

THE

WU G E I N D O S

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SOJOURN AT OWENS RIDGE

(VIRGIL'S OBSESSION, VIRGIL'S MISTAKE, VIRGIL'S MISCALCULATION, VIRGIL'S DEFEAT, VIRGIL'S GRIM REALIZATION, VIRGIL'S LAMENT, VIRGIL'S HARROWING ESCAPE, VIRGIL'S HUMILIATION. Ed.)

Well, Greg said it hadn't been climbed. That was one of the reasons why we were hauling all this gear across severely broken terrain on an approach to Owens Peak. Another more important reason was that I had my eye on that impressive looking dihedral on the northeast side of Owens Peak for two years and now Greg Vernon was aware of it also.¹ (Virgil's obsession. Ed.). It took virtually no effort to persuade Ben Chapman to accompany me on what looked like a Grade IV climb. (Next time, it may take Virgil more effort-Ed.)

Being experienced at difficult and tiring approaches, I carried an all too heavy pack with half of it's contents proving useless as a result of later miscalculations. Ben, though, appeared to take the approach lightly, as he carried a daypack while stuffing the rest of his gear in a hand satchel.² During the five hours it took to reach the base of the dihedral through class 3+ terrain, I became convinced that Ben was taking the opportunity to work on his arm muscles by carrying that bag. As we neared the dihedral, we saw for the first time walls which had previously been hidden by the bulk of the Owens Ridge massif. Above were 500 foot walls, while along side us 1000+ foot cracks extended their branches up the buttresses. We made mental notes to return before scant surface water in the region had been depleted by the relentless summer sun. There was also disappointment. The dihedral had taken on more definition as we approached and was now considerably more broken. Ben asked if I would be disappointed if the climb turned out to be class 4. I didn't answer. We christened it the Dihedral Gully.

To our chagrin, we left the last water some 1000 feet below our camp at the very base of the dihedral. We arrived at camp high above the creek at midday. It was shortly thereafter that we made our miscalculation. Baring the fact that it was now 1 o'clock on a January afternoon, and that we had no water at our camp or to take with us, we started to climb (Virgil's mistake-Ed.). Assuming this climb would be quick, and since we could see the top (or could we ?!) we felt we'd have to work to make it interesting and would find water on the way back down. We decided to take only one rope and leave the daypacks, pins and hammers, and carry only nuts (Virgil's miscalculation - Ed.). Ben led the first pitch, a slick 5.7 waterchute. At the last minute, I decided to take my headlamp.³ After patching a broken wire with a piece of gymnastic tape, I returned to the climb. After the waterchute we coiled the rope and scrambled 500 feet up to the left side of a bulge where we roped up again. I led the next pitch and was surprised to find it 5.8. After anchoring in spiderweb fashion to a series of loose blocks, I graciously gave Ben the lead of a hard 5.8 or 5.9 finger crack. And so the climb went, while I reconsidered our original class 4 rating in the encroaching twilight. At one point early on, Ben's headlamp had been snagged by a bush and it's battery pack lost (ah, cruel circumstance - Ed.).

Ben was half a pitch above me when we decided to rap (Virgil's defeat - Ed.). He thought we were one pitch from the top but it was difficult to climb when he couldn't see. It turned out later that we were about 400 feet from the top. From the way the wind was howling around us we knew we'd be in for a cold bivy. Because of the faulty

(continued on page 3)

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DEADLINE: April 12, (Thursday)

MUGELNOOS MEETINGS: Third Tues. of each month, 7:30 p.m., Dept. of Water and Power Cafeteria (Orange Rm), 111 N. Hope, downtown LA. Parking free. Program, conversation-climbers, skiers & guests welcome.

C A L E N D A R

Ski Mountaineers

Mar 24-25-Inconsolable Range:Haas
Apr 14-15-San Gorgonio:Goebel
Apr 21-22-Mineral King:Goebel
Apr 27-29-Pear Lake:Wilts

Rock Climbing Section

Mar31-1- Owens Ridge:Vernon
Apr 7 - Big Rock:Koss
Apr 14-15-Kern Valley:Vernon
Apr 21-22-Joshua Tree:Haupt

STAN KLEIN UPDATE

Following a three month period in a near comatose state, an additional minor surgery was performed on Stan to relieve pressure in the cerebral area. Following this surgery the progress Stan has made can only be described as astonishing. Stan is verbally communicating, walking, eating well, and is gaining strength day by day. He is now allowed to go home for a few hours a week and will probably be discharged from the hospital in about six weeks. Stan is not quite ready for a lot of visitors, but a card or two might be appreciated.

