



# Rock Rendezvous



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## June Meeting Notes

By Simon Kenney...

This month we held our meeting at the home of Les and Bev Wilson, tucked away in the Berkeley hills close to Wild Cat Canyon. The evening was cool and dry, so we decided to hold the meeting in the back garden, where Les had already set up the BBQ and put out some tables and chairs.

As the masses assembled and set themselves up with BBQ food and drink I noticed Ricardo carrying around with him a 2m length of very tatty, frayed climbing rope, which obviously had a story attached to it. Ricardo and a friend were climbing one of the routes on El Cap, one that involves ascending several fixed lines before reaching the start of the climb. This was part of one of the fixed lines!! Apparently it had been set with a bad angle over a corner of rock at the anchor and combined with the excess baggage Ricardo and company had decided to bring on the climb the rope began to chafe on the edge until it split the outer mantel to expose the core. 'The rope dropped 6" as the outer mantel split' (said Ricardo) 'and I knew something was wrong'. A rapid rearrangement of the rope setup unloaded the fixed line and a disaster was avoided. Ricardo later removed the damaged section of fixed line,

rearranging it to avoid any repeat performance. I guess the moral is either never climb with Ricardo!! Or, more seriously, be aware of the stresses you are putting into a rope system and always have an easy backup available. This way Ricardo managed to avoid what most certainly would have been a fatal accident.

Onto more cheery stuff, I started the meeting with a quick rundown of the new RR website. Which by now you will have all heard of. The new system will require each person who wishes to enter his or her name for any RR organized trip to be a member (of course you can sign as many guests as you like). This is a really simple process (assuming you have paid your fees to Ricardo!) and requires that you make a login and password for yourself. Carolyn has included the email I sent out a couple of weeks ago with details on how to use the new website. (Spread the word!)

Trips; I'm off to Sonora Pass for the 4th July weekend (With 21 people from the club so far!!), where there are tons of moderate routes to chose from along with a reservoir to swim in, a place to buy





beer and all those other basic foods. (report to follow). Hamid attempted to climb the East Face of Half Dome (Regular Route) but had to bail after trying to haul too much gear (seems to be a theme this month).

After that we settled down to a video personal account by Les of his attempt to summit Yerupaja in Peru (adjacent to Siula Grande, the mountain made famous by Joe Simpson's book, and more recently the movie, "Touching the Void")

Les wrote:  
Yerupaja, 21,769 feet, the highest peak in the Cordillera Huayhuash of Peru, was first climbed in 1950 by an expedition from Harvard. This was one of the finest climbs of the time. The peak remained unclimbed again until 1966, when a party of which I was a member made the second and third ascents. I

did not reach the summit. My son David on a trip with his family in 1995 passed by Yerupaja, and decided his father should try again. This resulted in an expedition in 1997 sponsored by American Adventure Travel, and the making of the documentary, parts of which were shown at the meeting.

The Cordillera Huayhuash, although not very high, is among the most spectacular ranges in the world. There are beautiful scenes of these fantastic peaks. Siula (featured in Touching the Void) is the next peak north of Yerupaja.

After the video we continued drinking and eating in the wonderful surroundings of Les and Bev's back garden.

Thanks once again Les and Bev.

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## An Encounter with Spiderman on Matthes Crest BY MEI XI





Allen wants to do the traverse from south to north on **Matthes Crest** on July 4th. That's a backcountry climb with 3 hours of hike in. The climb is along 1.5 miles ridgeline of Matthes Crest. I'm a bit concerned about the weather since it's been a pattern to have an afternoon thunderstorm in the high country during the past few days.

My alarm clock goes off at 4 am. It's still pitch dark, but it's not raining. We get out of the tent and I can see some stars above us, which is a good sign. It's cold, so we make some tea and heat up some cereal. The time is 5:20am when we leave our car at the trailhead. Yesterday, I told him that if we could not be on the trail by 4:30am, I would not do the climb. It turns out to be another wishful thinking of mine.

