

THE MUGELNOOS

No. 542 -- February 21, 1978

Newsheet published by and for the Ski Mountaineers and Rock Climbing Sections of the Sierra Club's Angeles Chapter. Send subscriptions and address changes to Phil Bruce, 8544 Eucalyptus, Downey, CA 90243. Subscriptions \$2/year. This is a 4 page issue.

WHO'S WHO IN THE NOOS

John and Ruth Mendenhall

← OUR HEROES

John and Ruth Mendenhall have always been in the RCS and SMS, or so we learned on our mother's knees. But, shocking though it be, the truth is that it hasn't always been so!

John Dale Mendenhall moved to Van Nuys from his native Missouri as a boy of 8 in 1919. Family vacations to the Sierra stimulated an interest in mountaineering, and he had made 3 first ascents near Convict Lake before 1930. In that year John and a friend made the first ascent of the Ne Gully of Laurel Mtn, generally accepted as the first belayed climb made in the High Sierra. John and his friend had been practicing techniques from library books at local cliffs.

John attended Cal Tech, graduating with honors in 1933. He entered the profession of civil engineering (which he still practices) and went to work out on the desert. Despite a competing interest in wrestling, he continued climbing throughout the early and middle Thirties, often with RCS members.

Meanwhile, Ruth Eleanor Dyar had come to Southern California and developed an interest in the Sierra Club. She started out in Kiesling, Washington on a farm, whence she and her 4 siblings moved to nearby Spokane when she was 14. Ruth's father worked for a newspaper in Spokane and was an author and playwright. She also took to writing and earned a BA Cum Laude in Journalism from the University of Washington in 1934.

Ruth joined the Sierra Club in late 1937 and the SMS in January 1938. With her journalism background, she was naturally attracted to the recently started Mugelnoos. Ruth took over as editor after only three months in the club. (see last issue of the Mugelnoos).

John returned to LA from the desert in early '38 and joined the Sierra Club.

He became active with the RCS. John and new convert Ruth Dyar both became RCS members on June 29, 1938. A crowded 1938 season saw John make the 2nd ascent of the Mechanic's route at Tahquitz and Ruth, on her first Sierra trip, take part in the first ascent of the North Buttress of Mt. Sill in the Sierra.

Following their first meeting at Tahquitz Rock, John and Ruth became acquainted on RCS trips. John joined the SMS in December 1938, and the two now-crossed paths skiing. In May 1939, they became ~~star~~ charter members of the famous "Base Camp" cooperative, which became an unofficial RCS/SMS headquarters.

The pace of climbing became feverish in 1939. J&R climbed together frequently, making first ascents on Strawberry Pk locally and in the Mt. Whitney area. The fever was diagnosed as terminal, and so on September 22, 1939, John and Ruth married.

Their pace seemed to quicken after marriage. The Mugelnoos reached undreamed of heights of popularity and influence under Ruth's continued editorship, while John became the third person to be RCS chairman (1939-40). In August of 1940, they really broke out of the local scene and entered the ranks of internationally active climbers by attempting difficult Mt Confederation in the Canadian Rockies--an audacious move at a time when only one other party of local climbers had ever ventured so far afield.

The war years took them to San Jose, Delaware, Missouri, and finally Birmingham, Alabama, where daughter Vivian was born in 1943. The years away from Los Angeles (to 1945) saw more Sierra first ascents, climbs in the Devil's Lake area of Wisconsin, ascents (including a first) in the Tetons, and various local climbs. John and Ruth took up where they had left off upon returning to Southern California in 1945. Daughter Valerie was born in 1946, following which Ruth acted as mother to three--her two daughters plus the Mugelnoos. John began leading again for the RCS. The 33 years since the war have been so full of activity that we couldn't begin to list it all here. Some of the highlights follow:

Cont P. 3

MUGELNOOS STAFF

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NEXT ISSUE: MARCH 21, 1978
DEADLINE: MARCH 17, 1978 (Friday)

MUGELNOOS MEETING: Tuesday ~~#####~~
March 21, 1978 7:30 p.m., L.A. Dept. of Water and Power Auditorium, 111 n. Hope St., downtown L.A. Free Parking. Come one-half hour early for Ski Mtnrs. equipment demo. Program, refreshments. Climbers, skiers, guests all welcome.

