

THE MUGELNOOS

No. 626 - February 19, 1985. An 8 page issue.

A newsheet published by and for the Ski Mountaineers and Rock Climbing Sections of the Sierra Club's Angeles Chapter since 1938. Send subscriptions & address changes to Dove Menkes, 2530 Coventry Circle, Fullerton, 92633. \$7 per year due in October.

## MARK GETS TOP AWARD

The winner of the highest honor the Angeles chapter awards for service in outings is Mark Goebel, who will receive this year's Outings Leadership Award at the annual chapter awards banquet, Saturday, March 9th.

We who have worked with and followed Mark, all recognize how deserving he is of this award and extend heartfelt and enthusiastic congratulations to him.

The SMS will arrange a table at the banquet. For further information, contact Paul Harris.

Thanks for all you've done for the SMS, Mark!

KMC

## MOGUL MANIA

An astounding 31 students signed in at Snow Summit to participate in this year's fourth annual training weekend. Snow Summit had planned to provide four instructors but pneumonia cut the ranks, and only three instructors were available for the stalwart 31. The group was split evenly into three sets, with an advanced, an advanced beginner, and a downright beginner group. Led by Marty Murie, the Snow Summit staff introduced the SMS students to the PSIA method of telemarking. Two hours of morning instruction was followed by a lunch break and two hours of afternoon instruction. A noticeable improvement in skills and confidence was observed in all participants.

With an hour and a half available after the afternoon lesson ended, several students stayed up high on the mountain to practice the day's lessons. Kathy Crandall managed to get moderately lost -- just enough so that she led two beginners down an icy, moguled, advanced slope. When they gulped and went for it, and then afterwards said it was exciting to have something to shoot for, we knew we had found students with the "right stuff!"

The following day, the majority of the group opted to continue telemarking, but over at Snow Valley. We set off with some trepidation, remembering the long lift lines at Snow Summit (cut the day before with the SS ski instructors), and certain encounters with the Snow Summit glaciers. It turned out that lift lines were small, snow coverage excellent, and ice minimal at Snow Valley. Some of the more adventurous tackled the new lifts at the top, just as we were engulfed in a white-out. There is something rather nerveracking about an icy, steep, moguled slope on a peak called Slide Mountain. When you're on cross-country skis and you can't see your ski tips, you might even refer to the situation as suspenseful. After a few close encounters of the worst kind, we decided to see if we could find our way back to the lodge.

The weekend was very successful. Everyone was excellent about pitching in to cook (although there was some noise about the spaghetti being too short) and cleaning was done with no hassle.

Mark did his usual excellent job of covering waxing, ski tuning, avalanche preparedness, etc., on Saturday night. All agreed that spaghetti should be retired until 1986.

KMC

MUGELNOOS STAFF

EDITOR for Feb.: Pete Matulavich  
 MUGELPRINTER LeRoy Russ  
 MUGELMAILER Dove Menkes  
 REPORTERS: Kathy Crandall, Mark  
 Goebel, Rich Henke, Margo Koss,  
 Ron Mastrianni, Kent Osborne,  
 Greg Vernon.

\$7 per year, checks to Mugelnoos

NEXT EDITOR: Tom Jeter  
 321 E. Orangewood  
 #C-7  
 Anaheim, CA 92802  
 714 750-2590

NEXT ISSUE: March 19, 1985  
 DEADLINE: Tues., March 12

MUGELNOOS MEETINGS: Third Tues.  
 of each month, 7:30 p.m., Dept.  
 of Water and Power Cafeteria  
 (Orange Rm), 111 N. Hope, down-  
 town L.A. Parking free. Pro-  
 gram, conversation -- skiers,  
 climbers, guests welcome.

CALENDAR

Ski Mountaineers Section:

Feb 23 - Local tour: Fried/Gygax  
 Mar 1-3 - SMS Races: Crandall/  
 Goebel/Harris  
 Mar 9-10 - Craft, Butler, Sugar  
 Loaf: Maloy, Crandall,  
 Hawthorne  
 Mar 16-17 - So. Sierra: Gygax/  
 Fried

Rock Climbing Section:

Feb 24 - Big Rock: Rutherford/Erb  
 Mar 3 - Rubidoux: Train. Comm.  
 Mar 9-10 - J-Tree: Russ/Koss  
 Mar 16-17 - Fossil Falls: Train.  
 Comm.