JP

LTC ACCEPTS RCS TRAINING IN LIEU OF LTP ROCK CHECKOUT

A current RCS proficiency card will normally be accepted in lieu of an M LTP rock checkout, as will active RCS membership in lieu of an E rock checkout. Apply individually to the LTC Rock Chairman, Jim Erb. Include date for completion of RCS training course or acceptance as RCS member, and an SASE if confirmation is desired. JE

NEW RCS MEMBER:

The RCS welcomes James Weger to membership in the Section. MK

SALLY REID RUNS FOR SIERRA CLUB BOARD

Long time conservation activist and outings leader, Sally Reid is currently running for the National Board of Directors; your vote counts! TJ

JOSHUA IS THE PLACE WHERE WE CLIMB ROCK (by Elden Hughes)

Chorus (tune: Joshua fit the battle of Jerico)
Joshua is the place where we climb rock
Joshua is the place where we climb rock
Joshua is the place where we climb rock
And the rocks come tumbling down

Up to the base of Left Ski Track
He marched with chalk on hand
Don't need no belay to climb this rock
He's the dumbest climber in this land.

You may talk about bad protection
You may talk about flakes that break
There's nothing like climbing at Joshua
When you make a dumb mistake.

As he reached the crux the flake gave way
Upon the ground he hit.

His final words are often quoted,
He was heard to say, "Oh, shit!"

You may talk about the rock at Stoney
You may climb at Rubidoux
There's nothing like climbing at Joshua
On Pee Wee or Tip Toe.

You may smear your way up Headstone
You may jam crack up the Bong
The rest of us will drink our wine
And make verses for this song.

Judge Parker

By Harold Le Doux



SOJOURN AT OWENS RIDGE (CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)

wire, I treated my headlamp like crystal, knowing that it's demise meant our bivouac. (Virgil's grim realization. This is certainly high drama, as the fate of the party dangles precariously by one thin, faulty, taped wire! Ed.). Since most of the chosen descent line was amazingly free of good cracks, I lamented having left our hammers and pins in camp (Virgil's lament - Ed.). This neglect forced me to spend several hours of gardening and setting up multibush rappel anchors. It's always amazing how much different the terrain looks by headlamp than it does by daylight. Throughout most of the rappel we were continually fascinated by the shower of sparks emitted from our rappel devices in the dry air. Finally we reached the ground and a dry camp (Virgil's harrowing escape - Ed.). Being thoroughly thrashed, we didn't search for water, although as it turned out such a trip in darkness would have been without results and probably fatal. I'm not sure who was in better shape, ourselves or the dog. Oh, did I forget the dog? That dog which followed us from our car through the most broken terrain, climbed trees with us, amazingly appeared on top of every wall we scrambled over on our approach; a dog which was only stopped short by the slick waterchute on the first pitch of our climb.

The two hour water run the next morning left us thrashed with no desire to go back up and finish our climb (Virgil's humiliation - Ed.) As we left, we descended the left side of the canyon. This side would probably take an hour off the approach. From what we had completed of the climb, we rate it at least III, 5.9. There are also many other possibilities on the buttresses which form the dihedral including some beautiful aid lines. Also, the buttress across from the dihedral and completely obscured by Owens Ridge reminded one of the walls above Whitney Portal, although on a slightly smaller scale. But for this outing we were only concerned with getting our packs permanently off our backs which we did several hours later at the Grapevine Ranch. We also said goodbye to the dog.

Virgil Shields

Editor's Footnotes:

1. Ah, competition for a first ascent sends hormones raging through the blood of a true 'hard man', who, consumed with lust for the virgin route, looses all capacity for logical planning and preparation, and instead rushes pell mell into the jaws of fate! One is reminded here of Edward Whymper's party and that of Jean-Antoine Carrel, racing up opposite ridges of the then unclimbed Matterhorn in 1865 (see Men and the Matterhorn, by Gaston Rebuffat.).

