

MUGELNOOS

OCTOBER 1, 1997

Number 737



Duncan, Reiner, and Don in upper Rock Creek. Mt. McAide on left. Photo by Gregg Esser, Professional Photographer

WAHOO GULLIES April 19-20, 1997

by Reiner Stenzel

The Wahoo Gullies are classic couloirs for ski mountaineers in the Eastern Sierra Nevada. They are located on Mt. Locke (12,634') southeast of Mt. Humphreys near Bishop. The central couloir leads to the summit. It is about 2500' long, at least 50' wide, and has an angle between 30 and 40 degrees. Our scheduled tour attracted 13 participants: Lisa Freundlich, Reed Moore, Alvin Walter, Jerry Olsen from San Diego, Duncan Livingston from Hemet, Felix Betschard, Stefano Villa, Keith Hines, Gregg Esser, Jim DeRose and myself from the Los Angeles area, John Bees from Reno and Greg Stach from San Francisco. We met Sat morning near the McGee Creek on the Buttermilk road and car shuttled in two four-wheel drive trucks to the road end (8,500') leaving by about 9 am. After some hiking we reached the snow level, skinned up to the base of the central gully which, face on, looks somewhat intimidating. On the lower portion we could still ascend on skis but soon it was easier to kick steps. The gully is

Cont. Page 3

THE MUGELNOOS IS 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.

MUGELNOOS STAFF

EDITOR
MUGELPRINTER
MUGELMAILER

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: NOVEMBER 18, 1997

ISSUE DEADLINE NOV. 11, 1997. ALL PHOTOS, SLIDES, AND ARTICLES SENT TO: ANDY FRIED, MUGELNOOS EDITOR, c/o TEC GROUP, 10727 WHITE OAK AVE. SUITE # 205, GRANADA HILLS, CA 91344. 3 1/2" OR 5 1/4 " DISKS (IBM) OR AT 71237.1270@COMPUSERVE.COM. IF YOU WISH TO HAVE PHOTOS RETURNED AFTER PUBLICATION INCLUDE A SELF ADDRESSED STAMPED ENVELOPE. WE ARE NOT RESPONSIBLE FOR LOST PHOTOS.

UPCOMING TRIPS:

Date	Location	Leaders / Program
Nov 18 Tue	Ski Mountaineer Monthly Mtg:	
Jan 10 Sat	Ski Mountaineers	O: Local Tour. Leader: Paul Harris. Asst: Walt Boge.
Jan 17 Sat	Ski Mountaineers	T: Mt Pinos - Pine Mtn Club. Leader: Reiner Stenzel. Asst: Pete Matulavich.
Jan 20 Tue	Ski Mountaineers Monthly Mtg:	
Jan 24-25 Sat-Sun	Ski Mountaineers	T: Snowshelter Course Reiner Stenzel. Asst: Ken Deemer.
Jan 30 Feb 1 Fri-Sun	Ski Mountaineers	O: Nordic Downhill Clinice. Leader Paul Harris. Asst: Nancy Gordon.
Feb 8 Sun	O: Local Tour.	Leader: Mark Goebel. Asst: Pete Matulavich.
Feb 17 Tue	Ski Mountaineers Monthly Mtg:	
Feb 20-22 Fri-Sun		T: Winter Hut Tour. Leader: Reiner Stenzel. Asst: Ken Deemer.
Feb 22 Sun	Ski Mountaineers	T: Mt Baldy Steep and challenging skiing in Baldy Bowl. Leader: Mark Goebel. Asst: Pete Matulavich.
Feb 27 Mar 1 Fri-Sun	Ski Mountaineers	O: Nordic Downhill Practice. Leader: Paul Harris. Asst: Nancy Gordon.
Mar 7 Sat	Ski Mountaineers	T: Mt. San Jacinto (10,804'): Leader: Lawrence Pallant. Asst: Paul Harris.

Mar 14-17 Sat-Tue Ski Mountaineers
T: Buena Vista Crest to Merced Peak Leader: Tom Marsh. Asst: Joe McGuire.

May 2-3 Sat-Sun Ski Mountaineers
T: Lamarck Col. Leader: Lawrence Pallant. Asst: Tom Marsh.