C A L E N D A R

- Feb 26 Sat Local Intro. Alpine Ski Tour, I. Lieberman
- Mar 4 - 5 Sat-Sun Mt. San Antonio Ski Hut, John Wedberg
- Mar 12 Sun Rubidoux practice Rock Climb, Tom Jeter
- Sun Local Intro. Ski Tour, Walter Boge
- Mar 18-19 Sat-Sun Suicide Rock Climb, F. Wing, D. Perkins
- Sat-Sun Ski Tour: Mt. Morgan via Rock Creek, M. Goebel

NEW ADDRESS

Leslie Masters
Frances Cholewa
420 Whiting St.
El Segundo, CA (213) 322-6099

RESCUE SEMINAR

Rescue seminar April 16, for reservations contact Kathy Quinn, 501 N. Indian Hill, Claremont, CA 91711 (714) 624-1271

COMMENTS REQUESTED

This is to inform all RCS members that the following people have passed their safety test and are being considered for membership in the section:

- Frances Cholewa
- K. Gil Chon
- Judith Fairchild
- Stan Klein

comments or opinions as to applicants safe or unsafe climbing practices by any RCS member should be brought to the attention of the Safety Committee Chairman, Dick DeRusha no later than March 17, 1978.

Dick DeRusha
1421 Edgecliffe Dr.
Los Angeles, CA 90026
(213) 661-9924

FOR SALE

6 1/2' Head "Standard" skis with step-in safety bindings. \$25
Sierra plastic ski boots, size 12, \$15
& 1/2' Northland hickory triple-groove jumping skis. \$10.

Contact Bob Frampton
(714) 624-2697

SLIDES WANTED:YOSEMITE

Don Pies is putting together a slide show depicting Yosemite rock climbing routes that RCS members have found to be interesting and would like to recommend to other climbers. Now is your chance to ~~Water and~~ become famous*12% H urry, Hurry. These slides will be shown at the May Mugelnoos meeting. The presentation will concentrate on Yosemite's less famous short routes. Don may be contacted by phone at (213) 374-5745--home: or at (213) 322-1763 X248--work.

The Inyo REGISTER reported that their first major snow survey showed that all stations are over 150% of normal. Snow depths ranged from 118" at Mammoth to 45" at Cottonwood. The above report appeared before the latest series of storms which buried Mammoth and June Mountains under 6 more feet of new snow and closed their access roads on Feb 10. Is this 1969 again?

Meantime, enough snow has fallen in the So. Calif. mountains to hold all SMS ~~to~~ tours scheduled there also. It is now time to start thinking sunshine!

B.L.

GREAT SNOW ON LOCAL TOUR

The Feb. 12 local ski tour was held at the abandoned rope tow area between Waterman and Kratka ridge. Although road closed signs were posted in La Canada, the drive to Waterman was made with no more difficulty than the mandatory chains.

Six checkout candidates showed up for the tour, in addition to the two leaders. Of these four had suitably equipped downhill skis with climbing skins, one had downhill skis but used climbing wax (effectively, I might add) and one arrived with, you guessed it, Nordic skis! Snow conditions were near perfect: about an inch of powder over a base that was as smooth and uniform as one might find at one of the better maintained resorts. No one had any trouble as an ascent was made to near the Waterman summit. Then clouds closed in and snow started falling. A really good ski run was made back to the cars, interrupted by waits for the Nordic skier. While I have nothing basically against Nordic skis on Ski Mountaineering trips, it appears that they cannot handle the downhill terrain and traverses that are necessary. Perhaps Nordic skis with additional heel hold down would work, but not the conventional pin binding.