Letter to the Editor

I've just gone through the proficiency checkoff process and am writing to express my appreciation to those RCS members who have contributed their time and shared their climbing skills as evaluators, instructors, etc.

Although I wasn't a student in the training course, I sat in on a few of the classes. Having done a little climbing and taken several of the commercial courses prior to applying for a proficiency rating with the RCS, I am impressed with the RCS approach. What distinguishes the RCS training from other instruction is the proficiency checkoff process. Unlike the commercial courses, in the RCS the instructors and evaluators seem to have the feeling that "we're all in this together," probably because of the possibility that the instructor may end up climbing with the student some day.

Kent Osborne

FOR SALE

BONNA metal-edged 3-pin mountaineering skis w/mica base. 210 cm. Hardly used. \$75  
 HEAD STANDARDS, classic Alpine skis, 185 cm. \$35  
 Beautiful wooden light touring skis, excellent condition. 190 cm. \$50  
 Above items: Rich Henke  
 Work: (213) 536-8560  
 Home: (213) 545-3812

HUMMINGBIRD Ice Tool: \$45  
 Greg Vernon (619) 446-5724

PERMIT PROCEDURES

Please be advised that application procedures for wilderness permits are handled by a strict set of rules. To apply for a permit you must apply as close to Mar. 1st. as possible but not one day before. Those received before March 1st. are not accepted.

After applying, forms may be returned to you and at that time contact Andy Fried for instructions. The Angeles chapter and the forest service are in the process of an agreement toward a better reservation service for us.

RM

PARTNERS WANTED

I am looking for partners to climb Mts. Williamson, Tyndall, Middle Palisade, or Langley. Not on the same weekend if possible. If you are in good condition, able to follow a route, consider yourself a masochist and want to climb with one of the RCS' most noted climbers for upchucking above 14,000 ft., then call: Ron Mastrianni  
 (714) 848-4642 Eves.

ADVANCE NOTICE

Mar. 23-24 Kern Valley: Meeting place at parking area below Kern Slabs 5 mi. N of Kernville. Trip is suitable for anyone. Climbing in general area of Slabs. Nice first ascent possibilities up river in Salmon Creek drainage and on "Book Rock." Camping is allowed at several points along Kern River. Forest service c.g.'s charge a fee, but many river access sites are free. Area just east of road at USFS Camp 3 provides a nice spot to camp for climbing at Kern Slabs. Meet around 8:30. Good place for breakfast is Dam Corner, next to Union 76 station in Kernville. Routes are listed in Kern Valley guide, available from Dick Banner at Bigfoot Mountaineering, 2594 Brundage Lane, Bakersfield (805) 323-9481.

GV

## SMS RACES

Those turkeys who were silly enough to miss this fulfilled extravaganza last year are about to receive a second chance! The SMS races will once again be held at Snow Summit during the weekend of March 1-3. Saturday is race day and there will be parallel and telemark divisions on whatever gear you choose. There will be videotapes, more fabulous cakes, the chance to laugh at others, and for others to laugh at you. Unbelievable trophies will be awarded to winners, and even losers with extraordinary style!

Make your reservations now: send a check for \$10 to Kathy Crandall. This covers two nights at Keller Hut, the race fee, the community dinner (you need only bring something for a salad or for Sunday breakfast), and the videotape of you running the gates. Be sure to come! Kathy's address: 1025 E. Woodbury Road, Pasadena 91104.

KMC

## PIÑOS POWDER

Real snow has returned to the local mountains this season and skier enthusiasm is running high. Over 30 people inquired about the SMS clinic, January 12th, and 21 actually showed up and received instruction from this reporter, Kathy Crandall, Owen Maloy and Paul Harris.

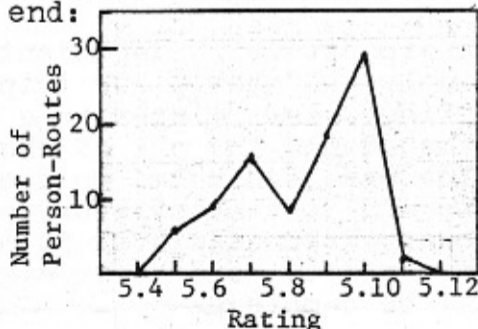
Santa Ana winds were blasting through the LA basin as we departed for Mt. Pinos and ski conditions were not expected to be too good up high. However, surprise-surprise, not only were the winds much lighter at 8,000 feet, but deep powder snow covered much of the mountain. It was so deep, in fact, that we had to first pack out our primary practice slope.

