



# MUGELNOOS

JANUARY 20, 1998

Number 740

## WOMEN ON THE ROCKS, WAY BACK THEN

BY RUTH DYAR MENDENHALL, CONTINUED

Ideas had been exchanged, and the prospective personnel reduced to six for a start: three men (Howard Koster, Glen Warner, and John Mendenhall) and three women (Olga Schomberg, my sister Joan Dyar (Clark) who had recently joined me in California and I). We were between the ages of twenty-one and thirty. The men and I were dedicated climbers and also skied. Olga and Joan climbed a little and skied more. Our first practical need was to find the right house.

All the rental houses we had looked at up to late April 1939 were unsuitable — inconveniently located, too costly, too stark, too small. Then came an incredible stroke of luck. En route to a ski mountaineering venture on Mt. San Gorgonio, John and I took a look at a house for rent in northeastern Los Angeles. There it was! Big enough; on a streetcar line; cheap enough (\$60 a month); and fully and nicely furnished, right down to table linens, a radio-phonograph, an encyclopedia, a piano, a fireplace and a mantel clock. On top of all that, the landlady, Grace Shults, had been a Sierra Club member. She seemed to have neither questions nor qualms about our unconventional plans. We telephoned our prospective housemates to inspect the place, and went off skiing. Early the next week, the chosen six assembled to look together at this gem of a house. The decision seemed so momentous that for a short time we even ran out of wisecracks. We voted "Yes."

The rooms were apportioned among us without problems. Joan and I had the big upstairs bedroom, and Olga the small one. John, who needed a little peace and quiet for his engineering studies, had the third. Howard and Glen took the big downstairs bedroom. Mr. and Mrs. Shults retained a small corner apartment. Their son occupied a little knotty-pine building at the back of the lot. That was Monday. The next Saturday, May 5, 1939, we moved in.

Six people arrived with their accumulated belongings. These turned the ample front porch into a sort of junkyard of hickory skis, bamboo ski poles, desks, boots, carpets, a drafting board, lamps, ropes, a typing chair, canned milk, my typewriter. Before getting organized, we looked again at our brown stucco palace. Enthusiasm mounted. Glen and I were so pleased at the back lawn that we turned somersaults all over it. There were roses, syringa, and apple blossoms in bloom. Mrs. Shults, with what turned out to be typical kindness and thoughtfulness, had cooked us a big pot of split pea soup and disappeared into her own rooms. Pea soup became a symbolic delicacy that for many years was ceremoniously served at the Camp anniversaries and reunions.

A few days later, as all gathered at our new home for dinner, we held a house meeting. Our residence had to have a name, of course. After contemplating the fact that we had all heard of Green Gables and Seven Gables, Howard suggested Composition Roof, and Joan came up with Clark Gables. Eventually we chose Base Camp. We decided to try out this system of housework: a girl and a fellow would buy food and cook dinner together for one week (breakfasts were individually prepared, and we were seldom home for lunches); a girl and a fellow would wash dinner dishes; and a girl and a fellow would do the cleaning, yard work, household laundry, and everything else. We would have the same partner for three weeks, then switch partners and start all over. This plan worked so well that we