Those qualifying for future tours are: Joan Jones, Paul Kenworthy, Bryn Grain, Mike Layland and Nick Allis

John and Ruth Mendenhall cont8d

- Trips to Canada, resulting in the first ascent (FA) of Mt. Confederation (1947), the FA of the North Pk of Mt Lowell (1948), ascents of several Bugaboos (1949), FAs of Mt Synge, Midway Pk, and difficult Aiguille Pk (1952), FA mt Palmer (1953), a weathered-out attempt on Robson (1954), and FA of NW Ridge of Mt Temple (1957).
- Myriad Sierra climbs, including FA Palisade Crest points (1954-55) and FA North Face of Mt Williamson (1957). In addition, John made other technical first ascents and three first winter ascents (sill, 1957; Middle Palisade, 1960; Gayley, 1961).
- Innumerable climbs at Tahquitz Rock, including the first ascent of the Super Pooper (1952). Additionally John and Harry Sutherland pioneered the Open Book (1947), John and Royal Robbins created Human Fright (1952), and John with Chuck Wilts made the Consolation (1953).
- Climbs of most major Cascade volcanos (many with the children).

Unlike many experienced climbers, John and Ruth have remained loyally active with the RCS. They have continued to teach and lead trips down to the present. John has led more days of climbing for the section than any other person (over 100). Ruth served as RCS Secretary-Treasurer 1953-54; John served a second term as Chairman 1958-59. Ruth oversaw the Mugelnoos all the way up through last year. Both are Safety Committee members (John since the first committee in 1946, Ruth since 1969).

In summary, it can safely be said that the RCS would be immeasurably poorer without the experience and loyal service of two of Southern California's finest contributions to the climbing world--JOHN AND RUTH MENDENHALL.

JR

DR. WADE MAKES LAST SCHUSS

His son and son-in-law placed his ice axe, engraved with the dates of his birth and death, on the summit of San Geronio, and signed the register with his name for the last time. Dr. Robert Wade, one of the Edelweiss "renegades" of the 1930's and 40's, died April 17, 1977, according to his widow Isabelle Wade writing from her home at 1008 Madison Place, Laguna Beach 92651.

"In March of 1976, he was forced to leave Mammoth, where both of us were skiing, to enter the hospital with pulmonary oedema," writes Mrs. Wade. "He made a good comeback but skiing was forbidden from then on."

Ski Mountaineers of those days will well remember Dr. Wade's compact figure whizzing down the Big Dmaw toward the Edelweiss Hut, the tiny shelter made of trees, rocks, and tar paper which was destroyed in later years by the Forest Service.

Mrs. Wade writes of some of the others who skied together there: "Elly Jaun, John Surr, Walter Lier, Bob Wade have all gone from the skiing and climbing hills. Lofty Bishop died long ago; Bill Spurgeon too, and Heri Leuthold (one of the originals) died last year. John Elvrum (long of Snow Valley) spends his winters (often with Hjalmar Hvam) playing golf and his summers salmon fishing. Fred Eaton and Joe Vanier are still active. Greetings to the people that I know!"

