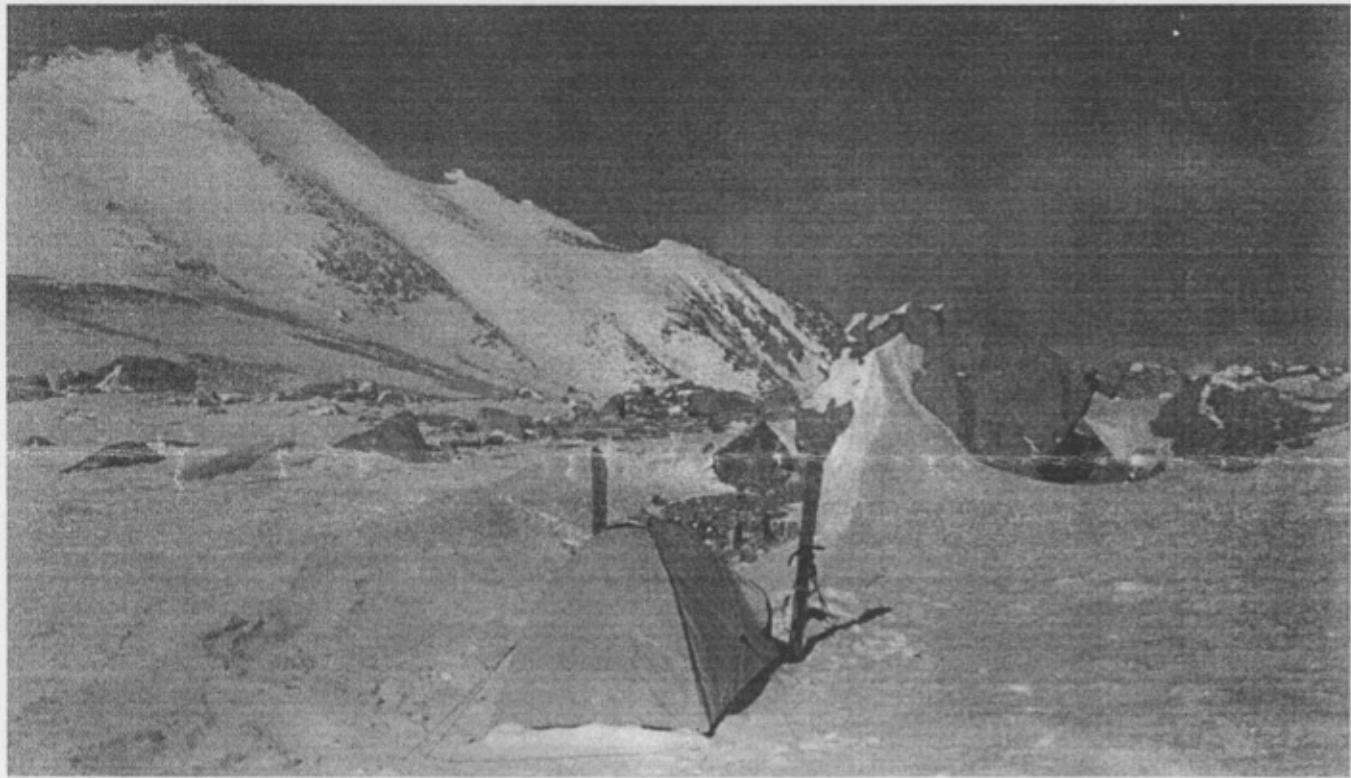


MAY 19, 1998

Number 744



### Mt WILLIAMSON-WHITNEY CREST TOUR May 1-7, 1998

by Reiner Stenzel

The description for this SMS trip called for challenging skiing, mountaineering, and bushwhacking. We got it all, including some more surprises. Here is how it went: After contacting about a dozen of able SMS members, most declined due to the trip difficulty, but a quorum of three remained: R.J. Secor, Don Ralphs, and myself. We met on Fri, 5/1, at 8am in Lone Pine, had a last good breakfast, drove up to Whitney Portal to leave two cars, and shuttled in R.J.'s car to the George Creek trailhead. At least that was the intention, but in spite of his trail description and his GPS we ended up at a different road end and had a warm-up hike before the fun of George Creek started. Infamous George Creek starts at an elevation of 6,000', has a disappearing trail, numerous stream crossings, and a class 5 thicket of brush on either side of the creek. Our packs were heavy and The skis stuck high into the air, which already called for trouble. It started when R.J. lifted his old backpack and the shoulder strap tore off. After an improvised fix we ascended George Creek, partly XC and partly on a faint trail. At every tree and bush one had to bend deep down to avoid getting the skis entangled. Every stream crossing involved a balancing act over logs or rocks which eventually ended up with wet boots. Arms and legs got scratched by the thorns. After hours of suffering, a broken GPS and pack, and numerous cigarettes smoked to lighten his pack, R.J. could not stand it anymore and quit, yes, he bailed out on us! Now we were two. We rearranged gear and continued. Actually, after reaching the snow level travel became much easier. But by the end of the day we were far short of our goal to camp at 11,000' for next day's ascent of Mt Williamson.

cont. pg.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 PAYABLE TO "SKI MOUNTAINEERS" DUE IN OCTOBER. SUBSCRIPTION PAYMENTS ARE NOT TAX DEDUCTABLE AS CHARITABLE CONTRIBUTIONS.

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**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: OCT. 1998**

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**UPCOMING TRIPS:**

Date	Location	Leaders / Program
May 23-25	Sawtooth Ridge Ski Camp	Leader: Reiner Stenzel, Asst: G Holleman
