

MUGELNOOS

JANUARY 21, 1997

Number 732



Rock Creek Ski Camp

June 1-2, 1996

by Reiner Stenzel.

This SMS trip was scheduled late in the season, just in case there was a lot of snow. Well, 1996's snow was ok but below average. In June most Southern Californians had packed their ski gear away or headed north. Since nobody called to join, I took my trustworthy four-legged companion, Tatanka, and ventured on a spring ski-hike into Little Lakes Valley where there is usually late snow below Bear Creek Spires. On Saturday I hiked to Long Lake where solid snow coverage started and then skinned up to the Treasure Lakes, a place of fond memories. I set up basecamp on the ridge overlooking the upper, highest lake. Not a single soul around this beautiful and usually popular place. Plenty of excellent snow covered the surrounding slopes and bowls. The lakes were still covered but not safe to ski on. In the afternoon I toured below Bear Creek Spires to the ridge above the Dade Lakes. It was a beautiful day with dark-blue sky, intense sunlight, and a great mountain scenery. Then I looked for some excitement and climbed into a steep chute on the North face of Bear Creek Spires. As the angle exceeded 40 degrees, I became a bit nervous since the afternoon snow was heavy and big balls began to roll. I skied down safely, then looked back and

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ANDY FRIED
ANDY FRIED
PAT HOLLEMAN

MEETINGS

3RD TUES EACH MONTH NOV. THRU MAY EXCEPT DEC. 7:30 PM GRIFFITH PARK RANGER STATION AUDITORIUM 4730 CRYSTAL SPRINGS DRIVE, LOS ANGELES, CA.

NEXT ISSUE: FEB 18, 1997

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UPCOMING TRIPS:

Date	Location	Leaders / Program
Jan 24-26	D/H Clinic: Keller / Bear Mtn	Paul Harris / Nancy Gordon
Feb 1	Local Tour	Mark Goebel / Ken Deemer
Feb 8	Mt. San Jacinto	Pete Matulevich / TDA
Feb 15-17	San Bernardino Ridge	Reiner Stenzel / TBA
Feb 21-23	Keller Hut: downhill practice	Nancy Gordon / Paul Harris
Mar 8-9	Mt. San Jacinto tour/snow camp	Reiner Stenzel / Ken Deemer
Mar 22-24	Mt. Bago-Kearsarge Pass	Reiner Stenzel / Tom Marsh
Mar 22-23	Mt. Baldy, San Antonio Hut	Ken Deemer / Mark Goebel
Apr 5-6	Avalanche Safety - Mammoth	Andy Fried / Owen Maloy
Apr 12-15	Virginia Lake - Twin Lake	Tom Marsh / Keith Martin
Apr 19-20	Palisade Glacier tour	Mark Goebel / Gerry Holleman
Apr 19-20	Wahoo Gullies	Reiner Stenzel / TBA
Apr 26-M 4	Trans Sierra: Cirque Crest	R. J. Secor / Reiner Stenzel
May 3-4	Ski Mountaineers Peak	Gerry Holleman / Paul Harris
May 10-11	Horton Lakes	Keith Martin / Owen Maloy
May 10-12	Mt. Williamson	Reiner Stenzel / TBA
May 17-18	Basin Mtn Couloir	Don Pies / Ken Deemer
May 24-26	Matterhorn Pk/Sawtooth Rdg	Reiner Stenzel / TBA
May 31-J 1	Rock Creek Ski Camp	Pete Matulavich / Ken Deemer

UPCOMING MUGELNOOS PROGRAMS

Feb 18 Avalanche Safety and awareness.

SMS WEB PAGE

<http://www.edgeinternet.com/skimt/>

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DO YOU HAVE AN E-MAIL ADDRESS?
WANT IT PUBLISHED SO OTHER SMS'ERS CAN FIND YOU?
IF SO PLEASE SEND IT TO PAT HOLLEMAN.

