



Rock Rendezvous: Volume 12; Issue 6: July 2002

# Rock Rendezvous

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## Junes meeting notes (...or 'It's not my job')

By the Venerable Kevin Kachadourian

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This month Kevin Kachadourian is once again filling in for Tom Kidd (who is a much better writer, and should come back as soon as possible).

Simon, our illustrious leader, after herding the revelers into the living room, thanked Karen for the use of her humble but warm abode. There was a brief discussion of Karen's ACL (but, sadly, no slides). There were a few new faces, including visitors from the East Coast (Carol), and South Africa (Zenid), and many familiar faces packed cozily into Karen's living room.

In the announcements department: Outdoors Unlimited is conducting a Wilderness First Aid course in July and August. The word is that they do a bang up job, so participants get a thorough basic training, with minimal blood loss.

A calendar of events from REI was passed around. The editorial committee (of the Homeland Security Commission) has determined that the list is too long to include

here, and we don't want to alarm you, anyway, but among the programs are:

**Climber Self-Rescue**, through Mountain Adventure Seminars

**Basic Rock Climbing**, through Mountain Adventure Seminars

**Backcountry Cooking** (I thought Bruce B could teach this one)

**Gear and Anchor Clinic**, through Mountain Adventure Seminars

**Bear Safety** (we do want to keep the bears safe)

And an array of orienteering, GPS, camping, hiking, and other seminars and workshops. The locations are the REI stores around the Bay Area. To get more information, contact Jason Flesher or Polly Bolling at (510) 527-4140.

Em made the following announcements, by remote control:

1. Does anyone want to purchase a Sonora Pass Climbing guidebook with group discount? If there is interest, please pass around a sign-up sheet with name/contact phone

or email). Regular price is \$14. Our group discount price is \$12 (\$11 if we are 10 or more.) So far she had 3 orders.

2. Is anyone interested in an RR trip (loosely organized by Em and Bruce) to Sonora Pass area later this summer? Ask for show of hands & if interest she will try to schedule it for a weekend that RR does not have other trips. (ed: I don't remember if a show of hands ever happened, so if you are interested, contact Em).
3. Access Fund Adopt-a-Crag Day is Sunday Sept. 8. Paul Minault has asked me to organize a Rock Rendezvous group project. I am thinking of a clean-up at either Mt. Tam, Mickey's Beach, or Mt. Diablo, followed by a potluck picnic/barbecue. Any interest from members? Any other ideas or suggestions for worthy Adopt-a-Crag projects? I assume it does not need to be limited to the Bay Area; would members be more/less inclined to participate if it is somewhere in the mountains, such as Tahoe or Yosemite? (Building a brew pub at Upper Pines probably does not qualify.)
4. Bruce and I have a permit for two persons in my name for the Palisades via N. Fork Big Pine Creek Thurs Aug 8 through Mon Aug 12 which we are unable to use. I'm not sure what the official word is on whether this is transferable (probably not), but is anyone interested in impersonating me to take over the permit? Note that the

critical date is when you ENTER the wilderness area, which can be anytime up until midnight Aug 8, and the permit has instructions on how to arrange for a night-box permit pickup on that night.

Local bouldering/training sessions were discussed, with gyms and rocks mentioned. If you are on the email server, you have noticed the recent flurry of emails about Handley Rock, Indian Rock, and a couple of gym nights. It seems like the climbing season is in full swing.

I have no notes about recent trips, and only a brief mention of Simon's July 4<sup>th</sup> Fresno Dome trip, which I believe has become the July 4<sup>th</sup> Courtwright Reservoir trip.

It was decided that the next meeting will be July 9<sup>th</sup>, in light of the holiday being so close to the 2<sup>nd</sup>. It was also decided that it would be at Kevin's house, so the other climbers don't have to suffer him strutting around in his leathers anymore (ed: see, when you write these things, you can say whatever you want).

As part of the upcoming trips discussion, there was a brief discussion about the dangerous descent from Middle Cathedral, including smashed rap bolts. The business done, Karen treated us to a slide show of a variety of California, climbing locations, running roughly from North to South, from Mickey's Beach to the desert, including backcountry classics such as Bear Creek Spire. All in all, it was a wonderful evening. A double thanks to Karen for hosting the meeting and providing the slide show.

## And Introducing...

By Sir Simon Kenney

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In attendance at our RR meeting last month several new and potential new faces appeared. (Damn these south bay meetings are getting more successful...I suppose I will have to have another one).