May 23-25	Tioga & Sonora Pass Ski Camp	Ldr: K Martin Asst: O. Maloy
Jun 13-16	Sat-Tues Northern Ski Advent.	Ldr: Nancy Gordon, Asst: O. Maloy

Jun 6-8 Sat-Mon.

Randy Lamm

Santa Monica

**San Antonio (Mt. Baldy) Ski Hut Work Party**  
SMSers come on up & help with the Spring cleaning. Meet 8am Sat by lock gate to carry supplies. RSVP with Jerry Held for dinner reserv. if you want to stay overnight. (714) 751-8805.

**Mugelnoos Programs**

May 19 Brad Jensen----- Spring 97 Ski Ascent of Denali

**SMS WEB PAGE**

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

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**WELCOME NEW MEMBERS**

**Election Results**

The following were elected:

**KEITH MARTIN, RICHARD GEIST, STEVE HESSEN, MARK GOEBEL, OWEN MALOY, & SUSAN LOFTUS**

Some of you may note that six were elected while you were asked to vote for only five of the six, it turns out that the bylaws specify that there are six offices not five as some of us thought.

## Cont. from page 1

On Sat, 5/2, we got up to a beautiful sunrise. But, surprise, by 8 am billowing clouds drifted up from the valley. They rapidly grew, sank and by 10 am we were in a whiteout. Now it was navigation by altimeter, map and compass. The plan to ski Mt Williamson (14,370') was obviously out. At an elevation of 3,000m George Creek splits and we headed SW toward an unnamed lake (3,300m) and a chute leading to the big bowl east of Trojan Pk and Mt Barnard. The whiteout was dense and there were a few moments of doubt. Finally, by noon, we reached the chute. When the clouds opened for a moment, a steep wall of snow was visible. Don got worried. He felt that he could not handle it and what might come after this. I reassured him of his strong skiing (we had skied together Whitney's Trailcrest the year before) but could not convince him to go any further. I respected his decision to return, for whatever reason, but this was certainly the lowest moment of the trip. He was going to struggle again through George Creek without a car at the trailhead. I was going on a multiday solo trip in rugged terrain. Well, the decisions were made and after lunch we bid farewell. In the afternoon I ascended to the 4,000m level and by 4pm set up camp just below Mt Barnard. It was cold and windy in the wide open bowl and I was glad to have Don's good Bibler tent. Clouds were drifting through but it gradually cleared toward the night.

