



Rock Rendezvous: Volume 12; Issue 5: June 2002

Rock Rendezvous

President	Simon Kenney	(925) 279 4428	Simon.kenney@Nolte.com
Vice President	Kevin Kachadourian	(510) 336 7019	kachadourian@earthlink.net
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



Mays meeting notes

By Kevin Kachadourian

Our illustrious president opened the meeting by thanking our host, Scott for the use of his abode. There was some confusion at first, what with all the motorcycles out front and leathers inside, that people had come to the wrong meeting (the Mistress Kat fan club meeting was next door). As always, there was a call for articles for the newsletter, and photos. Simon mentioned that he has a scanner if someone wants a photo or slide scanned (I lost my focus here for a moment, thinking about the photos I'd liked to have scanned....). Simon reminded those assembled that next month's meeting is in the South Bay, and PAY YER DUES.

In the recent trips department, Karen shared a brief story of her journey under the knife, for a little knee work. She said she had some slides (ACL bits, but no blood). I'm not sure if there's a slide show in the works or not. Noriko and Torger skied and hiked to Cathedral and Mathes Crest. They reported a stunning panoramic view of the Cathedral area in the snow. I have a note about Eric's toes disappearing, which can only mean he is still ice climbing (see slide show report below). Paul Amico led his first 5.5, with a successful ascent of the rather dirty Sloppy Seconds, near Reed's Pinnacle. Not to be

outdone, Kevin led a 5.7 next door, only aiding one short section. At the same time, Eric, Catrin and some visitors from Sweden were waltzing up the face routes nearby. Also in Yosemite, Andy G. was on Fuddy Duddy, a flaring chimney in the Positively Fourth Street area. Andy reported that you need a #5 Friend, and the rappel is exciting (1/4 inch rawl drives, leaper hanger, and 4 pieces of bleached webbing). Meanwhile, Ger and Simon were having a social climbing day at Pinnacles, which included Ordeal. Near them, was Scott, on Stupendous Man.

The only upcoming trip that made it to my notepad is a possible 4th of July trip to Fresno Dome (Courtwright Reservoir). When it was pointed out to Simon how hot it would be then, he seemed unflustered. When he was told how far it was to the nearest pub, he hesitated.

The meeting moved onto the slide show with a presentation by Eric of recent ice climbs. The first climb was in Yosemite just past the Wawona tunnel. Eric's partner was a 50 year old without toes (perhaps Eric has been inspired to follow in his footsteps). The description of being hard at first then easy is not so. There were 2 easy pitches, then 8

hard ones. The climbing looked very exciting, and very vertical (did I mention the waterfalls?). They left the car at 8:30am, started climbing at 10:00am, and topped out at 12:15am, followed by a 3-4 mile hike out. Eric had his first hallucination while climbing (he didn't say what it was, but Catrin was at the meeting). Eric also climbed at Lake Louise, where there was danger due to lots of climbers, and a descent that involved a bobsled chute. At Murchison Falls, Scott's toes forced a turn around (since Eric had already climbed with a toeless climber),

while at Weeping Wall, the avalanche detonations presented a different ice climbing challenge. Finally, someone's glasses got stuck to their tongue (I don't know - I just write the notes, then come back later and try to decipher them). Eric closed the discussion talking about the new Euro style of having velcroed climbing tools that you just stick to your body instead of harnessing them.

Thanks to Scott for his hospitality (just send Simon the vet bill for the cats), and to Eric for his slide show.

And Introducing...

By Simon Kenney and Kevin Kachadourian

John Ubante arrived fresh faced and keen to our meeting. John has been climbing for about 7 months; his accomplishments include 2 trips to Joshua tree, Panicles (Along with various other local climbs). He has been in the bay area about 3 years and obviously has heaps of money as he has bought himself a complete lead rack ropes etc and claims to climb regularly at Mission Cliff. They must pay real well when you are a Wells Fargo system administrator!!