Skiers were placed in different groups based upon abilities which ranged from advanced beginner to advanced intermediate. Although the instruction included basic ski positioning and maneuvers of the 4th class test, the big request was for lots of telemark practice which everyone received. Apparently the instruction worked as all survived a crusty slope back to the parking area, thanks to my miscalculation of the route.

MG

## BIG ROCK RATINGS IN

Analysis of the Big Rock, January 13th route sheet revealed the following: 22 climbers climbed 88 person-routes (a person-route is defined as one climber climbing one route; e.g. a team of two doing one route is counted as two person-routes), a mean of 4 routes per climber. The frequency distribution of climbs by rating was skewed toward the high end:



The mean rating of person-routes climbed was just over 5.83, and the median was 5.9. Males climbed at an average rating of 5.83 and women at an average of 5.84. Comments indicated that Anna Houpt did her first 5.10 lead, that Tony Bird and James Weger found two pitches of 5.11 on the summit crag (?), and that Jane Clark made a great lead! One verbal comment was recorded: "John Orange, why do you have tomatoes on your hat?" Participants offered an amazing array of suggestions on how to commit a difficult-to-detect murder on a climb, to a screenwriter who came out looking for ideas for a script. A good time was had by all!

MK

## BOFFO BOULDERING

The annual Great Western Bouldering Contest was held at Mt. Rubidoux on Saturday, October 27th, and it was a great happening! The event was put together by Randy Vogel, who graciously allowed Mugelnoos to publish the map of the boulder problems. Some folks did not enter the contest, thinking it was for the climbing elite: they discovered, to their chagrin, that it was a "People's Bouldering Contest" with problems for everyone. Some other folks avoided the contest because of a distaste for "competitive climbing." They should reconsider next year - this was a fun event, with new problems, a chance to check your view of reality by quickly assessing your ability and matching it to various problems. Thoughts of winning were entertained by only a few of the entrants, although some of us were treated to a pleasant surprise when it turned out they gave prizes in various age divisions.

There were some 260 competitors, ranging in ability from novice to world class, and the some 120 problems covered this range of ability. Spirits were high, as climbers shared information on give-away 14's (5.10c) and way hard 12's. Scoring was based on a point system, with a 5.9 problem being worth 11 points, a 5.10a 12 points, etc. The total score was the best ten of eleven scores. Winners were:

<u>Men</u>		<u>Jr. Men (under 22)</u>		<u>Women</u>	
Ron Fawcett	165	Doug Chalker	161	Marie Gingery	139
Brian Sarney	164	Mark Perko	154	Maria Cranor	136
Rob Raker	163	Scott Loomis	146	Marena Weber-	
		Terry Roebuck	146	Goetz	119
<u>Men 35-44</u>		<u>Men 45 and up</u>		<u>Women 35-44</u>	
Dan Leichtfuss	150	Paul Harris	99	Maria Cranor	136
Terry Emerson	138			Kathy Crandall	111
Larry Zulin	126			Margo Koss	99

KMC

## SKI OUTINGS SUMMARY

It was recently suggested that we publish figures relating to participation on SMS outings. Fortunately, I remembered the bundle of sign-in sheets stored in the Outing Chair's notebook, which Gerry Holleman has audited and the results are shown below for the 3 years we have records.

Since SMS activities are primarily dependent upon that often rare substance known commonly as "snow," our trips frequently suffer when the substance is lacking. Last winter is a case in point, we had no snow in the local mountains and all of those trips were cancelled, except two which were conducted on machine-made snow. This winter, snow is everywhere and just about every outing has gone. Our two training trips in January attracted over 50 skiers!

All trip leaders are urged to send their sign-in sheets to Gerry, so our future records will be complete.

