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General Meeting

PARTY TIME



Photo Credit: Ricky's Sports

Come to the Peak Climbers' Festivus party, on Tuesday, December 10, 2013, from 7:00 to 10:00 p.m., at the Whisman Station Clubhouse, at 420 Kent Drive, Mountain View.

Bring a potluck dish to share with climbers who eat like bears! Bring a thumb drive or a CD or 35 mm slides with 10 or 12 of your most heart-stopping climbing photos, from this year or from long ago. Bring your family and friends.

In addition, feel free to bring your alcoholic beverage of choice, and of course, since we are a green organization, bring your own plate, cup, and eating utensils.

From Central Expressway, exit at Whisman. Swing around, cross Whisman, and continue

straight onto Whisman Station. Just after the VTA light rail tracks, at the tee at Magnolia Park, turn left on Jacaranda, then right on Kent. Street parking is limited. If you can't find a space close by, park at the lot at the VTA light rail station and walk over.

From US-101, exit at Ellis. Turn right at Middlefield, left at Whisman, then follow the close-in directions above.

From CA-237, exit at Maude/Middlefield. Take the 237 service drive to get from Maude to Middlefield, turn right on Middlefield, left at Whisman, then follow the close-in directions above.

On VTA light rail, exit at Whisman Station. This is the second stop from the green line terminus at the Mountain View CalTrain rendezvous. It's a short walk to the clubhouse.

Festivus: It's the festival for the rest of us.

Editor's Notes

For my notes to you this month, I urge everyone to read the message from our Chair, Terry Cline, below, and offer your thoughts and recommendations for the future growth of our club.

Happy Holidays!
Judy

New PCS Officers For 2014

Accompanied by modest fanfare, the PCS elections for the new term were held at the November PCS meeting on the 12th of November, 2013.

The existing chair, Terry Cline, agreed to continue on as interim-Chair of the PCS for the new term.

Rakesh Ranjan was nominated and elected for the role of vice-chair.

The existing treasurer, Yoni Novat, also agreed to continue on for the new term.

The motion was passed unanimously.

The nominating committee, along with the rest of the PCS membership, would like to thank the outgoing officers, Terry Cline, Rod McCalley and Yoni Novat for doing an excellent job in 2013.

We would also like to wish the new officers all the best and safe climbing for 2014.

The PCS Nominating Committee
Lisa Barboza, Rod McCalley, Terry Cline and
Arun Mahajan

Chair Column

As we wind up the year, I'd like to thank Yoni Novat for serving as Secretary/Treasurer this year and for volunteering to continue in 2014. I'd also like to thank Rod McCalley for filling the role of Vice-Chair and Trip Scheduler; it was supposed to have been a temporary assignment but continued on till I was able to give him a hand late in the year. Much thanks to him also for graciously hosting our trip planning meetings the last two years.

Thanks also to the many slideshow presenters whose stories and stunning photos have become the main attraction for most who come to our monthly meetings, whether member or not.

This may also be a good time to reflect on the

health of the section and bring up to date those of you who were not able to make the November meeting where we discussed ways to improve the section as we go forward.

As a reminder, the purposes of the Peak Climbing Section are:

- To explore, enjoy, and preserve the mountain ranges and become familiar with their scenic resources;
- To preserve their forests, wildlife and wildernesses;
- To enlist public interest and cooperation in protecting them;
- To cultivate comradeship in and understanding of mountain climbing;
- And to further the purposes of the Sierra Club.

To these ends we organize peak climbing trips, mostly to the Sierra Nevada but also to other ranges around the country and the world, that are focused mostly, but not exclusively, on non-technical ascents. The value proposition we offer participants is experienced leaders guiding small groups safely up mountains and on high country trips. With the PCS you know what you are getting. Our record is one of very few injuries and no fatalities. Some have quipped that the PCS is "NOLS for free".

Having said that, our demographics are aging and the influx of new members has slowed to a trickle. A small core group keeps our club going, but they are either getting burned out or are moving on to other life interests. The result is few new leaders, with current ones contributing for years. Many people come to our monthly meetings for our slideshows, but rarely participate further. Attendance at the monthly meeting is highly dependent on the attractiveness of the slideshow. We need to find a way to introduce new members to the activities, values, and comradeship we hold dear.

Recognizing that these issues have been festering for a number of years, a group of long-time members and leaders recently met to

brainstorm ideas for improving the situation. Here is a summary of some actions recommended that may help refocus our activities, recruit new blood, and improve participation.

