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A six 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 and address changes to Pat Holleman, 1638 6th St., Manhattan Beach, CA 90266. \$7 per year due in October. Subscription payments are not tax deductible as charitable contributions.

### SMS GOES TO MAMMOTH

February 4-5, 1989

Although 4-wheel-drive vehicles and goggles were not entirely necessary for this snowy ski weekend, they certainly were helpful. Fortunately, all 9 participants were able to ride or drive in a 4WD. Snow was falling north from Little Lake, and the masses were jammed up with their chains at the base of Sherwin Grade. Adding to the tension, near white-out conditions on the road into Mammoth slowed us down, but couldn't keep us out.

Nancy (Ski Fever) Gordon, our natural alarm clock, stirred us up and moving towards the slopes on Sat. morning. Since the storm was still full force over Mammoth, the group was oriented towards less windy June Mountain, and a good choice it was. Mammoth was just about closed by the wind. Meanwhile, we had to feel our way through the "white out" down to 395, but from there on it was smooth sailing.

Once at June, we found light winds, no lines, the new tram up the face, several high speed quad chairs, and best of all, lots of almost still untracked powder. Needless to say, the SMS gang dove right in and started making tracks. Following a full day of redlining the fun meter, all hands gathered back at Mammoth for dinner at Owen Maloy's. The party increased with visits from Pat and Gerry Holleman, in from the skating lanes; and Andy Fried and LeRoy Russ who were checking out local real estate (maybe they can host next year's condo trip).

It was at this time that the Alaska cold weather was moving south, and on Sunday it was right in downtown Mammoth. How cold was it? A soda I carried in my fanny pack was frozen after only 3 hours. With the cold also came light powder snow, in great abundance. Chair lift rides became high flying search vehicles from which untouched glades of powder could be discovered for the next run. The gang regrouped at lunch and then separated for the final attack on Chair 9, an area of reported untracked whiteness (at least large patches). Owen led his team down from the top of five, while Dick S., Mark G., and Howard Schultz skied in from the side. Right at the base of Gold Hill they met and attacked with right and left tele turns, and even a few parallels. But once wasn't enough, as many untracked fields still remained. It was time for the black diamond run, Ricochet! First a quick left from the chair, some bumps, then the long traverse followed by a sharp left turn downward. And so it went until it was time for the last run down to our 4WD's.

How cold was it? Snow was still on our bumper when we pulled into the lot in Sylmar. The other powder hounds were Lisa Freundlich, Larry Bigler, Paul Shubert, Ann Rosenthal, and Dave Dykeman.

MG

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NEXT ISSUE: April 18, 1989  
 COPY DEADLINE: April 11, 1989

## NEXT MUGELNOOS MEETING

Tuesday, April 18, 1989, 7:30 p.m.  
 Program of interest to Ski Mountaineers,  
 Trip Reports, Socializing. Griffith  
 Park Ranger Station Auditorium,  
 4730 Crystal Springs Drive, L.A.

## SMS SCHEDULE

March 25-26: Annual Wilderness Race:  
 Race round trip from Round Valley to  
 summit of San Jacinto. Awards and prizes  
 for winners and losers. Race Sun, for Sat  
 info call Leader: Kathy Crandall. Asst: Dick  
 Smith.

April 15-16: Onion Valley Area Ski Tours:  
 Both Days we will tour from this E side  
 roadhead with carcamp at lower elevation.  
 Tours will go toward Kearsarge Pass and  
 Robinson Basin with ski runs of 2500' to  
 3000'. Leader: Mark Goebel. Asst: Owen  
 Maloy.

## FOR SALE

DYNASTAR TELEMAR SKIS: 200 cm.,  
 Asolo bindings. These are great skis for  
 touring and the lifts. Will sell for \$180.  
 Mark Goebel. (714) 963-9384.

