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General Meeting

Date Tuesday, August 12, 2014

Time 7:30 pm – 9:30 pm

Where PCC
3921 E. Bayshore Road
Palo Alto, CA

Program A Year of Climbing: from the Sierra Nevada to the Cordillera Blanca

Presenter: Vitaliy Musiyenko

2013 was a good year for Vitaliy Musiyenko: climbing big walls, free-standing ice pillars, perfect granite in the Sierra Nevada and some of the most beautiful peaks in Cordillera Blanca (Peru). Come hear about climbing on the Incredible Hulk, El Capitan, Alpamayo, Chacaraju, the Evolution Traverse, Huascarán, The Watchtower and much more!



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

Hope everyone is having a wonderful summer! We have some awesome trip reports in our August Scree - check them out!
Judy

Chair Column

It's not true old dogs can't (re)learn new tricks. At least I was given the opportunity to find out last week. I went on a rather impromptu trip to solo Mt Russell. They say most mountaineering accidents result from a sequence of small, seemingly inconsequential, decisions that become a disaster in the making. I don't want to seem dramatic. Nothing bad happened this time, maybe I got lucky.

First, I wasn't fully committed to what I wanted to do since getting a walk-up permit for the North Fork of Lone Pine Creek was iffy and I was conflicted about alternatives. (Ranger said that destination has not been so in demand this year, permit no problem. Check). The weather forecast was for 20% thunderstorms overnight and 30% for the climb day (hey, that'll never happen. Yeah, right). I wanted to save weight so debated going with just a bivy sack or with my lightest tent (which is really more for bugs than rain. Eh, I can get by with the light tent in the remote chance it rains a little). I'll take a little extra food in case I need to stay an extra day (but it would have helped if I had taken a commensurate amount of extra stove fuel. Duh!).

Well, at 3 am the first night the rain began with a bang, literally with a spectacular lightening and thunder storm very close, scary close, and continued for about 14 hours. I spent the day bailing my leaky tent and trying to conserve food and fuel for an extra day. Russell's East Face was fully covered in new snow. Rock falls were coming everywhere. Climbing was out of the question. I worried about being trapped above the wet Ebersbacher Ledges, which I had last climbed 37 years ago and barely remembered the way through the trickiest sections. I stayed another night and hiked out in a drizzle with a guided group who fortunately were camped near by. Fortunate since most of the cairns marking the route down to Lower Boy Scout Lake had been washed out by the storm; I probably would have gotten lost in the wet brush. The Ebersbacher Ledges and the creek crossings were challenging in the full-on wet conditions.

Nothing bad happened, but I ignored the multiple warning signs that normally would have caused me to stay home. One needs to think things through and put ego and ambition in the bottom drawer in a dark closet. Lessons relearned.

Now, for a change in topics. It's that time of year to solicit participation in the nominating committee for next year's officers. If you'd like to serve this important Section function, let me know.

For those who attended Vitaliy Musiyenko's slideshow in 2012, Vitaliy has been a very busy climber since. You'll enjoy an update on what his 2013 was like. Please come to our August 12 meeting. You'll be impressed and entertained.

Terry

PCS Trip Calendar

There are no official PCS trips currently scheduled.

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.

August 16 - 18: Mount Clarence King
Leader: Terry Cline

August 22 - 25: Mt. Keith, Center Peak
Leader: Kelly Maas

Private Trip Details

Mt. Clarence King

Goal: Mt Clarence King, 12,905'

Location: Kings Canyon NP, Sixty Lakes Basin, Kearsarge Pass, Independence

Dates: August 16-18

Leader: Terry Cline

Co-Leader: wanted

Difficulty: Class 3, technical rock climbing

We'll climb the classic South Face route; its first ascent by Bolton Brown was the hardest American rock climb in the 19th century. Saturday we will hike 7.3 miles over Kearsarge Pass from Onion Valley above Independence to the vicinity of Charlotte Lake and from there 8 miles over Glenn Pass along the Pacific Crest trail to the upper Rae Lakes basin before heading up to the Sixty Lakes Basin. Because of permit camping restrictions, we will camp somewhere between Glenn Pass and the Rae Lakes Basin.

Sunday we will move camp into Sixty Lakes Basin before climbing the exposed class 3 South Face of Clarence King. A light rope will be carried to protect the famously exposed 5.4 summit block move to reach the top. After descending the peak, we will spend the night in the beautiful Sixty Lakes Basin. Monday we will hike out the way we came.

This climb involves more than 30 miles of hiking and much elevation gain and loss over three passes. Only very fit climbers experienced in exposed class 3, moderate rock climbing, belaying, and rappelling. Permit for six.

