



Rock Rendezvous: Volume 12; Issue 2: March 2002

Rock Rendezvous

President	Simon Kenney	(925) 279 4428	Simon.kenney@Nolte.com
Vice President	Kevin Kachadourian	(510) 336 7019	kevink38@ix.netcom.com
Treasurer	Karen Christie	(650) 852 1212	kchris@genome.stanford.edu
Newsletter Editor	Carolyn Dent	(510) 243 1573	CDent@sangamo.com
Publisher	Andy Gioumousis	(650) 323 7871	andy@slac.stanford.edu
Outdoor Events	Mike Brodesky	(415) 863 6578	mbrodesk@interwoven.com
Scribe	Tom Kidd	(415) 750 9102	tkidd@exelixis.com



February Meeting Notes

By Tom Kidd

Simon opened the February meeting with the alarming words, "Shall we whiz around the room?" Alarming that is to our gracious and house-proud hosts, Jen and Nate, when someone replied "What, on the floor?" And I thought whiz was only slang for urination in Britspeak. The self-confessed mortgage slaves were relieved (sic) when it turned out that Simon merely wanted people to introduce themselves. Nate introduced himself as having "married a climber, but started climbing a week before meeting her". The rapid and tart response was "yes – once at the gym with his ex-girlfriend..." Next up was Susan, who "tried it, enjoyed it, then stopped", presumably still talking about climbing. Torger has climbed five times a year for eleven years. Katrin was present without Eric (see below), and long time member (15 years), Paul Espinosa, put in a visit. We actually had three Pauls present and a couple of Karens, including our treasurer who we all have to pay dues to NOW! Paul of Christmas party fame had an original stomping ground of the Red River Gorge. Paul of the British accent just climbs everywhere. Another Brit, Simon Allen, has been in the USA for six months. Steve Giddings of the Santa Barbara chapter was also present, as he is doing a sabbatical at

Stanford. Newsletter mailer Andy was present, as was Scott who gave our slideshow. It was the first meeting for Jason from the East Bay. Chris Conroy who has been climbing since the sixties and switched to rock after falling out of a tree showed up. Mary-Lou began climbing in the Tahoe area, moved down the Bay Area and wants to start climbing again. Meike can ski and snowboard and tries to climb. On the visitor's front we had Andrew from Australia, who is one of the top ten fencers there, Kathleen who climbed in high school on the Precipice at Acadia (ladder climb without ropes) and Ted who was limping from a Harley accident but was 1997 amateur national dirt bike champion...

Announcements: Kevin is the new Madame Vice. Karen Christie, exhausted from "organizing" (partying?) a conference in Tucson made an appeal for fees. The Yosemite sites have already been reserved and the idea is to sign up as trip leaders etc. on line. This is going to annoy Tina and others without internet connections... So far, Nate has signed up for May 10, Paul for April 12, and Simon for June (probably not all of the month).

Trips. Karen had been to Organ Pipe Cactus National Monument. Erik was in Yosemite

on the night of the meeting snagging the 10th or 11th ascent of the appropriately named Widow's Tears (Katrin was not allowed to go, because "the climb was too hard"). Erik has written an article for this newsletter, and there are additional truly frightening photographs and a short description on his website: www.sandelin.nu. Noriko had skied the Glacier Point Road to Centennial Dome. Jen and Nate visited Pyramid Peak in Desolation Wilderness which is easy and very beautiful. They built a snow cave which was successful but very dicey, so I think they slept in a tent instead. Chris and Torger discussed the prospect of skiing Pyramid Peak, climbing at Lover's Leap, cycling fifty miles and kayaking/floating on the American River. Chris went with Hong's brother to Moab where they climbed and mountain biked. By the time of writing, the RR trip to Lassen should be finished, and like last year, it attracted a stormy weekend, although probably not three feet of fresh powder.

Before the slideshow, two things happened. One, we celebrated Karen Christi's birthday with Jen's excellent chocolate cake. The second was the following dialogue:

Jen: "We have a big announcement to make!" This statement attracted the attention of all in the room, especially Nate: "We do?"

