



Rock Rendezvous: Volume 12; Issue 11: December 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



November meeting notes

By Tom Kidd

Seen at the Banff Film Festival was an Italian film based on the third ascent of The Tempest on El Cap. Mike Brodesky mistakenly thought that it starred Bruce Binder, but it was actually Robert De Niro in his most difficult role to date, recreating the persona of Bruce on a big wall with all those personality nuances we know and love so much. The biggest controversy will undoubtedly be the same one the surrounded Boogie Nights – did the actor require a prosthetic? One of the scenes needed an appendage longer than the average male possesses... I refer of course to the scene in which a can of chili is consumed sans utensils. Some of us know all this detail because we saw the film at October's meeting, and then saw Bruce's slides at the November meeting at Karen Christi's house.

The excellent quality of the slides made it abundantly clear that Bruce in the film is not the same person as in the slides. The person in the film clearly doesn't know what they are doing (although the tiredness was convincing), while at Karen's house, Bruce gave us details that only the true Bruce would know. For instance, any actor

portraying Bruce would automatically assume that he should be drinking beer at every belay, while in reality, Bruce declined beer on the route. This should give you some idea of the difficulty involved. The climb is rated IV A2 5.6 which just might be a sandbag. The grade IV took our heroes nine days, and often eight hours per pitch. The A2 utilizes 17 beaks, 15 knifeblades and 150 copperheads. A slide of the jug to the belay at the top of pitch 2 left the viewers in no doubt as to how steep the climb is. And we were told that some of the 5.6 felt like 5.10. After seeing a series of pictures of the pitch which Alex Lowe fell off, this was believable. A technical tip was the use of Russian aiders on the climb. Instead of foot steps, there are titanium 1/2 inch rings; hooks are strapped to each knee and to the foot – these hooks are placed in the appropriate loop and are great for overhanging ground. At the October meeting, Bruce suffered three blown bulbs in the projector, and was unable to show his slides. To compensate we got treated to more slides of his summer holidays, notably his trip to the Bugaboos with Em. They stayed at the Kane Hut and climbed routes like the Bugaboo Spire by the NE ridge. The

latter was a sixteen and a half hour day. Finally we saw shots of the Lost Arrow Spire.

Thanks to Karen for hosting the meeting. Her place provided many attractions, including the nefarious Fang, the house cat, and a boa constrictor described as “huge” by Simon. Kevin quickly corrected him: “Simon, that’s not huge”. Perhaps a little too much information. Like the copy of the Karma Sutra in the bookshelves which I am sure belonged to one of Karen’s roommates. And not the snake. It is a delight to report that after months of panic about when, where and how to sign up for it, the Joshua Tree trip is over. Thank the deity of your choice. And revel in Brodesky’s prank about the alcohol ban and the howls of email anguish that ensued. Of course, if I know this it tells you how late I turned these notes in, making Carolyn’s job hard (sorry!). Thanks to her for doing such a great job. She and all the masthead but Andy are staying on for next year, and you can FRO if you have a problem with that. (Ask Simon if you need a translation). Suggestions for next year were trips to Courtright, Lassen and new skis for Kevin. In other business, Simon said that RR would sponsor someone in the climb for Yosemite despite the club running a deficit... One of my favorite comments of the evening occurred when in upcoming events, the visit of a blind climber to Touchstone in Concord was mentioned: “there goes the on sight!”

Recent activity was Erik who had a near epic in Sweden and “nearly got a job” and is now “going to lay low for a while”. Erik did the Prow with Brodesky although the style was not completely impeccable – “was there a helicopter involved?” They were impressed by an Austrian team on Astroman who started at 10:30am and got to the bottom by dusk. Adam went to Phantom Spires and Yosemite with Noriko. Mentioned were Oedipus Rex “climb the tree”, Gingerbread “stiff for 5.7” and The Clown 5.8 (Torger took a 20ft fall from the second pitch).

New faces included Emily Troemel formerly of the San Diego set (inevitably knows Inez); Sylvan from France who has climbed all around and is looking for partners; Steve Shields who met Carolyn’s birthday party in the valley and was impressed by the drinking (he’s an ice climber); Chris Karitaojier, a friend of Bruce and Em’s who tried to get him up Generator Crack (sounds familiar) and Dave who moved here from Seattle.