Center Basin

Goal: Mt. Keith (13,977'), class 2; Center Peak (12,760'), class 2

Location: Onion Valley, eastside of the Sierra

Dates: August 22 - 25

Leader: Kelly Maas

Co-Leader: wanted

The approach is from Onion Valley trailhead and over Kearsarge Pass, then down to Vidette Meadow and up Bubbs Creek to Center Basin. This is a long hike in, so the trip is going to be 4 days. If we have sufficient time and energy, we can also consider an additional class 3 objective. Maps: Tom Harrison - Mt Whitney High Country Leader : Kelly Maas, 408-378-5311, kellymbase-pcs@yahoo.com

Two More Trips!

Here are two trips that may be of interest to PCS members from former PCS member and Chair, Emilie Cortes, who now runs an all women's adventure travel company. She's offering 10% off either of these trips for any PCS member.

Kilimanjaro

<http://www.callwild.com/trip.php?id=74>

\$4395 [August 28- Sept 4, 2014](#)

Kilimanjaro offers a challenging 7 day trek up the highest mountain in Africa. No technical climbing skills required. There are optional safari (Serengeti and Ngorongoro Crater) and Mt Kenya extensions (2nd highest mountain) available. We carry daypacks while porters carry all our gear and set up our camp, but it's still a tough mountain due to the altitude and requires training and preparation.

Everest Base Camp

<http://www.callwild.com/trip.php?id=32>

\$3895 [November 11-27, 2014](#)

A challenging 12 day trek to the base camp of the highest mountain on the planet - Everest Base Camp. We will also hike to the top of Kala Pattar which offers the best views of Everest.

We carry day packs and stay in traditional Sherpa tea houses along the way. EBC requires a strong sense of adventure and willingness to train and prepare for your trek.

Trip Reports

Crown Point

June 21 - 22

By Terry Cline

Crown Point, 11,346 ft, lies above the beautiful Crown and Snow Lakes in the Hoover Wilderness with its lower SW slopes on the northern boundary of Yosemite NP. Rock Island Pass lies on the boundary above Snow Lake and is the low point on the ridge between Crown Point and The Juggernaut. I first hiked past Crown Point in 1973 while on a loop around the alpine Sawtooth Ridge and Matterhorn Peak. After seeing the impressive view of its north side from Barney Lake 3,000 ft below, I promised myself I'd climb it someday. Someday turned out to be a lot further out that I ever imagined, but that's a story for another day.

Saturday June 21st Wolfgang Schweigkoffer, Tomoko Nakajima, Alex Sapozhnikov, and I made our way through the Mono Village commercial campground at the end of Twin Lakes to the Barney Lake Trail up Robinson Creek. Parked next to us were fellow PCS'ers Linda Sun and Julius Gallwas packing up to go up Horse Creek to have a go at the beautiful North Arete of Matterhorn Peak. Wolfgang and I had by coincidence shared breakfast with Linda and Julius at the Hays Street Cafe in Bridgeport after getting our wilderness permits (a good choice for breakfast, by the way).



Little Slide Canyon from Robinson Creek Trail

The Robinson Creek trail rises gently for about 3 miles through sage brush and intermittent forest to the head of the valley before going sharply up to Barney Lake at nearly 4 miles from the cars. A good place to rest, refuel, and hydrate with a grand view of Crown Point beyond. Along the way one gets a nice view to the left of Little Slide Canyon, home to a large number of high-end technical routes on the Incredible Hulk, which could be seen from our trail. There are also a few technical routes on the north side of Crown Point dating back to the early 1970's. Our intended class 2 route lay hidden on the south side.



Crown Point from Barney Lake

The crux of our day lay just beyond the boggy meadows at the end of Barney Lake in the switchbacks rising some 900 ft or so to the junction between the Peeler Lake and Crown Lake/Snow Lake trails. Fortunately, it was still early in the day, but upon return we got the full brunt of the heat on these switchbacks. Past the junction we were treated to a series of small lakes dubbed the Robinson Lakes before we passed the larger Crown Lake surrounded by cliffs.



One of the Robinson Lakes

By mid-afternoon we had reached our objective for the day, the junction of the Snow Lake trail and the Mule Pass trail I had taken in 1973 to reach the backside of the Sawtooth Ridge. At 9660 ft elevation, this junction is at the edge of a nice sandy meadow next to a number of stream branches feeding Crown Lake below. Nice camping with only intermittent annoyances from the mosquitoes. After a 9 mile and 2500 ft gain day, we followed the maxim “sleep low and climb high”, leaving the 600 ft or so step up to Snow Lake on the approach to Crown Point for the next day.