Jen: "Foster dog"

This meant that they are temporarily adopting a rescue dog. This is practice for having children, even though they can give

the dog back, and you can't do the same for children... Someone offered "any one of us can come and live here as practice". This offer was declined.

Scott gave us a great slideshow of ice climbing at Lee Vining two weeks before Christmas and it looked in excellent condition. We saw shots of Chouinard Falls, the Main Wall, Scott soloing, and Scott leading Zippo's Frozen Booger. Next Scott showed us trips to three volcanoes around Mexico City just after Christmas. All on a fancy projector, and actually none of the slides were his, a point with which much fun was had by the ever-interactive audience. Not knowing, the true spelling of the names of the volcanoes, I will go for phonetic spellings. The first, Lavalechai, was for acclimatization purposes and they were accompanied to the summit by three dogs, one of which is predicted to be soon adopted by a Palo Alto family. The second peak, Orisawacua, had a summit crucifix so complicated, it looked like part of the Mir space station. Scott unfortunately caught a cold and had to turn back at 17,000ft. The third peak, Ectascywatt, was supposed not to need crampons. This turned out to be false and we saw amusing pictures of crampons strapped to Adidas sneakers. Thanks to Scott for an interesting and amusing slideshow, even if they weren't his own slides. Many thanks also to Jen and Nate for hosting, and for ignoring all the partial nudity and frolicking in the hot tub when they weren't looking...

And Introducing....

Simon Kenney

A few new lambs to the slaughter for this month:

Steve Giddings. In fact we are Re-introducing Steve as he forms the sole member of the Santa Barbara Chapter of Rock Rendezvous. Steve has recently moved to the area after a stay away of about 2 years. He will be in the area for about 5 months. If you ever have any trouble with your "Black Holes" he is your man as he works on 'elementary particle Physics and Black holes'. Oh yes and he climbs; Alpine

style and Ice. His recent endeavors include; Ptarmigan ridge, and J Tree.

Ted (Sorry Ted, cant decipher my own writing –Surname), Ted is a friend of Scott Johnston, who presented our slideshow this month. Ted is temporarily out of action owing to a little too much Harley Davidson/Car interaction that demolished his leg. Apparently needs about another 18 months to recover. But then intends to return to Mountain biking and climbing with Scott. Last endeavor was The Precipice Arcadia.

Jason Feyoch, from the Bay area Jason has climbed for about 3 years. Usually more of yer sports climbing type Jason wants to graduate onto longer Traditional routes leads to about a 5.8 on trad routes. Also into

mountain biking and skiing, he is even giving Triathlons a go. Of course when he has been in the club a while we will wean him onto the more challenging sports of "climbing into a soft comfy chair" and "drinking whilst standing".

Widow's Tears

Erik Sandelin

For over a year I have been moaning and groaning about spending more time in the car getting to the Rock-Rendezvous meetings than actually at the meetings. So when our beloved leader finally



decided that south-bay members also are worthy members of our club, I better come up with a damn good excuse for not attending the first south-bay meeting in ages. The name of the excuse is Widow's Tears, and no it's not Catrin's tears I am talking about, I am talking about one of the highest waterfalls in Yosemite. Certain years, when the moon is full, the stars aligned the correct way, and a spell of cold weather hits Yosemite, this waterfall actually freezes into climbable conditions. When it does, you better get it while you can. It won't last long.

First ascended over three days in 1975 by Kevin Worrall and Mark Chapman, up to fifteen years have passed between successive ascents. So when Bill McConachie sent me an email with subject line "BIG ICE" and message "Yosemite ice is IN!! Let's climb it Tuesday!" I had no excuse for not skipping work and joining him. Although my consciousness told me I should work, my rational side argued that in five years, what will I remember? A day at work, or a day ice climbing in Yosemite?