Well, I should see you all at the Christmas party, except for Erik. J-Tree was his last RR trip as he is heading to Canada after that and then moving to Norway. So there will be no drunk Swedes falling asleep on the sofa at the Christmas party which will be a big shame. Someone suggested that we just need a long blonde wig, an Abba album and a half cooked herring, but it won’t be the same...

And Introducing...

New member introductions by Simon Kenney

Sylvain Colin (No not Colin Sylvain), fresh from France has been climbing for about 5Yrs. This was Sylvain’s first RR meeting but he also joined us at J. Tree and got really involved with the club motto (“A drinking club with a climbing problem”). Although he hates the cold, Sylvain suffered his first cross country skiing experience last year, and said that he would follow the club anywhere into the snow (Well almost anywhere)

Dave Goetz was originally from Texas, moved to Seattle and finally a few weeks ago got it right when he moved here to the bay. Dave has climbed for 3 years, and will tackle 5.10 sport and 5.8 trad routes, he is currently doing a post Doc in “Protein Biochemistry” but really would prefer to be mountaineering or learning to back country ski.

A Day on the Wall, a Night in the Open

Eric Sandelin

"We're aaaall gooonnaa diiiiee!!!". The thoughtful words of our neighbors echo across the golden granite of the southeast face of El Capitan.

"Yes, but you are gonna die first!" my partner Norman replies and then we laugh. Our attempt to climb the route 'Mescalito' on El Capitan turns out to be a social affair. To the right of us we have the two young "We are all gonna die!" rock'n'roll climbers on Sea of Dreams. Kindly enough, they provide us with their philosophical words, accompanied with the latest death-metal tunes from their getto-blaster. Further to the right there are parties on Tangerine Trip and on Zodiac. They are too far away for us to know their taste of music, but their presence helps us fight the exposure-induced loneliness we feel. Hanging in the middle of an overhanging featureless sea of granite, we feel as lonely and vulnerable as if we were trying to cross the Pacific Ocean in a small dinghy. Although they are too far away to help us if we would get into trouble, just the sight of them still makes us feel safer.

Once in a while a biker-looking caver from Atlanta pops by. Yes, I said, "pops by". The day before a rope suddenly appeared from nowhere twenty feet out in the air. Rescue was our immediate thought. We were delighted to find out that we were wrong when the first 'rescuer' appeared on the rope. With large tattoos, shorts, army-boots and a helmet with two flashlights and a video camera it was evident that this was not a rescuer. A short conversation ensued. He belonged to a group of cavers from Atlanta who planned to rappel and jumar for a couple of days from the top of El Cap. He didn't understand why we wanted to spend a week on a rock face and we didn't understand why he wanted to do long jumars just for the fun of it. Jumaring is not fun. It's scary! At least we agreed we didn't understand each other and told him to bring a pizza the next time he came by.



To the left of us we have a German solo climber on New Dawn. Enviously we watch him laying in his sleeping bag on the spacious Lay-Lady ledge while we are struggling for yet another night with a hanging bivy. Every evening it is the same thing: I, the theoretical physicist, reach the belay, tired and hungry after a long day of hauling, cleaning, free-jumaring and leading. In front of me are three or four bolts on a blank face rock face. Nothing else. With my lack of organizational skills the task ahead of me is daunting. I need to create a belay with a fixed lead line for Ola, a jumar-line and a chicken-line for Norman, and two haulines. This is a complicated task in its own. But I also need to set the belay up for a bivy. The haulines should be set up so that the haulbags are accessible but still won't interfere with the two portaledges. In addition there should be a tether for each of us to tie into while sleeping, and last but not

least, all this should be set up so that there's a free rope for Norman to start leading in the morning while Ola and I break down the bivy.

I am not up for the task in my tired state of mind. Hastily I fix the lines and hope that Norman with his engineering mind will have a master plan when he arrives at the belay. Under normal circumstances Norman always has a plan for this sort of things. An engineer by profession and fixing racecars on his spare-time, his brain immediately sees how complicated mechanical systems should be set up. However, the route is steep and the rope Norman is jumaring is free hanging. It's no surprise he is wasted by the time he reaches the belay and he does not have the master plan I was hoping for.

Enter Ola. Each evening he is our savior. He doesn't show it, but he is probably disappointed that the bivouac is not already set up by the time he has cleaned the pitch. Instead he has to take charge or we will be sleeping hanging from our harnesses. Luckily Ola has the perfect wall-mind. He never seems to be stressed. Even if he is tired and hungry he performs his tasks methodically and carefully. He hands out direction to Norman and me and slowly our bivouac is unfolding: First we need to untangle the rope-web strung across the belay. The free lead rope Norman will use tomorrow morning should be put in a rope-bag and clipped out of the way. The two haulines need to be recoiled from the end to make sure they will feed out smoothly when Norman hauls them up to the next belay.