## PORK BELLY NEWS UPDATE

It's a bit disingenuous of Pete Matulavich  
 to make fun of my Montana ski article being  
 published in the PORK BELLY NEWS.  
 After all, he told me it was his family's  
 favorite reading back home. If they finish the  
 hog futures, they sometimes try the  
 CHICAGO TRIBUNE, where the article  
 was also published. GH

## VOTE IN THE 1989 SIERRA CLUB NATIONAL ELECTION!

As an editorial in the L.A. Times recently suggested, The Sierra Club is in danger of becoming The Molehill Club because of the unsolved insurance crisis which has effectively eliminated the Rock Climbing Section, half of our Mugelnoos subscribers. The Sierra Peaks Section and the Desert Peaks Section are no longer leading even third class peaks because the 3rd class definition suggests that a rope should be carried for safety. And the Ski Mountaineers Section appears to be on an endangered species list if "standards" for insurance continue to deteriorate. Some ski trips led last year, such as the Mt. Shasta trip, can no longer be led. This makes our vote in this year's election particularly important because there are candidates running for the National Board of Directors who feel that the insurance dilemma should also be considered one of the priorities of the Sierra Club.

R.J. Secor, Bruce Knudtson, and Barbara Reber were placed on the ballot by petition. They are longtime members of the L.A. Chapter and support both outings and conservation. R.J. is an active member of the Ski Mountaineers and has held the offices of chairman, vice-chairman, and secretary-treasurer in the Ski Mountaineers Section. All three are members of the various mountaineering sections and training committees. They are committed to restoring the Sierra Club budgetary balance among exploring, enjoying and protecting.

Other candidates for the National Board of Directors are Judith Anderson (CA), Phillip Berry (CA), Joni Bosh (AZ), Jim Dougherty (DC), Calvin French (CA), Michael Garabedian (NY), Roy Hengerson (MO), Vivien Li (MA), Ron Mayhew (GA), Madge Strong (CA), and Sandy Tepfer (OR).

Read their statements carefully and vote! The futures of the Ski Mountaineers Section and the Rock Climbing Section are at stake and every vote will be important. Your ballot must be received by noon, April 8, 1989, to be counted.

### PINHEADS JOIN PINEHEADS FOR BALDY WEEKEND

SMSers Joy Fagert, Reiner Stenzel and Pete Matulavich joined members of the Alpine Ski Touring Section for a mellow weekend at Baldy Hut, February 18-19. Skiers from the A.S.T.S. included members of the infamous "Chute Corps," Craig Dostie, Jamie McReel and Vince Desrochers. Serving as hut overlord was John Wedberg, a member of both the SMS and A.S.T.S.

The "Chute Corps" gets its name from the ultra-steep chutes its members like to ski. These guys were some kind of skiers, handling 45-50 degree chutes with the ease most of us display on a bunny run at a ski resort. Making it the more impressive was that two of the skiers, Jamie and Craig, did it on 3-pins!

A small group of us gathered at the hut to watch these outrageous skiers. We had binoculars and the scene was right out of one of those old mountaineering films where a group of spectators is typically seen on the sun deck of a lodge, keeping a constant vigil on the progress of a climbing team. The "Corps" didn't let us down, and in snow conditions that were hopeless, tackled some of Baldy's most challenging terrain.

Joy, Reiner and I thought we needed some kind of a name, too, so we adopted the "Hut Potatoe Corps," and while our exploits weren't nearly so impressive, we did bag Baldy and attempt some fairly challenging terrain. We encountered perfect corn on the slopes just below the saddle, but the snow in the bowl was heavy and infested with snow snakes, making a simple traverse a lesson in futility.

The weekend was highlighted by a pleasant evening in the hut, filled with good cheer, camaraderie and a few raunchy jokes.

PM

### POWDER PERFECT PRESIDENTS' WEEKEND

February 22, 1989

The return of snow to the Sierra (finally) made a ski trip to the "Tioga Pass Winter Resort" a doable trip for Kris and me over the long weekend - 4 days total. After a ski and hike in on Saturday we spent two days schussing and eating!

The resort food was plentiful and good, the staff helpful about areas to tour and the amenities - indoor heated toilets, electric heat cabins and shower areas were welcome after a hard day in powder. The first ski day was up the hill in back of the lodge with skins to an abandoned ghost town, a long gradual descent along the ridge crest, downhill to the north end of Saddlebag Lake, lunch in a short but heavy snowfall and finally a two mile glide back to the lodge. From Saturday noon to Sunday evening the new snow depth was 3-8 inches of new powder.

Monday dawned clear and cold with little wind. Time for a tour to Tuolumne. After the 1.6 mile rise to the pass we had 3+ miles of downhill with stops to ski endless meadows, try out the tele on small hills and inhale the clear air and view of Cathedral Peak. The three skiers we saw on Monday did not diminish our sense of really being back of beyond. I recommend this trip to the strong intermediate skier with skins, snow and rock savvy since there are slide potential areas for both on the way in, plus the ever present slab-a-roo run of snow after a storm. Six miles and 2,000 feet of gain plus the daily tariff for room and two meals are all that it takes!