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**UPCOMING TRIPS:**

| Date         | Location | Leaders / Program   |
|--------------|----------|---|
| Jan 23-25    | Sat-Sun  | Ski Mountaineers<br>O: Nordic Downhill Clinice. Leader Paul Harris. Asst: Nancy Gordon.                                 |
| Jan 30-Feb 1 | Sat-Sun  | Ski Mountaineers<br>T: Snowshelter Course Reiner Stenzel. Asst: Ken Deemer. <b>CHANGE</b>                               |
| Jan 14-16    | Fri-Sun  | T: TIOGA PASS LODGE. Leader: Reiner Stenzel. <b>CHANGE</b><br>Asst: TBD.  |
| Feb 8        | Sun      | O: Local Tour.<br>Leader: Mark Goebel. Asst: Pete Matulavich.   |
| Feb 17       | Tue      | Ski Mountaineers Monthly Mtg:   |
| Feb 20 -22   | Fri-Sun  | Ski Mountaineers<br>O: Nordic Downhill Practice. Leader: Paul Harris. Asst: Nancy Gordon.                               |
| Feb 22       | Sun      | Ski Mountaineers<br>T: Mt Baldy Steep and challenging skiing in Baldy Bowl. Leader: Mark Goebel. Asst: Pete Matulavich. |
| Mar 7        | Sat      | Ski Mountaineers<br>T: Mt. San Jacinto (10,804'):Leader: Lawrence Pallant. Asst: Paul Harris.                           |
| March 13-16  |          | San Bernadino ridge Reiner Stenzel asst: tba  |
| Mar 14-17    | Sat-Tue  | Ski Mountaineers<br>T: Buena Vista Crest to Merced Peak Leader: Tom Marsh. Asst: Joe McGuire.                           |
| Mar 15       |          | Mt Baldy M. Goebel Asst: Ken Demer  |
| Mar 21-22    | Sat-Sun  | Mt. Silliman, Great Western Divide Reiner Stenzel, Asst: Owen Maloy   |
| Mar 28-29    |          | Mt. San Jacinto- Intro Tour Leader :Ken Deemer, Asst: Pete Matulevich   |

April 4-5 Sat-Sun Mammoth /June Downhill ski practice: Owen Maloy

April 11-15 Sat-Wed Mammoth -Lee Vining Ldr Tom Marsh; Asst Joe McGuire

April 18-19 Onion Valley-Sardine Can Don Pies-Ken Deemer

May 1-7 Fri-Tue Mt Williamson-Mt Whitney Crest Ldr:Reiner Stenzel, Asst: Ken Deemer

May 2-3 Sat-Sun Mt. Wood, Ldr: Mark Goebel, co-Ldr: Dan Richter

May 9-10 Sat-Sun Lamarck Col: Leader: Lawrence Pallant. Asst: Tom Marsh.

May 9-10 Sps/SMS Morrison & Baldwin co-ldrs : Scott Jamison, L Tidball Res. Barbee Tidball

May 16-17 Ski Mountaineers Pk,Ldr Gerry Holleman, Asst :Paul Harris

May 23-25 Tioga & Sonora Pass Ski Camp Ldr: K. Martin Asst: O. Maloy

Jun 13-16 Sat-Tues Northern Ski Advent. Ldrs:Nancy Gordon, O. Maloy

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**Ski Mountaineer Leaders**

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

**Mugelnoos Programs**

Feb 17 David Braun----First ski ascent of Mt. Fairweather  
 Mar 17 Slide program-- equip,safety and outings  
 April 21 Rich Henke--- -----Ski tours in S.W. US.  
 May 19 Brad Jensen----- Spring 97 Ski Ascent of Denali

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stuck to it, with trade-offs and variations, for the duration. None of us had ever been in charge of running a household, and we found the job novel and even hilarious. Before we moved in, our contemporaries told us it "wouldn't work." It did, and so did we. Of course we didn't all have the same tastes and talents. Some were better cooks than others, Howard the best of us all. One of our male visitors did remark that he "just couldn't see why the men should be compelled to cook." It really took two to run the 1915 washing machine in our small back cellar. It had two large copper tubs, leaky hoses, an electric wringer, and frightening gears. We kept each other up to a high standard of living. I once overheard Olga reprimanding Glen for getting out a clean tablecloth. Glen replied firmly that he would rather eat off newspapers than use the dirty one.