The morning of Sun, 5/3, was perfect without a cloud in sight. With ice axe and crampons I climbed the South ridge of Trojan Pk (4251m or 13,947'). It was a pleasure to find the peak register and to place the first signature in 1998. The view was outstanding, but puffy clouds were rising again out of Owens Valley. To the North was Big Willi (14,370') which we missed to ski. Actually, the upper South facing slopes were all dry and it would have been just a climb which I had done 10 years ago. Because of the weather I rushed back to camp, packed out and was ready to continue by 10am. The Crest Route goes right over Mt Barnard (13,990'). Surprisingly, there was no snow on the NE slopes and it was a peak climb with full gear, at a slow pace because of the altitude. The clouds were rising, but I was lucky and it remained clear when I summited at 11:30am. Another outstanding view of many High Sierra peaks rising above the low clouds. Being on the summit is such a special moment after a long hard climb. Equally rewarding was signing in on the last page of an original peak register started in 1936! Many legendary names of mountaineers were in it. Finally, it was time for the descent. The Southwest facing slope leading down to Wallace Lke had full snow coverage. It was crusty at the top, but gradually softened into prime corn snow. The 2,500' ski descent was a dream of backcountry skiing.

With proper route finding it was moderately steep and avalanche free. After a lunch break at Wallace Lke (11,540') I proceeded to climb up to Tulainyo Lke (12,820'). It was a tiring afternoon having climbed two SPS peaks in the morning. By 4pm, I found a scenic camp spot overlooking the round, solidly frozen, highest lake in the Sierra Nevada. The basic routines followed: pitching the tent to get out of the cold wind, boiling water for a hot soup, and more water for the freeze-dried dinner, and still more for a hot drink afterwards, since one is so dehydrated after a long day skiing at high altitude. During dinner, I noticed a worrisome change in the sky: Dark stratus clouds moving rapidly in from the West. While the puffy clouds in the East usually dissipated at night the front from the West was a real snow storm. It started to snow at 8pm and continued all night. Wind gusts rattled the tent. My greatest concern was the potential avalanche hazard on the steep Northern slopes of the Russell-Carillon col which I had to cross the next day. If necessary, I was ready to sit out the storm since I had supplies for seven days.

Mon, 5/4, I woke up to a good omen: Sunshine on the tent. Outside it was a glittering winter landscape with everything smoothed over by a few inches of fresh powder. This precious break in the weather had to be used. I rapidly collected a few essentials and headed up to nearby Tunnabora Pk (13,563'). This was the last SPS peak I wanted to climb to finish the Whitney-Williamson quadrangle. At 7am I was on the summit, and not too early since the higher peaks such as Mt Russell became shrouded in clouds. It took me a while to find the summit register which turned out to be stuck in a crack and covered by rock and snow. During those moments one gets the lingering doubt whether one has climbed the right peak. After signing in as the first in this year and taking a few summit pictures, I headed back down to camp. I had a leisurely breakfast and waited to see what would happen to the weather. The clouds were coming and going. By 10am I decided to pack out and give it a try to climb Russell-Carillon Pass (13,290'). This is a genuine mountaineering experience involving a climb on 45deg snow and rock with ice axe and crampons, complicated by a full pack with skis sticking high up. The snow had a firm base under about 1/2 foot of windpacked powder which did not slide. Luckily, there was no cornice at the pass. After about an hour of high-concentration climbing the pass was reached with a big relief. This was probably the most tricky part of the crest tour. From the pass the view due South was breathtaking. Clouds rose from below and drifted around the high peaks, exposing occasionally the peaks of Mt Whitney, Russell, McAide, Thor, etc. Since I did not trust the weather I soon headed down to the Upper Boy Scout Lke. This was another fine 2,000' ski run on good spring snow. However, when skiing the steeper part, the wet

