

## Rock Rendezvous March Newsletter

### March Meeting: Pacific Ceiling Tour

This month's meeting will be at the home of Chris and John Kerr. Jerry Dodrill will be giving a show on the "Pacific Ceiling Tour." This involved bagging all of California's fourteen thousand foot peaks in nine and a half days with Hans Florine, Russ McBride and Tony Ralph.

The March meeting will be at John and my house- Chris and John Kerr 3960 Waterhouse Road Oakland, CA 510-482-8322

### Directions from SF & North Bay:

580E to Fruitvale Exit (6 mi from East end of Bay Bridge). Left on Fruitvale for .75 mi. (Continue past the Safeway and up the hill even though road name changes to Lyman). Take left to 3960 Waterhouse. It is the first house on the right, a yellow house with white garage doors.

### Directions from Berkeley:

Take Hwy 13S, past the Claremont, to Park Blvd exit (3.5mi). Right on Park Blvd .7 mi to first light. Go right on Leimert to 5-way stop. Go straight downhill to stop. Go right on Waterhouse. We are at 3960 Waterhouse. Wind through a couple of stop to the last house on the street, a yellow house with white garage doors on the left side of the street.

The Banff film fesstivval will be:

Berkeley, CA  
R.E.I. Berkeley  
510-527-7377  
April 10, 1999

The overall URL is: [http://www.banffcentre.ab.ca/CMC/film/film\\_tourall.html](http://www.banffcentre.ab.ca/CMC/film/film_tourall.html) which shows the shows in other areas such as Tahoe, Santa Cruz etc.

Good Deals on Avalanche Transceivers.

I recently did a fairly extensive search of suppliers of avalanche transceivers from non-profit groups to retail stores to find a good deal and encourage people to get equipped. Four Rock Rendez-Vous folks got in on the last round. This is to encourage people to order some more. I found two good deals, one for the Ortovox F1 Focus, and one for the SOS F1-ND. EM Holland bought an F1-ND last year, though, and was rather dissatisfied with it and brought it back; she and I have both owned Ortovox transceivers in the past and liked them, so we decided to go with the Ortovox deal. By the way, additional research on the web showed that the new DTS Tracker and similar units are really not yet ready for prime-time. This is the recommendation of the International Commission for Alpine Rescue (ICAR), who did over 1000 comparative trials with the new and old units, their report can be found at <http://www.slif.ch/slif/info/lvs-e.html> (note that this address is slightly different from the (incorrect) one I sent out in my e-mail). In addition to the problems that they noted, Lisa Newcomb adds that she and her dad did tests on the Tracker and found that when it was buried vertically, they could not pick up the signal at all until they were five feet away!

The Ortovox F1 Focus uses the same traditional technology as the F1 Classic (which I own), but adds a visual indicator that appears to work pretty well (based on dry land tests in the park last night). It does not, however, have the problems associated with the Tracker. So I think it is an excellent choice.

To cut to the chase, here's the deal. I found a number of places willing to sell at about \$210 (e.g. \$210 shipping included, \$200+shipping, etc), but most required purchasing 6-12 units. The Backcountry Store, however, was willing to give a price of \$210, including shipping (no sales tax), for three or more units. Their price for a single unit was \$235, including shipping (no sales tax). Compare this to about \$271 if you go down to Marmot, buy at their price and give the governor his due. The service was excellent - they responded quickly to my inquiries and when I finally did place an order, they shipped the same day (though we also cleaned them out of their remaining stock of

three units and they had to backorder two units which will hopefully be in soon). They also have excellent prices on shovels.

The Backcountry Store Backcountry Ski Gear, Avalanche Gear, Camping and Hiking Gear <http://www.bcstore.com> [christian@bcstore.com](mailto:christian@bcstore.com)

800-409-4502 435-657-2468 435-657-2467 fax

The other possible deal is from the EKW Fund (Unicas). This is a non-profit group that will sell the SOS F1-ND at cost (\$195) + \$10 shipping. If you order several, they will only charge you for shipping once. EM had a bad experience with this unit, but if it is your preference, this is a good deal too.

