

3/19/92 KFB

MUGELNOOS

MARCH 17, 1992

Number 692



SMS SNOW SHELTER COURSE

February 22 and 23

On the weekend of February 22nd and 23rd, nine adventurous and hardy souls met at the Manker Flat trailhead, with the intention of ascending the trail to the West Ridge of Mt. Baldy and building snow shelters to spend the night in. After hurriedly packing some last minute items in our packs, we left the trailhead around 9 a.m.

The curriculum of this snow shelter course included: how to build an igloo, snow cave, or other snow shelter, avalanche beacon practice, navigation in whiteout conditions, and just general enjoyment of the great winter outdoors. Everyone was required to bring shovels, beacons, and snow saws, but no tents were allowed. After rewatering at the hut, we ascended the West Bowl to the ridge, arriving there about 1 or so. Reiner Stenzel, our leader, promptly claimed a point right on the edge of the bowl so he could have a room with a view, which was quite spectacular and included Baldy Ski area, San Gorgonio, Telegraph Peak and many other peaks. The rest of us spread ourselves around a small are, split into

groups of two and three, and proceeded to stamp down an area about 15 by 15 feet to pack snow in order to make blocks. After accomplishing that task, we drew a circle in the middle of the area about 7 to 8 feet in diameter, marking the perimeter of our igloo. We then began sawing blocks from within that circle and placed them around the perimeter, leaning inward at about a 30 to 35 degree angle. After making several rows we realized that something wasn't working as it should, and finally figured that the blocks had to spiral up and around toward the top, rather than be built up in layers, or rows. We made a spiral cut through one row, and began laying the blocks again, each block tilting inward more. That proved to be the trick, and we were able to complete our igloo, whereas two other teams gave up trying to close the top in after their walls reached heights of 5 or 6 feet. One team bootlegged a tent fly and used it to cover the top of their igloo, and the other team just left the top open. One team decided it would be best to position their entrance tunnel to afford them the best view, while our team positioned the entrance at ninety degrees to the wind to afford us the greatest comfort,

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NEXT MEETING

APRIL 21, 1992 7:30 PM GRIFFITH PARK RANGER STATION AUDITORIUM 4730 CRYSTAL SPRINGS DRIVE, LOS ANGELES, CA.

NEXT ISSUE: MAR 17, 1992

ISSUE DEADLINE APRIL 15, 1992 ALL PHOTOS, SLIDES, AND ARTICLES SHOULD BE SENT TO: ANDY FRIED, MUGELNOOS EDITOR, c/o TEC GROUP 10727 WHITE OAK AVE. SUITE # 205, GRANADA HILLS, CA 91344. IF YOU WISH TO HAVE PHOTOS RETURNED AFTER PUBLICATION INCLUDE A SELF ADDRESSED STAMPED ENVELOPE. WE ARE NOT RESPONSIBLE FOR LOST PHOTOS.

UPCOMING TRIPS:

MAR 21-22 SAT-SUN JUMP TURN CLINIC
LEADER: CRAIG DOSTIE, ASST: DAN DOMANCICH

MAR 28-29 TELESCOPE PEAK DEATH VALLEY
LEADER: SCOT JAMISON ASST: REINER STENZEL

MAR 26-29 CLARK RANGE EXPLORATORY
LEADERS: MARCIA MALE ASST: NANCY GORDON

APRIL 4-5 MAMMOTH LAKES TOURING
LEADER: OWEN MALOY ASST: NANCY GORDON

APRIL 11-12 MCGEE CANYON
LEADER: SCOT JAMISON ASST: MARCIA MALE

APRIL 11-12 SKI MOUNTAINEERS PEAK
LEADER: GERRY HOLLEMAN ASST: PAUL HARRIS

WANTED STORIES FOR MUGELNOOS, THIS IS YOUR CHANCE AT FAME AND FORTUNE (AT LEAST A LITTLE).

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

BRING BACK THOSE LONG PAGES!

I first want to congratulate you on several fine improvements you've made to the Mugelnoos. I like the clean laser-printed copy and the greater use of photographs, and I'm sure many will find the new masthead exciting.

However, I object to the shorter 8 1/2 X 11 format and much preferred the longer 14 inch pages. I felt the longer pages gave the Mugelnoos a special character and separated it from the other section newsletters. The longer format had been with us most of our 50 years and I'm not so sure we should readily change such a time-honored tradition.