That evening the mosquitoes were tolerable and the night clear, but warm. Wake-up call was 5 am and we were on the trail by 6 am on Sunday. The step up to Snow Lake was a bit of a grunt for so early in the day, with only a little snow obscuring one part of the trail. About halfway past the lake to Rock Island Pass we could see a clear sandy ramp diagonally left up to the crest of the South Slope of Crown Point.

From the crest it was mostly class 1 until within about 500 ft of the summit where it turned into classic class 2 scrambling over big blocks and through scrubby trees. The summit greeted us with a short spicy slab over the drop to the lake (which could be avoided to the left if one desired). We were the second party to summit this year according to the register, which also recorded ascents by Bob Burd’s Sierra Challenge last year.



View from the summit to the southeast

The views in all directions were grand. Tower Peak to the NW, the headwaters of Rancheria Creek to the W flowing SW into Kerrick Canyon in Yosemite and eventually into Hetch Hetchy Reservoir. Slide Mountain to the SE, easily climbed from the Burro Pass Trail. And yes, there were even routes by Fred Becky and Vern Clevenger and Galen Rowell on The Juggernaut, with its intimidating north side, flat top, and easy backside, positioned between Rock Island Pass and Slide Mountain. In the distance to the SE we could see Conness and beyond.

After an uneventful descent to camp, we packed up and after lunch headed back to the cars. After a hot and tiring hike out we were back to the parking lot by 5 pm. Wolfgang and I had a quick meal at the Mono Village Cafe (not bad), while Alex and Tomoko got on the road right away in a futile attempt to beat the traffic.

Though everyone in the party was experienced, Crown Point is a good peak for novices and should be included in the PCS schedule more often. The approach hike is beautiful and the views on the climb are scenic.

The Mills Story
Mills Peak (13,451 ft)
June 24
By Lisa Barboza

Talk about pressure! I had a list finish with over 60 people coming to Saddlebag Lake on Friday night June 27th for a planned June 28 List Finish on Saturday, and here I was staring at a scree-filled gully with lots of loose rock, at the top of a 30 degree snow slope of scalloped snow, with a fifteen foot chockstone to surmount. Lucky for me- I love my friends – I wouldn't be anywhere without them – truly.

We met at the Mosquito Flat trailhead at 6:00 am for the dayhike of Mills – and were greeted by fantastic weather, and shortly, the slanting, warming rays of the sun. The route is a scant 10 miles, round trip, and about 3500 feet of gain from the Mosquito Flat Trailhead at 10,000 feet. On our trip were Daryn Dodge, Kathy Rich, Corinne Livingston, Will Molland-Simms, and yours truly. We took the trail to Ruby Lake, and from there, cross country to Mills Lake at 11,440'. We found the going easier on the southeast side of Ruby Lake, and soon, we were staring at the snow climb to the base of the Mills chute. There are several chutes to choose from and determining which one can be tricky. The correct one is the northernmost chute above the small tarn that lies at 12,200' and it has a chockstone at its base. There are other chutes to the south of the correct one. Look for the chockstone. The chute itself starts at about 12,600', and is at the top of a 500' snow slope or scree slog, depending on the season.

The chockstone: we reached the top of the 30 degree snow slope which was scalloped with sun cups – an easy climb with our crampons and ice-axes. Doubtfully, we kept our ice axes and crampons with us. We also all carried protection, and harnesses, as well as a 30 meter rope, which turned out to be unnecessary. The chockstone was surmounted by a CL3 move to the left of the stone; the top was covered with

sand and gravel, but we were able to get all five above the chockstone easily and in a safe location which minimized rockfall. Some may want a belay over this chockstone, depending on their skill level. But experienced climbers won't need a belay.

Atop the chockstone, we had two choices – the chute, or the CL3 rock route, which was plainly marked by a prominent duck. Although we decided to climb the chute above the chockstone, I strongly recommend against it unless it is filled with forgiving and climbable snow.

Above the chockstone is about a 20 foot gain of loose sand and rock leading to an easier class 3 section of rather crappy rock in the left corner of the chute. It's short and leads to another section of loose sand and rock above it. This is probably the worst section in the chute. As you climb up this loose sand and rock section, you should look right and see on the wall a rock chute that leads up and slightly right out of the main chute, marked by ducks. We climbed the chute, handling it in three sections – each time, we would wait until the climber had reached a point in the slope that wouldn't launch rocks and pebbles on us. A very time consuming process. At the top of the third section, we were able to traverse to the left to the summit plateau, which you gain at the extreme northern end of the plateau. The summit plateau had limited snow on top, which we easily crossed. The plateau is not flat, but is about a 10 degree slope – and comprises the ancient surface of the land before the Sierras rose from the plutonic depths. We summited at 12:10 PM – after a slow, safe climb.