Ski Mountaineer Leaders

Walt Boge
13260 Cumpston St.
Van Nuys, 91401
(818) 781-4576

Ken Deemer
2401 Pine Ave
Manhattan Bch 90266
(310) 546-4012
kdeemer@earthlink.net

Andy Fried
9218 Jellico Ave.
Northridge 91324
(818) 993-1891 H
(818) 363-6196
71237.1270@compuserve.com

Mark Goebel
9522 Innsbruck Drive
Huntington Beach 92646
(714) 963-9384

Nancy Gordon
6550 Ellenvue Ave.
West Hills 91307
(818) 884-8065
ah361@afn.org

Paul Harris
P.O. Box 70765
Pasadena 91107
(818) 577-4800

Grerry & Pat Holleman
1638 6th ST
Manhattan Bch. 90266
(310) 374-4654
72763.514@compuserve.com

Owen Maloy
P.O. Box 2083
Mammoth Lakes 93546-2083
(619) 934-4553
(619) 934-9511-fax
jom@qnet.com

change -----

Tom Marsh
5493 Quailridge Dr.
Camarillo 93012
(805) 388-3984
qtrmoon@aol.com

Keith Martin
P.O. Box 864
Palos Verdes Estates 90274
(310) 316-7617

Pete Matulavich
126 Calle Candida
San Dimas 91773
(909) 599-6148

Don Pies
1606 Haynes Lane
Redondo Beach 90278
(310) 318-6251

R. J. Secor
2346 Las Lunas St.
Pasadena 91107-2510
(818) 795-5520]

Reiner Stenzel
519 Almar Ave.
Pacific Palisades 90272
(310) 454-9787
stenzel@physics.ucla.edu

Eric Watts
3729 Vista St.
Long Beach, 90803
(310) 433-5099

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, October 18, 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 October 4, 1997.

SMS WEB PAGE

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

Has your area code changed? New e-mail address? If so please let Pat Holleman know so SMS records will be up to date.

long! It took 2 hours to reach the ridge. The group was widely spread out in the gully. A few of us had some energy left and climbed to the summit of Mt. Locke. The scenery was great: Tom, Basin, Humphreys, Emerson were all nearby and they had inviting slopes waiting to be skied.

Gregg, a professional sports photographer, took many scenic and action pictures. Then came the moment we waited for. From the summit we made a few practice turns and then dropped into the steep upper Wahoo Gully (>40 degrees). The snow was tricky with a soft layer of variable thickness on a frozen base. Parallel jump turns were the rule, teleturns the exception. It was an exhilarating skiing experience: Flanked by high granite walls one skies down a relentlessly dropping chute, trying to avoid disastrous falls. The steep angle makes it an exhausting firm, requiring many stops to recover and to maintain concentration. Near the bottom most everyone was pretty exhausted but content to have made it. We waited for the last ones and then skied down a new route which had snow coverage nearly to the cars. Shuttling in 4 cars got us back to the remaining cars and then to a pretty car campsite near a stream in the Buttermilk country. It was party time. We sampled a variety of excellent dishes, good wines, and desserts. The happy hour continued around a campfire.

On Sunday, we originally planned to ski the nearby Basin Couloir. However, the snow level was too far above the dirt road and there was no enthusiasm for a long dry XC hike. Thus, we drove on the main road first toward North Lake which was also dry and then toward South Lake where we were lucky and could ski up from the road. We ascended the Northern end of the Inconsolable Range up to a 12,000' ridge East of South Lake. There was an excellent view of the Evolution Group to the West, Humphreys and Tom in the North, and the Palisades Range to the South. After an early lunch we skied down a Northeast facing slope with excellent spring snow to Brown Lake (10,800'). The descent continued via Bluff Lake to Parchers Camp (9,400') with some challenging forest skiing in soft snow. Although the group was widely scattered everyone made it eventually safely back to the cars. It was another fine ski tour. On the way home Duncan left some fine telemark tracks on the sand dunes in Red Rock Canyon.

Gardner Basin Loop

by Rich Henke

The road to Onion Valley was clear on Thursday night, April 25, 1997. Friends had indicated that an avalanche had closed the road a few weeks earlier. I slept at the trailhead and by morning, 3 more cars containing 8 skiers from the

San Francisco area had arrived.

Our group started toward Kearsarge Pass at 9 a.m. Participants were Gus Benner, Armando Menocal, Maggie Filmore, Chris Jones, R.D. Caughron, Heather Wilson, Dave Church, Randy Spurrier and myself. A short walk brought us to excellent corn snow that was the standard for the next 4 days. Several of us left our packs and telemarked back down to Big Pothole Lake from near the pass while waiting for one of our group to retrieve a better pair of skins from the car. We continued west and camped on the western edge of Charlotte Lake.