The EKW Fund P. O. Box 300 Ridgeway, Colorado 81432 (970) 626-5723.  
Tom Lambert  
[tom@lambert.net](mailto:tom@lambert.net)

1519 Hearst Ave #5  
Berkeley, CA 94703  
(510) 665-9311

Now, I for one intend to take random behavior more seriously because I intend to become a good deal more ungovernable than I already am. -- Utah Phillips.

February Meeting

Rule #1 of Presidency: Delegate I learned this lesson about 20 minutes into the February Rock Rendezvous meeting, when it dawned on me that no-one was taking notes. So, here's what I could slowly scrawl on a piece of paper, while

talking, and sort of listening....

First, many thanks to Jen Burke for opening her home for our meeting. As always, she was the consummate hostess. The meeting began with the traditional introductions. There were a few new faces, the only two of which I remember are Eric Paulson and Chris Hahn (it helps that they drove me). I expect we'll be seeing more of them at future meetings.

The first order of business was a discussion of the latest developments in Yosemite Valley. After a brief report (by your prez - my god, he's everywhere) of a recent meeting with reps of the Park Service at Marmot, two differing viewpoints were presented by Paul Minault and Les Wilson. Paul stated how the meeting seemed reasonable (best word I can think of) and how the Park Service reps (Gary Coliver and Chip Jenkins) were receptive to the input of the climbing community (see article in this issue). Les presented a very different picture of a Park Service that was diverting our attention with fruitless conversations while the devastating destruction of the Merced River area of the Valley continued as part of the effort to widen the road so tour buses can bring yet more tour groups to the Valley. By now, you should have received e-mail information about the latest, and how to comment/complain. If you haven't, or trashed it and want to recover it, contact either Les or Kevin, and they will be happy to give you the info you need. Next on the agenda was recent trips. This is where my ADD really expresses itself - all I remember is that Les took a trip to Yellowstone, while Bruce, Em and Paul Espinosa went ice climbing in Utah: 4 canyons in 4 days). Up coming trips include a canyoneering trip by Les, and a weekend on Lassen by Kevin and Eric (which has already happened). Late breaking news - rumor has it that a group from the Ski Touring Section of the Sierra Club will be on Lassen the same weekend, including RR member Chris Kerr and her better half, John.

The officers present announced a Masthead meeting, coming up soon, and asked the group for suggestions as to club projects or causes (to add direction to the year). The suggestions made were: 1 good deed a year, such as the El Cap cleanup. Buy Bruce gear (wonder who said that) Start a club gear kitty (things like huge pro, very expensive and rarely used) Attract new members by;

- having a gym night at a local gym
- having a midweek bouldering session (at Indian Rock or such)
- organizing a beginners' climbing trip.

Organize a safety review/practice session.

Business being done, we retired to the projection room to watch a slide show, courtesy of Paul Espinosa. We were treated to great views of a Lost Arrow Spire climb, a trip up Lurking Fear on El Cap, and slides of the aforementioned ice climbing trip to Utah, which included Great White Icicle in Little Cottonwood Canyon, drills on the first pitch of Stairway to Heaven (the ice chunks knocked down by parties above guided the decision to limit the climb), Donercicle and CCC Falls in Joe's Valley. That's pretty much all I remember. If I've really messed up, take comfort. They're impeaching Clinton, aren't they?

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Yosemite Planning Saga Continues  
Notes from the latest meeting  
by: Kevin Kachadourian