Dinners were nutritious and tasty, though sometimes we were up till midnight the preceding evening preparing jello, shelling peas, etc. Mother's Day came around soon after we were settled, so we planned a special dinner for the five available parents and grandmothers. Olga and I planned the menu: roast beef, gravy, new potatoes, asparagus, aspic salad, rolls, coffee, and strawberry pie. Much preparation had to be done the preceding

Saturday afternoon, since most of us planned to attend a practice climb Sunday morning. It had been my custom to rush off to climbs at the earliest possible moment, and return as late as feasible, and the fellows were even more addicted to this procedure. That Sunday Glen left early to take the ropes, which were stored in our living room window seat, to Eagle Rock. But the rest of us were putting finishing touches on the dinner preparations. I was baking pies and dusting, Joan fixing bouquets, Howard doing the wash, and John cleaning house and preening the parking strip. I put the roast in the oven and set the electric timer to turn it on at noon; those who stayed home watched breathlessly to be sure it did. Eventually John, Olga and I were off to the climb, being greeted by remarks about our lateness. I explained that we were too busy keeping house to climb, a shock to those who knew us.

When we returned to Base Camp, the roast was snapping away in the oven. Joan had set the table for eleven. Chairs, plates and silverware were carefully arranged so the guests would have the best. Several unlooked-for callers rang the doorbell, but never got in the door. Our invited guests duly arrived, and the affair went off smoothly. The older ladies seemed properly impressed. After their departure, we spent the rest of the evening praising ourselves, cleaning up, and hurling insults at each other. During that summer, we entertained countless guests, sometimes too many. We gave special dinners for aunts, cousins, old friends, and mostly our climbing and skiing friends.

Drop-in guests sometimes seemed a bit startled by in-

house arguments about who would stake them to the meal (twenty cents a head). Later we decided we should argue it out in private.

Since early 1938 I had been editing our newsheet, and putting it out at my apartment, with a few assistants both regular and ad hoc. The first time The Mugelnoos was mimeographed and mailed at Base Camp, a gang of thirty friends turned up for the occasion, probably more from curiosity than volunteerism. During the week, I had collected and rewritten the news and cut the stencils, with which John and Glen helped me. The mimeographing, an inky procedure, fitted ideally into the back porch. Our friends were perfect guests. They invited themselves, did most of the work, entertained themselves and their hosts, cleaned up the place, and went home. Mugelnoos-night parties became traditional, and Base Camp was turned into a social center as well as a source of information about almost anything. There was a lot of togetherness, but our rooms were strictly private territory.

Guests or not, there was always something going on at Base Camp. Joan on the piano and Howard on his tuba played duets. Some of us were always poring over mountaineering books such as Climbing Days by Dorothy Pilley and The Romance of Mountaineering by R. L. G. Irving. Four who were taking a first aid course had hysterics over prone-pressure artificial respiration. At dinners, the male cook was to sit in the armchair, which we called the Papa Chair; but if the male cook was absent, the female cook did the honors. There was a decided advantage to having two cooks- no matter what was fixed, there was always one other person to praise it.

We were heavy on economy, especially Howard, who occasionally overdid it. On one occasion he spied an uneaten cob of corn among the garbage, and indignantly bore it to the kitchen to add to the lima beans he was preparing. I intervened in sanitary horror. Howard was adamant. A wrestling match ensued, during which I succeeded in messing up the corn so even Howard admitted it was unfit to eat. Then we settled down to a laughing spree, and for several days our jokes seemed to center around garbage.

At dinner, humor seemed to be at its height. We often had jello for dessert, due to ease of preparation and low cost. Its basic ingredients became a matter of speculation. Howard advanced the theory that it was made from horses' hooves. The encyclopedia revealed that gelatin was indeed extracted from animal tissues. Horses were not specifically mentioned, but it was not uplifting to read of hides, glue, coated pills and isinglass. When the first course was over, Glen leaned back in his purple shirt and said, "Well, bring on the isinglass." I glanced at the color of the dessert being served, and inquired if it was "strawberry roan." On another evening Joan had received a message to telephone a climber who was an intern. As she rose from the table, she remarked, "I have to call General Hospital." John inquired sternly, "Has your meal taken effect already?"