SB

## REVOLUTION REVISITED

Ten years ago the SMS members revolted, passing bylaw amendments to give the leaders more say in the management, to strengthen recruitment, and to provide for elections by mailed ballot. Many old-timers supported this action and signed the petitions which forced an election. As a side effect, the section adopted a policy of allowing Nordic skis on trips. Some members quit over this heresy.

Older members no longer active and other Mugelnoos readers may wonder how all this has turned out.

*Bylaws Changes* - The change in election procedures and the involvement of the leaders has restored the section's health, along with such measures as the annual hike and potluck, and the highly successful training at Mt Pinos and Keller.

*Nordic Skis* - Almost nobody, in the SMS or anywhere else, skis in the backcountry with alpine equipment any more, although there are certainly places where it is appropriate (glacier skiing, for example). Many of us still own such gear -- but use it less and less. The Nordic gear is simply easier to use, especially when climbing.

But Alpine gear is welcome on SMS trips. The user goes up a little slower and down a little faster, but mixed equipment splits the group far less than mixed conditioning or downhill skill -- just as people said, ten years ago.

Paradoxically, the switch to Nordic equipment has increased the amount of downhill resort skiing the SMS does -- because we need the practice. The parallel turn works fine on hard snow, but the telemark has proved to be the ideal way to handle heavy backcountry snow. It takes a lot of work to learn to crank telly turns.

Nordic equipment and technique have improved enormously in the past 10 years, as a result of downhill-skier involvement in design and instruction. Nordic downhill skis will now handle anything a downhill ski will. SMS'ers routinely ski the more difficult slopes at Mammoth -- the Face of Three, Cornice and Scotty's Run, for example.

We are still stuck with the venerable three-pin binding, though. Where is the engineer who will invent (and successfully market) something better?

The term "Nordic Skiing" really covers several quite different sports: track skiing including skating, more-or-less flat off-track touring, steep-terrain backcountry skiing, and out-and-out downhill skiing. In Mammoth we have some Nordic skiers who have never skied anywhere but on Mammoth's lifts, and others who wear skating tights and funny hats and have never ridden a lift in their lives. There is no sign that the SMS will ever turn into a bunch of flat-terrain skiers. Except for an occasional Cross-Cultural Event, the SMS remains the preserve of the Skier of the Steep and Gnarly.

In fact, what has happened in the Angeles Chapter, as well as in the X-C world in general, is that more and more skinny skiers are discovering the intoxication of backcountry downhill. Last month's Cross-Country Skier is almost entirely devoted to serious skiing, from cranking telemarks to skiing near Denali (on skating skis!). The singles sections and the Nordic Ski Touring Section in our chapter have adopted the Sierra Club Ski Tests to qualify leaders and participants, with excellent results. These sections routinely train telemark skiers on downhill slopes. There are a lot of good skiers out there today even by SMS standards. Ten years ago the situation was dismal; almost nobody could turn without running into a tree first.

*Membership* - In spite of all this your reporter is not satisfied with the progress the section is making in recruiting and involving new and old members and developing new leaders. We seem to recruit mountaineers who are learning to ski rather than skiers who are learning to climb. With so many good skiers developing, we need to lead more introductory events and eliminate the section's cliquish image. Not all of these people have yet acquired the altitude conditioning needed to keep up on a regular SMS trip. I have found that even good skiers think that all the SMS does is go snow-camping and winter mountaineering, and that is way off the mark. We have something to offer because, by and large, the other sections do nothing but training; they rarely lead anything but beginner trips. Anybody who wants to ski in the mountains almost has to come out with the SMS.

## 1988 - 89 MOUNTAIN TRAVEL SOUTH POLE OVERLAND EXPEDITION

The chance to ski across Antarctica to the South Pole seemed too impossibly fabulous to pass up. Normally it had been easy to brush off Mountain Travel's lush catalog of tempting treks as too expensive, as requiring too much vacation time, or as something I could probably arrange myself. But perusing their newly arrived brochure at my kitchen table in December, 1987, this "Expedition to the South Pole" really lit up. It would require serious money (\$70,000) and extensive negotiations with my Air Force superiors to get two months leave approved, but having professionals set up the logistics for such a magnificent, but difficult undertaking seemed to outweigh those disadvantages.