On Thursday, January 21, representatives from various Bay Area climbing groups and access groups met with Gary Colliver and Chip Jenkins from the Park Service, at Marmot Mountain Works in Berkeley. For those of you who were at the previous meeting held a couple of years ago at Les Wilson's home (where the then Valley Implementation Plan was presented to a combined group of Rock Rendezvous and Cragmont Climbing Club members) this meeting was much smaller, and less contentious. In addition to Gary and Chip, there were 11 participants. There was also a film crew of 2, making a film on the history of climbing in Yosemite. From the Rock Rendezvous were myself, Peter Grace, Les Wilson. After introductions, Chip began the meeting by saying that it was their intention that this be a collaborative meeting, and the first in a continuing dialog. The process is still very fluid, with no irrevocable decisions. Chip and Gary explained that the purpose of this meeting was to get input from representatives of the climbing community as part of the scoping process, prior to formulating a comprehensive plan for the Valley. This comprehensive plan would combine all the fragmented previous plans, and hopefully address the concerns of all constituents (all of the park users). At this point, maps were brought out, indicating the latest in planning. What was most informative of them was a map, still under construction, that indicates the areas in the flood plan, in the rock fall and slide zones, and what's left. A similar map indicated the areas considered to be valuable for reasons such as historic monuments and riparian habitats. The dialog seemed to center around two topics: the presentation by Chip and Gary of where they were in the process, including what plans were being considered; and input from the climbing community as to our concerns ("Are there problems in Yosemite? What are they?"). Paul Minault opened the discussion from the climbing side of the table (actually, we had Chip and Gary surrounded). The two concerns he brought up were Camp 4 and the Park Service's general values in planning and decision making. Chip first addressed Camp 4. He reported that there is currently a move to add Camp 4 to the register of historic sites, thereby giving it protection it does not now have. The plans as far as moving Camp 4 or building close to it did seem fluid (as stated earlier). It seems that the earlier plans that would have had such an impact are being shelved or highly modified. As far as general values, the answer was a bit less clear. There was a directive from Secretary of the Interior Babbit to start implementing "irrevocable momentum" within a year. Needless to say, this caused some concern among the climbers present. The idea of a huge parking lot became the focus of some heated discussion. Dan Zimerlin made the comment that he did not

think that looking down from a spire onto a parking lot was an aesthetic experience. Chip's assurances that a decision was not yet made did not diminish the level of concern. That the Secretary had given one year for "irrevocable momentum" and that a parking lot was still being considered were not comforting thoughts. The outrage seemed to be heard and noted (in fact, Gary seemed to be taking quite a lot of notes, while Chip handled the room). The concessions in the park were introduced into the conversation by Lou Reichert as "...the third person not in the room." As to whether the contract for concessions was still on the table, the response was that the legal cost of reopening the contract was prohibitive. Paul introduced the concept that climbers are the "canary in a coal mine" as far as the park is concerned. They are the user group that will be hit first and hardest by any plan implementation. It was at about this point that I referred the group back to the map that showed just how little of the Valley is "left over" after you take out the areas in the flood zone and the rock fall and rock slide zones. I proposed that we are trying to figure out a way to overuse the Valley, to exploit it beyond its capacity. The key was to reduce use, make it less attractive. On this note, Les Wilson presented a clear and articulate question for decision making. Does an activity relate to the unique nature of Yosemite Valley? If it doesn't, it should be excluded from the Valley. As two good examples, almost certainly highly prized by some; he mentioned horseback riding and weddings. Both of these activities are greatly enhanced by the park's setting, however neither of them has to have the park in order to happen. It was at this point that the idea of concessions by the climbing community came into the conversation. While most of the climbers present said they were willing to contribute, through concession or compromise, to the overall betterment of the park; there was some hesitancy. Perhaps we were afraid of being the only group to make compromises, and somehow trampled in the park's further development as an amusement park. Paul said that he expected that climbers are prepared to give up comfort but not convenience. To our surprise, Chip and Gary told us that in all their meetings to date, this was the first time they heard climbers say they were willing to give something up. They also asked us to act as emissaries to the larger climbing community, to convince them that all user groups must, and will be asked to, make some sacrifice in how they currently use the park in order to provide for a more natural and sustainable park (ed: the wording of their request was different, and I have put my own spin on the message). Editor's Post Script: As evidenced by the discussion at the February meeting, this is a complex issue. It's easy, at least for me, to be seduced by the warm feelings of a small meeting of people seemingly on the same page and course. I invite you to make up your own mind, and then express it. Take an hour or so to think, decide, and add your small vote to one side of one point of this debate (it's highly recommended that you only send one simple statement to the government). If you are on the email list and haven't already received a packet of items, including sample letters to the government, you should soon.