2. Teamed with Virgil, Ben thinks the approach march is going to be like walking to a picnic??? He hasn't been reading Mugelnoos for the last 5 years!

3. Incredible isn't it, that after all these years of exploits, Virgil should still consider taking a flashlight on his climbs to be an option rather than a given! He would do well to have a headlamp permanently emplantated in his forehead.

RESCUE - FIRST AID SEMINAR - FOSSIL FALLS

The word was quality. Quality participants and quality instructors, 41 in all, who assembled at Fossil Falls February 11 & 12 for the Improved Rescue and Mountaineering First Aid Seminar. Around 9AM, Diann Fried and Margo showed up towing the 'port a pottys' much to everyone's relief! After that, participants were broken down into 6 teams which stayed together both days under the able leadership of Dave Burdett, Jim Erb & Theresa Rutherford, Greg Vernon, Greg Stevens, Don Havens & Bob Somoano, and Chuck Youngberg. Saturday morning's activities were kicked off with a demonstration by China Lake Search and Rescue on rigging a Stokes litter and lowering a victim and attendant down a 70 foot cliff face. The 6 participant teams then did the same thing with their own personnel and equipment, with the China Lake people helping to supervise. The rest of the day was spent practicing other exercises including; improvised stretchers & carries, lowering down a cliff in a triple bowline rope seat and 'piggyback' in a split rope carry improvised Tragsitz, hoisting up a cliff with a Z pulley system, and simulated river crossing techniques. The emphasis was on accomplishing all of this using only equipment normally carried by mountaineers, i.e. ropes, carabiners, slings, chocks & prussik loops.

(Continued on page 4)

RESCUE - FIRST AID SEMINAR - FOSSIL FALLS (CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3)

The campfire Saturday night was memorable on all counts, so much so that the gourmet diners among us, out chasing lobster tails at Indian Wells, made a big mistake! The real action was around the campfire, with Greg Stevens strummin on the ole banjo and songwriter guitarist Elden Hughes plunkin away. These two great balladeers mellowed us out for hours. There was something for everyone, ranging from SWING LOW SWEET CHARIOT all the way down to the infamous XXX rated BALLAD OF DIAMOND LIL. The audience knew we were in for something special before the latter, as Patty Carpenter, sitting next to Elden, clamped her hand over his mouth upon hearing the first few bars of melody and tried to hustle him away from the campfire. Popular opinion prevailed, however, and Elden got to sing us this number, whose lyrics would make a sailor blush, and had the chauvinist pigs among us oinking with approval as Lil finally met her match in the personage of Pisspot Pete! There was, of course, the obligatory GORY, GORY HALLELUJAH but the smash climbing song hit of the evening was an original composition by Elden entitled JOSHUA IS THE PLACE WHERE WE CLIMB ROCK. The drinking scene at the campfire was top notch too, as the wine bottles were passed around at a record breaking clip. No sooner had one taken a swig from the jug, than it was back in his/her hands again, having made a complete circuit around the campfire before you could so much as hiccup! The wine was mostly the standard rotgut swill so familiar to us all, but a bottle of really good stuff came around a couple of times. Mary Gygax, given the choice, actually preferred the swill (hard core, eh?). The whole scene was flowing so compellingly, that even our ostensible teatotelers got into the spirit(s) of the thing (photographic evidence forthcoming); altogether a magnificent campfire!!!

Saturday night was cold, but the Sunday sun greeted us with cloudless skies and windless balmy weather for our Mountaineering First Aid day. The First Aid staff consisted of Greg Stevens (paramedic, LA Fire Dept.), Theresa Rutherford (Registered Nurse), Leddy French (Registered Nurse, and ARC Advanced First Aid Instructor), and Art Smart (ARC First Aid Instructor). Participants practiced many aspects of mountaineering First Aid, and Leddy's well thought out accident scenarios involved the teams in the total decision making process of accident response. Theresa gave a theatrical and dramatic (rivaling the death scene from Otello) plea for the importance of TLC and positive rapport between victim and First Aider. One of the staff commented that she had heard the following words uttered within earshot of an accident victim - "Oh God! The bastard's gonta die!" Greg brought us all up to date on the latest in supplies for a personal mountaineering First Aid kit, and distributed some samples to the participants. He also volunteered to reorganize and resupply the RCS Group First Aid kits. There were a lot of vigorous questions and answers all day long, which the staff handled with aplomb, obviously holding the respect of the participants with their knowledge and experience. The seminar broke up at 4 PM Sunday with not enough time to practice everything, but how much time is ever enough for a subject like this?