By the way, I assume the figure in the masthead is a skier, but why the bulbous behind? Also, the date line is hard to read.

Pete Matulavich

Editors reply:

Please note the dateline has been changed with this issue. The skier in the masthead has a fanny pack. I am unable to print the 14' paper in the Magazine format I have been using. I could print 14" format in loose sheet form as was done before. I invite readers to send in comments-- what format would you like to see?

FOR SALE: Kastle RCX Skating Skies, 190cm., old style Salomon skate binding, \$80. Pat Holleman, (310) 374-4654

FOR SALE: Marmot Powder Tech Jacket, Med. \$75. North Face down vest, large. \$40. Kneissl Raceing Star track-Skiis 210cm. w/addidas bindings and boots size 9-10. \$40. Excel roller skiis w/addidas bindings. \$40. Ruksack-leather bottom w/ ski slots. \$10. Kelty daypack \$5. Downhill ski poles, strapless, 50in. \$5. Pantagonia expedition weight, med polypro tops & bottom. \$7.50 ea. Call Al Tapia (818) 351-0401.

Want: Used Ski Boots: Mens 9- 9 1/2. My niece wants to telemark. Any equipment freaks out there who have moved up from decent old equipment to the latest stuff and want to sell the old boots call: Kathy Crandall (818) 790-9252

SKI VEGAS

Bill Oliver

While visiting my mom in Las Vegas early in February, I scoped out the **Lee Canyon Ski Area**. It's about an hour's plus drive from Vegas; north on US 95, then west on Hwy 156. I was delighted.

There's a short chair (for beginners) plus two long ones - all two-seaters. There's only a couple of "most difficult" runs and a lot suitable for all levels of intermediate. I especially liked the long, smooth runouts - perfect for practicing turns. The snow was plentiful, and they can also make it. Lines were virtually non-existent (on Saturday!). Also, no ski boarders.

Adult all day ticket goes for \$23 (child/senior \$15); 1 - 4 pm, \$18. Some night skiing too - 4:30 - 10 pm, \$20. Rentals and lessons are available, plus lockers and a restaurant. Opens 9:30 am.

Snow Report (702) 593-9500 (24-hr recorder)

Other info (702) 646-0008.



which proved later to be the right choice. After enjoying a fine evening in the mountains and a wonderful haute cuisine which included "beenie weenies", Top Ramen, and home made Won Tons, the wind began to blow lightly, but before an hour had passed, was blowing with a vengeance. It blew so hard that we couldn't stand upright in it! We estimated the breeze was about 50 or 60 miles per hour, and it continued all night long and through the next day. All night long we could hear it ripping through the trees, and were thankful we had igloos instead of tents. They provided us with comfortable and reasonably quiet shelter, even those without tops! However, one of the "topless" dwellers was hit by a pine cone that blew in through the open top, and the team with the tent fly over their igloo complained about the flapping noise. Spindrift blew in the igloo with the view, but ours was comfortable and cozy all night long! When Sunday dawned, we all decided the wind was too much to continue with our plans, so we had breakfast and packed up and left. As we descended down the bowl through the trees, one of our group was blown over by a gust of wind, and unable to self arrest on the icy crust, slid several hundred feet down the slope, careening off trees and branches before finally coming to a stop against the trunk of one tree. Luckily, he had no injuries and was able to continue without any problems.

At the hut, we learned that one pair who had pitched a tent near the top of Baldy had it shredded by the wind and had to dig a shelter for survival. In my opinion, a snow cave is quieter and perhaps warmer, takes less expertise to build, and may be dug a little quicker than an igloo may be built. The limiting factor for a cave is snow depth. Drifts can be found and usually will provide adequate depth for a cave. Igloos are more labor intensive and require some skill and practice, but don't require the depth that a cave does. I would find it hard to spend a few hours building an igloo just for one night if I had just spent most of the day touring, so I would probably opt for a light weight tent. But for a base camp, an igloo or a cave can't be beat!