snow started to slide. After each traverse of the slope one had to wait till the oozing mass came to a standstill before starting the next traverse. In an earlier similar situation on Mt Ritter I was once caught by the slush and washed down, learning to respect the slowly moving ones. Further below, it was sweet turning, only interrupted by one long tumble when I foolishly initiated a turn in a climbers old glissade path. At the Boy Scout Lake it was time for lunch and to ponder what to do next. Originally, I had planned to camp at Iceberg Lake and to go over Whitney-Russell col to ski Young and Hale. But in view of the whiteouts, the potential for more snowstorms, and the inherent risks of a winter solo trip, I decided to ski out at this point. In retrospect, this was a good decision since the weather got worse the following days. There was plenty of snow along the North Fork of the Lone Pine Creek. Thus, instead of crawling along the Henneberger ledges, it became a fine ski run down the right hand side of the creek until the lowest possible creek crossing. There was a bit of bushwhacking at the creek crossing, but nothing comparable to George Creek. Finally, after a 30min hike down the civilized Whitney trail, I arrived at my car by 1:30pm, surprised how fast four eventful days had passed.

I noticed that Don's car was gone. When I later called him at home, he said that on his way down George Creek he met a group of hikers who kindly gave him a ride to Whitney Portal, solving his transportation problems. R.J. also made it out safely to his car near the George Creek trailhead. I would have enjoyed sharing the tour with them, but must admit that it was not an easy one. It involved all elements of high-altitude ski mountaineering: skiing, climbing, navigation, stream crossings, unstable weather, and unpredictable human reactions. For a while, this trip will satisfy the need for more.

## THE PULPIT MOVES TO THE OPEN SLOPE

\* Jim Valensi\*

April 26th brought an end to the on slope preaching season at Bear Mt. ski resort. (ski, resort ~) After five months of spreading the gospel the two local men of the cloth (teleski instructors) Bishop Joe McCoy ~ Deacon Dennis Yates are moving the preaching platform to the eastern sierra, home of the hedonist, the promised land. Hey, these guys aren't dumb. This is the best range for the finest corn snow on the globe, now. For many, if not all, So, Calif. back country skiers the pilgrimage is starting now. The holy walk to worship in the "first church of the open slope" as the "great one" called his house of prayer. It seems ironic that the first year the great Bardini will be watching from above, it turns out to be an El Nino snow year. Early last spring AB had a vision and after coming out of the multi-day haze of meditation, it was

whispered in his ear, "EL NINO means corn snow in English. " And so Bard's prediction of the great corn snow factory of the sierra range will run long and deep this season. Arch Bishops Moynier, Robinson, Beak, Vogel, Villanueva, & Fischer as well as the disciples of the ski mountaineers are preaching to the flock. With Deacons Stenzel Gobel, Maloy, Matulavich, Allsberry and Gordon as well as alter boy Harris and many other SMS holy ones spreading the word, this spring will touch many more followers. Touch them deep inside where the vision and feeling of carving deep can only be felt in the meat. Deep inside the meat of the believers, The believer who knows that the real ski season, the soul skiing season, starts as the other holy day, Easter, ends. So my fellow ski brethren seek out the preachings of these divine ones, these holy womans of the wild, and worship in the house of hedonism. Ski like you've never skied and climb like you've never climbed and rejoice in life. "Don't just stay somewhere, go my friends and live, live the joys of life in the Promised Land." AB Because, yesterday's history, tomorrow's a mystery, and today is a gift. That's why they call it the present. ALWAYS REMEMBER: "only their hair dresser knows for sure"

**P. S.** The coolest tele-ski video tape is out now. The style is 8 or so years old which is great. Still the feeling and soul of the tele-skier is captured on this tape. Get one for yourself. It can be had by contacting Curtis Johns at (310) 372-0709, the films producer or Joe McCoy at (909)585-1935. The more of these tapes that sell the better chance we'll have of getting brother Johns producing a second tape. Do it, you owe it to your young self.

**P.S. P.S..**

On the evening of May 5th, Glacier Lodge burned to the ground. This great old landmark, up from Big Pine, will be greatly missed. No customers were there at the time. Investigation pending.