<u>1982</u>	<u>1983</u>	<u>1984</u>
128 participants on 14 trips (29 days skied)	92 participants on 11 trips (19 days skied)	107 participants on 9 trips (20 days skied) (19 days cancelled)

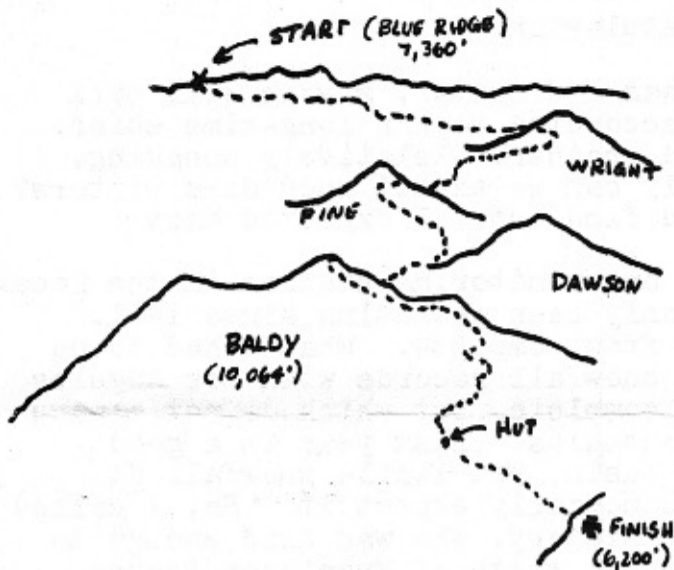
MG

## MOSAUER IN SAN GABRIELS II, BOB TOO

Ski Mountaineers founder Walter Mosauer is featured in John Robinson's excellent history of the San Gabriel Mountains. Referring to Mosauer as the "father" of southern California skiing, Robinson goes on to discuss the formation of the Ski Mountaineers section, SMS exploits, and the construction of Baldy Hut. Also included were many fine photographs of long-time SMS member and noted Claremont photographer, Bob Frampton.

Ed.

## BALDY THE HARD WAY



When we first thought of a trans-San Gabriel ski tour from Wrightwood to Mt. Baldy, we concluded that it could be done in one day under good conditions. But in the early morning of Saturday, February 9th, as we drove up I-15 in a steady rain, we wished we had brought more bivouac gear.

We departed the Blue Ridge trailhead at highway 2 at 7:15, and in spite of strong winds, low visibility, and drifted snow, we made good time along the ridge road.

We were putting a lot of faith in the weather forecast which said it would start clearing during the day, but things looked ominous at the time.

Just south of Wright Mountain, about six miles into the tour, the clouds began to break a little, and we were able to make out a steep and narrow ridge heading toward Pine Mountain. From here things would be getting a bit tougher. First we would have to ascend a thousand feet up the ridge, lose half of what we gained, and then ascend another 1300 feet to Baldy's summit.

We started switchbacking up the ridge favoring the east slope but ran into problems when the snow began to groan and break into large slabs. We tried the west slope but found it too steep. We had no choice but to remove our skis and post-hole our way straight up the narrow ridge with ice axes, struggling, at times, through deep, sliding snow. Fortunately, this didn't last long and, with snow conditions improving, we were able to put our skis back on and return to the more desirable east slope.

The clouds broke for good in early afternoon and, for the first time, we could see our objective, Baldy's enormous north face, snow-clad from top to bottom, its north ridge jutting out like a massive buttress.

We had a brief lunch, admiring a view seen only by winter mountaineers.

Refreshed, we started toward Baldy. As we climbed, the ridge became icier, edging became difficult, and winds reached gale force, driving us to the lee side.

We reached the summit at 4:30 in the golden light of late afternoon. Pausing only briefly to take in the view, we survival-skied, occasionally linking stem christies, to the lip of Baldy Bowl. In fading light, we dropped into the steep bowl making long traverses across icy slopes. About half-way down we removed our skis and plunge-stepped the rest of the way, running into a few hard, tricky spots.

We reached the hut in darkness at 6 p.m., where we were offered much-appreciated hot chocolate by its congenial occupants, among them, SMSers R.J. Secor and Val Kass, the latter having received his SMS check-off that day.

Using headlamps, we hiked down to Manker Flat under a star-filled night, city lights glowing far below. We reached Baldy road at 8 p.m. and walked to the Snowcrest Inn where we had to negotiate the most treacherous part of our journey, the snow-cruled steps leading to the bar.