Norge Ahlberg accompanied another first timer, Paul, to the meeting. She claims that she's only climbed on climbing walls, but they were outdoors, in Spain and

Mexico. Norge is interested in climbing on real rock, and already knows how to tie a figure 8. From talking to Norge, I get the impression that she would quickly learn the other stuff she needs to know to be a sterling climbing partner. She speaks fluent Spanish (how do you say "my friend has been carried off by condors" in Spanish?), and is into running, skiing (downhill), and water sports (kayaking and diving water sports- shame on you). Norge was born in the Philippines (hence the name), and is currently looking for work as a hospital administrator (hint). Welcome, Norge. We hope to see you at future meetings and on the rock.

E.R.T.R.

by B. B. Bindner, photos by Em Holland

The following trip report was submitted to Accidents in North American Mountaineering:

"Fall on rock, exceeding abilities, inadequate protection for second on a traverse, failure to doublecheck rappel setup"

The climb was originally named Feldspar. It was in the vicinity of Gianelli Edges near Sonora Pass in California-- I did the FA of this climb a week before the events

described, drilling two 3/8" protection bolts by hand, on lead, during the ascent.

I normally do not write beta descriptions of ascents, but in this case there is reason to include detailed information, so please bear with me.

Feldspar starts in the back of a triangular alcove capped by a 10-foot roof. To begin the climb, insecure chimney moves lead up 15' to a horizontal 10' very easy rightward

hand traverse crack along the right wall of the alcove, beneath the roof, out to the lip. The edge of the roof is quite sharp, with potential to cut the lead rope in a fall should pro be placed on the hand traverse or anywhere in the alcove. Strategy for the leader involves climbing up the insecure flared back of the alcove to the hand traverse, leaving one piece low in the back of the alcove to protect the moves up to the hand traverse crack. This pro, and another cam in the middle of the traverse, are back-cleaned (the lower by the belayer, the upper by the leader) after the leader reaches the lip of the roof, to keep the rope from being pulled tight against the sharp edge of the roof. Above, two bolts protect the face climbing to the top, 50 feet off the deck.

This time around (second ascent) I led the climb and, rather than lower to the ground, decided that belaying from the top would protect the last exit move from directly overhead, rather than slightly to the side, as would be the case with a "slingshot" belay, because of the location of the top anchors.

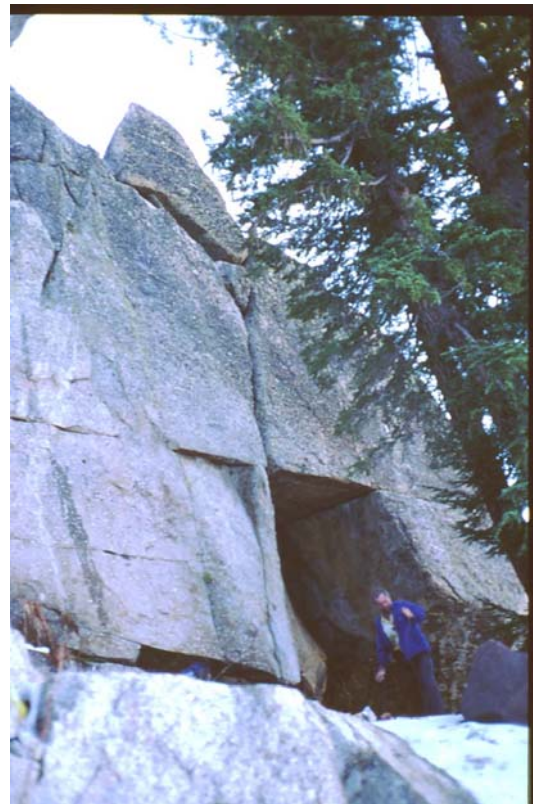
The problem here is that after backcleaning the lower protection, the second climber, "D." was exposed to an unprotected traverse with the crux move at the start of it. We knew that a fall would be a pendulum out away from the roof, but none of us anticipated that the swing back from the pendulum would shift D to the right, snapping her into the vertical face to the right of the roof, with great force. Yet this is exactly what happened.