Sometimes we laughed so loudly that we would glance up and notice the next-door neighbor peering at us from her kitchen window, and laughing right along with us. This neighbor was such-a good church-goer that we referred to her as the Christian Lady. We were somewhat surprised one day when she told Joan that we were "finer young people than some of the Christians she knew." Our landlady, Mrs. Shults, told us from time to time that we took better care of her property, and kept our house neater, than any tenant she had ever had. Along with all this virtuosity, domesticity and high jinks, we were living more economically than had seemed possible. About twenty dollars from each of us monthly covered all expenses, rent, food, telephone, newspaper and utilities.

We were usually gone weekends, climbing with each other and non-Base Camp friends. John D. Mendenhall had been attracted to the climbing scene since he was a child in Missouri. Chris Jones credited John in Climbing in North America with being the first known person "to consciously belay in the Sierra Nevada." He had figured it out from library books, and practiced with like minded friends. That summer John and I went on many private Climbs together. Our main goal was to make pioneer ascents of the north side of Strawberry Peak in the local mountains. The cliff could be seen from the Angeles Crest Highway, and was approached by a long hot trail and by way of a firebreak amid Southern California's chaparral. Our first route occupied us for several Sundays, and was so devious that we named it the Strawberry Roam.

Over the weekend of July 4, 1939, John and I planned to join the Rock Climbing Section's trip to the Minarets in the Sierra. We had spent our evenings the week before poring over maps and guidebooks. Our entire household was preparing for other trips. Ropes were inspected for flaws, crampons were tried on, boots waxed, pants patched commissaries organized.

John and I both had to work Saturday morning. After that nothing went quite right. Our transportation didn't leave till mid-afternoon. We reached the end of the road at midnight. John and I staggered out of our bags at 5 a.m. and backpacked seven miles to the RCS camp, easily identifiable because in those days our climbers rarely saw anyone else in the mountains. Due to inexperience and over-optimism, we thought we could make an afternoon climb of the Underhill-Eichorn Route on Banner Peak, 12,957 feet. The approach seemed long, but we moved fast when we got on the rock. The difficulty increased as we climbed, and by 6 p.m. the summit was still far above us. We bivouacked. We always had extra food in the rucksack, but it was a cold cramped night on our ledge. We slept, we shivered, we nibbled on our Famine Ration of horrid drugstore bargain chocolate. We laughed; climbers always seemed to think the worse the conditions, the funnier. It was a new experience for me, and I thought that since I was there I should make the most of it. The cliffs dropped

precipitously below, a star fell, the Banner Glacier gleamed in the moonlight. A red star rose over White Mountain Peak across Owens Valley. At around 4 a.m. the eastern sky was filling with an orange light. Before 5, pale sunlight lay across our ledge. We ate snow and our last lemon drops for breakfast, and descended to camp. We were teased for years about this bivouac, as a couple of weeks later we announced our engagement.

When we told Howard about our plans, he exclaimed, "But you can't get married and move out of Base Camp." It turned Out that we could and did. But Howard, true to his philosophy, in early 1941 brought his own bride to live at 'Base Camp for a few months, presumably under the housekeeping tutelage of the residents.

By mid-August 1939, the Romance in Mountaineering had struck again. Dick Jones and Adrienne Applewhite announced their engagement Our household and its circle of fiends rose to the occasion. On my birthday, August 16, a surprise party was arranged at Base camp for the two recently engaged couples. My gift from John was an ice axe, the peak of my desires. He had die-stamped in the steel head the words 'HAPPY BIRTHDAY 1939' on one side, and "RUTH FROM JOHN" on the other. After that presentation, Cupid came, in the flesh of a brawny mountain climber dressed in pink tights, a grass skirt, and wings, who carried a small bow and arrow. Gifts proliferated. The party ended with a turmoil of tissue paper, paper dishes, and cake crumbs in the living room. Glen in his sage way, "let's put the cake where the mice won't get it, and go to bed."