Our plan for this trip was to do a loop through the Gardner Basin and return to our car via Gould Pass (also called Dragon Pass). After skiing down the valley toward Charlotte Dome for several miles, we climbed up toward the old Gardner Trail which was barely recognizable. We posed for photos with Charlotte Dome in the background and took lots of pictures of Chris. It was fitting to have him in the foreground of the classic south face rock climb where he made the first ascent in 1970. Several miles of bushwhacking brought us to the snow covered valley which led northwest to Gardner Pass. A steep gully on the North side of the 11,200 pass required us to kick steps down at a point just east of the actual pass. After Gardner Pass, we stayed high and crossed into Gardner Basin at 11,100 feet through a col just south of peak 11,156. Again, step kicking was required to descend. After a wonderful ski to a lake at 10,200 feet, we climbed several hundred feet and camped at one of the many lakes in this beautiful basin.

The morning of our 3rd day was spent climbing to Sixty Lakes Col, at 11,680 feet. No step kicking descent this time - we had a great run into 60 Lakes Basin. A short climb over the col south of Fin Dome brought us to the Rae Lakes and after another climb, to Dragon Lake. We camped at a lake just west of Gould Pass at 11,800 feet.

An early start the next morning required lots of step kicking with ice axes to ascend the frozen snow of Gould Pass at 12,800 feet. At the junction below Golden Trout Lake, I left the group and climbed north over Lilly Pass (11,900ft) to finish the tour by skiing down Sardine Canyon, the next valley north of Onion Valley. In a good year, 5,000 vertical feet of skiing are possible on a run that ends at an elevation near 6,000 feet. A short walk along an old road which intersects the paved Onion Valley road at the first big bend to the south returned me to my car which my friends had driven down from Onion Valley. This was not a great snow year, but I did get about 3,000 vertical. It would have been even better had it not been for the 40-50 mile gusts that almost knocked me off my feet at the top.

I can't remember a trip that had such consistent good snow for the downhill runs. The loop covered about 30

Cont. Page 3

miles and gained a total of 10,800 feet. During the trip, we noticed lots of old avalanche debris from the major Sierra storms in January or February. Almost no snow fell after that so the avalanche signs were everywhere. In a normal year, fresh snow would have covered everything up. Sardine Canyon especially consisted of avalanche debris covered with corn snow. It was almost like skiing a mogul field!

It was a good trip for skiing new passes, my normal goal for Sierra spring tours. Five new ones this outing!

Spring Ski Descents

by Rich Henke

The 1997 spring snow conditions were the most unusual that I have experienced for years. Lots of warm snow and even rain fell during the big storms of January and February. I don't know the details very well since I was traveling outside of the U.S. I do know that there were major avalanches at that time and that there was very little snowfall in March and April (none in some locations). The avalanche signs are everywhere, especially in the gullies at low altitudes. In a normal year, fresh snow would have covered up the debris. This year, we had bumpy skiing at low elevations.

Elderberry Canyon - Mt. Tom 17 April 97

In 1993, I was able to drive my VW van to the end of the rough road at about 6200 feet. This year, another van spent the entire day getting unstuck about 1/4 of a mile from the end. Parking at 5400 feet seemed wise. I walked to about 7600 feet before skinning to 10,800 feet, just below the steep headwall. The descent had good corn snow, but lots of avalanche debris as described earlier. I

took my skis off at 7300 feet as I could not ski the snow in the bottom part of the gully - 4 years ago I skied to the car. Not a great run but good exercise.

Vagabond Peak - 14 May 97

Peter Green and I started walking south along a good trail from Parchers Lodge at 9200 feet near the end of the South Lake road. Skiable snow was reached after climbing 500 feet. We passed Brown Lake on our way to peak 12,674, which is on a ridge northwest of Vagabond Peak. We had a great view of the Bishop Pass and the surrounding area, but the ski back was marginal due to poor snow. Again, avalanche debris was everywhere. Moynier does not list Vagabond Peak as one of his 17 peak descents, but he does discuss it in the beginning of the peak descent section in his book and shows it on his map of South Lake short tours. In a good year, one could get 4000 vertical from the top of Vagabond.

Mt Wood - 15 May 97

This was a great descent! Peter Green and I walked the trail from the north end of Silver Lake at 7223 feet to obtain the eastern bench to the at about 9200 feet. From here, we skied to within 700 feet of the summit before walking the remainder of the way. After enjoying the view, we returned to our skis and enjoyed 3100 feet of continuous skiing, most of it on perfect snow at a good steep angle! The snow had softened just the right amount - as we climbed up we wondered whether we would be able to ski such steep hard snow. But falls weren't fatal as I demonstrated several times. Earlier in the year, one can ski all the way down to Grant Lake but we were too late this year. Interestingly, there were little signs of avalanche on Mt. Wood. It wasn't clear why it was different from other areas of the Sierra.

THE MUGELNOOS

PAT HOLLEMAN

1638 6th St.

Manhattan Beach, CA 90266

Richard L. Henke
652 Marine Ave.
Manhattan Beach, CA 90266
SMS RCS-R 1997