As D began to second the pitch, she had some difficulty with the first, flared stem/chimney/slot in the back of the alcove, being unfamiliar with the heel-toe/hip-shoulder-scum/palm-stem techniques needed to stay in the flared corner. After moving up only a few feet, she fell out of the corner, and as expected, swung out into the air. As she passed the lip of the roof, the protection placed above stopped her outward swing and pendulummed her forcefully back into the rock at the edge of another, lower roof. She put up her left hand to protect her face. Her hand was caught between the slightly protruding edge of her helmet and the edge of this lower roof,

tearing off the back of her left index finger at the fingernail, and breaking her finger.

As soon as I realized that D had been injured in the fall, I lowered her to the ground where friends began to administer first aid: stopping blood loss and treating for shock, splinting for the potential fracture, helping D change shoes, assessing her condition as to whether she would be able to hike out.

Seeing that the situation below was under control, I cleaned most of the anchors except a few required to rappel and clean the route. Just before I started to rappel, I stepped back to adjust position and felt a small "pop" at my rap device. Looking down, I realized that although I had threaded both strands of the rope through the device, only one had been clipped.



Bruce preparing to lead E.R.T.R.

ANALYSIS:

First, there is no doubt in my mind that D's helmet saved her from a potentially fatal head injury. The force of her swing back into the rock was severe. Her inclination to

protect her face also saved her from serious facial lacerations and possible fractures.

As to the cause of the accident, I ignored a small voice inside that said that there was a dangerous situation developing. Protection of the second on traverses is usually a postulate of my climbing, yet in this case I failed to protect. The primary reasons were rope drag and potential cutting of the rope on the edge (valid) but the secondary, or background assumptions and expectations were a big culprit: I had established the route, and felt that the chimney section was not really very difficult (underestimated difficulty); I had climbed the route on top rope the previous weekend with the same protection setup prior to leading it, and nothing bad had happened (reinforcement of bad habit); And I didn't expect D to fall before reaching the very easy hand traverse. The traverse itself was extremely easy, in fact soloable. It was D's position in the insecure chimney at the start of the climb that was unsafe.

We had other options available: As I was taking up slack to belay, the thought crossed my mind to have D tie into the middle of the rope rather than the end, replace the piece low in the back of the alcove and have one of our friends on the ground belay her on a backrope to control the potential pendulum fall. But I already had most of the rope up at the belay, and she was already tied into the end. Another option would have been for me to lower from the top, swing under the roof and place a piece to protect D. All of these options seemed "too much trouble" at the time, especially since the pendulum would supposedly be out from under the roof, away from the rock.



Bruce leading the hand-traverse

LESSONS:

1. Protect the second on traverses and *wherever* position and direction of rope run exposes the second to potentially dangerous falls. This is a simple lesson, of which I was well aware. Any pendulum fall is potentially dangerous. In pendulum falls, if you hit nothing on the initial pendulum, you can experience a backswing that contains *almost as much kinetic energy as the initial fall*. The sideways motion of a pendulum is also a serious concern, exposing the upper body, vital organs, head and face to severe impacts not experienced in a feet-first fall.
2. When other considerations (such as rope running over an edge) make it impossible to leave protection for the second, look for other ways to protect the second. This may involve using a back rope, lowering another rope from the top, leaving a fixed piece, or other creative solutions. *Do not let initial considerations keep you from finding other ways to protect the second.*
3. Always double check critical system points NO MATTER THE DISTRACTIONS: Belay anchors, knots, harness, locking carabiners... rappel setup. This accident could have resulted in one injury and one fatality had I stepped off the edge a moment sooner, without hearing my rappel setup fail. When possible, have your partner double check your systems, and vice-versa.
4. Listen to those small voices that question the safety of a setup, particularly when the setup appears to in some way, for whatever reason, violate a basic rule.

DENOUEMENT:

D. was able to hike out, and visited an emergency room in Sonora, where stitches were required to reattach what the E.R. doctor called a "partial amputation." Now, 6 months later, her finger is mostly healed, and she is looking forward to a rematch with the climb, now named "E.R.T.R." D's analysis of the accident: "I shouldn't have fallen. But I was tired from working the night before and driving up early that morning; the day was really cold, and I had not warmed up enough. I should have listened to the little voice telling me to try it another day when I was feeling better. The trick is distinguishing

that little voice of wisdom from that little

voice of fear. There lies the rub, as always.”