This strenuous tour consisted of about 15 miles and 4,000 vertical feet, and included stark, snow-bound vistas that rivaled the high Sierra. We recommend it highly.

Strong skiers interested in challenging trips of this nature should contact us, as we are planning several other tours, including a two or three-day "roof-of-the-world" tour across the San Gorgonio crest, bagging several 10,000-foot peaks along the way.

Rich Henke and Pete Matulavich

# SNOW YEARS

By Pete Matulavich

The 83-84 local ski season was a disaster, anyone will tell you. "The worst in ten years," according to one long-time skier. "The worst in a century," claimed another. Relatively speaking, how bad was it, and how frequently can we expect such dire winters? I decided to do some research and find out. I expected easy answers, but didn't get many.

For one thing, there's only one monitoring station in the local mountains, in Big Bear, and it's only been operating since 1961. Furthermore, its records are far from complete. What I had to do was combine the sketchy Big Bear snowfall records with Los Angeles precipitation records, which are complete, but which do not always reflect what's going on in the mountains. Last year is a good example -- plenty of rain in the basin, yet little snowfall at higher elevations where you would normally expect it. So, I called on John Ripley, the RCS keeper of history, who was kind enough to retrieve and lend me nearly 50 years' worth of Mugelnoos issues. I figured that exceptionally good or bad winters could be gleaned from past trip reports or lack of them. I was right and found many revealing reports, as well as a half-century of intriguing gossip, the latter keeping me occupied many an evening.

Using the above mentioned sources, as well as periodic snow-depth surveys made by two government agencies, I was able to piece together, what I consider, a generally accurate picture of snowfall activity in the local mountains for the past fifty years.

What I discovered was that local conditions are a lot better than most people imagine. There's plenty of snow here and it's relatively dependable. Only about one year in eight is an "off" year, and even then there is usually some snow to be found somewhere.

On the average, approximately 100 inches of snow will fall in Big Bear at an elevation of just under 7,000 feet. That's about a third of what falls at comparable elevations in the Sierra, and substantially more than the snowfall recorded in most mid-western cities, almost matching that of perennially snow-bound Buffalo, New York. Snow has fallen as early as October 2nd and as late as May. February is by far the snowiest month, with January a distant second.

Many years do better than the average, easily exceeding 150 inches, and it is not uncommon for snowfall to exceed 300 inches at higher elevations near the base of San Geronio.

Last year of course is a different story. No way around it, it was an absolute disaster with only 16 inches recorded at Big Bear. Half of that fell early, evolved into boilerplate and remained that way for most of the season. At best, there were only two or three "ski-able" weekends the entire season.

It was a bad year. But was it the worst? Maybe. It was certainly the worst ever recorded. But what about those years where records weren't kept or are incomplete? Here, I had to rely more heavily on past trip reports and, from them, along with snow-depth surveys, which are sometimes useful but not always reliable indicators of actual snowfall, I was able to determine that only two or three seasons in the past fifty could even come close to the dismal 83-84 season.

A Mugelnoos reporter called the 60-61 winter "the first in ski mountaineer history when there has been virtually no skiing in the regions of the ski huts." There are no snow reports from that season. A snow-depth survey taken in April measured zero, but that's not too uncommon, even in moderate years. Less than five inches of rain fell in L.A. from November through April that season, and temperatures were warmer than normal. If the Mugelnoos reporter hadn't used the word "virtually" in his report, I would have guessed 60-61 was the worst season. But since he did, and because five inches of rain can easily translate to three feet of snow at higher elevations, I'm not so sure. But does it really matter? It was a bad year no matter how you look at it.

The 69-70 season started out bad when all introductory tours had to be cancelled, but the season was salvaged when a massive storm dropped up to four feet of snow in March.

(Continued Page Seven)

SNOW YEARS (Continued from Page Six)

Many of you will recall the drought of 75-76. Only 3.85 inches of rain fell in L.A. from November through April, about one-fourth the norm, and the smallest amount in a century. You would have expected it to have been a terrible snow year as well. Not quite. Several local tours went as scheduled and, at times, there was more snow locally than there was in the Sierra. In fact, the very next year, the drought not yet ended, a ski tour was relocated from the Palisades in the Sierra to San Gorgonio! Still, 75-76 was nothing to shout about.