We follow the direction given on the Supertopo and soon arrive at a creek crossing. Confused with the description, we cross the creek on the wet and slippery log only to be turned back by a sloppy trail covered by hard ice. Actually, at this early hour of the day, most of the ground is covered by ice from yesterday's storm. We come to an agreement that we will just follow the easiest path on this side of the creek and see how far we can go. Matthes Crest will always be there, and we can just go for a hike today. So we push on carefully along the creek. The sun comes out, and we can see Cathedral Peak now, which gives us an indicator and we are on track in the right general direction. With the help of those unmistakable landmarks such Cathedral Peak and Echo Peak, we arrive at the base of the climb at 8:40 am, 3 hours and 20 minutes after we left the car. I am more than pleased with our speed even though my hard breathing keeps reminding me I am at a high altitude that my body is not used to.

Allen disappears behind a boulder while I busy myself with putting my climbing shoes on and racking up. However, a few minutes later, when I look around, I don't see Allen any more, I see Spiderman!!! Obviously, after Spiderman and his twin (of course he has a twin!) defeated [Incredible Hulk](#), he has decided to come and chill out here. There is a woman following up the first pitch above us, and when she looks down, she can't stop laughing. I don't know what happened to Allen, but climbing with Spiderman sounds just as good to me. Shortly after 9 am we both start free soloing up and soon pass the woman and her partner on the first two pitches. As soon as we pop up on the ridge, I can immediately see why many people have been fascinated by this climb. Imagine, there you are with hundreds of feet of drop on your left and on your right, and thousands of feet of granite wave extending in front of you. You have to be a stone not to be impressed.

There is no protection in free soloing, so we free solo within our comfort zone. After about 3/4 miles at a section that looks sketchy, we rope up. Then we mostly roped solo (with only a rope between us) and occasionally simul-climb (with a few pieces of gear between us while moving simultaneously). When we stand on top of the South Summit, it has just been 2 hours after we started climbing. We have been moving in a good pace.

Spiderman leads up the pitch to North Summit, where we find the register box. We sit down and have our lunch while reading through the scrambled notes in the box. One page of photocopy of the Croft guidebook catches our attention, where we read that one morning Peter Croft decided to run up Matthes Crest really early because he had to be back for work at 8:30am. He was no Spiderman; He was Superman! I lead the pitch after North Summit because there are a couple





of scary down-climb sections (one of them could have been avoided if I had chosen the right path). Belayed climbing slow us down quite a bit, and I watch a couple of free soloists pass me. Inspired, we decide to put away the rope and free solo the last 0.5 miles of ridge after North Summit except for one more exposed down climb section where we use a cordelette to protect ourselves. Sometimes, I'm down climbing; sometimes, I'm hopping from one rock to another 2 feet apart with great drop in between; and sometimes, I'm traversing a long way with my hands on the knife-edged ridge and feet on granite knob extrusions. That is the wildest experience in my life. We start heading down a little before the north end of the ridge to cut our way back to the plateau where we have come from. There is no more snow on our way back, and we get back to our car at 4:50pm. The sun is still out.



Above Left: Mei hiking in with Cathedral Peak in the background.

Above Right: Spiderman is traversing a knife-blade.

Left: Matthes Crest: I cannot get the whole ridge in the viewfinder without using the panoramic mode.





# Girls at Lover's Leap

Trip Report from Joan Marshall, Ger Murphy, and Carolyn Dent



May 16- 17 - Joan Marshall

Carolyn and I started out the weekend following the SuperTopo recommended 5.5-5.6 climbing day. This starts with Knapsack Crack (5.5) on the Hogsback. We were the first party on the rock, about 9am, but were quickly joined by a few others, and then later, scads of climbers. Definitely recommend this climb for beginning leaders as well as good warm up if you have been out of climbing for a while. A nice, easily protected crack.

Moved over to Manic Depressive (5.5). Carolyn and I both thought this had a few 5.7 moves, and was dirty and run out in places. We wouldn't recommend this as a beginner lead. Also, the start of the route was a little difficult to distinguish by looking at the topo. We found it by a process of elimination. The third route of the day, per Chris McNamara's recommendation was Deception, 5.6. We had a short wait, and set up first belay a little higher than the topo indicated. This worked out well, since the next pitch ran short for a 50m rope. Next time, I'd take a 60m rope. I led this pitch and made the common mistake of climbing just a bit too far, to make the traverse to the second belay. With a short rope, and serious rope drag, I nearly thought of bailing. Fortunately, the climber just about ready to take off from the ledge above pointed out a very small hand hold just out of sight. That was all I needed to traverse the 10ft or so to the belay ledge. Carolyn led the third pitch, and although she did not put her hand in a rattlesnake infested crack, she did have to vary the route to avoid a rattlesnake stretched out near the next moves.