- Reduce meetings to 4-6 times annually
- Continue our trip planning meetings, but as one of our regularly scheduled meetings open to all
- Continue our climbing trips, but somehow increase the number and variety
- Start a marketing campaign and coordinate our messages on available outlets
- Reinstigate training classes with the blessing of the Mountaineering Oversight Committee, perhaps modeled on the classes offered by the Sierra Peaks Section and the Colorado Mountain Club
- Revamp our web site for better communication and encouragement of member participation

Agreement on these recommendations was by no means universal, nor was it when broached at our October general meeting. Some will require changes in our bylaws and/or operating procedures. But change is needed. As is often said in business, those not agile enough to change with conditions do not thrive. I will elaborate details of these proposals as they evolve in future Chair Columns and at our monthly meetings.

As we enter a new year, I invite your ideas and your active participation in how we move forward. Critique these recommendations, and suggest alternatives and additions. Above all, get involved! My email and phone number are listed on the Officers page of the web site.

Terry

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>

December 7 - 8 - Cone Peak

Leader: Lisa Barboza

January 18 - Junipero Serra Peak

Leader: Lisa Barboza

PCS Trip Details

Cone Peak

Goals: Cone Peak, 5158'

Location: Santa Lucia Range, Ventana Wilderness

Dates: December 7 - 8

Leader: Lisa Barboza

We'll hike into the Big Sur backcountry in this early winter climb. Cone Peak is 11 miles from the trailhead at Lime Kiln campground. The peak is the third highest in the Santa Lucia range after Junipero Serra and Pinyon Peak. Details to come.

Contact lisa.barbozaATgmail.com for details

Junipero Serra Peak

Goals: Junipero Serra Peak, 5857'

Location: Santa Lucia Range, Ventana Wilderness

Date: January 18

Leader: Lisa Barboza

Co-Leader: Yoni Novat

Annual trip to climb Junipero Serra – 12 miles RT, 4000 feet gain. There will likely be snow at the summit for the last 300 feet, depending on the season. This is a really fun hike, and is traditional. Meet at Carl's Jr. off of East Dunne Ave in Morgan Hill at 6:30 AM for carpool

Contact lisa.barbozaATgmail.com for details

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.

December 7 - 8: Beginning snowshoe/snow camping for Women at Yosemite's Dewey Point

Leader: Sharon Lindsay

Private Trip Details

Beginning Snowshoe/Snow Camping for Women

Goals: Yosemite, Dewey Point

Location: Yosemite

Dates: December 7 - 8

Leader: Sharon Lindsey

Saturday morning to Sunday evening -one night of sleeping on snow.

Dewey Point is stunning! 3-4 miles one way on moderately flat terrain.

<http://www.sfgate.com/outdoors/article/Yosemite-s-Dewey-Point-well-worth-the-walk-3250541.php>

We'll go, snow, mud, rain or shine.

Leader: Sharon Lindsey West:

west.slw@gmail.com

Trip Report

Mt. Bierstadt, 14,060'

Colorado

October, 2013

By Terry Cline

After my Mother's memorial in Kansas, I flew in mid-October from Kansas City to Denver to visit my son Dave and his fiancé Candyce for five

days to see their new house in Westminster, explore the Boulder area, and hike a bit at altitude. The last hike was a climb of Mt Bierstadt, 14,060', in the front-range about an hour west of Denver.

Originally, I had wanted to climb Mt Audubon, 13,223', west of Boulder along the Continental Divide, but just a look up to the skyline while driving north of Boulder revealed the folly of that, given I only had light approach shoes; the divide was buried in snow. A conversation with forest service rangers at the station just outside Boulder revealed also that the road to the trailhead was gated for the winter, nearly doubling the distance I'd have to hoof it as well.

Another objective was to climb either Gray's Peak or Torrey's Peak along the divide above the I70 corridor near Bakerville. But the dirt road to the trailhead was also already closed for the winter, substantially increasing the trek to the summit. Those peaks were even more blanketed in snow than Audubon. The rangers suggested Bierstadt since it sees enough traffic that I would likely find a beaten path in the snow and ice navigable in my approach shoes.

Said to be the easiest 14'er within easy access from Denver, Bierstadt is very popular. The peak is named after Albert Bierstadt whose romanticized paintings of the American West in the 1800's helped feed the western expansion. It is one of 54 fourteeners in Colorado and located about 1.5 miles west-southwest of Mt Evans, 14,265', a fourteener with a road to its summit to an observatory and a snack shop. Evans is the highest peak in a massif known historically as the Chicago Peaks. The Mt Evans road is occasional host to what is billed as the world's highest road race. It is said that Bierstadt made sketches of the area in an 1863 visit in which he climbed what became his namesake peak and which resulted in the famous "A Storm in the Rocky Mountains, Mt Rosalie" painting. Upon Rosalie being renamed Bierstadt, another nearby peak was given the name Mt Rosalie.