LEADERSHIP TRAINING COURSE AVAILABLE

Registration is underway for the Angeles Chapter's Leadership Training Course, a program to prepare Chapter members to become qualified Sierra Club outings leaders. The course begins with an all-day seminar to be held at Griffith Park on Saturday, April 5, 1997. All applicants must be Sierra Club members and have participated in at least five club hikes or trips.

Club members wishing to enroll in the course should send a stamped, self-addressed business-size envelope to Alice Danta, LTC Registrar, 17561 Medford Avenue, Tustin, CA 92680-1950. Completed application forms must be returned to the Registrar not later than March 22, 1997.

NEW MEMBERS

Scott Meek & Julie Smith-Meek
Steve Tuszynski

Chino Hills
Los Angeles

cont. from page 1

saw a monstrous slide coming down the next chute. It must have started with a cornice break-off high up on the mountain which triggered a wet snow avalanche in the chute that grew into a football field of tumbling big balls. I kept a respectable distance from these chutes and returned on gentler terrain to my campsite. A group of skiers came up, and when they told me that they wanted to ski the steeps I gave them the warning.

Since June days are long I got my fishing gear out and skied down to the lower lakes to do some ice fishing. There were no bites, perhaps cast. Well, I had to settle for canned tuna instead of fresh trout for dinner. Sunday morning was relaxing. I toured the terrain around the Treasure Lakes, then packed out and skied out leisurely. Sunday hikers came up the valley. Altogether, it was a very pleasant spring trip which, I am sure, would have been enjoyed by other participants as well. It is scheduled again for June 1997.



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PEAR LAKE - A SENTIMENTAL JOURNEY

Mark Goebel

From the high point of the ridge, known to skiers as Winter Alta, at over 11,000', the Sierra range was majestically displayed in a Winter wonderland. Our visit to this high point had been brief because of a cold wind, but more importantly, a large band of dark clouds were quickly moving towards us. So, off with the climbing skins, a few quick bites to eat, and then point the skis down the narrow, wind blown ridge for a few careful turns before dropping over the edge of the ridge into a treeless, tilted expanse of snowy alpine slopes. First a short traverse to avoid a small cliff, and then we started turning on our merry way for a 2000' descent back to shelter at the Pear Lake Hut. The snow and the skiers both had their moments where one or the other was in control, but it was a wonderful day in the mountains with friends, and we had hundreds of square miles of untracked slopes to ourselves.

Where is this wonderland with a hut? Check your map on the western slopes of the Sierra, at 9200' in Sequoia National Park near the head of the Marble Fork of the Kaweah River. Three eights of a mile north of Pear Lake is the Pear Lake Ranger Station, which during the winter months is made available to backcountry travelers. The hut is now on the Federal list of historical structures, and it is 6 miles and 2000' of backcountry travel from the roadhead at Wolverton Meadows (located off the General's Hwy. between Giant Forest and Lodgepole. While the route is marked, it is sometimes difficult to follow, especially the last mile or so during stormy or foggy weather. Once I missed the hut by only a few feet because of dense fog, and only found it just before dark when happily the clouds lifted. This last section does have some avalanche hazard, and the overall trip can be very difficult for the inexperienced, or ill equipped winter adventurer. Never underestimate the effect of difficult snow conditions and/or a heavy pack upon your skiing ability and strength.

Construction of the hut was completed in 1941, and the hut has been a favorite destination for SMS groups for many years. Even back when real seal skins were attached to hickory skis with sticky wax much like we use glue covered skins today. Up until the early 1980s, the SMS frequently scheduled several trips each season, one in January or February, and then again in late April to ski Pears fabulous corn snow covered slopes. Back in those days, reserving the hut only required a call to the Park Service, and it was available just about anytime you wanted. The backcountry was seldom visited in winter, and only a handful of people knew

about or use the hut. Then with the 1980's, came a dramatic increase in backcountry winter travel and hut visitations, and a new reservation/lottery system. Also, public access to the hut was no longer available after March, so UCSB personnel could use it while conducting acid rain studies.