For sure I will never forget this day of ice-climbing. Had I done my homework I would have known that Widow's Tears qualifies as the world's twentieth highest waterfall, so you don't have to be a rocket-scientist to figure out that it's a loong climb. Ten pitches of steep, sustained, exposed and fun climbing made for a memorable day (and night). Although the steep 5th pitch is considered the route's most technically difficult pitch, that's not the crux of the route. The crux of the route is that none of the last six pitches are really easy. Every time we turned a corner or passed a bulge in the ice we thought the angle would kick back. Every time we were wrong. With four pitches to go we had to put on our headlamps. In vain we yelled to the lead climber "How does it look? Do you see the summit? ". Standing alone in the dark on an icy stance, shivering from cold, gloves frozen stiff and water in my shoes, I couldn't help but think about the rest of the Rock-Rendezvous bunch, who probably at this very moment are soaking in Nate and Jen's hottub, with a beer in their hand and bellies almost bursting from eating too much of Karen's birthday cake. Finally we pulled over the summit. It was thirty minutes past midnight and we were happy to have completed a great climb, and happy to dig into the haul-bag for dry clothes and food. After a short rest we staggered down the descent trail, now and then taking short naps in the snow, reaching the car well after sunrise.

Epilogue/footnote

The list labeling Widow's Tears as the world's twentieth highest waterfall also contains some other interesting information. There are eight waterfalls in Norway which are higher than Widow's Tears, some of them twice as high, and to my knowledge at least half of them consistently freeze and have been climbed. This says something about the incredible potential for ice-climbing in Norway, so if anyone is interested in climbing big ice you should drop me a line when I am back in Sweden in a year.



The Mace

By B. B. Bindner

Sunday, November 18, 2001: It is 9 am. Yesterday morning I was in bed at the Old Climber's Home in Oakland, California, snoring peacefully. A marathon driving session has made today is a different story. Greg Opland and Bill Wright just pulled up behind me at the parking area for the Mace, near Sedona, Arizona.

Greg and Bill, having climbed the Mace before, (Greg has climbed it 15 times) assemble a skanty rack and then stand patiently while I find my dentures, set up my titanium walker, and try to remember what I did with my harness. Finally Em comes to the rescue, pointing out that I am already wearing it. Em will remain on the ground for this climb, nursing an injured shoulder.

Soon all is ready, and Greg and Bill vanish up the trail as Em holds my elbow and assists my slow stumbling. Eventually we all reach the base of the Mace, where we find two fellows already working their way up the first pitch.

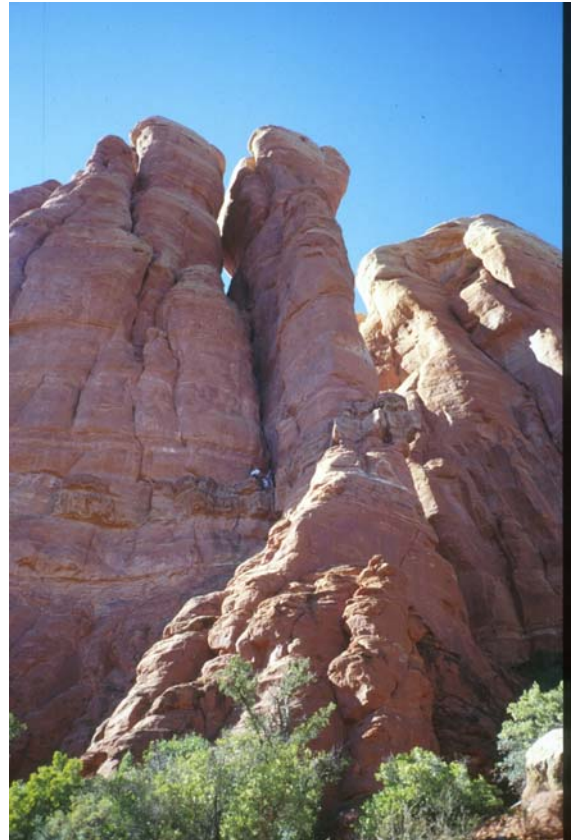
Now there's one thing you need to understand about Bill Wright. Although he claims to enjoy all the other facets of climbing as well as the next average joe, Bill likes to move FAST. His trip reports are heavily laced with pitches-per-day totals, and route times recorded in minutes and seconds. He recently co-authored (with Hans Florine) a book on speed climbing.