In summary, I believe this seminar and the previous Improvised Rescue seminar on 16 October, 1983 has been a terrific learning experience for a all concerned. Statistically, within the last 4 months we have given 66 different people 'hands on' practice in these techniques (9 people attended both seminars). Of these, 45 had RCS affiliations, being either members or Proficiency Card holders. There is a tremendous demand for advanced training, as I found in having to turn away 17 people for lack of space (while accepting 35) for the October 16 seminar at Rubidoux. Only one week after the Rubidoux seminar, Stan Kline (who himself attended it) took a long leader fall at Big Rock, needed First Aid and a technical rescue off a ledge. Talking later at the accident scene with Andy Fried, we conceived the project of another Rescue Seminar combined with litter lower and mountaineering First Aid in the immediate future. Stan's fall was the catalyst, and as a direct result, 41 people now have additional accident response skills to what they had before. The seminar at Fossil Falls is dedicated to Stan, as I told the participants Sunday Morning. Well, that's the account; an uproarious campfire sandwiched between no nonsense training in lifesaving techniques. Sometimes it can get heavy; I wore a Goofy hat and Theresa a funny nose to lighten things up. That's the way it was, and that's the way it is.

Tom Jeter

AN OBJECTION

At the February Mugelnoos meeting, a slide show was presented by a commercial ski touring company. Flyers were distributed by the Ski Mountaineers in January to advertise this show, presumably printed and paid for by the Section. While the speaker was preparing his projection equipment, a clip board was passed through the audience so that names could be added to the company's mailing list, and a catalog of ski tours and climbing trips was handed out. The slide show included numerous photographs of the speaker and his wife and various ski tours that the firm offered for a price. After the half-hour show, the speaker answered questions on the tours and climbs, and then said "Ski Heil" as he left for the airport. He had travelled from Donner Summit to Los Angeles just for this show.

My objection is that the Ski Mountaineers paid him \$75.00 for all of this advertising. The Section may have even paid for his travelling expenses, but I am not sure of this. Why pay someone \$75.00 to advertise their business when we get nothing in return, except for their advertising?

I believe that it would have been more appropriate for the SMS to charge him \$75.00 to advertise his business. The money could be placed in the Section's account so that we could build an SMS first aid kit, subsidize the Mugelnoos, to pay for postage to remind leaders that it is time to plan outings, to help replace a missing litter at Tahquitz or Suicide, or make a donation to the RCS equipment fund, the Friends of the Angeles Chapter, or a rescue team. That \$75.00 would have helped pay the printing bill for the recently held rescue seminar. These are all worthwhile activities and they deserve support. It makes no sense for the Ski Mountaineers to pay someone to publicize their business.

R.J. Secor

LONE PINE PEAK - WINTER ROUTE IV,5.7 (A1)

In beautiful, sunny and cold January weather, Bill Krause, Miguel Rodriguez and I attempted and on second try completed, the winter mountaineering route on Lone Pine Peak. The route was first climbed in March 1970 by Galen Rowell and Chris Jones. Judging from the summit register and the clean state of the rock, it has seldom been repeated. The route follows a wide, broken gully in the right center of the south face of LPP. After about 1000 feet is gained, a steeper, narrower gully shoots upward. Another 1000ft of snow, slabby rock and low angle frozen snow ends in a pitch of verglas and ice coated rock going up at 70° or more. The skyline notch is reached and a 60ft rappel to the left follows. Six pitches of clean, solid granite, mostly 5.3-5.6 with one pitch of "Friend" protected 5.7 crack ends on the long summit plateau, about a mile from the summit. The long snow walk to the summit is worth the effort as the view of Mt. Whitney, The Keller/Day Needles and Mt. Corcoran is awesome.....

Bill and I attempted this route on January 8th in one long day (18 hours of walking and climbing). Due to the deep snow and the difficult approach, our attempt ended on the first (5.7) pitch of the upper rock face. We rappelled and downclimbed the route as we had no bivouac gear and simply couldn't risk running out of daylight.