Although hut access become very difficult, especially on weekends, the area's terrain still drew us to those slopes but we now carried in a tent. Then in 1988, a trip best forgotten, with barely enough snow due to the drought, our skis were severely scraped by hidden rocks lurking under about 2" of new snow. We skied in and then right out the next morning. Instead, I prefer to remember a visit in 1985, when three of us paused for a day of unburdened skiing on adjacent corn slopes at the end of a Sierra High Route trip.

After many years of almost two Pear Lake tours a year, a bunch of back-to-back bad snow years, plus new family and work responsibilities resulted in a disruption to my usual Pear Lake habit. Then, late one night a few Januarys ago, the call came, "I have reservations for the Hut in February, do you want to come?" Thus, once again I found myself climbing the snowy wall out of the Wolverton parking lot, and our small group toured off among the Sequoias. It was a delightful day, and although the trail was a bit icy, we looked forward to better snow at least up above hut.

After a long and continuous climb through the forest, we reached Heather Gap by lunch, and could then see eastward to the open headwaters of the Kaweah River and the Tablelands. Following a short, but abrupt descent, and a few ups and downs past Heather and Aster Lakes, we reached the last downhill to the hut's front door dragging several inches of gluey wet snow on our skins. Then, after stripping the skins, we were able make a few turns down to the snow covered hut. Inside are bunks for 10, a wood pellet heating stove out as cantankerous as the old fuel oil stove), propane cooking stove and lanterns (you bring the gas), and an interesting visitors log book full of epoch tales of ski tours, and some cold bivouacs by those who failed to reach the hut.

From the hut there are many touring possibilities, from the gentle slope up to Pear Lake (ideal under a full moon with powder snow), to the Tablelands, Alta Peak, Winter Alta (in Spring, don't miss the long corn run down its south side while the north side is warming into condition), and many more.

On the morning of our departure, an all night storm had dropped at least 12" of the soft stuff, but our major

The above photo of spring snow was sent in by Belmer with the question: Any idea how to get the snow? I know we have some really advanced telemarketers in our group. Perhaps someone has some advice.

concern was reaching Heather Gap before any fog settled in. Fortunately, we were able to do so, and then we only had to enjoy the 2000' ride back down through the trees to the cars. Frequently these slopes can be a skier's nightmare due to variable conditions at lower altitude, but on this occasion, the new light snow over the hard base made for one of the best and easiest turning rides you could imagine, and so it goes in the backcountry. Another Pear Lake tour in the memory book, and looking forward to the next one.