The descent route: We all chose the rock route for the descent – we did not want to go anywhere near the chute. From the summit plateau, we moved easily to the top of the chute, which is at the northern end of the plateau.

A note from Daryn Dodge from a June 2012 climb: Rock ascent route: This is gained from just above the chockstone to the right of the

stone, and is marked with a few ducks. It is basically a set of four sandy ledges, a few feet wide, which are ascended by climbing about 10-15 feet of CL3 or CL4 rock above each ledge. It is listed as class 3 but some will consider two moves to make on this route as class 4. This route has much more solid rock but there is one big step to make, after about 100 feet of climbing from the main chute. It's actually more of an exposed mantle move with a lack of good handholds. We all made it without need of a rope but the exposure really gets your attention! This is the crux of this route. Climbing up the rock just above the main chute (those of us down in the main chute could often look up and see them progressing well up the rock) for another 100-200 ft gain you will come to a step-around on a ledge. You will be moving from left to right. The problem here is that there is a big rock on the ledge you practically have to step over. This is the 2nd of what some might call class 4 moves. After this the climbing stays class 3 and is easier, eventually coming to some ducks near where this route joins with the top of the main loose chute.

From the top of the main loose chute, you can see the top of the crest above you. Do not go here, as the peak is still to the south. Work up and south about 1/8 of a mile towards the summit plateau until you can see the next notch in the main crest above you. This is the north edge of the summit plateau and what I think is the easiest way to the summit. A short class 3 section gets you on the plateau here. We made the mistake of following ducks further south past this notch, which brought us to a class 4 wall to climb. We made it but I had to belay 5 out of 7 people up this 20-foot wall. It's then a 10 minute walk up the slanted plateau to the summit rocks.

We were back at the trailhead by 5:00 PM, and at the bar at Tom's place by 5:30. All in all, a great climb with great people. I highly recommend this climb. It is not as hard as it looks and as long as you choose the rock route – you will find it quite enjoyable. NOTE: Lisa's carefully drawn map appears on the last page of Scree.

Sugar Pine Peak (4,825'+) High Point of Yuba County

July 3

By Jeff Fisher

My son Gavin and I decided to take off early for the 4th of July weekend to try to attain the summit of Sugar Pine Peak, high point of Yuba County. It would be Gavin's 49th county high point and my 53rd. This would be our second attempt, having failed 3 weeks earlier on Father's Day weekend. We left Santa Clara about 11am on July 3rd.

On our first attempt with copies from Gary Suttle's book, 'California County Summits', plus more maps and other write-ups in hand, we followed the described approach. We failed because the paved described road had been washed out, apparently since 2010. At that time we took several hours investigating other dirt roads in the area trying to get to the trail head, which we did not find. We were disappointed because it is a long drive for an easy peak and we hated the idea of having to do it again.

This time we were prepared with various additional maps from Google, Mapnik, topo maps and others obtained off the web. But all the maps didn't make us feel assured of finding the peak because of all the roads crisscrossing out there and we discussed talking to some locals about directions or jokingly about getting a guide. On the outskirts of Challenge on La Porte Rd we saw a local denizen walking home drinking chocolate milk. I thought 'what the hey, anyone who drinks chocolate milk must know his way around,' so we stopped to talk to Mike Cunha, resident of Challenge: 59 years old and had lived in the area since he was 5.



Our guide Mike Cunha celebrating our successful summiting (before we had actually done it!)

Well he never heard of Sugar Pine Peak, but he knew the area well, had helped build some of the roads. He started telling us how to get around the slide. Sounded easier said than done, so the offer was made for him to guide us. \$20. He said it sounded like fun, but wanted to stop at his place for some food, a sandwich and yogurt, then by his friends' for some topo maps that weren't there. Then off we went. We drove passed the blocked road to unpaved Scales Rd. that we had explored on our previous trip. At a bridge across Slate Cr. Mike announced he had to have a cigarette. Nice creek, great place to stop. To our surprise he pulls out a pint of whiskey we don't know he had and started celebrating our imminent summit success. Then he yelled at some people down by the creek. When they responded, he yelled back "You know I can't hear". Off we drove. At a 4-way junction where we had gone straight before, Mike had us go right, which after a couple of miles got to the paved road past the slide (score one for Mike). We drove down the paved road 2 or 3 miles stopped at a possible junction. Gavin was reading the description from Suttle's book saying turn left off the white gravel road just before Little Brushy Creek. Mike said we passed it about a mile back (score two for Mike). From then on we were able to use Suttle's book. In about 3.5 miles and several junctions we found a small road going up to the right that took

us to the described trailhead. To my dismay we had passed by that road 3 weeks earlier on our first attempt, not knowing we were so close. Half mile up that road was the trail head, just .2 miles from our coveted Yuba County high point, Sugar Pine Peak. Mike not being a peak climber declined to go and decided to keep celebrating our summit success.