When we have organized the ropes and made sure the rack is out of the way it's time for the portaledges. With only three bolts we need to position them on top of each other while making sure we can still access them. We decide the best solution is to have Norman's single portaledge at the top on the left bolt and Ola's and mine double on the right bolt slightly below Norman. Ola downjugs to the haulbags, grabs Norman's portaledge and jugs up with it. He hands it over to Norman while they exchange our most common words: "Got it?," "Got it!". While Ola returns down for our portaledge, Norman starts to assemble his. It looks like

he is wrestling with a blue dragon when he unfolds it. The hollow aluminum tubes makes the horrifying noise of something falling, "cling-clong", when they bang against the rock. Of course they are all attached to each other with a wire but it's an unnerving sound I never get used to. Enviously I watch Norman laying in his portaledge when Ola and I start to wrestle with ours. Assembling the frame is quite easy but when it is done it looks like one of Escher's impossible geometrical figures. Unfortunately I am hanging in same bolt as the porta so it's my job to adjust the straps to make the porta flat. Ola calmly tries to direct me in the fading daylight, but he might just as well be teaching ballet to an elephant. I pull this strap and that strap but to no use. The portaledge still isn't even close to flat. Even Ola loses his temper, tells me to get out of the way (which means I high-step in the bolt the portaledge is hanging from), and in a minute it's flat. Now it is time for food and sleeping bags. While Norman and I are sitting in the portaledges, giving our hips a well earned rest, Ola jumars up and down to the haulbags with food and clothing and hands it over to us with the usual exchange of words: "Got it?," "Got it!".

Finally we have everything we need for the night and Ola prepares to enter our double portaledge. As he enters at one side I carefully slide my body to the other side to balance his weight. The portaledge creaks and moves a little bit when Ola enters but seem to hold up pretty well. Terrified by the exposure I sit next to the wall, trying to not think about what is outside the safe haven of the portaledge. Carefully remove our shoes and helmets and clip them into the anchors. Dinner consists of canned food as usual. Norman has a tasty can of Campbell's soup for dinner while Ola and I settle for Stagg chili. Some canned fruits finish the dinner and it's time for bed. Ola and I have to coordinate our movements when we slide into our sleeping bags. It goes well and the portaledge doesn't flip over. Laying two persons in a portaledge is claustrophobic enough even without the fly. I pray the weather will hold. The small size of the portaledge tempts me to stretch my arms outside the ledge when I try to find a comfortable position to sleep in. However,

my mind kicks in and when I think about what's out there I feel like I am sleeping on a raft sticking my arms out into a shark-filled sea. Quickly I pull back my arms. Eventually

exhaustion takes over and I drift into a dreamless sleep looking up into the starlit sky.

It's that time of Year Again...

Simon Kenney

A thank you to all of this year's Masthead.

Thanks to all your efforts this year the club has gathered many new members and kept hold of existing ones. We have had more events than before and a good cross section of the club attending (Not just a few hard core individuals). Michael has done an awesome job maintaining the website and creating a trip reservation page, not to mention making the reservations, without this RR would not exist - Thank you. Carolyn as her first year as newsletter editor has turned the newsletter into a good looking, interesting read, she has harassed members and resourced articles and added photographs, and it is now better than it has ever been - Thank you. Which brings me to Tom; thanks to Tom's monthly contribution to the newsletter as Scribe, we have always had a consistently amusing lead article to read, maybe it is the British/Irish sense of humor, but Tom excels at 'Double entendre'. Tom thank you for your excellent articles. Kevin, in the absence of Tom, has always been there to step in and as scribe, or as President in my absence and has added many contributions to the "....and introducing" articles, its not easy to take notes when you are trying to get drunk. Kevin thank you. Karen has done a superb job of oiling the club finances and we have managed to avoid any Enron style scandals. Karen's busiest time of year is when all the members fees are coming in - i.e. right after she took up the post last year - in at the deep end you have done wonderfully -

Thank you. And last but by no means least Andy, who has managed to get out all those newsletters out on time and at short notice every month without fail. Andy thank you.

Each of you have made a vital contribution in keeping Rock Rendezvous alive - very alive, without you we don't have a club. THANKYOU!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

Next year's masthead.