H.Schultz

SMS X-C Downhill Practice Feb 29- Mar 1. 1992

Leader: Nancy Gordon Asst: Paul Harris

The point of this non-training weekend was to have fun skiing with other telemark skiers at a ski resort.. A few skiers seemed slightly disappointed that instruction was not provided other than "Go for it!" With casual aplomb, we sent a few shock waves through the alpine skier community, often using their crashed bodies along with the trees and moguls as varied terrain obstacles. Paul Harris slapped on his new boards (Black Diamond Tele Sauvage) and knew no limits. Don Pies and Richard Contreras showed us grace, style, and speed. Seth Clark and Steve Matthews seemed to revel in the challenging terrain of Slide Peak. Barbara Matthews looked smooth and graceful on her Tua Cirques. Pete Matulavich had to huff and puff to keep up with his daughter Sarah, who skies fearlessly on Alpine boards. One run on Nancy's Tele Sauvages were enough to tell Pete his aging, untuned Phoenix skis may soon be history. Grace Tsang and Caroline Rennie had the greatest smiles and determination both days. Watch out for Bert and Everett — they've got the telemark spirit and will be an asset to SMS if they choose to join us. Nancy's daughter Sarah and her friend Mike enjoyed skiing on alpine boards, thoroughly trashing their bodies by skiing from 8:30 AM until 6PM. Chris from Sports Country Ltd in San Bernardino joined us pinheads on Saturday, too. And Nancy just had fun, grateful for another day on the snow.

After a great day of skiing, we retreated to Keller Hut for a relaxing evening. After dinner, Barbara and Steve supplied us with a most delicious dessert. Then, taking advantage of their lift tickets which included night skiing, Barbara and Steve returned to Snow Valley to ski, amazing all of us who could hardly move without difficulty. Everyone provided interesting ski tidbits and stories throughout the evening as the warmth from the wood-burning stove soothed our weary bodies.

Sunday, we awoke to a new dusting of snow. Seven of us decided to "test drive" Snow Valley arriving promptly at 0800. Mark Angevine arrived in time to join us. The "test drive" allows you to ski from 0800 until 0930 without a lift ticket. Just enough to wet your appetite and beg for more, except the conditions just weren't good enough for most of us to lay down the big bucks for a lift ticket. Some of us were graciously asked to leave before others. Grace and Caroline skied until 1130 without tickets. We retreated back to the hut to clean and close things down only to be surprised that Barbara and Steve had already done most of the work.

Skiing requires lots of practice to become proficient, so this was a great opportunity push your limits with other telemarkers. Having fun was the point.

Nancy Gordon

Avalanche Course and Snow Camp at Sherwin Bowl, Mammoth Lakes

Feb 8-9, 1992 Leader: Reiner Stenzel,
Asst: Nancy Gordon

Our objective was to study avalanche conditions in the backcountry after doing independent research on basic meteorology and snow properties. Our instructor, Norm Wilson, happened to be the avalanche consultant for the proposed Sherwin Bowl ski area. Reiner had arranged a special parking permit for our vehicles with the Public Works Dept of Mammoth, and Norm had arranged for us to park at the Snowcreek Development, the closest access to Sherwin Bowl.

We met at the Ranger Station at Mammoth Lakes at 7:30 AM. For whatever reason, there were six cancellations (pity). That left a small, but enthusiastic group of good backcountry skiers: Mark Bailey, Glenn Pinson, Catherine Laben, Peter Saggau, Jim Valensi, John Choboian, and Mike Rector.

We put our skis on at the parking lot and skied into base camp just below Judge's Bench. After setting up camp, we skied to areas suitable for field instruction in physical properties of snow, snow stratigraphy, the temperature gradient process, weak substratum snow layers, and avalanche paths and dynamics. It sure makes more sense to do this training in the field; besides, we got in some fine skiing as we examined the avalanche terrain of the Sherwin Bowl. We dug a Rutsch-Block and a snow pit and performed the shovel shear test. We discussed effects of precipitation, wind, temperature, routefinding, campsites, evaluating avalanche risk, and safety equipment.

Sunday, after searching for buried avalanche beacons near camp, we skied the area to further discuss safe travel in avalanche terrain and perfected several rescue techniques.

All of us benefitted from this avalanche education and should be able to make good decisions regarding safe travel and minimizing avalanche risk when skiing the backcountry. Norm Wilson is an avalanche guru dedicated to sharing the latest and best information available on snow and avalanche problems.