Then, there were the good years, and even the great ones.

The 68-69 season is still fondly remembered by many active ski mountaineers. While only a typical 123 inches fell that season, most of it, 80 inches, came down in one month, February, creating one of the best spring ski seasons ever!

The 73-74 season should have been mediocre. Only 73 inches fell that year, but the storms were strategically placed, coming right when you needed one. The season was almost too good. Several tours had to be cancelled because of road closures. Regardless, John Wedberg remarked at the time, "1974 must go into the books as the premier ski mountaineering season since we don't know when."

John may have spoken too soon. For then there was the 77-78 season. How big was it? Unfortunately, the guy who was supposed to check the snow stick must have gotten snowbound, for there are no reports from Big Bear at all that season. But this we know, more rain fell in L.A. that winter than any other winter in history, and most of it fell in the prime snow months of January and February. Issues of the Mugelnoos glowed with one stirring trip report after another. It's hard to say how much snow actually fell at Big Bear that winter; the potential for 250 inches was certainly there and might have been attained had temperatures that season not averaged three degrees above normal. At a higher elevation, near the base of San Gorgonio, a snow survey team reported a 130-inch snow-depth as late as April 25th, an all-time record about twice the norm and indicative of a snowfall that might have reached 400 or even 500 inches! There was speculation that the snow would last through the summer, but doubts surfaced as L.A. suffered through one of the hottest summers on record.

Then, on October 29th, following an early-season snowfall, one skier, eager to get a jump on the new season, trekked to the base of San Gorgonio where he found several inches of new powder. He brushed some of it aside and made a remarkable discovery -- a six-inch base left there from the previous year.



SAY, AREN'T THOSE ALPINE SKIES?

## IS IT SNOWING ?

If it's cold and raining in L.A., it's a safe bet that it's snowing in the mountains. As a very rough rule, temperatures fall 3.6°F for every thousand feet of elevation gained. So, if it's 57° in L.A. at an elevation of 500 feet, it'll be 32° at an elevation of 7500 feet, all things being equal.

## GLOOM !!

As this issue goes to press, record high temperatures (90° in L.A.) are devastating the snowcaps on Baldy, San Gorgonio, et. al. Is there no justice!?

Ed.

## PAGE EIGHT

**RCS RATINGS:** The new proficiency roster includes the following new people.

Kent Osborne  
Pat McVeigh  
Kent Santelman

James Kominski  
Carol Breyde

Roy Naasz  
Al Sanderson

Since the rosters were done, we have another three proficiency rates:

John Ash  
114 N. Detroit  
Los Angeles 90036  
(213) 936-9840 H  
(213) 838-2101 W

Jim Mathews  
1726 Micheltorena St.  
Los Angeles 90026  
(213) 668-0256

Jay Wulfow  
1411 Silverlake #11  
Los Angeles 90026  
(213) 664-9311 H  
(818) 507-4647 W

Also, Rich Henke's telephone numbers are: (213) 545-3812 H, (213) 536-8560 W.

### RCS MEMBER ROSTER:

Jane Clark  
10831 Ashby Ave.  
Los Angeles 90064  
(213) 475-2432 H  
(213) 475-4871

Theresa Rutherford is a T  
leader for the section.

**RCS ROSTER CHANGES:** Bob Caswell, the RCS Secretary, maintains the member and proficiency rosters as well as the Mugelnoos address file. Please send him any change of address or telephone. If you would like the changes published in the Mugelnoos (since new rosters only come out once a year), send the information to the current month's Mugelnoos editor with a request that it be printed.

**RCS STUDENTS:** Give completed check-off cards to the Registrar, LeRoy Russ.

**FOUND:** Some equipment was left at Big Rock on January 13. The owner should contact Margo Koss and describe the equipment. If it has not been claimed by March 31, it will be given to its finder.

**ADVANCE NOTICE:** The meeting place for the May 4-5 Needles trip will be at Needlerock Creek, 45 miles north of Kernville on the Kern River Road (which becomes the Lloyd Meadows road). Camping may be available at lower Peppermint. When you get to Johnsondale, stay right.

**CPR CLASSES:** \$5 per person. Contact Diana Moser, (818) 986-8757.

THE MUGELNOOS  
Dove Menkes  
2530 Coventry Circle  
Fullerton, CA 92633