**Michael Lake**, has not climbed for about 10years. Back then he lived in Portland, Oregon. Michael says he would often come down to Yosemite amongst other places (Where he would lead unto 5:10). He is hoping to get back into climbing and went on Torgers trip a couple of weeks ago to the valley his first 'real' climbing trip for a while.

**Carol Garfinkel**, was on a flying visit over from the East coast (Washington DC) on business, and found us through another RR member, Claire (and the website). Carol had just enough time over here to join Torgers on his trip. Apart from that Carol has climbed in W.Virginia at Seneca Rocks,

which consists of giant sandstone fins, about 3 pitches high. Carol is a member of The Mountaineering section of the Potomac Appalachian trail club. (So if you are over that way – remember they owe us one!)

**Rob and Zeanid Breyer** are husband and wife, who arrived from South Africa about 9 months ago, and got to know the club through another member Vinita Bali when they met on a 'leading course' at Planet Granite. So being from South Africa they have of course climbed "Table Top Mountain" in Cape Town, as well as Splitskoppe in Namibia. Here they have been to Pinnacles, Yosemite, and Mount Diablo. I had the pleasure of Mountain biking with Rob on the Flume trail in Tahoe a couple of weeks ago – great fun!!

## The Way Down

An Epic Descent by a very tired Paul Drew

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The climb had gone easily – after leaving the Bay Area at 7:20 am Adam and I had made good time to the bottom of Royal Arches in Yosemite. We caught up with all the early risers at the top of pitch 8. From there progress was decidedly leisurely as we had to wait behind a seemingly endless queue, with a high percentage of beginners, or at least climbers doing their first multi-pitch route. Despite this we reached the top at about 5pm – now to decide how to get off.

On the way up Adam mentioned he had been reading 'North American Accidents' before retiring to bed recently (not my favorite choice!) and had read several reports of climbers falling to their death down North Dome Gully. Given this and added to the fact that neither of us had been

done North Dome Gully we thought we would opt for the multi-pitch rappel descent. However when we arrived at the top of this to find one party leader teaching his seconds how to rappel and behind him a large queue we had second thoughts. Back in 1992 I had climbed Royal Arches, followed by Crest Jewel on North Dome and walked off via the Yosemite Falls trail. I obviously remembered this through rose-

tinted spectacles as I recalled the walk off as fairly quick and easy and being back in camp for tea (perhaps I was just fit). Anyway, based on this I persuaded Adam that the best way down was to climb to the rim, find the trail from North Dome Gully to the Yosemite Point and then follow the trail back to the valley floor. We wouldn't have to

risk our lives down the death slabs or wait for hours on rappel stations – BIG mistake.

We finished the route, including the final exposed 5.4 slab and then packed our gear away. Adam promptly slipped over in a muddy puddle getting impressively wet and muddy. Once he'd shaken himself off we set off up to the rim, we had to negotiate an unpleasant section of wet slab but once above this it was straightforward. On we plodded, gaining height slowly – there were occasional indications of a trail but nothing continuous. The rim didn't seem to ever get much closer. Finally we got to a viewpoint and could see across to Yosemite Falls, miles away, and across Indian Canyon. In our earlier discussions we had totally missed the fact that we would have to go around Indian Canyon, Adam had never been up here before and I was relying on sketchy memories from 10 years ago. By now we were getting fairly tired and the light was beginning to fade. Eventually the ground levelled off but there were no signs of any trails at all. To compensate, the views were tremendous; we could see across Half Dome and to the snow-covered high country beyond. The sunset was glorious.

We carried on, Adam was definitely feeling tired by now and I was getting very thirsty – we'd long since finished our water. Just as it was getting totally dark we reached a small stream (checking later this turns out to be Lehamite Falls creek). I promptly drank my fill and filled up my water bottle, but Adam refused to drink in case he caught giardia. Having had a very bad case of giardia, picked up in Pakistan, I could understand his concern but I needed the water too much to worry. Up here above the rim there was still a lot of snow patches around, but we were able to go around most of them. We were now navigating entirely by headtorch and the sound of flowing water. Before it had got fully dark we eyed up the route, we had to contour around Indian canyon and then climb the slope beyond to reach Yosemite Point and the falls beyond. On we trudged, reaching a large stream that we guessed was Indian Creek. At first Adam was hopeful that this was the creek that led into Yosemite Falls and suggested we follow it downstream, but I was certain this was wrong and convinced him to carry on. We

fortuitously found a fallen log across the stream so avoided getting our feet wet.