Week later, January 14, 15, 16 Miguel and I decided to go back, Bill having prior commitment of fun filled skiing weekend. We took an extra day off, each one of us having failed on Lone Pine Peak already. It was a good decision. The first day ended below the 70 degree ice. We chopped a nice platform in a 40° slope, pulled our sleeping bags out and settled into a 14 hour night. Morning found us debating whether to turn back as about 2 inches of fresh snow were covering the rock face. But sun came out at about 8AM and dried the rock. We pulled our ice tools out, put crampons on and climbed the beautiful and steep ice pitch. The rock climbing on the upper face was not easy with the 20 pound packs on our backs, but we reached the top at 3pm. I should add that we had to use a short tension traverse for aid on the 4th pitch. It allowed us to reach easier climbing on a rib to the right of us. Second night was spent on the summit plateau in subzero temperatures and in strong wind. Morning brought late start (9am), easy walk, summit pictures, then down, down, down. In 3 hours we were by our car having run down the east slopes of the mountain.

The Sierra Nevada have very few alpine type climbs for aspiring alpinists to practice their sport on. However, there are some challenging exceptions and this route is one of them. It is long (2800 feet?), it has very tough approach (Manzanita filled hell-Shields/Friedberg, Mugelnoos June 82), the gullies have deep snow as well as ice. The ice pitch is probably seasonal, but very steep. The rock pitches are none too easy, but not overly difficult... I would recommend this climb fully as a multi day trip (going to the summit), or as a late winter, one day "tour de force" for a solid, strong party. Alois Smrz.

Pear Lake
February 18-20, 1984

Seven patriotic individuals helped founding father, George, celebrate his two hundred and fifty second birthday by skiing, in spite of rangers' ominous warnings of extreme avalanche danger, into the Pear Lake Hut. Since the leaders' last foray into this snug fortress, several changes of consequence have occurred:

Probably in deference to avalanche hazard on the final traverse east of Aster Lake, the rangers have rerouted the trail; it now cuts north of Aster Lake and then follows the drainage up to the hut, thereby allowing skiers to avoid the precipitous ridge south of the hut.

A warmly received improvement is the installation of a sawdust compost-solar operated john. Readers interested in the mechanics of its operation will have to seek explanation from an ecologist. In the past skiers had to lug unesthetic honey buckets outside when they filled. They undoubtedly will appreciate the shinning porcelain toilet that replaced them with the new system.

Stoves are in the hut for users' convenience. All that skiers need to bring in lieu of their white gas stoves (which are no longer permitted in the hut) is a Coleman standard fuel cylinder (#94230).

One recommendation to the rangers would be to address the problem of late starts. Skiers still have to wait until 9:00 A.M. for the station to open in order to obtain their permit.

The hut was filled both nights with two groups from L.A. and two from San Francisco. Since it was uncertain the first night whether our group (which had a reservation for Sunday only) would be able to sleep inside, we carried in tents and set them up in anticipation of being summarily forced out with the late arrival of a large party with priority. As it turned out, they were daunted by the avalanche warning, leaving room inside for us. Nonetheless, Macho Men ORAN CHARLSON and FRIEDRICH STRAUB chose to sleep out in 13° cold Saturday, and FRIEDRICH, in an atavistic display of primitive durability or feeble-mindedness (readers, take your pick), actually slept out BOTH nights.

The storm that ushered our arrival left 6-8" of powder which proved to be a telemarker's wet dream. All participants successfully linked turns in the cirque above the hut. JANE CLARK and FRIEDRICH were SOOOOOOOOOO impressive that the leaders granted both their SMS proficiency sign-off (POWERS THAT BE: Are we authorized and have you taken note?).

Ours was a strong group with leader TOM DURYEA and participant PETER MATULAVICH skiing aggressively, but alpine equipped ORAN paralleled circles around the party on the way out. BOB CRAWFORD, who had exercised judgment and opted to ski the Wolverton area because of the avalanche warnings, was in the parking lot to greet us on our return.

This leader was reminded once again to screen trip applicants more selectively to avoid being the clumsiest skier on the trip.

George would be pleased with the good time we had in his honor.

Mary Gygax