Next day, we moved over to The Farce, on the Lower Buttress. I led the first pitch, and again made the common mistake of climbing too high, past an easy 4th class ledge, up to an ugly off-width chimney. After much deliberating I did make the move, a kind of dyno and body scrapping. I ended up with lots of scratches and bruises on this one. Rope drag was so bad, I had to pull the rope up with both hands and throw it to a rock or horn above me. Carolyn led the second pitch and got us back to the start of the climb, the descent not all that apparent. Two women took off on the route after us, but had a much easier time of it... They knew the route! Standing back from the wall, the route looked quite simple.

As we were walking down the descent trail, two guys were making their way up the direct route of Surrealistic Pillar, and offered to set up a top rope for us. We gladly accepted, knowing this opportunity doesn't come along often for a couple gals like us. I





wore myself out half way up the crack and moved over to the face. The wall is beautiful with thick criss-crossing dikes. Not much for the hands, but lots of holds for the feet. Carolyn was super and climbed the entire crack. She then used her knowledge of self-rescue, and prussiked herself partway up the rope, before pulling the rope.

The weather was perfect. Wind got a little heavy at times, but temperatures were cool. East Wall had lines of climbers, although Corrugation Corner had not a single soul. Surrealistic Pillar 5.7 route was empty by 2pm.



I love all the gear, especially hexes. I'm surprised how intellectual climbing is, what piece for what crack, and if you use it now, you won't have it for later, and where's the rope going. I love the fact that there is so much to learn, consider and decide. There's a kind of magic in it; walking up rock and trying to protect it. It's very empowering. All that self-reliance. I want to do more.

## **Starting at the Sharp End – Ger Murphy**

I did my first lead climb in Joshua Tree in April. It was spontaneous. I intended to follow Ryan up Beginner's Two (5.2) on the Blob. As we were about to head off, Simon suggested I might like to try leading it. I did and really liked it.

After that Carolyn very generously offered to mentor me on a lead at Lovers Leap. This was a lot scarier. I had time to think about it. It was a multi-pitch, no bolts, how would I know where to stop?

It was very mellow. We did Knapsack Crack (5.5) and I had a full rack! Carolyn said she was very patient and to take my time. I did and it was the only climb we did that day with her leading the 5.5 mid section. I spent so long hanging out playing with gear placements that my calves hurt like hell for a week after.

## **Getting it Together for the East Wall – Carolyn Dent**





I had been coming back to climbing after a few months break. Anyone who knew the routes will have noticed, when reading Joan's article, that I got all the easy leads! It was time to start getting myself back onto routes that challenge me. So what did I have my eye on? El Cap? No - the East Wall route, a three pitch 5.7 at Lover's Leap.

This route has been a bit of a bogey for me. Last year I stood at the bottom at least twice. OK, so this was 5.7, the grade I usually like to lead (for all that means!), but this was steep. Not the usual slabby stuff of 5.7's. So twice I skulked away with my tail between my legs, my self-preservation instinct having got the better of me.

I had not yet done any of the steeper routes at Lover's Leap - with the exception of The Farce - a 5.5, which I still think is harder than the East Wall. Grading is certainly subjective. I did not want a rope gun for East Wall - I wanted to do it with an equal partner, but I wanted a feel for what the steeper stuff felt like too. So two weeks beforehand I asked Peter Monks if he was up for a day trip to 'The Leap'.

Peter had never been to the Leap before, so he jumped at the chance and we made a date for the following Sunday. Peter had a party the Saturday night before, so we arranged to rendezvous at my apartment at the crack of dawn - around 8am. We figured that by starting to climb late morning on a Sunday we would avoid the crowds, and this turned out to be wonderfully true.