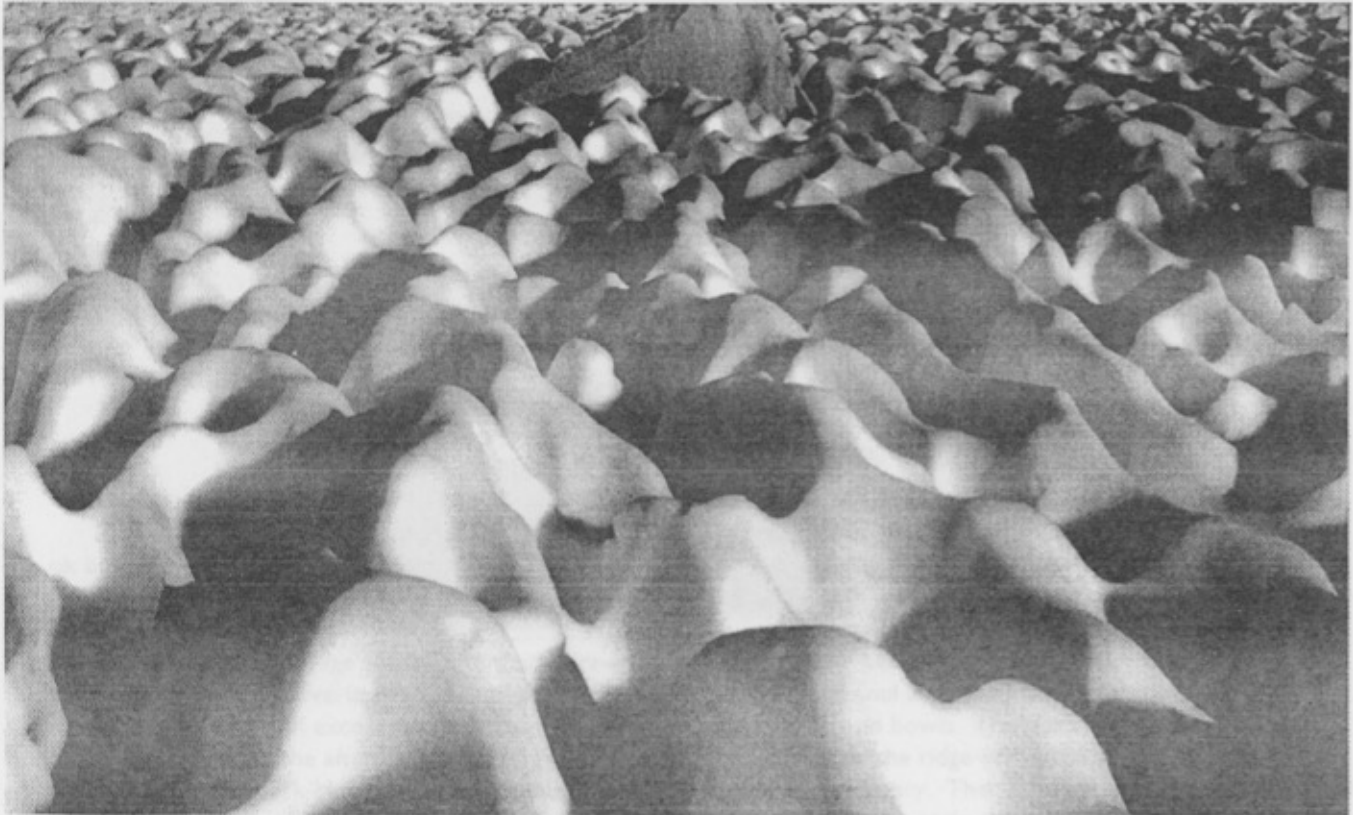
If you would like to book some time at Peak Lake Hut, contact the Sequoia Natural History Association, Attn: PEAR LAKE, Lodgepole Visitor Center, Sequoia National Park, CA 93262. Phone 209-565-3782. Have fun, and make some turns for me!

TELEMARK RESEARCH PROJECT

SMS members have the opportunity of participating in a Telemark research study (sorry, only on paper) which is being conducted by Alessandro Comai, a student at the School of Engineering, Coventry University, Coventry, UK. Besides being a telemark skier, Alessandro feels that this subject is interesting and unexplored. So, he has asked for our help and input. If you would like to participate, complete the questionnaire enclosed with this issue, and then return it to the SMS Secretary, Mark Goebel, 9522 Innsbruck Dr., Huntington Beach, CA 92646, and I will forward it on to Alessandro. Please get it to me by Feb. 15th. Alessandro has expressed that his research has exclusive academic reason, and he guarantees the maximum confidentiality regarding the information he receives from us.

M. Goebel

MUSKIEO HEIGHTS
Peter Dunlap-Shohl



The above photo of spring snow was sent in by Reiner with the question-Any idea how to ski this snow? I know we have some really advanced telemarkers in our group, Perhaps someone has some advice.

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Pre-register with SMS. Stay at Keller Hut

Jan. 26 • Telemark and Free-heel Ski Games

Clinics, demos, fun races, awards party, prize drawing

Pre-register with Bear Mt. Tele program

Feb. 22 • Ski With A Demo Team Member Clinic

Women Clinics: Telemark - Alpine - Snowboard

Pre-register with Bear Mt. Tele program

Feb. 22-23 • SMS Tele Practice

Pre-register with SMS. Stay at Keller Hut

Feb. 23 • Telemark and Free-heel Ski Games

Clinics, demos, fun races, awards party, prize drawing

Pre-register with Bear Mt. Tele program

Mar. 22-23 • Spring Tele Festival

Clinics, demos, fun races, awards party, prize drawing

Pre-register with Bear Mt. Tele program

For more information or to register call or write:
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