Recommended reinforcement for the field experience: Gallagher: The Snowy Torrents, Perla and Martinelli: Avalanche Handbook, LaChapelle: Avalanche Safety, Fredston and Fesler: Snow Sense, the U.S. Dept of Agriculture Handbook #489, and Daffer: Avalanche Safety for Skier and Climbers.

Nancy Gordon

SMS LEADS ASSAULT ON POOP-OUT HILL

Six skiers, including leaders Paul Harris and Pete Matulavich and SMSer Joy Goebel made a successful ascent of the ever-formidable Poop-Out Hill, January 12th. The chosen route was the traditional 4-mile long road leading from Barton Flats.

Receiving check-offs were Ken Whitaker and another able skier whose name I've unfortunately misplaced. Joy's friend, Barbara, was along for the ride. Some confusion was encountered when Pete and Ken, skiing well ahead and beyond the sight of the rest of the group, stayed on the road all the way to the Poop-Out parking lot, while Paul led the trailing members up the "short cut" trail, bypassing the parking lot completely. The two factions never saw each other again till the of the tour. Back at the cars, the group wipped Pete with frozen skins, blaming him for the breakdown in communication and threatening him with further leads if he didn't shape up. Unbeknownst to the group that Pete intentionally skied far ahead of them as part of a little known mountaineering drill to test their navigational skills. We're pleased to announce that the group, led by assistant Paul Harris passed the test with flying colors. Even if it weren't a test, you really couldn't fault Pete. He was eager to rush home to catch the televised ACE awards (cable TV'S Emmys). As it turns out, and while he's much too modest to mention it, a show Pete produced won the ACE for the best program in its category. Frozen skins, indeed!

Pete Matulavich

SAN JACK BAGGED

Numerous last minute drop-outs prompted leaders Reiner Stenzel and ACE award-winning Pete Matulavich to cancel the Jan. 18-19 San Jacinto snow camp and convert it to a private day trip. Joining the group was SMSer Jim Valensi (the hand's down winner of the day's most colorfully dressed award), and newcomers Mark Bailey and Todd Lehman--both showing good promise for future SMS outings. We ran into another pinhead on the tour and invited him to join us. We ascended San Jack in good time under mostly cloudy, cold and windy conditions. The peak offered vast brooding vistas and we decided to lunch there in the protection of a rock alcove. We descended mixed-bag snow ranging from slab to crust to occasional patches of powder. Snow snakes were plentiful. Good male bonding was enjoyed by all. We reached the tram at dusk, witnessing a fabulous crimson and indigo sunset which someone said was due to volcanic dust in the atmosphere. Which volcano, no one knew. (ed. note Mt. Pinitubo, in the Philippines)

While waiting nearly an hour for the tram, we ran into noted SPSer, 72 year old Wilson Harvey, who had bagged Miller that day. We enjoyed a long chat and marveled over his 50 year

old ice ax. Wilson told us of his upcoming marriage and informed us that his faithful dog, regularly seen with him on the trail to Baldy, and which once saved Wilson's life by leading him out of a white out, passed away a little while back. The lights of palm springs shimmered far beneath us as we descended in a packed tram--the predictable hoots and hollers greeting each bump along the way. Driving out of the tram parking lot, a stoked Jim Valensi shouts to a large group of harmless tourists leaving the tram building, "That was one fantastic tram ride, Wasn't it?!" Blank stares.

Pete Matulavich

Mt. Baldy's San Antonio Hut Weekend, March 7-8, 1992

We met at the Falls Road trailhead at 0800. The first contingent led by Mark Goebel and Paul Harris took off promptly, eager to seek out the abundant snow we knew we would encounter. I waited for those "Sorry, I overslept" few that arrived as the first group departed. There were a few who knew the trail that just couldn't get an early start that joined us later, and a couple more that preferred to ski at Mt. Baldy Resort during the day and hike up to the hut that evening.

John Wedberg, hiking strong despite a knee injury, had the hut open and the fire going by the time the first group arrived. We had a total of 20 in our group, some just skiing for the day. For some, their first trip to the hut was more than enough of an adventure. For most, getting higher to ski back down was the priority. Mark and Paul, with their insights of skiing conditions on Baldy, knew that sitting in the hut was wasting precious ski time. They led a group of eager skiers to the ridge via the east approach only to have the clouds come in and visibility play havoc with their ski run down. Most of the rest of us were content to ski the lower areas where the snow was the finest and infinitely skiable. It started snowing in the afternoon, and visibility varied throughout the day. Lounging at the hut was most acceptable under these conditions, but a few hardy skiers continued to seek out as many turns as possible until darkness prevailed.