We arrived at The Leap around 11, having stuffed ourselves with a hearty breakfast of homemade banana nut loaf on the way. Better than the usual stop at Starbucks! We then walked into the deserted campsite (closed for the clearance of diseased trees) and proceeded to gear up at one of the tables. A short hike found us at the base of Corrugation Corner (5.7) just ahead of a team of three - two New Zealanders and a local. To complicate things the NZ woman was also called Carolyn - so any calls of 'Off Belay Carolyn' had to be interpreted with caution!

It was cold, so it took us a while to get into the stride of climbing. Peter was leading today, and I was glad as my fingers could hardly make out the holds in the cold. The first pitch was nice, but the meat of the route starts on the second pitch - an awesome steep arête that is described in the guidebook as like

climbing a Stegosaurus. Numb hands were warmed by the awesome nature of the climbing, and the knowledge that the next belay ledge was in the sun!

The final pitch, in my opinion, was the best. It starts up a chimney - ugh - that was ascended with much cursing from me. I really won't repeat the language that was used here! Then a traverse into a corner led to some of the most brilliant exposed climbing ever. At one stage I was bridged across a corner with the drop of the last three pitches falling away between my legs. I let out a whoop of delight. This is not a situation you often find on a 5.7! The climbing then eases off with a 5.5 dike hike to the top.

After a break for a late lunch we also climbed Surrealistic Pillar, descending just as the sun was starting to set. What an amazing day, Corrugation Corner and Surrealistic Pillar, and we didn't have to wait or climb behind anyone all day long! That last pitch of Corrugation Corner is definitely on my list of coveted leads!





Two weeks later saw me back at The Leap with Jane Brennan, both of us eager to climb. This was also Jane's first visit to the leap, and she was suitably impressed. I found myself once more at the bottom of 'East Wall', and with a sense of déjà vu looking up and thinking how steep it looked! We were behind another party; a group of three, and watching the two beginners struggle did nothing for my confidence. Jane and I debated – do we or don't we? And I knew I had said I would take the first lead...

Eventually the last member of the first party was far enough off the ground to allow us to start. I was faltering, but knew there was only one thing to do, so stepped up onto the start and asked Jane to put me on belay. On a small ledge I placed my first piece, and then started the climb proper. My brain was telling me all the wrong things. Get down now, you don't belong here! I climbed a little further, spotted a bomber placement for my 3" Camalot right in front of my nose, and looked around and saw a sea of holds and gear placements. I was on my way.

The feeling at the first belay ledge was so good. We had got this far, and there were no thoughts of turning back. Jane took a look out at the second pitch, took the remaining gear off me, and then headed out to find the route for the traverse. This is the 5.6 pitch on the climb, but is often referred to as

the crux, as difficult route finding has led to many an epic. Jane had no such problems, and in very little time we were both perched on top of '(once a) bushy ledge' ready for the third (and final) pitch.

This last pitch is often a bottleneck, being the finish for three classic moderate routes: East Wall, East Crack and Bears Reach. We had no line ahead of us – what luck! The last pitch is straightforward climbing, apart from one mean 5.7 bulge, which is thankfully really well protected. As we topped out in the midday sun we were in no hurry, pausing to bathe in the sun and reflect on the morning's climb! Two very satisfied women!



## 2004 Calendar of Events

This month we have trips organized to the Sonora Pass and Tuolumne Meadows. For those of you who have not been to the Sonora Pass, the trip organized by Sue, Em, and Bruce is not to be missed. It will provide a rare opportunity to discover a unique climbing area with some of the people who have been active in putting up the routes in that area.

If you would like to organize a trip please let me know ([carolynldent@aol.com](mailto:carolynldent@aol.com)), and I can add it to the calendar, and advertise it nearer the time too... Please also let me know if you want your contact details (phone number and/or e-mail address) to be included in the newsletter. I am aware that some people do not like personal details publishing, so I will not do so unless you give me permission.

Thanks to Scott Johnston for booking our campsites for this year! All Yosemite Valley campsite bookings are in Upper Pines. Site numbers will be posted at the campsite entrance kiosk under Scott's name, unless otherwise stated in the table. Anyone who contacts Scott, the webmaster or the newsletter editor for campsite numbers will buy a large soda (for Scott) or beer (for the webmaster and newsletter editor).