When Em and I met Bill for the first time, we were struggling down the Falls Trail in Yosemite Valley under enormous loads, having set a new record for the most time anyone had ever spent on Muir Wall. Bill on the other hand was sprinting down the Falls Trail, having just climbed Lost Arrow Tip that day as a party of FOUR, and it was only 2 in the afternoon. That was a rest day for Bill, and included the round trip hike up the Falls trail from the Valley floor. The previously day he had climbed 10 domes up in Tuolumne with Hans Florine, and the following day he would climb Steck-Salathe' on the Sentinel.

The day prior to my Mace adventure, Bill and Greg had climbed uncounted pitches, stopping only well after dark. I was clearly out of my league climbing with these two, but happy that they had consented to guide my sorry flab up the Mace.

As we wait for the two fellows to finish the first pitch, Bill begins quivering with tension like a purebred greyhound dreaming of rabbits. I swear I can even hear him gnashing his teeth. Greg and I relax and discuss his fee for guiding me up this climb, and reminisce about our only other climbing adventure together, Steck-Salathe' in Yosemite Valley years ago, a climb that ended on the summit at midnight.

We debate who gets what pitch, and I opt for the first, not knowing the difficulty of any of them, but thinking that the first 20 feet above me look pretty mellow. I wait for 45 minutes to give the fellows above a little breathing room, then start, the few pieces of protection we have brought dangling forlornly from my waist. Eventually, I scamper up the easy chimney section to the crux of the first pitch: an overhanging roof split by a thin crack. There I struggle and flail, but finally hoist myself up the steep section, regretting every ounce of flab that pads my 20-pound spare-tire waist. That section dispatched, I soon reach the anchors, (having spent very little time placing what little protection I had) to find the upper team still working through the second pitch. I bring up Greg, with Bill simul-climbing closely behind. And we wait.



The start of the next pitch is a steep 5.9 hand crack right off the ledge. As the second man of the upper team falls onto my head, Bill begins to talk with him about letting us pass at the next belay. By the third fall, (I have moved out from under him by this time-- I'm slow, but I CAN be trained) Bill has him convinced. As the fellow pulls on a stuck cam, we assure him we will clean his piece and return it him when we pass.

Eventually the upper team is established atop pitch two, with Bill arriving about 45 seconds behind them. By the time I get there, Bill has passed them and led the third pitch (having talked one member of the other team into belaying him-- Bill could talk a dalmation out of its spots) and has placed me on belay to follow. Feeling like a sprinter at the hundred yard line, who has just been informed that the race has been suddenly extended to two hundred yards, I cling across the fingertip traverse and then dive up the offwidth with very little style, arriving at the third belay quivering with fatigue, our spare rope tangling around my knees, gear a-jumble and puffing like a steam engine. Soon Greg arrives and our passing maneuver is complete, having cost the slower party about a 20-minute delay.

As I begin to lead the fourth pitch, I notice that it seems to be the crux. A slightly overhanging offwidth snakes up through the sandstone to end in a horizontal roof. I nervously slot in a #2 camalot as Greg's voice drifts up: "What's Brutus doing placing a piece THERE? He'll need that higher!"

Ignoring the sinking feeling in the pit of my stomach and the running commentary from my two companions below, I slowly ooze up the crack, combining heel-toe and knee-jumar yoga with my more recently-perfected flab-stacks to propel me where other techniques would never suffice. Eventually I flop onto the huge ledge at the end of the pitch and lay there in the sun, a huge

mound of pale blubber twitching in unendurable fatigue. Greg's voice again floats up: "If you're through admiring yourself, we would appreciate it if you could belay us up there too."

I stumble to the anchors, and faster than I can haul in rope, Greg and Bill fly up the pitch.

Greg leads us on the fabulous step-across to the summit of the Mace, pausing mid-stride while Em takes a photo from 400 feet below. We take a very short break, leafing through the register noticing names like Allen Steck, Gary Clark, Inez Drixelius, Frank Stock, and the ubiquitous Greg Opland.