Our guide giving Gavin a few tips before we strike out on our climb of Sugar Pine Peak

So Gavin and I took off and 10 minutes later we had reached our goal (it took us 5 minutes of looking around to find the marker). We knew we were there when we found the concrete post support shown in a picture supplied to us by Steve Walstra, fellow county highpointer. The marker had fallen over and took a while to find. After photos and congratulations we headed back, happy to see Mike and the car still there (we had the keys). We drove back and had Mike back home right about 2 hours after we first met him. Gave him \$30 for services well rendered. Shook hands and told him he should open up a guiding service. Mike said he had a good time and so did we.



Summit Photos!

Basin Mountain (13,240')

July 18 - 20

By Debbie Bulger

Richard Stover and I are unable to hike fast. It is 3000' from the trailhead to our base camp above Horton Lakes. How can one hurry when the trail is lined with flowers and populated with fascinating residents of desert and forest? As when we climbed Mt. Tom 12 years before, prickly poppies greeted us at the start.

From the git-go we were immersed in the life of the community as two diminutive, unidentified hummingbirds buzzed nearby. Then a Northern harrier cruised by, perhaps looking for the hummingbirds. Ground squirrels and lizards rushed out of our way.

The trail (actually an old road) was lined with a colorful array of various yellow buckwheats, purple mountain pennyroyal, scarlet gilia, Indian paintbrush and more. The dry year meant that few mosquitoes marred our merriment.

Tiring of the trail, Richard and I headed cross country as we neared the lower Horton Lake. The decision was both a bother and a blessing. A bother because we found ourselves in brush and a bit of talus; a blessing because the inlet to the lower lake hosted an exquisite suite of flowers including Monkshood, Monkey flowers, Tiger lilies, Sierra Crane Orchids, and wild onions.

We camped high above the second Horton Lake, along the north-flowing creek that feeds the lake. We left camp the next morning at 6:30 a.m. It was another 3000 feet to the summit. We passed the first then second tarn on the north slope route. The summit is elusive. The 7½ minute map shows the summit of Basin as 13,181'. A friend related to me how he spent a great deal of time searching for the true summit, which is not visible while one is climbing. Determined not to make the same mistake, I asked Richard to check his GPS to indicate which way we should go. "It's to the right," he responded. And so we headed to the right bump according to Garmin.

Here I am on the right summit.



Debbie on the wrong summit of Basin

Only it was the wrong summit. To the east was the correct summit. And so we climbed down about 60 feet, traversed over talus and up another 120 feet on an easy slope to the right (north) summit. The true summit was separated from easier rocks by a narrow, airy bridge that Richard chose not to cross. He was only a few feet lower than I and took my picture on top.



Debbie on the correct summit of Basin

By then it was almost three. It was sprinkling and there was rain in the distance, but no thunder or lightning. Time to get back to camp despite the fantastic views of Mt. Humphreys and Mt. Tom. My arthritic knees protested the 3000 feet of downclimbing on the scree and talus. As we

walked into camp at 8:00 p.m., the rain began. We scurried into our tent where I fell asleep instantly.

The next morning it was still raining. We had set up a tarp for dry cooking and eating. We waited until the rain stopped and our tent dried out at 2:30 p.m. before hiking out.

It had been a lucrative trip. Over the course of three days in widely separated places we found the true summit, a fishing pole, a pair of sandals, and a monocular.

Elected Officials

Chair

Terry Cline: terry_cline@yahoo.com

Vice Chair and Trip Scheduler

Rakesh Ranjan: rakesh.lists@gmail.com

Treasurer and Membership Roster (address changes)

Yoni Novat: ynovat@gmail.com

Publicity Committee Positions

Scree Editor

Judy Molland / screeeditor@gmail.com

PCS World Wide Web Publisher

Joe Baker/ pcs@joebaker.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, August 25. Meetings are held on the second Tuesday of each month.

Lake to Mills Peak (3.36 km, 2.09 mi)