Despite mountain peaks and diamond rings, housework went on. Howard edged the front lawn, John mowed the back lawn, and I followed up with the sprinkler. I cooked a huge pot of stew that, with side dishes, kept dinners going for nearly a week. Green apples were falling from the tree that had been in bloom when we moved in. We picked them up for sauce and pies. Times were changing. Dick and Adrienne went on a Mass Honeymoon with a group of friends. Over Labor Day they bivouacked while down-climbing the East Face of Mt. Whitney. On the same weekend, John and I put up a new route on the East Buttress of Third Needle south of Whitney. The next Mugelnoos commented that our two man rope was soon to be spliced. I quit my job: hereafter we would divide work differently. In the midst of a terrible 109 degree hot spell, we were married at the home of John's parents in the San Fernando Valley and left Base Camp for our own home. Two girls and a man replaced us. The Shults family moved out to make room for more new residents.

The institution of Base Camp as a residence and social headquarters for skiers and climbers continued for over two more years. Sixteen different young people lived there, the maximum at any one time being ten and the minimum six. This number in-

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# 1997-1998 Schedule of TELEMARX SKI EVENTS

- Jan. 23 Friday "Chasing Funky Snow" Seminars \$68 All day clinics tailored for: Strong Intermediates and Advance Sklers only ~ goal is to ski any and everywhere. Tricks for skiing steeps, bumps, crud, smooth, fast, hop and jump turns, and more! Includes lift ticket and 4 hour clinic 10 AM-Noon and 1 PM-3 PM
  - Jan. 24 Saturday Ski Mountaineer's Free-heel Training Sessions All day clinics tailored for: Beginner ~ working on basic skills needed to do the Telemark and other free-heel turns. Intermediate ~ explore tactics on how to ski changing snow conditions and terrain. Advanced ~ work on steeps, bumps, crud, smooth, speed, hop and jump turns, etc. Includes lift ticket and 4 hour clinic 10 AM-Noon and 1 PM-3 PM  
To register and for more information ~ Contact: Paul Harris: 818-577-4800
  - Jan. 25 Sunday WINTER ~ TELEMARX and FREE-HEEL SKI GAMES SERIES FUN for everyone! Dual GS - Tele and Free-heel divisions ~ Skinning Climbing Contest Synchronized Skiing ~ Uphill Downhill Race ~ Clinics ~ Tele T-shirt ~ Prize Drawings  
Option #1 ~ Includes Lift Ticket, Clinics, Tele T-shirt, Games, Prize Drawing \$70  
Option #2 ~ Includes Lift Ticket, Tele T-shirt, Games, Prize Drawing - No Clinics \$55
  - Feb. 6-7-8 February Tele Workshops \$68 Fri-Sat-Sun. See Jan. 9 for details
  - Feb. 20 "Chasing Funky Snow" Seminars \$68 Friday See Jan. 23 for details
  - Feb. 21-22 Ski Mountaineer's Free-heel Training Weekend Sat-Sun. See Jan. 24 for details
  - Mar. 20-21 Spring Telemark Workshop \$68 Fri-Sat. See Jan. 9 for details
  - Mar. 22 Sunday SPRING ~ TELEMARX and FREE-HEEL SKI GAMES SERIES See Jan. 25 for details
- Programs subject to change without notice. For updates , call TELEMARX SKI PROGRAM 909-585-2519 ext.348

REGISTRATION FORM: mail with payment to: Bear Mountain ~ Telemark Ski Program  
P.O. Box 6812 ~ Big Bear Lake, CA 92315-6812 OR FAX TO: 909-585-6805

Dates of Events: \_\_\_\_\_  
Events: \_\_\_\_\_

Cost of Events: \$ \_\_\_\_\_ TOTAL: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

PAYMENT OPTIONS:  
 Check  Visa/MC # \_\_\_\_\_  
 Exp. \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_ Name on Card \_\_\_\_\_  
 Signature \_\_\_\_\_