As expected, a trail had already been beaten into the snow making it possible for me to handle

the conditions in my light hiker approach shoes. I borrowed Candyce's ski poles to use as trekking poles to save my creaky knees on the descent and to improve balance on the slippery ice sections going up.

The climb up the west face starts from a trailhead at the top of Guanella Pass, 11,669', above the old mining town of Georgetown on 170. Quite a spectacular road, lots of switchbacks and a little ice early in the day. It is now paved and not dirt as described in the old guidebook I have and is kept open most of the year.

I left the trailhead a few minutes after 9 am with a temperature in the mid 20's F and reached the summit a few minutes after noon. The route drops about 300' in the first mile to an icy crossing of Scott Gomer Creek below an iced over lake and meanders, thankfully on a beaten path, through a wide swath of willows ominously described in the guidebook as the "famous Bierstadt Willows", the bane of many a mountaineer. Before the creek crossing, the path had a few sections of boardwalk, a harbinger of what the trail could be like in warm weather. In the morning, this path had a significant amount of ice, which melted and exposed sticky soft mud on return in a warmer afternoon.

From the east edge of the willows the route winds up the broad western slope to a shoulder on the South Ridge at 13,780'. From there it's an easy class 2 scramble to the summit in about a quarter mile. Many parties, and there were a couple on the mountain this day, continue on to Mt Evans via a spectacular class 3 ridge called the Sawtooth. Next time.

Here's a photo of the mountain with the approximate route marked from the east end of the willows.



The mountain is really foreshortened in this view so you don't get a realistic feeling of the steepness. In the left background is the Sawtooth with its vertical cliffs dropping into a cirque on the north of Bierstadt.

The west slope was not too bad, comparable to hiking up Mission Peak at home via the Horse Heaven trail. But in up to mid-calf deep snow and much ice on the lower sections.

Halfway up to the shelf area I encountered three all-white ptarmigans, not the least bit afraid of me and blending in with the snow quite well.



Up on the shelf, I met a young fellow coming straight down the face at a jog. We stopped to talk a while. He was a Swiss intern visiting Omaha, NE to learn watchmaking. Go figure! He was in a hurry because he had to drive back to Omaha that night to be at work the next day, a nearly 600 mile drive. Ah, ... I remember when I had that much energy.

The last 400' or so was easy class 2 scrambling with an impressive drop to the east into the cirque below. Here I got caught by a couple I would meet shortly on the summit. The guy passed me with this sort of shit-eating grin. I would soon see why. Arriving at the summit, the young woman was jumping up and down, happy. "He proposed! He proposed! ..." They turned out to be marathoners, not really mountaineers, but very nice. I turned into engagement photographer for them with all our cameras. Nice couple. Here they are, I forget their names:



Here's the view to the west from the summit. The trailhead is just beyond the frozen lake near bottom center. The two highest peaks near the center are left-right Grays Peak, 14,270', and Torreys Peak, 14,267', on the Continental Divide. They were initially my choice to climb, but the road to the trailhead was already closed for the winter. Grays is the highest peak actually on the Continental Divide between the origin of the Pacific-Atlantic divide on Snow Dome in the Canadian Rockies and the Mexican border.



The descent was uneventful, but muddy in the willows with the higher afternoon temperatures. And the uphill finish was a drag after a longish day. Just before the boardwalks, I met a bare-foot couple heading for the muddy sections. Discarded flip-flops were soon found on the first boardwalk. The Evans traverse parties came in shortly after me and were impressed I'd done the summit so well coming from sea level (and, implicitly, *at my age*).

I drove back to Westminster taking the slow way through the beautiful Clear Creek Canyon to a traffic jam in Golden on the way to joining Dave for a nice dinner in Louisville. A nice introduction to the Colorado Rockies.

Wilderness First Aid Course

Of interest to prospective leaders of PCS overnight trips or leaders who need to renew their wilderness first aid certification:

Bobbie Foster will be teaching the annual Loma Prieta Chapter sponsored Wilderness First Aid class on the weekend of February 8-9 at the Peninsula Conservation Center in Palo Alto. For details click here:

http://www.fostercalm.com/?page_id=22

Publicity Committee Positions

Scree Editor

Judy Molland / screeditor@gmail.com

PCS World Wide Web Publisher

Joe Baker / pcs@jobaker.us

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 Monday, December 27. Meetings are held on the second Tuesday of each month.