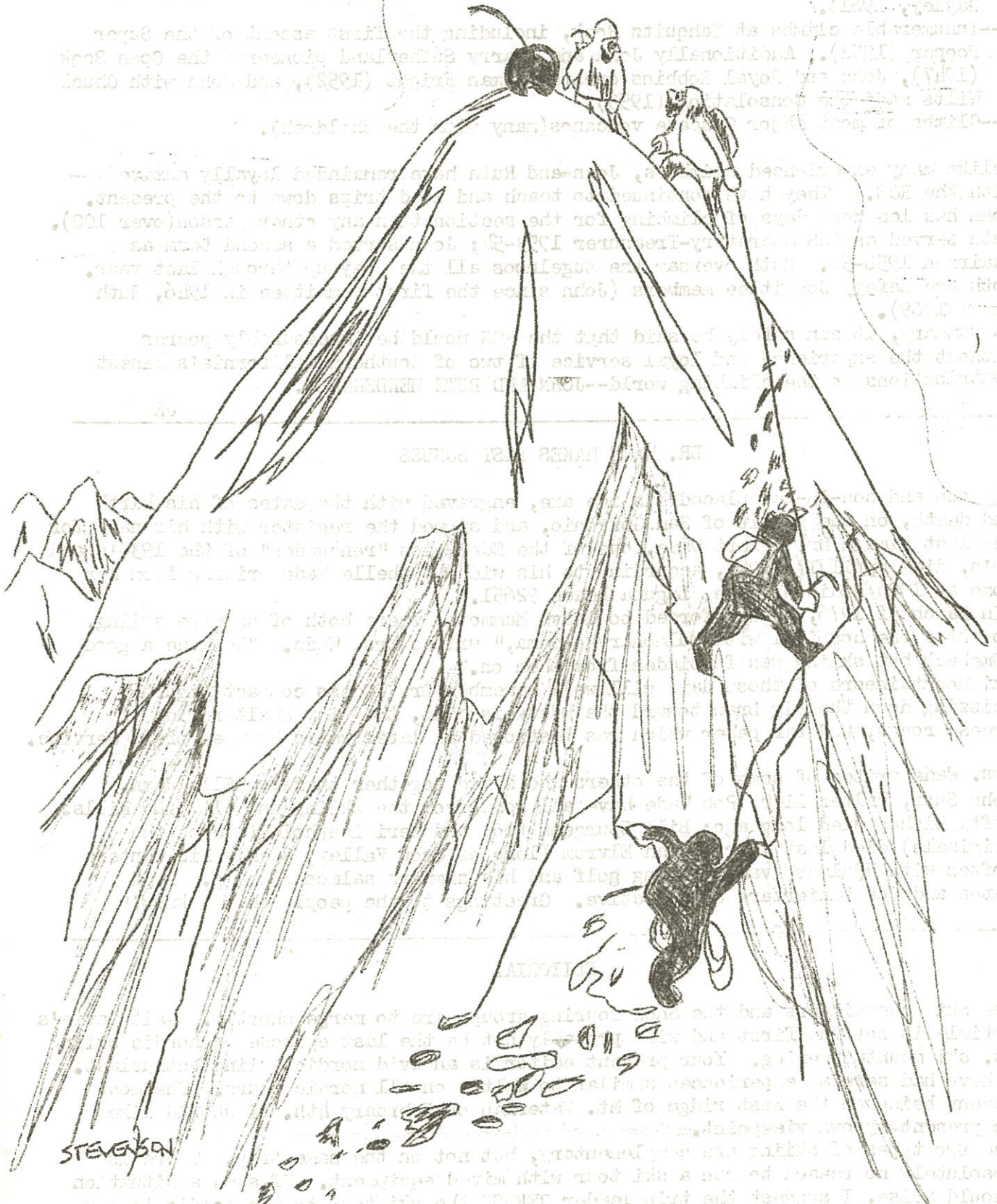
RDM

EDITORIAL

The Ski Mountaineers and the Snow Touring groups are to merge shortly. Walt Davie's article is not the first and will probably not be the last episode of nordic skiing vs. ski mountaineering. Your present editor is an avid nordic skiing enthusiast. I have had several experiences similar to Walt's on all nordic tours. The most recent being on the East ridge of Mt. Waterman on February 4th. I should like to present my own viewpoint.

The two types of skiing are complementary, but not on the same trip. There is absolutely no reason to run a ski tour with mixed equipment. If such a situation should arise, I suggest the trip leader REFUSE the ski tour to the nordic tourer. One or two painful experiences will cause the word to spread, "NORDIC SKIERS ARE NOT ALLOWED ON SKI MOUNTAINEERING SKI TOURS." This is infact the explicit policy of the Ski Mountaineers!

There seems to be a school of thought which says that nordic equipment cannot handle the traverses and linked turns required on steeper terrain. This is not entirely ~~the~~ the case. The equipment being sold for nordic touring is too light for general all purpose, all snow condition touring in So. Calif. I always recommend metal edges, over the ankle boots and stiffer skis. However, the ultimate ability is ~~the~~ in the judgement and experience of the skier, not wholly in the equipment. It has been my experience that many people who take up nordic skiing are winter hikers (admittedly an oversimplified viewpoint). This phenomenon is what gives rise to the problems of long waits during a downhill run. This problem happens with regularity on nordic tours. The problem is compounded in So. Calif. since our skin terrain has more relief than is ideally suited for X-C skiing.



"BY GOLLY,
IT IS A MARASCHINO CHERRY!"

The sketcher, Stevenson, has drawn a mountain peak with two figures climbing a rope. The figures are simple, dark shapes. The mountain is drawn with many diagonal lines to suggest texture and shading. The signature 'STEVENSON' is written in the lower left corner of the drawing. Below the drawing, there is a handwritten note in quotes: "BY GOLLY, IT IS A MARASCHINO CHERRY!". The text is written in a simple, slightly irregular hand.