The approach laid out in the brochure seemed bold but reasonable:

- \* Fly from Chile to an interior base in Antarctica away from the unpredictable coastal weather.
- \* Start from the landward side of the Ronne Ice Shelf where the continent itself began.
- \* Begin near sea level and gradually climb to 9300 feet at the Pole.
- \* A 750 mile route planned to keep some mountains or nunataks in view for most of the first half of the trip to provide scenery and visual reference.
- \* Avoidance of steeper grades where crevasses would be most likely.
- \* A one-way trip with return by air pick-up at the Pole.
- \* A modest goal of 15 miles a day for 50 days.
- \* Travel from late November to mid-January during the warmest summer months.
- \* Constant daylight to provide warmth and aid route finding.
- \* A relatively fixed playing field, as the Antarctic ice cap along the route chosen only moves about 30 feet per year, unlike the Arctic Ocean where the ice pans often drift several miles per day on North Pole-bound trekkers.
- \* Travelling mostly on snow/ice 1-2 miles thick, instead of on 6 foot thick sheets of ice floating on top of 2-3 miles of water as up North.
- \* The use of snowmobiles to pull the bulk of the gear on sleds, so people could ski with light packs and not have to drag 300 pound pulks.
- \* Being resupplied by air about every 200 miles, so there would be room on the sleds for some nice-to-have things that would make such a long journey more comfortable-Thermarest mattresses, books, tapes, new underwear every 2-4 weeks, and a varied menu of real food instead of freeze-dried fare.
- \* Use of daily radio communication for safety.
- \* Satellite navigation systems to aid in fixing daily positions.
- \* Solar cells to recharge batteries for the electronic gear and snowmobiles.
- \* A large community tent for cooking, eating and camaraderie in addition to the two-person sleeping tents.

(To be continued in a future Mugelnoos) RM

TIME TO SKI THE DESERT

Because of warm weather, we can expect good skiing in the Whites this year. Often we get depth hoar because the snow layers are relatively thin and the weather cold. This year we should get primo corn.

Desert Peaks Section members have scheduled a private climb of Mt DuBois (13559') on May 6. DuBois (the huge peak north of White and south of Montgomery) has enormously long and fairly gradual ski chutes on the Nevada side. Owen Maloy plans to take skis on this trip, and would like some SMS'ers for company. Contact Owen for details at 619-934-4553 (H/W) or Box 2083, Mammoth Lakes, CA 93546.

1989 SMS SKI CLINICS

January 14, January 28&29, 1989

We were again fortunate to find sufficient snow on Mt. Pinos for our one day ski clinic. Twenty-one students turned out to sharpen their x-c downhill skills, and instruction was provided by Dick Smith, Howard Schultz, and Mark Goebel. Following a short tour up into the meadows, the students probably were wondering what they had signed up for. First, everyone received countless practice in side-stepping, as it was necessary to break up the overlying crust. However, once completed, we had 3 separate practice areas and the turns could begin. The day stayed cool and breezy, and just as well because each run down required a climb back up. The day ended with the traditional fast run down to the cars, and apparently the instruction worked, as everyone was upright and smiling at the bottom.

Keller Hut and Snow Valley again hosted the annual SMS Training Camp weekend, and a massive turnout of 32 students were housed, fed, and instructed by the Training Committee: Paul Harris, Dick Smith, Gerry & Pat Holleman, Howard Schultz, Mark Goebel, Rose Lynch and Joy Fagert.

Keller Hut has received new paint, weather tight windows in the front room, as well as paneling. As usual, Rose had the place warmed up early Friday nite for arrivees, and put on the big dinner Sat. nite. The main course was chicken and cajun rice, along with a huge tossed salad. THANK YOU ROSE for another GREAT JOB! Dessert was a potluck affair, and the selection was staggering. But most staggering was the size of this group's collective sweet tooth. Truly a caloric feast, and the only concern was to the quantity of samples on one's plate.

As to skiing, Snow Valley was in full operation with the usual hard packed powder (possibly a little softer than last year), few lines and plenty of room to practice. We divided into 5 instructional groups, roughly by ability, and everyone received 6 hours of instruction. Sunday was planned as an optional day of skiing, but high winds put most of the lifts on hold and reduced interest to but a handful. A short hike was enjoyed by 8, who then returned to the Hut for leftovers and more dessert.

MG

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