**CARVE DEEP**

## MT BALDY TOUR • APR. 18~19, 1998

Mark Goebel

The original scheduled location of this weekend's tour was Onion Valley, however, El Nino still had its winter grip on the access road. Since our local mountains were buried under record amounts of snow, we figured Mt. Baldy would be a little more consolidated with its southern exposure, and of course there is also a comfortable Hut. Meeting Sat am were Ken Deemer, Eric Watts, Jim DeRose, and this reporter, and even at the cars snow was in abundance. Upon reaching the Hut we learned that 16 from the San Diego Mtn

Rescue Team were also using the the Hut on a snow training weekend, so space was definitely at a premium. Eventually we set off for the summit with 3 more SMSers up for the day on what was to be the first of a series of very warm days throughout much of California. As a result, a strong Spring avalanche cycle developed in the Sierra and our local mountains. Upon reaching the top of West Ridge, we noticed ski tracks that disappeared into a slide path on a steep chute on the next ridge to the west. Later I learned that the slide caught one of the skiers and carried him down 1600'! Fortunately he was unharmed. Clearly the recent new snow had become very wet and heavy, and slides were starting with little effort.

We continued on to the summit of West Baldy where we then skied SW along the ridge until we were across from our earlier point on West Ridge. Here we were able to descend steeply about 1000', and then we skinned back up to West Ridge and dropped back in to Baldy Bowl. We definitely got some snow rollers going, and Eric started a large but slow surface slide down in to the Bowl. On Sunday, with an earlier start, we climbed to the summit and then made several runs down on firmer, but very quickly softening snow along the east side of the Bowl. Realizing that the snow below the Hut would be very soft, we started down soon after lunch and struggled to stay upright in the apple sauce snow until we gave up skiing about half way down to the cars. It was a fun and challenging ski weekend with a good bunch of skiers.

## SAN GORGONIO WILDERNESS AREA TOUR

May 2-3, 1998  
Mark Goebel

The original plan was to ski Mt. Wood, a 12,000' peak just north of June Lake in the Sierra, but conditions were still unsettled up there, so we decided to go for the short drive and enjoy some of the best skiing locally in years. Our group of six included myself, Eric Watts, Ken Deerner, Tom Randal, and Gerry and Pat Holleman. Much of the hike in from the South Fork Trail was on snow, but it wasn't continuous until about one mile from South Fork Meadows. From here we skied due south, up Christmas Tree Hill and then followed the ski markers to a campsite at about 9500'. Along the way we viewed the large avalanche path which descends the northeast slope of Charton Peak, and based upon the many large broken trees now laying in upper South Fork Meadows, the path was very

active this past winter. In the afternoon we toured to the upper slopes of the Big Draw, and then enjoyed a fun run down on still firm corn snow. There were a number of other skiers, boarders, and hikers in the area this weekend, and it was reported that the upper slopes of San Gorgonio Peak were still icy. We had a good deal of wind during the night, but the skies stayed clear, while down in town rain was reported.

Sunday was another good day, so we opted to ascend Charton Peak via its east slope where the snow had nicely softened. From its 10,806' summit, we had an excellent view of the rising cloud layer below and decided to descend via the peak's major avalanche path which we had looked up the day before. Locating the start was easy, go east from the summit less than 200' feet, and then ski to the northeast. Just as soon as you are over the edge, the slope drops sharply and you can see the slide path's runout through the trees some 1600' below. We started down about 11:30 am and the snow was great. Initially you can ski the broad upper slope of the peak, or go right down the path. We did a little of both, and soon we were all together skiing the many different angles and pitches of this lengthy slope. Six well satisfied skiers finally caught their collective breaths at the top of Christmas Tree Hill where we skinned up for the 500' climb back to our campsite and lunch. The remainder of the afternoon entailed enjoyable skiing with backpacks down to Southfork Meadows and then out the trail a short distance before finally hiking the remaining 3 or so miles to the cars. On the upper slopes where we skied, the snow depth appeared to be 6 to 8 feet. Not bad for Southern California in May, and as this report is being written another winter storm is dropping still more snow here and in the Sierra. Still time to enjoy this memorable ski season.

## ST TOUR May 1-7, 1998

by Neil Stord



Don climbing up George Creek, weather deteriorating.

# THE MUGELNOOS

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