A Climbers Guide to the Sonora Pass Highway

Guidebook review by Em Holland

By Brad Young, Hope Wolf and Jim Lundeen

© 2001, YoungWolf GP, \$14.00*

Sonora Pass Climbing website:
<http://www.sonorapassclimbing.com/>

For years, when driving on Hwy 108 for ski trips or to reach climbing in the eastern Sierra, I had noticed granite domes and cliffs, even seen some old bolts, but had never been able to find any information on routes. Finally, the information is available. Bruce and I have made several exploratory trips to this area, including Burst Rock (see E.R.T.R. story in this RR News), Donnell Vista and Potter's Rock. It's about equal distance from the Bay Area as Yosemite Valley, but the climbs are uncrowded and

camping is casual. Some of the approaches require driving on dirt Forest Service roads, so it helps to have patience and routefinding skills; a 4wd vehicle is nice (but not required.) We've found some great climbs on quality rock, and there are lots more ... we're looking forward to exploring the area more this summer. Contact me (Em Holland, 415-383-7557, emholland2@attbi.com) if you are interested in joining us for a trip to the area, getting beta, or buying a guidebook with group discount.

*DISCOUNT on guidebooks: If placing a group order through the website, Rock Rendezvous members can get a price of \$12 each, (\$11 each if we order 10 or more).

Coming Trips

Michael Brodesky has installed a new reservations system for club campsite bookings over the summer. Some of these weekends are filling up already, so if you are keen to get out go ahead, log on, and try the booking site. It can be found at <http://www.rockclimb.org/rr/trips.html>.

Alternatively Michael can be contacted by e-mail mbrodesk@interwoven.com.

For those of you who do not have online access; space on trips may be booked by calling Michael on 415 948 8529.

We have campsites booked for the following weekends:

			Leader
June	6 – 8	Yosemite	Torger
July	12/13	Meadows	Simon
	19/20	Meadows	Carolyn
	27/28	Meadows	Simon
August	3/4	Meadows	Adam
	9/10	Meadows	Mitchel
	16/17	Meadows	Michael
	23/24	Meadows	
	29-2 nd Sept (4 nights)	Meadows	
Sept	6/7	Meadows	
	6/7	Yosemite	
	13/14	Yosemite	
	20/21	Meadows	
	20/21	Valley	
	27-29	Valley	
Oct	4/5	Valley (2 sites)	

An appeal from your editor...

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, bad jokes etc... to me Carolyn at cdent@sangamo.com. THANKS!

Next Meeting - Tuesday June 4th (7pm)

Next month Karen Christie will be hosting our meeting at her home in the South Bay. Bring plenty of beer and eats!

907 Clara Drive
Palo Alto 94303
650-852-1212 home
510-612-7434 cell

From the East Bay, there are many options. The best may depend on where you start and traffic on the day, whether you'll want to go over the Bay Bridge and follow directions from SF or go south on the East Bay side. In the absence of traffic considerations (ha!), the quickest way from Berkeley/Oakland is to take 880 South. From 880 South, take the exit for "84 West - Decoto Road" (about 20 miles south from downtown Oakland, 980/880 interchange) (first overhead sign is marked Decoto Road only; 1 mile before the exit there is a small sign on the right indicating Dumbarton Bridge). Follow signs for the Dumbarton Bridge/84 West and go over the Dumbarton Bridge (this is the pay direction). Once over the bridge, take a left on WWillow Road (second traffic light). Bear right to get back on 101 South (for about 2

miles).

From San Francisco, take 101 South or 280 South, according to your personal driving preference or any traffic accidents on the day.

From 101 South, take the Embarcadero Road/Oregon Expressway exit. Follow signs for Oregon Expressway (last ramp on right). Merge onto Oregon. At the 3rd traffic light, turn left (south-ish) onto Louis Road.

From 280 South, take the exit for Page Mill. From the ramp, turn left (to go east) on Page Mill, which will turn into Oregon Expressway when you cross El Camino Real. Turn right on Louis Road.

Once on Louis Road, Go about 3-4 irregular blocks and turn left on Clara Drive (one block past 4-way stop sign at Colorado and Louis). 907 is the first house on the left. There is plenty of on-street parking. If you have any problems, give me a call.

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.

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