<b>Proposed dates</b> (dates in bold are confirmed trips)	<b>Trip</b>	<b>Organizer</b>
<b>July 9<sup>th</sup> – 10<sup>th</sup></b>	Tuolumne Meadows campsite booked (in Phil Kline's name). A second site has also been booked in Scott Johnston's name (different sites on the Friday and Saturday nights).	Carolyn Dent <a href="mailto:carolynldent@yahoo.com">carolynldent@yahoo.com</a>
<b>July 17<sup>th</sup> – 18<sup>th</sup></b>	Sonora Pass – likely climbing areas are the Gianelli Edges, Herring Creek Dome, Frankenstein's, and Chipmunk Flat, with a possible hot-spring visit to appease feet that have suffered rock boots all day.	Sue Edwards, Em Holland and Bruce <a href="mailto:susanedwards732@yahoo.com">susanedwards732@yahoo.com</a>
<b>July 23<sup>rd</sup> – 24<sup>th</sup></b>	Tuolumne Meadows campsite booked	Jen Hanley
<b>August 6<sup>th</sup> – 7<sup>th</sup></b>	Tuolumne Meadows campsite booked	
<b>August 20<sup>th</sup>-21<sup>st</sup></b>	Tuolumne Meadows campsite booked	
<b>September 3<sup>rd</sup>-5<sup>th</sup></b>	Tuolumne Meadows campsite booked	
<b>September 10<sup>th</sup>-11<sup>th</sup></b>	Yosemite Valley campsite booked, Upper Pines	
<b>September 24<sup>th</sup>-25<sup>th</sup></b>	Yosemite Valley, Upper Pines	
<b>October 8<sup>th</sup> –9<sup>th</sup></b>	Yosemite Valley, Upper Pines	
<b>Thanksgiving November 24<sup>th</sup> – 28<sup>th</sup></b>	Two group sites booked at Indian Cove, Joshua Tree Site #2 (45 people) booked Wed Nov 24 <sup>th</sup> – Sunday morning Site #4 (25 people) booked Thursday Nov 25 <sup>th</sup> – Sunday morning	

## **New Rock Rendezvous Website – Up and Running!**

We are building a new website for the club (thanks mostly Tom Lambert). Many features are already available and several improvements are coming. Once fully in place, this should keep us going for many years into the future...

The site is available for anyone to browse at any time...now.

### Existing members:

You will need to create a login and password if you to want to add your name to any up coming trips. Ricardo will be confirming each persons membership as you create your login/password, so he will be busy at first until he gets to your Account/login. In order to avoid inconvenience, you should sign up for an account as soon as possible so that Ricardo will have time to check you off before you want to sign up for a trip. (Let me know if you are having problems adding your name to trips). Please remember to put in your First and last name when you see the member profile sheet as this will automatically fill in when you use it.

### Non members:

Can browse any of the site, but will not be able to add themselves to trips. If you would like to join then follow the instructions under "Join"





We are still working on refining the site. Please note that the trip signup system will soon be improved so that if you are logged in as a member you will be able to register for the trip in a single click (there will be a provision for signing up guests). If you have ideas for other improvements or find any bugs, please email Tom (tom@lambert.net) or me (Email on the website).

Go and poke around and see what you think!!

<http://rock-rendezvous.org>

Please forward this info to any other club organization or individual you think may benefit from it.

## Next meeting: Tues July 13th, 7pm

Jennifer Hanley and Nate McKitterick's House

158 Wayside Road, Portola Valley, CA94028  
Phone: (650) 529-1778

## Special Attractions

Jen will have the hot tub fired up!

As always, don't forget to bring some food and beer. And don't forget your bathing (no, not birthday!) suit.

### DIRECTIONS

Get yourself onto 280 (either end) and head towards Menlo Park. Take the Sand Hill Road exit and head west (if you're coming from the north, bear right). Stay on Sand Hill Road (which turns into Portola Road, but you'll never know it) approximately 3.3 miles. Pass Wayside Road on your right, then turn right into the Valley Presbyterian Church parking lot. Park there. The Valley Presbyterian Church parking lot has an egress onto Wayside Road. Walk up Wayside Road - we are the third driveway (don't try to count houses) on the right: #158. Our driveway is the really steep one. Bring a torch for the walk back down the hill!

### 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.