What kind of terrain do you usually ski \_\_\_\_\_ Rate your Free-heel Downhill skiing ability:  
 Beginner  Beg./Intermediate  Intermediate  Int./Advanced  Advanced  
 Do you:  Track Ski  Backcountry Ski  Alpine Ski  Snowboard  Take Tele Lessons  Rent Tele Equipment  
 How long Downhill Free-heeling? \_\_\_\_\_ Name brand and model if you own Tele Gear:  
 Skis \_\_\_\_\_  
 Boots \_\_\_\_\_  
 Bindings \_\_\_\_\_

## OTHER FREE HEEL EVENTS

TELE FESTIVAL WITH BACKCOUNTRY SEMINAR  
 FEB 27-MAR 1  
 Bear Valley CA  
 Mountain Adventure Seminars  
 800-362-5462

U.S. TELEMARX NATIONALS  
 MAR 5-8, 1998  
 THE BIG MOUNTAIN AT WHITEFISH, MT.  
 DAVE HARRISON 406-862-2909 OR 2911

LONGBOARD EVENTS  
 FEB 22, 1998  
 Plumas Eureka Ski Bowl  
 800-326-2247

THE GREAT AMERICAN TELEMARX FESTIVAL  
 & TELEMARX WORLD COP FINALS  
 MAR 20-29, 1998 PARK CITY & SNOWBIRD UT  
 801-955-8353 www.saltlake.net/~telemark

Women on Rocks cont.

cluded nine women and seven men. Base Camp was reluctantly disbanded in October 1941 because of the difficulties of keeping up the number of residents; defense work and the draft, higher education and romance were taking their toll. John and I, on the brink of leaving the Los Angeles area for war work on the East Coast and elsewhere, put up a new route on Mt. Whitney, the Southeast Face. World War II scattered our crowd all over the world and changed our lives. But when we returned four years later- the mountains were waiting.

SEE YOURSELF TELEMARKE !

Join PSIA Demo team member Urmias Franosch and PSIA Nordic examiner and clinician Dale Drennan for a day of nordic downhill instruction with video. This special offering of the Mammoth Mountain ski school is geared to the intermediate to advanced telemark skier who wishes to refine their technique with the aid of video analysis, or just see what they look like skiing. The day will be spent skiing in a variety of situations with video recording of free skiing runs as well as tasks with a specific skill focus. Viewing will take place at noon and at day's end with analysis and critique provided in accordance with participant's goals and expectations.

Cost: \$1 00 including lift ticket

Dates: January 11, February 8, March 8

Contact Mammoth Mountain Ski School at (760) 934-0685 for more information or to sign up.

THE MUGELNOOS

PAT HOLLEMAN  
1638 6th St.  
Manhattan Beach, CA 90266

FOR THE SKI MOUNTAINEER'S NEWSLETTER:

Introduction to Backcountry Telemarking : a course offered by Cerro Coso Community College, Mammoth Lakes campus. This course is for the intermediate level nordic downhill skier who wishes to learn how to undertake a short day or easy overnight ski trip into the backcountry safely and enjoyably. This one week course (Monday -Friday) is offered for credit three times this season- Feb. 9 - 13, Mar. 9 - 13, and Apr. 20 - 24. On-snow and lecture sessions will cover tactics for skiing ungroomed conditions,, equipment use, routefinding, winter survival, and avalanche awareness. Contact the college at (760) 872-1565 or (888) 537-6932, or Urmias Franosch, the instructor at (760) 924-3327 for more information.

For Sale 1 pr Rossignal-Black Widow 198cm-new \$75. 1 pr Tua Cirque 200cm used 2 days \$75 no bindings. Floyd Spangler (714) 970-1358.

IF YOU HAVEN'T RENEWED YOUR SUBSCRIPTION TO THE MUGELNOOS FOR 1998 THIS IS THE LAST ISSUE YOU WILL RECEIVE. TO RENEW, MAIL A CHECK FOR \$7 MADE PAYABLE TO "SKI MOUNTAINEERS" TO PAT HOLLEMAN, MUGELMAILER, 1638 6TH ST., MANHATTAN BEACH, CA 90266-6347



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SMS RCS-R 1998