Once across we headed up the hillside, still no sign of any trail. Adam was rapidly losing faith in our route and feeling cold, he was beginning to mutter about spending the night out. I put on a show of bravado and continued up the hill. Finally we reached the top – I had been hoping to hear Yosemite Falls from here and finally reach the trail. We carried on and started descending towards a stream, Yosemite Falls creek I assumed. Adam caught me up and pointed out we had done a 180 degree turn on the ridge crest and were headed back to the stream we crossed earlier. At first I didn't believe him, but catching sight of a moonlit Half Dome in entirely the wrong place finally convinced me. We very nearly gave up at this point, but instead turned around and retraced our steps to the top. A minute later I picked up a trail, at first indistinct but when we came across fallen trees that had been cut to let the path through we knew we were on route. What a relief, after several hours of floundering around in the forest I now felt reasonably certain we could get back to the valley floor.

We followed the trail and then met a couple of guys camping out. They confirmed we were on the North Dome – Yosemite Point trail and said we had about a mile to go to reach the bridge across the creek. They mentioned the trail was a little hard to follow down the hillside but as long as headed down towards the stream we would be fine. We followed the trail losing it a couple of times, but retraced our steps to get back on the trail. Most of the way down we found a junction and a signpost, mistakenly we followed the path to Yosemite Point. Great view of the valley with all the lights on, but of course a dead end. Back we went following the correct path this time finally getting down to the bridge over the creek.

From here it was a mere 3.5-mile stroll down the well-defined path but we were both very tired and Adam was getting very dehydrated. On and on we went, the trail seemed endless – I had definitely done this trail before without too much problem, but not this night. To top everything off, water from the falls was being blown on to the path

and it was like being in a cold shower. Finally we traversed away from the falls and neared the bottom. I agreed to head off and retrieve my truck from the Ahwahnee Hotel, coming back to meet Adam at Camp 4. The section along the road was annoying but surprisingly quick, I had been hoping to pick up a lift from a passing car but traffic was very light in the middle of the night. Neither Adam nor I had been carrying a watch so we had no real idea what time it was, I was actually pleased to discover it was 1:00 am when I finally reached my truck.

I collected Adam and we headed to North Pines to find the Rock Rendezvous site. Adam had arranged this with Jen and thought we were on site 5, but he had left the e-mails at home and wasn't 100% sure.

We knew which sites the Cragmont Club had booked but these were supposed to be full. First off we checked out site 5, this had a BMW and Mercedes parked there, we didn't recognize either and couldn't think of who in the club might be driving that flash a car. Next stop, the Cragmont sites. Adam definitely recognised these sites but as expected they were chock-a-block. Just by chance though there was an empty site opposite so we parked here and crashed in the back of my truck.

In the end it took us 5 hours to climb the route and 8 hours to get down. I've heard several tales of full day epics climbing the route, but none of nightmare descents. Next time we'll take one of the recognised descent routes!!

## Coming Trips...

Hope to see you out there!

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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>.

If you are booked on a trip that you can no longer attend please DO remember to 'un-book' your place. It would also be courteous if you could also e-mail the person first on the reserves list so that they can move their name up before someone else notices the space free and grabs it!

Alternatively Michael can be contacted by e-mail [mbrodesk@interwoven.com](mailto: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 <sup>nd</sup> Sept (4 nights)	Meadows	
Sept	6-7	Meadows	
	6-7	Yosemite	
	13-14	Yosemite	

## **Next Meeting - Tuesday July 9th (7:30pm)**

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Our brave volunteer this month is Kevin Kachadourian (so bring LOADS of alcohol so that the state of his house is the least of his worries on Wednesday morning...) also bring stuff to eat, because Kevin is not your mother...

4012 Maybelle Ave, Oakland, CA

Phone (510) 336-7019

Directions:

Note: please walk down the driveway and use the side door, as the front door currently leads to someone's bedroom! No deliberate mistakes please...

From SF and all points north of Oakland: take whatever roads get you to I-580 south. After you pass Fruitvale and 35<sup>th</sup> avenue, get off at High Street. Turn left and go under the freeway. At the first light, turn left onto MacArthur. Take the next right onto Maybelle Street (Kragen Auto Parts and Roma Pizza are on the corner). After 2.5 blocks, just as the street starts to climb, the house will be on the right.

From all points south of Oakland: take whatever roads get you to I-580 north. After you pass the exit for highway 13, take the next exit for MacArthur Blvd./High Street. At the stop sign, go straight. The exit ramp becomes Calaveras Ave (for a few meters), and then merges onto MacArthur. At the next light, go straight past High Street. Take the next right onto Maybelle Street (Kragen Auto Parts and Roma Pizza are on the corner). After 2.5 blocks, just as the street starts to climb, the house will be on the right.

## 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.

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