The 4-foot gap between the Mace and the adjacent formation is traditionally descended by a jump across, but I decline out of respect for how long it takes old folks like myself to heal from sprained ankles and bruised heels. Instead, we all rappel and step back across the gap, using the summit register box as our sole rappel anchor.

All too soon we are back at the base of the Mace, Greg and Bill speed off to meet Bill's wife in town while Em and I make our way back to the car at a more leisurely pace, sipping brews. By 2 pm, we are re-united at a Mexican restaurant with a distinct decor theme of psychedelic toucans. There, in addition to Greg and Bill, we meet Bill's two hyperactive children and his highly energetic wife. Soon the family of four departs, speeding west, due in San Diego the next morning. Greg, Em, and I stay awhile longer, finishing our meals, and planning for our next adventure.

Thanks, Greg and Bill, for an incredible climb!

Coming Trips

We have campsites booked for the following weekends:

April	12/13	Yosemite
	26/27	Yosemite
May	3/4	Yosemite
	10/11	Yosemite
	31/1 June	Yosemite
June	6 – 8	Yosemite
	12/13	Tuolome Meadows

Leaders have not yet been assigned for these trips. If you would like to lead a trip please contact Michael Brodesky (mbrodesk@interwoven.com) by e-mail or phone (415 948 8529).

Thanks to Micheal for booking these sites.

Next Month

We hope to have photos and a report from February's Lassen trip. Find out whether the snow dampened our spirits (Whiskey... Port...) this year...

An appeal...

If you have done something that you think the RR membership would be interested in then I would love to hear from you with photos or/and an article. My intention as editor is for the newsletter to represent as wide a cross-section of the membership as possible, rather than for it to be restricted to those people I can talk to and nag for articles! So please send any articles, photos, beta etc... to Carolyn at cdent@sangamo.com. THANKS!

Next Meeting – Tuesday March 5th (7pm)

Tom and Nicole will be hosting the next meeting, which will be held in the city at:
643 Lake Street, San Francisco, CA 94118. 415-750-9102.

Parking varies, so please try and carpool. For parking, try the dead end streets north of Lake street. The doorbell is at waist height by the keyhole on the iron gate. (Peoples powers of observation weren't up to this last time...)

Please don't climb the brickwork (a la Bruce) - it makes the Pinnacles look solid and we were lucky we weren't blamed.

Directions:

From Marin: take Hwy 1 south from the Golden Gate bridge. Take the first right (Lake Street) after passing through the Presidio tunnel. Do an immediate U-turn (probably not legal) and follow Lake east: 643 is between 7th and 8th Avenues.

From South Bay: using your favorite combination of freeways, get to Hwy 1 north (19th Ave). Go through the Golden Gate park, and turn right on Lake. You are a few blocks away from 643.

From the East Bay: from the Bay Bridge, exit onto the central freeway to where it leaves you on Fell Street. Follow Fell Street for 2.5 miles approx. Turn right on Stanyan. This is just before Fell veers leftwards around the Golden Gate Park and a few blocks after the Cole street intersection. There is a turning lane that separates from Fell just beforehand. Follow Stanyan to Geary and make a left turn. Follow Geary to 8th Ave. Turn right and follow 8th to Lake. Right on Lake and you are at 643.

Public Transportation: Tom & Nicole's place is only one block from bus lines #1 (California) from downtown, #4 (Sutter), & #44 (O'Shaughnessy) from the Sunset, and 2 blocks from the #2 (Clement) bus.

Rock Rendezvous Newsletter
C/o Karen Christie
907 Clara Drive
Palo Alto
CA 94303
<http://www.rockclimb.org/rr/>

Warning/Disclaimer

San Francisco Rock Rendezvous is not a teaching organization and does not endorse or insure rock climbing. Trips advertised in the newsletter are private and are only listed to allow for the co-ordination of car pooling and camping. Each participant on a trip is solely responsible for his or her safety during the entire trip, including the transportation to and from the climbing area and site, and any necessary insurance.