I have decided to run for President again for next year if you will all have me.

I have asked each member of the current masthead to stay in place for next year and so we have for Nomination:

Simon Kenney - President
Kevin Kachadourian - Vice president
Karen Christie - Treasurer
Carolyn Dent - Newsletter editor
Michael Brodesky - Webmaster and site reservations
Tom Kidd - Scribe

Keeping a consistent team for the masthead makes running RR easier and allows us to build on what we already have achieved. (OK so I sound like the CEO but its true!!)..... Thanks team!!

Finally if anyone out there wishes to put forward another nomination for any member of the masthead then please let me know ASAP.

You are Invited to the RR Christmas Party!

PARTY AT THE PRESIDENTS HOUSE !!!

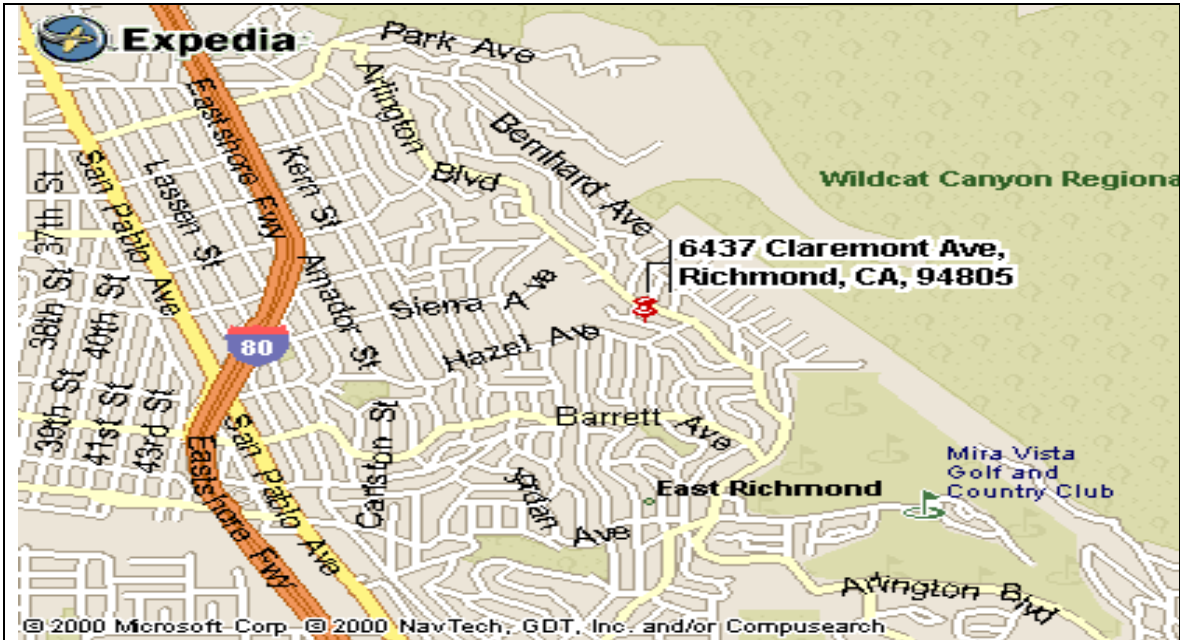
(That's Simon Kenney and not George W – although he did say he might show up late)

DECEMBERS RR MEETING WILL ALSO BE THE RR CHRISTMAS PARTY!!

YOU LUCKY PEOPLE: I HAVE DECIDED TO HOST THIS YEARS ROCK RENDEZVOUS PARTY AT MY PLACE!! AND HAVE SET THE DATE FOR SATURDAY DECEMBER 7TH

Show up around 8:00pm, RR will provide some food/beer/wine/soda. Just bring any extra booze you wish to add and something for a potluck.

I have heaps of room if you wish to crash so if you want to get totally drunk then that's OK too!!



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Phone:
(510) 2371466 (home)
(415) 5051189 (Simon's/ Amy's cell)
(925) 2794428 (Simon's work)

Directions:

- I 80 Exit at San Pablo Ave
- Go south 1 block on San Pablo Ave and turn left at lights on Barrett Ave.
- Follow Barrett Ave to the top of the hill where it intersects with Arlington Blvd. Turn left on Arlington Blvd.
- After about 4 blocks turn left on Olive and immediately right on Claremont. We are about 4 houses in on the right.

6437 Claremont Avenue
Richmond, CA 94805

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/>