his truck. With tired legs that seemed like a good deal. He was fortunate to hitch a ride with a fisherman after a short time, so the hike down was not too bad.

After dropping him off, we stopped at Parcher's Resort hoping their little restaurant/bar would be serving lunch; they weren't, only breakfast. On to Bishop. Sonja Dietrich had sung the praises of the Burger Barn on the road into Bishop, so we decided to give it try. One star on ambiance (the flies are annoying), three stars for the burgers on

homemade buns.

The long drive home ensued, with a stop for ice cream in Escalon. A great trip in beautiful country.

Elected Officials

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Joining the PCS is easy. Go to <http://www.peakclimbing.org/join>

PCS Announcement Listserv

If you join the PCS Announcement Listserv you will receive announcements and updates of trips and meetings. Use the <http://lists.sierraclub.org/SCRIPTS/WA.EXE?A0=LOMAP-PCS-ANNOUNCE&X=&Y=> web page.

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, April 25. Meetings are held on the second Tuesday of each month.