The Baldy Hut is one of our favorite huts. It is cozy, comfortable, and intimate. The luxury of only having to carry a sleeping bag and some food is not to be underestimated. And people are relaxed and fun-loving on recreational outings such as this. With us this weekend: Greg Westernik from the Washington, D.C. area; Lisa Freundlich, Reed Moore, Chuck Ramm, and Andy Rindell from the San Diego area; Peter Green from Palmdale; Denny Capp from Costa Mesa; Jim Valensi from San Pedro; and from the L.A. area: Karl Doertling, Ray Smith, Keith Martin, Ray Hays, Jim and Sarah Johnston, Rose

Lynch, and Dave Braun.

Sunday, after making a 0600 trip to the head, I observed the cloud layer below getting ready to ascend and predicted accurately that the visibility would be variable throughout the day again. The new fallen snow was prime at 25 degrees. Returning to the hut, I quietly donned my ski clothes, grabbed a few edible goodies left over from the night before, and left for a prebreakfast ski at 0630. After traversing up to the bottom of the chutes, I realized the clouds were rising quicker than anticipated. To return to the hut for breakfast

after one run would be a waste of ski time, but the proper "leader" thing to do. Selfishly, I continued up to the ridge. En route to the summit, I reflected on the peacefulness of this early morning climb, the marvelous snow conditions, how full of snow all those chutes were, and what's it all about? I did an about face and returned to the ridge.

As luck would have it, Dave Braun was just arriving from below, also intent on exploring the chutes. We pursued this exploration together with caution and concern, knowing the new snow was on top of a very consolidated layer. Would this snow avalanche as we skied the chutes? I already knew the steeper areas directly below the chutes were close to slabbing off on my traverse. Visibility was decreasing to about 30-40 feet. We had both noted that the chute with the dead tree on the ridge looked very skiable from below. In fact, all the chutes had plenty of snow in them. To test the safe skiabilty of the first chute that looked promising, Dave carefully skied into the top of the chute. There was a large rock form dividing the chute in half about 15 feet below. The snow slid as if on ball bearings; he removed his skis and kick-stepped up to the ridge. Skiing down the ridge a little further, we came to the dead tree chute. Knocking my ski pole on the lip of the chute sent a shower of snow cascading down the chute. Skiing along the ridge a little further, we finally agreed to ski off in what I think may be called Procrastination Chute. Snickers time.

Dave skied off first; his powerful jump parallel turns astonished me. When I jumped in, I was surprised to find myself buried up to my thighs in snow and going no where. How was I going to do this? Dave had disappeared beyond my visibility. I leaned out into the void and the skis moved from their secure position and turned. How amazing! The skis did it again, turning the other direction. Soon I had Dave in sight; he was negotiating another rock form, still energetically doing jump turns. The flat light made it difficult to tell any steepness variations, but the snow was wonderful and slightly forgiving of the "initiate and compensate" movements I was doing. Dave had stopped below the last rocks and the entry to the wider snow area below, I

rolled in next to him head over heels having been accosted by an unseen ball of snow in my path. Ah, self-arrest grips are such a wonder! The lighting got worse, but the skiing got easier as we traversed to the slope directly above the hut. We needed the trees to read the snow. Returning to the hut for what was now lunch, we couldn't have been happier. Our high-five bought joy to my heart.

In my absence, most of the group had skied the bowl, following my tracks to the bottom of the chutes. Reiner Stenzel had skied up for the day and was en route to the summit. Half of the group had packed up and left due to the poor visibility or other commitments. The San Diego group were the real die-hards, skiing long and persistently in the thick cloud that had engulfed the Baldy Bowl. We straightened the hut and went through hut closing procedures before locking up and descending to that lower level of L.A.-ization.

For good physical conditioning and excellent backcountry skiing practice, nothing beats this area. To use the hut, contact the leader in charge for the weekend. The fees are \$5 for overnight use and \$1 for day use. The hut is 2.5 miles and 2200' elevation gain from the trailhead. It has a fully equipped kitchen and new foam pads for sleeping. It also has the best skiing in Southern California. Shhhh!

Nancy Gordon

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